

LI MINGRUI'S PRIVATE TROUPE  
AND  
ITS SPECTATORS (1644-62)

by

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## ABSTRACT

Scholars of vernacular Chinese plays such as *Mudan ting* (Peony Pavillion) by Tang Xianzu (1550-1616) have paid much attention to the texts of the plays, their readership, and the historical development of performances of them, but their studies to date have revealed little about the spectatorship of performances. In this thesis, I will explore the private troupe of Li Mingrui (1585-1671)—known for performing *Mudan ting* and *Moling chun* (Spring in Moling) by Wu Weiye (1609-71)—and endeavor to discover how the spectators interpreted performances by this troupe. Information about the troupe and about spectators' interpretations will be revealed by analyzing dozens of extant poems that were written especially during household performances, and due attention will also be paid to the political and cultural climate of the time when they were written. The purpose of this study is to provide a detailed picture of a typical private troupe during the Ming-Qing transition, to consider the degree of continuity of performance elements from late Ming to early Qing, and to deepen our understanding of the mentality of the literati world during this transitional period.

Li Mingrui's particular fondness for *Mudan ting* and *Moling chun* stems from his close relationship with both playwrights. A protégé of Tang Xianzu, the preeminent late-Ming playwright, and mentor of Wu Weiye, whose play reflects the dilemmas of political and cultural identity post-1644, Li Mingrui is ideally situated for a study of this kind. His troupe of eight actresses, which was created around 1646 and forced to disband in the spring of 1662, was able to perform *Mudan ting*, for which eight roles are designated, as well as *Moling chun*, for which twelve roles are designated, with the added participation of amateurs and other household servants who knew how to perform plays.

Li Mingrui was independent from partisan strife between the Donglin and eunuch factions during the late Ming period, and was forced to serve under the Manchus for several months in 1644. Despite his service under the Manchus, he enjoyed good relations with other scholars in the early Qing, and the spectators of his troupe included both Ming loyalists and scholars who had served both the Ming and Qing. Both groups attended the same gatherings and performances and wrote poems at them. Nearly all the spectators viewed Chinese music and the Ming-style costumes onstage as nostalgic reminders of the fallen Ming. Even more important, these performance elements came to symbolize Han-Chinese Ming culture. In their poems these spectators distinguished Han-Chinese culture from Manchu culture, using references to performance elements to drive this distinction home.

A politically charged term such as “Ming loyalist” does not adequately encompass the evidence of these poems, which reveal beliefs shared by men who were otherwise deeply divided politically. The aforementioned spectators can be more aptly described as “cultural loyalists” whose social activities sustained Chinese culture during the transition from the Han-Chinese Ming to the Manchu Qing Dynasty.

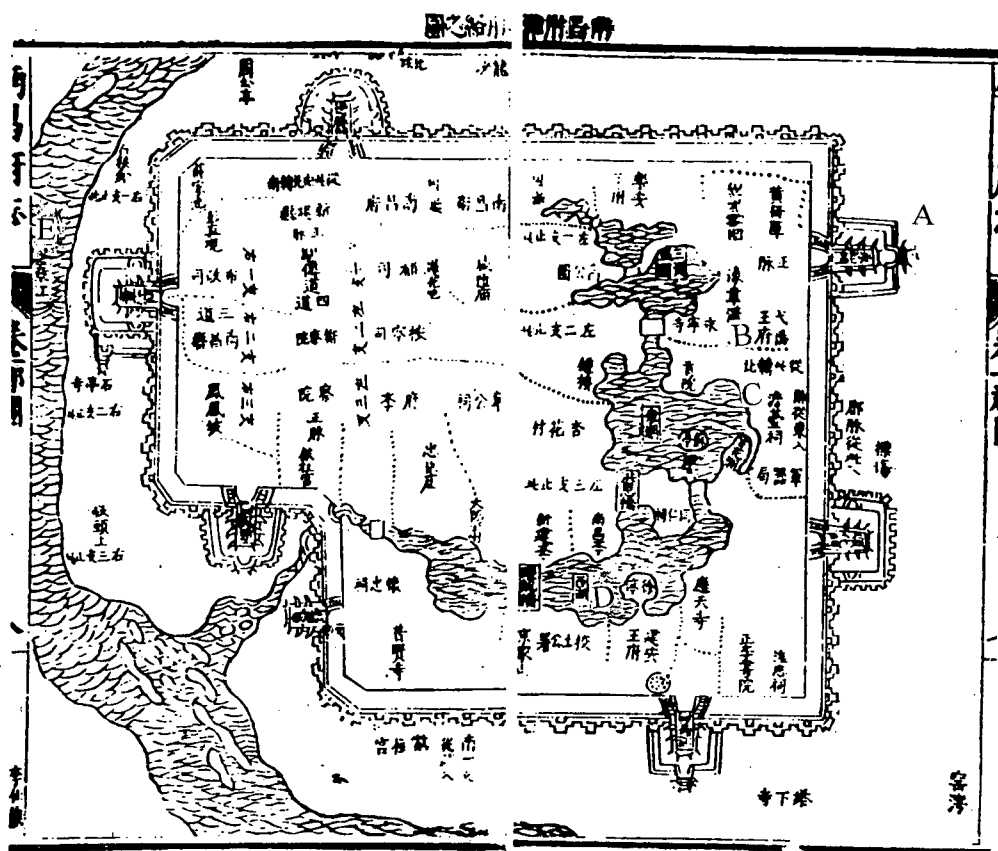


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**Fig. 1: The Map of Nanchang City (1588).**

From: Fan Lai and Zhang Huang. *Xin xiu Nanchang fuzhi* (1588), p. 29.

A: *Yonghe men* 永和门 (Gate of Eternal Peace).

B: *Yiyang Wang fu* 弋阳王府 (Mansion of Yiyang Prince), which was re-constructed into the Garden of Elysium by Li Mingrui.

C: *Dantai ci* 澹台祠 (Memorial Temple to Dantai Mieming).

D: *Xihu* 西湖 (Western Lake)

E: *Zhangjiang* 章江 (the Zhang River), i.e., the Gan River.



**Fig. 2: The Performance of Kun Opera  
during the Chongzhen Period (1628-44).**

From: Liao Ben, *Zhongguo gudai juchang shi*, illus. 66.

The block engraving, originally in the *chuanqi* drama *Hehua dang* 荷花荡 (Lake of Lotus) published in the Chongzhen period, describes the performance of a play in the Kun style. The actor performing on the mat is wearing the Ming-style official costume.



**Fig. 3: The Performance of a Play during the Celebration of  
Emperor Kangxi's Sixtieth Birthday (1713).**

From: Qu Yanjun, comp., *Zhongguo Qingdai gongting banhua*

(Hefei: Anhui meishu chubanshe, 2002), vol. 30, p. 70.

On the stage, one actor is wearing a gauze hat (*shamao* 纱帽), and another a scarf (*futou* 幞头). Both of them are wearing Ming-style costumes.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

While assembling information on Li Mingrui and his associates, I came to understand their dilemma of cultural identity during the transition from the Han-Chinese Ming Dynasty to the “barbarian” Manchu Dynasty. Any change of circumstances requires a psychological readjustment. I have enjoyed writing this thesis with lots of support and encouragement, and I wish to express my thanks to professors and friends.

Under Professor Catherine Swatek’s supervision, I become accustomed to Western academic regulations, a tradition different from what I have learned in China. She also edited and has critically commented on the entire draft. Her patience and scrupulousness made me believe that she did much painstaking work for an international student such as me. Ms. Joni Low proofread and edited Chapters 4, 6 and 7 and her work has promoted its readability, for which I express my thanks. Professors Jerry D. Schmidt and Alison Bailey have encouraged me while I was writing this thesis, and have read the draft and given me some suggestions.

I also reserve debts of thanks to Mr. Yi Chen of Boston and Mr. Xiaohe Ma of the Harvard-Yenching Library, who helped me obtain primary materials helpful to my study.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Private troupes, owned by gentry, nobles, and wealthy merchants, were the most important performers of *chuanqi* drama from the late sixteenth century, when the Kun style became the dominant style of the literati *chuanqi* drama, to the late eighteenth century, when “the practice of maintaining household troupes declined.”<sup>1</sup> Directed, supervised, and nurtured by gentry who composed nearly all *chuanqi* playtexts and who knew theatrical arts much better than others,<sup>2</sup> private troupes were better able to promote the development of drama in this period than were the public professional troupes that wandered in towns and villages, or the court troupes that performed exclusively within the imperial palace.<sup>3</sup> The private troupes to be discussed below are those owned by the gentry, for several reasons: (1) it is the gentry who played a decisive role in the development of *chuanqi* drama in this period; (2) original records by and about the gentry are much easier to find than those by and about either

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<sup>1</sup> According to Guo Yingde, *chuanqi* drama as a genre came into being during the period of 1465 to 1586, while the Kun style was reformed by Wei Liangfu 魏良辅 (1501-84) and utilized in the creation and performance of *chuanqi* drama by Liang Chenyu 梁辰鱼 (1519-91). See Guo Yingde, *Ming Qing chuanqi shi* (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 2001 rpt.), pp. 38-76. During the Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong reigns (1662-1795), officials were prohibited “from enjoying theatricals either in public or in private,” and during the Kangxi and Yongzheng reigns (1662-1735) a “playwright-dominated drama centered in household troupes” shifted to an “actor-dominated one centered in professional troupes based in urban areas.” See Catherine C. Swatek, *Peony Pavilion Onstage: Four Centuries in the Career of a Chinese Drama* (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, 2002), pp. 151, 134, 341n. 180.

<sup>2</sup> John Hu, “Ming dynasty drama,” in Colin Mackerras, ed., *Chinese Theater: from Its Origins to the Present Day* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), p. 61. According to Guo Yingde, *chuanqi* drama in the Ming and Qing dynasties includes court drama (*gongting chuanqi*), folk drama (*minjian chuanqi*) and literati drama (*wenren chuanqi*), the third of these outnumbering the other two. Literati playwrights, who mainly came from gentry, had decisive influences on their counterparts who were employed by emperors or by public professional troupes. See Guo Yingde, *Ming Qing chuanqi shi*, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Qi Senhua provides an interesting discussion of how private troupes were advantaged when it came to promoting theatrical arts in the Ming and Qing dynasties. See Qi Senhua, “Shilun Mingdai jiayue,” in Hua Wei and Wang Ailing, eds., *Ming Qing xiqu guoji yantaohui lunwen ji* (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo chouben, 1998), pp. 317-19.

imperial clansmen or merchants (two other groups keenly interested in drama); and (3) owners of private troupes in this period came chiefly from the gentry.<sup>4</sup>

Although bondservants who amused their masters by singing and dancing, actors and actresses in private troupes established the traditions of Kun Opera, developed performances of extracted scenes, encouraged the literati playwrights, and disseminated the Kunshan style of singing as they traveled about with their owners.<sup>5</sup> We have some information concerning the circumstances under which private troupes operated (e.g., the number of actors or actress in a typical private troupe, their training, places and occasions of performances, regulations governing actors/actresses).<sup>6</sup> As for the functions of private troupes, the academic consensus is that they not only entertained gentry families, but also mediated social intercourse between the owners and their guests.<sup>7</sup> In seventeenth-century China, “not only individual actors, but

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<sup>4</sup> No statistics about private troupes are available; thus we do not know the percentages of those owned by gentry, nobles, and merchants respectively. Liu Shuiyun collects the names of over 500 owners and hypothesizes that there were at least thousands of private troupes in the Ming and Qing dynasties. Based on the materials he has collected, he claims that most troupe owners came from the gentry. See Liu Shuiyun, “Jiayue tengyong: Ming Qing xiju xingsheng de yinxing beijing,” *Wenji yanjiu* 1 (2003), pp. 94, 95. Citing Lu Eting, who lists some thirty-two owners of private troupes from the mid-Ming to early Qing in his study, Sophie Volpp thinks that the practice of raising private troupes was likely not so widespread as proposed. See Volpp, *Worldly Stage: the Figure of the Theater in Seventeenth-Century China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, forthcoming).

<sup>5</sup> Hu Ji and Liu Zhizhong, *Kunju fazhan shi* (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 1989), pp. 188-224, 329-40, esp. 203-10; Liu Shuiyun, “Jiayue tengyong,” pp. 97, 101-02.

<sup>6</sup> E.g., Lu Eting, *Kunju yanchu shigao* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenji chubanshe, 1980), pp. 116-23, 160-69; John Hu, “Ming dynasty drama,” p. 82-88; Hu Ji and Liu Zhizhong, *Kunju fazhan shi*, pp. 191-202, 210-13; Cyril Birch, *Scenes for Mandarins: The Elite Theatre of the Ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 1-10; Liao Ben, *Zhongguo gudai juchang shi* (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1997), pp. 61-74; Grant Shen, “Acting in the Private Theatre of the Ming Dynasty,” *Asian Theatre Journal* 15.1 (Spring 1998), esp. pp. 72-82; Qi Senhua, “Mingdai jiayue,” pp. 312-17; and Li Jing, “Ming Qing tanghui yanju changsuo xushuo,” *Minzu yishu* 2 (2002), pp. 168-85.

<sup>7</sup> Lu Eting, *Yanchu shigao*, pp. 118-19, 123; Qi Senhua, “Mingdai jiayue,” pp. 311-22; and Liu Shuiyun, “Jiayue tengyong,” pp. 97-98. Liu also provides some examples to illustrate that the performances of a private troupe would be used by the owner to do his filial duty to his old parents. According to Judith Zeitlin, You Tong 尤侗 raised his private troupe mainly with the intention of commemorating his father, who had enjoyed drama while living. See “Spirit writing and performance in the work of You Tong (1618-1704),” *T'oung Pao* 84.1-3 (1998), pp. 133-35.



entire troupes were bestowed upon friends, bequeathed upon relations, bought and sold. Their circulation served to create and maintain networks of social exchange.”<sup>8</sup> An owner would ask his private troupe to perform when he held a banquet, or would be accompanied by his actors or actresses on his travels. Even when the literati held a meeting as members of a society, they would book a private troupe to perform, whether that troupe was owned by one member or by someone outside their society.<sup>9</sup> Whether enlivened with simple performances or elaborate ones, such gatherings were regarded as so elegant, solemn, and distinguished that the attendees would compose poetry, known as *guanju shi* 观剧诗 (poetry on watching plays), as records of the performances and their thoughts about them.

Questions then arise: What did the performances of private troupes mean to the gentry in this period? Did contemporary events external to the performance influence the gentry’s reception of it? If so, how did these events (e.g., the political context) during this transitional period transform the meaning of a performance for those in attendance? In this study, gentry will be viewed as spectators rather than playwrights, directors, and designers of performances, and more attention will be paid to the actual responses of spectators than to the subjective intentions of the playwrights and performers. By examining the audience’s interpretations of performance elements such as music, costumes, and libretto, a different perspective emerges that will enable us to explore fresh questions about the performance and spectatorship histories of these plays.

Poems written while watching plays are sources that enable us to explore how the

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<sup>8</sup> Volpp, *Worldly stage*.

<sup>9</sup> Liu Shuiyun provides examples that illustrate how private troupes functioned as media of social intercourse. See “Jiayue tengyong,” pp. 97, 98. He also explores the relationship between meetings of literati societies and theatrical performances, including those of private troupes, in the Ming and Qing dynasties. See “Mingmo Qingchu wenren jieshe yu yanju huodong,” *Nantong shifan xueyuan xuebao* 17.1 (March 2001): 52-56.

literati—who wrote plays themselves—responded to these troupes and performances as spectators. In fact, the attitude of literati towards performances by private troupes has been discussed by such scholars as Lu Eting, Grant Shen, and Sophie Volpp. Lu argues that what literati sought from performances was relaxation and, more important to them, sexual stimulation.<sup>10</sup> While focusing on the aesthetic contributions of private troupes to the development of Chinese drama, Shen also discusses the erotic dimension of singing and dancing, the two basic elements of a performance for literati spectators.<sup>11</sup> Sophie Volpp, in her case study of liaisons between literati and actors, explores a triangular relationship between Chen Weisong 陈维崧 (1626-82), a famous poet, Xu Ziyun 徐紫云 (d. 1675?), an actor in a private troupe, and Mao Xiang 冒襄 (1611-93), the troupe's owner and Chen Weisong's patron.<sup>12</sup> The performance of plays during the late Ming and early Qing was an important medium of social exchange amongst the literati, and an indispensable element of gentry gatherings. Since the medium of *chuanqi* drama reached its zenith when such gatherings were socially influential, we must explore the possibility that private troupes provided more than simply a divergence from reality and an erotically appealing spectacle.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Lu Eting, *Yanchu shigao*, pp. 118-23, 155-69.

<sup>11</sup> Grant Shen, "Private Theatre of the Ming Dynasty," pp. 69, 70.

<sup>12</sup> See Sophie Volpp, "The literary consumption of actors in seventeenth-century China," in Judith T. Zeitlin and Lydia H. Liu, eds., *Writing and Materiality in China: Essays in Honor of Patrick Hanan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), pp. 133-79; also *Worldly stage*. Homosexual love between actor and scholar is described at length in Chen Sen's *Pin hua baojian*, a novel written between 1827 and 1837 but reflecting the theatrical world of late eighteenth-century Beijing. Nearly all actors described in the novel are from professional public troupes, but their relationships with scholars can be viewed as the historical and logical outcome of private troupes' sexual stimulation of the literati in the late Ming and early Qing. Chen's novel has been used as a source about sexuality and gender in late imperial China, e.g., Chloe Starr, "Shifting boundaries: gender in *Pinhua baojian*," *Nan Nü* 1.2 (October 1999): 268-302; Keith McMahon, "Sublime love and the ethic of equality in a homoerotic novel of the nineteenth century: *Precious Mirror of Boy Actresses*," *Nan Nü* 4.1 (March 2002): 70-109.

<sup>13</sup> Liu Shuiyun explains the functions of appreciating performances at meetings of literati societies in the Ming and Qing dynasties as follows: (1) it was regarded as an elegant fashion and a vehicle for enhancing

## *Methodology*

Roger Chartier's idea of "historical reading," which he uses to coax out the implications of the play *George Dandin* by Molière (1622-73) for different spectators ranging from the French court, nobility, and burghers, can help us to explore these questions concerning responses to *chuanqi* plays among the literati. According to Chartier, historical reading "involves weaving together three strands of analysis": (1) gaps between the texts of different genres on the one hand, and between "situations in the theater and situations in the social world that served as their matrix" on the other; (2) "the forms in which the text was given," for example, stage performance vs. printed edition; and (3) receptions reflected in "contemporary accounts" and later descriptions. Studying how a play is received, Chartier thinks, requires investigating how the text

led its spectators or its readers to mobilize social knowledge fed by current events and based on ways of perceiving and judging.... Thus it will require moving from the contents of the text and from discourses and practices on which the text is based towards the thoughts that those contents were capable of eliciting.<sup>14</sup>

In an historical reading of a play, Chartier adds, "anything that operated outside the text to lend it meaning" is worth noting.<sup>15</sup> Inspired by this audience-centered approach, I will explore the particular theatrical and political circumstances that influenced literati reception of *chuanqi* plays during the transition from Ming to Qing.

Some scholars of Chinese drama have discussed the relationship of texts and their

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the society's prestige; (2) it was viewed as both entertainment and relaxation; and (3) it enabled the expression of nostalgia for the fallen Ming and papered over differences and conflicts between societies. Liu's arguments are insufficient, but they serve as one starting point for this study. See "Yanju huodong," pp. 54-55.

<sup>14</sup> Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), pp. 49-50.

<sup>15</sup> Chartier, *Forms and Meanings*, p. 50.

receptions to social contexts. In her study of the representations of *Si fan* 思凡 (Longing for the secular life) in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Beijing, Andrea S. Goldman compares the texts of *Si fan* as Kun Opera and *Zidi shu* 子弟书 (scions' tales) and exposes differences between them by coaxing out "differing social dynamics between performers and audiences in the two performances."<sup>16</sup> She argues that as Kun Opera *Si fan* "is in many ways a product of the commercial, urban theater hall; that is, its production values were enhanced, if not shaped, by the audience/performance dynamics of the commercial playhouse."<sup>17</sup> Unlike Chartier, however, Goldman does not consider how Chinese spectators responded to performances by mobilizing "social knowledge fed by current events and based on ways of perceiving and judging." Some studies exploring the reception of the Ming and Qing dramatic literature such as *Mudan ting* focus on readers' responses to the original texts but not spectators' responses to or interpretations of the performance elements.<sup>18</sup> In this thesis, I will try to apply Chartier's "historical reading" to the exploration of the performances of plays during the Ming-Qing transition.

### *Why Li Mingrui's Private Troupe as a Case Study?*

In this thesis, I will use the private troupe of Li Mingrui 李明睿 (*zi* Taixu 太虚;

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<sup>16</sup> Andrea S. Goldman, "The nun who wouldn't be: Representations of female desire in two performance genres of 'Si fan'," *Late Imperial China* 22.1 (June 2001):75.

<sup>17</sup> Goldman, "The nun who wouldn't be," p. 107.

<sup>18</sup> For example, Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 68–112; Judith Zeitlin, "Shared dreams: The story of the three wives' commentary on *The Peony Pavilion*," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 54.1 (June 1994): 127–179; and Ellen Widmer, "Xiaoqing's literary legacy and the place of the woman writer in late imperial China," *Late Imperial China* 13.1 (June 1992): 111–155; Maram Epstein, *Competing Discourses: Orthodoxy, Authenticity, and Engendered Meanings in Late Imperial Chinese Fiction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 61–119, esp. 92–103. Catherine Swatek contributes much to the study of the historical development of performing *Mudan ting*. See Swatek, *Peony Pavilion onstage*.

1585-1671) for a case study of these questions. A famous *littérateur* who lived in the late Ming and early Qing, Li owned a private troupe that was well known, as indicated by a comment to the effect that “Master Li has had *Mudan ting* 牡丹亭 (the Peony Pavilion) and the newly written *Moling chun* 秣陵春 (Spring in Moling) performed in his [Canglang 沧浪] Pavilion, where many celebrities gathered and composed poems to make a record of their fine points.”<sup>19</sup> Such poems not only enable us to gauge how plays were received, they can also help us to identify specific plays on which to focus our attention.

The title of a series of quatrains written by Zhu Zhongmei 朱中楣 (*hao* Yuanshan 远山, b. 1621), wife of Li Yuanding (b. 1595), also mentions a performance of *Mudan ting* by Li Mingrui’s troupe, this time paired with *Yanzi jian* 燕子笺 (The Swallow Letter) by Ruan Dacheng 阮大铖 (1586-1646):

In the early spring of the year *dingyou* (1657), the former minister of rites Li Taixu visited me together with his wife and accompanied by their company of young actresses, who performed *Yanzi jian* and *Mudan ting*. I presented a quatrain to each actress, eight poems in total.<sup>20</sup>

丁酉初春，家宗伯太虚偕夫人携小女伎过我，演燕子笺、牡丹亭诸剧，因各赠一绝，得八首。

As for other plays performed by Li’s actresses, a poem by Chen Hongxu (1597-1665) mentions a performance of *Xixiang ji* 西厢记 (The Story of the Western Wing), the perennially popular romance by Wang Shifu 王实甫 (ca. 1260-1336), and hints at the

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<sup>19</sup> Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua* (Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1973), p. 816. Qiu (*juren* 1696; Xinjian 新建, Nanchang Prefecture) was a poet and critic. *Moling chun* is a *chuanqi* drama by Wu Weiye (1609-71). The Canglang Pavilion was Li Mingrui’s villa in the suburb of Nanchang City. For more details about Li’s relationship with Wu and his villa, see Chapter Two.

<sup>20</sup> Zhu Zhongmei, “Dingyou chuchun jia zongbo Taixu xie furen xie xiao nuji guo wo, yan Yanzi Jian, Mudan Ting zhu ju, yin ge zeng yi jue, de bashou,” in Li Yuanding, *Shiyuan quanji* (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1997), pp. 109-110. Mao Xiaotong mistakenly attributes these eight quatrains to Li Yuanding. See Mao Xiaotong, ed., *Tang Xianzu yanjiu ziliao huibian* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), p. 1169.

spectators' response to it:

After years spent studying maps and histories in a land of water and clouds,  
The old gentleman suddenly wears Daoist garb.  
But his amorous desires still exist,  
As he watches *The Western Wing* by the waves' reflected light.<sup>21</sup>

几年图史水云乡，  
元老翻然羽客装。  
只有情缘今尚在，  
绿波影里看西厢。

Rounding out this preliminary survey are two poems that mention performances of *Caihao ji* 彩毫记 (A Tale of the Multicolored Brush), a *chuanqi* play about the Tang poet Li Bai (701-62) by Tu Long (1543-1605), another late Ming *chuanqi* playwright.<sup>22</sup> In another poem by Chen Hongxu, references to the content of Tu's play are oblique but unmistakable:

The Auxiliary Academician sang Concubine Yang's praises that year,  
In an embroidered robe, where could [Li Bai] find a beauty?  
The current Hanlin Academician is also named Li,  
But his fate excels that of the Yelang exile.<sup>23</sup>

供奉当年咏太真，  
锦袍何处觅佳人。  
今日翰林还姓李，  
遭逢却胜夜郎身。

A poem by Li Yuankuan (1596-1675), a close friend of both Chen Hongxu and Li Mingrui, is more explicit in its reference to a performance of the play, with its comparison of the actors onstage to their counterparts offstage and the mention of the beautiful women who

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<sup>21</sup> Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 818; also Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, pp. 1178-79.

<sup>22</sup> Tu Long's *Caihao ji* is included in *Guben xiqu congkan chu ji* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1954), vols. 87-88.

<sup>23</sup> Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 818; also Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, pp. 1179. In 756 Li Bai was suspected of joining the rebellion led by Li Lin (d. 756) and was banished to Yelang (today's Guizhou). See Liu Xu et al., *Jiu Tang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 190:5053-54; Ouyang Xiu and Song Qi, *Xin Tang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 202:5763. For more details about Li Bai and the rebellion, see Part Four of Chapter Two.

graced the occasion, presumably Li's actresses:

The gauze hat onstage defies us,  
The Academician still wears his embroidered robes.  
The tale of wiping off vomit with dragon's towel has long made the rounds,  
But how can that compare to embracing a beauty tonight?<sup>24</sup>

俳场纱帽傲吾曹，  
学士依然御锦袍。  
拭吐龙巾佳话久，  
何如今夜拥姬豪。

Since Li Mingrui's private troupe was famous for performing *Mudan ting* and *Moling chun* and since Li enjoyed close relations with both Tang Xianzu (1550-1616) and Wu Weiye (1609-71) as I will demonstrate shortly, I will focus this study on performances of *Mudan ting* and *Moling chun* rather than those of *Xixiang ji* and *Caihao ji*.<sup>25</sup>

Neither a playwright in his own right nor a director of his troupe, Li was an aficionado who enjoyed watching plays. The spectators of his private troupe, most of whose poems about the performances are extant, include both Ming loyalists and officials who

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<sup>24</sup> Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 817; also Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, p. 1178. For an abstract of *Caihao ji*, see Guo Yingde, *Ming Qing chuanqi zonglu* (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997), pp. 154-56. As an Auxiliary Academician in 743 Li Bai was often drunk and Emperor Xuanzong had to order to awake him by wiping his face with cold water so that Li Bai could compose edicts or poems. See Huang Xigui, *Li Taibai nianpu* (Beijing: Zuo jia chubanshe, 1958), p. 13; also Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 190:5053; Ouyang Xiu and Song Qi, *Xin Tang shu*, 202:5763. That anecdote was integrated into scene 13 of *Caihao ji*, in which drunk Li Bai is summoned to compose some poems to present Emperor Xuanzong and his Concubine Yang who are enjoying peonies in their garden. See Tu Long, *Caohao ji*, 1:36b. In scene 20, after his dismissal in 744, Li Bai rides his donkey to Huayin to visit his friend Yuan Danqiu but is suspected as a spy and arrested. In his confession, Li says, "I, the confessor, have no given name or surname, but once I was wiped on my face with the dragon towel, enjoyed the soup served by the Son of Heaven himself. [When I composed a poem,] the powerful eunuch [Gao] Lishi took off my shoes and [Yang] Guifei herself held the ink stone for me. I could ride my horse in front of the emperor's palaces, but I am prohibited to ride my donkey in Huayin County." See Tu Long, *Caihao ji*, 1:59a.

<sup>25</sup> Besides performing *chuanqi* drama such as *Mudan ting*, *Yanzi jian*, *Moling chun*, *Xixiang ji*, and *Caihao ji*, Li Mingrui's private troupes also performed *zaju* such as *Jingzhao hua mei* 京兆画眉, *Taohua renmian* 桃花人面, *Jiangan jiepei* 江干解佩, and *Yanzi xianjian* 燕子衔笺. See Zhu Zhongmei, "Yinchun ri yan ji, zongbo nian sao yin ming nüji yan zaju sishou 迎春日讌集, 宗伯年嫂因命女伎演杂剧四首" (During the feast on the Beginning of Spring, the wife of the ex-minister of rites asked her actresses to perform *zaju*, so I composed four poems), in Li Yuanding, *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 113. Since Li Mingrui's troupe was known for performing *chuanqi* drama, its performance of *zaju* will not be covered in this thesis.

served under both the Ming and the Manchu regimes. As I will describe in Chapter Two, Li Mingrui was aloof from the political strife between the Donglin clique and eunuch partisans during the Ming period, but had relations with members of both political groups under the two regimes. The spectators of his troupe differed in their political experiences in the Ming period and in their political attitudes towards the new regime. However, they attended the same gatherings, watched the same performances, and exchanged poems about these performances. Their poems reflect changes in the literati world that were caused by the collapse of the Ming and the invasion of the Manchu armies and analyzing these poems will enable us to understand what softened their political differences and drew them together as aficionados of the theatre.

Li's troupe differed from those of playwrights who personally influenced their actors by directing them and sometimes even performing with them, and also from those of wealthy merchants who were opera aficionados but had little interaction with literati. His private troupe can be regarded as a typical one in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a period when "private theatrical entertainments became *de rigueur* among the elite" and "the notion of theatricality was so alive in all aspects of literati cultural production."<sup>26</sup> This is also the time when the Han-Chinese Ming Dynasty declined and the Manchu regime rapidly rose. The period of dynastic transition coincides with Li Mingrui's life, and the performances by his troupe which existed from about 1646 to 1662 lie at the center of this study of how household performances were interpreted by literati spectators during this turbulent period of Chinese history.

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<sup>26</sup> Sophie Volpp, *Worldly stage*.



## Sources

I failed in getting Li Mingrui's works, but for the purposes of this study, which focuses on those who attended performances by his troupe, sufficient information can be gleaned from other primary sources. Nonetheless I list his works here and what I have been able to learn about them:

(1) *Sibugao* 四部稿 (Draft on the Four Branches), which includes works probably in the Ming period. The earliest edition that I have identified was not published until 1624;<sup>27</sup> it was subsequently entitled *Langyuan sibugao* 阆园四部稿 (Draft on the Four Branches in the Garden of Elysium) in a Qing dynasty edition.<sup>28</sup> A revised and enlarged edition published in the Kangxi period (1662-1722) was possibly entitled *Sibugao wenchao* 四部稿文钞 (Selected Essays from the *Draft on the Four Branches*).<sup>29</sup>

(2) *Dachuntang ji* 大椿堂集 (Great Cedar Hall Collection), with a preface by Wang Siren (zi Jizhong, 1575-1646),<sup>30</sup> who also wrote a commentary to *Mudan ting*. This edition probably was published between 1629 and 1630.<sup>31</sup> It was included in *Chongzhen ba dajia shi*

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<sup>27</sup> In the preface to *Sibugao*, Huang Daozhou (1585-1646) wrote, "Taixu has several sons but I have not yet raised one, even though I am pressing forty *sui*." Thus, the preface was written around 1624. Huang and Li were both successful in the metropolitan examination in 1622. See Huang Daozhou, "Langyuan sibugao xu 阆园四部稿序" (Preface to the *Draft on the four branches in the Garden of Elysium*), cited in Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang wen zheng* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe youxian gongsi, 1970), pp. 226-28.

<sup>28</sup> Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang xianzhi*, p. 1548; also Zhao Zhiqian et al., *Jiangxi tongzhi* (Taipei, Huawen shuju, 1967), p. 2335.

<sup>29</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), p. 338. According to Sun, this edition includes both prose and poetry and, as appendices, Zhao Yi's long poem on Li's advice to Emperor Chongzhen about moving the capital to Nanjing, with annotation of the poem by Fang Wen (1612-69).

<sup>30</sup> Wang Siren, "Li Taixu *Dachuntang ji* xu 李太虚大椿堂集序" (A preface to Li Taixu's *Great Cedar Hall Collection*)," in Wang Siren, *Wang Zhizhong xiansheng wenji*, in *Qiankun zhengqi ji*, comp. Pan Ci'en (Taipei: Huanqiu shuju, 1966), pp. 19334-36.

<sup>31</sup> As I will argue in Part Four of Chapter Two, Li Mingrui went to Nanchang to attend his father with the permission of Emperor Chongzhen in 1629 and was back in Beijing before the end of 1630, since he was appointed as the examination mentor of the metropolitan examination to be held in the spring of 1631.

*xuan* 崇祯八大家诗选 (Selected Poems of Eight Great Poets in the Chongzhen Period) published in 1633.<sup>32</sup>

(3) *Bailudong gao* 白鹿洞稿 (Draft from White Deer Cave), which includes prose and poetry composed after 1644.<sup>33</sup>

(4) *Xiaojing jianzhu* 孝经笺注 (Commentary to the *Classic of Filial Piety*).<sup>34</sup>

(5) *Xiaojiang ji* 萧江集 (Xiao River Collection). A collection of Li's poems composed after he was forced to disband his troupe in 1662. It has a preface by Shi Runzhang (1618-1683).<sup>35</sup>

(6) *Xianyipu* 仙音谱 (A Register of Immortal Sounds), commonly entitled *Yuzhang xianyipu* 豫章仙音谱 (A Register of Immortal Sounds from Yuzhang), published in the Kangxi period, which includes poems composed by Li and his friends.<sup>36</sup> According to Qian Qianyi (1582-1664), most of the poems are about watching the performances of Li's private troupe.<sup>37</sup> This work is therefore of great interest for this study, but to date I have not been able to locate a copy of it.

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According to Wang Siren, Li asked him to write a preface for *Dachuntang ji* while Li was on leave in Nanchang.

<sup>32</sup> Yang Haiqing, ed., *Zhongguo congshu guang lu* (Wuhan: Hubei renmin chubanshe, 1999), vol. 1, p. 793. *Chongzhen ba dajia shi xuan*, edited by Xia Yunding 夏云鼎, can be located in *Zhongguo guojia tushuguan* 中国国家图书馆 (National Library of China) in Beijing.

<sup>33</sup> Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang xianzhi*, p. 1548; also Zhao Zhiqian et al., *Jiangxi tongzhi*, p. 2335.

<sup>34</sup> Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang xianzhi*, p. 1548; also Zhao Zhiqian et al., *Jiangxi tongzhi*, p. 2165.

<sup>35</sup> Zhao Zhiqian et al., *Jiangxi tongzhi*, p. 2335. Shi Runzhang, "Xiaojiang ji xiaoyin 萧江集小引" (Prologue to the *Xiao River Collection*), in Shi Runzhang, *Shi Yunshan ji*, eds. He Qingshan and Yang Yingqin (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1992-93), vol. 1, pp. 512-13.

<sup>36</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531. Yuzhang is the ancient name of Nanchang.

<sup>37</sup> Qian Qianyi, "Du Yuzhang xianyipu man ti ba jueju... 读豫章仙音谱漫题八绝句..." (Eight quatrains composed randomly upon reading the *Register of Immortal Sounds from Yuzhang*...), in Qian Qianyi, *Muzhai youxue ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1996), pp. 522-24.

The above works, though inaccessible to me, do reveal something about Li Mingrui's life. Both *Xianyinyu* and *Xiangjiang ji* are inspired directly by the creation and disbandment of his private troupe, and they illustrate clearly that the troupe would have been of great importance in Li's life under the Manchu regime. That said in my study I will analyze many materials other than works authored by Li Mingrui to assemble information about his life, his private troupe, and its spectatorship. Among these materials are hosts of poems composed by those spectators and their contemporaries, which tell stories about Li Mingrui, about his troupe and its performances, and about the poets' opinions of those stories. When I cite the poems, I will examine the historical plausibility of the descriptions within them by quoting from official records and studies of the Ming-Qing transition, in the spirit of a traditional scholar who cites poems while carrying out evidential research (*kaozheng* 考证).

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Li Mingrui was not a playwright or a director but just an aficionado of plays, not a Ming loyalist politically but in close relations with both Ming loyalists and the officials serving the Manchu regime as spectators of his private troupe. Since both Ming loyalists and Qing officials gathered and watched performances by his private troupe on the same occasion and described them in dozens of poems, the gatherings provided a stage on which all spectators also played their roles and expressed themselves. Analyzing those expressions will help us understand Li's private troupe and the spectators' responses to its performances.

In what follows, I will investigate Li's life in Chapter Two and assemble information about his troupe in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four, I will introduce those among his friends and associates whose poems I will utilize for this study and analyze these poems for what they tell us about their authors' responses to the performances. In Chapter Five, I will explore

how meaning is created by spectators as they watch a performance and, in Chapter Six, consider to what extent that meaning was also embraced by other literati such as Qian Qianyi and Gong Dingzi (*zi* Zhilu 芝麓, 1616-73), the leading two scholars in Li Mingrui's time who were not among the spectators of Li's troupe. In the conclusion, I will discuss why Ming-style performance elements survived the political and military conquest of the Manchus, argue that the term "cultural loyalist" is a more useful term for describing the literati world of the Ming-Qing transition than the politically charged term "Ming loyalist," and explore the special manifestation of cultural identification of literati with performers/courtesans during this period.

## CHAPTER II

### LI MINGRUI'S LIFE AND TIMES

Little is known about Li Mingrui's life. Since there are no detailed accounts of him in *Ming shi* 明史 (History of the Ming) or *Qing shi gao* 清史稿 (Draft History of the Qing), I have pieced together information from other sources, which form a rough sketch of three aspects of Li's life: (1) his relationships with Tang Xianzu and Wu Weiye, which help explain why he paid special attention to *Mudan ting* and *Moling chun*; (2) his official career in the Ming period, which will demonstrate his complicated involvement in the partisan strife that was rife during the Ming-Qing transition; and (3) his life under the Manchu regime, which illustrates the change in political culture experienced by the gentry at this time.<sup>1</sup>

#### 2.1. Li Mingrui and Tang Xianzu

Li Mingrui was born into a poor family in a village called Chucha 滁槎, forty *li* away to the northeast of Nanchang in Jiangxi Province.<sup>2</sup> From this humble background Li went on to study in the Prefecture School of Nanchang and then became a protégé of Tang Xianzu, a man thirty-five years his senior who was the most famous playwright in the country by the

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<sup>1</sup> Shi Zuyu provides an outline of Li's life, but misses some important original materials and even makes some wrong interpretations. In this part, I will not repeat materials that I think Shi uses or analyzes correctly. See Shi Zuyu, "Li Mingrui gouchen," *Fudan xuebao* 5 (2002): 134-40.

<sup>2</sup> Shi Zuyu's research concerning the years of Li's birth and death is excellent. See Shi Zuyu, "Li Mingrui gouchen," pp. 134-35. He thinks that Li and his family originally lived within the City of Nanchang, but according to the gazetteer for Nanchang, it is very likely that they were villagers in Chucha until Li succeeded in the 1622 metropolitan examination and took office in Beijing. See Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang xianzhi*, pp. 52, 920; and also his "Nanchang jiangyu shuidao tu 南昌疆域水道图" (Map of the territory and irrigation works for Nanchang) in *Nanchang xianzhi*. For the poverty and simplicity of Li's father, see Tan Yuanchun, "Xiaoyi Li Taigong zhuan 孝义李太公传" (Biography of the filial and righteous old gentlemen Li [Zhensuo]), in Tan Yuanchun, *Tan Yuanchun ji*, ed. Cheng Xingzhen (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998), pp. 574-76; also Wang Siren, "Li Zhensuo xiansheng xiaoyi zhuan 李贞所先生孝义传" (The filial and righteous life of Mr. Li Zhensuo), in *Wang Jizhong xiansheng wenji*, pp. 19448-51.

time of their association.

### 2.1.1. When Was Li Mingrui under Tang Xianzu's Supervision?

In a note in which he accepted Li Mingrui as his protégé and attached a poem, Tang wrote:

In spite of the snow you dispensed with trivial burdens and studied in my humble home, and for this you deserve praise as a man of some accomplishment. In accepting Taixu [as my protégé], there is sure to be future glory in view of past promise. In acknowledging me as his master, Taixu hopes to achieve much with each passing day and to contribute much with each passing month. Tonight I have extemporized a quatrain to present him, as follows:

When did your youth chivalry come into being?  
You gave up drinking and arrived here from home.  
Plum blossoms in spring snow at midnight,  
Voice reciting by lamp-light at a small window.<sup>3</sup>

雪中屏去杂累，读书寒舍，足称男子矣。不佞得太虚，固前有光而后有辉。太虚得不佞，犹欲日有就而月有将也。夜间口占以似：

少年豪气几时成？  
断酒辞家向此行。  
夜半梅花春雪里，  
小窗灯火读书声。

Li Mingrui had been under Tang's supervision for seven years, as indicated in a poem by Li himself that contains the line, "In seven years' time I became proficient in the *Lisao* and *Wenxuan* 七岁熟精骚选理."<sup>4</sup> There is no evidence of the exact date Li began to study under

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<sup>3</sup> Tang Xianzu, "Jian menren Li Taixu 柬门人李太虚" (A note to my protégé Li Taixu), in *Tang Xianzu quanji*, ed. Xu Shuofang (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 1999), p. 1484.

<sup>4</sup> Li Mingrui, "Linchuan Tang shi wenye duonian... 临川汤师问业多年..." (Master Tang in Linchuan had been tutoring me for many years...), in Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, pp. 278-29. From Li Laitai (d. 1681; *jinshi* 1652), we learn that Laitai's father, Li Xuemin 李学旻, studied together with Li Mingrui under Tang's direction and lived in the same bedroom for three years, information that does not contradict what we learn from Li Mingrui here. See Li Laitai, "Ji zongbo xueshi jia Langweng shu 祭宗伯学士家阆翁叔" (Funeral oration for my uncle Langweng, the former academician and minister of rites), in Li Laitai, *Lian kan ji* (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1997), p. 215; also in Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, p. 279. Li Mingrui's reference to "seven sui" cannot refer to Tang Xianzu, since we know that Tang began to study *Wenxuan* only at twenty *sui* and was

Tang's supervision, but it must have been after Lu Tingxuan 卢廷选 (*jinshi* 1592) became Prefect of Nanchang Prefecture in 1606, because of a comment we have by Li's father, Li Zhensuo, which furnishes a clue. The comment, preserved in a biography of the father written by Tan Yuanchun 谭元春 (*zi* Youxia 友夏; 1586-1637), one of the founders of the Jingling School,<sup>5</sup> refers obliquely to a memorial Mingrui had submitted to the Emperor Chongzhen requesting leave to return home to care for his father:

Who asked you to inform the emperor of my story? When you were a government student appreciated by Prefect Lu, you spoke to him [about me], and he planned to visit my house. When you were studying under the supervision of Master Tang in Linchuan, he wrote "Cooking for mother in the snow hut" to praise me; here too this gesture was occasioned by your speaking to him.<sup>6</sup>

孰使汝上闻于君父乎？汝诸生时，受知卢太守，汝与太守言，太守乃欲式吾闾。汝从临川汤先生学，先生书“雪庐炊养”褒我，亦汝辄语汤先生。

Lu Tingxuan had held office in Cangzhou and then in Beijing before coming to Nanchang. While in Nanchang he often met with students in the prefecture school, and in Wanli 35 (1607) he had ordered that district schools in Nanchang and Xinjian be repaired.<sup>7</sup> Such action typically was undertaken just after taking a new post and it is reasonable to infer that Lu became Prefect of Nanchang in 1606.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, Tang Xianzu visited Nanchang several times from 1607 on until his death in 1616, and every time he visited, local scholars and

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not well-versed in this collection until his thirty or forty *sui*. See Xu Shuofang, *Wan Ming qujia nianpu* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1993), vol. 3, p. 232; also Tang Xianzu, "Yu Lu Jingye 与陆景邺" (A letter to Lu Jingye), in Tang Xianzu, *Tang Xianzu quanji*, p. 1436.

<sup>5</sup> For the biography of Tan Yuanchun, see Goodrich, *Dictionary of Ming Biography, 1368-1644* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), pp. 1246-48.

<sup>6</sup> Tan Yuanchun, "Xiaoyi Li Taigong zhuan," in *Tan Yuanchun ji*, p. 575. Li Mingrui's grandfather had died, and the dedication by Tang Xianzu mentioned here praises Li Zhensuo for his filial care of his mother.

<sup>7</sup> Chen Hongxu, *Jiangcheng mingji*, in *Siku quanshu zhenben wuji*, ed. Wang Yunwu (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1974), 3:9a-b, 10b.

<sup>8</sup> For the bibliography of Lu Tingxuan, see Song Ruolin et al., *Putian xianzhi* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe youxian gongsi, 1968), pp. 560-61.

students sought direction from him or asked to be his protégé.<sup>9</sup> Since Li Mingrui tells us that he had been under Tang's tutelage for seven years and Tang died in 1616,<sup>10</sup> it is likely that he became Tang's protégé formally sometime around 1608 when he was 23 years old.

### 2.1.2. Tang Xianzu's Influence on Li Mingrui

As a protégé of an elderly Tang, Li Mingrui was greatly influenced by him. Tang's thought had undergone a dramatic change in his late years, after his dismissal for failure in the evaluation of 1598. Commenting on changes in the style of his own prose and poetry, Tang informed one of his friends,

When I began to study as a young man, I already realized to attack Wang [Shizhen 王世贞, 1526-90] and Li [Panlong 李攀龙, 1514-70], and abandoned myself to the euphuistic style of parallel couplets, following the models of the Six Dynasties [poets]. After a long time, I began to spurn this style. In this sense I too became a follower of Wang and Li. Having indulged in drama and connived at my passions for several years, I began to read works by the scholars of the past and natives of Jiangxi and became interested in the thoughts of Zeng Gong 曾巩 [a native of Nanfeng; 1019-83] and Wang Anshi 王安石 [a native of Linchuan; 1021-86].<sup>11</sup>

吾少为学，已知訾警王李，捐捐然骈枝骊藻，从事于六朝，久而厌之，是亦王李之朋徒耳。沈湎词曲，荡涤放志者数年，始读乡先正之书，有志于曾王之学。

Qian Qianyi reiterated these comments in his biography of Tang, remarking that Tang was

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<sup>9</sup> According to Xu Shuofang, Tang Xianzu visited Nanchang in 1607, 1608, 1609, 1612, and 1614. See *Wan Ming qujia nianpu*, vol. 3, pp. 425, 435, 437, 446, and 456. In the preface to an anthology of works by Nanchang poets, Tang wrote, "Every time I visited Zhangmen, groups of scholars would come to ask me for supervision in the Pavilion for Embracing Scenery, where they had grand meetings 余每如章门，前后旅进就業者，往往而是，会揽秀楼中甚盛." See Tang Xianzu, "Lanxiulou wenxuan xu 揽秀楼文选序" (Preface to *Literary selections from The Pavilion for Embracing Scenery*), in *Tang Xianzu quanji*, pp. 1136-37. Constructed in Wanli 34 (1606), Lanxiulou was a favorite place where literati in Nanchang gathered and composed prose and poetry. See Chen Hongxu, *Jiangcheng mingji*, 4:11a-b. Tang Xianzu wrote a rhapsody about it in 1608. See *Tang Xianzu quanji*, 1999, pp. 1039-48; also Xu Shuofang, *Wan Ming qujia nianpu*, vol. 3, p. 435. It is likely that the preface was also written in 1608.

<sup>10</sup> Xu Shuofang, *Wan Ming qujia nianpu*, vol. 3, p. 465.

<sup>11</sup> Qian Qianyi, "Tang Yireng xiansheng wenji xu 汤义仍先生文集序" (Preface to the *Collected prose of Mr. Tang Yireng*), in Qian, *Muzhai chuxue ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985), pp. 905-06.



proficient in *Wenxuan* (Selections of Refined Literature) in his youth, studied music in middle age, and changed his writing style after forty *sui*,<sup>12</sup> modeling his poetry on that of Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) and Su Shi 苏轼 (1036-1101) and his prose on that of Zeng Gong and Wang Anshi.<sup>13</sup>

Wang Shizhen and Li Panlong were two leaders of the Latter Seven Masters who represented the Archaist School of Ming literature.<sup>14</sup> Wang Shizhen abided by the fundamental principle of archaism, which modeled itself on the prose of Qin and Han and the poetry of the High Tang, although he also acknowledged the accomplishments of Song poets including Su Shi.<sup>15</sup> Tang Xianzu was unfriendly to Wang Shizhen's family and disagreed with Wang Shizhen on literary theory. As mentioned above, he followed the style of the Six Dynasties in his early years and then changed to venerate the works of Zeng Kong, Wang Anshi, Su Shi and Bai Juyi; he never followed the works that the Archaist Masters honored.<sup>16</sup>

Scattered sources suggest that Li Mingrui carried on these tendencies of Tang's

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<sup>12</sup> Throughout this thesis, I adopted the customary Chinese system for counting age.

<sup>13</sup> Qian Qianyi, "Tang Suichang Xianzu zhuan 汤遂昌显祖传" (Biography of Tang Xianzu, [ex-magistrate] of Suichang County), in Qian, *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan* (Shanghai: Gudianwenxue chubanshe, 1957), pp. 562-64.

<sup>14</sup> For Wang Shizhen's biography, see L. Carrington Goodrich, *Ming Biography*, pp. 1399-1405. For Li Panlong's, see Goodrich, pp. 845-47.

<sup>15</sup> For an introduction of the Archaist School and Wang Shizhen's theory, see Chih-p'ing Chou, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 3-14; Kenneth James Hammond, "Beyond Archaism: Wang Shizhen and the legacy of the Northern Song," *Ming Studies* 36 (1996): 6-28. Chou thinks that Wang Shizhen's idea meant a significant deviation from the major principle of Archaism since he was fond of Bai Juyi and Su Shi.

<sup>16</sup> For Tang Xianzu's unfriendliness to Wang Shizhen's family and his attacks on Wang's literary theory, see Xu Shuofang, *Tang Xianzu pingzhuan* (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1993), pp. 54-59; Peikai Cheng, *Reality and Imagination: Li Chih and Tang Hsien-tsu in Search of Authenticity* (Ph. D dissertation, Yale University, 1980), pp. 142-43. For some examples of Tang's unfriendliness to Wang Shizhen and his attacks on the archaist literary theory, see Tang, "Sun Pengchu *Suichutang ji xu* 孙鹏初遂初堂集序" (A preface to Sun Pengchu's *Collection from the Suichu Hall*); "Da Wang Dansheng 答王澹生" (A reply to Wang Dansheng); and "Da Zhang Mengze 答张梦泽" (A reply to Zhang Mengze), in *Tang Xianzu quanji*, pp. 1121-22; 1303-04; 1451-52.

mature thought. As early as 1624, in the preface to *Sibu gao*, Huang Daozhou compares Li Mingrui to Su Shi in experience and the style of his prose.<sup>17</sup> Zhou Lianggong (1612-72; *jinshi* 1640) agrees with Qian Qianyi's view of the changes in Tang Xianzu's late works and makes the direct claim that Li Mingrui inherited Tang's mantle:

Master [Tang] Yireng had been following the style of the Six Dynasties to compose his prose and poetry. He did not spurn what he had written [as a young man] until his late life, when he realized to model his works on those of Zeng Kong and Wang Anshi. [...] Mr. [Li Taixu] carried on Tang's thought.<sup>18</sup>

义仍先生生平撰著以六朝为归，晚年悔其所作，乃知宗趣曾、王。……而先生绍述之。

A more detailed and vivid description of the style of Li Mingrui's poetry and prose was provided by Wang Siren:

[Li Taixu's] *yuefu* poems are pure and classical, unrestrained as a falcon flying in the sky; his modern-style poems are momentous and unrepressed, like a whale roaming in the sea; his ballad poems are as rushing and lively as a heavenly steed galloping down the slope; his eight-legged essays and letters, with precise allusions and true forms, are like a seasoned peasant talking about farming; his memorials are penetrating and earnest, like an excellent physician writing out a prescription.<sup>19</sup>

[李太虚]所著乐府，高清古逸，如独鹞之凌霄；所著近体，恢洪展肆，如大鲸之掣海；所著放歌，奔腾跳艾，如神骏之下坡；所著试牍，典确真式，如老农之谈穡；所著疏章，肯款迫至，如良医之发圭。

Wang Siren did not explicitly say that Li Mingrui's works were influenced by Tang, but his description of Li's style could also be applied to the works of Bai Juyi, Su Shi, Zeng Gong, and Wang Anshi, all exemplars of Tang's late years.

According to Li Mingrui himself, Tang taught him and his fellow students to "explore all learning from our innate sensibilities and not live life out of books; to refine our thoughts

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<sup>17</sup> Huang Daozhou, "Langyuan sibu gao xu," in Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang wen zheng*, pp. 226-28.

<sup>18</sup> Zhou Lianggong, "Nanchang xiansheng *Sibu Gao* xu 南昌先生四部稿序" (A preface to Master Nanchang's *Draft of Four Branches*), in Zhou, *Laigutang ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe), p. 587.

<sup>19</sup> Wang Siren, "Li Taixu *Dachuntang ji* xu," in *Wang Jizhong xiansheng wenji*, p. 19335.

by following the Confucian way and not seek success from the eight-legged essays 为学悉从性灵探讨，不从纸堆里作生活；皆从学道精思，不从帖括中求出脱。”<sup>20</sup> Here Tang emphasized directly the role of *xingling* (innate sensibility) in scholarship and writing, and as I will argue, Li upheld his supervisor’s teaching.

The idea of *xingling*, as a literary concept, was developed most fully by the Gong’an School (also known as *xingling pai*, or the School of Innate Sensibility) in opposition to the Archaist School. Its leader, Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道 (1568-1610), used the term *xingling* interchangeably with *xingqing* 性情, to refer to self-expression as the source of literary creation. As personal nature within one’s bosom, *xingling* means “not only a combination of personality and spirit, but also a synthesis of feeling and emotion,” and in writing, it is “revealed through spontaneous outbursts and not through deliberate contemplation.”<sup>21</sup> After Yuan Hongdao’s death in 1610, the Jingling School has been viewed as the successor of *xingqing* to the Gong’an School, and its founders Zhong Xing<sup>22</sup> and Tan Yuanchun also “stressed the importance of individual innate sensibility,” even though the Jingling writers were critical rather than supportive of Yuan Hongdao and his brothers.<sup>23</sup>

According to Chih-p’ing Chou, “*xingling*” has different meanings in different historical contexts and academic discourses,<sup>24</sup> but Tang Xianzu’s understanding of the term

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<sup>20</sup> Du Guo 杜果, “*Wenchang Tang shi zongpu xu* 文昌汤氏宗谱序” (Preface to the *Genealogy of the Tang Family in Wenchang*), in Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, p. 280.

<sup>21</sup> Chou, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School*, p. 46. For Yuan Hongdao’s biography, see Goodrich, *Ming Biography*, pp. 1635-38.

<sup>22</sup> For Zhong Xing’s biography, see Goodrich, *Ming Biography*, pp. 408-09.

<sup>23</sup> Chou, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School*, pp. 113-18.

<sup>24</sup> Chou examined the origins of *xingling* and investigated its meanings. See Chou, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School*, pp. 44-45.

is similar to its meaning in the Gong'an literary theory. In fact, Tang was a major ally of the Gong'an School. Both he and Li Zhi 李贽 (1527-1602), one forerunner of the Gong'an School, were influenced by the teachings of Wang Yangming 王阳明 (1472-1528), especially the ideas of the Taizhou 泰州 thinkers, and their intellectual pursuits of "innate sensibility" were interrelated, as Pei-kai Cheng has argued.<sup>25</sup> Given their shared interest in *xingqing*, Tang supported the principles of both the Gong'an and Jingling Schools.<sup>26</sup> In his late years, he published five essays by Tan Yuanchun and praised the author highly in his preface to the collection.<sup>27</sup>

That Li Mingrui accepted Tang Xianzu's interpretation of *xingqing* is illustrated in Li's preface to *Xu Hang youcao* 徐杭游草 (Draft of Travels to Xuzhou and Hangzhou), an anthology of poems by Fang Wen (1612-69), and also in his relationship to Tan Yuanchun, one of the founders of the Jingling school. In his preface, Li emphasized his belief that the six classics of Confucianism, including the *Book of Songs*, were essentially narrative works. He emphasizes the importance of *xingqing* in poetry, and argues that all poems in the *Book of Songs*

were composed to express the minds and feelings of loyal officials, filial sons, sentimental women, and men at war, who indulge in their passions and sentimental attachments. All of them express an idea, and both feeling and scene are found in them.

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<sup>25</sup> Cheng, *Reality and Imagination: Li Chih and Tang Hsien-tsu in Search of Authenticity*, pp. 128-66.

<sup>26</sup> For a recent study about Tang Xianzu's relationship to the Gong'an School, see Wang Chengdan, "Tang Xianzu yu Gong'an Pai guanxi lun lue," *Qi Lu xuekan* 4 (2000): 46-51. Pei-Kai Cheng and Zhou Yude both discuss Tang Xianzu's idea of *xingqing* at length. See *Reality and Imagination*, pp. 144-50, 294-305; Zhou Yude, *Tang Xianzu lungao* (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1991), pp. 87-96.

<sup>27</sup> In a letter to his friend, Tan wrote, "Master Tang in Linchuan once sent me the prologue to the *Five Essays of Master Tan*, but I did not reply to him before he passed away 汤临川曾寄谭子五篇序，竟未报书，汤先生亦死." See Tan, "Yu Wang Yiming 与王以明" (To Wang Yiming), in *Tan Yuanchun ji*, p. 752. A note to one of Tan's poems says, "Tang [Xianzu] once wrote a preface to and published five essays of Mr. Tan 汤曾序刻谭子五篇." See Tan, "Ji Huang Zhenfu xiansheng jian huai Tang Linchuan 寄黄贞父先生兼怀汤临川" (A poem sent to Mr. Huang Zhenfu and to commemorate Tang Linchuan), in *Tan Yuanchun ji*, p. 65.

How can they be compared to the work of later poets, who ignore their own sensibilities and gather up other peoples' dregs, swallowing them raw and whole in the name of "seeking after poems"?<sup>28</sup>

皆忠臣、孝子、怨女、征夫流连缱绻，感怀而作，其间无非写意中之事，而情与景皆在其中，岂如后人之为诗者，置自己之性情而拾他人之糟粕，生吞活剥，捉摸求诗之谓耶？

As one of the two founders of the Jingling school, Tan Yuanchun advocated a literary theory grounded in *xingling*.<sup>29</sup> Tan had been unsuccessful in several provincial examinations until Li Mingrui supervised the examination in Hubei in 1627, during which Tan was selected as the Number One Graduate, and since then, he showed deep gratitude for Li's recognition, and the two men maintained a close relationship until Tan's death in 1637. Two essays Li wrote discuss Tan's poems and ideas,<sup>30</sup> and it is highly likely that Tang Xianzu's estimate of Tan's talent influenced Li's.

## 2.2. Li Mingrui and Wu Weiye

Li Mingrui and Wu Weiye became acquainted in 1616, when Li and Weiye's father Wu Kun 吴琨 (*zi* Yuyu 禹玉, Yunyu 蕴玉; 1584-63) were tutoring the sons of Wang Zaijin 王在晋 (*zi* Mingchu 明初; *hao* Huyun 岫云; 1564-1643; *jinsi* 1592) in Taicang and when Weiye was also under his father's tutelage.<sup>31</sup> According to Niu Xiu 钮琇 (fl. the 17<sup>th</sup> century),

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<sup>28</sup> Li Mingrui, "Xu Hang youcao xu 徐杭游草序" (Preface to the *Draft of Travels to Xuzhou and Hangzhou*), in Fang Wen, *Xu Hang youcao* (included in *Tushan ji*, vol. 5. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1979), 1a.

<sup>29</sup> For one view of Tan Yuanchun's place in the Jingling school, see Chou, *Yüan Hung-tao and the Kung-an School*, pp. 113-18.

<sup>30</sup> Li Mingrui, "Tan Youxia yiji xu 谭友夏遗集序" (Preface to the *Posthumous Works of Tan Youxia*); and "Zhong Tan hezhuan 钟谭合传" (Biographies of Zhong [Xing] and Tan [Yuanchun]), in Tan, *Tan Yuanchun ji*, pp. 949-50; 958-60.

<sup>31</sup> Ma Daoyuan, ed., *Wu Meicun nianpu*, in *Jindai Zhongguo shiliao congkan*, ed. Shen Yunlong

Li appreciated Weiye's exercises in composition and predicted that the child would be a great man. At the end of the lunar year, Li became drunk at a feast and smashed a jade cup that his host used specially to press the tutors to drink. Teased by his disciples for this lapse, Li left for Nanchang with taels of silver given by Wu Kun to cover his traveling expenses. A likely date for this incident is the end of 1620 or beginning of 1621.<sup>32</sup>

In 1630, Wu Weiye was successful in the provincial examination, and it was said that Li managed to get Wu's examination paper and showed it to his colleagues in Beijing. The following year, with Li as his examination mentor, Wu became the number one graduate in the metropolitan examination and second in the palace examination.<sup>33</sup> However, his success was soon challenged. According to Cheng Muheng 程穆衡 (*jinshi* 1737), some of Li Mingrui's enemies demanded that Wu's honor be revoked because of his failure to follow proper procedure in listing Li as the examination mentor who recommended him. Li rejected this demand,<sup>34</sup> but referred to the incident in a preface and explained his reasons for singling out Wu's paper.<sup>35</sup> Whether Wu Weiye's honor was deserved or not, we can conclude that Li

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(Taibei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1966), p. 15. For the biography of Wang Zaijin, see Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, 257:6625-26; Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 839. Wang Zaijin once was appointed the provincial administration commissioner of Jiangxi in the Wanli period and appreciated Li Mingrui who was a national student then. See Niu Xiu, *Gu sheng* (Shanghai: Guoxue fulunshu, 1911), 1:10b-11a.

<sup>32</sup> After describing how Li Mingrui argued with his host and went home, Niu Xiu mentioned that he was successful in the provincial examination in the autumn of the year when he came home from Taicang. According to the *Jiangxi tongzhi*, Li became the number one graduate in the 1621 provincial examination in Jiangxi. See Niu Xiu, *Gu sheng*, 1:10b-11a; and Tao Cheng et al., *Jiangxi tongzhi* (n.p., 1732), 55:28b. Citing Gu Shishi 顾师轼, Ma Daoyuan thought that Li left Wang Huiyun's family in 1622. See Ma Daoyuan, *Wu Meicun nianpu*, p. 16-17. This is unconvincing, because Li was successful in the metropolitan examination in Beijing in the spring of 1622.

<sup>33</sup> Ma Daoyuan, *Wu Meicun nianpu*, pp. 20-22; Niu Xiu, *Gu sheng*, 1:11a.

<sup>34</sup> Cheng Muheng, "Loudong qijiu zhuan 娄东耆旧传" (Biographies of old respected scholars of Loudong), in Wu Weiye, *Wu Meicun quanji*, ed. Li Xueying (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1990), p. 1411.

<sup>35</sup> The paper was written in a style that differed completely from that favored in the examinations for

Mingrui's part in his success was not a small one.

Lu Shiyi 陆世仪 (1611-72), a native of Taicang, provides more details about Wu's success. According to him, Weiye's success was promoted intentionally by Li Mingrui and Zhou Yanru 周延儒 (1588-1644),<sup>36</sup> the chief examiner and longtime associate of Weiye's father. Their promotion of Wu was hailed as nepotism by some enemies of the Donglin clique to which Zhou Yanru belonged, but Emperor Chongzhen dismissed the impeachment since he also appreciated Wu Weiye's paper. An argument then arose between Li Mingrui and Zhang Pu 张溥 (*zi* Tianru 天如; 1602-41), Wu's tutor prominent in literati circles,<sup>37</sup> when Wu's paper was published with not Li Mingrui's name but Zhang Pu's as the appraiser before the text. Dissatisfied with Wu's failure to follow proper procedure, Li Mingrui wanted to revoke his honor but relented and abandoned this plan when Wu, accompanied by friends, apologized and explained that it was a publishing mistake. It was the principle of proper procedure that Li Mingrui was advocating, not to have his own name replace Zhang Pu's. However, Zhang Pu became very angry and remained hostile towards him.<sup>38</sup> Bad relations between them may explain, in part, why no poem can be found in Wu Weiye's extant collected works about the close relations between Wu and Li during the Ming period.

Other than this, we know little about relations between Li Mingrui and Wu Weiye in the waning years of the Ming dynasty. During the Ming period, their last traceable meeting

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the past one hundred years. See "Xiong Yubin ji xu 熊渔滨集序" (Preface to *Xiong Yubin's Collected Works*), in Wei Yuankuang, ed., *Nanchang wen zheng*, pp. 319-20.

<sup>36</sup> For the biography of Zhou Yanru, see Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, 308:7925-31; Goodrich, *Ming Biography*, pp. 277-79.

<sup>37</sup> For the biography of Zhang Pu, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>38</sup> Lu Shiyi, *Fushe ji lue*, in *Donglin yu Fushe* (Taipei: Tanwan yinhang and Zhonghua shuju, 1968), pp. 65-66.

took place in Beijing in the spring of 1637, when Wu paid a visit to inform Li that Tan Yuanchun had died.<sup>39</sup> According to Wu's own account, their next meeting did not take place until some time between Shunzhi 8 (1651) and 9 (1652), when Li sought refuge in Yangzhou from the Nanchang rebellion and met Wu at Tiger Hill in Suzhou.<sup>40</sup> This meeting is recorded in a series of poems Wu addressed to Li, in which Wu wrote:

Separated by mountains and passes we still hoped to meet each other,  
Terrified by the army horses we wetted kerchiefs with tears.  
[...]  
We looked at each other, having both lost our way,  
Shaking hands we talked about our hardships.<sup>41</sup>

关山思会面，  
戎马涕沾巾。  
.....  
相看同失路，  
握手话艰辛。

It is difficult to date precisely the first meeting of the two men in the Qing period, but a close examination of the arrangement used in editions of Wu Weiye's poems enables us to

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<sup>39</sup> Li Mingrui, "Zhong Tan hezhuan," in Tan Yuanchun, *Tan Yuanchun ji*, p. 959. As discussed below, Li was stripped of his qualification to be an official in this year, so it is conceivable that Wu came to see Li off to Nanchang, perhaps also composing some poems for the occasion that have been lost. Tan Yuanchun died in a hostel in a Beijing suburb.

<sup>40</sup> In 1654 when Li was at the age of 70 *sui*, Wu composed an essay to congratulate him, in which he wrote, "After he arrived at Yangzhou, he met me at Tiger Hill. I found that he looked much younger even though we had been parted for fifteen or sixteen years... 其之维扬也，与伟业相遇于虎丘，别十五六年矣，其容加少..." According to Chinese reckoning, fifteen or sixteen years separated 1637 from 1651-52. Ma Daoyuan dates the essay to 1658, when Wu was at the age of 50 *sui*; his mistake is made due to a sentence in the text that reads "I think I am twenty years younger than my master 自数其齿少于师二十岁." In fact, as indicated above, Li was twenty-five years older than Wu. Perhaps the character *wu* 五 has been lost between *shi* 十 and *sui* 岁. See Wu Weiye, "Zuoshi Li Taixu xiansheng shou xu 座师李太虚先生寿序" (Preface to birthday congratulations for Mr. Li Taixu, my examination mentor), in Wu Weiye, *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 765. See also Ma Daoyuan, *Wu Meicun nianpu*, pp. 66-67; Shi Zuyu, "Li Mingrui gouchen," p. 135.

<sup>41</sup> Wu Weiye, "Zuozhu Li Taixu shi cong Yandu bei gui, xun yi Nanchang bing bian bi'nan Guangling, fu cheng 座主李太虚师从燕都北归，寻以南昌兵变避难广陵，赋呈" (Master Li Taixu, my examination mentor, came south from the capital Beijing and not long after he was forced to seek refuge in Guangling [Yangzhou] because of the rebellion in Nanchang. I composed the series of poems to present to him)," poem 8, in Wu Weiye, *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 116. More discussion of this series of poems can be found in Part 4 of this chapter.



arrive at an approximate date. Jin Rongfan 靳荣藩 (1728-84), who edited *Wu shi ji lan* (Overview of Wu [Weiye's] Collected Poems), arranged the poems according to their form and then their date.<sup>42</sup> The same arrangement is followed in two other editions of Wu's poetry, and with this in mind we can examine other poems from the chapter containing the series in question for dates. A poem in this chapter following the series is entitled "*Hai yi* 海溢" ("Tsunami") and is dated the eighth lunar month of Shunzhi 7, or September of 1650.<sup>43</sup> Working back from this precisely dated poem, we come to another titled "*Suimu song Mu da Yuanxian wang Tonglu sishou* 岁暮送穆大苑先往桐庐四首" ("Four poems to see Mu Yuanxian off to Tonglu at year's end"), which indicates that it was composed at the end of Shunzhi 6 (i.e., sometime between December of 1649 and January of 1650). A poem before this one titled "*Chu chun ye zuo Jihuaishi* 初春夜坐寄怀室" ("Staying at the Studio for Venting Feeling on a Spring Night") must have been written in the spring of 1649, and thus "*Zuozhu Li Taixu shi cong Yandu bei gui*...座主李太虚师从燕都北归..." ("Examination mentor Li Taixu Came South from Beijing [...]") was likely written in 1649, i.e., one year after the rebellion broke out in Nanchang in 1648.<sup>44</sup> This inference contradicts what Wu himself tells us but is nonetheless credible. As for the series of poems by Wu about Li Mingrui's villa at Nanchang, the Garden of Elysium, they can be dated to 1651.<sup>45</sup> Before he

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<sup>42</sup> Wu Weiye, *Wu shi ji lan*, ed. Jin Rongfan (n.p.: Lingyun ting, 1770), fanli, 4b.

<sup>43</sup> According to Gu Shishi, "In the eighth lunar month [of Shunzhi 7 (1650)], a gale and tsunami broke out and Wu composed a poem to describe them [顺治七年]八月大风, 海溢, 有诗." Cited in Ma Daoyuan, *Wu Meicun nianpu*, p. 52.

<sup>44</sup> For the sequence of these poems, see the table of contents in Wu Weiye, *Meicun shiji jianzhu*, ed. Yan Rong, comm. Chen Muheng (n.p., 1990), 4a; also the table of contents for Wu Weiye, *Wu Meicun quanji*, vol. 1, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> The series, entitled "*Langyuan shi shishou bingxu* 阆园诗十首并序" (Ten poems about the Garden of Elysium, with a preface), comes before poems presented to a local official in Zhejiang in the spring

was forced to leave for Beijing to take office in the ninth lunar month of Shunzhi 10 (late October- mid-November of 1653),<sup>46</sup> Wu Weiye can be regarded politically as a Ming loyalist, and there is evidence from his oeuvre that he regarded his mentor as a Ming loyalist too.

To congratulate Li on his seventieth birthday in the spring of 1654, Wu Weiye composed a series of poems and an essay.<sup>47</sup> In the essay, he briefly rehearsed Li's political, literary, and academic experiences, from his success in the metropolitan examination in 1622 to his reclusive life since 1649. In addition to praising Li Mingrui in the two series of poems mentioned above, Wu congratulated him now for surviving the hardships of life under the Qing Government with an open mind, while he (Wu) found that strain and stress had aged him prematurely. Wu had been recommended for an official post in Beijing in 1652, and having initially refused the offer he had eventually gone north in the ninth lunar month of 1653. Prior to that, he had paid a special visit to Nanjing with the intention of refusing the recommendation,<sup>48</sup> and he may have passed through Yangzhou and met with Li at this time, composing the essay and poems of congratulation in advance.

It is unclear whether Li exerted any influence on Wu or vice versa. What we can say is that they shared feelings about the fall of the Ming and the period of transition to the Qing, as will become more evident in what follows.

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of 1652, which dates them to 1651. See Ma Daoyuan, *Wu Meicun nianpu*, pp. 53-54. For the series of ten poems about the Garden of Elysium, see Wu Weiye, *Meicun shiji jianzhu*, 8:17a-21a; and *Wu Meicun quanji*, pp. 120-24.

<sup>46</sup> Ma Daoyuan, *Wu Meicun nianpu*, pp. 56-59.

<sup>47</sup> Wu Weiye, "Shou zuoshi Li Taixu xiansheng sishou 寿座师李太虚先生四首" (Four poems to congratulate Master Li Taixu, my examination mentor), in *Meicun shiji jianzhu*, 13:7b-8a; and in *Wu Meicun quanji*, pp. 414-15. See also "Zuoshi Li Taixu xiansheng shou xu," pp. 763-65. For Li's birthday, see Shi Zuyu, "Li Mingrui gouchen," p. 135.

<sup>48</sup> Ma Daoyuan, *Wu Meicun nianpu*, pp. 55-59.

### 2.3. Li Mingrui's Political Career in the Ming Period

Li Mingrui was not as successful or influential as some other candidates who succeeded in the metropolitan examination in 1622,<sup>49</sup> nor as some other officials who were natives of Jiangxi Province in the late Ming Dynasty. He cannot be regarded as a member of the Donglin faction or as a follower of the eunuch faction.<sup>50</sup> Although he expressed his own views on political events and once became a victim of partisan strife, Li appeared to have kept an independent stance throughout the partisan strife of the late Ming period.

He received the *jinshi* degree in April of 1622 and was selected as a Hanlin bachelor (*shujishi*) on August 1. In March of 1624 he was appointed as an examining editor (*jiantao*) in the Hanlin Academy<sup>51</sup> and, in July 1627, as chief examiner of the provincial examination in Huguang, where he selected Tan Yuanchun as the number one graduate.<sup>52</sup> However, the materials most revealing of his political views are those concerned with political events during the Chongzhen period (1628-44).

Among the graduates in the metropolitan examination in 1622 are some famous Donglin members, men such as Wen Zhenmeng 文震孟 (1574-1636), Huang Daozhou, and Ni Yuanlu 倪元璐 (1593-1644).<sup>53</sup> Of these, only Huang Daozhou was close to Li. In some

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<sup>49</sup> For the list of graduates who succeeded in the metropolitan examination in 1622, see Zhu Baojiong and Xie Peilin, eds., *Ming Qing jinshi timing beilu suoyin* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), pp. 2598-2601.

<sup>50</sup> For an excellent recent study of the Donglin faction and the embroiled politics of the late Ming, which are the backdrop of Li Mingrui's early life, see John Dardess, *Blood and History: The Donglin Faction and its Repression, 1620-1627* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002).

<sup>51</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, ed. Zhang Zongxiang (Beijing: Guji chubanshe, 1958), pp. 5203, 5208, 5255.

<sup>52</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, p. 5376.

<sup>53</sup> For Donglin members succeeding in the metropolitan examination in 1622, see Li Yan, *Donglin dangji kao* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1957), pp. 184-85. For the biography of Wen Zhengmeng, see Goodrich, *Ming Biography*, pp. 1467-71; for those of Huang Daozhou and Ni Yuanlu, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period*, pp. 345-47, 587.

name lists of Donglin members compiled by the eunuch faction during the Tianqi period (1621-27), there are at least sixteen members who were natives of Jiangxi Province, but Li's name is not among them. Zou Yuanbiao 邹元标 (1551-1624), one of the leaders of the Donglin faction, was from Jiangxi,<sup>54</sup> and since officials from the same province typically stuck together, Li's independence from the Donglin faction is a surprise; what is even more surprising is that he came under attack by Donglin members and their allies.

In May of 1628, Wang Yehao 王业浩 impeached Li Mingrui, accusing him of listing the names of some eunuchs in his preface to a memorial that reported the results of the 1627 provincial examination of Huguang. Wang's memorial of impeachment implies that Li had relations with some members of the eunuch faction and, as we shall see, Li appears to have had a good relationship with Ruan Dacheng, an adoptive son of the powerful chief eunuch Wei Zhongxian 魏忠贤 (1568-1627).<sup>55</sup> Since no other evidence was uncovered that might flesh out the context of Wang Yehao's memorial or his attitude towards the Donglin and eunuchs, it is not clear what the impeachment meant to Li's official career. What is clear, however, is that the memorial prompted Li to submit a memorial that defended his conduct as examiner and requested leave to return home to do his filial duty, but Emperor Chongzhen neither faulted him for misconduct nor approved his request, at least initially.<sup>56</sup> From Tan Yuanchun's biography of the father we learn that Li Mingrui told the emperor about his

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<sup>54</sup> For Donglin members from Jiangxi, see Qian Renlin, *Donglin biecheng* (Mimeographed edition. Guangzhou: Zhongshan tushuguan, 1958), 11b and passim.

<sup>55</sup> For Ruan's biography, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 398-99. For Wei Zhongxian's, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 846-47. For Wei's emergence and fall, see Frederick W. Mote and Denis Twitchett, eds., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 7, *The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part I* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 595-614.

<sup>56</sup> See *Chongzhen changbian*, in *Ming shilu fulu* (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan shiyusuo, 1967), vol. 7, p. 425. The words in the *Ming shi* are not clear enough to illustrate Wang Yehao's political attitude. See Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 230:6025, 240:6240-41, 257:6635, 265:6840, and 266:6863-64.

father's diligent care of his own mother (Mingrui's grandmother), and his account so moved the emperor that he finally consented to Li's request for a leave. These events took place in Chongzhen 2 (1629).<sup>57</sup> From this we can also infer that Li returned to Beijing before the end of Chongzhen 3 (1630), in time to serve as Wu Weiye's mentor in the metropolitan examination held in 1631, in which Wu emerged as *zhuangyuan* and Zhou Yanru was the chief examiner.<sup>58</sup> Since Li Mingrui was one of the mentors for this examination, this places him in Beijing in the spring of 1631.<sup>59</sup>

Li's differences with Donglin members, which emerged during these contentious years, can be illustrated with reference to their attitudes on two important political issues: the question of how to deal with the *Sanchao yaodian* 三朝要典 (Essential Documents of Three Reigns), and debates over what Emperor Chongzhen should do as Li Zicheng (1606-1645) marched towards Beijing at the head of a rebel army.

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<sup>57</sup> Tan Yuanchun, "Xiaoyi Li Taigong zhuan," in *Tan Yuanchun ji*, p. 575. As for the year when Li visited his father in Nanchang, some clues can be found in Tan's works. When Li was home attending his father, Tan wrote a letter saying that he should have visited Li that year but did not because his second brother died in the autumn, and promising to visit Nanchang at some time between spring and summer of the next year. See Tan, "Ji Li Taixu zuoshi 寄李太虚座师" (Letters to Li Taixu, my examination mentor)," letter 1, in *Tan Yuanchun ji*, pp. 871-72. According to the epitaph by Tan, his brother Tan Yuanhui 谭元晖 (*zi* Xiaomi 小米) died in the autumn of the year *jisi*, or Chongzhen 2 (1629). See his "Jia zhong shi muzhi 家仲氏墓志" (Epitaph for my younger brother)," in *Tan Yuanchun ji*, pp. 700-02. For the seniority of Tan's brothers, see his "Xian fujun zhiming 先府君志铭" (Epitaph for my father)," in *Tan Yuanchun ji*, pp. 696-97.

<sup>58</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, p. 5555.

<sup>59</sup> No evidence illustrates the relations between Li Mingrui and Zhou Yanru. Zhou once was on the lists of Donglin members (see Qian Relin, *Donglin biecheng*, 5b and *passim*), but in Chongzhen 2 (1629), he succeeded by means of a dirty trick in getting the position of grand secretary in a contest with Qian Qianyi. He had served as grand secretary and concurrently minister of rites from January 1630 to July 1633 to little credit, and was denounced by most Donglin members for his personal morality and political ability. According to Tan Yuanchun, Li did something against Zhou when he campaigned for the position of grand secretary, although Tan did not provide any more details about what Li did. See his "Bu shou Li laoshi wushi xu 补寿李老师五十序" (Belated congratulations on the fiftieth birthday of Mentor Li), in Tan Yuanchun, *Tan Yuanchun ji*, p. 838. As I will demonstrate below, Li Mingrui and Qian Qianyi had relations after 1644, so it is safe to say that Li supported Qian in his contest with Zhou. Additionally, Tan composed these birthday congratulations to Li in the spring of 1634, in which he illustrated Li's fair-mindedness by mentioning that he had done something to Zhou. If Li had supported Zhou, Tan's praise of him here would have irritated most scholars. Thus Li's attitude to Zhou most likely was similar to that of most Donglin members. For the contest between Zhou and Qian for the position of grand secretary, see Mote and Twitchett, *Cambridge History*, pp. 614, 619-21.

The compilation of the *Sanchao yaodian*, a document intended to legitimate the power of the eunuchs and discredit the Donglin, began in February 1626 under the directions of Wei Zhongxian.<sup>60</sup> For many, it symbolized the eunuchs' stranglehold on power,<sup>61</sup> and after ascending the throne, Emperor Chongzhen moved to obviate this usurpation of power and dispel Wei Zhongxian's influence. In response, Wei hanged himself in December of 1627. Chongzhen's next step was to cope with the *Sanchao yaodian* properly and effectively, and on the twenty-fifth day of the fourth lunar month of Chongzhen 1 (28 May 1628), Ni Yuanlu, also a Donglin member, submitted a memorial proposing that all copies of and blocks for printing the *Sanchao yaodian* be destroyed because the book was Wei Zhongxian's "private work." Ni thought that it would be impractical to revise the book, and suggested that an annalistic veritable record be compiled to replace the *Sanchao yaodian* as a more trustworthy record of the Tianqi era. In his comment on this memorial, Emperor Chongzhen wrote that it would be unnecessary to keep the *Sanchao yaodian*, since the veritable record was about to be compiled, but he asked for more discussion of so crucial a recommendation.<sup>62</sup> On 1 June 1628, Li Mingrui weighed into the debate and submitted a memorial clearly aimed at Ni, which suggested that the *Sanchao yaodian* might as well be preserved, as a reference from which the emperor could draw lessons. Li wrote:

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<sup>60</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, pp. 5319-20.

<sup>61</sup> For some information about *Sanchao yaodian*, see Mote and Twitchett, *Cambridge History*, pp. 609, 613.

<sup>62</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, p. 5432-33; *Chongzhen changbian*, vol. 7, pp. 447-452. For the whole text of Ni's memorial and the comment by Emperor Chongzhen, see Ni Yuanlu, *Ni Wenzheng gong wenji*, ed. Ni Huiding (n.p., 1772), 1:12a-14b. The memorial is dated 1 June 1628 in *Chongzhen changbian*, but at the end of the original text included in his collection, Ni wrote, "I wrote and sent [this memorial] on the twenty-fifth day, the fourth lunar month, the first year of Chongzhen," that is, 28 May 1628. For a study on Ni Yuanlu, see Ray Huang, "Ni Yüan-lu: 'realism' in a Neo-Confucian scholar-statesman," in *Self and Society in Ming Thought*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), pp. 415-49. Ray Huang mentioned Ni Yuanlu's crucial encouragements to Chongzhen to prosecute the eunuch partisan and recall the Donglin members in 1628 (p. 418).

There are two opinions in the current discussion—to preserve it or destroy it. To those who ask to destroy it, it should be destroyed; to those who claim to preserve it, why not preserve it? If it is preserved, Your Majesty will be able to exile and dismiss those officials who are praised in it, so that any punishment will not be delayed in the discerning and wise Court. Your Majesty will be able to get and appoint the wise officials who are deprecated in it, so that Your Majesty need not seek inspiration from dreams and divination. Basically, the officials regarded as treacherous in the book are actually virtuous [...] and the officials viewed as virtuous are actually treacherous. ... Now, when we discuss the book, we will not suggest preserving or destroying it, but just leave it alone to be preserved or destroyed. ... *The Essential Documents in the Three Reigns* may not be called a “private work;” rather, it refers directly to public opinion, which can be brought forth provided that one reads it from a point of view the opposite [of its authors]. [...] I suggest preserving it temporarily so that it will be affirmed or denied by later generations and help them discern the worthiness and treachery within.<sup>63</sup>

今之争者有存毁二说，然曰毁则诚宜毁，曰存则亦何必不存？存而后皇上之放殛所遗者，可尽得于其所是，不至稽诛于极辨之朝；皇上之所侧席而求者，可尽得于其所非，不必更劳乎梦卜。盖凡要典之曰奸者，即贤也，……要典之曰贤者，乃奸也。……今日论是书，不当言存毁，当任其存毁……然则三朝要典，又可不可曰私书，而直曰公议，盖以为反观而公议出焉耳。……臣且欲姑留之而听是非于万世，反贤奸于此书耳。

Clearly, Li was more tolerant of the existence of a book that many others thought confounded right and wrong politically, and unlike Ni Yuanlu, Li seemed independent from partisan strife. However, his were the views of the minority in the discussion, and he created enemies for himself besides those in the Donglin group. He singled out some officials as opportunists, who by trickery fawned on and were praised by some in both the eunuch faction and the Donglin faction, and suggested that evidence of their political thievery could be found in the book. Qu Shisi 瞿式耜 (1590-1650), a member of the Donglin, had complained in a memorial that some opportunists were still in important positions at this time,<sup>64</sup> and Li also implied that his colleagues, as official historiographers, should be held accountable for the

<sup>63</sup> Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang wen zheng*, pp. 123-26.

<sup>64</sup> Qu Shisi was a protégé of Qian Qianyi, a member of the Donglin faction, and a firm Ming loyalist. For his complaint, see Tan Qian, *Guo que*, p. 5434. For his biography, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 199-201.

*Sanchao yaodian*, since an honest historiographer should not “shift all blame onto others but attribute all merit to himself.”<sup>65</sup> These same historiographers, Li felt, would not necessarily understand the Emperor’s intentions or know what principles and criteria to follow were they ordered to revise the book. Li himself did not know what the emperor had in mind, since he criticized Chongzhen indirectly in his response to Ni’s memorial by referring to the emperor’s vagueness on the issue.

In fact, Emperor Chongzhen was more concerned with settling the dispute as soon as possible, finally ordering the woodblocks and all copies of the book destroyed on 10 June. In his edict, he declared that “[f]rom now on, officials will not be praised or vilified according to this work and men of talent will not be promoted or demoted according to it. . . . Do not provide any more different suggestions.”<sup>66</sup>

Probably it was his independence that isolated Li Mingrui and cut him off from help once he was attacked. Li’s father passed away at the end of the year *renshen* (sometime from the end of 1632 to the beginning of 1633). Li should have hurried home for the funeral, but according to Tan Yuanchun he had not reached Nanchang by the time that Tan’s personal representative arrived there with an elegy of condolence, on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month of the year *guiyou* (22 February 1633).<sup>67</sup> After the funeral, Li also should have observed mourning for three years, but in Chongzhen 7 (*jiayu*, 1634), we learn that he visited Zhejiang and Jiangsu and bought a boatload of Song editions back to Nanchang from

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<sup>65</sup> Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang wen zheng*, p. 125.

<sup>66</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, p. 5435.

<sup>67</sup> In the elegy of condolence, Tan wrote, “My mentor has not come home yet by a skiff from Beijing one thousand *li* distant 扁舟千里，师归未遑。” See his “Nancheng diaoyan ci 南昌吊唁词” (Elegy of condolence to Nanchang), in *Tan Yuanchun ji*, pp. 732-33; also “Xiaoyi Li Taigong zhuan,” pp. 574-76.



Huating (today's Shanghai).<sup>68</sup> Li's performance as eldest son during the period of mourning was censured, and was one of two reasons for his failure in the regular capital evaluation of 1635 and dismissal from office on 31 March.<sup>69</sup> During the evaluation, Li was impeached as unfilial to his father and disloyal to the emperor. He was both humiliated and angered by the censure, declaring that "one can do without being an official, but cannot do without being a man."<sup>70</sup>

A struggle ensued to recover Li's good name. Tan Yuanchun wrote several letters to Li's examiners and friends seeking their support, but almost nothing is known of these efforts.<sup>71</sup> They must have had some effect, because in Chongzhen 10 (1637) Li was permitted to defend himself in Beijing. In February of that year he accused Jiang Yueguang (d. 1649), a

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<sup>68</sup> In a letter to Li Mingrui, Tan Yuanchun wrote, "I was informed from afar that you, my mentor, came back from Wuxia 遥传师吴下归来." This letter follows one written in Chongzhen 6 (1633), in which Tan discusses the biography of Li's father. See Tan Yuanchun, "Ji Li Taixu zuoshi," letter 4, in *Tan Yuanchun ji*, p. 873. The information about Li's purchase of books is from Chen Hongxu, *Jiangcheng mingji*, 2:52a.

<sup>69</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, p. 5693. In the Ming Dynasty, officials in Beijing were evaluated every six years, "The officials of the fourth rank and higher are required sending their self-confessions to be accessed by the emperor. As for the officials of the fifth rank and lower, the results of their assessments will be listed in a special memorial to the emperor and they will be retired, reappointed, promoted, demoted, or dismissed. This is called the 'capital evaluation.'" See Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, 71:1723. Li declared that he was dismissed from the position of "daily lecturer, companion of the left secretariat for the heir apparent" and, concurrently, "expositor-in-waiting in the Hanlin Academy," both rank 6a. See Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang wen zheng*, p. 633; and Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 422.

<sup>70</sup> Tan Yuanchun, "Ji Ge Qizhan laoshi 寄葛杞瞻老师" (Letters to my mentor Ge Qizhan), letter 1; and "Ji Ling Mingke 寄凌茗柯" (A letter to Ling Mingke), in *Tan Yuanchun ji*, pp. 876, 877.

<sup>71</sup> At least five letters are available, and these indicate that Tan Yuanchun sought support for Li from three of his associates: Luo Yuyi 罗喻义 (*zi* Xiangzhong 湘中; *hao* Yujiang 荑江; *jinshi* 1613), Ge Yinliang 葛寅亮 (*zi* Qizhan 杞瞻; *jinshi* 1601), and Ling Yiqu 凌义渠 (*zi* Mingke 茗柯; 1593-1644; *jinshi* 1625). Luo was Li's examination mentor in 1622, and Ge, a friend and mentor, once was an official in Jiangxi. For the letters, see Tan Yuanchun, "Ji Li Taixu zuoshi," letters 5 and 6; "Ji Ge Qizhan laoshi," letters 1 and 2; and "Ji Ling Mingke," in *Tan Yuanchun ji*, pp. 874-76, 876-77, and 877-78 respectively. I have gleaned information on Luo Yuyi and Ling Yiqu from Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, 216:5717-18 and 265:6852-53; see also Zhao Zhiqian et al., *Jiangxi tongzhi*, pp. 324, 2688, and Gong Jiajun, *Hangzhou fuzhi* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1974), p. 2409 (for information on Ge Yinliang); also an editor's note in *Tan Yuanchun ji*, pp. 740-41, which mentions that Luo Yuyi was Li Mingrui's examination mentor in 1622.

Donglin member from Nanchang, of opening one of his private letters covertly.<sup>72</sup> However, the outcome of this effort was that Li was deprived of his qualification to hold office on 13 May.<sup>73</sup> Tan Yuanchun had received the degree of *juren* (provincial graduate) and had never held office, and the officials he contacted on Li's behalf had little influence in the official world of the late Ming. Li's dismissal was likely the result of irrational partisan strife since he did not belong to Donglin or eunuch factions and an independent official would be attacked without any protection of a faction during this period. The capital evaluations, which were conducted by the Ministry of Personnel with the help of censorial officials, were often used to attack and weaken political opponents in the late Ming, and by this time Li was quite isolated.<sup>74</sup>

In 1641, Li was employed by local Jiangxi officials as chief-lecturer of the famous White Deer Academy 白鹿书院 in Lushan.<sup>75</sup> Then, in the eighth lunar month of Chongzhen 16 (September of 1643) he was summoned by the emperor to Beijing at the recommendation of Li Banghua 李邦华 (d. 1644) and Lü Daqi 吕大器 (d. 1646; *jinshi* 1628),<sup>76</sup> to consult on policy concerning the rebellion led by Li Zicheng. Because the imperial envoy was delayed by the war Li Mingrui did not set out until December, and on the eve of his departure he was visited by several Donglin members who were natives of Jiangxi, who offered

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<sup>72</sup> For Jiang's biography, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 143-44. He was appointed right vice-minister of rites and acting concurrent chancellor of the Hanlin Academy in 1635 and was Li Mingrui's immediate chief.

<sup>73</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, pp. 5775, 5782.

<sup>74</sup> For a study of the relationship between the capital evaluations and partisan strife in the late Ming, see Charles Hucker, *The Censorial System of Ming China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), pp. 163-68, 178, 195, 214.

<sup>75</sup> Zhao Zhiqian et al., *Jiangxi tongzhi*, p. 1832; Xu Zi, *Xiaotian jinian*, ed. Wang Chongwu (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1957), p. 71.

<sup>76</sup> For the biography of Li Banghua, see Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, 265:6841-46. For that of Lü, see 279:7141-43.

encouragement.<sup>77</sup> Li Banghua and Lü Daqi were staunch and famous Donglin members too. Such associations indicate that Li Mingrui was appreciated by some Donglin members and that there was some consensus between him and them about what was needed at this critical time in the history of the dynasty. But differences appeared as soon as Emperor Chongzhen asked them to discuss what he should do as the rebels were approaching Beijing. Li Banghua and other Donglin members suggested that the emperor should stay in Beijing and his heir apparent move to Nanjing to command the army reserves, but Li Mingrui proposed instead that the emperor himself move south to command the army there, because the heir apparent was too young to have either the prestige or the administrative ability to assume command.<sup>78</sup>

Swayed by conservative officials, the emperor rejected any suggestion that he should move to Nanjing, and as a result he committed suicide by hanging, bringing the Ming Dynasty to an end. But for Li Mingrui, the emperor's rejection of his counsel perhaps marked the apex of his political career and he made a detailed record of the emperor's summons and the proposals he had offered.<sup>79</sup> After reading this record, Zhao Yi, a former Ming official,

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<sup>77</sup> The Jiangxi officials who visited Li included Xiong Mingyu 熊明遇 (*jinshi* 1601), Jiang Yueguang, Yang Tinglin 杨廷麟 (d. 1646; *jinshi* 1631), and Wan Yuanji 万元吉 (1603-46; *jinshi* 1625). See Li Mingrui, "Guiwei tezhao ji 癸未特召记" (A record of the special summons in the year *guiwei*), in Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang wen zheng*, p. 633. For biographies of Xiong, Yang, and Wan, see Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, 257:6629-31; 278:7113-15; and 278:7116-21 respectively.

<sup>78</sup> For the suggestions of Li Mingrui and some Donglin members, see Tan Qian, *Guo que*, p. 6031; Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, 24:334 and 265:6846; Xu Zi, *Xiaotian jinian*, pp. 26-27, 69-70, 74; also Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "The Shun interregnum of 1644," in *From Ming to Ch'ing: Conquest, Region, and Continuity in Seventeenth-Century China*, eds. Jonathan Spence and John E. Wills (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), pp. 47-50; and Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 240-57. Some historians of the Qing thought Li Mingrui's proposals unfeasible and even ridiculous. See Tan Qian, *Guo que*, p. 6031, and especially Xu Zi, *Xiaotian jinian*, p. 71.

<sup>79</sup> Li Mingrui, "Guiwei tezhao ji," "Zhaodui ji yi 召对记一" (Record of interviews with the emperor: Part I), and "Zhaodui ji er 召对记二" (Record of interviews with the emperor: Part II), in Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang wen zheng*, pp. 633-40. Nearly all that we know about Li is found in these discussions about whether and how to move south. For examples, see Tao Cheng et al., *Jiangxi tongzhi*, 70:33a; and Xu Zi, *Xiaotian jinian*, pp. 26-27, 69-71; Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang xianzhi*, p. 920; Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, 24:334 and 265:6846.

composed a long poem describing what Li had done in 1644 and opining that Emperor Chongzhen would not have died nor the Ming have ended had Li's advice been adopted. In 1661 Fang Wen in turn claimed to have read and planned to print this poem, adding comments about the affair.<sup>80</sup> Li's rejected proposals thus brought him fame with contemporary literati.

It thus appears that in the Ming period Li Mingrui kept aloof from partisan strife, maintaining relations with one or two members of the eunuch faction and also sustaining good relations, on the whole, with Donglin members. It is unclear whether his independent stance was influenced by Tang Xianzu's independent political attitude towards the Donglin. In a poem of congratulations on Li's seventieth birthday in 1654, Wang Youding 王猷定 (*zi* Yuyi 于一; 1598-1662), the son of a Donglin member, wrote of how "The stele of the Yuanyou Party commemorates Sushui [Sima Guang] 元祐党碑怀涑水," an allusion to partisan strife in the Northern Song that refers to the corresponding situation in the Ming.<sup>81</sup> Wang's allusion implies that Li's name would have been on the list of names of Donglin members, but it more likely refers to the circumstance that Li became a victim of late Ming partisan strife because of his independence. In an essay he wrote to congratulate Li on his birthday, Wang was appreciative of Li's independent stance when he wrote:

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<sup>80</sup> Fang Wen, "Luling Zhao Guozi Yi du Li Taixu xiansheng *Zhaodui lu*... 庐陵赵国子疑读李太虚先生召对录..." (Zhao Yi, whose *zi* is Guozi, of Luling read of Master Li Taixu's *Records of interviews with the emperor*). Fang composed this poem in 1661. See Fang Wen, *Xijiang youcao* 西江游草 (Draft of travels to Xijiang. Included in *Tushan ji*, vol. 6), 3b-4a. Xijiang is an alternative name of Jiangxi.

<sup>81</sup> Wang Youding, "Shou Li zongbo Taixu xiansheng 寿李宗伯太虚先生" (Birthday congratulations to Master Li Taixu), in Wang Youding, *Sizhaotang shiji*, in *Yuzhang congshu*, comp. Hu Sijing (Nanchang, 1916), vol. 160, 3:14a. For Tang Xianzu's independence from the Donglin and his agreements and differences with them, see Xu Shuofang, "Tang Xianzu xiqu de qiangdiao he tade shidai," *Zhongguo wen zhe yanjiu tongxun* 6.1 (March 1996), pp. 6-10. In 1102 Cai Jing 蔡京, Emperor Huizong's prime minister, inscribed the names of 309 officials and their so-called criminal acts on a stone tablet erected in front of the gate to the Imperial University, among which was the name of Sima Guang (1019-83), a native of Sushui, Shanxi. See Tuotuo, *Song shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 19:365.

As for the disaster of the treacherous eunuchs, I don't blame the little people but the gentlemen. The kingdom could not but be thrown into disorder, and gentlemen rejoiced in it as a means to make names for themselves—a terrible pain for the country! Those officials who flattered the eunuchs disordered the realm by means of the *Essential Documents [in the Three Reigns]*, and Master Li did not wish to provoke more disputes with respect to this one book. . . . Not long after, Master Li was wounded by slander and then dismissed. In [Chongzhen] 10 (1637), the rebels ran rife... and the capital fell [into their hands]. Where were the officials who had indulged in partisan strife then? Master Li was detained in a dangerous city and tortured by the rebels.... He did not dare to die even when he was beaten unconscious. Then, barefoot and weeping tears of blood, he advocated the plan for burying his dead emperor. Alas! That human talent and the state of the realm should reach such a pass!<sup>82</sup>

夫逆珰之禍，吾不罪小人而罪君子。天下不得已而有事，君子樂之以立名，國之大痛也。彼媚珰者以要典亂天下，先生不欲事是非于一書，……亡何先生傷于讒，去國。十年，巨寇豕突，……神京淪陷，向之朋黨安在哉？先生圍危城，被盜拷掠，……昏仆中不敢死，乃徒跣泣血，倡謀以葬先帝。嗟乎，人才國勢，至于如此。

In Wang Youding's view, the Donglin party members ignored practical and effective measures to repress the power of eunuchs, indulging in partisan strife even on the eve of the fall of Beijing. Compared with the officials who engaged in factional strife, Li was more loyal to Emperor Chongzhen and more worthy of praise.<sup>83</sup>

Since his success in the metropolitan examination in 1622, Li Mingrui had kept aloof from the partisan controversy that crippled the government during the Tianqi and Chongzhen reigns (1621-27 and 1628-44 respectively). He had relations with eunuch-partisans such as Ruan Dacheng, and also with some Donglin members, sharing their moral and political views but disagreeing on some details of policy and strategy. Independence hindered his official career in the Ming period, but when considered together with his conduct under the new

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<sup>82</sup> Wang Youding, "Li Taixu xiangsheng qishi shou xu 李太虛先生七十壽序" (An essay to congratulate Master Li Taixu on his seventieth birthday), in Wang Youding, *Sizhaotang wenji*, in *Yuzhang congshu*, comp. Hu Sijing (Nanchang, 1916), vol. 158, 5:2b-4b.

<sup>83</sup> In his funeral oration for Li Mingrui, Li Laitai expressed an idea similar to Wang Youding's about Li Mingrui's political stance. He emphasized Mingrui's independence from partisan controversy and appreciated his loyalty to the fallen Ming under the Manchu regime. See Li Laitai, "Ji zongbo xueshi jia Langweng shu," in Li Laitai, *Lian kan ji*, pp. 215.

regime outlined in the next part, enabled a stance whereby he could maintain close relations with some Ming loyalists and with officials who served the Manchu conquerors, and invite members of both groups to watch performances by his private troupe.

#### 2.4. Li Mingrui in the Qing Period

Li Mingrui arrived at Beijing in early February 1644, and had his first interview with Emperor Chongzhen on 10 February.<sup>84</sup> On 25 April, the rebels took over Beijing and the emperor committed suicide by hanging. As were other officials in Beijing, Li was seized, beaten, and held for ransom by the rebels.<sup>85</sup> He was released when Li Zicheng marched east to campaign against Wu Sangui 吴三桂 (1612-78) and the Manchus in May.<sup>86</sup> On 7 June, the Manchus took over Beijing. On 8 June, Dorgon (1612-50),<sup>87</sup> the Manchu prince regent, ordered that sacrifices be performed and a funeral held for Emperor Chongzhen and his Empress. On 19 June, Li Mingrui was recommended for the office of the left vice-minister of rites and coerced into accepting the post. In that capacity he assisted Yang Rucheng 杨汝成, the right vice-minister in planning for and presiding over the funeral ceremonies.<sup>88</sup> Li would have thought it his duty to bury his emperor and empress with proper ritual ceremonies, but he seemed reluctant to take any office under the Manchus. Even Wang Youding, a firm Ming

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<sup>84</sup> Li Mingrui, "Gui wei tezhao ji," "Zhaodui ji yi," in Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang wen zheng*, pp. 635-36.

<sup>85</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, p. 6061-62. For the experiences of the Ming officials during the stay of the rebels in Beijing, see Wakeman, "The Shun interregnum of 1644," in Spence and Wills, *From Ming to Ch'ing*, pp. 57-58, 66-71; and Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, pp. 287-90.

<sup>86</sup> Xu Zi, *Xiaotian jinian*, p. 131. For the biography of Wu Sangui, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 877-80.

<sup>87</sup> For the biography of Dorgon, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 215-19.

<sup>88</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, pp. 6083, 6085. For Dorgon's coercion of Li, see Wakeman, "The Shun interregnum of 1644," in Spence and Wills, *From Ming to Ch'ing*, pp. 74-75.

loyalist, believed that Li took the office for the sole purpose of planning the funeral, as indicated in his birthday essay cited at the end of Part Three. In any event, Li was dismissed from this post on 1 December 1644, on the grounds of disrespectful behavior during an audience with either the Emperor Shunzhi or the Prince Regent.<sup>89</sup> As an official in the Ministry of Rites and a specialist on the *Classic of Filial Piety*, Li would certainly have known the outcome of such conduct, and it is safe to conclude that it was intended to result in his dismissal.<sup>90</sup>

Li Mingrui's arrival in Nanjing was reported to Emperor Hongguang by Liu Zeqing 刘泽清 (d. 1648) on the nineteenth day of the third lunar month of Hongguang 1 (15 April 1645), that is, the first lunar anniversary of Emperor Chongzhen's death. On the same day, the Ming government in Nanjing held a ceremony to mourn the dead emperor. Emperor Hongguang received a poem said to have been composed by Emperor Chongzhen before he died and decreed that Chen Mingxia's 陈名夏 (1601-54) surrender to the Manchus be investigated.<sup>91</sup> It was reported that Li Mingrui's arrival was praised by Emperor Hongguang and in his memorial, Liu Zeqing also recommended Li, who was not a Donglin member, by comparing him to Chen Mingxia, a Donglin member who had surrendered to the Manchus.<sup>92</sup> It is unclear whether Li Mingrui brought with him the emperor's posthumous poem and list of officials who had surrendered, but he was coldly received by some Nanjing officials who

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<sup>89</sup> *Shi'er chao donghua lu (Shunzhi chao)* (Taipei: Wenhai chubanshe, 1963), 2:29a.

<sup>90</sup> Shi Zuyu thinks so. See Shi, "Li Mingrui gouchen," p. 137.

<sup>91</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, p. 6198. For the biography of Liu Zeqing, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 531-32; for Chen Mingxia's, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 95. Chen Mingxia (1605-54) was a native of Liyang 溧阳, Jiangsu.

<sup>92</sup> For Hongguang's praise of Li Mingrui, see Wang Runan, *Xu bu Ming ji biannian* (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang and Zhonghua shuju, 1961), p. 107; also Zou Yi, *Ming ji yiwen* (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang and Zhonghua shuju, 1961), p. 84. For Liu Zeqing's recommendation for Li Mingrui, see *Pian'an pai ri shiji* (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang and Zhonghua shuju, 1958), p. 238.

thought themselves loyal and upright. According to Li Qing (1602-83), then serving in Nanjing, Li did not have an interview with Emperor Hongguang after his arrival but instead met with Ruan Dacheng on the outskirts of Nanjing for several days. A memorial he submitted to Hongguang, in which he possibly described his experiences in Beijing after it fell to the Manchus, was regarded by many as a pretext for defending himself.<sup>93</sup> It was also said that Ruan Dacheng attempted to incite Li into attacking Jiang Yueguang, a grand secretary in Nanjing who was hostile to Ruan, but Li refused to do so.<sup>94</sup> These stories further illustrate Li's independence from but sympathy with the Donglin faction. At this time Li corresponded with Huang Daozhou, a staunch Donglin member who was debating whether to resign from his position in Nanjing,<sup>95</sup> possibly to inform Huang of his experiences in Beijing. In his reply, Huang seemed willing and able to understand Li's actions under the Manchus and he confirmed Li's moral quality and loyalty, saying:

Excepting surrender [to the barbarians] as a personal taint, there are the alternatives of considered speech and careful deliberation. Even though one cannot stand shoulder-to-shoulder with [Bo] Yi and [Shu] Qi, why can one not compare with [Liuxia] Hui and [Shao] Lian? [...] As for my writing, it falls short of yours, and as for my conduct, I know well what is superior or inferior, present or lacking in it. What need is there for you to have words with the likes of them?<sup>96</sup>

降辱而外，尚有伦虑一条。即不能与夷齐方驾，何遽不及惠连？……仆之文章

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<sup>93</sup> Li Qing, *San yuan biji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), pp. 130-31.

<sup>94</sup> Wen Bing 文秉, *Jia yi shi an* 甲乙事案 (Notes to the events in the years of *jiashen* and *yiyou*), cited in Shi Zuyu, "Li Mingrui gouchen", p. 137.

<sup>95</sup> Hong Si et al., *Huang Daozhou nianpu*, eds. Hou Zhenping and Lou Zengquan (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1999), pp. 28, 87, 115.

<sup>96</sup> Huang Daozhou, "Da Li Taixu shu 答李太虚书" (A reply to Li Taixu), in Huang, *Huang Zhangpu Quanji* (n.p., 1826), 16:5b-6a. Huang addressed Li as "*nian weng* 年翁" (old men who succeeded in the civil examination in the same year), since both of them succeed in the metropolitan examination in 1622, making Li sixty *sui* in 1644, old enough to be addressed in this manner. Thus I think it likely that Huang replied to Li's letter in late 1644 or early 1645. Bo Yi 伯夷 and Shu Qi 叔齐 were famous hermits who refused the appointments from the Zhou after the collapse of the Shang. See Sima Qian, *Shi ji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 61:2121-29.



即不及翁，行誼優劣得失，亦吾寸心，何必與彼曹出口矣。

In this reply Huang alludes to Liuxia Hui and Shao Lian, men who took office under chaotic dynasties but were still regarded as noble recluses by Confucius, since they acted morally and rationally.<sup>97</sup> This is Huang's way of saying to Li that although he took office under the Manchus, he too could be regarded as a noble recluse. At the end of the letter Huang suggests that Li need not care about impeachment by their colleagues nor need he dispute with the officials who reproach him, since he had done nothing wrong.

Before Li's arrival at Nanjing, the minister of punishments in Nanjing had sent several memorials advising punishments of former colleagues of Li and Huang who had surrendered to the rebels and/or the Manchus in Beijing.<sup>98</sup> On 10 March 1645, a censor named Zhou Yuntai 周元泰 sent up a memorial suggesting that the ministry of punishments arrest Yang Rucheng, Li's partner in Beijing, and Cao Rong 曹溶 (1613-85), who had surrendered to the Manchus.<sup>99</sup> On 9 April, Emperor Hongguang received one more memorial of this kind but ignored it.<sup>100</sup> Although those punishments were not actually implemented because of the incompetence, indolence, and disorder of Emperor Hongguang and his government,<sup>101</sup> Li Mingrui risked being arrested when he appeared in Nanjing on the

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<sup>97</sup> Confucius said, "It may be said of Hui of Liu-hsia, and of Shao-lien, that they surrendered their wills, and submitted to taint in their persons, but their words corresponded with reason, and their actions were such as men are anxious to see. This is all that is to be remarked in them." See Ruan Yuan ed., *Shisanjing zhu shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), pp. 2590-30. The English translation is cited from James Legge, "Confucian Analects," in *The Chinese Classics* (2<sup>nd</sup> and rev. ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893), vol. 1, pp. 336-37.

<sup>98</sup> At least two similar memorials were sent by the minister of punishment in Nanjing, one on 8 September 1644, the other on 7 February 1645. See Tan Qian, *Guo que*, pp. 6136-37, 6175.

<sup>99</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, p. 6184. For the biography of Cao Rong, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 740.

<sup>100</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, p. 6195.

<sup>101</sup> For such conditions under the Hongguang regime, see Mote and Twitchett, *Cambridge History*,

anniversary of Emperor Chongzhen's death. His decision to go there in spite of this risk illustrates his loyalty to the fallen Ming and distance from the rising Qing.

Less than two months after Li's arrival, Emperor Hongguang fled the city and the Manchu army occupied Nanjing. Although Li's life after the fall of Nanjing in 1645 is not well documented, it is possible to discover some information concerning his activities in this period. He lived in Nanchang until 1649, sometimes traveling about in Jiangsu and Zhejiang as a merchant and at other times living in Lushan as a recluse while lecturing at the White Deer Academy.<sup>102</sup> Facts about his activities directly relevant to the concerns of this thesis are: (1) his refusal to join in but moral support of a rebellion led by Jin Shenghuan 金声桓 and Wang Deren 王得仁 against the Manchus in Nanchang in 1648;<sup>103</sup> (2) his mentality that was similar to that of a Ming loyalist, even though he once held office under the Manchus; (3) accumulation of property as a merchant.

After the fall of Nanjing, according to Wu Weiye, Li may have lived as a recluse in Lushan, collecting materials with an intention to write a historiography about the rise and fall of dynasties.<sup>104</sup> When Jin Shenghuan and Wang Deren rebelled in 1648 in Nanchang, Li was sympathetic to the rebellion,<sup>105</sup> but refused an invitation from the rebels to join them. Wu

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pp. 641-60.

<sup>102</sup> Much information about Li in this period can be found in Wu Weiye's poems. See *Wu Meicun Quanji*, pp. 114-16, 120-24, 414-15, 763-65.

<sup>103</sup> For the rebellion led by Jin Shenghuan and Wang Deren, see Lynn A. Struve, *The Southern Ming 1644-1662* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 125-29; also Mote and Twitchett, *Cambridge History*, pp. 684-86.

<sup>104</sup> Wu Weiye, "Zuoshi Li Taixu xiansheng shou xu," "Zuozhu Li Taixu shi cong Yandu jiandao bei gui...," poem 2; "Langyuan shi shishou bing xu," poem 9, in *Wu Meicun quanji*, pp. 764, 114, 123, respectively.

<sup>105</sup> In the poem presented to Li, Wu wrote of how:

out of pity for the bones of the newly vanquished,  
He climbed the terrace alone as the sun set.

refers to Li's disinclination to join in the rebellion by way of allusions in two of his poems.

In the first of them, he claims that Li informed him of the rebellion by a letter:

From the River's islet at night comes the sound of the watchman's knocker,  
From each River City precinct, carriages emerge.  
In the end it proved difficult to enlist Li Bai,  
who kept to his bed in Kuanglu.

江渚宵传柝，  
江城里出车。  
终难致李白，  
卧病在匡庐。

The second line refers to the thousands of people who were forced to do corvée for the Manchu army during the siege of Nanchang, a description corroborated in other sources.<sup>106</sup>

The allusion to Li Bai in the last two lines of Wu's poem refers to the An Lushan Rebellion, when Li Bai took refuge in Jiangxi and was employed as a private advisor by Li Lin (d. 756), the Prince of Yong. In 756, Li Lin rebelled and Li Bai dwelt in seclusion at the same place where Li Mingrui chose to reside during the turbulent period immediately after the Manchu conquest.<sup>107</sup>

In the preface to his series of poems about the Garden of Elysium, Wu used another

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可怜新战骨，  
落日独登台。

See Wu, "Zuozhu Li Taixu shi cong Yandu jiandao bei gui...", poem 4, in Wu, *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 115.

<sup>106</sup> The phrase "li chu ju 里出车" (from each precinct carriages emerge) comes from *Zhouli zhushu* and *Han shu*. In the commentaries to the *Rites of Zhou*, "*fu* 賦" (labor levy) is defined as "sending out carriages and labors to do corvée" (chu che tu ji yaoyi 出车徒给徭役). See *Zhouli zhushu*, in *Shisanjing zhushu*, p. 712. For Wu's poem, see Wu, "Zuozhu Li Taixu shi cong Yandu jiandao bei gui...", poem 5, in Wu, *Meicun shiji jianzhu*, 8:14b-15a. For another reference to forced labor for the Manchu army during the siege of Nanchang, see Xu Shipu, *Jiang bian jilue*, in *Baibu congshu jicheng* (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1970), 2:1a-4a. According to Xu's account, thousands of people, most of them old men and women, dug trenches along the city wall, built ramparts, and set up pontoon bridges across the Gan River. Many died of exhaustion and others were sold into slavery.

<sup>107</sup> For Li Bai's attendance in Li Lin's office, see Ouyang Xiu and Song Qi, *Xin Tang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 202:5763. For the rebellion of Li Lin, see Liu Xu et al., *Jiu Tang shu*, 107:3264-66; Ouyang and Song, *Xin Tang shu*, 82:3611-12.

allusion to illustrate Li's political attitude when he wrote:

Yunqing abandoned his herb garden and did not return,  
Shaoling left Rangxi and resided elsewhere.<sup>108</sup>

云卿弃药圃而不归，  
少陵辞灊西而又往。

Su Yunqing 苏云卿 was a recluse in Nanchang in the thirteenth century and once was a close childhood friend of Zhang Jun 张浚 (1097-1164), a Southern Song general famous for his resistance against the Jurchens. As prime minister, Zhang Jun sent a special envoy to invite Su to work together, but after the first meeting Su left his house without indicating his future whereabouts.<sup>109</sup>

The warfare at Nanchang caused the death of Li's son Li Que 李恂 (zi Baoyuan 抱原) and also damaged his urban villa, the Garden of Elysium. Li Que was a *bagong* 拔贡 (graduate for preeminence) and once served as *jiaoyu* 教谕 (instructor) in the district school of Shangrao 上饶, Jiangxi Province. He was killed by Manchu soldiers, possibly while doing forced labor, in Xinjian 新建, a county neighboring to Nanchang.<sup>110</sup> Li Mingrui grieved this loss for a long time, according to Wu Weiye.<sup>111</sup> The Garden of Elysium, one of the most

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<sup>108</sup> Wu Weiye, Preface to "Langyuan shi shishou bing xu," in *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 121; also the preface to "Langyuan shi 阆园诗" (Poems about the Garden of Elysium), in his *Meicun shiji jianzhu*, 8:17b.

<sup>109</sup> Tuotuo et al., *Song shi*, 459:13459-60. For the notation to the sentences cited, see Wu, *Meicun shiji jianzhu*, 8:18b-19a. For the allusion to Du Fu and Rangxi, see the next page.

<sup>110</sup> Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang xianzhi*, p. 1101.

<sup>111</sup> In a poem, Wu wrote:

How pitiful thinking of his beloved son,  
He vents his feelings in the Canglang Pavilion.

可怜思爱子，  
托付在沧浪。

famous gardens in Nanchang and originally the urban mansion of the Yiyang Prince 弋阳王, was close to *Yonghe men* 永和门 (the Gate of Eternal Peace), one of the eastern gates of Nanchang, and to *Dantai ci* 澹台祠, a memorial temple to the south (see *Figure 1*).<sup>112</sup> During the siege of Nanchang, the Manchu commander Tantai Holhoi 谭泰何洛 established his headquarters six or seven *li* away from *Yonghe men* and ordered that a terrace be built just two *li* away from this gate, to be used as a watchtower and a battery. The Manchu army shelled the *Dantai ci* on the day when Wang Deren married and bombarded the city on 1 March 1649, finally putting the rebellion down.<sup>113</sup> Li's garden could easily have been damaged seriously or destroyed as Wu Weiye hinted in his poem and elsewhere.<sup>114</sup>

After declining the rebels' invitation, Li Mingrui left by way of Jiujiang to seek refuge<sup>115</sup> and then lived in Yangzhou. He likely did not live in one place for a long time, but

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See Wu, "Langyuan shi shishou bing xu," poem 8, in Wu, *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 123. As mentioned above, this series of poems was composed possibly in 1651.

<sup>112</sup> Chen Hongxu, *Jiangcheng mingji*, 2:52a. Li Mingrui was proud of his garden (see his poems cited in Chapter Three). For the relative positions of the garden, temple, and gate, see "Nanchang fuzhi tu 南昌府治图" (Map of the area under the jurisdiction of Nanchang Prefecture), and "Nanchang fuzhi mailuo tu shuo 南昌府治脉络图说" (Notes to the map of the area under the jurisdiction of Nanchang), in Fan Lai and Zhang Huang, *Xinxu Nanchang fuzhi* (1588. Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1990), pp. 27, 28, 29. The *Dantai ci* was constructed to commemorate Confucius's protégé Dantai Mieming 澹台灭明 (*zi* Ziyu 子羽; b. 512 BC), possibly the first scholar to espouse Confucian ideas in Jiangxi. See Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 67:2205-06, 121:3116.

<sup>113</sup> Xu Shipu, *Jiang bian jilue*, 2:4b-5a, 10a.

<sup>114</sup> In the preface to his series of poems about the Garden of Elysium, Wu wrote, "The immortal's medicine mortars and carts were sent up to heaven. Can the Prince's pearl screen and painted pillars still be in this world? 将仙人之药臼车箱，俱移天上；岂帝子之珠帘画栋，尚出人间？" See Wu's preface to "Langyuan shi shishou bing xu," in *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 121. For the allusions used here, see *Meicun shiji jianzhu*, 8:18b-19a.

<sup>115</sup> Wu Weiye made reference to these travels in the following couplet:

Just as the wind stiffened at Mount Madang,  
He turned the helm towards Pencheng.

马当风正紧，  
捩舵下湓城。

rather moved from one place to another, just as Du Fu moved to Dongtun after living in Rangxi for several months.<sup>116</sup> In Zhenjiang or Yangzhou Li wrote to Wu, informing him of the rebellion and his current situation and agreeing to meet with him.<sup>117</sup> This meeting would be the one mentioned above as their first encounter in the Qing period. After that, Li possibly traveled about in Zhenjiang, Yangzhou, Nanjing,<sup>118</sup> Suzhou, Hangzhou, and naturally

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See Wu, "Zuozhu Li Taixu shi cong Yandu jiandao beigui...", poem 6, in *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 116. Mount Madang is on the south bank of Yangzi River near Jiujiang. Pencheng is the ancient name of Jiujiang.

<sup>116</sup> In the late spring of 767, Du Fu lived in Rangxi and around the end of this year he moved to Dongtun. See *Du Fu nianpu*, ed. Sichuan Sheng Wenshi Yanjiu Guan (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1958), 108b-125b.

<sup>117</sup> Couplets from two poems of a series by Wu Weiye supply this information. The first of them mentions a letter that Li wrote to Wu while still in Zhenjiang:

In Nanxu, close to the mountain scenery,  
he wrote in reply to Hou Ba.

南徐山色近，  
题语报候芭。

The second couplet, from a poem immediately after the first, mentions their meeting:

We looked at each other, both having lost our way,  
shaking hands and talking about our hardships.

相看同失路，  
握手话艰辛。

See Wu, "Zuozhu Li Taixu shi cong Yandu jiandao beigui...", poems 7 and 8, in Wu, *Meicun shiji jianzhu*, 8:15a-b. In the first couplet Wu casts himself in the role of Hou Ba, protégé of Yang Xiong 扬雄 (53 BC-AD 18), a famous scholar in the Western Han Dynasty (see Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 87:3585). In *Wu Meicun quanji*, "Nanxu 南徐" is inexplicably changed to "Nan Qi 南齐." See p. 116. Nanxu is the ancient name for Zhenjiang.

<sup>118</sup> According to Wu Weiye, Li asked Ji Zongmeng to compose a rhapsody and "Master Zhao" to make a painting of his destroyed villa, the Garden of Elysium. That happened in Zhenjiang, where Mount Beigu exists and in Yangzhou, where the Great Canal starts. As Wu put it in a couplet, "Hopefully, the continuous peaks of Mount Beigu will seem like Censer Peak; the Great Canal with tide gushing will seem like Penkou 庶几峰连北固，不异香炉；潮上邗沟，居然湓口." See Wu, Preface to "Langyuan shi shishou bing xu," in *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 121. For more discussion about the rhapsody and painting, see below. According to Fang Wen, Li was living in Nanjing in 1664. See Fang, "Li Langweng yu Shiyinyuan, zhao tong Huang Ziwen Chen Yugong xiaoji 李閔翁寓市隱園，招同黃子威、陳俞公小集" (Li Langweng, living in Shiyinyuan, invited me to drink together with Huang Ziwei and Chen Yugong), and "Song Li Taixu xiansheng huan Nanchang 送李太虛先生還南昌" (See Master Li Taixu off back to Nanchang), in Fang Wen, *Tushan xuji* 廬山續集 (included in *Tushan ji*, vols. 7, 8), 3:7b-8a; 1:18a-b.

Nanchang. In Shunzhi 10 (the year *guisi*, 1653), he was living in Nanchang. In the spring of that year a grand meeting was held at Tiger Hill in Suzhou, which several thousand scholars from nine prefectures attended. As a leader of the literati, Wu Weiye was invited to meditate a dispute between the *Tongsheng she* 同声社 (Same Voice Society) and the *Shenjiao she* 慎交社 (Cautious Relation Society), both made up of young scholars.<sup>119</sup> During the meeting, Wu asked for information about Li in one of the poems he composed during the gathering and hinted that Li was presently in Nanchang by way of an allusion:

Any letter from Luling recently?  
He vents his feelings in Canglang Pavilion as Zimei did.<sup>120</sup>

近得庐陵书信否？  
寄怀子美在沧浪。

According to one commentator, Luling alludes to Li Mingrui and Zimei refers to Su Shunqin (*zi* Zimei, 1008-48), a poet in the Northern Song Dynasty who constructed the Canglang Pavilion in Suzhou after his dismissal,<sup>121</sup> just as Li Mingrui built a pavilion of the same title in the suburb of Nanchang after the fall of Nanjing in 1645.

In the summer of 1654, Shi Runzhang visited Hangzhou and met Li at West Lake. By his account Li looked distressed and poor, drifting about on a boat together with his private troupe.<sup>122</sup> However, as I will argue, Li was running businesses and collecting properties

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<sup>119</sup> Another source puts the attendance at about 500. See Cheng Muheng's notation to Wu's poems on this meeting, "Guisi chunri xiyin sheji jishi 癸巳春日禊饮社集即事" (Extempore poems composed during the sacrificial festival and society meeting in spring of the year *guisi*), in Wu Weiye, *Meicun shiji jianzhu*, 12:5b; Gu Shishi 顾师轼, "Meicun xiansheng nianpu 梅村先生年谱" (Chronological Biography of Master Meicun)," in Wu Weiye, *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 1463.

<sup>120</sup> Wu Weiye, "Guisi chunri xiyin sheji jishi," in *Meicun shiji jianzhu*, 12:5b.

<sup>121</sup> Tuotuo et al., *Song shi*, 442:13081.

<sup>122</sup> Shi Runzhang wrote:

Singing sadly after many disasters with only four walls left,

enough. According to Shi, before 1654 Li had joined a “Fragrant Hill Society” (*Xiangshan she* 香山社) together with some old scholars in Hangzhou.<sup>123</sup> Originally the name of a society organized by Bai Juyi in Xiangshan with eight old scholar-officials,<sup>124</sup> “Xiangshan she” here refers to a “Society of Five Old Gentlemen of Mount Gu” (*Gushan wu lao hui* 孤山五老会),” which Li formed together with Wang Ruqian 汪汝谦 (*zi Ranming* 然明; 1577-1655), Feng Yuanchu 冯鹓雏 (*zi Yunjiang* 云将), Zhang Suichen 张遂辰 (*hao Qingzi* 卿子; d. ca. 1670), and someone surnamed Gu 顾 (*zi Lindiao* 林调).<sup>125</sup> Of these, Zhang Suichen lived in seclusion in Hangzhou after the collapse of the Ming Dynasty and was definitely a

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Frustrated in his remaining years, he lives in a little boat.

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A spring breeze sets long sleeves dancing as he plays the silver zither,  
At a joyous feast on a moonlit night, the iron flute is put away.

多难悲歌余四壁，  
残生潦倒一孤舟。

.....

春风舞袖银箏弄，  
夜月欢筵铁笛收。

See Shi, “Xihu zuihou chou Li zongbo 西湖醉后酬李宗伯” (Reply Master Li, the ex-minister of rites while drunk at West Lake), in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 3, p. 436. In a note to another poem composed for Li at West Lake, Shi says, “Any guest who visits him will be accompanied in drinking by his boy-singers 客至，出歌儿佐酒。” See “Xihu cheng Li Taixu zongbo 西湖呈李太虚宗伯” (Presented to Li Taixu, the ex-minister of rites, at West Lake), in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 4, p. 195.

<sup>123</sup> In a note to a poem presented to Li, Shi describes how, “[f]orced by the warfare, [Li] lives in Hangzhou. He has some excellent singers in his private troupe and has created a Fragrant Hill Society together with some old scholars at West Lake [李]被兵后侨寓西冷，蓄善歌者，与湖上耆旧为香山社。” See “Xihu zuihou chou Li zongbo,” in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 3, p. 436. The word “Xileng 西冷” (Western cold) is the name of a bridge at West Lake.

<sup>124</sup> For the Fragrant Hill Society created by Bai Juyi, see Liu Xu et al., *Jiu Tang shu*, 166:4356; Ouyang and Song, *Xin Tang shu*, 119:4304.

<sup>125</sup> Wang Ruqian, “Tong Li Taixu xiansheng, Feng Yunjiang, Gu Lindiao, Zhang Qingzi ding Wulao Hui 同李太虚先生、冯云将、顾林调、张卿子订五老会” (I form the Society of Five Old Gentlemen in Mount Gu together with Master Li Taixu, Feng Yunjiang, Gu Lindiao, and Zhang Qingzi), in Wang, *Chunxingtang shiji*, in *Congmu Wang shi yishu* (Changsha, 1886), 5:5b-6a. See also “Xiao zhuan,” 1a; 5:1b. Mount Gu is an islet in West Lake.



Ming loyalist.<sup>126</sup> According to Qian Qianyi, Wang and Feng both were Ming loyalists, as I will argue in Chapter Four.

Li's relations with and fame among Ming loyalists can be viewed partly as indicating that his mentality was that of a Ming loyalist, even though he was criticized by some of them for having served under the Manchus in Beijing for more than half a year. Such criticism of him is illustrated by a story that came into being after Xu Shipu (*zi* Juyuan; d. ca.1653), a famous poet and essayist in Jiangxi, was killed by a robber in his villa. Zhao Yi (1727-1814), a famous scholar, heard the story from Jiang Shiquan (*zi* Xinyu 心餘; 1725-85), a playwright, and wrote it down:

Li Taixu was the examination mentor of Wu Meicun and one of the chief ministers in the Chongzhen period. He did not die during the national misfortune but surrendered to Li Zicheng. He did not escape home until the Manchus had unified the country and set up the Qing Dynasty. One Xu Juyuan, a provincial graduate and son of a man [who passed the metropolitan examination] in that same year [as Li did], once derided Li. [...] He wrote a play in which, after Taixu and Gong Zhilu surrendered to the rebels, they heard that Qing troops had entered [Beijing] and fled south in a hurry. After arriving at Hangzhou they were followed by Manchu soldiers and hid between the iron thighs of Qin Hui's wife at the front of Yue Fei's tomb. Just then she happened to menstruate, and after the soldiers had gone, the heads of the two men were befouled with blood. This play already had been performed among the people, when Taixu got some word of it. When Zhilu was demoted from the position of the chief minister of the Imperial Parks Administration and was exiled to Guangdong, he passed through Nanchang and also heard about this. He and Taixu secretly summoned performers and watched a midnight performance [of the play]. At the moment when the two men came out from beneath the thighs [of the statue], blood dripping over their faces, they looked at each other and cried aloud, "Our good names and integrity have been dragged through the dust. What more can we say? Since we have been insulted so terribly by this youngster, we must kill him to revenge the humiliation." Then they sent someone to wait for Juyuan at his hostel and stab him to death.<sup>127</sup>

李太虚者，吴梅村之座师也。崇祯中为列卿。国变，不死，降李自成。清定鼎后，乃脱归。有举人徐巨源者，其年家子也，尝非笑之。……巨源又撰一剧，演太虚及龚芝麓降贼后，闻清朝兵入，急逃而南，至杭州，为追兵所蹶，匿于岳坟

<sup>126</sup> For the biography of Zhang Suichen, see Gong Jiajun et al., *Hangzhou fuzhi*, p. 2811; and Deng Zhicheng, *Qing shi jishi chu bian* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), pp. 246-47.

<sup>127</sup> Zhao Yi, *Yan pu za ji*, ed. Li Jiemin (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1982), p. 40.

铁铸秦桧夫人胯下，值夫人方祥变，迨兵过而出，两人头皆血污。此剧已演于民间，稍稍闻于太虚。适芝麓以上林苑监谪官广东，过南昌，亦闻此事，乃与太虚密召歌伶，夜半演而观之。至两人出胯下时，血淋漓满头面，两人相顾大哭，谓名节扫地至此，夫复何言。然为孺子辱至此，必杀之以雪此仇。乃使人俟巨源于逆旅刺杀之。

The above account is not credible and contains numerous falsehoods. (1) Li cannot be referred to as a chief minister, since he was dismissed from the position of *Hanlin yuan shijiang* (expositor-in-waiting in the Hanlin Academy, rank 6a) in 1635 and was appointed as *You shuzi* (Right Mentor in the Secretariat of Heir Apparent, rank 5a) in 1644.<sup>128</sup> (2) Li did not surrender to the rebels led by Li Zicheng who took over Beijing, and he was dismissed from the position of the left minister of rites, which he had been coerced into accepting and never actively sought. He possibly was attacked by some Manchu soldiers who were irritated by his arrogance, but was never searched by them.<sup>129</sup> (3) Xu Liangyan,<sup>130</sup> Shipu's father, succeeded in the metropolitan examination in Wanli 26 (1598),<sup>131</sup> while Li succeeded in 1622, so Shipu could not be addressed as the "son of a graduate in that [same] year" (*nianjia zi* 年家子). (4) Gong Dingzi did surrender to Li Zicheng. He also surrendered to the Manchus when their army arrived in Beijing and went smoothly on to an official career in the Qing period.<sup>132</sup> Gong and Li may have known each other, but their relations likely were not as close as the above story suggests, since no strong evidence of such can be found in Gong's collected works. (5) According to other sources, Xu Shipu was killed by a robber in his own

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<sup>128</sup> Tan Qian, *Guo que*, p. 6021.

<sup>129</sup> Li Qing, *San yuan biji*, pp. 130-31.

<sup>130</sup> For the biography of Xu Liangyan, see Qian Qianyi, *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan*, pp. 555-56.

<sup>131</sup> Zhu Baojiong and Xie Peilin, eds., *Ming Qing jinshi timing beilu suoyin*, p. 966.

<sup>132</sup> Zhao Erxun et al., *Qing shi gao* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), 484:13324-25; Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 431.

house, not in a hostel.<sup>133</sup>

None of the extant works of Xu Shipu indicates his relationship to Li Mingrui. A falling out between them is probable, perhaps caused by Li's independence from the Donglin faction to which Xu's father belonged as a famous and firm member. It is said that Xu Shipu was "of great talent, impetuous, and always self-indulgent. He failed in the civil examinations repeatedly. After the national misfortune, he lived as a recluse in the mountains and gave up all hope of succeeding in the civil examinations."<sup>134</sup> His distance from Li possibly also stemmed in part from differences in their personalities. As a friend of Xu Shipu, Ming loyalist, and son of a Donglin member, Wang Youding was more tolerant and enjoyed a closer relationship with Li.

It is safe to say that Li's brief service under the Manchus was one, but not the only, factor that influenced his relations with his contemporaries. It is also safe to say that remaining loyal to the fallen Ming or serving under the Manchus were not the only principles by which scholars decided with whom to associate in the early Qing. In fact, the story of Li and Gong sending an assassin to kill Xu is found in only one source. If Li and Gong actually did this, then Qian Qianyi, Chen Hongxu, and Wang Youding, all close friends of Xu Shipu, would have left some hint of the incident in their writings. In the eighteenth century, Quan Zuwang (1705-55), a specialist on Ming history, questioned the story in a letter to his friend, thinking it stupid for Li and Gong to plot against Xu just when he was being courted and

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<sup>133</sup> In 1652, Chen Mingxia suggested that offers of office be made to famous scholars. He sent a special envoy to visit Xu with money and clothing as gifts, asking him to serve under the Manchus. Xu refused the invitation and gifts. After the envoy had left, a robber entered his house with the intention of stealing the gifts that Xu had refused. Angry and frustrated, he then dispatched Xu. See Wu Dexuan 吴德旋, "*Chuyuelou wenjian lu* 初月楼闻见录;" Li Huan 李桓, "*Guo Chao qixian leizheng chu bian* 国朝耆献类征初编;" Xu Zi, "*Xiaotian ji zhuan* 小腆纪传;" "*Qing shi lie zhuan* 清史列传," in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, comp. Zhou Junfu (Taipei: Mingwen chuju, 1985), vols. 19, pp. 109-10; 187, p. 449; 69, pp. 812-13; 104, pp. 684-85, respectively.

<sup>134</sup> Xu Zi, *Xiaotian jizhuan*, in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, vol. 69, pp. 812-13.

recommended by a high official. Quan thinks that Xu's friends concocted this story, based on conflicts that may or may not have existed.<sup>135</sup>

Although Li's temporary service under the Manchus may have invited ridicule, his mentality was the same as that of a Ming loyalist. Though he did not join in the 1648 rebellion in Nanchang, he mourned Emperor Chongzhen and remembered fondly the fallen Ming. Poems written by friends about Li late in his life describe him as a hermit nostalgic for the fallen dynasty. For example, a poem by Wu Weiye contains a couplet recalling his friend's service in the Hanlin Academy during the Ming:

A ten-year dream outside Golden Horse Gate,  
is still recollected in the evening clouds.<sup>136</sup>

十年金马梦，  
回首暮云中。

Another of Wu's poems pictures Li fondly remembering Emperor Chongzhen's kindness to him even in the midst of warfare that put his family members in great peril:

Fishing in mist-covered water he thought of former favors,  
Midst clash of arms ten mouths broke through the tight siege.<sup>137</sup>

烟水一竿思旧德，  
兵戈十口出重围。

Lines from a poem by Wang Youding convey nostalgia for the Ming in the guise of

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<sup>135</sup> Quan Zuwang, "Jiang Fang zhang Rulu wen Xu Juyuan shishi shu 见方丈孺庐问徐巨源事实书" (Reply to Fang Rulu, an old gentleman, on facts concerning Xu Juyuan), in *Quan Zuwang ji huijiao jizhu*, ed. Zhu Zhuyu (3 vols. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), pp. 1679-80.

<sup>136</sup> Wu Weiye, "Zuozhu Li Taixu shi jiandao cong Yandu bei gui...", poem 2, in *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 114. Here "jin ma" (golden horse) refers to the Golden Horse Gate, where academicians waited for edicts from the emperor in the Western Han Dynasty (for some examples, see Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 58:2617, 64:2821, 65:2843, 78:3284, 87:3574, 100:4256). As demonstrated in Part Three of this Chapter, Li Mingrui had been an official in Hanlin Academy for about ten years in the Ming period.

<sup>137</sup> Wu Weiye, "Shou zuoshi Li Taixu xiansheng sishou 寿座师李太虚先生四首," poem 3, in *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 415. The second line means that ten members of Li Mingrui's family survived the siege in 1648 Nanchang and followed him to seek refuge in Yangzhou.

references to two allusions, one to the partisan controversy in the Yuanyou period (1086-94) of Song, the other to the fallen Western Han Dynasty:

The stele of the Yuanyou Party commemorates Sushui [Sima Guang],  
At the ruined palaces of the Western Capital he misses the Numinous Brilliance.<sup>138</sup>

元祐党碑怀涑水，  
西京遗殿想灵光。

Li himself also declared his loyalty to the Ming. While in Zhejiang in 1654, some scholars congratulated him on attaining the age of seventy *sui*, to which he responded by citing an allusion to Wang Kun 王琨, who lamented his longevity having witnessed the forced abdication of Emperor Shun 顺帝 of the Song Dynasty in 479.<sup>139</sup> After Li returned to Yangzhou, scholars there also tried to celebrate his birthday, but he refused them and accepted only the congratulations of a few close friends, such as Wang Youding and Wu Weiye. In his essay for the occasion, Wang praised Li's continual recollections of the favors that Chongzhen had conferred on him.<sup>140</sup> It seems that Li wanted others to find his mentality to be similar to that of a Ming loyalist, and that he believed that Wang and Wu would understand him more than others.

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<sup>138</sup> Wang Youding, "Shou Li zongbo Taixu xiansheng 寿李宗伯太虚先生" (Birthday congratulations for Master Li Taixu, the ex-minister of rites), in Wang, *Sizhaotang shiji*, 3:14a. For the allusion to the Yuanyou Partisan strife in the first line, see Part Three of this chapter. The second line alludes to King Gong in Lu of the Western Han, whose Hall of Numinous Brilliance was the only one to survive the warfare at the end of the dynasty. Wang Yanshou 王延寿 (*zi Wenkao* 文考), an Eastern Han writer, visited the hall and composed a rhapsody about it filled with nostalgic reminiscences about the prosperity of the former dynasty. See Wang Yanshou, "Lu Lingguang Dian fu 鲁灵光殿赋" (Rhapsody on the Hall of Numinous Brilliance in Lu), in *Zhaoming wenxue*, comp. Xiao Tong (Taipei: Wenhua tushu gongsi, 1975), pp. 151-55. For the English translation of Wang Yanshou's rhapsody, see David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan, or Selectons of Refined Literature*, vol. 2 : *Rhapsodies on Sacrifices, Hunting, Travel, Sightseeing, Palaces and Halls, Rivers and Seas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 263-78.

<sup>139</sup> For Wang Kun's story, see Li Yanshou, *Nan shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 23:628. Emperor Shun was forced to abdicate by one of his own generals, who founded the Southern Qi Dynasty (479-502).

<sup>140</sup> Wang Youding, "Li Taixu xiansheng qishi shou xu" (Preface to the seventieth birthday wishes for Master Li Taixu), in Wang, *Sizhaotang wenji*, 5:2b-4b.

Around 1650 when he was in Zhenjiang, Li missed his destroyed garden in Nanchang so much that he asked one “Master Zhao” to make a painting of it and Ji Zongmeng (*juren* 1636) to compose a rhapsody about it.<sup>141</sup> He insisted that the painting and rhapsody be made so as to conjure up memories of his garden and hometown, and said as much when he met Shi Runzhang in 1654 in Hangzhou.<sup>142</sup> But Wu Weiye thought that Li actually was expressing nostalgia for the fallen Ming with the painting and rhapsody:

He has ordered a boat to Huaiyin earlier,  
But still visits the pavilion beside the Yangzi River.  
In the morning, he looks on Mount Beigu,  
Which places seem like Nanzhou?  
Pools and terraces of the Wangs and Xies have vanished,  
Trees wither over the tombs of Qi and Liang.  
Far from home he weeps for his country,  
Are his tears shed just for his hometown? <sup>143</sup>

早买淮阴棹，  
仍登江上楼。  
晓来看北固，  
何处似南州？  
王谢池台尽，  
齐梁寝树秋。  
天涯忧国泪，  
岂为故乡流？

In the Shunzhi period, Li perhaps owned a very little farmland,<sup>144</sup> and he made a

<sup>141</sup> Wu Weiye, Preface to “Langyuan shi shishou bing xu,” in *Wu Meicun quanji*, pp. 120-21; see also *Meicun shiji jianzhu*, 8:17a-19a. According to Wang Zhuo 王晔, Li showed the rhapsody to Zhao Kaixin 赵开心 (zi Dongmen 洞门, *jinshi* 1634) and Li Kai 李楷. See Wang Zhuo, *Jin shishuo* 今世说, in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, vol. 18, p. 49. Zhao Kaixin was dismissed in 1646 and summoned to Beijing to take his former office in early 1651, so the rhapsody possibly was finished in 1650. The painter could not be Zhao Kaixin, since Cheng Muheng, citing Wang Zhuo, notes that Ji Zongmeng composed the rhapsody but that he does not know who the painter is. I think that Zhao Yi is the painter since, as a native of Jiangxi, he would have visited Li’s garden and known it well.

<sup>142</sup> Shi Runzhang, “Xihu cheng Li Taixu zongbo,” in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 4, p. 195. One line from the poem mentions the painting, “Mount Kuang is the prototype of the landscape painting 山川画里归匡岳.” A note adds that “Master Li misses his destroyed villa, the Garden of Elysium, and has had a picture of it drawn 先生思豫章故园，尝绘为图。” Mount Kuang is an alternative name of Lushan in Jiangxi.

<sup>143</sup> Wu Weiye, “Langyuan shi shishou bing xu,” poem 10, in *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 124. Mount Beigu is in northern Zhenjiang.

living mainly by running a business. In a poem composed after watching a performance by Li's private troupe, Li Yuankuang observed how,

After a luxurious feast he again shakes the True Man's sword,  
In his study he sometimes trims a merchant's sail.<sup>145</sup>

绮筵复动真人剑，  
书幌时摇估客帆。

One measure of his wealth is that he bought lots of valuable flowers and plants from Suzhou and shipped them to Nanchang. The flowers and plants were so well known that some famous poets composed poems in praise of them. Li may have purchased them for his birthday in 1654 when he attained the age of 70 *sui*. In 1655, Sun Zhiwei (1620-87) enjoyed them at the *Ou tai* 欧台 (Ouyang Terrace) in Nanchang and wrote in a poem that "the flower boat came from Tiger Hill recently 花船新自虎丘来."<sup>146</sup> Shi Runzhang also enjoyed them when he was the Assistant Administration Commissioner of Huxi Circuit in 1661 and mentioned them in a poem:

The flowers were bought from distant central Wu,  
[...]  
carried aboard ship, with gold spent unstintingly.<sup>147</sup>  
[...]

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<sup>144</sup> Another poem by Wu Weiye remarks that "[h]e is hospitable but has less than two *qing* of land 好客从无二顷田." See "Shou zuoshi Li Taixu xiansheng sishou," poem 2, in *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 414.

<sup>145</sup> See Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 817. The first line refers to Li's study of Daoism in middle age.

<sup>146</sup> Sun Zhiwei, "Ou tai tong Wang Yuyi, Du Canglue he Li Taixu zongbo 欧台同王于一、杜苍略和李太虚宗伯" (Reciprocate the ex-minister of rites Li Taixu, together with Wang Yuyi and Du Canglue at the Ouyang Terrace), in Sun, *Gaitang ji* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1979), 9:2b-3a. He composed the poem in the year *yiwei*, that is, in 1655. The *Ou tai* (Ouyang Terrace) is a historic site at which Ouyang Dong, a scholar in the Tang Dynasty, studied. See Shi Runzhang, "Zi zhi ge 紫芝歌" (A song on the purple glossy ganoderma), in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 2, pp. 350-51.

<sup>147</sup> Shi Runzhang, "Langyuan mudanhua xia zui ge 阆园牡丹花下醉歌" (Singing drunk amidst the peony shrubs in the Garden of Elysium), in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 2, p. 380. For the year when Shi took office in Jiangxi, see He Qingshan and Yang Yingqin, "Shi Yushan nianpu jian bian 施愚山年谱简编" (A brief chronological biography of Shi Yushan), in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 4, p. 300.

此花远自吴中买，

.....

不惜黄金舁入舟。

.....

Wang Youding provides an explanation for why the cost of the flowers and plants was so extravagantly high in the following poem:

The Academician is a generous and unrestrained recluse,  
He has bought a boatload of Jiangnan spring.

[...]

With a value of one hundred thousand cash,  
They make one feel refreshed at a glance.

[...]

This spring, snow suddenly fell three feet deep,  
In Fujian recruiting officers spread out through the fields.  
Officials seized boats and pressed for beans and fodder,  
Those with boats did not fit them for flower merchants.  
I felt distress even before I saw the soldiers,  
Had just heard a city's archers were all lost in southern campaigns,  
When I got up and saw one man walking among the flowers.<sup>148</sup>

学士磊珂历落之畸人，  
一船买尽江南春。

.....

价值青钱十数万，  
使人瞥见冷心脾。

.....

今春陡然雪三尺，  
闽海征兵动阡陌。  
官吏捉船急豆刲，  
有船不装买花客。  
我未见兵愁已生，  
但闻满城弓箭尽南征，  
起看一人花里行。

It is clear from this poem that the cost of flowers and plants had become much higher because of the difficulty of hiring a large vessel to ship them to Nanchang. While the

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<sup>148</sup> Wang Youding, "Mai hua ge: wei xueshi Li Langweng fu 买花歌：为学士李闾翁赋" (A song about the purchase of flowers, composed for Academician Li Langweng), in *Sizhaotang shiji*, 1:17a-b.



Manchus were being attacked by Zheng Chenggong's 郑成功 (1624-62) naval forces, their officials commandeered large vessels throughout South and East China.<sup>149</sup> In traditional China, enjoying valuable flowers and plants has been viewed not only as symbolic of one's highmindness but also an indispensable part of the reclusive lifestyle. It is reasonable that Li Mingrui preferred to remove himself from active service of the Manchu authorities during a period of turmoil.

Li also collected bronzes, tablets, and valuable jewelry.<sup>150</sup> Although most of his property had been destroyed during the rebellion in Nanchang in 1648, he managed to keep his private troupe and several years later was sufficiently rich that he could afford to buy valuable flowers and plants. To recover his finances so quickly, one reasonable and practicable way would have been to go into business.<sup>151</sup>

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In this chapter, I have explored Li Mingrui's relationship with Tang Xianzu. As Tang's protégé, Li carried on his ideas about *xingqing* as an essential principle of literary creation. This sense of being Tang's protégé, as well as his memories of the man, account for his enjoyment of performances of the *Peony Pavilion*. As for Wu Weiye, I have not been able

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<sup>149</sup> In 1645 and 1655, Zheng Chonggong's naval forces attacked the Manchus along the shore of the Eastern Sea at least three times. See Zhao Erxun et al., *Qing shi gao*, 5:136-37, 138, 139, 143, 144. For the biography of Zheng, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 108-10. Wu Weiye provides a good description of the Manchus' seizure of vessels to carry their soldiers. See Wu, "Zhuo chuan xing 捉船行" (Ballad of seizing the boats), in *Wu Meichun quanji*, p. 86.

<sup>150</sup> According to Wu Weiye, Li hoped to be an excellent historiographer and spent much money collecting primary materials such as bronzes and stone tablets. Wu wrote, "He is fond of ancient things and knowledgeable. He has been searching for bronzes, tablets, and inscriptions, and once he finds what he likes, he does not stint even if he has to empty his purse 好古博物, 访求金石篆刻, 遇有所好, 虽倾囊为之无吝." See "Zuoshi Li Taixu xiansheng shou xu," in *Wu Meichun quanji*, p. 764. As for Li's interest in collecting jewelry, Qiu Junhong mentions his purchases of a red jade flute and a white jade pot from other connoisseurs in *Xijiang shihua*, p. 815.

<sup>151</sup> Shi Zuyu surmises that Li Mingrui ran a business but provides no evidence. See "Li Mingrui gouchen," pp. 138-39.

to find much evidence concerning the relationship of his ideas to those of Li Mingrui, but I have been able to document that Wu well understand Li's nostalgic memories of the fallen Ming and Emperor Chongzhen and shared them. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Six, Wu Weiye created *Moling chun* out of such memories, and this play was also often performed by Li's private troupe. Their common memories, which I have excavated from sources in this chapter, provide a context in which to understand Li's enjoyment of performances of *Mudan ting* and *Molin chun*, which are the subjects of Chapters Five and Six.

Li Mingrui's independent but sympathetic stance vis-a-vis the Donglin faction, his forced service under the Manchu rulers in Beijing, and his close relations with both Qing officials and Ming loyalists, produced tensions between the times in which he lived and his mentality. As will also become apparent in the following chapters, Li Mingrui's associates, whether loyal to the fallen Ming or willing to serve the Manchus, faced the same tensions and sought release from them by watching plays.

## CHAPTER III

### LI MINGRUI'S PRIVATE TROUPE

As a wealthy merchant, Li Mingrui was much richer than his mentor, Tang Xianzu, and able to afford an excellent private troupe that brought him and his associates much enjoyment. In this chapter, I will explore how his private troupe was assembled and disbanded and discuss what can be learned about the performers, as well as other details that can be elicited from the materials at hand. The discussion in this chapter, I hope, will illuminate more features about a typical private troupe in the period covered by this thesis.

I have found no evidence that precisely indicates when Li Mingrui's private troupe came into being. Shang Rong (b. 1785) reports that Li Mingrui bought some girls in Suzhou to form his private troupe just after having failed to secure a position in Nanjing with Ruan Dacheng's recommendation, in 1645.<sup>1</sup> According to Wu Weiye, Li Mingrui enjoyed performances by his troupe even before his Garden of Elysium was destroyed during the rebellion of Nanchang, which broke out in February 1648.<sup>2</sup> From this we can infer that Li Mingrui's troupe came into being between late 1645 and 1647.

#### 3.1. The Actresses of the Troupe

According to Zhu Zhongmei, Li Mingrui's private troupe was composed of eight actresses in the early spring of the year *dingyou* (1657), when Li Mingrui and his wife,

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<sup>1</sup> Shang Rong, "Li Taixu biezhuàn 李太虛別傳" (An unofficial biography of Li Taixu), in Shang Rong, *Chiyatang wenji* (Chengdu, 1868), 3:13b. As I will demonstrate later, at least one actress was a native of Pingyang 平陽, a place famous for its actresses and singing girls. See Part One of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Wu Weiye, Preface to "Langyuan shi shishou bing xu," in *Wu Meicun quanji*, pp. 121-22.

accompanied by the troupe, visited Li Yuanding and Zhu Zhongmei. During this gathering, Zhu composed eight quatrains, one for each of the actresses, who played respectively the roles of *sheng* 生, *dan* 旦, *xiaosheng* 小生, *xiaodan* 小旦, *mo* 末, *wai* 外, *jing* 净, and *chou* 丑.<sup>3</sup> In this section, I will investigate the actresses, especially the two who played the roles of *sheng* and *dan*.

Of the actresses of Li's private troupe in 1657, only five can be identified by name: Yanbo 烟波 (Mist-covered Water), Huixue 廻雪 (Whirling Snow), Xiaohan 晓寒 (Dawn Cold), Yanwan 燕婉 (Swallow Charm), and Zhuying 朱樱 (Vermillion Cherry). These identifications can be made using poems by Li himself and by friends and associates who attended performances by the troupe.

#### (1) Yanbo and Huixue.

In a poem, Li Mingrui wrote:

Huixue plays the jade flute facing the wind,  
Yanbo washes the ice jar while admiring the moon.

廻雪临风吹玉管，  
烟波弄月濯冰壶。

The note adds, "Huixue and Yanbo are the names of Master's two actresses."<sup>4</sup> They would be the leading actresses, having been mentioned most often<sup>5</sup> and taking the roles requiring

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<sup>3</sup> Zhu Zhongmei, "Dingyou chuchun, jia zongbo Taixu xie furen xie xiao nüji guo wo, yan Yanzi jian, Mudan ting zhu ju, yin ge zeng yi jue, de bashou" (In the early spring of the year *dingyou* [1657], the former minister of rites Li Taixu, visited me together with his wife and accompanied by their company of young actresses, who performed *Yanzi jian* and *Mudan ting*. I presented a quatrain to each actress, eight poems in total), in Li Yuanding, *Shiyuan quanji*, pp. 109-110.

<sup>4</sup> Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, pp. 815-16.

<sup>5</sup> In the poems accessible now about Li's private troupe, Yanbo is mentioned more than the others. For example, in a poem composed by Zhu Zhongmei entitled "Chu chun ji zongbo nian sao, bing yi Yanbo, Xiaohan zhu nulin 初春寄宗伯年嫂，并忆烟波、晓寒诸女伶" (In the early spring, I sent the poem to the wife of the ex-minister of rites, with some memories of such actresses as Yanbo and Xiaohan). See Li Yuanding,

the most beauty and talent, that of *sheng* and *dan*.<sup>6</sup> In the poem presented to the *dan* actress of Li's troupe, Zhu Zhongmei admiringly wrote that:

Newly made up, supple and full at fifteen *sui*,  
She finishes singing *Liangzhou*, amazing all the guests.  
Even were Consort Zhen to appear today,  
She would have to yield to this young "state toppler."<sup>7</sup>

新妆十五正盈盈，  
唱彻凉州举坐惊。  
若使甄妃今日见，  
应须还让小倾城。

Lines three and four allude to Empress Zhen (d. 230), prototype of Fufei 宓妃, the Luo River Goddess described in "Luoshen fu 洛神赋" (the Rhapsody on the Luo River Goddess) by Cao Zhi 曹植 (zi Zijian 子建, 192-232). "Huixue" also alludes directly to the Luo River Goddess, who was described appearing to Cao Zhi:

She is dimly described like the moon obscured by light clouds,  
She drifts airily like whirling snow in streaming wind.<sup>8</sup>

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*Shiyuan quanji*, p. 112. Mao Xiaotong attributes the authorship of this poem to Li Yuanding, in *Ziliao huibian*, p. 1169. Furthermore, Fang Wen singles out these two in a poem he wrote about the disbanding of Li's troupe, translated in Part Two of this chapter.

<sup>6</sup> In *Taohua shan* 桃花扇 (Peach Blossom Fan), Li Xiangjun 李香君, the beautiful courtesan and female protagonist, is recruited into the Court Troupe to perform for Emperor Hongguang. Ruan Dacheng hates her and tries to force her to play the roles of *jing* and *chou*, but Hongguang, appreciating her beauty and talent, orders her to play the role of *dan*. See Kong Shangren, *Taohua shan* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1998), scene 25, "Xuan you 选优" (Recruiting the Players), pp. 167-73. Although deciding what role a performer is to play is a complicated business, beauty and singing talent are the most essential qualities for those who play the *sheng* and *dan* roles.

<sup>7</sup> Zhu Zhongmei, "Ding you chu chun, jia zongbo Taixu xie furen xie xiao nüji guo wo...", poem 2, in Li Yuanding, *Shiyuan quan ji*, p. 110; Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, p. 1169.

<sup>8</sup> See Cao Zhi, "Luoshen fu," in Xiao Tong, comp., *Zhaoming wenxuan*, p. 255. The English translation is by David R. Knechtges, *Wen xuan, or Selections of Refined Literature*, vol. 3, *Rhapsodies on Natural Phenomena, Birds and Animals, Aspirations and Feelings, Sorrowful Laments, Literature, Music, and Passions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 359. In Chinese literature, the allusion to the Luo River Goddess was often used, together with the characters "hui xue," to refer to a beautiful woman. For example, in his *You xianku* 游仙窟 (A dalliance in the immortals' den), Zhang Zhuo 张鷟 (zi Wencheng 文成; ca.657-730) cited the allusion to describe the beauty of Shiniang:

The Luo River's goddess of gusting snow is fit only to fold your robes.

仿佛兮若轻云之蔽月，  
飘飘兮若流风之迴雪。

Born in 1643 according to the 1657 poem cited above, Huixue performed the *dan* roles in the troupe and Yanbo the *sheng* roles. Yanbo was a native of Pingyang, a place famous for producing actresses who excelled at singing and dancing. According to Zhu Zhongmei, Yanbo was the most talented actress in Li's troupe:

The songs and dances of Pingyang are renowned as of old,  
And preeminent at romance is this one *sheng*.<sup>9</sup>

平阳歌舞旧驰名，  
占尽风情是此生。

Her excellence is attested further by Zhou Lingshu's 周令树 adoration for her. Zhou (zi Jibai 计百, *jinsi* 1655) was a Prefecture Judge in Ganzhou from 1658 to 1661.<sup>10</sup> In a note to a poem composed in 1662 concerning the disbanding of Li's troupe, Fang Wen comments that, "My friend in Qianzhou (today's Ganzhou) once tried to marry Yanbo with one

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洛川迴雪，只堪使叠衣裳。

And he described the excellent dance of Wusao:

A single slender waist, and Luo Stream grows ashamed of its whirling snow.

一搦腰支，洛浦愧其迴雪。

See Zhang Zhuo, "You xianku," in *Tan ren chuanqi xiaoshuo ji*, gen. ed. Yang Jialuo (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1962), p. 20, 28, respectively. The English translations by Paul Rouzer, *Articulated Ladies: Gender and the Male Community in Early Chinese Texts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 317, 338.

<sup>9</sup> Zhu Zhongmei, "Ding you chu chun, jia zongbo Taixu xie furen xie xiao nüji guo wo...", poem 1, in Li Yuanding, *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 109; Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, p. 1169.

<sup>10</sup> Zhong Yinhong et al., *Ganzhou fuzhi* (1873. Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe youxian gongsi, 1970), p. 643.

thousand taels of silver as the betrothal gift, but failed.”<sup>11</sup> A year later, in a poem composed especially about Zhou’s studio, Fang Wen alluded again to Zhou’s chagrin over his loss:

There is only this occasion for some sadness,  
Yanbo never did come onboard the five-lake boat.

只有些些惆怅事，  
烟波未遂五湖舟。

A note adds that, “Yanbo is a girl from the Wu area. Jibai planned to make her his concubine but she was seized away by a bully. So it is said.”<sup>12</sup> The bully refers to is Wu Sangui, as will be explained below. Inasmuch as Zhou was willing to pay one thousand taels of silver as the betrothal gift and continued to regret the failure of the marriage due to Wu Sangui’s interference, Yanbo must have been an exceedingly attractive and talented actress.<sup>13</sup>

Zhu Zhongmei also mentioned some of the roles Huixue and Yanbo played. In 1658, Li Mingrui’s wife invited her to the performances of four *zaju*, one of which is *Taohua renmian* 桃花人面 (A Beautiful Face amidst Peach Blossoms) by Meng Chengshun 孟称舜 (ca. 1600-ca. 1684). Huixue played the role of the female protagonist (*dan*), as Zhu indicates in a poem she wrote for the occasion:

Huixue stands slim and graceful in white light silk,  
Her peach-blossom face is beautiful enough to topple city walls.<sup>14</sup>

迴雪婷婷縞带轻。  
桃花人面果倾城。

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<sup>11</sup> Fang Wen, “Wen Li zongbo jiaji bing qian, shang zhi 闻李宗伯家伎并遣，伤之” (At the news of the disbanding of the private troupe of Li, the ex-minister of rites, I am saddened by it), in Fang Wen, *Xijiang you cao* (included in *Tushan ji*, vol. 6), 30b.

<sup>12</sup> Fang Wen, “Ti Zhou Jibai Kanshanlou 题周计百看山楼” (For Mountain-Watching Studio of Zhou Jibai), in Fang Wen, *Tushan xuji* (included in *Tushan ji*, vols. 7, 8), 4:12b.

<sup>13</sup> For more about Yanbo’s story, see Part Three of this chapter.

<sup>14</sup> Zhu Zhongmei, “Yinchun ri yan ji, zongbo nian sao yin ming nüji yan zaju sishou,” poem 2, in Li Yuanding, *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 113.

In 1660, Zhu described Yanbo and Huixue's performance of *Moling chun* in the following poem:

Real Pearl is outstanding among the attendant screen in the Pan Valley,  
Yanbo's singing skill should be rare in the world.  
Fluttering and whirling, Huixue looks beautiful enough to compete,  
The two of them fly side by side in the spring scenery.<sup>15</sup>

盘谷真珠擅妓围，  
烟波歌态世应稀。  
飘飘廻雪堪争艳，  
共占春光对对飞。

Clearly, in the performance of *Moling chun*, Yanbo played the male protagonist (*sheng*) and Huixue the female (*dan*), since the role of *dan* requires more skill at dancing than the role of *sheng*.

## (2) Xiaohan.

The title of another poem by Zhu Zhongmei mentions Yanbo and another actress in Li's troupe: "In the early spring, I send a poem to the wife of the ex-minister of rites, with some memories of such actresses as Yanbo and Xiaohan."<sup>16</sup> However, I have been unable to determine what role she played based on available materials.

## (3) Yanwan.

This actress is mentioned in a poem about the troupe by Jin Yingsheng 靳应昇 (zi Bixing 璧星, hao Chapo 茶坡, 1605-63):

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<sup>15</sup> Zhu Zhongmei, "Zongbo nian sao xiangqi Canglang Ting, guan nüji yan *Moling Chun*, man cheng shi jue 宗伯年嫂相期沧浪亭，观女伎演秣陵春，漫成十绝" (The wife of the ex-minister of rites invited me to watch the performance of *Moling chun* in the Canglang Pavilion, and I composed randomly ten quatrains), poem 8, in Li Yuanding, *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 108. Li Yuan 李愿 (fl. 801), a scholar in the Tang Dynasty, lived as a recluse in the Pan Valley (in today's Jiyuan 济源, Henan Province). See Han Yu, "Song Li Yuan gui Pangu xu 送李愿归盘谷序" (A Preface to See off Li Yuan to the Pan Valley), in Han Yu, *Han Yu quanji jiaozhu*, eds. Qu Shouyuan and Chang Sichun (Chengdu: Sichuan Daxue chubanshe, 1996), pp. 1477-79.

<sup>16</sup> In Li Yuanding, *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 112; Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, p. 1169.



Among sweetly singing voices and engaging girls,  
Yanbo can be dimly discerned in red attire.  
Lovely Yanwan is still bashful before guests,  
And only glances back at the romantic old vice-minister.<sup>17</sup>

宛转歌喉窈窕娘，  
烟波缥缈出红妆。  
可怜燕婉犹羞客，  
只顾风流老侍郎。

There is no evidence what role she played.

#### (4) Zhuying.

Wang Youding possibly was enamored of this actress, since he composed a poem especially to present to her, in which he appreciated her eyes, as limpid as autumn waters:

Don't fix your sights on a pilgrim to the mountain,  
As one song mounts the wind you will feel an ease beyond ease.  
Even were one to write of the Luo River Goddess, who can compare with her?  
Only the autumn waves are left to lighten the world of men.<sup>18</sup>

莫将定眼对朝山，  
一曲凌风闲外闲。  
便写洛神谁得似，  
只留秋水照人间。

Wang described Zhuying's beauty in another poem, as follows:

By the by one can recognize Zhuying among the flower shrubs,  
And again hear the first sounds of the spring parrot.  
I want to describe the extreme purity of her eyes' pupils,  
Smoky pools whose layers cannot be fathomed.<sup>19</sup>

等闲花里识朱樱，

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<sup>17</sup> Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 819; Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, p. 1179.

<sup>18</sup> Wang Youding, "Zhuying kouhao 朱樱口号" (A song to Zhuying), in *Sizhaotang shiji*, 4: 4b. The same poem was included by Qiu Junhong as the second one of a series entitled "Li zongbo Canglang Ting shang guan nüyue, zuo liren shi 李宗伯沧浪亭上观女乐，作丽人诗" (Poems on the beauties, composed after watching the performance of the actresses in the Canglang Pavilion of Li, the ex-minister of rites). See Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 814. Thus Zhuying was certainly an actress of Li's private troupe.

<sup>19</sup> Wang Youding, "Guan ju 观剧" (Watch plays), poem 1, in Wang, *Sizhaotang shiji*, 4:4a.

又听春鹦第一声。  
欲貌双瞳清绝处，  
层层烟水不分明。

Her role in the troupe cannot be determined.

### 3.2. The Disbanding of the Troupe

For reasons yet to be determined, Li Mingrui was forced to disband his troupe in the early spring of 1662. In the fall of 1661, Shi Runzhang was appointed Assistant Administration Commissioner of Huxi Circuit and watched performances by Li's troupe in Nanchang.<sup>20</sup> Li Mingrui possibly wrote to Shi informing him of what he had to do, and Shi replied in the spring of 1662, attaching a poem that reads, in part:

As the plum blossoms were about to fall the beauties have gone,  
In one night sorrow of parting rose like spring waters.<sup>21</sup>

梅花欲落美人去，  
一夜离愁春水生。

Clearly, although Li and Shi were good friends, Shi was too weak to help Li out of his difficulties. In the same spring, Shi visited Li again after coming back to Nanchang and found that the troupe had already been disbanded:

After our parting in late fall, I came by once more,  
And saw again waves of spring waters on East Lake.  
The dancing butterflies and singing orioles have all scattered,  
By the banks of blossoming pomegranate broken hearts are many.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Shi Runzhang, "Li shangshu ye yan dengwu ge 李尚书夜宴灯舞歌" (A song for the lamp dance in a night banquet held by Minister Li), in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 2, p. 346; "Nanpu bie Li Taixu zongbo zhi Qingjiang 南浦别李太虚宗伯之清江" (Parting from Li Taixu, the ex-minister of rites, at Nanpu Pavilion enroute Qingjiang), in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 3, p. 246. The second poem was composed on the third day of the ninth lunar month of Shunzhi 18 (25 October 1661).

<sup>21</sup> Shi Runzhang, "Da Li zongbo shu man ti zhi wei 答李宗伯书漫题纸尾" (A poem written randomly at the end of a reply to Li, the ex-minister of rites), in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 3, p. 472.

<sup>22</sup> Shi Runzhang, "Chong guo Li zongbo 重过李宗伯" (Return visit to Li, the ex-minister of rites),

残秋别后此经过，  
又见东湖春水波。  
舞蝶啼莺今散尽，  
石榴花畔断肠多。

Fang Wen provides more details about the disbanding of the troupe in two poems written when he first learned of it. In the first of them, he wrote that:

The group of rainbow skirts were once immortals,  
Only fit to form ties with literati.  
For what do they belong to that humble servant?  
In the grieving wind and foul rain I weep for the beauties.

霓裳一部本群仙，  
祗合文人与结缘。  
底事同归厮养卒？  
酸风腥雨哭婵娟。

Fang's second poem alludes obliquely to a departure under escort by boat, from the perspective of an aggrieved admirer:

At the order to board the boat, tears flowed frequently,  
Yanbo and Huixue were even much sadder.  
The heart of a wanderer to the Zhang River was the first to break,  
Let alone the man who planned to marry Yanbo in Qianzhou.<sup>23</sup>

闻说登舸涕泪频，  
烟波廻雪更悲辛。  
章江游子肠先断，  
况是虔州纳采人。

Clearly, Li Mingrui's private troupe was disbanded by force, and the powerful man who

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in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 3, p. 466. The note to this poem says that "He disbanded his private troupe recently."

<sup>23</sup> Fang Wen, "Wen Li zongbo jiaji bing qian, shang zhi 闻李宗伯家伎并遣，伤之" (At the news of the disbanding of the private troupe of Li, the ex-minister of rites, I am saddened by it), in Fang Wen, *Xijiang you cao* (included in *Tushan ji*, vol. 6), 30b. The two poems were composed in the spring of the year *renyin* (1662). The Zhang River, together with the Gong River, empties into the Gan River in Ganzhou whose ancient name is Qianzhou, where Zhou Lingshu was the Prefecture Judge as mentioned above. But in Li Mingrui's time, the Gan River was named the Zhang River. (See *Map 1*) So, in his second poem cited, the third line refers to Fang Wen himself and the forth, Zhou Lingshu.

seized the actresses is vulgar from the scholars' point of view.

Li remained sad about the loss of his troupe for a long time and often recalled his actresses when watching performances by other troupes. In a long poem composed as a reply to Li's, Shi Runzhang refers to such sad memories:

With flutes and strings, one more feast is held at nightfall,  
Sweet songs recall a sudden memory of the hibiscus faces.  
Saddened that the Luo River shining pearl will not return,  
Dancing sleeves have changed into westward flying swallows.<sup>24</sup>

管弦日暮重开宴，  
娇歌忽忆芙蓉面。  
洛浦明珠怅不还，  
舞衫化作西飞燕。

In 1669, Sun Zhiwei visited Li in Nanchang and had no heart to mention the disbanding, as he recorded in a poem:

Once I watched a red-cheeked girl  
give an interpretation of "Green-headed Duck."

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<sup>24</sup> Shi Runzhang, "Jiuting zui ge da Li zongbo 就亭醉歌答李宗伯" (Singing drunkenly in the Jiu Pavilion, as a reply to the poem of Li, the ex-minister of rites), in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 2, p. 347. "The Luo River shining pearl" is an allusion to the Luo Goddess, coming from Cao Zhi's "Rhapsody on the Luo River Goddess," in which "the shining pearl" is used to describe the beauty of the Luo Goddess:

Bedecks her hair with head ornaments of gold and halcyon plumes,  
Adorns herself with shining pearls that illumine her body.

戴金翠之首饰，  
缀明珠以耀躯。

The English translation is cited from Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan*, vol. 3, p. 359.

The note to the first two lines of Shi Runzhang's poem says that Li composed a poem after the disbanding of his troupe, in which two lines read as

My family lost the hibiscus faces,  
While you gentleman still keeps the Hibiscus House.

我家失却芙蓉面，  
使君尚有芙蓉屋。

Shi named his mansion in Huxi Circuit as "Hibiscus House" since one hibiscus in the mansion were in full bloom when he arrived there. See Shi, "Xiaojiang changhe ji xu 萧江倡和集序" (The preface to the collected poems to reciprocate in Xiao River), in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 1, p. 60.

Today I come to visit Mentor Bai,  
but cannot bear to inquire after Poplar Twig.<sup>25</sup>

解唱绿头鸭，  
曾看红颊儿。  
今来寻白傅，  
不忍问杨枝。

“Green-headed Duck” is the title of a Tang Dynasty tune; and “Mentor Bai” refers to Bai Juyi, who was once appointed *Taizi shaofu* (Junior Mentor of the Heir Apparent).<sup>26</sup> “Poplar Twig,” refers to Fan Su 樊素, Bai’s female attendant, whose nickname was taken from the tune she excelled at singing,<sup>27</sup> and here is used to refer obliquely to Li Mingrui’s actresses.

More details about the whereabouts of the actresses are provided by Liu Jian (fl. 1720) in the following prose account:

Bamian Guanyin (the Bodhisattva of eight faces), together with [Chen] Yuanyuan (1624-81), was favored especially [by Wu Sangui] and had been one of the female attendants of Li Mingrui, the former minister of rites in Nanchang. The ex-minister had once had over ten female attendants, whose singing and looks were the pick of their day, and Bamian Guanyin was the best of them. Among them, Simian Guanyin (the Bodhisattva of four faces) also had beautiful looks and figure, but was inferior to Bamian Guanyin. My father [Liu Kun 刘昆 (*jinshi* 1659)] once saw them sing and dance at the house of the ex-minister, and [told me] they really were beauties. When the ex-minister was old, Bamian Guanyin and Simian Guanyin were taken by the Supervising Secretary, Gao An, who later presented them to [Wu] Sangui. When Kunming was taken in the year *xinyou* (1681), Yuanyuan was the first to die, while Bamian Guanyin was married to the Distance Pacifying General Cai Yurong (1633-99) and Simian Guanyin to the Southern Conquering General Muzhan (d. 1683).<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Sun Zhiwei, “Chong fang Li Taixu zongbo yu Nanchang, liu yin Langyuan 重访李太虚宗伯于南昌，留饮阆园” (I return to visit Li Taixu, the ex-minister of rites, in Nanchang, and was invited to stay to drink), in Sun Zhiwei, *Gaitang ji*, 3:8a.

<sup>26</sup> Liu Xu et al., *Jiu Tang shu*, 166:4340-58, esp. 4355; Ouyang Xiu and Song Qi, *Xin Tang shu*, 119:4300-05, esp. 4304.

<sup>27</sup> Bai Juyi, Preface to “Buneng wangqing yin 不能忘情吟” (Song of past feelings), in *Bai Juyi ji jianjiao*, comm. and ed. Zhu Jincheng (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), p. 3810. For an English description about Fan Su and Bai Juyi’s poem, see Arthur Waley, *The Life and Times of Po Chü-I (772-846 AD)* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1949), p. 196. Waley translated “Yangzhi 杨枝” into “willow branch.”

<sup>28</sup> Liu Jian, *Ting wen lu*, in *Yuzhang congshu, shibu 2*, ed. Jiangxi Sheng gaoxiao guji zhengli lingdao xiaozu (Nanchang: Jiangxi jiaoyu chubanshe, 2002), p. 495. Cai Yurong and Muzhan were commanders

八面观音与圆圆并擅殊宠，故宗伯南昌李明睿妓也。宗伯侍儿十数辈，声色极一时之选，而八面为之魁。其曹四面观音亦美姿容，亚于八面。先公曾于宗伯第，见其歌舞，果尤物也。宗伯老，为给事高安所得，以奉三桂。辛酉城破，圆圆先死，八面归绥远将军蔡毓荣，四面归征南将军穆占。

Liu Jian's account is credible, since his father, Liu Kun, once had been an official in Yunnan Province when Wu Sangui had both civil and military control of the province. When Wu Sangui rebelled in 1673, Liu Kun refused an appointment from him and was exiled to Tengyue Prefecture (today's Tengchong, Yunnan). After the rebellion was crushed, Liu Kun was promoted at Cai Yurong's recommendation.<sup>29</sup> Having both watched performances by Li Mingrui's troupe and had relations with Wu Sangui and Cai Yurong, Liu Kun's account to his son is a first-hand one. It is also likely that Shang Rong, Li Mingrui's biographer, is referring to Liu Jian's account when he states in Li's biography that Bamian Guanyin and Simian Guanyin were the best actresses in the troupe.<sup>30</sup>

### 3.3. Yanbo and the Troupe

If Bamian Guanyin is the nickname of Yanbo, her story would tell us more about Li Mingrui's troupe. Accordingly, before I leave the subject of Li's troupe and its make-up, I will briefly give reasons for believing that Bamian Guanyin and Yanbo are one and the same person.

Among the spectators of Li Mingrui's troupe, Zhu Zhongmei is the only one to

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who put down Wu Sangui's rebellion (1673-81). For Cai's biography, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 734-36; For Muzhan's, see Zhao Erxu et al., *Qing shi gao*, 254:9744-47.

<sup>29</sup> For Wu Sangui's civil and military control of Yunnan Province from 1659 to 1681, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 878. For the biography of Liu Kun, see Zhang Geng 张庚, "Liu Kun zhuan 刘昆传" (Liu Kun's life), attached to Liu Jian's *Ting wen lu* in *Yuzhang congshu, shibu 2*, pp. 508-09.

<sup>30</sup> Shang Rong, "Li Taixu biezhuàn," in *Chiyatang wenji*, 3:13b-14a.

mention the existence of a beauty called Bamian Guanyin. In the late spring of the year *jichou* (Shunzhi 6, i.e., 1649), Zhu, accompanying her husband Li Yuanding, left for Yangzhou by boat after a sojourn of ten years in Beijing and Tianjin.<sup>31</sup> Later that year, in Yangzhou or someplace nearby, she found a poem on the fan owned by a beautiful woman named Yanyan 燕燕 and composed a joking response to the same rhyme, in which three lines are accompanied by notes:

Each expression is suffused with autumn water's [gleam], (Note: She is called the  
Boddhisattva of eight faces)  
Gracefully she treads on fallen flowers. (Note: Her gold lotuses are small).  
A new swan has come from a distant frontier,  
At whose house did the old swallow stay? (Note: Once she was an attendant of the  
former prime minister)

面面盈秋水，（注：号八面观音）  
婷婷步落花。（注：金莲甚小）  
新鸿来远塞，  
旧燕泊谁家。（注：故相姬）<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Li Yuanding, "Guizhou chu fa Jinmen, ci youren yun ershou 归舟初发津门，次友人韵二首" (I will leave Jinmen by boat for the south, so I composed two poems following the rhyme used by one friend), in Li, *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 41; "Zhou fa Jinmen 舟发津门" (We will leave Jinmen by boat), and Zhu Zhongmei's reply, in *Shiyuan quanji*, pp. 74-75. In "Zhou fa Jinmen," Li Yuanding wrote:

Three trails could not be constructed along the Mirror Lake, (Note: Jishui)  
One high branch to stay on is to be found in the Thunder Pool. (Note: Yangzhou)  
Difficult to look back at ten years adrift,  
Would not the misty water of ten thousand *li* break hearts?

三径未能营鉴曲（注：吉水），  
一枝高拟寄雷塘（注：扬州）。  
十年飘泊难回首，  
万里烟波岂断肠？

Jinmen is an alternative name of Tianjin. The Mirror Lake is in Shaoxing, Zhejiang, where the Tang Poet He Zhizhang 贺知章 (659-744) once lived as a recluse (see Ouyang and Song, *Xin Tang shu*, 196:5606-07, esp. 5607). Here the allusion just means a place to live in as a recluse. The Thunder Pool is in Jiangdu County, not far from Yangzhou. For more details about the experiences of Li Yuanding and his wife in this transitional period, see Chapter Five.

<sup>32</sup> Zhu Zhongmei, "Ou jian Yanyan shantoushi, yin qi yun chao zhi 偶见燕燕扇头诗，因其韵嘲之" (Occasionally I found the poem on Yanyan's fan, thus I composed one with the same rhyme to joke with her), in Li Yuanding, *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 88. This poem can be dated according to the sequence of poems before and after it.

Clearly, “Yanyan” is Bamian Guanyin’s alternative name, and having once been an attendant of a former Ming minister, she had been sold or dismissed after her owner died. Since we know that Li Mingrui left Nanchang in 1648 to seek refuge in Yangzhou and sometimes traveled in Jiujiang, Zhenjiang, and Nanjing in 1649, thus he and Li Yuanding would have had opportunities to meet, most likely in Yangzhou, although no evidence of such a meeting has come to light. Since Bamian Guanyin had once been Li Mingrui’s attendant according to Liu Jian, the woman called Bamian Guanyin whom Zhu Zhongmei met must be the same woman mentioned by both Liu Kun and Liu Jian. That Zhu Zhongmei dredged up Yanyan’s old stories and made joking reference to them in the poem indicates that Bamian Guanyin was not Li Mingrui’s concubine but only an attendant. Zhu’s notes to her own poem give details of Bamian Guanyin’s history before she became Li Mingrui’s attendant, and suggest that the name Yanyan dates back to the time she served in the household of a nameless prime minister.

It is thus reasonable to suppose that Yanyan was renamed as Yanbo after she had been enlisted into Li Mingrui’s troupe, and that the “Bamian Guanyin” mentioned by Liu Jian refers to Yanbo. It was common practice for an actress or a female attendant to be renamed by the new owner when she was presented, seized or purchased. Qian Qianyi refers to this practice in one poem of the series presented to Li Mingrui, when he wrote that:

In cloud blue sleeves the girls are all “state toppling” beauties,  
As one by one, they give thanks by lamplight for their names.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Qian Qianyi, “Du Yuzhang Xian yin Pu man ti ba jueju...,” in *Muzhai youxue ji*, p. 523. According to the commentator, the second line originates from two lines by Liu Yuxi 刘禹锡 (772-842), which read:

Twisting strings, they play the new music beside flowers,  
Put down plectrums, and by lamplight give thanks for changing names.

撚絃花下呈新曲，



云蓝小袖尽倾城，  
逐队灯前谢小名。

Moreover, Zha Jizuo (1601-76),<sup>34</sup> an associate of Li's, changed the name of an actress whom Li Mingrui presented to him to Yexie 叶些, to accord with the names of the other performers in his private troupe, all of whose names ended with the character "xie 些."<sup>35</sup> So, it is quite likely that Bamian Guanyin was renamed Yanbo from Yanyan after she was enlisted into Li Mingrui's troupe.

Since Bamian Guanyin (i.e., Yanbo) had been an attendant of a high Ming official before she served Li Mingrui, she must have been more than eighteen *sui* when Zhu Zhongmei met her in 1649. In late Ming and early Qing, a girl was thought most suitable to train as an actress of a private troupe at the age of twelve or thirteen *sui*.<sup>36</sup> It is thus reasonable to suppose that Bamian Guanyin become an attendant of the nameless Ming prime minister at the age of at least twelve *sui* in 1644 when the Ming Dynasty fell, and she must have been born in or before 1633. Yanbo's partner Huixue was born in 1643 as mentioned above, and became one member of Li Mingrui's troupe in or after 1654. Thus

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放拨灯前谢改名。

See Liu Yuxi, "He Yang Shigao jishi shang xiaoji Yingying 和杨师皋给事伤小姬英英" (Reply Supervising Secretary Yang Shigao in the same rhythm, sorrowing about the young beauty Yingying), in *Liu Yuxi ji*, ed. Bian Xiaoxuan (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 449.

<sup>34</sup> For the biography of Zha Jizuo, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>35</sup> Shen Qi, *Zha Jizuo nianpu*, ed. Wang Maohe (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), p. 32. Zha Jizuo's private troupe was known as *Shi xie ban* 十些班 (the Troupe of ten *xie*), all names of whose performers ended with the character "xie". Lu Eting has made an excellent study of Zha's troupe. According to Lu, Zha Jizuo's private troupe consisted of actors and mainly actresses. See Lu, "Zha Jizuo he Li Mingrui 查继佐和李明睿" (Zha Jizuo and Li Mingrui), in Lu, *Qingdai xiqujia congkao* (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1995), pp. 21-26, esp. 24.

<sup>36</sup> Hu Ji and Liu Zhizhong, *Kunju fazhan shi*, p. 197.

Yanbo was at least ten years older than Huixue, and when Huixue came to Li's family Yanbo had been there for at least five years since Yanbo must have been enlisted into Li's troupe in or before 1649. Actually, it is also reasonable to suppose that Yanbo came into Li's family when the troupe formed during the period from late 1645 to 1647. So, Yanbo (Bamian Guanyin) quite likely witnessed the appearance and disbanding of Li's troupe.

Since Yanbo, who played the *sheng* roles, and Bamian Guanyin are the same person, and since, according to Liu Jian, she and Simian Guanyin were the most talented two actresses in Li Mingrui's troupe, it is natural to identify Huixue, who played the *dan* roles, with Simian Guanyin.

Commonly, to sustain high levels of the performance and beauty in a troupe, older actresses would be dismissed and younger ones recruited. In some private troupes, actresses would be admitted at the age of about thirteen *sui* and married at the age of twenty *sui*.<sup>37</sup> But Yanbo was an actress in Li Mingrui's troupe until she was taken away to Yunnan in 1662 when she would have been at least thirty *sui*. This example suggests that in the late Ming and early Qing period, an exceptional actress, even one much older than her partners, might be kept for a long time rather than be dismissed or married when of the age to become a wife or a concubine.

Another way to maintain the artistic vitality and sexual fascination of a private troupe was to send or accept an actor/actress as a present. Yexie, the actress renamed by Zha Jizuo, began to perform at the age of fifteen *sui* and was sufficiently talented that Du Jun 杜濬 (*zi* Yuhuang 于皇; 1611-87), a famous poet, wrote a poem especially to praise her.<sup>38</sup> Since

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<sup>37</sup> Xianggu shi 香谷氏, *Can lu gushi* 残麓故事 (Tales in the Broken Basket), cited in Hu and Liu, *Kunju fazhan shi*, p. 197.

<sup>38</sup> Shen Qi, *Zha Jizuo nianpu*, p. 32. According to Liu Zhenlin and Zhou Xiang, Du Jun composed

spectators of private troupes generally concerned, appreciated, and praised actresses who played the *dan* and *sheng* roles much more than those who played other roles during the late Ming and early Qing,<sup>39</sup> and since Yanbo had been playing the *sheng* roles since Li Mingrui's troupe formed as I argued above, it is quite likely that Yexie played the *dan* roles in Li's and Zha's troupes. Thus, before Huixue joined Li's troupe in or after 1654, Yexie, who played the *dan* roles, must have been paired with Yanbo who played the *sheng* roles. It is unclear if Huixue was more talented and beautiful than Yexie, but it is certain that the artistic vitality and sexual fascination of Li's troupe was maintained even after Yexie left. We can also think that, although the *dan* roles were played first by Yexie and then by Huixue, it is likely that the composition of Li's troupe basically remained the same over the period of 15-17 years of its existence.

One other source contains Bamian Guanyin's story beyond the point when she was seized by General Cai Yurong. According to it, Cai Yurong presented Simian Guanyin to Emperor Kangxi but kept Bamian Guanyin for himself. Kangxi then ordered Cai to submit Bamian Guanyin to the court, but she died en route to Beijing. However Kangxi believed that Cai had killed her and imprisoned the general in Manchuria. In protest—according to this account—troops under Cai's command revolted in 1688.<sup>40</sup> Such an explanation of the cause of Cai's being imprisoned contradicts the official record, according to which he was banished in 1687 to Heilongjiang because he was found having given a bribe of nine hundred taels of

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the poem to present to Rouxie 柔些. See Liu and Zhou, *Dongshan waiji* 东山外纪 (Unofficial Records from the Eastern Mount), in *Zha Jizuo nianpu*, p. 116.

<sup>39</sup> Lu Eting thinks that the *sheng* and *dan* roles were especially stressed in private troupes, while not only the *sheng* and *dan* but also the *jing* and *chou* roles were simultaneously stressed in public troupes, during the late Ming and early Qing. See Lu, *Kunju yanchu shi gao*, p. 80.

<sup>40</sup> Kawaguchi Choju, *Taiwan geju zhi* (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang and Zhonghua shuju, 1957), pp. 80-81.

silver to an official investigator in Yunnan and having taken a granddaughter of Wu Sangui to be his concubine in 1681.<sup>41</sup> It is unimportant whether General Cai Yurong married Wu Sangui's granddaughter or not, but it is certain that Yanbo (Bamian Guanyin) was seized by Cai Yurong after Wu Sangui's rebellion was put down in 1681 and she died before 1687.

### 3.4. The Roles and the Possible Performance of a Whole *Chuanqi*

As mentioned above, Li Mingrui's private troupe consisted of eight actresses, who were trained to perform the eight most essential roles: *sheng*, *dan*, *xiaosheng*, *xiaodan*, *mo*, *wai*, *jing*, and *chou*. In this section, I will explore the possibility that his troupe performed whole *chuanqi* plays, in addition to *zaju* and extracted scenes.

In the late Ming and early Qing a top-flight private troupe would commonly be composed of twelve performers, because the role system for Kun opera consisted of twelve role categories in the Qianlong period, having elaborated from the six basic roles (*sheng*, *dan*, *jing*, *mo*, *chou*, and *wai*) that were used in Southern Drama.<sup>42</sup> The size of a private troupe depended on the financial ability of its owner and the kinds of plays he enjoyed.<sup>43</sup> We know that Li Mingrui was rich enough to afford more than eight actresses, and that his troupe performed *chuanqi* plays, *zaju*, and extracts. Why, then, did his troupe lack the full complement of performers?

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<sup>41</sup> Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 735.

<sup>42</sup> Hu Ji and Liu Zhizhong, *Kunju fazhan shi*, pp. 193-97. For the roles used in the Southern Drama and their influences on the role system for Kun opera, see William Dolby, *A History of Chinese Drama* (London: Paul Elek, 1976), pp. 85-86, 102. Su Ziyu, "Song zaju, zaban yu nanxi, beizaju de hangdang tizhi," *Xiju* 2(1998): 105-07. The role category system for the Southern Drama sometimes is said to consist of seven roles, that is, it includes the *tie* 贴 role besides the six roles already mentioned. See Zhang and Guo, *Zhongguo xiqu tongshi* (Beijing: Zhongguo xiqu chubanshe, 1992), pp. 436-40, 770. According to both Su, Zhang and Guo, the *tie* actually originated from and supports the *dan*.

<sup>43</sup> Hu Ji and Liu Zhizhong, *Kunju fazhan shi*, p. 197.

It is plausible to link the size of his troupe to the style of *chuanqi* plays that Li favored. The Yihuang style popular in Li Mingrui and Tang Xianzu's native Jiangxi featured eight roles: *sheng*, *dan*, *jing*, *mo*, *chou*, *wai*, *tie*, and *laodan* 老旦. Tang Xianzu created *Mudan ting* originally in the Yihuang style, specifying these eight roles in his text.<sup>44</sup> Even after Tang's four plays were adapted to the Kun style and widely disseminated, they were still performed in the Yihuang style in Nanchang and Li Mingrui enjoyed such performances of them.<sup>45</sup> The eight actresses of Li Mingrui's troupe were sufficient to play all the roles in *Mudan ting*, and it is safe to say that this smaller troupe would work well in performing some whole *chuanqi* plays.

There is also evidence that Li Mingrui could augment his troupe when necessary using other members of his household. According to Liu Jian, Li Mingrui had "over ten female attendants whose singing and looks were the pick of their day."<sup>46</sup> Not all who were able to perform plays would necessarily become trained members in a private troupe. The private troupe of Zha Jizuo, one of Li's associates, was composed of ten actors and actresses acquired for the troupe, but more than twelve of his household attendants also knew how to perform plays.<sup>47</sup> Li Mingrui's household also surely had more than eight servants able to join

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<sup>44</sup> For the role category systems for the Haiyan style and Yihuang style, see Su Ziyu, "Tang Xianzu, Mei Dingzuo juzuo de qiangdiao wenti," *Yishu baijia* 1(1999): 26. Xu Shuofang is the first scholar to argue that Tang Xianzu created *Mudan ting* originally in the Yihuang style, and Su Ziyu supports Xu strongly. But Cheng Yun disagrees with Xu, arguing that Tang was influenced by the Kun style but failed in strictly following the rhyme of the Kun style to compose his plays. See Xu Shuofang, *Wan Ming qujia nianpu*, vol. 1, pp. 5-6; Su Ziyu, "Tang Xianzu, Mei Dingzuo juzuo de qiangdiao wenti," pp. 22-24; Xu Shuofang, "Mudan Ting he kunqiang," *Wenyi yanjiu* 3(2000): 91-97; Cheng Yun, "Ye tan Tang Xianzu xiqu yu Kunqiang de guanxi," *Wenyi yanjiu* 1(2002): 85-92; Xu Shuofang, "Da Cheng Yun boshi dui wo Tang Xianzu yanjiu de piping," *Waiyu yu waiyu jiaoxue* 3(2001): 35-36; "Zai da Cheng Yun boshi dui wo Tang Xianzu yanjiu de piping," *Wenyi yanjiu* 3(2003): 159-60.

<sup>45</sup> Su Ziyu, "Tang Xianzu, Mei Dingzuo juzuo de qiangdiao wenti," pp. 22-23.

<sup>46</sup> Liu Jian, *Ting wen lu*, p. 495.

<sup>47</sup> Lu Eting, "Zha Jizuo he Li Mingrui," in *Qingdai xiqujia congkao*, pp. 21-26, esp. 24.

his eight actresses on the stage, as occasion required. Li Mingrui also kept boy-actors, as Shi Ruizhang mentions in a note to a poem presented to Li at Hangzhou's West Lake in 1654.<sup>48</sup> Since Zha Jizuo's troupe consisted of both actors and actresses as Lu Eting has suggested, Li Mingrui also likely asked his boy-actors to support the actresses when necessary. With the participation of other servants who could play supporting roles, Li's private troupe would have been able to perform plays in which more than eight roles were designated and even tackle a whole *chuanqi* drama.

According to Li Yuanding and Zhu Zhongmei, Li Mingrui's troupe performed the whole *chuanqi* play *Moling chun*. Li Yuanding's poems about the performance were written in the late winter of 1659 and Zhu Zhongmei's in the beginning of 1660.<sup>49</sup> The performance was likely arranged especially to celebrate the Spring Festival of the year *gengzi* 庚子 (1660) and completed within several nights, long enough to perform the whole play. In his ten poems, Li Yuanding refers to the main plot of the play. For example, the third of them refers to scene 32, "*Ying gui*" 影归 (Return of the Soul), in which the female protagonist Huang Zhanniang 黄展娘 fully recovers from an illness with the combining of her soul with her body. In the fourth and fifth poems, Li Yuanding mentions scenes 29, "*Te shi* 特试" (Special Examination), 31, "*Ci yuan* 辞元" (Title of the Number One Graduate Refused), 34, "*Bei yuan* 杯圆" (Reunion with the Jade Cup), and 40, "*Zhen hun* 真婚" (The Real Wedding), in

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<sup>48</sup> The note says, "Any guest who visits him will be accompanied in drinking by his boy-singers 客至，出歌儿佐酒." See Shi Runzhang, "Xihu cheng Li Taixu zongbo," in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 4, p. 195.

<sup>49</sup> Li Yuanding, "Dong ye tong ji Canglang Ting guan nuji yan *Moling chun*, ci Xiong Shaozai yun shishou 冬夜同集沧浪亭观女伎演秣陵春，次熊少宰韵十首" (On a winter night, I joined a gathering together with others in the Canglang Pavilion, and watched the actresses perform *Spring in Moling*. I composed ten poems with the rhyme that Mr. Xiong, the ex-vice minister of personnel, used), in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 58. Zhu Zhongmei, "Zongbo nian sao xiang qi Canglang Ting guan nuji yan *Moling chun*," in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 108. The two series of poems can be dated according to the sequence of the poems before and after them. For more details about *Moling chun* and its performance, see Part Two of Chapter Five and Part Three of Chapter Six.

which the male protagonist Xu Shi 徐适 is specially offered the title of Number One Graduate by the Song emperor and marries both the maid Niaoyan 袅烟 and Zhanniang formally. In the sixth, seventh, and eighth poems, scene 41, “*Xian ci* 仙祠” (Sacrificial Temple for Immortals), the last scene of the play, is referred to, in which Xu Shi sends a *pipa*-lute as a gift to Cao Shancai 曹善才, once a musician of Xu Shi’s dead emperor and now willing to become a monk for the emperor, and Cao plays the lute and sings about the emperor’s life and his story in Heaven where the emperor and his concubines appear as immortals. In the second, fifth, seventh, and ninth poems of the series, Zhu Zhongmei refers to the love story between Xu Shi and Huang Zhanniang, which Wu Weiye describes in scenes 2-27 of his play. The twenty poems of Li Yuanding and Zhu Zhongmei can be viewed as a summary of Wu Weiye’s *Moling chun*. Wu designated twelve role categories for the play: *sheng*, *dan*, *xiaosheng*, *xiaodan*, *jing*, *mo*, *chou*, *wai*, *fujing* 副净, *tie*, *xiaochou* 小丑, and *laodan*. For Li’s eight actresses to have performed the entire play would have required the support of amateurs or other servants to play the roles of *fujing*, *tie*, *xiaochou*, and *laodan*.

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In this chapter, I have identified by name five actresses of Li Mingrui’s private troupe and have coaxed out some information about Yanbo, the most talented of them. We know that she played the *sheng* roles and was at least ten years older than her partner Huixue, who played the *dan* roles. Only eight actresses were in Li Mingrui’s private troupe, but with the cooperation of other female attendants and even boy-actors in Li’s household, they were able to perform a whole *chuanqi* play.

## CHAPTER IV

### WHO WERE THE SPECTATORS?

This chapter assembles information about the spectators of performances by Li Mingrui's troupe, which I will organize into categories according to their political standing during the Ming-Qing transition. The first group includes the spectators who were Ming loyalists, the second group is comprised of spectators who served both Ming and Qing, and the third group consists of spectators who passed the metropolitan examinations and took offices under the Manchu regime. This classification scheme will aid in understanding how the shared cultural notions could co-exist with different political attitudes during this transitional period.

The following groups of spectators are drawn from information reflected in Sun Dianqi's (1894-1958) notations to *Yuzhang xianyinpu* (hereafter *YZXYP*), the poems in *Xijiang shihua* (hereafter *XJSH*), as well as other prose and poems directly indicating the act of performance spectatorship. Although certain sources are not a direct record of spectatorship, I choose to view the author as a spectator of Li Mingrui's troupe, since evidence does indicate close relations between the writer and Li. According to Shi Runzhang, Li was so hospitable that "any guest who [visited] him [would] be accompanied to drink by his boy-singers"—that is, any guest of Li would have ample opportunities to watch the troupe perform, whether pure singing (*qingchang* 清唱) alone, or in tandem with costumes and movement.

The following groups will indicate Li Mingrui's good relations, not only with some firm Ming loyalists but also with scholars who served the Manchus; this list will illustrate the



variety of political and intellectual groups who derived meaning from performances by Li's troupe.

#### 4.1. The Spectators as Ming Loyalists

1. **Li Yuankuan** 黎元宽 (*zi* Bo'an 博庵; 1596-1675; *Jinshi* 1628; Nanchang). Fifty of his poems were included in *YZXYP*; six poems in *XJSH*.<sup>1</sup> Once the *tixue fushi* 提学副使 (assistant surveillance commissioner of the Education Intendant Circuit) in Zhejiang during the Ming period, he refused to take an office after 1644 on the pretext of his filial duty to his old mother.<sup>2</sup>

2. **Chen Hongxu** 陈弘绪 (*zi* Shiye 士业; 1597-1665; Xinjian 新建, Nanchang Prefecture). Fifteen of his poems were included in *YZXYP*; three poems in *XJSH*.<sup>3</sup> Son of a Donglin member, Chen never succeeded in the civil examinations but was recommended to serve in some local posts during the Ming. After 1644, he refused to take any office under the Manchus, but instead, he compiled a work about Song loyalists to demonstrate his loyalty to the fallen Ming.<sup>4</sup>

3. **Wang Youding** 王猷定 (*zi* Yuyi 于一; *hao* Zhenshi 轸石; 1598-1662; *bagong*; Nanchang). Three of his poems were included in *YZXYP*; two poems in *XJSH*.<sup>5</sup> Son of a

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<sup>1</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531; Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, pp. 817-18.

<sup>2</sup> For the biography of Li Yuankuan, see Tao Cheng, *Jiangxi tongzhi* (n.p., 1732), 70:33b; Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang xianzhi*, pp. 903-04.

<sup>3</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531; Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 818.

<sup>4</sup> Zhao Erxun et al., *Qing shi gao*, 484:13320-21. For a more detailed biography of Chen, see Shi Runzhang, "Gu zhengjun Jinzhou zhizhou Chen gong muzhiming 故征君晋州知州陈公墓志铭" (The epitaph to Mr. Chen, a summoned scholar and once the prefect magistrate of Jinzhou), in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 1, pp. 403-06.

<sup>5</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531; Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, pp. 814.

Donglin member, Wang never succeeded in any civil examination and remained loyal to the fallen Ming until his death.<sup>6</sup>

4. **Zha Jizuo** 查继佐 (*zi* Yihuang 伊璜; *hao* Yuzhai 与斋; 1601-76; *juren* 1633; Haining 海宁, Zhejiang). Zha Jizuo passed the 1633 provincial examination in Zhejiang as the Number One Graduate when Li Yuankuan supervised the examination as the provincial assistant surveillance commissioner. Zha and Li Mingrui once asked their private troupes to perform publicly at the same time at the same occasion in Yangzhou.<sup>7</sup> As mentioned above, Li Mingrui once sent an actress as a gift to Zha who then named her Yexie. Zha was a staunch and famous Ming loyalist in Zhejiang.<sup>8</sup>

5. **Jin Yingsheng** 靳应昇 (*zi* Bixing 璧星; *hao* Chabo 茶坡; 1605-63; *gongsheng*; Huai'an 淮安, Jiangsu). Five of his poems were included in *YZXYP*; one poem in *XJSH*.<sup>9</sup> Jin Yingsheng attended the palace examination in Shunzhi 13 (1656) as a *gongsheng*, but he had been viewed as a Ming loyalist because his poems were included in several collections of the Ming loyalist poetry.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For the recent studies on Wang Youding's life and literature, see Liu Yongqiang, "Wang Youding jiqi Sizhaotang ji," in *Zhongguo dianji yu wanhua luncong*, no. 2, ed. Zhongguo dianji yu wenhua bianjibu (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), pp. 156-71; Luo Zongyang, "Kai Qing chu sanwen fengqi zhi xian de Wang Youding," *Nanchang daxue xuebao* 33.4 (October 2002): 101-07. Luo argues that Wang Youding died in 1661.

<sup>7</sup> Shen Qi, *Zha Jizuo nianpu*, pp. 28, 32; Liu Zhenlin and Zhou Xiang, "Dongshan waiji," in *Zha Jizuo nianpu*, p. 116.

<sup>8</sup> In *Zha Jizuo nianpu*, Shen Qi provided the details about the life of Zha Jizuo as a Ming loyalist. For an English biography of him, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>9</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531; Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 819.

<sup>10</sup> Jin Yingsheng's attendance in the 1656 palace examination was provided by Deng Zhicheng, in Deng, *Qing shi jishi chu bian* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), pp. 540. For Jin's relations with other Ming loyalists, see Wang Yu, comp., *Jiangsu shi zheng* (Jiaoshan: Haixi an shizheng ge, 1821), 141:9a-10a. For his biography, see Wei Zhezhi et al., *Huaian fuzhi* (1748) (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe youxian gongsi, 1983), p. 2433. Zhang Qigan 张其淦 (b. 1859) praised Jin Yingsheng directly as a Ming loyalist. See Zhang Qigan, *Mingdai qian yimin shi yong* 明代千遗民诗咏 (Poems to Praise One Thousand Ming Loyalists), in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, vol. 66, pp. 642-43. Zhuo Erkan included one of Jin's poems in the collected poems by the

6. **Huang Wenxing** 黄文星 (*zi* Ziwei 子威; *hao* Cun'an 存庵; b. 1611; Nanchang).

According to Li Mingrui, Huang once advised He Tengjiao 何腾蛟 (1592-1649; *juren* 1621), the Governor-general of six provinces including Hubei and Hunan from January 1645 to 1649,<sup>11</sup> on how to defend against the Manchu attack, but his suggestions were not accepted. Subsequently, Huang returned disappointed to Nanchang, lived as a recluse with Li's family for a long time, and tutored Li's grandson. In his academic career, Huang focused more on public affairs and economics than on literature, as he witnessed the rebellion led by Zhang Xianzhong 张献忠 (1605-47) and the invasion of the Manchu forces.<sup>12</sup>

7. **Du Jun** 杜濬 (*zi* Yuhuang 于皇; *hao* Chacun 茶村; 1611-87; *gongsheng* 1638;

Huanggang 黄冈, Hubei). As mentioned above, he presented a poem to Yexie, the actresses presented by Li Mingrui to Zha Jizuo. Due to the rebellion led by Zhang Xianzhong, he was forced to seek refuge in Nanjing, lived there for roughly forty years, and then died in Yangzhou.<sup>13</sup> As I will demonstrate, his brother Du Jie 杜芥 had relations with Li Mingrui who had been roaming about in Yangzhou, Nanjing, and Hangzhou as we know. Thus, Du Jun definitely watched performances by Li Mingrui's troupe.

8. **Fang Wen** 方文 (*zi* Erzhi 尔止; 1612-69; *zhusheng*; Tongcheng 桐城, Anhui).

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Ming loyalists, which he compiled. See Zhuo, *Ming yimin shi* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), pp. 603-04.

<sup>11</sup> For He Tengjiao's biography, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 290-91.

<sup>12</sup> Li Mingrui, "Huang Cun'an shi wen xu 黄存庵诗文集" (A preface to Huang Cun'an's poetry and prose), in Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang wen zheng*, pp. 318-19. For his biography, see Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang xianzhi*, pp. 904-05. For the identity of Huang Wenxing as a Ming loyalist, see Zhu Xianzang, *Ming qian yimin shiyong san bian* (The Third Series of Poems to Praise One Thousand Ming Loyalists), in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, vol. 67, p. 376. For Zhang Xianzhong's biography, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>13</sup> For Du Jun's biography, see Deng Zhicheng, *Qing shi jishi chu bian*, vol. 1, pp. 184-85; Zhao Erxun et al., *Qing shi gao*, 501:13859; For his life in Nanjing and Yangzhou, see Fang Bao, "Du Chacun xiansheng mujie 杜茶村先生墓碣" (The memorial tablet to Master Du Chacun), in Fang Bao, *Fang Bao ji*, ed. Liu Jigao (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1983), pp. 400-01.

Fang Wen never served in any post during the Ming, and after the fall of the Ming he made a living by practicing medicine and divination.<sup>14</sup> In late October of 1661, Fang Wen traveled by boat from Nanjing to Nanchang, then to Qianzhou where he met Zhou Lingshu. Since he returned to Nanchang at the end of the year, we can deduce that he stayed there until the early spring of 1662.<sup>15</sup> On 2 November 1661, Fang Wen was invited by Li Mingrui to a feast and composed a poem, the last two lines of which read:

I heard your green eyebrows excel in singing,  
When will they play reed pipes?<sup>16</sup>

闻有翠眉工度曲，  
何时方一奏笙簧？

He certainly seemed to have been anticipating a performance by Li's troupe. Since he stayed in Nanchang until the spring of 1662, and since Shi Runzhang arrived at Nanchang in the fall of 1661 and watched the performance by Li's troupe as mentioned in Chapter Three, Fang Wen likely also watched its performance during his stay.

9. **Gui Zhuang** 归庄 (*zi* Xuangong 玄恭; 1613-73; Kunshan 昆山, Jiangsu). He was a famous Ming loyalist.<sup>17</sup> Four of his poems were included in *YZXYP*; one poem in *XJSH*.<sup>18</sup>

10. **Du Jie** (*hao* Canglue 苍略; 1617-93; *gongsheng*; Huanggang, Hubei). He was Du Jun's younger brother and had been living in Nanjing as Du Jun had since they came to seek

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<sup>14</sup> For Fang Wen's life, see *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, vol. 19, pp. 164-65; vol. 24, pp. 93-95; vol. 68, pp. 525-26; vol. 189, pp. 325-27.

<sup>15</sup> Chen Hongxu, "Xijiang You Cao xu 西江游草序" (Preface to the draft of the travel to Xijiang), in Fang Wen, *Xijiang you cao* (included in *Tushan ji*, vol. 6), 1a.

<sup>16</sup> See Fang Wen, "Chongjiu hou er ri tong Cheng Shiye yin Li Taixu xiansheng zhai tou 重九后二日同陈士业饮李太虚先生斋头" (On the eleventh day of the ninth lunar month, I drank with Chen Shiye in the studio of Master Li Taixu), in Fang, *Xijiang you cao* (included in *Tushan ji*, vol. 6), 22a.

<sup>17</sup> For the biography of Gui Zhuang as a Ming loyalist, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 427.

<sup>18</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531; Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 819.

refuge there due to the rebellion in the late Ming.<sup>19</sup> According to Sun Zhiwei, Du Jie once met Li Mingrui at the Ouyang Terrace (*Ou tai*), together with Wang Youding and Sun.<sup>20</sup>

11. **Song Jicheng** 宋继澄 (*zi* Chenglan 澄岚; *juren* 1627; Laiyang 莱阳, Shandong). Only one of his poems was included in *YZXYP*.<sup>21</sup> He refused to serve in any post after the fall of the Ming.<sup>22</sup>

12. **Sun Zhiwei** 孙枝蔚 (*zi* Baoren 豹人; 1620-87; Sanyuan 三原, Shanxi 陕西). Ten of his poems were included in *YZXYP*; one poem in *XJSH*.<sup>23</sup> After his campaign against the Shanxi rebellion failed, he escaped to Yangzhou and had been living there until his death. In 1679, he was forced to attend the examination of *boxue hongru* 博学鸿儒 (erudite scholasticus) and intentionally did not complete the examination.<sup>24</sup> Such an examination was given only once by the Manchu regime with an intention “to entice reclusive Chinese scholars into the officialdom.”<sup>25</sup> Refusing to attend it or intentionally failing means refusing to cooperate with the Manchus.

13. **Wang Ruqian** (*zi* Ranming; 1577-1655; Hangzhou). (See below)

14. **Zhang Suichen** (*hao* Qingzi; d. 1670; Hangzhou). (See below)

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<sup>19</sup> For Du Jie's biography, see *Qing shi gao*, 501:13859-60. More details were provided by Fang Bao, “Du Canglue xiansheng muzhiming 杜苍略先生墓志铭” (The epigraph to Master Du Canglue), in *Fang Bao ji*, p. 250-51.

<sup>20</sup> Sun Zhiwei, “Outai tong Wang Yuyi, Du Canglue he Li Taixu zongbo,” in Sun, *Gaitang ji*, 9:2b-3a.

<sup>21</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531.

<sup>22</sup> For Song Jicheng's biography, see Wang Pixu et al., *Laiyang xianzhi* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe youxian gongsi, 1968), pp. 1031, 1348-51.

<sup>23</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531; Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 819.

<sup>24</sup> For Sun Zhiwei's biography, see *Qing shi gao*, 484:13355. For a recent study on him, see Zhang Bing, “Qing chu Guanzhong yimin shiren Sun Zhiwei de jiaoyou yu chuanguo,” *Ningbo daxue xuebao* 13.1 (March 2000): 13-17, esp. 13-14.

<sup>25</sup> Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China*, p. 388.

15. **Feng Yuanchu** (*zi* Yunjiang; Hangzhou). (See below)

We know that the three mentioned above, together with Li Mingrui and Gu (*zi* Lindiao), formed the Society of Five Old Gentlemen of Mount Gu. Among them, Gu Lindiao's whereabouts and political standing are ambiguous, but sources do indicate that Zhang Suichen lived in seclusion practicing medicine in Hangzhou after the Ming collapse, and was definitely a Ming loyalist.<sup>26</sup> Both Wang Ruqian and Feng Yuanchu, according to Qian Qianyi, were Ming loyalists. In the epitaph to Wang Ruqian, Qian Qianyi wrote, "Ranming is definitely a virtuous man in the world, a gentleman of long life in the country, an aged hermit retired from the age of peace, and a loyalist who survived the disaster 然明盖世之吉人，邦之寿考，太平之遗老，劫后之种民."<sup>27</sup> In a letter to his friend, Qian Qianyi mentions the late life of Feng Yuanchu:

In Hangzhou I have an old friend of fifty years named Feng Yuanchu. [...] Now he is at the age of eighty-seven *sui*. He has closed his gate and lives in complete seclusion. [...] He cultivates orchids and washes bamboo [...] and is not inferior to the hermits of antiquity.<sup>28</sup>

不肖在杭有五十年老友曰冯鹄维……年八十有七矣。杜门屏居，……种兰洗竹，不愧古之逸民。

No evidence was found that directly indicates these three were spectators of Li Mingrui's troupe. But, as mentioned by Shi Runzhang who met Li Mingrui in Hangzhou in 1654, Li was accompanied by his troupe when he joined the Society of Five Old Gentlemen of Mount

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<sup>26</sup> For the biography of Zhang Suichen, see Gong Jiajun et al., *Hangzhou fuzhi* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1974), p. 2811; Deng Zhicheng, *Qing shi jishi chubian*, pp. 246-47.

<sup>27</sup> See Qian Qianyi, "Xin'an Wang Ranming hezang muzhiming 新安汪然明合葬墓志铭" (The epitaph to Wang Ranming of Xian'an, buried with his wife), in Qian, *Muzhai youxue ji*, p. 1155.

<sup>28</sup> See Qian Qianyi, "Yu Song Yushu 与宋玉叔" (A letter to Song Yushu)," in Qian, *Muzhai chidu* (Shanghai: Shangwu yin shu guan, 1936), 1:34a-b.

Gu.<sup>29</sup> According to Shi, Li Mingrui was so welcoming that he would ask his boy-singers to accompany any guest who visited him to drink, as I described in Part Four of Chapter Two. So, from the intersection of the sources, we can deduce that Wang Ruqian, Zhang Suichen, and Feng Yuanchu probably watched the performance by Li Mingrui's troupe.

#### 4.2. The Spectators Who Served Both the Ming and Qing.

16. **Li Kai** 李楷 (*zi* Shuze 叔则; *hao* Anweng 岸翁, Wutang 雾堂; *juren* 1624; Chaoyi 朝邑, Shanxi 陕西). Twelve of his poems were included in *YZXYP*.<sup>30</sup> From Shunzhi 2 (1645) to Shunzhi 4 (1647), Li Kai was the *zhixian* 知县 (district magistrate) of Baoying 宝应 County.<sup>31</sup> After he resigned from the post, he lived in Yangzhou for several years, where he collaborated with Li Mingrui in editing a book.<sup>32</sup>

17. **Li Yuanding** 李元鼎 (*zi* Meigong 梅公; 1595-1670+; *jinsshi* 1622; Jishui, Jiangxi). Four of his poems were included in *YZXYP*; two poems in *XJSH*.<sup>33</sup> Once the *guanglushi shaoqing* 光禄寺少卿 (vice minister in the Court of Imperial Entertainments) in the Ming period, he surrendered to Li Zicheng and then to the Manchus in 1644 Beijing. He had been the *bingbu you shilang* 兵部右侍郎 (right vice-minister of war) from 1645 to 1647

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<sup>29</sup> In the headnote to a poem presented to Li Mingrui, Shi Runzhang said, "[Li Mingrui was] forced to live at Xileng in Hangzhou due to the rebellion in Nanchang. He raised some excellent singers, and formed the Society of Fragrant Hill with other old gentlemen in the West Lake." See Shi, "Xihu zui hou chou Li zongbo," in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 3, p. 436.

<sup>30</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531.

<sup>31</sup> Dai Bangzhen et al., *Baoying xianzhi* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe youxian gongsi, 1970), p. 508.

<sup>32</sup> Yan Guangmin 颜光敏, ed., *Yan shi jiacang chidu xingshi kao* 颜氏家藏尺牍姓氏考, in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, vol. 10, p. 613; Qian Lin 钱林, ed., *Wenxian zheng cun lu* 文献征存录, in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, vol. 29, pp. 787-88.

<sup>33</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531; Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, pp. 818-19.

and again from 1651 to 1653, but was dismissed twice, once for his recommending a rebel to the governor of Shuntian 顺天 Prefecture, and the other for bribery.<sup>34</sup>

18. **Zhu Zhongmei** 朱中楣 (*zi* Yuanshan 远山; *hao* Yuanshan furen 远山夫人; b. 1621; Jishui, Jiangxi). Born in the Ming imperial clan, Zhu Zhongmei married Li Yuanding in 1639 and went north to Beijing with her husband in 1640. She composed some poems about Li Mingrui's private troupe and its performances, as cited in Chapter Three. She is the only female spectator whose poems about Li Mingrui's troupe and its performance are accessible to me. As a daughter of the Ming imperial clan and as wife of an official who served the Ming and then the Qing, she, on behalf of herself and her husband, composed poems from which we can find dark but ever-lasting nostalgia for the fallen Ming and Chinese culture which it represented, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Five and Six.

19. **Wu Weiye** (*zi* Jungong; *hao* Meicun; 1609-71; *jinshi* 1631; Taicang 太仓, Jiangsu). His relations with Li Mingrui were demonstrated in Chapter Two. I believe he composed some poems about the performances by Li Mingrui's troupe although they were lost.

20. **Xiong Wenju** 熊文举 (*zi* Gongyuan 公远; *hao* Xuetang 雪堂; 1660-69; *jinshi* 1631; Xinjian, Nanchang Prefecture). Sixty-eight of his poems were included in *YZXYP*.<sup>35</sup> Once the *libu langzhong* 吏部郎中 (director in the Ministry of Personnel) during the Chongzhen period, he surrendered to Li Zicheng and then to the Manchu conquerors in 1644 Beijing. In 1646 he resigned from the position of *libu you shilang* 吏部右侍郎 (right vice-minister of personnel), but in 1651 he was summoned to Beijing and appointed *libu zuo*

<sup>34</sup> *Qing shi lie zhuan*, in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, vol. 105, pp. 765-66; Deng Zhicheng, *Qing shi jishi chu bian*, pp. 861-62. For more details about Li Yuanding and his wife Zhu Zhongmei, see Chapter Five.

<sup>35</sup> Sun Dainqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531.



*shilang* 吏部左侍郎 (left vice-minister of personnel).<sup>36</sup>

21. **Zhou Lianggong** 周亮工 (*zi* Yuanliang 元亮; 1612-72; *jinshi* 1640; Kaifeng, Henan). In 1642 and 1643, Zhou, as the district magistrate of Wei County, Shandong, defended successfully against the Manchu army. In 1644, he escaped from the arrest by the rebels in Beijing and fled to Nanjing, where his family had lived for dozens of years. Zhou did not serve during the reign of Hongguang, but surrendered to the Manchus in 1645 when Nanjing fell. As mentioned above, he wrote a preface to Li Mingrui's *Sibu gao*.<sup>37</sup> No poem was found about Li Mingrui's troupe and its performances in Zhou's extant works, but Zhou would have inevitably watched performances by Li's troupe, since Li often visited Nanjing accompanied by his troupe.

22. **Cao Rong** 曹溶 (*zi* Jiangong 鉴躬; 1613-85; *jinshi* 1637; Jiaxing 嘉兴, Zhejiang). There is direct evidence that Cao was a spectator of Li's troupe, since Cao composed a *ci* poem specifically about the performance by the troupe.<sup>38</sup> Once a censor during the Chongzhen period, he surrendered to Li Zicheng and then to the Manchus in 1644 Beijing.<sup>39</sup>

23. **Zhu Hui** 朱徽 (*zi* Suichu 遂初, *Zimei* 子美; *Jinshi* 1631; Jinxian 进贤, Jiangxi). Forty-seven of his poems were included in *YZXYP*; two poems in *XJSH*.<sup>40</sup> Once the *xingke jishi* (supervising secretary in the Office of Scrutiny for Justice) in the Chongzhen period, he surrendered to the Manchus in 1644 and was promoted to the position of *du jishi* (chief

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<sup>36</sup> *Qing shi lie zhuan*, in *Qingdai zhuanji congan*, vol. 105, pp. 762-63.

<sup>37</sup> For Zhou Lianggong's biography, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 173-74. For the preface to Li Mingrui's collection, see Zhou Lianggong, "Nanchang xiansheng Sibu Gao xu," in *Laigutang ji*, pp. 584-89.

<sup>38</sup> Cited from Hu and Liu, *Kunju fazhan shi*, p. 335.

<sup>39</sup> For Cao Rong's biography, see Zhao Erxun et al., *Qing shi gao*, 484:13326-27; Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p. 740.

<sup>40</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531; Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, pp. 816-17.

supervising secretary). In 1645, he resigned from the post and went south to his hometown. In the year *renchen* (1652), he was appointed the *bingbei fushi* 兵备副使 (vice commissioner of the Military Defense Circuit) in Guyuan 固原, Ningxia, a post he resigned later.<sup>41</sup>

24. **Ji Zongmeng** 嵇宗孟 (*zi* Shuzi 叔子; *juren* 1636; Huai'an, Jiangsu). As mentioned in Chapter Two, Ji was the district magistrate of Yuyao 余姚 and then prefecture magistrate of Hangzhou, where Li Mingrui had lived for several years. Ji Zongmeng composed a rhapsody about Li Mingrui's Garden of Elysium destroyed during the Nanchang rebellion in 1648.<sup>42</sup> Since he was close to Li Mingrui, we can be certain that Ji watched performances by Li's troupe.

25. **Zhao Kaixin** 赵开心 (*zi* Lingbo 灵伯; *hao* Dongmen 洞门; d. 1664; *jinshi* 1634; Changsha 长沙, Hunan). According to Wang Zhuo 王晔 (b. 1636), Li Mingrui once showed Ji Zongmeng's rhapsody to Zhao Kaixin and Li Kai.<sup>43</sup> Zhao Kaixin was dismissed from the position of the *zuo qian du yushi* 左佥都御史 (left assistant censor-in-chief) in 1646, summoned to Beijing to serve in the former post in 1651, and then dismissed once more in 1652.<sup>44</sup> From one of Zhu Zhongmei's poems presented to Zhao Kaixin's wife, Zhao and his wife left Beijing in the late spring of 1652 to Yangzhou,<sup>45</sup> where Zhao had been staying and

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<sup>41</sup> For Zhu Hui's brief biography, see Tao Cheng, *Jiangxi tongzhi*, 70:33b.

<sup>42</sup> For more details of Ji Zongmeng's life, see Wu Kuntian et al., *Chongxiu Andong xianzhi* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1975), p. 190; Qi Zhaonan et al., *Wenzhou fuzhi* (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe, 1983), pp. 880.

<sup>43</sup> Wang Zhuo, *Jin shi shuo*, in *Qingdai zhuanji congan*, vol. 18, p. 49.

<sup>44</sup> For Zhao Kaixin's biography, see *Qing shi gao*, 244:9605-07; more details about the dates were provided in *Han ming chen zhuan* 汉名臣传 (Biographies of the Famous Chinese Officials), in *Qingdai zhuanji congan*, vol. 38, pp. 72-80.

<sup>45</sup> Zhu Zhongmei, "Ji chun song zongxian Zhao Dongmen furen gui Guangling ershou 季春送总宪赵洞门夫人归广陵二首" (In the late spring, I saw off the wife of Zhao Dongmen, the left censor-in-chief, back

had ample opportunities to watch performances by Li Mingrui's troupe until Zhao was summoned to Beijing in the following spring.

#### 4.3. Spectators Who Received Degrees and/or Held Offices during the Qing

26. **Shi Runzhang** 施闰章 (*zi* Shangbai 尚白; *hao* Yushan 愚山, Juzhai 矩斋; 1618-83; *jinshi* 1649; Xuancheng 宣城, Anhui). I mentioned details about Shi Runzhang's descriptions of Li Mingrui's troupe and its performance in Chapter Three. The record of his spectatorship matched the performances in Hangzhou, 1654, and in Nanchang, 1661.

27. **Zhou Lingshu** 周令树 (*zi* Jibai 计百; *jinshi* 1655; Weihui 卫辉, Henan). Four of his poems were included in *YZXYP*; one poem was included in *XJSH*.<sup>46</sup> I expanded on his adoration for Yanbo in Chapter Three.

28. **Xiong Yixiao** 熊一潇 (*zi* Hanruo 汉若; *hao* Weihuai 蔚怀; 1638-1706; *jinshi* 1664; Nanchang). Eight of his poems were included in *YZXYP*. Xiong was the protégé of Huang Wenxing, and studied in the Garden of Elysium together with Li Mingrui's grandson.

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to Guangling, and I composed two poems), in Li Yuanding, *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 91. In the second poem, Zhu mentioned that both Zhao and his wife went south to Yangzhou:

You are admired holding the tray level with your eyebrows,  
Now, you are about to go home, hands by hands.

齐眉人共羨，  
携手暫同歸。

These two lines indicate that Zhao Kaixin, together with his wife, went to Yangzhou at this time. The two poems was arranged after the one composed on the twelfth day of the eighth lunar month of the year *renchen* (14 September 1652) and before the one composed on the late spring of the year *guisi* (1653). I think such an arrangement is wrong because Zhao was dismissed in the second lunar month of Shunzhi 9 (1652) and summoned to Beijing in the second lunar month of Shunzhi 10 (1653). See *Han ming chen zhuan*, in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, vol. 38, pp. 72-80.

<sup>46</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531; Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, vol. 2, pp. 818-19.

He was once the minister of works under the Manchus.<sup>47</sup>

29. **Xiong Feiwei** 熊飞渭 (*zi* Yubin 渔滨; b. 1628; *jinshi* 1664; Nanchang).

According to Li Mingrui, Xiong Feiwei studied under the supervision of Huang Wenxing in the Garden of Elysium, together with Xiong Yixiao and Li's grandson.<sup>48</sup>

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Some spectators are mentioned in *YZXYP*, but there exists no other traceable information about these individuals to compile their identities in this thesis. Since they do appear on record as nonetheless present, I will list them here briefly: **Luo** 罗 (*hao* Yuezhai 约斋), **Cheng** 程 (*zi* Mingdong 鸣东), **Cheng** 程 (*zi* Loudong 娄东), **Zhao Yi** 赵嶷 (*zi* Guozi 国子) whose poems about the performances are also included in *YZXYP*.<sup>49</sup> Zhao Yi was quite possibly a Ming loyalist, since, as mentioned in Chapter Two, he was inspired enough by Li Mingrui's records about his special summons by Chongzhen, to compose a long poem in the memory of the Emperor. **Shen** 沈 (*zi* Zhonglian 仲连) listed in *YZXYP* was a military officer in Zhejiang, and once had close relations with Cao Rong.<sup>50</sup> Since Li Mingrui was so

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<sup>47</sup> For Xiong Yixiao's biography, see Jiang Shiquan, "Gongbu shangshu Xiong gong Weihuai xiangsheng mubiao 工部尚书熊公蔚怀先生墓表" (The epitaph to Mr. Xiong Weihuai, the ex-minister of works), in Jiang, *Zhongyutang ji jiaojian*, eds. Shao Haiqing and Li Mengsheng (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), pp. 2249-52.

<sup>48</sup> Li Mingrui, "*Xiong Yubin ji xu* 熊渔滨集序" (The preface to the *Collected works of Xiong Yubin*), in Wei Yuankuang, ed., *Nanchang wen zheng*, pp. 319-20.

<sup>49</sup> Sun Dianqi, *Fanshu ouji*, p. 531.

<sup>50</sup> In a poem about the feast hosted by Shen Zhonglian, Cao Rong wrote:

The military leader can drink with abandon,  
I, an old man, am feeble and dull.

豪饮推渠帅，  
衰退愧老夫。

See Cao Rong, "Shen Zhonglian zhao yin Shouzhong Tang 沈仲连招饮守中堂" (Shen Zhonglian invited me to

hospitable as I described in the beginning of this chapter, it would make sense that over thirty-four scholars and officials mentioned above would have watched the performances by his private troupe.

I will focus more on the first two groups—those staunchly loyal to the Ming, and those who served in both Ming and Qing dynasties—partially because of the nature of the sources, but more importantly because these groups clearly represent the political transition and cultural integration in the period covered in the thesis. Also, since the third group began to enjoy the benefits of the transition and integration, their attitudes towards the Manchu regime and the fallen Ming dynasty were less emotionally charged. The spectators' ideas about these performances, which I will reveal in the following chapters, will help to vividly illustrate the political transition and cultural integration of this period.

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drink in his Shouzhong Hall), poem 4, in Cao, *Jingtang shiji* (Baizhou: 1725), 22:9a. For more poems about the relations between Cao and Shen, see Cao, “Yu zhao Zhonglian gong ji, yi yu buguo, zuo ci ji zhi 欲招仲连共集，以雨不果，作此寄之” (I planned to invite Zhonglian to meet, but failed because of the rain. So I am writing the poems to send him), in *Jingtang shiji*, 22:7b; Cao, “Zhonglian yao tong Shihu fanzhou 仲连邀同石湖泛舟” ([Shen] Zhonglian invited me to sail in the Stone Lake), *Jingtang shiji*, 28:5a-b.

## CHAPTER V

### WHAT DID SPECTATORS DRAW FROM THE PERFORMANCES?

Both the singing and women of Li's private troupe were extremely beautiful and Li declared clearly that the aim of raising the troupe was to produce sensual pleasure. On a night of bright moonlight and cool breezes, Li asked his actresses to perform and to accompany him in drinking. He composed four poems to describe his enjoyment of the occasion, three of which read:

Just as wind and moon find it hard to be alone,  
Can we dispense with songs and dances on a pleasant night?  
Facing the moon and encountering flowers, wine is often poured,  
Birdsong amidst the flowers urges lifting of the pot.

只因风月两难孤，  
歌舞良宵罢得无？  
对月逢花频酌酒，  
花间鸟语劝提壶。

In Paradise there is another West Lake,  
Once at West Lake, did I recognize this or not?  
Excepting the Penglai Isle and Garden of Elysium,  
It is hard to find such fairylands in the world of men.

洞天别有一西湖，  
曾在西湖认得无？  
除却蓬莱并阆苑，  
人间难得此方壶。

In the moonlight, pearly dew covers flowers' faces,  
Under crabapple trees, they lean against banisters.  
Only this place remains suitable for strings and pipes,  
"Rainbow Skirt" issues from the [Palace of] Enveloping Cold.<sup>1</sup>

月色花容玉露溥，

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<sup>1</sup> Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, pp. 815-16. In the second poem, the former West Lake refers to the one in Nanchang City while the latter refers to the one in Hangzhou. We know that Li Mingrui once lived in Hangzhou. For West Lake in Nanchang in Li Mingrui's time, see *Figure 1*.

海棠树下倚阑干。  
惟余此地宜弦管，  
一曲霓裳动广寒。

Women, singing, dancing, scenery, flowers, and wine—all elements necessary to a scholar-official's enjoyment—are mentioned in these poems. Most of the spectators mentioned in the previous chapter lavished praise on the acting ability and beauty of the actresses, at times in frivolous or lecherous tones.<sup>2</sup> Li Yuankuan suggested that one should seize every opportunity to enjoy women and song; thus would he be released from the dilemmas caused by life under the Manchus.<sup>3</sup> Such observations support opinions mentioned in Chapter One about the sensual functions of a private troupe.

However, some spectators drew much more from the performances. In what follows, I will apply Chartier's audience-centered method of "historical reading" to analyze some poems written by the spectators about performances. The spectators' interpretations will be revealed by discussing their responses to performance elements of music and costume, to stories that plays tell, and to texts or individual lines of plays in the historical context of the

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<sup>2</sup> Zhu Zhongmei praised the performance techniques of the eight actresses. See Zhu, "Dingyou chu chun, jia zongbo Taixu xie furen xie xiao ji guo wo ...," in Li Yuanding, *Shiyuan quanji*, pp. 109-10; Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, pp. 1169. Sun Zhiwei, Gui Zhuang, Jin Yingsheng, Zhou Lingshu, and Wang Youding praised the beauties of the actresses. See Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, pp. 819-20, 814; Wang Dingyou, *Sizhaotang shiji*, 4:4a.

<sup>3</sup> In one poem about watching a performance, Li Yuankuan wrote:

What lingers in my heart will be released temporarily with sacrificial meeting,  
Fragrances spread when the eight beauties are talking.  
The atmosphere of today's meeting is just excellent,  
I am worrying about tomorrow to rain unbrokenly.

萦怀底事聊凭楔，  
作语生香仅八袞。  
座上风光今正好，  
明朝又怕雨霖霖。

See Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 817. Li refused the invitation from Emperor Shunzhi who promised to offer him a post. See Tao Cheng, *Jiangxi tongzhi*, 70:33b; Wei Yuankuang, *Nanchang xianzhi*, pp. 903-04.

Ming-Qing transition.

### 5.1. What Did Ming Loyalists Draw from the Performances?

As mentioned above, *Mudan ting* and *Moling chun* were the most important plays in the repertoire of Li's troupe. When the two plays were performed, Li Mingrui invited his friends and associates to watch, and the spectators wrote poems to record the performances and gatherings.<sup>4</sup> Among the spectators, Li Yuankuan, Chen Hongxu, and Li Yuanding had different ideas about the plays and performances of them. Like other hermits whose political aspirations were shattered but whose loyalties to the fallen Ming remained, Li Yuankuan was much concerned with enjoying *Mudan ting*, an erotic play, performed by sexually desirable actresses:

Unable to simultaneously exhaust Orchid Pavilion's scenic sights,  
We get drunk, float cups, and then roll the curtains up.  
The rouged and powdered surround us, redolent with flowers' scent,  
As *Peony Pavilion* is sung resoundingly, rhyme tallies are drawn.<sup>5</sup>

兰亭胜迹未能兼，  
尽醉流觞再卷帘。  
红粉围来花气转，  
牡丹唱彻韵筹添。

Li Yuanding, on the other hand, was more attuned to Du Liniang's plight as a wandering ghost, which he associated with his own situation after the fall of the Ming:

Lovers of ancient and modern times all praise Yuming,  
From lingering dreams and deep distress,  
I sigh at the windblown thistle's [rootlessness].<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 816.

<sup>5</sup> Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 817. "Orchid Pavilion," the site of revels for the calligrapher-poet Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (303-361, or 321-379) and his friends, here refers to Li Mingrui's Canglang Pavilion.

<sup>6</sup> Li Yuanding, "Mu chun xie Xiong Xuetao shaozhai, Li Bo'an xuexian yan ji Taixu zongbo Canglang Ting, guan nüji yan *Mudan Ting*... 暮春偕熊雪堂少宰、黎博庵学宪宴集太虚宗伯沧浪亭，观女



今古钟情推玉茗，  
梦回愁绝叹飞蓬。

In a poem especially written about the gatherings and performances, Chen Hongxu does not refer to the two plays, but he made an association between performances he had watched and his nostalgia for the fallen Ming:

Songs and pipes in the clouds have transformed into dust,  
Tears have been shed in the desert smoke for fifteen years.  
Once again, I heard the Zhenyuan court songs,  
And was shocked by seeing the Jade Hall person as I was drinking.<sup>7</sup>

云间歌管已成尘，  
泪洒荒烟十五春。  
又听贞元供奉曲，  
樽前惊见玉堂人。

The second line indicates that this poem was composed in Shunzhi 15 (1658). The third line originates from one poem by Liu Yuxi, which describes the decline of the Tang Dynasty caused further by the Zhu Ci Rebellion 朱泚之乱 (783-84).<sup>8</sup> The Jade Hall refers to the

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伎演牡丹剧，欢聚深宵，以门禁为严，未得入城，趋卧小舟，晓起，步雪老前韵，得诗四首” (In the late spring, I attended the feast gathering in the Canglang Pavilion of Taixu, the ex-minister of rites, together with Xiong Xuetang, the ex-vice minister of personnel, and Li Bo'an, the ex-education commissioner. We watched the performance of *Mudan ting* by the actresses, and the happy gathering did not end until midnight. Due to the strict regulations of the city gates, I could not enter into the city and had to sleep in a small boat. In the dawn, I got up and composed four poems with the rhymes that Xuetang had used once), in Li Yuanding, *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 54; Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, p. 1168; Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 819. “Yumingtang 玉茗堂” (White Camelia Hall) was Tang Xianzu's studio name.

<sup>7</sup> Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 818.

<sup>8</sup> Liu Yuxi, “Ting jiu gong zhong yueren Mu shi change 听旧宫中乐人穆氏唱歌” (Listen to Lady Mu, once a musician in the court, singing), in Liu Yuxi, *Liu Yuxi ji*, p. 333. In the poem, Liu wrote:

Do not sing any Zhenyuan court song,  
Just a few officials have survived that time.

休唱贞元供奉曲，  
当时朝士已无多。

For the rebellion led by Zhu Ci (742-84), see Liu Xu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 200:5385-91; Ouyang and Song, *Xin Tang*

Hanlin Academy, and “the Jade Hall person” means the Hanlin academician, here referring to Li Mingrui. In his poem, Chen Hongxu views the performances as symbols, to which he lends some political and historical meanings. So, the questions arise: to what extent is Chen Hongxu’s association reasonable? And what does it mean to those who try to explore his contemporaries’ ideas about performances during this transitional period?

Southern Drama, including Kun opera, reached a peak of popularity in the late Ming and Early Qing, especially in Nanjing, Yangzhou, and Hangzhou,<sup>9</sup> and *Mudan ting* was one of the most popular plays onstage after it left Tang Xianzu’s hand.<sup>10</sup> During this period of transition, scholars who wrote poems in response to dramatic performances read political, historical, and cultural meanings into plays more than dramatic meanings, irrespective of their political loyalties. For them, the brilliance of plays onstage symbolized the flourishing of the Jiangnan region and the Ming, but they also symbolized one of the causes of the collapse of the Ming, whose rulers had indulged themselves in enjoying plays too much to attend to government affairs. Kun opera, the style of Southern drama most favored by the literati, came to symbolize Chinese cultural superiority for some Ming loyalists in the early years of Manchu rule.

#### 5.1.1. Music: Chinese and Barbarian

In a series of eighteen short tunes (*qu* 曲), Wu Weiye recalled the prosperity of the Jiangnan region in the late Ming, cataloguing the excellence of gardens, food, pets,

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*shu*, 225:6441-50.

<sup>9</sup> For the prosperity of the Southern Drama including Kun opera in this period, see Lu Eting, *Kunju yanchu shi gao*, pp. 89-257; Hu Ji and Liu Zhizhong, *Kunju fazhan shi*, pp. 135-509.

<sup>10</sup> For the popularity and performance of *Mudan ting* in this period, see Swatek, *Peony Pavilion Onstage*, pp. 2-7. 101-57.

marketplaces, fruits, temples, gambling houses, and especially music, plays, and women.

Commenting on these tunes, Jin Rongfan wrote:

The rise and fall of the Ming Dynasty were both witnessed in the Jiangnan region, an ancient land of fame and culture, prosperity and good government. When recalling the advantages of this region, [Wu] Meicun might have mentioned things important and profound, but in those eighteen tunes, he only touched on implements for games, the prosperity of marketplaces, and the amusements of women and songs—all so-called “games for boys and girls.” Why? After crossing the Yangzi River [in 1644], those both high and low [in the Ming regime] indulged in frivolities, “singing clearly in a leaking boat and drinking lustily in a burning house,” in the words of Chen Wozi. Meicun witnessed this himself and faithfully recorded it as a substitute for “feelings no words can express.” All those eighteen tunes are history through poems. [...] Some consider them to be account books about women and wine, but I fear that they have misunderstood the author’s painstaking efforts.<sup>11</sup>

有明兴亡，俱在江南，固声名文物之地，财赋政事之区也。梅村追言其好，宜举远者大者，而十八首中止及嬉戏之具、市肆之盛、声色之娱，皆所谓足供儿女之戏者，何欤？盖南渡之时，上下嬉游，陈卧子谓其“清歌漏舟之中，痛饮焚屋之内”，梅村亲见其事，故直笔书之，以代长言咏叹。十八首皆诗史也，……或认作烟花账簿，恐没作者苦心矣。

Some other scholars would have connected the performances to the prosperity and collapse of the Ming in the same way as did Wu Weiye. For example, among loyalist spectators, Du Jun composed a long poem in which he associated the plays and songs of Nanjing with the transition from Ming to Qing and illustrated the history of the Ming from the time of Zhang Juzheng 张居正 (1525-73) to the end of the Southern Ming in 1645. At the end of the poem, he sorrowfully wrote:

Drumbeats scald like hot water, stab like horns,  
Feelings I should feel are stopped up in my heart.  
[...]  
Adrift in Jiangnan for most of my life,  
I once heard the sounds of yesterday’s coda,

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<sup>11</sup> For the eighteen tunes, see Wu Weiye, *Wu Meicun quanji*, 533-38, 1151. For the commentary of Jin Rongfan, see *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 538. Lu Eting cites these tunes and Jin’s commentary to illustrate scholar-officials’ indulgence in plays. See Lu Eting, *Kunju yanchu shi gao*, p. 116. “Meicun” is Wu Weiye’s hao, and “Wozi” is Chen Zilong’s (1608-47) zi.

And now hear the opening notes of today's regime.<sup>12</sup>

探汤挝鼓蒺藜刺，  
应有心肝碍胸次。

.....

此生流落江南久，  
曾听当时煞尾声，  
又听今朝第一声。

Sun Zhiwei composed a poem in a similar elegiac way after he watched the performance by Li's troupe:

Each time I heard the Water Tune I felt sad,  
How could I know that the immortal wanted to detain his guest?  
Without the jade girls to serve the wine,  
What chances have I to see ancient Yangzhou?<sup>13</sup>

曾闻水调每关愁，  
岂意神仙爱客留。  
不是行觞仍玉女，  
何缘得见古扬州？

The first three lines contain references to tunes created by Emperor Yang (560-618) of the Sui Dynasty, including a "Water Tune" composed on a visit to Yangzhou. In the Ming and Qing periods, "*shui diao* 水调" refers to "*shui mo diao* 水磨调" (water-polished music), that is, the Kun musical style.<sup>14</sup> With this allusion to Emperor Yang's visits to Yangzhou in the

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<sup>12</sup> Du Jun, "Zai wen dengchuan guchui ge 再闻灯船鼓吹歌" (Song upon hearing drums and pipes on the lamplit boats once more), in Du Jun, *Dun Chacun yi gao* (MS in Puban Collection, Asian Library, UBC) (n.p., n.d.)

<sup>13</sup> Sun Zhiwei, "Taixu zongbo yuan zhong guan nüyue 太虚宗伯园中观女乐" (Watching the actresses in the garden of Taixu, the ex-minister of rites), in Sun, *Gaitang ji*, 9:3a. In the second and third lines, "The immortal detains guest" and "Jade girls serve wine" are tunes created by Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty, according to the note to this poem. Wang Zhuo (the 12<sup>th</sup> century) suggests that originally and essentially "Water Tune" sounds sorrowful. See Wang Zhuo, *Biji man zhi*, in *Zhongguo gudian xiqu lunzhu jicheng* (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 1959; the 4<sup>th</sup> print, 1982), pp. 136-37.

<sup>14</sup> Dolby, *A History of Chinese Drama*, p. 92. In a long poem, Wu Weiye described the popularity of the Kun style, which he called "water tune," in the late Ming and early Qing:

For more than one century the music in the southern style has been played,

Sui Dyansty, Sun Zhiwei refers to a dramatic performance that reminded him of the prosperity of Yangzhou in the Ming period.

To other Ming loyalists, simply recalling the prosperity of cities such as Nanjing and Yangzhou meant improperly forgetting the collapse of the Ming. Fang Wen, a friend of both Sun Zhiwei and Li Mingrui, lamented the nonchalance of some young scholars who continued to indulge in playgoing even after the Manchu cavalry had taken over the Jiangnan region.<sup>15</sup> In a poem composed in Yangzhou in 1648, he rebukes those who fondly speak of the urbanity of the former dynasty with no thought for the holocaust that ended it:

Several thousands of willows along the Sui Dyke,  
Fifteen disastrous fires in the City of Yangzhou.  
Pavilions and terraces of the former dynasty all perished,  
Fragrant powder of the beauties has not completely vanished.  
[...]

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Songs of Bamboo Twigs and Water Tune have been sung in the Wu dialect.  
Wei Lingfu from my province composed the music,  
Liang Bolong, a hermit, wrote words to the melody.

百余年来操南风，  
竹枝水调讴吴侬。  
里人度曲魏良辅，  
高士填词梁伯龙。

See Wu, "Pipa xing 琵琶行" (Ballad of *pipa*-lute), in Wu, *Meicun shiji jianzhu*, 4:14b; *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 56. Wei Liangfu (b. 1501; native of Nanchang, but lived in Taicang, Wu Weiye's hometown) is the founder of the Kun style, in which Liang Chenyu 梁辰鱼 (*zi* Bolong, 1519-91; Kunshan, Jiangsu) composed the *chuanqi* drama *Huansha ji* 浣纱记 (Washing Silk) for the first time. For the contributions of Wei Liangfu and Liang Chenyu to the Kun style, see Dolby, *A History of Chinese Drama*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>15</sup> In 1645, Fang Wen was invited to watch the performance by the private troupe of his friend Liu Xuanjiu, and composed a poem in which the last two lines read:

Some guests are confused as if dreaming,  
They do not know the sorrowful rhapsody by Zishan.

有客迷离疑是梦，  
不知曾赋子山哀。

See Fang Wen, "Liu Xuanjiu zhaoji Weiyuan guan jiaji 刘旋九招集韦园观家伎" (Liu Xuanjiu held a meeting in the Wei Garden, with watching the performance of his private troupe), in Fang, *Tushan ji*, 6:22a. Yu Xin (*zi* Zishan; 513-81) composed the Rhapsody "the Lament for the south." For more about this allusion, see Part Two of Chapter Two.

I am shocked by young men after the massacre,  
who still urbanely talk about the former dynasty.<sup>16</sup>

隋堤杨柳几千条，  
劫火曾经十五烧。  
故国楼台俱泯灭，  
美人香粉未全销。

.....

却讶群儿屠戮后，  
风流犹自说前朝。

“Massacre” here refers to the bloodbath committed by the Manchus at Yangzhou, which reportedly lasted for ten days.<sup>17</sup> For his part, Fang Wen insisted that,

Until the seas dry up and rocks decay,  
This hatred will not transform into cold smoke.<sup>18</sup>

纵使海枯还石烂，  
不教此恨化寒烟。

Fang Wen thought that Chinese singers should not sing barbarian music but only Chinese songs. Such sentiments are expressed in two poems he wrote in 1657 to present to actresses who were natives of Zhejiang now enslaved by the Plain Red Banner. I translate one of them here:

Only the *Jie* drum can be heard at the Northern Frontier,  
How can they know the Southern songs as soft as the song of an oriole?  
Cai Yan was unwilling to end her days in the desert,  
Now sing the *Song of Weicheng* as He Kan did.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Fang Wen, “Guangling huaigu 广陵怀古” (Cherish the past in Guangling), in Fang, *Tushan ji*, 7:12b.

<sup>17</sup> For the bloodbath committed by the Manchu army at Yangzhou, see Wang Xiuchu, *Yangzhou shi ri*, in *Yangzhou congkan* (Yangzhou: 1936). For the recent studies about it, see Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, pp. 556-69, 581, 588, 818, 844; Mote and Twitchett, *Cambridge History*, pp. 656-8; Willard J. Peterson, ed., *The Cambridge History of China, volume 9, Part I: the Ch’ing Empire to 1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 86-87. Lynn A. Struve provided a detailed description about the massacre in his *Voices from the Ming-Qing Cataclysm: China in Tigers’ Jaws* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 28-48.

<sup>18</sup> Fang Wen, “San yue shijiu ri zuo 三月十九日作” (Composed on the nineteenth day of the third lunar month), in Fang, *Tushan ji*, 7:9b.

塞北惟闻羯鼓声，  
那知南曲细如莺？  
不甘蔡琰终沙漠，  
且作何戡唱渭城。

Obviously, Fang Wen hopes the singers would play Ming music instead of Manchu music. In a poem written the following year, Fang exhorted a scholar named Xu to sing only proper Chinese tunes, not foreign ones:

The music with short flute is the most affectionate,  
especially when the moon over the stream is bright.  
Just sing *Willow Branch* and *Plum Blossoms*,  
Don't play the notes of *Mahā* and *Tūla*.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Fang Wen, "Wang Weilai xi sang zeng gezhe 王渭来席上赠歌者" (Poems presented to the singers in the feast held by Wang Juanlai), poem 1, in Fang, *Bei you cao* 北游草 (Draft of poems on traveling north, included in *Tushan ji*, vol. 5), 35b. In the second poem, Fang mentioned the identity of the singers:

First the Bordered Red Banner and now the Plain Red  
When to return to Central Wu after being ransomed?

旗是厢红复正红，  
赎身何日返吴中？

Central Wu was the heartland of Kun Opera.

Cai Yan (b. ca. 177), a woman poet once seized by the Hun Xiongnu army and married to a Hun king, was redeemed from the Mongolian tribe with the aid of Cao Cao 曹操 (155-220). For the biography of Cai Yan, see Fan Ye, *Hou Han shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 84:2800-03. For a study in English about Cai Yan's life and her poems, see Hans H. Frankel, "Cai Yan and the poems attributed to her," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 5.1-2 (July 1983): 133-56.

The last line of the cited quatrain comes from a poem presented by Liu Yuxi to He Kan, a famous singer in the Tang Dynasty. According to Liu Yuxi, he came back to the capital Chang'an (today's Xi'an) and was moved by the songs popular twenty years before when he was dismissed. He Kan, the only performer Liu met in Chang'an after the Zhu Ci Rebellion, sang the *Song of Weicheng* at Liu's request. See Liu Yuxi, "Yu gezhe He Kan 与歌者何戡" (Present to the singer He Kan), in *Liu Yuxi ji*, p. 334. The story also can be found in Li Fang et al., *Taiping guangji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), p. 1551.

<sup>20</sup> Fang Wen, "Zeng Xu sheng 赠徐生" (Present to Master Xu), in Fang, *Xu Hang you cao* (included in *Tushan ji*, vol. 5), 26a. The note to this poem says, "Master [Xu] excels in music and rhythm 生妙于音律." The bamboo piccolo is the most important instrument to accompany in the Kun style performance.

Here "Willow Branch" means "*Zhe yang liu* 折杨柳" (the Song of breaking the willow branches), and "Plum Blossoms" means "*Meihua luo* 梅花落" (the Song of falling plum blossoms), both of which were created in the Liang period (502-57) and popular in the Chen period (557-89) of the Southern Dynasties. See Wang Jide, *Qu lü*, in *Zhongguo gudian xiqu lunzhu jicheng* (Beijing: Zhongguo xiqu chubanshe, 1982), p. 57. "Willow Branch" and "Plum Blossoms" are tunes used in Kun Opera.

*Mahā* and *Tūla*, of Buddhist origin, entered China from Turkestan in the Western Han Dynasty. They were first introduced by Zhang Qian 张骞 (d. 114 BC) and revised by Li Yannian 李延年 (d. ca. 90 BC), and

短笛横吹最有情，  
况于溪上月华明。  
祗宜杨柳梅花曲，  
莫作摩诃兜勒声。

### 5.1.2. Costumes: the Ming style and the Manchu Style

Not only the music of the Kun style, but also its costumes awakened nostalgia for the fallen dynasty.

In 1370, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (re. 1368-99), the founder of the Ming Dynasty, decreed that the civil and military official costumes follow the Tang style since his dynasty, after the Barbarian Yuan Dynasty, would restore the orthodox Chinese systems invented and developed in the Zhou, Han, Tang, Song Dynasties.<sup>21</sup> The Ming style costumes were and are viewed as representative of Han-Chinese culture.

Chinese traditional culture defines costume symbolism very consciously and clearly. Not only social classes and political structures but also ethnic origins were identified and differentiated with costumes. Changes in costumes always meant indicated deviations of psychological, philosophical, ethnic, and cultural identities.<sup>22</sup> That is the reason why the Han-Chinese males resisted so seriously the orders of shaving their heads in the Manchu style and adopting Manchu dress in the Early Qing. As Susan Mann claims, "Self-conscious awareness of ethnic differences, grounded in dress and custom, continued to separate Manchus from

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then integrated into military music. See Fan Ye, *Hou Han shu*, 47:1578; Fang Xuanling, *Jin shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 23:715-16.

<sup>21</sup> Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, 67:1633-34.

<sup>22</sup> John E. Vollmer, "Costume as symbol in traditional China," *Arts of Asia* 8.5 (September-October 1978): 42. Hua Mei provides reveals much about the relations of Chinese costumes to traditional Chinese philosophy and political notions. See Hua Mei, *Fushi yu Zhongguo wenhua* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2001), pp. 31-146.



Han Chinese” throughout the early Qing period.<sup>23</sup>

According to Lu Eting, the design of the theatrical costumes in the Ming period basically followed the patterns of contemporary dress and adornments.<sup>24</sup> (See *Figure 2*) Thus, it is easy to understand why some Ming loyalists connected costumes onstage with the fallen Ming. Fang Wen and Li Yuankuan did so. In 1652, for example, Fang composed two poems after watching a performance in a government office, one of which reads:

I have not seen robes and tablets for a long time,  
The actors still emulate the Han officials.<sup>25</sup>

久不见袍笏，  
优伶尚汉官。

The ceremonial tablets (*hu* 笏) were used at court audiences in the Ming Dynasty, but abolished in the Qing.<sup>26</sup> “Han officials” allude to *Han guan yi* 汉官仪 (Protocols of the Han officials) of Ying Shao 应劭 (fl. 189-94), a work concerning forms and etiquette in affairs of state and the regulation of official costumes in the Han Dynasty; here it refers to Ming etiquette. The second line of Fang’s poem means that performers who play the roles of officials in Ming-style regalia retain the Ming (i.e., Chinese) protocols.

In a poem about performances by Li Mingrui’s private troupe, Li Yuankuan echoed

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<sup>23</sup> Willard J. Peterson, ed., *Cambridge History*, p. 439.

<sup>24</sup> Lu Eting, *Kunju yanchu shi gao*, pp. 67-69. Wang Anqi describes the theatrical costumes in performances of chuanqi plays in the Ming period, citing mainly notes about costumes in the librettos, but she fails in paying much attention to the similarities of the costumes to the real dresses during this period. See Wang Anqi, *Mingdai chuanqi zhi juchang jiqi yishu* (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1986), pp. 256-71.

<sup>25</sup> Fang Wen, “Qingming Ri yin Dou jibu shu zhong guan ju yougan 清明日饮窦计部署中观剧有感” (In the Festival of Pure Brightness, I drank in the office of Censor Dou, and had some feelings after watching the performance), in Fang, *Tushan ji*, 5:14b.

<sup>26</sup> For the regulations and usages of the tablets as official and ceremonial dresses in the Ming Dynasty, see Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, 53:1347, 1349-50; 54:1368, 1376-77, 1379; 66:1617, 1630; 67:1634-36, 1641, 1645, 1648, 1654. No regulation or usage of the tablet was found in the historiographies about the Qing Dynasty.

Fang's sentiments when he wrote that "the gauze hat onstage defies us 俳场纱帽傲吾曹."<sup>27</sup>

The meaning of "gauze hat" in this context is a loaded one; since this form of casual headwear was worn by Ming officials either in retirement or just after they had passed the metropolitan examination and were awaiting an appointment.<sup>28</sup> For Li Yuankuan the actors wearing Ming-style dress shamed the spectators, who had been forced to shave their heads and adopt a Manchu style of dress.

The political and cultural meaning of the gauze hat to Ming loyalists is illustrated even more clearly in a poem Fang Wen wrote just before he died:

In my lifetime, I lived with poems and wine,  
I will die a natural death without remembering my home.  
Once I enter the Yellow Springs, there is nothing to see,  
But underworld officials still wearing the old gauze hats.<sup>29</sup>

平生诗酒是生涯，  
老死江干不忆家。  
自入黄泉无所见，  
冥官犹戴旧乌纱。

To the Ming loyalists, watching a theatrical performance inevitably recalled the fallen Ming. A line from Sun Zhiwei, "Rivers and mountains can be felt only in the theatrical world 江山只合对梨园,"<sup>30</sup> captures this sentiment well.

### 5.1.3. Played without taboos and watched with intentions

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<sup>27</sup> Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 817; see also Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, p. 1178.

<sup>28</sup> Zhang Tingyu et al., *Ming shi*, 67:1637, 1641.

<sup>29</sup> The two poems are included in Fang Wen, *Tushan xuji* (included in *Tushan ji*, vol. 5), "Hou ba 后跋" (Postscript).

<sup>30</sup> Sun Zhiwei, "Qiu ye tong Tianye, Qizhan zhu zi yin Cidou zhai guan ju 秋夜同天业、杞瞻诸子饮次斗宅观剧" (Drank and watched plays in Cidou's house together with Tianye, Qizhan, and other scholars in an autumn night), in Sun, *Gaitang ji*, 7:21b.

Nostalgia aroused by Kun-style music and costumes would be strengthened if the play performed was set in the Ming period, and some Ming loyalists found these feelings hard to bear and responded intensely. Two poems by Fang Wen exemplify this kind of response. One is about a performance at West Lake in 1658 of *Tieguan tu* 铁冠图 (Painting of an Iron Cap), a *chuanqi* drama that depicts the last days of Emperor Chongzhen in 1643-44.<sup>31</sup> In his poem, Fang Wen wrote:

Who without taboo wrote this new play?  
That actors have circulated to West Lake?  
It is Commissioner Zhang who is most alarmed,  
He dares not watch a second time *Painting of an Iron Cap*.<sup>32</sup>

谁谱新词忌讳无？  
优伶传播到西湖。  
惊心最是张方伯，  
不敢重看铁冠图。

“Commissioner Zhang” refers to Zhang Jinyan 张缙彦 (*jinsshi* 1631), who was the Provincial Administration Commissioner of Zhejiang from 1654 to 1658. In 1643, Zhang was appointed minister of war but was so incompetent that he was forced to resign. He surrendered to the Manchus in 1644, but accepted a commission from Emperor Hongguang in 1645 only finally to take a post under the Manchu regime several months later.<sup>33</sup> Fang Wen here heaps scorn on what Zhang had done, using the drama *Tieguan tu* to illustrate his abandonment of the Ming cause.

In 1663, Fang Wen was invited to a feast, at which the *chuanqi* drama *Wannian huan*

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<sup>31</sup> For the abstract of the drama and its conformity with and divergence from the historical facts, see *Chuanqi huikao*, pp. 75-80. For its evolution, see Yan Dunyi, *Yuan Ming Qing xiqu lun ji* (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou shuhua she, 1982), pp. 188-98.

<sup>32</sup> Fang Wen, “Hu shang guanju 湖上观剧” (Watch plays in the West Lake), in Fang, *Xu Hang you cao* (included in *Tushan ji*, vol. 5), 26a.

<sup>33</sup> For the biography of Zhang Jinyan, see Zhou Junfu, comp., *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, vol. 57, pp. 789-98; vol. 90, p. 134; vol. 105, pp. 791-95.

万年欢 (A Happiness for Ten Thousand Years) was requested to be performed. Fang Wen objected strenuously and was about to leave when the host tried to insist on performing it. Another guest praised Fang for his loyalty to the fallen Ming, at which point a different extract was performed. *Wannian huan*, also known as *Yu saotou*, is a love story between Ming Emperor Zhengde (re. 1506-22) and a courtesan named Liu Qian 刘倩 written by Li Yu 李渔 (1610-80) in 1655. Emperor Zhengde's adoration for and marriage with a courtesan surnamed Liu has been generally believed true and records about their love story can be found in some contemporary works.<sup>34</sup> According to Du Jun—the commentator of *Wannian huan*—Zhengde's whoring had been commonly known during the late Ming period and plays about that story had been performed without any censorship and condemnation before Li Yu wrote *Wannian huan*. It cannot be determined when the first play about the emperor's affair came into being, but Du Jun implies that the play's telling of the story had appeared in the late Ming.<sup>35</sup> In his poem about this performance, Fang Wen wrote:

Although plays are not about real life,  
Actor Meng, capped and robed, also can move us.  
I am shocked by such performances in the preceding dynasty,  
That no one at the feasts upbraided him right on the spot.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> For an abstract of *Wannian huan*, also known as *Yu saotou* 玉搔头 (The Jade Hairpin), see Dong Kang et al., *Qu hai zongmu tiyao* (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1959), pp.1020-23; Guo Yingde, *Ming Qing chuanqi zonglu*, pp. 589-92. Guo Yinde mentions the primary Ming records about the love story between Emperor Zhengde and Lady Liu of Taiyuan.

<sup>35</sup> For Du Jun's mentions of performances of plays about Zhengde's whoring, see Li Yu, *Yu saotou*, in *Li Yu quanji*, comp. Helmut Martin (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe youxian gongsi, 1970), vol. 10, pp. 4574-75.

<sup>36</sup> Fang Wen, "Guangling yi guijia yanke... 广陵一贵家讌客..." (A noble man in Yangzhou was host at a feast...), in Fang Wen, *Tushan xuji* (included in *Tushan ji*, vols. 7, 8), 5:5a. Meng was an actor in the court of Chu Zhuangwang 楚庄王 (King Zhuang of Chu, re. 613-591 BC) and excelled in remonstrating by euphemism. After the death of Sunshu Ao 孙叔敖 (ca. 630-593 BC), a minister who had rendered outstanding service to King Zhuang in Chu's conquests, Actor Meng wore Ao's cap and robe to celebrate King Zhuang's birthday. Meng's performance was so true to life that King Zhuang was moved and conferred a title and fief upon Ao's son, who had been so poor after Ao's death. See Sima Qian, *Shi ji*, 126:3201-02.

虽然游戏事非真，  
优孟衣冠亦感人。  
却讶先朝曾扮此，  
当筵未见有人嗔。

The third line clearly echoes what Du Jun tells us in his comments. Fang thought that this play could not be performed, because, once performed, it would be immoral to watch the roles of respected ancestors or emperors that were played outside the principle hall at which the spectators were drinking. It is well known that roles of emperors and empresses, except tyrants, debauched and overthrown monarchs, had been prohibited onstage in the Ming and Qing, since such improper performances were viewed as offensive to sages.<sup>37</sup> That is why the emperor described as a sage does not appear onstage but can be heard in *Mudan ting*, while the role of *xiaosheng* (debauched Emperor Hongguang) is designed by Kong Shangren to present onstage in *Taohua shan*. Emperor Zhengde is described as romantic and wise in *Wannian huan*; his presence onstage during the performance, for a Ming loyalist such as Fang Wen, was intolerable.

Such poems suggest that watching the performances of any play in this transitional period would have been regarded by some Ming loyalists as a way to express nostalgia for the fallen Ming. However, to substantiate Chen Hongxu's association of *Mudan ting* with nostalgic memory, more attention should be paid to the text and performances of *Mudan ting*. In what follows, I will demonstrate that extracts other than “Jing meng 惊梦” and “Xun meng 寻梦” (the most popular ones) were performed during the period covered in this thesis.

The background of the love story in *Mudan ting* is warfare between the Southern

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<sup>37</sup> Roles of emperors, empresses, loyal officials, and sages had been prohibited since Hongwu 30 (1397) when the Great Ming Laws came into being. Such prohibition was valid during the Qing period. For some primary materials about the prohibitions in the Ming and Qing, see Wang Liqi, *Yuan Ming Qing san dai jinhui xiaoshuo xiqu shiliao* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), pp. 11, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 34, 35, and 259.

Song and Li Quan 李全, a rebel supported by the Jurchens, who were ancestors of the Manchus. This setting, and language in Tang's original text that describes the Jurchens, could be interpreted by the readers and spectators to express their hatred of the Manchus and nostalgia for the fallen Ming. For this reason, the Qing government in the Qianlong period (1736-96) censored all such works, banning or destroying numerous books, and pruning away any language that could be construed as offensive to the Manchus.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, censorship of playwrights abated somewhat during the Shunzhi period (1644-62). As indicated in Fang Wen's poem cited above, a play such as *Tieguan tu* was written by a Ming loyalist and circulated by actors without any concern about censorship. In those years of turmoil, nostalgia for the fallen Ming or reflections about its collapse found expression in plays by popular playwrights such as Li Yu 李玉 (1591-1671) and by scholar-officials such as Wu Weiye.<sup>39</sup> Although literary inquisitions intensified in the Kangxi period (1662-1722), *Chuanqi huikao* 传奇汇考, a bibliography of *chuanqi* drama was completed by some Ming loyalists during these years.<sup>40</sup> An original uncensored text of *Mudan ting* appeared in the Yongzheng period (1723-35), when an edition with a commentary by Wu Zhensheng 吴震生 (1695-1769) and Cheng Qiong 程琼 was published with the title of *Caizi Mudan ting* 才子牡丹亭.

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<sup>38</sup> The peak of censorship in the Qianlong period coincided with the project of the *Siku quanshu*. For the political implications, see R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-lung Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

<sup>39</sup> Guo Yingde, *Ming Qing chuanqi shi*, pp. 311-15, 365-68, 422-29; Wang Ailing, "Ming Qing shuhuai xie fen zaju zhi yishu tezhi yu chengfen," *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu jikan* 13 (September 1998): 36-42.

<sup>40</sup> According to Deng Changfeng, the project of *Chuanqi huikao* was initiated between 1673 and 1679 by Lai Jizhi 来集之 (1604-83), a Ming loyalist, and was finally finished between 1715 and 1722 by other Ming loyalists. The compilers focused their efforts on recording *chuanqi* dramas created in the late Ming and early Qing and exploring their source materials. See Deng Changfeng, "Chuanqi huikao tanwei," *Chinese Studies* (Taipei), 17.1 (June 1999): 229-57.

丹亭.<sup>41</sup> Tang's text was not sanitized politically until 1781, when a revised edition was presented for the Emperor's perusal. This edition was known as the submitted edition (*jincheng ben* 进呈本), an official model subsequently replicated in most Qing editions.<sup>42</sup> In Li Mingrui's time, the spectators mentioned above thus had access to the unrevised text of *Mudan ting*, and performances by Li's actresses followed the original text.

Language in *Mudan ting* could easily evoke sorrow for the conquered dynasty. One example can illustrate this kind of sadness. Even in 1906, a writer whose pseudonym was Yuxuesheng 浴血生 claimed that his heart could not help pounding violently when he read language about the subjugated nation, and cited an aria from *Mudan ting* as an example:<sup>43</sup>

What purpose has Heaven in this  
when no light of sun moon or stars suffices  
to distinguish Chinese from Tartar  
but rank stench of sheep and goat  
blows throughout mortal world  
and central lands are turned  
to a desert of yellow sand?<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Tang Xianzu, *Caizi Mudan ting*, comm. Wu Zhensheng and Cheng Qiong (n.p., 1723-35). For the recent studies about this edition and the commentary, see Hua Wei, "Caizi Mudan Ting zuozhe kaoshu, jianji Lige Piping Jiu Ximu de zuozhe wenti," *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu jikan* 13 (September 1998): 1-36; Jiang Jurong, "Caizi Mudan Ting de lishi yiyun," *Nanjing shifan daxue wenxueyuan xuebao* 2 (June 2002): 13-20; Hua Wei, "How Dangerous Can the Peony Be?: Textual Space, *Caizi Mudanting*, and Naturalizing the Erotic" (unpublished manuscript), 2003.

<sup>42</sup> The submitted edition was followed in the ice-silk edition 冰丝本. See "Cong ke Qinghuige pidian *Mudan Ting* fanli 重刻清晖阁批点牡丹亭凡例" (Notes on the re-carved *Peony Pavilion* with commentaries by *Qinghui ge*), in Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, p. 933; Zhou Yude, *Tang Xianzu lun gao*, pp. 250-52. Some evidence of revision can be found in the commentaries attached to the Nuanhongshi 暖红室 edition published by Liu Shiheng. In the submitted edition, scene 15, "Ru die 虏谍" (A Spy for the Tartars) was cut, and any word that might offend Manchu rulers was changed or deleted in scenes 19, "Pin zei 牝贼" (The Brigandess); 38, "Huai jing 淮警" (The Scourge of the Huai); 43, "Yu Huai 御淮" (The Siege of Huaian); and 47, "Wei shi 围释" (Raising the Siege). For details, see Tang Xianzu, *Chong tu huijiao Mudan Ting Huan Hun Ji*, in *Linchuan si meng* included in *Nuanhongshi huike chuanqi*, comp. Liu Shiheng (Yangzhou: Jiangsu guangling guji kanyin she, 1990), pp. 135, 143, 184, 193, 199, 200, 201, 202, and 203.

<sup>43</sup> Yuxuesheng and Jietuo zhe 解脱者, "Xiaoshuo conghua 小说丛话" (Talks on Fictions), in Mao Xiaotong, *Ziliao huibian*, p. 958.

<sup>44</sup> Tang Xianzu, *Mudan ting*, eds. Xu Shuofang and Yang Xiaomei (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1998), Scene 46, "Zhe kou 折寇" (The rebel countered), p. 247. The English translation of this aria

问天何意？  
有三光不辨华夷，  
把腥膻吹换人间，  
这望中原做了黄沙片地。

Yuxuesheng doubtless was an anti-Manchu revolutionary inspired by Ming loyalism.<sup>45</sup> If Yuxuesheng could draw the sadness about a conquered nation from the words of Tang's libretto, how much more would a Ming loyalist, who had witnessed cruelty by the Manchu firsthand?

Since Li Mingrui was Tang Xianzu's protégé, we can safely assume that his private troupe performed *Mudan ting* following Tang's original text rather than a revised one. In the oft-cited letter to an actor named Luo Zhang'er, Tang Xianzu asked him to perform *Mudan ting* according to his "original version," not "the one revised," because that adaptation "greatly differs from my original idea."<sup>46</sup> Knowing Tang's hostility to any adaptation of his play, Li surely would have had his private troupe perform *Mudan ting* according to his mentor's original version.<sup>47</sup>

Some scholars believe that the whole play has never been performed since Tang Xianzu completed it and that only extracts, some of which were revised by performers, have

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is quoted from Birch, *The Peony Pavilion* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), p. 258.

<sup>45</sup> During the 1911 Revolution, Ming loyalists were praised highly and the study of them was promoted by the revolutionists against the Manchu regime. For detailed information, see Struve, *The Ming-Qing Conflict, 1619-1683: A Historiography and Source Guide* (Ann Arbor: The Associate for Asian Studies, 1998), pp. 88-95. For a brief but clear discussion of the relationship between the Revolution and the study of Ming loyalists, see Nan Bingwen, *Huihuang, quzhe yu qishi: ershi shiji Zhongguo Ming shi yanjiu huigu* (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 2001), p. 4-8.

<sup>46</sup> Tang Xianzu, "Yu Yi ling Luo Zhang'er 与宜伶罗章二 (A letter to Luo Zhang'er, the Yihuang-style actor)," cited in Swatek, *Peony Pavilion Onstage*, p. 1.

<sup>47</sup> Jiang Jurong claims that Li Mingrui's private troupe performed the revised version, but he does not provide any evidence to support his inference. See Jiang, "Mudan ting yanchu xiao shi," *Shanghai xiju* 6 (June 1998): 1-15.



been popular onstage.<sup>48</sup> But according to Jiang Jurong, *Mudan ting* was performed in its entirety several times during the Ming and Qing periods.<sup>49</sup> Lu Eting also thinks it possible that the whole play was performed in the early Qing and at least rehearsed at court during the Qianlong period. Scene 41, “Dan shi 耽试” (Delayed Examination), a scene that depicts Liu Mengmei’s attendance in the metropolitan examination, was once performed as an extract entitled “Mengmei yingshi 梦梅应试” (Liu Mengmei Attends the Examination) at Qianlong’s court.<sup>50</sup>

Scene 19, “Pin zei 牝贼” (The brigandess), an extracted scene about warfare between Li Quan and the Southern Song, was also performed in this period. In *Pinhua baojian*, a novel describing liaisons between scholars and boy-actors of Kun Opera in Beijing during the Qianlong period, on one occasion when the scholars and boy-actors gather to drink, they compose couplets using scene titles. Su Huifang 苏蕙芳, one of the actors, caps a couplet with the line, “Nü dao you ming Pin zei 女盗有名牝贼” (‘The Female Bandit’ is also titled ‘the Brigandess’).<sup>51</sup> Such a detail illustrates that, (1) “the Brigandess” was also known as “the Female Bandit,” an alternative title common enough to be understood by common spectators; (2) the boy-actors, who were instructed orally by their masters,<sup>52</sup> likely had learned such an extracted scene. In other words, the novel furnishes evidence that “the Brigandess” was

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<sup>48</sup> Zhou Yude, *Tang Xianzu lun gao*, pp. 252-63; Swatek, *Peony Pavilion Onstage*, pp. 101-57.

<sup>49</sup> Jiang Jurong, “Mudan ting yanchu xiao shi,” *Shanghai xiju* 6 (June 1998): 1-15.

<sup>50</sup> Lu Eting, “Qingdai quanben xi yanchu shu lun 清代全本戏演出述论” (A description and study on the performances of whole plays in the Qing period), in *Ming Qing xiqu guoji yantaohui lunwen ji*, eds., Hua Wei and Wang Ailing (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo chouben, 1997), pp. 336-38. Li Mei reveals much about the performance of the extracts from *Mudan ting* in the Qing court, but ignores the materials Lu cited. See Li Mei, “Tang Xianzu de chuanqi zhezixi zai Qingdai gongting li de yanchu,” *Wenyi yanjiu* 1 (2002): 93-103.

<sup>51</sup> Chen Sen, *Pinhua baojian*, vol. 2, p. 530.

<sup>52</sup> For oral instruction mentioned in this novel, see Chen Sen, *Pinhua baojian*, p. 725.

performed in the Qianlong and Jiaqing periods (1736-95 and 1796-1820 respectively).<sup>53</sup> Thus, with respect to performances of *Mudan ting*, it is safe to say that scenes other than the popular ones included in most miscellanies would have been performed or at least rehearsed.

Such likelihood can be supported further by the fact of an owner's control over his private troupe. As mentioned above, an owner could ask his actors/actresses to perform whatever he wanted to watch, especially when the environment was relatively more relaxed for playwrights and performers as during the Shunzhi period. A good example of this is a story concerning Wang Deren. To vent his grievance against the Manchus, Wang Deren asked his private troupe to perform plays about Guo Ziyi 郭子仪 (697-781) and Han Shizhong 韩世忠 (1089-1151), the former famous for putting down the An Lushan Rebellion (755-63) and the latter well-known for his resistance to the Jurchen army that attacked the Song Dynasty. Secret performances by Wang's private troupe were highly suspect, and when a high official asked for his troupe to perform for him, Wang was afraid of the consequences of divulging his nostalgia for the Ming by watching such performances and wearing Ming-style dress deep within his courtyard.<sup>54</sup> Performances of plays in the villas of the gentry could be more relaxed than those in official mansions, and those in attendance were more likely to request plays about Han Shizhong and extracts such as "Pin zei," whose content could be deemed politically offensive.

In short, for Ming loyalists, their enjoyment of a performance could go beyond the sensual pleasure and theatrical aesthetics *per se*. The stories, costumes, texts, and individual

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<sup>53</sup> Lindy Li Mark listed the titles of the plays mentioned in *Pinhua baojian*, with *Pin zei* included in, but she failed to point out that *Pin zei* is a scene in *Mudan ting*. See Lindy Li Mark, "Kunju and theatre in the transvestite novel *Pinhua Baojian*," *Chinoperl Papers* 14 (1986): 56.

<sup>54</sup> See Xu Shipu, *Jian bian ji lue*, 1:5b, 8b.

lines could remind them of the fallen Ming; even a romantic play such as *Mudan ting* could occasion sadness for the transitoriness and turbulence of life.

## 5.2. The Non-Loyalist Li Yuanding and His Wife Zhu Zhongmei

In Part One of this chapter, I revealed what the spectators as Ming loyalists received politically and culturally from the performances of plays. As mentioned in Chapter Four, both the Ming loyalists and the officials who served the Ming and then the Qing watched performances by Li Mingrui's private troupe, sometimes at the same occasion, writing and responding to each other's poems. A question naturally arises: what did the non-loyalist spectators draw from such performance elements as music, costumes, and plots? Did those performance elements mean same thing to them as to the loyalists? If so, to what extent are the meanings similar? If not, what are the differences? In what follows, I will explore these questions, using the experiences of Li Yuanding and Zhu Zhongmei as case studies.

### 5.2.1. Perplexing Lives

Although Li Yuanding's official biography is available, we know few details about his life either as a Ming official or after his dismissal from office in the Qing period (in 1647 and 1653). According to available sources, especially his collected works and those of his wife Zhu Zhongmei, he comes across as a weak and incompetent official, though successful as a poet.<sup>55</sup>

Li Yuanding passed the metropolitan examination in 1622, the same year as Li Mingrui did. In Chongzhen 5 (*renshen*, 1632), he was dismissed and left Beijing for the South. When passing by Tangyin 汤阴, Henan Province, he paid homage, in spite of the rain,

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<sup>55</sup> Deng Zhicheng also thinks so. See Deng Zhicheng, *Qing shi jishi chu bian*, p. 861-62.

at the Temple of Yue Fei 岳飞 (1103-42), a Song general famous for defending the dynasty against the Jurchen invasion. Li composed a poem about this pilgrimage, in which he expressed his concern about the warfare between the Manchu forces and Ming army on the northern frontier and regretted that the Ming government had no general as capable as Yue Fei. He wrote:

Just now, at frontier fortress beacon fires still burn,  
As sounds of armored cavalry fade, one lonely moon left remains.<sup>56</sup>

只今塞上仍烽火，  
铁骑声销夜月孤。

In 1639, Li Yuanding married Zhu Zhongmei, a daughter of the Ming imperial clan. In the winter of 1640 and accompanied by his bride, he went north to Beijing at Emperor Chongzhen's summons;<sup>57</sup> thereafter the couple lived in Beijing and Tianjin for ten years until they left for the Jiangnan region in the late spring of Shunzhi 6 (*jichou*, 1649).<sup>58</sup> It was during their stay in Beijing that their lives changed irrevocably when they surrendered to Li Zicheng and then to the Manchu conquerors in 1644. Li Yuanding regretted very much that he had accepted the 1640 summons, knowing full well that he would be ridiculed for his conduct during that ten-year period.<sup>59</sup>

According to a memorial he submitted in 1646 to apply for leave, Li Yuanding was

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<sup>56</sup> Li Yuanding, "Yu jing Tangyin ye Yue Miao 雨经汤阴谒岳庙" (I paid homage to the Temple of Yue Fei when I passed by Tangyin in the rain), in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 18.

<sup>57</sup> Li Yuanding, "Gengchen dong chu feng Guanglu ming ru chao zhouchi manxing si shou 庚辰冬初奉光禄命入朝舟次漫兴四首" (Four poems composed randomly in the winter of the year *gengchen* while aboard a boat en route to interview with the Emperor bearing the first order from the Court of Imperial Entertainments), in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 32.

<sup>58</sup> Li Yuanding, "Jichou yuanri shi bi 己丑元旦试笔" (A poem written as a test on the first day of the year *jichou*), "Zhou fa Jinmen," and Zhu Zhongmei's reply, in *Shiyuan quanji*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>59</sup> Li Yuanding, Preface to "Chushan sheng yu 出山贻语" (Collected Extant Poems Composed after I Came Out from Retirement), in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 32.

the only person from his hometown of Jishui who was serving the Manchu regime at that time; thus his family was looked upon with hostility and as a result his brother was driven to suicide and his mother was frightened to the point of illness.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps this is why Li had not returned to Jishui, but remained mainly in Baoying County of Yangzhou Prefecture until Shunzhi 13 (*bingshen*, 1656), when he observed the spring festival in Jishui.<sup>61</sup> In the same year Li borrowed Li Mingrui's house in Chucha to live in,<sup>62</sup> and since 1657 he and his wife mainly traveled about in Nanchang, Nanjing, Yangzhou, and Hangzhou, only rarely living in Jishui. Li's wanderings suggest confusion about his identity—as a son-in-law of the Ming imperial clan he had served both the Ming Dynasty and then Manchu regime and endured the political and moral censure of his associates. After his dismissal in the summer of 1647, he had moved to Tianjin and lived in his brother's mansion till the late spring of 1649. One day, he met there a guest who discussed the fallen Ming with him, and he was so moved that he marked the event with a poem:

A guest came and we talked of things past,  
With solicitude he asked about my former years.  
Feelings flew way beyond the blue sea,  
Tears fell beside the nighttime lamp.  
Parrots were heard in the deserted fortresses,  
Cuckoos wept in the empty mountains.  
With one goblet we became a little drunk,  
Completely in the dark about our lives.<sup>63</sup>

有客谈遗事，  
殷勤问往年。

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<sup>60</sup> *Qing shi liezhuan*, in *Qingdai zhuanji congkan*, vol. 105, pp. 765-66.

<sup>61</sup> Li Yuanding, Preface to *Hong xue cao*, in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 48.

<sup>62</sup> Zhu Zhongmei, "Yu Canglang Ting you huai zongbo niansao jiang ding jie ju chucha zhi yue 沧浪亭有怀宗伯年嫂兼定借居滁槎之约" (I miss the wife of the ex-minister of rites when we are living in the Canglang Pavilion, and she agreed to lend us their house in Chucha to live in), and Li Yuanding's reply, in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 79.

<sup>63</sup> Li Yuanding, "You ke 有客" (A guest visited us), in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 72.

情飞沧海外，  
泪落夜灯前。  
荒塞闻鹦鹉，  
空山泣杜鹃。  
一尊聊取醉，  
身世总茫然。

Ostensibly, Li Yuanding was hesitant to accept either Chongzhen's summons in 1640 or Shunzhi's in 1651, but his reasons for hesitating differed in the two instances. His former hesitation was due to a lack of confidence in his ability to serve, as indicated in the following lines from one of the four poems he wrote while en route to accept the appointment:

I desire to serve my country with a heart still loyal,  
I bear in mind the current situation but temples become grey.<sup>64</sup>

情悬报国心仍赤，  
念到忧时鬓已斑。

Despite these misgivings, he went north since he realized that it was his responsibility to accept the Emperor's summons when the country was in turmoil.<sup>65</sup> But in 1651, his hesitation

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<sup>64</sup> Li Yuanding, "Gengchen dong chu feng Guanglu ming ru chao zhouchi manxing si shou," poem 1, in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 32. In his preface to *Chushan shengyu*, he also emphasized his lack of self-confidence in 1640. See *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 32.

<sup>65</sup> Li Yuanding, "Gengchen dong chu feng Guanglu ming ru chao zhouchi manxing si shou," in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 32. In the fourth poem, he wrote:

In a sacred time, it is intolerable to dodge the edict,  
Countless [tears of] grief at parting wet the soldiers' robes.  
[...]  
Swords and halberds fill one's gaze all over the Central Plains,  
What tether my feelings to home are pines and firs there.  
[...]

圣世难容避诏严，  
离愁无数浣征衫。

.....

满目中原仍剑戟，  
系情故国是松杉。

.....

And in the third poem, he wrote:

was due to his bitter experiences from 1644 to 1647, as he wrote:

In the night quiet due to the knocker, I understood the peace,  
Having experienced the dangers of the river's current, I fear its swift rush.<sup>66</sup>

宵因柝静知安阜，  
险历河流怖激奔。

### 5.2.2. Barbarian music and Chinese Dress

We know that Li Yuanding accepted Shunzhi's summons to Beijing and served as the right vice-minister of war until his dismissal in 1653. Despite his surrender and service to the Manchus, however, he and his wife still distinguished their culture from that of the Manchus and even expressed nostalgia for the fallen Ming, feelings that are reflected more frequently and obviously in Zhu Zhongmei's poems than in Li Yuanding's. I think that Zhu Zhongmei's idea about the Ming-Qing transition can be taken as also representing Li Yuanding's, since she was both his wife and bosom friend.<sup>67</sup> As an official in the Qing period, Li Yuanding appreciated her nostalgia for the fallen Ming, and in his preface to *Suicao ji* 随草集, a collection of Zhu Zhongmei's poems, he characterized their contents as follows:

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Being drunk with wine and talking heartily illustrates the friendships,  
Eating in the wind and sleeping in the dew means the royal favors.

醉酒谈心存友谊，  
餐风宿露亦君恩。

<sup>66</sup> Li Yuanding, "Xinmao ji xia fu zhao bei shang zhou ci Qingyuan neizi chi shan suo shu 辛卯季夏赴召北上舟次清源内子持扇索书" (In the late summer of the year *xinmao* [1651], I was summoned to go north. When we arrived at Qingyuan by boat, my wife proffered a fan and asked me to write [a poem] on it), in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 75.

<sup>67</sup> In two poems presented to his wife, Li Yuanding called Zhu Zhongmei as his "*xiao you* 小友" (young friend) and "*yi you* 益友" (helpful friend). See Li, "Zeng nei 赠内" (A poem presented to my wife); "Zeng nei," in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 32; "Zeng nei," in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 79. According to Li, only Zhu Zhongmei could understand his hesitation to accept the summons in 1651. See Li Yuanding, "Xinmao ji xia fu zhao bei shang zhou ci Qingyuan neizi chi shan suo shu," in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 75.

Most [of her poems] were sung on occasions that moved her or were blurted out without thinking hard. [In her poems, she describes] white clouds and red trees, famous mountains and great rivers; she sorrows about the millet with drooping heads [in the ruined palaces of the fallen dynasty], misses the scented flowers from the emperors' descendants, feels deeply about the shifting of the seasons, or is moved by the drifting loneliness of our travels. [...] On breezy mornings or moonlit evenings, she often sat facing me, drinking tea or wine, sighing and lingering, one writing a poem and the other replying. [...]<sup>68</sup>

大都触景而吟，冲口而出，白云红树，名山大川，或伤故国之黍离，或怀王孙之芳草，或叹时序之变迁，或感行旅之飘零。……风晨月夕，与余茗碗清尊相对，欷歔流连，此唱彼和。……

Among the indicators of their nostalgia for the fallen Ming were the connections that they suggested in their poems, as their associates did, between the music and costume on the one hand and Chinese culture and the fallen Ming on the other hand.

In Zhu Zhongmei's poems, the role of "barbarian music" is usually negative, reminding her of the turmoil of the transition and the former prosperity symbolized by Chinese music. She compared herself, her husband, and other Chinese to Cai Yan and Su Wu 苏武 (d. 60 BC), the latter of whom was a Han ambassador detained by the Huns for

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<sup>68</sup> See Li Yuanding, *Shiyuan quanji*, pp. 80-81. The allusion to "the millet with drooping heads" comes from the poem entitled "Shu li 黍离" in *Shijing*, in which an ex-Zhou official expressed his loyalty to his fallen Zhou Dynasty when he passed by the ruined Zhou palaces. For the poem, see James Legge, trans., *The Book of Poetry*, in *The Chinese Classics, with a Translation, Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes* (London: Henry Frowde, 1865), vol. 4, part 1, p. 110. The allusion to the "scented flowers" comes from "Lisao 离骚" (On Encountering Trouble) by Qu Yuan 屈原 (ca. 340-ca. 278 BC), two lines of which read:

Why have all the fragrant flowers of days gone by,  
Now all transformed themselves into worthless mugwort?

何昔日之芳草兮，  
今直为此萧艾也？

According to the commentator Wang Yi 王逸, those two lines refer to wise men who pretended to be ignorant and unconventional due to a tumultuous political transition. The English translation of Qu Yuan's lines is cited from David Hawkes, trans., *The Songs of the South: an Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), p. 76. For Wang Yi's commentary to the lines, see You Guo'en, ed., *Lisao zuanyi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), p. 418.



nineteen years but refusing to surrender to them.<sup>69</sup> In the spring of 1645, Zhu Zhongmei wrote:

I sob every time I hear the Qiang flute,  
With tears wetting my clothes, I miss my former home.  
Willows in the garden are in bud with eyebrows knitted,  
Camellias without jointing find it difficult to stretch their leaves.  
In the spring breeze weeds grow tall from anxiety,  
On moonlit nights swan-born letters are few.  
Recalling Su Wu's words of former years,  
I pity myself—when can I prepare a returning cart?<sup>70</sup>

每闻羌笛动欷歔，  
泪衫重染思故庐。  
苑柳含芽眉未展，  
山茶抱节叶难舒。  
春风野草愁兼长，  
夜月征鸿信亦疏。  
为忆当年苏武句，  
自怜何日整归车。

In another poem the Qiang flute reminds her of music played with the Chinese reed, which she enjoyed as a girl in the palace of the Ming imperial clan.<sup>71</sup> However, Zhu cannot ignore the reality that the Manchu conquerors had taken over Beijing and tried to transform Chinese customs, as indicated in the following lines she wrote in 1647:

Mountains and rivers remain the same but caps and skirts are changed,

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<sup>69</sup> For the biography of Su Wu, see Ban Gu, *Han shu*, 54:2459-69; Michael Loewe, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han and Xin Periods (221 BC- AD 24)* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 493-95.

<sup>70</sup> Zhu Zhongmei, "Meng chun ganhuai 孟春感怀" (A reflection in the early spring), in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 85.

<sup>71</sup> Zhu Zhongmei, "Qixi ciri liqiu 七夕，次日立秋" (On the seventh day of the seventh lunar month. The autumn will begin tomorrow), in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 71. The poem was composed in 1645, and two lines in it read:

I was suddenly awakened by the Qiang flute from the distant marketplace,  
I still remember the sounds of the Chinese reeds played in the great palace.

忽惊远市吹羌笛，  
还记深宫奏夏簧。

Sounds of reed pipes arise at dusk to the north and south of the wall.<sup>72</sup>

山川如旧冠裳改，  
城北城南起暮笳。

The sound of reed pipes sometimes refers to the plundering that the Manchu forces visited on the Han-Chinese, a sound hated by their victims. These associations are explicit in a poem written for a woman enslaved by the Manchus during the Nanchang Rebellion. In 1652, Xiong Wenju happened to meet a Lady Tu 涂, then a servant of a Manchu official, whose father had been a friend of both Li Mingrui and Xiong. Xiong redeemed Lady Tu by selling his horse and cart, and she then lived with Zhu Zhongmei for several months before leaving Beijing for Nanchang to reunite with her husband. At her departure, Zhu presented six poems to her, one of which reads:

In her mind, the current murmured in the Zhang River,  
Her pretty face was very nearly buried in the clear rapids.  
Her floating fragrance almost disappeared but she finally survived,  
She hates the sound of reed pipes when the hunters come back at night.<sup>73</sup>

忆昔章江江水潺，  
几将清濑葬红颜。  
香飘欲散人犹在，  
厌听笳声夜猎还。

Lady Tu likely was caught and enslaved by the Manchu forces when they put down the rebellion in Nanchang in 1648 and then was forced to go north to Beijing. When she was caught, she tried but failed to drown herself and she hated the sound of reed pipes, which here refers to the Manchu horns.

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<sup>72</sup> Zhu Zhongmei, "Dinghai yuan ri shi bi 丁亥元日试笔" (One poem composed as a test on the new year's day, the year *dinghai*), in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 86.

<sup>73</sup> Zhu Zhongmei, "Zeng Tu nianzinü nan gui bing xu 赠涂年姪女南归并序" (A series of poems, with a preface, presented to the daughter of Master Tu, who passed the metropolitan examination in the same year as my husband did), poem 2, in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 91.

Just as barbarian music meant the Manchu's conquest of the Ming, changed "caps and skirts" were linked to Chinese cultural identity in the minds of Li and Zhu. To them, Ming-style dress, if it could be kept, still meant something culturally even after the Ming Dynasty had fallen irretrievably. At the beginning of 1645, Li Yuanding and Zhu Zhongmei mentioned the wearing of Ming-style dress under the Manchu regime after it was established in Beijing:

Different scenery unnecessarily reminds of the shift of seasons,  
Still following the grand etiquette Han officials form ranks.<sup>74</sup>

未须节物惊时代，  
仍有威仪列汉官。

The parrot under the eaves conveys the coming of the new guest,  
The grand etiquette in the Palace moves the former officials.<sup>75</sup>

檐前鹦鹉传新客，  
殿内威仪感旧官。

"The new guests" refers to the Manchu conquerors. Both Li Yuanding and his wife allude to a Han style of dress used for civil officials in the Western Han era (207 BC- AD 25), which was changed by Wang Mang 王莽 (45 BC-AD 23) but restored in AD 23 by Liu Xiu 刘秀 (6 BC-AD 57), founder of the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220).<sup>76</sup> The allusions to this Han style of court dress in the lines cited above are accurate, since the Manchu rulers permitted surrendering officials to wear the Ming style of dress after Beijing had been taken over in 1644; it was in 1645 that they began to force all Chinese to shave their heads and adopt the

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<sup>74</sup> Li Yuanding, "Yiyou yuandan shi bi 乙酉元旦试笔" (Composed a poem as a test on the first day of the year yiyou), in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 70.

<sup>75</sup> Zhu Zhongmei's reply to Li Yuanding poem entitled "Yiyou yuandan shi bi," in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 71.

<sup>76</sup> For the allusion, see Fan Ye, *Hou Han shu*, 1:10.

Manchu style of dress.<sup>77</sup> This brief continuation of a Ming style of dress under the Manchu regime brought Li Yuanding and Zhu Zhongmei some comfort, but this equilibrium was destroyed soon after they composed their poems in 1645. At the beginning of 1655, when they were living in Baoying, Zhu Zhongmei composed a poem in which she expressed shame for the change of dress from the Ming style to the Manchu style:

Pines and chrysanthemums already surround the Xinjing River,  
Gowns and caps still feel shame in the old Lingyan Pavilion.<sup>78</sup>

松菊已萦新泾水，  
衣冠犹愧旧凌烟。

The first line alludes to Tao Qian (365-427), a famous recluse who uses pines and chrysanthemums to symbolize his faith and steadfastness.<sup>79</sup> “Gowns and caps,” originally referring to scholar-officials and gentry, alludes to the scholar-officials who fled to the Jiangnan region at the end of the Western Jin (265-316) and the Northern Song (960-1127) due to the invasions of the barbarian nomadic peoples.<sup>80</sup> Clearly, with this allusion, Zhu Zhongmei refers to the scholar-officials who fled to the South and were forced to adopt Manchu style dress after the fall of the Ming in 1644. *Lingyan ge* 凌烟阁 (Lingyan Pavilion) was originally constructed in 643 according to the edict of Emperor Taizong of Tang and in it

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<sup>77</sup> Zhou Xibao, *Zhongguo gudai fushi shi*, pp. 449-50.

<sup>78</sup> Zhu Zhongmei's reply to Li Yuanding who wrote the poem “Yiwei yuanri shi bi 乙未元旦试笔” (Composed a poem as a test on the New Year's day of the year yiwei), in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 78. The Xinjing River in Qingpu refers to the Jiangnan region.

<sup>79</sup> Tao Qian, “Gui qu lai ci 归去来辞,” in Tao, *Tao Yuanming ji jiao jian*, ed. Gong Bin (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1996), p. 391.

<sup>80</sup> With this allusion, Liu Zhiji (661-721), a Tang historian, refers to the scholar-officials who fled to the Jiangnan region after the collapse of the Western Jin in 316, while Lu You (1125-1210), a Song poet, refers to those who fled to Jiangnan after the end of the Northern Song in 1127. See, Liu Zhiji, *Shi tong tong shi*, noted by Pu Qilong (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), vol. 1, p. 144; Lu You, “Lun xuanyong xi bei shidafu zhazi 论选用西北士大夫札子” (A memorial on selecting and appointing the scholar-officials of Western and Northern China), in *Lu You ji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), vol. 5, p. 1994.

the portraits of twenty-four officials who had rendered outstanding services at the founding of the dynasty were on display. In the context of these two lines, references to chrysanthemum and pine (symbols of stoic resistance) and to loyal service to the dynasty generate ironic contrasts to the behavior of Chinese officials who chose to wear Manchu dress and serve their conquerors.

Thus it is reasonable to conclude that when he watched the performance of *Moling chun* in Li Mingrui's Canglang Pavilion in the winter of 1659, Li Yuanding also connected the music and costume onstage with the nostalgia for the fallen Ming, as his loyalist associates did:

Talking about rise and fall, everything makes us sad,  
The colors of Loujiang's brush gleam like ripples on water.  
Strings and pipes can do nothing in the rear hall,  
But recollect in vain the feathered flags of the preceding dynasty.<sup>81</sup>

话到兴亡事事悲，  
娄江笔彩绚沦漪。  
后堂丝竹浑无奈，  
空忆先朝旧羽仪。

As mentioned in Part Four of Chapter Three, this poem refers to scene 41, "Xian ci," of *Moling chun*, in which Cao Shancai, playing the *pipa*-lute, tells the stories of his emperor and the concubine in the real world and heaven. In Wu Weiye's play, Cao Shancai, a court musician, expresses his nostalgia for the fallen dynasty with music and costume—traditionally the two indispensable elements of the court etiquette symbolized by feathered flags. Emphasizing these two elements, Li Yuanding feels same in the way Wu does in *Moling chun*.

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<sup>81</sup> Li Yuanding, "Dong ye tong ji Canglangting guan nüji yan *Moling Chun*, ci Xiong Shaozai yun shishou," poem 8, in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 58. Wu Weiye, the playwright of *Moling chun*, was a native of Taicang whose alternative name is Loujiang.

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In this chapter, I have focused on the meanings of performances by Li Mingrui's troupe to the Ming loyalists and officials who had served the Ming and then the Qing. To the Ming loyalists, performances of plays in the transitional period were culturally and politically charged occasions that reminded them of the fallen dynasty and the cultural divide between themselves and their conquerors, and in some of the poems they wrote about these performances, they expressed their feelings. To men such as Li Yuanding who had divided their loyalties, the performances were also politically and culturally charged. Their feelings of nostalgia were more obscure than those of the loyalists, but like these loyalists they distinguished things Chinese and Manchu and marked the political transition when they wrote in their poems about such performance elements as music and costume.

Although I have emphasized political and cultural meanings, other meanings might also be drawn by the spectators. Among those who had served the Ming and then the Qing, Zhu Hui saw enjoying performances and Daoist self-cultivation as compatible pursuits in the wake of the Ming collapse:

Clouds block Mount Tiantai, the stork's road is long,  
The spring information blocks the flower tide in Wuxi.  
In Zhongling there stands the Temple of Flying Curtains,  
Close by the city wall the jade flute is played.<sup>82</sup>

云锁天台鹤路遥，  
武谿春信隔花潮。  
钟陵自有游帷观，  
咫尺城闉度玉箫。

According to this poem, it was unnecessary to retreat to Mount Tiantai, which was far from

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<sup>82</sup> See Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, p. 816. Wuxi is a town in the outskirts of Nanchang. "The spring information" refers to the plum blossom because the plum is believed to blossom earlier than other plants in the spring. The Temple of Flying Curtains, now known as *Xishan wanshougong* 西山万寿宫 (The Longevity Palace in the Western Mountain), was established in Xinjian County in 376 to commemorate the famous Daoist Xu Xun 许逊 (239-374).

Nanchang, and far more preferable to study Daoism in a temple nearby, so that Zhu Hui could watch performances by Li's troupe just outside the city at the same time. To most spectators, enjoying performances was an integral part of their social lives and as such was devoid of political expressions. For Shi Runzhang, watching a performance by Li Mingrui's actresses deepened his feelings of friendship and admiration for their owner. In late October 1661, he presented Li with a poem before leaving for Qingjiang 清江, in which he wrote:

Tired in travel dress daily covered with dust,  
Suddenly hearing "Rainbow Skirt," with one song I was renewed.  
Singing and dancing for one hundred years one forgets the arrival of old age,  
As clash of arms fills the land, our friendship is redoubled.<sup>83</sup>

劳劳旅服日生尘，  
忽听霓裳一曲新。  
歌舞百年忘老至，  
干戈满地倍情亲。

Poems such as these support the common understandings mentioned in Chapter One, about the functions of private troupes' performances, as providing amusements and a currency of social exchange for those whose lives they touched. But these aspects are beyond the focus of this study.

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<sup>83</sup> Shi Runzhang, "Nanpu bie Li Taixu zongbo zhi qingjiang 南浦别李太虚宗伯之清江" (Parting from the ex-minister of rites Li Taixu in the Nanpu Pavilion and going to Qingjiang), in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 3, p. 246.

## CHAPTER VI

### PLAY SPECTATORSHIP DURING A PERIOD OF TRANSITION

In Chapter Five, I discussed the political and cultural meanings drawn from the troupe's performances by some Ming loyalists, as well as by some officials who served both the Ming and Qing. In carefully examining poems and prose by the spectators of these performances, it has become evident how their interpretations reflected the changes underway during this transitional period. Thus, one more question arises: to what extent were these meanings shared by other contemporary scholars outside of the aforementioned spectator groups? In this chapter I will explore the experiences of Qian Qianyi and Gong Dingzi, two leading scholars of the period, who were not among the spectators of Li Mingrui's troupe, but who were definitely theater-goers and music-lovers. Their ideas and feelings about the elements of performance will help to tease out the shared meanings and interpretations derived from performances of plays.

#### 6.1. The Experience of Qian Qianyi as a Theater-goer

I have found no evidence that Qian Qianyi watched performances by Li Mingrui's troupe, but in 1661 he composed a series of poems reviewing *Yuzhang xianyinpu*, a collection of poems by Li and his associates about such performances. Citing Buddhist teachings, Qian questioned the usefulness of enjoying performances that put on display the lifestyle of Li and his friends; he also questioned the meanings of the performances per se, and even the significance of *Mudan ting*.

Qian Qianyi empathized with the nostalgia for the fallen Ming expressed in the



poems in *Yuzhang xianyinpu*, but he cautions readers against simply remembering, since over-indulgence in plays had been one cause of the collapse of Hongguang's regime, which Qian himself had witnessed as a high official in Nanjing. The fifth poem of his series registers his dismay at this state of affairs:

Enticing dances and sweet songs were brilliant without end,  
Henceforth were the Southern Dynasties really "without sorrow"?  
Laughable were those forlorn guests at New Pavilion,  
Who covered their faces and moaned, becoming captives of Chu.<sup>1</sup>

舞艳歌娇烂不收，  
南朝从此果无愁？  
笑他寂寞新亭客，  
掩面悲啼作楚囚。

In the second line, Qian alludes to the last emperor of the Northern Qi, who excelled at music and composed one piece entitled "*Wuchou qu* 无愁曲" (Song without sorrow) just before the collapse of his dynasty.<sup>2</sup> Qian's allusion clearly refers to Emperor Hongguang, who indulged in watching performances to the point that he ignored government affairs. The last two lines refer to scholars of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (317-420), who often drank at the New Pavilion in Jiankang, lamenting the lost territory of the Western Jin Dynasty (265-316). They were denounced for hesitating to unite and expel the barbarians from central China.<sup>3</sup> Due to massacres and vandalism committed by the Manchus, the Jiangnan region, once the most thriving region in the late Ming, became so desolate that Qian lamented in other poems how

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<sup>1</sup> Qian Qianyi, "Du *Yuzhang xianyinpu* man ti ba jueju....," poem 5, in *Muzhai youxue ji*, p. 523.

<sup>2</sup> Wei Zheng et al., *Sui shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 14:331.

<sup>3</sup> Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo xinyu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), pp. 92-93; for the English translation of the story, see *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü: a New Account of Tales of the World*, trans. Richard B. Mather (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, 2002), p. 47. The same story also can be found in Fang Xuanling et al., *Jin shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 65:1747.

“Two thirds of the bright moon has been gobbled up 明月二分都捲去,”<sup>4</sup> and “A lingering dream that deceives men has appeared in Yangzhou 误人残梦到扬州.”<sup>5</sup> Such lines imply that survivors of the bloodbath had begun to indulge again in the sensual pleasures that had led to the collapse of the Ming. According to Qian, scholars who were busy enjoying the performances failed to cultivate themselves by resisting the temptation of sensual pleasures.

Citing a Buddhist allusion he wrote:

A river wind has blown down the *Register of Immortal Sounds*,  
As if brushing the strings of Asura's zither.<sup>6</sup>

江风吹落仙音谱，  
似拂修罗琴上弦。

The second line originates from the *Druma-kinnara-rāja-paripṛicchā* 大树紧那罗王所问经, which tells a story about the king of the *mahādruma Kinnaras*. According to the story, the King played his *vaidūrya* zither before Buddha during one sermon. Excepting the Buddha, the music so confused those in attendance that they could not control their minds and began to dance and indulge their passions, as children do. The Buddha continued to meditate,

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<sup>4</sup> This line is adopted from one in a poem about the prosperity of Yangzhou by Xu Ning 徐凝, a poet in the Tang Dynasty:

If the moonlit night in the world were divided in three,  
Two parts for no good reason would be in Yangzhou.

天下三分明月夜，  
二分无赖是扬州。

See Xu Ning, “Yi Yangzhou 忆扬州” (Remember Yangzhou), in *Quan Tang shi*, comp. Peng Dingqiu (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), vol. 14, p. 5377.

<sup>5</sup> Qian Qianyi, “Du Yuzhang xianyinpu man ti ba jueju...,” poem 1, in *Muzhai youxue ji*, p. 522.

<sup>6</sup> Qian Qianyi, “Du Yuzhang xianyinpu man ti ba jueju...,” poem 2, in *Muzhai youxue ji*, p. 522. Here *Xianyinpu* refers to the collected poems written by Li Mingrui and his associates about performances by his troupe, as I mentioned in Chapter One.

passing straight to nirvāṇa.<sup>7</sup> This tale prompted Qian to send Li and his associates a copy of the *Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra* 般若波罗蜜多心经, so that they might understand, through Buddhist teachings, the meaning of the illusion:

I send you a copy of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*,  
May you understand that “form is emptiness; emptiness form.”<sup>8</sup>

寄与多心经一部，  
色空空色任君参。

Clearly, what Qian Qianyi expresses retrospectively in this series of poems differed from what he had felt when watching performances in the Chongzhen period. In the winter of 1631, he watched a performance in the house of one of his friends and composed a long poem that describes the excellent drinking, singing, dances, and acrobatics enjoyed there.<sup>9</sup> In mid-summer of 1632, he joined in a luxurious gathering that lasted for one month and composed a series of poems to record it. One of the poems reads:

The wind from paulownia is soft and swallows’ nests are new,  
For one month our gatherings continued for several weeks.  
[...]  
Keeping company at a joyous feast keeps old age at bay,  
Pursuing the beautiful atmosphere, do not worry about getting poor.<sup>10</sup>

桐花风软燕泥新，  
一月歌场叠几旬。

.....

追陪欢宴应赊老，  
驱使风光莫较贫。

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<sup>7</sup> Kumārajīva, trans., *Druma-kinnara-rāja-paripricchā*, in *Tripikata in Chinese* (Tokyo: Taisho Issai-kyo Kanko Kwei, 1924), vol. 15, pp. 370-71.

<sup>8</sup> Qian Qianyi, “Du Yuzhang xianyinpu man ti ba jueju...,” poem 8, in *Muzhai youxue ji*, p. 524.

<sup>9</sup> Qian Qianyi, “Dong ye guan ju ge wei Xu Er Ercong zuo 冬夜观剧歌为徐二尔从作” (Composed for Xu Ercong after appreciating plays and songs on a winter night), in *Muzhai chuxue ji*, pp. 291-92.

<sup>10</sup> Qian Qianyi, “Zhongxia guan ju huan yan jia yue 仲夏观剧欢宴浹月...” (In mid-summer, I watched plays and attended joyous banquets for one month...), poem 2, in *Muzhai chuxue ji*, pp. 308-10.

Qian also changed his mind about performances of *Mudan ting*. In 1640, after watching a performance of “*Xun meng*” (Pursuing the Dream), a famous extract from *Mudan ting*, he composed a series of poems, describing the beauty of the actress’s languor, singing, and dancing:

Drowsily she awakens from her dream, stirred by spring’s cold,  
Fine tresses piled together, last night’s powder lingers.  
On stage she struggles to convey the fine points of “*Pursuing the Dream*,”  
Holds fast just now to her fading dream for the gentlemen to see. (Poem 2)

懵腾梦起逗春寒，  
薄鬓丛丛宿粉残。  
台上争传寻梦好，  
恰留残梦与君看。

Song ended, she lightly leaves the dance mat,  
The stage seems like the moon, her dancing like smoke.  
Now I too know how to pursue other dreams,  
For three days the sound of her song has lingered in my ears. (Poem 10)<sup>11</sup>

歌罢轻身下舞筵，  
歌场如月舞如烟。  
依今也解寻他梦，  
三日歌声在耳边。

Although Qian connected the beauty of the actress with the value of the extract—i.e., he found more value in the performance’s erotic meaning than in the text itself—he still suggests that the extract was excellent and worth performing. But in 1661, he claimed that *Mudan ting* was inferior to Wu Weiye’s *Moling chun*:

When sadly singing *Peony Pavilion* feelings abound,  
But how can it compare to these new strains of water music?  
Who can plumb the depths of Meicun’s sorrow?  
*Spring in Moling* is a song “from across the River.”<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Qian Qianyi, “Chun ye ting ge zeng xiuji shishou 春夜听歌赠秀姬十首” (Ten poems presented to the beauty after appreciating her songs in a spring night), in *Muzhai chuxue ji*, pp. 575-78, esp. 576, 578.

<sup>12</sup> Qian Qianyi, “Du Yuzhang xianyinpu man ti ba jueju...,” poem 3, in *Muzhai youxue ji*, p. 523. According to Guo Yingde, Wu Weiye finished his *Moling chun* between 1650 and 1653. See Guo, *Ming Qing*

牡丹亭苦唱情多，  
其奈新声水调何？  
谁解梅村愁绝处？  
秣陵春是隔江歌。

It is well-known that Wu Weiye used the love story in his drama to express his nostalgia for Emperor Chongzhen and the fallen Ming.<sup>13</sup> In the poems cited above, Qian insists that Wu's play is more relevant to the transitional period than Tang's *Mudan ting*.

Although Qian denied that performances similar to those by Li's troupe had moved him, citing Buddhist teachings which had decisive influences in his later life, he had once felt—as his contemporaries had—that the flourishing theater of the Jiangnan region symbolized a prosperous past worth remembering. The famous actors, actresses, and courtesans who had survived the turmoil were regarded as reminders of the fallen Ming. Whether Ming loyalists or officials under the Manchus, scholars would often compare these famous performers—people such as Ding Jizhi 丁继之, Su Kunsheng 苏昆生 (d. 1679), and Zhang Yanzhu 张燕筑—to Li Guinian 李龟年 (fl. the 8<sup>th</sup> century), a famous musician who drifted about during the An Lushan Rebellion in the Tang Dynasty. They also compared the

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*chuanqi zonglu*, p. 557. Therefore Qian refers to it “new strains of water music.” As mentioned above, “water music” in the Ming and Qing periods referred to the Kun style. The allusion to “*Ge jiang ge* 隔江歌” (the song from across the River) comes from a poem by Du Mu 杜牧 (803-52) in the Tang Dynasty, the last lines of which read:

The Shang maiden does not know the vanquished country's sorrow,  
From across the River she still sings “Flowers in the Back court.”

商女不知亡国恨，  
隔江犹唱后庭花。

See Du Mu, “Po Qinhuai 泊秦淮” (Anchoring on the Qinhuai River), in Du Mu, *Fanchuan shiji zhu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1998), pp. 273-74.

<sup>13</sup> For the whole text of *Moling chun*, see Wu Weiye, *Wu Meicun quanji*, pp. 1235-361. For the theme of this drama, see Guo Yingde, *Ming Qing chuanqi zong lu*, pp. 576-78; *Ming Qing chuanqi shi*, pp. 423-27.

Chongzhen period to the Kaiyuan and Tianbao periods of Xuanzong's reign (re. 712-56). It was said that when wandering from place to place, Li Guinian sang songs that had been popular during Xuanzong's reign, and that scholars who heard him sing were moved by nostalgia for that prosperous time and touched with sadness for the devastation caused by An Lushan's rebellion.<sup>14</sup> Allusions to this Tang musician appeared frequently in poems composed both by Ming loyalists and by scholars who served the Manchus.<sup>15</sup>

## 6.2. Wang Jia and Gong Dingzi

Some scholars' attitudes towards Wang Jia 王稼 (zi Zijia 紫稼, Zihe 子合, 1622/24-1654), a much younger actor than Su Kunsheng, Ding Jizhi, and Zhang Yanzhu, can also help us to understand the shared political and cultural meanings derived from elements of performance in this period of transition.<sup>16</sup> In 1651, Wang Jia left for Beijing to attach himself

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<sup>14</sup> For the story in which Li Guinian reminds scholars of Xuanzong's reign, see Zheng Chuhui, *Minghuang za lu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994), p. 27; Li Fang et al., *Taiping guangji*, 1961, vol. 5, p. 1549.

<sup>15</sup> For poems about Ding Jizhi, see Qian Qianyi, "Ti Jinling Ding lao huaxiang si jueju 题金陵丁老画像四绝句" (Four quatrains composed for the portrait of old gentleman Ding), in *Muzhai youxue ji*, pp. 129-30; Du Jun, "Ding sou heting yong Qian Yushan yun 丁叟河亭用钱虞山韵" (A poem composed for Old Ding's riverside pavilion, with the rhyme that Qian Yushan used), in *Du Chaxun yigao*; Gong Dingzi, "和牧斋先生韵为丁继之题秦淮水阁" (A poem composed for Ding Jizhi's pavilion along the Qinhuai River, as a reply to Master Muzhai with his rhyme), and "和牧翁金陵中秋待月诗题继之小册" (A poem composed for the album of Jizhi's paintings, as a reply to Muweng's poem "Waiting for the moon in mid-autumn"), in *Dingshantang ji* (Beijing: Renyi shuwu, 1883), 20:6b-7a. For poems about Zhang Yanzhu, see Qian Qianyi, "次韵赠张燕筑" (A poem presented to Zhang Yanzhu, to someone else's rhyme), in *Muzhai youxue ji*, pp. 231-32; Gong Dingzi, "Shou Zhang Yanzhu 寿张燕筑" (A poem to celebrate Zhang Yanzhu's birthday), in *Dingshantang ji*, 18:11a-b. For poems about Su Kunsheng, see Wu Weiye, "Kouzhan zeng Su Kunsheng 口占赠苏昆生" (Improvising a poem to present to Su Kunsheng), in *Wu Meicun quanji*, pp. 513-14; You Tong, "Zeng Su Kunsheng 赠苏昆生" (Poem presented to Su Kunsheng), cited from Hu Ji and Liu Zhizhong, *Kunju fazhan shi*, p. 264; Shi Runzhang, "Qinhuai shuiting ji Guo Fenyong, Yang Shangxian, Wu Yeren, Wang Zhouci ting Su sheng duqu 秦淮水亭集郭汾又、杨商贤、吴野人、汪舟次听苏生度曲" (I joined in a gathering at a house along the Qinhuai River, listening to Master Su sing some Kun arias, together with Guo Fenyong, Yang Shangxian, Wu Yeren, and Wang Zhouci), in *Shi Yushan ji*, vol. 2, p. 386.

<sup>16</sup> Meng Sen has produced an excellent evidential study on Wang Jia's life, see Meng Sen, "Wang Zijia kao 王紫稼考 (An evidential study of Wang Zijia)," in Meng, *Ming Qing shi lunzhu jikan xubian* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), pp. 275-88.

to Gong Dingzi, and Qian Qianyi composed a series of poems to bid him farewell. Although some poems remark on the homosexual relationship between Wang and Gong, in others Qian conveys remorse for the lost prosperity of the Ming:

Are you drifting around as Li Guinian did in Huxiang?  
His *Song of Red Beans* caused tears to wet handkerchiefs.  
Do not sing the sorrowful Tianbao songs,  
to attendees at the feasts in Chang'an.<sup>17</sup>

可是湖湘流落身？  
一声红豆也沾巾。  
休将天宝凄凉曲，  
唱与长安筵上人。

Again, Qian alludes in this poem to Li Guinian, who drifted about present-day Hunan Province and sang “Hongdou ci 红豆词” (Song of Red Beans), which made all in his audience lament the fate of Emperor Xuanzong when forced to escape west due to the An Lushan Rebellion.<sup>18</sup> During Wang Jia’s stay in Beijing with Gong Dingzi from 1651 to 1654, both Wu Weiye and Xiong Wenju watched him perform and composed poems about the performances, which were filled with nostalgia for past prosperity and with sadness about the turmoil of the transition.<sup>19</sup> In 1654, Gong Dingzi presented Wang Jia with fourteen poems

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<sup>17</sup> Qian Qianyi, “Xinmao chun jin, gezhe Wang lang bei you gaobie...辛卯春尽，歌者王郎北游告别...” (At the end of the spring of the year *xinmao*, the young singer Master Wang bade farewell to me, with a plan to travel north [...]), in *Muzhai youxue ji*, p. 124.

<sup>18</sup> Fan Shu, *Yunxi you yi*, in *Sibu congkan xubian* (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshu guan, 1934), 2:22a-23a.

<sup>19</sup> In his famous poem, Wu Weiye wrote:

At the age of thirty, Master Wang lives in Chang'an,  
Old elders are saddened by his old dramatic songs.

王郎三十长安城，  
老大伤心故园曲。

See Wu Weiye, “Wang lang qu 王郎曲” (Ballad of Master Wang), in *Wu Meicun quanji*, pp. 283-84. Xiong Wenju presented twelve poems to Wang Jia, in one of which he wrote:

before Wang went back to Suzhou. In one of them, Gong wrote:

As Yuyang drums sound, bells and rain echo each other,  
Glowworms stream in Changle Palace as the bright moon sinks.  
I did not believe that after bronze camels were covered by thorns,  
A single jade plant would flourish within the forest.<sup>20</sup>

渔阳鼓动雨铃暗，  
长乐萤流皓月沉。  
不信铜驼荆棘后，  
一枝瑶草秀中林。

“Yuyang” is the ancient name of Miyun in the municipality of present-day Beijing, the cite where An Lushan’s rebellion began in 755. Line three alludes to Suo Jing 索靖 (239-303), an official in the Western Jin Dynasty who had a premonition of impending upheaval and told the bronze camels in front of the palace gate in Luoyang that “You will soon be covered with thorns.”<sup>21</sup> Clearly, Gong Dingzi regarded Wang Jia as a precious legacy of the Ming and worried whether he could survive in the new regime. Gong regarded Wang as his fellow sufferer since both of them, lost in a search for themselves, were depressed about their loss of political and cultural identity:

It was an everlasting sorrow to drift into Luoyang,  
We looked at each other distressed, and hid behind muslin kerchiefs.  
As “Flowers in the Back Court” fall hearts will break,  
We too are men of Chen to Sui who have lost our way.<sup>22</sup>

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The sorrowful event has become history,  
but I recollect my old friends to Li Guinian.

凄凉此事成千古，  
犹向龟年忆旧游。

See Qiu Junhong, *Xijiang shihua*, pp. 809-10.

<sup>20</sup> Gong Dingzi, “Zeng gezhe Wang lang nan gui... 赠歌者王郎南归...” (Presented to the young singer Master Wang who is about to return south [...]), poem 4, in *Dingshantang ji*, 37:3a.

<sup>21</sup> Fang Xuanling et al., *Jin shu*, 60:1648.

<sup>22</sup> Gong Dingzi, “Zeng gezhe Wang lang nan gui...,” poem 8, in *Dingshantang ji*, 37:4a. “Houting



长恨飘零入雒身，  
相看憔悴掩罗巾。  
后庭花落肠应断，  
也是陈隋失路人。

Gong felt the sadness of separation, since he had to stay in Beijing while Wang left for his hometown. In another poem from the same series he declared his nostalgia for the Ming, alluding to two famous patriots:

Yu Xin lamented for Jiangnan in hazy moonlight,  
Affectionate Shen Jiong cried on the deserted terrace.  
Flying orioles are lingering along the road with tall catalpas,  
They will not let the horse with jade bridle go in the spring wind.<sup>23</sup>

烟月江南庾信哀，  
多情沈炯哭荒台。  
流莺正绕长楸道，  
不放春风玉勒回。

Gong here compares himself to Yu Xin (zi Zishan 子山, 513-81) and Shen Jiong. Yu Xin, after being forced to serve under the Western Wei (535-56), composed “*Ai Jiangnan fu* 哀江南赋” (Lament for the South), in which he described with nostalgia his Liang Dynasty (502-57) and its eventual collapse.<sup>24</sup> Shen Jiong was an official of the Southern Liang Dynasty who also was detained in the North by the Tabgach Wei rulers. It was said that he once visited the ruins of *Tongtiantai* 通天台 (Terrace to the Heavens), constructed during the

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hua” (Flowers in the Back Court), also known as “Yushu houting hua 玉树后庭花” (Jade Trees and Flowers in the Back Court), was the name of a tune created by Emperor Houzhu (re. 583-89) of the Southern Chen to praise the beauty of his concubines just before the collapse of his dynasty. See Yao Silian, *Chen shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 7:132.

<sup>23</sup> Gong Dingzi, “Zeng gezhe Wang lang nan gui...,” poem 12, in *Dingshantang ji*, 37:4b.

<sup>24</sup> For the biography of Yu Xin, see Li Yanshou, *Bei shi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 83:2793-94; Linghu Defen et al., *Zhou shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), 41:733-42. For the text of “*Ai Jiangnan fu*,” see Yu Xin, *Yu Zishan ji zhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 94-176. For an informative English study and translation of that rhapsody, see William T. Graham, Jr., *The Lament for the South: Yü Hsin's “Ai Chiang-Nan Fu”* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

reign of Emperor Wu of Han (156-87 BC; re. 140-87 BC), where he cried sorrowfully. Afterwards, Shen had a dream in which he refused to serve Emperor Wu of Han and was allowed to return south.<sup>25</sup> Wu Weiye incorporated Shen Jiong's experiences into his *zaju* entitled *Tongtiantai*, expressing thereby his hope to resign his post under the Manchus and also his nostalgia for the Ming.<sup>26</sup> By alluding to Shen Jiong in his poem, Gong Dingzi likely was expressing sentiments similar to those of Wu Weiye.

After Wang Jia returned to Suzhou, he was convicted of some indecency and flogged to death. Gong composed twelve poems to mourn his death, one of which includes the following allusions:

[Kou] Baimen died of illness, Master Wang was killed,  
Of the Tianbao era's urbanity only a little is left.<sup>27</sup>

白门病死王郎杀，  
天宝风流已不多。

Kou Baimen 寇白门 was a famous courtesan in Nanjing in the late Ming and early Qing. Fang Wen regarded her as one symbol of past prosperity and mention of her in his poems is associated with nostalgia for the Ming. Fang visited Kou in 1655 and composed three poems to describe the gathering, the first of which reads:

It is twelve frosts since I departed from Qinhuai,  
The gilded powder of Six Dynasties had lost its fragrance.  
Among former acquaintances, only Baimen still lives here,  
When we met beneath the lamps, our hearts nearly broke.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> For the biography of Shen Jiong, see Yao Silian, *Chen shu*, 19:253-56; Li Yanshou, *Bei shi*, 45:1677-79.

<sup>26</sup> For the whole text of *Tongtian tai*, see Wu Weiye, *Wu Meicun quanji*, pp. 1388-402.

<sup>27</sup> Gong Dingzi, "Wang lang wan'ge 王郎挽歌" (Elegies to Master Wang), poem 1, in *Dingshantang ji*, 39:20a-b.

我别秦淮十二霜，  
六朝金粉不闻香。  
旧人犹有白门在，  
灯下相逢欲断肠。

To Gong Dingzi, the death of Wang Jia and Kou Baimen symbolized an end to the influences and traditions handed down from the Chongzhen period.

### 6.3. The Dilemma of Identity in *Moling Chun*

Compared with Qian Qianyi and Gong Dingzi, scholars' interpretations of performances discussed in Chapter Five seem to have been more politically charged and sensitive to the circumstances of the early Qing. In fact, both staunch Ming loyalists and scholars who served under the Manchus viewed the performers and their performances as symbols of the tradition and prosperity of the Jiangnan region in the late Ming period. In the sources available to me, e.g., Fang Wen, a firm Ming loyalist, seems to interpret most performances both politically and culturally. On the other hand, Shi Runzhang, who passed the metropolitan examination and took office under the Manchus, interpreted the performances as simply a cultural activity handed down from the Ming period. As my earlier discussions suggested, unlike the Ming loyalists, Shi did not seem intent on interpreting these performances politically, to judge by the poems and prose about Li Mingrui's troupe examined in this essay. Qian Qianyi and Gong Dingzi, who both succeeded in the metropolitan examinations in the Ming period and held office in both dynasties, cannot be viewed as firm Ming loyalists in the political and moral sense, but they nonetheless

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<sup>28</sup> See Fang Wen, "Xie Zhang Shuicang, Li Qizhan yin Kou Baimen zhaitou you zeng 偕张水苍、李杞瞻饮寇白门斋头有赠" (I drank in Kou Baimen's house together with Zhang Shuicang and Li Qizhan, and composed the poems as presents), in *Tushan ji*, 12:17b.

maintained nostalgia for the fallen Ming. This tension between political and cultural identities, as will become apparent in what follows, is evident in their works and was also shared by their contemporaries. It was a cultural consensus about the traditions of the fallen Ming that brought scholars together in the early Qing, and it was the performance elements discussed above that helped make them aware of these cultural bonds, despite their different political decisions. Be they firm Ming loyalists or officials who served the Manchus, often these scholars would attend the same gatherings, watching the same performances, and reciprocating by writing poetry.

The dilemma of identity is illustrated clearly in *Moling chun*. In writing this *chuanqi* drama, Wu Weiye incorporated his own experiences of the Ming and Qing periods into the story of the male protagonist Xu Shi, who is described as living during the transition from the Southern Tang (937-75) to the Northern Song (960-1127). In the first part of this drama, Xu Shi, son of an official in the Southern Tang, promises to remain loyal to his fallen dynasty and dead last emperor. With help from the souls of the last emperor and his favorite concubine, who both become immortals in Heaven, Xu Shi succeeds in marrying Huang Zhanniang, the niece of the concubine. In the second part, Xu Shi is framed and arrested in Bianliang 汴梁, the capital of the Northern Song. The Song emperor appreciates Xu's talent and learning and honors him as the Principal Graduate. Xu is moved by the emperor's magnanimity and agrees to serve under the Song:

I appreciate the magnanimity of His Majesty,  
He has gently subdued an arrogant scholar.<sup>29</sup>

谢当今圣上宽洪量，  
把一个不伏气的书生款款降。

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<sup>29</sup> Wu Weiye, *Moling chun*, scene 31, "Ci yuan," in *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 1328.

Yet, Xu still struggles with his conflicting loyalties to the Song and the Southern Tang:

It seems that the House of Zhao is pressing me urgently,  
Who will cover up for me before my former Lord Li?<sup>30</sup>

似你赵官家催得慌，  
谁替我李皇前圆个谎？

However, Xu's final decision to serve the Emperor does not prevent him and his wife from having a sacrificial ceremony for the last emperor of the Southern Tang.<sup>31</sup> In this way, he reconciles his loyalties to the past through cultural acts, while making a sensible decision about his career.

We know that, during the Spring Festival of 1660, Li Mingrui asked his troupe to perform the complete *Moling chun*, and Li Yuanding and his wife Zhu Zhongmei made a record of the performance in their poems, some of which were cited in Chapters Three and Five.<sup>32</sup> Li Mingrui, who had been exclusively consulted by Chongzhen while he plotted the counterattack against the rebellion, would have been undoubtedly moved by the story. In two poems about the performance, Li Yuanding wrote:

Modern and ancient times are too blurred to be distinguished,  
Can one bear to meet one's lord again under a new regime?  
Most sorrowful is the *Song of Separated Swans*,  
Intolerable it is to burn the presented lute. (Poem 6)

今古茫茫总未分，  
可堪异代更逢君？  
伤心最是离鸿曲，  
解赠琵琶不忍焚。

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<sup>30</sup> Wu Weiye, *Moling chun*, scene 31, "Ci yuan," in *Wu Meicun quanji*, p. 1326. The Song emperors' surname is Zhao, and the Southern Tang emperors' surname is Li.

<sup>31</sup> Wu Weiye, *Moling chun*, scene 41, "Xian ci," in *Wu Meicun quanji*, pp. 1355-60.

<sup>32</sup> Li Yuanding, "Dong ye tong ji Canglang Ting guan nüji yan *Moling Chun*, ci Xiong shaozai yun shishou," in Li, *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 58; Zhu Zhongmei, "Zongbo nian sao xiangqi Canglang Ting guan nüji yan *Moling chun*, man cheng shi jue," in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 108. For discussion of some of these other poems, see pp. 66, 80-81, 127.

Bell and water clock sound low, patterned lutes surround us,  
Flowers in the mirror and shadows in the cup both are vague.  
In Moling spring grass is green year after year,  
Who is watching the Zhaoyang Palace where swallows fly? (Poem 10)<sup>33</sup>

钟漏沉沉锦瑟围，  
镜花杯影共依稀。  
秣陵春草年年绿，  
谁向昭阳看燕飞？

According to Li Yuanding, even in the Manchu regime, he and his contemporaries would remember Chongzhen's favors to them, but as memories of the fallen dynasty began to fade, few other than himself and other officials who had served the Ming would remain nostalgic for their fallen dynasty.

Undoubtedly, the dilemma that Xu Shi faces in *Moling chun* reflects one that Wu Weiye and his contemporaries—including most spectators of Li Mingrui's troupe—encountered in the early Qing. Xu's final decision to serve the Song and his memory of his last emperor illustrate a split between political strategies and mental or spiritual preferences similar to that of Li Mingrui and other scholars who succeeded in the metropolitan examinations in the Ming Dynasty and took office in both the Ming and Qing. For the latter group, watching performances was an effective way to alleviate their distress, especially when the play they were watching reflected the same painful choices that they had been forced to make.

For the intellectuals studied in this thesis, this psychological split between political necessity and cultural allegiance was endured by many Han-Chinese scholars during the transition from Ming to Qing. Li Kai, a spectator named in Chapter Four, claimed that:

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<sup>33</sup> Li Yuanding, "Dong ye tong ji Canglang Ting guan nüji yan *Moling Chun*, ci Xiong shaozai yun shishou," in *Shiyuan quanji*, p. 58. In the poems cited, "lute," "mirror," and "cup" are important material symbols in *Moling chun*. The Zhaoyang Palace was constructed as a harem during the reign of Emperor Wu of Han.

Had the Song Dynasty survived, China would have continued; the Song Dynasty collapsed and so China perished.<sup>34</sup>

宋存而中国存，宋亡而中国亡。

Qian Qianyi agreed with Li Kai. Both men cared more about whether orthodox Chinese culture continued or perished than about whether a dynasty survived or collapsed. When the Jurchens conquered the Northern Song and the Mongols overcame the Southern Song, Chinese culture had been crushed by a barbarian invader, and now the Manchu conquest portended the same. That a dynasty's collapse could ignite such anxieties reveals how closely intertwined political and cultural identities are in transitional periods. It is understandable, then, that performances by Li's troupe would be interpreted politically and culturally by intellectuals struggling with these questions.

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<sup>34</sup> Qian Qianyi, "Fu Li Shuze shu 复李叔则书" (Reply to Li Shuze), in *Muzhai youxue ji*, p. 1343; "Shu Guang Song yimin lu hou 书广宋遗民录后" (The postscript to the *Enlarged List of the Song Loyalists*), in *Muzhai youxue ji*, p. 1607.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have explored Li Mingrui's private troupe and responses by spectators of its performances. Since Li Mingrui's works are inaccessible to me, I have for the most part drawn on materials written by those spectators when writing this thesis.

As a protégé, Li Mingrui accepted Tang Xianzu's ideas of innate sensibility; and as the examination mentor of Wu Weiye, he encountered the same dilemma of political identity that Wu did under the Manchu regime. His close relationship to these two playwrights explains why performances of *Mudan ting* and *Moling chun* by his troupe predominated. His troupe, although composed of eight actresses, had the ability to perform some *chuanqi* dramas whole, including *Mudan ting* and *Moling chun*, with the participation of amateurs and other household servants who knew how to perform.

During the Ming period, Li Mingrui was independent from the partisan strife between the Donglin and eunuch factions. In 1644 under the Manchus, he was forced to take the position of right vice-minister of rites for several months. His political independence in the Ming and service under the Manchus appear to have had no lasting negative impact on his social status and relations with other scholars in the early Qing.

The spectators, including Ming loyalists and officials who served both the Ming and Qing, often attended the same gatherings and composed poems about plays performed on those occasions. This makes it possible for me to compare and contrast the responses of these two groups to the plays. Nearly all the spectators viewed the performance elements—Chinese music and Ming style costumes—as nostalgic reminders of the fallen Ming and, more



important, of Han-Chinese culture. As revealed in the above chapters, the cultural activity surrounding performances—particularly during this period—itself served as a stage upon which these groups could experiment with social roles that were congruent with their shared cultural beliefs, despite their different political choices. These social roles and shared cultural beliefs will provide a cultural rather than political perspective from which to re-evaluate the mentality of the literati world during this transitional period.

### *Performance Elements after the Military and Political Conquests*

In interpreting the performance elements of Li's troupe, an overwhelming number of spectators distinguished Chinese culture—symbolized by the Ming—from the barbarian one—symbolized by the Qing—expressing nostalgia for the fallen Ming and anxiety about the demise of Chinese culture to a greater or lesser degree. Performances—and their respective interpretations—were tolerated by the Manchu conquerors at this time, though after 1645 they had begun to force their new subjects to adopt Manchu style dress. This tolerance, together with the Qing adoption of Ming music and the widespread appreciation of Chinese-style performances, meant that the performance elements of music and costume survived the Manchu takeover and subsequent political rule.

After enthroning himself as the founder of the new dynasty in 1616, Nurhaci (1559-1626) began to make use of Chinese music in Manchu traditional memorial ceremonies. After 1644, the whole Ming music system had been essentially adopted and pursued by the Qing Court of Imperial Sacrifices (*Taichangsi* 太常寺), although some traditional Manchu songs and dances were maintained and performed exclusively by young Manchu nobles in

commemoration of their Manchurian past.<sup>1</sup> By condoning Ming music, the Manchu conquerors implicitly permitted the continued use of Chinese popular and folk music—central elements in the performance of plays—without any intention of changing them to their Manchu style. Furthermore, there is no evidence that the Manchu conquerors tried to force their new subjects to play and appreciate Manchu-style music.

To appease the resistance of the Han-Chinese to the shaving of heads and adopting of Manchu-style dresses, the Manchu conquerors approved Jin Zhijun's 金之俊 (1593-1670; *jinshi* 1619) proposals, one of which was that “courtesans follow the Manchu-style costumes but actors and actresses not do so 倡从而优伶不从.” Since actors and actresses were permitted to use Ming-style dress, the roles they played on stage in Ming-style dress were also tolerated. Jin Zhijun's proposals were not recorded in official documents, but they were widely believed to have been implemented, since they were consistent with what was observed during the Qing period. Although in 1653 Emperor Shunzhi denied the existence of a rule that permitted actors and actresses to save their hair and dress in the Ming style—meaning that actors should shave heads and adopt Manchu-style dress, Ming-style costumes had in fact been legally permitted on stage.<sup>2</sup> In fact, they were acceptable even within the

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<sup>1</sup> Zhao Erxun et al., *Qing shi gao*, 94:2732. For the biography of Nurhaci, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 594-99.

<sup>2</sup> Zhou Xibao, *Zhongguo gudai fushi shi*, p. 450. Jin Zhijun's proposals were known as “*shi cong shi bu cong* 十从十不从”(ten-conformities and ten-unconformities to the Manchu style costumes), that is, “men should while women should not; the living should while the dead should not; the present world should while the underworld should not; officials should while clerks should not; adults should while children should not; scholars should while Buddhists and Taoists should not; courtesans should while actors/actresses should not; inaugurations should while weddings should not; the dynastic title should while official titles should not; taxes and corvée should while the language and script should not.” Clearly the last two-conformities and two-unconformities are not related to costumes. Jin Zhijun surrendered to the Manchus in Beijing in 1644. For his life, see Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp. 160-61. Cen Dali thinks that “*shi cong shi bu cong*” was just imagined and circulated by some Han-Chinese scholars nostalgic for Ming style costumes and that what they imagined was inconsistent in some aspects with the realities during the Qing period. See Cen Dali, *Zhongguo fashi xisu* (Kunming: Yunnan jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), pp. 109-10. Hua Mei thinks that “*shi cong shi bu cong*” was implemented as an unwritten regulation. See Hua Mei, *Fushi yu Zhongguo wenhua*, p. 305.

Manchu imperial court.<sup>3</sup> During the celebration of Emperor Kangxi's sixtieth birthday in 1713 there were lots of performances of plays in Beijing, in all of which displayed actors and actresses wore Ming-style costumes, as is evident in woodblocks that illustrate the celebrations. (See *Figure 3*)

Based on this Manchu tolerance of certain Chinese cultural activities and the scholars' interpretations of these performance elements, it is safe to say that use of Ming-style costumes onstage was permitted during the whole Qing era. Even in 1781, a time when Emperor Qianlong's censorship intensified, a memorial submitted by the Governor of Jiangxi suggested that a play titled *Hongmensi* 红门寺 (Red Gate Temple) be banned because the performers wore Manchu style costumes.<sup>4</sup> This suggests performers rarely wore Manchu-style costumes, and even though performances of plays were often censored because of their political and ethical content or even their regional identity,<sup>5</sup> Chinese music and Ming-style costumes maintained a strong stage presence throughout the Qing period.

#### *From Political Loyalists to Cultural Loyalists*

As argued in Chapter Two, Li Mingrui remained independent from the strife between the Donglin faction and eunuch partisans during the Ming period, although he sympathized with the former. Though his political independence may have interfered with his official

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<sup>3</sup> For an introduction about performances of Kun opera in the Manchu imperial court in the early Qing, see Dolby, *A History of Chinese Drama*, pp. 130-34.

<sup>4</sup> "Qianlong sishiliu nian Jiangxi xunfu Hao Shuo fuzou zunzhi chaban xiju wei'ai ziju 乾隆四十六年江西巡抚郝硕覆奏遵旨查办戏剧违碍字句" (In Qianlong 46 [1781], following the edict, the Governor of Jiangxi censored the taboo words and expressions in plays), in Wang Liqi, ed., *Yuan Ming Qing san dai jin hui xiaoshuo xiqu shiliao* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), p. 116.

<sup>5</sup> For the national and local laws and regulations about the censorship and prohibition of plays from 1644-1795, see Wang Liqi, ed., *Xiaoshuo xiqu jinhui shiliao*, pp. 18-53, 95-118.

career in the Ming, it had no negative impact on his social status and his relations with other scholars in the early Qing. Li was forced to take a post as the right vice-minister of rites under the Manchu regime for several months, directing the ritual ceremony for Emperor Chongzhen and his Empress. Despite this service, he was not viewed as a Ming loyalist by other scholars, but maintained good relations with some firm Ming loyalists and considerable fame among his contemporaries.

The original burden of the term “Ming loyalist” was political. In the late nineteenth century, Han-Chinese revolutionaries infused the term with radically racist meanings and used it to express their struggle in the years leading to the 1911 Revolution.<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, spectatorship as discussed in this study reveals how relations between Ming loyalists and scholars who served both the Ming and Qing during this transitional period were grounded in shared cultural interests, and endured *despite* their different political choices. In a case study of Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲 (1610-95) and Lü Liuliang 吕留良 (1629-83), Tom Fisher argues that with the triumph of the Manchu forces and the fall of the Southern Ming, many Ming loyalists behaved differently as a result of the political choices they made, and their relations between other scholars suffered from this. For example, Huang Zongxi kept close friendships with powerful officials and “allowed his historical materials and son to contribute to the compilation of the official Ming History” although he refused to cooperate overtly with the new regime. Lü Liuliang, on the other hand, became a fundamentalist ethnic loyalist and rejected any relation with Qing officialdom or with anyone tainted by such associations, including his close friend Huang.<sup>7</sup> However, scholars from both groups—fundamentalist

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<sup>6</sup> Struve, *The Ming-Qing Conflict*, pp. 88-95.

<sup>7</sup> Tom Fisher, “Loyalist Alternatives in the Early Ch'ing,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 44.1 (June 1984): 83-122.

loyalists and those cooperating with the new regime—contributed much to Chinese literature, history, and philosophy, in their response to the Ming collapse.<sup>8</sup> Preserving Chinese culture was more important than restoring the fallen regime.

This is expressed clearly by a famous Ming loyalist Gu Yenwu 顾炎武 (1613-82), who submitted himself “tacitly” to the new regime, maintained friendships with those loyal to the Ming, and had friends and relatives who served the Manchus.<sup>9</sup> Gu differentiated between the destruction of *guo* 国 (nation) and *tianxia* 天下 (world):

There is destruction of the *guo* and destruction of the *tianxia*. Between destruction of the *guo* and destruction of the *tianxia* what distinction should be made? “Change the surname, alter the style”—that is a description of the destruction of *guo*. The widespread dominion of benevolence and righteousness decayed into the rule of beast-eating-man, and men and leaders eating each-other—this is a description of the destruction of *tianxia*.<sup>10</sup>

有亡国，有亡天下。亡国与亡天下奚辨？曰，易姓改号，谓之亡国；仁义充塞，而至于率兽食人，人将相食，谓之亡天下。

Thus, *tianxia* refers to a cultural body, a “traditionally accepted ideal of civilization”.<sup>11</sup> It is not the nation, but the culture and civilization, that is believed to have a moral claim on man’s loyalties, since “as for defending the *tianxia*, the average common man shares [this]

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<sup>8</sup> Scholarship was one important outlet for the surviving loyalists frustrated by the failure of the military resistances against the Manchu forces. For the Ming loyalists’ contributions to Chinese history and philosophy in their response to the collapse of the Ming house, see Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Great Enterprise*, pp.1082-99.

<sup>9</sup> Willard J. Peterson, “The life of Ku Yen-wu (1613-1682),” Part I, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 28 (1968): 148-54; Part II, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 29 (1969): 213-26.

<sup>10</sup> Gu Yanwu, *Ri zhi lu ji shi*, ed. Huang Rucheng (n.p., 1834), 13:5b. The English translation is cited, with a little revision, from Joseph R. Levenson, “*T’ien-hsia* and *kuo*, and the ‘transvaluation of values’,” *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 11.4 (August 1952): 449.

<sup>11</sup> Levenson, “*T’ien-hsia* and *kuo*,” p. 451.

responsibility 保天下者，匹夫之贱，与有责焉耳矣。”<sup>12</sup> Gu Yanwu's views of culture and nation are similar to those of Li Kai and Qian Qianyi cited at the end of Chapter Six.

Furthermore, this was echoed by the common preference of these spectator groups—whether directly stated or implicitly—for Chinese cultural activities, which were symbolized for them by the Ming Dynasty.

That said, I prefer to use the term “cultural loyalists,” rather than “Ming loyalists,” to describe the spectators covered in this thesis, including those loyal to the Ming and those who served under the Manchus. The cultural loyalists remained devoted to Chinese ideas, promoting the culture in which they had been raised and defending its superiority to Manchu culture. Through their praise of Chinese music and Ming-style stage costumes, the spectators of Li Mingrui's private troupe sustained the popularity of these performance elements into the society of the High Qing.

Yu Yingshi uses the term “*wenhua yimin* 文化遗民” (cultural refugee) to describe Chen Yinke's 陈寅恪 (1890-1969) attitude towards the Communist authorities in China, who were widely viewed as having destroyed traditional Chinese culture.<sup>13</sup> I use the term “cultural loyalist” to refer to the Han-Chinese literati who felt cultural nostalgia for the Ming despite their different political standing in the early Qing. Yu Yingshi uses the term “*wenhua yimin*” to refer to Chinese cultural conservationists who encountered Marxism and other Western ideologies, while my term refers to Ming (i.e., Han-Chinese) cultural conservationists during the Ming-Qing transition when the Han-Chinese and Manchu cultures were intermingling.

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<sup>12</sup> Gu Yanwu, *Ri zhi lu ji shi*, 13:6a; Levenson, “*T'ien-hsia and kuo*,” p. 449. The English translation is cited, with a little revision, from Levenson, p. 449.

<sup>13</sup> See Yu Yingshi, *Chen Yinke wannian shi wen shi zheng* (Taipei: Shibao wenhua, 1984), pp. 9-20, esp. 15.

The Mongols established Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) to dominate entire China after the fall of the Southern Song, and the Manchus founded the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) as the second regime of non-Han people over the Middle Kingdom after the Ming collapse. The Han-Chinese scholars during the Ming-Qing transition encountered the political and cultural dilemmas similar to ones that faced their ancestors during the Song-Yuan transition. That similarity partly explains why Chen Hongxu edited and Qian Qianyi planned to edit lists of Song loyalists, with intentions to illustrate their refusals to cooperate with and cultural attitudes towards the new regime.<sup>14</sup> Like the spectators studied in this thesis, Han-Chinese scholars also made different political choices after the collapse of the Southern Song—to remain loyal to the fallen dynasty or to serve the new regime.<sup>15</sup> But in the context of the reunification under the Mongolian regime, Han-Chinese scholars still contributed much to the continuity of traditions and innovations in Han-Chinese civilization, arts, and culture.<sup>16</sup> That continuous thriving of Chinese culture, according to John D. Langlois, provided the seventeenth-century Han-Chinese scholars interested in the Yuan history with “a kind of psychological solace or compensation” for the culture’s military weakness and more important, with a belief in its universality and continuity—which Langlois calls “Chinese culturalism.”<sup>17</sup> The culturalistic values “could easily generate contradictory behavior

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<sup>14</sup> Zhao Erxun et al., *Qing shi gao*, 484:13320-21. Qian Qianyi, “Shu Guang Song yimin lu hou,” in *Muzhai youxue ji*, p. 1607.

<sup>15</sup> For an informative survey of Song loyalism in the early Yuan, see Jennifer W. Jay, *A Change in Dynasties: Loyalism in Thirteenth-Century China* (Bellingham: Center for East Asian Studies of Western Washington University, 1991). In his case study of the southern Han-Chinese scholars, Yan-shuan Lao describes their cooperation with the Mongolian rulers in the early Yuan. See Yan-shuan Lao, “Southern Chinese Scholars and Educational Institutions in Early Yüan: Some Preliminary Remarks,” in *China under Mongol Rule*, ed. John D. Langlois, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), pp. 107-33.

<sup>16</sup> Some scholars of the Yuan history argue the unbroken traditions and innovations in Chinese culture under the Mongols. See Langlois, *China under Mongol Rule*.

<sup>17</sup> Langlois, “Chinese Culturalism and the Yuan Analogy: Seventeenth-Century Perspectives,”

depending on how one applied or interpreted [them],”<sup>18</sup> and explain why some Han-Chinese literati denied the legitimacy of a non-Han regime while others accepted and supported it. Undoubtedly, Li Mingrui and his associates shared the culturalistic values—the belief in Han-Chinese culture despite their different political choice. “Chinese culturalism” can be viewed as the notion shared by the “cultural loyalists.”

### *Scholars and Performers/Courtesans during the Transitional Period*

In Chinese history, during a transition from prosperity to decline, or from one dynasty to another one, performers and courtesans who survived the transition could be nostalgic reminders of prosperity of the fallen dynasty. During the An Lushan Rebellion, Li Guinian’s songs reminded scholars of Xuanzong’s reign; after the collapse of the Northern Song, the famous courtesan Li Shishi 李师师 (fl. 13<sup>th</sup> century) was said to have wandered about the Jiangnan region with “a pair of hardwood clappers,” singing songs for the scholars living there so that they would remember the conquered territory of the Northern Song.<sup>19</sup> Such a function of performance elements re-appeared during the transition from Ming to Qing, as I have shown in this thesis.

According to Frederic Wakeman, for Ming loyalists, performers and courtesans themselves in the early Qing often served as beautiful but sad reminders of lost prosperity, and their relations with Ming loyalists would produce more poetic appreciation and aesthetic sensibilities in poetry and plays about the loss of a kingdom (usually symbolizing the

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*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40.2 (December 1980): 355-59.

<sup>18</sup> Langlois, “Chinese Culturalism,” p. 357.

<sup>19</sup> For Li Shishi’s wanderings in Jiangnan, see Zhang Bangji, *Mozhuang manlu*, in *Congshu jicheng chu bian* (Changsha: Shangwu yishuguan, 1939), vol. 3, p. 90.



Ming).<sup>20</sup> In her study of how and why the heroic woman images were created in the early Qing poems and plays, Wai-yee Li argues that literary representations of heroic women, including courtesans, “encompass the authors’ apology, nostalgia, regrets, self-definition, and historical judgment, inseparable from their memory of and reflections on the traumatic dynastic transition.”<sup>21</sup> Actually, as Kang-I Sun Chang argues in her study of Chen Zilong: “after the fall of the Ming, the courtesan became a metaphor for the loyalist poets’ vision of themselves,” since “both the loyalist and the courtesan [experienced] similar dramatic reversals after the dynastic fell and had to make similar decisions regarding their public and private roles.”<sup>22</sup> In Ming loyalists’ descriptions, talented and beautiful courtesans symbolized freedom, self-creation, the possibility of heroic action, and also embodied elite cultural ideals.<sup>23</sup>

This may have been true for the authors and readers of poetry of this period, but for the spectators of plays studied in this thesis, performances in Ming-style costumes and accompanied by Chinese music were potent political and cultural symbols, which stirred their nostalgia for the fallen Ming and strengthened their belief in Chinese culture.

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<sup>20</sup> Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Great Enterprise*, p. 1078.

<sup>21</sup> Wai-yee Li, “Heroic transformations: women and national trauma in early Qing literature,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 59.2 (December 1999): 364.

<sup>22</sup> Kang-I Sun Chang, *The Late-Ming Poet Ch’en Tzu-lung* (New haven & London: Yale University, 1991), p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> Wai-Yee Li, “The Late Ming Courtesan: Invention of a Cultural Ideal,” in *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*, eds. Ellen Widmer and Kang-I Sun Chang (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 46-73. Paul S. Ropp, Dorothy Ko, and Ellen Widmer also discuss literati’s identification with courtesans in the late Ming and early Qing, see Paul S. Ropp, “Ambiguous Images of Courtesan Culture in Late Imperial China;” Dorothy Ko, “The Written Word and the Bound Foot: a History of the Courtesan’s Aura;” Ellen Widmer, “Ming Loyalism and the Woman’s Voice in Fiction after *Honglou meng*,” in *Writing Women*, pp. 17-45; 74-100; 366-96.

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