

UNPACKING THE LATRINE GODDESS:
THE EVOLUTION OF ZIGU INVITATIONS FROM THE FIFTH CENTURY TO THE
FIFTEENTH CENTURY

by

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Abstract

This thesis aims to unpack the evolution of Zigu belief from the fifth century to the fifteenth century from multiple aspects, with a specific focus on the gender factor. In this thesis, by examining the geographical and cultural background of Zigu, I will propose a thorough explanation of Zigu belief and the invitation ritual of Zigu. A detailed textual analysis will be given to lay a foundation for tracing the evolution of and changes in Zigu belief.

The Zigu story in *Yiyuan* (A Garden of Marvels), which is the earliest extant Zigu record, indicates that Zigu belief could be dated back to some time much earlier than the fifth century. Unfortunately, no earlier record is extant. Even the sources recorded in the Northern and Southern dynasties (420-589) are rather scarce now. This scarce source situation did not change until the Song dynasty (960-1279). Fortunately, some Zigu records in the Song dynasty were handed down to us. Moreover, the Song dynasty “witnessed” significant changes in the evolution of Zigu belief (see Chapter Five): the worship date of Zigu was no longer limited to a fixed date (on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month); the designation “Zigu” changed from an individual name to a category name of all the supernatural beings who descended in Zigu invitations; and the changes in the gender and the purpose of main practitioners of Zigu invitations.

Besides, Zigu belief is not merely a unilateral worship from believers towards the deity. Zigu’s alleged abilities in prediction lay a solid foundation for the establishment of Zigu belief. However, what motivates the evolution and transmission of Zigu belief is the dynamic and interactive relationship among the protagonist, the practitioner, and the writer, which are the three indispensable components in Zigu belief.

Lay Summary

The topic of this thesis is Zigu 紫姑. Zigu was commonly regarded as a toilet deity in premodern China. The belief of Zigu was widespread and found in different locations in several different dynasties. This thesis will examine the evolution of Zigu belief from the fifth century to the fifteenth century from multiple aspects, focusing on the gender factor.

Preface

This thesis is an original, unpublished, and independent work by the author, Meng Zhang.

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Introduction

As a typical representation of pollution and filth, it is to be expected that toilet-related topics are rarely the focus of scholars' study. Only a few have ventured into this area. No systematic attempt has yet been made toward such a rewarding study.

When I started to work on this latrine god topic, the main obstacle I confronted was and continues to be the scarce and patchy sources. As Kang Xiaofei points out in her book – anybody who studies Chinese local cults will encounter the problem of scanty sources (Kang 2006, 8). First, although toilet-related cults had appeared since ancient times, accounts have been few and incomplete. As for our protagonist Zigu, the earliest record could be traced back to the Liu Song dynasty (420-479)¹. However, this record also reveals that this Zigu belief was passed down from a more distant time. Unfortunately, there is no earlier record available to us. Second, relevant records of Zigu belief that were handed down to us were mainly recorded and circulated from the Southern Song dynasty (1127-1279) to the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and the Qing dynasty (1644-1912). Zigu narratives are barely seen before the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127). There is a huge temporal gap between the Liu Song dynasty and the Northern Song dynasty². Therefore, to ensure reliance on textual evidence rather than speculation, my conclusions are mainly based on the primary sources available to me. This means that my arguments and conclusions might be as fragmented and discontinuous as the textual evidence itself³, but I hope nonetheless that I can bring a degree of coherence to Zigu's story and the different contexts and meanings that shape and change that story⁴.

¹ The Zigu story in *Yiyuan* (A Garden of Marvels) is the earliest extant Zigu record. For details, see Note 43.

² To be more precise, it seems that the only Zigu record written in the Tang dynasty is a poem written by Li Shangyin. For the details of this poem, see Chapter Five (5.4).

³ Just as Paul Rouzer mentions in his *Articulated Ladies: Gender and the Male Community in Early Chinese Texts* (p. 9), “when dealing with a premodern society, texts may provide the only insight into the culture, and even then there is much of the culture that simply is unrepresented. We can be modest in making claims about how much of the world we are really reconstructing, but this does not mean that the task is completely futile as long as we do not make all-encompassing assertions about what we can accomplish.”

⁴ Here, due to the spatial disparities and the temporal differences, there might be some conflicts in Zigu belief between different regions.

I will begin my thesis in Chapter One with a physical background of toilets back to the pre-Western Han period, especially in ordinary people's lives. The focus of Chapter Two will be given to the relation between the so-called latrine goddess Zigu and toilets. In Chapter Three, I will first provide a phonologic context of Zigu and then examine the probable geographical origin of Zigu based on currently available sources. After elucidating Zigu's origin, Chapter Four will be dedicated to figuring out procedures and rituals of worshipping Zigu. Chapter Five will explore the dynamic changes in Zigu invitations. By means of marking the distribution of Zigu records in different dynasties on maps, the transmission of Zigu belief can be visualized. Moreover, the Song dynasty (960-1279) was a watershed in Zigu belief. Not only had the worship date and purpose been changed since the Song dynasty, but the designation of "Zigu" also embraced a new connotation. More importantly, the main practitioners of Zigu belief also changed. I will combine literary works such as biographies and poetry, historical works such as official histories and local gazetteers, and records of social customs, in order to conduct a thorough and in-depth research. I expect this thesis to reveal insights to scholars who study Chinese folklore or marginalized figures⁵, like concubines and ghosts.

It is crucial to mention the range of this thesis⁶. Concerning the time range, I will mainly examine Zigu records from the fifth century to the fifteenth century. However, in order to elucidate my argument, some Zigu records that were recorded after the fifteenth century are also given in this thesis. With regard to the content, it is not my intention to make a full list of all cases that count as Zigu records⁷, though many of these will be

⁵ Here, I want to thank Professor Bailey. In one of our skype meeting, she points out that Zigu could also be seen as a marginalized female figure, which deserves more attention than normal female figures.

⁶ Due to the limited space, this thesis only examines and elucidates some fundamental topics of the latrine goddess, Zigu. Except for what is mentioned in this thesis, a lot of Zigu-related topics that are thought-provoking and of great importance still need scholars to pay more attention and to conduct further research, for example, the similarities and differences of the belief in latrine deities in different Asian cultures, and the interactions and connections between Zigu invitations and spirit writing in different dynasties.

⁷ It is necessary to mention that the objective of Appendix A that lists a large number of Zigu records is to provide readers with an overview of some important Zigu narratives in different dynasties rather than to list all of the Zigu records.

mentioned as examples. It is necessary to point out that Zigu belief is the main concern in this thesis rather than spirit writing (*Fuchi* or *Fuji* 扶箕). Although the procedures and rituals of inviting Zigu are sometimes rather similar to that of spirit writing⁸, the latter is not the main topic of this thesis. As for the corresponding parts of spirit writing, some scholars have already conducted thorough studies, for example, *The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan*⁹ written by David Jordan and Daniel Overmyer, and *Fuji mixiu di yanjiu*¹⁰ written by Xu Dishan.

Moreover, it is also crucial to provide a brief description of the sources I used in writing this thesis. In terms of the texts, primary sources cited in this thesis are mainly from the Erudition database¹¹, accessed by the UBC account. The two main primary sources used in this thesis are *Yiyuan* (A Garden of Marvels) and *Zigu shen ji. Yiyuan*, which contains the earliest extant Zigu record, is a collection of stories of the strange compiled by Liu Jingshu (?-c.468) in the Liu Song dynasty. The Zigu story in *Yiyuan* provides us an understanding of the time, place, and the process of worshipping Zigu in the fifth century. *Zigu shen ji* is another important Zigu record that records a series of Zigu invitations during 1080-1081, which is written by Su Shi (1037-1101). As a typical example that proves the changes in Zigu invitation, the descended “Zigu” in *Zigu shen ji* was able to talk and compose poems, which was different from Zigu’s abilities recorded in the Liu Song dynasty. The full-length translations of these two Zigu stories are provided in Chapter Two (2.1) and Chapter Three (3.2), respectively. As for the citation, due to the traditional page layout that is different from western-formatted works, I adopt the traditional way to cite

⁸ The earliest record of spirit writing can be traced back to the Tang dynasty, which is much later than that of Zigu. For the detail, see Groot J. J. M. de. 1910. *The Religious System of China its Ancient Forms, Evolution, History and Present Aspect: Manners, Customs and Social Institutions Connected Therewith*. Vol. 6. Leiden: Brill, pp. 1309-1310.

⁹ See David K. Jordan and Daniel L. Overmyer. 1986. *The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

¹⁰ See Xu Dishan 許地山. 1946. *Fuji mixiu di yanjiu* 扶箕迷信底研究(The Study of the Superstition of Fuji). Min Guo ed. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan.

¹¹ The Erudition database includes over 10,000 titles from the Pre-Qin period onwards. All primary sources included in the Erudition database have images of the original pages. As for the Erudition database, see <http://server.wenzibase.com.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/spring/front/read>.

Chinese primary sources. The “a” and “b” following the page number denote the recto and verso sides of a folio page.

In terms of maps, the black-white modern maps are downloaded from the official website of the Ministry of Natural Sources of the People’s Republic of China. According to the primary sources collected from the Erudition database, I marked the locations where Zigu worship occurred on both the historical maps and the modern maps. For ease of comparing and analyzing Zigu records in different dynasties, I only use the modern black-white maps in the main part of this thesis.

Chapter One Background

As Dr. Overmyer points out in his book *Local Religion in North China in the Twentieth Century: The Structure and Organization of Community Rituals and Beliefs*, “A clear understanding of the geographical, economic and social contexts is vital for the topic of this book, as it is for the study of any religious practice” (Overmyer 2009, 11). In recognition of this, I argue that it is crucial to provide an analysis of the setting, both at the micro-level and the larger geographical level, before getting into the further analysis of Zigu (Tzu-ku, 紫姑), the so-called latrine goddess.

1.1. Physical setting

Before starting to conduct this latrine-goddess related research, it is necessary to have a general overview of the site, the latrine (a.k.a. the toilet), the common name of which in Chinese is *Ce* (廁), where was the original locale of the Zigu story. *Ce* works as the place for urination and defecation, having complex social and cultural functions for ancient Chinese people, especially those ordinary people living in rural areas. Even though historical records of the pre-Western Han period in China are rather scarce, but we still could have a general sense of this toilet-character (*Ce*) through an exegetical way of analyzing its composition.

According to the *Shuowen jiezi* (Explaining single-component graphs and analyzing compound characters)¹², the original meaning of *Ce* means clean (*Qing* 清) (Xu and Xu 2015, 309), indicating the place to clean impurity, while in Ru Chun’s¹³ annotation of *Hanshu* (History of the Former Han)¹⁴, *Ce* is explained as *hun* (溷), which means pigsty

¹² *Shuowen jiezi* is an early-second-century Chinese dictionary written by Xu Shen (c.30-c.124). According to Endymion Wilkinson’s *Chinese History: A Manual, Revised and Enlarged*, *Shuowen jiezi* was completed in B.C.100 but presented to the emperor later in 121 (p. 63).

¹³ Ru Chun 如淳(?-?), a famous scholar in the Wei dynasty (220-266, a.k.a. the Cao Wei dynasty) during the Three Kingdoms period.

¹⁴ *Hanshu* is an official history compiled by Ban Gu (C.E.32-C.E.92). It covers the history from B.C.E.206- C.E.23.

(Ban and Yan [82?], 11b)¹⁵. What makes it more interesting is that *hun* in some dictionaries, such as *Zheng zi tong* (Zhang 1685, 112b)¹⁶, is also annotated as *Ce*. From the lexical aspect, the interchangeable usage of these characters, to a great extent, indicates that toilets might have a close connection with pigsties in Chinese society.

Only based on these lexical sources mentioned above, it is not plausible to conclude that all toilets have some specific connections with the pigsty since early times. However, it is reasonable to presume that toilets, during the Qin dynasty (B.C.E. 221-B.C.E. 206) and the Han dynasty (B.C.E. 201-C.E. 220), at least in some specific areas, were physically connected with the pigsty, on the basis of some excavated reports of historical remains. The close link between toilets and pigsties could be traced back to as early as the Western Han dynasty (B.C.E. 206-C.E. 6)¹⁷. Within the Sandaohao village in Liaoyang (in present day Liaoning Province), which dated approximately from B.C.E. 230 to C.E. 20, four out of six residential areas had pigsties adjoining the ditch that was used as the toilet (Li 1957, 120). Although the pigsties' structure had gone, through the remaining holes in the ground, it is evident that the ditch and the pigsty were contiguous¹⁸. This kind of toilet-pigsty construction brought practical conveniences into ancient people's lives¹⁹. As for the function of this construction, in this case, the adjacency between toilets and pigsties might be conducive to efficiently collect human excretion and pig feces together, which could be

¹⁵ Yan Shigu 顏師古(581-645), a famous Tang dynasty historian, also made an annotation to agree with Ru Chun's opinion.

¹⁶ *Zheng zi tong* is a seventeenth-century Chinese dictionary, composed by a Ming scholar Zhang Zilie 張自烈 (1597-1673).

¹⁷ To the best of my knowledge, the Western Han dynasty is the earliest dynasty in which I could find toilet-related historical remains.

¹⁸ Due to the copyright issue, please see Li Wenxin's article for this toilet-pigsty picture. Li Wenxin 李文信. 1957. "Liaoyang Sandaohao Xihan cunluo yizhi 遼陽三道壕西漢村落遺址(The Western Han Village Site in Sandaohao in Liaoyang)." *The Chinese Journal of Archaeology* 考古學報(01), Figure 1 on page 240. It is also worth noting that the framing structure did not form a closed circle, the ditch that was located at the left side, served as the left part of the pigsty.

¹⁹ For more examples related to the toilet-pigsty constructions in the Han dynasties, see Peng Wei 彭衛. 1999. "Qin Han shiqi cesuo ji xiangguan de weisheng sheshi 秦漢時期廁所及相關的衛生設施(The Toilet and Related Sanitary Facilities in the Qin and Han Period)." *Root Exploration* 尋根(02): 18-21. For the development of the layout of ancient toilets in the Han dynasty, see Li Xiumei 李秀梅. 2016. "Qiantan Handai cesuo jiegou buju de fazhan 淺談漢代廁所結構佈局的發展(The Study in the Development of the Configuration and Layout of Toilets in the Han Dynasty)." *Wenhua yichan yu gongzhong kaogu* 文化遺產與公眾考古(02): 83-93.

used as fertilizer in farming. This structure also saves labor in transmitting human feces. It might not be plausible enough to assert that these functions could also be seen in other areas, but it suffices to prove the spatial closeness between toilets and pigsties since the Western Han dynasty.

This kind of case, in which toilets are set just next to pigsties, not only can be seen in real village-remains sites but also can be found in the Han dynasty's funerary wares²⁰. For instance, a green-glaze ceramic toilet-pigsty that was dated back to the Han dynasty was unearthed in Shou County in Anhui Province in 1975. The bottom part of it is two equal rectangular pigsties. There is an upstairs outside starting from the first-floor pigsties to the second-floor toilets. At the same time, toilets are connected to pigsties inside as well²¹.

Although the toilet-pigsty pottery model is not a real construction, to a great extent, real toilets' features are reflected through these model toilets. For this kind of multi-storied toilet-pigsty structure, besides the abovementioned possible feature that collects feces from both human and pig to fertilize crops out of agricultural consideration, according to some scholars, this kind of multi-storied toilet-pigsty structure aims to provide human feces to feed pigs. Human feces excreted on the upper floor could be efficiently delivered to the lower floor, where pigs live, and serve as nutritious pig feed (Li 2016, 90)²².

²⁰ Besides the report of the ceramic toilet-pigsty found in Anhui Province, there are also other toilet-pigsty funerary wares found in other provinces.

For the ceramic pigsty-roofed toilet excavated from Henan Province, see Suo Quanxing 索全星. 1995. "Henan Jiaozuo Baizhuang liuhao Donghan mu 河南焦作白莊 6 號東漢墓(The Number Six Eastern Han Dynasty Tomb at Baizhuang in Jiaozuo in Henan)." *Archaeology* 考古(05): 400.

For the grey pottery pigsty-toilet excavated from Jiangsu Province, see Liang Yong 梁勇 and Geng Jianjun 耿建軍. 1995. "Jiangsu Tongshang xian Litun Xihan mu qingli jianbao 江蘇銅山縣李屯西漢墓清理簡報(The Report of the Western Han Tomb at Litun in Tongshan County in Jiangsu)." *Archaeology* 考古(03): 223-224.

For the roofed pigsty-toilet pottery excavated from Shandong Province, see Zhao Zongxiu 趙宗秀. 1995. "Shandong Sishui Nanchen Donghan huaxiang shimu 山東泗水南陳東漢畫像石墓(The Eastern Han Stone Tomb with Portrait at Nanchen in Sishui in Shandong)." *Archaeology* 考古(05): 394.

²¹ Due to the copyright issue, for the picture of this toilet-pigsty ceramic ware, please see Su Xisheng 蘇希聖 and Ruipeng Li 李瑞鵬. 1990. "Anhui Shouxian chutu de liangjian Handai lüyou tao moxing 安徽壽縣出土的兩件漢代綠釉陶模型(The Two Excavated Han Dynasty Green Glazed Potteries)." *Cultural Relics* 文物(01): 95.

²² In Li Xiumei's article, she also cites *Liji* (The Book of Rites) and Zheng Xuan 鄭玄's (127-200) annotation as the testimony, "君子不食溷腴(a gentleman do not eat the meat of pigs living in toilets)," "腴有似于人穢(The fat part of pork belly is similar to human's filth)." It is interesting to note that this taboo against pork is unclean in other societies. In his article, "Pigs and Their Prohibition", Richard A. Lobban points out, "the scientific quest to explain the origin of the taboo against eating pigs is at least as old as the ancient Greeks" (p. 57). Later on, this pork taboo is also seen in

Furthermore, except for the physical structure of toilets mentioned above, from the aspect of the traditional theory of Eight Trigrams (*Bagua* 八卦), the location of a toilet is crucial for a household since at least the Pre-Qin period. A narrative of the location of toilets found in Dunhuang manuscripts (Pelliot chinois 2615)²³ records how best to site toilets to prevent harm or ensure good fortune:

The toilet is close to *Kan*²⁴, the water of Kan (*Kan shui*²⁵) is water. The water is turbid, so the toilet can be built. To make the toilet that is inside of the household in *Gui*²⁶, the toilet in *Zi*²⁷ will harm the head of the household and two people. [The toilet] in *Chou*²⁸ will [cause family members to] be killed by ghosts. [The toilet] in *Yin*²⁹ is auspicious. [The toilet] in the places of *Mao*³⁰ and *Chen*³¹ will [cause] several kinds of diseases. [The toilet] in *Si*³² will lead to bleeding. [The toilet] in *Wu*³³ will harm the head of the household. [The toilet] in *Wei*³⁴ will lead to involving in many official businesses and poverty. [The toilet] in *Shen*³⁵ will make

Hebrew, Jewish, Islamic societies. For more details, see Richard A. Lobban. 1994. "Pigs and their Prohibition." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26 (1): 57-75; and Mary Douglas. 1991. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge, p. 30.

²³ Pelliot chinois 2615 is [*Huang(?)*] *Di tui wuxing yinyang deng zhai tu jing* [皇(?)]帝推五姓陰陽等宅圖經, which was published in 2009. For the online version, see <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8307395h/f11.item.zoom>. The version I cited below is an annotated version, see Jin Shenjia 金身佳. 2007. *Dunhuang xieben Zhaijing zangshu jiaozhou* 敦煌寫本宅經葬書校注 (The Annotation of the Dunhuang Transcript of the Buried Residence Canon). Beijing: Minzu chubanshe, pp. 80-81.

²⁴ The Trigram of *Kan* is one of the Eight Trigrams, which indicates water and the east.

²⁵ As for this "*Kan*", there are different translations. In Richard Rutt's translation, he mentions that Richard Wilhelm translated it as "abysmal" (p. 120), which is still debatable. Besides, according to Richard Rutt, "*Kan*" also symbolizes "moving water" and "the second son" (p. 174). Here, due to the vague translation, it might be better to keep the original Chinese pinyin, "*Kan*". For the details of "*Kan*" and other Trigrams, see Richard Rutt. 2013. *Zhouyi: A New Translation with Commentary of the Book of Changes*. 1st ed. London: Routledge. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/10.4324/9781315028989>.

²⁶ *Gui* is the tenth heavenly stems. Within the heavenly stems, *Gui* belongs to *Yin* and indicates water. The direction implied by *Gui* is the north.

²⁷ *Zi* is the first earthly branch. Within the earthly branches, *Zi* indicates the north and the animal rat.

²⁸ *Chou* is the second earthly branch. Within the earthly branches, *Chou* indicates the north by east 30 degrees and the animal ox.

²⁹ *Yin* is the third earthly branch. Within the earthly branches, *Yin* indicates the north by east 60 degrees and the animal tiger.

³⁰ *Mao* is the fourth earthly branch. Within the earthly branches, *Mao* indicates the east and the animal rabbit.

³¹ *Chen* is the fifth earthly branch. Within the earthly branches, *Chen* indicates the south by east 60 degrees and the animal dragon.

³² *Si* is the sixth earthly branch. Within the earthly branches, *Si* indicates the south by east 30 degrees and the animal snake.

³³ *Wu* is the sixth earthly branch. Within the earthly branches, *Wu* indicates the south and the animal horse.

³⁴ *Wei* is the seventh earthly branch. Within the earthly branches, *Wei* indicates the south by west 30 degrees and the animal goat.

³⁵ *Shen* is the eighth earthly branch. Within the earthly branches, *Shen* indicates the south by west 60 degrees and the animal monkey.

people feel stomachache. [The toilet] in *You*³⁶ is inauspicious. [The toilet] in *Xu*³⁷ is auspicious. [The toilet] in *Hai*³⁸ is auspicious. The toilet in the direction of the *Qing*-color dragon (*Qinglong*)³⁹ will disturb the head of the household, causing declination. If [a] fetus and human hair are found in the toilet, it is inauspicious for the household. The toilet located at the southeast corner will cause a sudden death. The toilet located in the direction of Black Turtle (*Xuanwu*)⁴⁰ is detrimental to children. The toilet connected to the kitchen range will [bring] a bad reputation [to the household]. If [people] get in the door and then see the toilet, it is ominous. If the toilet gathers dust, [people] will contract urinary disease⁴¹. The toilet located at the west corner will hinder offspring. Planting trees on the toilet, people will die if the troops are dispatched. The toilet [built] during May and June is to subdue dragons. 廁近坎，坎水為水，水至穢濁，故可造廁，令宅內廁在癸。廁在子，害家長及二人。在丑，為鬼所害。在寅，吉。在卯辰地，數病。在巳，見血。在午，害家長。在未，多官事，貧。在申，令人腹痛。在酉，不吉。在戌，吉。在亥，吉。廁在青龍上，妨家長，衰。小兒胎及人發在廁內，家不利。廁在東南角，出暴死人。廁在玄武上，不利小兒。廁在灶相連內，有惡名。入門見廁，凶。廁內著灰，淋病。廁在西角，妨子孫。廁上種樹，出兵死人。廁在五月六月，伏龍故也(Jin 2007, 80-81)。

This narrative was found in [*Huang(?)*] *Di tui wuxing yinyang deng zhai tu jing* ([*皇(?)*]帝推五姓陰陽等宅圖經) that was allegedly written by the legendary Yellow Emperor (Huangdi, ?-?⁴²). Although the authenticity of the authorship of this work and the existence of the alleged author have not been confirmed, it is undoubted that the geomancy of the toilet's location had existed since the Pre-Qin period (before B.C.E. 221).

Through this work, it can be surmised that the location of toilets exerts influence on various aspects of ordinary people's lives. Interestingly, among all the toilet sites cited

³⁶ *You* is the ninth earthly branch. Within the earthly branches, *You* indicates the west and the animal rooster.

³⁷ *Xu* is the tenth earthly branch. Within the earthly branches, *Xu* indicates the north by west 60 degrees and the animal dog.

³⁸ *Hai* is the eleventh earthly branch. Within the earthly branches, *Hai* indicates the north by west 30 degrees and the animal pig.

³⁹ *Qinglong* is one of the Four Symbols of the Chinese constellations, which represents the east.

⁴⁰ *Xuanwu* is one of the Four Symbols of the Chinese constellations, which represents the north.

⁴¹ The disease that is referred to here, *Linbing*, is different from its modern meaning, "gonorrhoea". In ancient China, *Lingbing* indicates the symptom of dribble urine.

⁴² Currently, no solid evidence shows the specific birth date and death date of Huangdi. Whether Huangdi existed in history is still a debatable issue. Legend had it that Huangdi was influential in geomantic and medical areas.

above, only three cases lead to an auspicious outcome. The majority of toilet sites are detrimental to people. That is to say, this work is a guidance on the location of toilets in preventing life-threatening harm and bad fortune.

Although the earliest extant Zigu record is a Liu Song record, Zigu belief could be traced back to a much earlier time. Therefore, the close connection between toilets and pigsties during the pre-Western Han period was most likely to provide an underlying foundation of Zigu's story.

Chapter Two The relation between Zigu as a latrine goddess and toilets

2.1. The duty of Zigu's archetype in toilets

The first record of Zigu could be dated back to *Yiyuan*⁴³ written in the Liu Song dynasty by Liu Jingshu. In this narrative, Zigu died as a miserable concubine on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month and was worshipped around toilets or pigsties as a goddess:

In the world there is a goddess known as the Purple Maiden⁴⁴. From antiquity the story has been passed down that she was a concubine in a certain family, and that the head wife was jealous of her and always gave her vile tasks⁴⁵ to perform. On the fifteenth day of the first lunar month she died of anger. That is why people now make images of her⁴⁶ on that day. At night they welcome her at the privy or by the pigsty railing, invoking her with the words “Zixu’s not here. (This was the husband’s name.) Old lady Cao’s gone home. (This was the head wife’s name.) The little maiden can come out and play!” When the person holding the image feels it grow heavy, this means that the goddess has arrived. Wine and fruits are set out for her, and then one perceives that her face has brightened and flushed, and she starts jumping about. She can divine all sorts of affairs and can predict the year’s silk harvest, and her prognostications often hit the mark. If the prediction is favorable, she dances about, and if unfavorable, she rolls her eyes. A certain Mr. (Mrs.) Meng⁴⁷ of Pingchang⁴⁸ never would believe

⁴³ *Yiyuan* is a collection of stories of the strange compiled by Liu Jingshu. According to Robert Campany’s *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China*, *Yiyuan* is extant in a ten-juan version comprising 382 items (p. 78). The Zigu story in *Yiyuan* provides us an understanding of the time, place, and the process of worshipping Zigu in the fifth century.

⁴⁴ Robert Campany translates Zigu as “Purple Maiden”, which was also known as “Tzū Ku” in Wade-Giles. For the sake of coherence, hereinafter refer as Zigu.

⁴⁵ Here, the original Chinese text is “每以穢事相次役”. I think it might be better to translate “穢事” as “filthy tasks” rather than Campany’s translation, “vile tasks”.

⁴⁶ From the narrative, it seems that Zigu believers in the Liu Song dynasty must have certain knowledge of what Zigu looks like, or at least certain features, to “make images of her”, unfortunately, which did not come down to us.

⁴⁷ Here, the original Chinese word is “Meng Shi 孟氏”. Campany translated it as Mr. Meng, a man. The way to read *Shi* 氏 as the surname of the male in ancient times could be traced back to *Zuozhuan* 左傳 (*The Zuo Tradition* or *The Commentary of Zuo*). However, what is neglected by Campany is that *Shi* 氏 could also be used to refer to married women, the example of which could be found in *Zuozhuan* as well (for example, “Duke Zhuang’s bottom part came out [of his mother’s womb] first, which astonished [his mother] Jiang Shi, 姜氏莊公寤生, 驚姜氏”). That is to say, it is hard to claim the gender of this “Meng Shi” here only according to the given information. However, considering the early customs of Zigu belief, the people who were involved in the worship of Zigu were usually women. Here Meng Shi is more likely to be a woman.

⁴⁸ According to the *Chinese Civilization in Time and Space* (中華文明之時空基礎架構) published by Academia Sinica and the *Buddhist Studies Place Authority Databases* (地名規範檢索), due to the duplication of the same place name, this Pingchang 平昌 in question has several different possible locations. For a detailed analysis, see Chapter Three (3.3).

this. When he (she)⁴⁹ came forward to take hold of the image herself, she was propelled right up out of the room and away, never to be seen again (Campany 2015, 85)⁵⁰.

世有紫姑神，古來相傳云：是人家妾，為大婦所嫉，每以穢事相次役。正月十五日，感激而死，故世人以其日作其形，夜於廁間或豬欄邊迎之，祝曰：子胥不在，是其婿名也。曹姑亦歸曹，即其大婦也。小姑可出戲，投者覺重，便是神來，奠設酒果，亦覺貌輝輝有色，即跳躩不住，能占眾事，卜未來，蠶桑。又善射鉤，好則大儂，惡便仰眠。平昌孟氏恒不信，躬試往投，便自躍茅屋而去，永失所在也(Liu n.d., 5b-6a)。

As one of the most famous and prevalent latrine goddesses in popular religion, the reason why Zigu was connected with toilets was strangely absent from the earliest record. The only mention of the toilet in this earliest narrative was the worship place of Zigu, at the privy or by the pigsty railing, but without any explanations of the reason behind it.

The explicit reference⁵¹ of the connection between “Zigu” and toilets appeared in *Zigu shen ji* (子姑神記)⁵², written by Su Shi. The descended Zigu (子姑) narrated her story to the audience:

...Qie ([a humble form of self-reference] refers to herself) came from Shouyang. [My]last name is He, [my] first name is Mei and [my]courtesy name is Liqin. [I] read books and have written prose since my youth, and then [I] married an actor. During the Chuigong era (685-688) of the Tang dynasty (618-907), the District Magistrate of Shouyang killed my husband and took me as his concubine. However, his wife was so jealous and ferocious. [I] was killed in the toilet. Even though I have already died, I still dared not to tell [what happened]. A heavenly messenger noticed this and

⁴⁹ Campany uses “he” to refer to this “Meng Shi”. According to the abovementioned analysis (Note 47), I changed this “he” to “she” with parentheses.

⁵⁰ This translation is based on Robert Campany’s full translation of *Yiyuan*, Item138, p. 85, with some emendations by me.

⁵¹ The first narrative that explicitly connected Zigu with toilets was *Xian yi lu* 顯異錄 written in the Tang dynasty. Unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge, all the existing *Xian yi lu* narrative of Zigu were found to be quoted from secondary sources, for example, *Tian zhong ji* 天中記.

⁵² *Zigu shen ji* was collected in *Dongpo xuji* (in *Su Wenzhong gong quanji*). The story of *Zigu shen ji* records a series of Zigu invitations that Su Shi heard and attended in person during 1080-1081. As a typical example that proves the changes in Zigu invitation, the descended “Zigu” in *Zigu shen ji* was able to talk and compose poems, which was different from Zigu’s abilities recorded in the Liu Song dynasty. For a full translation of this *Zigu shen ji* story, see Chapter Five (5.2).

Here, although the Chinese pronunciations are the same, Zigu, the Chinese characters are different. The one in question is 紫(purple), in contrast, the one in the title of Su Shi’s prose is 子(infant, child).

redressed the injustice for me. Moreover, [the heavenly messenger] made me recognized by the human world. That is the so-called Zigu goddess in the world... 妾壽陽人也。姓何氏，名媚，字麗卿。自幼知讀書屬文，為伶人婦。唐垂拱中，壽陽刺史害妾夫，納妾為侍妾。而其妻妬悍甚。見殺於廁。妾雖死不敢訴也。而天使見之，為直其冤，且使有所識於人間。蓋世所謂子姑神者...(Su [n.d.]1468, 21a-22a)

In this narrative, the relation between Zigu and toilets was specifically presented as that toilet was the deathplace of Zigu. With regard to the designation of Zigu, some scholars took it for granted that the Zigu (子姑) in Su Shi's prose was exactly the same Zigu (紫姑) that appeared in the *Yiyuan* narrative. Be that as it may, the different narratives of these two Zigu make this argument problematic. Not only was the personal information of these two Zigu different, but their abilities were also different. For the previous Zigu (紫姑), she had the ability to foretell the future, good and bad luck, and no specific writing ability was mentioned. However, for the second Zigu (子姑), in Su Shi's narrative, the attention focused on her ability to compose literary works. As a matter of fact, the designation of "Zigu" had already changed from simply an individual name to a category name since the Northern Song dynasty. As discussed in Chapter Five, this Zigu narrative in Su Shi's prose corroborated that inviting Zigu was not limited to invite the original Zigu (the spirit of that pathetic concubine) anymore. Instead, it was more like a general god-invitation case, bearing a category name, "Zigu invitations".

For the question of why the ritual of worshipping Zigu was performed nearby toilets and pigsties, scholars still hold different opinions, which could be divided into two arguments, based on whether the toilet was Zigu's deathplace or not. In her article, Xu Haiyan mentions that the reason why people chose toilets or pigsties as the worship place was not only because Zigu died in the toilet, but also having the consideration of avoiding distractions according to the narrative in *Dong lan*⁵³, "it has to be quiet between pigsties

⁵³ Unfortunately, I was not able to find the full text of *Dong lan*. The limited content about Zigu in *Dong lan* was partially quoted in *Jingchu suishiji* and several other sources. As for *Jingchu suishiji*, see Note 56.

and toilets, then [the ritual of worshipping] Zigu could be practiced (溷廁之間必須靜，然後致紫姑)” (Xu 2005, 122)⁵⁴. On the other side, Chao Weipang points out that the reason why people go to toilets to invite Zigu was not because the toilet was her deathplace. It was where people stored sieves and brooms, which were the tools used in the ritual of worshipping Zigu⁵⁵. Moreover, this kind of worshipping ritual (by holding a sieve) later developed into the so-called spirit writing (Chao 1942, 26-27).

However, piecing primary sources together seems to provide another possible explanation of the Zigu-toilet connection.

In the mid-sixth-century work *Jingchu suishiji* (Record of the Seasons of Jingchu)⁵⁶, the prerequisite of the Zigu worship ritual was pointed out — an old saying says that it has to be quiet between pigsties and toilets, then [the ritual of worshipping] Zigu could be practiced (Zong [n.d.]1922, 3b). It is worth noting that the character “quiet” (*Jing* 靜) shares the same meaning as the character “clean” (*Jing* 淨) in ancient times. In the abovementioned sentence, the character “quiet” (*Jing* 靜) is more likely to express the meaning of “clean”. That is to say, the prerequisite of worshipping Zigu is to make sure that the possible worship places between the pigsty and the toilet are clean. Considering the narrative that Zigu was asked to undertake some filthy tasks, which was indicated in the *Yiyuan* record, it is reasonable to deduce that one of the filthy tasks was to clean toilets.

Besides, in the *Baishi liutie*⁵⁷, the chapter on pigs refers to a feature of pigs, to be fed

⁵⁴ Here, I quoted this quotation, “it has to be quiet between pigsties and toilets, then [the ritual of worshipping] Zigu could be practiced”, from *Jingchu suishiji*. “溷廁之間必須靜，然後致紫姑”，see Zong Lin 宗懷. [n.d.]1922. *Jingchu suishiji* 荆楚歲時記. Baoyantang miji 寶顏堂秘笈, edited by Chen Jiru 陳繼儒, 3b. For the connotation of this quotation, I have a different understanding. The character “Jing 靜” could be read as same as “Jing 淨” in ancient Chinese. For the detailed analysis, see below.

⁵⁵ In personal correspondence, Dr. Bailey points out an interesting and meaningful question - why did they (people) use such implements? Currently, to the best of my knowledge, no record directly explains why people used sieves and brooms to invite Zigu. Inspired by Li Yuhang’s “Mimicking Guanyin with Hairpins: Jewelry as a Means of Transcendence”, considering that sieves and brooms are common tools that women use in daily chores, I speculate that sieves and brooms acting as a representation of the chore tools, form a symbolic connection between the female believers and the female goddess, Zigu.

⁵⁶ *Jingchu suishiji* is written by Zong Lin (502-565) during the Northern and Southern dynasties. It documents customs and traditions in the Chu area (present day Hubei Province) around the sixth century.

⁵⁷ *Baishi liutie* is an encyclopedia written by Bai Juyi (772-846) in the Tang dynasty. The original name of that book was *Jingshi leiyao* (經史類要). In this book, Bai Juyi collected idioms and literary allusions and arranged them into

inside of the pigsty, and followed with an interlinear note, “Zigu mei shi(/si) yu juanli (紫姑每食於圈裏)”(Bai n.d., 68a), which could be read in two different ways, depending on the meaning of the character “*Shi(/Si)*” that could be read as either “*Shi* (to eat)” or “*Si* (to feed)”. First, if this character is read as “*Shi*”, then this sentence means that Zigu ate in the pigsty. Second, if it is read as “*Si*”, then it means that Zigu fed pigs in the pigsty. Considering the context that this account was under the chapter “pigs”, the first reading, “*Shi*”, is not as directly related to pigs as the second reading. As for the second reading, Zigu’s duties were not only the above mentioned “cleaning the toilets”, but also feeding the pigs in the pigsty.

It can be assumed that even though the earliest record of Zigu in *Yiyuan* made no mention of the connection between Zigu and toilets, with the help of later sources, cleaning toilets and feeding pigs in the pigsty might very well have been Zigu’s primary duties around toilets and pigsties.

Here, identifying the connection between Zigu and the toilet provokes a new question. Considering the close connection between the goddess Zigu and the filthy toilets and unclean pigsties, and the apparent contradiction between sanctity and uncleanness, how could Zigu be considered as a sacred deity and worshipped by believers?

This issue can be solved in two different aspects. First, theoretically speaking, as pointed out by Mary Douglas, “What is clean in relation to one thing may be unclean in relation to another, and vice versa” (Douglas 1991, 9). Although Zigu may be considered as unclean in relation to the toilet and the pigsty, it will not hinder her from being clean and sacred in other aspects, for instance, being worshipped as a goddess. Second, although Zigu’s duties are closely connected to some typical representations of impurity, the uncleanness was actually imposed on her in a coercive way. She was forced to do filthy works and being exposed to the uncleanness was not her own will. In this case, nonetheless

different categories as sources for his works.

the toilet and pigsty were regarded as unclean, the strong contrast between the filthy environment and Zigu's tragedy actually made Zigu stand out and aroused people's empathy.

2.2. Zigu and the title of the latrine goddess

After clarifying the duties of Zigu in the toilet and pigsty, here is a tricky question waiting for us. When it comes to the relation between “Zigu” and the title “latrine goddess”, there were generally two different narratives. In some records, the relation was described as “Zigu was designated as the latrine goddess”, for instance, the narrative in *Tanyuan*⁵⁸, “Zigu, is the latrine goddess (紫姑者，廁神也)” (Kong [n.d.]1922, 2b). In contrast, the relation was depicted as “the latrine goddess was called Zigu”, taking the account in *Mengxi bitan* (Jottings from the Mengxi)⁵⁹ as an example, “according to the old tradition, [people] welcomed the latrine goddess on the fifteenth day of the first month⁶⁰ and called it Zigu (舊俗正月望夜迎廁神，謂之紫姑)” (Shen [1086-1093?], 5a). At first glance, it was basically the same meaning but expressed in different ways. However, in the first expression, as the normal declarative sentences in classical Chinese, no emphasis was put on either clause. To be more precise, there was no accentuation on the uniqueness of the latrine god(dess). There might be a latrine goddess named Zigu, and other latrine gods might also be concurrent at the same time. In other words, there was no doubt that Zigu was the latrine goddess, but the latrine deities that existed at that time were not necessarily named Zigu. However, for the second expression, “the latrine goddess was called Zigu”,

⁵⁸ *Tanyuan* is a *biji* collection allegedly written by Song scholar Kong Pingzhong (1044-1111). The authorship of *Tanyuan* is still under uncertainty. Unfortunately, as for the content of *Tanyuan*, some statements are not consistent with the evidence in other sources, and some stories are rather fragmentary. *Biji* is a genre in Chinese literature. A book of *Biji* might contain different types of works, such as reading notes, anecdotes, short stories, and others.

⁵⁹ *Mengxi bitan* is a *biji* (miscellaneous notes) written by Shen Kuo (1031-1095) during 1089-1093. The *Mengxi* in the title of this book is the name of the place where Shen Kuo lived after 1088. It is located in present day Zhengjiang, Jiangsu Province. According to Endymion Wilkinson's *Chinese History: A Manual, Revised and Enlarged*, “one third of the 507 notes (in *Mengxi bitan*) record the author's observations of natural phenomena and the results of his experiments” (p. 854).

⁶⁰ Wang Ri, the fifteenth day of a month in the lunar calendar.

having “the latrine goddess” as the subject of this sentence, had the connotation of a corresponding one-to-one relation.

It is worth noting that the second formulation, the exclusive latrine goddess-Zigu combination, did not appear until the Song dynasty. That was probably because when it came to the so-called latrine god before the Song dynasty, it always referred to other male gods, like Hou Di (后帝)⁶¹ and Guo Deng (郭登)⁶², rather than Zigu. Even though Zigu’s story was closely related to toilets, there was no explicit connection between the formal title of the latrine deity and Zigu. Taking the *Yiyuan* as a typical example, although it included the first Zigu narrative, there was no direct mention that Zigu was equivalent to the latrine deity at that time. Instead, a quotation in this book explicitly pointed out that the name of the latrine god was Hou Di (Liu n.d., 3a)⁶³. Although Zigu did have a close connection with toilets and did gradually develop her reputation as the latrine goddess, regarding Zigu as the formal latrine goddess seems to have not become the mainstream in the Liu Song dynasty⁶⁴.

⁶¹ In the same *Yiyuan* where the earliest Zigu narrative was found, a male figure named Hou Di was also closely related to toilets. It seemed that at least in the Liu Song dynasty, it was Hou Di, rather than Zigu, who held the status as the commonly known latrine deity. Although Hou Di seemed to have this formal status as the latrine god, the story of Hou Di was only recorded in several literary works. The story in *Yiyuan* was repeatedly quoted, if not verbatim, mainly from the Northern and Southern dynasties to the Song dynasty.

⁶² Another so-called latrine god named Guo Deng was found in the Song dynasty collection *Taiping guangji* (Wide gleanings made in the Taiping Era). The story of Guo Deng happened in the Tang dynasty, the first year of the Baoli reign (825). One night, when the Censor, Qian Fangyi (?-?), went to the toilet, he encountered the latrine god, Guo Deng, who had messy hair and Qingyi (Qing-color clothes) (Li Fang, *Taiping guangji*, 7b).

⁶³ The full story was that Tao Kan (259-334) once went to the toilet and saw tens of people holding official seals. One of them was wearing red clothing with a flat turban (*Pingshang ze* 平上幘), called himself “Hou Di” and said, “[I] regard *Jun* (a vocative expression of “You”) as a venerable person, so [I] came to tell [you the information] and [if you could] keep it secret for three years, [you] will be rich and distinguished to the extreme.” Kan then got up but the god disappeared. There was an official seal with the character *Gong* towards where he defecated. *Za Wu Xing Shu* says, “The latrine god is Hou Di.” (“陶侃曾如廁，見數十人，悉持大印。有一人朱衣平上幘，自稱後帝云：‘以君長者，故來相報，三載勿言，富貴至極。’侃便起，旋失所在，有大印作公字當其穢處。雜五行書曰：‘廁神曰後帝’”， see Liu Jingshu 劉敬叔. n.d. *Yiyuan* 異苑 (A Garden of Marvels). Wenyuange siku quanshu ed. Vol. 05, 3a.)

⁶⁴ It is necessary to mention that there was a gap in primary sources about Zigu between the sixth century and the Song dynasty. One major factor for this might be the development of printing technology with a concomitant increase in printed texts, while another could be the change from women to male literati as the main practitioners of Zigu worship in the Song, which ensured a greater number of narratives being recorded.

Chapter Three The designation and origin of Zigu

3.1. The phonologic context of Zigu

Speaking of the origin of the name Zigu, in his article, “The Origin and Growth of the Fu Chi”, Chao Weipang points out a significant opinion that the name Zigu (Tzu-ku) came from the wrong pronunciation of the Tz’u-ku (Latrine lady, Cegu) (Chao 1942, 24). Thanks to the lexicographic method syllabic transcriptions (*fanqie*)⁶⁵, the original pronunciation could come down to us. According to the *Hanzi yuanliu zidian*⁶⁶, the original pronunciation of *Ce* in ancient times was *Ci*⁶⁷ (Gu 2003, 582). As corroborated by several linguists, for example, William H. Baxter, the pronunciation of *Ci* in Middle Chinese is very similar to that of *Zi*, if not identical⁶⁸.

In terms of this explanation, however, there are still two questionable points. First, even though the similarity existed between the original pronunciation of *Ce* (*Ci*) and *Zi*, it is still a puzzle why the Chinese character, 紫, was employed as the ideographical expression of this pronunciation. There are various Chinese characters with the same pronunciation *Zi/Ci*; to make it simpler, people could even continue to adopt *Ce* as the designation of the latrine god. How could *Zi* (紫) become the widely circulated name of it? Second, considering that it might also have the different appellation of Zigu in different areas in China because of the disparity of dialects, it is hard to claim that Zigu was due to the mispronunciation of “Cegu [Tz’u-ku]” without any certain evidence. Speaking of the ancient pronunciation, besides the character *Ce*, the phonetic difference can also be seen in

⁶⁵ As a traditional Chinese lexicographical method, *fanqie* indicates the pronunciation of one Chinese character by using two other characters.

⁶⁶ *Hanzi yuanliu zidian* is a modern dictionary designed for reading both classical Chinese and modern Chinese. It not only provides the different variants of Chinese characters but also contains the original configuration and the evolutionary process of Chinese characters.

⁶⁷ The entry of *Ce* in *Shuowen jiezi* also records that *Chu* and *Li* (viz. *Ci*) are used to express the pronunciation of *Ce*, by employing the method *fanqie*.

⁶⁸ As for the pronunciations of *Ci* and *Zi* in Old Chinese and Middle Chinese, I consulted the list of reconstructed Old Chinese items, <http://ocbaxtersagart.lsa.umich.edu/BaxterSagartOCbyMandarinMC2014-09-20.pdf> provided by William H. Baxter and Laurent Sagart. See William H. Baxter and Laurent Sagart. 2014. “The Baxter-Sagart Reconstruction of Old Chinese.”, last modified Jan 10, 2016, accessed Jul 25, 2020, <http://ocbaxtersagart.lsa.umich.edu/>.

the character *Zi* (purple). According to a Song dynasty rime dictionary, *Ji Yun* (Collected Rimes)⁶⁹, the ancient pronunciation of *Zi* is “*Ji*”, which derives from the *fanqie* of “*Jiang*” and “*Shi*” (Ding 1039, 10b)⁷⁰. If *Zi* also has another pronunciation, then it is hard to claim *Ce* and *Zi* shared a similar pronunciation in ancient times. Hence, only based on the potential similarity of pronunciation of the characters *Ce* and *Zi*, it is untenable to argue that the name *Zigu* [*Tzu-ku*] was due to the wrong pronunciation of *Cegu* [*Tz’u-ku*].

3.2. The background of *Zigu* in different dynasties

It is worth stressing that there was an incompatible timeframe existing in *Zigu* belief. The origin of the tale of *Zigu* and the cult of worshipping *Zigu* emerged from the Liu Song dynasty, but a Song dynasty record specifies her background and her personal name, He Mei, which appeared and supposedly circulated in the Tang dynasty. Why and how did this incompatible timeframe happen⁷¹?

In his article, Chao Weipang points out that *Zigu* would not be that lady’s name. “Otherwise, they would not have given her the name Ho Mei [He Mei]” (Chao 1942, 24). Although it is reasonable to say that, it is still possible to speculate that the narrative of He Mei was actually highly influenced by literati in the Northern Song dynasty, as Pan Chengyu mentioned in his article. According to the record of Su Shi in the *Songshi* (History of Song)⁷², the year Su Shi wrote this prose *Zigu shen ji*, was right after the year that the *Wutai shi an* (Crow Terrace Poetry Trial)⁷³ occurred. Pan Chengyu points out that this

⁶⁹ The first rhyme dictionary, *Qieyun* was compiled by Lu Fayuan in 601. Although, unfortunately, the full copy did not come down to us, other later rhyme dictionaries were highly influenced by it, such as *Guangyun* and *Jiyun*.

⁷⁰ The same pronunciation was also corroborated by another rhyme dictionary, *Guangyun*, though through a different character pair, “*Jiang*” and “*Ch*”.

⁷¹ This question can be answered with the recognition of the changes in *Zigu* belief (Chapter Five). Here, by bringing out this question, I would like to provide a detailed analysis of the *Zigu* records written by Su Shi and offer my thinking process as well.

⁷² *Songshi* was edited by Tuotuo (Toghto 脫脫, 1313-1355) from 1343 to 1345. It covers the history of the Song dynasty from 960 to 1279. According to Endymion Wilkinson’s *Chinese History: A Manual, Revised and Enlarged*, “the editorship was credited to the chancellor Tuotuo, but the compiling was done by a group of officials from his office and from the Yuan Guoshi yuan 國史院(Yuan Historiography Academy)” (p. 847).

⁷³ Before the occurrence of the Crow Terrace Poetry Trial, due to the conflicting political opinion with Wang Anshi and disapproval of Wang Anshi’s new policies, Su Shi petitioned Emperor Shenzong to let him take office out of the

Zigu in question was the embodiment of Su Shi's self (Pan 2000, 42). In Pan's opinion, Su Shi did some literary recreations of Zigu's figure. Under Su Shi's narrative, Zigu was transformed from a folk goddess into a literary figure who shared similar distress and frustration with him (Pan 2000, 43). First, I do not think that the story of He Mei was more or less recreated by Su Shi. Second, although it is a common practice for male literati to use a female voice or representative to express their own ideas or to complain about being underappreciated, it is too literal and far-fetched to get this conclusion by matching the details in the *Zigu shen ji* with Su Shi's works⁷⁴. In order to conduct a thorough examination, it is necessary to provide the translation of Su Shi's *Zigu shen ji*:

The third year of the Yuan Feng era (1080), the first day of the first [lunar] month, I left the capital and came to Huangzhou. [I] arrived at the [Qi'an] Prefecture⁷⁵ on the first day of the second [lunar] month. The second year, *Jinshi*⁷⁶ Pan Bing told me, "it is really strange. When you [Gong]⁷⁷ were first appointed [to serve in Huangzhou], the people in Huangzhou did not know at all. A goddess descended in the Guo family, who moved to Huangzhou from the North part of China. [The goddess] talked with people with a loud voice and was good at composing poems. [The goddess once 'said',] 'Mr. Su will come, but it is too late for me to see [him].' Later on, you arrived on the

capital. At that time, he noticed more drawbacks in new policies. He indirectly satirized them in his poems. However, unfortunately, the one who led the new policies was Emperor Shenzong rather than Wang Anshi at that time. That is to say, although it was an indirect satire, the person that Su Shi actually offended was the Emperor, which was considered as an extreme crime in premodern China. This case was prosecuted by the *Investigating Censor* working in the Censorate, which was also called "Wutai (Crow Terrace)".

⁷⁴ Below is an example in Pan's article. "After Su Shi was released from the prison, he wrote two poems named "Shier yue ershiba ri, mengen zeshou jianjiao shuibu yuanwailang huangzhou tuanlian fushi, fu yong qianyun". One of these poems says, "Why has to trace this calamity thoroughly, could it be said that there is a reason for getting a reward without deserving it." This narrative of Su Shi and the narrative of Zigu—" [She] did not tell the name of that governor all along", are sharing the same level of propriety." ("出獄以後，蘇軾作《十二月二十八日，蒙恩責授檢校水部員外郎黃州團練副使，復用前韻》二首，其一云'此災何必深追咎，竊祿從來豈有因'，這與紫姑'終不指言刺史之姓名'，可謂同有禮矣". See Pan Chengyu 潘承玉. 2000. "Zhuohui ceshen yu yaotiao nüxian——Zigu shenhua wenhua yiyun fawei 濁穢廁神與窈窕女仙——紫姑神話文化意蘊發微(The Filthy Latrine God or the Graceful Female Immortal - the Elucidation of the Cultural Implication of Zigu Tale)." *Journal of Shaoxing College of Arts and Sciences* 紹興文理學院學報(04): 43.) Although I think Pan's analysis is too far-fetched, I do partially agree with his argument about the connections between Zigu's story and Su Shi's experience. I would argue that the similar distress and frustration sparked Su Shi's interest and aroused his empathy to record Zigu's story (see Chapter Five).

⁷⁵ Qi'an was an alternative name of Huangzhou during the Northern Song dynasty.

⁷⁶ According to Charles O. Hucker's *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (p. 167), *Jinshi* (進士) is a "degree or status often compared to the academic doctorate in the modern West, conferred on successful candidates in the highest-level regular civil service recruitment examinations, qualifying them for appointment to government office."

⁷⁷ In classical Chinese, *Gong* is an honorific way to refer to a man. Here it refers to Su Shi.

day when the goddess left.” The first [lunar] month of the second year, [Pan] Bing said [to Su Shi] again, “the goddess is descending in the Guo family again.” I went there to witness it. [They] dressed the grass and wood as a woman and put chopsticks into [her] hands. Two children supported [her]. [She] used chopsticks to draw characters: “Qie ([a humble form of self-reference] refers to herself) came from Shouyang. [My] last name is He, [my] first name is Mei⁷⁸ and [my] courtesy name is Liqin. [I] read books and have written prose since my youth, and then [I] married an actor. During the Chuigong era of the Tang dynasty, the District Magistrate of Shouyang killed my husband and took me as his concubine. However, his wife was so jealous and ferocious. [I] was killed in the toilet. Even though I have already died, I still dared not to tell[what happened]. A heavenly messenger noticed this and redressed the injustice for me. Moreover, [the heavenly messenger] made me recognized by the human world. That is the so-called Zigu goddess in the world. [Although] the so-called Zigu goddesses are numerous, no one is remarkable like me. [Here she is talking to the listener, Su Shi] please stop for the moment. I will compose poetry and dance to entertain you.” Tens of poems were quickly composed. All of those poems had ingenious ideas and mingled with jocosity. When asked about the truth of the transformation of gods, celestials, ghosts, and buddhas, her answers were all out of people’s expectation. The audience applauded. [She] made a bow again to request a favor, “Your prose is famous in the world. why stint a square inch of paper to not let the world know about me?”⁷⁹ [Hereafter is Su Shi’s comment:] I viewed Mrs. He’s life, learned that she was seized by a merciless official and killed by his ferocious wife. She was so deeply wronged, but she did not point out the name of that District Magistrate, which suggests she is a courteous person. She could foresee the life of guests who came here, but she still did not speak about others’ privacy and good or bad luck all along, which is discreet. Moreover, [she] knew and liked to compose prose and felt regretful to be unknown in the world, which is wise. [I] just roughly record it for her in order to reply to her intention.

元豐三年正月朔日，予始去京師來黃州。二月朔至郡。至之明年，進士潘丙謂予曰：“異哉！公之始受命，黃人未知也。有神降于州之僑人郭氏之第，與人

⁷⁸ When Judith Zeitlin refers to this He Mei story in her article, she points out, “there is also probably a connection to He Xiang 何仙姑, a female divinity who frequently descended into the planchette.” However, the legendary story of He Xiang has several different versions. It is hard to confirm her origin and background, let alone her connection with He Mei. See Judith Zeitlin. 1998. “Spirit Writing and Performance in the Work of You Tong 尤桐 (1618-1704).” *T’oung Pao* 84 (01): 102-135. (Note 50).

⁷⁹ Interesting here is the fact that He Mei (Zigu) was not the earliest female figure who asked for poems from literati. In a Tang story, a courtesan, Yan Lingbin 顏令賓, who was fond of writing poems and songs, “often begged some poems or song from examination candidates as a gift”. Considering that both He Mei and Yan Lingbin were able to compose poems, their behavior of asking for poems from literati indicated a sense of “like knows like” (Xingxing xiangxi 惺惺相惜). From these two cases, it is possible that the educated female figure asking poems from a literatus is a common literary motif. For the story of Yan Lingbin, see Paul Rouzer, *Articulated Ladies Gender and the Male Community in Early Chinese Texts*, p. 269.

言如響，且善賦詩，曰：‘蘇公將至，而吾不及見也。’已而公以是日至，而神以是日去。”其明年正月，丙又曰：“神復降于郭氏。”予往觀之，則衣草木為婦人，而置筭手中，二小童子扶焉，以筭畫字曰：妾壽陽人也。姓何氏，名媚，字麗卿。自幼知讀書屬文，為伶人婦。唐垂拱中，壽陽刺史害妾夫，納妾為侍妾。而其妻妬悍甚。見殺於廁。妾雖死不敢訴也。而天使見之，為直其冤，且使有所識於人間。蓋世所謂子姑神者，其類甚眾，然未有如妾之卓然者也。公少留，而為賦詩，且舞以娛公。詩數十篇，敏捷立成，皆有妙思，雜以嘲笑。問神仙鬼佛變化之理，其荅皆出於人意外。坐客撫掌，作道調梁州，神起舞中節，曲終再拜以請曰：公文名於天下，何惜方寸之紙，不使世人知有妾乎？予觀何氏之生，見掠於酷吏而遇害於悍妻，其怨深矣。而終不指言刺史之姓名，似有禮者。客至逆知其平生，而終不言人之陰私與休咎，可謂智矣。又知好文字而恥無聞於世，皆可賢者。粗為錄之，荅其意焉(Su [n.d.]1468, 21a-22a).

Through examining this narrative, it is not hard to figure out that *Zigu shen ji* is a record of folklore that documents a “Séance” of Zigu in detail. Although the author is a prestigious literatus, Su Shi, it does not mean this narrative could only be a literary recreation rather than a detailed record of what was believed to have truly happened. It might involve some personal feelings when Su Shi comments at the end of this record. However, before that, it is more like a general narrative record. Not only recording what happened in that “Séance”, Su Shi also wrote down the causation of it—the same goddess descended in the previous year and made a correct prediction on Su Shi’s appointment and arrival time when Su Shi was appointed to serve in Huangzhou.

The evidence that this *Zigu shen ji* was not a personal and literary recreation could also be found in another Zigu-related narrative recorded by Su Shi. It is *Tian zhuan ji*⁸⁰, which is written one year later than *Zigu shen ji*. In this narrative, Su Shi mentioned, “[people] commonly worshipped ghosts...[people] dressed dustpans and brooms as the Zigu goddess...The goddess who descended in the Guo family in Huangzhou was the most distinctive one. This year, the god who descended in the family of Wang Ruogu (?-?), who

⁸⁰ *Tian zhuan ji* is another Zigu record that is collected in *Su Wenzhong gong quanji*. In *Tian zhuan ji*, Su Shi recorded a Zigu descended in Wang Ruogu’s family in Huangzhou one year after the Zigu case in *Zigu shen ji*. This Zigu case is another typical example that proves the changes in Zigu invitation. As for the details, see Note 81 and Chapter Five (5.3).

is a person living in Huangzhou, was especially strange (江淮間俗尚鬼…必衣服箕帚為子姑神…黃州郭氏神最異。今年黃人汪若谷家，神尤奇)” (Su [n.d.]1468, 21a-22a)⁸¹. If the second record of Zigu does not exist, it is still tenable to say that Zigu’s previous suffering in *Zigu shen ji* was intentionally depicted by Su Shi to match with his own pathetic experience. However, the existence of this Zigu-related record in *Tian zhuan ji* proves that the Zigu narrative in *Zigu shen ji* is probably also based on a real “Séance” that Su Shi witnessed in person⁸². The reason why he recorded these Zigu cases was not to recreate some figures to express his own feelings but to document what happened during the Zigu “Séances”.

Besides, through examining these two Zigu narratives written by Su Shi, it deserves to be mentioned that a tendency in Zigu belief to move from an individual name to a category name was seen in the Song dynasty, probably starting from the Northern Song. Zigu was regarded as an individual figure, no matter as a living person or as a goddess. However, these two narratives written by Su Shi show that the designation “Zigu” had already commonly represented different gods who descended through the same activity – “inviting Zigu” since the Northern Song dynasty. Through Su Shi’s narrative, it is evident that the goddess who descended in the Guo family in the first two years was not the god who descended in Wang Ruogu’s family, even though both were given the title of the name “Zigu god(dess)”⁸³. If that is the case, back to the incompatible timeframe issue mentioned above, it might be possible that the later Northern Song dynasty’s Zigu record which

⁸¹ The reason that Su Shi commented “especially strange” was probably that the descended “Zigu god” in Wang Ruogu’s family successively involved two different male figures, see Chapter Five (5.3).

⁸² As for the veracity of Su Shi’s attendance of this Zigu invitation, only an annotation from *Su Wenzhong gong shi bianzhu jicheng zong’an* 蘇文忠公詩編注集成總案, which is a compilation of annotations of Su Shi’s work written by Qing scholar Wang Wengao 王文誥(1764-?), mentions that a deity descended in Guo Gou’s family in the first lunar month of the fourth year of the Yuan Feng era and [Su Shi and] Pan Bing went to [Guo’s place] and recorded the story of He Liqing (He Mei) (“元豐四年正月神降郭違家與潘丙往觀記何麗卿事”), see Wang Wengao 王文誥. [1823?]. *Su Wenzhong gong shi bianzhu jicheng zong’an* 蘇文忠公詩編注集成總案. Vol. 21, 1a. <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=38834&page=2>.

⁸³ Here it is of great importance to note that I use “Zigu goddess” to address the very Zigu who used to be a pathetic concubine. Since the Song dynasty, due to the descended “Zigu” can be either female or male, “Zigu god(dess)” will be used as the appellation.

specified the personal name and the family background of Zigu, was only one case among all those Zigu-related cases under the same category name—— Zigu god(dess), and was occasionally similar to the original Zigu story, but not completely based on it.

3.3. The geographical origin of Zigu

If we try to examine Zigu's geographical background, it is necessary to trace back to the earliest record of Zigu's story, *Yiyuan*. In this earliest record, following after the narrative of worshipping Zigu, a place named Pingchang was mentioned. Meng Shi, who was from Pingchang, did not believe Zigu invitations at the time, so she went to carry the image of Zigu in person. She then leaped through the thatched-roof cottage, and so [people] forever lost her whereabouts (平昌孟氏恒不信，躬試往投，便自躍茅屋而去，永失所在也) (Liu n.d., 5b). As a testimony of the outcome of this example of lack of belief in Zigu, this story was not necessarily related to the birthplace of the Zigu belief. However, there is no doubt that it was at least in Pingchang that Zigu belief existed, especially earlier than or during the time when the *Yiyuan* was written, which was the Liu Song dynasty. As the only place name mentioned in the earliest records of Zigu belief, Pingchang should have aroused scholars' attention, but surprisingly, has never been discussed.

Speaking of Pingchang, there were several different places named Pingchang in Chinese history⁸⁴. Since this Zigu narrative was included in *Yiyuan*, which was written during the Liu Song dynasty, those Pingchangs that were set up later than the fifth century are not taken into consideration here. Apart from this, according to the author Liu Jingshu of the *Yiyuan*, this Zigu belief has been passed down from antiquity (世有紫姑神，古來相傳云…) (Liu n.d., 5b), the story of Mrs. Meng as a related narrative, could have happened either in the past or in the Liu Song dynasty. However, after setting this very broad time filter, there were still four different locations named Pingchang in the *Chinese*

⁸⁴ According to the data in the *Chinese Civilization in Time and Space* 中華文明之時空基礎架構 (<http://cts.ascc.net/intro.php?lang=en>), there were 18 related places named Pingchang.

Civilization in Time and Space system⁸⁵, which matched the time range. These locations were respectively: (1) Pingchang in Fenzhou (present day Xixian in Shanxi Province) during the Northern Wei dynasty (386-534); (2) Pingchang in Qingzhou (present day Linzi and Qingzhou area in Shandong Province) during the Northern Wei dynasty and/or Liu Song dynasty⁸⁶; (3) Pingchang Prefecture during the Former Qin dynasty (317-420⁸⁷); and (4) Pingchang County in Changshan County, Dongyang Prefecture, Yangzhou during the Three Kingdoms period (221-280).

Here, it is crucial to bring in a historical text, the *Songshu* (Book of the Song)⁸⁸ which was written by Shen Yue (441-513) in the Liang dynasty (502-557), which offered important clues for us to figure out where this *Yiyuan* Pingchang was. First of all, the Pingchang referred to in the *Songshu* were all related to the Qingzhou area, if not all exactly located there. For example, an account that a white swallow (*Bai Yan*)⁸⁹ was seen in Pingchang, Liu Daolong (?-466), the Governor of the Qingzhou then offered it [to the Emperor]⁹⁰ was found in the *Zhi* (Treatises) section (Shen [488?], 16a). From this record, it is evident that the Pingchang here was within the jurisdiction of Qingzhou. At any rate, the Pingchang in Qingzhou undoubtedly existed during the Liu Song dynasty.

Second, in the *Songshu*, there was a clan named Meng that appeared as a famous

⁸⁵ *Chinese Civilization in Time and Space* is a project conducted by Academia Sinica. According to its introduction, Academia Sinica aims to “construct an integrated GIS-based application infrastructure within the spatial extent of China”. This project provides the contemporary corresponding geographical locations and detailed information of those locations from different dynasties. And the maps that this project bases on are Tan Qixiang’s *Zhongguo lishi dituji* 中國歷史地圖集(The Historical Atlas of China).

⁸⁶ It is noteworthy that this Qingzhou was located in the Northern Wei dynasty’s territory, according to the record in the *Chinese Civilization in Time and Space* system. However, according to *Zhongguo lishi dituji* 中國歷史地圖集(The Historical Atlas of China), Qingzhou, was located in present day Shandong peninsula within the territory of the Liu Song dynasty rather than the Northern Wei dynasty. Supposedly, the *Chinese Civilization in Time and Space* is based on the vectorization of the *Zhongguo lishi dituji*. This confusion was probably due to the battles of Qingzhou between the Northern Wei and the Liu Song in 458 and 467, respectively, which made the boundary around Qingzhou changeable. For the online version of this map, see <http://www.guoxue123.cn/other/map/pic/09/01.jpg>.

⁸⁷ Here, according to the *Chinese Civilization in Time and Space* data, that place was named as Pingchang Prefecture from 317-420. This time span was close to the reign period of the Former Qin dynasty, which was from 350-394.

⁸⁸ *Songshu* is the official history of the Liu Song dynasty compiled around 488 by Shen Yue. It covers the Liu Song history from 420-478. *Songshu* is one of the Twenty-Four Histories (Orthodox Histories).

⁸⁹ *Bai Yan* is an auspicious omen in ancient China.

⁹⁰ “白燕見平昌，青州刺史劉道隆以獻”，see Shen Yue 沈約. [488?]. *Songshu* 宋書(Book of the Song). Qing dynasty (Wuyingdian) ed. Vol. 29, 16a.

family in the Pingchang area. Several officials from this clan were not only mentioned in the *Liezhuan* (Ranked Biographies)⁹¹ section, but also referred to in the *Benji* (Basic Annals) section⁹². Here, a close connection between the Meng clan and Pingchang was found. As it proved by the family background information of some high officials (for example, Meng Chang and Meng Yi⁹³) in this Meng clan⁹⁴, this Pingchang under discussion was exactly the Pingchang in Qingzhou, rather than in other provinces.

Therefore, although this Zigu belief came down from ancient times, it is undoubted that as early as the Liu Song dynasty, if not much earlier⁹⁵, the related worship rituals of Zigu has already been performed in Qingzhou area within the Liu Song dynasty's territory close to the Yellow River area.⁹⁶

In terms of the geographical origin of Zigu, a description that Zigu was from the south deserves special attention. The narrative was from a collection of miracle stories, *Soushen milan*⁹⁷, written by Zhang Bingwen (?-?) in the Northern Song dynasty, “the deity Zigu, also known as Zi Xian (Purple Immortal), was a person of the South⁹⁸(紫姑神，世或稱之

⁹¹ For example, in volume 1 of the *Liezhuan* section, “Yu 瑀 was powerful at that time, and he was keeping up with the Joneses, like Meng Lingxiu 孟靈休 (?-?) from Pingchang, He Xu 何勗 (?-?) from Donghai and others.”(“瑀豪競於時，與平昌孟靈休、東海何勗等，並以輿馬驕奢相尚”). See Shen, *Songshu*, Vol. 41, 21b.

⁹² For example, in volume 1 of the *Benji* section, “Therefore, [Emperor Gaozu of the Liu Song was] together with [his younger] brother Daogui 道規 (370-412), Liu Yi 劉毅 (?-412) from the Pei County, Meng Chang 孟昶 (?-410) from Pingchang... planned with a sense of honor”(“高祖於是與弟道規、沛郡劉毅、平昌孟昶...並同義謀”). See Shen, *Songshu*, Vol. 01, 5b.

⁹³ According to volume 26 of the *Liezhuan* section, “[here this] Meng is Meng Yi (?-?), [his] courtesy name is Yanzhong 彥重, from Anqiu 安丘 in Pingchang. [His]brother [Meng]Chang is noble and illustrious, [so] Yi refused to be recruited in the court as an ordinary person.”(“孟卽孟顛，字彥重。平昌安丘人。兄昶貴盛，顛不就徵辟”). See Shen, *Songshu*, Vol. 66, 9a). Here the Anqiu in Pingchang is Anqiu County in present day Shandong Province. Shandong Province is where the ancient Qingzhou area was located. That is to say, this Pingchang, where the Meng family was from, was in the Qingzhou area.

⁹⁴ Although there is a possibility that the “Meng shi” in the *Yiyuan* record was therefore part of an elite family or lineage, without any direct evidence, currently we still cannot make a conclusion with certainty. It is possible that the “Meng” was a clan-surname for a whole village, or Meng shi belonged to a small branch of the Meng clan which did not have a close relation to the eminent Meng clan.

⁹⁵ The content of the first Zigu record indicates that the belief in Zigu could be traced back to an earlier time. Unfortunately, there is no earlier written record of it.

⁹⁶ Technically, comparing with the Northern Wei regime, the territory of the Liu Song regime was located in the South part of China at that time. But Qingzhou was actually situated near the north boundary of the Liu Song territory and was rather close to the Yellow River area.

⁹⁷ *Soushen milan* is a *zhiguai* collection written by Zhang Bingwen in 1113. This book mainly documents some stories about retribution and predestination that happened in the Northern Song dynasty.

⁹⁸ In personal correspondence, Dr. Bailey points out the concept of “the South” might be slightly different then. It is necessary to clarify the boundary of the Northern Song dynasty at that time. According to the *Zhongguo lishi dituji*, in 1111, the Northern Song territory ranged from Xiningzhou (near present day Xining) in the northwest, Daizhou

曰紫仙，南方人)” (Zhang [1113]1935, 24a). However, according to the Zigu records in the Northern Song dynasty, those records were mainly found in central China⁹⁹.



Map 1 Northern Song Zigu records

Clearly, this map¹⁰⁰ does not denote that the Zigu belief originated from or was limited to South China. As analyzed above, as early as the fifth century, a Zigu-related practice happened in Pingchang, which was in the Qingzhou area, a comparatively Northern area. Besides, the story of Zigu was also found in the mid-sixth century annotated record, *Jingchu suishiji*, which documented customs and traditions in the Chu area (present

(present day Dai county in Xinzhou, Hebei Province) in the north, and the Hainan Island in the south. Considering that the Northern Song territory was smaller than the present Chinese territory, “the South” in the Northern Song dynasty is very likely smaller and a little bit more south than the present South China (the south of the Yangzi River).

⁹⁹ According to Note 98, if the speculation that “the South” in the Northern Song dynasty is very likely smaller and a little bit more south than the present South China is true, then the area of central China in the Northern Song dynasty should be rather similar to the present central China.

¹⁰⁰ I downloaded the basic black-white map from the official website of the Ministry of Natural Sources of the People’s Republic of China. According to the primary sources collected from the Erudition database, I marked the locations where Zigu worship occurred. In those locations where more than one case was found, I also marked their amount. For instance, during the Northern Song dynasty, two cases were found in the Huangzhou area in present day Hubei Province, so there is a number “2” marked in the red circle.

As for maps of the Southern Song and the Ming dynasty, and changes on the Zigu records (from the Northern Song dynasty to the Ming dynasty), see Chapter Five.

day Hubei Province), a relatively central area. These two facts might shed new light on the issue of the origin of Zigu belief. In contrast to the common argument that Zigu was a person/goddess from South China, which was seen in both primary sources like *Soushen milan* and some scholars' articles¹⁰¹, the belief in Zigu was probably prevalent in central China where livelihood was mainly based on farming culture, taking into consideration the purpose of worshipping Zigu at the beginning —— practicing divinations for sericulture¹⁰².

A Chinese idiom perfectly summarizes the two different divisions of labor: *Nan geng nü zhi* (men tilling the farm and women weaving). If farming is the life task of most ordinary men in ancient China, by way of analogy, family handicrafts related to sericulture¹⁰³ dominated ordinary women's lives. This basic economic pattern in traditional society led to silkworms and mulberry gradually playing a vital role in women's lives. After figuring out the crucial status of sericulture in ancient women's lives, the behavior that connected the harvest of silkworms and mulberry with the belief in an outstanding female-incarnation goddess was understandable.

¹⁰¹ For example, in *Zigu xinyang liubian yanjiu*, Lin Jifu points out that Zigu was a goddess who originated in the Yangzi River area in South China. See Lin Jifu 林繼富. 2008. "Zigu xinyang liubian yanjiu 紫姑信仰流變研究(The Study in the Development of Zigu Belief)." *Journal of Yangtze University* 長江大學學報(01): 5-11.

¹⁰² It is evident that sericulture is not exactly equal to agriculture. But considering the division of labor between genders, as for central China, men were closely connected with "agriculture" while women were related to "sericulture".

¹⁰³ It is necessary to mention that both silkworms and mulberry are equally important in sericulture. Silkworms are the producer of the silk threads, and the leaves of the mulberry tree are the main food of silkworms.

Chapter Four The procedures and rituals of worshipping Zigu

4.1. Procedures and rituals

The complexity and diversity of rituals associated with the worship of Zigu are kaleidoscopic in nature. The detailed procedures hinge on not only the spatial diversity (different locales) but also the temporal difference (different dynasties).

In terms of this issue, some scholars have already provided their arguments and conclusions¹⁰⁴. In his article, Chao Weipang points out that there were two different kinds of performances in which brooms and sieves were the two main implements, respectively (Chao 1942, 15). Moreover, Chao Weipang argues that the earliest record of sieve-based invitation rituals, Su Shi's *Zigu shen ji*, could be seen as the supplementary narrative of the worship practice of Zigu in the Liu Song dynasty (the earliest record in *Yiyuan*) (Chao 1942, 15). However, the time factor¹⁰⁵ should not be ignored when we consider the difference and diversity in ritual. These two methods, the broom and sieve, seem not to have been used in early Zigu belief. It is evident that there was no mention of the specific utensil that was used in the worship ritual in the Northern and Southern dynasties (420-589). Only a general description was found, "people make her shape during the daytime of that day (故世人以其日作其形)" (Liu n.d., 5b). It was not until the Northern Song dynasty that some records referred to the employment of sieve (*Ji*) or bamboo utensil (*Shaoji*) in Zigu worship. As corroborated by the preface of Su Shi's poem *Shaonian you*¹⁰⁶, "Mr. Guo in Huangzhou, who moved from North China, invited the Zigu goddess in the first lunar month every year. [They] used the sieve as her belly and chopsticks as her mouth, and she would compose

¹⁰⁴ It is necessary to point out that the range of this chapter is limited to the procedures and rituals of inviting Zigu. Although the procedures and rituals of inviting Zigu were sometimes similar to that of spirit writing, the latter is not the topic of this chapter (and this thesis). For the studies of spirit writing, see Jordan and Overmyer, *The Flying Phoenix: Aspects of Chinese Sectarianism in Taiwan*; Xu, *Fuji mixun di yanjiu*; Chao Weipang. 1942. "The Origin and Growth of the Fu Chi." *Folklore Studies* 01: 9-27.

¹⁰⁵ Although both of these dynasties were mainly based in South China, Chao ignores the possible disparity between the customs of Zigu in the Liu Song dynasty and the Song dynasty, which were more than 400 years apart. Without a specific connection, it is not tenable to claim that the detailed worship practice could also be employed in a ritual 400 years earlier.

¹⁰⁶ The quotation here is an interlinear note in one of Su Shi's poems, *Shaonian you*. This note aims to explain the reason of composing this poem.

poems in an ashpan (黃之僑人郭氏，每歲正月迎紫姑神。以箕為腹，箸為口，畫灰盤中為詩)” (Su and Mao [1630?], 36b).

Considering the spatial diversity and temporal difference, in order to figure out the detailed procedures and rituals of worshipping Zigu, it is necessary to conduct a comparative study with several typical Zigu cases. First, from the aspect of temporal difference, a comparative analysis between the earliest Zigu record written by Liu Jingshu in the Liu Song dynasty and the widespread Zigu record written by Su Shi in the Northern Song dynasty will be provided below. Second, as for spatial diversity, considering that the Northern Song dynasty witnessed changes in Zigu belief, I will compare the Zigu ritual in several different accounts recorded in the Northern Song dynasty.

4.1.1. The temporal difference in Zigu ritual

	Liu Song dynasty ¹⁰⁷	Northern Song dynasty ¹⁰⁸
Offering	Wine and fruits	
Manikin	[People] make a Zigu image.	[People] shape wood and grass into the form of a woman and put chopsticks into [her] hands.
Incantation	“Zixu is not here (the name of her husband). Caogu also came back home (the name of his wife). Xiaogu (Zigu) come out and have fun.”	
Support	[Unspecified] person holds Zigu image.	Two children support [her].
Manifestation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Zigu image’s face has brightened and flushed. • The person holding the image feels it grow heavy. • If the prediction is favorable, the Zigu image dances about, and if unfavorable, she rolls her eyes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sieve (<i>Ji</i>) is used as her belly, and chopsticks are employed as her mouth. • [She] uses chopsticks to draw characters in an ash pan.
Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to foresee all sorts of affairs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to talk with people in a

¹⁰⁷ Based on the Zigu record written by Liu Jingshu in *Yiyuan*, see Liu, *Yiyuan*, 5b-6a.

¹⁰⁸ Based on Zigu records written by Su Shi in *Zigu shen ji*, *Tian zhuan ji* and *Shaonian you*. As for *Zigu shen ji* and *Tian zhuan ji*, see Su, *Su Wenzhong gong quanji*, 21a-22a. For *Shaonian you*, see Su and Mao, *Dongpo ci*, 36b.

	Liu Song dynasty ¹⁰⁷	Northern Song dynasty ¹⁰⁸
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to predict the silk harvest. 	loud voice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to compose poems. • Be able to dance.

Table 1 The temporal difference between the Liu Song and the Northern Song dynasty

As for the offering for Zigu worship, no particular requirement was mentioned. In the Liu Song dynasty, the offering was just customary and regular offering for other rituals in general – wine and fruits, while no offering information was mentioned in Su Shi’s narrative. Except for the offering, the incantation for inviting Zigu was also exclusively seen in the Liu Song dynasty’s record. On the one hand, it might be just pure coincidence that these two factors (the offering and the incantation) were not mentioned in the extant Northern Song example. However, on the other hand, it is also possible that there was no more emphasis on the offering and incantation in the Northern Song dynasty, if these two factors had not entirely faded away in later dynasties. In order to find more evidence, more Zigu records are required (for follow-up analysis, see 4.1.2).

Besides, as shown by the table above, both the Zigu ritual in the Liu Song dynasty and that in the Northern Song dynasty needed human support. In Su Shi’s narrative, he specified that two children were needed to support the Zigu manikin to function. Similarly, the fact that someone was needed to hold Zigu’s image was also seen in the Liu Song record, even though there is no specific reference to the age, gender, and role of that person.

The manifestation of Zigu from the Liu Song dynasty to the Northern Song dynasty can be seen as an evolution. At the first stage, the manifestation of Zigu can only be seen through her image and be felt by the person who held her image. She was believed that she could predict the harvest and the future. However, the answers that she was able to provide were just limited to affirmation or negation. Gradually, it evolved into a manikin that could express her opinions and comments in words, with the help of some tools.

The most apparent difference in Zigu belief between the Liu Song dynasty and the

Northern Song dynasty was her increasing abilities. She was able to “talk” and to write, and even to compose poems, since the Northern Song dynasty (see Chapter Five).

4.1.2. Spatial diversity in Zigu ritual

Limited by the scarce primary sources, Zigu records documented in the Northern Song dynasty were all found in South China. As shown in the table below, primary sites were in Huangzhou (in present day Hubei Province), Hangzhou (in present day Zhejiang Province), and Pengcheng (in present day Jiangsu Province). Both Hangzhou and Pengcheng were located in the Jiangnan area, and all three locations were along the Yangzi River.

	Northern Song dynasty			
	Su Shi ¹⁰⁹	Shen Kuo ¹¹⁰	Chen Shidao ¹¹¹	Zhang Bingwen ¹¹²
Location	Huangzhou	Hangzhou	Pengcheng	Unknown
Manikin	Dresses the grass and wood as a woman and puts chopsticks into [her] hands.		Decorates dustpans and brooms to invite Zigu	
How it works	[She] uses chopsticks to draw characters in an ash pan.			Makes use of some tools to write in ash. If someone asks the deity to write, it will do so on paper.
Ability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to talk with people in a loud voice. • Be able to compose poems. • Be able to dance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to compose prose. • Good at calligraphy in different styles. • Be able to play the Chinese zither (<i>Zheng</i>). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to answer questions. • Be able to write. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be able to draw and to write. • Be able to chant.

Table 2 The spatial diversity during the Northern Song dynasty

¹⁰⁹ Based on Zigu records written by Su Shi in *Zigu shen ji*, *Tian zhuan ji* and *Shaonian you*. As for *Zigu shen ji* and *Tian zhuan ji*, see Su, *Su Wenzhong gong quanji*, 21a-22a. For *Shaonian you*, see Su and Mao, *Dongpo ci*, 36b.

¹¹⁰ Based on the Zigu record written by Shen Kuo in *Mengxi bitan*, see Shen, *Mengxi bitan*, 5a-6a.

¹¹¹ Based on the Zigu record written by Chen Shidao in *Yingshi zi xu*, see Chen Shidao 陳師道. [n.d.]1132. *Houshan jushi wenji* 後山居士文集. Song dynasty ed. Vol. 16, 3b-5a. *Houshan jushi wenji* is a collection of Chen Shidao's poems and prose.

¹¹² Based on the Zigu record written by Zhang Bingwen in *Soushen milan*, see Zhang, *Soushen milan*, 24a.

As shown by the table above, generally speaking, no obvious difference can be seen through these Northern Song dynasty's records. Although the materials that were used to make the Zigu manikin were not always the same, the idea of the Zigu manikin was basically the same – to make a female shape, specifically with a mouth and a belly part to “communicate” with practitioners and onlookers.

As mentioned above in Chapter Four (4.1.1), through the comparison between the typical records of Zigu ritual in the Liu Song dynasty and the Northern Song dynasty, the focus of Zigu narrative was gradually shifted from the detailed description of the ritual itself, like the ritual offering and the ritual incantation, to the production of Zigu manikins and her exceptional abilities. With the enhancement of the entertaining and recreational purpose of inviting Zigu, the effectiveness of Zigu's predictions attracted both participants and writers' attention.

Although the offering and the incantation were rarely seen in the Zigu invitation scenarios afterward, they did not entirely disappear in subsequent dynasties. As proved by a Southern Song record and a Qing record, the incantation in the Zigu invitation still existed not only in the Southern Song dynasty but also in the Qing dynasty. In *Yijian zhi*¹¹³, a story titled “Zhengshi Zigu shi” (Poems composed by the Zigu in the Zheng family), Hong Mai recorded a Zigu invitation case. It was said that the protagonist Zheng Duanruo used to invite Zigu when he was young. Those immortals that were invited by incantation were all female immortals (鄧端若少時，傳得召紫姑。呪訣而所致皆女仙) (Hong [1198?], 4b).¹¹⁴ In this narrative, the detailed content of this incantation was not mentioned by the author, which might prove the likelihood that the original incantation had already disappeared by that time. However, in another Zigu narrative recorded in *Jiexu tongfeng lu*¹¹⁵, the author

¹¹³ *Yijian zhi* is a Song *zhiguai* (accounts of anomalies) collection written by Hong Mai. The writing period of *Yijian zhi* was from 1162-1202. *Yijian zhi* documents anecdotes, literary allusions, Song urban life, and others. It contains four parts, *Jiazhi* 甲志, *Yizhi* 乙志, *Bingzhi* 丙志, and *Dingzhi* 丁志. *Yijian zhi* is an important source of exploring the literary works in and the literary world of the Song China.

¹¹⁴ *Yijian zhizhi* is one of the four parts in *Yijian zhi*. For *Yijian zhi*, see Note 113.

¹¹⁵ *Jiexu tongfeng lu* is a Qing book that documents the traditional customs and festivals in one year, written by Kong

Kong Shangren (1648-1718) clearly documented the content of the incantation for inviting Zigu, which was rather similar to the original incantation in the Liu Song dynasty¹¹⁶. These two cases corroborate the possibility that the lack of detailed description of some parts of the ritual results from the importance being attached to other parts of the ritual¹¹⁷.

Compared with the occasional lack of the description of the ritual process, an entirely disappeared ritual stage – seeing off the god, makes the Zigu ritual more fascinating and confusing. Generally speaking, a complete ritual contains a series of steps, from inviting the god at the beginning to seeing off the god at the end. For instance, Dr. Overmyer clarifies the ritual process when he discusses rituals that took place in Guyi Village in Hebei Province in the twentieth century, “There were four stages of the ritual: inviting the gods, welcoming the gods, making offerings to them and seeing them off (*songshen*)” (Overmyer 2009, 66). This conclusion might not be applicable to every religious ritual. However, it provides us a framework of a complete ritual. It is strange that the seeing-gods-off step was barely seen in Zigu records. According to the Zigu-related records I collected, two reasons might lead to this phenomenon. First, the uncertain identity of the descended “Zigu”¹¹⁸ and its uncertain duration render the situation unforeseen and unruly, which might leave no time for participants to prepare and conduct the seeing-god-off ritual. As a result, this part has been gradually omitted by both participants and writers. Second, Zigu, as a marginalized folk goddess lacking an official identity in pantheons, might also undermine its legitimacy and orthodoxy. Indirectly, the Zigu ritual was gradually incomplete.

Nonetheless, those Zigu records that came down to us cannot represent all the Zigu cases. Without a certain amount of fieldwork¹¹⁹ to re-confirm, it is still too early to draw

Shangren. The structure of *Jiexu tongfeng lu* is after the pattern of *Jingchu Suishiji*.

¹¹⁶ See Kong Shangren 孔尚任. n.d. *Jiexu tongfeng lu* 節序同風錄. Qing dynasty ed, 24b.

¹¹⁷ Here, it is possible that the two recorders of these two works had different aims in chronicling these two Zigu narratives. In “Zhengshi Zigu shi”, it seems that Hong Mai tried to record a Zigu case that happened on Zheng Duanruo. As for the Zigu narrative in *Jiexu tongfeng lu*, it is more like a general description of Zigu invitation in or before the Qing dynasty. However, the reason why I quote these two narratives is to prove that the Zigu incantation still existed not only in the Southern Song dynasty but also in the Qing dynasty.

¹¹⁸ The descended “Zigu” was not limited to immortals. It can also be ghosts or other supernatural beings.

¹¹⁹ I would suggest that the fieldwork take place at least in present day Hubei Province where has Zigu invitation as a

a final conclusion about the seeing-god-off part of the Zigu ritual.

4.2. The possible Daoist connotation in the category name “Zigu”

4.2.1. *Zi* (purple) in the designation of Zigu

As discussed in Chapter Three, although the pronunciation of *Ce* [Tz’u, toilets], to some extent, does sound like *Zi* (purple) as Chao Weipang suggested, there are various Chinese characters with the same pronunciation *Zi/Ce*, why did this color-indicating character *Zi* become so widely circulated?

As for this question, in his *Fuji mixin di yanjiu*, Xu Dishan points out that the designation Zigu might relate to fox spirits during the Six dynasties (222-589). At that time, some fox spirits declared that “A Zi” was their name. The “Zi” in the fox name “A Zi”, was the same “Zi” in the designation Zigu¹²⁰(Xu 1946, 16). First, considering that the earliest Zigu record was seen in the Liu Song dynasty, which was temporally in the second half of the Six dynasties, it is tenable to claim that the designation of Zigu might be influenced by fox spirits. Second, coincidentally, the active regions of Zigu belief and the fox cult in the early stage were also rather similar. As concluded in Chapter Three, although it is impossible to assert that Pingchang was definitively related to the birthplace of Zigu belief, there is no doubt that Zigu belief was seen in North China at least in the fifth century. As for foxes, according to Kang Xiaofei, “foxes did have natural habitats in many other places, but fox cult activities were peculiar to North China” (Kang 2006, 47). From the aspect of active regions, it is also reasonable to speculate about the possible connection between Zigu and a fox cult.

custom as early as the mid-sixth century. Since Zigu belief was not one of the main beliefs in premodern China, some details about the ritual of Zigu invitations were not well-documented in official gazetteers that have already been published online. Visiting local museums and looking for local primary sources might provide researchers with more information.

¹²⁰ Here it is necessary to mention that the source that Xu Dishan used to support his argument is a fox story recorded in *Soushen ji* (In Search of the Sacred). *Soushen ji* is a compilation of anecdotes about spirits and immortals, written by Gan Bao (?-c.336). From my perspective, I think Xu Dishan intends to provide a possibility that the “Zi” in the fox name “A Zi” might have some influence on the “Zi (purple)” in the Zigu, which does not mean all foxes were named “A Zi” at that time.

Except for the likely impact of the fox cult, considering the later connection between Zigu belief and Daoist paradise Penglai (4.2.2), is it possible that the “Zi” of the designation Zigu had already had specific Daoist connotation in the first place?

The connection between the color purple and Daoism could be traced back to the miracle story that Lao Zi (Lao Tzu, ?-?) went out of the Hangu Pass¹²¹ during the Eastern Zhou dynasty (B.C.E.770–B.C.E.256). In that story¹²², the purple atmosphere as an auspicious omen was closely connected with Lao Zi, who was regarded as the reputed founder of Daoism. Although the veracity of this story is debatable, probably since that time the color purple started to be associated with Daoism. Afterwards, this color was also employed to refer to the imperial family and distinguished and exalted figures. Although it is possible that Zigu was seen as a folk goddess with special status and the character “Zi” in the designation Zigu had the connotation of nobility and high prestige, no specific religious background appeared in early Zigu belief. That is to say, it is hard to confirm the early connection between Zigu belief and Daoism. Currently, to the best of my knowledge, there is no clue indicating that Zigu was regarded as a Daoist goddess in the early stage. The specific Daoist-related trait that was known by us was more likely to be imparted on Zigu in later dynasties.

4.2.2. Zigu and Penglai

It is noteworthy that some Zigu claimed themselves to be immortals from Penglai, a fabled abode of immortals in Daoism. On top of that, these Zigu records started to appear since the Southern Song dynasty. To be more precise, seven out of nine happened in the Southern Song dynasty.

It deserves particular attention that the earliest record of Penglai was much earlier than

¹²¹ Hangu Pass was the western gate of the Zhou capital.

¹²² According to the *Lie yi zhuan* and other collection of miracle stories, when Laozi wandered to the west, the guard of Hangu Pass, Yinxi, noticed that there was a purple atmosphere floating on top of the Pass, [at that time] Laozi went through the Pass riding on a greenish-blue/black buffalo.

the first Zigu record. The official record of Penglai can be traced back to the Warring States period (B.C.E.475-B.C.E.221). According to the record in *Hanshu*, during the Warring States period, King Wei [of Qi], King Xuan [of Qi] and King Zhao [of Yan] all sent people to look for Three Divine Mountains in the [East] sea (自威、宣、燕昭使人入海求蓬萊、方丈、瀛洲) (Ban and Yan [82?], 10b). Penglai was one of these Three Divine Mountains. The record of Penglai appeared much earlier than Zigu belief, but not until the Southern Song dynasty did Penglai started to be mentioned in Zigu records as the origin of some descended goddesses/gods. Based on the religious contexts of the Southern Song dynasty, it is possible to see how that connection might have developed. At the beginning of the establishment of the Northern Song dynasty, there was no serious imbalance between Buddhism and Daoism. Although the social acceptability towards Buddhism and Daoism were not exactly the same¹²³, the imperial attitudes towards these two religions were rather similar, inheriting the previous tradition in the Tang dynasty. However, during the reign (997-1022) of Emperor Zhenzong (968-1022) in the Northern Song dynasty, Daoism was gradually established as an official nationwide religion, overtaking the status of Buddhism. Based on this Daoist social atmosphere and the symbolic and representative status of Penglai in Daoism, those “Zigu” who self-claimed Penglai origin seemed to aim at formalizing their orthodox status by labeling themselves as Daoist immortals.

In *Mengxi bitan*, Shen Kuo provided a general statement of this phenomenon, “These years there were lots of people who invited the Zigu Immortal, most of [those descended immortals] could compose prose, songs, and poems. Some of them were experts. I had seen them a lot, [they] usually claimed themselves as fallen immortals from Penglai (*Penglai Zhe Xian*) (近歲迎紫姑仙者極多，大率多能文章歌詩，有極工者。予屢見之，多自稱蓬萊謫仙)” (Shen [1086-1093?], 6a). Here the name “fallen immortal” deserves special attention. On the one hand, as mentioned above, these descended “immortals” tried to

¹²³ For example, Confucian scholars like Han Yu were very hostile towards Buddhism in the Tang.

formalize their sacred status and to get spiritual support from Daoism by connecting themselves to the Daoist paradise Penglai. On the other hand, the modifier “fallen” of the “fallen immortals from Penglai” provided them a legitimate excuse for wandering in the secular world.

Interestingly, not all those descended “Zigu” who shared the same title “Penglai immortal” were female. In *Yingshi zi xu*, written by poet Chen Shidao (1053-1102) in the Northern Song dynasty, there was a clearly masculine name “Xu Jun”, following after the title of “Penglai immortal” (蓬萊仙伯徐君) (Chen [n.d.]1132, 4a). It also corroborates the argument that “Zigu” was a category name rather than an individual and personal name since the Northern Song dynasty, which will be demonstrated at full length in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five The dynamic changes in the narrative of Zigu in Chinese history

5.1. Geographical transmission

As mentioned above, although it is hard to trace where was the birthplace of Zigu belief, at least in the Liu Song dynasty or even earlier, a Zigu practice had already occurred in the Qingzhou area¹²⁴. The location of Qingzhou is marked on Map 2 with a red circle.



Map 2 Liu Song Zigu records

Besides, as corroborated by the mid-sixth century annotated record, *Jingchu suishiji*, Zigu belief was also found in the Jingchu area (present day Hubei Province) before or roughly around the mid-sixth century. The location of Jingzhou is marked on Map 3 with a red circle.

¹²⁴ For a detailed analysis of this Zigu practice in Qingzhou, see Chapter Three.



Map 3 Zigu records around the mid-sixth century

Taking into consideration the purpose of worshipping Zigu at the beginning — practicing divinations on sericulture, as mentioned in Chapter Three (3.3), from these two maps that specify the locations of Qingzhou and Jingzhou, it is not hard to deduce that the Zigu belief was probably prevalent in rural areas of the north and central China in earlier or during the fifth and the sixth century.

Due to the scarcity of early sources, the early transmission of Zigu belief still remains unknown to us. However, fortunately, the records of Zigu practice were well-documented since the Song dynasty. In order to visualize the geographical distribution of Zigu records and the geographical changes with time, according to different dynasties' records, I marked all the locales of Zigu cases with red circles as below (Map 4 to Map 6).

As for these maps, there is something that needs to be mentioned. First and foremost, these maps are designed for visualizing the geographical changes of Zigu worship practices, rather than calculating the precise amount of Zigu records. As for the data collection of these maps, I only collected the records that are related to Zigu belief. Unfortunately, not all Zigu records are depicted with a precise date and locale. Those uncertain cases are not

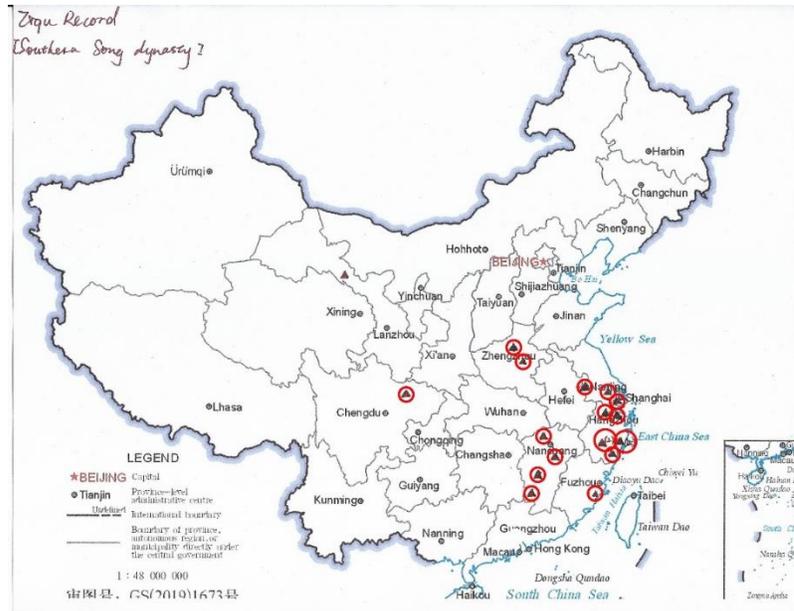
marked on maps. Second, the administrative divisions were different in different dynasties. Similarly, the geographical regionalization was different as well. Every single place has its distinctiveness under different dynasties, even different reigns. Therefore, according to Academia Sinica's project *Chinese Civilization in Time and Space* and Tan Qixiang's *Zhongguo lishi dituji* (The Historical Atlas of China), I marked all ancient locations appeared in Zigu records on their corresponding current locations (on modern maps) to make the maps more straightforward and easy to be identified¹²⁵.



Map 4 Northern Song Zigu records¹²⁶

¹²⁵ In addition to modern maps, I also used historical maps to locate the locations in Zigu records. Unfortunately, due to the copyright issue, I am not able to include historical maps in this thesis. For an online version of Tan Qixiang's *Zhongguo lishi dituji* see <http://www.guoxue123.cn/other/map/zgmap/index.htm> (only for research and study purpose).

¹²⁶ The circled locations on Map 4 are Zhongmou County (Henan Province), Pengcheng (Jiangsu Province), Huangzhou (Hubei Province).



Map 5 Southern Song Zigu records¹²⁷



Map 6 Ming Zigu records¹²⁸

¹²⁷ The circled locations on Map 5 are Ganzhou (Gansu Province); Zhongmou County, Xiangyi (Henan Province); Jinling, Wuxi (Jiangsu Province); Xiuzhou (Shanghai area); Lin'an Fu, Taizhou (2 records), Quzhou (2 records), Shaoxing (Zhejiang Province); Jianchang, Jiangzhou, Linchuan (2 records), Jizhou, Nankang (Jiangxi Province); Putian (Fujian Province); Guangzhou (Guangdong Province); Xinjian County (Sichuan Province). Besides, there is one more case located in the Jiangxi area but no further details.

For the Zigu case in Jiangzhou, it needs specific clarification that there were two Jiangzhou in the Southern Song dynasty. One was in present day Jiangxi Province and the other one was in present day Guangxi Province. With the help of some narrative in *Sanchao beimeng huibian* (e.g. the mention of Jiangzhou comes along with that of Jiangxi), it seems that the Jiangzhou in question was the one in Jiangxi Province.

¹²⁸ The circled locations on Map 6 are Chenliu (Henan Province), Jinling (Jiangsu Province), Kuaiji (Zhejiang

Due to the early records (before the Song dynasty) having limited information, my conclusion is based on Zigu records from the Northern Song dynasty to the Ming dynasty.

First, comparing the Zigu record shown by these maps, there was an expanding trend of the dissemination of Zigu belief from central China to the west and the south, especially to the south. In the Northern Song dynasty, Zigu practice was not widespread, and the limited records were mainly located in central China. When it came to the Southern Song dynasty (see Map 5), it is evident that the number of Zigu records had increased and most of the Zigu records occurred in South China, especially the coastal area.

Compared with the Northern Song dynasty map (Map 4), it is reasonable to deduce that Zigu belief had spread further, and a north-to-south tendency could be seen through these two maps. Speaking of the underlying reason behind this tendency, the population migration at the turn of the Northern Song dynasty and the Southern Song dynasty might be the main factor. In 1127, the *Jingkang incident* (otherwise known as *Humiliation of Jingkang*) marked the end of the Northern Song dynasty. After Emperor Huizong (1082-1135) and Emperor Qinzong (1100-1161) became the Jurchen's captives, the later Emperor Gaozong, Zhao Gou (1107-1187) established the Southern Song dynasty and then moved the capital to Lin'an (present day Hangzhou area, Zhejiang Province). On the one hand, with this southward capital relocation, the majority of the Northern Song population also naturally migrated to the south, with the transfer of the political and economic center – the capital. On the other hand, the long-term wars between the Jurchen and the Northern Song dynasty made the territory of the latter become dangerous for ordinary people. Compared with the north, peace and stability also attracted a tremendous number of people to migrate

Province), Fuzhou (Fujian Province), Wuchang, Jingzhou (Hubei Province), Changsha (Hunan Province), Yingshan (Sichuan Province), Jiaozhou (Shandong Province). It is worth mentioning that a different Zigu case in the Jiangzhou area was recorded in the Ming dynasty. As mentioned in Note 127, there were two different Jiangzhou since the Song dynasty. However, unfortunately, for this Ming dynasty Jiangzhou case, it is still hard to distinguish its location. To make the conclusion more accurate, here this Jiangzhou case is not marked on Map 6.

to the south.

It is also interesting to note a geographical feature of these Zigu records in the Southern Song dynasty. Zigu cases were usually reported in some relatively rural areas. Although Lin'an as the capital was one of those prosperous and densely-populated areas in the south, as shown by Map 5, only one Zigu case was reported in Lin'an. However, a few Zigu cases are marked just around the Lin'an area on the map. The same situation was also seen in other areas. For example, a Zigu case was found in Xiangyi, a comparatively rural area that was close to Kaifeng Fu which was a place with a dense population and long history. In the Jiangxi area, several Zigu cases were reported in Linchuan, Jiangzhou, and Jianchang, respectively, which can be seen as the outskirts of the neighboring administrative center, Longxing Fu. According to these examples, Zigu worship was conducted in comparatively rural areas at least in the Southern Song dynasty¹²⁹.

Besides, comparing Zigu records in the Southern Song dynasty (Map 5) and that in the Ming dynasty (Map 6), it is clear that a westward trend took place. Zigu practices seen in some relatively western part of Chinese territory, to a great extent, might also have resulted from the migration of the population during the turn of the Yuan and the Ming dynasties. At the end of the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), the Huguang area¹³⁰ became one of the main battlefields between several different military forces, such as the Yuan army, the Red Turban army¹³¹ at first, and then the army of Chen Youliang (1316-1363) and that of Zhu Yuanzhang (1328-1398). The population of the Huguang area dropped dramatically due to warfare. In the early stages of the Ming dynasty, Emperor Taizu, namely, Zhu Yuanzhang, commanded a large number of people who used to live in present day Jiangxi

¹²⁹ This geographical feature might not just start from the Southern Song dynasty and there was a strong possibility that it was also seen in other dynasties. Unfortunately, the records of other dynasties, like the Northern Song dynasty and the Ming dynasty, were not dense enough to reveal the regularity.

¹³⁰ Huguang was a regional name during the Yuan and the Ming dynasty, roughly included the present day Hubei and Hunan Provinces.

¹³¹ The rebellion caused by the Red Turban Army was known as *The Red Turban Rebellion*. They aimed at overthrowing the Yuan dynasty between 1351 and 1368.

Province to migrate to the Huguang area. This command was not only to fill that underpopulated area but also to reduce the pressure on the densely-populated cities in the south, for example, the area around present day Jiangxi Province. According to Map 6, Zigu records appear in present day Hubei and Hunan Provinces, which are roughly the previous Huguang area. To the farthest place, Zigu practices also appear in the area of present day Sichuan.

After comparing and concluding the geographical distribution of and changes in Zigu records in different dynasties, it is necessary to clarify a concern of the availability of sources associated with the Ming Zigu records. As shown by Map 5 and Map 6, there was a westward trend of the dissemination of Zigu belief from the Southern Song dynasty to the Ming dynasty. However, as for the Ming Zigu records on Map 6, is it because of the dissemination of Zigu belief, or is it just simply because of the increasing availability of sources?

Unfortunately, in this stage, due to the paucity of decisive sources and the uncertainty of other possible factors, it is hard to confirm with solid evidence. Nonetheless, I would like to suggest a speculative hypothesis which based on the findings in this research and had a strong possibility. Considering that the availability of Zigu records is an intangible concept, it might be better to break through from a tangible measure, the overall picture of the number of Zigu records¹³². As shown by Map 5, it is evident that the number of Zigu records had increased in the Southern Song dynasty. If the increasing availability of texts was the main reason for the westward trend of the dissemination of Zigu belief in the Ming dynasty, then the overall number of Zigu records in the Ming dynasty should increase, or at least similar to that in the Southern Song dynasty. However, this situation is not shown on Map 6. Comparing the overall Zigu cases on Map 5 and Map 6, a decreasing trend of

¹³² Here, I do not think it is accurate enough to compare the exact number of Zigu records on the maps above. The Zigu records marked on maps can only display a general trend. Therefore, what I will compare is the overall picture of the number of Zigu records.

Zigu records reveals itself¹³³. The trend that fewer Zigu cases were apparently recorded in the Ming dynasty than the Southern Song dynasty suggests the high possibility that the factor of the dissemination overrode the factor of availability and resulted in this westward trend shown by the comparison between Map 5 and Map 6. According to the corresponding population migration mentioned above, it is very likely to see this westward dissemination trend happened.

5.2. From a fixed date to unrestricted worship dates

As mentioned in Chapter Two, according to the record in *Yiyuan*, people commonly invited Zigu on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, at least during the Liu Song dynasty. From the Liu Song dynasty to the mid-sixth century, the worship date of Zigu was still the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, as the *Jingchu suishiji* corroborated.

However, as time went by, different worship dates emerged in Zigu belief starting from the Northern Song dynasty.

First, the worship date of Zigu had been changed¹³⁴. In the Northern Song dynasty, there was no direct, explicit mention of the dates that Zigu was worshipped. However, through the narrative in Su Shi's *Zigu shen ji*, the worship date of Zigu can be roughly deduced. Although this Zigu case was only a regional case that might not represent a country-wide trend, what deserves our attention is that the duration of the descent of this so-called Zigu was lasting at least a month, rather than just one single day as recorded in *Yiyuan*. In *Zigu shen ji*, Su Shi recorded that he left the capital and headed to Huangzhou on the first day of the first lunar month and arrived at Qi'an Prefecture on the first day of the second lunar month. According to the report of an officer, the "goddess" who

¹³³ This decreasing trend might be caused by several different factors. Except for the two reasons (the dissemination and the availability of texts) mentioned above, the trend that spirit writing gradually took the place of Zigu practices could be a major factor.

¹³⁴ In her book, Valerie Hansen also notices that the time to ask Zigu was no longer limited to the fifteenth day of the first lunar month through Shen Kuo's narrative, but she does not conduct further analysis. See Hansen, Valerie. 2014. *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276*. p. 66.

descended in the Guo family magically foresaw the departure of Su Shi and also predicted that she would not have the chance to meet Su Shi. Exactly as she predicted, she left on the same day, the first day of the second lunar month, when Su Shi arrived at Qi'an Prefecture (Su [n.d.]1468, 21b)¹³⁵. In this narrative, the day the goddess left was the first day of the second lunar month. Although the date that she first descended in the secular world remained unknown, what we can deduce with some certainty is that on the first day of the first lunar month, she had already descended in the Guo family. That is to say, even though it is still unclear that the worship process happened once or many times, as a descended goddess, her theophany lasted as long as a month¹³⁶, which was entirely different from the record in the Liu Song dynasty.

Moreover, in his *Mengxi bitan*, Shen Kuo pointed out the changes in the worship date of Zigu. “According to the old tradition, [people] welcomed the latrine goddess on the fifteenth day of the first month and called it Zigu. However, in the Northern Song dynasty, the worship date of Zigu did not have to be at the first lunar month, [people could] invite [Zigu] at ordinary times (舊俗正月望夜迎廁神，謂之紫姑。亦不必正月，常時皆可召)” (Shen [1086-1093?], 5a). Through Shen Kuo's narrative, it can be surmised that there was no more time restriction on inviting Zigu in the Northern Song dynasty. It should be noted that most of the Zigu invitations that happened at ordinary times were not for its original purpose of forecasting the sericulture. In contrast, starting from the Northern Song dynasty, the purpose of inviting Zigu gradually diversified according to the needs of ordinary people (see Chapter Five, 5.4).

¹³⁵ “元豐三年正月朔日予始去京師來黃州。二月朔至郡”，see Su, *Su Wenzhong gong quanji*, 21b. 朔(Shuo) indicates the first day of a month. From the Shuo-day in *Zhengyue* (the first lunar month) to that in the second lunar month is basically one month.

¹³⁶ *Tanyuan* also recorded this Northern Song Zigu case. Unlike the date recorded in Su Shi's narrative, the account of *Tanyuan* explicitly pointed out a slightly different date: “near Huangzhou, Mr. Guo, the *Imperial Bodyguard*, had this goddess in his family, [the goddess] was cunning. Every year [it] comes on the first day of the first lunar month and leaves on the second day of the second lunar month”. (“近黃州郭殿直家有此神，頗黠捷。每歲率以正月一日來，二月二日去”，see Kong, *Tanyuan*, 2b.) The record of the departure time of the goddess in *Tanyuan* was one day later than that in Su Shi's narrative. Although these two dates were not exactly the same, at least there was one thing we can say with certainty: the duration of the descent of this goddess was about one month.

However, the fifteenth day of the first lunar month was still seen in some records, especially those repetitive records similar to the *Yiyuan* record, such as the *Suishi guangji*¹³⁷. Speaking of the repetitive records, it is necessary to mention the two different types of Zigu records. One is retelling the original Zigu story through first citing or paraphrasing the earliest Zigu record and then adding the author's comments or other related sources. This type of Zigu record consistently existed from the mid-sixth century, for example, the Zigu record in the *Jingchu suishiji*, to the Qing dynasty, such as that in the *Xu Qianshu*¹³⁸ and *Guisi cunghao* (Leftovers from *Guisi leigao*)¹³⁹. The *Suishi guangji* mentioned above also belongs to this type. The other is reporting a specific Zigu invitation case from the writer's own experience or by hearsay. This tendency started to appear since the Northern Song dynasty. Su Shi's *Zigu shen ji* and *Tian zhuan ji* are two typical examples. This type was rather often seen in the Southern Song dynasty, especially in Hong Mai's *zhiguai* (accounts of anomalies) collection, *Yijian zhi*.

To differentiate these two types is not to separate Zigu belief into two parts. As for the transmission of Zigu belief, the first type provided Zigu invitations theoretical support by repeating the previous tradition and custom, while the second type offered some practical experience by recording Zigu cases. These two types make Zigu belief become a combination of documentary material and practical records and an amalgam of history and real life.

In sum, starting from the Northern Song dynasty, the date that Zigu was worshipped was not restricted to the fifteenth day of the first lunar month. In addition, the duration of

¹³⁷ *Suishi guangji* is a folklore record written by Chen Yuanliang 陳元靚(?-?) in the Song dynasty. It mainly documents festivals and seasons but also contains a large number of quotations from earlier sources.

¹³⁸ See Zhang Shu 張澍. 1804. *Xu Qianshu* 續黔書. Qing dynasty (Jiaqing) ed. Vol. 02, 38a. *Xu Qianshu* documents the history, geography, officials, and other local stories in Guizhou when Zhang Shu served as the *zhixian* (District Magistrate) there.

¹³⁹ See Yu Zhengxie 俞正燮. 1833. *Guisi cunghao* 癸巳存稿. *Lianyunyi congshu* 連筠籟叢書, edited by Yang Shangwen 楊尚文. Qing dynasty (1848) ed. Vol. 13, 49a-50a. *Guisi cunghao* was finished in 1833, the *guisi* year in the Sexagenary cycle. It is a *biji* collection written by a Qing philosopher Yu Zhengxie (1775-1840). It is a collection of Yu Zhengxie's analysis of traditional texts in different genres, covering religion, literature, history, geography, astronomy, medicine, and other areas.

her descent might be as long as one month.

5.3. From an individual name to a category name

If there was only a linear evolution in the circulation of miracle tales, then all the related questions might be easily and readily solved. However, considering the long-term evolution in tradition and the complicated regional disparities, that kind of idealized situation was not seen in our Zigu case.

In the earliest record, *Yiyuan*, the archetype of Zigu was a concubine who was commanded by the wife to cope with filthy housework. Besides, under the name “Zigu”, there was no mention of any other concurrent female figures in the Liu Song dynasty. However, starting from the Northern Song dynasty, a divergence of the designation “Zigu” emerged.

On the one hand, the previous Zigu figure (in *Yiyuan* record) remained available. When later literati referred to *Yiyuan* narrative, the name Zigu still referred to the pathetic concubine who died on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month. On the other hand, “Zigu” seemed to be generalized as a category name used when people referred to the goddesses/gods descended in Zigu invitations since the Northern Song dynasty¹⁴⁰.

As mentioned above, in the narrative of Su Shi’s *Zigu shen ji*, when the female protagonist claimed her ability in her own words, she declared that there were several similar or identical kinds of the so-called Zigu goddess/god, but none of them was as excellent as she (Su [n.d.]1468, 21b)¹⁴¹. Although this sentence aimed to show how talented she was, it incidentally mentioned the existence of other individuals who were also categorized as a kind of Zigu god(dess). And this was not a rare case. As discussed in

¹⁴⁰ Valerie Hansen also notices this change happened in the Song dynasty. She points out, “another important change dating to the Song was that other gods, and even spirits of dead people, began to convey messages through spirit-writing, a technique which had once been exclusively the Purple Maiden’s (Zigu)” (p. 66). However, it is worth noting that some of those spirits and gods, who were able to convey messages through spirit-writing, were still categorized as “Zigu”.

¹⁴¹ “蓋世所謂子姑神者，其類甚衆，然未有如妾之卓然者也”，see Su, *Su Wenzhong gong quanji*, 21b.

Chapter Three (3.2), even Su Shi had recorded two different “Zigu” goddesses/gods in his two prose works, *Zigu shen ji* and *Tian zhuan ji*, let alone those different “Zigu” cases recorded by other literati.

Su Shi recorded several different Zigu invitation cases in his works. Although all these god invitations bore the same designation, Zigu invitation, the actually descended goddesses/gods (or other spiritual beings) had different personal names. In both *Zigu shen ji* and the personal conversation between Su Shi and a so-called “*Sangu*”¹⁴², the descended “goddess” claimed that her name was He Mei, apparently a female name. However, in Su Shi’s *Tian zhuan ji*, the “god” that descended in Wang Ruogu’s family first claimed that his name was Li Quan. Afterward, he also claimed his name was Liu Bao when he saw Zhang Bin (a *Jinshi*¹⁴³), a close acquaintance with Liu Bao. In this sense, not only can we conclude with certainty that it was not only one individual figure under the designation “Zigu” in the Northern Song dynasty but also it is possible that the descended “Zigu goddesses/gods” involved multiple figures in one case.

The same situation was also seen in the Southern Song dynasty. In *Yijian zhi*, Hong Mai mentioned that the so-called Zigu god(dess) was usually under the disguise of a god identity, some of them could harm people (紫姑神類多假託，或能害人) (Hong [1166]1879, 5b)¹⁴⁴. Hong Mai explicitly pointed out the “Zigu god(dess)” was one type of the so-called god. It seems rather common that people had the consensus that the ritual of welcoming Zigu was more like a process of inviting general supernatural beings, like immortals, or in the worst case, ghosts¹⁴⁵. This so-called “Zigu” did not only represent the

¹⁴² For the detailed conversation, see Yu Yue 俞樾. 1899. *Chaxiangshi congchao* 茶香室叢鈔. Chunzaitang quanshu ed. Vol. 19, 20a. *Chaxiangshi congchao* is a *biji* collection written by Yu Yue in 1899. According to the preface of the *Chaxiangshi congchao*, Yu Yue always recorded some uncommon things when he read books. This book is a collection of all these special reading notes.

¹⁴³ For *Jinshi*, see Note 76.

¹⁴⁴ *Yijian yizhi* is one of the four parts in *Yijian zhi*. For *Yijian zhi*, see Note 113.

¹⁴⁵ Interestingly, let alone those immortals, as for the descended ghosts, there was a clear distinction between the harmless ghosts and the evil ghosts. Several ghost-descended Zigu cases were recorded in *Yijian zhi* by Hong Mai. For example, a narrative of an evil ghost was recorded in *Yijian yi zhi* under the title “*Niogui huo Qiuduo*” (Female ghost allures Qiu Duo), Qiu Duo often invited the so-called “Zigu” for composing poems and he was so obsessed with the descended female ghost that he wanted to see her “real shape” and even to marry her. The ghost not only alienated Qiu

pathetic concubine but also had been generalized as a category name to refer to all the goddess/gods who descended in Zigu invitations.

Considering the underlying reason behind this phenomenon, the unique characteristic of Zigu might be the primary cause.

First, the marginalized characteristic of Zigu provided fewer limitations on her figure and offered more imaginary space for various interpretations. Tracing back to the first record, Zigu was a concubine when she was alive and later was posthumously portrayed as a toilet-related “goddess”. Both of these characters, concubine and toilet-related “goddess”, could be seen as marginalized figures. What made it more ironic was that even after Zigu was posthumously deified into a “goddess”, she was still only able to “wield powers only in the absence of her husband and his wife” (Kang 2006, 112), which proved how restricted this family hierarchy was and how powerless a concubine could be. Paul Rouzer provides a thoughtful observation, “women are ‘inside outsiders’” (Rouzer 2001, 100). However, here concubines, as a specific class of women, are more likely to be simply regarded as “outsiders”. Generally speaking, a concubine has much less power than a legal wife and is more restricted in a traditional Chinese family. As Kang Xiaofei concludes in her book, “only the former (wives) had the right to fully enjoy the descendants’ offerings with their husbands; the latter (concubines) remained marginal to the family and rarely could claim a place on the ancestral tablet” (Kang 2006, 82). In the cultural context of ancestral worship, women did not share an equal position with men. Much worse, although both concubines and legal wives are women, concubines have no choice but to have a more marginal status in households.

Duo from his family but also tried to kill him in different ways. For the full story, see Hong, *Yijian yi zhi*, 5b-8a. As for the example of a harmless ghost record, in *Yijian bingzhi*, there was a passage titled *Bingjia Xiaohong* (Xiao Hong from the pancake store). Mr. Zhang hired some construction workers to build a house on his land. One of them accidentally found a pair of jade bracelets which he sold for money. Later a ghost named Xiaohong descended on the “Zigu” sieve. She claimed her bones were destroyed by the construction and she had no place to stay because the jade bracelets were taken away. She did not leave the Zhang family until they offered sacrifices and conducted Buddhist ceremonies to save her later. For the full story, see Hong Mai 洪邁. [1171]1879. *Yijian bingzhi* 夷堅丙志. *Shiwanjuanlou congshu* 十萬卷樓叢書, edited by Lu Xinyuan 陸心源. Qing dynasty (Guangxu) ed. Vol. 19, 1b-2a. *Yijian bingzhi* is one of the four parts in *Yijian zhi*. For *Yijian zhi*, see Note 113.

It is worth noting that the marginality of Zigu was not only within the scale of the family but also at the social level. Within the scale of a family, a concubine is undoubtedly a marginal figure who is also seen as an outsider of the family. Moreover, due to their concubine identities, they also suffer strong discrimination in society.

Furthermore, the “betwixt and between” position blurs the boundary between Zigu and other similar or relative figures. The concept of “betwixt and between” is first pointed out by Victor Turner when he introduced his theory of liminality (Turner 2017, 95). Kang Xiaofei further connects the liminality with marginality when she talks about the fox cult in China (Kang 2006, 2). Based on Victor Turner’s argument, Kang Xiaofei specifies the so-called betwixt and between:

In other words, the betwixt and between represents a liminal phase, and ambiguous and paradoxical stage of being neither this nor that – or being both. It is a ritual stage that allows people to change from one state to another, and thereby to reorder the world and to gain new power to deal with life. Liminal situations and roles tend to be conceived as “dangerous, inauspicious, or polluting to persons, objects, events, and relationships that have not been incorporated into the liminal context.” In popular culture and folk literature, they are likened to marginal groups, such as shamans, mediums, magicians, and jesters, who usually come from the bottom of society yet and endowed with the ritual power of the weak to reverse established social structures and express cultural oppositions (Kang 2006, 6).

Here, this concept can also be perfectly applied to our Zigu belief. The pathetic concubine identity categorizes Zigu into the socially marginal group in which liminal situations are more likely to happen. Besides, Zigu’s connection with toilets and pigsties places her in a position betwixt and between. Neither was she considered as a goddess from mainstream religions, nor should she be defined as a ghost. Based on Mary Douglas’s conclusion, Kang Xiaofei argues, in a given society, what is perceived to be ambiguous and marginal tends to be regarded as ritually unclean, hence defiling established principles (Kang 2006, 6). In ancient China, toilets were commonly regarded as filthy places and

pigsties were also seen as unclean. As a pathetic concubine closely connected to toilets and pigsties, Zigu was put in a unique position, marginalized but being commonly worshipped, ritually unclean but regarded sacred.

By virtue of the liminal situation, the designation, Zigu, was not limited to the original concubine figure. Its “betwixt and between” characteristic enabled the title “Zigu” to be a collection of all those relevant goddesses/gods, ghosts, and other supernatural figures and eventually became a category name.

5.4. Changing roles

According to the earliest record, *Yiyuan*, Zigu could predict people’s concerns and foretell the future and the sericulture (能占眾事，卜未來，蠶桑) (Liu n.d., 5b). As mentioned in Chapter Three (3.3), the fact that Zigu was regarded as having a close connection with the harvest of silk-related handicrafts was due to the gender division of labor in ancient Chinese society. Men took the responsibility of farm-related work while women mainly worked on silk-related family handicrafts. This basic economic pattern in traditional society caused silkworms and mulberry to gradually play a vital role in women’s lives.

In the Northern Song dynasty, Su Shi’s *Zigu shen ji* revealed a new and crucial feature of Zigu. After the goddess descended and introduced her background, on her own initiative, she composed poems to entertain Su Shi and other audiences. According to Su Shi’s comment, “[she] finished dozens of poems in a very short time and all these poems had excellent thoughts. Some of them also satirized people. When [people] asked for the principle of the transformation of immortals, ghosts and Buddhas, her answers were always unexpected (詩數十篇，敏捷立成，皆有妙思，雜以嘲笑。問神仙鬼佛變化之理，其答皆出於人意外)” (Su [n.d.]1468, 21b-22a). And then, interestingly, this Zigu goddess also asked Su Shi to write down something about her. The unique point of this narrative

was not only that Zigu goddess could compose poems but also that she asked people to compose literary works to record her.

Besides Su Shi's narrative, in the Northern Song dynasty, Shen Kuo also recorded his observations and comments on the Zigu invitation. He recorded a particular Zigu case that occurred in Wang Lun's family, during the Jingyou era (1034-1038). In this case, the descended goddess claimed that she was a maiden in the imperial harem of the God of the heaven (Shangdi 上帝)¹⁴⁶. She could compose literary works and the style of her works was pure and attractive. Her works were even compiled into a collection called *Nüxian ji* (Female immortal's collection) and circulated in the world (自稱上帝后宮諸女, 能文章, 頗清麗, 今謂之女仙集, 行於世) (Shen 1093, 5b). Moreover, not only could she compose literary works, but she was also good at calligraphy. Shen Kuo reported that her writing had various styles and her strokes showed vigor. The calligraphic styles of her writing were not the official script or seal script from the human world (其書有數體, 甚有筆力, 然皆非世間篆隸) (Shen [1086-1093?], 5b). Here in this *Mengxi bitan* record, the so-called Zigu goddess was able to compose literary works and extraordinary calligraphy, which was more like a literatus rather than an illiterate female ghost. Starting from the Northern Song dynasty, the new trait of Zigu revealed from Su Shi and Shen Kuo's records symbolized a new worship purpose - inviting Zigu for literary entertainment. Moreover, starting from the Northern Song dynasty, the worshippers of Zigu belief were not limited to women. In those Zigu practices that aimed to communicate with Zigu for literary amusement or for official job prediction, men were in the majority¹⁴⁷.

Furthermore, in addition to the Zigu invitation being practiced by literati for literary amusement and official job prediction, it also gradually transformed into a common

¹⁴⁶ It is necessary to mention that even though the Chinese word "Shangdi" is the modern translation for the Christian God, here corroborated by the context, this "Shangdi" is more likely to be the Celestial Ruler in Chinese mythology. However, it is also possible that this "Shangdi" is the abbreviation of a Daoist God, the God of Northern Heavens ([Xuantian] Shangdi 玄天上帝).

¹⁴⁷ For the details, see Chapter Five (5.5).

practice and became popular among (presumably male) young teenagers. In his *Mengxi bitan*, Shen Kuo reported that when he was young, he usually saw children invite Zigu in leisure time as entertainment. His relatives had invited Zigu who descended but refused to leave. This situation happened twice, which made him not dare to invite [Zigu] (予少時見小兒輩等閒則召之，以為嬉笑。親戚間曾有召之而不肯去者，兩見有此，自後遂不敢召) (Shen [1086-1093?], 5a). A similar record was also seen in *Yingshi zi xu*, Chen Shidao mentioned that teenagers decorated dustpans and brooms to invite Zigu as entertainment at the beginning of every year in his village (吾里中少年，每歲首簪飾箕帚召紫姑以戲) (Chen [n.d.]1132, 4a). The invitation of Zigu seemed not to be a belief-related ritual in these two records. The invitation purposes were not limited to either predicting the sericulture or composing literary works, and it turned into a simple recreational activity among young men.

As for ritual purposes, it deserves special attention because the verb used by writers sometimes also indicated the expected purpose of inviting Zigu. Here I arrange these different verbs into groups according to their types.

No purpose mentioned	Type 1	<i>Ying</i> (welcome) ¹⁴⁸ , <i>Zhao</i> (call), <i>Qing</i> (request), <i>Yao</i> (invite), <i>Yan</i> (invite), <i>Xia</i> (descend), <i>Jiang</i> (descend), <i>Zhi</i> (summon)
	Type 2	<i>Feng</i> (serve), <i>Shi</i> (serve), <i>Bai</i> (worship)
Forecast affairs	Type 3	<i>Bu</i> (divine), <i>Zhan</i> (divine), welcome Zigu for divination
	Type 4	<i>Wen</i> (ask), <i>Dao</i> (pray for help), pray Zigu for asking the solution
Entertainment purpose	Type 5	<i>Nao</i> (amuse), Call Zigu for amusement, welcome Zigu for amusement
Celebration and appreciation	Type 6	<i>Sai</i> (thank deity with sacrifice, usually refers to a village festival), <i>Xie</i> (appreciate)

Table 3 Different verbs in Zigu invitations

¹⁴⁸ For *Ying* (welcome), *Zhao* (call) and *Qing* (request), there are two different cases here. If it appears as the only verb in the sentence, it still has its original meaning. However, if another verb comes after it with a preposition, *Yi* (for), then it will form a grammar structure, “verb1 + *Yi* (for) + verb2”. For example, “政和二年，襄邑民因上元請紫姑神為戲” (In the second year during the Zhenghe era, people who lived in Xiang Yi requested Zigu god(dess) for amusement). Here, the second verb indicates the real purpose of this sentence. For this “verb1 + *Yi* (for) + verb2” structure, I put them into other types according to the meaning of the different second verb.

First, there is no specific intention revealed from the Type 1 and Type 2 verbs. Verbs in Type 1 emphasize the action of inviting Zigu rather than its purpose and verbs in Type 2 just describe Zigu belief with relatively abstract verbs without any further indication.

Both Type 3 and Type 4 are related to forecasting affairs. Unlike verbs in Type 4, which only demonstrate the action of asking for the future, Type 3 verbs also indicate that some divination tools might be employed in the Zigu ritual to foretell the future.

As for Type 5, entertainment purposes can be clearly seen through these verbs. For example, a Zigu case in *Wenchang zalu*¹⁴⁹ recorded, “in the first lunar month, [Vice Minister Xie’s] family welcomed Zigu god(dess) for entertainment (歲正月, [謝侍郎]家人迎紫姑神為戲)” (Pang n.d., 15a).

Type 6 is a type of verb showing people’s appreciation towards Zigu god(dess). It is worth noting that a particular “festival” of appreciating Zigu was launched by worshippers in rural areas. Among these verbs, “*Sai*” usually refers to a village festival (or at least a public gathering) that appreciates goddesses/gods with sacrifices and celebrations. For example, in his poem, Li Shangyin (c. 813-858) mentioned, “I stay in the countryside idly and unemployed, there is no chance for me to watch the spectacle [in the capital]¹⁵⁰, I feel embarrassed to go with village people to watch the festival for Zigu (*Sai Zigu*) (身閑不觀中興盛, 羞逐鄉人賽紫姑)” (Li n.d., 33b)¹⁵¹. A distinct comparison between the capital and the countryside was depicted through this line, which also implicitly showed that the festival for Zigu was held in rural areas¹⁵², at least in the Tang dynasty. Moreover, several Qing dynasty poems also corroborated the fact that the Zigu festival was held in rural areas.

¹⁴⁹ *Wenchang zalu* is a *biji* collection written by Pang Yuanying (c.1082) when he served as the Director of Foreign Relations (*zhuke langzhong* 主客郎中) in the Department of State Affairs (*shangshu sheng* 尚書省) in 1082. This book contains Pang’s miscellaneous notes from 1082-1085.

¹⁵⁰ It is necessary to mention the background of this poem. This poem was written by Li Shangyin in 854 when he was in mourning for the death of his mother.

¹⁵¹ *Li Yishan shiji* is a collection of poems written by Li Shangyin. Yishan is Li Shangyin’s courtesy name. Here, I only intend to convey the meaning of this line rather than translate it into a standard poem form, similarly with the poem below.

¹⁵² See the geographical feature of Zigu worship in Chapter Five (5.1)

For instance, in his poem written on the Lantern festival day, scholar Liang Xihang (?-?)¹⁵³ mentioned, “I just raise a toast to the Qingdi¹⁵⁴, have not yet gone to Zigu festival (*Sai Zigu*) with my village neighbors (且將尊酒酬青帝，未逐鄉鄰賽紫姑)” (Liang 1739, 4a). Due to the patchy evidence, it is hard to prove that this Zigu festival (*Sai Zigu*) was continuously held only in rural areas from the Tang dynasty to the Qing dynasty. However, through these poems, we could deduce that the Zigu festival was a tradition in the countryside, at least in these two dynasties.

According to the table above, there were three main purposes of worshipping Zigu, to forecast affairs, to provide entertainment, and to celebrate and show worshippers’ appreciation¹⁵⁵. As for entertainment purposes, it was apparently not prevalent until the Northern Song dynasty according to available evidence.

5.5. The changes in gender

This section will focus on examining one of the main changes in Zigu invitations, the gender change in the main practitioners of Zigu. Moreover, from a broader perspective, attention will also be given to the change in the gender of the protagonists of the latrine deities and the writers of Zigu invitations.

5.5.1. The gender change in the practitioners of Zigu

As Dr. Overmyer mentions in his book, “Most of the early devotees of this cult were women and girls, who inquired among other things about the prospects for the silkworm season” (Jordan and Overmyer 1986, 38). In the early stage of Zigu belief, the primary purpose of worshipping Zigu is to ask about the harvests of sericulture. However, there is

¹⁵³ Liang Xiheng is a scholar from Jiexiu area (in present day Shanxi Province). His courtesy name is Chubai (楚白). This poem is quoted from Liang Xiheng’s collection of poems, *Feishuizhou yiji*. Feishuizhou is the name of Liang Xiheng’s residence.

¹⁵⁴ Qingdi and Zigu is a pair of antitheses that is commonly seen in poems. *Qing* (bluish-green) is a matching of *Zi* (purple) and Qingdi (a legendary emperor) is a matching of Zigu (latrine goddess).

¹⁵⁵ The appreciation purpose was mostly seen in poems during and after the Tang dynasty.

a tricky problem. About the sequence, there are two possibilities: (1) Zigu's ability to predict sericulture attracted women's attention. Because sericulture was that to which they devoted themselves, women gradually became the main worshippers of Zigu belief; (2) Countryside women needed to connect sericulture with a holy female figure. This demand linked the extraordinary ability in predicting sericulture to this female figure, Zigu. However, due to the scarce sources in the early stage of Zigu belief, it is hard to prove either of these possibilities with valid evidence. More detailed information is needed to resolve this question. Nonetheless, considering that women and men had entirely different purposes¹⁵⁶ in worshipping Zigu, I agree with the second possibility that this unique ability in predicting sericulture was due to women's needs. Although men's purposes were completely different from that of women, all of these purposes indicated a strong sense of practical concern. From predicting the harvest of sericulture to the possibilities of an official career, from predicting something crucial to being conducted as an amusement, every possible purpose of inviting "Zigu" bears a sense of practical concern. Considering the underlying reason, it might not be accurate to conclude that Zigu had these abilities that coincidentally matched with ordinary people's needs. It is more tenable to say that different personal needs shape the abilities of "Zigu". It can be argued that Zigu as a so-called god(dess), was primarily associated with prediction all the time. According to the different petitions, "Zigu" provides corresponding answers. What people petition to gods reflects the primary concerns in their lives.

As for the gender and class status of the worshippers of Zigu, a divergent trend could be seen in the Song dynasty. From the earliest record until the Song dynasty, women were the majority of Zigu worshippers, focusing on predicting the harvests of silkworm and

¹⁵⁶ For women, worshipping Zigu was mainly for (but not limited to): (1) predicting the harvest of sericulture; (2) asking about the future. Although a Qing Zigu record mentions the purpose that women ask is information about husbands or marriage, this purpose is not a major concern. For men, inviting Zigu was mainly for: (1) predicting the success in Imperial Examinations and official careers; (2) literary exchange or simply as entertainment.

mulberry. However, since the Northern Song dynasty, literati became the new dominant practitioners when Zigu was said to be able to compose literary works and predict official careers. On the one hand, no literati-conducted Zigu invitation has been found before the Northern Song dynasty. However, there was a dramatic increase in the number of Zigu invitations conducted by literati during the Song dynasty. On the other hand, the previous Zigu invitations that used to be conducted by female worshippers for predicting sericulture harvests seem to change. Given that the traditional and the main method for women to earn a living was still engaging in sericulture¹⁵⁷, their needs in predicting the sericulture harvest still exist. However, compared with the literati cases, which more or less specified the identity of literati, no record directly proved that a woman or a group of women conducted Zigu invitations during the Song dynasty¹⁵⁸. Based on the findings in this research and informed guesswork, I would like to suggest a speculative hypothesis that the previous women-conducted Zigu invitations for predicting sericulture partially transferred its function to other female figures¹⁵⁹ since the Song dynasty, especially in the south area. As for these female figures, some of them were closely related to Zigu belief, such as Cegu¹⁶⁰ and (Shao)jigu¹⁶¹, some of them had interactions with Zigu belief in their formation and evolution, such as Lugu¹⁶² and Qigu¹⁶³. Due to the paucity of related Song records,

¹⁵⁷ As for the possible occupations in the Song dynasty, there were not too many options for women. Although the Song dynasty “witnessed” a prosperous and advanced economy in Chinese history, in the traditional division of labor, *Nan geng nü zhi* (men tilling the farm and women weaving), women’s occupation was not substantially changed in the Song dynasty. As for the textile industry in the Song dynasty, although cotton had been introduced and planted regionally in China, silk and sericulture were still the mainstream.

¹⁵⁸ However, it is also possible that the main practitioners were men and men write more about themselves than about women.

¹⁵⁹ See Appendix B for the connections between Zigu and other related female characters.

¹⁶⁰ Zigu’s background story and the previous connections between Zigu and toilets underlay the foundation of the formation of the designation, Cegu. After Cegu was somehow separated from the mainstream designation Zigu around the Southern Song dynasty, it mainly centered in South China, especially the Jiangnan area during the Ming and the Qing dynasties. For details, see Appendix B.

¹⁶¹ (Shao)jigu shares the same background story with Zigu. (Shao)jigu, as one of the vernacular names of Zigu, was gradually accepted by ordinary people during the Ming and Qing dynasties. The earliest record of (Shao)jigu was found in the Song dynasty. For details, see Appendix B.

¹⁶² Both Lugu and Zigu were believed to have a strong connection with silk-related handicrafts. This similar divination power concerning the silk harvest might be the reason why Lugu and Zigu were seen as the same deity. For details, see Appendix B.

¹⁶³ Qigu belief and Zigu belief might be interactive during their formation and evolution process. It is necessary to mention that Qigu refers to two different appellations, 戚姑 and 七姑. For details, see Appendix B.

whether these female figures took over the role of previous Zigu is still debatable. Taking Shaojigu as an example, an interlinear note in Fan Chengda's (1126-1193) poem indicated that the ancient Zigu was called Great Immortal (*Daxian*) in the Southern Song dynasty, and her vernacular name (*Suming* 俗名) was Shaojigu (即古紫姑，今謂之大仙。俗名箕筭姑) (Fan n.d., 4b). That is to say, in certain areas¹⁶⁴, the Shaojigu in the Southern Song dynasty was considered as the previous Zigu (see Appendix B). Considering the new abilities shown by the descended Zigu and the new connotation imparted by the designation “Zigu” since the Song dynasty, it can be surmised that the previous women-worshipped Zigu belief was preserved in different female figures. In terms of the timeline, since no Song record directly proved that Zigu practices conducted by a woman or a group of women, and the earliest extant record of Shaojigu was in the Song dynasty, it is tenable to suggest this hypothesis. Nonetheless, it is also possible that Zigu invitations conducted by women and Shaojigu practices were concurrent since the Song dynasty. Unfortunately, given that the sources about other female figures are mainly later than the Song dynasty, it is hard to make a further conclusion unless some decisive records emerge.

As for the appellation, comparing with “worshippers”, the word used to address female believers in the early stage of Zigu belief, it might be more accurate to address the male counterpart simply as “male practitioners”. As for male practitioners, especially literati¹⁶⁵, it was Zigu's abilities in prediction that attracted them to participate in Zigu invitations. It was corroborated by the phenomenon that spirit writing was also prevalent among literati. In her book, Kang Xiaofei mentions, “Literati were active practitioners of spirit writing, and among the many different kinds of divine being they invoked were young females who could dance, sing, compose poems and engage in literary criticism” (Kang 2006, 60). According to the similar procedures and functions, it can be surmised that the

¹⁶⁴ Fan Chengda's poem did not specify any locations. However, considering Fan Chengda's life experience, this poem was more likely to describe the customs in the comparative south area.

¹⁶⁵ I also include some non-literati teenagers as male practitioners. For an account of the teenager Zigu invitations, see Chapter Five (5.4).

practitioners of Zigu invitations and that of spirit writing might overlap. For men, being involved in Zigu invitations fulfills their needs either in predicting official positions or entertaining themselves. Regarding those Zigu invitations conducted by men, Zigu was still venerated as a goddess, but her unique identity, a latrine goddess, gradually weakened. In some cases, the author still addressed Zigu as a latrine goddess¹⁶⁶, but in more other cases, this specific title “latrine goddess” was somehow omitted¹⁶⁷.

The gender hierarchy revealed from the discrepancy in practitioners also deserves special attention. Before the Song dynasty, the relationship between Zigu, as a female deity, and ordinary women, as female believers, was a pure deity-worshipper relation without gender hierarchy. Female believers held and participated in Zigu ritual during which they asked about what concerned them. However, since the Song dynasty, in some male practitioners' cases¹⁶⁸, the previous deity-worshipper relationship was replaced by either a casual-acquaintance relationship in exchanging poems, or even a reversed relationship that was diametrically opposed to the previous deity-worshipper one. In the former case, by exchanging poems, the descended Zigu and male practitioners (literati) usually were able to have an equal casual-acquaintance relationship. As for the latter, taking *Zigu shen ji* as a typical example, after stating her pathetic experience and showing her ability in prediction, Zigu took the initiative to compose poems and dance in order to entertain Su Shi and other audience members. Based on all these efforts she made, she then went further to ask Su Shi to write a poem to record her story. Compared with her so-called goddess status, her behaviors were more like a courtesan whose objective was keeping the literati amused. This narrative was obviously incompatible with the previous deity-worshipper relationship revealed from the earlier Zigu stories. In contrast, Zigu had a comparatively inferior status in this relation, which was probably highly influenced by the strict gender

¹⁶⁶ For example, the Zigu case recorded in *Mengxi bitan*, see Shen, *Mengxi bitan*, 5a.

¹⁶⁷ For example, the Zigu case recorded in *Yingshi zi xu*, see Chen, *Houshan jushi wenji*, 3b-5a.

¹⁶⁸ Some Zigu cases still carried on the same deity-worshipper relation as before.

hierarchy in the Song dynasty. In *Zigu shen ji*, from the narration of the descended Zigu, we can still observe some similar behaviors that were often found connected to courtesans and concubines, which was her last identity before death¹⁶⁹. Given Su Shi's status as a famous poet and scholar-official, it is a strong evidence of how deep the influence of gender hierarchy was in the Song dynasty.

The shift of the main practitioners from women to men was closely connected with the Song dynasty's economic structure and social class. To be more precise, the rise of the scholar class resulted in this shift in the Song dynasty.

Since the beginning of the Song dynasty, under the reign of Emperor Taizu (927-976), the core policy tended to value scholars and overlook military officers. Due to this favorable policy¹⁷⁰ towards scholars, the literati stratum thrived and enjoyed an unprecedented high status. As Zhang Duanyi (1179-?) corroborated in his poem, "all the dignitaries who wore red or purple clothes in the court, were scholars (滿朝朱紫貴，儘是讀書人)" (Zhang 1241, 37a)¹⁷¹.

On the one hand, the tendency to value scholars over military men made more official positions available to them, even some of those positions that used to be exclusively set for military officers. As expounded by Cai Xiang (1012-1067), "Ministers are scholars; the Court Attendants¹⁷² are scholars; the Three Bureaus¹⁷³ that took charge of levies in money

¹⁶⁹ The Zigu in *Zigu shen ji* was abducted by a Magistrate and became his concubine. Later on, she was killed by his legal wife. For the detailed story, see Chapter Three (3.2).

¹⁷⁰ Besides, record had it that the Song Emperor Taizu commanded his descendants never to kill scholar-officials. This record is undoubtedly strong evidence of the scholars' high status. However, although this record was widespread, it was strange that it was not seen in official histories. Scholars still hold different opinions in regard to its authenticity. As for this topic, see Yang Haiwen 楊海文. 2010. "Song Taizu shibei de wenxian ditu 宋太祖誓碑的文獻地圖(The Literature Map of the Oath Stele of the Emperor Taizu in the Song Dynasty)." *Academic Monthly* 學術月刊 42 (10): 138-147; and Du Wenyu 杜文玉. 1986. "Song Taizu shibei zhiyi 宋太祖誓碑質疑(The Query of the Oath Stele of the Emperor Taizu in the Song Dynasty)." *Journal of Henan University* 河南大學學報(哲學社會科學版) (01): 19-22.

¹⁷¹ *Gui er ji* is a Song *biji* collection written by Zhang Duanyi. Although Zhang Duanyi made some excellent comments in his collection, there is also a certain number of wrong statements in his work.

¹⁷² Here, Court Attendant refers to *Jinshi* 近侍, the translation here is adopted from Charles O. Hucker's *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (p. 167).

¹⁷³ Here, the Three Bureaus refer to *Hubu* (戶部, Households Bureau), *Duzhi* (度支, Finance Bureau), and *Yantie* (鹽鐵, Salt and Iron Bureau). The duties of these Three Bureaus are similar to that of the Ministry of Revenue in some dynasties. In *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, Charles O. Hucker expounds that the role of the Ministry of Revenue is "in general charge of population and land censuses, assessment and collection of taxes, and

and goods are scholars; the Border Commanders are scholars; all the Transport Commissioners are scholars; Prefects are scholars (大臣，文士也；近侍之臣，文士也；錢谷三司，文士也；邊防大帥，文士也；天下轉運使，文士也；知州，文士也)”(Cai n.d., 10b)¹⁷⁴. It is rather unexpected to see that scholars even acted as the Border Commanders, which was commonly considered as a typical position for military officers in previous dynasties. On the other hand, the establishment of a large number of schools and the development of Imperial Examinations provided a favorable environment for scholars. Although there was no fundamental change in Imperial Examinations from the Tang dynasty to the Song dynasty, the Song Imperial Examinations were more impartial and allowed more students to pass¹⁷⁵. In this context, especially for students from low-income families of lesser status without any privilege from their elder generations, studying hard to pass the Imperial Examinations seemed to become the most practical method to change their fortune and achieve success¹⁷⁶.

For scholars who had not passed the Imperial Examinations, undoubtedly, their main concern was about the exam. Even for those who had already passed, their later official positions and relative promotion were also crucial matters. At this point, it is tenable to observe that the Zigu goddess, whose predicting ability had already been corroborated by women, gradually became prevalent and finally well-received among the literati stratum. Moreover, as discussed in Chapter Four, the Song dynasty also witnessed a new change in Zigu ritual. The descended Zigu was able to speak, to write, even to compose poems. Pondering over these extraordinary abilities of Zigu, what Zigu was able to do had a strong resemblance to the characteristics of literati. As far as I am concerned, this phenomenon is not a pure coincidence. I do not believe that Zigu’s literary abilities were fabricated by

storage and distribution of government revenues” (p. 258).

¹⁷⁴ Cai Xiang (1012–1067) is a famous calligrapher and politician in the Northern Song dynasty.

¹⁷⁵ For a Song method to make the examination fairer and a recruit ratio of *Jinshi* in the Tang and Song dynasty, see Ebrey, Patricia Buckley, Anne Walthall, and James B. Palais. 2006. *Pre-Modern East Asia to 1800: A Cultural, Social, and Political History*. p. 160.

¹⁷⁶ For a general introduction of the Song scholar-official class, see *ibid*, pp. 159-160.

literati (see Chapter Three 3.2). However, it is possible that Zigu's new abilities in the Song dynasty were a consequence of adjusting to literati's needs and matching with their cultural level. When women were the main worshippers of Zigu belief, their concern basically centered on the harvests of sericulture, which was comparatively easier to be answered with an affirmative or negative expression. However, in the Song dynasty, when the main practitioners were mainly educated men, what they petitioned generally focused on the content of Imperial Examinations¹⁷⁷ and their official careers, which were too complicated to be answered with an affirmative-negative answer. To a great extent, the new evolution of Zigu's abilities in prediction probably resulted from the advanced needs of male literati.

5.5.2. The change in the protagonists of latrine deities

If we examine this Zigu topic from a broader perspective, Zigu was not the first deity who was highly associated with the latrine in history. From the ancient asexual¹⁷⁸ latrine spirit (*Cejing* 厕精), Yi(倚)¹⁷⁹, to the male latrine god Hou Di and Guo Deng, it is significant that the latrine gods and their gender changed over time. What made Zigu stand out from other latrine deities and have a stronger influence than other latrine deities?

Considering the reason for the question above, Gong Weiying points out an interesting argument that women use toilets more frequently than men, and those who worshipped Zigu as the latrine goddess were mainly women. Therefore the influence of the female

¹⁷⁷ Based on the primary sources I collected, some literati invited Zigu before they attended the Imperial Examinations. During the Zigu invitation, the descended Zigu often offered some clues about the general topic of that year's exam. Zigu did not tell them the detailed question, nor did she reveal whether they passed the exam or not. In some cases, some literati did not know how to understand the clues until they went to the Imperial Examination and saw the questions.

¹⁷⁸ It is interesting that there was no implicit or explicit mention of the gender of Yi. On the one hand, what is apparently revealed from this vague-gendered figure suggests a comparatively unbiased-gender social background. The stories in *Bozetu* could be dated back to as early as the era of the legendary Huangdi when traditional Chinese society probably had not been established. On the other hand, it is also possible that no specific mention of Yi's gender indicates his male identity. Generally speaking, unmarked gender designations tend to be masculine, whereas marked gender could be coded as female.

¹⁷⁹ As Daoshi (?-C.E.683) mentioned in the *Fayuan zhulin* (Forest of Gems in the Garden of the Dharma), the spirit of the latrine was named Yi, wore Qing-color clothing, and held a white stick. People who knew its name can eradicate the latrine spirit, but those who did not know its name will die (Daoshi, *Fayuan zhulin*, 18a). According to the record of this latrine spirit in later sources, the original story of Yi was documented in *Bozetu* (Chart [Revealed by the Boze]), which unfortunately is no longer fully extant.

latrine goddess, Zigu, was stronger than those male latrine gods (Gong 1997, 85). If we consider Gong's argument in a practical way, it seems plausible. However, as mentioned above, although some women still worshipped Zigu-related belief, men gradually became the main worshippers from the Song dynasty onwards. That is to say, the fact that women use toilets more frequently than men was not the main reason for Zigu's strong influence. In the same vein, the frequency of using toilets was not a determinant factor for worshippers' gender.

I would argue that the pivotal factor that made Zigu belief more influential was her adaptable ability in prediction. It is necessary to mention that the so-called Zigu here refers to the category name, Zigu. Since the Song dynasty, the connotation of Zigu had changed from simply referring to that pathetic concubine to a category name, which comprised of both male and female deities (or other spiritual beings) who descended during the Zigu invitation. Zigu's miraculous ability in prediction attracted not only women but also men. The sharp increase in the target audience enhanced the dominant status of Zigu belief. More importantly, in turn, the various needs from different people also extended the range of Zigu's predictions, which revitalized Zigu belief.

5.5.3. The changes in the writers of Zigu

Since the new change that Zigu was able to speak and to communicate appeared in the Song records, the descended Zigu themselves started to serve as a narrator and also contributed to the documentation of Zigu stories.

For most of the practical Zigu cases, the writer is no longer the only one who contributes to the completion of Zigu records. The descended Zigu often tells her/his¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Although not as many as pathetic female stories, some descended male supernatural beings also have a tragic background. For example, Yue Fei 岳飛 (1103-1142) had descended in a Zigu invitation in the Southern Song dynasty. In this case, Yue Fei left a poem indicated that what he had experienced. For this story, see Guo Tuan 郭象. n.d. *Kui che zhi* 睽車志. Wenyuange siku quanshu ed. Vol. 01, 12a-12b. *Kui che zhi* is a Song *zhiguai* collection written by Guo Tuan (c.1165). The main idea of this book is to preach retribution (the cause and effect) by telling some supernatural stories. However, some stories are absurd and contrary to common sense.

story, which is also one of the core parts of a Zigu record. What is more, sometimes what Zigu says about her/his pathetic life experience is exactly what sparks literati's interest, for example, the Zigu case recorded in Su Shi's *Zigu shen ji*¹⁸¹. In this Zigu case, the descended Zigu asked Su Shi to write down her story. In sharp contrast with her courteous behavior and wisdom, the unfair fate she suffered touched Su Shi to record her story. In this case, Su Shi was the author of *Zigu shen ji*, while the narrator of all the description of the pathetic life experience was actually this descended Zigu.

In a word, even though literati were the undoubted writers of Zigu records, it was believed that some Zigu narrated their own stories. Considering the underlying reason, the connections between male writers and the marginalized female figure (like concubines and ghosts) deserve special attention.

When literati are in the condition of “gentlemen who do not meet with their times” (*junzi buyu* 君子不遇)¹⁸², it is a common practice for some literati to find another voice or representative to express their own ideas or to complain about being underappreciated. In addition, since ancient times, women were an emblem of literati self-identity (Rouzer 2001, 203-204). Under these circumstances, a pathetic marginalized female figure who shares a similar underappreciated feeling is undoubtedly an interesting and thought-provoking alternative. Coincidentally, Zigu, a tragic latrine goddess, having both the identity of a concubine and a ghost, is a typical marginalized female figure. As mentioned above, the marginality of Zigu is not only caused by the fixed family hierarchy but also exacerbated by social discrimination. Important here is the possibility that marginalized female figure's circumstances might portray the similar circumstances confronted by underappreciated literati¹⁸³. First, the family system connotes the official system. The

¹⁸¹ See Chapter Three (3.2) for the full translation of this Zigu case.

¹⁸² The translation of *junzi buyu* is adopted from Paul Rouzer, see *Articulated Ladies: Gender and the Male Community in Early Chinese Texts*, p224. *Junzi buyu* is commonly used to describe literati who are underappreciated or misunderstood.

¹⁸³ Here, I am inspired by Paul Rouzer's argument in his *Articulated Ladies: Gender and the Male Community in Early Chinese Texts*, “Courtesan society could function as an image of literati society – both were educated communities with

family hierarchy faced by concubines reflects the tiered official hierarchy faced by literati. To be more precise, the fact that Zigu was killed by the legal wife clearly shows how powerless a concubine could be within a household. The similar powerless circumstance was exactly what the author Su Shi confronted at that time and it would inevitably evoke his empathy. Su Shi was arrested and imprisoned because of the *Wutai shi an*¹⁸⁴ in which he was accused of offending the emperor. The powerless feeling of being imprisoned and then being demoted and the sorrow of being misunderstood were fully evoked by hearing Zigu's pathetic experience. Second, social discrimination towards Zigu is also a reflection of that towards underappreciated literati. For a literatus, passing the Imperial Examinations and striving for a decent official position are the top priorities. Failing in achieving these goals might lead to being despised by acquaintances, in the worst case, even being a laughingstock of others.

On the surface, it seems that authors are simply describing how that pathetic figure was wrongly treated and disregarded; at bottom, the pathetic figure is a medium that is able to express their disappointed and underappreciated feelings indirectly.

Based on this detailed investigation in the changes in Zigu belief, in the next section, the conclusion, I will review the objective of this study and offer a succinct summarization of this thesis.

their own rules and hierarchies" (p. 256).

¹⁸⁴ For the details of *Wutai shi an*, see Note 73 and Note 74.

Conclusion

The objective of this thesis is to examine the evolution of Zigu invitations from the fifth century to the fifteenth century from multiple aspects, with a specific focus on the gender factor. Some parts of the evolution of Zigu belief are briefly mentioned in some articles about spirit writing¹⁸⁵. In discussing the contributions of earlier studies, I either provide some different or even opposed opinions, or conduct further analysis with more details. In order to restore the development of Zigu belief, it is inevitable to have some overlap with earlier research. In contrast with other articles and books that more or less touched on Zigu topic, this thesis aims to conduct a thorough investigation of the evolution of and the changes in Zigu belief from the fifth century to the fifteenth century, covering the two key points (the Liu Song dynasty and the Song dynasty) in Zigu belief. Moreover, the maps that visualize the origin and evolution of Zigu records are also a new and unique attempt in this thesis.

By untangling the possible origin of Zigu belief and identifying the main changes in Zigu belief, a general evolution history of Zigu invitations starting from the earliest record is revealed from primary texts. Below is a succinct summarization of the conclusions of this thesis.

Geographical origin and changes

In Chapter Three (3.3), the Pingchang mentioned in the extant and the earliest record *Yiyuan*, has already been located in Qingzhou (in present day Shandong Province). Although Pingchang might not be the exact origin of Zigu belief¹⁸⁶, there is no doubt that it was at least in Pingchang that Zigu belief existed, especially earlier than or when the *Yiyuan* was written (the fifth century).

¹⁸⁵ For example, the argument that the toilet was Zigu's deathplace and the conclusion that employing sieves and brooms were the two different kinds of performances of worshipping Zigu are pointed out by Chao Weipang in his article, "The Origin and Growth of the Fu Chi", p. 17, pp. 26-27.

¹⁸⁶ For detailed analysis, see Chapter Three (3.3).

To show an overall tendency of the locales of Zigu cases, I marked all the extant Zigu records from the Liu Song dynasty to the Ming dynasty on Map 7 with red circles. The two solid red circles are the earliest Zigu record (*Yiyuan*, in the fifth century) and the second earliest one (*Jingchu suishiji*, in the mid-sixth century).



Map 7 An overview of the geographical dissemination of Zigu belief

As analyzed in Chapter Five (5.1), in general, there was an expanding trend of the dissemination of Zigu belief from central China to the west and the south, especially to the south. Beginning from the Song dynasty, Zigu practices were widely reported in South China, especially along the coastal provinces, while they were also seen in relatively western areas, as far as present day Sichuan. Nonetheless, considering the currently limited sources, the transmission of Zigu belief is still an open-ended topic that needs more evidence to draw a further conclusion.

In this concluding part, I intend to summarize this thesis from two different aspects. One is from the perspective of changes in Zigu belief, and the other is from the viewpoint

on the different roles in Zigu belief.

The Song dynasty as a watershed

As shown in Chapter Five, in different dynasties, the customs and rituals of Zigu were not the same all the time. The Song dynasty, as a watershed, played a crucial role in Zigu belief.

	Before Song dynasty	Song dynasty and afterward
Date	Fixed worship date	Unrestricted worship date
Designation	Individual name	Category name
Ability	Provide an affirmative or negative answer by the manikin figure	Be able to speak, to write down words, even to compose poems.
Main worshipper and worship goal	Women (asking about the harvests of sericulture and future)	Literati men or teenagers (asking about the Imperial Examination and official career, sometimes for entertainment)

Table 4 The changes in Zigu belief

Changes happened in basically every aspect of Zigu belief. Before the Song dynasty, Zigu invitations were commonly conducted by village women on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month. Since the Song dynasty, the worship date of Zigu was not limited to that single day. Likewise, the main practitioners were not restricted to women. Men, especially literati, became the main practitioners of Zigu invitations. Along with the gender change, the practitioners' goal was also changed from merely asking the harvests of sericulture to inquiring about an official career, and also just for entertainment. Interestingly, as literati gradually became the main practitioners of Zigu invitations, the descended Zigu started to be able to speak and compose poems, which had a strong resemblance to the characteristics of literati. Moreover, most importantly, since the Song dynasty, the designation, Zigu, had changed from a personal name to a category name, comprised of both male and female deities who descended during the invitations of Zigu.

Zigu belief as a whole

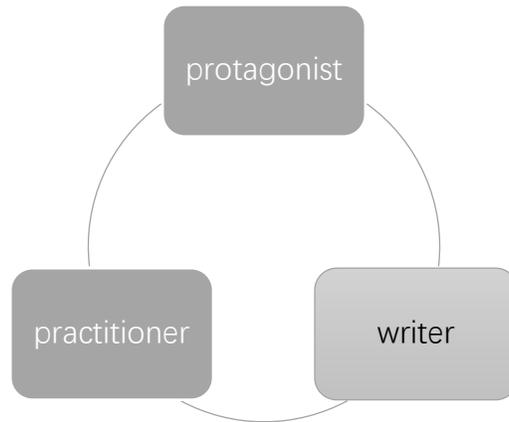


Figure 1 The relation between the protagonist, the practitioner, and the writer

Let me approach the conclusion of this thesis from another angle, from the integrity of Zigu belief. With the formation and evolution of Zigu belief, the protagonist, practitioner, and writer are three indispensable factors. It is necessary to mention that this relationship is not unique to Zigu belief. Here, I would like to use it as a method to explore different angles from which to view the evolution of and changes in Zigu worship over time and through different lenses¹⁸⁷.

First of all, the protagonist in Zigu belief is a rather complicated concept. The gender and the identity of the so-called Zigu are not consistent all the time. In the Liu Song dynasty, Zigu was recorded as a pathetic concubine who was killed by the legal wife, while since the Song dynasty, this designation “Zigu” represented all the supernatural beings who descended through the previous Zigu invitation ritual. In the Song dynasty, the designation Zigu transferred from a personal name to a category name. The identity and gender of Zigu changed. Due to the open possibility of the descended supernatural beings, Zigu’s gender was not limited to female.

Second, the change in the main practitioners in Zigu belief, to a certain degree, was a

¹⁸⁷ Given that the objective of this thesis is tracing evolutions of Zigu belief over time, place, and gender, it might be better to offer another angle from which to view the Zigu cult than simply conduct a chronological analysis.

reflection of the society at that time. In as early as the fifth century, if not much earlier, women were the main worshippers of Zigu through which they asked about sericulture harvests. The agricultural society shaped the traditional division of labor in ancient Chinese society, which caused the phenomenon that women resorted to Zigu's ability to predict sericulture harvests. When it came to the Song dynasty, literate men became the main practitioners of Zigu invitations reflected in the development of a newly thriving stratum, literati. Zigu's outstanding ability in prediction was an apparently perfect tool that helped literati achieve success in either Imperial Examinations or official careers. (Or, at least, so it was believed).

Last but not least, writers. It is interesting that overlaps in roles are seen in Zigu belief, not only between the practitioner¹⁸⁸ and the writer but also between the protagonist and the narrator. In some Song dynasty and later records, literati were generally those who wrote down Zigu records among a group of people who participated in a Zigu invitation¹⁸⁹. The descended deities (or other spiritual beings) sometimes took the narrator's role by telling their own stories.

Zigu belief is not merely a unilateral worship from believers towards the deity. Zigu's extraordinary ability in prediction lays a solid foundation for the establishment of Zigu belief. However, what motivates the evolution and transmission of Zigu belief is the dynamic and interactive relationship among the protagonist, the practitioner, and the writer, which are the three indispensable components in Zigu belief. Moreover, this dynamic and interactive relationship can also be seen in the gender factors in Zigu belief. As the designation, Zigu, changes from an individual name to a category name, the gender of the descended Zigu is not limited to female and Zigu's ability is no longer limited to predict sericulture harvests. These changes had a close connection with the gender change in the

¹⁸⁸ Here, this "practitioner" refers to literati, who became the main practitioners of Zigu belief since the Song dynasty.

¹⁸⁹ It is necessary to mention that even though the writers (in some cases, the writer is also the main practitioner) were always literati, most Zigu records did not specify the identities of onlookers and other practitioners.

main practitioners of Zigu belief. With the development of the thriving literati stratum, the main practitioners shifted from women to men in the Song dynasty. Correspondingly, Zigu's abilities were also advanced by literati's needs in predicting Imperial Examinations and official jobs. In addition, literati not only acted as the practitioners but also served as the writers in Zigu belief. By describing how the descended "Zigu" was wrongly treated and disregarded, literati found a channel to vent their disappointed and underappreciated feelings indirectly.

In conclusion, Zigu as a folk belief originated in North China in ancient times, the earliest extant record proves that Zigu invitations existed at least in the Qingzhou area (in present day Shandong Province) as early as the fifth century. With the dissemination and evolution of Zigu belief, there was an expanding trend from central China to the west and the south. Beginning from the Song dynasty, Zigu practices were widely reported in South China, especially in the coastal provinces. Moreover, the Song dynasty also witnessed some new changes in Zigu belief: the worship date of Zigu was no longer limited to a fixed date (on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month); the designation "Zigu" changed from an individual name to a category name of all the supernatural beings who descended in Zigu invitations; the changes in the gender and the purpose of main practitioners of Zigu invitations. The changes in social strata prompted the literati to start playing crucial roles as both main practitioners and writers in Zigu belief, which in turn extended the range of Zigu's predictions and revitalized Zigu belief.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Some important Zigu narratives in different dynasties¹⁹⁰

Date ¹⁹¹	Text	Source
Liu Song dynasty (420-479)	世有紫姑神，古來相傳云：是人家妾，為大婦所嫉，每以穢事相次役。正月十五日，感激而死，故世人以其日作其形，夜於廁間或豬欄邊迎之，祝曰：子胥不在，是其婿名也。曹姑亦歸曹，即其大婦也。小姑可出戲，投者覺重，便是神來，奠設酒果，亦覺貌輝輝有色，即跳躑不住，能占眾事，卜未來，蠶桑。又善射鉤，好則大舞，惡便仰眠。平昌孟氏恒不信，躬試往投，便自躍茅屋而去，永失所在也。	<i>Yiyuan</i> 異苑 (A Garden of Marvels)
mid-6th-century	自爾，廁中著以敗衣，蓋為此也...將後帝之靈，憑紫姑而言乎？...俗云溷廁之間必須靜，然後致紫姑	<i>Jingchu suishiji</i> 荆楚歲時記 (Record of the Seasons of Jingchu)
Sui dynasty (581-619)	平昌孟氏常以此日迎之，遂穿屋而去。自示 𡇗 (正)着以敗衣，蓋為此也...南方多名婦人為姑仙，有 麻姑 云東海三為桑田□□□古樂府云：黃姑織女遙相見吳云淑女惣角時喚作 小姑子 。續齊諧記有 青溪姑 。	<i>Yuzhu baodian</i> 玉燭寶典

¹⁹⁰ As for the different colored highlighted sections, the green highlight signifies the different designations which are more or less related to Zigu, while the blue highlight indicates the self-claimed titles or names of the descended Zigu. The text with red font color signifies some regional features in the ritual of Zigu invitations.

¹⁹¹ Here, the approximate writing date of the narrative might be different with the published date of the book that contains that narrative. For those works without a specific writing year or writing period, I use the writer's date of birth and death instead.

Date ¹⁹¹	Text	Source
772-846	食圈(紫姑每食於圈裏)	<i>Baishi liutie</i> 白氏六帖
1037-1101	予往觀之，則衣草木為婦人，而置箸手中，二小童子扶焉，以箸畫字...妾壽陽人也。姓何氏，名媚，字麗卿。自幼知讀書屬文，為伶人婦。唐垂拱中，壽陽刺史害妾夫，納妾為侍妾。而其妻妬悍甚。見殺於廁...而天使見之，為直其冤且使有所識於人間。蓋世所謂子姑神者。其類甚眾，然未有如妾之卓然者也。	<i>Zigu shen ji</i> 子姑神記
1037-1101	黃之僑人郭氏，每歲正月迎紫姑神。以箕為腹，箸為口，畫灰盤中為詩。敏捷立成，余往觀之，神請予作少年遊，乃以此戲之	<i>Shaonian you</i> 少年游
1053-1102	每歲首簪飾箕帚召紫姑以戲，一歲有神下焉，曰：吾蓬萊仙伯徐君也。	<i>Yingshi zi xu</i> 穎師字序
1086-1093	舊俗正月望夜迎廁神，謂之紫姑。亦不必正月，常時皆可召。予少時見小兒輩等閒則召之，以為嬉笑。親戚間曾有召之而不肯去者，兩見有此，自後遂不敢召...多自稱蓬萊謫仙	<i>Mengxi bitan</i> 夢溪筆談 (Jottings from the Mengxi)
1113	紫姑神，世或稱之曰“紫仙”，南方人...多假物書於灰燼中，人有求其椽筆者，即書於紙...若其請致之禮，多繪畫婦人江鄉之間，人人能之，比寢不錄。	<i>Soushen milan</i> 搜神秘覽
Song dynasty (960-1279)	所邀紫姑神作詩詞，至於數百篇。語言字畫皆高妙，所居之地曰電梁，自稱雲洞君。	<i>Zhuzhuang shihua</i> 竹莊詩話

Date ¹⁹¹	Text	Source
Song Dynasty (960-1279)	近黃州郭殿直家有此神，頗黠捷。每歲率以正月一日來，二月二日去。	<i>Tanyuan</i> 談苑
1123-1202	善邀紫姑，稍暇則焚香致請來者，多女仙。或自稱蓬瀛真人。	<i>Yijian zhizhi</i> 夷堅支志
	紫姑仙之名，古所未有。至唐乃稍見之。近世但以箕插筆，使兩人扶之。或書字於沙中，不過如是。有以木手作黑字者，固已甚異。而衢人沈生之術，特為驚。聽其法從占者各自書心疏仍自緘封用印蠟，亦可沈漫不知既至當門焚褚錕而禱。	<i>Yijian zhizhi</i> 夷堅支志 “沈承務紫姑”
	紫姑神類多假託，或能害人。予所聞見者屢矣。	<i>Yijian zhizhi</i> 夷堅支志 “女鬼惑仇鐸”
	紹興二十年...其姪琰觀衆客下紫姑神啓曰：敢問大仙姓名，為誰何代人也。書曰：唐朝呂少霞。	<i>Yijian zhizhi</i> 夷堅支志 “呂少霞”
	時張氏居南禪寺，鬼降于紫姑箕上，書灰曰：我乃公家所營邸處土中人也。名曰小紅。	<i>Yijian zhizhi</i> 夷堅支志 “餅家小紅”
1123	紹聖元年九月，過廣州訪崇道太師何德順。有神仙降其室，因言女仙也。賦詩立成，有超逸絕塵語。或以其托於箕筭，如世之紫姑神者。疑之。然味其言，非紫姑所能至。有入獄群鳥獸者，而托於箕筭。豈足恠哉。崇道好事喜	<i>Shihua zonggui</i> 詩話總龜

Date ¹⁹¹	Text	Source
	客多與士大夫游，其必有以致哉。	
Emperor Xiaozong (1127-1194)	岳侯死後，臨安西溪寨軍將子弟因請紫姑神，而岳侯降之，大書其名。衆皆驚愕，謂其花押則宛然平日真迹也。	<i>Kui che zhi</i> 睽車志
At the turn of the Yuan and the Ming dynasty	祀紫姑。俗謂之坑三姑娘娘。以箕插筯就廁，婦人禱之以卜蠶桑之事，及請畫花樣以求巧。若男子見之即退。	<i>Tianjia wuxing</i> 田家五行
Ming dynasty (1368-1644)	以筯插筯箕布，灰棹上畫之。有能作詩詞者。初問必先書姓名，皆近世文人如于湖石湖止齋者，亦有能作時賦。時論記跋之類者，往往敏而工。言禍福卻多不驗	<i>Youhuan jiwen</i> 遊宦紀聞
1512-1580	箕動，衆叩。姓名書曰：介甫。完知為安石也。	<i>Pengchuang rilu</i> 蓬窗日錄
1567-1624	箕仙之蔔，不知起於何時，自唐、宋以來，即有紫姑之說矣。	<i>Wu za zu</i> 五雜俎
1582-1664	此地業因弘多智眼滅熄髑髏盛糞之魔民，依虞山為窟穴，繼之以黃頭之邪宗，紫姑之廁鬼。	<i>Muzhai youxue ji</i> 牧齋有學集
Qing dynasty	古人制物精意，雖日用小物，亦有至理寓焉。如箕帚除穢之器，人多忽視，不知箕插彩花於角，可降紫姑	<i>Xu Zibuyu</i> 續子不語

Date ¹⁹¹	Text	Source
1635-1704	正月賽紫姑加髻髻於柳箕之上，呼阿姑，焚香禮之。	<i>Guhuantang ji</i> 古歡堂集
1648-1718	夜靜時迎紫姑神于廁中或豬欄邊，著敗衣于苕帚箕上，像紫姑神形。兩人扶之，祝曰：子婿不在，曹夫人已行。小姑可出。捉之覺重，是神來。即迎于堂，以卜蠶事。姑拜則吉。又有祀以馬糞，打鼓□馬糞香三□而神躍拜不已者吉，倒則否。謂之馬頭娘子，蓋蠶神也。又曰何三姑，又曰廁姑，又曰戚姑娘。	<i>Jiexu tongfeng lu</i> 節序同風錄
1717	俗正月十四日請七姑以箒箒爲人稱之則重。又有箕姑、竹姑、葦姑、鍼姑...又正月十五日請紫姑（按七姑定即戚姑之訛。）	<i>Yanzaige zhixin lu</i> 燕在閣知新錄
1728-1804	然則箕卜之術本起於紫姑，後來方家推而廣之耳。	<i>Hengyan lu</i> 恒言錄
1789-1852	采溪毛薦野蔬村裏女兒迎紫姑。以箕為鼓，帚為馬，往來求之。	<i>Yousheng ji</i> 友聲集
1797	紫姑何麗卿，俗呼爲三姑。（顯異錄）紫姑今謂之大仙，俗名箒箕姑。（石湖居士集）紫姑廁神也。金陵有致其神者，問三姑姓。即畫粉為字曰：姓竺，南史竺法明乃吾祖也。（談苑）禾俗婦女祀灰，七姑即紫姑之遺。（吳興記）	<i>Lianshi</i> 蠢史
c.1798	灰七姑辭自注禾俗嘗以二月初祀灰，七姑即紫姑之類也。	<i>Liangzhe</i> <i>youxuanlu buyi</i> 兩浙輶軒錄補遺

Date ¹⁹¹	Text	Source
1804	<p>今黔之各郡不聞有此俗，獨玉屏於元宵小兒女用帕巾蒙筓箕，簪以花朵，兩手托之，問衆事。蓋猶是楚之遺風也。</p>	<p><i>Xu Qianshu</i> 續黔書</p>
<p>Emperor Daoguang (1821-1850)</p>	<p>望夕迎紫姑，俗稱接坑三姑娘，問終歲之休咎...李商隱詩：羞逐鄉人賽紫姑。此風唐時已然...崑新合志亦以十五日迎紫姑，問休咎。范志則以十二月十六日祭廁姑，男子不得至。今俗已非。</p> <p>婦女又有召帚姑、針姑、葦姑，卜問一歲吉凶者。一名百草靈，鄉間則有祈蠶之祭。案范石湖上元紀吳下節物詩注：筓箕巫志怪，香火婢輸誠。句下俗傳正月百草靈，故掃葦針之屬皆卜焉。多婢子輩為之。弊帚繫裙以卜，名掃帚姑。針姑以針卜，伺其尾相屬為兆，俗名針姑。葦莖分合為卜，名葦姑。至白粥以祭蠶神，則本歲時記所載王成遇蠶神故事也。</p>	<p><i>Qing jia lu</i> 清嘉錄</p>
1832	<p>盧姑不知何許人，相傳其夫溺死。覓屍不得，姑縫紉其衣赴水死。越三日，抱夫屍浮出。遂以為神。湖俗女郎每於春初會聚，迎姑卜蠶法取全蘆一莖，滌淨截其根，置水盂內。復截四尺許，剖而為二，兩頭各以蘆杪三寸作擔若肩與然擇未字女郎二人舁之，設香案於密室，善迎者，望空作禮致詞者三，舁者覺重，則知為姑至矣。舁登案衆女郎肅拜甚恭，有所問，則兩蘆相擊，數定盈虛，凡陰晴、豐歉年齒壽夭、</p>	<p><i>Yeyu</i> 野語 “盧姑”</p>

Date ¹⁹¹	Text	Source
	財利諸事，有數可按者悉示。不爽如問蠶，則以幾擊為收成，幾分湖女重蠶信盧姑有以擊多致賀擊少涕泣者，禱畢人以針插蘆正中，別懸一線遙相對，蘆輒婉轉相就，穿線入針孔中。穿畢，蘆曲折入水，盂內承其根以出	
1833	其法則稽神錄云，正月望夜，江左風俗。取飯箕，衣之衣服。插箸為嘴，使畫粉盤以卜...今蘇州有田三姑娘。嘉興有灰七姑娘。皆紫姑類。	<i>Guisi cunhao</i> 癸巳存稿
1838-1894	萍洲可談古傳紫姑神，近世尤甚。宣和初禁之乃絕。嘗觀其下神，用兩手扶一筭，箕頭插一箸。畫灰盤作字，加筆於箸上則能寫紙。自稱蓬萊大仙，多女子也。有名字伯仲，作文可觀。著碁則人無能敵者。余寓南海，有一假儒衣冠者，能迎致其神。在書室中和余詩云云。	<i>Songshi jishi buyi</i> 宋詩紀事補遺
1845-1858	閩俗，婦女多善扶紫姑神。上諸府則在七月七日，稱為姑姑，下諸府則在上元夜，稱為東施娘。又下(諸)府未字少女，多於是日潛揭門前所貼春聯，于紫姑前焚之，以為他日必得讀書佳婿。	<i>Min zaji</i> 閩雜記
c.1845	湖以春初迎盧姑卜蠶，即古紫姑。	<i>Xiwu canlüe</i> 西吳蠶略
1899	東坡集有仙姑問答。一則云僕嘗問三姑：是神耶？仙耶？三姑曰：曼卿之徒也。欲求其事為	<i>Chaxiangshi</i> <i>congchao</i>

Date ¹⁹¹	Text	Source
	<p>作傳。三姑曰：妾本壽陽人，姓何名媚字麗卿...姑云則天時。按此即世所謂坑三姑也。</p>	<p>茶香室叢鈔</p>

Table 5 Some important Zigu narratives in different dynasties

Appendix B

The connections between Zigu and other related female characters

In the first place, it is crucial to mention the necessity of analyzing the connections between Zigu and other related female characters, which might seem to be unnecessary. Only by studying Zigu belief in the context of local beliefs of other similar female figures in ancient China can we reach a fuller understanding of the actual range and detailed category of Zigu belief. To clarify that either those female characters originated from Zigu or were based on a different background story, is important for us to understand the range and influence of Zigu belief.

1. Zigu and (Shao)jigu (箒箕姑)

It is necessary to point out the dual meanings of the character “*Ji*” before starting to analyze the connection between Shaojigu¹⁹² and Zigu. The first and the original meaning of *Ji* indicates a “winnowing basket” or a “sieve”, which is used to sift the bran from grain. The character *Ji* that has this meaning often comes along with the character *Shao*, which means a “bamboo basket for rice”. The combination of these two words, *Shao* and *Ji*, refers to bamboo utensils that are used to wash rice and to fill with rice. In contrast, the second meaning of *Ji* indicates a cleansing tool, dustpan, which is frequently mentioned with *zhou* (brooms) for the sake of cleaning.

When he mentions how the invitation of Zigu was performed, Chao Weipang points out in his article, “in general, there are two kinds of performances: (1) a broom is employed; (2) a sieve is employed (15).” For the time being, let us just leave the first broom-based ritual aside for later discussion. As for the employment of the sieve in the performance, I

¹⁹² When it comes to *Ji*-related immortal, broadly speaking, it naturally refers to “Jixian (Ji Transcendent)”. Here this “(Shao)jigu” in question is under the broad category of “Jixian (Ji Transcendent)”, who is invited via planchette to make predictions, and specifically refers to female “Jixian” who is invited with a sieve(dustpan) or broom. However, I only provide information and cases about Zigu, the topic of this thesis.

fully agree with Chao's statement that Zigu was also called *Chi-ku* or *Lady Sieve* when she was invited with a sieve (Chao 1942, 17). However, to be more precise, it is necessary to mention that this designation was not used until the Southern Song dynasty¹⁹³.

For the record of Shaojigu, an account in the *Shujizhuan huowen*¹⁹⁴ mentions that the Shaoji Immortal composes poems and *Ci* (lyric poetry) in person to predict misfortune and happiness (笰箕仙親寫爲詩詞，以言禍福) (Chen [n.d.]1924, 11b), which was rather similar to the function of Zigu at that time. In Fan Chengda's poem, a more explicit connection was built between Zigu and Shaojigu. Following after the sentence "[If one] uses a dress-decorated broom to make a divination, [the divination will be] confirmed; using a dustpan to compose poems, [people will be] surprised (笰卜拖裙驗，箕詩落筆驚)" (Fan n.d., 4b)¹⁹⁵, an interlinear note pointed out that the subject of the second clause is the ancient Zigu who was called Great Immortal (*Daxian*) in the Southern Song dynasty, and her vernacular name (*Suming* 俗名) was Shaojigu (即古紫姑，今謂之大仙。俗名笰箕姑) (Fan n.d., 4b). This interlinear note indicated that the name of Shaojigu originated from the previous Zigu, and Shaojigu was regarded as one of the common names of "Zigu" at least during the Southern Song dynasty¹⁹⁶. Here, a tendency could be clearly seen. Beginning from the Song dynasty, the background story was not necessarily emphasized in all Zigu-related records. A clear differentiation emerged in both the Zigu belief and its

¹⁹³ There is a slight possibility that the sieve-based ritual could be dated back to the Northern Song dynasty, see Note 201. Besides, as for the sieve-related ritual, I do not agree with the timeframe pointed out by Chao Weipang. As for the sieve-related ritual, I do not agree with the timeframe pointed out by Chao Weipang. As he mentions, "if the invitation of Tzu-ku with a sieve and the *Fuchi* with the same instrument are exactly the same, then the transition from the former to the latter is only a change of name. The period of transition, roughly speaking, is at the end of the Southern Song dynasty" (p. 19). Here, there was no record that proved the sieve-based invitation of Zigu could be traced back to any time earlier than the Southern Song dynasty. Chao Weipang takes for granted that the earliest record of sieve-based invitation rituals that were recorded in the Song dynasty could be seen as the supplementary narrative of the worship practice of Zigu in the Liu Song dynasty.

¹⁹⁴ *Shujizhuan huowen* is written by Song scholar Chen Dayou (c.1198-c.1250). It is an argumentative work of *Shujizhuan* with a format of questions and answers.

¹⁹⁵ This line was quoted from Southern Song poet Fan Chengda's poem *Shangyuan ji Wuzhong jiewu fei xieti sanshier yun* 上元紀吳中節物俳諧體三十二韻, see Fan Chengda 范成大. n.d. *Shihu shiji* 石湖詩集. Sibugongkan jing Qing Airutang ed. Vol. 23, 4b. *Shihu shiji* is a collection of poems written by Fan Chengda. The title of this work is from Fan Chengda's poetic name, Shihu jushi.

¹⁹⁶ Currently, no evidence shows that "Shaojigu" was regarded as the common name of "Zigu" earlier than the Southern Song dynasty, as indicated by this record.

worship rituals. In some cases, the background story was still seen in the narrative, but in others, the original core of the Zigu belief was already simplified into a divination practice with either entertainment or fortune-telling purposes¹⁹⁷.

Moreover, it is also necessary to mention a Ming dynasty Zigu-related story about a poet named Zhu Yuanxu (?-?)¹⁹⁸. There were in total ten different books or collections that recorded this story. When it came to the Immortal who made a poem to satirize Zhu Yuanxu, eight out of ten versions referred to this immortal as “Zigu”, but one of them¹⁹⁹ did not specify the name of this immortal, and the other one²⁰⁰ written in the Ming dynasty specifically mentioned it was named “Jixian”, an appellation that was similar to Jigu. It is not impossible that this was due to transcription errors. However, this possibility is rather low because the character “Zi (紫)” and “Ji (箕)” are not that similar. Therefore, this alternative designation of Jixian might indicate that the social recognition of Zigu and Jixian, to a great extent, were rather similar in late imperial China.

Besides the sieve, the broom was also employed in the worship of Zigu, as abovementioned. In Chao Weipang’s article, he analyzes the role of the broom and uses the Song dynasty account, Su Shi’s *Zigu shen ji*, as the supplementary explanation of the

¹⁹⁷ For the detailed discussion, see Chapter Five.

¹⁹⁸ This story was recorded in 10 different versions, each of them at least had some slight differences with others. Here I summarize the storyline based on the one recorded in the *Chanji bitan*. Zhu Yuanxu from Jiangzhou was a scholar with a good reputation in poetry. His parents died, but his two little brothers were still young. He hid ten or more boxes of silk brocade inherited from his parents and disregarded his two brothers. One day, when his neighbor invited Zigu, he asked for poems. Zigu wrote a poem to satirize his behavior. He was terrified and then recalled his brothers and taught them Confucianism... (“江州朱原虛爲學究有詩名。父母亡而二弟垂髻。父母所遺綾錦十餘篋，原虛匿之。又遂二弟於外流離不振。一日隣人降紫姑仙。原虛在坐，請曰：聞仙姑能詩，幸見教。仙降筆曰：何處西風夜捲霜，鴈行中斷各悲涼。吳綾越錦成私篋，不及姜家布被香。原虛得詩皇恐。即召二弟還家完聚。教之業儒，俱登科典州郡事二弟事原虛如事父焉。夫二弟固賢矣，而原虛始乖友道口即改。圖殆庶幾哉。遷善徙過者矣”). See Chen Shi 陳師. 1593. *Chanji bitan* 禪寄筆談. Ming dynasty ed. Vol. 02, 9a. Unfortunately, no record indicates an approximate time in which Zhu Yuanxu lived during the Ming dynasty. *Chanji bitan* is a *biji* collection written by Chen Shi (?-?) when he temporarily lived in a monastery. Although his records are multifarious, some of his records did not go through meticulous textual research and are not reliable.

¹⁹⁹ This version was recorded in *Jianhu ji* 堅瓠集, volume 2. *Jianhu ji* is a *biji* collection written by Zhu Renhu 褚人獲 (1635-?) around the late Ming and the early Qing dynasty. See Chu Renhu 褚人獲. [1690?]. *Jianhu ji* 堅瓠集. Qing dynasty (Kangxi) ed. Vol. 02, 16b-17a.

²⁰⁰ This version was recorded in *Xuetao shiping* 雪濤詩評, written by Jiang Yingke 江盈科 (1553-1605) in the late Ming dynasty. *Xuetao shiping* is a collection of Jiang Yingke’s thoughts and comments on poems. See Jiang Yingke 江盈科. n.d. *Xuetao shiping* 雪濤詩評. Minguo qianyin ed, p. 40.

earliest record in *Yiyuan* that was written in the Liu Song dynasty (Chao 1942, 15). Although both of these dynasties were mainly based in South China, Chao ignores the possible disparity between the customs of Zigu in the Liu Song dynasty and the Song dynasty, which were more than 400 years apart. Without a specific connection, it is not tenable to claim that the detailed worship practice could also be employed in a ritual 400 years earlier. The earliest record of the broom-based Zigu ritual could be traced back to the Northern Song dynasty, as indicated by Su Shi's work. In the *Tian zhuan ji*, he pointed out that [people] commonly worshipped ghosts. In the first lunar month, [people] dressed the dustpans²⁰¹ and brooms²⁰² as the Zigu goddess, some [of those Zigu goddesses/gods] could count numbers or draw characters (江淮間俗尚鬼。歲正月，必衣服箕箒為子姑神，或能數數畫字) (Su [n.d.]1468, 22b).

In sum, as for the connection between Shaojigu and Zigu, the former was one of the vernacular (*Su* 俗) names of the latter. The earliest record of (Shao)jigu was found in the Song dynasty.

2. Zigu and Keng Sangu/ Keng Sangu niangniang (坑三姑/坑三姑娘娘)

For the connection between Zigu and Sangu, Gong Weiyong points out an interesting explanation: the predecessor of Zigu was Di Ku's concubine, Jian Di. In the south, Zigu was named Keng Sangu, which indicated there was supposed to be a Dagu and an Ergu. Besides, like Zigu (Sangu), Jian Di also had two sisters (Gong 1997, 87). More interestingly, Gong Weiyong argues that these three sisters as the predecessors of Zigu (Sangu), gradually evolved into three sister goddesses, Yun Xiao, Qiong Xiao, and Bi Xiao

²⁰¹ Here, I translate the Chinese character “*Ji*” as “dustpan” rather than sieve because it appears with the character “*zhou*” (broom). Usually, this combination indicates a set of cleaning tools. However, there is still a slight possibility that this character “*Ji*” means “sieve”. If that is the case, then the earliest record of the sieve-based worship ritual of Zigu could also be traced back to the Northern Song dynasty.

²⁰² As abovementioned, the combination “*Jizhou*” refers to common cleansing tools in ordinary families. It is interesting to note that *Jizhou* sometimes also indicates “wife and concubines”, see this online dictionary source <http://dict.revised.moe.edu.tw/cgi-bin/cbdic/gswweb.cgi?o=dcbdic&searchid=Z00000087315>. This dictionary is developed by the Ministry of Education (ROC). For a similar usage of “*Jizhou*” in a fox story in *Taiping guangji*, see Li Fang, *Taiping Guangji*, Vol. 454, 2a-4a. For another online version, see <https://ctext.org/taiping-guangji/454/jizhen>

in the *Fengshen yanyi* (The Investiture of the Gods)²⁰³(Gong 1997, 87).

First of all, in order to examine if there was a connection between Jian Di and Zigu, it is necessary to focus on this important figure, Di Ku, who was related to both Jian Di and Zigu. In the *Jingchu suishiji*, which appeared as early as the mid-sixth century, Zong Lin quoted an account from the *Dong lan*, says that [Zigu] was the daughter of Di Ku. When she was about to die, [she] said, [I] enjoyed music all [my] life, [so] when it is the fifteenth day of the first [lunar] month, [people] can invite [me] with a grand musical performance (洞覽云：是帝馨女。將死，云：生平好樂，至正月半，可以衣見迎)²⁰⁴ (Zong [n.d.]1922, 3b). The same narrative from the *Dong lan* was repetitively quoted in other later sources, such as *Tian zhong ji*²⁰⁵, and *Suishi guangji*. In this narrative, the daughter of Di Ku was regarded as the archetype of Zigu. No further detailed connection between Di Ku's daughter and toilets was mentioned. That was the only connection built between Zigu and Di Ku. To the best of my knowledge, there was no mention of any association between Zigu and Di Ku's concubine, Jian Di. Gong Weiyong's argument is hard to be proved²⁰⁶.

However, as for the connection between toilets and the three sister goddesses, *Fengshen yanyi* offers a clear narrative about the Goddesses Yunxiao, Qiongxiao, and Bixiao. "These three ladies are the goddess Keng San guniang. Primeval Golden Dipper

²⁰³ *Fengshen yanyi* is a famous gods-and-demons (*Shenmo*) fiction written in the Ming dynasty. It was written by Xu Zhonglin (c.1560-c.1630) during the Longqing and Wanli period (1567-1620).

²⁰⁴ It is necessary to mention that the Chinese character "Yi 衣" here was used as the character "Yin 殷". In ancient classical Chinese, the "Yi 衣" sometimes was borrowed to express the meaning of "Yin 殷". According to Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters, "Yin 殷" means the grand spectacle of musical performance.

²⁰⁵ *Tian zhong ji* is a Ming encyclopedia written by Chen Yaowen (c.1524-c.1605). It has 796 categories with multiple entries under each category. For all the entries in *Tian Zhong ji*, Chen Yaowen provided the corresponding sources.

²⁰⁶ According to Gong Weiyong, it is the *Qinzi yiwei* (親子易位, parent-children translocation) phenomenon that traces the archetype of Zigu to Jian Di. I did not find any relative information about this *Qinzi yiwei* in *China National Knowledge Infrastructure* (CNKI). Considering that quotation marks are used when Gong Weiyong mentions this term, it is also possible that *Qingzi yiwei* is a term created by Gong to refer to the phenomenon that parent-children translocation. Although Gong points out that this phenomenon is often seen in ancient Chinese miracle tales, this does not necessarily mean that it could also be applied in this case without any evidence.

(*Hunyuan jindou* 混元金斗²⁰⁷) is the cleaning-bucket (*Jingtong* 淨桶²⁰⁸) of the human world, all the births within the human world have to be transformed to live from here (雲霄娘娘，瓊霄娘娘，碧霄娘娘。以上三姑正是坑三姑娘之神。混元金斗即人間之淨桶，凡人之生育，俱從此化生也)” (Xu [1567-1620?], 65a). Although the “toilet” is not specifically mentioned in this narrative, the term “*Keng*” and “*Jingtong*” are implicitly connected with toilets. In the countryside of North China, “*Maokeng* 茅坑 (latrine pit)” or “*Fenkeng* 糞坑 (manure pit)” were the vernacular name of toilets, which probably shares the same sense of the “*Keng*” in “*Keng San guniang*”. In other words, the three sister goddesses were probably considered as a representation of the toilet - the latrine goddesses. Moreover, here the word *Jingtong* indicates the bath bucket used for bathing the new-born babies. As Ma Shutian points out, giving birth was seen as unclean, so sometimes women were asked to give birth in toilets in ancient times (Ma 1997, 277). In this sense, the place of bathing the new born babies is more likely to be in toilets.

However, although *Fengshen yanyi*, reportedly written in the Longqing (1567-1572) or Wanli period (1573-1620) in the Ming dynasty, revealed background information about Sangu and the possible connection with toilets, the earliest record that Sangu is Zigu comes from elsewhere. In *Tianjia wuxing* (Peasant proverbs on climate)²⁰⁹, which was written at the turn of the Yuan and Ming dynasty, Lou Yuanli (c. mid-fourteenth century) pointed out that Zigu was commonly known as Keng Sangu niangniang, when he mentioned the worship of Zigu ([紫姑]俗謂之坑三姑娘娘) (Lou and Zhang n.d., 3a). After this record, the account that the vernacular (*Su* 俗) name of Zigu was Sangu or Keng San guniang gradually emerged. For instance, in the *Qing jia lu*²¹⁰, Gu Lu (1793-1843) mentioned that

²⁰⁷ Primeval Golden Dipper is the weapon of the three sister goddesses. Here, I adopted this English translation of the *Hunyuan jindou* from Kang Xiaofei’s book *The Cult of the Fox*, p. 111.

²⁰⁸ This *Jingtong* refers to the bath bucket used for bathing the new-born babies.

²⁰⁹ *Tianjia wuxing* 田家五行 was written by Lou Yuanli 婁元禮 at the end of the Yuan dynasty and the beginning of the Ming dynasty. *Tianjia wuxing* mainly documents the agricultural meteorology around the Lake Tai area around the mid-fourteenth century.

²¹⁰ *Qing jia lu* 清嘉錄 is written by the Qing scholar Gu Lu 顧祿. It documents the traditional customs and festivals around the Suzhou area, according to the sequence of the twelve months.

on the night of the fifteenth day [people] invited Zigu, who was commonly known as Jiekeng San guniang, to ask about the good and bad luck for the whole year (望夕迎紫姑, 俗稱接坑三姑娘, 問終歲之休咎) (Gu [1830?], 32a). It is interesting to note that the earliest connection between Zigu and (Keng) Sangu had already appeared by the end of the fourteenth century, which was about 200 years earlier than the narrative of (Keng) Sangu's background in *Fengshen yanyi*.²¹¹

Afterward, (Keng) Sangu as one of the vernacular name of Zigu was gradually accepted by ordinary people during the Ming and Qing dynasties.

3. Zigu and Cegu 廁姑

For the connection between Zigu and Cegu, Chao Weipang provides an explanation that the name “*Tzu-ku* (Zigu)” came from the wrong pronunciation of the *Tz'u-ku* (Cegu) (Chao 1942, 24). Let alone the problematic phonetic disparity²¹², his argument also does not conform with the chronological order of the occurrence of these two names. As mentioned above, the earliest record of the name Zigu was found in the Liu Song dynasty, if not earlier. In contrast, the term “Cegu” did not appear until the Southern Song dynasty. The earliest record of Cegu was found in the *Wujun zhi*²¹³, written by Fan Chengda, “on the sixteenth day women will worship Cegu and men should not be there (十六日婦女祭廁姑男子不得至)” (Fan 1229, 8b). The first record of Cegu is supposed to appear much earlier than the designation of Zigu in order to support Chao's argument, but the fact is that the name Cegu appeared far later than Zigu.

Moreover, besides this first record, all the other records of Cegu were mainly during the Ming dynasty and the Qing dynasty. Coincidentally, most of the Cegu records in the

²¹¹ Here, another possibility is that the narrative of (Keng) Sangu's background had already existed before the Ming dynasty. The background story might be recorded in other sources but those sources did not come down to us.

²¹² For the phonetic analysis of this opinion, see Chapter Three (3.1).

²¹³ *Wujun zhi* was written by Fan Chengda around 1192 and it was published after revised in 1229. *Wujun zhi* is a gazetteer for Pingjiang Fu in the Southern Song dynasty. Pingjiang Fu is mainly present day Suzhou City and a part of the Shanghai area.

Ming and Qing dynasties were gazetteers, which means the locales of these records and narratives could be easily located. When we examine those records of Cegu, it is unexpected to see that the locales of these records were mostly in South China. The abovementioned first record of Cegu, *Wujun zhi*, mainly documented the social conditions and local practices in Pingjiang Fu (present day Suzhou in Jiangsu Province) during the Southern Song dynasty. For the other Cegu-related records during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the locales of those records included: Xiong County²¹⁴ (present day Baoding City in Hebei Province); Jiading²¹⁵ (present day Shanghai area); Hangzhou Fu²¹⁶ (present day Hangzhou area); Suzhou Fu²¹⁷ (present day Suzhou area); Yin County²¹⁸ (present day Ningbo City in Zhejiang Province); and Chizhou Fu²¹⁹ (present day Chizhou City in Anhui Province). Xiong County and Chizhou Fu were located in the Yellow River area and central China respectively, apart from this, eight out of ten records centered in the Jiangnan area in South China during the Ming-Qing period. Considering this geographical tendency, the use of Cegu might be influenced by the dialect, Wu Chinese²²⁰.

²¹⁴ According to the *Xiong sheng*, the first gazetteer of Xiong xian, “Women invite Cegu to practice divination by floating flowers on water and asking about the good and bad fortune. [They also cut the colorful flowers to use as hairpins (女子邀厠姑卜流花問吉凶。又剪綵簪之)”, see Wang Qi 王齊. 1537. *Xiong sheng* 雄乘. Ming dynasty (Jiajing) ed. Vol. 01, 24b.) Xiong County is in present day Baoding City, Hebei Province.

²¹⁵ According to the *Jiading xianzhi*, volume 2, “ladies use candies and cakes as sacrificial offerings, as in planchette writing (女子以果餌迎厠姑，如扶乩之狀)”, see Zhang Yingwu 張應武 and Han Jun 韓浚. [1605?]. *Jiading xianzhi* 嘉定縣志. Ming dynasty (Wanli) ed. Vol. 02, 11b.) Jiading County is present day Jiading District in Shanghai.

²¹⁶ According to the *Zhejiang tongzhi*, volume 99, “On the night of the fifteenth day, women in the countryside invite Cegu to predict the good or bad fortune and the rich or poor harvest in the next year (鄉村婦女於十五夜召厠姑，以卜一歲吉凶，并蠶田豐歉)”, see Ji Zengyun 嵇曾筠. 1735. *Zhejiang tongzhi* 浙江通志. Wenyuange siku quanshu ed. Vol. 99, 11a.) *Zhejiang tongzhi* is a provincial gazetteer of present day Zhejiang Province, compiled during the reign of Emperor Yongzheng (1722-1735).

²¹⁷ According to the *Suzhou fuzhi*, volume 3, “on the sixteenth day women worship Cegu and men should not be there (十六日婦女祭厠姑男子不得至)”, see Feng Guifen 馮桂芬. 1877. *Suzhou fuzhi* 蘇州府志. Qing dynasty (1883) ed. Vol. 03, 7b.) Suzhou is roughly present day Suzhou City in Jiangsu Province.

²¹⁸ According to the *Yinxian zhi*, volume 1, “in the first ten days of the first [lunar] month, at night, women invite celestial immortals or Cegu to ask about the good or bad fortune (正月上旬夜，女子邀天仙或厠姑問吉凶)”, see Qian Weiqiao 錢維喬. 1788. *Yinxian zhi* 鄞縣志. Qing dynasty ed. Vol. 01, 15b.) Yin county is in present day Ningbo City, Zhejiang Province.

²¹⁹ According to the *Chizhou fuzhi*, volume 1, there is an interlinear note after the phrase “ask for divination 問卜”, “Virgins invite Cegu at midnight and ask about good or bad luck (處女夜分邀厠姑，叩諸函吉)”, see Wang Chong 王崇. 1545. *Chizhou fuzhi* 池州府志. Ming dynasty (Jiajing) ed. Vol. 02, 2b.) Chizhou is in present day Anhui Province.

²²⁰ This speculation that Wu Chinese influenced the formation of the designation, Cegu, is still questionable. The dialect, Wu Chinese, can be traced back to as early as the Qin dynasty. However, here these Cegu records were mainly recorded in the Ming and the Qing dynasties. It is hard to explain why no Cegu narrative recorded in the early dynasties came down to us.

As for the date of Cegu worship, even though the fact that most records provide the time “the night of the fifteenth day of the first lunar month”, a different date is found in *Qing jia lu*. At the end of the record titled “Keng Sangu niangniang”, the author Gu Lu quoted an account of Cegu, “*Fan zhi*²²¹ which recorded that [people] worship Cegu on the sixteenth day of the twelfth [lunar] month (范志則以十二月十六日祭廁姑)” (Gu [1830?], 33a).

Combining with the abovementioned deduction, in conclusion, Zigu’s background story and the previous connections between Zigu and toilets underlay the foundation of the formation of the designation, “Cegu”. After Cegu was somehow separated from the mainstream designation Zigu around the Southern Song dynasty, it mainly centered in South China, especially the Jiangnan area during the Ming and the Qing dynasties.

4. Zigu and Lugu 盧姑

The records of Lugu were not as numerous as that of other possibly related female figures. However, fortunately, the linkage between Lugu and Zigu is more straightforward and more explicit than others.

In several records dated back to the Qing dynasty, a female figure named Lugu was also mentioned with Zigu. In his *Xiwu canlüe*²²², Cheng Dai-an (?-?) pointed out that [Huzhou area] invited Lugu to make divination on [the harvest of] silkworms during the early spring, [Lugu was] the previous Zigu (湖以春初迎盧姑卜蠶，即古紫姑) (Cheng [1845?], 2b). According to Cheng Dai-an’s description, this Lugu seemed to serve as the Qing-dynasty version of Zigu, inherited from the previous Zigu belief. However, tracing back to the origin of this Lugu, a different female figure with a vividly miserable background story showed up. According to the *Yeyu*²²³, Lugu was from an unknown place.

²²¹ Here, “Fan zhi” might be the abbreviation name of a gazetteer.

²²² *Xiwu canlüe* 西吳蠶略 is an agricultural book about silkworms written by Cheng Dai-an around 1845. It mainly documents the process and some crucial methods in sericulture.

²²³ *Yeyu* is a *biji* collection written by Cheng Dai-an (the late eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century).

It was said that her husband drowned. [Lugu] could not find his corpse. [Lu]gu sewed up her clothes and went into the water to commit suicide. Three days later, [she] floated above the water, carrying her husband's corpse. Therefore, [people] regarded her as a goddess. As the Huzhou customs, girls gathered together in spring and invited Lugu to divine about silkworms (盧姑不知何許人。相傳其夫溺死。覓屍不得，姑縫紉其衣赴水死。越三日，抱夫屍浮出。遂以爲神。湖俗女郎每於春初會聚，迎姑卜蠶)(Cheng [1832]1845, 19a). Although the specific date of this story was not revealed from this narrative, the clear differences between this Lugu story²²⁴ and that of Zigu can easily be seen. But if Lugu had a different background, then why was she somehow seen as the same as the previous Zigu around the Huzhou area? The similar traits of these two figures throw light on this question. Zigu was generally deemed to predict the harvest of mulberry and silk (silkworms) while Lugu was reported to have the ability to make divination about silkworms, at least in the Huzhou area. Both Lugu and Zigu were believed to have a strong connection with silk-related handicrafts. This similar divination power concerning the silk harvest might be the reason why Lugu and Zigu were seen as the same deity.

5. Zigu and Qigu (戚姑/七姑)

Besides examining the connection between Zigu and Qigu, it is also necessary to pay attention to the relation between the two names 戚姑 (hereafter refer as Qigu (1)) and 七姑 (hereafter refer as Qigu (2)) under the same phonetic designation Qigu.

As for the Qigu (1), the earliest record could be traced back to the Han dynasty. Documented in the *Hanshu*, Lady Qi was a favored imperial concubine of Emperor Liu Bang. After Liu Bang died, his legal wife, Empress Lü firstly killed Lady Qi's son and then

According to the preface of *Yeyu*, Cheng Dai-an mainly documented what he experienced and what he heard from other villagers or friends in this book.

²²⁴ It is interesting that this plot does not exclusively involve in the story of Lugu. It had been seen in some earlier records about filial sons and daughters. According to Robert Campany, there is a type of tale about filial sons. "The son leaps into the water where his parent was lost, and soon the two corpses appear, hand in hand, as if bonded by their mutually resonant sympathy, allowing for proper burial" (p. 352).

cut off her four limbs, and dug out her eyes, to make her become a human-pig (先是高后鳩殺如意, 支斷其母戚夫人手足, 搥其眼, 以為人彘) (Ban and Yan [82?], 31b). Empress Lü let her live in Juyu (使居鞠域中) (Ban and Yan [82?], 3b). According to Yan Shigu's annotation, Juyu was just like the place for kickball, which indicated an enclosed space like a cellar²²⁵(鞠域如蹋鞠之域謂窟室也) (Ban and Yan [82?], 3b-4a). In this earliest and official record, there was no mention of toilets. But in the *Lunheng* (Doctrines evaluated)²²⁶ that was written in the same era, there was a clear description that the toilet was the place where the poor Lady Qi was left by Empress Lü (Wang [86?], 19b)²²⁷. The difference between these two narratives in the same period was probably due to the officiality of *Hanshu*²²⁸. According to the background story of Lady Qi, which was regarded as the archetype of Qigu (1), the similarities between Zigu and Qigu (1) were not hard to find: (1) Both of them were depicted as a miserable concubine, whatever an ordinary one or an imperial one, who was killed by the legal wife; (2) Both of them were closely related to the toilet. Although there was no mention of the toilet in the first records of these two figures, toilets were allegedly said to be the deathplace of both Zigu and Qigu (1) in some later narrative. As for the date of worshipping Qigu (1), a Ming dynasty book, *Tian zhong ji*, points out that according to one account, [people] invited the Qigu goddess on the first day of the first [lunar] month (一曰世俗元日請戚姑之神) (Chen n.d., 54b-55a). Due to the scarcity of reliable sources, it is hard to deduce if this date in *Tian zhong ji* revealed an overall picture or just a regional custom. From my perspective, this record is dated to the Ming dynasty, which was in a comparatively late period in both Zigu and Qigu beliefs. The

²²⁵ Here, Yan's annotation was rather confusing. Kickball in ancient China was supposed to be an outdoor exercise. It is not plausible to equate the ground for kickball with a cellar.

²²⁶ *Lunheng* is written by the Eastern Han philosopher Wang Chong (c.27-c.97). In this book, Wang Chong offered a critical analysis to histories and stories and criticized some superstitious thoughts at that time.

²²⁷ “吕后断戚夫人手, 去其眼, 置於厠中, 以為人豕”, see Wang Chong 王充. [86?]. *Lunheng* 論衡 (Doctrines evaluated). Sibu congkan jingtong Jincatong ed. Vol. 06, 19b.

²²⁸ From my perspective, generally, an official history record was inevitably influenced by Confucian propriety. It might purposely embellish things that were unethical, bad, or disgraceful... But those unofficial histories, without moral requirements, are more likely to reveal the truth. [Even though sometimes the authenticity of some unofficial histories is still debatable.]

customs of both these two beliefs, especially the worship dates and detailed rituals, might have already been changed dramatically by this time.

Although a difference in dating Zigu belief and Qigu (1) belief can be seen, these two traditions of worship shared a similar purpose. The purpose of inviting Qigu (1) was recorded in the *Hongya xianzhi*²²⁹(Gazetteer of Hongya County), women invited the latrine goddess Qigu (1) to ask about fortunes and misfortunes (女子邀廁神戚姑問禍福) (Zhang 1562, 15a). It is worth noting that here Qigu (1) was categorized as a latrine goddess. Although this *Hongya xianzhi*, was composed in the Qing dynasty, which might not be tenable enough to prove that Qigu (1) as one of the latrine goddesses was accepted nationwide. But it at least showed that Qigu (1) was somehow merged into the belief in a latrine goddess in the Sichuan area no later than the Qing dynasty.

Speaking of the belief in Qigu, in addition to the abovementioned Qigu (1), the alternative Qigu (2) should not be ignored.

In the Qing dynasty, Yuan Yi (1789-1863) conducted a detailed investigation of the Qigu (2) shrine among certain areas (Jiangxi, Gannan, Fujian, and Tingzhang Prefectures) in South China. Based on this investigation, he pointed out several different possible origins of the Qigu (2) belief, dating back to the Tang and the Song dynasties²³⁰. But none of them was related to either the Qigu (1) or toilets. That is to say, our toilet-related Qigu (2) might not be the only Qigu (2) existing in folklore and literature.

Moreover, in *Yanzaige zhixin lu*: [A comment by the author:] Qigu (2) was the erroneous designation of Qigu (1) (按七姑定即戚姑之訛) (Wang 1717, 2a). According to this record and the abovementioned conclusion, considering the same pronunciation, it is

²²⁹ *Hongya xianzhi* was written by a Ming scholar Zhang Keshu 張可述 (c.1523-?) in 1562. As a native, Zhang compiled this first local gazetteer of Hongya County. Hongya County is under the administration of present day Meishan City, Sichuan Province.

²³⁰ As Yuan Yi mentioned in *Suihuaitang quanji*, in Jiangxi, Gannan, Fujian, and Tingzhang Prefectures, all government offices and villages worshipped Qigu through building shrines (“江西、贛南、福建、汀漳諸郡，凡官廡邑聚皆廟祀七姑”，see Yuan Yi 袁翼. 1888. *Suihuaitang quanji* 遂懷堂全集. Yuan Zhensong keben ed. Vol. 01, 45a.). *Suihuaitang quanji* is a *biji* collection written by Yuan Yi in 1888. The experience that he once served as the District Magistrate of Yushan (in Jiangxi Prefecture) makes his statement persuasive.

possible that Qigu (2) might be just an error for Qigu (1)²³¹.

Furthermore, due to the proximity between the date of worshipping Zigu (the fifteenth day of the first lunar month) and Qigu (2) (the fourteenth day of the first lunar month) in *Yanzaige zhixin lu* (Wang 1717, 2a)²³², there was a good chance that the worship dates of Zigu and Qigu were the same day at the earlier period. Apart from the date, the similarities were also seen in the worship rituals of these two female figures. The way to invite Qigu was also recorded in *Yanzaige zhixin lu*, using *Zhao 'li* (箒籬)²³³ to make a human shape, [after the god descended,] it would be heavier when it was weighed (以箒籬爲人稱之則重) (Wang 1717, 2a). To a great extent, this *Zhao 'li* was rather similar to the sieves used in Zigu worship, and the verification and testament of the deity descending were all through the changes of its weight. In other words, both the worship tools and ritual methods of Qigu were similar to that of Zigu. One cannot claim that these two figures are actually the same only based on these two features. However, it indicates that the belief in Qigu might be highly influenced by that of Zigu.

If Qigu (2) was just a false designation of Qigu (1) and the belief in Qigu (2) might have been influenced by Zigu, then Qigu (1) belief might be influenced by Zigu belief as well. But the date of the story of Qigu (1) was earlier than the earliest record of Zigu. The only reasonable explanation of this is that the beliefs about Qigu (1) and Zigu interacted during their formation and evolution.

²³¹ It is also possible that Qigu 七姑 had its own origin but gradually merged into the belief in Qigu 戚姑. However, due to the scarcity of primary sources, it is hard to provide a final conclusion in this stage.

²³² On the fourteenth day of the first lunar month, [people] invited Qigu (2)... On the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, [people] invited Zigu... (“俗正月十四日請七姑...又正月十五日請紫姑...”, see Wang, *Yanzaige zhixin lu*, 2a.)

²³³ *Zhao 'li* is a utensil that is used to separate solids from liquids, which is similar to a sieve.

6. Conclusion

	Zigu	(Shao)jigu	(Keng) Sangu	Cegu	Lugu	Qigu
Separate Background story	√	X	√	X	√	√
Earliest record ²³⁴	Liu Song dynasty	Song dynasty	At the turn of Yuan and Ming dynasties	Southern Song dynasty		Han dynasty
Worship date	The night of the fifteenth day of the first lunar month	The night of the fifteenth day of the first lunar month	The night of the fifteenth day of the first lunar month	The night of the fifteenth day of the first lunar month. The sixteenth day of the twelfth month	During the early spring	On the first day of the first lunar month
Worship practice	Make Zigu's shape, and invite her at the toilet or the pigsty	Dress sieves or brooms with clothes as the shape of Zigu				Qigu uses a <i>Zhao'li</i> to make human shape
Worship goal	Predict all concerns. Foretell the future and the sericulture	Basically the same as that of Zigu; no special goal was mentioned	Ask about the good and bad luck		Make divinations on [the harvest of] silkworms	Ask about fortunes and misfortunes
Note				mainly centered in South China		

Table 6 A comparison between Zigu and other similar figures

The connections between Zigu and other different female figures can be seen through the above discussion and this table. In sum, (Shao)jigu and Cegu shared the same background story as Zigu. Moreover, (Shao)jigu, as one of the vernacular names of Zigu, was gradually accepted by ordinary people during the Ming and Qing dynasties, so did (Keng) Sangu. Although Lugu and Zigu were believed to have a strong connection with silk-related handicrafts, Lugu had its own background story. Besides, Qigu belief and Zigu belief might be interactive during their formation and evolution process.

²³⁴ As for the latest mention of these female figures, it seems that these appellations all existed at least until the Qing dynasty. However, it is hard to surmise that it was a small scale or a nation-wide phenomenon simply from the scarce records.