Xiao Gang (503-551): His Life and Literature

by

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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on an emperor-poet, Xiao Gang (503-551, r. 550-551), who lived during a period called the Six Dynasties in China. He was born a prince during the Liang Dynasty, became Crown Prince upon his older brother's death, and eventually succeeded to the crown after the Liang court had come under the control of a rebel named Hou Jing (d. 552). He was murdered by Hou before long and was posthumously given the title of "Emperor of Jianwen (Jianwen Di)" by his younger brother Xiao Yi (508-554). Xiao's writing of amorous poetry was blamed for the fall of the Liang Dynasty by Confucian scholars, and adverse criticism of his so-called "decadent" Palace Style Poetry has continued for centuries.

By analyzing Xiao Gang within his own historical context, I am able to develop a more refined analysis of Xiao, who was a poet, a filial son, a caring brother, a sympathetic governor, and a literatus with broad and profound learning in history, religion and various literary genres. Fewer than half of Xiao's extant poems, not to mention his voluminous other writings and many of those that have been lost, can be characterized as "erotic" or "flowery". Through an analysis utilizing the concepts of genre and intertextuality, I discover that his yuefu titles cover a wide range of old and new topics. This reveals his efforts to revive traditional yuefu writing and to reassert the centrality of the south in Chinese civilization during the Period of Division.
This dissertation analyzes Xiao Gang's writing techniques from a philological perspective. With this methodology, I have been able to clarify some misinterpretations by earlier scholars and provide new evidence about Xiao's unique writing skills and creative originality.

Rediscovering Xiao Gang is not just a matter of understanding an individual poet from a long past age. The Six Dynasties period during which he lived was politically chaotic and unstable, but it was also a period when literature flourished. Xiao Gang and his literary works provide valuable resources for studying this fascinating era. The re-evaluation of Xiao Gang undertaken in this dissertation comprises an effort to discover the truth that has been hitherto obscured by undue attention to the checkered political history of the Liang Dynasty.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ..................................................................................................................................... ii  
Table of Contents ..................................................................................................................... iv  
List of Tables ........................................................................................................................... vi  
List of Abbreviations .............................................................................................................. vii  
Acknowledgements ................................................................................................................ viii  
Introduction .............................................................................................................................. 1  
Chapter 1  Xiao Gang's Life ................................................................................................. 13  
  1.1  Xiao Gang and His Family ............................................................................................. 13  
  1.2  Education of Emperor Wu's Children ........................................................................ 22  
  1.3  Xiao Gang's Career ..................................................................................................... 29  
  1.4  Xiao Gang's Difficulties ............................................................................................. 48  
  1.5  Liang's Decline and Xiao Gang's Final Days ............................................................. 60  
Chapter 2  Xiao Gang's Literary Thought ............................................................................ 85  
  2.1  Critique of Xiao Gang's Poetry as Decadent ............................................................... 85  
  2.2  Ideas Linking Xiao Gang and the Yutai xinyong ....................................................... 107  
  2.3  The Date the Yutai xinyong Was Compiled ............................................................... 115  
  2.4  The "Preface to the Yutai xinyong" and the Purpose of Compiling the Yutai xinyong146  
  2.5  Xiao Gang's "Letter to the Prince of Xiangdong" ....................................................... 170  
  2.6  Xiao Gang's "Writing Should Be Unrestrained"......................................................... 197  
Chapter 3  Xiao Gang's Yuefu Poetry ................................................................................. 215  
  3.1  Reputation for Writing Amorous Poetry .................................................................... 215  
  3.2  Xiao Gang's Yuefu Poems in Group A ...................................................................... 226  
  3.3  Xiao Gang's Yuefu Poems with Titles Originating from Southern Ballads .......... 240  
  3.4  Xiao Gang's Yuefu Poems in Group B ...................................................................... 262
3.5 Significance of Xiao Gang's Writing *Yuefu* Poetry .......................................................... 291

Chapter 4 Conclusion ........................................................................................................ 296

Tables .................................................................................................................................... 305

Bibliography ......................................................................................................................... 317

Appendix: Xu Chi’s Absence from the *Yutai xinyong* .......................................................... 335
List of Tables

Table 1: Xu Ling's Career between 531 and 541 ............................................................ 305

Table 2: Xu Ling's Career in Case of the Department of Learning and Virtue was Established after 535 ................................................................. 306

Table 3: Statistics of Xiao Gang's Extant Poems (based on Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nan-bei Chao shi) ................................................................. 306

Table 4: Xiao Gang's Yuefu Poems in Yuefu shiji .......................................................... 307

Table 5: Emperor Wu's Sons and Their Mothers ......................................................... 316
# List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Author/Compilers</th>
<th>Publisher and Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Bei shi</td>
<td>Li Yanshou</td>
<td>Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HS</td>
<td>Han shu</td>
<td>Ban Gu</td>
<td>Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LQL</td>
<td>Lu Qinli</td>
<td>Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nan-bei Chao shi</td>
<td>Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSJZS</td>
<td>Shisan jing zhushu</td>
<td>Ruan Yuan, Yangzhou: Jiangsu Guangling guji keyinshe, 1995.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YKJ</td>
<td>Yan Kejun</td>
<td>Quan shanggu sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen</td>
<td>Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1958.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Introduction

After the brief reunification of the Western Jin Dynasty (265-316), China entered a period of division that had lasted 272 years (317-589). The Liang Dynasty (502-557) alone experienced almost fifty-years of peace under the reign of Xiao Yan 蕭衍 (464-549, r. 502-549), known posthumously as Emperor Wu of Liang, in the south.

The Southern Dynasties (420-589) inherited an aristocratic system passed down from the previous Wei (220-265) and Jin Dynasties (265-420). In this system, power shifts occurred within an exclusive and privileged circle, and members of the top-ranking aristocratic families were promised important official positions. They arranged marriages within this circle to protect their privileges, making it difficult for others, including the low-rank gentry class (hanmen 寒門), to obtain upward social mobility. Such an easy and comfortable life inevitably let to decadence¹ and it gradually weakened the capacity and power of the aristocracy. This provided opportunities for the military commanders who were from the lower gentry class to seize power and eventually usurp the crown. The Xiao clan of Lanling, which provided the royal families of the Qi and Liang

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¹ The term "decadence" or "decadent" used in this dissertation is based upon a definition indicating the "behaviour, attitudes, etc. which show a fall in standards, especially moral ones, and an interest in pleasure and enjoyment rather than more serious things." (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (Oxford University Press 2011), http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/dictionary/decadence). The moral standard in this case refers to the Confucian orthodoxy established during the Han Dynasty (202 B.C.-220), and the Confucian scholars mentioned in this dissertation refer to those who follow this tradition.
dynasties, rose to prominence in this manner. Emperor Wu of Liang, an outstanding member of this clan, was the one who made the Liang Dynasty the high point of the entire era of division.

Although Emperor Wu rose to power from a military background, he was recognized for his broad knowledge, which crossed the boundaries of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. He was viewed as a representative figure that was as cultivated as the Six Dynasties gentry.\(^2\) Even his hostile rival in the north, Gao Huan 高歡 (496-547), acknowledged that in the mind of the northern gentry, legitimacy rested in the south with Emperor Wu.\(^3\) If his wise military stratagems and keen political sense helped his rise to the throne, then his broad knowledge of literature, religion and arts played an important role in his ruling the empire. Despite the unstable relationship with the north, Emperor Wu was able to create a relatively tolerant and peaceful political environment within his empire, especially in the first half of his reign. He re-established Confucian schools for the younger generations and organized projects of compiling and annotating Confucian classics, the Buddhist canon and Daoist scriptures. At the same time, literary activities became more frequent than ever and literary talent was a bridge to official opportunities. In both the capital and regions, literary


\(^3\) "There is an old man of Wu at the east of the Yangtze River called Xiao Yan, who wholeheartedly works on regulations and etiquette. Gentlemen in the Central Plain look towards him and consider that the legitimacy rests in the south with him." 江東復有一吳兒老翁蕭衍者，專事衣冠禮樂，中原士大夫望之以為正朔所在. See Li Baiyao 李百藥, *Bei Qi shu 北齊書*, "Du Bi" 杜弼, juan 24 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 347. Unless otherwise noted, all translations in this dissertation are my own, whether the originals are in Chinese or in Japanese.
salons were patronized by the emperor's sons. Competitions of writing poetry took place at palace banquets and on diplomatic occasions. In line with the aristocratic fads, ornate, sensitive and allusive descriptions were admired in writings more than before. Tonal device, first proposed in the previous dynasty, were zealously practiced. Finally, aestheticism and novelty became the literati's ultimate pursuit, and literary criticism started to blossom. In addition to the achievements occurring in literature, public lectures on Daoist doctrines and grand Buddhist events were held officially and frequently by Emperor Wu and his sons. Painting, calligraphy, game playing, music, and singing and dancing were popular with the upper class. As a result, the aristocracy enjoyed a hedonistic life with little concern for politics. 4

Emperor Wu's long peaceful reign allowed religion and literature to flourish, a rare achievement in the history of China. However, his longevity also led to the fall of the dynasty he founded. He was criticized for appeasing his close family members who committed evil deeds. His dependence on a certain flattering courtier led him to make misjudgments in his old age, and it was this relationship, some claim, that was responsible for the chaos that occurred at the end of his reign.

4 Mori Mikisaburō observes that Emperor Wu of Liang conducted the grandest project of compiling the annotation on Confucian rituals, which took more than twenty years to finish and included 1,176 juan. However, only Zhou li 周禮 (The Zhou Rituals) was given a cold shoulder. Since Zhou li is mainly about a state's official system, Mori remarks that, the disesteem indicates the southern gentry's indifference to the state and politics. See Mori Mikisaburō, Rikuchō shitaifu no seishin 六朝士大夫の精神 (Kyoto: Dōhō sha shuppan, 1986), 117.
In his last years, his desire for the reunification of the south and north lured him to accept a cunning surrender from the north. Hou Jing 侯景 (d. 552), who starved the emperor to death after occupying the capital, would eventually leave the Liang fatally damaged. The Liang Dynasty eked out a meagre existence for about eight more years after the emperor's death until the Chen Dynasty (557-589) usurped the throne from Emperor Wu's grandson.

Xiao Gang 蕭綱 (503-551), known posthumously as Emperor Jianwen of Liang, was born as Emperor Wu's third son in the second year after the Liang Dynasty was established. He lived almost his entire life under Emperor Wu's reign except the last two years as a puppet emperor after the emperor's death. In every aspect, Xiao Gang's life was deeply connected with Emperor Wu. To Xiao Gang, Emperor Wu was not only the emperor and a father but also a role model for his life.

Xiao Gang became Crown Prince upon the death of his older brother, Xiao Tong, in 531. Strongly influenced by his tutor Xu Chi 徐摛 (474-551), he felt passionate about poetic writing from the age of seven. Before becoming a crown prince, he served as a governor in multiple regions. He launched a successful military campaign against the northern regime, and the instructions he issued at Yongzhou demonstrate his sympathy for local people and his efforts to make changes in a corrupted and idle officialdom. After he became a Crown Prince, he was fully

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5 The ages of individuals in this dissertation follow the traditional manner of the Chinese nominal age (sui 壽), which counts the first year of birth as one year old, but using the English wording for ages.
aware of his duties despite the difficulties of carrying out his ideas due to the adverse political environment in the central government. He was a filial son and acted as a mediator in order to keep the family in harmony. In battles against the rebel Hou Jing, he did his best to support his generals and stood firmly with his soldiers. In his last days, he bore insults in order to survive. But when he realized that he was going to be murdered, he showed no fear but drank wine and enjoyed himself until the last moment. He was murdered at the age of forty-nine. As a Crown Prince, he failed to suppress the rebellion and the failure caused his own death and brought a fatal damage to the Liang Dynasty. However, he was regarded as a distinguished man by contemporary historians. In contrast to this, generations of Confucian historians blame his Palace Style poetry as causing the fall of the Liang because of its "decadence" and lack of morality.

Palace Style poetry has been criticized for its ornate diction and amorous themes, and *Yutai xinyong* (New Songs from a Jade Terrace) has been viewed as its representative anthology for long because it collects poems on the themes of this sort. Since many of Xiao Gang's poems are contained in this anthology and the compiler Xu Ling 徐陵 (507-583) was Xu Chi's son, Xiao is widely believed to be the patron behind the project for the purposes of propagating and amplifying his Palace Style poetry.

Soon after Xiao Gang was appointed Crown Prince, the poetic style practiced in his Eastern Palace was named the "Palace Style" and was used to attack him by those who did not want to see
him become a crown prince. Some researchers believe that Xu Chi was transferred away from the capital by Emperor Wu in order to maintain a balance between Xiao and his opponents.⁶ Kōzen Hiroshi speculates that 534 was the year when Yutai xinyong was compiled,⁷ and I examined this theory by looking into Xu Ling's whereabouts around that time. Although Xu Ling's biography in the historical sources does not provide a clear timeline of his career year by year, I was able to deduce the approximate year he was suspended from the position of Magistrate of Shangyu District by taking Liu Xiaoyi's 劉孝儀 (Liu Qian's 劉潛 courtesy name, 484-550) career as reference, because the years when Liu was at the position of Censor-in-Chief can be identified. Based on this, Xu Ling would still have been at the capital working for the Department of State Affairs as Vice Minister of Revenue in and around 534, and thereby it would have been possible for him to work on the project of compilation for Xiao Gang. In his "Preface to the Yutai xinyong", Xu Ling indicates that this anthology is to be circulated between people living in the palace and treasured by them just like the secret Daoist esoterica. I believe that Yutai xinyong was compiled for private use in Xiao Gang's household with Xiao's approval. Furthermore, 534 was also the year Xu Chi completed his 3-year official term in Xin'an and returned to serve Xiao Gang again in the Eastern Palace. The

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timing of Xu Chi's return and the private nature of the compilation of *Yutai xinyong* indicate the end of Xiao and Xu's confinement brought about by those who were against Xiao and the Palace Style poetry. 8

The constitution of poets in the *Yutai xinyong* reflects that poems with amorous themes by learned poets did not start from Xiao Gang and his fellow Palace Style poets. What they have done was a continuation and a development of this tradition. In his "Preface to the *Yutai xinyong*", Xu Ling states that amorous songs may be very different from orthodox poems, but are not necessarily unacceptable because in fact, amorous songs are equal to those in *The Book of Odes* 詩經. Xiao Gang and his fellow poets' innovative poetic writings contributed to the widely spread and long-lasting popularity of their poetic style.

I analyzed Xiao Gang's thought on literature based on a few surviving pieces of his literary works. Some researchers believe that his "Letter to Prince of Xiangdong" was written to attack Xie Lingyun's 謝靈運 (Xie Gongyi's 謝公義 courtesy name, 385-433) and Pei Ziyue's 裴子野 (469-530) writing styles. However, the strengths and the weaknesses of Xie's and Pei's styles had become common knowledge in the Liang times, and Xiao Gang's intention was not to attack them. In this letter, he expresses his frustration over the popular poetry style in the capital, which unsuccessfully

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8 See discussions in Appendix.
imitated Xie's and Pei's styles. Xiao disagrees with the verbose capital style that contains no beauty, and in the genre of poetry, he prefers refined writings with exquisite expressions. I maintain that in his letter, Xiao advocates that men of letters should write in accordance with the genres they choose and write in a proper way.

The term "fangdang 放蕩" in Xiao Gang's "Letter Admonishing Daxin, the Duke of Dangyang" has often been used as evidence to support the claim that Xiao's writing is "decadent". However, although the term contained the meaning of "debauchery" as it does in modern Chinese, Dang Shu Leung maintains that the term should be interpreted in a contemporary linguistic context. Namely, when "fangdang" was used to apply to literature, "unrestrained" writing indicated to compose without following the rules of writing. Dang's remark leads to a new interpretation of this letter. That is, in this letter, Xiao Gang expresses his expectations to his son Daxin, a boy in his early teenage, to grow up as an erudite gentleman with proper conduct by following the teachings of Confucius, while as a man of letters, writing in an unrestrained manner so he can surpass the masters as Xiao Zixian 蕭子顯 (ca. 487-537) had remarked. Xiao Zixian said: "In the case of writing, the most troublesome aspects are mediocrity and oldness. If there is nothing new and unique (xinbian 新變), it is impossible to surpass the masters."

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The term "xinbian" that Xiao Zixian used is also found in the same context relating to the innovative Yongming 永明 style that employed tonal prosody, and Xu Chi's distinctive poetic writing. I analyzed the structure of the phrases that contain both of these characters, and concluded that this term is very likely an abbreviation of the terms indicating "new sounds and variant tunes (xinsheng bianqu 新聲變曲)" and "new poems and variant sounds (xinshi biansheng 新詩變聲)".

The two characters meaning "new" ("xin 新") and "variant" ("bian 變") in these terms were combined and formed the term "xinbian". Describing the common nature of the various artistic works that is "new and unique", "xinbian " is rendered as a noun meaning "innovation" in those historical entries.

There are 284 poems attributed to Xiao Gang in Lu Qinli's Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nan-bei Chao shi. Among them, 88 are compiled under the category of yuefu (Music Bureau poetry) and 196 are called shi (poem). As a poetic genre that has a tradition of writing to recurring titles, yuefu poetry is an effective instrument for exploring the originality in Xiao Gang's poetic writings. To understand how Xiao Gang pursued new and unique poetic writing, I examined his yuefu poems in the light of comparison with those written previous to his times with the same titles. In addition, I analyzed the distribution of his yuefu titles in Guo Maoqian's 郭茂倩 (1041-1099) categories because it helps to reveal the purposes of his writing in this genre.
After examining Xiao Gang's yuefu poems contained in Guo Maoqian's *Yuefu shiji* （樂府詩集）(*Anthology of Music Bureau Poetry*), an anthology compiled during the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127), I discovered that the yuefu titles Xiao Gang wrote to include old and new. Xiao Gang also wrote lyrics based on the southern ballads that originated from the Yangtze River area. No matter what kind of the yuefu titles Xiao Gang wrote to, the themes were always written in accordance with the actual meanings of their titles. Moreover, Xiao Gang's yuefu poems are broadly distributed among the categories in the *Yuefu shiji*. These factors hint a possible cause of the heated yuefu composition during that time. That is, it was probably for reviving and redeveloping the lost yuefu tradition, which flourished during the Han Dynasty. The overwhelming quantity of citations and literary allusions from the history of the Han Dynasty in Xiao Gang and his contemporaries' yuefu poems attest their longing for that golden age. Their enthusiasm of writing yuefu poetry, as well as for literature as a whole, was a part of Emperor Wu's ambition of rebuilding a strong Chinese empire just like the Han. It was also one way of declaring that the regime in the south was the genuine successor of Chinese civilization, not the north.

Themes involving females are common in folk songs. Xiao Gang wrote yuefu poems only to follow the thematic tradition of folk songs and in accordance with the meanings of the titles. Xiao Gang's reverence for the meaning of titles did not hinder him from writing freely and creatively in his own style. He adopted elements from old yuefu lyrics in his own poetic writings and used them
to enrich the contents and increase layers in his own works. As a learned poet, Xiao Gang adroitly used his knowledge of history to write his yuefu poems. Despite being a well educated man of letters, Xiao Gang showed no resistance to adopting colloquial expressions in his yuefu writing, and his innovative writing can also be found in other genres of his literary writings.

Xiao Gang was a literatus with broad and profound learning in religion, history and various literary genres. He was also a filial son, a caring brother and a sympathetic governor. As a well-educated poet, Xiao is capable of using his own style to rewrite all kinds of yuefu topics, introducing elegant language and elaborate syntax. Wang Wen-Chin remarks that Xiao Gang and his fellow Palace Style poets added a family's touch on their frontier poetry and this style initiated the basic formula of the frontier poetry during the Tang Dynasty. Furthermore, they enthusiastically practiced the newly discovered tonal technique and this contributed to the blossoming of the Regulated Poetry taking place in the Tang Dynasty as well. His poetic writings were not the cause of the fall of the Liang. On the contrary, his yuefu compositions may even have played a politically motivated and ambitious role to rebuild a powerful empire.

This dissertation sheds light on Xiao Gang's life and literature. It is an initial attempt to reconsider and rethink Chinese literature of the Six Dynasties from a perspective that privileges a re-examination of primary sources within a historical context.
Chapter 1  Xiao Gang's Life

1.1  Xiao Gang and His Family

Emperor Wu of Liang, Xiao Yan, had eight sons and at least nine daughters. His first wife, Xi Hui (468-499), was the daughter of Princess Xunyang, a daughter of Emperor Wen of Song (Liu Yilong, 407-453). She had been famed as a clever lady ever since her childhood, when she showed literary talent and skill at female duties. She married Xiao Yan at the end of the Jianyuan Era (482) of the Qi Dynasty, giving birth to three daughters, Princess Yongxing named Yuyao, Princess Yongshi named Yuwan, and Princess Yongkang named Yuhuan. She died in the eighth month of the first year of the Yongyuan Era (August or September 499) at the age of thirty-two when Xiao Yan was a

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1 See Table 5 for Emperor Wu's sons and their mothers. For detailed information regarding the origin of the Xiao clan and Emperor Wu's family, see Cao Daoheng's Lanling Xiao shi yu Nanchao wenxue (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004).

2 Besides Princess Yongxing, Princess Yongshi, and Princess Yongkang, who were born to the first wife Xi Hui, Emperor Wu also had Princess Fuyang, Princess Anji, Princess Changcheng, Princess Yongjia, Princess Lin'an, and Princess Xin'an, who were born to subsequent wives.

3 LS, "Gaozu Xi Huanghou" 高祖郗皇后, juan 7, 157.

4 The Chinese lunar calendar is generally used to indicate dates in this dissertation, and the years are converted to the Western calendar in the parentheses following behind.
Regional Inspector of Yongzhou. She was given the posthumous title of Empress De (virtue) after Xiao Yan ascended the throne.

One year before Xi Hui's death, Xiao Yan took a fourteen-year-old concubine named Ding Lingguang 丁令光 (485-526) as his second wife. Although she was treated harshly by the jealous Xi Hui, Ding reportedly maintained a humble and respectful attitude towards Xi. 6 Ding gave birth to Xiao Yan's first son Xiao Tong 蕭統 (b. 501), third son Xiao Gang (b. 503) and fifth son Xiao Xu 蕭續 (b. 506). 7 She was given the title of Honoured Consort (Guipin 貴嬪) after Emperor Wu ascended the throne. Ding was described as a lady with compassion and benevolence. She lived a

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5 LS, "Gaozu Xi Huanghou" 高祖郗皇后, juan 7, 157. Cao Daoheng suspects Xi Hui committed suicide by drowning herself in a well because of feeling anger and jealousy over Xiao Yan's taking Ding Lingguang as his concubine. See Cao Daoheng 曹道衡, Lanling Xiao shi yu Nanchao wenxue, 127.

6 NS, "Houfei xia" 后妃下, juan 12, 339.

7 Xiao Xu's 蕭續 year of birth is not clearly recorded. According to NS (juan 53, 1318-1321), the noble title of Prince of Luling was conferred on him one year later than his older brother Xiao Ji 蕭績 in the eighth year of the Tianjian Era (509). Yet, LS (juan 23) indicates Xiao Xu and Xiao Ji 蕭績 were given their titles in the same year (Ibid., 427 and 430). For reference, Xiao Zong and Xiao Gang were one year apart in age and their titles of nobility were given in different years; on the other hand, Xiao Yi and Xiao Ji 蕭紀 were the same age and their titles were given in the same year. If both Xiao Ji 蕭績 and Xiao Xu 蕭續 received their titles in the same year as LS states, they should be considered the same age. In that case, since Xiao Ji's 蕭績 birth year is the fourth year of the Tianjian Era (505), Xiao Xu would be born in 505 as well. However, according to LS, Xiao Xu was summoned to the capital for the position of General of Xuan yi in command of the garrison at Shitou in the first year of the Putong 普通 Era (520) (LS, juan 23, 431). Wu Guangxing 吳光興 therefore remarks that, according to the Liang's convention of a prince's coming-of-age ceremony 冠禮, Xiao Xu should have turned 15 that year. Wu argues that the transfer can be considered to be for the purpose of making the ceremony for Xiao Xu (Wu Guangxing, Xiao Gang Xiao Yi niangpu 蕭綱蕭繹年譜 (Beijing: Shehui kexue chubanshe, 2006), 259). In this case, Xiao Xu's birth year should be 506, one year later than Xiao Ji's 蕭績. LS's two records expose the confusion and contradiction regarding Xiao Xu's birth year. NS's record and Wu's assertion will be followed here.
humble life style and converted to Buddhism, faithfully following Emperor Wu. She died in the seventh year of the Putong 普通 Era (526) at the age of forty-two. Although Lady Ding occupied the highest status in the inner palace, she was never given the title of Empress. She was posthumously awarded the title Queen Mother by her second son Xiao Gang after he ascended the throne. Her first son Xiao Tong, as Emperor Wu's first biological son, was appointed Crown Prince in the first year of the Tianjian 天監 Era (502). Both Xiao Tong and Lady Ding's third son Xiao Xu died of natural causes.

Emperor Wu's second son Xiao Zong 蕭綜 was the son of Lady of Chaste Beauty Wu (吳淑媛). He was born in the first year of the Tianjian Era (502). Lady Wu was the previous Qi emperor's concubine. Being born seven months after his mother was married by Emperor Wu, Xiao Zong was told by his mother later that he was not Emperor Wu's biological son. Xiao Zong defected to the Northern Wei in the sixth year of the Putong Era (525) when he was twenty-four years old and never returned. He died at the age of thirty-one. Emperor Wu's fourth son Xiao Ji 蕭績, sixth son

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8 NS, "Houfei xia" 后妃下, juan 12, 340.

9 Xiaofei Tian states that Xiao Zong's death was in 529 or 530, but this claim needs further investigation. According to LS (juan 55, 824), Xiao Zong died at the age of 49 in the second year of the Datong 大通 Era (528). If that is true, Xiao would have been born before the Liang Dynasty was established. WS indicates that Xiao was 31 years old when he died of illness (WS, "Xiao Baoyin" 蕭寶寅, juan 59, 1326). Since Xiao Zong died after Xiao Baoyin's execution and Xiao Baoyin died in the third year of the Yong'an Era (530) (WS, juan 59, 1324.), Xiao Zong's year of death should be after 530. Since Emperor Wu of Liang usurped the throne in the third month of the first year of the Tianjian 天監 Era (LS, juan 1, 25), and Xiao Zong was born seven months after his mother was married by the emperor (LS, juan 55,
Xiao Lun 蕭綸, seventh son Xiao Yi 蕭繹 and eighth son Xiao Ji 蕭紀 were born to different concubines. The fourth son Xiao Ji 續 died at the age of twenty-five (529) because of illness. Xiao Lun was forced to run for his life during the chaos of Hou Jing's rebellion because Xiao Yi was chasing him. He was killed by the military forces of Western Wei in the second year of Dabao 大寶 Era (551) at the age of forty-four. The eighth son Xiao Ji 紀 was killed by his brother Xiao Yi in 553, in a battle for the throne after the Hou Jing rebellion was suppressed. Xiao Yi, known as Emperor Yuanxiao (r. 552-554), was killed one year after his capital Jiangling was occupied by

823), Xiao Zong must have been born around or after the tenth month of the year 502. If Xiao Zong indeed died at the age of 31, then the year of his death would be 532 (the fourth year of the Zhong-Datong 中大通 Era in Liang's calendar). However, WS also indicates that Xiao Zong's coffin was taken to Luoyang at the end of the Putai 普泰 Era of the Northern Wei (普泰末，敕迎其喪至洛。) (WS, juan 59, 1326), which was around the tenth month of the Chinese lunar calendar (BS, juan 5, 169) in 531. In this case, he would have died at the age of 30 and very close to his birthday. In the Liang's calendar, this is the third year of the Zhong-Datong 中大通 Era. WS's calculation seems more plausible despite the minor confusion. For Xiaofei Tian's claim, see her Beacon Fire and Shooting Star, 262.

10 Both LS ("Gaozu san wang" 高祖三王, juan 29, 431 and 825; "Yuan Di" 元帝, juan 5, 113.) and NS ("Liang Wu Di zhuzi" 梁武帝諸子, juan 53, 1322 and 1328; "Yuan Di Yi" 元帝繹, juan 8, 234.) indicate that noble titles were conferred on Emperor Wu's youngest three sons in the same year — the thirteenth year of the Tianjian Era (514). Xiao Lun was very likely the same age as Xiao Yi and Xiao Ji 紀.

11 According to LS, Xiao Lun's age of death was 33 in 551 (LS, "Gaozu san wang" 高祖三王, juan 29, 435-436). Note 19 in LS (juan 29, 440) introduces Qian Daxin's 錢大昕 argument that claims the age of Xiao Lun's death in LS should be an error. Qian remarks that in 551, thirty-eight years had passed since Xiao's first conferment took place in 514. Qian speculates Xiao's age in 551 should be 44 or 45. Since Xiao Lun's receipt of his noble title took place in the same year with Xiao Yi and Xiao Ji 紀, Xiao Lun's age at the time of his death is very likely to be 44. See Qian Daxin's argument in his Nian'er shi kaoyi 廿二史考異, v. 9, "Liang shu" 梁書, juan 26, , 11, series of Shixue congshu 史學叢書, v. 25, in Baibu congshu jicheng 部百叢書集成, v. 86, ed. Yan Yiping 嚴一萍 (Taipei: Yiwén yínshuguān, 1964).

12 According to LS, Xiao Ji 蕭紀 died at the age of 46 ("Wuling Wang Ji" 武陵王紀, juan 55, 828).
the invaders of the Western Wei.  

His ephemeral reign only lasted about two years, as was the case with the reign of his brother Xiao Gang.

Xiao Gang, known as Emperor Jianwen (r. 550-551), was born in the Xianyang Palace 顯陽殿 on the twenty-eighth day of the tenth month in the second year of the Tianjian Era \(^{14}\) (December 2, 503). He was portrayed favourably in his biography compiled by Yao Cha 姚察 (533-606) and Yao's son Yao Silian 姚思廉 (557-637):\(^{15}\)

Taizong (Xiao Gang) was perspicacious since a tender age. His comprehension excelled others. He had already written literary works at the age of six. Gaozu (Emperor Wu) was stunned by his early achievements and would not believe them. Thereupon he interviewed [Xiao Gang] face-to-face. The diction of [Xiao Gang's writing] was quite beautiful. Gaozu sighed: "This son is the Dong'e [Cao Zhi\(^ {17}\)] of my family." He grew to be dignified and distinguished, displaying neither anger nor pleasure. His cheeks and jaw were square-shaped and ample; his beard and hair were like a painting. When casting a glance sideways, his eyes illuminated others.

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\(^{13}\) LS, "Yuan Di" 元帝, *juan* 5, 135.

\(^{14}\) LS, "Jianwen Di" 簡文帝, *juan* 4, 103.

\(^{15}\) At the age of thirteen, Yao Cha was invited to Xiao Gang's literary salon in Xiao's residence, the Xuanyou Hall in the Eastern Palace. The Confucian scholars in Xiao's salon admired Yao's literary endowment and Yao was treated more courteously by Xiao after Xiao ascended the throne. See NS, "Yao Cha" 姚察, *juan* 69, 1689.


\(^{17}\) Cao Zhi 曹植 (192-232) was Cao Cao's 曹操 (155-220) third son and was famous for his outstanding literary talent.
In the same biography, Xiao Gang was described as a fast learner who "reads ten lines at a time" (讀書十行俱下) and who had an outstanding memory. He "took no time to compose literary writings and rhapsodies," (篇章辭賦，操筆立成。) and also "understood Confucian books comprehensively and spoke about arcane ideas well." (博綜儒書，善言玄理。)

Xiao Gang was a handsome man with outstanding qualities even from an early age. However, he was not the only splendid son in his family. For Xiao Tong, known as Crown Prince Zhaoming, is also described as being "born perspicacious." (生而聰叡) He was also of handsome appearance and behaved properly, reading several lines at a time and remembering all that he saw. He would "compose more than ten rhyming couplets in one poem whenever he attended banquets or farewell parties (每遊宴祖道，賦詩至十數韻)." Sometimes when Emperor Wu ordered him to compose verse with difficult rhymes, he gave it a thought then accomplished the piece in no time.

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19 Ibid.
20 Much research has been done on Xiao Tong, especially on topics related to the renowned anthology called Wen xuan 文選. The most recent research in English is by Ping Wang in her "Culture and Literature in an Early Medieval Chinese Court: The Writings and Literary Thought of Xiao Tong (501-531)" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2006), http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/docview/304968944; or her newly released book The Age of Courtly Writing: Wen xuan Compiler Xiao Tong (501-531) and His Circle, in Sinica Leidensia, v. 106 (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012).
21 LS, "Zhaoming Taizi" 昭明太子, juan 8, 165.
22 Ibid., 166.
without making any changes. In addition, Crown Prince Zhaoming was "gentle and tolerant," and "would not display happiness and displeasure on his face." (性寬和容眾，喜慍不形於色。) Xiao Lun, the sixth son of Emperor Wu, was "clever from an early age. He was erudite and good at composing literary writings, especially letters." (少聰穎，博學善屬文，尤工尺牘。) Xiao Yi, the seventh son of Emperor Wu, was "clever and handsome, and naturally gifted." (聰悟俊朗，天才英發。) In response to Emperor Wu's request, he surprised courtiers by reciting the "Qu li 曲禮" in The Record of Rituals when he was five years old. After growing up, he was fond of learning, comprehensively reading various books. The Liang shu states: "As soon as his writing brush touched the paper, he completed an essay; once he started to talk, he made a speech. His quick wit and wisdom were preeminent at that time." Xiao Ji, the youngest son of Emperor Wu, was "gentle and tolerant when he was young" and "would not display happiness and displeasure on his face." In addition, he "studied diligently and had literary talent." The second son Xiao Zong was also talented, and like his step brothers, he was good at literary writing as well. The fourth son

23 Ibid., 166.
24 Ibid., 167.
25 NS, "Liang Wu Di zhuzi" 梁武帝諸子, juan 54, 1322.
26 LS, "Yuan Di" 元帝, juan 5, 135.
27 Ibid.
28 既長好學，博總群書，下筆成章，出言為論，才辯敏速，冠絕一時。Ibid.
29 少而寬和，喜怒不形於色，勤學有文才。See NS, "Liang Wu Di zhuzi" 梁武帝諸子, juan 53, 1328.
30 及長有才學，善屬文。Ibid., 1316.
Xiao Ji, who died young, was so smart that he was able to point out a falsification his subordinate made when he was only seven years old.\textsuperscript{31} In contrast to the brothers mentioned above, the fifth son Xiao Xu was the one who pleased Emperor Wu with his outstanding ability in martial arts. He was compared to Cao Cao's second son Cao Zhang (d. 223), who was famous for his military exploits, by his father Emperor Wu.

Xiao Gang married his first wife, Wang Lingbin (505-549), in the eleventh year of the Tianjian Era (512),\textsuperscript{32} when he was 10 years old. Wang Lingbin was from one of the two most eminent aristocratic families in the Six Dynasties. Her grandfather Wang Jian (452-489) was a representative figure of the Wang clan who had occupied important positions in the previous Song and Qi dynasties. In Emperor Wu's early career as a guard in the military service, Wang Jian was impressed by him right after their first meeting and proposed to the emperor to promote him to the position of Subordinate in Residence Registration 户曹屬. He told He Xian 何憲 (n.d.) of Lu Jiang that the young Xiao Yan (who later became Emperor Wu) would become Palace Attendant in his thirties, and after that, would be noble beyond description.\textsuperscript{33} This anecdote shows Wang Jian's foresight about Xiao Yan's future and also reveals the relationship between Wang

\textsuperscript{31} LS, "Gaozu san wang" 高祖三王, \textit{juan} 29, 427-428.
\textsuperscript{32} LS, "Taizong Wang Huanghou" 太宗王皇后, \textit{juan} 7, 158.
\textsuperscript{33} NS, "Liang benji" 梁本紀, \textit{juan} 6, 168.
Lingbin's family and Emperor Wu. Being born in an eminent aristocratic family, Wang Lingbin was portrayed as "genial and virtuous" (柔明淑德). She gave birth to Xiao Gang's first son Xiao Daqi 大器 (d. 551), known posthumously as the Ill-fated Crown Prince 哀太子, in the fourth year of the Putong Era (523) when Xiao Gang was twenty-one years old. She next gave birth to Prince Nanjun of Dalian 大連 (527-551), and Princess Changshan of Miaolüe 妙箬 (n.d.). She was given the title Crown Princess when Xiao Gang became Crown Prince in the third year of the Zhong-Datong 中大通 Era (531). She died in the third year of the Taiqing 太清 Era (549) before the rebel Hou Jing occupied the capital Jiankang. She was forty-five years old, and would posthumously be given the title Empress Jian after Xiao Gang ascended the throne. Xiao Gang had about twenty sons and at least eleven daughters.

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34 LS, "Taizong Wang Huanghou" 太宗王皇后, juan 7, 158.
35 Ibid.
36 Xiao Gang had twenty sons and seventeen of them have their names recorded in NS (juan 54, 1337). From Xiao Gang's "Grieving for Datong" ("Datong ai ci" 大同哀辭), which he wrote to grieve one of his sons who died in childhood (YKJ, 3026), we know that he had a son who died early named Datong. Datong was among the three sons who are not recorded in NS.
37 Xiao Gang's youngest daughter, who is mentioned in the historical record, is the eleventh daughter of Princess Anyang 安陽公主 who married Zhang Jiao 張交 (LS, "Zhang Mian" 張緬, juan 34, 504). Besides Princess Anyang and the ninth daughter Princess Haiyan 海鹽公主, only Princess Liyang 津陽公主, Princess Changshan (named Miaolüe 長山公主, Prince Nansha 南沙公主 and Princess Yuyao 餘姚公主 are mentioned without indication of their order of birth. In Qian Yong's 錢泳 (1759-1884) Lüyuan conghua 履園叢話, one of Xiao Gang's daughters named Miaoyan 妙嚴 was mentioned. It is not clear whether Miaoyan was one of the princesses mentioned above because her title is unknown. See Qian Yong 錢泳, Lüyuan conghua 履園叢話, "Conghua shijiu, Lingmu, Liang Miaoyan Gongzhu mu" 墳話十九陵墓.
1.2 Education of Emperor Wu's Children

Emperor Wu was an accomplished scholar. He understood very well what education meant to his family and his children. Emperor Wu learned from the past. Several ill-fated juvenile emperors had destroyed their ancestors' regimes in the previous dynasties, and Emperor Wu recognized that the lack of proper education was one of the crucial reasons for these disasters. In order to have his regime last as long as possible, Emperor Wu provided the best education he could think of for his children, especially for his sons. Through an examination of Xiao Yi's case, Unno Yōhei speculates about the princes' learning process and academic program. According to Unno, the princes began their learning of Confucian classics as early as the age of three. They would start from *Xiao jing* 孝經 (*The Classic of Filial Piety*) and *Lunyu* 論語 (*The Analects*), and then recite the Five Confucian Classics.38 When they entered their teenage years, they learned to speak the Luoyang dialect with standard pronunciation, studied the composition of poetry and writing of articles, and also practiced calligraphy. Their knowledge of history and the genealogy of hundreds of relatives was expected to be broad. At the same time, they were required to master proper

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38 The Five Confucian Classics include *Zhouyi* 周易 (*The Book of Changes*), *Shang shu* 尚書 (*The Book of History*), *Shi jing* 詩經 (*The Book of Odes*), *Li ji* 禮記 (*The Record of Rituals*), and *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*The Spring and Autumn Annals*).
behavior and the etiquette of genuine gentry.³⁹ For the young princes, accomplished scholars would be chosen as their learning companions who would play a role as supervisors as well. Their tasks were to give the princes instruction in their learning and behavior. When the youngest prince Xiao Ji 紀 was a governor of Eastern Yangzhou, he was said to be arrogant. Considering the previous supervisor to have been too weak to discipline the young prince, Emperor Wu summoned Jiang Ge 江革 (d. 535), an upright and outstanding scholar, to take over Xiao Ji's education. After arriving at Xiao Ji's realm, Jiang Ge's capacity and fair judgments stunned the local population. He lived on his own salary only and ate simply. He comforted commoners but frightened corrupt officials. Xiao Ji felt fear of him and began to pay respect to the new supervisor. Jiang Ge would certainly have spoken about the Shi jing (The Book of Odes) and the Shang shu (The Book of History) whenever he had meals with the young prince. From then on, the prince started to enjoy learning and became fond of literature. Emperor Wu was satisfied with Jiang Ge's achievement when he read the poems composed by Xiao Ji afterwards, and the prince grew up as Emperor Wu's favorite son.⁴⁰

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⁴⁰ LS, "Jiang Ge" 江革, juan 36, 524-525.
There are very few extant historical records about Emperor Wu's daughters' education. Beatrice Spade remarks that women gained academic proficiency from their religion and families in the Southern Dynasties. She maintains that one of the primary reasons "why the education of women received so much attention from the fourth through sixth centuries" was that women carried on the responsibility of educating children in their early ages before they reached the eligible age and level to enroll in government sponsored schools. As Spade points out, since education was used to "justify the dominant social, economic, and political position of the great families residing in the South," aristocracies "emphasized the scholarly traditions of their families to set themselves apart from others." Xiao Yi recalled that he received his early education under his mother's personal instruction, learning the *Xiao jing (The Classic of Filial Piety)*, *Lunyu (The Analects)* and *Mao shi (The Book of Odes with Mao's Commentary).* Xiao Yi's mother, Lady Ruan (477-543), was from a modest family. Before joining Emperor Wu's household, she had been taken by Xiao Yaoguang, the last emperor of the Qi Dynasty.

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42 Ibid., 17.
44 Xiao Baojuan (蕭寶卷) 483-505, the last emperor of the Qi Dynasty.
concubine. She was Emperor Wu's lady-in-waiting before giving birth to the emperor's seventh son. Xiao Yi's recollection reveals that the royal concubines in Emperor Wu's inner palace were generally educated and were capable of giving early scholarly training to their children, both princes and princesses. We are able to learn that Princess Lin'an was a lady with literary talent from the "Preface to Princess Lin'an's Collection" written by her brother Xiao Gang as well.

In the case of Xiao Gang's education, Emperor Wu asked his trusted drafter Zhou She 周捨 (469-524) to find a man who is "capable at both literature and learning, and with good reputation." Zhou She thereupon recommended his brother-in-law, Xu Chi. Xu Chi was a man who "loved learning since a tender age. When he grew up, he explored the Confucian classics and histories broadly. He was fond of writing new and unique compositions and was not be restrained by old styles." When he was thirty-eight years old, he became the seven-year-old Xiao Gang's Reader-in-Waiting accompanying the prince to his first appointment as Concurrent Controller of the garrison at Shitou (509). Except for the mourning period for his mother's death and the three

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45 LS, "Gaozu Ruan Xiurong" 高祖阮修容, juan 7, 163. See also NS, "Houfei xia" 后妃下, juan 12, 340.
46 Regarding females' involvement in the literary world and the education they received during the Southern Dynasties, see also Xiaofei Tian, Beacon Fire and Shooting Star, 190-191.
47 擢幼而好學,及長,遍覽經史,屬文好為新變,不拘舊體。See LS, "Xu Chi" 徐摛, juan 30, 446. I will discuss the meaning of "xinbian" 新變 in detail in Chapter 2.
48 According to LS, Xu Chi died in the third year of the Taiqing Era (549) at the age of seventy-eight. He died of illness after he was prohibited from seeing Xiao Gang, who was under house arrest by order of the rebel Hou Jing. See LS, "Xu Chi" 徐摛, juan 30, 448.
years he was appointed Governor of Xin'an, Xu Chi faithfully stayed beside Xiao Gang in the rest of his life. Xiao Gang later wrote in a preface: "I was an addict of poetry when I was seven and I never tired of it [even] after I grew up." (余七歳有詩癖，長而不倦。) Xu Chi's influence on Xiao Gang's literature was apparently profound and long-lasting.

In the decree for Zhou She's funeral, Emperor Wu glorified Zhou: "The principles [of his thought] embraced Arcane Learning and Confucianism, and he broadly explored literature and history." In the Southern Dynasties, it was the gentry's ideal to obtain knowledge combining Arcane Learning, Confucianism, Buddhism, literature and history in a comprehensive manner.

Xiao Gang's works reflect his achievements in scholarly learning. On Arcane Learning, he wrote the *Lao zi yi* (Exegesis of the Lao zi) and *Zhuang zi yi* (Exegesis of the Zhuang zi). He occasionally gave lectures on these topics personally. On Confucianism, he wrote the *Li dayi* (General Principles of the Rituals) and *Chunqiu fati* (Elucidation of the Meaning of the Title of the Spring and Autumn Annals). The biographies he wrote include the *Zhaoming Taizi zhuan* (Biography of Crown Prince Zhaoming) and *Zhu wang zhuan* (Biographies of Princes).

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50 義該玄儒，博窮文史. See LS, "Zhou She" 周捨, juan 25, 376.
51 Mori Mikisaburō, *Rikuchō shitaifu no seishin*, 89.
53 Ibid.
54 SS, "Jingji yi" 經籍一, juan 32, 930.
His writings contributed to literature as well. Besides his own
good-sized collection (a volume of eighty *juan*), he wrote the *Xie Ke wen jingwei* 謝客文涇渭
(*Purity and Muddiness of Xie Lingyun's Writing*) and compiled the *Zhaoming Taizi ji* 昭明太子集
(*The Collected Works of Crown Prince Zhaoming*). Xiao Gang was also a gentleman with
multifarious hobbies like other aristocrats of his time. He wrote the *Ruyi fang* 如意 方 about medical
prescriptions and the *Tanqi pu* 彈棋譜 and *Qipin* 棋品 about chess played at that time. His *Mashuo
pu* 馬槊譜 was a book about a style of horseback martial arts using lances. He seemed to have been
interested in divination (cf. his lost work *Yilin* 易林), Daoist charms (cf. his lost work *Guangming
fu* 光明符) and the Daoist theory of five elements (cf. his lost work *Zao jing* 竈經) as well. His
*Yujian* 玉簡 (*Jade Slips*) is likely to have been a collection of articles used in Daoist sacred

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55 Ibid.
56 LS, "Liang benji xia" 梁本紀下, *juan* 8, 233. Xie Ke 謝客 is Xie Lingyun's other name. "Xie Lingyun, Governor of
Linchuan. At first, Du Mingshi of Qiantang dreamt of someone entered his house at night. In that evening, Lingyun
was born in Guiji. Ten days later, Xie Yuan died. Considering the difficulties of having offspring, the Xie family sent
Lingyun to Du and asked Du to raise him. [Lingyun] returned to the capital at the age of 15. That is why he was named
'Ke'er' 客兒 (guest or stranger)." 臨川太守謝靈運。初，錢塘杜明師夜夢東南有人來入其館。是夕，即靈運生於
會稽。旬日，而謝元亡。其家以子孫难得，送靈運於杜治養之。十五方还都，故名客兒。See *Yi yuan* 异苑,"Xie Ke'er" 謝客兒, *juan* 7, in *Xuejin taoyuan* 學津討原, v. 16, Zhang Haipeng 張海鵬 ed. (Yushan: Zhang shi Zhaokuang ge, 1805), image duplicated by Shanghai
Hanfen lou and published by Shangwu yinshuguan. The name "Xie Ke" can also be found in Zhong Rong's "*Shi pin* 詩品序 (*Preface to the Gradations of Poets*)" indicating Xie Lingyun. See LS, "Zhong Rong" 鍾嶸, *juan* 49, 695.
57 YKJ, "Zhaoming Taizi ji xu" 明太子集序, 3016-3017.
59 Ibid.
ceremonies or writings with mysterious power. The one-hundred-scroll Changchun[dian] yiji 長春[殿]義記 (Record of the Discourse at the Hall of Eternal Spring) edited by him may have been "an account of astronomical discussions ... along with other esoteric subjects." Like his father, Xiao Gang was a devoted Buddhist at the same time. He was the senior editor of the large Buddhist collection Fabao lianbi 法寶連璧 (Linked Jewels from the Treasures of the Dharma), which consisted of two hundred twenty scrolls with contributions by thirty-seven scholars. It took at least five years to complete this project.

Xiao Gang did not disappoint Emperor Wu. Having the good education his father designed for him, he grew up and became a fine gentleman.

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60 Wu Guangxing suggests that Xiao Gang's Yujian was a reference book of beautiful expressions (see Xiao Gang Xiao Yi nianpu 蕭綱蕭繡年譜, 402). However, Wu's assumption may need further consideration because "yujian" 玉簡 is a terminology often seen in Daoist contents. It refers to the articles that were used in the sacred ceremonies offering sacrifices to the gods of mountains and rivers, or a kind of uncommon document with mysterious power. See Dao jiao dacidian 道教大辭典, eds. Zhongguo Dao jiao xiehui and Suzhou Dao jiao xiehui (Beijing: Huaxia chubanshe, 1994). See also Li Shuhuan 李叔還, ed., Dao jiao dacidian 道教大辭典 (Taipei: Juliu tushu gongsi, 1979).
61 Xiaofei Tian, Beacon Fire and Shooting Star, 284. It might be a book that also included astrological discussions. See Jiang Xiaoyuan 江曉原 and Niu Weixing 鈕衛星, "Tianxue shi shang de Liang Wu Di" 天學史上的梁武帝, Zhongguo wenhua 中國文化 15-16 (1997): 128-140. See also LS, "Xu Mao" 許懋, juan 40, 579; and NS, "Xu Mao, zi Heng" 許懋子亨, juan 60, 1487.
62 NS, "Liang benji xia" 梁本紀下, juan 8, 233. See also LS, "Jianwen Di" 節文帝, juan 4, 109.
63 YKJ, "Fabao lianbi xu" 法寶連璧序, 3052.
64 Wu Guangxing, Xiao Gang Xiao Yi nianpu, 401.
1.3 Xiao Gang's Career

Xiao Gang was enfeoffed as Prince of Jin'an in the fifth year of the Tianjian Era (506) at the age of four. In line with the regulations of the Liang, he started his career as a regional governor when he was seven years old. From that time on, he was transferred from one region to another until he was appointed Crown Prince after his brother Xiao Tong's death.

At the age of seven (509), he was appointed Concurrent Controller of the garrison at Shitou; at eight (510), Commander-in-Chief of the military affairs of the five regions of Northern and Southern Yanzhou, Qingzhou, Xuzhou and Yizhou, also Regional Inspector of Southern Yanzhou; at eleven (513), Governor of Danyang; at twelve (514), Commander-in-Chief of the military affairs of the seven regions of Jingzhou, Yongzhou, Liangzhou, Northern and Southern Qinzhou, Yizhou and Ningzhou, and also Regional Inspector of Jingzhou; at thirteen (515), Commander-in-Chief of the military affairs of Jiangzhou, and also Regional Inspector of Jiangzhou; at sixteen (518), Concurrent Controller of the garrison at Shitou again, also Governor of Danyang, in addition appointed Palace Attendant; at eighteen (520), Commander-in-Chief of the military affairs of the seven regions of Yizhou, Ningzhou, Yongzhou, Liangzhou, Southern and

65 The English official titles used in this dissertation are based on Charles O. Hucker's *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1985).
66 "Zhou" is translated as "region" from the Han to the Sui Dynasty in Hucker's *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, 178.
Northern Qinzhou and Shazhou, also Regional Inspector of Southern Xuzhou; at twenty-one (523), Commander-in-Chief of the military affairs of the four border regions of Yongzhou, Liangzhou, and Northern and Southern Qinzhou, the Jingling District of Yingzhou, and the Sui Commandery of Sizhou, Commander of Controlling the Man Tribe, also Regional Inspector of Yongzhou; at twenty-four (526), Commander-in-Chief of the military affairs of the three regions of Jingzhou, Yizhou and Southern Liangzhou; at twenty-eight (530), Commander-in-Chief of the military affairs of the two regions of Southern Yangzhou and Xuzhou, also Regional Inspector of Yangzhou. He was commissioned as Imperial Commissar holding the emblems of commander five times, in 510, 514, 515, 520 and 523.67

During his years as regional governor, Xiao Gang's ranks,68 which were defined by the titles of general, show his rise from the seventeenth to the top twenty-fourth rank: seventeenth rank at the age of eight (General of Xuanyi 宣毅將軍, 510), eleven (General of Xuanhui 宣惠將軍, 513), twelve (General of Xuanhui 宣惠將軍, 514), sixteen (General of Xuanhui 宣惠將軍, 518); eighteenth rank at the age of seven (General of Yunhui 雲麾將軍, 509), thirteen (General of Yunhui 雲麾將軍, 515), eighteen (General of Yunhui 雲麾將軍, 520); twentieth rank at the age of twenty-one (General of Pinxi 平西將軍, 523); twenty-first rank at the age of twenty-two (General

67 LS, "Jianwen Di" 簡文帝, juan 4, 103-104.
68 Xiao Gang's ranks are based on SS, "Zhi di ershiyi, Baiguan shang, Liang" 志第二十一百官上梁, juan 26, 736-737.
of Anbei 安北將軍, 524); and the top twenty-fourth rank at the age of twenty-eight (General of Biaoji 騃騎將軍, 530), which is one year before he became Crown Prince. 69 This is to say, Xiao Gang was conferred the title of "General of Yunhui" 雲麾將軍 ("General of Cloud Banners") three times, "General of Xuanhui" 宣惠將軍 ("General of Propagating Graciousness") three times, and once each for his other titles with the rank of general.

Xiao Gang was described in almost all the extant historical records as a man of integrity.

According to his biography, he started to handle general administrative affairs personally when he was eleven years old and experienced governing in different regions after that. When he was a Regional Inspector of Yongzhou, he launched an expedition to the north. His victory retrieved more than a thousand li of territory for Liang. 70 There are two commands Xiao Gang issued during his time in Yongzhou that have survived:

誠欲投軀決隄，曝身求雨，九伐方弘，三驅未息。役爨之憂，兵家斯急；師興之費，日用彌廣。今春流既長，艫舳爭前，轉漕相追，饋糧不闕，義存矜急，無俟多費。

〈臨雍州原減民間資教〉

I am sincerely willing to throw my body to the broken embankment and to expose my flesh to pray for rain. The expedition has just expanded; the imperial hunting is not yet held in abeyance. 72 The concern about combat supplies is the most urgent affair for military commanders. The expense of army mobilization increases every day. Now that the spring current has already risen, boats race

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69 LS, "Jianwen Di" 简文帝, juan 4, 103-104.
70 Ibid., 109.
71 YKJ, 3000. See also YWLJ, juan 50.
72 The translation here was made with reference to John Marney's Liang Chien-Wen Ti (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976), 29. The term "imperial hunting" (三驅) here can be considered as an analogy of "expedition".
forward, chasing each other from one watercourse to another. Provisions and funds for troops are ample. The principle of righteousness demands compassion for those in urgent need.73 No further contributions for the expense should be imposed [on the commoners].

"Instructions for Showing Leniency and Reducing People's Monetary Contributions in Yongzhou"

Strong men are weighed down by wearing armor. Common women labour at transporting provisions. Inferior food barely fills bellies, and [people] die in the ditches without being buried. Spring silk worms are not [enough] to warm cold bodies; the harvest is not sufficient for summer hunger. Why do they have to bear this, and in addition be plundered? To atone for [the crime of] harming others or larceny would cost one tenth of one's finance. [If] they redeem their doing from punishment by paying gold as a ransom, [the money] is used by others to embellish mansions.

"Instructions for Abolishing Corruption and Idleness in Yongzhou"

In the above commands, Xiao Gang shows his sympathy for and efforts on behalf of the commoners living in his region. He understood their hardship and its causes. The first command was to lighten their burden, while the second one attempted to make some changes in the officialdom. Xiao Gang was also a filial son. He was said to have grieved so deeply for his mother that he became emaciated. Day and night, he cried out loud without stopping, his tears moistening his mat until it rotted.75

Xiao Gang was appointed Crown Prince at the age of twenty-nine. The imperial decree was issued on the twenty-seventh day of the fifth month in the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era (June

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73 I am indebted to Xiaofei Tain for the translation of this line.
74 YKJ, 3000. See also YWLJ, juan 50.
75 在穆貴嬪憂，哀毀骨立，晝夜號泣不絕聲，所坐之席，沾濕盡爛。See LS, "Jianwen Di" 简文帝, juan 4, 109.
and the conferment ceremony took place on the seventh day of the seventh month in the same year (August 5, 531), more than two months after Crown Prince Zhaoming's death (May 7, 531). While purchasing an estate for his mother's (Honoured Consort Ding) tomb, Crown Prince Zhaoming followed a Daoist priest's advice and secretly buried a wax goose together with some other charms at the spot by the tomb to secure his position. This secret was leaked to Emperor Wu by a eunuch intending to take revenge on a rival eunuch favoured by Crown Prince Zhaoming.

Emperor Wu sent someone to look into the case and the wax goose was found. Emperor Wu was frightened by this black magic and he ordered a full investigation. Xu Mian 徐勉 (466-535), a trusted minister of the emperor, convinced the emperor not to do so and closed the case by executing the Daoist priest. Although he was left untouched, Crown Prince Zhaoming was embarrassed. Without being given a chance to vindicate himself to his father, he lived in regret and indignation from then until his death. Li Yanshou, the historian who compiled the Nan shi in the Tang Dynasty, suggests that this scandal, so-called "Goose Burying Incident" 埋鵝事件, and the

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76 初, 丁貴嬪薨, 太子遣人求得善墓地, 將斬草, 有賣地者因閹人俞三副求巿, 若得三百萬, 許以百萬與之。三副密啟武帝, 言太子所得地不如今所得地於帝吉, 帝末年多忌, 便命巿之。葬畢, 有道士善圖墓, 云 “地不利長子, 若厭伏或可申延”。乃為蠟鵝及諸物埋墓側長子位。有宮監鮑邈之、魏雅者, 二人初並為太子所愛, 邈之晚見疏於雅, 密啟武帝云: “雅為太子厭禱。”帝密遣検掘, 果得鵝等物。大驚, 將窮其事, 徐勉固諫得止, 於是唯誅道士。 See NS, "Liang Wu Di zhuzi" 梁武帝諸子, juan 53, 1312-1313.

77 由是太子終身慚憤, 不能自明。 See ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiyi" 梁紀十一, juan 155, 1512.
concern over Crown Prince Zhaoming's first son's young age led to Emperor Wu's decision to establish Xiao Gang as Crown Prince.\textsuperscript{78}

Although the authenticity of the "Goose Burying Incident" is suspected by some scholars because it is not recorded in \textit{Liang shu},\textsuperscript{79} many still take it into consideration when discussing Xiao Tong's death and the reason for Xiao Gang's establishment as the succeeding heir. While Cao Daoheng and Fu Gang conjecture that this incident did not cause damage to Emperor Wu's affection for Xiao Tong after all,\textsuperscript{80} Lin Dazhi maintains that the incident is one of the major reasons for Xiao Gang, not Xiao Tong's son, being appointed the heir. In addition to the two factors

\textsuperscript{78} "Since Huan was the first grandson, he ought to have been established as the next heir. But [Emperor Wu] was hesitant. The emperor had obtained the empire not long before. He was afraid to entrust the great undertaking to a young monarch. In addition, since he felt resentment towards [Crown Prince Zhaoming for his scandal], he had Prince Jin'an (Xiao Gang) in mind. Before he finally made his decision, the emperor had been hesitating from the first third of the fourth month to the twenty-first of the fifth month." 歐既嫡孫,次應嗣位,而遲疑未決。帝既新有天下, 恐不可以少主大業, 又以心銜故, 意在晉安王, 猶豫自四月上旬至五月二十一日方決。See NS, "Liang Wu Di zhuzi" 梁武帝諸子, \textit{juan} 53, 1312-1313. Similar to this comment, in ZZTJ, Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086) also suggests that the scandal was the cause of the abandonment of Crown Prince Zhaoming's son from the position of heir: "Crown Prince Zhaoming was kind-hearted and pious, and gained Emperor Wu's affection. [But] once stained with [the emperor's] suspicion, [Crown Prince Zhaoming] died in unhappiness. His guilt affected his offspring. He meant to seek the good but gained ill luck. His guilt affected his offspring. He meant to seek the good but gained ill luck. He was unable to clear himself. Should one not be alert?!" 以昭明太子之仁孝, 武帝之慈愛, 一染嫌疑之跡, 身以憂死, 罪及後昆, 求吉得凶, 不可湔滌, 可不戒哉! See ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiyi" 梁紀十一, \textit{juan} 155, 1512.

\textsuperscript{79} See Zhang Pu's 張溥 "Liang Zhaoming ji tici" 梁昭明集題辭, in \textit{Han Wei Liuchao bai san jia ji tici zhu} 漢魏六朝百三家集題辭注 (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1961), 209. See also Cao Daoheng 曹道衡 and Fu Gang 傅剛, \textit{Xiao Tong pingzhuan} 蕭統評傳, in \textit{Zhongguo sixiangjia pingzhuan congshu} 中國思想家評傳叢書, Kuang Yaming 匡亞明 ed. (Nanjing: Nanjing Daxue chubanshe, 2001), 84.

\textsuperscript{80} Cao Daoheng 曹道衡 and Fu Gang 傅剛, \textit{Xiao Tong pingzhuan} 蕭統評傳, 85. Ping Wang agrees with this opinion in her "Culture and Literature in an Early Medieval Chinese Court," 40. See also Wang's \textit{The Age of Courtly Writing}, 49.
mentioned by Li Yanshou, Lin suspects that Emperor Wu might have lost confidence in Xiao Tong's capability to become a future emperor before the incident.  

After Crown Prince Zhaoming's death, Xiao Gang became the oldest son, and he was born of the same mother as Crown Prince Zhaoming. Noting that the "8,000" households enfeoffed to Xiao Gang "might be a mis-transcription of '2,000'," John Marney in addition uses this as one of the significant pieces of evidence to remark that Xiao Gang's appointment was also because "from all appearances he was Emperor Wu's favourite." However, the 8,000 households of appanage enfeoffed to Xiao Gang with noble title, Prince of Jin'an, is not conclusive proof of his being Emperor Wu's favourite son. If the "8,000" was indeed a mis-transcription, Xiao Gang's appanage would be the same as his brothers'. Wu Guangxing remarks that according to the Nan shi, the decree issued in the first year of the Tianjian Era (502) indicates that, in the case of imperial brothers and imperial sons being conferred with a title of nobility, the limit of appanage should be 2,000 households. Xiao Gang's "8,000 households" is markedly in contrast with this decree.

81 Lin Dazhi 林大志, Si Xiao yanjiu: Yi wenxue wei zhongxin 四蕭研究——以文學為中心 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007), 51.
82 John Marney, Liang Chien-wen Ti, 177.
83 Ibid., 49.
84 Wu Guangxing, Xiao Gang Xiao Yi nianpu, 30-31. According to NS, "Imperial brothers and sons are appointed governors of commanderies, and are enfeoffed with 2,000 households." 皇弟、皇子封郡王，二千戶。See NS, "Wu Di shang" 武帝上, juan 6, 184. Moreover, note 14 in NS, juan 13 (page 1335) indicates that according to Cefu yuangui 冊府元龜 ('Fengjian san' 封建三, juan 264.), from Xiao Hong 蕭宏 to Xiao Dayuan 蕭大圜, twenty-two male imperial
Emperor Wu was known as a monarch who valued traditions and regulations. As we will see later in the case of Xiao Ji's first appointment as a governor of the important Yangzhou, Emperor Wu would make a special presentation, giving the reasons for his atypical decision. Yet, in Xiao Gang's above case, no such entry is found in the extant historical records.

Indeed, Emperor Wu is known for appeasing his family members when they broke the law. One struggles in particular to understand his degree of tolerance when dealing with those who tried to harm him. Emperor Wu's younger brother Xiao Hong 蕭宏 (473-526) attempted to assassinate the emperor, but the emperor forgave him and treated him as if nothing had happened. 蕭宏's son, the notorious Xiao Zhengde 蕭正德 (d. 549), was once adopted by Emperor Wu before Xiao Tong was born. He bore a deep-seated resentment for Emperor Wu's cancellation of the adoption. He revolted and escaped to the north once but returned before long because of the lack of support he found there. Emperor Wu kept assigning important positions to him despite knowing about his misdeeds and crimes. Xiao Zong was the second son of Emperor Wu who identified himself as a posthumous child of the last emperor of the previous dynasty. Emperor Wu buried

relatives who obtained the nobility title of "Wang" 王 ("Prince") in the Liang Dynasty were all conferred appanages of 2,000 households.

85 NS, "Liang zongshi shang" 梁宗室上, juan 51, 1277-1278.
86 Ibid., 1279-1281.
Xiao Zong with the rituals appropriate for his own son after Xiao Zong's bier was stolen back to Liang.\textsuperscript{87}

According to most of the historical records, Emperor Wu seemed to show his affection equally to his sons and Xiao Gang seemed to be a docile son with a gentle nature just like Crown Prince Zhaoming. However, he was not necessarily the son whom Emperor Wu favored the most. Emperor Wu tried to cure Xiao Yi's eye himself when it was failing, and forgave the trouble maker Xiao Lun despite reducing Xiao Lun to the status of a commoner or putting him under house arrest as punishments for his wrongdoings and crimes. Xiao Lun's title and official positions were restored before long and Emperor Wu encouraged him when he did a good job composing poems.\textsuperscript{88}

According to the \textit{Nan shi}, however, the youngest son, Xiao Ji 纪 seemed to be the one Emperor Wu favoured the most.\textsuperscript{89} Li Yanshou 李延壽 (fl. 7th century) suggests that Emperor Wu's special affection was the reason why Xiao Ji was appointed governor of Yangzhou, a popular and important position at the time, soon after he received his nobility title, Prince of Wuling. He was

\textsuperscript{87} NS, "Liang Wu Di zhuzi" 梁武帝諸子, \textit{juan} 53, 1318.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid., 1322-1323.
\textsuperscript{89} The probable reason that Xiao Ji was treated differently in LS and NS is that LS was compiled under Xiao Yi's supervision. Xiao Yi killed Xiao Ji in the fight for the throne after the rebel Hou Jing was suppressed. In LS, Xiao Ji's biography was placed in the same \textit{juan} (scroll) with Xiao Zhengde, Xiao Zong and Xiao Yu, which is between the scroll about "Various Barbarian" 諸夷 and the scroll about the rebel "Hou Jing" 侯景. In contrast, NS's compiler Li Yanshou was free from Xiao Yi's restraint, and Xiao Ji's biography in NS was placed in the scroll of "Emperor Wu of Liang's Sons". See LS, \textit{juan} 55, 825-828. See also NS, \textit{juan} 53, 1328-1333.
aged seven at the time (514). Xiao Ji's two other brothers who were appointed to the same position were Xiao Gang and Xiao Lun, and were twenty-eight and twenty-five years old respectively at the time of their appointments. Xiao Ji was once again appointed to the same position at the age of twenty-nine (536) before his last appointment to the Regional Inspector of Yizhou. In Xiao Ji's first appointment as Regional Inspector of Yangzhou, Emperor Wu specially added the following comments to the official document: "Guarding rightness cleanly and being frugal and unadorned, this is his purity. Modestly declining when facing wealth, this is his incorruptibility. Knowing the law without breaching it, this is his cautiousness. With no duties left behind, this is his diligence." Ironically, as we have seen in the discussion of Emperor Wu's sons' education, Jiang Ge was sent to supervise Xiao Ji because Xiao Ji's previous supervisor was reportedly too weak to discipline his behaviour. This anecdote reveals that Jiang Ge's transfer took place when Xiao Ji was the governor of Eastern Yangzhou and seventeen years old (524). Considering that Emperor Wu's comments quoted above were given when Xiao Ji was of a much

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90 NS, "Liang Wu Di zhuzi" 梁武帝諸子, juan 53, 1328.
91 LS, "Xiao Jie" 蕭介, juan 41, 587.
92 武陵王紀字世詢, 武帝第八子也。少而寬和, 喜怒不形於色, 勤學有文才。天監十三年, 封武陵王。尋授揚州刺史, 中書詔成, 武帝加四句曰: "貞白儉素, 是其清也; 臨財能讓, 是其廉也; 知法不犯, 是其慎也; 庶事無留, 是其勤也。” 紀特為帝愛, 故先作牧揚州。 See NS, "Liang Wu Di zhuzi" 梁武帝諸子, juan 53, 1328.
93 LS, "Jiang Ge" 江革, juan 36, 524-525.
94 LS, "Wu Di xia" 武帝下, juan 3, 68.
younger age, Emperor Wu's compliment about Xiao Ji could be somewhat exaggerated. The reason why Emperor Wu might have done so is to make up for the lack of Xiao Ji's qualifications. In the third year of the Datong Era (537), Xiao Ji was appointed Regional Inspector of Yizhou, a position that Xiao Gang once declined in the first year of the Putong Era (520). Like Xiao Gang, Xiao Ji stubbornly refused to accept the position because of the remoteness of Yizhou. However, in the following conversation between Emperor Wu and Xiao Ji, one sees a warm and vivid image of a loving old father and a beloved son:

帝曰：“天下方亂，唯益州可免，故以處汝，汝其勉之。”紀歔欷，既出復入。帝曰：“汝嘗言我老，我猶再見汝還益州也。”

Emperor [Wu] said [to Xiao Ji]: "The world is in chaos. Only Yizhou can avoid [the unrest]. That is why I place you there. You may try hard." [Xiao] Ji sobbed. He walked out, and then came back in. The emperor said: "You used to say I am old. I will still see you [come back and] return to Yizhou."

Emperor Wu successfully convinced Xiao Ji to accept the appointment. Although Xiao Ji was still not willing to go, he understood his father's concern. In Yizhou, Xiao Ji developed two new territories and paid tribute ten times more than any previous governors. In return, he was

95 Appointments required justification. For instance, in Xiao Jie's 蕭介 (476-548) case, Emperor Wu was going to promote him to a position in charge of a commandery. At first, the reason the emperor told his minister He Jingrong 何敬容 (d. 549) was "Xiao Jie is very poor." He Jingrong remained silent, and then Emperor Wu said: "Since there is no good governor in Shixing Commandery, the people up on the [Dayu] Range (大庾嶺) are restless. Jie may be made the governor." [Xiao Jie] thereupon was sent to Shixing to become the governor. 高祖謂何敬容曰: “蕭介甚貧，可處以一郡。”敬容未對，高祖曰: “始興郡頃無良守，嶺上民頗不安，可以介為之。”由是出為始興太守。See LS, "Xiao Jie" 蕭介, juan 41, 587.

96 NS, "Liang Wu Di zhuzi" 梁武帝諸子, juan 53, 1328.
awarded the title of Commander Unequalled in Honour (開府儀同三司). Of Emperor Wu's sons, only Xiao Ji was honoured with the highest official title of the Three Councillors (三公) because of his distinguished achievements. In the beginning of the Taiqing Era (547), Emperor Wu sent Zhang Sengyou (张僧繇) (n.d.), a famous portraitist, to Yizhou to draw a portrait of Xiao Ji. It had been one decade since the old father last saw his youngest son and he missed him. Emperor Wu was eighty-four years old.

Although he might not have been the favorite son of Emperor Wu, Xiao Gang had priority for the position of heir among his brothers because he was now the oldest. The controversy about legitimacy was between him and the late Crown Prince's first son Xiao Huan (萧欢) (d. 541). Okabe Takeshi disagrees with both possible reasons that led to Xiao Gang's appointment, namely, Crown Prince Zhaoming's scandal and the concern about Xiao Huan's young age. He argues that no matter what happened between Emperor Wu and Crown Prince Zhaoming, the appointment of Xiao Gang as Crown Prince was unique in the history of the Southern Dynasties because it violated tradition, which decreed that the first son and then the first grandson (from the dead heir) should be established as the heir. Okabe maintains that the reason for Xiao Gang's establishment was the crucial political role the Crown Prince played in the imperial government at the time. In the

97 Ibid.
98 Ibid., 1332.
Southern Dynasties, Okabe asserts, a Crown Prince carried heavy duties on behalf of an emperor especially during the emperor's absence. During his long peaceful regime, Emperor Wu heavily relied on Crown Prince Zhaoming to run the empire, and Xiao Gang was not an exception either. Okabe concludes that political needs overrode the ritual tradition in Xiao Gang's case.99

Okabe's discussion sheds light on the Crown Prince's political status and roles regarding the establishment of Xiao Gang as Crown Prince. Nonetheless, it does not seem to contradict the concern about Xiao Huan's youth. Cao Daoheng does not believe Xiao Tong's "Goose Burying Incident" had affected Emperor Wu's decision about Xiao Gang's establishment. He takes the emperor's concern about Xiao Huan's youth as the reason for Xiao Gang's establishment.100

Because he had experienced the cruel massacres that took place at the end of the Song and the Qi dynasties,101 Emperor Wu knew only too well how fragile a regime could be when it was entrusted

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101 Xiao Daocheng 蕭道成 (427-482), Emperor Gao of Qi, admonished his heir, Xiao Ze 蕭賾 (440-493), when his illness got serious: "If the [Lius of] the Song did not plot [murders] among themselves, how were others able to take advantage? You should be highly aware of that." 宋氏若骨肉不相圖，佗族豈得乘其弊？汝深戒之。 (NS, "Qi Gao Di zhuzi xia" 齊高帝諸子下, juan 43, 1080.) It is difficult to imagine that erudite Emperor Wu of Liang had no knowledge about this admonishment, which was given by his father's intimate cousin, and no knowledge of the cruel slaughters that took place within the royal clan of the Song Dynasty. Moreover, Emperor Wu was actually involved, more or less, in the massacres of Xiao Daocheng and Xiao Ze's descendants. The massacres were launched by Emperor Ming of Qi, who
to a juvenile heir. He had been working carefully all his life to prolong his empire's fortune and would not allow the same mistake to be repeated. After two months of deliberation, Xiao Gang, who had reached a mature age with experience both in civil administration and military affairs, was appointed to be the new Crown Prince. Crown Prince Zhaoming's children were rewarded noble titles equivalent to those of their uncles and aunts, which were at a higher level than other imperial grandchildren. In addition, they were granted appanages of 2,000 households.  

Xiao Huan died on the ninth day in the twelfth month of the sixth year of the Datong大同 Era (January 21, 541).  

At this point, the questionable legitimacy of Xiao Gang's becoming the heir was supposedly settled.  

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102 NS, "Liang Wu Di zhuzi"梁武帝諸子, juan 53, 1312.  
103 LS, "Wu Di xia"武帝下, juan 3, 85. Also see NS, "Liang benji zhong"梁本紀中, juan 7, 214.  
104 The controversy about Xiao Gang's establishment was based on the relevant discussion in Li ji (The Record of Ritual). Zheng Xuan's 鄭玄 (127-200) annotation indicates different rules for appointing the next heir after the current one dies. According to the ritual of the Yin 殷 (?- ca.1100 B.C.), the younger brother of the deceased becomes heir. According to the ritual of the Zhou 周 (ca. 1100 -770 B.C.), the first son of the deceased becomes heir. Although the establishment of a brother was a ritual practiced in antiquity as well, according to Confucius, the ritual of the Zhou should be the way (see Ruan Yuan 阮元 ed., Li ji zhengyi禮記正義, "Tan Gong shang di san"檀弓上第三, in SSJZS, 1273.) Corresponding with Zheng Xuan's annotation, Diao Rou 刁柔 (501-556) remarks that the regulation of the establishment of the first son's younger brother from the same mother was practiced in the Shang 商 (also called Yin). He in addition mentioned that after the first grandson deceased, the sequence would go back to the deceased first son's younger brother according to Chunqiu Gongyang zhuàn春秋公羊傳 (juan 10, in SSJZS, 1309-1310.). According to the
Crown Prince Zhaoming died on the twenty-ninth day of the fourth month in the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era (May 31, 531). An imperial decree was issued on the twenty-seventh day of the fifth month in the same year (June 27, 531), proclaiming Xiao Gang's establishment as the new crown prince. With regards to his qualifications, the appointment was rationalized as follows:

詔曰：“非至公無以主天下，非博愛無以臨四海。所以堯舜克讓，惟德是與；文王舍伯邑考而立武王，恪于上下，光于四表。今岱宗牢落，天步艱難，淳風猶鬱，黎民未乂，自非克明克哲，允武允文，豈能荷神器之重，嗣龍圖之尊。晉安王綱，文義生知，孝敬自然，威惠外宣，德行內敏，羣后歸美，率土宅心。可立為皇太子。”

The imperial decree states: "It is only through utmost impartiality that the empire may be controlled; it is through immanent love that the Four Seas [the empire] may be ruled. That is why Yao and Shun were able to abdicate the throne, and only yield [the throne] to the one with virtue. King Wen [of Zhou] abandoned [his first son] Boyikao and established King Wu [of Zhou instead]. He set standards in both high and low [hierarchy], and illuminated the four directions. Now Mt. Tai is barren and the national fate has its difficulties. Primitive and simple customs are still rife; the common people are not yet settled down. If it is not because of one's brightness and sagaciousness, in accordance with civil and military capacities, how is one able to carry the weight of the sacred emperorship, or inherit the honour of the monarchial power? Prince of Jin'an, [Xiao] Gang, is born to understand argumentations in literary writings, [his] filial piety and respect come from his nature. His prestige and mercy glow outwards; he is perceptive with moral integrity by nature. Seigneurs admire him; [people] all over the country gladly and wholeheartedly are convinced. Thus [Xiao Gang] is approved as the Crown Prince."
Xiao Gang seemed to understand Emperor Wu's concerns. He accepted the appointment despite receiving opposite advice.108 After he became Crown Prince, Xiao Gang gained a reputation for being gentle and forgiving. He was also astute and clever. Not for a single instance would he be deceived in documents or daily business. He faithfully conducted his duties assisting Emperor Wu.

As an accomplished scholar just like his father and brother Crown Prince Zhaoming, Xiao Gang assembled scholars to compile books and provided them with wonderful food and fruit when he was still a governor in Yongzhou. The ten members who were selected for this kind of project were given an appellation — "Gaozhai xueshi" 高齋學士 ("Scholars of the Lofty Studio").109 After he became Crown Prince, Xiao continued supporting literary activities in the Eastern Palace enthusiastically. He tirelessly discussed literary works with his men of letters and composed literary writings with them.110 Xiao Gang not only associated with mature literati who shared the same interests with him, but was also known for his patronage of younger talents. Xiao Gang had known Xu Ling and Yu Xin 庾信 (513-581) since they were children because of their fathers, Xu Chi and Yu Jianwu 庾肩吾 (d. 551 or 552), who served him as his close courtiers for a considerable

108 Xiaofei Tian further hypothesizes that Xiao Gang's acceptance was due to his understanding of the political situation. See her Beacon Fire and Shooting Star, 277.
109 NS, "Yu Jianwu" 庾肩吾, juan 50, 1246.
period. They grew up in a rich literary environment created in Xiao Gang's household. Zhang Zhengjian 張正見 (n.d.) and Yao Cha were introduced to Xiao Gang when they were thirteen years old. Xiao admired their literary precocity and made them guests of his literary salon. The former three, Xu Ling, Yu Xin and Zhang Zhengjian, were known as important literati in the following dynasties and had a strong influence on contemporary literature. Yao Cha, who became a historian later on, compiled the draft of the *Liang shu (The History of the Liang)* that preserved the valuable history of Liang after its fall.

As the oldest son and the heir, Xiao Gang now was the one who acted to keep fraternal harmony among his brothers and cousins, and he acted as a mediator when they were in trouble. For instance, Xiao Yi once attempted to bring a favorite concubine from Jingzhou when he was transferred back to the capital, and Xiao Xu wrote a document to report his violation. Xiao Yi cried in front of a messenger to appeal to Xiao Gang about Xiao Xu's report, and Xiao Gang mediated between them and stopped the dispute. When Xiao Lun committed misdeeds and was punished by Emperor Wu, Xiao Gang took responsibility as his older brother and submitted a memorial as an apology to Emperor Wu. In Xiao Zhengde's case, Xiao once snatched a decoy pheasant that

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111 CS, "Yao Cha" 姚察, *juan* 27, 348. See also CS, "Zhang Zhengjian" 張正見, *juan* 34, 469.

112 元帝之臨荊州，有宮人李桃兒者，以才慧得進，及還，以李氏行。時行宮戶禁重，續具狀以聞。元帝泣對使訴於簡文，簡文和之得止。元帝猶懼，送李氏返荊州…… See NS, "Liang Wu Di zhuzi" 梁武帝諸子, *juan* 53, 1321.

113 YKJ, "Xie Shaoling Wang jingu qi" 謝邵陵王禁錮啟, 3004.
belonged to an official named Zhang Zhun 張準 (n.d.). Giving vent to his anger, Zhang spoke out loud of a scandal implying that Xiao Zhengde was keeping his own sister as a concubine, doing so at a formal Buddhist ceremony at which Emperor Wu was also present. Although Xiao Zhengde's sister, Princess of Changle, was supposed to marry Xiao Gang's courtier Xie Xi 謝禧 (n.d.) before she was taken by Xiao Zhengde, Xiao Gang was afraid the emperor would hear about this scandal. He immediately ordered Xiao Ji to calm down Zhang Zhun and presented a decoy pheasant to Zhang afterwards. In this case, Xiao Gang sacrificed his and his subordinate's interests to keep Emperor Wu out of the family concerns.

As for assisting Emperor Wu's governance, Xiao Gang did his duty to request Buddhist ceremonies held by the emperor to benefit all beings because Emperor Wu had turned himself into an Emperor Bodhisattva. Moreover, one memorial Xiao Gang presented to the emperor indicates his concern for legal fairness to be applied to prisoners:

伏以明慎三典，寬簡八刑。宸鑒每以垂心，國誥是焉攸切。臣比時奉敕旨，權視京師雜事，切見南北郊壇、材官、車府、太官下省、左裝等處，並啟請四五歲以下輕囚，助充使役。

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114 先是，正德妹長樂主適陳郡謝禧，正德姦之，燒主第，縛一婢，加玉釧於手，以金寶附身，聲云主被燒死，檢取婢屍並金玉葬之。仍與主通，呼為柳夫人，生二子焉。日月稍久，風聲漸露。後黃門郎張準有一雉媒，正德見而奪之。尋會重雲殿為淨供，皇儲以下莫不畢集。準於眾中吒罵曰："張準雉媒非長樂主，何可略奪！" 皇太子恐帝聞之，令武陵王和止之乃休，及出，送雉媒還之。See NS, "Liang zongshi shang" 梁宗室上, juan 51, 1282.

115 "Qing xing Chongyun Si kaijiang qi" 請幸重雲寺開講啟 ("Memorial of the Request for the Emperor's Descending of Giving an Imperial Lecture in Chongyun Temple), "Chong qing kaijiang qi" 重請開講啟 (Memorial of the Second Request for the Imperial Lecture), "San qing kaijiang qi" 三請開講啟 (Memorial of the Third Request for the Imperial Lecture) etc. See YKJ, 3005-3006.
In order to be clear and prudent [when dealing with] the three kinds of criminal laws [including light, medium and heavy penal codes], and in order to be tolerant and simple with the eight punishments, Your Majesty often pays close attention [to these matters]. Imperial admonition thereupon is deeply associated [with these matters]. Earlier, I received the imperial decree of looking into sundry [matters] for the time being. I have seen that government sectors such as the Department of Altars at the southern and northern suburbs, the Department of Constructions, the Department of Vehicles, the Department of Imperial Kitchen and the Department of Treasury, have requested that prisoners who committed light crimes and were punished with four or five years in prison should do labour [for them]. There are some prisoners who were sentenced to the same level of punishment and the articles of their crimes were the same. However, A would be provided to the mint; B would be deployed to the suburban altars. The work at the three places of the mint is hard; the work at the six places of the suburban altars is easy. The order [of disposal] is up to the officials in charge of the prison. They consider and decide who is doing what. From here, the road of juggling with the law is open. Fairness is often sacrificed to monetary concerns. I am afraid that the weight of the law will be all about official power; legal provisions will depend on the red pen [used to write down the sentences]. I, a foolish man, consider that [the government] should establish articles and statutes in detail and make [those] the long-term norm.

"Memorial Regarding the Deployment of Prisoners Used in Labor Services"

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116 These two characters are not found in the text collected in both YWLJ ("Xingfa bu, Xingfa" 刑法部刑法, juan 54, 978-979) and SS ("Xingfa" 刑法, juan 25, 701). They may be superfluous characters, or, the result of a clerical error. In the later case, "yuushi" 許是 (thereupon) might be the original word because the pronunciations of the two are identical.

117 "Wuwen" 舞文 are written as "wuwen" 娜文 in YWLJ. See YWLJ, "Xingfa bu, Xingfa" 刑法部刑法, juan 54, 979.

118 YKJ, 3004.

119 The meaning of "zuozhuang" 左裝 is unclear. However, according to Kangxi zidian 康熙字典, "zhuang" 裝 was used as "cang" 藏 in Kong Zhigui's 孔稚圭 (447-501) "Bei Shan yiwen" 北山移文: "The uproar of beating up criminals interferes with his thinking. The urgent documents for lawsuits fill up his mind." 敲扑諠嚻犯其慮,牒訴倥偬裝其懷。

("Shen ji xia, Yi zi bu, zhuang" 中集下字鄙裝, in Kangxi zidian 康熙字典; see also Wenzuan, "Bei Shan yiwen," juan 43, 1959.). "Zhuang" 裝 here can be interpreted as "to store", the same as what the character "cang (or zang when used as a noun)" 藏 means. Therefore, "zuozhuang" 左裝 can be considered as an alternative form of "zuozang" 左藏, which means "treasury".
Emperor Wu rejected the proposal by complaining about the intricacy and difficulties of the task.\(^{120}\) Although his suggestion was not accepted by the emperor, Xiao Gang's benevolence and his sense of justice are well documented in this proposal.

1.4 Xiao Gang's Difficulties

In the historical commentaries, it is hard to find anything negative about Xiao Gang. The only criticism seems to be about his poetry. In the commentary of his official biography, his poems were described as excessively ornate and lacking in political function as defined by Confucian ideology.

史臣曰：太宗幼年聰睿，令問夙標，天才縱逸，冠於今古。文則時以輕華為累，君子所不取焉。及養德東朝，聲被夷夏，洎乎繼統，寔有人君之懿矣。方符文、景，運鍾屯、剝，受制賊臣，弗展所蘊，終罹懷、愍之酷，哀哉！\(^{121}\)

The historian says: "Taizong (Xiao Gang) was clever and perspicacious as a child. His good reputation was established early. By nature he was generous and untrammelled, superior to those from antiquity to the present. His writing, however, was criticized because it was frivolous and flowery. It is not something a gentleman would like. By the time of his nourishing his virtue in the Eastern Palace, his good reputation spread widely. As soon as he inherited the regime, [he] truly had imperial virtue. His way of doing things was in accordance with Wen and Jing's [good governance];\(^{122}\) but his fate fell into straits and decay. He was enslaved by a treacherous minister,

\(^{120}\) SS, "Xingfa" 刑法, juan 25, 701.
\(^{121}\) LS, "Jianwen Di" 简文帝, juan 4, 109.
\(^{122}\) "Wen and Jing" refer to the Han Emperor Wen, Liu Heng (劉恆, 202-157 B.C., r. 180-157 B.C.), and his son the Han Emperor Jing, Liu Qi (劉啟, 189-141 B.C., r. 157-141 B.C.). They reduced taxes and corvée from commoners. Their generous governance brought economic prosperity. For their biographies, see HS, "Wen Di, Liu Heng" 文帝劉恆, juan 4, 105-135; and HS, "Jing Di, Liu Qi" 景帝劉啟, juan 5, 137-153.
and was not able to make use of what he obtained. He finally suffered the cruel destiny of Huai and Min.\textsuperscript{123} How sad!"

In the "Letter Admonishing Daxin, the Duke of Dangyang" ("Jie Dangyang Gong Daxin shu" 誡當陽公大心書) to his son, Xiao Gang revealed his literary theory of separating literature from personal conduct: "The way of conducting oneself differs from writing. Conduct gives priority to circumspection. Writing should be unrestrained."\textsuperscript{124} The meaning of "fangdang" 放蕩 in Xiao Gang's expression has evoked controversy in academic circles. Traditional criticism takes it to mean "debauched", which is same as its modern Chinese meaning. This interpretation has, more or less, contributed to the negative evaluation of Xiao Gang's literature, especially his poetry. However, some scholars argue that this particular word should be interpreted in the contemporary linguistic environment of the Six Dynasties. I will discuss this expression in light of Xiao Gang's literary thought in the next chapter.

From the letter Xiao Gang wrote to his son Xiao Daxin (523-551), one might sense the separation of Xiao Gang's personality from his writings. Some researchers consider that this separation is derived from the coexistence of contradictory beliefs in Xiao Gang's mind. Lin Po-Ch'ien and Shen Shu-Fang maintain that Xiao Gang's personality and his literary theory were

\textsuperscript{123} Emperors Xiaohuai, Sima Chi 司馬熾 (284-313), and Emperor Xiaomin, Sima Ye 司馬鄴 (300-318), were emperors of the Western Jin Dynasty. They both suffered bad fates. See JS, "Di ji di wu" 帝紀第五, \textit{juan} 5, 115-136.

\textsuperscript{124} 立身之道與文章異，立身先須謹慎，文章且須放蕩。 See YKJ, 3010.
deeply influenced by the Buddhist scripture, the *Vimalakīrti sutra*. According to Lin and Shen, the respected Bodhisattva, Vimalakīrti, on the one hand had profound understanding of Buddhist canons. He was persuasive and quick-tongued in argument with outstanding wisdom. His supernatural power was awe-inspiring to his disciples. On the other hand, he was said to live a worldly life. He gambled and also visited brothels and taverns as if there were no Buddhist commandments for him. Lin and Shen remark that Emperor Wu's family, including Xiao Gang, was very familiar with Vimalakīrti. They argue that Xiao Gang's theory of separating personal conduct and literature reflects the seeming contradiction indicated in the *Vimalakīrti sutra*.

As a prince of the prosperous Liang, Xiao Gang was not required to have a thrifty and simple life style. In the official denunciation, likely written by Wang Wei 王偉 (d. ca. 552) on behalf of the rebel Hou Jing, Xiao Gang was accused as follows: "The Crown Prince fancies jewels only and indulges in wine and beauties exclusively. His speaking is limited to frivolity; his poetic writing

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126 Ibid.
127 Wang Wei was an erudite and resourceful writer who assisted Hou Jing. He wrote all documents for the illiterate Hou and gave him advice and guidance that led to Hou's success in defeating Emperor Wu and Xiao Gang. For his biography, see NS, "Wang Wei" 王偉, juan 80, 2017-2018. See also note 6 in Scott Pearce, "Who, and What, Was Hou Jing?" *Early Medieval China* 6 (2000): 51. This denunciation was written in the third year of the Taiqing Era (549) immediately before Hou broke the peace treaty and began to attack the Forbidden Interior of the Liang capital.
never goes beyond sensuality.\textsuperscript{128} Since this personal attack was made by a hostile enemy, it might be somewhat exaggerated. However, considering the wrongdoings of the emperor and his other sons were also recorded in other historical sources, one would suspect that the censure of Xiao Gang was not a pure fiction either. In fact, after Hou Jing captured the capital and occupied the Eastern Palace where Xiao Gang lived, he "took several hundreds of female entertainers from the Eastern Palace and distributed them to his sergeants."\textsuperscript{129} The many female entertainers in the Eastern Palace reveal that Xiao Gang was not living a frugal life. After Hou Jing disclosed the truth, Emperor Wu felt both ashamed and furious.

In addition to his wife Wang Lingbin, Xiao Gang had more than ten concubines according to the \textit{Nan shi}.\textsuperscript{130} He had more than thirty children, far surpassing any of his brothers. In addition, his Palace Style poetry includes flowery poems describing women in details such as their physical appearance, belongings and performance. It was the feminine theme of his poetry that became the main target of Confucian critics. Nonetheless, his family arrangements and the feminine theme of his poetry do not necessarily make Xiao Gang a carefree or decadent person. Xiao Yi revealed that

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{128} 皇太子珠玉是好，酒色是耽，吐言止於輕薄，賦詠不出桑中。 See \textit{ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiba" 梁紀十八, juan 162, 1577.}
\item \textsuperscript{129} \textit{ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiqi" 梁紀十七, juan 161, 1570.}
\item \textsuperscript{130} \textit{NS, "Jianwen ershi zi" 簡文二十子, juan 54, 1337.}
\end{itemize}
Xiao Hui 蕭恢 (476-526), had thirty-eight daughters and at least four sons. In the previous dynasty, Emperor Gao of Qi (Xiao Daocheng 蕭道成, 427-482) had nineteen sons and Emperor Wu of Qi (Xiao Ze 蕭麟, 440-493) had twenty-three sons. It was considered a man's duty to have many children at the time, not to mention that Xiao Gang was an imperial prince. In addition to living with many concubines, Xiao Gang often associated with female palace performers on social occasions. The theme of femininity in his poetry may not seem to be proper from the point of view of orthodox Confucians. However, his undisguised description of this part of his life reflects his sincere attitude to both his real life and his literature. Xiao Gang's theory of separating personal conduct from literature possibly has something to do with the Vimalakīrti as Lin and Shen suggest, because from the previous section regarding Xiao Gang's career, it is not difficult for one to recognize that despite being criticized for his erotic poetry, Xiao Gang took his political responsibilities seriously, whether he was a regional governor or a crown prince.


132 Zhu Mingpan 朱銘盤, Nanchao Liang huiyao 南朝梁會要 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1984), 116.

133 Cao Daoheng, "Zhaoming Taizi he Liang Wu Di de jianchu wenti," 118.

134 NS, "Qi Gao Di zhuzi shang" 齊高帝諸子上, juan 42, 1059.

135 Ibid., "Qi Wu Di zhuzi" 齊武帝諸子, juan 44, 1097.
Xiao Gang had ambitions of becoming a qualified future monarch. Unfortunately, he found it far more difficult than he would have imagined after he moved back to the capital as a crown prince. Xu Chi, who had never been apart from Xiao Gang since Xiao was seven years old, now was sent away to Xin'an Commandery:

The prince entered [the capital] and became Crown Prince, ... Since [Xu] Chi's writing style was distinctive, people in the Crown Prince's residence all imitated it. The name "Palace Style" originally referred to his style, and has been used ever since. Emperor Wu was furious after he heard of it. He summoned [Xu] Chi in order to reprimand him. When they met, Chi responded to the emperor's questions clearly and promptly. His expressions and ideas were worthy of regard. Emperor Wu felt relieved. He thereupon asked Chi about the general meaning of the Five Classics. Next, he asked about the history of dynasties in the past and miscellaneous doctrines of various schools. In the end, they discussed Buddhism. Chi's answers were profound and inclusive; his responses were like an echo. Emperor Wu was stunned and highly praised him. They became even closer. Chi was treated as a favourite more and more day by day. The Commandant, Zhu Yi, was not happy. He said to his close friend: "Old man Xu is in and out of the Two Palaces [where Emperor Wu lives]. This puts more and more pressure on me. I should find a place for him before it is too late." He thereupon took a chance to speak to Emperor Wu: "Chi is in his old age. Moreover, he likes streams and rocks. He is intent on residing in only one commandery, so he can enjoy a relaxing life." Emperor Wu thought that was what Chi wanted. He then summoned Chi and said: "Xin'an has a beautiful landscape. Ren Fang (460-508) and the like used to govern there. You may leisurely administer it for me." In the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era, [Xu] then was sent away to become Governor of Xin'an.

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136 Except the mourning period for Xu Chi's mother's death.
137 LS, "Xu Chi" 徐摛, juan 30, 447. See also NS, "Xu Chi" 徐摛, juan 62, 1521.
The third year of the Zhong-Datong Era (531) is the very year when Xiao Gang was appointed Crown Prince. Xu Chi was transferred away from Xiao Gang soon after Xiao's return to the capital. In a letter to Xu Chi, Xiao Gang expressed his anguish in the capital:

山濤有言：“東宮養德而已。”但今與古殊，時有監撫之務，竟不能黜邪進善，少助國章，獻可替不，仰裨聖政，以此慚惶，無忘夕惕。驅馳五嶺，在戎十年，險阻艱難，備更之矣。觀夫全軀具臣，刀筆小吏，未嘗識山川之形勢，介冑之勤勞，細民之疾苦，風俗之嗜好。高閣之間可來，高門之地徒重。玉饌羅前，黃金在握。浞訾栗斯，容與自熹，亦復言軒、羲以來，一人而已。使人見此，良足長歎。

Shan Tao\textsuperscript{139} said: "The Eastern Palace\textsuperscript{140} should only focus on fostering his virtue." However, nowadays, it is different from antiquity. From time to time, there are duties of inspection and supervision. Yet ultimately, I am not able to get rid of evil and support justice; hardly able to assist the national law; not able to offer properness and replace impracticality; and not able to serve the sacred governance. I am ashamed and frightened on this account, unable to forget it day after day. I have galloped over the Five Ridges, guarding the frontier for ten years. Of dangers, difficult roads and hardships, I have experienced more than enough. Look at those who keep themselves safe and those who were there just to make up the number, also the minor officials whose job is to compose documents. They have not yet known the topography of mountains and rivers, soldiers' pains in armor, humble commoners' hardship, or the preferences and inclinations found in local customs. [Places] between high towers are where they ought to come. Places where high gates are located are all that they value. In front, gorgeous food and drinks are spread out; in their hands, is gold. Being self-conceited, they are leisurely self-congratulatory and smug. In addition, they say there has only been one person [who has virtue] since the time of Xuan Yuan and Fu Xi.\textsuperscript{141} When one witnesses this, it is enough to make one heave a long sigh.

"A Letter Responding to Xu Chi"

\textsuperscript{138} YKJ, 3010.
\textsuperscript{139} Shan Tao (205-283) was one of the "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove".
\textsuperscript{140} The term "the Eastern Palace" refers to the Crown Prince here.
\textsuperscript{141} Xuan Yuan and Fu Xi were the legendary figures representing virtue.
In the above letter, again, one sees Xiao Gang's concerns for ordinary people. In contrast with his own experiences in the regions, Xiao Gang acutely criticized the decadent official(s) he met in the capital. As a Crown Prince, he fully understood his duties. However, he told Xu Chi that he could hardly make changes but sigh. According to Xiao Gang, this person or these officials was/were living a luxurious life in the capital and was/were so arrogant that even the Crown Prince could do nothing with him/them. Lacking the subject of the decadent behaviours in the original text, it is difficult for one to identify whom Xiao Gang was attacking and whether it was one individual or many.

"When [Zhu] Yi was doted on [by Emperor Wu], everybody at the court would fear him. Even the Crown Prince was not able to suppress [his anger]." Based on this entry in the Nan shi, Zhu Yi 朱异 (483-549) was very likely the one, or at least one of the corrupt officials, who Xiao Gang criticized in the above letter. He felt jealous of Xu Chi and convinced Emperor Wu to transfer Xu away from the capital. After Zhou She's death in the fifth year of the Putong Era (524), Zhu Yi took Zhou's job of handling the foremost important issues and decisions. He was also in charge of changes of administrative divisions, national rituals and imperial decrees. Although all kinds of

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142 异之方倖，在朝莫不側目，雖皇太子亦不能平。See NS, "Zhu Yi" 朱异, juan 62, 1518.
143 He was one of Emperor Wu's entrusted ministers, and also Xu Chi's brother-in-law. Zhou She recommended Xu Chi as Xiao Gang's learning companion.
documents piled up waiting for him every day, Zhu Yi was capable of settling them in no time.\textsuperscript{144}

He was an erudite man who specialized in the Five Classics and pleased the emperor with his good skills at playing chess. Although he was from a humble family, it was his talent and administrative capability that attracted Emperor Wu. In addition, he was an expert in flattering the emperor. He gained Emperor Wu's full trust, receiving and maintaining special treatment for over thirty years.\textsuperscript{145}

However, the face he revealed behind Emperor Wu's back was quite different. It was this face that Xiao Gang and other courtiers saw:

\begin{quote}
貪財冒賄,欺罔視聽,以伺候人主意,不肯進賢黜惡。四方餉饋,曾無推拒,故遠近莫不忿疾。起宅東陂,窮乎美麗,晚日來下,酣飲其中。每迫曛黃,慮臺門將闔,乃引其鹵簿自宅至城,使捉城門停留管籥。既而声勢所驅,薰灼内外,產與羊侃相埒。好飲食,極滋味色之娛,子鵝炰鰌不輟於口,雖朝謁,從車中必齎飴餌。而輕傲朝賢,不避貴戚。人或誨之,曰: “我寒士也,遭逢以至今日。諸貴皆恃枯骨見輕,我下之,則為蔑尤甚,我是以先之。” \textsuperscript{146}
\end{quote}

He coveted wealth and had a lust for property. He deceived [Emperor Wu], blocking information from him. He read the emperor's mind, not willing to recommend good and reject bad people. He never declined presents from all directions. For these reasons, everyone felt furious [with him] and hated [him] regardless of wherever they were. He built his mansion on the Eastern Slope. It exhausted the possibilities of luxury. After withdrawing from the court in the afternoon, he drank until he was drunk in the mansion. When it close to dusk, worrying about being locked out, he would lead his honour guards to the gate of the Forbidden Interior, grab the doors and stop [the city guards] from locking up the gates. Driven by his aggressiveness, his prestige and privilege were

\textsuperscript{144}自周捨卒後,異代掌機謀,方鎮改換,朝儀國典,詔誥敕書,並兼掌之。每四方表疏,當局簿領,諮詢詳斷,填委於前,異屬辭落紙,覽事下議,從橫敏贍,不暫停筆,頃刻之間,諸事便了。

See LS, "Zhu Yi" 朱異, \textit{juan} 38, 538. See also NS, "Zhu Yi" 朱異, \textit{juan} 62, 1516.

\textsuperscript{145}異居權要三十餘年,善窺人主意曲,能阿諛以承上旨,故特被寵任。See LS, "Zhu Yi" 朱異, \textit{juan} 38, 540. See also NS, "Zhu Yi" 朱異, \textit{juan} 62, 1518.

\textsuperscript{146} NS, "Zhu Yi" 朱異, \textit{juan} 62, 1516.
imposed on others outside and inside [the court]. His possessions equaled Yang Kan's.\(^\text{147}\) He liked to drink and eat, and indulged in the taste of the food to the full. He also liked women and entertainment to an extreme degree. He ate tender geese and broiled loaches without a break. Even on the way to see the emperor, he would certainly prepare pastries in his retinue's cart. He looked down on good courtiers and he would not defer to nobles and imperial relatives. When someone admonished him, he said: "I am a man of humble origins who has attained his present status through many vicissitudes. Those noblemen despise me, relying on the dead bones [of their ancestors]. If I am subservient to them, they will despise me even more. Thus I despise them before [they do so to me]."

Zhu Yi's biography above has contents similar to what we have seen in Xiao Gang's letter to Xu Chi. Zhu Yi's behaviour of not deferring to noblemen and imperial relatives, in Xiao Gang's eyes, was "self-conceited", "self-congratulatory" and "smug". Zhu Yi's life style was both luxurious and decadent. He was "stingy, never [believing in] giving and sharing. His uneaten food always rotted. More than ten carts [of this kind of food] were thrown out [as garbage] every month. He would not even share [the food] with his sons or close family."\(^\text{148}\) Zhu Yi's decadent life style can be found in Xiao Gang's letter as well: "In front, gorgeous food and drinks are spread out; in their hands, is gold." Zhu Yi's life was too much of a contrast with that of ordinary people. That is why Xiao Gang criticized as knowing neither "soldiers' diligence nor labour" nor "humble commoners' harshness". It is not clear who complimented Zhu Yi or the likes as the "only one

\(^{147}\) Yang Kan 羊侃 (495-549) was a very capable general. Xiao Gang heavily relied upon him to protect the capital from Hou Jing's attack and he died in the battle against Hou.

\(^{148}\) 性吝嗇,未嘗有散施, 异下珍羞恒腐爛, 每月常棄十數車, 虽諸子別房亦不分贈. See NS, "Zhu Yi" 朱异, juan 62, 1518-1519. See also LS, "Zhu Yi" 朱异, juan 38, 540.
person" who was “with virtue ever since the time of Xuan Yuan and Fu Xi." In any case, this compliment was nothing else but an irony to Xiao Gang.

In Xiao Gang's surviving collection, there is a rhapsody that ridicules sycophants:

奚兹先生問於何斯逸士曰:"夫三端所貴,三寸著名。故微言傳乎往記,妙說表乎丹青。魯談笑而軍卻,王言詠而瑞隆。陸有千金之富,周為一說之功。復有搆扇之端,讒諛之迹。豔紫淩朱,飛黃妒白。吾將欲廢便辟之交,遠巧佞之友。殄張儀之餘,殲蘇秦之後。粉虞卿之白璧,碎漢王之玉斗。然後浮偽可息,淳風不朽。" 〈舌賦〉

Mister Why This asked Hermit How This: "The three ends are valued; the three-inch [tongue] makes a reputation. Thereupon, subtle words are handed down in records written in the past; wonderful thoughts are indicated on paintings. Lu Zhonglian defeated armies while talking and laughing; Wang Shi recited [poetry] and then, felicitous omens thrived. Lu Jia possessed wealth of a thousand gold [pieces]; Zhou Yu made a contribution by [giving] one talk. On the other hand, there are signs of malicious accusation and provocation, tracks of flattery and censure.

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149 David R. Knechtges suggests that this piece is rhymed, and should be set off as verse.
150 YKJ, 2996.
151 The term "the three ends" refers to a literatus' sharp end of a pen (pungent writing), a knight's sharp end of a sword (skilled fighting), and a sophist's sharp tongue (acute debating).
153 Wang Shi 王式 who lived in the Western Han Dynasty (202 B.C.- 9) was the Prince of Changyi's 昌邑王 (Liu He 劉賀, 92-59 B.C.) teacher. After Liu He was deposed from the throne for his inappropriate behavior, his courtiers, except Wang Ji 王吉 and Gong Sui 龔遂, were put into jail awaiting execution because they did not remonstrate Liu. Wang Shi was one of them. When Wang was asked why he did not admonish Liu, he answered that he had been teaching The Book of Odes to the new emperor day and night before, and he would like to use the 305 poems in the book as his petition. Thus, he was released. See HS, "Rulin zhuan, Wang Shi" 儒林傳王式, juan 88, 3610.
154 Lu Jia 隆賁 (240-170 B.C.) persuaded the King of Southern Yue to submit to the Han Emperor and was presented with a thousand pieces of gold by the king. See Shi ji, "Li Sheng Lu Jia liezhuan" 郴生陸賁列傳, juan 97, 2698.
155 Zhou Yu 周瑜 (175-210). According to Pei Songzhi's 裴松之 (372-451) annotation in Sanguo zhi, Zhou Yu's speech that convinced Sun Quan 孫權 (182-252) and Sun's mother not to send a hostage to Cao Cao as Cao had demanded was recorded in the "Jiangbiao zhuan" 江表傳. See Chen Shou 陳壽 (233-297), Sanguo zhi 三國志, "Wu shu, Zhou Yu, Lu Shu, Lü Meng zhuan" 吳書周瑜魯肅呂蒙傳, juan 54 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 1260-1261.
Evil purple suppresses upright red. Feihuang feels jealous of Baiyi. I want to break off friendly relations with flatterers and keep myself away from toadying companions. [I want to] exterminate Zhang Yi's scions, annihilate Su Qin's descendants. [I want to] crush Yu Qing's white jade and smash the King of Han's jade liquid measure. Thereafter, superficiality and dissimulation can die out; simplicity will last forever.

"Fu on the Tongue"

Xiao Gang created a conversation between two hypothetical characters in this rhapsody.

What we can see today is only a fragment of the entire work because Mister Why This' question is not complete and Hermit How This' answer is not found. Nonetheless, Xiao Gang's ridicule of smooth-tongued people and his resentment are well expressed. On the one hand, he lists the most famous historical figures whose achievements derived from their skillful speaking; on the other hand, he points out the hazards of using oral skill in a harmful way. Although there is not a clear indication of when this work was written, Xiao Gang's resentment of sycophants reminds us of the

156 "Feihuang" 飛黃 is the name of a fox-shaped Pegasus with a horn on the back. It was said to have a life span of a thousand years (高誘注: 飛黃，乘黃也，出西方，狀如狐，背上有角，壽千歲。). See Gao You's annotation to "Black dragons haul carriages; Feihuang lies prostrate at its stable" 青龍進駕，飛黃伏皁 in Liu An 劉安 (179-122 B.C.), Huainan zi 淮南子, "Lanmin xun" 飛黃, annot. Shen Dehong 沈德鴻, Wang Yunwu 王雲五 eds. (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1933), 40. "Baiyi" 白義 is the name of one of the eight steeds owned by King Mu of Zhou. See Mu Tianzi zhuan 穆天子傳, juan 1, in Han Wei biji xiaoshuo 漢魏筆記小說, ed. Zhou Guangpei 周光培 (Qinhuangdao: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), 4.

157 Zhang Yi 張儀 and Su Qin 蘇秦 were both famous persuasive talkers living in the Warring States Period. They sold their strategies to the kings and helped their lords to take over other kings' land. See Shi ji 史記, "Su Qin liezhuan" 蘇秦列傳, juan 69, 2241-2277. See also Ibid., "Zhang Yi liezhuan" 張儀列傳, juan 70, 2277-2300.

158 Yu Qing 虞卿 was a person of distinction in the Warring States Period. He sold his ideas to feudal lords and received the white jade from King of Xiaocheng 孝成王 of Zhao 趙. See Shi ji 史記, "Pingyuan Jun Yu Qing liezhuan" 平原君虞卿列傳, juan 76, 2370.

159 King of Han here refers to Liu Bang 劉邦 (256-195 B.C.). The anecdote about the jade liquid measure is recorded in Shi ji 史記, "Xiang Yu benji" 項羽本紀, juan 7, 314-315.
conflict between Zhu Yi and him. In a letter to Xiao Yi, Xiao Gang told his younger brother that life in the capital was quite different from that in the regions, and he was not happy ever since he came back to the capital. He said: "I am often in a trance. Although I open my mouth to laugh, I do not feel real joy. I have not drunk for two hundred days." As a prince, Xiao Gang realized the dangers a sycophant like Zhu Yi could bring. In the second half of the above rhapsody, he strongly states his determination to stay away from sycophants.

In the political environment dominated by Zhu Yi, Xiao Gang could hardly fulfill his ambitions in spite of being the Crown Prince. Shi Guoqiang argues that Xiao Gang’s Palace Style poetry was promoted under these depressing circumstances. Emperor Wu's blind reliance on Zhu Yi eventually led to the fall of the empire.

1.5 Liang’s Decline and Xiao Gang's Final Days

In the governance of his empire, Emperor Wu heavily relied on capable officials. In his early reign, Xu Mian 徐勉 (466-535) and Zhou She were his entrusted assistants. Thanks to these two talented and upright officials, the empire was well run. After they passed away, Emperor Wu

160 但不得倜儻,殊異盤下之時,……但吾自至都已來,意志忽怳,雖開口而笑,不得真樂,不復飲酒,垂二十旬。See YKJ, "Da Xiangdong Wang shu" 答湘東王書, 3012.

placed his full trust in Zhu Yi and He Jingrong 何敬容 (d. 549). Both of them were from low-rank families but impressed the emperor with their profound learning in the Five Classics. He Jingrong was in charge of affairs outside the court and Zhu Yi was responsible for internal matters. Only Zhu Yi had remained in the palace working closely with Emperor Wu for a considerable time, and his opinions largely influenced Emperor Wu's decisions. Fu Qi 傅岐 (d. ca. 549) once asked Zhu Yi why he never opposed Emperor Wu and suggested that some courtiers resented his absolute obedience to the emperor.162 Responding to the question, Zhu merely said that he was not able to offend the imperial ear, because the emperor had brilliant understanding already.163

The government had been run by the two-faced Zhu Yi even before Xiao Gang became Crown Prince. As we have seen, Xiao Gang was incapable of making many changes because Emperor Wu would listen to Zhu more than to anyone else. In the later period of Emperor Wu's reign, social contradictions and political crises grew increasingly intense. Although Zhu Yi's craft and flattery were criticized as weakening Emperor Wu's contact with reality, Emperor Wu was not totally in the dark. More likely, he chose what he wanted to hear. He Chen 賀琛 (n.d.) wrote a report to the throne concerning four current major problems. The first was the drop in national revenue

162 Absolute obedience was not enough to fulfill one's duties for someone in Zhu Yi's position.

163 自徐勉、周捨卒後，外朝則何敬容，內省則異。敬容質慤無文，以綱維為己任，異文華敏洽，曲營世譽，二人行異而俱見倖。異在內省十餘年，未嘗被譴。司農卿傅岐嘗謂異曰：“今聖上委政於君，安得每事從旨。頃者外聞殊有異論。”異曰：“政言我不能諫爭耳。當今天子聖明，吾豈可以其所聞干忤天聰?” See NS, "Zhu Yi" 朱異, juan 62, 1516-1517.
due to the decrease in household registrations. He Chen remarked that the revenue from the border had fallen significantly; in addition, debt had been left unsettled for years. He claimed that local governors should take responsibility for people losing their homes. The second was the pervasive corruption in officialdom. He Chen remarked that the cause of corruption was the prevalence of luxury. As a solution, he suggested the promulgation of sumptuary regulations to encourage thrift. By doing so, he believed that people's behavior and interests would change. The third was unfair official recruitment. He pointed out that narrow-minded and shallow people were fighting for promotion. They exaggerated their abilities and contributions, framed others and glorified themselves. He maintained that the solution for the increase in wickedness was to be fair in official recruitment. The fourth was the need for cutting government expenses.  

He Chen's report reflected the social reality of Liang at the time. National revenue had decreased and the difficulties of government had increased in consequence. Government officials were mostly corrupt because of the prevalent luxury. Official recruitment favoured those who were good at dishonest behavior. Finally, ordinary people were full of unrest because of the many official activities and government expenses. Emperor Wu was furious after he read the report. To oppose He Chen's remarks, he enumerated how he himself had been living a thrifty life and at the

164 NS, "He Yang" 賀瑒, juan 62, 1511-1512. See also ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiwu" 梁紀十五, juan 159, 1552-1553.
same time diligently taking care of his government. He claimed that he had set a perfect example for the officials so He Chen should pinpoint the names of corrupt officials. He struck down every point He Chen made and launched a self-defense in response. He Chen dared not identify anyone or anything as Emperor Wu suggested; instead, he apologized. Sima Guang suggests that the reason Emperor Wu was furious was that He Chen spoke the truth.

Although Emperor Wu said the world was in chaos to convince Xiao Ji to accept his appointment to Yizhou, he did not seem to realize, or did not want to acknowledge, how bad the situation was in his last years. He trusted Zhu Yi just as he had trusted Xu Mian and Zhou She in the former days. His blindness, or maybe his excessive tolerance, for other people put him and his empire in great danger. Xiao Gang once expressed his sentiment less clearly in the "Fu on Recounting Melancholy":

> 情無所治，志無所求。不懷傷而忽恨，無驚猜而自愁。玩飛花之入戶，看斜暉之度寮。雖復玉觴浮椀，趙瑟含嬌。未足以祛斯耿耿，息此長謠。
>
> Sentiment has nowhere to settle; there is nothing I want. I am not embracing sorrow, but feel regret all of a sudden. I am not frightened or suspicious, yet I worry myself. I appreciate the flying petals entering the windows and watch slanting rays of sunset pass by my hut. Although I have these jade goblets and floating cups, with stringed instruments of Zhao that contain loveliness, these are not enough to expel this depression and end this long ballad.

"Fu on Recounting Melancholy"

165 NS, "He Yang" 賀瑒, juan 62, 1512-1513. See also ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiwu" 梁紀十五, juan 159, 1552-1553.

166 ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiwu" 梁紀十五, juan 159, 1553.

167 YKJ, 2995.
There is no indication when this rhapsody was written. However, Xiao Gang's gloomy sentiment under the ostensibly peaceful circumstances is easily understood. The contradiction expressed in this rhapsody presents a portrait of Xiao Gang's frustration and despair hidden under the surface of his luxurious life.

In his *Family Instructions for the Yans*, Yan Zhitui 颜之推 (531- ca. 591) described the social situation at the peak of the Liang:

梁朝全盛之時，貴遊子弟，多無學術，至於諺云：“上車不落則著作，體中何如則祕書。”無不熏衣剃面，傅粉施朱，駕長簷車，跟高齒屐，坐薦子方褥，憑斑絲隱囊，列器玩於左右，從容出入。望若神仙。明經求第，則顧人答策；三九公讌，則假手賦詩。168

In the heyday of the Liang Dynasty, the scions of noble families mostly were unlearned. So much so that there was a saying: "One who boards a chariot and does not fall will become an Attendant of Writing. One can write a stereotyped phrase such as 'how are you doing?' in a letter will become secretary." Everyone perfumed his garments, shaved his face, pasted rouge and face powder. They rode in long-eaved-carts, wore high-teeth clogs, sat on square-shape cushions with a chess board pattern, leaned on soft bolsters woven with multi-colored silk thread and had knickknacks laid on each side. They went in and out gracefully and looked like immortal beings from a distance. When seeking to pass the examination for the degree of "Clearly Understanding the Classics" and applying for official positions, they hired someone to answer questions and compose essays on their behalf. When attending banquets held by famous noblemen, they [again] asked someone to compose poems for them.169


The long peaceful and prosperous period of Emperor Wu's reign resulted in a languid young generation of the ruling class.

The economy was also in crisis. According to the *Sui shu*, in the early years of the Liang, the weights of the two kinds of legal coins still matched their face values. Ignoring the throne's decree prohibiting private coinage, some people privately used illegal coins; and some even cast their own iron coins. This severely disturbed the metal-based monetary system. At the beginning of the Datong 廣通 Era (535-545), the prices of commodities skyrocketed. Since the value of the iron coinage had significantly declined, people had to carry coins by the cart load for shopping. The calculation of coins was done by strings of coins rather than by the piece. The face value of the legal iron coins became different from region to region. As a consequence, merchants started to profit from the monetary disorder. At the time of the Zhong-Datong 中大同 Era (546), the emperor's prohibition was made in vain. It was said that in the last years of the Liang, coins with a face value of one-hundred were only worth thirty-five. Along with the increase in famine and

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170 Although they share the same pronunciation, this name of era is written as 中大同 (546) in Chinese characters, differing from that written as 中大通 (529-534).

rebellions, the fate of the Liang was in decline and its fall was only a matter of time. Emperor Wu's welcoming of Hou Jing was only the incident that started the downturn.

Hou Jing, a military man descended from a non-Han people called the Jie 羯, had worked for a powerful minister of the Eastern Wei named Gao Huan. Although his right leg was shorter than the other and he was not good at horse riding or archery, he was recognized as wise and resourceful. He was a merciless man with a skillful way of managing his troops. Since he shared all the spoils with his commanders and soldiers, all of his men were faithful to him. Gao Huan assigned a hundred thousand men to Hou and heavily relied on him to guard the southern regions of the Yellow River. Gao Huan and Gao Cheng 高澄 (521-549), his son and successor, knew very well that Gao Cheng was incapable of commanding Hou. On his sickbed before his death, Gao Huan gave Gao Cheng guidance on how to deal with Hou. Gao Huan died in the first year of the Taiqing Era of the Liang (547). Following his father's instructions, Gao Cheng concealed his father's death, then sent a letter to Hou Jing summoning him back to the capital in the name of his father. However, the ruse was seen through by Hou Jing. Hou Jing then offered to surrender the territories under his command to Gao's rival — the Western Wei. His surrender was accepted, but

172 Scott Pearce, "Who, and What, Was Hou Jing?" 50.
173 ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiwu" 梁紀十五, juan 159, 1556.
174 LS, "Hou Jing" 侯景, juan 56, 834.
175 ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiwu" 梁紀十五, juan 159, 1556-1557.
at the same time, Hou sent envoy Ding He 丁和 (d. 552) to Liang offering thirteen regions of his holdings as well. The courtiers of Liang were concerned that to take Hou Jing in would break the peace between the Eastern Wei and the Liang. Nonetheless, Emperor Wu coveted the broad territory Hou Jing offered, considering that it was an opportunity to take back the north.176

According to *Nan shi* and *Zizhi tongjian*, Emperor Wu's decision to welcome Hou Jing was made in the first year of the Taiqing Era (547).177 It was said that Emperor Wu had a dream in the previous month, in which all the governors of the Central Plains (the north) offered their holdings to him. After his arrival to Liang, Ding He claimed that Hou Jing had by coincidence decided to surrender on the very same day that the emperor had the dream.178 Since Xiao Gang and some courtiers strongly opposed the acceptance of Hou,179 Emperor Wu needed some support from other quarters. As usual, Zhu Yi perceived Emperor Wu's intention and took the acceptance in a positive way. He said:

177 NS, "Hou Jing" 侯景, *juan* 80, 1994; and ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiliu" 梁紀十六, *juan* 160, 1559. However, LS indicates that this happened in the second year of Taiqing (548). See LS, "Hou Jing" 侯景, *juan* 56, 862-863.
178 Both NS and ZZTJ indicate the dream occurred on the sixteenth day of the first month in the first year of the Taiqing Era (547). But in NS, Emperor Wu told Huang Huibi 黃慧弼 about the dream ("Hou Jing" 侯景, *juan* 80, 1994.) instead of Zhu Yi as indicated in ZZTJ ("Liang ji shiliu" 梁紀十六, *juan* 160, 1559.). In LS, the dream occurred in the middle of the Zhong-Datong Era (ca. 546) and Zhu Yi was the listener ("Hou Jing" 侯景, *juan* 56, 862-863.).
聖明御宇，上應蒼玄，北土遺黎，誰不慕仰，為無機會，未達其心。今侯景分魏國太半，輸誠送款，遠歸聖朝，豈非天誘其衷，人獎其計。原心審事，殊有可嘉。今若不容，恐絕後來之望。此誠易見，願陛下無疑。180

The Brilliant Understanding (the emperor) rules the universe. [This] corresponds with the [mandate of] Heaven. All the people in the enemy-occupied north admire [Your Majesty]. It is just because there is no chance, their wishes are not yet fulfilled. Now Hou Jing occupies more than half of the [Eastern] Wei's territory, offering and delivering his sincere heartfelt feelings. He surrenders to the sacred empire from afar. Doesn't that show his heart is guided by Heaven and his decision is admired by human beings? After examining his real intention and investigating the matter, we would find him extremely praise-worthy. If we do not accept [Hou Jing], I am afraid it will terminate the future desires [of other people who want to submit to the emperor]. This is truly easy to see. I wish Your Majesty will not hesitate.

Thus, Emperor Wu heard what he wanted to hear. He accepted the omen of his dream and made the decision to welcome Hou Jing.

At the time, Hou Jing had a foot in two camps, the Western Wei and the Liang. After being deceived by Hou Jing a number of times, the monarch and courtiers of the Western Wei concluded that they could not put faith in Hou. In the sixth month of the same year, Hou decided to submit to the Liang, and his family in the Eastern Wei was abandoned. Liang launched a campaign in the eighth month attacking Eastern Wei. Being deaf to Hou Jing's warning, Liang suffered a severe defeat. Liang not only lost tens of thousands of soldiers, the coward Chief Commander Xiao Yuanming 蕭淵明 (d. 556) was also captured by the enemy. In the first month of the next year, Hou

180 LS, "Zhu Yi" 朱異, juan 38, 539. The two other sources (NS and ZZTJ) also state that Zhu Yi was the one who supported Emperor Wu.
Jing was defeated by his adversary, Murong Shaozong 慕容紹宗 (501-549)\(^{181}\) of the Eastern Wei, who was the only man capable of overpowering Hou, as indicated in Gao Huan's instructions to his son.

Although Xiao Gang opposed the acceptance of Hou Jing, he did not seem to know about Hou. When the news of Hou's losing battles was brought to the capital, a rumour started saying that Hou had been killed. Xiao Gang told He Jingrong that he believed Hou Jing was still alive. He turned pale with fright when he heard He Jingrong said that it would be good luck for Liang if Hou Jing had indeed been killed. Xiao Gang asked why he said so. He Jingrong answered: "[Hou] Jing is a man who has betrayed people repeatedly. He will eventually bring down the empire."\(^{182}\)

Emperor Wu was taking a nap when he heard that Xiao Yuanming had been captured by the Eastern Wei. He was so astonished and terrified that he even fell down from his bed. At this point, he started worrying that he had made a mistake.\(^{183}\) Emperor Wu did not take into account Hou Jing's loss. Everything seemed to be back to normal. However, the situation changed because of a letter written by Xiao Yuanming sent from the Eastern Wei.

\(^{181}\) Murong Shaozong 慕容紹宗 was the first man who taught Hou Jing the arts of war. See NS, "Zeichen" 賊臣, juan 80, 1993.

\(^{182}\) ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiqi" 梁紀十七, juan 161, 1565.

\(^{183}\) Ibid., 1560-1562.
In the second month of the second year of the Taiqing Era (548), Gao Cheng suggested to rebuild the friendship between Eastern Wei and Liang, after he took all the territory back from Liang and rooted out Hou Jing's henchmen. He treated Xiao Yuanming well and had Xiao write a letter saying he would be sent back to Liang if friendly relations could be revived. Emperor Wu read the letter in tears. In court, opinion was divided. One group led by Zhu Yi insisted on accepting the offer of peace; only the Minister of Agriculture, Fu Qi, questioned the intention of Gao Cheng's offer. He remarked that it was a strategy for alienating Liang from Hou Jing. Emperor Wu took Zhu Yi's side. As expected, Hou Jing felt uneasy with the rapprochement. He wrote several letters to Emperor Wu to appeal for cancellation of the decision. He also wrote a letter to Zhu Yi with an attachment of three hundred taels of gold, expecting his help. Zhu Yi took the gold without passing his letter to the emperor.\textsuperscript{184}

Hou Jing's unease escalated after Emperor Wu's envoy paid a visit to Gao Cheng. He urged the emperor to launch a campaign against Eastern Wei again. Emperor Wu told him just to sit back and enjoy himself. In addition, the emperor gave Hou his word that he would not break his promise of a monarch to a subject. However, Emperor Wu's word was treacherous. When Hou Jing forged a letter from Eastern Wei offering the exchange of Xiao Yuanming and himself, Emperor Wu

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 1566-1567.
decided to accept the offer. Fu Qi spoke up that it would bring not only ill fortune, but also Hou Jing's resistance. To oppose Fu Qi, Zhu Yi and Xie Ju 謝舉 (d. 548) claimed that Hou Jing was only a powerless man on the run. Without taking Hou Jing seriously, Emperor Wu returned a positive response, which of course was reported to Hou Jing. Hou finally made up his mind to rebel.\footnote{Ibid., 1567.}

Hou Jing was able to recruit three thousand men when he started the rebellion in the eighth month of the same year of the Taiqing Era (548).\footnote{LS, "Zhu Yi" 朱异, juan 38, 539.} Neglecting reports from a number of local governors and underestimating Hou Jing's capability, Zhu Yi and Emperor Wu would not listen to others' suggestions to prepare for Hou Jing's arrival. They did not dream that Xiao Zhengde had already made a secret deal with Hou Jing either. Following the secret plan, Xiao Zhengde ferried Hou's soldiers across the Yangtze River in no time. Even when Hou Jing's envoy Xu Siyu 徐思玉 (n.d.) requested to meet Emperor Wu privately and Gao Shanbao 高善寶 (n.d.) became alarmed at the danger of doing so, Zhu Yi still retorted: "How could Xu Siyu possibly be an assassin?!"

Ironically, the letter brought by Xu Siyu from Hou Jing was to accuse Zhu Yi of playing politics. In the letter, Hou Jing asked the emperor's permission to let his armed men enter the capital in order to execute Zhu Yi and his followers. This, of course, was only Hou's excuse. Nonetheless, Emperor Wu later asked and confirmed with Xiao Gang that Hou's similar claim appeared in another
denunciation regarding Zhu Yi's wrongdoings. Xiao Gang dissuaded the emperor from killing Zhu Yi on the spot to avoid being ridiculed by the enemy. He composed a rhapsody after they were surrounded by Hou Jing's army in the capital:

彼高冠及厚履，並鼎食而乘肥。升紫霄之丹地，排玉殿之金扉。陳謀謨之啟沃，宣政刑之福威。四郊以之多壘，萬邦以之未綏。問豺狼其何者，訪虺蜴之為誰。 〈圍城賦〉

That person is wearing a high hat and thick-sole shoes. He eats from a tripod and rides on a stout horse. Rising to the cinnabar place of purple clouds, he pushes open the golden doors of the jade palace hall. He declares stratagems and assists the monarch, announces government orders of rewards and punishments. Because of him, forts are increased at the four sides of suburbs. Because of him, all nations live in chaos. We inquire who the cruel and evil person is. We investigate who the vicious man is.

"Fu on the Besieged Wall"188

Although there is no indication of the man's name in the work, it is clear that the person was Zhu Yi. Xiao Gang's anger finally exploded. Emperor Wu asked Zhu Yi who this person was afterwards, but Zhu Yi was not able to respond. He died soon after at the age of sixty-seven of shame and resentment. Emperor Wu gave him a handsome funeral and conferred the official title he had long wished for.189

There were many factors contributing to the result of Liang's losing the battles and eventually enabling Hou Jing's usurpation. Despite his inability to read and write, Hou Jing was an expert on war strategy himself. With the assistance of Wang Wei, who was a bright man with broad

187 Ibid. See also NS, "Zhu Yi" 朱異, juan 62, 1518.
188 Marney translated this fu in his Liang Chien-wen Ti, 151.
189 NS, "Zhu Yi" 朱異, juan 62, 1518. See also LS, "Zhu Yi" 朱異, juan 38, 540.
knowledge, Hou Jing made smart and cunning moves that put his opponents at a loss. Even compared with the destruction caused by Hou Jing, the problems of Liang itself caused the most damage. By the end of Emperor Wu's reign, the old generals who helped Emperor Wu establish the dynasty had almost all died. Courtiers rarely saw weapons in their daily life. The ones in the capital were shocked by the emergency, and the youths were all stationed in the regions. Although many reinforcements gathered and surrounded Hou Jing's ring of encirclement, they were either defeated by Hou's men, or hesitated to approach. The relationship between leaders was ugly. Imperial relatives were fighting with each other in order to seize power, and the Chief Commander Liu Zhongli 柳仲禮 (n.d.) lost his courage for fighting after he was injured in a battle with Hou Jing. Liu was mean to other commanders and did nothing but enjoy wine and entertainment in his camp. In addition, the discipline of the royal armies was slack, in some cases even worse than that of Hou's troops. Their behaviour betrayed Liang people's expectations, disappointing those who were secretly willing to help the royal troops against Hou.

As the Crown Prince, Xiao Gang requested full leadership from Emperor Wu in the emergency after Hou Jing crossed the Yangtze River. Unfortunately, he made fatal mistakes. From Xiao Gang's point of view, the decisions might have been made cautiously and reasonably. However, the deficiencies in his decision making were similar to what we have seen in his understanding of Hou Jing, namely, his blindness to one's inherent qualities.
Xiao Gang's first decision was to place Xiao Zhengde and Yu Xin respectively at the guard of the two important capital gates. He followed Xiao Zhengde's suggestion to keep the float bridge on the moat connected. Of course, he had no means of knowing that Xiao Zhengde was assisting Hou Jing and hence should be the last one to be trusted. But it is unfathomable that Xiao Gang still had faith in Xiao Zhengde after seeing his betrayal and wrong-doing in the past. Yu Xin, a talented literatus Xiao Gang should have known very well, was frightened by the iron masks Hou Jing's soldiers wore. He was chewing a piece of sugarcane when Hou's soldiers appeared, and it dropped from his hands when an arrow struck a post by the gate nearby. He fled immediately. The boat unmoored by Yu Xin's soldiers was reconnected to the float bridge, and Hou's army reached the capital gate with no difficulty.\(^\text{190}\) Yu Xin was only one of the many civil officials who panicked. Xiao Gang gave his own horse and three thousand crack troops to Wang Zhi 王質 (511-570) for him to back up Yu Xin, but Wang Zhi ran away even before the fight began.\(^\text{191}\)

In the middle of the chaos, Hou Jing's subordinate Fan Taobang 范桃棒 (d. ca. 548) was convinced by Chen Xin 陳昕 (d. ca. 548) to kill Wang Wei and Song Zixian 宋子仙 (d. 550). Emperor Wu was overjoyed when he learned the news from Chen Xin. However, Xiao Gang was

\(^{190}\) ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiqi" 梁紀十七, juan 161, 1570.

\(^{191}\) Wang Zhi was supposed to patrol the Yangtze River regularly to prevent Hou Jing's crossing. However, he failed to do his job on the very day when Hou Jing's army crossed the river. See NS, "Zeichen" 贼臣, juan 80, 1998.
suspicious and hesitated to accept the offer. He believed that it would be safest if they reinforced the defences and upheld their position until the arrival of reinforcements. Fan Taobang's additional offer of sending five hundred unarmed soldiers into the capital increased Xiao Gang's suspicions even more. Although Emperor Wu and Zhu Yi urged him to take the offer, Xiao Gang turned a deaf ear to them. At this point, he still had faith in the reinforcements, believing his imperial relatives and generals would come to their rescue. Unfortunately, he made a wrong calculation this time.

Hou Jing killed Fan Taobang after the deal was divulged, and the reinforcements were never willing to make their way to the capital.

There were some brave officials, such as Yang Kan (495-548) and the Jiang brothers, who fought for the emperor. The awful situation lasted for months and both sides had lost many lives and exhausted their food and supplies. In order to bring in supplies and buy time for recovering, Wang Wei suggested that Hou Jing make peace with the emperor. Xiao Gang asked for Emperor Wu's approval because the situation inside the Forbidden Interior was miserable. Emperor Wu was in a fury: "It's better to die than to make peace!" Xiao Gang insisted: "[Hou] Jing surrounded [us] long ago. [Yet,] the reinforcements are at a stalemate showing no sign of fighting.

192 ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiqi" 梁紀十七, juan 161, 1572. See also NS, "Zeichen" 賊臣, juan 80, 2001.
It is better to allow peace-making and make plans later." 193 Emperor Wu compromised. After the ceremony of pledging truce, Hou Jing came up with all kinds of excuses and continued to stay. Xiao Gang perhaps knew that Hou Jing was lying but was not able to take decisive action. He might be viewed as a coward with a lack of strategic insight. But one thing is certain: he was in despair of the reinforcements' arrival. All he could hope now was that Hou Jing would keep his promise and leave, for he had no means and strength left to fight any more. Nonetheless, reality betrayed his wish.

Hou Jing realized that there was no rescue for the emperor that Xiao Gang could expect and that the situation was very bad in the Forbidden Interior. Now that he had obtained everything he needed, Wang Wei persuaded him to renounce the treaty. Xiao Zhengde also encouraged Hou Jing not to give up. Thereupon, Hou Jing sent the official denunciation mentioned earlier in this chapter, accusing Emperor Wu of ten kinds of misconduct, including censure of Xiao Gang's luxurious life style and frivolous writings. 194 The military attack restarted in the third month of the third year of

193 ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiba" 梁紀十八, juan 162, 1576. According to NS, Emperor Wu would not believe Hou Jing's word. "Jianwen (Xiao Gang) stated to Emperor Wu: 'We are surrounded and compelled by Hou Jing. Since there are no troops serving the throne, we want to approve the peace making now and consider the strategy later.' Emperor Wu was in a fury: 'It's better to die than to make peace!' Jianwen said: 'A treaty signed under coercion indeed is an utmost disgrace. [If we do not accept the treaty, then] white blades will intersect in front; stray arrows will have no eyes.'" 簡文乃請武帝曰: "侯景圍逼, 既無勤王之師, 今欲許和, 更思後計也." 帝大怒曰: "和不如死." 簡文曰: "城下之盟, 乃是深恥; 白刃交前, 流矢不顧." See NS, "Zeichen" 賊臣, juan 80, 2005.

194 ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiba" 梁紀十八, juan 162, 1577.
the Taiqing Era (549). Before long, the Forbidden Interior finally fell into Hou Jing's hands. Both Emperor Wu and Xiao Gang did not show a whit of fear when they faced Hou Jing. Xu Chi and Yin Buhai 殷不害 (505-589) stood firmly beside Xiao Gang when all others scattered. Hou Jing was sweating and not able to respond to the imperial father and his son's inquiries.

Emperor Wu was unbending after being overpowered by Hou Jing. He starved to death on the second day of the fifth month of the same year (June 12, 549). He was eighty-six years old. The news of the emperor's death was kept a secret from the public. Xiao Gang knew the news soon after his father's death, but he could only cry silently. Twenty-five days later, Xiao Gang was enthroned. As an emperor now, however, Xiao Gang's situation was not much different from before. He could only do what Hou Jing told him to do and had no freedom to meet his courtiers.

Since Xu Chi convinced Hou Jing to salute Xiao Gang when they first met in the palace, Hou Jing hated Xu Chi and Xu was forbidden to meet Xiao Gang after Xiao was nearly under house arrest. Not being able to see Xiao Gang, Xu Chi died of respiratory disease soon after at the age of seventy-eight.

195 LS, "Wu Di xia" 武帝下, juan 3, 95.
196 NS, "Xu Chi" 徐摛, juan 62, 1522.
In the beginning of February 550 (the first day of the first month in lunar calendar), Xiao Gang changed the title of the reign from Taiqing to Dabao 大寶.\textsuperscript{197} He was restricted by Hou Jing to the capital, while his brothers and nephews were fighting with each other in the regions. The strongest, Xiao Yi, defeated and killed Xiao Yu 蕭譽 (d. 550), Crown Prince Zhaoming's second son, in the same year. He would not accept the new title of Xiao Gang's reign and issued an order to suppress Hou Jing. While fighting against Hou Jing's army, Xiao Yi fought against Xiao Yu's brother Xiao Cha 蕭詧 (519-562) and his own brother Xiao Lun. Western Wei killed Xiao Lun in 551 after Xiao Lun was chased by Xiao Yi. Xiao Yi also killed his younger brother Xiao Ji in a battle in 553, one year after his ascent to the throne.

Xiao Gang was alone in the palace. His first wife, Wang Lingbin, had died soon after Hou Jing's siege began. His closest courtiers were either dead or too afraid to visit him. Since he would not give up visiting Xiao Gang, Xiao Zi 蕭諮 (d. 550) was assassinated by his personal enemy who was instigated by Hou Jing.\textsuperscript{198} Xiao Gang bore insults and managed to put up with Hou Jing. However, he was not able to evade his ill fate. On the fifth day of the eighth month of the second

\textsuperscript{197} LS, "Jianwen Di" 簡文帝, juan 4, 105-106. See also NS, "Jianwen Di" 簡文帝, juan 8, 203.

\textsuperscript{198} ZZ TJ, "Liang ji shiji" 梁紀十六, juan 163, 1593.
year of the Dabao Era (September 20, 551), Xiao Gang was dethroned and officially put under house arrest in the Yongfu Palace. Most of his sons, including his Crown Prince Daqi, were murdered one after another. On the winter night of the second day of the tenth month (November 15, 551), Wang Wei and his henchmen brought wine and tidbits to Xiao Gang wishing him longevity. Xiao Gang understood that the inevitable hour had come. Becoming drunk he said: "I didn't expect that I would be able to enjoy [life] to this extent!" After Xiao Gang fell asleep, Wang Wei left the room. Peng Jun 彭儁 (d. ca. 552) put a sand bag on Xiao Gang, then Wang Xiuzuan 王脩纂 (n.d.) sat on top of the sand bag. Thus Xiao Gang was murdered at the age of forty-nine.

Hou Jing's real intention was to ascend the throne himself. But instead, he established Xiao Dong 蕭棟 (d. 552) who was Crown Prince Zhaoming's grandson as emperor. Hou did this on the same day when Xiao Gang was dethroned. In the forged imperial decree, Hou Jing forced Xiao Gang to rationalize his own dethronement by saying that Xiao Gang was not the legitimate heir who should have become heir after Crown Prince Zhaoming's death. In the eleventh month, Hou

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199 LS, "Jianwen Di" 簡文帝, juan 4, 108. See also ZZTJ, "Liang ji ershi" 梁紀二十, juan 164, 1598. However, NS ("Liang benji" 梁本紀, juan 8, 231) records that it was on the seventeenth day of the eighth month of the same year (October 2, 551). In this dissertation, I follow the records in LS and ZZTJ.

200 NS, "Liang benji" 梁本紀, juan 8, 232.

201 ZZTJ, "Liang ji ershi" 梁紀二十, juan 164, 1598-1599. According to LS, in order to kill Xiao Gang, Wang Xiuzhuan filled a piece of kerchief with soil and then put it on top of Xiao Gang's stomach. See LS, "Hou Jing" 侯景, juan 56, 858.

202 LS, "Hou Jing" 侯景, juan 56, 857. See also LS, "Liang benji" 梁本紀, juan 8, 231-232.

203 NS, "Liang benji" 梁本紀, juan 8, 232.
Jing compelled Xiao Dong to abdicate the throne to him. He imprisoned Xiao Dong, together with his brothers Xiao Qiao 蕭橋 and Xiao Jiu 蕭樛, in a back room. They were drowned (on May 2, 552) by Xiao Yi's secret order after Xiao Yi's army took back control of the capital.

Before taking off for the general campaign against Hou Jing, Wang Sengbian 王僧辯 (d. 555), who was Xiao Yi's general, asked Xiao Yi what to do with Xiao Gang in case Xiao Gang was still alive after Wang's army entered the capital. Xiao Yi's command was to "use all possible military force." Xiao Gang was the brother who admired Xiao Yi's literary talent and entrusted his youngest son Xiao Dayuan 大圜 (n.d.) to him after Hou Jing occupied the entire capital. However, Xiao Yi's real intention was to snatch the throne. For the sake of ascending the throne, even Xiao Gang was on his list of those he wished to eliminate. Despite the fact that Xiao Yi killed his own brothers and several nephews, there is no record of him killing any of Xiao Gang's sons. After the assault against Hou Jing was over, Xiao Yi was happy to see Xiao Dayuan again when the latter was found and sent to Jiangling by Wang Sengbian. Xiao Yi dressed the boy in "Yue coat and

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204 LS, "Hou Jing" 侯景, juan 56, 859. See also NS, "Zeichen" 賊臣, juan 80, 2011.
205 NS, "Liang benji" 梁本紀, juan 8, 238.
207 ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiba" 梁紀十八, juan 162, 1580.
Hu belt (越衫胡帶)", which was non-Han Chinese clothing.\textsuperscript{208} Despite the fact that Xiao Gang's offspring might become the potential heirs to the throne, Xiao Yi treated Xiao Gang's children differently compared with the way he treated his own brothers and Crown Prince Zhaoming's offspring. The "barbarian" clothing he put on Xiao Dayuan might serve as his way of saying that the boy had lost the legitimacy of being a candidate for Liang's throne. Perhaps it was the most merciful thing he could do by way of reciprocating Xiao Gang's consistent fraternity to him.

Hou Jing was killed by his followers when he was on the run from Xiao Yi's army in the first year of the Chengsheng\textsuperscript{\textit{承聖}} Era (552). He had enjoyed a hundred days as an emperor. Xiao Yi granted Xiao Gang the posthumous title of Jianwen\textsuperscript{\textit{簡文}}. In the twenty-eighth day of the fourth month (June 5, 552), Xiao Gang was buried at the Mausoleum of Zhuang beside his empress.\textsuperscript{209}

His sons, Dafeng\textsuperscript{\textit{大封}} (n.d.) and Dayuan, survived after Western Wei killed Xiao Yi. They were taken to Chang'an with other captives and were treated as guests in the north. Dayuan lived into the Sui Dynasty (581-619), being admired for his literary talent. He left some works behind including twenty scrolls of \textit{The Old Days of the Liang} (\textit{Liang jiushi} 梁舊事).\textsuperscript{210}

\textsuperscript{208} \textit{Zhou shu} 周書, "Xiao Dayuan" 蕭大圜, \textit{juan} 42, comp. Linghu Defen 令狐德棻 et al (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1971), 756. See also BS, "Xiao Dayuan," \textit{juan} 29, 1069.

\textsuperscript{209} LS, "Jianwen Di" 簡文帝, \textit{juan} 4,108. See also NS, "Liang benji" 梁本紀, \textit{juan} 8, 232.

\textsuperscript{210} BS, "Xiao Dayuan" 蕭大圜, \textit{juan} 29, 1065.
Xiao Gang approved the execution of the eunuch who indirectly caused Crown Prince Zhaoming's death when the eunuch committed a crime in another legal case. He was saddened by Crown Prince Zhaoming's misfortune of being treated unjustly. He wiped away his tears when he made the decision to confirm the death penalty.\textsuperscript{211} Xiao Tong and Xiao Gang were brothers and had a very close relationship.\textsuperscript{212} It may be because they had the same parents and were close in age. But more importantly, it could be because they shared similar qualities and interests.

They both were admired for their precocious talent for learning. When they grew up, they gained reputations for being gentle and tolerant. After becoming Crown Prince, Xiao Gang took up his duties just like his older brother. They both sympathized with the people's hardships and tried to lighten their burdens. Traditionally, Xiao Gang would be viewed as a poet who wrote decadent Palace Style poetry, while Xiao Tong was an orthodox literatus. However, the ornate and unique style of poetry had been quite prevalent since the previous period, and, as we have seen in this chapter, Xiao Gang was not a decadent person with low moral standards, interested only in pleasure and enjoyment. One should be aware that, unlike Xiao Tong, Xiao Gang was not

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{211} NS, "Liang Wu Di zhuzi" 梁武帝諸子, \textit{juan} 53, 1313.
  \item \textsuperscript{212} See also Ping Wang, "Brotherly Love Through Courtly Writting" in \textit{The Age of Courtly Writing}, 87-103.
\end{itemize}
established as a Crown Prince at an early age. His legitimacy as heir after Xiao Tong's sudden death was even questioned by some courtiers and was used by Hou Jing to accuse Emperor Wu.\(^{213}\)

Xiao Gang's famous advice to his son is "the way of conducting oneself differs from writing. Conduct gives priority to circumspection. Writing should be unrestrained." Regardless of the meaning of the term "fangdang (unrestrained)", from this expression, one can perceive that Xiao Gang was clear in the contrast between his attitude towards life and towards his literature. In the letter he sent to Xiao Yi, he recalled his joyful and carefree days in Yongzhou. Nonetheless, he faithfully carried out his duties as a Crown Prince despite the depressing political environment in the capital. In the emergency when Hou Jing crossed the Yangtze River, Xiao Gang wasted no time in standing in front of the emperor with his military uniform on and requested full leadership. He was highly conscious of his responsibility as the heir of the empire. During the long defence that lasted for about six months without reinforcements, he stood with his fighters. In contrast to those who ran away from the battlefields or enjoyed entertainment in military camps, Xiao Gang was far from being a coward or a decadent person. In his last days, he bore insults in order to survive. But once he realized his time had come, he showed no fear but enjoyed himself until the last moment.

\(^{213}\) Ping Wang extensively discusses the relationship between Xiao Tong and Xiao Gang in "Culture and Literature in an Early Medieval Chinese Court" and her The Age of Courtly Writing. I will discuss Xiao Tong and Xiao Gang's literary thought in more detail in the next chapter.
The following self-account was written on a wall where Xiao Gang was under house arrest.

Looking back over his entire life, he felt no regrets.

有梁正士蘭陵蕭世絳，立身行道，終始如一，風雨如晦，雞鳴不已。弗欺暗室，豈況三光，
數至於此，命也如何！ （幽縖題壁自序） 214

Upright gentleman of the Liang, Xiao Shizuan of Lanling. His way of conducting himself has always been consistent. "Wind and rain are sweeping across the gloomy sky. Cocks cry out loud without ceasing."215 He has never deceived others in a darkened room, not to mention under the three lights [of the sun, the moon and the stars]. Fate meant it to be this way. What can to be done?

"The Self-account216 to the Writing on Wall under House Arrest"

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214 LS, "Jianwen Di" 簡文帝, juan 4, 108. See also YKJ, 3018.

215 As Xiaofei Tian points out, this two lines are quoted from the poem "Wind and Rain" ("Fengyu" 風雨) from Shi jing, and traditionally "reflects on how a gentleman remains steadfast in chaotic times." (Xiaofei Tian, Beacon Fire and Shooting Star, 306.). See also Kong Yingda’s 孔穎達 (574-648) commentary in Mao Shi zhengyi, juan 4, in SSJZS, 345.

216 For the English version of this self-account, see also Marney's translation in Liang Chien-wen Ti, 171 and Xiaofei Tian, Beacon Fire and Shooting Star, 306.
Chapter 2 Xiao Gang's Literary Thought

2.1 Critique of Xiao Gang's Poetry as Decadent

Yao Silian, one of the compilers of the *Liang shu*, highly praises Xiao Gang's personality, saying he was "clever and perspicacious," that "his good reputation was established early," and that "by nature he was generous and untrammelled, superior to those from antiquity to the present."

However, he also disparages Xiao Gang's writing, criticizing it because "it was dissolute and flowery." He considers that Xiao's style was "not something that a gentleman would like" because his poems were flawed by levity and sensuality. Similar criticism can be seen in He Zhiyuan's 何之元 (d. 593) "Liangdian zonglun" 梁典總論 ("Summary Disquisition on the History of the Liang"): Taizong (Xiao Gang) was filial, merciful, and kindhearted. He was indeed a monarch who followed the former sovereign's law with respect. What a pity that he was killed by the rebel. His writing was gorgeous and sensual, causing decay in social customs and norms. His poems were chanted by

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2 YKJ, 3430.
3 The term "shouwen zhi jun" 守文之君 originates from *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuang* 春秋公羊傳. In the conversation regarding a royal heir in the mourning period of the former king, the heir is supposed to "carry on King Wen [of Zhou]'s regime and follows King Wen's law." 繼文王之體，守文王之法度. See *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuang zhusu* 春秋公羊傳注疏, "Wen Gong jiu nian" 文公九年, juan 13, in SSJZS, 2269. Moreover, in Shi ji, to the phrase "zi gu shouming zhi diwang ji jiti shouwen zhi jun" 自古受命之帝王及繼體守文之君, Sima Zhen 司馬貞 (fl. Tang Dynasty) annotates in his *Suoyin* 索隱: "The term 'shouwen' means 'to follow the law'. It indicates the monarch, who is not the founding monarch receiving the mandate [from Heaven], follows former emperors' law only." 守文猶守法也，謂非受命創制之君，但守先帝法度為之主耳. See Shi ji, "Waiqi shijia" 外戚世家, juan 49, 1967.
women's mouths, and were not worthy to reach gentlemen's ears. This is what a man of letters is deeply afraid of. His poetry was a serious blemish on politics and morality. The technique of carving insects has nothing to do with government or negligence, so even an ordinary grown man would not do it, much less a monarch!

He Zhiyuan was a historian living during the Liang, Chen and Sui dynasties. In his comment, again, we see the contradiction between Xiao Gang's personality and his writing. In contrast to Yao Silian's father Yao Cha, who was treated well by Xiao Gang, He Zhiyuan did not seem to have any direct connection with Xiao Gang during his lifetime, so these two independent sources demonstrate contemporary opinions of Xiao Gang.

Soon after Xiao Gang became Crown Prince, his and his long-time tutor Xu Chi's poetry was given the name "Palace Style" by their contemporaries. The word "Palace" indicates Xiao Gang's residence, the "Eastern Palace", and the "Palace Style" refers to their novel poetic writing style. Because it was so different from the prevalent style in the capital, the fresh Palace Style became popular rapidly and people who served in Xiao Gang's Eastern Palace all started to imitate it.

4 The term "diaochong" 雕蟲, literally translated as "carving insects", refers to a type of calligraphy learned by young boys. In this context, it means "ornate writing devoid of moral purpose". I am indebted to David R. Knechtges for this suggestion.

5 The remark that "a grown man would not do the technique of carving insects" was made by the Western Han literatus Yang Xiong 揚雄 in his Fayan. See Yang Xiong, Yang zi Fayan 揚子法言, "Wuzi" 吾子, juan 2, 6, in SBCK chubian, Zi bu 子部. I will discuss this comment in detail later.

6 CS, "Wenxue, He Zhiyuan" 文學何之元, juan 34, 465-468.

7 LS, "Jianwen Di" 簡文帝, juan 4, 109. See also LS, "Xu Chi" 徐摛, juan 30, 446.

8 LS, "Xu Chi" 徐摛, juan 30, 447.
In the next century, as monarch of the newly established Tang Dynasty, the emperor Taizong of Tang (Li Shimin 李世民, 599-649, r. 627-649) started a project of compiling historical works. The projects included histories of the Six Dynasties and the Sui Dynasty: 

- *Liang shu* 梁書 (*History of the Liang*)
- *Chen shu* 陳書 (*History of the Chen*)
- *Bei Qi shu* 北齊書 (*Northern History of the Qi*)
- *Zhou shu* 周書 (*History of the Zhou*)
- *Sui shu* 隋書 (*History of the Sui*)

In addition, the *Jin shu* 晉書 (*History of the Jin*), *Nan shi* 南史 (*History of the Southern Dynasties*) and *Bei shi* 北史 (*History of the Northern Dynasties*) were also compiled during Taizong's reign. The historians in the early Tang Dynasty attempted to restore Confucianism to literature, for they believed that literature existed for the purpose of politics and morality.

The attack on Xiao Gang's Palace Style poetry escalated in *Sui shu*:

When Emperor Jianwen of the Liang (Xiao Gang) resided in the Eastern Palace, he also liked literary writings. The range of his elegant phrases and skillful compositions was confined to sleeping mats. He elaborated intricate expressions, and his thoughts were limited to the inner chambers. The curious youngsters imitated and learned [his style] one after another. People both inside and outside the court bustled out [of their enthusiasm for following the style], and it was

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11 Ibid., "Wenxue" 文學, *juan* 76, 1729.

called the "Palace Style". It spread rapidly and widely without showing a sign of ceasing until the fall [of the Liang Dynasty].

The language used in the attack is concrete. Terms such as "dissolute", "flowery", and "sensual" appearing in the *Liang shu* and the "Liangdian zonglun", are now related to "sleeping mats" and "inner chambers". It is the amorous contents in Xiao Gang's poetry that the metaphors refer to. In the preface to the "Wenxue (literature and learning)" section in *Sui shu*, Xiao Gang and his brother Xiao Yi were accused of starting the lascivious style of writing: "the meaning (of their poems) was superficial and complicated; the writing was ambiguous and decorated. Levity and novelty were valued when choosing diction. There is a lot of sorrow in the sentiment."\(^{13}\) In the end, his poetry was condemned as "*wangguo zhiyin*" 亡國之音 ("the sound that doomed a nation").\(^{14}\)

Similar criticisms can be found in *Nan shi*\(^{15}\) and *Bei shi*.\(^{16}\) From the Tang Dynasty onward, the notoriety of Xiao Gang's poetry grew. Xiao Gang's poetry was labeled decadent,\(^{17}\) "flirtatious", "vulgar", "sexually perverted",\(^{18}\) and "erotic"\(^{19}\) by Confucian critics. Regardless of

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\(^{13}\) 其意淺而繁，其文匿而彩，詞尚輕險，情多哀思。 See SS, "Wenxue" 文學, *juan* 76, 1730.

\(^{14}\) Ibid.

\(^{15}\) NS, "Liang benji xia" 梁本紀下, *juan* 8, 252.

\(^{16}\) BS, "Wenyuan" 文苑, *juan* 83, 2782.

\(^{17}\) *Zhongguo wenxue piping shi [shang]* 中國文學批評史 [上], ed. Fudan Daxue Zhongwen xi Gudian wenxue jiaooyanzu (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1979), 139.


whether these accusations are appropriate, there is a reason for the appearance of the Palace Style poetry from the historical point of view.

As for the literary development prior to the Liang Dynasty, Birrell gives a brief summary:

The early medieval period witnessed an explosion of interest in the study of literature that was unequalled in the cultural tradition, even to present times. Literature was viewed as an autonomous subject for intellectual and critical inquiry, and, for the most part, was detached from the separate concerns of politics, philosophy, and other forms of academic pursuits. For the first time in its history, literature was perceived as a pure form of humanistic expression, with its own forms of discourse and rhetoric, and its own distinctive concerns.20

After the fall of the Han Dynasty, Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-226, r. 220-226)21 wrote the earliest extant essay devoted to the discussion of literature, "Lun wen" 論文 ("A Discourse on Literature").22 He comments on the quality of some renowned literati's writing, and recounts the characteristics of different literary genres, saying:

21 Cao Pi is Cao Cao's first son, and his younger brother is Cao Zhi. He usurped the throne from the last emperor of the Han Dynasty and established the Wei of the Three Kingdom. The father and sons are called the "Three Caos" 三曹 for their highly evaluated literary talent.
22 Cao Pi's "Lun wen" as an important work of early Chinese literary criticism is well acknowledged. For example, Sui-kit Wong indicates that it is important because it might be "the earliest attempt in China to put 'literature' on a pedestal," and "the earliest evidence of an awareness of literary 'genres', and genres have subsequently pre-occupied the minds of many Chinese critics." For its strong influence on the later Chinese literary criticism, Stephen Owen remarks that the "rudimentary formulations of many of the perennial interests of later critics" can be found in this essay. See Sui-kit Wong, Early Chinese Literary Criticism (Hong Kong: Joint Publishing Co., 1983), 22. See also Stephen Owen ed. and trans., An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911 (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), 335.
As far as literary writings are concerned, their root is the same but the branches are very unlike. Therefore elegance befits memorials and memorandums; lucidity well suits letters and treatises; in epigraphs and eulogies one values plain factualness; in poetry and rhapsodies one desires ornate embellishment. These genres are very different from one another, which is why a good writer is usually adept at just one of them. Only a comprehensive talent can master them all.

Cao Pi here reveals the difficulty of mastering the writing skill in multiple genres for an individual writer, and declares that poetry and rhapsody writing should be ornately embellished. His viewpoint was carried on and developed by Lu Ji 陸機 (261-303). In his eminent "Wen fu" 文賦 ("Fu on Literature"), Lu writes:

Lyric poetry springs from feelings and is exquisitely ornate;
The rhapsody gives form to an object, and is limpid and clear.
The epitaph displays outer form to support substance;
The dirge wrenches the heart and is mournful and sad.
The inscription is broad yet concise, gentle and smooth;
The admonition restrains, and is crisp and bold.
The eulogy is dignified and relaxed, lush and luxuriant;
The treatises subtle and exact, pellucid and coherent.
The memorial is calm and clear, refined and elegant;
The discourse dazzles and glitters, but is deceptive and deceitful.

Although there are distinctions among these forms,

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23 Xiao Tong 蕭統 ed., Wen xuan 文選, "Dian lun, Lun wen" 典論論文, juan 52 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji shudian, 1986), 2271.

They all repress the wayward, control wild abandon.
Words must convey meaning, and principle must be properly set forth;
Thus, there is no need for prolix verbiage.\(^{25}\)

In Lu's "Fu on Literature", the classification of literary genre becomes more diverse than that in Cao Pi's "A Discourse on Literature". Yet, in regard to poetry writing, the preference remains the same — it should be "ornate".

The interpretations of the term "qimi" 綺靡 in Lu Ji's "Fu on Literature" are diverse.\(^{26}\) Some researchers attempt to take "mi" 麗 as an indication of sound (or rhyme) deriving from the adjective word "mimi" 麗靡 (decadent [music]).\(^{27}\) Li Zehou 李澤厚 disagrees with this theory. Because "qi" 綺 originally means "fine silk" 細綾 and "mi" 麗 is an antonym of "thrifty" 节俭, he maintains that "qimi" indicates that "the literary grace [of the poetic writing] is flowery and flourishing ("綺靡", ...
且文采美麗繁盛。)。28 Yet, the two characters, "qi" 綺 and "mi" 靡, had been used as a compound word when Chen Shou 陳壽 (233-297) wrote the Sanguo zhi at the latest. According to the Sanguo zhi, in a memorial Hua He 华覈 (n.d.) submitted to Sun Hao 孫皓 (r. 242-284), Hua voiced his concern about current social problems, saying that "all sorts of artisans produce useless goods; women wear fine29 accoutrements." 百工作無用之器，婦人為綺靡之飾。30 In addition, Li Shan 李善 (ca. 630-689) annotates "qimi" 綺靡 in Lu Ji's "Fu on Literature", saying that it means "elaborate and ingenious" (精妙)。31 In English translations for this term, Achilles Fang renders this line as "Shih (lyric poetry) traces emotions daintily";32 and Stephen Owen translates it as "Poems follow

29 Italics mine as in all the following unless otherwise noted.
30 Sanguo zhi 三國志, "Wu shu ershi, Hua He" 吳書二十華覈, juan 65, 1468. Chu Hsiao-Hai (Sherman Chu) 朱曉海 maintains that "qimi" 綺靡 is an assonance word that the two characters share the same vowel sound and so the meaning of this word should not be taken as the combination of the original meanings of the two characters. Namely, the meaning of "qimi" has nothing to do with the original meaning of the two characters. However, in order to attest that the term "qimi" 綺靡 in Hua He's memorial does not contain the same meaning as that in Lu Ji's "Fu on Literature", he interprets the two characters separately, saying that "qi" indicates "silken garments with embroidery" (綾綺之服 上有文(紋)繡), and "mi" indicates "being extravagant and wasteful" (奢侈 or侈靡). Chu asserts that "qimi" in Lu Ji's "Fu on Literature" means to write poetry in an indirect, unrestrained and pleased manner (婉轉附意、跌宕愜心). See Chu's discussion in his "Qicuo' qimi' jie" ‘綺錯’ ‘綺靡’ 解, Tsing hua journal of Chinese studies 清華學報 25, no. 1 (March 1995): 37, 46 and 47.
31 Wen xuan, "Wen fu" 文賦, juan 17, 766.
from feeling, they are sensuous, fine." Including David Knechtges' translation cited above, these translations render the meaning indicated in Hua He's memorial and Li Shan's commentary.

Lu Ji's "Fu on Literature", as Knechtges explicates, contains "a broad and comprehensive treatment of the process of literary creation" and its statements on the rhapsody and poetry "have been especially influential." In a good piece of writing, Lu Ji remarks: "Things are in various postures. Styles are frequently changing. Cleverness is advocated with regard to idea-seeking. Beauty is valued in expressions. The alternation of sounds is like the five colours illuminating each other." Lu Ji not only endorses beautiful expression, he sheds light on metrical beauty in writing. It is obvious that he has recognized the phonetic characteristics of the Chinese language, and he suggested that writers make the best use of rhyme. Although he has not reached the point of using tonal patterns the way writers of later dynasties did, there is no question about his pioneering efforts in this area. Lu's theory indicates that Chinese poetry was heading in a more sophisticated and more aesthetic direction — a direction leading to bettes-lettres.

Ornate expressions had been proficiently utilized in grand rhapsody writings from the Han Dynasty, and what was emphasized in Cao Pi and Lu Ji's treatises only inspired Xiao Gang and his

35 其為物也多姿，其為體也屢遷。其會意也尚巧，其遣言也貴妍，暨音聲之迭代，若五色之相宣。*Wen xuan, "Wen fu"* 文賦, *juan 17*, 766.
fellow poets to write in an innovative way with poems and short rhapsodies. Likewise, sensual poems do not originate from Palace Style poetry either. Shi Guanhai, having carefully examined the poems and rhapsodies about women from the period of *The Book of Odes* to Xiao Gang's time, portrays the continuity in how this topic, sometimes treated sensually, appears in poetry and rhapsody writings.³⁶

Writing sensual poems did not start from Palace Style poetry, and sometimes the judgment of whether a poem is sensual or not depends on interpretation. Yet, this does not change the fact that during the Qi, Liang and Chen period, the expression "meiren" 美人 (fair woman), or its synonyms, was very frequently used in poems, as Shi observes. In comparison with those written in the previous ages, Shi remarks that in this period this kind of expressions is no longer euphemistic or ambiguous. He believes that the phenomenon reflects the contemporary social and cultural environment and the evolution of literary ideas, as well as the interaction between folk and learned literature.³⁷

In addition to the unstable political situation and the family background of the ruling class, scholars often list the influential factors affecting literature of the Southern Dynasties, especially that of the Qi and Liang periods, as follows: the decline of Confucianism and the thriving of

³⁷ Ibid., 48-52.
Buddhism and Daoism, the decadent social climate, the increasing urbanization, the literary independence from orthodox Confucianism, the influence of folk literature, and the advocacy and patronage of the monarchs. Among these factors, Hu Dehuai remarks that the advocacy and patronage of the monarchs of the Qi and Liang are most remarkable because the monarchs actively participated in literary activities themselves. The "Four Xiaos" 四萧 of the Liang, namely, Emperor Wu and his three sons, Xiao Tong, Xiao Gang and Xiao Yi, often become the topic of discussions regarding the literary landscape of the Liang.

Emperor Wu, as a founding emperor of the Liang, was versed in both military affairs and literary learning. Although he showed no interest in the newly invented tonal prosody, which was initiated by his contemporaries Zhou Yong 周颙 (d. 485) 39 and Shen Yue, his talent and profound learning in literature and religion were highly regarded and well acknowledged. As a learned scholar, the literary and cultural undertakings he promoted were unprecedented and for that matter even rare in the entire history of China. As Yao Silian puts it, to "promote literature and learning" (興文學) was one of Emperor Wu's governance policies. 40 His courteous reception to men of letters resulted in the rise of elites originating from the low-rank gentry class as well as the flourishing of

38 Hu Dehuai 胡德懷, Qi Liang wentan yu si Xiao yanjiu 齊梁文壇與四蕭研究 (Nanjing: Nanjing Daxue chubanshe, 1997), 6.
39 Zhou Yong was Xu Chi's father-in-law.
40 LS, "Benji disan" 本紀第三, juan 3, 97.
literary families. His literary activities encouraged voluminous compilations of literary encyclopedias, Buddhist canons and works in numerous fields such as history, genealogy and so forth in the Liang Dynasty. It was during Emperor Wu's reign that Zhong Rong (ca. 468-518) and Liu Xie (ca. 465-532) produced their two important literary treatises.

During the early sixties of the 20th century, Chinese scholars began discussing the idea that three rival literary schools emerged in the critical writings of the Liang period. One of these three was the "archaic school" represented by Pei Ziyue, whose theoretical treatise is believed to be his "Diaochong lun" ("On Carving Insects"). In this treatise, Pei makes a strong criticism of the new literary trend that had emerged in the later years of the [Liu] Song Dynasty, the Daming Era (457-464). According to Pei, younger generations since then had sought a flowery style in poetry to express their feelings and had abandoned classical learning. As Ping Wang argues, Pei "emphasizes the importance of classical learning and the instructive purpose of writing" and

41 For detailed discussion about the literary families in the Liang, see Xiaofei Tian, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, 117-125.
43 See note 43 in Xiaofei Tian's *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, 125.
44 For English translation of Pei's "Diaochong lun", see Ping Wang, "Culture and Literature in an Early Medieval Chinese Court," 62-64. Wang listed other versions of English translation in the same dissertation.
believes that expressing one's feelings "is not part of the proper writing." Emperor Wu of Liang is believed to have been the supporter of this school, and its members were seniors who played an active role in the early time of the Liang.

The opposite school was the "avant-garde school" led by Xiao Gang and Xiao Yi. In contrast to Pei Ziyu's conservative view of literature, members of this school pursued a "xinbian" ("new and unique", or "innovative") poetic style, attaching importance to expressing one's feelings with ornate diction, and enthusiastically practising the newly invented tonal prosody. The Yutai xinyong, a poetry anthology mainly focusing on amorous themes, is regarded as the representative anthology of this school. Xiao Yi says in his Jinlou zi: "As for literary writings, they only need to spread out gorgeous expressions, bring out the melodious music of words, capture the beauty of rhythm, and surge with feelings like those of waves." Zhong Rong's Shi pin 詩品 (Gradations of Poets) was taken as the theoretical guideline, for it claims: "Without recourse to poetry, how could they [the fickle chances and circumstances] be fully laid bare? Without the song, is there any way in which the emotions

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46 The meaning of this term will be discussed in detail later.
47 Xiao Yi, Jinlou zi jiaojian 金樓子校箋, "Li yan" 立言, annot. Xu Yimin 徐逸民, 955. See also the translation by Zong-Qi Cai in Hawai'i Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture, 286.
aroused could be allowed to range freely?" 48 非陳詩何以展其義，非長歌何以釋其情。In addition, Xiao Gang, in his "Yu Xiangdong Wang shu" ("Letter to Prince of Xiangdong"), which I will discuss later in detail, also expresses the same criteria for poetry writing.

Finally, the third school taking the middle position was called the "compromise school" and is represented by Xiao Tong. The theoretical treatise behind this school is said to be Liu Xie's Wenxin diaolong 文心雕龍 (The Literary Mind Carves Dragons). 49 The Wenxin diaolong is the most important systematic literary treatise in the history of Chinese literary criticism. It discusses numerous aspects of literature in detail, including its origin, its styles, its creative processes and its criticism. 50 This school believes that literature undergoes changes as Xiao Tong indicates in a letter to Xiao Yi:

48 Translated by Sui-kit Wong, "Preface to the Poets Systematically Graded," in Early Chinese Literary Criticism, 93-94. Shi pin 詩品 (Gradations of Poets) is a monograph on poetry criticism written by Xiao Gang's contemporary Zhong Rong. See LS, "Zhong Rong" 鍾嵘, juan 49, 696. See also Morino Shigeo 森野繁夫, "Ryō sho no bungaku syūdan" 梁初の文学集団, Chūgoku bungaku hō 中国文学報 21 (1966): 100.

49 Many scholars agree on the "three schools" division. See examples, Hu Dalei 胡大雷, Zhonggu wenxue jituan 中古文学集団, 15; Hu Deyai 胡德豊, Qi Liang wentan yu si Xiao yanjiu 齊梁文壇與四蕭研究, 17; Morino Shigeo 森野繁夫, "Ryō sho no bungaku syūdan" 梁初的文學集團, 97.

Although spokeless wheels herald the making of a grand imperial carriage, does a grand imperial carriage still have the nature of spokeless wheels? Although layers of ice are formed of accumulated water, accumulated water lacks the coldness of ice. Why? This is because, as they develop and become elaborate, things outgrow their original nature and change radically. If physical things change this way, so do writings (wen). As writings change with time, it is hard to discuss them in great detail.  

Xiao Tong also believes that the ideal literary writings should be in good balance between ornamentation and classic appropriateness. Xiao Tong expresses this idea in his preface to the Wen xuan:

夫文典則累野。麗亦傷浮。能麗而不浮。典而不野。文質彬彬。有君子之致。吾嘗欲為之。但恨未逮耳。  

When literary writings possess a classic appropriateness, they might be burdened by being plain; when they are decorous and ornate, they could suffer from superficiality. If one's literary style may achieve ornamentation without being superficial and appropriateness without being plain, then content and form will be in a perfect balance, which is the very style of a gentleman. This is what I would like to accomplish in my own writings, but I regret to say that I am not quite there yet.

In comparison to the flowery Yutai xinyong, the Wen xuan is considered the anthology representing this school because of its orthodox selections. In academic circles, a tension between these two anthologies is found, believed to speak for the decadent literature and the orthodox voice.
respectively. Some scholars even presume political rivalry between the two brothers because of this significant difference.

However, after analyzing the similarities and differences between the "Four Xiaos'" literary thought, Lin Dazhi remarks that current discussion of the "three schools" focuses excessively on their differences, while neglecting the fact that the father and sons share many common interests and opinions about literature. For example, they all believe that literature undergoes changes, emphasize the ornate nature of literature, and agree that poetry can be used to express one's feelings. Although Hu Dehuai claims that the concept of the "three schools" fulfills the basic requirement for their qualification to be considered "schools", he admits that: the members of each school sometimes overlap; members of the same school sometimes belonged to different eras; and the boundaries between the schools are not as clear as later "schools". The model of the three literary schools was proposed in the early sixties of the twentieth century as mentioned before. There is no historical evidence indicating that the Liang literati consciously established those schools or chose to join them. After discussing many complexities related to the division of the

55 Lin Dazhi 林大志, *Si Xiao yanjiu*, 113-118.
56 Hu Dehuai 胡德懷, *Qi Liang wentan yu si Xiao yanjiu* 齊梁文壇與四蕭研究 (Nanjing: Nanjing Daxue chubanshe, 1997), 17.
schools and the common thoughts shared between the four Xiaos, Xiaofei Tian rightly points out the defect of this model. She argues:

The ultimate weakness of Zhou Xunchu's "three camps" theory is the fact that it is predicted on the contemporaneity of the three "camps." Without the condition of simultaneity and a direct conflict of interests, there would be no "three camps." Rather, there would be only a change in tastes and fashions, which was in fact what happened in the Liang.\(^{58}\)

Tian is the first to give a clear definition to the term "school" or "camp" in this particular case. The starting point of the distinction of "three schools (or camps)" may be as Tian maintains, "an anachronistic misunderstanding of the age — perhaps a result of observing the intertwined literary and political partisanship commonly seen in late imperial China."\(^{59}\) However, this theory was promoted for decades and even became settled conviction in academic circles worldwide for a reason. It is well acknowledged that a large number of men of letters emerged during the period of the Liang and that they lived in a complex literary world. When facing this large and talented group, the theory of the "three schools/camps" is one way of sorting out the complicated connections between those persons and the theories they favored. Nonetheless, the clear-cut model has its limits when it comes to dealing with a far more complex reality. In fact, as many scholars have pointed out, many "members" did not confine themselves to one literary group. The change of

\(^{57}\) The italics here is by the author.

\(^{58}\) Xiaofei Tian, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, 143.

\(^{59}\) Ibid., 6.
group membership sometimes was simply caused by official transfers. Overlapping the "three schools" mentioned above, we see some scholars introduce terms such as "public group" - "private group", or "central group" - "regional group", and so forth. Liu Xiaochuo 刘孝绰 (481-539) was a member of Xiao Tong's court who contributed to the compilation of Wen xuan. In Ping Wang's words, he was "Xiao Tong's Laureate Poet". Hu Dalei uses Liu Xiaochuo's transfer from Xiao Tong's group to Xiao Gang's as an instance, concluding that Liu wrote in accordance to Xiao Gang's style after the transfer took place because literary groups influence individual literatus's writing. Yet, if we look at this incident from Xiaofei Tian's point of view, there is no need to force the conclusion to fit Hu's ideas. In other words, Liu Xiaochou wrote what he usually wrote no matter whom he worked for.

Abandoning the model of the "three schools" does not change the fact that literati of the Liang did form literary clubs or salons headed by members of the royal family both in the capital and regions. The group of "Gaozhai xueshi" ("Scholars of the Lofty Studio") in Xiao Gang's prioncedom when he was still titled Prince of Jin'an was one of them. The root of Xiao Gang's "Palace Style" poetry can be sought back in the Yongming 永明 Era (483-493) of the previous

60 Morino Shigeo 森野繁夫, "Ryō sho no bungaku syūdan" 梁初の文学集団, 83.
61 Hu Dalei characterizes Xiao Tong and Xiao Gang's schools as "official" (蕭統、蕭綱主持的是以官屬形式組織起來的文學集團) and that of Pei Ziyi's as "of interest" (而裴子野文學集團，是由於一些文人具有相同的文學主張與文學趣味，相互賞好，經常聚在一起展開一些文學活動而組織起來的。). See Hu's Zhonggu wenxue jituan, 141.
dynasty, the Qi. The poetic style named after this era, the Yongming Style, is characterized by its ornate, simple but smooth diction, as well as by the tonal prosody newly proposed by Zhou Yong, Shen Yue and their fellow poets:

齊永明中，文士王融、謝朓、沈約文章始用四聲，以為新變。至是轉拘聲韻，彌尚麗靡，復踐於往時。62

Back in the mid-Yongming Era of the Qi Dynasty, the scholars Wang Rong (467-493), Xie Tiao (464-499) and Shen Yue began to use the four tones to compose literary writings.63 They regarded this as "xinbian". By the time when Taizong (Xiao Gang) became Crown Prince, he and his fellow scholars started to adhere to sound and rhyme. They valued magnificence and richness [in verse writing] more than in the past.

Although the name "Palace Style" was given after Xiao Gang became Crown Prince, the practice of this kind of poetry had begun long before that. Xiao's long-time tutor, Xu Chi, was famous for writing "xinbian and not being restrained by old styles," 屬文好為新變，不拘舊體。64 and his influence on Xiao Gang was revealed by Xiao himself, who said that he had become fascinated by poetic writing at a tender age. Although the term "xinbian" 新變 in the citations above is a keyword for understanding the nature of the Palace Style, its meaning has not been closely inspected.

62 LS, "Wenxue shang" 文學上, juan 49, 690. See also NS, "Yu Jianwu" 庾肩吾, juan 50, 1247.


64 LS, "Xu Chi" 徐摛, juan 30, 446-447. See also NS, "Xu Chi" 徐摛, juan 62, 1521.
As a compound word, "xinbian" first appeared in Xiao Zixian's *Nan Qi shu*. "In the case of writing, the most troublesome aspects are mediocrity and oldness. If there is no xinbian, it is impossible to surpass the masters." 在乎文章, 彌患凡舊。若無新變, 不能代雄。\(^{65}\) In addition to the two citations about the Yongming Style and Xu Chi's writing, these three entries containing the term "xinbian" are all from or around the Liang period, and this term does not seem to be commonly used thereafter.

The two characters, "xin" 新 and "bian" 變, are usually used independently. "Xin" normally is used as an adjective meaning "new"; and "bian" is used as a verb indicating the meaning "to change". Following this logic, it is not surprising to see Xiaofei Tian translate "xinbian" as "novel transformation" or "new transformation",\(^{66}\) because based on the contexts, the term "xinbian" functions as a noun in those paragraphs. However, this compound word is more likely constructed by taking the two words as sharing the same lexical nature, namely, "bian" should also be used as an adjective in the same manner as "xin". In fact, the term "xinbian" appears in one more entry in *Nan Qi shu*: "[Lu] Jue (472-499) had lofty demeanor and quality since he was young. He was fond of literary writing, and his pentasyllabic style poems are quite xinbian." 厥少有風槩, 好屬文, 五言詩體甚新變。

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\(^{65}\) NQS, "Wenxue" 文學, juan 52, 908.

\(^{66}\) Xiaofei Tian, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, 153 and 175.
"xinbian", the term "xinqi" 新奇 is used in other editions.\textsuperscript{67} As an adjective, "xinqi" 新奇 means "novel"; and "qi" 奇 by itself means "distinctive" or "outstanding",\textsuperscript{68} functioning as an adjective just like "xin" 新. It was the similar lexical and semantic nature that enables the replacement of these two words, "xinbian" and "xinqi", in different editions, and the structure of the two should be considered the same.

It is not rare to see "bian" used as an adjective component in some words before and during the Southern Dynasties. "Xinsheng bianqu" 新聲變曲 ("new sounds and variant tunes") can be found in Lady Li's biography in Han shu about her brother Li Yannian\textsuperscript{69} and in Pan Yue's 潘岳 (247-300) "Sheng fu" 笙賦 ("Fu on the Mouth Organ"),\textsuperscript{70} as well as in Dai Yong's 戴顒 (377-441) biography in Song shu and Nan shi.\textsuperscript{71} In addition, "xinshi biansheng" 新詩變聲 ("new poems and variant sounds") can be found in Wei Dan's 韋誕 (179-253) "Jingfu Dian fu" 景福殿賦 ("Fu on the

\textsuperscript{67} 五言詩體甚新變 “新變” 各本作 “新奇”. See NQS, "Lu Jue" 陸厥, juan 52, 897.

\textsuperscript{68} I am indebted to Daniel Bryant for this suggestion.

\textsuperscript{69} 每為新聲變曲，聞者莫不感動。（Whenever [Li] composed new sounds and variant tunes, no audiences would not be touched.) See HS, "Xiaowu Li Furen" 孝武李夫人, juan 97 shang, 3951.

\textsuperscript{70} 新聲變曲，奇韻橫逸。（New sounds, variant tunes, / Wonderful melodies, exuberant and care-free.) See Wen xuan, juan 18, 861. Translated by David R. Knechtges, Wen xuan or Selections of Refined Literature, v. 3, 311.

\textsuperscript{71} 為義季鼓琴，並新聲變曲，其三調遊絃、廣陵、止息之流，皆與世異。（[Dai Yong] strummed zither for [Liu] Yiji (415-447). [The music he played was] all new sounds and variant melodies. The archaic music like "Youxian", "Guangling" and "Zhixi" that he played with his three tunes [of qingshang mode] were all different from those played by worldly musicians.) See Shen Yue 沈約, Song shu 宋書, "Dai Yong" 戴顒, juan 74 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 2277. See also NS, "Dai Yong" 戴顒, juan 75, 1867.
Jingfu Hall"),\(^{72}\) and "biange\(^\text{變歌}\) (variant songs) is used in some titles of Han\(^\text{yuefu}.\(^{73}\) The character "bian\(^\text{變}\) in these terms contains the meaning of "deviating from the standard."\(^{74}\)

As a compound word, "xinbian" is very likely an abbreviation of "Xinsheng bianqu" and "xinshi biansheng", a newly created word in the Qi and Liang period. By omitting the nouns, which respectively refer to songs, tunes, music and poems, the adjectives, "xin" and "bian", were combined and form the term "xinbian". This new compound word emphasizes the common nature of all these artistic creations and was used as a noun substituting both the original "xinsheng bianqu" and "xinshi biansheng". Thus, the term "xinbian" as it appeared in the three entries cited at the beginning of this discussion should be interpreted as follows: Shen Yu and his fellow poets used the four-tones to "compose new and unique poems" (以為新變); Xu Chi was fond of a "new and unique style when he wrote" (屬文好為新變); and Xiao Zhixian maintains that "if there is nothing new and unique" (若無新變), it is impossible to surpass the masters.

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\(^{72}\) 新詩變聲，曲調殊別。 (New poems and variant sounds, the tunes and melodies are extraordinarily distinctive.) See YWLJ, \(\text{juan}\) 62, 1124.

\(^{73}\) LQL, \(\text{juan}\) 10.

\(^{74}\) An explanation in this sense about the term "biansheng\(^\text{變聲}\) (variant sounds) can be found in "Biansheng pian\(^\text{變聲篇}\) cited in the Song shi 宋史. A phrase, "延年善歌，為新變聲. ([Li] Yannian was expert in [making] songs. [He] composed new variant tunes.)," appears in an entry about the Han Emperor Wu's favorite musician in the Han shu 宋史. The structure of the three characters "xin bian sheng" 新變聲 should be taken as "xin"+"biansheng". See Tuo Tuo 脫嶄 eds., Song shi 宋史, "Yue liu" 樂六, \(\text{juan}\) 131 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 3060. See also HS, "Li Yannian" 李延年, \(\text{juan}\) 93, 3725.
Much has been said about the Palace Style poetry from various aspects. However, its unchangeable core feature is "xinbian" — "novelty and uniqueness", or as correctly translated by Marney and Knechtges, "innovation". Palace Style poetry was criticized as "decadent" from the moral aspect because it expanded topics to something that had not been written about much by learned literati before and was written in a flowery way. Its flowery diction and refined syntax were elaborately polished despite the "vulgar" themes. Moreover, the mixture of long and short lines, the heptasyllabic form, the tonal regulation, the exquisite parallelism and the creative use of literary allusions, all these were dynamically developed from centuries of literary experimentation by Palace Style poets. The persistent critique of Palace Style poetry as "decadent", which Xiaofei Tian properly refutes, is far from the truth. "Xinbian" was not only the most remarkable feature of Xiao Gang and his fellow poets' poetry writing, it was also their ultimate literary pursuit.

2.2 Ideas Linking Xiao Gang and the Yutai xinyong

The extant works of historical figures usually play an important role in creating their images for later generations. In his discussion of Xiao Gang's contribution to Chinese Buddhism, Marney writes, "Hsiao Kang (Xiao Gang) wrote many hundreds of folios on Buddhist themes, a quantity far

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75 John Marney, *Liang Chien-wen Ti*, 82 and 98. See also Knechtges, *Wen xuan or Selections of Refined Literature*, v.1, 11.
76 Xiaofei Tian, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, 7.
exceeding his poetry, official writings, and Taoist exegeses. ...but his major dissertations, including the monumental *Fa-pao lien-pi* (*Fabao lianbi*), are lost. It is ironic that had any of these survived, Hsiao Kang might be remembered above all as a great Buddhist writer.\(^7^7\) The *Fabao lianbi* was an immense project organized by Xiao Gang when he was still the Prince of Jin'an. More than 30 literati were involved, and the project was completed three years after he became Crown Prince in the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534).\(^7^8\) In addition to being the chief coordinator of this large series, Xiao Gang's profound understanding of Buddhism and his devotion to it are documented in both historical records and his surviving works. Yet, when speaking of Xiao Gang, his ornate writing style, especially his Palace Style poetry, has been taken as the main thing. What Marney calls attention to is how little a historical figure's lost works affect the evaluation given by later readers. Failing to be remembered as "a great Buddhist writer", Xiao Gang has been remembered as a poet who wrote "decadent" poetry,\(^7^9\) and the surviving *Yutai xinyong* (*New Songs from a Jade Terrace*) is believed to be an anthology that provides good examples of his Palace Style poetry.

\(^7^7\) Marney, *Liang Chien-wen Ti*, 123.
\(^7^8\) NS, "Lu Gao" 陸杲, *juan* 48, 1205.
In the *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nan-bei Chao shi*, Xiao Gang's poetry is divided into two categories: *yuefu* 樂府 (Music Bureau) and *shi* 詩 (poem). Leaving out those with disputed authorship, Xiao Gang's extant poetry amounts to approximately 261 works. The *Yutai xinyong* is not only the earliest primary source for Xiao Gang's surviving poetry, among the 6 early sources anterior to the end of the Tang Dynasty, it is also the second main source, surpassed only by the *Yiwen leiju* 藝文類聚 (*Collection of Literature Arranged by Categories*). Of his 261 extant poems, 68 are contained in the *Yutai xinyong*, and this portion comprises about 26% of his entire extant verse.

Among the ancient poetry anthologies, the *Yutai xinyong* is the third oldest following the *Shi jing* (*The Book of Odes*) and *Chu ci* 楚辭 (*The Songs of the South*). However, it was not mentioned in "standard histories" (*zhengshi* 正史) until the *Sui shu*, which writes that this anthology consists of 10 *juan* (scroll) and was compiled by Xu Chi’s son, Xu Ling. There were no clear entries found linking Xiao Gang to the *Yutai xinyong* before Liu Su's *Da Tang xinyu* 大唐新語.

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80 The statistics regarding the number of Xiao Gang's extant works is based on LQL. There are 12 *yuefu* and 11 *shi* attributed to him whose authorship is disputed. In the following statistics, these disputed verses are not included.

81 Since the last two *shi* on page 1980 in LQL only retain two lines and one line respectively, they are not included here.

82 Among the 68 works, 24 are under the *yuefu* category and 44 works belong to *shi*. These numbers exclude 10 poems that are of disputed authorship.

(New Anecdotes of the Great Tang). This book was completed in 807,\textsuperscript{84} more than two centuries after Xiao Gang's death. In this book, the \textit{Yutai xinyong} was called \textit{Yutai ji} \textit{(Collected Works from a Jade Terrace)}:\textsuperscript{85}

Before this, when Emperor Jianwen of Liang (Xiao Gang) was Crown Prince, he was fond of composing amorous poetry. People living within Liang's borders were all converted to write poems in his style. Gradually, this became a custom, and it was named "Palace Style". [Emperor Jianwen]

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{85} \textit{Yutai ji} 玉臺集 was the shortened form of \textit{Yutai xinyong}. See Yong Rong 永鏞, Ji Yun 紀昀, eds., \textit{Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao} 四庫全書總目提要, "Ji bu sanshijiu, Zhongji lei yi, \textit{Yutai xinyong} shijuan" 集部三十九總集類一玉臺新詠十卷, \textit{juan} 186 (Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu yinshuguan, 1965), 4124. There are disagreements about whether these two are different books. The opinion in \textit{Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao} will be followed in this dissertation.
\textsuperscript{86} DTXY, 42.
\end{flushright}
modified his style in his late years, but he was not able to reverse this trend. Therefore, he commanded Xu Ling to compile the Yutai ji, in order to amplify\(^{87}\) the style.

The *Da Tang xinyu* collects stories from the "national history" (國史)\(^{88}\) of the Tang Dynasty for the purpose of moralization. Immediately preceding the above quotation is an anecdote about Emperor Taizong of the Tang:

太宗謂侍臣曰：“朕戲作艷詩。”虞世南便諫曰：“聖作雖工，體制非雅。上之所好，下必隨之。此文一行，恐致風靡。而今而後，請不奉詔。”太宗曰：“卿懇誠如此，朕用嘉之。臣皆若世南，天下何憂不理。”乃賜絹五十疋。\(^{89}\)

\(^{87}\) The rendering of the meaning of the character "*da*" 大 in the phrase "yi da qi ti" 以大其體 is controversial. "Da" is usually used as an adjective with the meaning of "big". However, it is used as a transitive verb here. Fu Gang 傅剛 interprets this phrase as meaning that Xiao Gang intends to "introduce the historical origin" of the amorous poetry in the *Yutai xinyong* ("Yutai xinyong yu Wen xuan" 《玉臺新詠》與《文選》, Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua 中國典籍與文化 1 (2003): 15-16.); and Mu Kehong 穆克宏 takes it as Xu Ling's attempt to "expand the range of amorous poetry" by adding poems about women's life, which have nothing to do with love, in the *Yutai xinyong* ("Shilun Yutai xinyong" 試論《玉臺新詠》, Wenxue pinglun 文學評論 6 (1985): 109.). Zhou Xunchu 周勳初, on the other hand, remarks that the *Yutai xinyong* was compiled to "popularize" (推廣) Palace Style poetry ("Liang dai wenlun sanpai shuyao" 梁代文論三派述要, in Zhou Xunchu wenji 周勳初文集, v. 3 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2000), 90.). In English translations, Marney uses the term "elevate" (Liang Chien-wen Ti, 114). Birrell disagrees with some translations that render this character as "amplify, or supplement," suggesting that it is "better construed as to 'elevate, give prestige to, or privilege' the vogue of Palace Style Poetry." (Games Poets Play, 309-310). Xiaofei Tian translates "*da*" 大 as "glorify" (Beacon Fire and Shooting Star, 187.). The interpretations "amplify" or "supplement" correspond with Fu Gang and Mu Kehong's understanding, and these interpretations, as Gui Qing 归青 remarks, emphasize the intention of amplifying the contents of Palace Style poetry (Nanchao Gongti shi yanjiu 南朝宮體詩研究, in Liuchao wenxue yanjiu congshu 六朝文學研究叢書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), 313.). On the other hand, the translations proposed by Marney, Birrell, and Tian accentuate the effort to propagate the poetic style and to increase its popularity. Shen Yucheng 沈玉成 maintains that the two kinds of interpretation can coexist (Shen Yucheng wenchun 沈玉成文存 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 186.). Here I would adopt "amplify" as my translation.


\(^{89}\) DTXY, "Gongzhi di wu" 公直第五, juan 3, 41-42.
Emperor Taizong said to his courtiers: "I compose amorous poems for entertainment." Yu Shinan (558-638) therefore admonished him: "Although Your Majesty's writing is very skillful, the style is not elegant. What the ruler likes, the ruled follow. Once this kind of writing becomes known, I am afraid it will grow popular. From now on, please forgive me for not obeying your imperial order." Taizong said: "You are so sincere. I adopt and honor your admonition. If courtiers were all like Shinan, I would have no worry in governing the empire." Thus Emperor Taizong presented [Yu] fifty bolts of thin silk.

In the end, Liu Su comments that Yu Shinan's admonition derived from the anecdote concerning Xiao Gang cited above. For a long time, the *Da Tang xinyu* was considered the decisive evidence connecting Xiao Gang and the *Yutai xinyong*. However, the authenticity of this anecdote is questioned by some researchers.

Wu Guanwen remarks that the *Da Tang xinyu* of today is not the original one written by Liu Su in the Tang Dynasty. She maintains that it is actually a different name for a book called the *Tang shishuo xinyu* 唐世說新語 (*A New Account of Tales of the Age of Tang*), which was written in the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644). Wu argues that the anecdote concerning Xiao Gang cited above is

90 Ibid., 42.
not reliable. Likewise, since there is no supporting evidence found in standard histories such as the Liang shu, Nan shi or Chen shu, Okamura Shigeru questions the trustworthiness of the anecdote in the Da Tang xinyu. He sees the Da Tang xinyu as a work of fiction containing miscellaneous stories written by an anonymous scholar much later than the Liang and Chen dynasties. Studies of Chinese literary thought have traditionally taken the anecdote in the Da Tang xinyu as their theoretical basis instead of standard histories such as Liang shu and Nan shi, a research procedure Okamura likens to "putting the cart before the horse." In conclusion, Okamura asserts that all discussions based on the anecdote should be completely ignored.

Okamura suspects that the Yutai xinyong was not valued by contemporary literati from the beginning when it was compiled. Yao Cha, the first compiler of the Liang shu and Chen shu, was a close friend of both Xiao Gang and Xu Ling. After the fall of the Liang Dynasty, he served in the court of the Chen with Xu Ling. Although he himself was glorified as the "Master of Writing of the Generation" (一代文宗) in the Chen, Xu Ling highly respected Yao Cha's literary achievements

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92 Wu Guanwen, "Guanyu jinben Da Tang xinyu de zhenwei wenti," 29.
94 Ibid., 50.
95 CS, "Xu Ling" 徐陵, juan 26, 335. See also NS, "Xu Chi" 徐摛, juan 62, 1525.
and conduct.96 If the Yutai xinyong was compiled at Xiao Gang's command to "amplify the [Palace] style," the project should be understood as official. It is only difficult to understand why there is no mention of Xu Ling's Yutai xinyong in either the Liang shu or the Chen shu. Huang Wei maintains that it is because the compiler Yao Shilian hid the name of the anthology to protect Xu Ling from being criticized by Tang Confucian scholars, since in the Early Tang period when the Liang shu and the Chen shu were compiled, the political trend of re-establishing Confucianism was in fashion.97 However, this theory is not supported by any direct evidence. Wang Hao believes that the Yutai xinyong was compiled by Xiao Yi's wife Lady Xu, and the reason why this anthology is not mentioned in the Liang shu and Chen shu is because the book was not popular in Liang times due to Lady Xu's bad reputation.98 Since Sui shu indicates that Xu Ling was the compiler of the Yutai xinyong, Wang's theory brings us back to the question: "Who was the compiler of the Yutai xinyong?" Moreover, to find the answer to why the Yutai xinyong is not mentioned in the Liang shu and Chen shu, it is necessary to concentrate on two aspects: the date when the Yutai xinyong was compiled and the purpose of this project.

96 CS, "Yao Cha" 姚察, juan 27, 354.
2.3 The Date the *Yutai xinyong* Was Compiled

According to Liu Su, the *Yutai xinyong* was compiled in Xiao Gang's "late years". Yet how many years of his life does this entail? As we have seen in Chapter 1, Xiao Gang was murdered at the age of 49 in 551. The last four years of his life, starting from the second year of the Taiqing Era (548), were chaotic, and he was powerless. During this period, Xu Ling had already been transferred away from the capital to serve Xiao Yi around the first year of the Taiqing Era. One year later, he was sent to the Eastern Wei as an envoy (548) and was detained in Wei until after Xiao Yi's death. It was therefore impossible for both Xiao Gang and Xu Ling to compile the *Yutai xinyong* in the last five years of Xiao Gang's life.

Both Kōzen Hiroshi and Yoshida Takeshi remark that the arrangement of poets' names shows different sequences between scrolls (*juan*) in the *Yutai xinyong*. Putting some minor confusions aside, they both agree that from *juan* 1 to *juan* 6, the sequence fundamentally follows the order in which poets died, from the Han Dynasty to the Liang Dynasty. Following *juan* 7, which contains only the poems written by some members of Liang's imperial family, all poets in

99 The discussions of the *Yutai xinyong* here do not include the poets and their poems that were not collected in the Song editions and the determination follows the YTXY.
juan 8 were from the Liang period and were arranged in order according to their official ranks.\textsuperscript{100}

In addition, Közen observes that the same sequence, which appears from juan 1 to juan 8 mentioned above, is repeated in juan 9 and juan 10 respectively.\textsuperscript{101} Namely, the Liang imperial family members who appear in the entire juan 7 and in juan 9 and 10 function as a dividing line, between poets who were placed before them listed in order of their year of death, and those after them listed according to their official ranks.\textsuperscript{102} In order to identify the time the Yutai xinyong was compiled, Közen and Yoshida take the list of compilers in Xiao Yi's "Preface to the Fabao lianbi"\textsuperscript{103} as an essential reference.

Xiao Yi wrote the preface in the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534) when the Fabao lianbi was completed.\textsuperscript{104} At the end of the preface, Xiao Yi gave an account of the names, official titles and ages of the thirty-seven compilers\textsuperscript{105} and listed them in the order of their current official rank from high to low. Közen compares the sequence of Xiao Yi's list to that in juan 7, juan 8, juan 9 and juan10 of the Yutai xinyong, remarking that the six poets in juan 7 and juan 8 who were on

\textsuperscript{100} Közen Hiroshi 興膳宏, "Gyokudai shin'ei seiritsu kō," 58-73. See also Yoshida Takeshi 吉田猛, "Gyokudai shin'ei no seiritsu ni tsuite" 『玉臺新詠』の成立について, Ritsumeikan bungaku 立命館文学 430-432 (1981): 465-482.
\textsuperscript{101} Közen Hiroshi, "Gyokudai shin'ei seiritsu kō," 62.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 64.
\textsuperscript{103} YKJ, 3051-3053.
\textsuperscript{104} NS, "Lu Gao, zi Zhao" 陸杲子罩, juan 48, 1205.
\textsuperscript{105} Xiao Yi's name also appears on the list but he did not participate in the project of compilation. See YKJ, "Fabao lianbi xu" 法寶聯璧序, 3052.
both lists were put in the same sequence as that found in Xiao Yi’s preface. Similarly, the three poets in Juan 9 and the four poets in Juan 10 whose names were located after the names of imperial family members were essentially put in the identical order with that in Xiao Yi’s list as well.\footnote{Kōzen Hiroshi, "Gyokudai shin’ei seirisu kō," 62.}

Kōzen thereupon infers that the Yutai xinyong was very likely compiled as a whole at a time close to when Xiao Yi’s preface was written, which should be around the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534). Examining the years of the latest death listed in Juan 6 and the earliest death noted in Juan 8, Kōzen points out that He Sicheng 何思澄, who was the last male poet placed at the end of Juan 6, died in the fourth or fifth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (532 or 533); Liu Zun 劉遵, who was placed in Juan 8, died in the first year of the Datong Era (535). Kōzen argues that if He Sicheng died one or two years later, his works would have been located in Juan 8. Similarly, had Liu Zun died one or two years earlier, his works would have appeared in Juan 6.\footnote{Ibid., 64.} In other words, the poets who were listed after the names of the imperial family members must have been alive when the Yutai xinyong was compiled.

The poets from the imperial family in Juan 7 begin with the founding Emperor Wu and princes' names were listed in sequence by age. Xiao Tong, Xiao Zong, and Xiao Ji 蕭績 had died before the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534), and their poems are not in the anthology.
Xu was the only one still alive at the time but has no poems contained in the *Yutai xinyong* among the emperor's sons. Xiao Xu's literary capability is not mentioned in historical sources; in contrast, according to the *Liang shu*, he was an expert at martial arts.\(^{108}\) A lack of literary talent, perhaps, explains why Xiao Xu's name is not listed in the *Yutai xinyong*. In any case, Kōzen's inference explains why the sequence of poets' names appearing before and after the names of the imperial members are different. The years of He Sicheng's and Liu Zun's deaths provide strong and convincing support for Kōzen's theory.

Yoshida also takes the list in Xiao Yi's preface as a reference. Analyzing the first seven poets' ranks and the years of their deaths in *juan* 8, he remarks that most of these poets died by the end of the fifth year of the Datong Era (539) and their names were put in order following their official ranking.\(^{109}\) Differing from Kōzen, Yoshida concludes that the *Yutai xinyong* was compiled from the fifth to the seventh year of the Datong Era (539-541) by a group of five or six poets: Yu Jianwu, Liu Xiaowei 刘孝威 (d. ca. 549), Yu Xin, Xu Chi, Xu Ling, and perhaps Ji Shaoyu 紀少瑜 (n.d.) too.\(^{110}\) Except for Xu Chi, five of the six had their poems collected in the *Yutai xinyong*. The fifth to the seventh year of the Datong Era (539-541) was the period when six of them all

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\(^{108}\) LS, "Gaozu san wang" 高祖三王, *juan* 29, 431.

\(^{109}\) Yoshida Takeshi, "Gyokudai shin'ei no seiritsu ni tsuite," 475.

\(^{110}\) Ibid.
closely served Xiao Gang in the Eastern Palace. According to Yoshida, some of the Liang poets in
juan 8 had already died at the time when the Yutai xinyong was compiled. Yoshida fails to provide
an explanation of why these poets were not placed with the other dead poets of the Liang in juan 6.
Moreover, there is no discussion found in his article concerning why the Yutai xinyong was
compiled by a group of six poets rather than Xu Ling himself, as indicated in Sui shu.

Liu Yuejin challenges Kōsen's theory, claiming that the compilation of the Yutai xinyong
should be dated in the Chen Dynasty. This is a traditional disputed issue because the compiler Xu
Ling's official title as indicated in the anthology was the one he held in the Chen Dynasty, and in
some editions of the Yutai xinyong, Xiao Gang was called by his posthumous name, the Emperor of
Jianwen. As for the first account, Birrell argues that "the dynastic tag of the Ch'en (Chen) to Hsū
(Xu)'s name merely denotes that it was in this dynasty, which he served, that he died," and this is
"an historian's convention."¹¹¹ In regard to why Xiao Gang was called by his posthumous name in
some editions if this anthology was compiled in the Liang times, for there were many "crown
princes" in the history but only one "Emperor of Jianwen of the Liang", Fu Gang infers that it was
probably because readers in later generations revised the term "crown prince" to Xiao Gang's

¹¹¹ Birrell, Games Poets Play, 308.
posthumous name to avoid confusion. In contrast to these two issues, the debates on the *Yutai xinyong*'s editions are more intricate, and this is the ground for Liu Yuejin's argument.

The multiple extant editions of *Yutai xinyong* were produced during the late Ming Dynasty and the early Qing Dynasty. The original editions did not survive. The earliest extant fragment of this anthology was found in Mingsha caves at Dunhuang in northwest China in 1908. The fragment indicates that the sequence of poets and poems is "identical to that of Chao Chün's (Zhao Jun 趙均, 1591-1640) standard text of 1633." However, as Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 (1866-1940) observes, the way of introducing groups of poems under each poet's name is different from the editions produced in the Ming and Qing dynasties. There is no evidence indicating the date when this fragment was produced, and the information contained in it is insufficient to be used as reference for a conclusive analysis regarding the authenticity of the later editions. Even if we had the complete version of the Dunhuang edition, we would still have no means of knowing if it was

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113 Ming Dynasty (1368-1662) and Qing Dynasty (1616-1912).
the original edition of Xu Ling's *Yutai xinyong*. It is important for us to bear in mind that any of the discussions and arguments about the editions of the *Yutai xinyong* are based on the comparison between those produced in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. Since the absolute correct answer is no longer available, judgments often rely on logical inference and sometimes are even based on an individual scholar's personal sense.

From the sequence of the poets cited in Kōzen's theory, Liu Yuejin conjectures that the text Kōzen adopts is Chen Yufu's Song edition (1215) reprinted by Zhao Jun of Hanshan in the sixth year of the Congzhen Era of the Ming Dynasty (1633).\(^\text{117}\) This edition has been acknowledged as the preferred edition of the *Yutai xinyong* among many others because it was considered to be a duplication of the Chen Yufu Edition, which was produced in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279). Pointing out some perplexing arrangements of the poems and poets in the Zhao Jun Edition, Liu Yuejin maintains that this edition is actually not as reliable as has been thought, and therefore, that Kōzen's theory is questionable.

It is not surprising to find disorder in the Zhao Jun Edition, just like that in any of the other extant editions. The disorder of the text had appeared in Chen Yufu's edition at the latest.

According to Chen's postface contained in the Zhao Jun Edition,\(^\text{118}\) Chen copied texts from three


\(^{118}\) The text of Chen Yufu Edition is not extant except for the postface.
different patchy editions and combined them to make a complete one. These three editions include the Old Capital Edition (舊京本), the Yuzhang Edition (豫章刻本) and the Shi Family's Privately Held Copied Edition (石氏所藏錄本). 119 Ueki Hisayuki points out that Chen had already realized the disorder of the text he copied and kept the interpolated poems in order as they were. 120 Among the three editions, the Old Capital Edition is believed to be an edition produced during the previous Northern Song period, as revealed by its name. In addition to the Old Capital Edition, Ueki observes that there was at least one more edition called the "Mingzhou Edition" (明州本)121 that had been circulated during the Northern Song.122 In other words, the three editions that Chen Yufu consulted were not the only ones to have survived from the Song Dynasty.

Liu Yuejin divides the extant editions of the *Yutai xinyong* into two homologous groups. One is the group deriving from the Chen Yufu Edition, which contains no interpolated poems after the Southern Song period and has been used to support the idea that the compilation of the *Yutai xinyong* took place during the Liang Dynasty. Another is led by the Zheng Xuanfu 鄭玄撫 (fl. Ming

119 See Chen Yufu's postface in YTXY, 531. See also Birrell's "The Story of the Text, Yü -t'ai hsin yung: New Songs from a Jade Terrace" in Games Poets Play, 314.
120 Ueki Hisayuki, "Maboroshi no Sōhan Gyokudai shin'ei Chin Gyokufu hon wo chūshin toshite," 33.
121 Mingzhou is modern Ningbo in Zhejiang Province.
122 According to Ueki, the "Mingzhou Edition" of the Northern Song Dynasty is mentioned in Shao Zhang's 邵章 (1872-1953) "Xulu" 續錄 in Zengding Siku jianming mulu biaozhu 增訂四庫簡明目錄標註. Shao Zhang indicates that this edition only retained eight *juan* out of ten when its wooden printing blocks were repaired in the early Southern Song period (1131-1162). See Ueki, "Maboroshi no Sōhan Gyokudai shin'ei Chin Gyokufu hon wo chūshin toshite," 29.
Dynasty) Edition,\textsuperscript{123} which contains nearly 200 more poems\textsuperscript{124} than the Chen Yuefu group and is often used to maintain that the \textit{Yutai xinyong} was compiled in the Chen Dynasty. The latter group is also called the "General Edition of the Ming" (明通行本) or "Common Edition" (俗本). Liu Yuejin considers that the number of poems in the Chen Yufu group is closer to Xu Ling's original edition; whereas the arrangement of poets in the Zheng Xuanfu group seems to be more reasonable.\textsuperscript{125} In the Zheng Xuanfu Edition, poems written by the Liang poets (including members of the imperial family of the Liang and the Liang courtiers) are placed from \textit{juan} 5 and the sequence of the poets starts from Emperor Wu, followed by crown prince, princes and Liang courtiers. In contrast, the Liang poets' poems are placed in \textit{juan} 5 and 6 (by Liang courtiers), \textit{juan} 7 (by members of the imperial family of the Liang), and \textit{juan} 8 (by Liang courtiers again) in the Chen Yufu group.

Although Jiang Yan 江淹 (444-505), Qiu Chi 邱遲 (464-508), Shen Yue and Liu Yun 劉惲 (n.d.) died before Emperor Wu of Liang, Liu Yuejin claims that their names should still be placed after the emperor's as the sequence shown in the Zheng Xuanfu group because it was a "general rule" (通例).\textsuperscript{126} However, Ji Rongshu 紀容舒 (1685-1764) points out that the sequence placing the

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\textsuperscript{123} Liu Yuejin, \textit{Yutai xinyong yanjiu}, 42.
\textsuperscript{124} The number of the interpolated poems differs in various editions. See Fu Gang 傅剛, "Lun \textit{Yutai xinyong} de bianjiti li" 論 \textit{玉臺新詠} 的編輯體例, 362, note 12.
\textsuperscript{125} Liu Yuejin, \textit{Yutai xinyong yanjiu}, 60.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid., 75.
monarch's poems between courtiers' was not a mistake but a format tradition since the Han Dynasty.

In contrast, the so-called "general rule" actually started from Xu Jian's 徐堅 (659-729) Chuxue ji 初學記 in the Tang Dynasty, and the old-fashioned sequence is not something that later generations could forge. Fu Gang acknowledges that the "general rule" applied to the arrangement in the group of the Zheng Xuanfu Edition seems more reasonable; however, this is actually evidence of subsequent modification. In terms of editorial arrangement, since the sequence of poets' deaths seen in the group of Chen Yufu Edition is seldom encountered, while the arrangement following the "general rule" is more popular, Fu argues, it is unthinkable that someone would modify a more "reasonable" arrangement to something that is rare, not to mention the many flaws found in the text of the Zheng editions.

One piece of evidence Liu Yuejin brings up to oppose Kōzen's theory is Liu Xiaochoo's poem, "Yuan Guangzhou Jingzhong zuo jian guji yishou" 元廣州景仲座見故姬一首 ("Met A


128 For the examination in his "Lun Yutai xinyong de bianji tili" 論《玉臺新詠》的編輯體例, Fu Gang adopts the Xu Xuemo Woodblock Edition 徐學謨刻本 to represent the group of Zhen Xuanfu Edition.

129 Fu Gang, "Lun Yutai xinyong de bianji tili," 355.
Familiar Girl at the Banquet Held by the Regional Inspector of Guangzhou, Yuan Jingzhong").

Liu's argument can be summarized as follows:

1) Yuan Jingzhong 元景仲 (d. 549) was appointed Regional Inspector of Guangzhou 廣州刺史 in the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era (531).

2) The third year of the Zhong-Datong Era (531) when Yuan was appointed Regional Inspector of Guangzhou was the year when Liu Xiaochuo ended his mourning period and was transferred to Xiao Yi's princedom. Therefore, Liu was not in the capital and he was not able to write this poem that year.

3) Yuan returned to the capital in the second year of the Datong Era (536) because of his father's death. His mourning period should end after the fourth year of the Datong Era (538). During the mourning period, Yuan was not allowed to host parties, not to mention inviting entertaining girls to the parties.

Based on the arguments summarized above, Liu Yuejin concludes that this poem must be composed after the fourth year of the Datong Era (538). In this case, Liu questions, how can one

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130 The mourning period in the Liang Dynasty was 27 months. See Okamura Shigeru 岡村繁, "Monzen hensan no jittai to hensan tōshō no Monzen hyōka" 『文選』編纂の実態と編纂當初の『文選』評價, Nihon Chūgoku gakkai hō 日本中国学会報 38 (1986): 144.
explain the placement of Xiao Zixian's poem in *juan* 8 if poets in this scroll were all alive when

*Yutai xinyong* was compiled as Kōzen maintains. For Xiao Zixian died in the third year of the

Datong Era (537).  

Liu Yuejin's argument is debatable because the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era (531) is not the only year Yuan Jingzhong was appointed to the position of Regional Inspector of Guangzhou. According to the *Liang shu*, Yuan was appointed to the same position in the sixth year of the Putong 普通 Era (525), soon after his father Yuan Faseng 元法僧 (454-536) surrendered to the Liang after Xiao Gang's military campaign against the north. The appointment took place on the fourth day of the third month (三月己巳, April 12 in Western calendar) in 525.  

This entry provides another possibility as for the composition date of the poem Liu Yuejin questions.

Liu Xiaochuo, who wrote the poem, was Crown Prince Zhaoming's favourite courtier and served in the Eastern Palace for a long time. In the year 525, he was suspended by his old friend Dao Qia 到洽 (477-527). Officially, he was accused of bringing his concubine to his official residence while leaving his mother behind in his private residence.  

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131 Xiao Zixian's poem is located at the first place in *juan* 8. See YTXY, 324. For his year of death, see LS, "Xiao Zixian" 蕭子顯, *juan* 35, 512.

132 For Liu Yuejin's argument, see his *Yutai xinyong yanjiu*, 80.

133 LS, "Wu Di xia" 武帝下, *juan* 3, 69. This is not recorded in NS.

134 LS, "Liu Xiaochuo" 劉孝綽, *juan* 33, 480-481. Dao Qia was appointed Palace Aide to the Censor-in-Chief 御史中臣 in 525. See LS, "Dao Qia" 到洽, *juan* 27, 404.
long this suspension lasted. Since Dao Qia died two years later and the royal family including Emperor Wu and Xiao Yi all showed their sympathy to Liu, it is very likely that he was restored soon after Dao's death. In any cases, during the suspension, Liu Xiaochuo stayed in the capital and he was often invited to Emperor Wu's banquets. That means, there was nothing keeping Liu away from parties and banquets during his suspension period. The year of 525 is more likely the year in which the questioned poem, "Met A Familiar Girl at the Banquet Held by the Regional Inspector of Guangzhou, Yuan Jingzhong", was composed for the banquet held by Yuan Jingzhong. The banquet was probably Yuan's farewell party before his departure for Guangzhou. From this point of view, Liu Yuejin's argument does not undermine Közen's theory either.

Tan Beifang agrees with Liu Yuejin and maintains the unreliability of the Zhao Jun Edition. In addition to pointing out Zhao's "faithless" (不忠) editing, Tan discusses the differences between some extant editions, attempting to identify what reflects the original text and what does not. She uses Chen Yufu's edition and Yan Shu's 晏殊 (991-1055) fragmentary Leiyao 類要 as her authoritative references.

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135 LS, "Liu Xiaochuo" 刘孝绰, juan 33, 482.
As mentioned earlier, Chen Yufu's edition is no longer extant, and it was believed that Zhao Jun's edition was a revised edition based on Chen's. However, Zhao Jun did not mention the name of the Song edition he used in the preface written to his edition. Feng Ban (1602-1671), Zhao Jun's friend, confirms that Zhao Jun's revision was based on a Song edition in his preface to the Revised Edition of the Fens. He and his brother, Feng Shu (1593-1645), both state that they visited Zhao Jun's home and duplicated the Song edition there in 1629, without mentioning the name of the Song edition either. In addition, Feng Ban reveals that he once borrowed a Song edition for collating purposes in 1649. He points out that there are many mistakes in the Song edition he borrowed and that the gain and loss of Zhao Jun's revision are half and half. Interestingly, again, Feng did not reveal the name of this Song edition. We do not know why these famous bibliophiles would not reveal the name of the edition owned by the Zhao family while, especially in the Feng brothers' case, giving detailed information including names for other editions. The postface written by Chen Yufu, which is contained in the extant Zhao Jun Edition,

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137 Ji Rongshu 紀容舒, "Yutai xinyong kaoyi xu" 玉臺新詠考異序, 1, in Yutai xinyong kaoyi.  
138 YTXY, 532.  
139 Ibid., 533,541.  
140 Ibid., 534.  
141 See "Feng Shu" and "Feng Ban" in YTXY, 533-534 and 541-542.
is the only reason that makes one believe that the Song edition on which Zhao based his editing was
the Chen Yufu Edition.

Chen Yufu's postface is missing in the Revised Edition of the Fengs. Since the Feng brothers
state that their edition was a duplication of the Song edition Zhao Jun owned, Tan Beifang suspects
that the edition Zhao used did not include Chen Yufu's postface and so that the postface must come
from a different source, probably, the Edition of the Study of Five-cloud Creek Printed by Movable
Woodblocks (五雲溪館活字本).\textsuperscript{142}

Liu Yuejin conjectures that the Edition of the Study of Five-cloud Creek might be the earliest
extant edition of \textit{Yutai xinyong}.\textsuperscript{143} On the one hand, Liu suspects that this edition may not share the
same source with the Chen Yufu Edition because of the differences shown between this edition and
the Zhao Jun Edition.\textsuperscript{144} On the other hand, he admits that the layout of the contents in this edition
is similar to that in the Zhao Jun Edition and that it also contains the Chen Yufu postface as does
Zhao's. Liu then categorizes the Edition of the Study of Five-cloud Creek and the Zhao Jun Edition

\textsuperscript{142} Tan Beifang, "\textit{Yutai xinyong} banben kao — Jian lun cishu de bianzhuan shijian he bianzhe wenti" 《玉臺新詠》版
本考——兼論此書的編纂時間和編者問題, 4.
\textsuperscript{143} Liu Yuejin infers that this edition appeared before the Zhengde 正德 Era (1506-1521) of the Ming Dynasty. See his
\textit{Yutai xinyong yanjiu}, 7.
\textsuperscript{144} Ibid.
to the same homologous group, both being subordinate to the Chen Yufu Edition.\footnote{Ibid., 45-47.} Liu's statements in the same book are self-contradictory.

Ueki Hisayuki agrees with the theory dating the Edition of the Study of Five-cloud Creek to around the middle of the Ming period. He maintains that it should belong to the same homologous group with the Chen Yufu Edition. Despite the differences between the two, Ueki argues that the number and the sequence of the poems in the Edition of the Study of Five-cloud Creek are basically identical to those of the Zhao Jun Edition. In comparison with the "General Edition of the Ming" (明通行本), which contains nearly 200 interpolated poems and lacks Chen Yufu's postface, Ueki remarks that the differences between the Edition of the Study of Five-cloud Creek and the Zhao Jun Edition are minor.\footnote{Ueki, "Min dai tsūkō Gyokudai shin'ei no kaidai," 331. Similar statement can be found in Saitō Mareshi's "Gyokudai shin'ei senchū kō" 『玉臺新詠箋注』, Nara Joshi Daigaku Bungakubu kenkyū nenpō 奈良女子大学文学部研究年報 41 (1997): 32.} In light of Ueki’s discussions, Tan Beifang's concern about Zhao Jun's "faithless" editing can be ignored because Zhao Jun did not seem to change Chen Yufu's edition fundamentally.

Another normative reference Tan heavily relies on is Yan Shu's fragmentary Leiyao. According to the meaning of its title, Leiyao is an encyclopedia that collects writings in a condensed manner. Since this book was compiled in the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1126), Tan
believes that the text of the *Yutai xinyong* cited in this book is the same as that in Xu Ling's edition.

Indeed, Yan Shu lived in the Northern Song period and what he collected in the *Leiyao* must be something that was printed or in circulation at that time. However, taking the two Northern Song editions mentioned earlier into consideration, we neither know how many more editions circulated during the Northern Song period, nor do we know which edition Yan cited. Furthermore, even if we knew the edition Yan adopted, we still wouldn't be able to tell if it was Xu Ling's original. The significance of Tan's study lies in its detailed comparisons between the extant editions produced in the late Ming and the early Qing period. Although the *Leiyao* is a useful resource to a certain extent, unfortunately, it does not grant the absolute authority of judging if Zhao Jun's editing is fake or real.\(^{147}\)

Gui Qing calls attention to the common aspects between the extant editions besides the differences. He remarks that the internal principle of compilation of the Zhao Jun Edition is clear. Even if the readings questioned by Liu Yuejin were indeed errors, he continues, it would still be difficult for us to determine how the errors originated, the original text or the transmitted text. Thus, he remarks, we cannot conclude that the Zhao Jun Edition is not reliable only based on those differences.\(^ {148}\) Using the *Leiyao* as a reference in some respects as Tan Beifang does, however, Fu

\(^{147}\) As for the flaws in *Leiyao*, see Fu Gang, "Lun *Yutai xinyong* de bianji tili," 350-351.

\(^{148}\) Gui Qing 呂青, *Nanchao Gongti shi yanjiu* 南朝宮體詩研究, 309.
Gang reaches a completely opposite conclusion. Fu carefully examines the differences between the Zhao Jun Edition and the Xu Xuemo Edition (which belongs to the group of the Zheng Xuanfu Edition), and maintains that the Zhao edition corresponds to Xu Ling's original, while the Zheng Xuanfu Edition is a modified edition.\textsuperscript{149} Based on the reliable Zhao Jun Edition as Fu Gang attests, Kōzen's theory concerning the compilation date of the \textit{Yutai xinyong} is not only convincing, but also sound in its choice of sources. Still, one needs to keep in mind that, Kōzen's theory is developed based on the hypothetical foundation assuming that the current order of the arrangement in the \textit{Yutai xinyong} reflects Xu Ling's original intend. Since Xu's original edition of \textit{Yutai xinyong} is no longer available, like many of the cases we have encountered in classical studies, we can only compromise at certain point to the lack of solid and sufficient evidence or we would not be able to pursue any research.

In the controversy surrounding \textit{Yutai xinyong}'s compiler(s), Li Jiandong launches a thorough argument against the theories that assert Zhang Lihua,\textsuperscript{150} Princess Xu\textsuperscript{151} or a certain royal lady as

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{149} Fu Gang, "Lun \textit{Yutai xinyong} de bianji tili," 5.

\textsuperscript{150} Zhang Lihua was the favorite imperial wife of Chen Shubao 陳叔寶 (553-604), the last emperor of the Chen Dynasty. See Zhang Peiheng 章培恆, "\textit{Yutai xinyong} wei Zhang Lihua suo 'zhuanlu' kao" 《玉臺新詠》為張麗華所“撰錄” 考, \textit{Wenxue pinglun} 文學評論 2 (2004): 5-17. See also his "Zaitan \textit{Yutai xinyong} de zhuanluzhe wenti" 再談《玉臺新詠》的撰錄者問題, \textit{Shanghai Shifan Daxue xuebao [Zhexue shehui kexue ban]} 上海師範大學學報（哲學社會科學版）35, no. 1 (2006): 1-13. The opposing arguments can be seen in the following papers: Fan Rong 奉榮, "\textit{Yutai xinyong} 'zhuanlu' zhengxiang kaobian —— Jian yu Zhang Peiheng xiansheng shangque" 《玉臺新詠》“撰錄”真相考辨 —— 兼與章培恆先生商榷, \textit{Zhongzhou xuekan} 中州學刊 6 (2004): 92-94; Wu Guoping 鄒國平, "\textit{Yutai xinyong} Zhang Lihua zhuanlu shuo xianyi
being the compiler. Li maintains that Xu Ling was the one who compiled *Yutai xinyong* as indicated in the *Sui shu* and *Yiwen leiju*. Since the historical sources including the *Sui shu*, *Jiu Tang shu* (Old History of the Tang) and *Xin Tang Shu* (New History of the Tang) all point to Xu Ling without mentioning other possibilities, it is widely acknowledged that Xu Ling was the only compiler of *Yutai xinyong*. If that is the case, Xu Ling must have been available for the project around the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534).

Xu Ling was born in the sixth year of the Tianjian Era (507), two years before his father joined Xiao Gang's household. According to the *Chen shu*, Xu Ling was skilled in composition by the age of eight, and understood the meanings of *Lao zi* and *Zhuang zi* when he was twelve. When he grew up, his learning in history was extensive; his eloquence was swift, with depth and width. In the second year of the Putong Era (521), Xu Ling became an Attendant in Xiao Gang's military
garrison when his father was serving Xiao Gang as Administrative Adviser. He was appointed Scholar 學士 of the Eastern Palace soon after Xiao Gang became Crown Prince (531). Before long, he was transferred to the Department of State Affairs working as Vice Minister of Revenue (尚書度支郎), after which, he was appointed Magistrate of Shangyu District (上虞令). During his term of office in Shangyu, Xu Ling was accused of corruption and suspended by Liu Xiaoyi, the Censor-in-Chief (御史中丞) at the time. It was said that Liu had borne malice towards Xu Ling for many years and the accusation was based on rumors.155

There is no clear indication of Xu Ling's appointments year by year from the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era (531) to the second year of the Taiqing Era (548). Huang Ying quotes Zhou Jianyu's "Xu Ling nianpu" 徐陵年譜, Liu Yuejin's "Xu Ling shiji biannian congkao" 徐陵事跡編年叢考, Fan Rong's "Xu Xiaomu nianpu" 徐孝穆年譜, and Xu Yimin's "Xu Ling nianpu" 徐陵

155 Ibid., 325-326.
156 Zhou Jianyu 周建渝, "Xu Ling nianpu" 徐陵年譜, Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu jikan 中國文哲研究集刊 10 (1997): 125. Huang Ying cites the same article from Zhou's Chuantong wenxue de xiandai piping 傳統文學的現代批評 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2002).
157 Liu Yuejin 刘跃進, "Xu Ling shiji biannian congkao" 徐陵事跡編年叢考, in Yutai xinyong yanjiu 《玉臺新詠》研究 (Beijing : Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 309. See also his "Xu Ling nianpu jianbian" 徐陵年譜簡編, in Liuchao zuojia nianpu ji yao 六朝作家年譜輯要 下冊 (Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999), 397.
年譜，说那是 "相当合理" (較為合理) to determine that Xu Ling's appointment as Magistrate of Shangyu took place soon after 532, which is one year after Xiao Gang became Crown Prince. In addition, since 537 was the year when Xiao Yi was given the title of "General of Zhenxi" 鎮西將軍, Huang maintains that this year was also the year when Xu Ling was transferred to Xiao Yi's princedom after his suspension from Shangyu. On the other hand, Huang Ying acknowledges that Xu Ling's career after his time as Magistrate of Shangyu is obscure and that Xu's movements between 534 and 537, and from 538 to 548 are not mentioned in historical sources.

I will discuss Xu Ling's career in detail later. Here I would like to point out two crucial mistakes Huang made. One is that, Huang claims that the Prince of Nanping's princedom was abolished after Xiao Wei's (476-533) death in 533. Huang infers that Xu Ling was transferred to Shangyu in 532 and was suspended in the same year; then he was reinstated as Adjutant in the Prince of Nanping's princedom in 533. Because of Xiao Wei's death, Huang argues, Xu Ling returned to Xiao Gang's Eastern Palace in 534 before he was transferred to Xiao Yi's princedom in

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159 Xu Yimin 許逸民, "Xu Ling nianpu" 徐陵年譜, in Xu Ling ji jiaojian v. 4 徐陵集校箋 (第四冊) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008), 1710. In fact, Xu Yimin indicates Xu Ling's transfer to Shangyu took place in 531.

160 Huang Ying 黃穎, "Xu Ling Liang chao shili buzheng" 徐陵梁朝仕歷補正, Xuchang Xueyuan xuebao 許昌學院學報 29, no. 6 (2010): 55.

161 Ibid., 57.
Huang's hypothesis is not supported by any of the historical sources. In fact, Xiao Wei's heir Xiao Ke 蕭恪 (d. 552) inherited the title of Prince of Nanping after Xiao Wei's death and the princedom was maintained until Xiao Ke's death at least. In addition, the obvious flaw in Huang's account is his/her ignoring of the entry in *Chen shu*, which indicates that Xu Ling's reinstatement was "a long time" (久之) after his suspension from Shangyu took place. The hurried timeline of Xu Ling's career in Huang's theory does not correspond to the historical record either. The second mistake, again, is Huang's ignoring of the records indicating Xiao Yi was conferred with the title of "General of Zhenxi" twice in his life. The first time was in 537 and the second time was in 547. Many researchers, including Huang Ying, Xiaofei Tian, Yen Chih-Ying, and most of the researchers Huang cited above, take 537 as the year when Xu Ling was transferred to Xiao Yi's

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162 Ibid.
163 CS, "Xu Ling" 徐陵, *juan* 26, 325-326.
164 LS, "Yuan Di" 元帝, *juan* 5, 113. NS only records one of the two conferments, which took place in the first year of the Taiqing Era (547) ("Yuan Di Yi" 元帝繹, *juan* 8, 234.). Liu Yuejin 劉躍進 claims that Xiao Yi was given the title of "General of Zhenxi" the second time in the third year of the Taiqing Era (549). However, Liu's source is not indicated. See Liu's *Zhonggu wenxue wenxianxue* 中古文學文獻學 (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1997), 30.
princedom. Cao Daoheng at first believed the same as well. However, he later altered his opinion and maintains that the date could only be 547 because of Liu Xiaoyi's official term in the position of Censor-in-Chief.\(^{167}\) Furthermore, Fan Rong takes the year of 547 for Xu Ling's questioned transfer as well.\(^{168}\) Ignorance of Liu Xiaoyi's official term in the position of Censor-in-Chief is a serious defect in the mainstream theory accounting for Xu Ling's career between 531 to 548. Theories that do not take this pivotal factor in Xu Ling's biography into account are far from being "reasonable", not to mention being accurate.

Liu Xiaoyi's career helps resolve the question of Xu Ling's whereabouts around the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534), when the *Yutai xinyong* was supposedly compiled. Liu became Censor-in-Chief after he had accomplished his mission as an envoy and returned from the Eastern Wei. *Nan shi* is the only source that clearly indicates the date when the diplomatic mission took place. According to *Nan shi*, Liu Xiaoyi was sent to the Eastern Wei in the fall of the fourth year of the Datong Era (August 21, 538).\(^{169}\) The relevant entry in *Zizhi tongjian* indicates the mission took place in the same year, but in winter.\(^{170}\) In the *Liang shu*, although the precise year

\(^{167}\) See note 4 in Cao Daoheng's *曹道衡 "Xu Ling"* 徐陵, in *Zhongguo zhuming wenxuejia pingzhuang* (xupian 1) 中國歷代著名文學家評傳（續篇一） (Jinan: Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe, 1996-1997), 416-417.

\(^{168}\) Fan Rong 樊榮, "Xu Xiaomu nianpu" 徐孝穆年譜, 9.

\(^{169}\) The date in the Chinese lunar calendar is the *wu-chen* day of the seventh month (秋七月戊辰) in 538. See NS, "Liang benji" 梁本紀, juan 7, 213.

\(^{170}\) ZZTJ, "Liang ji shisi" 梁紀十四, juan 158, 1541.
was not mentioned, it is certain that the mission was after the third year of the Datong Era (537).\textsuperscript{171} In addition, there are two entries found in the Wei shu concerning Liu Xiaoyi’s diplomatic mission(s).

The first entry appears in the Wei shu is found in Xing Xin’s 邢昕 (d. 538) biography, in the context of Xing’s whereabouts in the beginning of the Tianping 天平 Era of the Eastern Wei.\textsuperscript{172} The Tianping Era only lasted 4 years and the first year corresponds to the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era of the Liang (534). The original expression for the time when Liu Xiaoyi's mission took place was "at the time" (時).\textsuperscript{173} However, although this vague term allows many possibilities, Liu's mission does not seem to have taken place at any time during the Tianping Era. According to Liang shu, in the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534), Liu Xiaoyi was appointed to the position of Librarian (洗馬) of Xiao Gang’s Eastern Palace, after he completed his mourning period for one of his parents.\textsuperscript{174} Obviously, in this year he had not yet been appointed to Cavalier Attendant-in-Ordinary (散騎常侍), the official title he used on the mission to the Eastern Wei. In addition, Liu did not seem to go on any diplomatic mission before the third year of the

\textsuperscript{171} LS, "Liu Qian" 劉潛, juan 41, 594.
\textsuperscript{172} WS, "Wenyuan" 文苑, juan 85, 1874.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{174} LS, "Liu Qian" 劉潛, juan 41, 594.
Datong Era (537) according to Liang shu. The third year of the Datong Era was the last year of the Tianping Era of the Eastern Wei.

Preceding the second entry about Liu's mission in the Wei shu, the historical record shows that warfare between the Liang and the Eastern Wei had lasted continuously for almost the entire Tianping Era. In the winter of the fourth year of the Tianping Era (537), the second entry indicates that Zhang Gao 張皋 (n.d.), Liu Xiaoyi and Cui Xiao 崔曉 (n.d.) paid tribute to the Eastern Wei.\textsuperscript{175} This mission very likely put an end to the perennial wars and made peace between the two nations. The mission indicated here was one year earlier than what we have seen in the Nan shi and Zizhi tongjian. Taking the frequent mistakes shown in the Wei shu into account,\textsuperscript{176} one may feel suspicious about the authenticity of this record. Nonetheless, the Zizhi tongjian indicates a mission also took place in the same year as that in the Wei shu. According to the Zizhi tongjian, Zhang Legao 張樂皋 (n.d.) and his companions went on a diplomatic mission to the Eastern Wei in the eleventh month of the third year of the Datong 大同 Era (from the end of 537 to the beginning of 538).\textsuperscript{177} We do not know if Zhang Gao in the Wei shu and Zhang Legao in the Zizhi tongjian are the same person or not. Neither do we know if Liu Xiaoyi was a member in the mission led by Zhang

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\textsuperscript{175} WS, "Daoyi Xiao Yan" 島夷蕭衍,\textit{juan} 98, 2177-2178.

\textsuperscript{176} See Note 17-22 in WS,\textit{juan} 98, 2191-2192.

\textsuperscript{177} ZZTJ, "Liang ji shisan" 梁紀十三,\textit{juan} 157, 1538.
Legao. If Zhang Gao and Zhang Legao are the same person and Liu was one of the envoys in Zhang Legao's team, Liu may have been sent on a mission that took place during the winter from the end of the third year to the beginning of the fourth year of the Datong Era (537-538) before the mission indicated in the *Nan shi*, which was in the fall of the fourth year of the Datong Era (538). In that case, Liu Xiaoyi would have been sent on two missions in two successive years. There is no further evidence to confirm if Liu was sent to the Eastern Wei once or twice. We can only assume that Liu Xiaoyi's diplomatic mission(s) took place in the third year or the fourth year of the Datong Era (537 or 538), or both. Namely, Liu Xiaoyi could not have become Censor-in-Chief before 537 or 538. In order to determine which year Liu Xiaoyi took up this position, it is necessary to investigate Liu Xiaoyi's predecessor.

According to the *Liang shu*, in the New Year's Celebration ceremony held on the first day of the fifth year of the Datong Era (539), Zhang Wan 張绾 (n.d.) and his brother Zhang Zuan 張綯 (499-549) respectively led two lines of one hundred officials at the east and west sides of the stairs in the imperial hall. The equally distinguished roles they played in the ceremony were traditionally entrusted to the Censor-in-Chief and the Chief Administrator of the Department of State Affairs. At the time, Zhang Wan was in the position of Censor-in-Chief and Zhang Zuan was Chief Administrator of the Department of State Affairs. At

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178 As remarked in Note 10 of LS ("Zhang Mian" 張緬, *juan* 34, 506), the original text that indicates "the fourth year of the Datong Era" is in error. This is because, according to NS ("Zhang Hongce" 張弘策, *juan* 56, 1386), Zhang Zuan was appointed Chief Administrator of the Department of State Affairs in the fifth year of the Datong Era (539).
Administrator of the Department of State Affairs. Since it was the first time in history that these two important roles were entrusted to two brothers, their contemporaries thought it was a great honor for them. Based on the record of this event, we know that Zhang Wan became the Censor-in-Chief in the fourth year of the Datong Era (538) at the latest. "More than one year later [after the ceremony]," *Liang shu* continues, "[Zhang Wan was] transferred away [from the capital], becoming the Metropolitan Governor of Yuzhang (豫章內史)." In other words, Zhang Wan left the position in the sixth year of the Datong Era (540).

After his return from the diplomatic mission(s), Liu Xiaoyi was appointed to about five positions before he took the position of Censor-in-Chief. Sometimes he held two or three positions at once. Although the general term of offices was three years in the Six Dynasties, the two or three years from Liu Xiaoyi's return from the diplomatic mission(s) until Zhang Wan's transfer away from the position of Censor-in-Chief are not an abnormal length of time for those temporary positions. After the position of Censor-in-Chief, Liu was transferred to Governor of Linhai in the

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180 Ibid., 504.
182 Dao Zhongju's 到仲舉 (516-566) biography indicates that his career from the third year to the sixth year of the Tianjia Era of the Chen dynasty (562-565) was a full term (manzhi 蒲秩) of office as Governor of Danyang. See CS, "Dao Zhongju" 到仲舉, *juan* 20, 267.
tenth year of the Datong Era (544).\textsuperscript{183} This year was also the very year that Zhang Wan was transferred back to the capital, assuming his old position as Censor-in-Chief again.\textsuperscript{184} That means Liu Xiaoyi was in the position of Censor-in-Chief from 540 to 544. In order to determine Xu Ling's whereabouts around the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534), it is crucial to examine Xu Ling's career between the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era (531) and the year Liu Xiaoyi became Censor-in-Chief (540).

According to Xu Ling's biography in \textit{Chen shu},

中大通三年，王立為皇太子，東宮置學士，陵充其選。稍遷尚書度支郎。出為上虞令，御史中丞劉孝儀與陵先有隙，風聞劾陵在縣贓汙，因坐免。\textsuperscript{185}

In the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era, the prince [Xiao Gang] was established as Crown Prince. The position of Scholar was introduced at the Eastern Palace. [Xu] Ling filled the position. \textit{Before long}, [he was] transferred to the Department of State Affairs as Vice Minister of Revenue. He was transferred away [from the capital] and became the Magistrate of Shangyu. The Censor-in-Chief, Liu Xiaoyi, had borne malice towards Xu Ling for a long time. [Liu Xiaoyi] accused Xu Ling of corruption based on rumors. [Xu Ling] therefore was suspended.

If this is the complete record for Xu Ling's career from 531 to the year when Liu Xiaoyi suspended him, then Xu Ling held three positions before his suspension after the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era (531). The term "before long" in the above quotation indicates that Xu Ling did

\textsuperscript{183} LS, "Liu Qian" 刘潜, \textit{juan} 41, 594.
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., "Zhang Mian" 張緬, \textit{juan} 34, 504.
\textsuperscript{185} CS, "Xu Ling" 徐陵, \textit{juan} 26, 325.
not stay at the position of Scholar of the Eastern Palace for long.186 In contrast, he very likely completed the team of office as Vice Minister of Revenue in the Department of State Affairs. Since a full tenure of office normally was three years, Table 1 displays all four ways to account for his suspension under the assumption that Liu Xiaoyi suspended Xu Ling after he took up the position of Censor-in-Chief in 540.

Either Scenario 1 or Scenario 2 likely accounts for Xu Ling's career when we piece together the historical record, while Scenario 3 and Scenario 4 are doubtful. Scenario 4 requires Xu Ling to have been suspended in the first year of his term of office in Shangyu in 540. Since Xiao Gang was established as Crown Prince in the fifth month of 531 and the ceremony took place in the seventh month of the same year,187 Xu Ling would have had to complete his full term of office as Scholar of the Eastern Palace. Scenario 3 assumes Xu Ling was suspended in the second year of his term of office in Shangyu in 540. In this case, he would have been in the position of Scholar in the Eastern Palace for more than two years but less than three years.188 In either scenario 3 and 4, Xu Ling

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186 Some may claim that "Scholar of the Eastern Palace" was a sort of honorary title and did not have a "term" like an administrative office. Even if true, the focus here is not the nature of his position, but the length of time Xu Ling was at this position before being transferred away from the Eastern Palace.

187 LS, "Jianwen Di" 簡文帝, juan 4, 104.

188 Fu Gang 傅剛 speculates that Xu Ling left the Eastern Palace and became Vice Minister of Revenue in the Department of State Affairs around 539 (the fifth year of the Datong Era) or between 536 and 537 (the second and the third year of the Datong Era). His speculation is close to Scenario 3 in Table 1. See Fu Gang, "Yutai xinyong bianzhuan
would not have been transferred away from the position of Scholar "before long" as documented in Chen shu. Conversely, Scenario 2 assumes Xu Ling was suspended in the last year of his term of office in Shangyu in 540. In this case, he would have been in the position of Scholar of the Eastern Palace for less than two years. Finally, Scenario 1 assumes Xu Ling was suspended after the three-year term of his office in Shangyu but remained in the same position waiting for the next transfer order in 540. In this case, he would have been in the position of Scholar of the Eastern Palace for less than one year. The length of time that Xu Ling would have stayed in the position of Scholar of the Eastern Palace in Scenario 1 and Scenario 2 more closely corresponds to the written record of his biography. Cao Daoheng also takes Liu Xiaoyi's official term in the position of Censor-in-Chief into consideration, remarking that Xu Ling's term of office in Shangyu should be around 535-540.\(^{189}\) Cao's speculation is very close to the inference shown in Scenario 1 and Scenario 2.

Because there is no mention of the year in which Liu Xiaoyi suspended Xu Ling, it is possible that it occurred any time he was in the position of Censor-in-Chief from 540 to 544. However, since Scenario 3 and Scenario 4 do not correspond to Xu Ling's biography, Xu Ling's

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\(^{189}\) See note 3 in Cao Daoheng 曹道衡, "Xu Ling" 徐陵, in Zhongguo lidai zhuming wenxuejia pingzhuan (xupian 1), 416.
suspension could not have been later than 541 when Liu Xiaoyi was in the first year of his term of
office. In the case of Scenario 2, it is possible that Xu Ling was suspended in the last year of his
tenure in 540, or the year he was waiting for his next transfer order in 541. In the case of Scenario 1,
Xu Ling could only have been suspended in 540, the year he was waiting for the next transfer order
while he was still in the same position. The year 540 was the year when Liu Xiaoyi had just taken
up the position of Censor-in-Chief before he officially started his term of office. Both Scenario 1
and Scenario 2 are possible in light of Liu Xiaoyi's official experience. In each of these cases, Xu
Ling would have already left Xiao Gang's Eastern Palace in the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era
(534) as indicated in Table 1.

If Xu Ling did spend more than one year on the project to compile *Yutai xinyong*, he
would have been about to leave (Scenario 2) or had already left Xiao Gang's household.
Nonetheless, he was still in the capital working for one of the most important sectors of the central
government. If the project was indeed commanded by Xiao Gang, Xu Ling was not far from him.191

190 Fu Gang highly evaluates Kōzen's inference regarding the compilation date of the *Yutai xinyong* but considers that
the compilation might have taken more than one year to finish. His account for the date is from the fourth year of the
Zhong-Datong Era to the first year of the Datong Era (532-535). See Fu Gang 傅剛, "Yutai xinyong bianzhuan shijian
zai taolun" 《玉臺新詠》編纂時間再討論, 60.

191 Cao Daoheng believes that the *Yutai xinyong* was compiled during the time period when Xu Ling was able to see
Xiao Gang frequently. He claims that the date of the compilation does not have to be when Xu was in the position of
Scholar of the Eastern Palace. Since Xu Ling had a chance to work for Xiao Gang closely again after he was reinstated
as Adjutant in the Prince of Nanping's princedom (CS, "Xu Ling" 徐陵, juan 26, 325-326), Cao considers that this
2.4 The "Preface to the Yutai xinyong" and the Purpose of Compiling the Yutai xinyong

The controversies regarding the purpose of compiling the Yutai xinyong are many. As stated earlier, Liu Su says that it was because Xiao Gang wanted to "amplify" the Palace Style. Many discussions in later generations were developed from Liu Su's comment. Because of the long-time monarch-subject relationship between Xiao Gang and Xu Ling's family, Xiao Gang has been viewed as the initiator behind the project.

Luo Yuming and Wu Shikui disagree with Liu Su's comment that Xiao Gang had regretted writing Palace Style poetry. By compiling an anthology that contained poems with feminine themes from both the past and the contemporary age, they maintain, Xiao Gang in fact attempted to "amplify" his style in order to legitimize it. Luo and Wu recall the incident of Xu Chi's being transferred away from Xiao Gang three years prior to the compilation and imply that there is a connection between this incident and Xu Ling's being chosen as the compiler of the Yutai xinyong.

period is more possible to be the compilation time and it is in accordance with Liu Su's wording, which indicates that the Yutai xinyong was compiled in Xiao Gang's "late years". However, Cao did not provide convincing evidence to support his remark and there is no mention about Kōzen's theory in his argument. Cao also admits that his remark is only a conjecture. See note 4 in Cao Daoheng, Xu Ling, in Zhongguo lidai zhuming wenxuejia pingzhuan (xupian 1), 417-418.
From this political point of view, Luo and Wu surmise that the compilation of the *Yutai xinyong* was Xiao Gang's protest against his opponents.\(^{192}\)

However, a number of researchers believe that the aim of the project was to establish a new poetic style. Some tend to assume a tension between the *Yutai xinyong* and Xiao Tong's *Wen xuan* 文選 (*Selections of Refined Literature*). For instance, Közen maintains that Xiao Gang and his fellow poets compiled the *Yutai xinyong* for the purpose of establishing a monument of their new literature. He remarks that the project was accomplished shortly after Crown Prince Zhaoming's death and it applied a very different concept from that adopted in the *Wen xuan*. Közen argues that these phenomena demonstrate Xiao Gang's attempt to consolidate the foundation of his own literature.\(^{193}\)

Questions about the *Wen xuan*'s compilation are disputed. The title of the book appearing at the end of Xiao Tong's biography reveals Xiao Tong's connection with this anthology:

所著文集二十卷；又撰古今詔文言，為正序十卷；五言詩之善者，為文章英華二十卷；文選三十卷。

The collected work of his own writings amount to twenty *juan*. He also compiled: classical pronouncements and elegant sayings from the past and present, i.e., the *Zheng xu* 正序 (*Correct

\(^{192}\) Luo Yuming 骆玉明 and Wu Shikui 吳仕逵, "Gongtì shì de dàngdài pìngjìng jìqì zhèngzhì běijīng," 118.

\(^{193}\) Közen Hiroshi, "*Gyoku dai Shin'ei seiitsu kō,*" 72. Fu Gang 傅剛 also shares similar view with Közen. See his "*Yutai xinyong yu Wen xuan*" 《玉臺新詠》與《文選》.
Sequence?), in ten juan; the best examples of five-syllable verse, i.e., the *Wenzhang yinghua* (Prime Blossoms of Literature), in twenty juan; and the *Wen xuan*, in thirty juan.\(^{194}\)

Shimizu Yoshio maintains that Liu Xiaochuo was the only compiler of the *Wen xuan*, and Xiao Tong was, in Knechtges' word, a "nominal" compiler.\(^{195}\) Okamura Shigeru agrees with Shimizu and claims that Liu Xiaochuo collected most of the works from various anthologies and compiled them into the thirty-scroll (juan) *Wen xuan* on his own before Xiao Tong's death. Namely, the *Wen xuan* is a secondary anthology, a refined version of other anthologies.\(^{196}\) Okamura also observes that in comparison to the *Wenzhang yinghua* and *Zheng xu* 正序, the *Wen xuan* was only mentioned very briefly in the above citation and Yan Zhitui completely ignored it in his *Yan shi jiaxun* (Family Instructions of the Yans). He thereupon infers that the *Wen xuan* was not a popular book until the Sui and Tang dynasties.\(^{197}\) In contrary to Shimizu's theory, the *Wen xuan* was traditionally believed to be a compilation by multiple men of letters who served Xiao Tong.

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\(^{196}\) Okamura Shigeru 岡村繁, "Monzen hensan no jittai to hensan tōsho no Monzen hyōka" 『文選』編纂の実態と編纂当時の『文選』評價, 152.

\(^{197}\) Ibid., 153.
During the Putong Era (520-526), Liu Xiaochuo being one of them.\textsuperscript{198} In either case, it is certain that the \textit{Wen xuan} was compiled before the \textit{Yutai xinyong}. Both anthologies started to receive public attention about the same time but the treatment each received are completely different.

Unlike the \textit{Yutai xinyong}, the \textit{Wen xuan} "survived to become the model of many subsequent anthologies. ... The works it selected became an important part of the literary canon. For literature of the pre-Tang period, the \textit{Wen xuan} still represents the best selection of rhapsodies, lyric poetry, and prose."\textsuperscript{199} It was the orthodox contents of the \textit{Wen xuan} that separates it from the \textit{Yutai xinyong}. Calling attention to the differences between the two anthologies, Xiaofei Tian points out that, "a simplistic binary comparison without contextualization tells us more about the ideological presumptions underlying the writing of the cultural narrative by later generations than about the Liang," and what one should bear in mind is that "both anthologies are chance survivals from a sea of anthologies produced in the first half of the sixth century."\textsuperscript{200} Tian's insight brings a breath of fresh air to the long-time discussions about the two "rival" anthologies.

\textsuperscript{198} Knechtges, \textit{Wen xuan or Selections of Refined Literature}, v. 1, 10; Knechtges, "\textit{Wen xuan} Studies," 5-7. See also Hsieh K'ang 謝康 et al., \textit{Zhaoming Taizi he ta de Wen xuan} 昭明太子和他的文選 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1971), 85.


\textsuperscript{200} Xiaofei Tian, \textit{Beacon Fire and Shoting Star}, 108.
Putting the *Yutai xinyong* back in its contemporary literary context, Xu Yunhe remarks that theories like that proposed by Közen are far from convincing. Since compiling books with certain themes was quite popular in the Southern Dynasties, Xu argues that it is unthinkable that the purpose of the *Yutai xinyong*'s compilation was to advocate one's own style.\(^{201}\) In his "Jiedu 'Yutai xinyong xu'" ("Deciphering the 'Preface to the *Yutai xinyong*'"),\(^{202}\) Xu Yunhe calls attention to the importance of a careful reading of Xu Ling's preface, because the superficial readings have caused misunderstandings. Likewise, Chu Hsiao-Hai considers reading Xu Ling's preface as the foundation for approaching the various issues regarding the *Yutai xinyong*.\(^{203}\) Despite some differences in their perspectives, both Xu and Chu maintain that *Yutai xinyong* was initially compiled for female readers.\(^{204}\)

According to the *Sui shu*, the flowery Palace Style poetry created by Xiao Gang, Xiao Yi, Xu Chi and Yu Jianwu became popular after the beginning of the Datong Era (535-545). As discussed...


\(^{204}\) Ibid., 19. See also Xu Yunhe 許雲和, "Jiedu 'Yutai xinyong xu'", 47. Some other scholars also acknowledge the same, and in English, for examples see, James Robert Hightower, "Preface to 'New Songs from the Tower of Jade'," in *Studies in Chinese Literature*, 125; Knechtges, "Culling the Weeds and Selecting the Prime Blossoms," 233; and Xiaofei Tian, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, 260.
earlier, the *Yutai xinyong* was compiled by Xu Ling around the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534), which was one year before the first year of the Datong Era (535). As one of the leading poets, Xu Chi's transfer to Xin'an inevitably weakened the composition activities of this kind of poetry. Xu Chi's return had to wait until the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534), and with little doubt, his return restored vitality to literary activities to the Eastern Palace. Owing to the special relationship between Xu Ling's family and Xiao Gang, in addition to being known as a promising young scholar, Xu Ling should have had ample opportunities to attend Xiao Gang's public and private parties. The time when the Palace Style started to bloom and the time when the *Yutai xinyong* was compiled, it is only natural to infer that the *Yutai xinyong* may have contributed to the spread of the style to a certain extent. Did the project take place under Xiao Gang's command, and was it a tool manipulated by Xiao Gang for political protest? If so, in contrast to the popularity of the style, why was the name of the *Yutai xinyong* neither linked to Xiao Gang in any standard histories nor mentioned in Xu Ling's biography? Moreover, why does Xu Chi, a forerunner of the Palace Style poetry, not have a single poem in the *Yutai xinyong*? To find answers to these questions, we shall first read through the preface written by the compiler himself as Xu Yunhe and Chu Hsiao-Hai suggest.

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205 See Appendix for the discussions regarding Xu Chi's absence from the *Yutai xinyong*. 
Xu Ling's "Preface to the Yutai xinyong" was written in the Parallel Prose-poetry style, a very popular writing style in the Six Dynasties. It starts with a dynamic and gorgeously adorned portrait of a royal residence:

凌雲槼日。由余之所未窺。萬戶千門。張衡之所曾賦。周王璧臺之上。漢帝金屋之中。玉樹以珊瑚作枝。珠簾以玳瑁為柙。

Reaching above the clouds and screening the sun, You Yu had never seen. The tens of thousands of gates and doors were what Zhang Heng used to chant about. On the top of King of Zhou's Jade Terrace, inside the Han emperor's Golden chamber, the branches of jade trees are made of corals; shells of hawksbill are used to make the sinkers of pearl blinds.

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207 You Yu 由餘 was a wise man who assisted Duke Mu of Qin to expand Qin's territory. Wu Zhaoyi's 吳兆宜 annotation indicates that in Shi ji ("Qin benji" 秦本紀), Duke Mu of Qin showed You Yu his palace and high terrace. However, in the Shi ji published by Zhonghua shuju, what Duke Mu of Qin showed You Yu was his palace and "jiju" 積聚 (Shi ji, "Qin benji" 秦本紀, juan 5, comp. Sima Qian 司馬遷 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1959), 192). "Jiju" means "wealth". See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in Xu Xiaomu ji, 135.

208 This refers to Zhang Heng's 張衡 (78-139) "Fu on the Western Capital" ("Xijing fu" 西京賦 ). See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in Xu Xiaomu ji, 135. See also Wen xuan, juan 2, 47.

209 The term "king of Zhou's Jade Terrace" refers to the "terrace of overlapped jades" 重璧之臺 in "Mu Tianzi zhuan" 穆天子傳 (Biography of the Mu Heavenly Son). See "Mu Tianzi zhuan," juan 6, 16, in SBCK chubian, v. 27, Zi bu 子部 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1922). See also Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in Xu Xiaomu ji, 135.

210 The term "golden chamber" originates from a story in Han Wu gushi 漢武故事 (Old Anecdotes about Emperor Wu of Han). In the story, the juvenile emperor said to his aunt that he would build a golden chamber to keep his aunt's daughter in if the daughter married him. See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in Xu Xiaomu ji, 135. See also Han Wu gushi 漢武故事, in Han Wei biji xiaoshuo 漢魏筆記小說, ed. Zhou Guangpei 周光培 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1994), 461.
Following the portrait of the palace and mansions in the royal residence, Xu Ling describes the beautiful women living inside by using large number of allusions from historical documents.

其中有麗人焉。其人也。五陵豪族。充選掖庭。四姓良家。馳名永巷。亦有穎川新市。河間觀津。本號嬌娥。曾名巧笑。楚王宮內。無不推其細腰。魏國佳人。俱言訝其纖手。閱詩敦禮。非直東鄰之自媒。婉約風流。異西施之被教。弟兄協律。自小學歌。少長河陽。由來能舞。琵琶新曲。無待石崇。箜篌雜引。非因曹植。傳鼓瑟于楊家。得吹簫于秦女。至若寵聞長樂。陳后知而不平。畫出天仙。閩氏覽而遙妒。且如東鄰巧笑。來侍寢於更衣。西子微顰。得橫陳于甲帳。陪遊馺娑。騁纖腰于結風。長樂鴛鴦。奏新聲于度曲。妝鳴蟬之薄鬢。照墮馬之垂鬟。反插金鈿。橫抽寶樹。南都石黛。最發雙蛾。北地燕脂。偏開兩靨。

Inside, there live beautiful women. Some are from the powerful families of Wuling, who are chosen to live in the royal chambers built for ladies-in-waiting. Some are from decent families, who are famous in the Long Alley of the palace. Also, there are beauties from Yingchuan, Xinshi, Hejian, and Guanjin.211 One's original name is Lovable Beauty; another one used to be called Sweet Smile.212 [Even if they were] in the palace of the king of Chu, everyone would have recommended their slender waists.213 The beauties in the Wei would all say they are surprised by the delicacy of

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211 Wu Zhaoyi annotates Yingchuan 穎川 as referring to Empress Yu of Mingmu 明穆庾皇后 in Jin shu but he is not certain about whom Xinshi 新市 refers to. Chu Hsiao-Hai suggests that Yingchuan should refer to Lady Tang of the Eastern Han, the wife of the dethroned emperor Shao Di; and Xinshi refers to Han Emperor Wu's beloved concubine Lady Li. Chu agrees with Wu's annotation saying that Hejian 河間 refers to Lady Gouge 鉤戈 who was also Han Emperor Wu's concubine (HS, juan 49, 1985), and Guanjin 観津 refers to Empress Dou of Han, who was the wife of Emperor Xiaowen. See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in Xu Xiaomu ji, 136. Chu Hsiao-Hai's commentaries are in "Lun Xu Ling 'Yutai xinyong xu'," 2.

212 "Qiaoxiao (Sweet Smile)" refers to Duan Qiaoxiao who was Emperor Wen of Wei's lady-in-waiting. See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in Xu Xiaomu ji, 136. See also Cui Bao 翟豹, Gujin zhu 古今註, "Zhu xia" 註下, juan xia, in SBCK sanbian, v. 85, Zi bu 子部, Zhang Yuanji 張元濟 ed. (Shanghai: Pu ban shulou, 1935). Wu Zhaoyi's annotation indicates that the source of this allusion is Zhonghua gujin zhu 中華古今註. However, Zhonghua gujin zhu was written by Ma Gao 马縞 in the Five Dynasties period after the Tang, and there is no relevant contents found in it.

213 "King Wu of Chu likes slender waist; many starve to death" was a proverb in the Han Dynasty. See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in Xu Xiaomu ji, 136. See also HS, "Ma Yuan" 马援, juan 24, 853.
these beautiful women's hands.\textsuperscript{214} Not the same as the east neighbor who acted as a matchmaker for herself, they read the \textit{Odes} and pay homage to the Confucian ethical codes. They are graceful and charming in nature, different from the lesson-taking Xishi. Their brothers are proficient in music and they learned singing from a tender age.\textsuperscript{215} [Like the lady who] grew up in Heyang, they are good at dancing from the first.\textsuperscript{216} They play new melodies on lutes, without needing Shi Cong's "Preface to the 'Lyric of Wang Mingjun'" ("Wang Mingjun ci xu" 王明君辭序). The miscellaneous ballads they play on a harp have nothing to do with Cao Zhi's "Lay of Konghou" ("Konghou yin" 筵築引).\textsuperscript{217} They learn to strum stringed musical instruments from the Yang Family.\textsuperscript{218} They study bamboo flutes from the female musician of the Qin.\textsuperscript{219} If the news saying that they are favored by the emperor reaches Empress Chen's ears in the Changle Palace, the empress would feel uneasy.\textsuperscript{220} Their portraits are prettier than a goddess; the consort of Xiongnu's chieftain would feel jealous from afar after seeing it.\textsuperscript{221} Like the east neighbour Qiaoxiao, they come to serve the emperor in the dressing room. [Also like] the brows-knitting West Girl (Xi Shi), they have opportunities to lie down in the emperor's curtained bed. They accompany [the emperor] strolling about the Sasuo Palace [of the Han]; swing about their slender waists dancing to the tune

\textsuperscript{214} "Delicate hands" originates from the poem "Ge lü" 葛屨 in \textit{The Book of Odes}. See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in \textit{Xu Xiaomu ji}, 136. See also \textit{Mao Shi zhengyi}, "Guofeng, Weifeng" 國風魏風, in SSJZS, 357.

\textsuperscript{215} This allusion originates from Lady Li and her brother Li Yannian lived in Emperor Wu of Han's time. See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in \textit{Xu Xiaomu ji}, 136 and 126. See also HS, "Xiaowu Li Furen" 孝武李夫人, \textit{juan} 97 \textit{shang}, 3951-3956; and HS, "Li Yannian" 李延年, \textit{juan} 93, 3725-3726.

\textsuperscript{216} This refers to Han Emperor Cheng's empress Zhao Feiyan. See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in \textit{Xu Xiaomu ji}, 136. See also HS, "Wuhan zhi di qi" 五行志第七, \textit{juan} 27 zhong zhi shang, 1395.

\textsuperscript{217} "Konghou" 筵築 is the name for a harp.

\textsuperscript{218} According to HS, Yang Yun's 楊肅 wife was expert at strumming stringed music instruments. See HS, "Yang Chang, zi Yun" 楊肅子諤, \textit{juan} 66, 2896. See also Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in \textit{Xu Xiaomu ji}, 136.

\textsuperscript{219} The "female musician of the Qin" refers to Duke Mu of Qin's daughter Nongyu, who was married to a bamboo flute master named Xiao Shi by her father. See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in \textit{Xu Xiaomu ji}, 136. See also \textit{Lie xian zhuan} 列仙傳, "Xiao Shi" 蕭史, \textit{juan} shang, in \textit{Han Wei biji xiaoshuo}, 140.

\textsuperscript{220} This refers to the story about singer Wei Zifu and Empress Chen in HS. See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in \textit{Xu Xiaomu ji}, 136. See also HS, "Xiaowu Wei Huanghou" 孝武偉皇后, \textit{juan} 97 \textit{shang}, 3949.

\textsuperscript{221} In his annotation, Wu Zhaoyi quotes the story in Huan Tan's 恽譔 Xin lun 新論 (\textit{New Disquisitions}), which indicates that the womenfolk of the Xiongnu's chieftain were jealous by nature. See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in \textit{Xu Xiaomu ji}, 136. See also YKJ, "Huan Tan Xin lun xia, shuce di shisi" 恽譔新論下述策第十四, 551.
of "Jiefeng" [as Zhao Feiyan did]. They play music in the Changle Palace and Yuanyang Palace, performing up-to-date music while writing lyrics for songs. They dress up their hair on temples as thin as cicadas. They look at the reflection of their "zhuima" style in a mirror. Their hairpins are inserted backwards; their dangling hair ornaments are fixed horizontally. Kohl from the southern capital perfectly sets off their eyebrows; rouge from the north opens dimples on both sides of their cheeks.

Besides the female beauties, there are also coquettish boys in the palaces:

亦有嶺上仙童。分丸魏帝。腰中寶鳳。授歷軒轅。金星與婺女爭華。麝月共嫦娥競爽。驚鸞冶袖。時飄韓椽之香。飛燕長裾。宜結陳王之佩。雖非圖畫。入甘泉而不分。言異神僊。戯陽臺而無別。

There are also immortal boys at the summit of the mountain range, sharing pills with the emperor of the Wei. Ling Lun invents the musical scale and presents the calendar to the Yellow Emperor.
Sir Gold Star competes in brilliance with Lady Vega; the Moon Lad competes in brightness with the goddess Chang'e. Their decorated sleeves are like startled phoenixes, from time to time, the scent that Administrator Han wore wafts forth. The long skirt of Zhao Feiyan should have Prince Si of Chen's pendant tied to the belt. Although they are not painted in the portrait [like Lady Li was], they enter the Ganquan Palace without being distinguished from her. They are not the Goddess [of Mt. Wu], but entertain their emperor at the terrace with no difference.

The two allusions in the first four lines indicate the contributions made by young immortal servants and a male musician to the emperors. Then Xu Ling uses the names of constellations to imply that the good-looking young males are not inferior at all to the female beauties. The phrases "decorated sleeves are like startled phoenixes" and "the long skirt of Zhao Feiyan" both refer to dancers. The scent Han Shou wore and Prince Si of Chen's pendant imply that although those...

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228 "Sir Gold Star", Venus, and Vega indicate male and female respectively. Venus's other names in Chinese are "Taibo jinxing" 太白金星 or "Taibo" 太白. The reason why Venus indicates male is probably because "Taibo" 太白 literally means "senior male". In contrast, Vega's Chinese name is the "star of the Weaving Girl" 織女星.

229 Han Shou 韓壽 was a good-looking young man who was secretly in love with his superior's daughter. The rare and fantastic scent he was stained with from the lady revealed his love affair. The story is found in Shishuo xinyu. See Liu Yiqing 劉義慶, Shishuo xinyu jiaojian 世說新語校箋, annot. Yang Yung 楊勇 (Taipei: Hongye shuju, 1972), 690. See also Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in Xu Xiaomu ji, 138. An English translation of Shishuo xinyu is available by Richard B. Mather. See Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403-444), A new account of tales of the world: Shih-shuo Hsin-yü, comm. Liu Jun 劉駿 (462-521), trans. Richard B. Mather (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976).

230 Zhao Feiyan was famous because of her skillful dancing. The allusion to the pendant of Prince Si of Chen is from Cao Zhi's "Luo shen fu" 洛神賦. See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in Xu Xiaomu ji, 138. See also Wen xuan, juan 19, 895-901.

231 According to Wu Zhaoyi, the allusions to Lady Li and the Ganquan Palace originate from "Xiaowu Li Furen" 孝武李夫人 in HS, juan 97 shang, 3951. See also Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in Xu Xiaomu ji, 138.

232 Wu Zhaoyi writes that the allusions to "the Goddess of Mt. Wu" and "the terrace" are from Song Yu's 宋玉 "Gaotang fu" 高唐賦. In the rhapsody, Song Yu tells the story that the Goddess of Mt. Wu had sexual intercourse with King Xiang of Chu on a terrace when he was having a nap. See Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in Xu Xiaomu ji, 138. See also Wen xuan, juan 19, 875-882.
dancers are as skillful as the famous female dancer Zhao Feiyan, they are actually males. At last, Xu Ling remarks that the services which the handsome young males provided to the emperors in the inner palaces were not different from those of charming females. Regardless of their gender, Xu Ling admired all the beautiful people in the palace:

真可谓倾国倾城。无对无双者也。

Their beauty is truly [the same as a woman whose beauty can] "overthrow cities and ruin states,“ and they are "peerless and matchless!"

Almost every sentence in the above two paragraphs contains a literary allusion. The absence of subjects leaves room for various interpretations of which person or people Xu Ling refers to. Some researchers tend to think all of the above descriptions are devoted to a single female who compiled the *Yutai xinyong*. However, it is impossible for one person to have the various levels of social status, not to mention different genders described. Because "peerless and matchless" can also be used in the plural, Chu Hsiao-Hai remarks that taking this phrase as an indication for a single beauty misrepresents Xu Ling's real intention.²³⁴ Xu Yunhe also argues that all the literary allusions in Xu Ling's preface imply a group of beautiful people who live and serve in the palace.²³⁵

The word "qiren" 其人 that starts the paragraph describing female beauties is probably taken as an

²³³ The term "qingguo qingcheng" 倾国倾城 originates from Li Yannian's song about his sister Lady Li. See HS, "Xiaowu Li Furen" 孝武李夫人, *juan* 97 *shang*, 3951.

²³⁴ Chu Hsiao-Hai 朱晓海, "Lun Xu Ling 'Yutai xinyong xu'," 9.

²³⁵ Xu Yunhe 許雲和, "Jiedu 'Yutai xinyong xu',' 47.
indication of a single person by some readers. But this word can also refer to more than one person.

For instance, in his "Discussion of the Qualities of the Two Early Emperors of the Han" ("Han er zu youlie lun" 漢二祖優劣論), Cao Zhi says:

客有問余曰。夫漢二帝。高祖光武。俱為受命撥亂之君。此時事之難易。論其人之優劣。孰者為先。A guest asked me: "The two emperors of the Han, the founder of the Han and Emperor Guangwu, had both received the mandate from Heaven as monarchs who dispelled chaos. This is a matter of complexity of a current event. [Yet,] regarding these people's (qiren) qualities, who is the prior one?"

The term "qiren" here indicates two emperors. Moreover, In the Sou shen ji (Records of Seeking for Gods), Gan Bao 干寶, who lived in the fourth century, writes: "Outside the Southern Sea, there are mermaids. They live in water like fish, and they never stop weaving. They (qiren) weep pearls [instead of tears]." In this case, "qiren" refers to mermaids in general.

In the succeeding paragraph, Xu Ling describes the literary talent these beautiful people have:

加以天情開朗。逸思彫華。妙解文章。尤工詩賦。琉璃硯匣。終日隨身。翡翠筆牀。無時離手。清文滿篋。非惟芍藥之花。新製連篇。寧止蒲萄之樹。九日登高。時有緣情之作。In addition, their natural instincts are cheerful. Their extraordinary thoughts are refined and brilliant. They comprehend literary works cleverly; and they are especially good at writing poems and rhapsodies. Colourful glazed inkstone cases are with them all day. Jade brushholders never leave their hands. Their portfolios are full of elegant literary writings, not only poems about peonies. They have written many new works, not just the ones about grapevines. When climbing to

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236 YWLJ, "Hou Han Guangwu Di" 後漢光武帝, juan 12, 237.
237 搜神記曰。南海之外。有鲛人。水居如魚。不廢績織。其人能泣珠。 See YWLJ, "Baoyu bu xia, Zhu" 報玉部下珠, juan 84, 1437.
heights on the ninth day, they often compose poems expressing their feelings. When [someone like]
Princess Wannian died, there was a eulogy [written by them like that written by Zuo Fen238].

Poems about peonies and grapevines, poems written on the ninth day when climbing to the
heights, and eulogies resemble Zuo Fen's for Princess Wannian are all masterpieces written by
gifted female writers. Xu Ling then concludes:

其佳麗也如彼。其才情也如此。
Their beauty is like that. Their literary talent is like this.

After introducing those beautiful people's charm and talent, Xu Ling goes on to describe
their life inside the imperial residence.

既而椒房宛轉。柘館陰岑。銅蠡晝靜。三星未夕。不事懷衾。五日猶賒。誰能
理曲。優游少託。寂寞多閒。厭長樂之疏鐘。勞中宮之緩箭。輕身無力。怯南陽之擁衣。
生長深宮。笑扶風之織錦。雖復投壺玉女。為歡盡于百駟。爭博齊姬。心賞窮于六箸。無
怡神于暇景。惟屬意于新詩。可得代彼萱蘇。微蠲愁疾。
Then, [the path to] an empress' palace is winding and curving; the inner court is serene and
carefully secluded. Crane-shaped red locks are well secured at dawn. Bronze door knockers are
quiet at noon. When the Three Stars [in Orion]239 have not yet risen at night, the beautiful people
are not yet in bed.240 The waiting period of five days is so long,241 who will be in the mood of

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238 Zuo Fen 左芬 (d. 300) was sister of the famous poet Zuo Si 左思 (250-305). She became a concubine of Emperor Wu of Jin because of her literary talent. See JS, "Zuo Guipin 左貴嬪, juan 31, 957.

239 "Sanxing 三星 (the Three Stars) indicates the "Shen Mansion" 参宿 in the Chinese constellations system called the "Twenty-eight Mansions" ("Ershiba xiu 二十八宿"). They are considered as the equivalent to Alnitak, Alnilam and Mintaka, the stars of Orion's Belt. See Liu Zhouyang 劉周堂 ed., Zhongguo gudai wenxue zuopin xuanzhu 中國古代文學
作品選注 (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue chubanshe, 2011), 92. See also Luo Zhufeng 羅竹鳯 eds., Hanyu dacidian [Haiwai ban] 漢語大詞典 (海外版), v. 1, "sanxing 三星, 213; v. 2, "shenxiu 参宿, 845 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1993).

240 James R. Hightower relates these two lines to the phrases "bao qin yu chou 抱衾與裯 (in "Zhao nan, Xiaoxing" 召南小星) and "san xing zai tian 三星在天 (in "Tangfeng, Choumiu 唐風繢嫫) in Shi jing, and translates them as: "The turn of the Triad not yet come, she need not serve with bedding in arms." See note 6 on page 133 in Studies in Chinese Literature.
performing music?! Being free from restraint, there is not much to entrust [their sentiments] to. Feeling lonely, they have a lot of leisure time. They are tired of the sparse chimes from the Changle Palace; they feel bored by the slow moving arrow of the clepsydra in the mid-palace. The light bodies lack strength, they are afraid to wash clothes like the woman in Nanyang did. Being born and growing up in the palace, they laugh at the brocade woven with palindrome by the woman in Fufeng. 

Although the jade-like girls play the game of throwing arrows into a distant pot and enjoy themselves to the full by having arrows bound back one hundred times without a break; as well as the beauties of Qi compete in gambling and are filled with joy in a big game; they do not feel happy in their mind during their spare time. They only love new poems, wishing the poems can substitute the herbs of oblivion and slightly soften their depression.

In this paragraph, Xu Ling describes the palace beauties' lives. They are free from the worries and sorrow of being separated from their husband, the emperor. They are able to enjoy themselves with all kinds of games as much as they wish. However, they feel depressed because of

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241 According to Li ji 禮記, concubines should serve their husband once every five days ("Thus, even if a concubine is old, if she has not yet reached the age of fifty, she must participate in sexual intercourse once every five days." 故妾雖老，年未滿五十，必與五日之御。). See Li ji 禮記, "Neize" 内則, in SSJZS, 1468. See also Liu Zhoutang 劉周堂 ed., Zhongguo gudai wenxue zuopin xuanzhu 中國古代文學作品選注, 92.

242 Women in Nanyang and Fufeng were living apart from their husbands. That is why one prepared clothes for her husband and another wove a palindrome on brocade to express her sadness. The beautiful people in the palace have no concerns about these matters. For the allusion about the woman wove brocade with palindrome in Fufeng, see JS, "Dou Tao, qi Su shi" 窦滔妻蘇氏, juan 96, 2523. See also Wu Zhaoyi's annotation in Xu Xiaomu ji 徐霞客日記, 139.


244 The term "Xuan Su 萱蘇" indicates "xuan cao 萱草" and "gaosu 皋蘇". Xuan cao, Hemerocallis fulva, is believed to have the power to make people forget unhappiness. Gaosu is the name of a certain kind of tree, which contains sweet juice. If one drinks it, he/she will no longer feel hungry and will forget weariness. Hightower does not translate these lines in a literal manner but rightly gives Wang Lang's (d. 228) "Letter to the Crown Prince of the Wei" (與魏太子書) as an example, in which the meaning and use of the herbs of "xuan su" are well explained. See Hightower's Studies in Chinese Literature, 132, note 7. See also YKJ, 1173. Anne Birrell translates this word as "the flower of oblivion" (Chinese Love Poetry: New Songs from a Jade Terrace, 6.).
their idleness. According to Xu Ling, the only thing that can cheer them up is writing new poems.

In the following paragraph, Xu Ling finally reveals the purpose of compiling the *Yutai xinyong*:

> 但往世名篇。當今巧製。分諸麟閣。散在鴻都。不藉篇章。無由披覽。于是然脂暝寫。弄筆晨書。撰錄豔歌。凡為十卷。曾無參[忝]245于雅頌。亦靡濫于風人。涇渭之間。若斯而已。[Yet] in most cases, the masterpieces of the past, and the clever writings of the present are stored in the Qilin Chamber and dispersed in the Hongdu Library. If one does not borrow them from those places, there is no means to peruse them. Therefore, at night, I lit lamp oil and made copies; at daybreak, I held a writing brush and wrote. After writing down and compiling the amorous songs, I divided them into 10 *juan*. [These amorous songs] are worthy of being compared with the poems in *The Book of Odes*; also widely chanted among poets. Between the Jing River and the Wei River, [the dividing line of pureness and muddiness are distinct,246 and the difference between this book and *The Book of Odes*] is just like this.

The Qilin Chamber and the Hongdu Library were imperial libraries. In traditional society, it was not convenient for the women living in the inner palace to gain access to those libraries. In contrast, as a young scholar serving the Crown Prince and then working for the Department of State Affairs, Xu Ling would not have had difficulties using the libraries. In fact, in the succeeding paragraph, Xu Ling acknowledges that the calligraphy style used in the *Yutai xinyong* imitated those in the collections in the Three Communicating Agencies, which implies that he used resources from the highest level of the government. Xu Ling states that the poems he selected are amorous songs and in fact amorous songs equal to those in *The Book of Odes*. In Xu Ling's opinion,

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245 The character here should be "tian" 訾 rather than "can" 参, because "tian" means "disgraced, ashamed". See the text of "*Yutai xinyong xu*" in YTXY, 13.

246 When the Jing River and the Wei River merge at the northern suburb of Xi'an, a clear division line between the two currents is created because the two rivers contain different densities of mud. This allusion was often used in ancient time from the *Shi jing* (*The Book of Odes*) on.
amorous songs may be very different from orthodox poems, but are not necessarily unacceptable. It is interesting to see that Xu Ling also mentions the time frame when he worked on the project. Some readers might take the "at night" and "at daybreak" as expressions indicating Xu Ling's great efforts working day and night. Nonetheless, as mentioned earlier, Xu Ling was no longer a Scholar in the Eastern Palace when he compiled the anthology. He had started working for the Department of State Affairs, and the "night" and "daybreak" may literally indicate the time of day when he worked on this project.

After the compilation work was done, the valuable collection deserved the best binding:

於是麗以金箱。裝之寶軸。三臺妙迹。龍伸蠖屈之書。五色花箋。河北膠東之紙。高樓紅粉。仍定魯魚之文。禿惡生香。鴻防羽陵之蠹。靈飛六甲。高擅玉函。鴻烈仙方。長推丹枕。

Thereupon, I beautified it with a golden case. I put it on a precious scroll. The marvelous style of the Three Communicating Agencies is used in its calligraphy, which resembles dragons' stretches and caterpillars' bends. The multicolored paper with floral pattern is from Jiaodong in Hebei. The red powder from the high tower corrected the mistakes as usual. The rue that keeps evil away was used to protect the anthology from bookworms. It is like the valuable Daoist canons Lingfei and Liujia that nobly occupy the jade box, also like the fairy prescription in Honglie, it makes one push the cinnabar pillow away for a long time.

Xu Ling states that the anthology is just as valuable as Daoist esoterica. At last, he once again sheds light on the palace beauties, revealing that they are the readers of this anthology:

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247 According to Wu Zhaoyi's annotation, "Lingfei" 灵飞 and "Liujia" 六甲 originate from Han Wu neizhuan. See also Ban Gu's Han Wu Di neizhuan in Han Wei biji xiaoshuo (page 471) for the story about "Lingfei" and "Liujia".

248 "Honglie" 鴻烈 and "xianfang" 仙方 can be found in Bowu zhi. See Xu Xiaomu ji, 140. As Wu Zhaoyi remarks, "Honglie" is an abbreviation for Liu An's Huainan honglie ji 淮南鸿烈集, which is a book related to Daoism. To "push the cinnabar pillow away" indicates that because one is absorbed in something, one stays up late.
And inside the Black Bull Curtained Bed, the remaining music has not yet come to an end. In front of the Vermilion Bird Window, the new makeup is done. At this moment, untying the silky ribbon, they open the light blue book cover made of silk. They enjoy reading the anthology for long hours in their studies. The book is always circulated by delicate hands. How they are unlike Empress Deng of Han (Deng Sui 鄧綏, 81-121), who studied [Confucius's] Spring and Autumn but had difficulties acquiring Confucian accomplishments. Neither are they the same as the Queen Mother Dou of Han (205-135 B.C.), who disseminated Daoism but was not able to master the techniques of alchemy. They certainly surpass the powerful family of Western Shu, whose maids could only chant Wang Yanshou's "Fu on the Lulingguang Hall". They also outstrip the ladies-in-waiting who served Emperor Yuan of Han when he was Crown Prince in the Eastern Palace, as they could only intone the "Vertical Flute Laud". For our graceful ladies, [to read this anthology] is almost like wasting their time. Ah, intelligent ladies, please do not make fun!

In his annotations, Wu Zhaoyi indicates that the allusion of the "Zhuniao chuang" (Vermilion Bird Window) originates from the anecdote about the meeting of the Queen of the West

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249 The character "tao" 繃 is adopted from the text in YKJ (page 3457), which means 'silky ribbon'. All though the character "tao" 湌 used in Xu Xiaomu ji is pronounced the same, it means 'overflow' and does not make sense here.

250 The following lines are not in the text contained in YWLJ.

251 The line "li yi xiang lian" 麗以香奩 (beautified with fragrant case) does not fit in the context here. I follow the text in Wenyuan yinghua (ed. Li Fang 李昉 et al. (Taipei: Huawen shuju, 1967)) instead, which is "wu huo ji yan" 無或譏焉. See Chu Hsiao-Hai's discussion about this line in his "Lun Xu Ling 'Yutai xinyong xu'" 8.

252 HHS, "Huanghou ji di shi shang" 皇后紀第十上, juan 10 shang, 418.

253 HS, "Waiqi zhuang di liushiqi shang" 外戚傳第六十七上, juan 97 shang, 3945.

254 According to Wu Zhaoyi, this allusion originates from the story about Liu Yan 劉焉 (d.234) who had his maids learn songs and music. See Xu Xiaomu ji, 141. See also Sanguo zhi, "Shu shu shi" 蜀書十, juan 40, 1001.

255 Wu Zhaoyi identifies this allusion as originating from Wang Bao's 王褒 (fl. 73-49 B.C.) story in HS. According to the story, when Emperor Yuan of Han was still a Crown Prince, Wang Bao's writings helped cure his illness. The Crown Prince was especially fond of Wang Bao's "Vertical Flute Laud" ("Dongxiao song" 洞簫頌). He had all his ladies-in-waiting memorize this poem. See Xu Xiaomu ji, 141. See also HS, "Wang Bao" 王褒, juan 64 xia, 2829.
西王母，an immortal, and Emperor Wu of Han in the Bowu zhi 博物誌 (Records of Various Things), while the term "Qingniu" 青牛 (Black Bull) in "Qingniu zhang" 青牛帳 (Black Bull Curtained Bed) refers to the spirit of a catalpa tree in the Luyi zhuan 錄異傳 (Collection of Strange Stories).\(^{256}\)

However, the juxtaposition of these two literary allusions does not make sense because they show no connection and share nothing in common.

The relatively complete story about the meeting between the Queen of the West and Emperor Wu of Han is found in Han Wu Di neizhuan 漢武帝內傳 (Biography of Emperor Wu of Han),\(^{257}\) the "Zhuniao chuang (Vermilion Bird Window)" in this story being a window in Emperor Wu's palace. The story tells how Emperor Wu received Daoist esoterica showing how to become an immortal from the Queen of the West. Supposedly, the Queen of the West vouchsafed the emperor a map called "Wu yue zhenxing tu" 五嶽眞形圖 ("Genuine Image of the Five Mountains") in addition to the Daoist canonical works "Lingfei" 灵飛 and "Liuji" 六甲, which we have seen in the previous paragraph about the binding of the Yutai xinyong in Xu Ling's preface.

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\(^{256}\) Xu Xiaomu ji, 140-141. For the source of "Vermilion Bird Window", see Zhang Hua 張華 (232-300), Bowu zhi 博物誌, in Han Wei biji xiaoshuo, 663. For the source that Wu Zhaoyi indicates for "Black Bull Curtained Bed", see Lu yi zhuan 錄異傳, in Guoxiaoshuo gouchen 古小說鉤沉, Lu Xun quanjji 魯迅全集, v. 8, ed. Lu Xun xiansheng jinian weiyuanhui 魯迅全集, 1938, 523-524.

\(^{257}\) Han Wu Di neizhuan, in Han Wei xiaoshuo, 465-473.
In contrast to the "Vermilion Bird Window", there is no mention of the "Qingniu zhang" 青牛帳 (Black Bull Curtained Bed) in the Han Wu Di neizhuan. It is difficult to find this word in other extant sources as well. Nonetheless, the expression "Qingniu" 青牛 (Black Bull) in the form of "Qingniu Shi" 青牛師 (Master Black Bull) or "Qingniu Daoshi" 青牛道士 (Daoist Priest Black Bull) designating a legendary long-lived Daoist priest, appears in some sources linked to the "Genuine Image of the Five Mountains".

In his annotations to the Hou Han shu, Li Xian 李賢 (651-684) and his collaborators quote a story about a man called Feng Junda 封君達, the "Qingniu Shi" 青牛師 (Master Black Bull), from Han Wu Di neizhuan. In the story, Feng Junda was said to be a person who practiced the Daoist way of lengthening his life span. Since he often rode on a black bull, Feng was called "Daoist Priest Black Bull". After he learned that a person named Lu Nüsheng 魯女生 possessed a map called "Image of the Five Mountains" ("Wu yue tu" 五嶽圖), over a period of years, Feng repeatedly asked Lu to give him the map. More information about Lu Nüsheng is found in a book called Sanfu Huangtu 三輔黃圖 (Yellow Images of the Capital Outskirts) written in the Six Dynasties:

漢武帝內傳曰：魯女生，長樂人。初餌胡麻，乃永絕榖八十餘年，少壯色如桃華。一日，與親知故人別，入華山。後五十年，先識者逢女於廟前，乘白鹿，從王母。人因識之。謝其鄉里而去。259

258 HHS, "Fangshu liezhuan" 方術列傳, juan 82 xia, 2750.
*Han Wu Di neizhuan* says: "Lu Nüsheng was from Changle. In the beginning, he ate sesame. Then he stopped eating grain for more than 80 years. He looked young and strong; [his skin] color was like peach blossoms. One day, [after] bidding farewell to his family and friends, he entered Mt. Hua. Fifty years later, one of his acquaintances ran into him in front of a monastery. He was riding on a white deer and following the Queen of the West. People thereupon recognized him. He excused himself from his fellow villagers and left."

From what we have seen in Li Xian's annotations and the *Sanfu huangtu*, it is clear that in the original *Han Wu Di neizhuan*, the stories about the "Daoist Priest Black Bull" 青牛道士 Feng Junda, and the immortal, Lu Nüsheng, were included. Namely, "Master Black Bull" or "Daoist Priest Black Bull" is related to the story of "Vermilion Bird Window" by way of "Genuine Image of the Five Mountains". Thus, the allusions of the "Vermilion Bird Window" and the "Black Bull" originate from the same source, the *Han Wu Di neizhuan*, and both words share a common connection to Daoism. Xu Ling invented the word "Black Bull Curtained Bed" to match the existing "Vermilion Bird Window". The clever couplet parallels the colors ("vermilion" and "black"), the creatures ("bird" and "bull"), and the materials ("window" and "curtained bed") in an adroit way. On top of his skillful writing, Xu Ling creates a mystic heaven-like environment where those beautiful people live.

In the lines following the "Vermilion Bird Window" and "Black Bull Curtained Bed", Xu Ling imagines how the anthology would be used by the beautiful people in the palace. He admires their great capacity for learning, and in the last four lines, he ends in a humble tone begging them to excuse his insignificant work.
In Xu Ling's preface, there is not a single word indicating Xiao Gang's involvement in this project. Regarding the purpose of compiling the anthology, we are not able to find any direct evidence in the preface to support either Liu Su's claim in the Da Tang xinyu, or the theories maintaining both political and literary purposes.

Xu Yunhe points out that it was not uncommon for some books to be composed for female readers in the Southern Dynasties.260 Based on his reading of Xu Ling's preface, Xu Yunhe maintains that the compilation of Yutai xinyong was for the purpose of taking care of palace ladies' mental health and to fulfill the needs of their psychological relief.261 Likewise, Okamura Shigeru argues that Yutai xinyong was an anthology that helped palace ladies to pass time.262 Both Xu Yunhe and Okamura's hypotheses are loyal to Xu Ling's preface. Okamura in addition infers that the anthology was privately compiled by Xu Ling by his own decision.263 His inference completely disconnects Xiao Gang from the project.

In the capital Jiankang, Xiao Gang's Eastern Palace was second only to Emperor Wu's palace. Kondō Izumi observes that Emperor Wu had abstained from sexual relations and stopped

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260 Xu Yunhe 許雲和, "Jiedu 'Yutai xinyong xu'," 47.
261 Ibid. The mental health and psychological relief that Xu mentioned here refer to the depression the palace people felt, which is indicated in Xu Ling's "Preface to the Yutai xinyong".
262 Okamura Shigeru 関村繁, "Monzen to Gyokudai shin'ei," 62.
263 Ibid.
composing love poems around the eleventh to thirteenth year of the Tianjian Era (512-514).\textsuperscript{264} That is to say, around the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534) when Xu Ling compiled the \textit{Yutai xinyong}, there were fewer entertainers needed in Emperor Wu's palace. The seventy-one-year-old emperor's children had now grown up. Some of his concubines had died, some were living with their sons in the sons' fiefs, and the rest were living simple lives similar to that of nuns. On the other hand, since Xu Ling and his family were in a position similar to those of Xiao Gang's retainers,\textsuperscript{265} and Xu Ling grew up close to Xiao Gang and started his career in Xiao Gang's household, it is not difficult to imagine that he had many chances to meet with the people living or serving in Xiao Gang's residence. The extremely private living environment of the readers of \textit{Yutai xinyong} hints at three possible starting points for the project: (1) on Xu Ling's own intention as Okamura infers; (2) upon the request of the reader(s) in Xiao Gang's household; (3) under Xiao Gang's command for his own private reasons. Considering the timing of Xu Chi's return and the large number of Xiao Gang's poems collected in the \textit{Yutai xinyong}, it is inconceivable to assume that Xiao Gang had no knowledge of Xu Ling's project. However, having knowledge is not the same as officially

\textsuperscript{264} Kondō Izumi 近藤泉, "Ryō no Bu Tei no enshi to Ryō dai zenki bundan no dōkō - 1: Ryō no Bu Tei no bungaku jō no tachiba no henka ni tsuite" 梁の武帝の艶詩と梁代前期文壇の動向（一）梁の武帝の文学上の立場の変化について, \textit{Nagoya Gakuin Daigaku Gaikokugo gakubu ronshū} 名古屋学院大学外国語学部論集 8-1 (1996): 32.

demanding the activity. In any of these cases, Xiao Gang must have known about the project and given Xu Ling his permission if not a command. Moreover, the *Yutai xinyong*’s private nature is confirmed by Xu Ling himself. As we have seen in his preface, Xu Ling states that this anthology is like the treasured Daoist esoterica from the immortal world and it is supposed to be circulated among the beautiful people living in the palace. Only when we follow what Xu Ling wrote in his preface, are we able to understand why the theme of the anthology focuses on amorous songs.

The private nature of the project provides an explanation as to why the *Yutai xinyong* was unknown to the public until the *Sui shu* was compiled and why it was not recorded in Xu Ling’s official biography. On the other hand, Cao Daoheng surmises that the original version of the "fu" section in *Wen xuan* might be Emperor Wu's lost *Fu ji* 賦集 (*Collection of Rhapsodies*), and if that was the case, then the *Wen xuan* would be "official" and the compilation of *Wen xuan* might even be commissioned by Emperor Wu. Unfortunately, there is no means for us to prove Cao's conjecture because Emperor Wu's *Fu ji* did not survive. Regardless of whether Cao's conjecture was true or false, *Wen xuan*’s orthodox nature is well acknowledged. If the *Yutai xinyong* was

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266 Xiaofei Tian also mentions about the possibility of Xiao Gang's "tacit agreement" on the compilation of the *Yutai xinyong* as a conjecture. See Xiaofei Tian, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, 195.

267 This is not to suggest that the purpose of this project was to hide its existence from Emperor Wu. Rather, it may have been compiled in a secretive manner treating the anthology as a treasure like the Daoist esoterica.

indeed compiled for private use, then it would not be proper to make comparisons between it and the *Wen xuan*. For from the beginning, these two anthologies were compiled for different purposes for different readers,\textsuperscript{269} and any conclusions drawn from simplistic comparisons would not be credible.

### 2.5 Xiao Gang's "Letter to the Prince of Xiangdong"

Xiao Gang's love of "Palace Style" poetry became a blemish on his near-perfect reputation. His goodness and erudition were ignored in the *Da Tang xinyu*. He was blamed for spreading the decadent "Palace Style" poetry that eventually caused Liang's fall. The immense gap between his admirable personality and his indulgence in writing "decadent" poetry has puzzled researchers who wanted to re-construct Xiao Gang's image. To solve this puzzle, it is necessary to examine Xiao Gang's literary thought.

Since he did not pass down any theoretical treatises on literature, Xiao Gang's ideas on literature are usually analyzed by way of his writings in other literary genres. Among these writings, the "Letter to the Prince of Xiangdong" ("Yu Xiangdong Wang shu" 與湘東王書) is the most detailed and is viewed as one of the most important pieces. However, the conclusions drawn from this letter are diverse due to differing readings.

\textsuperscript{269} See also Ping Wang's *The Age of Courtly Writing*, 80.
In this letter, Xiao Gang mentions that the expressions and literary approaches of his contemporaries were different than those of the past. Hayashida Shinnosuke maintains that, in Xiao Gang's mind, the writing styles of the two different time periods were not compatible, and the literary expressions in the Liang Dynasty were distinctive. Hayashida believes that the "Letter to the Prince of Xiangdong" embodied Xiao Gang's self-awareness and pride at being the standard-bearer of contemporary Liang Literature.  

Morino Shigeo takes Hayashida's theory as a claim of Xiao Gang's disapproval of the writings of antiquity. He argues that, according to the letter, Xiao Gang's intention was actually the opposite of what Hayashida maintains. Namely, Xiao Gang "advocated the return to the poetic spirit of antiquity and disapproved of contemporary writings." Hayashida and Morino's arguments are diametrically opposed to each other. Before hurrying to any conclusions, it is important to review the letter itself first.

Xiao Gang's "Letter to the Prince of Xiangdong" is found in Yu Jianwu's biography in the *Liang shu*. Prior to examining the letter, the historian examines the situation surrounding Xiao Gang:

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Previously, when Taizong (Xiao Gang) was serving in the regions, he often liked to associate with scholars who were fond of writing. At that time, [Yu] Jianwu, together with Xu Chi of Donghai, Lu Gao of Wu Commandery, Liu Zun and Liu Xiaoyi of Pengcheng, and Xiaoyi's younger brother Xiaowei, were admired and welcomed [by Taizong]. By the time when he resided in the Eastern Palace, Taizong also started the Department of Learning and Virtue, and created the position of Scholar. Jianwu's son [Yu] Xin, Chi's son [Xu] Ling, Zhang Zhanggong of Wu Commandery, Fu Hong of Beidi, and Bao Zhi of Donghai were selected to fill the positions. Back in the mid-Yongming Era of the Qi Dynasty, the scholars Wang Rong, Xie Tiao and Shen Yue had begun to use four tones to compose new and unique poems. By the time when Taizong became Crown Prince, he and his fellow scholars [mentioned above] started to adhere to sound and rhyme. They valued magnificence and richness in verse writing more than in the past. At that time, the Crown Prince wrote a letter to the Prince of Xiangdong to discuss this issue. He said:

This prologue introduces Xiao Gang's literary companions both before and after he became Crown Prince. It reveals that the literary style they practised was based on the new and unique Yongming Style. The time sequence indicated in this paragraph can be outlined as follows: first, before Xiao Gang had become Crown Prince; second, after Xiao Gang became Crown Prince and established the Department of Learning and Virtue; third, a review of the Yongming Era of the Qi Dynasty; fourth, back to the time after Xiao Gang became Crown Prince. Following this time sequence, the term "at that time" (時) at the end of the prologue is generally understood as the time

272 LS, "Wenxue shang" 文學上, juan 49, 690.
after Xiao Gang's becoming Crown Prince in 531 when the Department of Learning and Virtue was established. On this basis, the letter is believed to have been written in 531.\footnote{Hu Dehuai 胡德懷 remarks that the letter was written in 536 when the Department of Learning and Virtue was established. Although the relevant primary sources of LS and NS are mentioned in Hu's argument, the process of his speculation remains obscure. See his "Si Xiao nianpu," in Liuchao zuojia nianpu jiyao [xia ce] 六朝作家年譜輯要(下冊), Liu Yuejin 劉躍進 and Fan Ziye 韋子燁 eds. (Ha'erbin: Heilongjiang jiaoyu chubanshe, 1999), 59. In contrast, Wu Guangxing 吳光興 maintains that this letter was written between October and November in the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era (531). See Wu Guangxing, Xiao Gang XiaoYi nianpu, 170-172.}

However, Shimizu Yoshio maintains that the time Xiao Gang wrote this letter must have been in the early years of the Datong Era.\footnote{The Datong 大同 Era lasted from 535 to 545.} He argues that, in Yu Jianwu's biography, the above prologue is placed after the account of Yu Jianwu's career from the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era (531) to the time when Yu Jianwu was appointed Director of the Watches (太子率更令) and Palace Cadet (中庶子) in the household of the Heir Apparent. Based on Yu's career during that period, Shimizu remarks that the earliest year Yu Jianwu could have taken the two positions mentioned above would have been in the first year of the Datong Era (535). Taking the term "at that time" as mentioned at the end of the prologue as the time when the Department of Learning and Virtue was established, Shimizu maintains that the establishment of the Department of Learning and Virtue should be after 535.\footnote{Shimizu Yoshio 清水凱夫, "Kanbun Tei Shō Kō 'Yu Xiangdong Wang shu' kō" 简文帝萧綱「与湘東王書」考, Ritsumeikan bungaku 立命館文學 430-432 (1981): 455.}
Shimizu speculates the year should be 535 based on the record of Yu Jianwu's career immediately preceding the prologue in his biography:

肩吾字子慎。八歳能賦詩，特為兄於陵所友愛。初為晉安王國常侍，仍遷王宣惠府行參軍，自是每王徙鎮，肩吾常隨府。歷王府中郎，雲麾參軍，並兼記室參軍。中大通三年，王為皇太子，兼東宮通事舍人，除安西湘東王錄事參軍，俄以本官領荊州大中正。累遷中錄事諮議參軍，太子率更令，中庶子。276

[Yu] Jianwu's courtesy name was Zishen. He was able to compose poems when he was eight years old. His brother Yuling loved him most. At first, he was an Attendant-in-Ordinary in the Prince of Jin'an's (Xiao Gang) Princedom. Then he was transferred to the position of Adjutant of the prince's Xuanhui Garrison. from then on, he followed the prince each time [he] was transferred. He held the position of Palace Attendant in [Xiao Gang's] princedom and Adjutant of Yunhui Garrison concurrent with Adjutant of Record Keeper in Xiao Gang's household. In the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era, the prince (Xiao Gang) became Crown Prince. Jianwu held the position of Interpreter-Clerk of the Eastern Palace at the same time. Then he was promoted to the position of Administrative Supervisor in the Anxi Garrison, a princedom of the Prince of Xiangdong (Xiao Yi). Soon he received the position of Senior Rectifier of Jingzhou, while keeping the old official title. Later, he was in succession appointed Adjutant for Household Records, Director of the Watches and Palace Cadet in the household of Heir Apparent.

Before he took up the positions of Director of the Watches and Palace Cadet in Xiao Gang's household, Yu Jianwu worked for Xiao Yi in Jingzhou as Xiao Yi's Administrative Supervisor.

According to Yu Jianwu's biography, Xiao Yi was the General of Anxi 安西 at the time. However, in contrast to Yu Jianwu's title in Xiao Yi's "Preface to the Fabao lianbi", Shimizu points out that Yu Jianwu's correct title should be Administrative Supervisor in the Prince of Xiangdong's Pingxi 平西 Garrison as indicated in Xiao Yi's preface. In other words, Yu Jianwu started to work for Xiao

276 LS, "Wenxue shang" 文學上, juan 49, 690.
Yi when Xiao Yi was "General of Pingxi", not "General of Anxi". Since Xiao Yi held the title "General of Pingxi" from the fourth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (532),\(^{277}\) until the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534) when Xiao Yi wrote his preface, Shimizu maintains that Yu Jianwu's return to Xiao Gang's household would have been the first year of the Datong Era (535) at the earliest.\(^{278}\) To prove his hypothesis, Shimizu finds additional support from Yu Xin's biography in *Zhou shu*:

起家湘東國常侍，轉安南府參軍。時肩吾為梁太子中庶子，掌管記。東海徐摛為左衞率。摛子陵及信，並為抄撰學士。父子在東宮，出入禁闥，恩禮莫與比隆。既有盛才，文詰綺豔，故世號為徐、庾體焉。當時後進，競相模範。每有一文，京都莫不傳誦。\(^{279}\)

[Yu Xin] started his career as Attendant-in-Ordinary in the Prince of Xiangdong's princedom. Then he was transferred to Adjutant of the Annan Garrison. At the time, [Yu] Jianwu was Palace Cadet in the household of the Heir Apparent and was in charge of secretaries. Xu Chi of Donghai was Commandant of the Left Guard. [Xu] Chi's son [Xu] Ling and [Yu] Xin both were Scholars of Compiling and Writing. These fathers and sons were working together in the Eastern Palace, and they were allowed to come and go freely and easily in the Forbidden Interior. The favour and courtesy they received were without comparison. They not only had great talents, their writings were equally gorgeous. It is why their writing style was called the "Style of Xu and Yu". The young scholars at the time competed to imitate their compositions. Every piece of their work would be widely read in the capital once it became public.

According to Yu Xin's biography, Yu Jianwu, Yu Xin, Xu Chi, and Xu Ling simultaneously served Xiao Gang some time after Xiao Gang became Crown Prince. Since Yu Jianwu and Xu Chi were appointed to those official titles after the first year of the Datong Era (535), Shimizu

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\(^{277}\) LS, "Yuan Di" 元帝, *juan* 5, 113.

\(^{278}\) Note 10 in Shimizu Yoshio's "Kanbun Tei Shō Kō 'Yu Xiangdong Wang shu' kō," 464.

\(^{279}\) *Zhou shu* 周書, "Yu Xin" 庾信, *juan* 41, 733.
concludes that Yu Xin and Xu Ling also took up the position of Scholar of Compiling and Writing after 535. In the same manner, Lu Tongqun maintains that Yu Xin must have been appointed Scholar of Compiling and Writing after the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534). 280

Since Xiao Xu held the title of General of Annan 281 from the first to the third year of the Datong Era (535-537), Yu Xin must have been transferred to the position of Adjutant of Annan Garrison after the first year of the Datong Era (535). His return to Xiao Gang's Eastern Palace thereupon would be after that. Regarding the whereabouts of Yu Jianwu, Xu Chi and Yu Xin around 535, the information provided in other historical sources shows no conflict with Yu Xin's biography. However, this is complicated in Xu Ling's case, especially when the establishment of the Department of Learning and Virtue is tied to Xu Ling's appointment as Scholar in Xiao Gang's Eastern Palace.

In our previous discussion (see Table 1), Xu Ling's first appointment after Xiao Gang became Crown Prince was as Scholar. In the context of Yu Jianwu's biography, the position of

280 Lu Tongqun 魯同群, Yu Xin zhuan lun 庾信傳論 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1997), 10.
281 During the Liang period, the 21st official ranking of general included eight titles. General of Andong 安東將軍 (General of Pacifying the East), General of Anxi 安西將軍 (General of Pacifying the West), General of Annan 安南將軍 (General of Pacifying the South), and General of Anbei 安北將軍 (General of Pacifying the North) were responsible for the external warfare; General of Anzuo 安左將軍 (General of Pacifying the Left), General of Anyou 安右將軍 (General of Pacifying the Right), General of Anqian 安前將軍 (General of Pacifying the Front), and General of Anhou 安後將軍 (General of Pacifying the Rear) were in charge of domestic affairs (see SS, "Zhi di ershiyi, Baiguan shang, Liang" 志第二十一百官上梁, juan 26, 736.). The term "Annan" in the title of "General of Annan" probably refers to the meaning of "Pacifying the South" rather than the proper noun "Annam", which refers to the northern Vietnam in present day.
Scholar that Xu Ling took up at that time should be "Scholar of Compiling and Writing" and belong to the Department of Learning and Virtue. Therefore, if the Department of Learning and Virtue was established after the first year of Datong Era (535) as Shimizu claims, then Xu Ling's succeeding appointments after "Scholar" indicated in his biography were also taken up after 535. In Xu Ling's biography in *Chen shu*, there is no clear indication of the year when Xu Ling was suspended from his position in Shangyu, nor of the year when Liu Xiaoyi suspended him. In Table 2, Scenario 5 and Scenario 6 are the extreme scenarios in terms of examining the feasibility of Shimizu's theory.

Scenario 5 shows the situation if Xu Ling was suspended in his first year after being appointed Magistrate of Shangyu and Liu Xiaoyi had just taken up his position of Censor-in-Chief before officially entering his official term in 540. In this case, there would be no room for Xu Ling to take up the position of Scholar in 535. In the case of Scenario 6, Liu Xiaoyi would have suspended Xu Ling right before he left the position of Censor-in-Chief while Xu Ling was in the last year of his term of office as Magistrate of Shangyu. In this case, Xu Ling would have held the position of Scholar for two years. It is therefore possible that Xu Ling held all three positions between 535 and 544.

According to his biography, Xu Ling was reinstated as Adjutant in the Prince of Nanping's princedom after a long-term suspension. After this, he was appointed Senior Recorder for Comprehensive Duty. Before he was transferred to Xiao Yi's princedom and sent to the Eastern
Wei as an envoy in the second year of the Taiqing Era (548), he composed the preface to Xiao Gang's *Changchundian yiji* 長春殿義記 (*Record of the Discourse at the Hall of Eternal Spring*)\(^{282}\) and gave lectures on the *Zhuang zi yi* 莊子義 (*Exegesis of the Zhuang zi*) in the Department of Junior Mentor upon Xiao Gang's command.\(^{283}\)

There is neither indication about how many years constituted a "long-term suspension" nor why Xu Ling's suspension lasted so long. We can reasonably assume that Liu Xiaoyi was still in the position of Censor-in-Chief during the suspension. In that case, Xu Ling must have been suspended in the early period, and certainly not later than the end of the second year of Liu Xiaoyi's term of office. There are other possible scenarios to account for Xu Ling's three appointments between 535 and 544; nonetheless, no matter in which year Xu Ling was suspended, he must have waited until Liu Xiaoyi's transfer in the tenth year of the Datong Era (544) before he was reinstated. Although Shimizu's and Lu Tongqun's theories are not impossible, they cannot account for Xu Ling's career between 531 and 535.

It can hardly be a coincidence that the establishment of the Department of Learning and Virtue, in both Yu Jianwu's and Xu Ling's biography, occurred immediately following Xiao Gang's

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\(^{282}\) *Changchundian yiji* probably was the same book as the one called *Changchun yiji*, whose compilation Xiao Gang started to organize in the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era (531). See LS, "Xu Mao" 許懋, *juan* 40, 579.

\(^{283}\) CS, "Xu Ling" 徐陵, *juan* 26, 325-326.
accession to role of Crown Prince. More importantly, Yao Silian and his father, Yao Cha, who both originally came from the Southern Dynasties, had first-hand historical materials about Xiao Gang and his courtiers. Reading Xu Ling's biography in a straight-forward manner, the event of his being appointed Scholar in the Department of Learning and Virtue very likely took place soon after Xiao Gang became Crown Prince in 531, not after 535 as Shimizu claims. The historian, Linghu Defen 令狐德棻 (582–666), who wrote Yu Xin's biography, was originally from the north. Rather than manipulating the account of events surrounding Xu Ling's career to correspond with those provided in Yu Xin's biography, we should accept the description of events passed down to us by Yao Cha and his son, Yao Silian.

Starting with the term "previously", the prologue in Yu Jianwu's biography is a review of the past. In contrast, the term "at that time" at the end of the prologue brings us back to the time when Yu Jianwu was in the positions of Director of the Watches and Palace Cadet in the household of the Heir Apparent. Based on this sequence, the year when the Department of Learning and Virtue was established is not necessarily the same year as when Yu Jianwu took up the positions of Director of the Watches and Palace Cadet in the household of the Heir Apparent, because the establishment of the department was a recollected event. The "Letter to the Prince of Xiangdong" was written when Yu Jianwu was in the positions of Director of the Watches and Palace Cadet in Xiao Gang's
household, and this explains why Xiao Gang's letter to his brother is recorded in Yu Jianwu's biography.

If Xu Ling's official title around 535 indicated in Yu Xin's biography can be interpreted as one of his actual duties, then Linghu Defen's record can be partially correct. Xu Ling had many chances to work for Xiao Gang, especially when he was in the capital, regardless of what official titles he held at the time. For instance, before he was transferred to Xiao Yi's princedom, he worked in the capital as Senior Recorder for Comprehensive Duty. At the same time, he was commanded by Xiao Gang to write a preface for Xiao Gang's works, and to teach the young princes by using Xiao Gang's commentaries on *Zhuang zi*. Although Xu Ling's official title might not have been Scholar at that time, the tasks Xiao Gang gave him were virtually the same as Scholar of Composing and Writing. Likewise, as indicated in Table 1, Xu Ling compiled the *Yutai xinyong* when he was working for the Department of State Affairs as Vice Minister of Revenue around the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534). In the case of either Scenario 1 or Scenario 2, Xu Ling would have still been in the capital until the second or third year of the Datong Era (536 or 537). Xu Ling's work place might not have officially been the Eastern Palace; however, there were no difficulties for him to "come and go freely and easily in the Forbidden Interior" and participate in activities held in Xiao Gang's household. In this sense, what is indicated in Xu Ling's biography does not necessarily conflict with what is in Yu Xin's biography. Therefore, Shimizu's hypothesis
maintaining the "Letter to the Prince of Xiangdong" was written after 535 can be considered appropriate.

After his older brother Xiao Tong's death, Xiao Yi now was the only brother Xiao Gang saw as his kindred spirit, sharing the same interest and enthusiasm for literature. Like his father and the two older brothers, Xiao Yi is acknowledged as an outstanding man of letters. In addition, his talent in painting and calligraphy gained him a great reputation as well. His extant *Jinlou zi* 金樓子 (*The Master of the Golden Tower*), which he started to write at the age of fourteen, reveals his ambition for establishing himself by words (立言). As stated earlier, Xiao Yi shared a close literary sense with Xiao Gang, believing poetry was to express one's feelings, and his practice of poetry writing was similar to that of Xiao Gang. On the other hand, he agreed with Xiao Tong's view of literature and considered Pei Ziye, the representative of the so-called "archaic school", to be one of the four friends who understood him (知己). Xiao Yi shared the common literary sense of the Liang. The ornate and novel style seen in his extant poetic writings makes him a "Palace Style" poet in the eyes of later critics.

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284 See Xiao Yi's "Neidian beiming jilin xu" 内典碑銘集林序 in YKJ, 3053. See also Xiaofei Tian's discussion in *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, 134-136.

285 Xiao Yi, "Jinlou zi xu" 金樓子序, in YKJ, 3051.

286 Morino Shigeo 森野繁夫 discusses Xiao Yi's place in the literary world of the Liang, maintaining that he was a lesser figure compared to his father and his two older brothers, Xiao Tong and Xiao Gang. See Morino Shigeo 森野繁夫, "Ryō
Now that Xiao Gang's long confinement\textsuperscript{287} had ended, all his old subordinates, who were also his fellow poets, gathered around him again. In the beginning of the letter to Xiao Yi, he confides his confusion and concerns about the literature he encountered in the capital:

吾輩亦無所遊賞，止事披閱，性既好文，時復短詠。雖是庸音，不能閣筆，有慚伎癢，更同故態。比見京師文體，懦鈍殊常，競學浮疎，爭為闡緩。玄冬脩夜，思所不得，既殊比興，正背風騷。若夫六典三禮，所施則有地，吉凶嘉賓，用之則有所。未聞吟詠情性，反擬內則之篇；操筆寫志，更摹酒誥之作；遲遲春日，翻學歸藏；湛湛江水，遂同大傳。\textsuperscript{288}

I too have nothing for entertainment, only spread out my books and read. As I like literature by nature, sometimes I will compose some short verses. Although these are a commonplace sound, I am not able to put down my writing brush. I am ashamed of my itchiness to exercise my writing skill and return to my old habit. Recently, I saw the literary style at the capital is abnormally timid and obtuse. Writers compete by imitating meretricious and superficial writings, and strive to compose verses with sluggish rhythm. In the long winter nights, I think about this but am not able to understand why. Their style is so much different from that in \textit{The Book of Odes} and goes against the ways of \textit{The Songs of the South}. There are occasions when the "Six Statutes"\textsuperscript{289} and the "Three Canons of Etiquette"\textsuperscript{290} may be applied: in events of good luck and ill fate, as well as social intercourse when good guests arrive. I have never heard of such things as copying the writing of "Internal Norms" ("Nei ze") [of \textit{The Record of Rituals}] to express one's feelings, or imitating the "Injunction against Drunkenness" ("Jiu gao") [in \textit{The Book of History}] when taking up a writing brush to express one's aspirations. What folly is it to describe a warm and brilliant spring day but

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\textsuperscript{287} See discussions about the confinement in Appendix.

\textsuperscript{288} LS, "Wenxue shang" 文學上, \textit{juan} 49, 690.

\textsuperscript{289} The "Six Statutes" refers to "Zhidian" 治典 ("Code of administration"), "Jiaodian" 教典 ("Code of education"), "Lidian" 礼 ("Code of rites"), "Zhengdian" 政典 ("Code of government"), "Xingdian" 刑典 ("Code of penalty"), and "Shidian" 事典 ("Code of service"), which originally appeared in \textit{Zhou li} 周禮 (\textit{The Zhou Rituals}).

\textsuperscript{290} The "Three Canons of Etiquette" refers to \textit{Zhou li} 周禮 (\textit{The Zhou Rituals}), \textit{Yi li} 儀禮 (\textit{The Etiquette and Rituals}) and the \textit{Li ji} 礼記 (\textit{The Record of Rituals}).
modeling oneself on the Daoist scriptures Gui zang, or conveying the image of deep water of a river
by making one's writing similar to the "Great Treatise" ("Da zhuan") [in the Record of Rituals]?291

In the beginning of this paragraph, Xiao Gang depicts his life. He read more than he wrote.

He felt "ashamed" of his desire to write but could not help to returning to his old practice of doing
this. This reveals his passion for writing in a humble way. Next, Xiao Gang talks about his
impressions of writing in the capital. He uses The Book of Odes and The Songs of the South as
standards for writing poetry. He points out that the style in the capital is very different and even in
contrast with these traditional models. Furthermore, he gives details of the inappropriateness found
in the capital style, criticizing the writers there for using improper styles in verse writing. Starting
with self-deprecation, Xiao Gang unfolds his arguments in the next paragraph:

吾既拙於為文，不敢輕有掎摭。但以當世之作，歷方古之才人，遠則揚、馬、曹、王，近
則潘、陸、顏、謝，而觀其遣辭用心，了不相似。若以今文為是，則古文為非；若昔賢可
稱，則今體宜棄。俱為盍各，則未之敢許。292
I am clumsy at writing and dare not to criticize lightly. Piece by piece, I compared contemporary
writings to those of the gifted writers' in the past. In the distant past, there were Yang Xiong, Sima
Xiangru, Cao Zhi and Wang Can; more recently, there were Pan Yue, Lu Ji, Yan Yanzhi and Xie
Lingyun. I observed the expressions and intentions in both contemporary writings and those of
antiquity, but found nothing in common. If we agree with the writings of nowadays, then the ones
in antiquity were wrong. If the distinguished masters in the past deserve to be praised, then the
contemporary style should be abandoned. I dare not consent to the idea that the styles of past and
present are equally "correct".

291 The translation here has benefitted from reference to those of John Marney (Liang Chien-wen Ti, 80-83), and
Siu-Kit Wong (Early Chinese Literary Criticism, 137-147.).
292 Ibid., 690-691.
In this paragraph, Xiao Gang raises the topic of his argument. In the beginning, Xiao Gang points out that the writings of antiquity and those of his age are different. Although Xiao Gang did not immediately give his judgment about which one is preferable, the verse writers of the past on his list were all skillful and renowned. Yang Xiong (53 B.C.-18) and Sima Xiangru (ca. 179-127 B.C.) were celebrated rhapsody (fu) writers and the rest were ranked at the top (Cao Zhi, Wang Can, Pan Yue, Lu Ji and Xie Lingyun) and middle class (Yan Yanzhi, 384-456) for their pentasyllabic verses in Zhong Rong's Shin pin. Xiao Gang's selection of these writers implies that his criticism placed more emphasis on poetic writing than other genres. He believes that the "expressions" and the writer's "intentions" are the criteria used to measure the quality of this kind of writing. To give his judgment, Xiao Gang criticizes Xie Lingyun's and Pei Ziye's imitators:

又時有效謝康樂、裴鴻臚文者，亦頗有惑焉。何者？謝客吐言天拔，出於自然，時有不拘，是其糟粕；裴氏乃是良史之才，了無篇什之美，是為學謝則不屆其精華，但得其冗長；師裴則蔑絕其所長，惟得其所短。謝故巧不可階，裴亦質不宜慕。故胸馳臆斷之侶，好名忘實之類，方分肉[六駭]於仁獸，逞卻克於邯鄲，入鮑忘臭，効尤致禍。決羽謝生，豈三千之可及；伏膺裴氏，懼兩唐之不傳。故玉徽金銑，反為拙目所嗤；巴人下里，更合郢中之聽。陽春高而不和，妙聲絕而不尋，竟不精討錙銖，覈量文質，有異巧心，終愧妍手。是以握

293 Siu-Kit Wong maintains that Xiao Gang declares his position of a traditionalist at the end of this paragraph. See Wong's Early Chinese Literary Criticism, 144, n. 11. However, Xiaofei Tian disagrees with Wong, remarking that Xiao Gang "was using the former masters to illustrate how modern writers were misled in their idea of literature." See Tian's argument in her Beacon Fire and Shooting Star, 281.
Moreover, recently, there are some writers who imitate Xie Kangle (Xie Lingyun) and Chamberlain for Dependencies Pei [Ziye]. I have doubts about them as well. Why so? It is because Xie Ke's (Xie Lingyun) extraordinary expressions are like something soaring through heaven. His writing was a product of nature. Yet sometimes it was too unrestrained and this is like the dregs of his writing. Pei was gifted as a good historian. His works contain none of the beauty of The Book of Odes. Thus, when learning from Xie, contemporary writers are not able to reach Xie's best features, but only achieve his verbosity. When taking Pei as their model, the epigones destroy Pei's strong points and only obtain his shortcomings. Xie's writing admittedly was too skillful to be followed, Pei's works were also too plain and should not be admired. Therefore, those whose minds are full of fanciful preconceptions, and the kind who are fond of empty fame and have forgotten substance, draw an analogy between a tiger-eating monster and a unicorn, the merciful beast, and show off.

294 LS, "Wenxue shang" 文學上, juan 49, 691.

295 According to Guangya, the character "jie" 階 has the meaning of "to follow". 階 仿 因。See Zhang Yi 張揖, Guangya gulin 廣雅詁林, eds. Xu Fu 徐復. (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1998), 349. In addition, Zhong Rong comments about Xie Lingyun's writing: "His talent is excellent and his vocabulary is grand. His expressions are so rich and dazzling that they are difficult to follow." 才高辭盛，富豔難蹤。See Zhong Rong's "Shi pin xu" in LS, "Zhong Rong" 鍾嵘, juan 49, 695. The meaning of the word "zong" 蹤 appearing in Zhong Rong's comment is defined as "to follow" 從也 in Shi ming 釋名. See Liu Xi 刘熙, Shi ming, "Shi yanyu" 釋言語, juan 4, in SKQS, v. 76, Jing bu, Xiaoxue lei, 174.

296 According to the note in LS (Note 5 in "Wenxue shang" 文學上, juan 48, 700), the word "fen rou" 分肉 in LS is written as "liubo" 六駮 in Cefu yuangui 綱府元龜. See Wang Qinruo 王欽若 (962-1025) eds., Cefu yuangui, "Runwei bu, wenxue" 閏位部文學, juan 192, 2318. The annotator of LS remarks that "to draw an analogy between a tiger-eating monster and a unicorn" 方六駮於仁獸 and "to show off [the crippled] Xi Ke in Handan" 逞卻克於邯鄲 should be a couplet. Since "liubo" 六駮 indicates a kind of animal that eats tigers and leopards, it matches the person's name "Xi Ke" in the succeeding sentence. In contrast, "fen rou" 分肉, which literally means "to divide meat or flesh," does not possibly match with "Xi Ke" unless it was used as a nick name of a kind of animal. Moreover, in the latter case, the first character appearing in the same sentence, "fang" 方, does not function as a verb as does the supposed matching character "cheng" 逞 (to show off) in the parallel line. It is because in this case, "fang" 方 should be translated as an adverb, "just a moment ago". The translation here will adopt "liubo" instead of "fen rou". "[Qi]lin" 麒麟 (unicorn) is said to be a merciful beast that does not harm other creatures. See Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhushu 春秋公羊傳注疏, "Ai gong shisi nian" 哀公十四年, in SSJZS, 2352.
[the crippled] Xi Ke\textsuperscript{297} in Handan.\textsuperscript{298} Similar to those who become used to the stench in a salted fish shop, these writers imitate mistakes and bring about disasters. They break scholar Xie [Lingyun]'s wings; all the three thousand ancient punishments\textsuperscript{299} are not enough to punish them. They believe in Pei [Ziye] wholeheartedly, [yet I am] afraid that the stories about the high-minded Tang Lin and Tang Zun\textsuperscript{300} would not be handed down by them. That is why jade frets [of musical instruments] and high quality gold are objects of derision in ignorant eyes, and rustic music like "Baren" and "Xiali" catches the fancy of people in Ying. It is hard for the lofty music "Yangchun"\textsuperscript{301} to receive a response, so its marvelous sound has vanished and is heard no more. In the end, these imitators do not elaborately investigate the finest details, nor do they examine the quality of their writings. They differ from the ingenious minds and are ashamed to face the skillful masters. That is why looking towards the kingdom of Zheng from a distance, gentlemen who clasp beautiful gems know they must retire; and gazing at the country of Min, people who try to sell dress hats and green jade shoes\textsuperscript{302} sigh. Poetry having come to this, their prose follows suit too. Only because the ink cannot speak, it has to suffer being driven around to stain the paper. As paper lacks emotions, it puts up

\textsuperscript{297} "In spring, the Duke of Jin sent Xi Ke to Qi to convoke a meeting. Duke Qing of Qi let women watch from behind curtains. When scholar Xi appeared, the women [behind curtains] laughed in their chamber." 春，晉侯使郤克徵會于齊。齊頃公帷婦人使觀之。郤子登。婦人笑於房。 Du Yu 杜預 annotates: "They laughed because Xi Ke climbed up the stairs with his crippled feet." 鬧而登階，故笑也。See Zuoqiu Ming 左丘明, Chunqiu Zuo zhuan 正義 in SSJZS, 1889.

\textsuperscript{298} Handan 邯鄲 was a city well-known for its people's elegant walking style. See Zhuang zi jishi 莊子集釋, "Qiushui di shiqi" 秋水第十七, juan 6 xia, annot. Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 601.

\textsuperscript{299} See Kong Yingda’s 孔穎達 commentary in Shang shu 正義, "Lüxing" 吕刑, in SSJZS, 247.

\textsuperscript{300} The term "Liang Tang (two Tangs)" refers to Tang Lin 唐林 and Tang Zun 唐尊 who lived in the Han Dynasty. They enjoyed great fame because of their broad learning in the classics and because their proper behavior was in harmony with the rites. See HS, "Bao Xuan" 鮑宣, juan 72, 3095.

\textsuperscript{301} "Xiaren Bali" and "Yangchun" both originate from Song Yu's "Response to King Chu's Inquiry" ("Song Yu dui Chu Wang wen" 宋玉對楚王問). See Wen xuan, juan 17, 768.

\textsuperscript{302} The term "cui lü" 翠履 literally means "kingfisher shoes", and Marney translates it this way. However, the "kingfisher" here is used to indicate the beautiful green color of jade — the color is like that of kingfisher birds' feathers. Thus, "cui lü" 翠履 probably indicates the shoes that are decorated with beautiful green color jades. See Lin Weimin 林維民, Zhongguo zhonggu wenxueshi pingzhu 中國中古文學史評注 (Shantou: Shantou Daxue chubanshe, 1997), 293. For how "cui" 翠 (kingfisher) was used to indicate color by poets in the Southern Dynasties, see Cao Daoheng's remark in his Lanling Xiao shi yu Nanchao wenxue, 96.
with their shaking and crinkling. It has gone too far! The confusion about writing has developed to this extent!

Xie Lingyun and Pei Ziye's strengths and weaknesses indicated in the above paragraph are not Xiao Gang's invention. Similar comments about Xie Lingyun can be seen in Zhong Rong's Shi pin: "He has great talent and his vocabulary is grand. His expressions are so rich and dazzling that they are difficult to follow." Nonetheless, "it is quite encumbered with verbosity." On the other hand, Pei Ziye's style of composition "was of a stern, classical air, and swift-written. He gave no value to beautiful and degenerate phraseology. Sentence structure was largely modeled on ancient writings and was completely different from contemporary styles." What Xiao Gang wrote was already common knowledge in Liang times. Xiao Gang's intention was not to criticize the writing styles of Xie Lingyun and Pei Ziye, for he highly valued their strengths and achievements in writing. His true target was those who unsuccessfully imitated Xie's and Pei's styles, and his criticism can even be viewed as a compliment paid to the two earlier masters.

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303 才高辭盛，富艷難蹤。 YKJ, 3275.
304 頗以繁蕪為累。 Ibid., 3277.
305 子野為文典而速，不尚麗靡之詞，其制作多法古，與今文體異。 LS, "Pei Ziye" 裴子野, juan 30, 443. Translated by Marney (Liang Chien-wen Ti, 88.).
Most of the metaphors Xiao Gang used in this paragraph indicate the incompatibility between the capital style and the masterpieces of antiquity. However, the last couplet, "looking towards the kingdom of Zheng from a distance, gentlemen who clasp beautiful gems know they must retire" （握瑜懷玉之士，瞻鄭邦而知退）and "gazing at the country of Min, people who try to sell dress hats and green jade shoes sigh" （章甫翠履之人，望閩鄉而歎息）, have been controversial because of the vague implications of their literary allusions.

In his book review of Luo Genze's 罗根泽 Zhongguo wenxue piping shi 中國文學批評史 (The History of Chinese Literary Criticism), Ogawa Tamaki 小川環樹 307 argues that the literary allusion "looking towards the kingdom of Zheng from a distance, gentlemen who clasp beautiful gems know they must retire" （握瑜懷玉之士，瞻鄭邦而知退）originates from Zihan's 子罕 story in Chunqiu zuozhuan 春秋左傳 (Zuo's Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals). In the story, Zihan refused to accept a raw piece jade presented by a person from Song because he treasures purity more than the gem. 308 Based on this story, Ogawa argues that this metaphor hints at a different sense of worth. Hayashida Yoshio agrees with Ogawa's remark about the origin of the metaphor but dissents from Ogawa's interpretation. Hayashida takes the following allusion, "gazing at the country of Min, people who try to sell dress hats and green jade shoes sigh" （章甫翠

307 The article was published in Chūgoku bungaku hō 中国文学報 21 (1966): 137-141.
308 Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi 春秋左傳正義, "Xiang gong zhuan shiwu nian" 襄公傳十五年, in SSJZS, 1960.
履之人，望閩鄉而歎息), into consideration, claiming that both metaphors allude to the imitators in the capital who feel ashamed about themselves and sigh about their own failure.\(^{309}\) In other words, he takes this couplet as the imitators' self-reflection on their own unskillful capital writing style.

Hayashida's interpretation runs counter to previous discussions of Xiao Gang's poetics and introduces a conflict into the previously coherent tradition of Xiao Gang criticism. Moreover, his arguments are built on a rather fragile and unreliable foundation. Shimizu Yoshio points out that Zihan in the particular story was actually an official of the Song, not of the Zheng.\(^{310}\) That is to say, the man who wanted to present Zihan with a raw piece of jade does not need to look towards the kingdom of the Zheng because both of them were from the same kingdom, the Song. In fact, the term "gentleman who clasps beautiful gems" (握瑜懷玉之士) does not indicate a jade-presenter either.

Citing the terms "bao yu" 抱玉 (to hold jade) and "wo zhu" 握珠 (to grasp pearl) from Zhong Rong's "Preface to the Shi pin",\(^{311}\) Shimizu asserts that Xiao Gang's "wo yu huai yu zhi shi" 握瑜懷玉之士 (gentlemen who cherish beautiful gems) was an imitation of Zhong Rong's expressions, and that both Zhong Rong and Xiao Gang's expressions originate from "huai jin wo yu" 懷瑾握瑜 in

\(^{309}\) Hayashida Shinnosuke 林田慎之助, "Shō Kō no 'Yu Xiangdong Wang shu' wo megutte: Morino shi ronbun 'Kanbun Tei no bunshō kan' hiihan," 25.


\(^{311}\) YKJ, 3276.
Qu Yuan's 屈原 (fl. The Warring States Period) biography in Shi ji 史記. Since "huai jin wo yu" 懷瑾握瑜 is also seen in Xiao Gang's step brother Xiao Zong's poem, "Listening to the Toll of the Bell" ("Ting zhong ming" 聽鐘鳴), the expression seems to have been commonly used in Xiao Gang's times. His expression, "wo yu huai yu" 握瑜懷玉, was not necessarily borrowed from Zhong Rong's preface; nonetheless, it should function in the same sense despite the minor rearrangement of the characters. This group of synonyms all refers to gentlemen of distinguished morality and outstanding talents. However, since the expression "Zheng bang" 鄭邦 (the kingdom of Zheng) in the succeeding line does not share the same origin with the "gentlemen who clasp beautiful gems" (握瑜懷玉之士), the implication of this allusion requires further investigation.

In its meaning as a territory known for its "licentious musical entertainments", many researchers acknowledge that the "kingdom of Zheng" in Xiao Gang's letter originates from the Li ji (The Record of Rituals). According to the Li ji, "the music of Zheng and Wei is the music of disordered times." 鄭衛之音，亂世之音也. Based on the original meaning used in the Li ji, Shimizu maintains that "the kingdom of Zheng" in Xiao Gang's letter refers to the Liang capital during the Zhong-Datong Era, when "timid and obtuse " (儒鈍), "meretricious and superficial" (浮

312 Shi ji, "Qu Yuan" 屈原, juan 80, 2486 and 2488.
313 LS, "Yuzhang Wang Zong" 豫章王綜, juan 55, 825.
314 Marney, Liang Chien-Wen Ti, "Notes and References 38," 186.
315 Li ji zhengyi 礼記正義, "Yue ji di shijiu" 楽記第十九, in SSJZS, 1528.
"sluggish rhythm" (闡緩) writings prevailed. Shimizu actually relates the "music of Zheng" with the critical terms that Xiao Gang previously used in the same letter to describe the capital style. However, Shimizu fails to provide the demonstration for his statement.

Regarding the "music of Zheng and Wei", an important word used in the same context in the *Li ji* is often neglected. It is the character "man" 慢, which appears twice and is located right in front and behind the frequently quoted sentences given above. After the discussions concerning how the five traditional Chinese musical pitches impact national politics, the argument continues: "If all the five musical pitches are disturbed, they will infringe upon each other. This is called 'man'. In this case, the nation is not far from being destroyed. The music of Zheng and Wei is the music of disordered times, and is likened to 'man'."  

In Xu Shen’s 歐慎(58-147) lexicon *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, "man" 慢 is defined as "indolence" (惰) and "disrespect" (不畏). According to the lines quoted above, "[they would] infringe upon each other. This is called 'man'," it is obvious that "man" takes the meaning of "disrespect" in the original context. Since the music of Zheng and Wei is likened to "man", the reason that the music is said to be "the music of disordered times" (亂世之音)

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317 *Li ji zhengyi* 禮記正義, "Yue ji di shijiu" 樂記第十九, in SSJZS, 1528.
318 Xu Shen 許慎, *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 220.
is because of its nature of "disrespect". However, Xiao Gang's intention in using this literary allusion does not seem to be the same as in the *Li ji*. Rather than criticizing the capital style as something disrespectful, his criticism is focused on its being "timid and obtuse" (儒鈍), "meretricious and superficial" (浮疎), and with "sluggish rhythm" (闡緩), as Shimizu remarks. The other meaning of "man" actually matches what Xiao Gang intends. In Zhang Yi's (fl. The Three Kingdom, Wei) lexicon *Guangya* 廣雅, which was compiled in the 3rd century, "man" is located in two different semantic categories corresponding to the two meanings indicated in *Shuowen jiezi*. In the category led by "indolence" (惰), "chan" 聲 and "huan" 緩 are both included, and these two characters are listed as expressing "sluggish rhythm" in Xiao Gang's letter. In other words, although Xiao Gang borrowed the "kingdom of Zheng" from the *Li ji*, he used it in a completely different sense. Instead of criticizing the capital style as something that would ruin the country, his intention in using this literary allusion was to lament that talented writers from outside found no place for themselves in the literary environment of the capital. Only because he well understood the different meanings of "man", was he able to use this literary allusion in such a creative way. His roundabout technique reflects his erudition in a rather playful way, which also reminds us of the remark about his tutor Xu Chi's writing style — "new and unique".

319 Zhang Yi 張揖, *Guangya gulin* 廣雅詁林, 134.
Xiao Gang links allusions of different origins together and creates his own expressions. In the next line, he uses "zhangfu" (dress hats) and "cuilü" (green jade shoes) to indicate things that are valuable elsewhere but not accepted in certain places. The word "cuilü (green jade shoes)" is seldom found in other sources, nor is the practice of pairing it with "zhangfu (dress hats)". Nonetheless, in Ge Hong's 葛洪 (284-364 or 343) Baopu zi nei wai pian 抱朴子內外篇, instead of "cuilü (green jade shoes)", "chixi" 赤舄 (red shoes) is paired with "zhangfu (dress hats)": "Dress hats are not sold in the [southern] barbarian Yue; red shoes are not used in barefoot [eastern barbarian] Yi" 章甫不售於蠻越, 赤舄不用於跣夷. According to the local customs, people in Yue did not wear hats and those in Yi did not wear shoes. Since Min was also identified as a southern "barbarian" land in ancient times and was often paired with the Yue, it is not surprising that Xiao Gang uses Min as a substitute for Yue in his letter. However, in the case of "chixi (red shoes)" and "cuilü (green jade shoes)", the reason why Xiao Gang chooses the latter as a substitute for the former is more complicated.

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320 Ge Hong 葛洪, Baopu zi nei wai pian 抱朴子內外篇, "Nei pian" 内篇, juan 7, 40, in SBCK chubian, v. 31, Zi bu 子部.
321 A similar expression can be found in Liu Shu's 劉書 Liu zi 劉子: "One who sells dress hats does not visit Min and Yue; one who peddles red shoes does not enter barefoot Yi. It is because they know those businesses are inappropriate to the customs." 貨章甫者, 不造閩、越; 衛赤舄者, 不入跣夷, 知俗不宜也. Liu Shu 劉書 lived in the Northern Qi Dynasty (550-577) and was Xiao Gang's contemporary. See Liu Shu, Liu zi, "Sui shi" 隨時, in Xu Yuantai 徐元太, Yu lin 營林, in SKQS, v. 318, Zi bu 子部, 124.
According to *Zhou li*, "chixi (red shoes)" were kings' or emperors' shoes, which exclusively matched their ceremonial robes "gunmian zhi fu" 袞冕之服 worn in the most important ceremonies.\(^{322}\) In the Southern and Northern Dynasties, the combination of "gunmian zhi fu" and "chixi" was the most honorable awards given by emperors. Thus, "chixi" was not an item of merchandise in Liang times, and Xiao Gang had full knowledge about that. To avoid using ceremonial "chixi", Xiao Gang replaces it with the precious "cuilü (green jade shoes)". In his letter, Xiao uses "zhangfu" and "cuilü" to imply brilliant writings. The unpopularity of these beautiful "goods" in the country of Min is compared to the neglect of brilliant writings in the capital.

After his criticism, Xiao Gang turns his pen in a positive direction:

至如近世謝朓、沈約之詩，任昉、陸倕之筆，斯實文章之冠冕，述作之楷模。張士簡之賦，周升逸之辯，亦成佳手，難可復遇。文章未墜，必有英絕，領袖之者，非弟而誰。每欲論之，無可與語，思吾子建，一共商搉。辯茲清濁，使如涇、渭；論茲月旦，類彼汝南。朱丹既定，雌黃有別，使夫懷鼠知慚，濫竽自恥。譬斯袁紹，畏見子將；同彼盜牛，遙羞王烈。相思不見，我勞如何。\(^{323}\)

Contemporary writings, such as the poetry by Xie Tiao and Shen Yue, and the prose of Ren Fang and Lu Chui, are indeed the crown of *belles-letters* and the models of documentary writing.\(^{324}\) Zhang Shijian's (Zhang Shuai) rhapsodies and Zhou Shengyi's (Zhou She) argumentative prose are also masterpieces and difficult to encounter again. If literature is not meant to deteriorate, there must be someone of outstanding ability in the world. If you, my younger brother, are not the one who takes on this leadership, then who is this person? Every time when I think of discussing this issue, there is no one there for me. I miss my Zijian (Cao Zhi),\(^{325}\) wishing to talk things over.

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\(^{322}\) *Zhou li zhushu* 周禮注疏, "Lü ren" 跡人, juan 8, in SSJZS, 693.

\(^{323}\) LS, "Wenxue shang" 文學上, juan 49, 691.

\(^{324}\) The English transliteration for "wenzhang" 文章 here refer to Marney's translation in his *Liang Chien-wen Ti*, 81.

\(^{325}\) "My Zijian" here refers to Xiao Yi, the Prince of Xiangdong.
together. Discriminating purity from muddiness, we shall make the boundary as clear as that between the Jing and the Wei rivers. We shall have discussions on the first day of every month, just like the scholars in Ru'nan used to do. When the decisions are made by vermilion ink, and differences are indicated by yellow orpiment, the rat meat seller will feel ashamed and the flutist Lan Yu will be embarrassed. It is like Yuan Shao who fears to see Zijiang, and the cattle thief who feels abashed to let Wang Lie know about his crime from afar. I have been longing to see you but have no means to do so. How unhappy I am!

326 "Earlier before, [Xu] Shao and [Xu] Jing both had fine reputations. [They] liked to comment on the people in the local communities. Every month, they would change the topics of their discussions. That's why there is a custom called 'Comments of the first day of a month' in Ru'nan." [初,劭與靖俱有高名,好共覈論鄉黨人物,每月輒更其品題,故汝南俗有“月旦評”焉。See HHS, "Xu Shao zhuan" 許劭傳, juan 68, 2235.]

327 "People in Zheng call unpolished jade 'pu'璞. People in Zhou call un-dried rat meat 'pu'璞. There was a man from Zhou who hid his 'pu' in the front part of his robe and asked a merchant from Zheng: 'Do you want to buy 'pu'?' The merchant said: 'Yes.' The man then took out his 'pu'. The merchant looked at it and found it was rat meat. Thus he declined the deal and did not take it." 郑人謂玉未理者為璞,周人謂鼠未腊者為璞,周人懷璞謂鄭賈曰: "欲买璞乎?" 賈曰: "欲之。" 出其璞,視之,乃鼠也。因謝不取。See Yinwen zi 尹文子, "Dadao xia" 大道下, 7, in SBCK chubian, v. 24, Zi bu 子部.

328 "King Xuan of Qi had flutists play flutes. Every time, he had to have 300 flutists play together. The recluse of the southern outer city wall proposed to play a flute for the king in the orchestra. King Xuan was happy with him. The ration of food supplied by the king was counted to several hundreds of individuals. After King Xuan died, King Min became the king. He preferred to enjoy solo performances. The recluse ran away."

齊宣王使人吹竽,必三百人。南郭處士請為王吹竽,宣王說之,廪食以數百人。宣王死,湣王立,好一一聽之,處士逃。See Han Fei zi 韓非子, "Neichu shuo shang" 内儲說上, juan 9, 49, in SBCK chubian, v. 20, Zi bu 子部.

329 "[Xu Shao] at first worked as a clerk for the Commandery Labor Section. Governor Xu Qiu respected him a lot. When people working as officials heard that Zijiang (Xu Shao) had become an official in the sector, none of them neglected to change and adorn their behaviors. Yuan Shao, a man from the same commandery, was an aristocratic cavalier. When he resigned from the position of Governor of Puyang and was on his way back to his home commandery, he was accompanied by a large number of vehicles and attendants. Just before he crossed the border of the commandery, he dismissed his guests. He said: 'How can I let Zijiang see my carriages and attire?!!' Then he returned home in a single cart." [劭] 初為郡功曹,太守徐璆甚敬之。府中聞子將為吏,莫不改操飾行。同郡袁紹,公族豪俠,去濮陽令歸,車徒甚盛,將入郡界,乃謝遣賓客,曰: "吾輿服豈可使許子將見。" 遂以單車歸家。See HHS, "Xu Shao" 許劭, juan 68, 2234.

330 "Wang Lie, [whose] courtesy name was Yanfang, was from Taiyuan. He was an apprentice of Chen Shi and was famous for his good deeds. There was a cattle thief who was caught by the owner in the village. The thief apologized: 'I will take all kinds of punishments, but please don't let Wang Yanfang know [about this].' [Wang] Lie sent someone to
In this last paragraph of his letter, Xiao Gang names some remarkable contemporary writers and indicates the literary genres in which they had expertise. Although he was disappointed by the literary circle in the capital, by paying compliments to these writers, dead or alive, he shows the possibility of literary reformation. In Xiao Gang's mind, his brother Xiao Yi, the Prince of Xiangdong, is the one suitable to take leadership of this reformation. At the end of the letter, Xiao Gang enthusiastically tells his brother about his dream, which was about discussing literature with him. This paragraph reminds us of Xiao Gang's gentle nature that we have seen in Chapter 1—humble and thoughtful.

Xiao Gang's frustration over the capital style well expresses his enthusiasm for literature. The message he passes along in this letter is that writers should write in accordance with the genres they choose. That is, poetry should be written as poetry and history should be written as history. He thank the thief after he heard about that and made a present of twenty feet of cloth to the thief. Someone asked him why. Lie said: 'The thief was afraid I would hear about his fault. This is because he has a sense of shame. If he feels ashamed, he must be able to turn over a new leaf. That's why I encouraged him.' Later, there was an old man who lost his sword on the road. A passerby found it and stayed with the sword [by the road]. In the evening, the old man returned and found the sword. He thought it strange and asked the passerby's name. He told [Wang] Lie about the story [afterward]. Lie had someone investigate [the matter] and found out the passerby was the cattle thief. In all cases of controversies about right and wrong, [people] at first expected Lie's judgment, [but then] some would return home before they got there and some would turn around after they saw his house. He touched people's hearts with his virtue just like this.”

disagreed with the verbose capital style that contained no beauty. In the genre of poetry, refined writings with beautiful expressions were what he preferred. In the literary allusions that Xiao Gang used in the letter, we witness his "new and unique" (xinbian) writing skill.

2.6 Xiao Gang's "Writing Should Be Unrestrained"

In his letter to the Prince of Xiangdong, Xiao Gang listed the poets who inspired his work. If the contemporary writers he admired were to represent his hope for literary reformation, then the masters of writing in the past were to legitimize his propositions for reformation. The masters Xiao Gang looked up to were Yang Xiong, Sima Xiangru, Cao Zhi, Wang Can, Pan Yue, Lu Ji, Yan Yanzhi, and Xie Lingyun. As mentioned in the previous section, these writers' reputations were well acknowledged in Xiao Gang's times. They were viewed as masters because of their artful writings, especially in the genres of *shi* 詩 and *cifu* 辭賦 (poetry and rhapsody). Without exception, their writings are distinguished by their meticulous construction, flowery expressions, and extensive literary allusions. In Lu Ji's eminent literary treatise, "Wen fu" 文賦 ("Fu on Literature"), the process of writing is carefully analyzed. Xiao Gang, as he stated in the letter to his brother, believed that the principles of writing set by these forerunners should be followed.
The "Wen fu" is "the first major discourse on the art of writing in ancient Chinese and is composed in what might best be described as 'prose-poetry' (rhapsody)."\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^1\) It is considered a milestone in the history of Chinese literary criticism. Before the "Wen fu", literary criticism was dominated by Confucian values that stressed political and didactic functions: "A successful government starts from poetry, is established in rites, and achieves this with music."\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^2\) Confucius (551-479 B.C.) advised young people to learn poetry because "poetry can be used to encourage; can be used to observe; can be used to associate with other people; can be used to express feelings of resentment. Near [to one], [poetry can be used to] serve [one's] father; at a distance, [it can be used to] serve [one's] monarch."\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^3\) In his "Preface to The Book of Odes", Mao Chang 毛萇 (fl. the Western Han Dynasty) expounded his understanding of Confucius's opinions expressed above:

"Poetry is where aspiration proceeds to. In the heart, it is aspiration. When it is expressed in language, it becomes poetry."\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^4\) Thus, for thousands of years, Confucian scholars have viewed the activity of writing poetry as an effective means that helped them become involved in politics. It has also been a highway leading to official careers, which brought them fame and wealth.

\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^1\) Lu Ji, The Art of Writing, trans. Sam Hamill (USA: Milkweed Editions, 2000), xv.
\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^2\) 興於詩, 立於禮, 成於樂. See Lunyu zhushu 論語注疏, "Taibo" 泰伯, juan 8, in SSJZS, 2487.
\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^3\) 詩可以興, 可以觀, 可以羣, 可以怨. - 聖之事父, 遠之事君. Ibid., "Yang huo" 陽貨, juan 17, in SSJZS, 2525.
\(^3\)\(^3\)\(^4\) 詩者, 志之所之也, 在心為志, 發言為詩. See Mao Shi zhengyi 毛詩正義, "Zhoujum Guanju xungu di yi" 周南關雎詁詁第一, juan 1, in SSJZS, 269.
Among the writers that Xiao Gang admired, Yang Xiong and Cao Zhi once revealed their contempt for poetry and rhapsody writing despite both of them being masters in these genres themselves. Yang Xiong admitted that he was fond of writing rhapsodies when he was young, but he belittled composing rhapsodies as a subject for children's education, and claimed that it was not something a grown man should do. As a Confucian scholar, Yang Xiong originally believed that writing rhapsody was a means to admonish emperors in order to bring changes to government. He admired Sima Xiangru's rhapsodies and was keen on imitating his works. According to the historian Ban Gu 班固 (32-92), Yang Xiong's rhapsodies used extremely beautiful expressions that none of his contemporaries could equal. Nonetheless, Yang Xiong stopped writing rhapsodies after he realized that his writings did not function as he had expected. His euphuistic and gorgeous rhapsodies only encouraged his emperor to proceed in a direction that he actually opposed, leaving Yang disappointed. Like Sima Xiangru and some famous rhapsody writers in the past, his flowery rhapsodies had lost the meaning of admonition and were treated as nothing more than entertainment. Yang Xiong's early intention was to contribute to fair government by writing attractive rhapsodies; nonetheless, he was betrayed by reality. For the rest of his life, Yang Xiong

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335 或問, 吾子少而好賦, 曰, 然, 童子雕蟲篆刻。俄而曰, 壯夫不為也。Yang Xiong 揚雄, Yang zi Fayan 揚子法言, "Wuzi" 吾子, juan 2, 6, in SBCK chubian, Zi bu 子部.
336 HS, "Yang Xiong zhuan" 揚雄傳, juan 87 xia, 3575.
emphasized that writing should follow the norms indicated in the Confucian classics. In his poetic writings, Knechtges observes that Yang continues "using many of the rhapsodic conventions."

Nonetheless, Knechtges remarks, "as his interests turn to philosophy, Yang rejects the epideictic rhapsody in favor of a more direct, less verbally ornate style, which does not obscure the moral message."

Cao Zhi, a prince of the Wei in the Three Kingdoms period, was eager to show his aspiration and capability in serving his imperial brother. In a letter to Yang Dezu 杨德祖 (Yang Xiu's 杨脩 courtesy name, 175-219), he acknowledged that folk songs and ordinary people's ideas should not be neglected by the government. On the other hand, he wrote to his friend: "Poetry and rhapsody (cifu) are a minor Way. Certainly, these are not enough to propagate the great righteousness and illuminate it for future generations."

昔楊子雲先朝執戟之臣耳，猶稱壯夫不為也。吾雖德薄，位為蕃侯，猶庶幾勠力上國，流惠下民，建永世之業，留金石之功，豈徒以翰墨為勳績，辞賦為君子哉！

In the past, although Yang Ziyun (Yang Xiong) was a mere halberd-holding guard serving the previous dynasty, he claimed a grown man should not compose [poetry and rhapsody]. I lack virtue, yet, as a feudal lord, I wish to do my best to serve the emperor and to benefit my people. I also wish to establish immortal undertakings, and to leave monumental achievements behind. How can I only

338 Ibid., 107.
339 David R. Knechtges points out that rhapsody was frequently called "tz'u-fu (cifu)", and "tz'u (ci)" is probably the most common word to refer "what one might call belles letters or literature in the modern sense." Ibid., 89. I translate this term, "cifu", in a literal manner here.
take writing brushes and ink as exploits and regard poetry and rhapsody as the same as being an upright gentlemen?!340

Cao Zhi was Cao Cao's favorite son because of his literary talent.341 After Cao Cao's death, his elder brother, Cao Pi, usurped the throne from the last emperor of the Han Dynasty and became the first emperor of the Wei. However, Cao Zhi's reputation and talent made Cao Pi uneasy. The jealous emperor constantly expelled his younger brother, exposing him to mortal danger. Cao Zhi's downplaying of poetry and rhapsody was a means to express his aspiration for building a new kingdom for his family. Nonetheless, despite his efforts to show his loyalty, Cao Zhi never gained his brother's trust.

Lu Ji was rigorously schooled in both Confucian and Daoist classics, like other Chinese literati at that time. In the "Fu on Literature", his view of the purpose of literature shows no conflict with Confucianism. He writes: "As for the function of literature, It is indeed that on which a multitude of principles rest;" 伊茲文之為用，固眾理之所因 and "It rescues the way of Wen and Wu,342 which was about to fall; And spread their moral influence so that it does not perish." 濟文武於將墜，宣風聲於不泯。343 This idea does not hinder Lu Ji from maintaining that "Lyric

340 Wen xuan, "Yu Yang Dezu Shu" 與楊德祖書, juan 42, 1903-1904.
341 Sanguo zhi, "Chen Si Wang Zhi" 陳思王植, juan 19, 557.
342 "Wen and Wu" refer to King Wen (ca. 1152-1056 B.C.) and his son King Wu (1087-1043 B.C.) of the Zhou.
343 Wen xuan, "Wen fu" 文賦, juan 17, 773. These two citations are translated by David R. Knechtges in Wen xuan or Selections of Refined Literature, v. 3, 231.
poetry springs from feelings and is exquisitely ornate. The rhapsody gives form to an object, and is limpid" as we have seen in the earlier discussion. In the end, he concludes that all kinds of writing should "repress the wayward, control wild abandon. Words must convey meaning, and principles must be properly set forth; Thus, there is no need for prolix verbiage." Although Lu Ji calls for self-control in writing, he does not forbid flowery expressions. Neither does Lu Ji show any intention of belittling poetry and rhapsody writing. In contrast, Lu Ji writes his elaborate treatise in the form of a rhapsody, which reflects his appreciation of these genres. His attitude was not affected by any utilitarian factors either. Lu Ji's passion for and adherence to the beauty of poetry and rhapsody were pure.

As we have seen in his letter to the Prince of Xiangdong, Xiao Gang appreciates good writings that correspond to the characteristics of their genres. Xiao Gang lavishes his compliments on contemporary writers and their writings, especially Xie Tiao's, Shen Yue's and Xie Lingyun's verse, Ren Fang's and Lu Chui's essays, Zhang Shuai's rhapsodies, Zhou She's argumentative prose, and Pei Ziye's history writing. In his letter "In Response to Zhang Zuan's Thank You Letter for Showing [Zhang] the Collection [of My Works]" ("Da Zhang Zuan xie shi ji" 答張纘謝示集), Xiao Gang disagrees with the belittlement of poetry and rhapsody by Yang Xiong and Cao Zhi:

344 亦禁邪而制放。要辭達而理舉，故無取乎冗長。Wen xuan, 773. Translated by David R. Knechtges, Wen xuan or Selections of Refined Literature, v. 3, 221.
有好文章，於今二十五載矣。竊嘗論之：日月參辰，火龍黼黻，尚且著於玄象，章乎人事，而況文辭可止，詠歌可輟乎？不為壯夫，楊雄實小言破道。非謂君子，曹植亦小辯破言。論之科刑，罪在不赦。至如春庭落景，轉蕙承風。秋雨旦晴，檐梧初下。浮雲生野，明月入樓。時命親賓，乍動嚴駕，車渠屢酌，鸚鵡驟傾。伊昔三邊，久留四戰。胡霧連天，征旗拂日。時聞塢笛，遙聽塞笳。或鄉思悽然，或雄心憤薄。是以沉吟短翰，補綴庸音。寓目寫心，因事而作。345

I have been fond of literary writing for 25 years now. I used to discuss poetry and rhapsody writing as follows: The sun, the moon and stars appear as asterisms; and the flames and dragons are embroidered on imperial garments to display events in human life. What is more, prose and poems can be retained; and the chanting songs can be preserved.346 "Writing poetry and rhapsody are not something a grown man should do," Yang Xiong indeed damaged the Way with his nonsense. "Poetry and rhapsody ought not to be [likened and called] upright gentlemen," Cao Zhi's pointless argument also undermined the proper remarks. Speaking in terms of the punishment of the law, they deserve no pardon. As for times when the sun sets in the spring courtyard and trembling cymbidia welcome the breeze; when Autumn rain clears up at dawn and leaves of a paulownia tree by the eaves just start to fall; when floating clouds arise from the open land and the bright moonlight shines in a high tower; when sometimes we gather relatives and guests, setting out in carriages; when [at parties] we frequently fill clam-shaped goblets with wine, and the wine in parrot cups is downed in no time; when I was exposed to enemy attacks on all four sides for long at the three borderlands [of the east, the north and the west], with the barbarian land densely covered by fog and expedition banners brushing against the sun; when now and then I heard a flute from the fortress, and from afar came the sound of a northern reed whistle, which sometimes made me feel a mournful longing for home, and at other times a heroic aspiration swelled inside me: at times like

345 YWLJ, "Shu" 書, juan 58, 1042.

346 According to Guangyun, the character "zhi" 止 contains the meaning of "liu" 留 (Zhou Zumo 周祖謨, Guangyun jiaoben 廣韻校本 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 252.), which means "to retain", "to remain", "to keep", and "to preserve" in English. Li Shan annotates Lu Ji's "Wen fu", indicating that "shi zhi" 逝止 means "to go or to stay" 去留 (Wen xuan, 766). Although no example is found to support the argument that the character "chuo" 輟 appearing in this letter is used as "liu" 留, since "chuo" 輟 means the same as "zhi" 止 (Guangyun jiaoben, 501), it is feasible to interpret "chuo" 輟 in the sense of "liu" 留 in this couplet.
these, humming to myself, I pondered incompetent writings and patched up some mediocre tunes. I
observe with my eyes and express my heart, and I write inspired by [outer] events.347

Xiao Gang identifies neither the name of the collection he showed to Zhang Zuan nor the
literary genre contained in this collection. However, we are able to find the answers from the clues
he provides in the above letter.

In the letter, Xiao Gang reveals his long-lasting affection for writing, which reminds us of his
confession that he had been "an addict of poetry" since he was seven years old.348 He criticizes the
comments made by Yang Xiong and Cao Zhi, in which the two belittled poetry and rhapsody
writing. The opening of the letter and the criticism imply that the works in the collection he showed
Zhang Zuan were very likely poems and rhapsodies. At the end of this letter, Xiao Gang talks about
the motivation and inspiration of his writing. In short, Xiao Gang's letter to Zhang Zuan was about
an anthology that contained his own poems or rhapsodies.349

In his letter to Zhang Zuan, Xiao Gang maintains that the purpose of his poetry and rhapsody
writing is to express his feelings and aspirations. He is inspired by both natural phenomena and
events in his life. Utilizing the expressions reflected on the heavenly bodies and the exclusive

347 A complete translation in English is available by Zong-Qi Cai. See Hawai’i Reader in Traditional Chinese Culture, 285-286. See also Xiaofei Tian's partial translation in her Beacon Fire and Shooting Star, 136. The translation here was made with reference to both.
349 Xiao Gang had his collected works compiled before he became Crown Prince. See NS, "Lu Gao, zi Zhao" 陸杲子罩, juan 48, 1205. See also SS, "Jingji si" 經籍四, juan 35, 1076.
patterns on emperor's garments, he argues that poetry and rhapsody can even preserve these images and events in writing. Traditionally, Chinese scholars believed that writings are immortal. Zuoqiu Ming 左丘明 (ca. 502-422 B.C.) wrote: "The highest sages do not dismiss virtue. The secondary sages do not dismiss meritorious service. The lesser sages do not dismiss expounding their ideas in writings. Their writings will not be abandoned even as time elapses. This is what we call 'immortal'." Zuoqiu Ming's idea about writing have strongly influenced Chinese scholars ever since. Cao Pi announces that:

Literary writing is a great undertaking for ruling a country, and a glorious enterprise that will never perish. One's life span is limited. Glory and pleasure stop with a person's physical body. Life, glory and pleasure must expire when the time arrives. They are not as good as literary works, which are permanent. That is why writers in antiquity devoted themselves to writing brushes and ink to express their ideas in writings. Neither by borrowing good historians' words, nor by means of swift force, are writers' reputations passed on to later generations on their own.

The writings Zuoqiu Ming and Cao Pi discuss are general literary writings. In contrast, Yang Xiong and Cao Zhi single out poetry and rhapsody and devalue these genres because they believe

351 Wen xuan, "Diantun, Lun wen" 典論論文, juan 52, 2271.
poetry and rhapsody do not accord with Confucian values. Yang Xiong's giving up on writing flowery rhapsody was due to his crisis over his identity as a genuine Confucian scholar. His lofty self-esteem would not allow him to be treated as a mere entertainer. In Cao Zhi's case, since he died after his brother Cao Pi, he should have had knowledge of his brother's ideas quoted above. Although his poetry and rhapsodies had been celebrated since his youth, the applause accorded them caused his brother's hatred and jealousy. To a certain extent, his fame put him in the awkward situation of being viewed as a self-indulgent man seeking pleasure. His contempt of poetry and rhapsody was a message stating that he was not proud of his fame as a poetry and rhapsody writer; instead, his true aspiration was to make contributions to his brother's empire. Both Yang Xiong and Cao Zhi were passionate about flowery writings and their achievements were beyond argument. Their belittling of poetry and rhapsody writing derived from the fear each had of being viewed as a man who had lost his Confucian identity.

Xiao Gang was free from the crisis that Yang Xiong and Cao Zhi had experienced. He lived in a period when Confucianism was no longer the dominant ideology. Buddhism and Daoism were as popular as Confucianism or even surpassed it on the political level in the Liang Dynasty. As a Chinese emperor, Xiao Gang's father, Emperor Wu of Liang, was the first emperor to convert officially to Buddhism from Daoism, naming himself "Bodhisattva". A cultivated scholar at that time was required to acquire extensive knowledge of the three doctrines and to have the three
coexisting in his daily life. As we have seen in Xu Chi's case regarding his and Xiao Gang's Palace Style poetry, although Emperor Wu was furious at first, he eventually excused Xu Chi after testing Xu's erudition. In fact, in his early years, Emperor Wu himself was fond of writing flowery poems that were strongly influenced by southern folk songs.353

The emperor's tolerance and the multi-ideological society of the day provided a rather relaxed literary environment for Xiao Gang's writing. Xiao Gang treats poetry and rhapsody with no discrimination from other genres. He follows Lu Ji's theory — "Lyric poetry springs from feelings and is exquisitely ornate; the rhapsody gives form to an object, and is limpid and clear." In the "Letter Admonishing Daxin, the Duke of Dangyang" ("Jie Dangyang Gong Daxin shu" 戒當陽公大心書), he urges his son to broaden his learning, advising him that writing is different from one's conduct:

汝年時尚幼。所闕者學。可久可大。其唯學歟。所以孔丘言。吾嘗終日不食。終夜不寢。以思。無益。不如學也。若使牆面而立。沐猴而冠。吾所不取。立身之道。與文章異。立身先須謹重。文章且須放蕩。354
You are still young at your age. What you lack is learning. Only learning can last long and expand. Therefore, Confucius said: "I used to fast all day and stay up all night to think. It was not beneficial. It would be better to learn." I would not prefer that you stand still facing the wall;355 [or be] like a

353 Kondō Izumi 近藤泉, "Ryō no Bu Tei no enshi to Ryō dai zenki bundan no dōkō - 1: Ryō no Bu Tei no bungaku jō no tachiba no henka ni tsuite," 27-41.
354 YWLJ, "Jianjie" 警誡, juan 23, 424. Here I follow the punctuation in YKJ, 3010.
355 See Lunyu zhushu, "Yanghuo" 陽貨, juan 17, in SSJZS, 2525. This means that one is not able to make progress when facing a wall.
monkey wearing a cap. The way of conducting oneself differs from writing. Conduct gives priority to circumspection. Writing should be unrestrained.

Xiao Gang's theory that "writing should be unrestrained" was violently attacked by Confucian scholars in later dynasties as stated earlier. The word Xiao Gang used for "unrestrained", "fangdang", caused controversy in academic circles as well. Traditional criticism interprets "fangdang" as "debauchery", which is the same meaning as it has in modern Chinese. Yang Ming remarks that "fangdang" means "freedom from restriction" in the sense of "indulgence". According to Yang's interpretation, Xiao Gang believes that a gentleman should carry out rites and practise morality; yet, it is allowable for the gentleman to "indulge" himself in writing at the same time. Yang Ming maintains that Xiao Gang's standpoint in this letter opposes Confucian orthodoxy. Nonetheless, Lin Dengshun challenges this theory by using Xiao Gang's "Preface to The Collected Works of Crown Prince Zhaoming". Xiao Gang writes:

竊以文之為義。大哉遠矣。......文籍生。書契作。詠歌起。賦頌興。成孝敬於人倫。移風俗於王政。道綿乎八極。理浹乎九垓。贊動神明。雍熙鍾石。此之謂人文。

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356 See Shi ji, "Xiang Yu benji" 項羽本紀, juan 7, 315. This refers to the idea that beautiful clothes cannot hide the incivility inside.

357 Wang Yunxi 王運熙 and Yang Ming 楊明, Wei Jin Nan-bei Chao wenxue piping shi 魏晉南北朝文學批評史 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989), 299-300.

358 Lin Dengshun 林登順, "Wei Jin Nan-bei Chao wenlun shang chengxian de ruxue jingshen" 魏晉南北朝文論上呈現的儒學精神, in Wei Jin Nan-bei Chao wenxue lun ji: Wei Jin Nan-bei Chao wenxue guoji yantao hui lunwen ji 魏晉南北朝文學論集·魏晉南北朝文學國際研討會論文集 (Nanjing: Nanjing Daxue Zhongguo yuyan wenxue xi ed. (Nanjing: Nanjing Daxue chubanshe, 1997), 457.

359 Xiao Gang, "Zhaoming Taizi ji xu" 昭明太子集序, in YKJ, 3016.
I believe that the meaning of writing is great and lasts a long time. … When ideographic characters were created, ballads arose, and rhapsodies and eulogies came into vogue, they accomplish filial piety in human relations, and change customs through government orders. They enable the Way to reach the eight ends of the world. These norms penetrate into the nine barbarian lands. They praise and move the gods, and harmonize bells and stones. This is called human culture.

Xiao Gang knows very well what is said in the Confucian doctrine regarding literary writing. In his proposal requesting He Chen to recite Emperor Wu's commentaries on *The Book of Odes*, he uses typical Confucian language:

臣聞樂由陽來，性情之本。詩以言志，政教之基。故能使天地咸亨，人倫敦序。360

I learned that music is from *yang* and is the basis of one's nature; poetry is there to express one's aspirations and is the foundation of government and morality. That is why [music and poetry] are capable of making the entire universe prosperous, and also making human relations warm and orderly.

No matter how their poems were seen in the eyes of others, in both Xu Ling's "Preface to the *Yutai xinyong" and Xiao Gang's "Letter to the Prince of Xiangdong", *The Book of Odes* was always set as a standard of their poetry writing. In his letter to Zhang Zuan, Xiao Gang juxtaposes feelings and aspirations equally as he expresses himself. Taking ornate language into consideration, Xiao Gang follows Lu Ji's train of thought faithfully — "Lyric poetry springs from feelings and is exquisitely ornate."

Dang Shu Leung disagrees with Guo Shaoyu's remarks criticizing Xiao Gang for separating writing from conduct as a false theory that resulted in "erotic literature" — Palace Style poetry.361

360 Xiao Gang, "Qing Shangshu Zuocheng He Chen feng shuzhi zhi Mao Shi yi biao" 請尚書左丞賀琛奉述制旨毛詩義表, in *YWLJ, juan* 55, 989.
He discusses the meaning of "fangdang" in the contemporary linguistic context of Xiao Gang's time. Similar to Yang Ming, Dang remarks that "fangdang" contains the meaning of "free from restriction". However, Yang Ming's argument is rather conventional because his conclusion ignores the different ways this word was used. "Fangdang" is primarily used for human behavior that can be interpreted as "debauched" or "indulgent". This is the reason why the word in Xiao Gang's letter has been taken in the same sense for a long time.

John Marney remarks that the discussions taking Xiao Gang's "fangdang" as either a psychological release or a reflection of the decadent time period are actually moving away from "the field of literary discussion." He argues:

Essentially, Hsiao Kang's (Xiao Gang) "licentious" theories were an extreme expression of his consistent complaint against the uninspired imitations and the patching together of allusions and references which were passed off as creative poetry. To Hsiao Kang, creative literature meant artistry achieved only through the natural, untrammeled expression of emotion, elegantly conveyed. This view went against deeply rooted concepts of literature and its functions, and obscured the fact that in most other respects Hsiao Kang was very orthodox.

The "consistent complaint" mentioned in the above quotation refers to Xiao Gang's attack on the capital style. Marney took "fangdang" in the sense of "literary license" and translates it as

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361 Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞, Zhongguo gudian wenxue lilun pipingshi 中國古典文學理論批評史 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1959), 81.
363 Marney, Liang Chien-wen Ti, 96-97.
364 Ibid., 96.
"the uninhibited expression of sentiment".\textsuperscript{365} Dang Shu Leung also sheds light on the meaning when "fangdang" was used to apply to literature. He writes: "If unrestrained behavior refers to indulgence and breaking the rules of etiquette, then unrestrained writing naturally indicates to write without following the rules of writing."\textsuperscript{366} He argues that the look of unrestrained literature is found in three aspects: style, language and content. In Xu Chi's and Xiao Gang's "new and unique" poetry, one will discover a new writing style, a unique way of using language, and the introduction of new themes. These can all be defined as elements of unrestrained writing in Dang's theory, and this kind of writings is not necessarily erotic. Although Marney and Dang interpret Xiao Gang's "fangdang" in a similar sense, the conclusions they reach are somewhat different.

As we have seen in his discussion quoted above, Marney believes Xiao Gang's "fangdang", "literary license", went against Confucian orthodoxy. From his point of view, Xiao Gang "assumed an aggressive role in the literary debates of his day, and on occasion he crushed his literary adversaries with his very cruel pen."\textsuperscript{367} Yet, on the other hand, Marney concedes that Xiao Gang was "very orthodox" and he "paid full service to orthodox concepts of literature" in most other respects.\textsuperscript{368} Namely, in comparison with most of his other literary compositions, Xiao Gang's idea

\textsuperscript{365} Ibid., 95.
\textsuperscript{366} 鄧仕樑, "Shi 'fangdang'," 44.
\textsuperscript{367} Marney, \textit{Liang Chien-wen Ti}, 97.
\textsuperscript{368} Ibid.
about writing indicates in this particular letter to his son is rather unexpected. The aggressive image
of Xiao Gang reflected in Marney's interpretation inevitably exposes a contrast with his gentle
image portrayed in works of history.

Like many other researchers who ignore the young age of the letter's recipient, Anne Birrell
renders what Xiao Gang wants to say as "literature is the unrestrained expression of emotion"
although there is no mention of "emotion" in Xiao's original words. Birrell further develops Xiao's
statement as his "valuable service for the study of literature by drawing a line under the values of
classical culture which interwove criteria for morality, politics, and poetics into a seamless whole,
thus establishing the advent of the modern era of pure literature." Xiao Daxin was born in 520
and was granted the title of "Duke of Dangyang" in the fourth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (532)
at the age of 13. Although we do not have the precise date when this letter was written, from the
phrase in Xiao Gang's letter, "You are still young at your age ("you" 幼)," it is safe to infer that Xiao
Daxin was still an early teenaged boy at that time. Birrell's interpretation may well explain the
theory in the context of the development of Chinese literature during the medieval period,
especially in comparison to the theoretical treatises or preface written by Zhong Rong, Liu Xie and

369 Birrell, Games Poets Play, 281-282.
370 LS, "Taizong shiyi wang" 太宗十一王, juan 44, 613 and 615.
371 Gui Qing 郭青 places this letter under the entry of the fourth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (532) in Xiao Gang's
chronological biography. See his Nanchao Gongti shi yanjiu, 362-363.
Xiao Tong. The question is, was Xiao Daxin able to comprehend such a profound theory at such a young age? Since Xiao Gang wrote this letter to his son for the purpose of education, not for expressing his own literary thought particularly, Dang Shu Leung's understanding better suits this context. Dang remarks that Xiao Gang's letter belongs to the category of family instruction. Like other fathers, Xiao Gang wishes his son to have a peaceful and successful life. Dang argues:

"Although Emperor Jianwen was leading the contemporary literary trend with keen determination at blazing new trails, he did not want his son to behave indulgently."372 That is the reason why Xiao Gang separated writing from personal conduct.

One of the contemporary scholars whom Xiao Gang admired, Xiao Zixian, states his ideas about literature as follows: "In the case of writing, the most troublesome aspects are mediocrity and oldness. If there is nothing new and unique, it is impossible to surpass the masters."373 Xiao Gang on the one hand expects his son to grow up as an erudite gentleman by following Confucius' teachings. On the other hand, he advises his son to write in an unrestrained manner because, as Xiao Zixian indicates, this is the way to surpass the ancient masters of writing. Regardless of the

373 在乎文章，彌患凡舊，若無新變，不能代雄。See NQS, "Wenxue" 文學, juan 52, 908. Although there is no clear indication of the year Xiao Zixian wrote NQS, according to LS (juan 35, 511), it was before the second year of the Zhong-Datong Era (530). Since Xiao Daxin was given the title "Duke of Dangyang" in 532, Xiao Gang must have known this statement when he wrote the letter to his son Daxin. See LS, "Taizong shiyi wang" 太宗十一王, juan 44, 613.
adverse criticism of his poetry, Xiao Gang believes that the creative school of poetry that he leads is in accordance with Confucianism and that its practice follows the tradition and principles set by the masters of the past. In his works concerning his ideas on literature, Xiao Gang maintains his consistency with and attachment to what he believes, just as he claims in "The Self-account to the Writing on the Wall under House Arrest" that we examined at the end of Chapter 1.
Chapter 3  Xiao Gang's Yuefu Poetry

3.1 Reputation for Writing Amorous Poetry

Xiao Gang might not have been a capable monarch with the ability to lead his empire to overcome the fatal chaos at the end of the Liang Dynasty. However, his contribution to classical Chinese poetry was invaluable. The poetic style he and his fellow literati developed drew upon the essentials of almost every kind of poetic device created before his time and prepared a solid and necessary foundation for Chinese poetry in the Tang Dynasty. His "xinbian" (new and unique) style was called "Gongti shi" 宮體詩 (Palace Style Poetry).

Xiao Gang is recorded as a patron and an enthusiastic writer of Palace Style poetry in historical sources. There are two entries that indicate the beginning of the term "Gongti (Palace Style)" in the Liang shu. One appears in Xiao Gang's biography:

雅好題詩，其序云：“余七歲有詩癖，長而不倦。”然傷於輕艷，當時號曰“宮體”。

[Xiao Gang] often liked to write poetry. He said in an autobiographical postface2 [to his poetry anthology]: "I was an addict of poetry when I was seven and I have never tired of it [even] after

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1 LS, "Jianwen Di" 簡文帝, juan 4, 109. See also NS, "Jianwen Di," juan 8, 233.

2 It is not clear what the original text "xu" 序 here was written for, because there is no further information provided except the previous indication of Xiao's passion for poetry writing. There are many ways to translate the character "xu" 序 in English. For example, usually, it is rendered as "preface". As an ellipsis of "houxu" 後序, it can also be translated as "postface". As a substitute character of "xu" 敘, a homophonous word, then it is translated as "to give an account" or "to recount". Since there is no indication of what kind of work Xiao Gang wrote this "xu" 序 for, and the only clue we have is that it is about his poetry writing, it may be safe to infer that this "xu" 序 was written for a collection of his poetry writings; yet, we still have no means to know if this "xu" 序 was placed in front of or after the body of those
The term "at the time" at the end of this passage refers to the time after Xiao Gang became Crown Prince (ji ju jianfu 及居監撫). This corresponds to another entry that appears in Xu Chi's biography in the same book, which also hints at the origin of the name for the poetic style:

屬文好為新變，不拘舊體。……王入為皇太子，轉家令，兼掌管記，尋帶領直。摛文體既別，春坊盡學之， "宮體 "之號，自斯而起。³

[Xu Chi] was fond of writing new and unique compositions and was not restrained by old styles. ... After the prince (Xiao Gang) was established as Crown Prince, [Xu Chi] was transferred to the position of the Crown Prince's Household Provisioner, concurrent with his position as Overseer of the Secretariat. Before long, he took up the duty of Concurrent Controller. Since [Xu] Chi's writing was distinctive, people in the Crown Prince's residence all imitated the style. The name "Palace Style" has been used ever since.

As we have seen, after Xiao Gang became Crown Prince, Xu Chi returned to the capital with Xiao Gang and served him in the Eastern Palace. His new and unique style became popular in the Eastern Palace and was called the "[Eastern] Palace Style". Xu Chi was Xiao Gang's tutor, and they both wrote poems in the same style.

In his "Gongti shi jieshuo bian" 宮體詩界說辯, Gui Qing maintains that the term "qingyan" 輕艷 (frivolity and flamboyancy) in Xiao Gang's biography refers to contents rather than form, and the phrase "[being] damaged by its frivolity and flamboyancy" refers to the characteristics of themes and contents of the Palace Style poetry. He claims that his interpretation is close to the writings. Since the citation is about Xiao Gang himself, my translation here is adopted on the suggestion of David R. Knechtges, which is "autobiographical postface".

³ LS, "Xu Chi" 徐摛, juan 30, 446-447. See also NS, "Xu Chi" 徐摛, juan 62, 1521.
description found in the *Sui shu*, in which Xiao Gang and the Palace Style poetry are described as follows:

When Emperor Jianwen of the Liang (Xiao Gang) resided in the Eastern Palace, he also liked literary writings. The range of his elegant phrases and skillful compositions was confined to sleeping mats. He elaborated intricate expressions, and his thoughts were limited to the inner chambers. The curious youngsters imitated and learned [his style] one after another. People both inside and outside the court bustled out [of their enthusiasm for following the style], and it was called the "Palace Style". It spread rapidly and widely without showing a sign of ceasing until the fall [of the Liang Dynasty].

Putting aside the censure, Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580-643) here sketches the features of Palace Style poetry as "elegant" and "intricate". He indicates the theme of this kind of poetry is something related to females and matters of the inner chambers. In addition, Wang Wei attacks Xiao Gang on behalf of Hou Jing, saying that his "speaking is limited to frivolity" and his "writing never goes beyond sensuality." Likewise, since poems with themes about females were usually composed during parties, or sometimes were even written for female readers or entertainers as we have seen in the case of Xu Ling's "Preface to the *Yutai xinyong*", it is not difficult to understand why He Zhiyuan indicates that Xiao Gang's "gorgeous and sensual" poems were chanted by women's

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5 SS, "Jingji si" 經籍四, juan 35, 1090. This paragraph has been cited earlier in Chapter 2. For the sake of convenience, I cite it here again.

6 ZZTJ, "Liang ji shiba" 梁紀十八, juan 162, 1577.
minds. In agreement with these statements, Liu Su's *Da Tang xinyu* simply connects Xiao Gang's Palace Style poetry with the *Yutai xinyong* and equates Palace Style poetry to "*yanshi*" (amorous poetry). As a result, the *Yutai xinyong* has been viewed as an anthology that represents Palace Style poetry and some scholars believe that Palace Style poems are contained in the *Yutai xinyong*.

Although Liu Su's statement strongly influenced the critique of Xiao Gang and Palace Style poetry for centuries, scholars have increasingly argued that amorous poetry did not originate with Xiao Gang and that the Palace Style poetry is rather a continuation and development of the Yongming Style. For example, Yan Caiping remarks that poets started to write amorous poems from the Eastern Jin Dynasty (316-420). Following Wang Xianzhi's (344-386) three poems of "Song of Taoye" ("Taoye ge" 桃葉歌), Xie Lingyun also wrote two poems titled "Present and Response at the Dongyang Creek" ("Dongyang xi zhong zengda" 東陽溪中贈答). Yan maintains that, differing from these aristocratic poets, poets of plebeian origins (including royal poets of

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7 He Zhiyuan 何之元, "Quan Chen wen" 全陳文, "Liangdian zonglun" 梁典總論, *juan* 5, in YKJ, 3430.
8 DTXY, "Gongzhi diwu" 公直第五, *juan* 3, 42.
10 YTXY contains two of the three poems titled "Qingren taoye ge" 情人桃葉歌 (*juan* 10, 471-472). One more is found in YFSJ, *juan* 45, 665.
non-aristocratic background) during the [Liu] Song (420-479) and Qi (479-502) dynasties were more interested in imitating the southern ballads. Among them, Bao Zhao 鮑照 (414-466), Tang Huixiu 湯惠休 (fl. [Liu] Song Dynasty), Shen Yue and Xiao Yan (who later became Emperor Wu of Liang) were famous literati who practised this kind of poetic writing. Yan Caiping argues that Xiao Gang and his group only managed to push this literary trend to its peak because after the Yongming Era of the Qi, the amorous theme had already been woven into the portrayal of landscape and objects in poetry. It is unfair to have Xiao Gang and his fellow poets take full responsibility for the popularity of amorous poetry that lasted for many years thereafter.12

"Amorous poetry" usually indicates poems that contain themes about females and flowery expressions. If Xiao Gang's poetry was called Palace Style poetry, it is not difficult to discover the problems involved by saying that Palace Style poetry equals "amorous poetry" because Xiao Gang did not write exclusively on female-related topics but treated many others.

There are 286 poems attributed to Xiao Gang in Lu Qinli's Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nan-bei Chao shi. Among them, 88 are under the category of yuefu 樂府 (Music Bureau poetry) and 198 are called shi 詩 (poem). There are 12 yuefu poems and 11 shi poems that are of disputed authorship. In

12 Yan Caiping 閻采平, Qi Liang shige yanjiu 齊梁詩歌研究 (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1994), 164-167.
addition, the last two poems in the *shi* category only contain two lines and one line respectively and they are not counted in the statistics in Table 3.

The theme of love is common in Chinese folk songs. When literati composed *yuefu* poems in the Six Dynasties, they usually imitated old folk songs using the existing titles or expressions to create their own works. It is not surprising to see in Table 3 that 60% of Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poems are written about females, and in contrast, more than 70% of his *shi* poems are not. In other words, approximately 65% of Xiao Gang's entire extant corpus of poetry is not written about females, as indicated in Table 3. This ratio may rise even higher if we take into account the number of those that vanished in the flames of the imperial libraries of the Liang. Xiao Gang's poems contained in the *Yutai xinyong* may reflect his Palace Style writing one way or another. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the *Yutai xinyong* was unknown to the public until the beginning of the Tang Dynasty, and Xu Ling did not intentionally select amorous poems to represent Palace Style poetry but rather for private use in Xiao Gang's household. In addition, more poems written by those who are not considered Palace Style poets are contained in the *Yutai xinyong* than by those that are,13 and only 31% of Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poems and 26% of the entire poetic corpus of Xiao

Gang's poems in *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nan-bei Chao shi* were collected from the *Yutai xinyong*.\(^{14}\)

Thus, Xiao Gang did not write amorous poems exclusively and neither is it appropriate to take the *Yutai xinyong* as an anthology representing Palace Style poetry.\(^{15}\)

The term "yuefu (Music Bureau)" was originally used as the name of a government musical institution. Until the 1970s, many scholars believed that the term "yuefu" first appeared in the reign of Emperor Gaozu of Han (Liu Bang 劉邦 256-195 B.C., r. 202-195 B.C.) and was officially used as a name of a musical institution during Han Emperor Wu's times (Liu Che 劉徹 156-87 B.C., r. 141-87 B.C.).\(^{16}\) What they based their interpretation on was documented history such as the *Hou*
Han shu (The History of the Latter Han) and Han shu (The History of the Han). However, this theory has been questioned by a few recent archaeological discoveries. In 1976, a chime with the characters "yuefu zhong" 楯府鑷 (yuefu bell) carved on it was discovered at the archaeological site of emperor Qin Shi Huang's (259-210 B.C.) mausoleum.\textsuperscript{17} In 2000, the stamps of three seals at an archaeological site of the Qin Dynasty (221-206 B.C.) were found to contain characters related to official titles of a "yuefu" institution.\textsuperscript{18} In addition, the eight bronze gongs carved with the characters "made by yuefu smiths in the ninth year of Emperor Wen's Era" 文帝九年樂府工造 were discovered at the tomb of the King of Southern Yue in Guangzhou.\textsuperscript{19} All these give evidence to that the term "yuefu" had been used as the name of a government musical institution in the Qin Dynasty at the latest, and some researchers believe that the date might even be able to be pushed back to the Warring States Period (475 or 403-221 B.C.).\textsuperscript{20} In the reign of the Han Emperor Wu, the Yuefu's

\textsuperscript{17} Yuan Zhongyi 袁仲一, "Qin dai jinwen taowen zakao sanze" 秦代金文、陶文雜考三則, Kaogu yu wenwu 考古與文物 4 (1982): 92-94.
\textsuperscript{18} Liu Qingzhu 劉慶柱 and Li Yufang 李毓芳, "Xi'an Xiangjia xiang yizhi Qin fengni kaolue" 西安相家巷遺址秦封泥考略, Kaogu xuebao 考古學報 4 (2001): 433.
\textsuperscript{19} Huang Zhanyue 黃展岳, "Nanyue Wang mu chutu wenzi ziliao huikao" 南越王墓出土文字資料匯考, in Xian Qin Liang Han kaogu luncong 先秦兩漢考古論叢 (Beijing: Kexue chubanshe, 2008), 436-437.
duty was to collect folk songs and to bring together musicians and poets to produce music and write songs for official use.\textsuperscript{21} Masuda Kiyohide remarks that from the Western Jin Dynasty (265-316), this term began to appear in written documents to indicate songs and lyrics that imitate those produced during the Han and [Cao] Wei (220-265) dynasties. He maintains that this is the first time in the history of Chinese literature that "\textit{yuefu}\" was distinguished from ordinary poems as a poetic genre.\textsuperscript{22}

\textit{Yuefu} writing had become a genre of Chinese poetry by Xiao Gang's times, and Xiao Gang's compositions in the \textit{yuefu} category should be identified as a component of his Palace Style poetry\textsuperscript{23} as well. Cao Daoheng maintains that Palace Style poetry developed from some amorous poems written from the times when the Yongming style was created, and that these amorous poems were imitations of the southern ballads such as Wu Songs (\textit{Wu ge} 吳歌) and Western Melodies (\textit{Xi qu} 西曲). In contrast to simply expressing feelings like those seen in folk songs, Cao observes that Xiao Gang and his fellow poets' poems somewhat practised the writing technique of "portraying objects"

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} HS, "Liyue zhi di er" 禮樂志第二, \textit{juan} 22, 1049. See also HS, "Yiwen zhi di shi" 藝文志第十, \textit{juan} 30, 1756.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Masuda Kiyohide, \textit{Gakufu no rekishiteki kenkyū}, 7. Stephen Owen remarks that "the term ('yuefu') is used to describe a kind of poetry at least by the mid-fifth century." See his \textit{The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry} (Cambridge (Massachusetts) and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 304.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Suzuki Torao remarks that normally "\textit{Gong ti} (Palace Style)\" indicates poetry and in contrast, "\textit{Xu Yu ti} 徐庾體 ("Xu [Ling] and Yu [Xin]'s Style") refers to prose. See Suzuki Torao 鈴木虎雄, "Jo Yu no bunshō" 徐庾の文章, \textit{Shina gaku} 10, no. 3 (1941): 332.
\end{itemize}
He argues that the portraits of women's beauty do not necessarily mean the poets looked down on females, acclaims Xiao and his poets' practice for enriching the art of poetic writing, and maintains that the Palace Style poems are distinctive in their ways of describing colors, gestures and movements. In Cao's view, Xiao's yuefu writing is a part of his Palace Style poetry verse. Xiao Gang's reputation for writing frivolous and flamboyant poetry does not originate from the anthology Yutai xinyong. Instead, together with some of his shi poetry about females, Xiao's yuefu poetry largely contributed to contemporary impressions about his poetic style.

Writing yuefu poems involves re-writing lyrics for old tunes. Innovation started soon after the fall of the Han Dynasty. In the [Cao] Wei period (2nd-3rd centuries), Cao Cao and his sons, Cao Pi and Cao Zhi, composed yuefu poems on completely new themes despite using the same old titles as the Han yuefu poems. Xiao Difei remarks that this movement changed the unadorned style of the Han yuefu poetry and started the trend of imitation thereafter. To understand how Xiao Gang pursued new and unique poetic writing, it is useful to examine his yuefu poems in the light of comparison with those written previous to his times with the same titles. As a poetic genre that

24 Cao Daoheng 曹道衡, Lanling Xiao shi yu Nanchao wenxue, 113.
25 Xiao Difei 蕭滌非, Han Wei Liuchao yuefu wenxue shi, 23.
26 Although Shen Yue's (441-513) and Jiang Yan's (444-505) names are listed after Xiao Gang's in the Yuefu shiji, they were in the same generation as Emperor Wu of Liang and were famous for their literary activities in the Qi Dynasty (479-502). Thus, these two poets and Emperor Wu of Liang can be considered as poets of the Qi Dynasty.
has a tradition of writing to recurring titles, *yuefu* poetry is an effective instrument for exploring the originality in Xiao Gang's poetic writings, and the analysis may also be useful for revealing the purposes of his writing in this genre.

In the succeeding sections, my analysis will focus on Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poems contained in the *Yuefu shiji*, an anthology compiled during the Northern Song Dynasty, and the original text employed in the examinations will mainly be based on that of the *Yuefu shiji* unless otherwise indicated. Guo Maoqian, the compiler of the *Yuefu shiji*, arranged *yuefu* poems with the same titles in chronological order, with priority given to works by poets of royal social status. That is why Xiao Gang's name usually is listed at the beginning of the Liang poets in the *Yuefu shiji* because he was a Crown Prince and later became an emperor of the Liang. In cases where no poems or lyrics from the ages previous to Xiao Gang's are included, Xiao's works are placed at the first position unless Emperor Wu of Liang also wrote to the same titles. For the convenience of analysis in this chapter, Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poems contained in the *Yuefu shiji* are divided into two groups based on their positions under their titles. 'Group A' consists of poems with titles for which there is no example earlier than Xiao's, 'Group B' of those with titles for which there are earlier examples. In

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27 This does not necessarily mean that Xiao Gang was the first individual who wrote to those titles in all cases.
addition, a section is created to examine Xiao's *yuefu* poems that are derived from the southern ballads despite their overlapping with the above group division to a certain extent.

### 3.2 Xiao Gang's *Yuefu* Poems in Group A

Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poems contained in the *Yuefu shiji* are listed in Table 4. There are 78 *yuefu* poems (including 8 poems with disputed authorship) under 62 titles, not including the ten poems that are contained in the corpus of Lu Qinli's *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nan-bei Chao shi*.

Since poem No. 55 in Table 4, "Song of Golden Music" (*Jin yue ge* 金樂歌), is probably not a *yuefu* poem, the following discussions will not include this poem.

Among Xiao Gang's 77 *yuefu* poems, 54 (70%) have themes or titles that correspond to those written before his times. Moreover, among these 54 *yuefu* poems, Xiao Gang is found to be the first poet placed under their titles in 38 (70%) of them. The *yuefu* titles that have Xiao Gang's poem(s) placed first under their titles can be divided into five groups.

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28 These ten *yuefu* poems are "Cock Fighting" (*Douji pian* 鬥雞篇), "Mid-way Spring" (*Banlu xi* 半路溪), "Presenting the *yuefu* Greater 'Drooping Hands'" (*Fu yuefu de Da chuishou* 獻樂府得大垂手), "Little 'Drooping Hands'" (*Xiao chuishou* 小垂手), three poems of "Something to Grieve About" (*You suo shang* 有所傷), "A Rooster Crows" (*Jiming pian* 雞鳴篇), the third poem of "Tune to Governor of Yanmen" (*Yanmen taishou xing* 雁門太守行), and one "Song of Night after Night" (*Yeye qu* 夜夜曲) that is attributed to Shen Yue in YFSJ but to Xiao Gang in YTXY and LQL.

29 Ordinal numbers for poems indicated in this chapter refer to those in Table 4.

30 See Note 1 to this poem on page 1052 in YFSJ.

31 This number includes the *yuefu* poems with disputed authorship.
First, Xiao Gang's poem(s) are the earliest surviving poem(s) under titles for which the original lyrics had been lost. This group includes No.14, 24, 28 (2 poems), 38, 40, 43, and 53 in Table 4. For instance, Xiao Gang's "String Music of Shu" ("Shu guo xian" 蜀國弦) [No.14] is the only yuefu poem under this title written before the Sui Dynasty (581-618). Guo Maoqian quotes the monk Zhijiang's 智匠 (fl. Chen Dynasty) Gujin yuelu 古今樂錄 (Record of Old and New Music)\(^\text{32}\) as follows:

張永《元嘉[正聲]技錄》有《四弦》一曲，《蜀國四弦》是也，居相和之末，三調之首。古有四曲，其《張女四弦》《李延年四弦》《嚴卯四弦》三曲，闕《蜀國四弦》。……

There was a tune called "Si xian (Four Strings Music)" in Zhang Yong's Yuanjia [zhengsheng] jilu (Record of the Craft of Correct Music of the Yuanjia Era). That is [actually] "Shu guo si xian (Four Strings Music of Shu)". It is placed in the end of the Xianghe (Accompanied Songs)\(^\text{34}\) category and at the first place of the three tunes. In antiquity, there were four kinds [of "Si xian (Four Strings Music)"] "Zhang Ru si xian", "Li Yannian si xian", "Yan Mao si xian" are three of them. But the "Shu guo si xian" is not extant.

Zhang Yong's 張永 (410-475) Yuanjia zhengsheng jilu 元嘉正聲技錄 was written in Emperor Wen of [Liu] Song's Yuanjia Era (424-453), and Xiao Gang should have known at least the title of this tune. This means that Xiao Gang composed his "String Music of Shu" by using an old title

\(^{32}\) The Gujin yuelu 古今樂錄 was written by a Buddhist monk called Zhijiang 智匠 who lived in the Chen Dynasty (557-589). The book did not survive but we are able to see some fragments in citations contained in other ancient books such as the YFSJ.

\(^{33}\) YFSJ, 440.

\(^{34}\) This translation of "xianghe" 相和 is adopted on the suggestion of David R. Knechtges. Joseph Roe Allen translates "xianghe geci" 相和歌辭 as "lyrics for songs with strings and bamboo winds". See Allen's In the Voice of Others: Chinese Music Bureau Poetry (Michigan: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1992), 40.
created in the past. Likewise, Xiao Gang's "Anle Palace in New City" ("Xincheng Anle Gong" 新城安樂宮) [No.24], "The Road to Shu Is Hard" ("Shu dao nan" 蜀道難) [No.28], "Lay of the Thunderbolt" ("Pili yin" 霹靂引) [No.38], "Separation of Paired Swallows" ("Shuang yan li" 雙燕離) [No. 40], "Lay of the Dragon Mound" ("Long qiu yin" 龍丘引) [No. 43], "Trading a Beloved Concubine for a Horse" ("Aiqie huan ma" 愛妾換馬) [No. 53] also used old yuefu titles. Among them, "Anle Palace in New City" and "The Road to Shu Is Hard" were not sung any more in the Chen Dynasty according to the Gujin yuelu. Xiao Gang's yuefu poems in this group are the earliest ones written to those titles in the Yuefu shiji.

Second, Xiao Gang used revised or derived titles of old tunes. This group includes No. 10, 15, 42, 47, and 51 in Table 4. For instance, Xiao Gang's "A Rooster Crowing on the Top of a Tall

35 YFSJ, 565 and 590. According to Guo's notes, the titles of these two tunes are recorded in Wang Sengqian's (426-485) Yanyue jilu 宴樂技錄 (Record of the Craft of Banquet Music).
36 Ibid., 828. Guo Maoqian quotes Xie Xiyi's 謝希逸 (fl. [Liu] Song Dynasty) Qin lun 琴論, which says that the "Lay of the Thunderbolt" was written by Yu of Xia 夏禹. Guo also quotes the Yuefu tijie, which claims the author of this lay was Shangliang of Chu 楚商梁. Although Guo was not able to determine which source was more reliable, this title of the lay existed before Xiao Gang's time.
37 Ibid., 848. Guo Maoqian says that the tune was also called "Lay of the Chu" ("Chu yin" 楚引) and was first made by a traveler of Chu named Long Qiugao 龍丘高.
38 Ibid., 1042. Guo Maoqian quotes Yuefu tijie, which says: "According to old hearsay, 'Trading a Beloved Concubine for A Horse' was written by the Prince of Huainan. [I] suspect that the Prince of Huainan was Liu An 劉安."
39 See YFSJ, 565 and 590.
40 The term "Old tunes" refers to the tunes created during the periods of the Han and [Cao] Wei. See Masuda, Gakufu no rekishiteki kenkyū, 8-10.
Tree" ("Ji ming gaoshu dian" 雞鳴高樹巔) [No. 10] was derived from an ancient lyric "A Rooster Crows" ("Ji ming" 雞鳴). "When Placing Wine" ("Dang zhi jiu" 當置酒) [No.15] was written about a theme similar to Kong Xin's 孔欣 (420-479) "Placing Wine in A Big Hall" ("Zhi jiu gaotang shang" 置酒高堂上). Xiao's "Widowed Crane" ("Biehe 別鶴) [No. 42] was also written about the same theme as that of Muzi of Shangling's 商陵牧子 "Melody of the Widowed Crane" ("Biehe cao" 別鶴操), and his "Becoming an Immortal" ("Shengxian pian 昇仙篇) [No. 47] adopted the same theme as that of Cao Zhi's 曹植 "Immortal(s)" ("Xianren pian 仙人篇) and Wang Rong's 王融 (467-493) "Immortal(s)" ("Shenxian pian 神仙篇). His "Parting in Life" ("Sheng bieli 生別離) [No.51] is also similar to Wu Maiyuan's 吳邁遠 (fl. [Liu] Song Dynasty) "Long Parting" ("Chang bieli 長別離). Despite the slight differences of titles, Xiao Gang wrote these poems in accordance with their original themes.

Third, Xiao Gang took phrases from other poems and used them as his titles. This group includes No. 16, 20, 22, 45, 54, 57, and 61 in Table 4.

Guo Maoqian quotes the commentary in the Yuefu tijie, indicating that the title of "Paired Paulownia Trees Growing by an Empty Well" ("Shuang Tong sheng kong jing" 雙桐生空井) 41

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41 Ibid., 845. According to Li Shan's annotation to Ji Kang's 嵇康 (ca. 224-263) preface to his "Qin fu" 琴賦 in the Wen xuan, both Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133-192) and Cui Bao 崔豹 (fl. Jin Dynasty) mentioned this tune in their Qin cao 琴操 and Gujin zhu 古今注 respectively. See Wen xuan, "Ji Shuye Qin fu bing xu" 嵇叔夜琴賦并序, juan 18, 846.
derives from "Tune of the Fierce Tiger" ("Menghu xing" 猛虎行). 42 Cao Rui's 曹叡 (204-239)

"Tune of the Fierce Tiger", also named "Paired Paulownia Trees" ("Shuang Tong" 雙桐), is cited in Guo's introductory comments as follows:

雙桐生空井, Paired paulownia trees grow by an empty well.
枝葉自相加。 Their branches and leaves overlap with each other.
通泉溉其根, Unobstructed springs water their roots.
玄雨潤其柯。 Mysterious rain moistens their stems.  (YFSJ, 462)

Xiao Gang's "Paired Paulownia Trees Growing by an Empty Well" [No. 16] took its title from the first line of Cao Rui's poem and is written in accordance with the meaning of the new title:

季月雙桐井, The well by paired paulownia trees, the last month of the season.
新枝雜舊株。 New branches mingle with old stems.
晚葉藏栖鳳, Leaves hide roosting phoënixes at night.
朝花拂曙鴉。 Flowers brush early crows in the morning.
還看西子照, Looking back [under] the pure moonlight,
銀床繫轆轂。 A silvery railing holds the winch.  (YFSJ, 466)

42 YFSJ, 462-463.
43 The text of the first line in YFSJ (juan 31, 462) is "Paired paulownia trees grow empty branches" ("Shuang tong sheng kong zhi" 雙桐生空枝). However, the text in YWLJ (juan 88, 1528) is "Paired paulownia trees grow by an empty well" ("Shuang tong sheng kong jing" 雙桐生空井). Because YWLJ was compiled in the Tang Dynasty before YFSJ, and the character "jing" 井 (well) makes better sense than "zhi" 枝 (branches) in the context, I follow the text in YWLJ here.
44 The character "shuang" 雙 (pair) is adopted from the text in YWLJ (page 1528). Since "jiyue" 季月 means the last month of each season, the character "dui" 對 (to face) seen in YFSJ does not make sense in the sentence. The translation here follows the text in YWLJ instead.
45 The characters "Xi zi" 西子 is adopted from the text in LQL, 1918.
Despite the similar theme adopted in this *yuefu* poem, the expression "Xi zi zhao" 西子照 used at the end of the poem is unique. The term "Xi zi" in the fifth line refers to one of the most beautiful women in ancient China named Xi Shi 西施. Huan Kuan 桓寬 (fl. Han Dynasty) quotes Wenxue 文學 in his *Yantie lun* 鹽鐵論, saying: "[If] Xi zi suffers impurity, [even] a vulgar person would cover his nose." 西子蒙以不潔，鄙夫掩鼻。 在 other words, Xi zi’s image is "pure". In addition, Xiao Gang uses the character "zhao" 照 to indicate "moonlight" in one of his "Poems of Moon Watching" ("Wang yue shi" 望月詩): "Flowing radiance enters painted hall. The first glimmer of the *moonlight* rises to the palace crossbeam." 流輝入畫堂，初照上梅梁。 The character "zhao" 照 in the fifth line of Xiao's "Paired Paulownia Trees Growing by an Empty Well" is used in the same sense and can also be translated as "moonlight". Thus, Xiao Gang uses a female figure "Xi zi" to express the meaning of "pure" to describe the purity of the silvery moonlight, which the railing around the well in the following line reflects.

However, rather than the material of making the railing, the term "yin" 銀 (silver) here is more likely used to portray the illuminated color from the bright moon because the term "Xi zi zhao" 西子照 in the previous line refers to "pure moonlight".

47 The term "Xi zi" 西子 here is collated and explained by Wang Liqi 王利器 based on the phrase "[If] Xi zi suffers impurity, people then cover their noses when walking pass by her" 西子蒙不潔，則人皆掩鼻而過之 in *Meng zi* 孟子. Wang also points out that similar expressions can be found in the citation from *Han zi* 韓子 in *Yulan* 御覽, juan 607 and Xiao Yi’s *Jinlou zi* 金樓子, "Liyan xia” 立言下 (Xu Yimin 許逸民 ed. and comm., *Jinlou zi jiaozhu*, v. 2, 909.). See Wang Liqi’s commentary in note 46 in Huan Kuan 桓寬, *Yantie lun jiaozhu* 鹽鐵論校注, "Shu lu" 墓路, juan 5, annot. Wang Liqi 王利器 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 272 and 282. See also *Meng zi* 孟子, "Lilou xia” 離婁下, in SSJZS, 2730.

48 YWLJ, "Tian bu shang, Yue" 天部上月, juan 1, 8.
Xiao Gang took the line "Middle Wife Weaves Golden Silk" ("Zhongfu zhi liuhuang" 中婦織流黃) [No. 20] as his yuefu title from the ancient lyric "Ballad of Chang'an Has a Narrow Byway" ("Chang'an you xiexia xing" 長安有斜狹行), and took "A Drifting Vessel Lies across the Great River" ("Fanzhou heng Da Jiang" 泛舟橫大江) [No. 22] from Cao Pi's "Ballad of Watering Horses at a Pool by the Great Wall" ("Yinma Changcheng ku xing" 飲馬長城窟行). His "Song of Selling Wine" ("Danglu qu" 當壚曲) [No. 45] was inspired by the love story of Sima Xiangru and Zhuo Wenjun 卓文君 in the Han shu. Likewise, the theme of his "The Emperor's Arrival at the Ganquan Palace" ("Xingxing Ganquan Gong" 行幸甘泉宮) [No. 61] derives from the stories about Han emperors' summer vacations in the Ganquan Palace, and the same theme had also been adopted in some previous works written by Yang Xiong, Liu Xin 劉歆 (50 B.C.-23), and Wang Bao 王褒 (fl. Han Dynasty). Moreover, Xiao Gang's title "What Is Gathering under the Date Tree" ("Zhao xia he zuanzuan" 棗下何纂纂) [No. 54] can be found in the "Old Song of a Sigh" ("Gu duojie ge" 古咄)...

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49 YFSJ, 562. About the intertextual relationship between "A Drifting Vessel Lies across the Great River" ("Fanzhou heng Da Jiang" 泛舟橫大江) and "Ballad of Watering Horses at a Pool by the Great Wall" ("Yinma Changcheng ku xing" 飲馬長城窟行), see Allen, In the Voice of Others, 93-94.
50 YFSJ, 911.
51 Yang Xiong and Liu Xin wrote in the rhapsody form while Wang Bao wrote an ode. Saying Xiao Gang's "The Emperor's Arrival at the Ganquan Palace" shares the same Ganquan topic with these previous works does not mean that Xiao Gang's work directly derived from them. The focus here is on whether or not Xiao Gang composed his yuefu poems in correspondence with the meaning of the title he chose.
Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poems mentioned above are the earliest listed in the *Yuefu shiji*. In addition, the title of his "Melancholy in Solitude" ("Duchu chou" 獨處愁) [No. 57], which shows a connection to Sima Xiangru's "Fu of a Beauty" ("Meiren fu" 美人賦), is the only *yuefu* poem under this title in the *Yuefu shiji*.

There is no indication as to whether the titles discussed above were originally created by Xiao Gang or his literary group, nor does Guo Maoqian state whether or not he himself gave the titles to Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poems in this group. Nonetheless, as *Yuefu shiji* was compiled at the end of the Northern Song Dynasty, it should be safe to say that Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poems in this group are the earliest ones that survived at that time.

The fourth group includes Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poems with titles that have no clear indication of their origin by Guo Maoqian. In the *Yuefu shiji*, there are no comments regarding the origin of "The Chang'an Street" ("Chang'an dao" 長安道) [No. 6] nor do earlier poems or lyrics with this title

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52 YFSJ, 1045. An English translation of this poem is in David R Knechtges, *Wen xuan or Selections of Refined Literature* v. 3, 303-313.
53 YFSJ, 1074.
54 Masuda observes that Guo Maoqian took four of Jiang Yan's thirty "Miscellaneous Poems" from the *Wen xuan* but gave them new titles when he included them in his YFSJ. The four new titles are "Ancient Parting" ("Gu libie" 古離別), "Ballad of Serving in War" ("Congjun xin" 從軍行), "Ballad of Resentment" ("Yuan ge xing" 怨歌行), and "Ballad of Goodness" ("Shan zai xing" 善哉行). Masuda remarks that these titles have nothing to do with the original author, Jiang Yan, and he suspects that there are other *yuefu* poems like these in YFSJ. See Masuda, *Gakufu no rekishiteki kenkyū*, 435-436 and 509.
55 Masuda, *Gakufu no rekishiteki kenkyū*, 436.
appear before Xiao Gang's in the *Yuefu shiji*. Together with a similar title "The Luoyang Street" ("Luoyang dao" 洛陽道) [No. 5], Masuda infers that these two *yuefu* titles were created in Emperor Wu of Liang's reign, because the earliest poets who wrote poems on these *yuefu* titles in the Southern Dynasties all lived during his time, and these two titles do not appear in the group of contemporary northern folk songs contained in the *Gujin yuelu* either. Masuda maintains that the capitals of the Han Dynasty in "The Chang'an Street" and "The Luoyang Street" reveal Liang poets' longing for the old capitals in the Central Plain before the Period of Division.56 Furthermore, Wang Wen-Chin remarks that poets in the Southern Dynasties likened their capital Jiankang to Chang'an and Luoyang.57 In the latter case, Xiao Gang was probably writing about Liang's Jiankang under the names of Chang'an and Luoyang.

There are no indications regarding the origins of "Picking Chrysanthemums" ("Cai ju pian" 採菊篇) [No. 48], "Evodia"58 Woman ("Zhuyu nü" 茱萸女) [No. 52], "Song of Peach Blossom" ("Taohua qu" 桃花曲) [No. 59], and "Grasses in Trees" ("Shu zhong cao" 樹中草) [No. 60] in the *Yuefu shiji* either.

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56 Ibid., 259-260.
57 Wang Wen-Chin 王文進, "Biansai shi xingcheng yu Nanchao de yuanyin," 50. See also his "Nanchao shiren de shikong siwei" 南朝士人的時空思維, in *Nanchao shanshui yu Changcheng xiangxiang* 南朝山水與長城想像 (Taipei: Liren shuju, 2008), 157-196.
58 The translation of "zhuyu" 茱萸 here is adopted on the suggestion of David R. Knechtges.
Xiao Gang's "Picking Chrysanthemums" is the only poem under this title. However, we can see a couple of old Yuefu songs reflected in its closing lines.

採菊篇  
採菊篇

月精麗草散秋株,  
The beautiful herb disperses its autumn stems in the sparkling moonlight.

洛陽少婦絕妍姝。  
The young wife of Luoyang is the prettiest among the lovely girls.

相喚提筐採菊珠,  
Calling out each other's names, she [and her friends] carry baskets and pick pearl-like chrysanthemum buds.

朝起露濕霑羅襦。  
Getting up early, their silk jackets are soaked wet by dew.

東方千騎從驪駒,  
Following a black steed, here comes a thousand cavalry from the east.

豈不下山逢故夫。  
Why wouldn't she go down the hill to meet your old husband?

(YFSJ, 931)

As Joseph Roe Allen remarks, the second line from the bottom reminds us of a similar line in "Mulberry Tree by the Path" ("Mo shang sang" 陌上桑), and the last line is similar to the beginning part of the first poem in the Yutai xinyong, which is an ancient poem singing about a woman who ran into her ex-husband on the way down a hill after picking deer-parsley.59 The first character of the last line in Xiao Gang's poem cited above has two versions. One is "qi" 豈 in the Yuefu shiji; the other is "geng" 更 in the Wenyuan yinghua.60 Allen adopts the reading "geng" and translates as "But she will not even come down the hill to meet her old husband."61 He interprets this line by comparing it with "Picking Deer-parsley" and "Mulberry Tree by the Path":

In Xiao's poem the woman's dismissal of those old marital bonds seems even stronger since she will not even come down the mountain to see this pathetic fellow with his mercantile mind; yet this is

60 Wenyuan yinghua 文苑英華, "Yuefu shiqi, Cai ju" 樂府十七採菊, juan 208, 1033. See also LQL, 1923.
61 Allen, In the Voice of Others, 130.
apparently because she has a new lover who is off in the east galloping his black steed, not because she has become more independently minded. In fact, the wife in the original "Deer-Parsley" poem strikes us as a particularly strong woman and not a likely model for the typical Xiao woman. ... By giving her a new lover, Luofu's husband as it were, he (Xiao Gang) rewrites her rejection of her old husband into an affirmation of other romantic attachments.62

This interpretation might be the best one can make if one adopts "geng" in the last line but it does not make good sense. If we assume that the woman in Xiao Gang's poem is being compared to Luofu in "Mulberry Tree by the Path", then the man coming from the east on a black steed should be her current husband as is said in the original narrative (YFSJ, 411). In this case, the woman has no reason not to go down the hill to meet him, a man who is envied by others as the best husband a woman could marry. Based on Allen's interpretation, the man on the black horse is designated as the heroine's new lover and her old husband is actually absent from the scene Xiao Gang created. One can only be certain that she will not go down the hill to meet her old husband, who is not there, and assume that she might go down the hill to see her new lover, who is about to get there.

Uncertainty about whether she is "going down the hill" at the spot is not what one sees in the narrative of the original "Picking Deer-parsley":

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上山採蘼蕪，
Going up the hill, she picks deer-parsley.
下山逢故夫。
Down from the hill, she runs into her old husband.
長跪問故夫：
Kneeling down, she asks her old husband:
 " 新人復何如？ ”
"How is your new wife?"
 " 新人雖言好，
"Although the new wife is said to be good,
未若故人姝。
She is not as pretty as my old wife.
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62 Ibid., 132.
顏色類相似，
手爪不相如。”
“新人從門入，
故人從閣去。”
“新人工織縑，
故人工織素。
織縑日一匹，
織素五丈餘。
將縑來比素，
新人不如故。”

The two resemble each other,
But their handiness is not the same."
"The new wife enters from the gate.
The old wife leaves her chamber."
"The new wife is skilled at weaving double-thread silk;
The old wife is good at weaving pure white silk.
Double-thread silk is forty feet a day;
Pure white silk is more than fifty feet [a day].
If I compare double-thread silk to pure white silk,
The new wife is not as good as the old."

(YTXY, 1-2)

The woman in the "Picking Deer-parsley" is an abandoned wife, who goes down the hill and
meets her divorced husband. Despite the lines describing her old husband's regrets, there is no
indication of the husband's social background or of the woman's response to his regrets. Adopting
the reading "qi" instead of "geng" in the last line of Xiao Gang's "Picking Chrysanthemums",
allows a rather different interpretation. In that case, the old husband is designated as an ideal man
just like Luofu's husband, who comes from the east on a black steed followed by a thousand cavalry
troops, and the ending is the same as what Xiao Gang depicts: "why wouldn't she go down the hill
to meet him?" Xiao Gang's poem merely follows the original scenario in "Picking Deer-parsley"
indicating that the old couple met after she went down the hill. The two very different narratives are
linked by the creative use of the expression "gufu" 故夫 (old husband), whose image is transferred
to Luofu's husband by Xiao Gang.
The combinations of elements taken from old yuefu poems (words in italic below) can also be found in Xiao Gang's "Evodia Woman" ("Zhuyu nü" 茱萸女) [No. 52]:

茱萸女
Evodia Woman
茱萸生狭斜, Evodia grows by the narrow byway,
結子復銜花。Bearing fruits and containing flowers.
遇逢纖手摘, [Its flowers] are picked by a tender hand;
濫得映鉛華。Many flowers shine with the lead powder [on her pretty face].
雜與鬟簪插, [Evodia flowers] are inserted between the hairpins,
偶逐鬢釵斜。Aslant, they form pairs with the golden hair ornaments.
東西爭贈玉, Men from east and west compete to present jades [to her].
縱橫來問家。People from every direction come to ask [where her] home is.
不無夫壻馬, It is not that she has no horse from her husband.
空駐使君車。The governor's carriage stops in vain.

(YFSJ, 1040)

The term "narrow byway" originates from the ancient lyric "Ballad of Chang'an Has a Narrow Byway", and the "horse from her husband" and "governor's carriage" are again from "Mulberry Tree by the Path". The intertextual elements from the old poems or lyrics provide a hint of Xiao Gang's storyline; yet, the female character in his "Evodia Woman" is rather different from those in the old ones. The Evodia Woman created by Xiao Gang is as pretty as Luofu but she does not pick mulberry leaves for silkworm rearing. Instead, she picks evodia flowers for dressing up her hair. She has a husband who is as enviable as Luofu's, and the neighborhood where she picks evodia flowers is similar to where the three dames in "Ballad of Chang'an Has a Narrow Byway" live luxuriously. Xiao Gang's heroine is a fortunate woman endowed with beauty and wealth.
"Song of Peach Blossom" and "Grasses in Trees" are two short quatrains\(^{63}\) with corresponding themes and titles as well. Even if they were written by Xiao Zixian,\(^ {64}\) they still are from the Liang Dynasty according to the *Yuefu shiji*. Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poems in the fourth group are those with titles that have obscure origins. Nonetheless, through the complex intertextual threads discussed above, we witness Xiao Gang's creative elaborations on the originals and his efforts to match the themes of his poems to the meaning of the original titles.

Finally, Xiao Gang also writes lyrics based on southern ballads. For example, his "Ballad of Spring River" ("Chunjiang xing" 春江行) [No. 58] is said to be a "Tune of a Ba Woman" ("Ba'nü qu" 巴女曲).\(^ {65}\) "Ba" 巴 indicates the eastern Sichuan region, the title referring to the origin of this tune. During the Liang Dynasty, the Sichuan area was called Yizhou 益州, a region that was next to Xiao Gang's realm. It is not surprising to see Xiao Gang's lyrics to this tune:

客行祇念路，
V. 旅客心念路。

旅行祗念路，
V. 旅行心念路。

相爭度京口。
V. 便爭渡京口。

旅途人，
V. 旅途人。

谁知堤上人，
V. 誰知堤上人。

拭涕空搖手。
V. 拭涕空搖手。

No one realizes that the people seeing them off

Are wiping tears and shaking their hands in vain. (YFSJ, 1081)

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\(^{63}\) The term "quatrain" used in this dissertation indicates four-line verse, without reference to tonal pattern.

\(^{64}\) "Song of Peach Blossom" ("Taohua qu" 桃花曲) [No. 59] and "Grasses in Trees" ("Shu zhong cao" 樹中草) [No. 60] are attributed to both Xiao Gang and Xiao Zixian in LQL. Mei Dingzuo 梅鼎祚 (1549-1615) in his *Gu yue yuan* 古樂苑 notes that these two are also said to be written by Xiao Zixian. However, he did not provide his sources. See *Gu yue yuàn* 古樂苑, *juan* 38, in SKQS, Ji bu 集部, Zhongji lei 總集類, v. 446, 585.

\(^{65}\) YFSJ, 1081.

\(^{66}\) "Jingkou" 京口 was located at the lower reaches of the Yangtze River and was a town of military importance.
This is a poem written in plain and straightforward language. There are no literary allusions, nor are there intertextual yuefu connections. The style is extremely close to an unadorned folk song and the theme again corresponds to the title.

In any of the five groups discussed above, Xiao Gang's yuefu poems that are prior to other poets' poems to the same titles show a consistency of matching themes to the meaning of the titles he selected. Yet, this does not hinder him from writing freely and creatively in his own style.

3.3 Xiao Gang's Yuefu Poems with Titles Originating from Southern Ballads

Poems from No. 32 to 37 in Table 4 are classified under the category of "Qingshang qu ci" 清商曲辞 ("Lyrics for Tunes with Qingshang Mode") in Yuefu shiji. Although "Qingshang" as a name for a tune started at the end of the Han Dynasty at the latest, Masuda remarks that the connotation of this term had been changing until the northern regime reunified China.68 As indicated in Guo Maoqian's introduction, it was in the Northern Wei's Emperor Xiaowen's reign (471-499) that the southern ballads, Wu Songs (Wu ge 吳歌) and Western Melodies (Xi qu 西曲), were included in the category of "Lyrics for Tunes with Qingshang Mode" in northern China.69 In contrast to "Lyrics for Tunes with Qingshang Mode" in northern China.69 In contrast to "Lyrics for Tunes with Qingshang Mode" in northern China.

67 Some of Xiao Gang's yuefu poems discussed in this section may overlap with the definition of Group A in the previous section (3.2). Since they are all categorized under "Qingshang qu ci" 清商曲辞 (Lyrics for Tunes with Qingshang Mode) in YFSJ, for the convenience of discussion, this section is devoted to Xiao Gang's yuefu poems contained in this category.
68 Masuda, Gakufu no rekishiteki kenkyū, 116-121.
69 YFSJ, 638.
Tunes with *Qingshang* Mode" being treated as the "correct music of China" 華夏の正聲 in the north, Masuda argues that Wu Songs and Western Melodies had never been called "Qingshang qu" 清商曲 ("Tunes with *Qingshang* Mode") in the south during the Period of Division.⁷⁰ In other words, Wu Songs and Western Melodies were not identified as orthodox music in the minds of southern literati.

There are three subcategories of "Lyrics for Tunes with *Qingshang* Mode" in *Yuefu shiji*: "Wu Songs", "Western Melodies", and "Songs from South of the [Yangtze] River" ("Jiangnan nong" 江南弄). According to the *Jin shu*, Wu Songs originated in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River and began flourishing from the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420).⁷¹ There are no poems by Xiao Gang under the subcategory of Wu Songs in *Yuefu shiji*, but he does have poems in the other two subcategories.

Guo Maoqian quotes the monk Zhijiang's 智匠 annotation in *Gujin yuelu* regarding the Western Melodies:

“（略）按西曲歌出於荊，郢，樊，鄧之間，而其聲節送和與吳歌亦異，故（依）其方俗而謂之西曲云。” ⁷³

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⁷⁰ Masuda, *Gakufu no rekishiteki kenkyū*, 121.
⁷¹ *JS*, "Yue xia" 蕭下, *juan* 23, 716.
⁷² The character "yi" 依 is filled in here by following the note in YFSJ. See YFSJ, 689.
⁷³ YFSJ, 689. See also Chiu Hsie-You 邱燮友, "Liuchao Wuge Xiqu fenbu quyu de tanshu" 六朝吳歌西曲分佈區域的探述, in *Wei Jin Nan-bei Chao wenxue yu sixiang xueshu yantaohui lunwen ji* 魏晉南北朝文學與思想學術研討會論文集, Guoli Chenggong Daxue Zhongwen xi ed. (Taipei: Wen shi zhe chubanshe, 1991), 71-87.
"... Note: Xi qu (Western Melodies) originated in the areas of the Jing, Ying, Fan and Deng. Their tunes, rhythm, closure and harmony are different from Wu Songs. That is why they are called Western Melodies according to the local customs."

The Jing, Ying, Fan and Deng regions were located in the middle region of the Yangtze River basin. They were important areas of military defense and were normally governed by princes during the Southern Dynasties. This is why "the southern lyrics and poems all chanted about these regions and treated [these regions] as the Promised Land" during the Qi and Liang dynasties. Before he became Crown Prince, Xiao Gang was appointed Regional Inspector of Jingzhou at the age of twelve in the thirteenth year of the Tianjian Era (514) and was stationed there for about one year. Xiao was also appointed Regional Inspector of Yongzhou when he was twenty-one years old in the fourth year of the Putong Era (523) and this time, he stayed at this position until the first year of the Zhong-Datong Era (529). Hence, Xiao Gang was stationed in the middle section of the Yangtze River basin for nearly a decade. His "A Crow Crying at Night" ("Wu ye ti" [No.32] and "Song of the Roosting Crow" ("Wu qi qu" [No. 33] are identified as Western Melodies in Yuefu shiji; and the "Song of Yongzhou" ("Yongzhou qu" [No. 34] is none other than a tune from his realm.

74 Cao Daoheng 曹道衡, Lanling Xiao shi yu Nanchao wenxue, 61.
76 LS, "Jianwen Di" 簡文章, juan 4, 103-104.
Xiao Gang's four poems to the "Song of the Roosting Crow" are followed by poems written by his younger brother Xiao Yi 蕭繹 and by his contemporaries Xiao Zixian and Cen Zhijing 岑之敬 (519-579). Xiao Gang writes:

1. 芙蓉作船丝作䋏, Hibiscus makes a boat; silken thread makes a rope.
   北斗横天月将落. The Dipper lies across the sky and the moon is about to set.
   采桑渡头擬77黄河, At the dock for mulberry picking, [the water] can be compared to the Yellow River,
   郎今欲渡畏风波. My love now wants to cross but is afraid of the wind and waves.

2. 浮云似帳月如鉤, The floating cloud is like curtains and the moon is similar to a hook.
   那能夜夜南陌头. How can [I tryst with someone at] Nan mo tou78 night after night?
   宜城醞酒79今行熟, The vintage wine of Yicheng is now ready for drinking.
   停鞍繫马暂棲宿. Stop the saddle, tether the horse, [I will] lodge for the night.

3. 青牛丹轂七香车, A cart of seven aromas with red hubs drawn by black bullocks.
   那能夜夜南陌头. How can [I tryst with someone at] Nan mo tou78 night after night?

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77 In the text in YFSJ, the character "ai" 堵 (to obstruct) is used here. However, the Yellow River was not in the territory of the southern regimes at that time. The character "ni" 擬 (to take something as) used in the text of Gushi ji 古詩紀 makes better sense. See Gyokudai shin'ei shū 玉臺新詠集, annot. Suzuki Torao 鈴木虎雄 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1956), 229.

78 The term "Nan mo tou" 南陌頭 (the beginning of the Southern Path) indicates a location where couples tryst. It appears in one of the versions of "Mulberry Tree by the Path" ("Mo shang sang" 陌上桑) contained in Leishu canjuan 類書殘卷 according to LQL (page 259). In the narrative of "Mo shang sang", this place was where Luofu picked mulberry leaves and encountered the governor who tried to seduce her. The place name can also be found in some yuefu poems written by other Liang poets. See examples, Emperor Wu of Liang's "Song of Water in A River" ("He zhong zhi shui ge" 河中之水歌), Shen Yue's "Looking out from A High Terrace" ("Lin gaotai" 臨高臺), and Liu Miao's "Poem on Encountering Mulberry Leaf Pickers in Mt. Wan" ("Wan shan jian caisang ren shi" 萬山見採桑人詩). See LQL, 1520, 1620 and 1890.

79 The term "tou po" 投泊 (to anchor for a stay) is used in the text in YFSJ. Since it does not make sense with the following phrase "jin xing shu" 今行熟 ("about to mature now"), I follow the text in YTXY here, which employs the term "yunjiu" 酝酒 (vintage wine) instead. See YTXY, 427.
The four poems of Xiao Gang's "Song of the Roosting Crow" cited above are a series. Each poem is a verse of the tune. The narrative describes a traveler's one-night stay at a brothel and the storyline follows the time sequence. In the first verse, Xiao Gang explains the traveler's situation. The man is taking a journey on a river and the sun has set. The strong wind and high waves start to pick up, so he has concerns about continuing his journey under such bad conditions. The dock for "mulberry picking" bears an intertextual link to the ancient lyric "Mulberry Tree by the Path" and suggests that romance is about to take place. In the second verse, although the floating clouds and the moon hint at a romantic open-air trysting place, the traveler chooses to have a roof over his head and enjoy the famous Yicheng wine, and so stops at an accommodation. In the third verse, Xiao Gang portrays a brothel equipped with fine bedding, and this is where the traveler is going to stay.

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80 I am indebted to Xiaofei Tian for the translation of the term "kelian" 可憐 here.
81 "Zhicheng" 織成 is a top quality patterned silk woven with golden and colorful silken threads. It was used by royal families and high ranking officials from the Han Dynasty onwards. See Hanyu daicidian, v. 9, 1019.
82 The translation of this line refers to Suzuki Torao's interpretation. See Gyokudai shin'ai shū, 231.
At last, the pretty courtesan appears in the fourth verse. With the courtesan beside him, the traveler rests happily for the night. The plot is compact, and the scenes are closely linked. Xiao Gang sketches a traveler's evening with refined language and beautiful images. The traveler's romance with a courtesan occurs naturally and the traveler finds comfort for the night at the brothel.  

In the introduction to the "Song of Xiangyang" ("Xiangyang yue" 襄陽樂), Guo Maoqian mentions that Xiao Gang had ten lyrics with the title "Song of Yongzhou" ("Yongzhou shi qu" 雍州十曲), but we can only find three in the Yuefu shiji:

雍州曲三首

南湖
南湖荇葉浮,
復有佳期遊。
銀絃翡翠鉤,
玉舳芙蓉舟。
荷香亂衣麝,
橈聲送急流。

北渚
岸陰垂柳葉,  
平江含粉堞。  
好倉城旁人,   
多逢蕩舟妾。

Three Lyrics to the Song of Yongzhou

Nanhu (The Southern Lake)
Leaves of yellow floating-hearts44 float on the Southern Lake.
Again, we have an outing on a beautiful day.
Silver thread and a jade hook,
A lotus boat with a jade stern.
The aroma of lotus mingles with the musk on the robe.
The sound of oars sends off the torrent. (YFSJ, 705)

Beizhu (The Northern Islet)
Leaves of drooping willows shade the shore.
The level river contains white battlements.
Often, [I] run into people living by the city wall.
Frequently, [I] meet young wives who are rowing boats.

83 Regarding the connection between yuefu poems and the world of courtesans in the Southern Dynasties, see Konishi Noboru's 小西昇 discussion in his "Nanchō gakufushi to yūjo shōgi no sekai" 南朝樂府詩と遊女娼妓の世界, in Mekada Makoto Hakase koki kinen Chūgoku bungaku ronsū 目加田誠博士古稀記念中國文學論集, Mekada Makoto Hakase koki kinen Chūgoku bungaku ronsū henshū inkai ed. (Tokyo: Ryukei shosha, 1974), 197-220.

84 "Xing"荇 is probably Nymphoides peltata, also called "yellow floating-heart". The translation was suggested by Daniel Bryant.
Emerald water splashes on their long sleeves.
Floating moss stains their light oars.  （YFSJ, 705）

Dadi (The Big Dike)
Yicheng is a midway point in a journey.
Travelers linger on here the most.
A divorced wife is skilled at weaving pure white silk.
Bewitching courtesans are used to counting money.
They prepare wild rice, detain honorable guests.
Wine bought on credit, [the guests] pursue immortals.  （YFSJ, 705）

In the note to his translation of the three lyrics to the "Song of Yongzhou", Marney maintains that these lyrics "refer to Hsiang-yang 襄陽, the capital city of Yung 雍 province (Yong region). I-ch'eng 宜城 was a town on the Han River 漢水, south of Hsiang-yang. Hsiao Kang (Xiao Gang) was governor of Yung province from 523-526." In fact, Xiao Gang's official term in Yongzhou lasted from 523 to 529. When his mother died in 526, Xiao asked to resign from his position in Yongzhou but his proposal was denied, and he stayed at the same position until he was appointed Regional Inspector of Yangzhou in 530. Marney's note reveals the close connection between the three lyrics of Xiao Gang's "Song of Yongzhou" and the locations mentioned in this series.

However, he fails to provide the information about the three sub-titles.

86 LS, "Jianwen Di" 簡文帝, *juan* 4, 103-104.
Nanhu 南湖 (The Southern Lake) in Xiao Gang's first lyric is close to Wuchang Commandery 武昌郡, a place in Yingzhou 郢州. In Zang Zhi's 臧質 (400-454) biography, Shen Yue records an episode of Zang's escape that tells about the Southern Lake:

質先以妹夫羊沖為武昌郡，質往投之，既至，沖已為郡丞胡庇之所殺。無所歸，乃入南湖逃竄，無食，摘蓮噉之。追兵至，窘急，以荷覆頭，自沈於水，出鼻。87

[Zang] Zhi had appointed his brother-in-law, Yang Chong, an officer of Wuchang Commandery. He ran there to seek shelter. When he arrived, [he found that Yang] Chong had been killed by Yang's subordinate Hu Bizhi. [Zang] had nowhere to turn to. He then entered the Southern Lake to get away. He had no food, so he plucked lotus to eat. When the troops chasing him caught up, he was in consternation and panicked. He covered his head with a lotus leaf and sank himself under water, leaving only his nose above the surface.

This lake therefore was in the Wuchang Commandery where the Han River flows into the Yangtze River. The episode reveals that the lake grew many lotuses. Likewise, according to Li Daoyuan's 郦道元 (470-527) Shui jing zhu 水經注 (Commentary on the Water Classic), one of the sources of the Xiang River 湘水 in Fengcheng (or Pingcheng) District 馮乘縣 of Linhe Commandery 臨賀郡 was called "Beizhu" 北渚 (Northern Islet).88 The Xiang River is a tributary of the Yangtze River and Linhe Commandery was a place to the south of Jingzhou 荊州. Along the Xiang River valley, many places are still named "Outang" 藕塘 (Pond of Lotus Roots), "Bailian" 白蓮 (White Lotus) and "Liantang" 蓮塘 (Pond of Lotus).89 Both "Nanhu (Southern Lake)" and

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87 Shen Yue 沈約, Song shu 宋書, "Zang Zhi" 臧質, juan 74, 1920-1921.
88 Li Daoyuan 郦道元, Shui jing zhu 水經注, "Xiang shui" 湘水, juan 38 (Shanghai: Guoxue zhenglishe, 1936), 472.
"Beizhu (Northern Islet)" are place names indicating the area around the middle reaches of the Yangtze River. As a governor of this region, Xiao Gang would have been familiar with them and it is not surprising to see the scenery of these river towns reflected in his yuefu poems.

Dadi 大堤 (Big Dike) refers to a small town near Yicheng. According to Masuda, Dadi started being used as a name of a village in the first year of the Daming Era of the [Liu] Song Dynasty (457). This village was established as a settlement for northern nomadic tribes, "huren" 胡人, who had wandered to the south. Based on Zeng Gong's 曾鞏 (1019-1083) "Xiangzhou Yicheng xian Changqu ji" 襄州宜城縣常渠記, Masuda infers that Dadi was located to the east of Yicheng 宜城 and occupied some land jutting out into the water, and, hence, it was actually an outer harbor of Yicheng. In contrast to the long history of Yicheng being a famous wine making city, Masuda argues, Dadi was a thriving amusement town where "rows of exotic brothels were built side by side." 異国風の妓樓が軒を列ねていた。 Since the distance between Xiangyang and Yicheng is about 48 km, if one leaves Xiangyang southwards at daybreak, one's boat will arrive at

90 Masuda, Gakufu no rekishiteki kenkyū, 337. See also Song shu, "Zhou jun san, Yongzhou" 州郡三雍州, juan 37, 1143.
91 Ping Wang remarks that the non-Han peoples immigrated to Yongzhou after the fall of the Western Jin Dynasty in 317, and they were originally from the south of the Yellow River (modern Shanxi Province). See Wang's discussion of Yongzhou and Dadi in her "Southern Girls or Tibetan Knights: A Liang (502-557) Court Performance," Journal of the American Oriental Society 128, no. 1 (2008): 69-83.
93 Masuda, Gakufu no rekishiteki kenkyū, 340.
Dadi at dusk.\textsuperscript{94} Masuda remarks that this estimated time of arrival corresponds to the first lyric in Liu Dan's 刘诞 "Song of Xiangyang" ("Xiangyang yue" 襄陽樂).\textsuperscript{95}

\begin{tabular}{l}
朝發襄陽城, & In the morning, I set off from Xiangyang. \\
暮至大堤宿。 & At dusk, I arrive Dadi and lodge for the night. \\
大堤諸女兒, & There are various young women in Dadi, \\
花豔驚郎目。 & Whose flower-like glamour stuns men's eyes.
\end{tabular}

Many glamorous young women worked as courtesans in Dadi, and they were good at singing and dancing because of their northern tribal origins. As an amusement town, Dadi became a place where men on journeys preferred to stay because of both the famous Yicheng wine and the beautiful women. Xiao Gang's "Big Dike" is more comprehensible when we read it with this historical background.

By substituting Dadi for Yicheng in his "Big Dike", Xiao Gang hints that these two places are, as Masuda also points out, actually at the same location.\textsuperscript{96} The divorced wife from "Picking Deer-parsley" only functions as a foil for the "bewitching courtesans" in the following line. The people who prepare wild rice to retain honorable guests are brothel workers, and the "honorable

\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 339.
\textsuperscript{95} According to \textit{Gujin yuelu}, "Song of Xiangyang" ("Xiangyang yue" 襄陽樂) was first written by Prince Jingling of Song, Liu Dan 刘诞 (433-459). See YFSJ, 703.
\textsuperscript{96} Ping Wang thinks that Dadi was "only a nickname" of Yicheng. See Wang's "Southern Girls or Tibetan Knights," 78.
guests" are the men who have wine bought on credit, get drunk, and then pursue courtesans who are as beautiful as immortals.

Comparing Xiao Gang's "Song of the Roosting Crow", "Big Dike", and the first lyric of Liu Dan's "Song of Xiangyang", it is not difficult to find what is common to all these works. The traveling men's arrival time is dusk, the location for lodging overnight is a town called "Yicheng" or "Dadi", and what is waiting for them are coquettish courtesans and fine wine. Although there is no indication of the geographical provenance of the tune "Song of the Roosting Crow", based on these common elements, we can conclude that this tune also originates from the area of Yongzhou as the other two do.

In addition to Western Melodies, Xiao Gang also wrote some poems in the "Songs from the South of the [Yangtze] River" ("Jiangnan nong" 江南弄) category. According to the Gujin yuelu, Emperor Wu of Liang (Xiao Yan) was the initiator of "Songs from the South of the [Yangtze] River":

Gujin yuelu says: "In the winter of the eleventh year of the Tianjian Era of Liang (512), Emperor Wu revised the Western Melodies and made fourteen songs of 'Jiangnan shangyun yue' and seven songs of 'Jiangnan nong'. [The latter are,] first, 'Song from the South of the [Yangtze] River'; second, 'Song of Dragon Flute'; third, 'Song of Picking Lotus'; fourth, 'Song of Phoenix Mouth
Yuefu shiji preserves all seven lyrics of Emperor Wu's "Songs from the South of the Yangtze River" and three of Xiao Gang's. For the convenience of comparison, Xiao Gang's "Songs from the South of the Yangtze River" lyrics are cited below together with those by Emperor Wu:

1. 江南弄
   
   歌从南的[南] [梁武帝]
   
   和云：
   “陽春路, 媚婷出緋羅。
   雲：
   和云：
   "On the spring road, graceful beauties appear with figured woven silk."
   
   眠花雜色滿上林,
   Numerous flowers and various colors fill the Imperial Garden.
   舒芳耀綠垂輕陰。
   [Flowers] that emit fragrance and sparkling green leaves cast airy shadows.
   連手躞蹀舞春心。
   Hand in hand, we sidle along in quick and short steps, dancing to the heart of spring.
   舞春心，臨歲腴。
   Dancing to the heart of spring, we get close to the year's harvest.99
   中人望，獨踟蹰。
   Women in inner chambers are waiting with longing, and loiter alone. (YFSJ, 726)

2. 江南曲
   
   歌从南的[南]
   
   萧纲
   (By Xiao Gang)
   
   和云：
   Singing in harmony:

97 YFSJ, 726.
98 These three were mistakenly attributed to Xiao Tong. See note in YFSJ, 729.
99 Xu Bo 徐煬 (1570-1642) suspects that the term "suiyu" 岁腴 means "harvest year" (豐年). See Xu Bo, Xu shi bijing 徐氏筆精, juan 2, 165-166, in Zazhu miji congkan 雜著秘笈叢刊, v. 9, Qu Wanli 居萬里 eds. (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1971).
100 The comma added here is based on LQL, 1522. I am indebted to Xiaofei Tian for the translation of this term.
“陽春路，時使佳人度。” "On the spring road, sometimes causes beautiful women to cross."
枝中水上春併歸, Spring returns, among branches and on rivers.
長楊掃地桃花飛。 Long tendrils of willows sweep the ground; peach flowers fly.
清風吹人光照衣。 Fresh wind blows on people; sunshine illuminates robes.
光照衣，景將夕。 Sunshine illuminates robes; the sun is setting.
擲黃金，留上客。 Throw away yellow gold; detain honorable guests.

Both lyrics describe a banquet held in the spring, and do so with beautiful language. In contrast to Xiao Gang's carefree mood throughout his lyric, Emperor Wu brings up a lonesome atmosphere at the end of his lyric.

2. 龍笛曲  
(By Emperor Wu of Liang)

和云: 
“江南音, 一唱值千金。” "Music of Jiangnan, one song is worth a thousand pieces of gold."
美人綿眇在雲堂, A beauty is in the cloud hall, far away.
雕金鏤竹眠玉床。 She is napping on a jade bed decorated with engraved gold and carved bamboos.
婉愛寥亮繞紅梁。 Graceful and lovely, [her singing voice] is loud and clear, lingering on cinnabar beams.
繞紅梁,流月臺。 Linger on cinnabar beams; flowing over the moon-watching tower.
駐狂風,鬱徘徊。 [Her singing] stops the strong wind, and roams in dejection.

龍笛曲  
(By Xiao Gang)

和云: 
“江南岸, 真能下翔鳳。” "River bank of Jiangnan, truly can detain the flying phoenix."
金門玉堂臨水居, Golden gate and jade hall, [she] resides by the water.
一嚬一笑千萬餘。 [Her] every frown and every smile, deserve thousands and millions.
遊子去還願莫疏。 The traveler goes and returns, I wish he does not become a stranger.
願莫疏，意何極。 Not to become a stranger; how endless my longing.
雙鴛鴦，兩相憶。 Like paired mandarin ducks, we think of each other.
Both the father and son write on female-related themes. Emperor Wu's lyric is about a singing girl and her performance. Again, he brings in a somewhat unhappy tone at the end of a seemingly gorgeous scene. In contrast, Xiao Gang's lyric focuses entirely on a love theme.

3. **採蓮曲**

_**Song of Picking Lotus**_

**(By Emperor Wu of Liang)**

*Singing in harmony:*

"採蓮渚，窈窕舞佳人。"

"On the islet for picking lotus, beauties are dancing gracefully."

遊戯五湖採蓮歸，

Strolling about the five lakes, I return after picking lotus.

發花田葉芳襲衣。

Blooming flowers and dense leaves, fragrance permeates my robe.

為君儂歌世所希。

For you, I would sing a cherished song.

世所希，有如玉。

Songs cherished by the world are like a jade.

江南弄，採蓮曲。

"Songs from the South of the [Yangtze] River", or "Song of Picking Lotus."  

**(YFSJ, 727)**

3. **採蓮曲**

_**Song of Picking Lotus**_

**(By Xiao Gang)**

*Singing in harmony:*

"《採蓮歸》，淥水好沾衣。"

"As we sing 'Returning from Lotus Picking', clear water likes to bedew one's clothes."

桂槳蘭橈浮碧水，

Cassia oars and magnolia paddles float on emerald water.

江花玉面兩相似。

Flowers on the river and the jade-like face resemble each other.

蓮疏藕折香風起。

Lotus are sparse, the roots are snapped, and fragrant breezes arise.

香風起，白日低。

Fragrant breezes arise; the bright sun sets.

採蓮曲，使君迷。

"Song of Picking Lotus", fascinated you.  

**(YFSJ, 729)**
Both of the lyrics above concentrate on the act of lotus picking and bring out the meaning of their titles. It is difficult to distinguish their styles from one another.

Although Emperor Wu's "Songs from the South of the [Yangtze] River" includes a title called "Song of Picking Water Chestnuts" ("Cai ling qu" 採菱曲), Xiao Gang's "Song of Picking Water Chestnuts" is obviously written in a different form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>採菱曲</th>
<th>Song of Picking Water Chestnuts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>梁武帝</td>
<td>(By Emperor Wu of Liang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>和云:</td>
<td>Singing in harmony:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;菱歌女，解佩戲江陽。&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;A girl who sings 'Water Chestnuts', unties her pendants and frolics at the north of the river.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>江南稚女珠腕繩，</td>
<td>A young girl of Jiangnan wears a pearl band on her wrist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>金翠搖首紅顏興。</td>
<td>Golden and kingfisher hair accessories dangle over her flushed face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>桂棹容與歌採菱。</td>
<td>Leisurly sculling with cassia oars, she sings &quot;Picking Water Chestnuts&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>歌採菱，心未怡。</td>
<td>Singing &quot;Picking Water Chestnuts&quot;, her heart is not happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>瞻羅袖，望所思。</td>
<td>She veils herself with silk sleeves, longing for the one she misses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(YFSJ, 727)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>採菱曲</th>
<th>Song of Picking Water Chestnuts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>蕭綱</td>
<td>(By Xiao Gang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>菱花落復含，</td>
<td>Flowers of water chestnuts fall then bud again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>桑女罷新蠶。</td>
<td>A mulberry picking girl quits [rearing her] new silkworms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>桂棹浮星艇，</td>
<td>Cassia oars and floating star-like boats,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>徘徊蓮葉南。</td>
<td>Hesitate at the south of the lotus leaves.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(YFSJ, 740)

The structure of Emperor Wu's "Song of Picking Water Chestnuts" shows no difference from his other "Songs from the South of the [Yangtze] River" lyrics, consisting of three heptasyllabic
lines and four short trisyllabic phrases. On the other hand, Xiao Gang's "Song of Picking Water Chestnuts" contains four pentasyllabic lines and is in the form of pentasyllabic quatrain. If both of their "Song of Picking Water Chestnuts" were actually sung with music in the Liang, then the tunes must have been different in spite of having the same title. In fact, Guo Maoqian realized this and placed Xiao Gang's "Song of Picking Water Chestnuts" in a different section in his anthology following Bao Zhao's seven poems with the title "Songs of Picking Water Chestnuts" ("Cai ling ge" 採菱歌) that also adopt the form of pentasyllabic quatrains.

Despite the structural differences, both Emperor Wu and Xiao Gang's "Songs of Picking Water Chestnuts" are loyal to the traditional love theme of southern ballads. The necessary elements, which include beautiful young women, boats and the picking of water plants, can be found in these two lyrics as well. However, Xiao Gang's "Song of Picking Water Chestnuts" shows layers of intertextual connection linking it to other yuefu lyrics. That is something we do not see in Emperor Wu's "Song of Picking Water Chestnuts". "Mulberry picking woman" in the second line of Xiao Gang's lyric evokes Luofu's image in "Mulberry Tree by the Path", but her quitting [rearing] new silkworms implies a course of action opposite of the Luofu story. Moreover, the third line of Xiao Gang's lyric, "hesitate at the south of lotus leaves," retains a trace of the Han yuefu lyric named "South of the [Yangtze] River" ("Jiangnan" 江南):
Guo Maoqian notes that Emperor Wu of Liang wrote "Songs from the South of the [Yangtze] River" to replace the Western Melodies, and his "Song of Picking Lotus" and "Song of Picking Water Chestnuts" originate from this ancient lyric. Nonetheless, unlike the pentasyllabic form seen in this ancient lyric, Emperor Wu's lyrics to the "Songs from the South of the [Yangtze] River" employ a completely different style. Emperor Wu might have been influenced by the title of this ancient lyric, but definitely not by the poetic structure, because his "Cai lian" and "Cai ling" were essentially revisions of southern folk songs, which did not originate from the ancient lyric. On the other hand, Xiao Gang’s "Song of Picking Water Chestnuts" inherits the pentasyllabic form from the ancient lyric and the last line of his lyric was also adapted from this lyric. Thus, Xiao Gang's "Song of Picking Water Chestnuts" more likely derives from the ancient lyric rather than from the Western Melodies. Likewise, although another set of "Songs of Picking Lotus" ("Cai lian qu" 採蓮曲) [No. 36] by Xiao Gang follows the poetic tradition of the Jiangnan (South of the Yangtze River)

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101 YFSJ, 384.
background and describes the scenery of women picking lotus on lakes, unlike his lyric with the identical title in the "Songs from the South of the [Yangtze] River" [No. 35] series, this set of "Songs of Picking Lotus" adopts the pentasyllabic form just like his "Song of Picking Water Chestnuts" [No. 37]. In addition, his two poems of "Thoughts of Jiangnan" ("Jiangnan si" 江南思) [No. 8] are written in the pentasyllabic form and correspond to the meaning of the title. They are placed under the category of "Lyrics for Accompanied Songs" ("Xianghe geci" 相和歌辭), the same as the ancient lyric of "South of the [Yangtze] River" cited above. So far as poetic form is concerned, these pentasyllabic Jiangnan-related poems are distinguished from Emperor Wu's "Songs from the South of the [Yangtze] River" and might not originate from the same source. It is not clear why Guo Maoqian separates these pentasyllabic yuefu poems into two different categories, "Lyrics for Accompanied Songs" and "Lyrics for Tunes in the Qingshang Mode".

Xiao Gang's "A Crow Crying at Night" ("Wu ye ti" 鳥夜啼) [No. 32] is also categorized under the Western Melodies group by Guo Maoqian. Reportedly, this tune was first written by a prince in the [Liu] Song Dynasty. Yet the compiler of Jiu Tang shu suspects that the extant lyrics are not the same as the original ones. In the Yuefu shiji, the extant anonymous eight verses of "A
Crow Crying at Night" are placed before Xiao Gang's, and are designated as "Ancient Lyrics" ("Gu ci" 古辭) in Zuo Keming's 左克明 (fl. Yuan Dynasty) Gu yuefu.103

1. 歌舞諸少年, Various dancing and singing youths,
娉婷無種迹。Trip elegantly and leave no footprints.
菖蒲花可憐, Irises flowers are lovely.
聞名不曾識。I have heard their name but do not recognize them.

2. 長檣鐵鹿子, Tall masts have iron pulleys,
布㠶阿那起。Fabric sails rise gracefully.
詫儂安在問, While [you] were wondering where I was,
一去數千里。[Your vessel] had gone several thousand li.

3. 辭家遠行去, You left home for a long journey.
儂歡獨離居。You and I104 are living separately.
此日無啼音, I did not cry today,
裂帛作還書。But tear a piece of silk to write a letter to you.

4. 可憐烏臼鳥, Poor drongos,
彌言知天曙。They stubbornly say they know the time of daybreak.
無故三更啼, For no reason they called at mid-night.
歡子冒闇去。My love left in the darkness.

5. 烏生知欲飛, Crows desire to fly when they are born.
飛飛各自去。They fly away each on their own.
生離無安心, Being separated from you, I feel restless.

103 YFSJ, note 1 to "Wu ye ti ba qu" 乌夜啼八曲, juan 47, 691. See also Zuo Keming 左克明, Gu yuefu 古樂府, juan 7, in SKQS, Ji bu 節部, Zongji lei 總集類, v. 457, 632.
104 The term "Nong huan" 儂歡 should be translated literally as "I and you". Here I follow the English word order and translate this term as "you and I" instead. For a detailed discussion regarding the usage of "nong" and "huan" in the Southern Dynasties, see Xiaofei Tian, "Configuring the Feminine: Gender and Literary Transvestitism in the Southern Dynasties Poetry" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1998), 15-20, accessed 2011, http://search.proquest.com/docview/304433279.
夜啼至天曙。 I cried all night until daybreak.

6. 龍窻窻不開， I covered the windows, so the windows are not opened.\(^{105}\)
荡戶戶不動。 [But when] I swayed the door, the door [still] wouldn't move.
歡下葳蕤籥, You locked up the complex lock,
交儂那得徃。 Stopping me from going (after you).

7. 遠朢千里煙， Gazing through the mist for a thousand li,
隱當在歡家。 I stay quietly at your home.
欲飛無兩翅， I want to fly but do not have two wings.
當奈獨思何。 How do I stand my lonely thoughts?

8. 巴陵三江口， At Baling, the confluence of three rivers,\(^{106}\)
蘆荻齊如麻。 Reeds are as even as hemp stalks.
執手與歡別, When I held your hands and bade farewell to you,
痛切當奈何。 I felt so much pain I didn't know what to do. (YFSJ, 691)

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\(^{105}\) There is a pun used in this phrase. Gu Yanwu 袁炎武 (1613-1682) explains how the pronunciation of the character "cong" 听 was constructed with the traditional fanqie 反切 method in his Yin lun 音論. He says: "People in the antiquity called ear 'cong'. Yi zhuan says that 'cong' means 'dim'. [Huangdi] Lingshu jing says: 'The bottom of Shaoyang channel roots in Qiao yin acupoint and connects to Chuanglong.' 'Chuanglong' means 'inside the ear.' [Joining the sounds of] characters 'chuang' and 'long', [we have] the exact pronunciation 'cong.'" 古人謂耳為聽，易傳：聽，不明也。靈樞經：少陽根於竅隂，結於窻籠。窻籠者，耳中也。窻籠正切聰字。The combination of the words "chuang" ("window") and "long" ("to cover") not only function as a phonetic notation for the word "cong" ("dim"), but also expresses the meaning of it. Namely, when a window is covered, the room inside is dim, which is the same as if the window was not opened. Wittily re-arranging the two characters of the word "chuanglong" with the reverence for the original meaning, the author creates a line making a good match with the succeeding line that expresses what he or she really wants to say. For Gu's remark, see Gu Yanwu 袁炎武, Yin lun 音論, "Fanqie zhi shi" 反切之始, juan xia, 12-13, in Yinxue wu shu 音學五書, v. 1 (Puban collection, Si ming guan jia lou, 1885). For the quotation from Lingshu jing, see Huang Di suwen Lingshu jing 黃帝素問靈樞經, v. 1, juan 2 "Genjie di wu, Fayin" 根結第五法音, 2, in Gujin yitong zhengmai quanshu 古今醫統正脈全書, in Baibu congshu jicheng 百部叢書集成, v. 90 (Taipei: Yiwen, 1967). For the quotation from Yizhuan, see Zhouyi zhengyi 周易正義, "Shike" 噬嗑, in SSJZS, 37.

\(^{106}\) Chiu Hsie-Yu remarks that "Baling" 巴陵 and "Sanjiangkou" 三江口 are now in Yueyang County 岳陽縣 in Hunan Province. See Chiu Hsie-Yu, "Liuchao Wuge Xiqu fenbu quyu de tanshu," 83.
The narrative tone is full of feeling and the melancholy expressed in poems 5, 6, 7 and 8 touches one's heart. The connection between these eight poems is somewhat loose, and each of them can be viewed as an independent composition. The language in this set of lyrics is plain and colloquial. When one compares them with Xiao Gang's poem on the same title, the folk nature of these lyrics is striking.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>烏夜啼</th>
<th>A Crow Crying at Night</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>梁簡文帝</td>
<td>(By Xiao Gang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>緑草庭中望明月，</td>
<td>From the green grass court, she gazes at the bright moon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>碧玉堂裏對金鋪。</td>
<td>In the emerald hall, she faces the golden knocker-bases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鳴弦撥捩發初異，</td>
<td>Plucking strings with a plectrum, the start of [her] music is different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>挑琴欲吹衆曲殊。</td>
<td>Stirring the zither, getting ready to play [the flute], all [her] songs are unique.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>不疑三足朝含影，</td>
<td>She does not doubt the morning sun contains the shadow of the three-legged [crow].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>直言九子夜相呼。</td>
<td>She frankly speaks that the nine stars [at Scorpio's tail] call each other at night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>羞言獨眠枕下淚，</td>
<td>She is ashamed to say she sleeps alone and weeps on her pillow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>託道單棲城上烏。</td>
<td>She finds excuses from the lonely perching crow on the city wall.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(XFSJ, 691)

Xiao Gang employs the heptasyllabic form to write this poem, and it contains more information in each line than is found in the ancient pentasyllabic lyrics. Instead of the narrative scheme adopted in the ancient lyrics, Xiao Gang uses simple and refined language to sketch the heroine's luxurious environment and praise her outstanding musical talent in the first half of the poem. In contrast to the emotional straightforward tone of the ancient lyrics, Xiao Gang's heroine is shy and his expressions are periphrastic. The four pairs of exquisite couplets, which occupy the
entire eight-line heptasyllabic poem, display his polished writing skills. Furthermore, the use of rhymes in every other line in this poem was new when rhyme scheme requiring a rhyme in each line was still common in heptasyllabic poetry at the time.107

Xiao Gang's lyrics and poems composed to titles of southern ballads reveal his talents for writing in diverse poetic styles. He is capable of creating plain and straightforward pieces just like ancient lyrics or those in the pure folk style.108 On the other hand, he does not refrain from bringing in his own language and the poetic taste of a well-educated literatus. In both cases, Xiao Gang writes his poems or lyrics in accordance with the meaning of their titles.

107 Wang Yunxi observes that there are three rhyming schemes applied to heptasyllabic poetry in early ancient times, two rhymes in each line, one rhyme in each line, and one rhyme in every other line. He maintains that the last rhyming scheme, one rhyme in every other line, was accomplished by Bao Zhao in his "Imitating the Hardship of Journeys" ("Ni Xinglu nan" 擬行路難), and the Liang poets including Xiao Gang in addition practised this new rhyming scheme in their yuefu poems with other old titles. Together with the yuefu poems with the title "Ballad of Yan" ("Yan ge xing" 燕歌行) that were written by Xiao Yi, Xiao Zixian and Yu Xin, Wang gives Xiao Gang's "A Crow Crying at Night" and "Ballad of Shangliutian" as examples for his argument. See Wang Yunxi 王運熙, Wang Yunxi juan 王運熙卷, in Dangdai xuezhe zixuan wenku 當代學者自選文庫 (Hefei: Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 1998), 5 and 12.

108 This plain and straightforward language can also be found in his "Song of the Yinyu Rock" ("Yinyu ge" 淫豫歌) [No. 62]. However, this poem is said to be an ancient lyric or boatmen's song. See note 1 to Xiao Gang's "Yinyu ge" in YFSJ, 1208.
3.4 Xiao Gang's Yuefu Poems in Group B

As discussed in the previous sections, Xiao Gang's Yuefu poems placed prior to other poets' with the same titles have themes that match their titles. The analysis in this section concentrates on Xiao's Yuefu poems that follow the poems written before his times in Yuefu shiji.

When Xiao Gang writes Yuefu poems on the same themes as previous works, the themes correspond to the meaning of the titles. For instance, the original "Emperor's Outing to Hui"

("Shang zhi hui" 上之回) was about Han Emperor Wu's (Liu Che 劉徹, 156-87 B.C.) outings to Huizhong, a border town in Anding Commandery, after he opened up the Huizhong Road in 107 B.C..109 The Han lyric reads:110

上之回。所中益。 Emperor's outing to Huizhong, the gathering in the royal residence is grand-scale.111

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109 YFSJ, 227. About the Han Emperor Wu's outings to Anding Commandery, see HS, "Wu Di, Liu Che" 武帝劉徹, juan 6.
110 The text and the punctuation for this lyric adopt those in LQL. See LQL, 156.
111 The English translation here refers to Lu Qinli's annotations: "'Shang zhi Hui' is about the emperor's visit to Huizhong. 'Suo zhong' indicates 'xingzaixuo'. See also 'Zhizi ban' [for the term 'suo zhong']. This was an idiom at that time. 'Suo zhong yi' describes the grand occasion in the 'xingzaixuo'. The last two lines are expressions of praise." 上之回者。言上幸回中。所中即行在所。又見雉子班。蓋當時習語。所中益言行在所儀從之盛。末二句則讚美之辭。(Ibid.) Lu correctly points out the connection between the term "suo zhong" 所中 and "xingzaixuo" 行在所. However, only the "suo" 所 in "suo zhong" 所中 is the character indicates the "xingzaixuo" 行在所 (see "suo" 所 in Kangxi zidian). Li Xian 李賢 cites Cai Yong's 蔡邕 statement in Duduan 獨斷 for his commentary to Liu Xiu's 刘秀 (5 B.C.-57, r. 25-57) biography: "The Son of Heaven (emperor) makes his home wherever he goes. That is why the [emperor's] residence is called 'xingzaixuo' (the 'Place of Moving and Staying')." 蔡邕獨斷曰：“天子以四海為家，故謂所居為行在所。” (HHS, "Guangwu Di Liu Xiu" 光武帝劉秀, juan 1 shang, 15.) Ru Chun 如淳 (fl. The Three Kingdom period) also cites the same statement by Cai Yong for his commentary to Liu Che's 劉徹 (156-87 B.C., r. 141-87 B.C.) biography in the Han shu, saying that, "Cai Yong says, the Son of Heaven makes his home [wherever] under the Heaven and calls his residence the 'Place of Moving and
Summer is around the corner; [His Majesty] is about to set off for the north.

Carrying on [the good government administered at] the Ganquan Palace, [112] [the outing] is a good act for the whole year.

Climbing up the Shiguan Palace [by the Ganquan Palace], [113] he looks over the countries.

The Yuezhi tribe submits; the Xiongnu surrender.

He orders officials of all kinds following him to gallop.

For thousands of years, endless happiness.                     (LQL, 156)

This lyric admires the Han Emperor Wu's efforts for protecting the territory of the Han empire. It extols the emperor's feat of bringing peace to the people living in the border area. Xiao Gang also wrote a *yuefu* poem with the same title. [114]

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"Staying. Although the emperor is in the capital now, [the term 'xingzaisuo' here] indicates [the emperor's residence because] it is where he has arrived and is staying." 蔡絳( substituted for 天子以天下為家, 自謂所居為行在所, 術今雖在京師, 行所在至 耳. Yan Shigu 颜师古 (581-645) argues that it is not correct that Ru Chun calls emperor's residence in capital 'xingzai'. In fact, in the context to which Ru Chun writes his commentary, there is no clear indication about whether the "xingzaisuo" 行在所 was in the capital or not. Maybe that is why Yan makes this refutation. However, Yan's argument is not convincing because asYan himself acknowledges earlier in the same commentary, the emperor's whereabouts is unpredictable. (師古曰: “此說非也。天子或在京師, 或出巡狩, 不可豫定, 故言行在所耳。不得亦謂京師為行在也。”) In that case, the emperor's residence can be anywhere, including the capital as Ru Chun remarks. For Ru Chun's commentary and Yan Shigu's argument, see HS, "Wu Di Liu Che" 武帝劉徹, *juan* 6, 181.

[112] The architectural complex of Ganquan Palace 甘泉宮 (Sweet Spring Palace) was about 300 *li* away to the north-west of the Han capital Chang'an. It was not just a royal summer resort in the Han Dynasty. Han emperors used it as an important headquarters for handling government affairs during the summer. For instance, Han Emperor Wu would stay at the Ganquan Palace from May to August. During his stay, he received foreign envoys, conducted sacred ceremonies, held court meetings to discuss politics and so forth. The emperor's outing mentioned in this lyric likely departed from the Ganquan Palace because the palace was where the emperors stayed during the summer and it was located between Chang'an and Huizhong. About the Ganquan Palace, see Tang Zhongyou's 唐仲友 (1136-1188) "Han Ganquan Gong ji" 漢甘泉宮記, in *Yuhai* 玉海, *juan* 155, Wang Yingling 王應麟 (1223-1296) ed., in *SKQS*, Zi bu 子部, Leishu lie 類書類. See also *Zhongguo gudai shenghuo cidian* 中國古代生活辭典, He Benfang 何本方, Li Shuquan 李樹權 and Hu Xiaokun 胡曉昆 eds. (Shenyang: Shenyang chubanshe, 2003), 585.

[113] As for the location of the Shiguan Palace 石關宮 (Stone Pass Palace), see Guo Maoqian's introduction in *YFSJ*, 227.
上之回

蕭綱

Emperor's Outing to Hui

(By Xiao Gang)

前旆拂回中，

The banners in the front sweep at Huizhong.

後車臨桂宮。

The rear carriages approach the Gui Palace.115

輕絲駐雲罕，

Airy fluff tarries on flags.116

春色繞川風。

River-borne breezes encircle spring scenery.

桃林方灼灼，

A peach grove is now in brilliant bloom;

柳路日曈曈。

On the road shaded by willows, the sun glistens.

笳聲駭胡騎，

The sound of reed whistles alarms the Hu cavalry.

清磬讋山戎。

Limpid chime stones cause fear in the hill-tribesmen.

微臣今拜手，

Kneeling down, this humble subject now bows,117

願帝永無窮。

And wishes Your Majesty unending life.          （LQL, 1901）

The theme of Xiao Gang's "Shang zhi Hui" also concerns an emperor's outing for the protection of his territory.

Xiao Gang's "Thoughts" ("You suo si" 有所思) [No. 2], "Overlooking from a Lofty Terrace" ("Lin gaotai" 臨高臺) [No. 3], "Picking Mulberry Leaves" ("Cai Sang" 採桑) [No. 11], "Poem of Mingjun" ("Mingjun ci" 明君詞) [No. 12], "Ballad of the Gentleman" ("Junzi xing" 君子行) [No. 17], "Ballad of Chang'an Has a Narrow Byway" ("Chang'an you xiaxie xing" 長安有狹斜行) [No.

---

114 A previous translation of this lyric is available by Marny in his Beyond the Mulberries, 11. The translation here has consulted Marney's version.

115 "Gui gong" 桂宮 (Cassia Palace) located in the capital of the Han Dynasty, Chang'an. Stretching from Chang'an to the frontier commandery Anding, the first couplet describes the very long queue of Han emperor's outing.

116 The term "yunhan" 雲罕 indicates "banners". See Hanyu dacidian, v. 11, "yun" 雲, 771.

117 "Bai shou" 拜手 was a form of salutation performed by ancient Chinese males. After kneeling down, one folded hands in salute and bowed his head to touch his hands. See Hanyu dacidian, v. 6, "bai" 拜, 427.
"Poem on Resentment" ("Yuan shi" 咏詩) [No. 30], "Ballad of Resentment Song" ("Yuan ge xing" 怨歌行) [No. 31], "Ballad of Chaste Woman" ("Zhennü xing" 貞女行) [No. 41], " Beauties" ("Meinü pian" 美女篇) [No. 46], "An Eastward-Flying Shrike" ("Dong fei bolao ge" 東飛伯勞歌) [No. 50], and "Song of Night after Night" ("Ye ye qu" 夜夜曲) [No. 56] are also written in accordance with the themes of previous poems as well as the meanings of their titles.

Xiao Gang also writes poems that are different in contrast to those written to the same titles before him, but Xiao's themes match the meaning of the titles better. This group includes "Breaking a Willow Branch" ("Zhe yangliu" 折楊柳) [No. 4], "A Black Horse" ("Zi liu ma" 紫騮) ...
There are five poets' poems under the title of "Ballad of the Brilliant Capital Luoyang" in the *Yuefu shiji*. Among them, Cao Pi and Bao Zhao lived before Xiao Gang's time, Dai Gao was Xiao's contemporary, and Zhang Zhengjian was a renowned poet in the following Chen Dynasty. Cao Pi gives examples in his quadrasyllabic poem saying that superficial beauty does not last long. Because of the homiletic contents, it is difficult to link the theme of his poem to the meaning of its title. In Bao Zhao's pentasyllabic poem, the first half of the poem glorifies the pavilions of a palace, but in the second half of the poem, negative thoughts intrude:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A twelve-story palace pavilion,</th>
<th>煌煌京洛行 鮑照 (By Bao Zhao)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has four doors and eight decorated windows.</td>
<td>凰樓十二重，四戶八綺窗。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On its carved rafters are embroidered golden lotuses.</td>
<td>繡桷金蓮花，桂柱玉盤龍。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On its cassia posts are entwined jade dragons.</td>
<td>珠簾無隔露，羅幌不勝風。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pearl curtains do not shut out dew.</td>
<td>寶帳三千所，為爾一朝容。</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three thousands precious curtained beds,</td>
<td>All beautiful for one morning for your face.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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121 See Masuda's analysis of "Breaking a Willow Branch" ("Zhe yangliu" 折楊柳) and "A Black Horse" ("Zi liu ma" 紫騮馬) in *Gakufu no rekishiteki kenkyū*, 244-252 and 275.
The aroma rises above the purple mist.
The rainbow color hangs down in the emerald clouds.
A spring flute turns the bright sun back.
Autumn's enticing songs detain the north flying geese.
I am only afraid the autumn dust has been stirred up,
And the deep affection will be banished like withered grass.
I sit there looking at the fully expanded green moss.
I lie down facing the splendid but empty bamboo mats.
Zithers and lutes are scattered about.
I no longer sew my dancing garments.
From ancient times, it is rare [for lovers] to stay together;
How [can I expect] you are only in love with me?
I only see a pair of yellow swans,
Following each other, they fly a thousand li with single mind.

(YFSJ, 583)

The pavilions are gorgeous indeed and from the scenery and the props, one can easily sense the extraordinary atmosphere of the palace. However, there is nothing to help identify Luoyang in Bao Zhao's poem cited above. In other words, this palace can be any palace in decline during any time period. In contrast, Xiao Gang's poem on the same title expresses no personal sentiments but includes many references to historical figures and locations, telling us that the place he writes about is none other than the old capital Luoyang:

Ballad of the Brilliant Capital Luoyang
(By Xiao Gang)
To the south, I roam about Yanshi District.
Clipping up to the slope, I reach the east of Baling.123

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122 Note 5 to Bao Zhao's "Ballad of the Brilliant Capital Luoyang" in YFSJ remarks that the character "bing" 兵 (soldier) may be a mistake for "gong" 共 (together). See YFSJ, 583.

123 "Baling" is the name of the Han Emperor Wen's tomb.
I gaze back at the Dragon Head Battlement,
And gaze at the Deyang Palace ahead.
The layered gates are shining in the distance.
The Heaven Pavilion is covered under the sky.
I am suspicious [that the road] by the city wall is the Double Passageway.
In the grove, I recognize the wind of pine trees.
The Yellow River flows into the Luo River.
The Cinnabar Spring goes around the Shexiong House.
The moon gleams with undefiled luminescence overhead.
The morning sunshine sweeps the blue sky.
Autumn frost drives away wild geese at dawn.
Spring rain turns into rainbows in the evening.
Marquis Quyang builds a mansion;
Marquis Gao'an returns to the forbidden interior.
Liu Cang comes back and becomes Counselor-in-Chief.
Dou Xian departs, going away to face the barbarians of the west.

---

124 The term "Tian ge" 天閣 (Heaven Pavilion) indicates "Shangshu tai" 尚書臺 (Imperial Secretariat), an office located inside the palace for processing important and confidential affairs.
125 "Fudao" 複道 (Double Passageway) was a passageway that led to the Weiyang Palace 未央宮 in the Han Dynasty. See Sanfu huangtu 三輔黃圖, "Gui Gong" 桂宮, juan 2, 4, in SBCK sanbian, v. 59, Shi bu 史部. An English translation of the relevant text of this poem is available in note 13 of Ping Wang's "Culture and Literature in an Early Medieval Chinese Court," 7.
126 "Shexiong" 射熊 indicates "Shexiong Guan" 射熊館, a house in the Changyang Palace 長楊宮 of the Western Han. See HS, "Yang Xiong" 楊雄, juan 87 xia, 3557. See also Li Shan's commentary on Yang Xiong's "Fu on Changyang" ("Changyang fu" 長楊賦) in Wen xuan, "Tianlie" 天麗, juan 9, 404.
127 Marquis Quyang is Wang Gen 王根 (d. 2 B.C.), who was the Han Emperor Cheng's (Liu Ao 劉駙, 51-7 B.C.) uncle. He was a powerful official who assisted Liu Xin 劉欣 (27-1 B.C.), the Han Emperor Xiao'ai, gain the throne after Liu Ao's death. See HS, "Ai Di Liu Xin" 哀帝劉欣, juan 11, 333.
128 Marquis Gao'an is Dong Xian 董賢 (d. 1 B.C.), the Han Emperor Xiao'ai's (Liu Xin 劉欣) homosexual partner. See HS, "Dong Xian" 董賢, juan 93, 3733-3741.
129 Liu Cang 劉蒼 (d. 83), Prince of Dongping 東平王, was Han Emperor Guangwu's (Liu Xiun 劉秀, 5 B.C.-57) second son. See HHS, "Xianzong Xiaoming Di Liu Zhuang" 显宗孝明帝劉莊, juan 2, 96.
130 Dou Xian 邓憲 (d. 92) was the Han Emperor Xiaozhang's (Liu Da 劉炟, 58-88) brother-in-law. See his biography in HHS, "Dou Rong" 邓融, juan 23, 812.
此時車馬合， At this moment, carriages and horses gather.
茲晨冠蓋通。 This morning, envoys pass through.
誰知兩京盛， Who knows the splendor of the two capitals,
歡宴遂無窮。 Where happy banquets never end?  

(XFSJ, 583)

Xiao Gang's "Ballad of the Brilliant Capital Luoyang" is completely different from Cao Pi's poem in its thematic selection, and his identifiable expressions are distinguished from Bao Zhao's as well. There is no surviving ancient lyric with the same title so we are not able to compare Xiao Gang's poem with it. However, there is little doubt that Xiao Gang's "Ballad of the Brilliant Capital Luoyang" corresponds to the meaning of the title better than either Cao Zhi's or Bao Zhao's.

The ancient lyrics of "A Pheasant Flies in Morning" ("Zhi zhao fei cao" 雉朝飛操) have two different origins according to two different sources. Yang Xiong believes that this tune was created by an instructress of a future bride from Wei, whose mistress committed suicide at the death of her promised husband. On the other hand, Cui Bao maintains that Du Muzi (fl. Qi Dynasty, 479-502) wrote this tune for a recluse grumbling about still living as a bachelor in his fifties.¹³¹ Bao Zhao writes:

雉朝飛操 A Pheasant Flies in Morning
(By Bao Zhao)
雉朝飛，振羽翼， A pheasant flies in morning. He rouses his wings.
專場挾雌恃強力。 Acting as a master, he seizes and holds female pheasants under his wings by force.

¹³¹ See Guo Maoqian's comment in YFSJ, 835.
Bao Zhao's poem portrays a strong male pheasant's death during a hunt. Like the two ancient lyrics, the pheasant in Bao Zhao's poem is used as a metaphor for a human figure. This male pheasant is compared to a strong and brave man, who has no rancor at heart when he is defeated by a powerful opponent. Instead of using pheasants to express human emotions, in the first half of his poem, Xiao Gang focuses on bringing out the meaning of the title. He touches on all the semantic elements contained in it: "pheasant", "morning" and "fly":

雉朝飞操
萧纲

A Pheasant Flies in Morning
(By Xiao Gang)

晨光照麦畿，
平野度春䴈。
避鹰时聳角，
姊壻或斜飞。

Dawn glow illuminates a boundless stretch of wheat.
[A pheasant] flies across the spring plain.
Eluding a falcon, he sticks up his comb.
Cautious of the boundary of his territory, sometimes he flies aslant.

132 According to Li Shan, Pan Yue wrote a preface to his "She zhi fu" 射雉賦 (Fu on Shooting a Pheasant) that includes the phrase of "to learn the affair of meiyi" 習媒翳之事. Xu Yuan 徐爰 (394-475) annotates "meiyi" 媒翳 as follows: "Mei' indicates pheasants that are reared from chicks and become close to human beings by the time they grow up. These pheasants are able to attract wild pheasants. That is why they are called 'mei (camouflage).' 'Yi' 翳 indicates the blind to hide and to shoot arrows from." 媒者, 少養雉子, 至長狎人, 能招引野雉, 因名曰媒。翳者, 所隱以射者也。See Wen xuan, "Pan Anren 'She zhi fu" 潘安仁射雉賦, juan 9, 415.

133 Lu Dian 陸佃 (1042-1102) writes about pheasants as follows: "Pheasants die with righteousness. They are protective of the hill viewed as their boundary and guard their territory. They are good at fighting. They would not cross their
When a youth is on active service far away,
He feels resentful, there is much unhappiness.
It is better to follow a wastrel,
Silken sleeves brushing against official robes.  (YFSJ, 836)

Xiao Gang's description in the first half of the poem displays his keen observation of a pheasant's nature and behavior. He admires the pheasant's upright nature and daring, which are results of his own human-like character. In contrast, in the second half of the poem, Xiao Gang points to a completely different direction. The "active service afar" is compared to a pheasant guarding his territory. However, unlike the pheasant, the young man is not fond of the service he is on. Xiao Gang wittily suggests a solution, which is to follow a life style similar to Dong Xian, the Han Emperor Xiao'ai's (Liu Xin) homosexual lover. The image of the young man in this poem goes against the nature of the pheasant. This unexpected twist in Xiao Gang's "A Pheasant Flies in Morning" reveals the poet's creativity in contrast to the reverence for the poetic tradition in Bao Zhao's poem.

borderline even when they fly. In general, there is one male pheasant in charge within a territory. Although there are many other pheasants there, they dare not to cry out loud."雉死耿介，始壘護疆。善鬚，雖飛不越分域。一界之內，要以一雄為長，餘者雖衆，莫敢鴝鳴。 See Lu Dian, Pi yao 埤雅, "zhi" 雉, juan 6, in SKQS, Jing bu 經部, Xiao xue lei 小學類, v. 76, 257.

The last line of the poem, "silken sleeves brushing against official robes," refers to the anecdote about the emperor Liu Xin and his favorite homosexual lover Dong Xian in Han shu: "Once [Dong Xian] was taking a nap. Unexpectedly, he was lying on the emperor's sleeve. The emperor wanted to get up but [Dong] Xian was still asleep. The emperor did not want to disturb him. He then cut off his own sleeve and got up."嘗晝寢，偏藉上褏，上欲起，賢未覺，不欲動賢，乃斷褏而起。 See HS, "Dong Xian" 董賢, juan 93, 3733.
In the case of "The Unlucky Woman" ("Qie boming" 妾薄命), Cao Zhi's first poem on this title is about a happy outing and the second one is about a festive banquet. Some beautiful singing or dancing girls participated in Cao Zhi's party, but there is nothing that can be linked to the meaning of the title. In contrast, unlucky women are portrayed vividly in Xiao Gang's poem:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>妾薄命</th>
<th>Unlucky Woman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>蕭綱</td>
<td>(By Xiao Gang)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>名都多麗質，</td>
<td>In the famous capital, there are many beautiful girls,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>本自恃容姿。</td>
<td>Who are proud about their appearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>蕩子行未至，</td>
<td>Her dissolute man has not yet come;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>秋胡無定期。</td>
<td>There is no certain date for her playboy husband's return.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>玉貌歇紅臉，</td>
<td>Her jade-like face has no rouge applied any more,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>長顰串翠眉。</td>
<td>When she frowns, her kingfisher eyebrows often join together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>塞鏡迷朝色，</td>
<td>Her cosmetic mirror is confused by her morning complexion;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>縫鍼脆故絲。</td>
<td>When sewing, the old thread easily breaks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>本異搖舟咎，</td>
<td>This is different from the fault of rocking the boat;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>何關竊席疑。</td>
<td>And has nothing to do with the suspicion of stealing a cradle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

135 Qiu Hu was a man who left his wife on the fifth day after they married. On the way home after five years, he encountered a beautiful young woman who was picking mulberry leaves by the roadside. He tried to seduce her. Being refused by the woman, he returned to his home to see his mother only then finding out the woman who refused him was actually his wife. His wife drowned herself after she learned the truth because she could not endure an untrue husband. See Wen xuan, "Yan Yannian Qiu Hu shi" 顏延年秋胡詩, juan 21, 1002-1003.

136 Marney translates "zhaose" 朝色 as "morning beauty [goddess]" (see Beyond the Mulberries, 18). But he does not provide a source or reason. According to Shuowen jiezi 說文解字, "'se' means complexion." 色，顔氣也。See Xu Shen, Shuowen jiezi, 187.

137 The term "yao zhou gou" (the fault of rocking the boat) refers to an entry in Chunqiu zuozhuan 春秋左傳: "Marquis Qi was boating with Lady Cai in his garden. Lady Cai rocked the boat. Marquis Qi was scared and his look changed. The marquis told Lady Cai to stop but she would not listen. He got angry and sent her back to where she came from, yet he did not completely sever all ties with her. Her family married her off to someone else." 齊侯與蔡姬乘舟于囿。蕩公。公懼。變色。禁之。不可。公怒。歸之。未絕之也。蔡人嫁之。See Chunqiu zuozhuan zhengyi, "Xi Gong zhuan san nian" 傲公傳三年, in SSJZS, 1792. See also Marney trans., Beyond the Mulberries, 18.
Xiao Gang's "Unlucky Woman" juxtaposes a number of women's unlucky cases in history.

His learned writing reminds one of Xu Ling's "Preface to the Yutai xinyong". Like his "Ballad of
the Brilliant Capital Luoyang", Xiao utilizes his broad knowledge of historical sources in this poem as well.

Xiao Gang's efforts in writing yuefu poems to match the meaning of titles can also be seen in his "Ballad about Suffering from Heat" ("Ku re xing" 苦熱行). The two poems with the title "Ballad about Suffering from Heat" by Cao Zhi and Bao Zhao are about the unbearable heat in the southern or western edges of Chinese territory, and describe the hardship of military expeditions to these regions. However, Xiao Gang's poem on the same title ([No. 49]) is somewhat different, for he only writes about the heat in his own residence. This does not mean that Xiao Gang had no interest in writing about frontier themes. In fact, he and his literary group promoted poetry about the frontier, writing on the following titles: "Climbing over Mt. Guan" ("Du Guanshan" 度關山) [No. 9], "Ballad of Longxi" ("Longxi xing" 隴西行) [No. 21], and "Ballad of the Governor of Yanmen" ("Yanmen Taishou xing" 雁門太守行) [No. 25]. Although the locations indicated in these three titles, Mt. Guan, Longxi and Yanmen, were all north-western border regions during the Han Dynasty, none of the lyrics or poems with these titles previous to Xiao Gang's in Yuefu shiji are written about life on the frontier.
The only surviving lyric with the same title as Xiao Gang's "Climbing over Mt. Guan" was written by Cao Cao. Cao's poem is about the proper behavior of monarchs. Similarly, the ancient lyric "Ballad of the Governor of Yanmen" was composed in admiration of the good deeds of a sage governor of Yanmen named Wang Huan 王涣, who lived in the Latter Han Dynasty, and that using the title "Ballad of Longxi" praises a well-educated and capable housewife. The older literatus poems with the title "Ballad of Longxi" were composed by Lu Ji, Xie Lingyun and Xie Huilian 謝惠連 (d. 433). Their works all concentrate on philosophical themes. Likewise, the ancient lyric "Ballad of Walking out the Summer Gate" ("Bu chu Xiamen xing" 步出夏門行), another name for "Ballad of Longxi", is about a good man who becomes an immortal and ascends to heaven. Two more lyrics with this title in Yuefu shiji were written by Cao Cao and Cao Rui, but neither has anything to do with the frontier either.

Xiao Gang has three poems with the title "Ballad of the Governor of Yanmen" and three titled "Ballad of Longxi" in the Yuefu shiji. The following is an example of Xiao Gang's frontier Yuefu poems:

144 YFSJ, 391.
145 Ibid., 573-574.
146 Ibid., 542.
147 YFSJ only contains two of them (page 574-575). The third one is in YWLJ, juan 42, 758. See also LQL, 1906.
148 YFSJ, 543-544.
Climbing over Mt. Guan

(By Xiao Gang)

Mt. Guan is far but can be crossed.
One goes so far, it is hard to imagine.
The Investigating Censor cuts off the road of escape.
The Protector-General commands the leading unit.
Strong peasants contend for land productivity.
One battle after another decided by the weather.
Skilled Soldiers open the cross-bows with their feet and all arrows hit their targets.
Cavalry of Yue from Hongnong seizes enemy flags.
After seizing flags, they go farther.
Driving barbarians away is an endless task.
After Huo Qubing, it is hard to see Mt. Langjuxu conferred again.
The Xiongnu chief's wife has gone forever and she left no countenance.

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149 Mt. Guan, a mountain pass located in the present Gansu Province, was a place that had to be passed when one traveled west from Chang'an in ancient times.

150 The term "Yue ji (cavalry of Yue)" indicates the cavalry constituted by soldiers who were originally from the Yue area. See Ru Chun's annotation in HS, "Baiguan gongqing biao" 百官公卿表, juan 19 shang, 737.

151 Hongnong was a commandery close to the capital Chang'an in the Han Dynasty. See Li Xian's commentary in HHS, "Guangwu Di ji, Jianwu liu nian" 光武帝紀建武六年, juan 1 xia, 49. The term "Hongnong Yue ji (Cavalry of Yue from Hongnong)" can be found in HS ("Feng Fengshi zhuan" 馮奉世傳, juan 79, 3298), indicating a crack troop that guarded the capital city and its environs.

152 Huo Qubing 霍去病 (140-117 B.C.) was granted Mt. Langjuxu because of his enormous military exploit against the Xiongnu tribes in 120 B.C.. See HS, "Wei Qing, Huo Qubing zhuan" 衛青霍去病傳, juan 55, 2486.

153 After Huo Qubing conquered Mt. Qilian and Mt. Yanzhi (123 B.C.), which were territory of the Xiongnu, according to Xihe gushi 西河故事, the Xiongnu people sang: "[After] my Mt. Qilian was taken away, my domestic animals no longer propagate. Having lost my Mt. Yanzhi, our women lost their complexion." 亡我祁連山，使我六畜不蕃息；失我焉支山，使我婦女無顏色. See Zhang Shoujie's 張守節 (fl. Tang Dynasty) commentary in Shi ji, "Xiongnu liezhuan" 匈奴列傳, juan 110, 2908. Despite using different characters, the mountain name "Yanzhi" 焉支 is pronounced the same as the word indicating Xiongnu chief's wife, "Yanzhi" 閼氏. In fact, Lu Qinli notes that in Erya yi 繇雅翼, the latter, characters "閼氏", are adopted as the name of the Mt. Yanzhi (LQL, 124-125). In this case, what has long gone can also be taken as the mountain territory as recorded in history, and the ones who lost their complexion are the Xiongnu women.
behind.

銳氣且橫行，
High morale runs wild.
朱旗亂日精。
Red banners disturb the sun.
先屠光祿塞，
First [the troops] massacre the Guanglu Fortress;\textsuperscript{154}
卻破夫人城。
Turning back, they smash through the Furen Wall.\textsuperscript{155}
凱歌還舊里，
They return home with triumphant songs,
非是衒功名。  
But don’t show off their honor and fame.               (YFSJ, 391-392)

Xiao Gang fully displays his historical knowledge of the warfare which took place during the Han Dynasty between the Han Chinese and the Xiongnu tribes. The poem is written as a narrative that starts with the preparation, then the battles, and finally a triumphant return. However, it is not an ordinary narrative telling a story of a specific battle, for this poem combines many battles that took place during the Han Dynasty into a single poem and each of them is easily identified because of Xiao Gang's refined and precise diction. The mixture of pentasyllabic lines and heptasyllabic lines contributes to the changing tempo of the poem.

\textsuperscript{154} A Chief of Xiongnu called Huhanye 呼韓邪 decided to surrender to the Han Emperor Xuan in 53 B.C.. He proposed to the Han emperor that he stay in the Guanglu Fortress 光祿塞 in order to protect Han's Shouxiang Wall 受降城 in times of emergency. Thus, Guanglu Fortress was a Xiongnu territory, located at the north side of the Great Wall around the border of Inner Mongolia of China and Mongolian People's Republic in the present day. See HS, "Xiongnu zhuan" 匈奴傳,juan 94 xia, 3798. See also Tan Qixiang 譚其暹, ed., Zhongguo lishi dituji 中國歷史地圖集 (Shanghai: Ditu chubanshe, 1982), 39.

\textsuperscript{155} The "Furen Wall" (夫人城) is an abbreviation of "Fan Furen Wall" (範夫人城) and was a place in Xiongnu territory. It was located near Dalandzadgad of the Mongolian People's Republic. See HS, "Xiongnu zhuan" 匈奴傳, juan 94 shang, 3779. See also Tan Qixiang, Zhongguo lishi dituji, 39.
Xiao Gang sometimes develops themes similar to what had been written before with added content of his own invention. His "Ballad of Serving in War" ("Congjun xing" 從軍行) [No. 18] is a good example of this tendency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>從軍行</th>
<th>Ballad of Serving in War</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>蕭綱</td>
<td>(By Xiao Gang, first of two poems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>貳師惜善馬,</td>
<td>The tribe in Ershi(^{156}) cherishes good steeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>樓蘭貪漢財。</td>
<td>[Barbarians] of Loulan(^{157}) are greedy for Chinese wealth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>前年出右地,</td>
<td>Last year, [the Han troops] went out to the western territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>今歲討輪臺。</td>
<td>This year, the force is sent to press Luntai.(^{158})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>魚雲望旗聚,</td>
<td>Scale-like clouds overlook gathering banners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>龍沙隨陣開。</td>
<td>Dragon-shaped dust rises from ranks of troops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>地道夜銜枚。</td>
<td>In tunnels, they put wooden gags in mouths [to ensure silence] at night.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>將軍號令密,</td>
<td>General's commands are transmitted frequently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>天子璽書催。</td>
<td>The emperor's sealed documents are sent urgently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>何時反舊里,</td>
<td>When can I return to my hometown?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>遙見下機來。</td>
<td>She will descend from her loom seeing me come from a distance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(YFSJ, 478)

Xiao Gang's poem above describes battles on the north and west borders of Chinese territory during the Han Dynasty as well. Similar to other poets' "Ballad of Serving in War", a large portion of this poem is devoted to a description of military activities. What distinguishes Xiao Gang's poem


\(^{157}\) Loulan was an important hub on the Silk Road. Properties that belong to merchants and envoys who passed there were often robbed by the king of Loulan. See HS, "Zhang Qian, Li Guangli zhuan" 張騫李廣利傳, juan 61, 2695.

\(^{158}\) Luntai (Bugur) was a place on the northern Silk Road. It is in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China. See "Map 16. The Western Regions and the Silk Roads" in The Cambridge History of China, v. 1, 406.
from those before him is the family touch added in the last two lines; Xiao Gang describes the
wife's reaction when she sees her husband's return. This feature can also be found in the second
poem of his "Ballad of Serving in War":159

雲中亭障羽檄驚，
The fort of Yunzhong160 is startled by urgent military messages.
甘泉烽火通夜明。
Beacon fires in Ganquan161 are bright all night.
貳師將軍新築營，
The General of Ershi162 newly built barracks;
嫖姚校尉初出征。
The Commandant of Power163 just set out on an expedition.
復有山西將，
Again there is a general from Shanxi,164
絕世愛雄名。
Who loves heroic fame the most in this world.
三門應遁甲，
The Three Gates correspond to magic skills in Dunjia.165
五壘學神兵。 
The Five Ramparts166 imitates divine troops.

159 Xiaofei Tian's English translation and commentary on this poem are available in her Beacon Fire and Shooting Star, 328-329.
160 Yunzhong was near present day Hohhot, the capital city of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in northern China. See Tan Qixiang, Zhongguo lishi dituji, 13-14.
161 Ganquan located at the northwest of Chang'an (what is now Xi'an).
162 The term "Ershi Jiangjun" 貳師將軍 (General of Ershi) refers to Li Guangli 李廣利 (d. 88 B.C.). See HS, "Wu Di Liu Che ji, Tianhan si nian" 武帝劉徹紀天漢四年, juan 6, 205.
163 The term "Piaoyao Jiaowei" 嫠姚校尉 (Commandant of Power) refers to Huo Qubing 霍去病 (140-117 B.C.). See Xun Yue 荀悅 (148-209), Qian Han ji 前漢紀, "Xiaowu Huangdi ji, Yuanshou er nian" 孝武皇帝紀元狩二年, juan 13, 91, in SBCK chubian, v. 6.
164 The term "Shanxi jiang" 山西將 (general from Shanxi) originates from Ban Gu's comment in Han shu: "From Qin and Han on, Shandong (east of the mountain) has produced ministers; Shanxi (west of the mountain) has produced generals." 秦、漢以來，山東出相，山西出將。See HS, "Xin Qingji" 辛慶忌, juan 69, 2998.
165 The three gates indicate "Gate of Opening" 開門, "Gate of Resting" 休門, and "Gate of Living" 生門. See the commentary on the phrase "The God Taiyi is in Heaven. He has five generals and three gates" 天有太一，五将三門 in Gao Biao's 高彪 (n.d.) exhortation to his emperor in HHS, "Gao Biao" 高彪, juan 80 xia, 2650. The term "Dunjia" 遁甲 indicates a kind of Daoist divination.
166 The term "Wu lei" 五壘 (Five Ramparts) probably refers to Huangshi gong wulei tu 黃石公五壘圖 (Image of Five Ramparts by Gentleman of Yellow Stone), a book on the arts of war. This book still could be seen in the Sui Dynasty (589-618). See SS, "Jingji san, zi, bing" 經籍三子兵, juan 34, 1012. "Huangshi gong" 黃石公 (Gentleman of Yellow
白雲隨陣色，
The white clouds match the color of army formations.

蒼山答鼓聲，
Green mountains echo the roar of drums.

邐迤觀鵝翼，
Sprawling out, the troops take the shape of goose wings;

參差睹雁行。
Uneven, they are like wild geese flying.

先平小月陣，
First, they pacify Lesser Yuezhi's defense.167

卻滅大宛城。
Next, they destroy the wall of Dayuan.168

善馬還長樂，
Good steeds are brought back to the Changle Palace.

黃金付水衡。
Gold is given to the Money Manager.

小婦趙人能鼓瑟,
The youngest wife is from Zhao and she can play a zither.

侍婢初笄解鄭聲。
The maid just turned fifteen and understands Zheng's music.

庭前桃花飛已合,
Peach flowers in front of the yard have flown and met.

必應紅妝來起迎。
She should put on vermilion makeup and welcome [his return].

(YFSJ, 478)

Wang Wen-Chin examines Xiao Yi and other Liang poets' "Ballad of Yan" ("Yan ge xing"燕歌行) and maintains that the poetic phenomenon of putting military fighters and their wives together in a frontier poem distinguishes the frontier poetry of the Southern Dynasties from that of the Han and [Cao] Wei period. He furthermore remarks that this style eventually initiates the basic formula of the frontier poetry during the Tang.169 As one of the leading poets of the Liang, Xiao Gang's two yuefu poems "Ballad of Serving in War" show the same features as "Ballad of Yan". At

Stone) was a legendary immortal who gave Zhang Liang 張良 (250-186 B.C.), a famous military counselor of Liu Bang, a mysterious book on the arts of war. See Shi ji, "Liu Hou shijia" 留侯世家, juan 55, 2034-2035.

167 The term "Xiao Yue" 小月 refers to "Xiao Yuezhi" 小月氏, a nomadic tribe living along the Silk Road around modern Gansu and Qinghai provinces during the 2nd century B.C. to the 1st century.

168 The term "Dayuan" 大宛 (Ferghana) was the ancient name of a country in the west of the Han empire. Its territory approximately covered the east part of Uzbekistan and the south-western part of present day Kyrgyzstan. See Tan Qixiang, Zhongguo lishi dituji, 37-38. See also Bing Maps, accessed February 18, 2012, from http://www.bing.com/maps/?FORM=Z9LH4.

the end of the second "Ballad of Serving in War", Xiao Gang attaches a heptasyllabic quatrain that
depicts a waiting family in a peaceful home. The figure of "the youngest wife" in this poem
contains an intertextual thread linking it to the ancient lyric "Ballad of Chang'an Has a Narrow
Byway". This thread not only evokes our memory of the blessed family in the ancient lyric, but also
enhances the celebratory mood of the triumphant return.

In the case of more than one theme having been written to previous lyrics or poems under a
certain title, Xiao Gang chooses one of the themes to compose his own. For instance, according to
the Gujin yuelu and Ji lu, as cited in Guo Maoqian's introductory comment, there are various tunes
that share the title "Amorous Song" ("Yan ge xing" 艳歌行). One of the two ancient lyrics under
this title in Yuefu shiji is about a chaste wife who helps to mend the clothing of two or three brothers
as guests in her house but was suspected of infidelity by her suspicious husband. Another ancient
lyric is about a huge tree in a remote mountain that was cut down and made into a beam for a palace
in Luoyang. Xiao Gang's "Amorous Song" [No. 26] in Yuefu shiji does not follow the themes of
these two ancient lyrics but rather the amorous theme in Fu Xuan's "Poem of There Is a Woman
[using the tune of] Amorous Song" ("Yan ge xing you nü pian" 艳歌行有女篇), which is written
about the theme of romance between a talented young man and a beautiful lady.

Finally, Xiao Gang employs the traditional boating title "Ballad of Oars" ("Zhao ge xing" 櫂
歌行) [No. 29] to compose a poem which is very different from earlier ones. Guo Maoqian notes:
《古今樂録》曰： "王僧虔《技録》云：《櫂歌行》歌明帝‘王者布大化’一篇，或云左延年作，今不歌。梁簡文帝在東宮更製歌，少異此也。" 《樂府解題》曰： "晉樂奏魏明帝辭云‘王者布大化’，備言平吳之勲。若晉陸機‘遲遲春欲暮’，梁簡文帝‘妾住在湘川’，但言乘舟鼓櫂而已。" 170

Gujin yuelu says: "Wang Sengqian's Ji lu reads: One 'Ballad of Oars' celebrates Emperor Ming's 'The Great Modification by the Monarch'. Some say that it was composed by Zuo Yannian.171 But it is not sung now. Emperor Jianwen of Liang (Xiao Gang) made another song in the Eastern Palace. It is a little different from this.172" The Yuefu jieti says: "The Jin [court] music performs Emperor Ming of Wei's lyric singing 'The Great Modification by the Monarch'. [The lyric] recounts the exploits of the pacification of Wu. But it is like Lu Ji of the Jin's 'The sunny spring is coming to an end' and Emperor Jianwen of Liang's 'I live by the Xiang River,' which are only about boating and paddling."

The three lyrics mentioned above are all contained in the Yuefu shiji. Besides Emperor Ming of Wei (Cao Rui 曹叡, r. 226-239) and Lu Ji, Kong Ningzi 孔寗子 (d. 425) and Bao Zhao were also poets who wrote "Ballad of Oars" before Xiao Gang.173 Cao Rui's lyric is about the pacification of Wu as indicated in the Yuefu jieti. The second half of his lyric describes hard battles because Wu's territory was around the lower reaches of the Yangtze River. The following four lines are especially closely connected to the theme of the title:

發我許昌宮， I set off from my Xuchang Palace;

170 YFSJ, 592-593.
171 Allen changes the name "Zuo Yannian" 左延年 to "Li Yannian" 李延年 (Allen, In the Voice of Others, 123). It is not clear what sources he bases this on. Li Yannian 李延年 was Emperor Wu of Han's (Liu Che 劉徹, r. 141-87 B.C.) musician, and Zuo Yannian 左延年 was a favorite musician in Cao Pi's 曹丕 (r. 220-226) reign. About Zuo Yannian, see JS, "Zhi di shi'er, Yue shang"志第十二樂上, juan 22, 679.
172 "This" refers to the lyric by Emperor Ming of Wei (Cao Rui 曹叡, 204-239) that is contained in YFSJ.
173 One of Wu Maiyuan's 吳邁遠 (d. 474) poems is also placed under this title. But it is about an envoy's journey to the northern frontier. The note in the Zhonghua shuju edition indicates that it may be an error putting this poem under the title of "Zhao ge xing". See YFSJ, 594.
列舟于長浦。 翌日乘波揚， 樁歌悲且涼。
And line up my vessels along the Long Beach.
I ride on the swelling wave the next day;
The "Ballad of Oars" is sad and chilling.  (YFSJ, 593)

The poems by Lu Ji and Kong Ningzi are about relaxing outings on rivers in spring and Bao Zhao's is about a traveler's bitter journey by river. Xiao Gang's "Ballad of Oars" also has a watery setting. In contrast to the previous poems, Xiao introduces a female figure who is central to his poem. Allen asserts that this poem is erotic, arguing that:

... each act and image in Xiao's poem blends the feminine and the riparian, the domesticated and the vegetal, never saying but always implying the woman's desires. She flirts with and in the river, like the shamankas who once enticed the river gods in the *Chu ci*. And the lotuses and lilies respond, reaching out to hold her. The description of her makeup, which "might be" damp with perspiration, and clothes, which "seem" intentionally wet, is more appropriate to a love tryst than to the harvesting of water plants. In all this we recognize the voice and vision of Xiao Gang that upset generations of orthodox critics — upset them because it was so good at what it did.

Needless to say, Allen's argument cited above, especially the erotic implications he perceives from the poem, is based on his understanding of the poem. Here is his translation of this poem:

1 娥家住湘川, My home is along the River Xiang
2 蓼歌本自便。 Thus I know the "Water Chestnut Song"
3 風生解剌浪, The wind freshens, bringing up choppy waves
4 水深能捉船。 Where the water is deep, we hold onto the boat
5 葉亂由牵荇, Leaves are tangled from the trailing lilies
6 絲飄為折蓮。 Silken stems float off the broken lotus
7 激妝疑薄汗, The spray in my makeup might be delicate sweat
8 霉衣似故湔. My damp dress seems intentionally wet
9 浣紗流暫濁, Clean silks dragged briefly in the muddy water

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174 Discussions about the differences between Lu Ji, Bao Zhao and Xiao Gang's "Zhao ge xing" can be found in Allen's *In the Voice of Others* on page 120-124, and note 31 to Chapter 4 on page 252.

175 Allen, *In the Voice of Others*, 123.
This poem is an upbeat song as Allen remarks. However, further examination in detail is needed to determine whether or not it is an erotic poem.

Line 3 and 4 form a couplet, and the third character "jie" 解 in Line 3 should be grammatically parallel to the word "neng" 能 in Line 4. However, the character "jie" never has the meaning “bring up” that is employed in Line 3 of Allen's translation, and Allen does not even translate the word "neng" in Line 4. The same problem exists for the fourth characters in both lines, "ci" 刺 and "zhuo" 捉. Allen translates "zhuo" 捉 as a verb meaning "to hold" and takes "ci" 刺 to be an adjective describing the waves as "chopping".

In fact, "ci lang" 刺浪 in Line 3 and "zhuo chuan" 捉船 in Line 4 have a similar meaning. According to the Gujin yunhui juyao 古今韻會舉要, "ci, also means to pole." 刺，又撑也。 Although the expression "ci lang" 刺浪 is not commonly seen, the similar expression "ci chuan" 刺船 is not rare. According to Fangyan 方言 (Lexicon of Dialects), "What is used to punt a boat is
called 'a pole'." 所以刺船謂之篙。\(^{178}\) In addition, multiple occurrences of the term "ci zhou" 刺舟 can be found in *Huainan honglie jie* 淮南鴻烈解,\(^{179}\) all meaning the same as "ci chuan" 刺船. The expression closest to Xiao Gang's "ci lang" 刺浪 is "ci shui" 刺水, which is found in monk Daoshi's 釋道世 (d. 683) *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林: "The water level is up to his knees. [He] punts water with his cane." 水齊至膝，以杖刺水.\(^{180}\) The character "ci" 刺 in all these expressions indicates the meaning of "to punt", and this makes "ci lang" a good match with the term "zhuo chuan" 捉船 in the succeeding line.

A story in the Buddhist scripture *Baiyu jing* 百喻經 (Classic of One Hundred Teachings) reveals the meaning of "zhuo chuan":

昔有大長者子。共諸商人入海採寶。此長者子善誦入海捉船方法。若入海水漩洑洄流磯激之處。當如是 捉如是正如是住。\(^{181}\)

Once upon a time, there was a respected elder. He went to the sea with some merchants for treasure hunting. This gentleman was good at reciting the methods of *boating* in the sea. When the boat is in water with swirling undercurrents, backwash, or surges, [boaters] should *operate [the boat]* like this, keep it upright like this, and stop like this.

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\(^{179}\) Liu An 劉安 (179-122 B.C.), *Huainan honglie jie* 淮南鴻烈解, *juan* 1, in SKQS, *Zi bu* 子部, *Zajia lei* 雜家類, v. 280, 261. The same term can also be found in *juan* 14 (page 312) and *juan* 16 (page 320).

\(^{180}\) *Fayuan zhulin* 法苑珠林, *juan* 120, in SBCK *chubian*, v. 30, 1434.

The term "zhuo chuan" means "to operate a boat" with the sense of keeping a boat well balanced. Thus, Xiao Gang's expression "ci lang" is another way to say "punt a boat" but with an emphasis on "waves" (lang 浪) instead of "boats" (chuan 船 or zhou 舟) or "water" (shui 水). The character "lang" 浪 (waves) is carefully chosen to correspond to the character "feng" 風 (wind), which is located at the beginning of the same line. Since the Baiyu jing is a Buddhist scripture that tells Buddhist stories in colloquial language and Fangyan is a lexicon of dialects, we see that Xiao Gang had no resistance to adopting colloquial expressions in his yuefu writings.

Moreover, the meaning of "jie" 解 and "neng" 能 in the couplet contained in Line 3 and Line 4 are missing from Allen's translation. Taking into consideration the meanings of "jie" 解 and "neng" 能, the translation of Line 3 and Line 4 can be revised as below:

3' 風生解剌浪, When the wind arises, I know how to punt the boat in rough waves.
4' 水深能捉船. Where the water is deep, I am able to operate the vessel.

This new translation reveals the image of a skilled female punter at work which continues in Lines 5 and 6. These two lines also comprise a skillfully written couplet in which characters in both lines, "you" 由 and "wei" 為, have the same meaning of "because". Yet, this meaning is not found in either Allen's or Marney's translation. If we insist on the meaning of "because" in our revised translation of this couplet, it reads:

5' 葉亂由牽荇, Leaves are tangled because the yellow floating-hearts are dragged.
6' 絲飄為折蓮. Lotus filaments float [in the air] as its roots are snapped.
Since she is working hard on the boat, it is not difficult to imagine that the woman's clothes are made wet by the lake water. Allen's interpretation of Line 8 states that this poem is "more appropriate to a love tryst than to the harvesting of water plants." He translates the last character in this line, "jian" 湠, as "wet", and Marney uses the term "dampened" here.\(^{182}\) However, their translations of this character are somewhat misleading.

According to \textit{Guangyun} 廣韻, the character "jian" 湠 is used as the name of a herbal medicine and of a certain river; as a verb it means "to wash", "to put water on", or "to sprinkle"; and as an adjective it describes a torrent of water.\(^{183}\) In the case of Line 8, only a verb can fit. Thus, "\textit{gu jian}" 故湔 should be translated as "intentionally wash" or "intentionally put water on". According to the custom of the Jing and Chu regions where Xiao Gang had been stationed for years, local people intentionally washed or sprinkled water on their own clothes in spring. Zong Lin 宗懍 (ca. 500-563), one of Xiao Gang's contemporaries, tells us that on the spring festival at that time:

元日至於月晦，並為酺聚飲食，士女泛舟，或臨水宴會，行樂飲酒。\(^{184}\)
From the first day [of the year] to the end of the month, [people] gather together drinking and eating. Men and women take boat trips for leisure. Some of them hold banquets on the water, drinking wine and having fun.

Du Gongzhan 杜公瞻 (fl. Sui Dynasty) annotates Zong Lin's above entry, saying:

\(^{182}\) Marney trans., \textit{Beyond the Mulberries}, 34.

\(^{183}\) \textit{Guangyun}, 134, 135, 139, and 412.

按，每月皆有弦望晦朔，以正月為初年，俗重之以為節也。玉燭寶典曰：元日至月晦，人
並酺食渡水，士女悉湔裳，酹酒於水湄，以為度厄。185

Note that, the cycle of full moon and new moon comes every month. People made the first month
the beginning of the year. By custom it was thought to be important and was made a festival. The
Yuzhu baodian says: "From the first day of the year to the end of the month, people gathered
together drinking, eating and crossing rivers. Men and women all put water on their clothes and
sprinkled wine on the river bank. By doing so, they [believed they could] avoid bad luck."

The custom of spring purification on or beside a river has a long history. It is described as a
custom of Zheng in the Hanshi zhangju (Han's Commentary on The Book of Odes),186

which is quoted by Shen Yue:

鄭國之俗，三月上巳，之溱洧兩水之上，執蘭招魂續魄，祓除不祥。187

According to kingdom of Zheng’s custom, on the day of Shangsi in the third month, [people] go to
the Zhen River and the Wei River. Holding eupatorium188 in hand, they beckon the soul of the dead
[in order] to ward off evil spirits.

The author of the Yuzhu baodian, Du Taiqing 杜臺卿, lived during the Northern Qi, Northern
Zhou and Sui dynasties. Du Gongzhan cites Du Taiqing to remark that the same action was
followed by Liang. Furthermore, the outings on boats described in the "Ballad of Oars" written by
Lu Ji and Kong Ningzi also took place during the same spring festival.189 Hence, it makes better

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185 Ibid.
186 Hanshi zhangju 韓詩章句 was written by Han Ying 韓嬰 who lived in the Han Dynasty. The book has been scattered
and lost for long. The surviving fragments of this book can be found cited in some other ancient annotations.
187 Shen Yue 沈約, Song shu 宋書, "Li" 禮, juan 15, 386.
188 The English for the term "lan" 阮 is "Eupatorium japonicum". I am indebted to Jerry Schmidt for this translation.
189 Lu Ji indicates that his boat trip took place in the day of "chusi" 初巳, and Kong Ningzi indicates his was in the day
of "yuansi" 元巳. "Chusi" 初巳 and "yuansi" 元巳 are the same day in the spring as that indicated in Hanshi zhangju.
Character "yi" 己 is interchangeable with "si" 巳 according to Shiming; "yi" is 'si'. It means that yang-energy has already
sense to interpret Line 8 in light of the traditional custom of the spring festival and translate it as follows:

7' 滋妝疑薄汗, [Lake water] splashes on my makeup, which is mistaken as my delicate perspiration.
8' 霧衣似故湔。 My clothes are soaked, similar to intentionally purifying myself with water.

Only after recognizing that Xiao Gang is portraying a hard-working female from Lines 3 to 8, can we comprehend that Lines 9 and 10 express Xiao Gang's admiration for her:

9' 浣紗流暫濁, The current temporarily turns muddy when tulles are washed in it.
10' 汰錦色還鮮。 Brocades increase in brilliance of color after being cleansed in water.

Xiao Gang likens his heroine to tulles and brocades, implicating that she becomes even more beautiful after hard work. Hence, my complete revised translation of Xiao Gang's "Ballad of Oars" reads as follows:

妾家住湘川, I live by the Xiang River.
菱歌本自便。 "Song of the Water Chestnuts" is what I am good at.
風生解剌浪, When the wind arises, I know how to punt the boat in rough waves.
水深能捉船。 Where the water is deep, I am able to operate the vessel.
葉亂由牽荇, Leaves are tangled because the yellow floating-hearts are dragged.
絲飄為折蓮。 Lotus filaments float [in the air] as its roots are snapped.
濺妝疑薄汗, [Lake water] splashes on my makeup, which is mistaken as my delicate perspiration.
霑衣似故湔。 My clothes are soaked, similar to intentionally purifying myself with water.
浣紗流暫濁, The current temporarily turns muddy when tulles are washed in it.
汰錦色還鮮。 Brocades increase in brilliance of color after being cleansed in water.
參同趙飛燕, I would join with Zhao Feiyan,
借問李延年。 And beg to ask of Li Yannian:

fully bestrewed." 已, 已也, 陽氣畢布已也。 See Liu Xi 劉熙 (fl. Latter Han Dynasty), Shiming 釋名, juan 1, in SKQS, Jing bu 經部, Xiaoixue lei 小學類, v. 76, 169.
from the strings and flutes,
What is graded higher than the "Ballad of Oars"? (YFSJ, 594)

If this translation is correct, the image of Xiao Gang's heroine in the "Ballad of Oars" is very
different from that in Allen's interpretation. This woman is capable of punting a boat and works
hard harvesting water plants. In addition, she feels confident about her singing ability and is quite
proud of her song "Ballad of Oars". Xiao Gang's intention is not to imply anything erotic but to
admire a hard-working female who is also charming with her lovely singing voice. He did not
forget to bring up the title at the end of this poem just as in his other yuefu poems.

Xiao Gang did write some erotic poems in his shi corpus but those only occupy a very small
portion of his extant collection. It is not reasonable to draw conclusions about Xiao Gang's
personality and literature based only on this small portion, ignoring his many other works. As
mentioned earlier in this chapter, amorous poems did not start from Xiao Gang and Xiao was not
the only poet who wrote this sort of poems. In addition, erotic descriptions can be found in some
famous poets' poems before the Liang Dynasty as well. If we admit that writing erotic poems
occasionally was a common activity in the medieval literary world of China, then, Xiao Gang
should not be picked as the scapegoat for that.

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190 Xu Shen defines: "'Shéi' means 'what'. " 誰，何也。 See Shuowen jiezi, 57.
Interpretations can sometimes be influenced by a reader's preconceived notions and that helps to develop misunderstandings even further. Amorous poems are not necessarily the same as erotic poems. My attempt here is to prove that a careful and precise reading can help to clarify persistent misunderstandings.

3.5 Significance of Xiao Gang's Writing Yuefu Poetry

This chapter has been devoted to the analysis on Xiao Gang's Yuefu poetry contained in the Yuefu shiji, and I hope that it has shed light on its thematic issues and the interpretation of Xiao's poems. Joseph Roe Allen defines Yuefu poetry as poetry that is "centered on poems of thematic imitation or intertextuality"¹¹¹ because, in contrast to criteria of musicality, the "textual" way is "visible and meaningful to the reader."¹¹² This is especially true as time goes by. Musicians scattered or died during chaotic periods of war, and that is why we frequently see entries indicating the creation of "new sounds" (xinsheng 新聲) during the Western Jin Dynasty (265-316) and the Southern Dynasties (317-589). Although the term "xinsheng" may include changes in both music and lyrics at the beginning, given the lack of an effective means for preserving music in a written form, the actual music became more and more inaccessible to later generations. On the other hand,

¹¹¹ Allen, In the Voice of Others, 64.
¹¹² Ibid., 65.
the written lyrics gradually became the only reliable source for *yuefu*. In this sense, in spite of its folk origin, it is not surprising to see more and more learned writings on *yuefu* topics by well educated literati.¹⁹³

Masuda maintains that "many of the poets in the Liang and Chen who wrote to new tunes were different from those who wrote to the old tunes. They composed lyrics following the actual meanings of the titles."¹⁹⁴ Masuda's term "old tunes" refers to the tunes created during the periods of the Han and [Cao] Wei, and what he calls "new tunes" indicates those created afterward.¹⁹⁵ Xiao Gang writes poems to the titles of both "old tunes" and "new tunes" but he writes both kinds in the same way. As we have seen in this chapter, almost all the themes in his *yuefu* poems correspond to the actual meanings of their titles.¹⁹⁶ This may have something to do with group competitions

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¹⁹⁴ 梁・陳の新曲の作家の多くは、古曲の作者と異なって、ともかく語義的な題意に添って曲辞を制作している。Masuda, Gakufu no rekishiteki kenkyū, 246.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 8-10.

¹⁹⁶ Although his "Lady Chu's Sighs" ("Chu fei tan" 楚妃嘆) [No. 13] is not about Lady Chu's story, it still follows the principle of writing about a female figure. One may ask how we can be sure that the *yuefu* titles passed down to us today are the "original" ones Xiao Gang saw? Indeed, as Masuda has observed, Guo Maoqian took four of Jiang Yan's thirty "Miscellaneous Poems" from the *Wen xuan* but gave them new titles when he included them in his YFSJ. For the titles without Guo Maoqian's introductory commentary for their origins, it is understandable that some may suspect that these titles might be revised or added after Xiao Gang's times. However, I have not found any evidence indicating the *yuefu* titles Xiao Gang wrote to were revised or added after his times. Even if that had happened, especially in case of Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poems in Group B, one would inquire who for what purpose to do so.
prevalent in literary salons at that time. However, the real motivation for these competitions was not limited to entertainment and career advancement. The broad distribution of Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poems among Guo Maoqian's categories and the twenty-nine titles in the *Yuefu shiji* that were initiated by Xiao Gang call attention to another possible cause of the heated *yuefu* composition.

Although they had been chased away from the Central Plain to the south of the Yangtze River, people of the Southern Dynasties never gave up their dream of returning to their old motherland in the north. They brought old social and political systems to the south, and used old place names from the north to name their new homes in the south. The overwhelming quantity of citations and literary allusions from the history of the Han Dynasty in Xiao Gang and his

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197 Old *Yuefu* titles and selected lines from poems became topics of group writing competitions. This started from the Liang Dynasty according to Morino Shigeo 森野繁夫. See his "Ryō no bungaku no yūgisei" 梁の文学の遊戯, *Chūgoku chūsei bungaku kenkyū* 中国中世文学研究 6 (1967): 28-29.

198 Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poems are found in almost all the categories before Tang *yuefu* in YFSJ except "Jiaomiao geci" 郊廟歌辭 ("Lyrics for Songs of Suburban Temples"), "Yanshe geci" 燕射歌辭 ("Lyrics for Songs of Banquets") and "Wuqu geci" 舞曲歌辭 ("Lyrics for Dance Songs"). The former two categories contain lyrics devoted to official ceremonies and events, and the lyrics were officially written by writers specially appointed for that duty, such as Shen Yue in the Liang. It is not surprising to see that Xiao Gang has no poems in those categories. In addition, the editors of YFSJ's Zhonghua shuju edition maintain that "Wuqu geci" 舞曲歌辭 ("Lyrics for Dance Songs") is an unnecessary category (see "Chuban shuoming" 出版說明 in YFSJ, 3). In this case, Xiao Gang's extant *yuefu* poems actually cover all the categories he could according to Guo Maoqian's YFSJ.

199 The titles with the number "0" in the column of "Previous Poets" in Table 4.

200 The activity of writing *yuefu* poetry here should be separated from that of writing southern ballads, because, as Masuda points out, *yuefu* poems were distinguished from southern ballads by literati of the Southern Dynasties. See Masuda, *Gakufu no rekishiteki kenkyū*, 121.
contemporaries' yuefu poems attest their longing for that golden age. Their enthusiasm for yuefu poetry writing, as well as for literature as a whole, was a part of Emperor Wu's ambition of rebuilding a strong Chinese empire just like the Han. To revive and redevelop the lost yuefu tradition, which began and flourished during the Han Dynasty, was one way of declaring that it was the people in the south who were the genuine successors of Chinese civilization, not the contemporary northerners who occupied Chang'an and Luoyang.201 In fact, as mentioned in the Introduction of this dissertation, the Liang, where Emperor Wu ruled, was acknowledged by scholars in the Central Plain as the place where the legitimacy rested at that time.202 With this social and political background, we are better able to understand the efforts Xiao Gang made in his writing of yuefu poetry.

Themes about females are common in folk songs in general. If all the topics about females are considered amorous, then more than half of Xiao Gang's extant yuefu corpus are poems of this sort. However, Xiao writes yuefu poems only to follow the thematic tradition of folk songs and in

201 As for the political intention of composing yuefu lyrics, Ping Wang analyzes Emperor Wu of Liang's yuefu lyric "Xiangyang ta tongti ge" 襄陽踏銅蹄歌 (LQL, 1519). She points out that this lyric was a reworking of a lyric titled "Xiangyang Bai-tongdi" 襄陽白銅鞮 that was of non-Chinese origin. By replacing the character "bai" 白 (white) with "ta" 踏 (tread, stamp) in the title, Wang remarks that Emperor Wu "purges the ditty's ambiguous tone and transforms a popular song into a lyric for proper ritual." Wang maintains that this lyric is "only one example of Xiao Yan's serious musical compositions that carry political agendas," and the "Jiangnan nong" 江南弄 series discussed earlier in this chapter is included among these compositions. See Wang's "Southern Girls or Tibetan Knights," 80-82.

202 Bei Qi shu, "Du Bi" 杜弼, juan 24, 347.
accordance with the meanings of the titles, regardless of whether previous writers did this or not.

His heroines are usually beautiful and live in a luxurious environment. In his eyes, these females are ideal and perfect according to his sense of values. Some of them are talented at music, and in his "Ballad of Oars", one can even detect his respect and admiration for a hard-working female. As a well-educated literatus, Xiao is capable of using his own style to rewrite all kinds of yuefu topics, introducing elegant language and elaborate syntax combined with broad learning and profound knowledge of history.
Chapter 4  Conclusion

The Six Dynasties is one of the most important periods in the history of Chinese literature. After centuries of growth since early ancient times, many literary genres had been created. The chaotic political environment liberated literature from orthodox Confucianism after the fall of the Han Dynasty, and Daoism and Buddhism became popular and gained many adherents in the ruling class. In addition to the vibrant literary activities led by the upper class and the blossoming of literary criticism, Chinese linguistics showed a rapid development during this period as well. Xiao Gang and his fellow poets applied themselves to the practice of writing poetry with the four-tone prosody, which was initiated by Zhou Yong, Shen Yue and Wang Rong in the previous dynasty, as well as the experiments of writing various topics in various poetic forms. Xiao Gang was not the only poet who developed the Palace Style poetry that inherited the essentials of almost every kind of poetic device created before his times and enjoyed popularity for about a century across a broad region including both northern and southern China. Yet, he was viewed as its representative. He was an enthusiastic patron of this kind of writing and, moreover, he was a talented writer himself and was capable of leading the literary transformation from old to new. Xiaofei Tian evaluates Xiao Gang as "the most important figure in the sixth-century transformation of classical Chinese
poetry," and says that he was "one of the greatest poets in classical Chinese literature."¹ Tian's statement does not exaggerate Xiao Gang's literary talent, his erudition, and more importantly, his contribution to the development of Chinese literature, especially to the development of classical Chinese poetry. Without Xiao Gang's support and leadership, we might not have seen the well-acknowledged poetic achievements of the Tang Dynasty, or at least might not have seen them so early.

In current academic circles, Xiao Gang is usually treated as a member of the literati in research concerning politics and literary activities on the Six Dynasties and the history of Chinese poetry. Academic interest in Palace Style poetry has been increasing during recent years. In English, for example, Anne Birrell first translated the entire *Yutai xinyong*, which has been traditionally believed to be the representative anthology of Palace Style poetry. Yet, although he was an important poet, very few monographs have been devoted to Xiao Gang himself. John Marney's *Liang Chien-wen Ti* and some chapters in Xiaofei Tian's *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star* are two pioneer works that provide detailed studies of Xiao Gang from multiple aspects. The analysis in this dissertation is based on first-hand materials written either by Xiao Gang himself or by his contemporaries. Benefiting from and inspired by these original and forward-looking

¹ Xiaofei Tian, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, 261.
scholars' works, my secondary research covers not only primary materials but also the extensive literature in Chinese, Japanese and English.

Chapter 1 narrates Xiao Gang's family and his life based on documents written by Xiao himself and other historical sources. He was a filial son, a caring brother, a sympathetic governor, and was well educated from a tender age. He grew up as a literatus with broad and profound learning in history, religion and various literary genres. His establishment as Crown Prince upon his brother's sudden death was pushed through by his father despite controversies, and his acts during the crisis of rebellion demonstrated that he deserved that position.

Xiao Gang retained his passion for poetic writing all his life. He pursued a "new and unique" style just as his loyal subject and tutor Xu Chi did. Their style of poetry was named the "Palace Style" after Xiao became Crown Prince and it enjoyed great popularity until the early Tang. To analyze Xiao Gang's literary thought, in Chapter 2, I shed light on Xiao Gang's connection with the important anthology the *Yutai xinyong* and discuss his "Letter to Prince of Xiangdong", and the famous phrase "writing should be unrestrained" in the "Letter Admonishing Daxin, the Duke of Dangyang" to his son.

The *Yutai xinyong*, an anthology compiled by Xu Chi's son Xu Ling, has been viewed as having been compiled under Xiao Gang's command to amplify the standing of his and Xu's ornate Palace Style poetry. However, since the *Yutai xinyong* was not mentioned in any standard history
books about the Liang and Chen dynasties, Okamura Shigeru suspects that the *Yutai xinyong* was not valued by contemporary literati at the time it was compiled. Based on a careful reading of Xu Ling's "Preface to the *Yutai xinyong*" and an examination of the date this anthology was possibly compiled, I believe that the *Yutai xinyong* was compiled for private use in Xiao Gang's household with Xiao's approval and that it came to be known by the public only after the fall of the Liang or even the Chen.

Since the *Yutai xinyong* was not used by Xiao Gang intentionally to express his own literary ideals, I chose his "Letter to Prince of Xiangdong" and "Letter Admonishing Daxin, the Duke of Dangyang" to examine his literary thought. The former was written to his brother Xiao Yi after he became Crown Prince. In this letter, Xiao Gang expressed his frustration with the poets in the capital who were unsuccessfully imitating the styles of Xie Lingyun and Pei Ziye. Xie's and Pei's strengths and weaknesses as indicated in Xiao Gang's letter were common knowledge in the Liang period, and his intention was not to criticize the writing styles of Xie and Pei as some researchers believe, but rather to advocate writing in accordance with the genres in a proper way. That is, poetry should be written as poetry and history should be written as history. In this sense, Xiao Gang's comment on Xie's and Pei's styles in this letter can be viewed as compliments paid to the

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2 Okamura Shigeru, "Monzen to Gyokudai Shin'ei"『文選』と『玉臺新詠』, 50.
two earlier masters. He disagreed with the verbose capital style that contained no beauty.

Especially in the genre of poetry, he preferred refined writings with beautiful expressions.

Xiao Gang's expression "writing should be unrestrained" in his "Letter Admonishing Daxin, the Duke of Dangyang" aroused severe criticism in later dynasties and was used to rationalize the theory of Xiao Gang's poetry being "decadent". This is because traditional criticism interprets the word Xiao Gang used for "unrestrained", "fangdang" 放蕩, as "debauchery", which is the same meaning as it has in modern Chinese. However, as Dang Shu Leung remarks, "fangdang" contains the meaning of "free from restriction" in the contemporary linguistic environment of Xiao Gang's times, and "unrestrained writing naturally indicates to write without following the rules of writing."³ Xiao Gang said to his son: "The way of conducting oneself differs from writing. Conduct gives priority to circumspection. Writing should be unrestrained."⁴ Xiao Gang on the one hand expects his son to grow up as an erudite gentleman by following Confucius's teachings. On the other hand, he advises his son to write in an unrestrained manner because as Xiao Zixian indicates:

"In the case of writing, the most troublesome aspects are mediocrity and oldness. If there is nothing

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³ Dang Shu Leung, "Shi 'fangdang'," 44.
⁴ YWLJ, "Jianjie" 鑒誡, juan 23, 424.
new and unique, it is impossible to surpass the masters."⁵ This is not just an admonition to his son, but it is also what Xiao Gang believed.

In Chapter 3, my study focuses on the differences between Xiao Gang's yuefu poems and those written before his time, as contained in the Song dynasty anthology Yuefu shiji. Xiao Gang wrote yuefu poems to the titles of both "old tunes", which had been created in the Han and [Cao] Wei dynasties, and "new tunes", which appeared after that. I shed light on the thematic issues and the interpretation of his yuefu poems, and discover that almost all the themes in his yuefu poems correspond to the actual meanings of their titles. This may have had something to do with group competitions prevalent in literary salons at that time, as Morino Shigeru points out.⁶ However, the real motivation for these competitions was not limited to entertainment and career advancement. The broad distribution of Xiao Gang's yuefu poems among Guo Maoqian's categories and the twenty-nine titles in the Yuefu shiji that were initiated by Xiao Gang call attention to another possible cause, which was to revive traditional yuefu writing and to reassert the centrality of the south in Chinese civilization during the Period of Division.

Themes about females are common in folk songs in general, and approximate 60% of Xiao Gang's yuefu poems in Yuefu shiji were written with themes of this sort. He used female themes

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⁵ NQS, "Wenxue" 文學, juan 52, 908.
⁶ Morino Shigeo, "Ryō no bungaku no yūgisei" 梁の文学の遊戯, 28-29.
only to follow the thematic tradition of folk songs and in accordance with the meanings of the titles.

Still, as is well acknowledged, Xiao wrote some *shi* poems that are identified as "erotic" or "decadent". However, this kind of poetry, as many scholars have remarked, only occupied a very small portion of his extant collection, not to mention his other extensive writing, much of which has been lost. If we admit that writing erotic poems occasionally was a common activity in the medieval literary world of China, then, Xiao Gang's poems of this kind should not be picked out and used to attack his personal morality.

My dissertation overturns the traditional negative image of Xiao Gang from different aspects and reveals a different image of Xiao. This dissertation also analyzes Xiao Gang's writing techniques by examining his diction and expressions used in their semantic context. With this methodology, I have been able to reveal some misinterpretations by earlier researchers and to provide new evidence about Xiao's unique writing skills and creative originality. One often approaches a subject with preconceived notions founded upon and compounded by misunderstandings and misinterpretations handed down in the historiography. My methodology is

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7 For the list of Xiao Gang's poems that are most often demonstrated as this sort, see Xiaofei Tian's indication in note 2 for Chapter Six in her *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star*, 260-261.
8 Ibid., 260.
of importance for returning us to a contemporary reading of our subject through a privileging of primary resources and careful, analytic study from a semantic perspective. Xiao Gang has been labeled as an author of decadent poetry for long time. This research suggests the possibility and necessity of re-thinking and re-envisioning the literature and poetry of the Six Dynasties.

Nonetheless, because so much of the work of Xiao Gang and his contemporaries has been lost, we are sometimes handicapped by gaps in our primary sources. For instance, in the case of Xiao Gang's literary thought, there is no treatise or monograph by him found in his extant collection. What I have discussed here is based on limited sources, namely letters and fragments of some other documents. In addition, there are some other questions, such as the precise chronological sequence of Xiao Gang's works, that could not be addressed due to a lack of surviving documentation.

In the 5th century, the concept of four tones was understood by a number of scholars, and Shen Yue, together with his fellow poets, started to practise the intentional use of the four tones as a literary device. Although many scholars have noted Xiao Gang's contributions to the establishment of Regulated Poetry that came to fruition in the early 7th century, a complete examination of Xiao Gang's surviving poems has never been done. From this point of view, an analysis of the tonal regulations displayed in Xiao Gang's entire collection of extant poems is particularly important for a more thorough understanding of his impact on the development of
Regulated Poetry. My dissertation has examined Xiao Gang's *yuefu* poetry from semantic and thematic aspects but did not explore his use of tonal regulations. This complex topic will become the area on which I will concentrate in my future research.
### Table 1: Xu Ling's Career between 531 and 541

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Xu Ling</th>
<th>Liu Xiaoyi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>531</td>
<td>Scholar of the Eastern Palace</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>532</td>
<td>* Vice Minister of Revenue</td>
<td>Envoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>533</td>
<td>* Magistrate of Shangyu</td>
<td>Envoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>534</td>
<td>(Transfer)</td>
<td>* Censor-in-Chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>535</td>
<td>(2nd year)</td>
<td>* (Transfer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>536</td>
<td>(3rd year)</td>
<td>(1st year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>537</td>
<td>(2nd year)</td>
<td>(3rd year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>538</td>
<td>(4th year)</td>
<td>(1st year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>539</td>
<td>(2nd year)</td>
<td>(2nd year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>540</td>
<td>(Transfer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>541</td>
<td>(1st year)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Year of transfers took place.
Table 2: Xu Ling's Career in Case of the Department of Learning and Virtue was Established after 535

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>535</th>
<th>536</th>
<th>537</th>
<th>538</th>
<th>539</th>
<th>540</th>
<th>541</th>
<th>542</th>
<th>543</th>
<th>544</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scenarios</td>
<td>大同</td>
<td>大同</td>
<td>大同</td>
<td>大同</td>
<td>大同</td>
<td>大同 6年</td>
<td>大同 7年</td>
<td>大同 8年</td>
<td>大同 9年</td>
<td>大同 10年</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xu Ling</td>
<td>大同</td>
<td>大同</td>
<td>大同</td>
<td>大同</td>
<td>大同</td>
<td>大同 6年</td>
<td>大同 7年</td>
<td>大同 8年</td>
<td>大同 9年</td>
<td>大同 10年</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scenario 5
- * Vice Minister of Revenue
- * Magistrate of Shangyu
  - (1st year)

Scenario 6
- Scholar of the Eastern Palace
- * Vice Minister of Revenue
- * Magistrate of Shangyu
  - (3rd year)

Liu Xiaoyi
- Envoy
- Envoy
- * Censor-in-Chief
  - (Transfer)

* Year of transfers took place.

Table 3: Statistics of Xiao Gang's Extant Poems
(based on Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nan-bei Chao shi)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Surviving poems in total</th>
<th>Poems with disputed authorship</th>
<th>Poems without disputed authorship (A)</th>
<th>Xiao Gang's poems that do not relate to females* (B)</th>
<th>B's percentage in A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yuefu 樂府</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>[40%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shi 詩</td>
<td>196¹</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>[74%]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>170</td>
<td>[65%]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The numbers in this column exclude poems with disputed authorship.

¹ The number has excluded the last two fragments in LQL.
Table 4: Xiao Gang's *Yuefu* Poems in *Yuefu shiji*

* Poems with disputed authorship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Xiao Gang's <em>yuefu</em> poems [number including poems with disputed authorship]</th>
<th>Titles of Xiao Gang's <em>yuefu</em> poems (number of poems) page number</th>
<th>Previous poets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Lyrics for Songs of Suburban Temples</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>郊廟歌辭</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Lyrics for Songs of Banquets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>燕射歌辭</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>鼓吹曲辭</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Thoughts 有所思 (1) p 250</td>
<td>劉繪, 王融, 謝朓, 沈約</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Overlooking from a Lofty Terrace 臨高臺 (1) * p 259</td>
<td>古辭, 梁武帝, 沈約</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Liu Hui 劉繪, Wang Rong 王融, Xie Tiao 謝朓, Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝, Shen Yue 沈約
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of Xiao Gang's yuefu poems [number including poems with disputed authorship]</th>
<th>Titles of Xiao Gang's yuefu poems (number of poems) page number</th>
<th>Previous poets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5. The Luoyang Street 洛陽道 (1) p 339</td>
<td>Shen Yue 沈約</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6. The Chang'an Street 長安道 (1) p 343</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7. A Black Horse 紫騮馬 (1) p 352</td>
<td>Ancient Lyric 古辭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Lyrics for Accompanied Songs 相和歌辭</td>
<td>29 [31]</td>
<td>8. Thoughts of Jiangnan 江南思 (2) p 384</td>
<td>Tang Huixiu 湯惠休, Shen Yue 沈約</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9. Climbing over Mt. Guan 度關山 (1) p 391</td>
<td>Emperor Wen of Wei 魏武帝</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10. A Rooster Crowing on the Top of a Tall Tree 雞鳴高樹巔 (1) p 407</td>
<td>0 (Xiao Gang was the only poet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11. Picking Mulberry Leaves 採桑 (1) p 414</td>
<td>Bao Zhao 鮑照</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12. Poem of Mingjun 明君詞 (1) p 431</td>
<td>Shen Yue 沈約</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13. Lady Chu's Sighs 楚妃嘆 (1) p 436</td>
<td>Shi Chong 石崇, Yuan Bowen 袁伯文</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14. String Music of Shu 蜀國弦 (1) p 440</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Number of Xiao Gang's <em>yuefu</em> poems [number including poems with disputed authorship]</td>
<td>Titles of Xiao Gang's <em>yuefu</em> poems (number of poems) page number</td>
<td>Previous poets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Lyrics for Accompanied Songs 相和歌辭</td>
<td></td>
<td>15. When Placing Wine 當置酒 (1) * p 461</td>
<td>0 (Xiao Gang was the only poet)</td>
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<td>17. Ballad of the Gentleman 君子行 (1) p 468</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>18. Ballad of Serving in War 從軍行 (2) p 478</td>
<td>Wang Can 王粲, Lu Ji 陸機, Yan Yanzhi 颜延之, Shen Yue 沈約</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>19. Ballad of Chang'an Has a Narrow Byway 長安有狹斜行 (1) p 516</td>
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<td>24. Anle Palace in New City 安樂宮 (1) p 565</td>
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<td>25. Ballad of Governor of Yanmen 齊門太守行 (2) p 574-575</td>
<td></td>
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<td>26. Amorous Song 艳歌行 (2) p 580-581</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ancient Lyric 古辭, Liu Yigong 劉義恭</td>
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<td>27. Ballad of Brilliant the Capital Luoyang 煌煌京洛行 (1)* p 583</td>
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<td>28. The Road to Shu Is Hard 蜀道難 (2) p 590</td>
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<td>29. Ballad of Oars 撼歌行 (1) p 594</td>
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<td>30. Poem on Resentment 怨詩 (1) p 612</td>
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<td>31. Ballad of Resentment Song 怨歌行 (1) p 617-618</td>
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<td>清商曲辭</td>
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<td>32. A Crow Crying at Night 鳥夜啼 (1) [西曲] p 691</td>
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<td>33. Song of the Roosting Crow 鳥棲曲 (4) [西曲] p 695</td>
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<td>35. Songs from the South of the [Yangtze] River 江南弄 (3) * p 728</td>
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<td>36. Song of Picking Lotus 採蓮曲 (2) p 731</td>
<td>Du Muzi 犧沐子, Bao Zhao 鮑照</td>
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<td>37. Song of Picking Water Chestnuts 採菱曲 (1) p 740</td>
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<td>7 Lyrics for Dance Songs 舞曲歌辭</td>
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<td>38. Ballad of the Thunderbolt 霹靂引 (1) p 828</td>
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<td>40. Separation of Paired Swallows 雙燕離 (1) p 842</td>
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<td>41. Ballad of Chaste Woman 貞女引 (1) p 844</td>
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<td>43. Lay of the Dragon Mound 龍丘引 (1) p 848</td>
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<td>44. Unlucky Woman 娥薄命 (1) p 903</td>
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<td>Ancient Lyric 古辭</td>
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<td>51. Parting in Life 生別離 (1) p 1023</td>
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<td>56. Song of Night after Night 夜夜曲 (1) p 1070</td>
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<td>59. Song of Peach Blossom 桃花曲 (1) p 1083</td>
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<td>61. The Emperor's Arrival at the Ganquan Palace (1) p 1184-1185</td>
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Table 5: Emperor Wu's Sons and Their Mothers

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<td>2. Xiao Zong 蕭綜 (502- ca. 531)</td>
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<td>Prince of Yuzhang 豫章王</td>
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<td>4. Xiao Ji 蕭績 (505-529)</td>
<td>Lady of Bright Ritual Dong 董昭儀</td>
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<td>Prince of Nankang 南康簡王</td>
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<td>5. Xiao Xu 蕭續 (506-547)</td>
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<td>Prince of Luling 廬陵威王</td>
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XiaoYan 蕭衍
Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝
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Appendix: Xu Chi's Absence from the *Yutai xinyong*

Xu Chi's absence from the *Yutai xinyong* has been controversial for a number of reasons.

First of all, Xu Chi was said to be one of the initiators of Palace Style poetry, and the *Yutai xinyong* is viewed as the representative anthology of this style. Second, Xu Chi was Xiao Gang's long-time tutor and the most loyal subject who shared the same literary interests. Third, and most importantly, the compiler was Xu Ling, Xu Chi's son. In addition, in the sixth year of the Zhong-Datong Era (534), Xu Chi had completed his term of office in Xin'an and returned to the capital to serve again in Xiao Gang's Eastern Palace. If the *Yutai xinyong* was indeed compiled around that year, it would have been the ideal time for Xu Chi to take part in this project. However, there is not a single poem written by him included in the *Yutai xinyong*. Moreover, there are no historical records indicating that Xu Chi had written or compiled any books.

In the *Liang shu*, the titles of some literati's works are included at the end of their biographies. Yao Cha, who was his acquaintance, wrote nearly 800 characters for Xu Chi's biography. Despite his admirable literary talent, however, there is not a single word regarding his books in his biography or in other extant historical sources. Although he was viewed as one of the initiators of the Palace Style poetry by his contemporaries, and his poetry style was quite popular at the time, only five of Xu Chi's poems survive.
Because Xu Chi's poems are not found in the *Yutai xinyong*, Liu Yuejin argues that the compilation of the anthology must have taken place after the two imperial libraries were destroyed. The library in the capital Jiankang was burnt down during the Hou Jing Rebellion, and the one in Jiangling was set on fire by Xiao Yi before he was captured. Liu infers that since most of Xu Chi's works were circulated in the inner palaces, when great numbers of books in the two libraries were destroyed, Xu Chi's works disappeared in the flames as well. Liu thereupon concludes that Xu Ling was not able to collect his father's works under these circumstances in the Chen Dynasty. This is one of the reasons that Liu infers that the *Yutai xinyong* must have been compiled in the Chen Dynasty.\(^1\) Furthermore, Liu quotes Su Shi's 蘇軾 (1037-1101) *Za ji* 雜記 in Huang Chaoying's 黃朝英 (fl. Song Dynasty) *Jingkang xiangsu [za] ji* 靖康緗素[雜]記, claiming that since Xu Ling was a person who could not even remember some of his acquaintances due to his bad memory, he was not able to recall his father's works after they had vanished.\(^2\)

It is unlikely that Xu Chi's works would have been stored only in the inner palaces. Multiple historical sources indicate that the popularity of the Palace Style poetry was extraordinary and it had been prevalent for a long period and over a wide region until the beginning of the Tang. In


addition, Xu Ling was known as an erudite scholar who used an enormous number of literary allusions in his writings as attested by his "Preface to the Yutai xinyong". Li Jiandong argues that Xu Ling was not likely a person who would forget his own father's poems.3

The *Yutai xinyong* was more likely compiled in the Liang Dynasty before the Hou Jing Rebellion. The explanation for the absence of Xu Chi's poems from the *Yutai xinyong* needs to be pursued from a different perspective. Such an analysis should start with Xu Chi's biography:4

徐摛字士秀，東海郯人也。祖憑道，宋海陵太守。父超之，天監初仕至員外散騎常侍。Xu Chi, whose courtesy name was Shixiu, was from Tan in Donghai. His grandfather, named Pingdao, was Magistrate of Hailing of the [Liu] Song Dynasty. His father, named Chaozhi, had an official career reaching Supernumerary Senior Recorder at the beginning of the Tianjian Era.

The first paragraph quoted above introduces Xu Chi's identity and reveals that he was not from a high-ranking aristocratic family. In the following paragraph, Xu Chi's learning and official career are disclosed:

Xu Chi loved learning at a tender age. When he grew up, he read the Confucian classics and histories comprehensively. He was fond of writing new and unique compositions and was not be

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3 Li Jiandong 李建棟, "Lun Yutai xinyong zhi 'Zhuanlu zhe'," 143.
4 LS, "Xu Chi" 徐摛, *juan* 30, 446-448.
restrained by old styles. He started his career as Erudite of the National University; [then] was transferred to Assistant Left Guard. It happened to be the time when the Prince of Jin'an (Xiao Gang) was transferred away from the capital as a commander of Shitou. Gaozu (Emperor Wu) said to Zhou She: "Find a man for me. He should be capable at both literature and learning and with a reputation for good actions. I want him to accompany the Prince of Jin'an." [Zhou] She said: "My brother-in-law, who is named Xu Chi, is not good-looking and is short. He is so weak that he seems unable to support the weight of his clothing. But he is capable of taking this job." Gaozu said: "[If he indeed] possesses the talent of Zhongxuan, I would not cavil about his appearance." He appointed [Xu] Chi as Reader-in-Waiting. Later, the prince was transferred to govern Jiangzhou. In accordance with the general procedure, Chi was in addition appointed Adjutant of Record Keeper of [Xiao Gang's] Yunhui Military Garrison. Again, he was transferred to the position of Palace Record Keeper of the prince's Pingxi Military Garrison. When the prince was transferred to govern Jingkou, Chi followed the prince and became Palace Secretarial Aide of the prince's Anbei Military Garrison, and also concurrently to Magistrate of Tan District. Later, he resigned from these positions because of his mother's death. When the Prince of Jin'an was appointed Governor of Danyang, Chi was reinstated as the Magistrate of Moling. In the fourth year of the Putong Era, the prince was transferred to govern Xiangyang. Chi insisted on following the prince's office westward. He then was appointed the Prince of Jin'an's Administrative Adviser. In the beginning of the Datong Era, the prince acted as the Commander-in-Chief in charge of the expedition against the north. Chi was appointed Administrator of the prince's Ningman Military Garrison, counseling him on military affairs. Most of the documents from the prince were actually written by Chi. After the prince was established as Crown Prince, Chi was transferred to the position of the Crown Prince's Household Provisioner, concurrent with his position as Overseer of the Secretary. Before long, he took up the duty of Concurrent Controller.

According to the above biography, Xu Chi stayed close to Xiao Gang after he took the position as Xiao Gang's Reader-in-Waiting. He never once left until Xiao Gang became Crown Prince, except during the mourning period for his mother. During those 23 years, Xiao Gang grew up from a seven-year-old child to a young gentleman, and Xu Chi took up more and more

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5 "Zhongxuan" is Wang Can's 王粲 (177-217) courtesy name. Wang Can was a famous literatus of the Three Kingdom period, who served the [Cao] Wei dynasty. His biography is in Sanguo zhi, "Wei shu" 魏書, juan 21, 597-599.
responsibilities in Xiao Gang's princedom. Judging from the changes of his official positions, it is not difficult to see that Xu Chi had earned Xiao Gang's absolute trust during those years. His position in Xiao Gang's household was secure. However, for the first time in his life, Xu Chi encountered a severe crisis when he was without Xiao Gang's protection soon after Xiao Gang became Crown Prince.

Since [Xu] Chi's writing style had been distinctive, people in the Crown Prince's residence all imitated it. The name "Palace Style" [originally referred to his style, and] has been used ever since. Emperor Wu was furious after he heard of it. He summoned [Xu] Chi in order to reprimand him. When they met, Chi responded to the emperor's questions clearly and promptly. His expressions and ideas were worthy of regard. Emperor Wu felt relieved. He thereupon asked Chi about the general meaning of the Five Classics. Next, he asked about the history of dynasties in the past and miscellaneous doctrines of various schools. In the end, they discussed Buddhism. Chi's answers were profound and inclusive; his responses were like an echo. Emperor Wu was stunned and highly praised him. They became even closer. Chi was treated as a favourite more and more day by day. The Commandant, Zhu Yi, was not happy. He said to his close friend: "Old man Xu is in and out of the Two Palaces [where Emperor Wu lives]. This puts more and more pressure on me. I should find a place for him before it is too late." He thereupon took a chance to speak to Emperor Wu: "Chi is in his old age. Moreover, he likes streams and rocks. He is intent on residing in only one commandery, so he can enjoy a relaxing life." Emperor Wu thought that was what Chi wanted. He then summoned Chi and said: "Xin'an has a beautiful landscape. Ren Fang and the like used to govern there. You may leisurely administer it for me." In the third year of the Zhong-Datong Era, Chi then was sent away to become Magistrate of Xin'an. After his arrival, Chi governed the commandery in a relaxed manner. He taught local people rites and morality, and encouraged and supervised farming and sericulture. Within one year, the social customs there had been transformed. When his
term of office came to an end, Chi returned and was appointed Palace Cadet of the Eastern Palace, in addition to the title General of Rongzhao.

Xu Chi's crisis began with the growing critique of his "Palace Style" poetry. According to Yu Jianwu's biography in Liang shu, when Xiao Gang was still a governor in the regions, he was fond of composing flowery poems with fellow poets including Xu Chi and Yu Jianwu, a hobby which was carried on after he became Crown Prince. The poetry style they enthusiastically practiced was based on the newly invented Yongming Style, which experiments with elaborate tonal regulations in poetic composition. Xiao Gang and his fellow literati "adhered to sound and rhyme," and "valued magnificence and richness more than ever."6 In other words, Xiao Gang and Xu Chi had been enjoying and practicing the new and unique style long before Xiao Gang became a crown prince. However, their magnificent and rich poetry style was so different from those that prevailed in the capital, and this eventually caused trouble for Xu Chi.

Luo Yuming and Wu Shikui remark that the timing of naming Xu Chi's poetry style as "Palace Style" implies the political conflict aimed at Xiao Gang. This hostile term hints that Xiao Gang's opponents, who disliked him becoming Crown Prince, used Xiao Gang's flowery love poems as an excuse to launch their attack. Luo and Wu maintain that Xu Chi's transfer away from

6 LS, "Yu Jianwu zhuan" 庾肩吾傳, juan 49, 690.
the capital was Emperor Wu's strategy to protect Xiao Gang. Xu Chi, the Crown Prince's tutor and a representative poet of "Palace Style", playing the role of scapegoat for that purpose.7

Instead of exploring the political aspect of this incident, Li Jiandong believes Xu Chi's transfer was caused by his composing a large amount of "Palace Style" amorous poems. Although Emperor Wu forgave and even became close to Xu Chi after knowing of his erudition, Li argues that the wise emperor would not let his heir wallow in this kind of poetry and compromise his future. In Li's theory, the purpose of the transfer was to let Xu Chi take responsibility for misleading Xiao Gang, and this incident later became a psychological burden in Xu Chi's mind. Li concludes that this is the main reason why there are no poems by Xu Chi included in the Yutai xinyong.8

No matter what was behind the incident and what was in Emperor Wu's mind, Xu Chi survived the crisis and eventually returned to Xiao Gang's Eastern Palace three years later. He never left Xiao Gang after that until he was prohibited from seeing him before his own death in the Hou Jing Rebellion. However, Xu Chi would be unlikely to forget Emperor Wu's rage for the rest of his life, as Li Jiandong remarks. Although there is no mention in Xu Chi's biography of the

7 Luo Yuming 骆玉明 and Wu Shikui 吳仕逵, "Gongti shi de dangdai piping ji qi zhengzhi beijing," 116-117.
8 Li Jiandong 李建棟, "Lun Yutai xinyong zhi zhuanlu zhe,' 142.
psychological impact on him, we are able to learn about the consequences of Emperor Wu's rage from Shen Yue's experience:

At one time, Gaozu (Emperor Wu) had regrets about Zhang Ji. When Ji died, the emperor then told [Shen] Yue about it. Yue said: "The Left Vice Director of the Department of State Affairs used to work as Regional Inspector in a frontier region. What is the point of bringing up bygones again?" The emperor thought Yue was covering up for his in-law's family. He flew into a fury and said: "You said such a thing. Are you a loyal official?" Then he rode in his carriage and returned to the inner palace. Yue was in a panic. He did not realize that the emperor had left, sitting there as before. At the time he arrived home, without something to hold on to, he fell down at the door of his room before reaching the seating area. He got sick because of this incident. He had a dream of Emperor He of Qi cutting his tongue out with a sword.

Shen Yue and Emperor Wu served the Qi Dynasty together and both were members of the literary salon held by the Prince of Jingling of Qi (Xiao Ziliang 蕭子良, 460-494). It was Shen Yue who first suggested to Xiao Yan (who later became Emperor Wu of Liang) that he usurp the throne of the Qi and advised Emperor Wu to murder the last heir of the Qi, known posthumously as Emperor He of Qi (Xiao Baorong 蕭寶融, 488-502). After having a nightmare, Shen Yue invited a Daoist priest and had the priest send a message to Heaven on his behalf, explaining that the usurpation was not his idea. Shen Yue's behaviour increased the emperor's anger and imperial

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10 Ibid., 234.
messengers were sent to Shen Yue's residence accusing him of improper conduct. Shen Yue never recovered from his fear and died shortly thereafter.11

Although Emperor Wu did not directly sentence Shen Yue to death, his rage was powerful enough to bring it about. Likewise, Xu Chi knew very well what the emperor's fury meant and would never forget the critical experience. It was only by luck that he survived, and he must have also known that no one, not even Xiao Gang, could rescue him under the same circumstances. Since the crisis was caused by "Palace Style" poems, it is reasonable to infer that Xu Chi intentionally avoided having his poems known in public as much as possible after the incident. Being Xiao Gang's closest courtier, he must continue writing poems in the same style to please his lord. However, he would no longer be willing to show off those poems, not to mention including them in any anthology or any other books. Li Jiandong maintains that the reason for Xu Chi's absence from the Yutai xinyong is that Xu Ling did not want to betray his father's will.12 Li's inference is reasonable in light of Xu Chi's psychological development. Only in this way, can we explain why Xu Chi left almost no literary works behind in contrast to other contemporary major literati in the circle of Xiao Gang.13

11 Ibid., 243.
12 Li Jiandong 李建棟, "Lun Yutai xinyong zhi 'zhuanlu zhe'," 142.
13 "Other contemporary major literati in the circle of Xiao Gang" refers to those who have independent biographies in standard histories and were recorded as associating closely with Xiao Gang. For instance, Yu Jianwu 庾肩吾, Lu Gao 陸
Xu Chi's absence from the *Yutai xinyong* was not an accident. It was the outcome of obeying Xu Chi's own will, his desire to protect himself, and it would have been permitted by his lord Xiao Gang. After Xu Chi experienced this crisis, the ornate "Palace Style" of the *Yutai xinyong* was the last thing with which he would have wanted to be associated. In contrast to Xu Chi's careful and cautious attitude, however, Xiao Gang seemed to have had no qualms about writing this kind of poetry. After Xu Chi's return from Xin'an, the anthology that contained flowery-style amorous poems was compiled with Xiao Gang's permission. It is not surprising to see why some researchers view this as Xiao Gang's demonstration of protest against his opponents. However, would the spearhead of Xiao Gang's attack also be aimed at the emperor? In terms of his personality reflected in the primary sources we have discussed in Chapter 1, there is very little chance that Xiao Gang would do something like this. Xiao Gang was Emperor Wu's filial son, as always, when the *Yutai xinyong* was compiled. In contrast, the timing and the private nature of the compilation demonstrates Xiao Gang's obedience to his father, for the private nature is not for hiding the anthology from the emperor, but was compiled and treated as a treasure like the Daoist esoterica.

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呆 (or his son Lu Zhao 陸罩), Liu Zun 刘遵, Liu Xiaoyi 刘孝儀, Liu Xiaowei 刘孝威, Zhang Shuai 张率, Xiao Zixian 萧子顯, Zhong Rong 鍾嵘, Xu Ling 徐陵 and Yu Xin 庾信. These literati all have titles of their books recorded in SS.

14 One may argue that if this were the case, it is unthinkable that his own son Xu Ling would compile an anthology of Palace Style poetry. However, to understand Xu Chi's situation and exempt him from having his poem collected in the anthology do not necessarily mean his son Xu Ling can enjoy the same privilege, because the long-time and close relationship between Xiao Gang and Xu Chi had made Xu Chi a person special for Xiao Gang.
From this point of view, it is not surprising to see Emperor Wu's poems are also contained in the *Yutai xinyong*.

Xu Chi's crisis had a happy ending. As indicated in his biography, Xu Chi was excused because of his broad and profound knowledge on almost everything a gentleman was supposed to understand at the time. His outstanding performance not only saved his life, but also gained Emperor Wu's favour. In two separate publications, Li Jiandong, Luo Yuming and Wu Shikui, point out that Zhu Yi's jealousy was only an ostensible cause of Xu Chi's transfer.\(^{15}\) Luo and Wu argue that although he was very happy with Xu Chi after their meetings, Emperor Wu knew that he had to send Xu Chi away for the purpose of maintaining a balance between Xiao Gang's opponents.\(^{16}\) In other words, Xu Chi's three-year term of office in Xin'an was a confinement for both Xu Chi and Xiao Gang. There is no doubt that Xu Chi's absence was a loss for Xiao Gang, and that the timing could not have been worse. Nonetheless, the place where Xu Chi was sent was a commandery with beautiful scenery, and Xu Chi's job was to "leisurely administer" there. This is far from any kind of punishment except for the separation of Xu Chi from Xiao Gang. We can at least be confident about one thing here, namely, Xu Chi's transfer was not due to Emperor Wu's...

\(^{15}\) Li Jiandong 李建棟, "Lun *Yutai xinyong* zhi 'zhuanlu zhe'," 142. See also Luo Yuming 駱玉明 and Wu Shikui 吳仕逵, "Gongti shi de dangdai piping jiqi zhengzhi beijing," 117.

\(^{16}\) Luo Yuming 駱玉明 and Wu Shikui 吳仕逵, "Gongti shi de dangdai piping jiqi zhengzhi beijing," 117.
anger. The kind consideration shown in Emperor Wu's disposal virtually sent out a message that: as long as one had broadly acquired orthodox knowledge and obtained the qualification as a gentleman, composing "Palace Style" poetry would be tolerated.\textsuperscript{17} Xiao Gang understood his father's mind very well. Xu Chi's return from Xin'an thereupon meant the end of his confinement.

That the \textit{Yutai xinyong} was compiled after Xu Chi's return was not a coincidence. Since the anthology was compiled for only private use and was kept from the public, it caused no trouble. On the other hand, Emperor Wu's tolerance allowed the "Palace Style" to spread in popularity. This is only a tentative theory developed on an analysis of contemporary circumstances given the availability of limited primary resources.

\textsuperscript{17} Similar arguments can be seen in Luo Yuming and Wu Shikui's discussion (Ibid.) and Okamura Shigeru's \textit{"Monzen to Gyokudai shin'ei"}, 60.