

©Copyright 2012
Hsiao-wen Cheng

Traveling Stories and Untold Desires:
Female Sexuality in Song China, 10th-13th Centuries

Hsiao-wen Cheng

A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2012

Reading Committee:

Patricia B. Ebrey, Chair

R. Kent Guy

Tani E. Barlow

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

History

University of Washington

Abstract

Traveling Stories and Untold Desires:
Female Sexuality in Song China, 10th-13th Centuries

Hsiao-wen Cheng

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:

Professor Patricia B. Ebrey

History

This dissertation examines the historicity of female sexuality during the Song dynasty (960-1279), a time period when print technology, popular culture, and commercial activities had begun to boom yet prior to the emergence of a market for women's writings. It is both an intellectual history—to trace the changing and conflicting conceptualizations of female sexuality in both elite and popular discourses, and a social history—to look for the possible space and resources for women to negotiate autonomy over their sexual bodies and explore their desires. This dissertation proposes an approach—both academically and politically useful—to study the history of women, gender, and sexuality in premodern China in search of women's agency and possibilities of transgression using only extant sources written by elite men. That is, I treat my

sources as multivocal and inspirational in order to emphasize the contradictory nature of intellectual discourses and social norms on the one hand, and popular appropriations of “traveling stories” and “circulating knowledge” on the other. I seek to examine the historical *process* of the formation of norms concerning female sexuality during this critical period in Chinese history, the nuances of “queerness” and transgressiveness in my source materials, and the ways that Song Dynasty culture and women’s behaviors and practices related to their sexual bodies mutually defined each other.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Figures.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Chapter I: Traveling Stories: Multivocality and Vitality of Song Anecdotes.....	18
1. A new methodology: Faithful recording	
2. An old tradition: <i>Yijian zhi</i> and earlier <i>zhiguai</i> works	
3. Itinerary: Informants, transmitters, listeners	
4. Fragments and inconsistencies	
5. Contradictory and ambiguous moral codes	
6. Implications and applications	
Chapter II: Circulating Knowledge: The Use and Limit of Medicine.....	51
1. The framework	
2. Who's knowledge?	
3. Women in medical practice	
4. The limit of medicine	
Chapter III: Medicine, Exorcism, and Beyond: Contending Treatments of Sexual Desire and the Female Body.....	82
1. Pathologizing the “single <i>yin</i> ”	
1.1 Female sexuality in pre-Song medicine and the Bedchamber tradition	
1.2 Song development	
2. Desire, intercourse, pregnancy: Unstable categories	
3. The enchanted and possessed: Divergence from the medical models	
3.1 Active respondents: Cases from the Six Dynasties	
3.2 The dynamics in sexual possession and exorcism: Cases from <i>Yijian zhi</i>	
4. Desiring women in the Song	
Chapter IV: Deviant Viewers and Gendered Looks: Erotic Responses to Images and Song Visual Culture.....	124
1. Masterpieces vs. magic paintings: Living images in art criticism	
2. Deities step in: Miraculous icons in the Song	
3. Gendered looks: Two stories from the late Tang	
4. Deviant viewers in <i>Yijian zhi</i>	
5. Beyond masculine looks	
Chapter V: Untold Desires: Religious Women and a Potential Queer Space.....	157
1. In search of a women's queer history of premodern China	

2.	Stories before the Song	
2.1	Sixth-century Buddhist record: <i>Lives of the Nuns</i>	
2.2	Daoist attitudes toward marriage and sex	
2.3	Daoist women before the Song	
3.	The curious case of Pei Xuanjing	
4.	Canonical hagiographies and popular anecdotes: Textual interaction and popular intervention	
5.	New strategies, new details: New “queer space” for women in the Song	
6.	Two fake female immortals	
	Conclusion.....	196
	Bibliography.....	217

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Number	Page
1. Dunhuang, Cave 254.....	203
2. Dunhuang, Cave 254 (Detail).....	203
3. Dunhuang, Cave 248.....	204
4. Dunhuang, Cave 288.....	205
5. Dunhuang, Cave 428.....	206
6. Dunhuang, Cave 290.....	207
7a. Celestial King of the East, Dunhuang Cave 100.....	208
7b. Celestial King of the North, Dunhuang Cave 100.....	208
7c. Celestial King of the South, Dunhuang Cave 100.....	209
7d. Celestial King of the West, Dunhuang Cave 100.....	209
8. Hariti niche, Beimen Cave 122.....	210
8a. Hariti niche, Beimen Cave 122 (Detail).....	210
9. Hariti Niche, Shimenshan Niche no.9.....	211
9a. Hariti Niche, Shimenshan Niche no.9 (Detail).....	211
10. Beast-Feeding Mother, Dazu.....	212
11. <i>The Skeleton Puppet Master</i> (<i>Kulou huanxi tu</i> 骷髏幻戲圖).....	213
12. The Peddler and Playing Children (<i>Shidan yingxi tu</i> 市擔嬰戲圖).....	214
13. Zhao Zhifeng and His Disciples, Dazu.....	215
14. Master Fu, Dazu.....	216
14a. Master Fu, Dazu.....	216

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I take the process of writing this acknowledgement a reminder of how privileged I have been along the journey, which began with my mother's open-mindedness and full support of me choosing a "non-profitable" major when entering college. As an honor student in college, she once had the dream of pursuing a graduate degree abroad, but the circumstances had not allowed her to do so. If I have ever become more hard-working (against my lazy tendency), it is because I came to realize how many resources have been drawn to support me. And if I receive any reward, it is largely because of my privileged position and those who guide and assist me, and I shall remember my responsibility of assisting others and promoting rights and equality.

My deepest gratitude goes to Professor Patricia Ebrey, whom I always feel so fortunate to study with. She has turned me into a real historian and has been the source of so much of my knowledge and inspiration. I am grateful to Professor Kent Guy, Tani Barlow, Susan Shih-shan Huang, Madeleine Yue Dong, and Kyoko Tokuno at UW. They are not simply my intellectual mentors but also my role models. Professor Guy has shown me how fascinating the way Chinese history can be presented especially in lecture class. Professor Barlow has led me to the realm of queer and sexuality studies and challenged me with questions that I had never thought of. Susan has always been so supportive and caring about me in numerous ways ever since I entered the program; she has imparted to me strong interest in the history of images. I have received immense help and support from Professor Dong especially during the last two years; I saw a whole new "China" in her modern Chinese history class. Professor Tokuno has comforted me with the words of wisdom when I felt the most depressed. It is simply impossible here for me to recount all the wonderful things I have received from my professors. Special thanks go to my

reading committee: Patricia Ebrey, Kent Guy, and Tani Barlow for their meticulous reading of the entire manuscript and insightful comments. For their feedback on drafts of this and related work, I am also grateful to Professor Michael Szonyi, Eugenia Lean, Rania Huntington, Robert Hymes, Antonia Chao, Angelina Chin, Yujen Liu, Howard Chiang, Jen-Hao Walter Hsu, Robban Toleno, and Jason Chan.

Portions of the research and writing for this dissertation were funded by the Hsiao Fellowship in the UW China Studies Program, UW History Departmental Fellowships, Aldon Duane Bell Award for Women's History, UW Graduate School Dissertation Fellowship, China Time Cultural Foundation Young Scholar Award, Hsing Tien Kong Culture and Education Development Foundation Scholarship, and Academia Sinica's Fellowship for Doctoral Candidate. I particularly would like to thank Professor Jender Lee for her kind sponsorship during the most productive year (2011-2012) of my writing in the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica.

Many friends and classmates have provided intellectual and emotional support over the years: Sumei Yi, Jeong Won Hyun, Erin Brightwell, Cheng-shi Shiu, Chong Eun Ahn, Juned Shaikh, Li Yang, Gladys Ge Jian, Yu Huang, Hsun-hui Tseng, Jason Chan, Chad Garcia, Xi Chen, Xiaolin Duan, Tzu-yu Lin, Wenjuan Zhao, Chilan Ta, Michelle Kleisath, Yu-hsuan Su, Pei-ching Liu, Shuxuan Zhou, Leonar Yiong, and Paulina Yang. My life in Seattle has been vibrant because of them. I would also like to extend my thanks to those pleasant and critical minds at Academia Sinica: Yujen Liu, Chih-hua Chiang, Howard Chiang, Jen-Hao Walter Hsu, Wayne Soon, Joe Lawson, Harry Wu, Tomoya Yamaguchi, Robban Toleno, and Angelina Chin.

I owe special gratitude to Professor Chang-pwu Hsia and Hsiyuan Chen, who had taught me how to do research and encouraged me to study abroad in the first place; my parents, for their

unconditional love; and Angelina, for her company and support during the final stage of my writing, as well as introducing me to the practice of meditation and the wisdom of transitoriness, being mindful and compassionate.

Introduction

This dissertation examines the historicity of female sexuality during the Song dynasty (960-1279), a time period when print technology, popular culture, and commercial activities had begun to boom yet prior to the emergence of a market for women's writings. It is both an intellectual history—to trace the changing and conflicting conceptualizations of female sexuality in both elite and popular discourses, and a social history—to look for the possible space and resources for women to negotiate autonomy over their sexual bodies and explore their desires. This dissertation proposes an approach—both academically and politically useful—to study the history of women, gender, and sexuality in premodern China in search of women's agency and possibilities of transgression using only extant sources written by elite men. That is, I treat my sources as multivocal and inspirational in order to emphasize the contradictory nature of intellectual discourses and social norms on the one hand, and popular appropriations of “traveling stories” and “circulating knowledge” on the other. I seek to examine the historical *process* of the formation of norms concerning female sexuality during this critical period in Chinese history, the nuances of “queerness” and transgressiveness in my source materials, and the ways that Song Dynasty culture and women's behaviors and practices related to their sexual bodies mutually defined each other.

*

I began this project by reading anecdotes concerning popular uses of and discussions about medicine from the Song dynasty, times when prescriptions for women multiplied,

treatments for women developed into a separate division in medicine, and the government commissioned compilations of medical books and distributed them in print.¹ I looked for records of women vis-à-vis medicine—how they deal with their own bodies as patients and with others’ as advisers or even causes of the illnesses. I encountered stories like these: a female ghost instructs her lover what medicine to take to recover from the physical damage caused by his contact with her; a woman has a relationship with a ghost-deity and yet is not said to have any physical illness as a result of the contact; a sick woman argues with her doctor over her prescription, and her opinion is later proven correct; a woman of the imperial family, when being harassed by ghosts in dreams, is praised for praying to her ancestral shrine for help instead of seeking medicinal or exorcist treatments. I found in those anecdotes not only that women play active roles in treating their own and sometimes others’ bodies, but also that there is often more than one possible treatment or solution for almost every case. What does harm to a person in one story may simply be irrelevant in another. The ways that people understand what happens around them also tend to vary from person to person. I came to realize two things: that intellectual discourse (or intellectual men’s discourse on women’s bodies) may not be the only thing that historians can take from such texts, and that there is never simply one kind of “discourse.” Particularly, although my texts, as passed down, were all written by elite men, I wonder if they could be more than sophisticated narratives edited by their recorders. What if the stories, before and after being written down, did not circulate only among elite men? What if I ask not simply “what do they reflect” but also “what could they inspire”?

All stories are loaded with meanings. No matter whether real or fictional, they always tell us something about people’s lives and thoughts of that time. Stories told by elite men often reveal their fantasies and fears, and their efforts to conquer those fears. In folk tales we also

¹ Furth 1999, Goldschmidt 2009.

constantly find admonishments and moralizing messages. However, once a story circulates, it is exposed to arbitrary interpretations, appropriations, and maneuvers. The possible mutual impact of circulating stories and their contemporary audience caught my attention, and I began to treat Song anecdotes as “traveling stories”—stories that travel across time and space, from one person to another. They can influence and be influenced by their readers/listeners in diverse ways and thus have the potential to inspire and subvert.

To read sources from this angle led me to a subject that has drawn even less attention than women in medicine, one that I once thought almost impossible to study with only sources written by men: female sexuality from women’s perspective. Intriguing anecdotes continued to catch my attention: a prostitute falls in love and starts a relationship with (the spirit of) a temple statue; a girl laments the removal of her deity lover through exorcism; a married woman determined to become a Buddhist nun bravely confronts a senior monk and successfully persuades her family by recounting her dreams; a Daoist woman who makes her living by performing exorcisms and selling talismans cures a possessed girl by staying three nights with her. None of these stories conforms to the theories about female sexuality in Song medical books. They differ in startling ways from *zhiguai* and *chuanqi* works from pre-Song times and literary fiction from the Ming-Qing, as well. This dissertation is therefore an attempt to uncover Song women’s untold desires through such traveling stories and their Song dynasty context.

Structures and norms vs. women’s agency

The Song dynasty provides a curious case in the sense that it is when almost all of the characteristics of later imperial Chinese society began to emerge—in particular, urbanization and commercialization in cities, privatization of land and commodification of agricultural products,

booms in production and circulation of printed books, diversification of popular culture and religion, and the emergence of professional ritual masters and religious services. However, in contrast to the large number of women's writings from the Ming-Qing period, extant textual sources from the Song were overwhelmingly written by men. To excavate women's voices and study sexuality from women's perspectives not through women's writings poses a methodological challenge. With or without women's writings, through sources such as epitaphs, correspondence, *biji* writings, diaries, and materials from new archeological excavations, scholars in the past two decades have put as much effort into highlighting the agency and voice of women in premodern China as into critically analyzing the representations of them.² Current studies on women's history of traditional China seem to have been struggling with the dilemma between emphasizing women's agency and subjectivity and recognizing the limitation of sources.³

In fact, women's writings do not necessarily represent "women's voice," if there is such a thing at all. As Susan Mann demonstrates with the case of elite women from the High Qing, women's writings are just as diverse as men's, and the critical division among writing women in late imperial China ironically conforms to their different positions in or outside of the patriarchal family system.⁴ If in a certain time and space, the elite men centered epistemology dominates the ways in which ideas, experiences, and feelings are understood and expressed, it might not make much difference even if we have women's writings or direct interviews with female informants. Just as Dorothy Ko insightfully points out, there is no "authentic" female voice if the language itself does not serve to convey one's actual feelings; that is why, from Ko's point of

² See for example, Ebrey 1993, 2002; Ko 1994, 2005; Mann 1997, 2007; Cass 1999; X. Li 2002; Z. Li 2009; Judge 2011, Xu 2011.

³ Judge 2011: 7-8.

⁴ Mann 1997: 76-120.

view, modern researchers and interviewers of women with bound feet fail to listen to the “murmurs from within their bodies.”⁵ Ko looks for the bodily experiences in between the “gigantic history of the nation” and the stubborn body of each woman’s bound feet, calling attention to the hybrid nature of its history: “there is not one footbinding but many.”⁶ In this dissertation, I apply the following strategies and try to raise new questions to my source materials:

Firstly, I emphasize the complex nature and vulnerability of socio-intellectual structures and norms. When looking at “discourse,” I argue for the inconsistency in one genre/tradition and contradictions among many. For instance, while some Song doctors considered women who lack sexual contact with men more susceptible to illnesses such as “dreaming of intercourse with ghosts,” in anecdotes there are just as many married women as maidens who are said to be harassed/possessed (sexually) by ghosts/demons for various reasons, none of which has to do with their sexual status. While Song medical books pathologize “*guafu*,” or women without men, hagiographies and popular anecdotes vividly portray images of powerful women starting their religious careers by rejecting marriage or even initiating divorce. Diverse discourses of and treatments for women’s sexual bodies coexisted and contended with one another in Song society. They then became options, resources, and inspirations. Therefore secondly, I highlight the various possible and recorded uses (and misuses) of intellectual and regulative discourses in popular society. To do that, I illustrate the multivocality of “traveling stories” and “circulating knowledge,” trace the evolution of how stories were told from the Six Dynasties to the Song, present evidence of people interpreting and making use of one story in different ways, and argue for the potential of some stories that could be particularly subversive. While many stories

⁵ Ko 2005: 12-13.

⁶ Ko 2005: 2.

delineate the limitation of women's lives and space, I call attention to the flaws and the historical formation of those attempts to confine them. I argue that the possibility of transgression and subversion lies not in one particularly unusual story but the discrepant juxtaposition of many, the chinks that emerge as contending discourses confront each other, and the dynamics generated as stories and knowledge circulate. Lastly, I inquire into the impact on Song society and culture made by women's efforts to pursue bodily autonomy and to extend the boundaries of their desire. I will argue, for instance, that many practices and beliefs in Song popular religion—such as the physical manifestation of religious images, narration of one's dreams and spiritual journeys, models of female immortals and transcendents (immortals who were once humans)—had something to do with women's expressions of desire and their uses of religious resources. People's imagination of female immortals and religious experience was in constant dialogue with women's strategies to confront the family system and patriarchal structure.

To see the flaws in structures and norms and the possibilities in women's agency, I have to not only compare sources of different genres that are oftentimes separately studied, but also to challenge my own heteronormative assumptions.

Female sexuality, premodern China, and Queer methodology

Sexuality, as Michel Foucault, Jeffery Weeks, and many others have demonstrated, is a “very real historical formation,” as well as a “fictional unity.”⁷ The significance of “queer studies” is to challenge sexual norms that are/have been taken for granted and the social structures and epistemology based on those norms, as well as to reveal those expressions, behaviors, life styles, and identities that are considered “queer” under the rubric of “norm.” Karma Lochrie traces the shifting concept of “norm” in late nineteenth-early twentieth centuries

⁷ Weeks 2003: 6; Foucault 1990: 157.

along with the rise of the science of statistics: the combination of the two meanings of “normal,” one “describes a statistical regularity derived from quantitative analysis” and the other “an evaluation judgment attached to a model or type.”⁸ In medieval Europe, however, the most morally correct is often the minority.⁹ It is only after the twentieth century when “heterosexuality” becomes the scientifically “normal” category, and heteronormativity began to dominate our understanding of sex, gender, and human relations. It is thus both significant and challenging to study sexuality in times when modern sexual norms did not exist. The challenge, as the editors of *Constructing Medieval Sexuality* point out, is to look at the time period “without presentist assumptions yet without forfeiting the tools of contemporary theories of sexuality.”¹⁰ And the significance lies in those phenomena, expressions, and possibilities that have been overlooked and misplaced under modern sexual categories, and the *histories* of premodern sexual norms.

Scholars have been studying female sexuality in premodern China using several different but related approaches. Particularly noteworthy are critical analyses of the gender system and gender symbolism embedded in productions of elite men, as well as serious consideration of the genre and the historical context of sources. Charlotte Furth, for example, upon criticizing R. H. van Gulik’s *Sexual Life in Ancient China* as an Orientalist projection of the modernist concept of sex as “natural” onto the ancient Chinese world, insightfully points out that both in ancient manuals of “bedchamber arts” (*fangshu* 房術 or *fangzhong shu* 房中術) and in later medical texts, sexual pleasure always serves as “a means to other ends”—for men’s physical health (*yangsheng* 養生, or “nourishment of life”) as in earlier texts, or for successful conception (*qiuzi*

⁸ Lochrie 2005: 3. Interestingly, the modern Chinese term for normal, the compound “*zhengchang*” 正常 (correct and common) precisely reflects this semantic combination.

⁹ See for example, Lochrie 1997, 2005, Schultz 2006.

¹⁰ Lochrie 1997: ix.

求子, *zhongzi* 種子, or “begetting sons”) as in later texts. While van Gulik (mis-)interprets the bedchamber manuals as providing instructions for men to please women, a notion corresponding to the modern idea of sex liberation, Furth, through successful contextualization, argues that the ancient bedchamber arts are only for men’s use as methods of bodily cultivation, especially for aristocratic men with plenty of young women as “sexual handmaidens.” The core of bedchamber arts thus lies in men’s control over women’s and their own bodies, and the power of control the critical signifier of gender difference.¹¹ Texts of bedchamber arts, first catalogued under philosophical schools of thoughts (such as the *yin-yang* school or the school of the Five Phases) in Han Dynasty bibliographies, were incorporated into medicine after Sui-Tang times. Sexual techniques for the purpose of “nourishing life” became increasingly marginalized, while instructions for sexual intercourse in medical books from late imperial times are largely centered around procreation—“begetting sons” or “the multiplication of descendants” (*guangsi* 廣嗣).¹² Furth’s critical reading of bedchamber manuals and medical books is illuminating and has demonstrated the problem of the presentist romanticization in studying sexuality in premodern China. However, to rely heavily on medical texts and to relate premodern Chinese discussions of sexuality solely in terms of its physical functions may overlook the limit of medicine and the significance of other voices.¹³ Current scholarship on gender in traditional Chinese medicine

¹¹ Furth 1994: 131-132. Van Gulik’s approach was still living in the China studies field when Furth criticized it. Douglas Wiles’ 1992 book, for example, looks for practical inspirations through constructing/imagining a Chinese sexology: “As Western culture begins to ask itself, ‘Now that we can do anything we want, what do we want to do?’ Chinese sexual yoga arrives with a fresh perspective that will stimulate even the most seasoned sinologists and jaded satyrs” (Wile 1992: 3).

¹² Furth 1994: 131-32.

¹³ In Furth’s 1994 article, medicine seems to be taken for granted as “the orthodox discourse empowered to speak of such things” (Furth 1994: 144). Furth has incorporated other sources in comparison with medical texts in her later works, as do some other scholars studying late imperial times. Interestingly, as a result of their research, non-medical sources from late imperial China tend to support medical theories on gender and sexuality (Furth 1999, Zeitlin 2007, Chen 2011). Furth comes to the conclusion that in Ming times, “the diffused nature of medical authority, the domestic setting of practice, and the dialogical basis of diagnosis all fostered a medical culture where the idiom of illness was a shared property, not cut off from the language of everyday experience” (Furth 1999: 304).

focuses predominantly focuses on issues of reproduction.¹⁴ It is true that in traditional Chinese medical texts issues of sexuality are almost always discussed within the context of reproduction. Yet overestimating the authority of medicine in traditional China may lead to problematic readings of other sources.¹⁵ Just as we need to demystify the modern imagination of ancient China as a sex utopia, we also need to not assume the (modern) authority of medicine in explaining matters of the human body in premodern China. Furthermore, as I will argue in the third chapter, even in the medical tradition, the reproductive body and the sexual body have not always been the same. The combination of the two was a result of some Song doctors' selective (and also problematic) incorporation of earlier texts.

Literature scholars, on the other hand, focus on literary representations of sex and sexual desire and reveal a different side of the story that technical texts do not tell—romance, lust, relationships, struggles, fears, and fantasies. Rania Huntington's study of foxes and Judith Zeitlin's of ghosts in Ming-Qing literature, for example, examine the gender factor in considering human being's association with vixens and female ghosts—two kinds of supernatural beings that are often associated with sex and sexual desire.¹⁶ The remedy of a wild, dangerous, and sometimes mysterious sexual encounter in elite men's literary works (especially those well-structured ones from late imperial times) is often the incorporation of the female “other” into the family system, sometimes through successful conception of a human baby.¹⁷ Tze-lan Sang compares late imperial literary representations of female-female intimate relations

That is different from my observation of sources from the Song.

¹⁴ To name a few, Dikötter 1995, Z. Li 1997, Bray 1997, Furth 1999, Lee 2003, Wu 2010. Dikötter's book mainly deals with the Republican period yet constantly refers to “traditional medicine” of the Qing times.

¹⁵ For example, Dikötter's reading of Dai Zhen (Dikötter 1995: 64-66).

¹⁶ Huntington 2000, 2003; Zeitlin 2007.

¹⁷ Zeitlin 2007: 35-36. This formula had been there since the Song (see, for example, the account “The Son of Hu” (胡氏子) in *Yijian zhi yi*.9.255), but it was not typical, nor were there many cases like such. In pre-Song texts, that female ghosts become pregnant and give birth to human babies only happens in one kind of case: The wife dies without leaving any progeny and so comes back to fulfill the mission (Yan 1994: 125, Mai 1997: 101).

written by men and by women, pointing out the trivialization of female same-sex desire in men's writings and the limited expressions of it in women's writings. Male writers fantasize love and desire among women as either a cure to women's jealousy in a polygamous marriage or an imperfect, temporary substitute for sex between men and women. Female writers, on the other hand, even though boldly depicting women attracted to women, cannot go into physical details as male writers do in depicting sex between men.¹⁸

We know much more about the intellectual discourse on women, gender, and sexuality in premodern China than people of van Gulik's time. Scholars are sensitive to the genre and the context of their sources, aware of the androcentric concerns and how that serves to maintain the patriarchal system.¹⁹ However, as in the field of medieval Europe, we can also see the impact of heteronormativity in the studies on premodern Chinese sexuality. For instance, as Tze-lan Sang attempts for a "useful genealogy of for ethnic Chinese lesbians" since late imperial times,²⁰ her limitation of the search scope to "female same-sex relations" weakens her argument about the "emergence of (the concept of) lesbianism" in the early twentieth century—if lesbianism is a modern invention coming along with the attempt to redefine women's sexual body by means of modern science, why exclude other possible forms of female sexuality that might challenge the dichotomy of hetero- and homosexuality? Another example is Hsiu-fen Chen's equation of "women's lack of sexual contact with men" and "women's sexual frustration,"²¹ which I discuss in Chapter Three.

Nonetheless, studying sexuality in a different time and place inevitably creates another modern construction. The point is made this way in the case of medieval Europe:

¹⁸ Sang 2003.

¹⁹ In addition to works mentioned above, see also Goldin 2002

²⁰ Sang 2003: 40.

²¹ Chen 2011.

“Sexuality” designates a domain that is of interest to us today, and that interest has led us to look back to the Middle Ages to find phenomena that answer to it. In this sense, the object of study, medieval sexuality, is a modern construction.²²

In addition to recognizing my own limitation in terms of modern preconceptions, my goals of this research are thus to look at the unstable categories concerning female sexuality and the processes of their historical formation, and to search for those women’s practices, behaviors, and desires that resist “normal” solutions and comprehension.

Sources

My central source materials are anecdotes from Song times. Collections of anecdotes are traditionally categorized as *biji* 筆記—literati’s miscellaneous jottings, a genre that became popular during the Song along with the growing book market. The content of these books is diverse: from study notes, travel writings, quasi-fiction, comments on politics and daily life, to anecdotes about their contemporaries. Among these books, I draw the most heavily on Hong Mai’s (1123-1202) *Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 (*Record of the Listener*), not simply because it is one of the most substantial anecdote collections from the Song, but also because of its distinct genre. It originally contained thirty-two volumes (eighteen of them are lost), published one after one during the last thirty years of the twelfth century.²³ Stories recorded in *Yijian zhi* often involve the unusual and marvelous.²⁴ Yet in the preface to the second volume, Hong Mai consciously draws a line between earlier works of *zhiguai* 志怪 (records of the strange), which he describes as “*yuyan*” 寓言 (allegory), and his own work, which he stresses is based on reliable and

²² Lochrie 1997: ix.

²³ For detailed studies on the textual history of *Yijian zhi*, see Inglis 2006, 2007.

²⁴ But not all of them are about the “supernatural” in our modern understanding.

contemporary (“no older than sixty years” 遠不過一甲子) sources that were passed down by “ears and eyes,” that is, oral and written sources.²⁵

Scholars have relied heavily on *Yijian zhi* accounts to explore aspects of Song society that are not as well documented in other kinds of sources. And it is generally agreed that Hong Mai’s *Yijian zhi*, although similar in appearance, represents an essentially different genre from the *zhiguai* or *chuanqi* 傳奇 (tales of the marvelous) traditions, and that his sources were contemporary men and women of a wide social spectrum. However, it is still debatable to what extent Hong’s “record” reflects the voices of his informants, especially since the stories are still written in literary Chinese.²⁶ Yet the literary Chinese is often mediocre, a point criticized by some of Hong’s contemporaries. Hong defended himself against this charge in one of the prefaces:

All volumes of *Yijian zhi* come from hearsay. I simply recorded the words that I was told, even though I knew that they were awkward and contradictory.²⁷

夷堅諸志，皆得之傳聞，苟以其說至，斯受之而已矣，聾牙聾鼻，予蓋自知之。

He also described how obsessive he was with recording what was “exactly in accordance with” what people told him.²⁸ Although we may not naively take Hong’s claim as exactly how it was, Hong’s words at least demonstrate two things: First, he did sacrifice the quality of his writing for faithful recording. Second, his methodology was new to his peer readers. *Yijian zhi* is thus a multivocal text—not in the sense that it is indeed “exactly in accordance with” Hong’s informants’ words, but that it is affected by and part of it belongs to an oral tradition. In other words, Hong is not the only agent in his writing. I will further argue for *Yijian zhi*’s multivocality

²⁵ Preface to *Yizhi*, *Yijian zhi* 185.

²⁶ Hansen 1990: 21.

²⁷ Preface to *Zhidong*, *Yijian zhi* 967.

²⁸ Preface to *Zhigeng*, *Yijian zhi* 1135.

through close textual analysis in the first chapter. Here I turn to explain the usefulness of *Yijian zhi* and other “traveling stories” to this dissertation.

Sources like anecdotes are particularly useful for historians trying to excavate aspects of a society that are not fully reflected in prescriptive texts. Song historians have proposed various ways to justify their uses of *Yijian zhi*, a collection of mostly “supernatural” incidents, as a reliable historical source. Valerie Hansen uses a temple inscription identical to an account in *Yijian zhi* to illustrate the value of *Yijian zhi* as a source for popular belief during the Song.²⁹ Patricia Ebrey contrasts *Yijian zhi* accounts to “generalizing texts” (such as family precepts and ritual guide books), stressing how narratives like *Yijian zhi* reveal real people’s feelings and emotions, and how the authors explain and evaluate the various situations of human relationships.³⁰ Edward Davis uses a theoretical framework to distinguish *Yijian zhi* from *zhiguai* literature: “[I]n [*zhiguai*] homodiegetic techniques (‘I saw this,’ ‘I heard this from...’) serve the largely heterodiegetic end of sheer storytelling, whereas in [*Yijian zhi*] the homodiegetic aim of telling what happened is, on occasion, shaped by heterodiegetic forms.” That is, as I understand it, *zhiguai* are fictional stories framed in realistic settings, whereas *Yijian zhi* aims at recording unusual but true stories. This definition justifies Davis’ use of *Yijian zhi* as one of his crucial sources in studying the practice of spirit-possession rituals in the Song.³¹ Alister Inglis proposes that *Yijian zhi*’s significance lies in “questions of reception”—Song people’s interpretation of those abnormal events, for example—rather than whether such events are real.³²

In line with these scholars, I also look at how anecdotes reflect the descriptive rather than

²⁹ Hansen 1990: 21-23.

³⁰ Ebrey 1993: 10-17.

³¹ Davis 2001:18.

³² Inglis 2006: x.

the prescriptive side of Song people's erotic world and pay attention to the question of reception. To do that, I juxtapose anecdotal stories with rather systematically compiled texts such as medical books, the Song Code, and Buddhist and Daoist hagiographies. While systematic texts provide the intellectual context necessary to understand many of the anecdotes, the anecdotes in turn reveal how intellectual theories and regulative ideologies were circulated, (mis-)used, and appropriated on a popular level.

Going a step further, as proposed at the beginning of this introduction, I treat my sources as “traveling stories,” works that were circulating among people in various forms before and after being written down, and that were affected by and had an impact on the populace at large. As Inglis inspiringly states, if we consider *Yijian zhi* as a work of “oral history,” its stories would “logically reflect the imperfect memories of their informants, variation in detail, as well as the incremental exaggeration that tends to accompany a story's retelling.”³³ This would be true only if Hong Mai intended to keep the imperfect details and not to edit them into a coherent piece.³⁴

Anecdotes are not simply reflections of patriarchal social practices or of elite men's agenda to regulate women's bodies. Rather, they reveal how knowledge from different channels and traditions can be creatively interpreted and used, can inspire and open new possibilities for the ways people live and think about their lives. Similar to thinking of anecdotes as “traveling stories,” I consider other forms of intellectual discourse as “circulating knowledge”—knowledge that circulated in Song society in one way or another and was thus exposed to popular interpretation and appropriation. Traces of such interpretation and appropriation can be found in anecdotes, as well.

³³ Inglis 2006: 2.

³⁴ It seems to contradict Inglis' argument later in his book that Hong Mai's *Yijian zhi* was intended for factual record. Perhaps influenced by that, Inglis mistranslates a critical sentence in one of Hong's prefaces, “I knew that [my accounts] were awkward and contradictory (齟齬舛戾，予蓋自知之),” as “If it was difficult to read or parts were mis-transcribed, I would correct it myself” (Inglis 2006: 40).

Chapters

The first two chapters argue for the multivocality of *Yijian zhi* and several significant Song medical books—two types of sources that scholars would find the most relevant to study Song perceptions of sexuality—and the popular interpretations and uses of them. The first chapter examines the distinct genre of *Yijian zhi*—“faithful recording”—a new methodology developed out of an old anecdotal tradition. I contrast the styles of writing in *Yijian zhi* and in earlier *zhiguai* and *chuanqi* texts, and through close textual analysis I argue that records in *Yijian zhi* preserve the voices of people of various social strata and traces of oral transmission: fragmented and inconsistent details, abrupt endings with no certain explanations as to what is said to have happened, ambiguous and contradictory moral messages, diverse audience responses to one story, and instances of people making use of the “anomalies” commonly seen in anecdotes to disguise their other doings.

Chapter Two explores the all-inclusive nature and the popular uses of Song medical books. I look at how medical texts were compiled, circulated, and used as shown in official records, doctors’ notes, and anecdotes. I pay attention to the popular use of medical knowledge and the encounters between doctors and patients reveals women’s active participation in treating their own (and even others’) bodies, and, more importantly, the limited role of medicine of the “scholarly tradition” in regulating Song people’s understandings and treatments of their bodily disorders. I show how medical knowledge in its circulating forms provided alternatives rather than simply imposed authority.

In Chapter Three, I first trace the historical process of how female sexuality was constructed from the Six Dynasties to the Song, and then compare the contending discourses on

female sexuality in medical books, *zhiguai* literature, and Song anecdotes. I examine the problematic process of pathologizing “women without men” in the medical tradition, the combination of the reproductive and the sexual bodies in Song medicine, the demonization of women’s sexual desire in Song popular religion, and the dynamics of sexual possession and exorcism as seen in *Yijian zhi*.

The last two chapters are two case studies concerning the mutual impact between women’s sexual (or seemingly asexual) behaviors and Song popular culture. Chapter Four examines talk about erotic responses to publicly displayed images and their relationship to the development of visual culture and popular religion. I trace the development of such stories from the late Tang to the Song, and situate them within the context of several interrelated traditions: erotic encounters with supernatural beings in popular tales, the rhetorical tradition of living images in art criticism, and miraculous images in religious contexts. While art critics attributed the supernatural power of images to the painter/image maker, and in the religious world, living images demonstrated the deities’ efficacy and their intervention in the process of image-making, it is in stories about people’s erotic interactions with images that we see significant emphasis on the viewers’ active roles. Women as active viewers and subjects of desire were treated very differently in different stories and traditions.

The last chapter deals with anecdotes and hagiographical stories about women who, either because of their religious practice or by manipulating religious rhetoric and conventions, reject marriage and sexual relationships with men—in other words, women whose sexual bodies are not available to men. It concerns mysterious relationships between Daoist women and female immortals as well as real partnerships among women who shared the same faith. I argue for the existence of a potential queer space for women during the Song and examine the historical

specifics thereof. I trace the evolution of how such stories were told from the Six Dynasties to the Song, look for evidence of people making use of religious language and conventions in various ways, and argue for the usefulness of religious models for their creative readers, especially for women to create a queer space.

Chapter I

Traveling Stories:

Multivocality and Vitality of Song Anecdotes

The sixth account in the first volume of *Yijian zhi*, titled “The Guanyin *Gāthā*,” tells where this *gāthā*³⁵ comes from, how it is proven efficacious and becomes popular in two different places:

Zhang Xiaochun has a grandson who was unable to walk at the age of five. Someone told him, “Previously in the Huai [River] valley, a peasant had been lame for a long time. Yet he simply chanted the name Guanshiyin [i.e. Bodhisattva Guanyin, or Avalokiteśvara in Sanskrit] persistently every day. And so one day Guanyin appeared to him and left a four-lined *gāthā*: ‘The great wisdom comes from the heart; yet one cannot search for it within the heart. It completes all the doctrine, no matter whether past or present.’ On the one hundredth day after the peasant began chanting the rhyme, his illness suddenly healed.” Zhang then asked his grandson and the wet nurse to fast and chant the *gāthā*. Within two months, his grandson walked normally. Afterwards, all who had lame legs and chanted the *gāthā* experienced its efficacy. In addition, the white-robed monk Dingguang in Tingzhou [present day Changting, Fujian] also chants the *gāthā* when begging alms: “The great wisdom comes from the heart; yet where to search for it within

³⁵ *Gāthā* (Sanskrit; *ji* 偈 or *jita* 偈他 in Chinese), metrical hymn or chant, often occurring in sutras and usually of four, five, or seven words to the line, especially a verse praising the Buddha or restating succinctly major points of Buddhist doctrine. Soothil 1977: 225 a.

the heart? It completes all the doctrine, no matter whether past or present.” Whoever comes and asks for help, the monk writes it down for them and adds four characters “*zeng zhi yi zhong*” to the end. All have their wishes come true. It is truly incomprehensible.³⁶

張孝純有孫五歲不能行，或告之曰：「頃淮甸間一農夫，病腿足甚久，但日持觀世音名號不輟，遂感觀音示現，因留四句偈曰：『大智發於心，於心無所尋。成就一切義，無古亦無今。』農夫誦偈滿百日，故病頓愈。」於是孝純遂教其孫及乳母齋絜持誦，不兩月，孫步武如常兒。後患腿足者，誦之皆驗。又汀州白衣定光行化偈亦云：「大智發於心，於心何處尋。成就一切義，無古亦無今。」凡人來問者，輒書與之，皆於後書「贈之以中」四字，無有不如意。了不可曉。

Unlike many other *Yijian zhi* accounts, there is no footnote in the end indicating from whom Hong Mai got this story. But if according to the text, the peasant must have first told his miraculous experience (perhaps as an achievement of his piety) to others. Then his story and the *gāthā* might have passed through several people before “someone” told Zhang Xiaochun—not as a fairy tale or gossip for fun but as a possible alternative solution for his grandson’s leg problem. The peasant’s story, together with Zhang Xiaochun’s, might have been passed by several others, some of whom also tried and experienced the efficacy of this *gāthā*, before reaching Hong Mai. Meanwhile, the almost identical *gāthā* was circulating elsewhere in a different context. How this *gāthā* actually emerged and circulated might not be exactly in accord with what Hong Mai relates, especially since stories tend to develop and mutate as they are told and retold. However, this account reveals vividly what could happen when stories “travel”: they become multilayered yet remain fragmented, when the transmitters add whatever they think is relevant and at the same time perhaps omit the parts that they do not find relevant or worth telling, or that they simply fail

³⁶ “The Guanyin *Gāthā*” 觀音偈, *Yijian zhi*, jia.1.4-5.

to remember. In this case, the *gāthā* is handed down not simply in words but also in use. Users' reviews—witnesses and efficacious events related to the *gāthā*—accumulate along with its oral transmission. And variations emerge. The *gāthā* told by the peasant and Zhang Xiaochun only works for leg problems, but that told by the white-robed monk seems to work for everything. Furthermore, when saying that the whole thing is “truly incomprehensible,” Hong Mai more likely than not simply put together all he had heard concerning this *gāthā* without attempting to add or alter anything to make things comprehensible. Just as what he states in the preface to the fourteenth volume of *Yijian zhi*: “All volumes of *Yijian zhi* come from hearsay. I simply recorded the words that I was told, even though I knew that they were awkward and contradictory.”³⁷ In other words, although Hong Mai's record may very well diverge from what actually happened, it reflects at least to some extent what was being told at his time. The usefulness of *Yijian zhi* and other anecdotes in this dissertation derives from not only their socio-cultural context but also their circulation and interaction with their contemporary listeners and tellers. This chapter explores the multivocality and vitality of *Yijian zhi* record through its diverse informants and transmitters, fragmented and contradictory contents, ambiguous moral codes, and audience responses.

1. A new methodology: Faithful recording

In the preface to the second volume of *Yijina zhi*, Hong Mai distinguishes his work from earlier *zhiguai* works in two respects, that his sources are all contemporary anecdotes and that they are not allegorical.³⁸ That is, this work is a collection rather than creation. And what he

³⁷ Preface to *Zhidong*, *Yijian zhi* 967.

³⁸ *Yijian zhi* 185.

collects is based on what he hears or reads in a contemporary setting instead of what he determines is factual or morally meaningful. My interpretation to this preface slightly differs from Alister Inglis in this passage:

As for my book, however, [all the stories within] are within a cycle of no more than sixty years, passed down through ears and eyes, and based on reliable sources.³⁹

若予是書，遠不過一甲子，耳目相接，皆表表有據依者。

Inglis translates the last phrase as “all based on factual sources,” and Robert Hymes “all of it most exceptionally well supported and attested.” In my opinion, what Hong Mai means by “*juyi*” (據依) here is not objective facts but his sources, his informants.⁴⁰ What he really means is that he did not make up the stories. I agree with Hymes’ insight that *Yijian zhi* stories reveal unprecedented concern for pretense and verification in the world of gods and ghosts.⁴¹ However, not all *Yijian zhi* accounts are fully “attested.” As I will discuss with cases later in this chapter, those who tell the stories sometimes are at the same time puzzled and do not always know exactly what had happened. Hong Mai might have very like believed that his informants were telling the truth, especially at the moment when he finished the second volume, when he just began compiling *Yijian zhi*. He might not yet have thought about what could happen to a story as it circulates and passes through several hands. But presenting or investigating fact was not his primary goal. By saying “*biaobiao you juyi*,” he means literally that he “has reliable sources for every single account,” not that he has verified the facts.

³⁹ *Yijian zhi* 185. For other translations and interpretations to this preface, see Hymes 2005: 14-15, Inglis 2006: 24-28.

⁴⁰ Hong Mai uses the same word “*juyi*” in another *Yijian zhi* account, in which he writes, “[Magistrate Jia] had been the magistrate of Jinyun, and therefore has especially rich reference when speaking of the ghost-immortal Yinghua’s deeds” (嘗為縉雲丞，說鬼仙英華事跡尤有據依) (bing.14.487). The ghost-immortal Yinghua is a famous legendary figure in the Jinyun area. In this context, “*juyi*” also makes better sense to refer to those locals who tell the magistrate (a newcomer to the district) about the stories of their local deity.

⁴¹ Hymes 2005: 1-26.

I agree with Inglis that Hong Mai's attitude changed from the third volume,⁴² but it was not simply a turning point from claiming fact to not claiming it. Rather, with his readers' criticisms in mind, he became more aware of the distinct value of his work: a record of contemporary hearsay. In the preface to the third volume, he apologizes for some of his inaccurate accounts because they “border on slander of good people” (誣善). Note that he does not apologize for the inaccuracy itself but for how it affects living people negatively. When excusing himself, he seems to have also come to realize what could happen to a story's oral transmission:

This is probably partly due to the fault of the tellers, and partly due to my careless listening.⁴³

蓋以告者過，或予聽焉不審。

His reassertion of the purpose of *Yijian zhi* corresponds to my observation that he does not intend to investigate facts or make moral judgments:

When I first began to compile the *Record*, I was solely concerned with the extraordinary and the adoration of the strange. I originally had no intention of recording and discussing the works of men or exposing their wickedness.⁴⁴

始予萃夷堅一書，顛以鳩異崇怪，本無意於纂述人事及稱人之惡也。

Inglis argues that when Hong Mai says his accounts are not allegorical, he only means they are not fictional but still didactic, since “perhaps a fifth or a quarter of the extant text comprises of such [didactic] accounts, ranging from stories of karmic retribution for murder to execution-style

⁴² Inglis 2006: 29.

⁴³ Inglis translates “*ting yan bu shen*” as “my listening and not having verified the details” (Inglis 2006: 28). It is a possible translation for “*shen*” (審) as well. However, Hong Mai never attempted to verify the details of his accounts—he did for his other book *Rongzhai suibi* but not for *Yijian zhi*. And he was criticized for that, as we will see in his other prefaces.

⁴⁴ *Yijian zhi* 363. Translations cf. Inglis 2006: 28.

death-by-lightning for unfilial acts.”⁴⁵ However, there is a difference between asserting that the tales Hong records are already told (or can be interpreted) in didactic ways and asserting that he intentionally picks such tales for didactic reasons or adds didactic elements or messages himself. Hong’s preface seems to suggest the former: he had no intention to comment on people’s wickedness. Moreover, as I will soon argue, didactic messages that one can abstract from *Yijian zhi* accounts are very inconsistent and sometimes contradictory, which would be natural if the accounts are from multiple sources.

In the preface to the fourth volume, Hong quotes (or perhaps rephrases if not invents) some criticisms against his book:

The people you consult for testimonies are not necessarily virtuous scholar-officials but people of humble birth, unregistered monks, mountain dwellers, Daoist priests, blind shamans, ordinary women, minor clerks, and servants. Every strange tale that reaches you you all happily accept with no further inquiry. [Do you not realize] why people value research and verification?⁴⁶

稽以為驗，非必出於當世賢卿大夫，蓋寒人、野僧、山客、道士、瞽巫、僮婦、下隸、走卒，凡以異聞至，亦欣欣然受之，不致詰。人何用考信？

Unlike the preface to the third volume, here Hong does not apologize or argue against the criticism but precisely agrees to it. He further claims that his methodology is closer to the Grand Historian’s (Sima Qian) because he faithfully records what he hears regardless of their unusualness, inconsistency, or inferior sources.⁴⁷ The “Guanyin *Gāthā*” can be seen as one example of his application of this principle. I will discuss more examples concerning the diverse

⁴⁵ Inglis 2006: 27.

⁴⁶ *Yijian zhi* 537.

⁴⁷ *Yijian zhi* 537.

background of Hong's informants later in this chapter. As his project grew larger and larger, Hong seemed more and more obsessed and also proud of this methodology of faithful recording. In the preface to the seventeenth volume, he describes how he collects his stories:

Whenever I hear people telling a story, I always record it immediately. At times when I am unable to do that, especially while drinking, I write it down the next morning and always show it to the teller. I would not rest until I am sure that my record is in accordance with what people tell me from the beginning to the end.⁴⁸

蓋每聞客語，登輒紀錄。或在酒間不暇，則以翼旦追書之，仍亟示其人，必使始末無差戾乃止。

Hong certainly did not transcribe word by word what he had heard, since he still wrote mostly in literary Chinese.⁴⁹ But as I will continue to illustrate, he did try to preserve all the oddness and inconsistencies and not purposely alter or polish them. *Yijian zhi* is a multivocal text—not because it is a transcription of Hong's informants' words, but because it both reflects and contributes to an oral tradition. Hong is not the only agent in his writing.

Furthermore, although *Yijian zhi* departed from the earlier *zhiguai* tradition and seemed to have aroused quite some criticisms among the literati of the time, Hong Mai was not the only one who collected and compiled contemporary anecdotes during the Song. Several books from the Song that are still extant consist of stories very similar to *Yijian zhi* in style, such as *Kuiche zhi* 睽車志, *Kuoyi zhi* 括異志, *Touxia lu* 投轄錄, et cetera. I draw reference from those works, too.

Some of Hong Mai's informants are anecdote collectors as well. The first three accounts in the first volume of *Yijian zhi* are all told by a man named Sun Jiuding (fl. 1113). Hong notes that

⁴⁸ *Yijian zhi* 1135.

⁴⁹ When recording conversations he sometimes uses vernacular. As Robert Hymes observes, the uses of vernacularized or literary talks (or a mixture of and shifting between both) often reflect the social status of the speaker and the context of the conversation (Hymes 2006: 47-52).

“Sun also has a book recording a number of such happenings, all contemporary.”⁵⁰ Hong also “stole” (剽取) one-third of the notes written by the father of one of his acquaintances, and that constitutes three *juan* of his seventeenth volume.⁵¹ Ten accounts of the twelfth volume come from the *Mengzhao lu* 夢兆錄 (*Record of Omens in Dreams*) by a Mr. Liu from Linchuan.⁵² Yet Hong Mai seemed the most productive and his *Yijian zhi* perhaps the most popular and widely circulated collection of stories.

2. An old tradition: *Yijian zhi* and earlier *zhiguai* works

Is *Yijian zhi* really as different from previous *zhiguai* works as Hong claims? There are significant breaks as well as continuities between them. When Gan Bao 干寶 (fl. ca. 317) compiled *Soushen ji* 搜神記 (*Record in Search of the Supernatural*), in his memorial to Emperor Yuan of the Jin Dynasty requesting paper, he reported that he intended to “record strange and unusual events from antiquity to the present, collect scattered and unredacted materials, and make them coherent” (撰記古今怪異非常之事，會聚散逸，使自一貫). It was a tough task. As Gan Bao “widely consulted those who had knowledge of the past” and searched through “incomplete pieces of paper and fragmented lines,” he found that each source was different from another (博訪知古者，片紙殘行，事事各異).⁵³ When he finished the book, he apologized in the preface that since what he recorded were not witnessed by his own eyes and

⁵⁰ *Yijian zhi* jia.1.3.

⁵¹ *Yijian zhi* 1135. Inglis identifies this acquaintance of Hong Mai’s as Wu Zhen 吳濬 from Poyang, and his father Wu Liangshi 吳良史 (Inglis 2006: 167).

⁵² *Yijian zhi* zhiyi.2.811.

⁵³ “Memorial Requesting for Paper” 請紙表, *Soushen ji* 17. This memorial is included in Xu Jian’s 徐堅 (Tang) *Chuxue ji* 初學記 and Su Yijian’s 蘇易簡 (Northern Song) *Wenfang sipu* 文房四譜. See also Xie 2011: 80.

ears, he did not dare to claim that his accounts were all accurate.⁵⁴ Gan Bao's attempt to make his record coherent and as close as possible to fact is distinctly different from Hong Mai's. Although Gan makes the excuse that previous historians did not perfectly record "historical events without any discrepancies" and have "words from all sources agree" (事不二跡，言無異途), to him, it is still the ultimate goal to find out the truth, and the best ways are to "look back to narrate events of a past one thousand years ago, writing down the characteristics of distant and peculiar ways of life, stringing together word fragments between textual faults and fissures, questioning the elderly about events in former times" (仰述千載之前，記殊俗之表，綴片言於殘闕，訪行事於故老).⁵⁵ Hong Mai, on the other hand, seems to realize that absolute fact is simply unattainable and claims that his unconditional and faithful recording strategy is closer to the Grand Historian than those who consult only words of the elite.

Unlike Hong Mai, who dedicated *Yijian zhi* to recording contemporary anecdotes, Gan Bao collected materials from antiquity to his time in order to complete *Soushen ji*. Many of Gan Bao's sources are textual records from earlier times.⁵⁶ He may have included some orally transmitted tales and contemporary anecdotes as well.⁵⁷ However, Gan's attitude toward his contemporary sources is different from Hong's. Gan is much more concerned with whether or not what he collects is factual. "Should there be fiction or errors in the recent events which I have collected, I would hope to share the ridicule and condemnation with worthies and scholars

⁵⁴ *Soushen ji* 19. For an English translation to the preface, see DeWoskin 1996: xxvi-xxvii.

⁵⁵ *Soushen ji* 19. Translation cf. DeWoskin 1996: xxvii.

⁵⁶ Such as *Fengsu tong* 風俗通 (by Ying Shou 應劭 of the Eastern Han), from which at least eleven accounts of *Soushen ji* draws reference. Interestingly, as Xie Mingxun points out, Ying Shou includes those supernatural or mysterious tales in his *Fengsu tong* only to demystify them and eliminate superstition; however, Gan Bao borrows Ying's accounts precisely to "make clear that the spirit world is not a lie" (Xie 2011: 83-86).

⁵⁷ Xie identifies "plain vernacular" and characteristics of oral storytelling in some *Soushen ji* accounts (Xie 2011: 91-96).

before me” (若使採訪近世之事，苟有虛錯，願與先賢前儒，分其譏謗), Gan says.⁵⁸ This may be similar to Hong’s blaming both his informants and himself for “slander of good people.” Yet Hong’s informants are not restricted at all to “worthies and scholars”; Gan does not go so far as to justify simply faithful recording, either.

Their motivations, however, are quite similar: both have strong interest in the strange and believe in the supernatural world. The *Jin History* records that what motivates Gan Bao’s work on *Soushen ji* is his witness of an extraordinary event with his family: The beloved maid of his father’s, murdered by Gan’s mother by burying alive in the father’s tomb, comes back to life several years later when they open the tomb to bury the mother.⁵⁹ In one of the very rare cases where Hong Mai expresses his personal opinion after his account, he says: “This is how I came to believe that all deities regardless of their rank can all try their best to manifest themselves in order to attract offerings” (乃信幽冥間無問尊卑小大，皆能隨力自表以享祭供).⁶⁰

Compared with *zhiguai* from the Six Dynasties, contemporary anecdotes are even more frequently seen in *chuanqi* works from the Tang. However, anecdotes recorded in Tang *chuanqi* are still predominantly told by and circulate among the elite. They reflect concerns of the literati especially from the mid- and late Tang, as Daniel Hsieh puts it, the “new questioning, openness, and intellectual fascination for the *other* in its various forms.”⁶¹ In the end of “Renshi zhuan” 任氏傳 (The Story of Miss Ren), the author Shen Jiji 沈既濟 (fl. late eighth century) recounts how he acquired this story from Wei Fu, the nephew of the central character in the story, and how he passed it to others who were with him on the same journey—all are literati with official posts

⁵⁸ *Soushen ji* 19. Translation cf. DeWoskin 1996: xxvii.

⁵⁹ *Jin shu* 82.2150.

⁶⁰ *Yijian zhi*, zaibu.1813.

⁶¹ Hsieh 2008: 26.

or titles.⁶² Sometimes, it is a mixture of both textual and oral transmission (and still among the literati). One account in *Xuanguai lu* 玄怪錄 (*Record of the Mysterious and Strange*) tells about a nun's revenge. According to the author Niu Sengru 牛僧儒 (779-849), the story was first written down by an acquaintance of the nun. A friend of Niu's mentioned it and showed it to Niu, then Niu read and memorized it:

[Li] Gongzuo was greatly amazed [by the nun's deeds] and so wrote a biography for her. In the Gengxu year of the Taihe reign (830), Li Fuyan of Western Long traveled to South Ba [present day Sichuan] and met *jinshi* Shen Tian in Pengzhou. As we talked about strange tales, Tian showed us the biography. I read and memorized it. Now as I write this book to record the strange, I include it here.⁶³

公佐大異之，遂為作傳。大和庚戌歲，隴西李復言遊巴南，與進士沈田會于蓬州。田因話奇志，持以相示，一覽而複之。錄怪之日，遂纂于此焉。

One possible exception in *Xuanguai lu* that might be told by a non-literatus is the account titled “Wang Huang.” It is a rather conventional female ghost story, in which both the man and the ghost die. Niu notes in the end that this story was told by a servant who had seen and interacted with the man and the ghost.⁶⁴ This story, as Niu records it, however, is much longer than most *Yijian zhi* accounts. It is a complete and well-written narrative. Niu must have worked on the details, if not invented the servant as its narrator—since both the man and the ghost die, the servant would seem the most reasonable witness to all what happens in the man's bedroom.

Tang *chuanqi* authors often comment directly on their well-written stories. Shen Jiji laments that the virtue of the “female demon” (女妖) Miss Ren surpasses that of most women of

⁶² *Tang Song chuanqi xuan* 6. Daniel Hsieh also uses this passage to illustrate that “[m]any *chuanqi* must have originated in such oral tales” (Hsieh 2008:26).

⁶³ *Xuanguai lu* 2.361.

⁶⁴ *Xuanguan lu* 4.414.

his time, that “when someone used violence on her, she did not abandon her principles, and she met her death by sacrificing herself for someone else” (遇暴不失節，徇人以至死). Shen further criticizes Zheng, the man whom Miss Ren follows, on the grounds that he is too mediocre to appreciate Ren’s virtues and is only attracted by her beauty; if he were a “perceptive man” (淵識之士)—such as Shen himself?—he “would surely have been able to investigate the principles in such a transformation, to discern the lines of distinction between human beings and spirits, to write it out in a beautiful style, and thus to transmit such subtle feelings to posterity” (必能揉變化之理，察神人之際，著文章之美，傳要妙之情).⁶⁵ An account in *Xuanguai lu* tells that a sow becomes human and spends a night with a man named Yin Zongzhi. Yin forcefully keeps one shoe of hers, which becomes a pig’s foot after dawn. Yin traces the blood stain and found the sow. Yin’s friend then kills it with an arrow. Niu Sengru comments at the end: “That year, [Yin] Zongzhi left the mountain and attended the civil service examinations. He had a high reputation and good family background but still failed. Is it not due to his betrayal of the sow?”⁶⁶

Chuanqi writing was certainly an arena for Tang literati to express (and perhaps contend) ideas about identity, relationships, and social values. As Robert Campany insightfully observes in Six Dynasties *zhiguai* writings, which he views as “cosmographies”:

Traditions and genres of cosmographic discourse should not be thought of as rigidly implying commitment to a single, particular worldview. Rather, a single tradition or genre more often than not becomes a *public field of contention* on which individuals or groups play out conflicts and contend for power, using shared conventions of discourse about a single object or type of object to advance divergent ends.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ *Tang Song chuanqi xuan* 6. Translation according to Owen 1996: 525-26.

⁶⁶ *Xuanguai lu* 4.411-12.

⁶⁷ Campany 1996: 5-6. Italics mine.

This is the common ground on which I will proceed to discuss cases from *Yijian zhi*. I will argue that Song anecdotes (as well as other circulating knowledge that I will discuss in later chapters) as a “public field of contention” has a larger popular base and reflects more diverse voices.

3. Itinerary: Informants, transmitters, listeners

Hong Mai sometimes cites the sources of his accounts and gives the names of his informants; sometimes he does not. Almost all the names he provides are those of literati/scholar-officials (including women in their households⁶⁸). Perhaps some of those unattributed accounts are from people of lower social status, such as “unregistered monks, Daoist priests, blind shamans, ordinary women, servants,” et cetera. It might also have been that some stories were already so well known to people of a certain locality and thus Hong did not feel necessary to indicate exactly from whom he heard them. The Guanyin *gāthā* might be one example. The story about how a prostitute becomes the wife of a rich merchant, also in the first volume of *Yijian zhi*, might be another:

The wealthy Mr. Pan from Jinyun [present day Lishui, Zhejiang] was poor when he was young, and had been doing business in town. One day when it was close to dusk, it suddenly rained heavily. Pan took shelter from the rain at a house by the street. Unable to return, he begged to stay for the night, not knowing it was a prostitute’s house. That night the prostitute dreamed of a black dragon coiling on the left of the door. At dawn she woke up and checked [the door], and saw Pan sleeping under the eaves. She invited him in and treated him with great courtesy. She expressed her willingness to sleep with him, but Pan

⁶⁸ For example, one account about a woman possessed by a ghost was first told by the woman’s older sister to her husband Zhao Boyi, Zhao Boyi told Wang Pan, and Wang Pan told Hong Mai (bing.7.421).

thought himself too poor to afford her and strongly rejected her. The prostitute tried several times unsuccessfully. One day, she made him drunk, and they finally consummated (*he 合*) the affair. From then on, the prostitute supported Pan with all her money and never asked him how he spent it. Pan used her money to invest in business and earned great profits. He accumulated a fortune of more than several millions, and therefore married the prostitute as his wife. Their son acquired a *jinshi* degree and was appointed a prefect. Their family is still a wealthy household.⁶⁹

縉雲富人潘君少貧，嘗貿易城中。天且暮，值大雨，急避止道傍人家，不能歸，因丐宿焉，不知其倡居也。倡夜夢黑龍繞門左，旦起視之，正見潘臥簷下，心以為異，延入，厚禮之。欲與之寢，潘自顧甚貧，力辭至再三，強之不可。一日，醉以酒，合焉。自是傾家貲濟之，不問其出入。潘藉以為商，所至大獲，積財逾數十百萬，因娉倡以歸。生子擢進士第，至郡守。其家至今為富室云。

This story vividly shows the prostitute's resolution and resourcefulness in pursuing possibilities of upward mobility by utilizing her sexuality *and* financial ability. What I would like to explore here is how this story might have taken shape and circulated. This story seems to be a tale about the rise of a locally prestigious family. It might be well known to the locals that Mr. Pan was once very poor and Mrs. Pan was once a prostitute. And either Mrs. Pan herself first told her auspicious vision and how she helped Mr. Pan to become rich, or others made up the story based on what they knew. Mrs. Pan would have perfect reasons to tell (or to tacitly agree to) this story, since if we read it closely, she is really the true hero of the rise of the Pan family. Whichever was the case, this story about a local prosperous family was very likely well known in the Jinyun area. The account right before Mr. Pan's is also about a worthy man of Jinyun origin: It is said that the

⁶⁹ "The Dragon Anomaly with Mr. Pan" 潘君龍異, *Yijian zhi*, jia.11.98.

prime minister He Zhizhong is poor when young. Before heading to the capital for the civil service examinations, he goes to a wealthy family for a loan. The servant makes him wait outside. The master dreams of a black dragon coiling outside the door. Later he wakes up and sees He is there. The master then believes that He will one day prosper and therefore gives him more than enough money for his expenses. Afterwards, He truly becomes the prime minister just as the master expects.⁷⁰ Apparently it was a popular belief at that time around the Jinyun (and the mid-south of Zhejiang) area that dreaming of a black dragon indicates that one will meet a person who is now poor and humble but who will one day become prosperous.⁷¹ Hong Mai might have acquired both stories at the same time, either when he passed by Jinyun or met people from there.

Those stories that Hong Mai acquired from his literati friends might still have originated from or been told by people other than the elite. The details of some accounts show that ordinary people were not only talking about their own unusual experiences in the public sphere in Song society but also were encouraged to do so. A story in the first volume tells how a filial daughter-in-law miraculously survives from a destined death:

In the twenty-ninth year of the Shaoxing reign (1159), in the intercalary month after the sixth month, there was a thunderstorm in Yanguan District [present day Haining, Zhejiang]. Several days before the storm, Miss Zhang, the wife of a salt worker in the Shangguan salt field, dreamed that a god admonished her for her misdeeds in a previous life and said, “Tomorrow you will die under the axe of thunder.” Zhang woke up, terrified

⁷⁰ *Yijian zhi jia*.11.97-98.

⁷¹ In earlier and other Song sources, the black dragon usually means the cause of floods or shipwrecks and is thus supposed to be expelled or killed. See for example, *Taiping guangji* 423.3443 “The Dragon Raiser” 豢龍者, *Yijian zhi yi*.4.217-18 “Zhao Shizao” 趙士藻. Two Song sources refer to the black dragon also as an omen of a person’s prosperity. One is about Xie Shenfu 謝深甫 from Taizhou (*Songren yishi huibian* 17.935); the other about the general Chen Yizhong 陳宜中 from Yongjia (*Guixin zazhi bieji*.1.243-244). Both places are very close to Jinyun.

and weeping with despair. When her mother-in-law questioned her, she did not tell the truth. Her mother-in-law became angry and said, “Is it because I borrowed something from you and haven’t returned it? What made you treat me like this!” Zhang then told about her dream. The mother-in-law did not quite believe it. The next day, when a fierce wind arose and the sky grew dark, Zhang thought she was about to die. She changed her clothes, walked outside, and stood beneath a mulberry tree. She thought to herself, “I can’t avoid being struck by lightning. But mother-in-law is very old. How can I terrify her!” In a short while, thunder and lightning darkened the sky, a voice from the sky called out to Zhang and said, “You were meant to die. But because of your filial thought just now heaven has forgiven you.” The voice further said, “Go home and continue to perform good deeds, and *tell people about this.*”⁷²

紹興二十九年閏六月，鹽官縣雷震。先雷數日，上管場亭戶顧德謙妻張氏夢神人以宿生事責之曰：「明當死雷斧下。」覺而大恐，流淚悲噎。姑問之，不以實對。姑怒曰：「以我嘗貸汝某物未償故耶？何至是！」張始言之，姑殊不信。明日，暴風起，天斗暗，張知必死，易服出屋外桑下立，默自念：「震死既不可免，姑老矣，奈驚怖何！」俄雷電晦冥，空中有人呼張氏曰：「汝實當死，以適一念起孝，天赦汝。」又曰：「汝歸益為善，以此語世人也。」

In many *Yijian zhi* stories the gods manifest themselves and deliver messages to people of rather low social status, and those people’s testimonies sometimes confirm and sometimes challenge

⁷² “The Filial Daughter-in-law of Yanguan” 鹽官孝婦, *Yijian zhi jia*.20.180. Translation cf. Inglis 2006: 81. Italics mine. Hong Mai notes that this story along with the next two in the volume were all told by Dou Siyoung (*Yijian zhi jia*.20.182). There is a textual discrepancy in this account: In the beginning it says that Zhang had the dream “several days before the thunderstorm” (先雷數日), yet the storm happens “the next day” (明日). This account is included in a local gazetteer, *Xianchun Lin’an zhi* 咸淳臨安志, compiled about a hundred years later than the first volume of *Yijian zhi* (*Xianchun Lin’an zhi* 92.4201b-4202a).

existing perceptions.⁷³ In this story, we do not know what the woman does in her previous life to deserve to be killed by lightning, but we do know that she is a filial daughter-in-law now, and that seems to confirm people's expectation of filial piety. If this story is not a purely fabricated one, it could only be told first by the woman herself. The narrator also implies that by saying that the voice from heaven commands her to tell the world about her experience. The woman would have every reason to tell this story. By doing so, she would not simply become a "filial daughter-in-law" but also acquire some sort of authority by passing a message directly from heaven. Moreover, while obeying the command to tell people her experience, she conveniently omits all details of the misdeeds in her previous life.

Unlike literati from the Six Dynasties and the Tang who seemed most interested in what happened among themselves and what their peer intellectuals thought about the world, people like Hong Mai and those who liked *Yijian zhi* stories were interested in listening to what happened and circulated among the commoners as well. They considered low commoners' words "reliable sources," and they sometimes figured in the stories as well.

4. Fragments and inconsistencies

Unlike most Six Dynasties and almost all Tang stories, many Song anecdotes recorded in *Yijian zhi* are fragmentary, with inconsistent and unexplained details. Here is an example:

One man named Duan Zai lived in the monastery accommodation in Pujiang District, Wuzhou Prefecture [present day Jinhua, Zhejiang]. One day Duan's wife saw a woman begging outside of the door, who was quite in the prime of her life. Duan's wife asked for her name and why she ended up here, and she said that she had no husband or relatives.

⁷³ More examples see Chapter Four, where I discuss stories about miraculous images in Song popular religion.

Duan's wife said, "If so, why you did not become a concubine, but instead begging for food on your own? Are you willing to follow me?" The woman responded, "Not that I do not want to be a concubine, but people are not willing to take such a poor and lowly woman like me. If I could only work in the kitchen of your household, it would be my ultimate fortune." Duan's wife then let her in, gave her a bath and new clothes, and sent the cook(s) to teach her how to prepare drinks and meals. She mastered it in ten days. Duan's wife then taught her music, which she also picked up within a month. As she practiced for long, her appearance became quite lovely. Duan named her Yingying and took her as his concubine. For five or six years, Duan had been afraid that one day she would leave. One night when it had passed midnight, the Duan family had all gone to bed. Someone called the doorkeeper from the outside and said, "I am Yingying's husband!" The doorkeeper said, "We never heard Yingying had a husband. Even if she does, it wouldn't be too late if you come tomorrow during the day. Why must you come in the middle of the night?" The person became angry and said, "If you don't open the door, I will enter from the chink!" The doorkeeper was furious and knocked on Duan's door and told him what had happened. Yingying overheard and seemed happy. She said, "Here he comes," and immediately walked out of the room. Duan worried that she would escape, so held a torch and followed to the main hall, where there was only a very loud sound and the light suddenly went out. When Duan's wife sent a maid to come out and see, Duan was already dead with his eyes, ears, nose, and mouth all bleeding. The outer door was still locked as before. No one knows what monster it was. This story was told by He Shuda of Pujiang. I heard it from Cheng Zizhong.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ "Duan Zai's Concubine" 段宰妾, *Yijian zhi jia*.3.22.

段宰者，居婺州浦江縣僧舍。其妻嘗觀于門，有婦人行丐，年甚壯。詢其姓氏始末，自云無夫，亦無親戚。段妻云：「既如是，胡不為人妾而乞食？肯從我乎？」曰：「非不欲也，但人以其貧賤，不肯納耳。若得供執爨之役，實為天幸。」遂呼入，令沐浴，與更衣，遣庖者教以飲膳，旬日而能。繼以樂府訓之，不逾月皆盡善。調習既久，容色殊可觀。段名之曰鶯鶯，以為側室。凡五六年，唯恐其去。一夕，已夜分，段氏皆就寢，有自門外呼聞者曰：「我鶯鶯夫也！」僕曰：「鶯鶯不聞有夫，縱如爾言，俟天明來未晚，何必中夜為？」其人頗怒曰：「若不啟門，我當從隙中入。」僕大怒，即叩堂門，以其事語段。鶯鶯聞之，若有喜色，曰：「他來也。」亟走出。段疑其竄，自篝火追至廳廂，但聞有聲極響，燈即滅。妻遣婢出視，段已死，七竅皆血流。外戶扃鑰如故，竟不知何怪。浦江人何叔達說，予得之程資忠。

This story might have first circulated in Pujiang, been told to others by a Pujiang local (He Shuda), and passed through several more people before reaching Hong Mai. This account as a “narrative” is a fragment. We do not know who/what the woman and her “husband” are, what they want, why the woman approaches the Duan family in the first place, and why she lies if the “monster” really is her husband. Hong Mai and his informants did not seem to know the answers either. The story as it is recorded in *Yijian zhi* may already be quite different from how it was first told. But it did not seem to become more rational under Hong Mai’s pen. As a narrative the story is poorly written, but as a folktale it is fun enough to tell. The incomplete details and open ending may even attract more interest and responses from the audience, as we can see in this other account:

Instructor Jiang from Yongjia [present day Wenzhou, Zhejiang] received his *jinshi* degree in the second year of the Shaoxing reign (1132) and was first appointed recorder of

Jinyun District, Chuzhou Prefecture. Before being transferred to the position of instructor in Xinzhou Prefecture, he returned home to wait for the beginning of the term. When he was a hundred *li* away from home, traveling across the mountains, he heard two people crying in extreme sorrow on the hill. He approached and saw an old man and a young woman with double hair coils [hairstyle of a maiden] cry in the middle of the road. Jiang felt sympathy for them and asked about the cause. The old man said, "I had been in the army for twenty years and only recently was released. Unfortunately bandits absconded with my identity document. I will have to go to the Board of Personnel to take care of it, but that will take at least five hundred thousand coins. I love this daughter of mine so much but have to give up my love and sell her. We have traveled for days and I am still unable to abandon her. That is why we cry." Jiang said, "How about I give you what I have right now, and you would not have to sell your daughter at this moment?" Jiang gave the old man all he had, which was only worth a hundred thousand. The old man said, "I am appreciative of your great charity, but it still does not help." Jiang said, "If you can trust me, I shall bring your daughter home. You simply take the money to Lin'an (the Southern Song capital), and if it is not enough, come to my house and take more. I will take good care of your daughter and shall never dare to treat her as my concubine. Please do not worry." The old man agreed, and promised to come back the next year in late spring. He handed over his daughter to Jiang and left in tears. Jiang came down and let the girl sit in the carriage. He himself followed walking with a cane.

永嘉人蔣教授，紹興二年登科，得處州縉雲主簿，再調信州教授，還鄉待次。未至家百里，行山中，聞嶺上二人，哭聲絕悲，至則一叟挾雙鬟女子欄道哭。蔣悽然，問其故。叟曰：「從軍二十年，方得自便。不幸遇盜，挈我告身去。將往吏部料理，

非五十萬錢不可辦。甚愛此女，今割愛鬻之。行有日矣，故哭不忍捨。」蔣曰：「以我囊中物與叟，少緩此計何如？」即舉餘裝贈之，纔直十萬。叟曰：「感君高義，然顧亡益也。」蔣曰：「叟果不見疑，當以女寄我歸。叟姑持此錢往臨安，事若不濟，還吾家取之。吾善視叟女，非敢以為姬妾，勿憂也。」叟謝曰：「諾。」約明年暮春再相見，以女授蔣，拭淚而別。蔣下車載女，自策杖踵其後。

As he arrived home, he left the girl in the outer quarter and entered alone to see his mother and wife. His wife Zhou welcomed him and said, "I heard you brought someone with you. Where is the person?" Jiang told her the truth. She said, "Then you have done a wonderful thing. Why would I not agree?" She then sent someone to bring the girl in. Jiang's mother Ke loved her as if she were her own daughter. They slept in the same bedroom. The girl occasionally went to the outer quarter and played with Jiang, and at times they flirted with each other. When Jiang first saw her, she was simply an ordinary young woman. Now she had become more and more beautiful and attractive. One night Jiang was drunk and lost control of himself, and so kept her and transgressed (*luan* 亂, i.e. having sex illicitly). The old man also never came. When Jiang was about to set off for a new position, his wife refused to go along, saying, "You have your lovely woman. What do you need me for?" His mother Ke also said, "You were trusted with another's child, and now you did this. You should know the consequences. I am old and shall spend my last days here at home. I cannot follow you." Jiang implored them but neither was willing to go. He ended up going to Xinzhou only with the woman.

將至家，置女外館，獨入見母妻。妻周氏迎謂曰：「聞有隨車人，今安在？」蔣以實告。妻曰：「然則美事也，其成之何害？」使人喚女歸。蔣母柯氏愛之如己子，夜則

與同寢處。女間至外舍與蔣戲，或相調謔。方初見時，猶尋常女子，至是顏色日豔，嫣然美好矣。一夕醉不自持，遂留與亂。而叟亦絕不至。臨赴官，妻不肯往，曰：「自有麗人，何用我？」柯夫人亦曰：「汝受人託子，而一旦若是，前程事可知矣。吾老當死鄉里，不能隨汝也。」蔣力請不能得，竟獨與女之信州。

After spending several months, one night Jiang called the woman to comb his hair. She held the comb and could not stop crying. Jiang asked why and she did not answer. Jiang pushed her by asking, "Do you miss your father? Do you want to leave?" The woman said, "I am not sad for myself but for you, my lord. One's lifespan is unpredictable, yet today is the end of your days. Please immediately write a letter to your mother." Jiang became angry and scolded, "Petty woman! How can you curse me like this!" The woman said, "Now is the last moment. In a short while you will not be able to do anything more. I do not dare to say absurd words." She asked the servant to bring the brush and letter paper, hastily put away the comb, and forced Jiang to write. Jiang felt half anger and half amusement. He laughed and said, "What should I write?" The woman responded, "Just say you caught an acute disease and will die today." Jiang could not help it so wrote more than ten words and again asked, "How do you know about this?" The woman suddenly changed her face and spoke harshly, "Do you know [the ghost-immortal] Yinghua of Jinyun? I am she!" She clapped her hands and disappeared. Jiang then fell to the ground and died, with his ears, nose, mouth, and eyes all bleeding. The servant saw a fox in the room leap through the window, climb up to the roof, and flee.

居數月，薄晚呼女櫛髮，女把櫛揮涕不止。問之不答，咄曰：「憶汝父邪？欲去邪？」女曰：「身非有所悲，悲主君耳。人壽不可料，今數且盡，願急作書報君夫人。」蔣怒，罵之曰：「小兒女子安得為不祥語！」女曰：「事極矣，過頃刻便不可為，吾言

不敢妄。」顧廷下小史，令取筆札。女倉卒收櫛，秉筆強蔣使書。蔣怒且笑曰：「所書當云何？」曰：「但言得暴疾，以今日死。」蔣不得已，寫十數字，復問曰：「汝那得知？」女忽變色厲聲曰：「君知縉雲有英華者乎？我是也！」拊掌而滅。蔣隨即仆地死，耳鼻口眼皆血流。小史見一狐，自室中穿牖，升屋而去。

People all said it was because Jiang did a good thing but did not sustain it to the end. Some said that previously as Jiang went to the post in Jinyun, when told about the story of Yinghua [the ghost-immortal], he said, “I will definitely kill it.” Several days after arriving at the office, he walked in the vacant lot behind the garden, where he found a giant well covered by a large stone. He suspected that some monstrous beings would hide below and ordered people to uncover it. They saw a big white worm more than one *zhang* (3 meters) long, as thick as a pillar. Jiang pierced its head with an awl, and it disappeared. Some suspected that it was this creature that caused Jiang’s death in Xinzhou. This story was told by Tang Xindao and Jiang Zili (or Jiang’s son Li).⁷⁵

人皆謂蔣為義不終至此。或說蔣初赴縉雲，人語以英華事，蔣曰：「必殺之。」到官數日，行圃後隙地，得巨井，礮石覆之，意怪處其下，命發視，見大白蚓長丈餘，麤若柱，引錐刺其首，蚓即失去。及信州之死，疑是物云。唐信道、蔣子禮說。

This account has even more inconsistent and confusing details. And as Hong Mai records it, it seemed to have aroused people’s curiosity and become a popular topic for gossip. Jiang’s death and his last conversations with the woman can only be told by the only witness—the servant. According to the servant, the woman claims that she is the ghost-immortal of Jinyun and, after Jiang dies, becomes a fox. One version of the ghost-immortal of Jinyun is in fact recorded in the first volume of *Yijian zhi*. In it, the ghost-immortal is a loyal figure to her lover’s family and

⁷⁵ “Instructor Jiang” 蔣教授, *Yijian zhi* yi.2.195-97.

helps repel those who occupy their house and office, and she has nothing to do with fox spirits.⁷⁶ Female ghosts and foxes often appear in very similar contexts in the *zhiguai* tradition but belong to two distinctly different categories. If the woman (or ghost-immortal) simply wants revenge, why bother to wait so long and spend so much time with Jiang and his family? Why would she be sad about Jiang's death as if it is beyond her control? Who is the old man? Is he really the woman's father or is the whole thing just a trick? What is the purpose if it is a trick? Why does he simply disappear in the latter half of the story? If Jiang is punished for not keeping his good deed to the end, who is punishing him? Does he really deserve dying in this way? People who heard the story at that time seemed to be providing different interpretations, although none perfectly explains all the puzzles.

Robert Hymes observes a distinct style of narration in *Yijian zhi* that is “emblematic of a change in thematic concerns” from the time of *Soushen ji* to the Southern Song: the anxiety about what is true and what is false (but in the disguise of truth) in the realm of gods and spirits. Hymes compares two almost identical stories, one from *Yijian zhi* and the other from *Soushen ji*, pointing out that the *Yijian zhi* one stands out by its “deferral of truth”—that is, readers/listeners of the *Yijian zhi* version of that story do not know which one is the real father and which one is in fact the fox spirit until the end of the story.⁷⁷ We see a similar deferral of truth in the above account of Instructor Jiang as well, but the deferral is even more radical: The witness(es), the tellers, the listeners, the recorder(s), and the readers—none of us know what after all is the truth about the woman and Jiang's death. *Yijian zhi* accounts' “deferral of truth,” I believe, reflects not

⁷⁶ “Ghost-Immortal of Jinyun” 縉雲鬼仙, *Yijian zhi* jia.12.101. This ghost-immortal is also mentioned in two other *Yijian zhi* accounts. One is about a man who is once the magistrate of Jinyun and therefore has “especially rich references when speaking of the ghost-immortal Yinghua” (bing.14.487). The other even records two poems attributed to her (ding.19.692-93). The tale(s) about this ghost-immortal seemed very popular in the Jinyuan area and even well-known to people elsewhere.

⁷⁷ Hymes 2005: 24-26.

simply Song people's anxiety over the uncertainties and dangers in the supernatural world (resulting from the commercialization of religious services),⁷⁸ but also how stories are told and talked about as gossip in Song society.

There are two more things worth noting in the story "Instructor Jiang." One is that its reference to the ghost-immortal may reflect how popular tales that originate in different places crisscross, interrelate, and even merge with one another as they "travel." The other is that both accounts, "Instructor Jiang" and "Duan Zai's Concubine," along with quite a few other *Yijian zhi* accounts seem to be part of the larger picture of Song people's anxiety over women of unknown origins (in particular those economically independent but without recognizable family bonds) and the uncertainly and mobility of one's wife or concubines.⁷⁹

5. Contradictory and ambiguous moral codes

Yijian zhi stories certainly are still discursive and contain didactic moral messages. However, they were not told by one person or one group of people but by many. Those explicit and implicit messages are diverse and, if taken together, often contradictory. Some values seem more common, but we can almost always hear contrasting voices. One example is the theme of (divine) punishments for killing lives and eating meat/seafood. There is no uniform principle in terms of the degree of punishments (what deserves harsher punishment and what lighter) and whom to punish (the eater, the cook, or the butcher/seller). The forms of punishments are also

⁷⁸ Hymes 2005: 19.

⁷⁹ People seemed both curious and fearful of such women as local or itinerant peddlers, who were sometimes suspicious of possessing certain demonic power or contriving some evil plans (*Yijian zhi* jia.20.161, bing.9.444). Some accounts show vividly how men are worried that their wives remarry after they die and that their concubines simply leave (*Yijian zhi* jia.2.15, jia.2.21, yi.1.190-91). This is a topic worth further investigation; I will not go into details here.

very diverse. One official loves to eat the soft-shell turtle (*bie* 鼈) and orders a subordinate to cook it; in the end the subordinate receives the retribution rather than the official—he dies the same way as the turtles he kills.⁸⁰ One account says that people in Xiuzhou all love to eat bullheads, but only the seller who is the most skillful in processing (and also causes the most pain of the bullheads) is punished—he also dies the same way as his bullheads.⁸¹ One account relates a conversation between a scholar-official who loves to eat beef and a deity of the netherworld. It shows vividly how people at that time might have quite different ideas about what counts as condemnable “killing living beings”:

The king (deity) asked: “You love to eat the meat of pregnant cows throughout your life and have accumulated profound sinful karma. Now it is time for you to suffer the pain.”

Jian (the official) was terrified and answered: “Although I love to eat it, I simply buy it when encountering butchers who sell it. I have never killed one on my own.”

The king said: “It is because you love it that the butchers kill them and sell them to you. How can you be innocent? [...]”⁸²

王...問曰：「汝平生好食子母牛肉，罪業深固，今當受其苦楚。」

堅驚怖答曰：「雖好此味，但遇屠者市肉則買之，未嘗親殺也。」

王曰：「以汝嗜此，故屠人宰殺以奉汝，烏得無罪？...」

In some cases it seems that only those who particularly enjoy eating certain animals are condemned. Yet one high official whose whole family has “ceased killing living beings” is still condemned for fishing occasionally. He is required by the judge of the hell to donate all his

⁸⁰ “Retribution due to the Soft-shell Turtles” 鼈報, *Yijian zhi jia*.2.14. A translation of this account see Inglis 2006: 79.

⁸¹ “Chen Wu’s Retribution due to the Bullheads” 陳五鯁報, *Yijian zhi jia*.4.32.

⁸² “Jiang Jian Eats Beef” 蔣堅食牛, *Yijian zhi zhijia*.10.789.

valuables to a Buddhist temple to redeem his sin. He does and yet still dies that year.⁸³ In some cases, it is unclear whether the punishment is divinely ordered or simply that the animal strikes back: A woman loves to eat crabs and always cooks them with brewed rice. One day when just about to eat, she sees the crabs on the table still alive and running. She is terrified and loses her appetite. The maid does not know about it and tries to eat them. In the end it is the maid (who very likely only occasionally eats crabs) rather than the woman (who constantly eats crabs) who is pierced by the crabs through the face.⁸⁴

Inglis also notices that, although divine retribution is one of the pervasive themes throughout *Yijian zhi*, there are several instances where “the perpetrators evade retribution.” He calls this phenomenon “paradox” and further argues that the lack of retribution in some accounts “indicates Hong’s desire to achieve an accurate record of what many contemporaries believed to be largely plausible, if not factual, accounts.”⁸⁵ In my opinion, we should not assume that *Yijian zhi* accounts should present coherent themes. Furthermore, there are in fact not only instances where the meat-eater/animal-killer “evades retribution” but eating meat/killing animals is not considered sinful at all. One is the account about a local official named Huang Cong. It is said that Huang “usually eats vegetables himself but buys four *liang* [ca. 0.35 lbs.] of meat every day to feed his mother.” And because of that, when he offended some other officials who planned on revenge, he was able to remain safe and “misfortunes transformed into fortunes” for him.⁸⁶ It is not that Huang’s filial piety redeems for his killing animals but that he is rewarded precisely because he purchases meat for his mother. Another account is even more intriguing: A woman who “serves the Buddha sincerely” even witnesses a miraculous manifestation of the Buddha

⁸³ “Cai Heng Eats Fish” 蔡衡食鱸, *Yijian zhi* jia.11.93.

⁸⁴ “Retribution due to Eating Crabs” 食蟹報, *Yijian zhi* jia.11.92.

⁸⁵ Inglis 2006:69-88.

⁸⁶ “Huang Zifang” 黃子方, *Yijian zhi* jia.6.50.

while cooking a fish! She sees two Buddha heads inside of the body of the fish. Her family then make woodcarvings for the bodies of the two Buddha heads and begin to worship them. As implied in the narrative, it is the family's reward for their piety that the woman's son passes the civil service examinations and is appointed the prefect of Kaizhou.⁸⁷ There is no mention of cooking fish as a misdeed, nor does the woman's family ever cease eating fish.

The contradictory didactic messages and moral ambiguity in *Yijian zhi* stories are also seen in terms of sexual behaviors. The very first account of the first volume of *Yijian zhi* tells the story of Sun Jiuding (a classmate of Hong Mai's father at the Imperial Academy) and the ghost of his deceased brother-in-law, Zhang Xin. Sun runs into Zhang on the day of the Weaving Maid and Cowherd Festival (the seventh day of the seventh month). He is "dressed in the attire of a high-ranking official followed by a full retinue of mounted attendants." They drink and talk for a short time before Sun realizes that Zhang actually has already died. Zhang tells Sun that he has become a deity-official, appointed as the "Judge of Revenues under the City God" (皇城 [城隍] 司注祿判官). Upon hearing this, Sun is initially delighted and subsequently inquires about his own career. Zhang replies that he will only acquire a high position after the age of thirty—which is verified in the end of the story. Sun then was taken by surprise:

"You, Sir, enjoyed wine and women throughout your life. You had been [sexually] violating women every month. So how did you reach your present position?"

Zhang said, "These were my deeds. In all things it is one's heart that is considered. If the heart is not unprincipled, then anything is possible."⁸⁸

「公平生酒色甚多，犯婦人者無月無之，焉得至此？」

⁸⁷ "Buddha Heads inside a Fish" 魚腹佛頭, *Yijian zhi* jia.17.151. Hong notes that he acquired this story from the woman's cousin Yu Bingfu.

⁸⁸ "Sun Jiuding" 孫九鼎, *Yijian zhi* jia.1.1. Translation cf. Inglis 2009: 3-7.

曰：「此吾之迹也。凡事當察其心，苟心不昧，亦何所不可！」

Zhang's words in his own defense are intriguing. If according to the Song Code, by sexually violating a woman he should have at least been punished for one and a half years of servitude (if the woman is an unmarried commoner) or ninety blows of the heavy rod (if the woman is a slave-servant not his own). The penalty would be even heavier if the woman is related to him or married, or he uses force (i.e. rape).⁸⁹ Yet Zhang not only evades all possible mundane and divine punishments but even becomes a deity after death. He does not explain what his “principle” is when claiming that his heart is not unprincipled. However, according to his logic, the principle of the divine world does not care about such sexual transgressions as “deeds”—while the mundane legal system cares only about deeds. That certainly is at odds with many Song people's expectation and Sun is therefore puzzled. However, as the story goes, Zhang is proven to be an efficacious (and thus legitimate) deity since his prediction about Sun's future career is verified.

This very story of Sun Jiuding is referred to in a later account titled “The Lady of West Lake” in the eleventh volume of *Yijian zhi*. In it, a young official lives with a female ghost (his lover) for half a year. Before they have to part, the ghost advises the man to take “Stomach Soothing Powder” (平胃散) to survive from the invasion of *yin* energy to his body. The man responds: “I once read *Yijian zhi* and found that Sun Jiuding also takes this recipe when encountering a ghost.”⁹⁰ Indeed, in the “Sun Jiuding” account, Zhang gives precisely the same warning and advice to Sun. Sun Jiuding and the young official have the same symptom (acute diarrhea) and recover by taking the same medicine. However, Sun only spends half a day with

⁸⁹ *Song xingtong* 26.478. McKnight 1992: 104. A man would only be free of penalty when the woman is a lesser class directly subordinate to him. But that way it would not be called “violation” (犯).

⁹⁰ “The Lady of West Lake” 西湖女子, *Yijian zhi zhijia*.6.754-55. This account ends with: “Whenever [the young scholar] tells people about this, he is still full of sorrow.” Hong Mai notes that his nephew knew about the whole story. Perhaps his nephew had met the young scholar in person and heard the story directly from him.

Zhang and his life is already endangered; the young official lives with the female ghost for half a year. It seems less harmful for a man to have sexual contact with a female ghost for half a year than to drink, eat, and chat (if nothing else) with a male ghost-deity for half a day.

The world of *Yijian zhi* is multivocal and heterogeneous. It would be very puzzling if, simply because it was all written down by Hong Mai, we assume that all its accounts represent the voice of a single person or a single class and try to analyze that single voice. There are certainly some values, concerns, as well as anxieties that are more frequently seen than others in *Yijian zhi*. Nonetheless, the diverse angles and solutions to those concerns and their contradictions are equally apparent.

6. Implications and applications

If many *Yijian zhi* accounts belong to an oral tradition and reflect a segment of local gossips and popular tales circulating in Song society, those accounts must have not simply reflected but also *stimulated* a kind of vitality among the populace: that of people hearing, telling, retelling, comparing, interpreting, distorting, applying, and making use of pieces of information in them. In the last story, “The Lady of West Lake,” for example, the young official learns about the usage and effect of Stomach Soothing Powder not through doctors or medical books but through *Yijian zhi*. Stories with discrepant and contradictory details may attract diverse responses as we have seen in the account of Instructor Jiang. However, even a rather coherent one can be read in very different ways. Consider the following account:

In Xianjing Prefecture,⁹¹ the Temple of Transcendent Enlightenment and its Hall of the

⁹¹ Xinjing jian, an industrial prefecture located in present day Sichuan, originally named Lingjing jian in Northern Song before 1110.

Mother of Nine Sons (i.e. Hariti, a subjugated demon-goddess in Buddhism) are located at the mountaintop. A lay Buddhist named Huang took charge of supplying the incense and saw among the clay figures in the hall a wet nurse with her breasts exposed. He fell in love with it. Whenever visiting the temple, he always fondled [the clay woman's breasts] gently with affection. One day the clay woman suddenly moved, and the two of them hand in hand went to the back of the screen and shared intimacy. Since then they met every day and kept at it for months. The man gradually became sick yet still managed to climb up the mountain. The abbot discreetly followed him and saw a woman welcome him with a smile halfway to the mountaintop. The next day, the abbot followed him again. When the woman appeared, the abbot hit her with a stick. The woman fell down [and turned into pieces of clay]. Among the clay pieces there was a clay fetus several months old. The abbot asked the man to take the fetus home, grind it and consume it with other medicines. The man then gradually recovered.⁹²

仙井監超覺寺九子母堂在山顛。一行者姓黃，主給香火，顧土偶中乳婢乳垂於外，悅之，每至，必摩拊咨惜。一旦，偶人自動，遂起行，攜手入屏後狎昵。自是日以為常，累月矣。積以臥病，猶自力登山不已。主僧陰伺之，至半山，即有婦人迎笑。明日，尾其後，婦人復至。以拄杖擊之，鏗然仆地。於碎土中得一兒胎，如數月孕者。令行者取歸，暴為屑，和藥以食。遂愈。

This is a complete narrative. Focused on the man's relationship with the clay woman and its aftermath, this account consists of no redundant or contradictory details. We know how and why this relationship begins, proceeds, and ends. We know how and why the man becomes interested, indulged, falls ill, and then is cured. We know who the man is, what he does, where the clay

⁹² "The Clay Fetus" 土偶胎, *Yijian zhi jia*.17.146. Hong Mai notes that he acquired this story from Yu Bingfu.

woman comes from, and who intervenes. This account makes good sense in itself. The implication of this narrative seems quite obvious too: an admonishment against excessive sexual fantasy or behavior, or a criticism of the imagery of sensuous bodies in the popular pantheon. Those messages might have been what the narrator meant to say. But is it really what every reader/listener would make of it? Deviant readers, listeners, or viewers can be recalcitrant. The clay figure of the wet nurse is made certainly not to arouse anyone sexually. But the man simply views it (and touches it) this way. Would people like him, instead of learning the lesson to “stay away from dangerous sexy images,” simply come up with thoughts like: “Don’t worry, there are cures!” One could learn from “The Lady of West Lake” and “Sun Jiuding” that interacting with ghosts (sexually or not) is not a big deal because “Stomach Soothing Powder” can help.

One could even make use of popular ghost stories as a disguise for adultery. An account in the twelfth volume of *Yijian zhi* tells about the affair between a retainer (*guanke* 館客) and a concubine of the famous/notorious eunuch Yang Jian during Huizong’s reign.⁹³ It is said that Yang Jian has dozens of concubines in his capital residence. When leaving for Zhengzhou for sacrifices, he locks them all in the inner quarter with only a small tunnel in the wall to pass food. One concubine is attracted to a retainer, who lives in the outer house, and uses a ladder to get him into her house. He goes at night and leaves before dawn for a sequence of days. One day Yang suddenly comes back when the retainer is still inside the house. He climbs up the ladder in a hurry and yet has no energy to climb down. Yang sees him at the top of the wall, knows what he must have done but does not expose him. People think that he must be possessed, help him down and summon a Daoist priest to treat him. The retainer so conveniently cooperates with the Daoist treatment and pretends that he is enchanted by ghosts and does not know what he has

⁹³ For Yang Jian’s biography, see *Song shi* 468.13664-65.

done.⁹⁴

Stories and medical prescriptions like these should be recognized as a kind of discourse in their obvious attempt to define a healthy or sick body, a sexual or asexual disposition of the body, and a desire that is supposed to be nurtured or suppressed. Nevertheless, as I have begun and will continue to argue throughout this dissertation, discourses on sexuality, the female body, desire and relationships from Song times are not coherent but discrepant and contradictory. Secondly, the potential of different implications and applications of the stories and the creativity of deviant readers/listeners/viewers deserve our attention.

⁹⁴ “Yang Jian’s Retainer” (楊戩館客), *Yijian zhi zhiyi*.5.830-31. The rest of the story tells how Yang Jian tricks the retainer and neuters him, and treats him as a “toy” (玩具) afterwards.

Chapter II

Circulating Knowledge:

The Use and the Limit of Medicine

If elite men's collections of popular anecdotes from the Song are multivocal and contain inconsistent details and contradictory ideas, what about medical books compiled by elite doctors and sponsored by the Song state? While we often think of medicine as one of the most powerful and authoritative forms of knowledge in defining and regulating sexuality and the body in modern times, was it also the case in premodern China? Scholars studying premodern Chinese medicine have demonstrated the revolutionary development during the Tang-Song periods and its close relation to the imperial patronage of medical compilations, the increase of printed books, elite's interest in medicine, and the expansion of the drug market.⁹⁵ The two aspects related to gender that have been well studied are the rapid increase in separate prescriptions for women and the establishment of gynecology as a distinct field (*fuke* 婦科). These developments coincided with large-scale state projects of compiling and publishing medical books, among which some particularly focused on "treatments for women." In past scholarship, these two phenomena are associated with a process of sex/gender differentiation, a shift in responsibility for reproduction from men to women, and the systemization of medical discourse on the female body. For example, Jen-der Lee, focusing on medical innovations during the Tang, concludes that in Tang

⁹⁵ For a thorough study on Song medicine and the social change, see Goldschmidt 2009.

medicine, bodies of men and women were essentially differentiated, and that the responsibility for pregnancy gradually shifted from men to women. The increased prescriptions for women's infertility, according to Lee, reflect an increasingly heavy burden on and a set of physical and moral regulation of women.⁹⁶ Charlotte Furth argues that "treatments for women" had gone through a process of systemization during the Song, characterized by the use of "pattern diagnosis," that is, "a strategy for grouping the multiplicity of individual symptoms into a smaller number of broad categories that in turn could be related to each other dynamically."⁹⁷ The female body was presented as dominated by Blood—a distinct concept in Chinese medicine referring to the "leading factor" of women's bodies, the source of women's physical traits such as menstruation, conception and lactation—while the male body was dominated by *qi*. Although both Blood and *qi* exist in men's and women's bodies, they were placed in a hierarchical relationship with Blood being inferior, secondary, and dependent on the *qi*.⁹⁸ Male physicians in the Song constructed a new pathology of women's disorders centered on menstruation, linking menstrual patterns with other syndromes, and thus made generativity the focus of a healthy or sick female body.⁹⁹ Beside the gender implications embedded in women's medicine, scholars have also paid attention to possible resistance and manipulation. Both Furth and Francesca Bray noticed that in the Ming dynasty, medical techniques for menstrual regulation, which might cause a miscarriage, could at the same time provide women "room for maneuver."¹⁰⁰ Hsiu-fen Chen also suggests the possibility that supernatural forces (ghosts/demons) were used as convenient excuse by patients for sexual transgression and doctors tacitly cooperated.¹⁰¹

⁹⁶ Li 1997: 316-17, Lee 2003: 7-11

⁹⁷ Furth 1999: 65.

⁹⁸ Furth 1999: 70-74. Hsiu-fen Chen also confirms that the fifth-century doctor Chu Cheng's theory of Blood versus Essence (*jing*) was "deployed to delineate femininity and masculinity, particularly in the Song" (Chen 2011: 70).

⁹⁹ Furth 1986: 51-56. Wilms 2005: 201-12. Also see Yates 2005: 129-31.

¹⁰⁰ Furth 1986: 64-65. Bray 1997: 276, 331-34.

¹⁰¹ Chen 2010: 726-27. I will show evidence later in this chapter that people in the Song did attempt (or at least

However, current scholarship has not told us, in Song times, how powerful medical knowledge was in shaping people's perceptions of the gendered and the sexual body and how successful (or unsuccessful) it was in regulating people's everyday lives.

In this chapter I seek a more nuanced picture of medical knowledge in Song people's daily lives through examining the nature and the use of Song medical books. The layout of Song medical books shows a pragmatic and all-inclusive approach that was intended for popular use. While it reflects the male literate physicians' effort to canonize their own medical opinions, it also increased the accessibility of medical knowledge and exposed it to public discussion and popular appropriation. Song anecdotes show how men and women both participated in that discussion and appropriation. There are cases where female patients contend with doctors based on their understanding of the *materia medica*, for example. How was medical knowledge used and discussed when printing made both old and new ideas more accessible? What can we learn from the dynamics taking place beside the sickbeds? Taking into consideration the circulation of medical knowledge and the actual encounters between doctors and patients may change the way we read gender from medical texts during the Song.

While there were various kinds of "healing" taking place in Song society,¹⁰² in this chapter I only focus on those concerning uses of medical knowledge which comes from what Angela Leung calls, the "scholarly tradition"—that is, materials that were written in standard medical texts, especially those that were compiled, published, and distributed under the patronage of the Song state.¹⁰³ This is to underscore my point that the authority of "standard" medical knowledge was challenged not simply by the popular or shamanistic (the

were aware of) such possibility.

¹⁰² For example, both the "scholarly tradition" and the "popular tradition" of medicine as Angela Leung points out (Leung 2003), and the exorcist rituals performed by Daoist masters (Davis 2001).

¹⁰³ Leung 2003: 375.

“non-scholarly”) tradition but also by the popular use and discussion of the scholarly tradition.

I begin with the framework itself. Using chapters concerning fertility and “(dreaming of) intercourse with ghosts” as examples, I analyze the all-inclusive approach and the hybrid nature of Song medical books and the ambiguity of gender differences reflected in those chapters. I argue that while individual parts of Song medical books may reflect and reinforce certain gender ideologies, taken together, medical knowledge and books functioned as open and multivocal recourses to non-specialists. Then I will turn to explore the actual encounters between doctors and patients, the circumstances where medical knowledge was used and discussed, mostly from *Yijian zhi*, and to call attention to patients’ resistance, active participation in their own treatment, and maneuvers involving use of medical knowledge. Overall, before turning to the next chapter, where I compare (conflicting) discourses on sexuality and the female body in medicine, *zhiguai* literature, and Song anecdotes, here I will show the ways that medical knowledge in its circulating forms provided alternatives rather than simply imposed authority.

1. The framework

One of the major difficulties to studying Song medical books is that they preserve a large number of texts from previous dynasties without indicating the source, and many of the original sources are no longer extant. What is from an earlier tradition and what is a Song invention is not always readily apparent, except for a few cases when the compiler explicitly commented on the development of certain notions or prescriptions, such as Kou Zongshi’s comment on the herb Cangzhu.¹⁰⁴ This is related to the pragmatic approach of the Song state compilation projects. As Angela Leung has pointed out, the Song scholarly tradition was “characterized by a highly pragmatic approach, consisting of the study of *materia medica* and the publication of

¹⁰⁴ This case will be further discussed below.

prescription manuals, as well as an elaborate system of public dispensaries,” and that the Song state’s interest in publishing medical books “derived less from a philological search for historical authenticity than a desire to promote an image of state benevolence.”¹⁰⁵ Such a pragmatic approach produced an all-inclusive yet not so consistent organization of those books. Indeed, Song physicians devoted themselves to the systematic work of collecting and editing medical texts and bridging the gap between the ancient tradition and their contemporary innovations.¹⁰⁶ It is also true that the epistemological construction on menstruation created a much more complicated image of the female body in which many symptoms are correlated to menstrual patterns.¹⁰⁷ However, in many places in Song medical books, information is disparate, sources are hybrid, and sex differences are ambiguous. The nature of Song medical books seems to reject a consistent interpretation of gender and sexual bodies. To illustrate this point, I first compare the descriptions on the syndrome of “(dreaming of) intercourse with ghosts” in a Sui dynasty medical book, *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 諸病源候論 (*On the Origins and Symptoms of Various Diseases*, compiled by Chao Yuanfang 巢元方 in 610, *Origins and Symptoms* hereafter), with those in a Northern Song one, *Taiping shenghui fang* 太平聖惠方 (*Prescriptions of Sacred Benevolence under the Great Peace*, commissioned by the Song court, compiled in 978-992, published in 992, *Prescriptions of Sacred Benevolence* hereafter).

Origins and Symptoms is a book consists of fifty *juan*. *Juan* 1-36 are general categories, organized by the origins of illnesses, and individual symptoms are listed under each etiological category. *Juan* 37-44 are specifically about women, and *juan* 45-50 about children. “Intercourse with ghosts” appears in three places in *Origins and Symptoms*, quoted and translated below:

¹⁰⁵ Leung 2003: 375-76.

¹⁰⁶ Goldschmidt 2009, *passim*.

¹⁰⁷ Furth 1999: 74-84.

Passage A is in *juan* 2, under the category of “Wind,” the section titled “Symptoms of Being Enchanted by Ghosts” (鬼魅候). Both passages B and C are in *juan* 40, under the category of “Women.” Passage B is from the section titled “Symptoms of Intercourse with Ghosts” (與鬼交通候); passage C immediately follows B and is from the section titled “Symptoms of Dreaming of Intercourse with Ghosts” (夢與鬼交通候):

(A) Those who are enchanted by ghostly things, they become sad easily and their heart moves for no reason [i.e. overly emotional and sentimental]. Some have a turbulent mind as if they are drunk, talk madly and appear frightened, cry sadly toward the wall, and often have nightmares. Some have intercourse with ghosts and spirits. They suffer from the symptoms of sudden cold and sudden heat, swollen heart and abdomen, short breath, and are unable to drink and eat. It is because they are caught by the enchanting spirits (*mei*).¹⁰⁸

凡人有為鬼物所魅，則好悲而心自動，或心亂如醉，狂言驚怖，向壁悲啼，夢寐喜魘，或與鬼神交通。病苦乍寒乍熱，心腹滿，短氣，不能飲食。此魅之所持也。

(B) Human beings are endowed with life through the fine essence/*qi* of the Five Phases and rely on the spirit-energy (*shenqi*) of the Five Viscera to develop. When the *yin* and the *yang* forces are balanced, the viscera and bowels strong, vicious influence of the Wind (*fengxie*) and enchanting ghosts (*guimei*) cannot disturb a person. If one does not rest and ingest regularly, and the Blood and the *qi* become depleted and weak, then *fengxie* takes the opportunity to invade the depleted body, and ghosts disturb the body’s regular pattern. As for women who have intercourse with ghosts, it is because their viscera and bowels are depleted and the protection of the spirit-energy (*shenshou*) is weak,

¹⁰⁸ *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 2.70.

and therefore the influence/*qi* of ghosts can sicken them. A woman appears unwilling to meet people, [acting] as if confronting [someone], talking and laughing on her own, and occasionally crying in sorrow. Her pulse appears slow and deep, and may resemble a bird pecking—these are all [symptoms] of illnesses caused by vicious forces. Sometimes the pulse is so continuous and unbreakable that one cannot count its number, even though the woman's complexion appears unchanged—these are also symptoms of such illness.¹⁰⁹

人稟五行秀氣而生，承五臟神氣而養。若陰陽調和，則臟腑強盛，風邪鬼魅不能傷之。若攝衛失節，而血氣虛衰，則風邪乘其虛，鬼干其正。然婦人與鬼交通者，臟腑虛，神守弱，故鬼氣得病之也。其狀不欲見人，如有對忤，獨言笑，或時悲泣是也。脉來遲伏，或如鳥啄，皆邪物病也。又脉來繚繚，不知度數，而顏色不變，此亦病也。

(C) Those with depleted viscera are prone to dream. That women dream of having intercourse with ghosts is also due to the weak *qi* of their viscera and bowels, and the depletion and waning of the protection of the spirit-energy. At this weak moment, they have intercourse with ghosts through dreams.¹¹⁰

夫臟虛者喜夢。婦人夢與鬼交，亦由腑臟氣弱，神守虛衰，故乘虛因夢與鬼交通也。

Hsiufen Chen traces the medical construction and explanation of the symptom “dreaming of intercourse with ghosts” (or Chen’s rendering, “dreaming of sex with demons”) from the earliest extant texts through late imperial times and points out three causes associated with this symptom: women’s emotions (or sexual frustration), bodily depletion, and “demon invasion.” The

¹⁰⁹ *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 40.1149-50.

¹¹⁰ *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 40.1150.

body-oriented explanation appeared earlier than those of emotions/desire and demonic forces.¹¹¹ As we can see in the three passages above, Chao in the early seventh century had incorporated both the body-oriented and demonological explanations. Passage A is a general description of the symptoms of enchanted by ghosts, and passages B and C further explain the inner cause (bodily depletion) of ghost enchantment and seem to imply that women's viscera and *qi*-energy are generally weaker (than men's) and thus they are more susceptible to such illnesses.¹¹²

Passages A and B are copied in full in *Prescriptions of Sacred Benevolence*, a state-sponsored medical compilation from the Northern Song. It consists of a long catalog of all kinds of illnesses with brief descriptions of the causes, and lists of all the symptoms, prescriptions, and recipes under each category. When it was compiled, the edict ordered all doctors in the Imperial Medical Academy to present recipes handed down from their families. After all the recipes were put into categories, the editors inserted one passage from *Origins and Symptoms* in front of each section as a brief introduction to the causes of certain illnesses and symptoms.¹¹³ Passage A is inserted in the section “Prescriptions for Enchantment by Ghosts” 治鬼魅諸方, and passage B in “Prescriptions for Women Having Intercourse with Ghosts” 治婦人與鬼交通諸方—both accord with their original categories in *Origins and Symptoms*.¹¹⁴

However, interestingly, other than those, a passage in the front the section titled “Prescriptions for Depletion, Exhaustion, and Dreaming of Intercourse with Ghosts,” under the category of

¹¹¹ Chen 2010, 2011. Chen convincingly demonstrates how “[t]he earlier body-oriented etiology of female sexual frustration, dreaming of sex with demons, and demonic fetuses gradually shifted to emotion-oriented perspectives in late imperial China” (2011: 70). However, Chen seems to agree with the assumption in premodern Chinese medical texts that those who lack sexual contact with the opposite sex would be sexually frustrated and “naturally become the targets of doctors’ particular concern” (Chen 2010: 706). I will revisit this point and analyze the medical construction of “female sexual frustration” and its relationship to the reproductive body in the next chapter.

¹¹² Interestingly, in concurrent *zhiguai* literature, instances of men enchanted by ghosts predominantly outnumber those of women (Mei 1997: 106-7).

¹¹³ *Song shi* 461.13507.

¹¹⁴ *Taiping shenghui fang* 56.5437, 70.6940-41.

disorders of semen, is taken from passages B and C:

Human beings are endowed with life through the fine essence/*qi* of the Five Phases and rely on the spirit-energy (*shenqi*) of the Five Viscera to develop. When the *yin* and the *yang* forces are balanced and ample, the viscera and bowels strong, vicious influence of the Wind (*fengxie*) and enchanting ghosts (*guimei*) cannot disturb a person. If one does not rest and ingest regularly, and the blood and the *qi* become depleted and weak, then *fengxie* takes the opportunity to invade the depleted body, and ghostly *qi* disturb the body's regular pattern. This is why for those who are exhausted and harmed, the *qi* of their viscera and bowels is weak, and the spirit-energy is unable to protect [the viscera and bowels]. Therefore at this weak moment, the vicious force invades, and the person has intercourse with ghosts through dreams.¹¹⁵

夫人稟五行秀氣而生，乘五藏神氣而養。若陰陽調利，則藏府強盛，邪鬼魅不能干之。若將攝失節，血氣虛衰，則風邪乘其虛，鬼氣干其正也。是以勞傷之人，藏府氣弱，神氣不守，故邪乘虛所干，(同)〔因〕夢與鬼交通也。

This passage is basically a combination of the former half of passages B and the latter half of C. Since it is in the chapter on all kinds of disorders of semen, the subject is undoubtedly men.¹¹⁶ The gendered implication in the passages of *Origins and Symptoms* becomes weaker when the passages are adapted and re-organized in *Prescriptions of Sacred Benevolence*. However, it is less likely that the compiler of *Prescriptions of Sacred Benevolence* intentionally challenged Chao's theory than that the way that the book was compiled—pragmatic and all-inclusive—coincidentally blurred some of the gender boundaries in its structure in this case.

¹¹⁵ *Taiping shenghui fang* 30.2621.

¹¹⁶ Similar passages also appear in other Song books explaining women's symptoms of this kind. For example, *Nüke baiwen* 1.61a, and *Furen daquan liangfang* 6.173.

The editors would rather include the more detailed explanation of etiology in both men's and women's chapters than exclude them from either one.¹¹⁷ Moreover, following the above passage, there are six prescriptions and their corresponding symptoms. All the symptoms listed are those that can easily be recognized by patients such as lack of strength in limbs, itch on the groin, and so on, rather than those often used by doctors for diagnosis, such as the pulse or the coating on the tongue. Aside from being doctors' reference book, Song medical books were compiled also for patients' use. With this resource, patients could fetch certain prescriptions for themselves from a dispensary, for example, instead of always going through a doctor.

The pragmatic and all-inclusive approach is the same in Southern Song medical books. A good example is the chapter on "Asking for Progeny" (求子) in *Furen daquan liangfang* 婦人大全良方 (*All-Inclusive Good Prescriptions for Women*, compiled in 1237), where the author Chen Ziming 陳自明 (1190-1272)¹¹⁸ lists prescriptions for infertility from four different sources, dating from the fifth century to the Southern Song. The first quote is contemporary, another Southern Song doctor Chen Wuze's "On Asking for Progeny" (陳無擇求子論), which states that the first priority for having progeny is to "examine whether the husband and the wife have any fatigue disorders or chronic damages, and to treat with proper prescriptions" (凡欲求子當先察夫婦有無勞傷痼害之屬，依方調治).¹¹⁹ It is immediately followed by a much earlier source of Chu Cheng 褚澄 (d. 483), a court doctor of the Southern Qi Dynasty (479-501). Chu recorded his conversation with the king concerning three pieces of advice for the king to beget sons. The

¹¹⁷ Also, the opening paragraph of this *juan* states that "to strengthen *yin* brings one children" (強陰令人有子), suggesting that men's fertility is one of the main concerns for this chapter (30.836). Fertility is not emphasized only in chapters on women's treatments but also men's, although it does not occupy as much space in men's as in women's.

¹¹⁸ Chen Ziming was the medical instructor (*yiju* 醫諭) at the Mingdao Academy 明道書院 in Jiangkang when compiling this book (*Furen daquan liangfang* preface.2).

¹¹⁹ *Furen daquan liangfang* 9.286.

first is about proper age—the man should be above thirty and the woman twenty. The second is to find “women who already have given birth to several boys.” And the third is to match an older man with a younger woman, or an older woman with a younger man.¹²⁰ The three suggestions are apparently geared to the noble class and generated from a completely different tradition than Chen Wuzhe’s prescription-based advice. The second one is perhaps the most inapplicable for a Southern Song user, but the author still includes it without leaving any comment or judgment on the divergent information. The next source is from Chao Yuanfang’s *Origins and Symptoms*, in which Chao lists three factors of infertility: the ancestor’s grave (that is, whether its location and direction lead to the lack of progeny), the husband’s and wife’s dates and times of birth, and the husband’s and wife’s physical condition. There is no internal link among the three, and Chao states that medicine can only treat the third.¹²¹ The fourth source is Sun Simiao’s 孫思邈 (581-682) *Beiji qianjin yaofang* 備急千金要方 (*Prescriptions Worth a Thousand for Emergencies*) and *Qianjin yifang* 千金翼方 (*Supplement to Prescriptions Worth a Thousand*). It begins with an unprecedentedly detailed physiology on why “women’s disorders are ten times more difficult to treat than men’s,” and then lists all the taboos for successful pregnancy, auspicious dates for conceiving male or female children, and medicinal prescriptions for men’s lack of *jing* or *yang* energy and women’s infertility.¹²² One thing worth noting in Sun’s treatise is that he advises those who care about “nourishing life” teach their children these prescriptions for women in order to save women’s lives especially during childbirth; those childcarers (*fumu zhi tu* 傅母之徒) should also transcribe his work and always bring it with them in case of

¹²⁰ *Furen daquan liangfang* 9.286-87.

¹²¹ *Furen daquan liangfang* 9.287.

¹²² *Furen daquan liangfang* 9.288-300. Prescriptions for men are quantitatively fewer than for women. Jen-der Lee has a detailed analysis on Sun Simiao and the development of medical discourse on fertility from the Han to the Tang (Li 1997, Lee 2003).

emergency.¹²³ This is certainly emblematic of male doctors' attempt to encroach on a traditionally female-dominant field (childbirth) and to canonize their construction of the female/reproductive body as the most authoritative one. But as I will continue to argue, such attempts do not seem to have been too successful at least up to Song times, and it was not because medical books were not spread widely enough, but precisely the opposite.

The most intriguing one is perhaps the last entry, “Hermit Wen’s Treatise on the Prescription for Progeny and Preserving Life” (溫隱居求嗣保生篇方論). It is from *Haishang xianfang* 海上仙方 (*Prescriptions of the Immortals on the Sea*, preserved in *Dao zang*) by a Song Dynasty Daoist Wen Daming. The treatise begins with a story recounting how this prescription is acquired by a Mr. Jiao from the Northern Song. The Jiao family had not been producing any sons by legitimate wives. Mr. Jiao therefore goes on a journey in search of solutions. He visits an old monk and asks for his advice. The monk relates three causes of infertility: one’s ancestors’ lack of virtue or one’s own misconduct, a bad match between the husband’s and wife’s times of birth, and the man’s insufficient *jing* energy or the woman’s cold Blood. Interestingly, here Mr. Jiao asks only for the solution for “wives’ and concubines’ cold Blood” since that is the only thing beyond his control. However, the monk asks him to “cultivate virtue before cultivating the body” and come back in three years—implying that the real problem of his family is his lack of virtue. Mr. Jiao then works hard on accumulating good deeds for three years and eventually acquires a recipe from the monk, and his wife gives birth to a son, the *yuanwai* Jiao. Although *yuanwai* Jiao continues to have sons, his sons are incompetent. He again goes to the old monk for help and received the same advice: to carry out good deeds. What he does before his sons and grandsons all become wealthy and prestigious is to print the recipe that

¹²³ *Furen daquan liangfang* 9.289. *Beiji qianjin yaofang* 2.16a-b.

his father acquires and distribute the copies. The recipe, named “Elixir for Maintaining Progeny and Giving Birth” (續嗣降生丹) is attached to the end of the story, and the instruction explicitly says that it treats *both men’s and women’s* infertility and other relevant disorders:

This prescription treats men’s cold and diluted semen, impotence, white and turbid nocturnal emission, as well as women’s leucorrhea, emaciation, and Cold and Hot [symptoms]. Yet for men and women’s various [symptoms out of] depletion and exhaustion, [including] pseudo-fever, night sweats, shortness of breath and lethargy, paleness, and lack of appetite, [this prescription] can treat all the above.¹²⁴

此藥及療男子精寒不固、陽事衰弱、白濁夢泄，及婦人血虛帶下、肌瘦寒熱。但是男女諸虛百損，客熱盜汗，氣短乏力，面無顏色，飲食少味，並皆治之。

In this case, the treatment for women is not separated from men’s; “asking for progeny” seems more of the men’s rather than the women’s responsibility. More interestingly, even though there might already be quite a few remedies at hand—given the fact that prescriptions for infertility greatly increased during the Tang and the Song when the state had been sponsoring projects of compilation and distribution of medical books—none seems to work for Mr. Jiao’s family. He still has to search for more options, and what he acquires is in turn incorporated into this state-sponsored medical book, *All-Inclusive Good Prescriptions for Women*.

The way that “Asking for Progeny” in *All-Inclusive Good Prescriptions for Women* is compiled seems to imply that readers are expected to choose for themselves among diverse options. And as the last entry suggests, medical books at this time functioned as open resources not simply in the sense that they provide options for users but also that part of their contents is contributed (and tested) by the users. The users (including women), as I am going to argue, were

¹²⁴ *Furen daquan liangfang* 9.300-302.

not simply capable of marginalizing the role of doctors, but could also manipulate medical knowledge to serve other purposes.

2. Who's knowledge?

Printing and official and private sponsorship made medical books circulate in Song society in large numbers. When the compilation of *Prescriptions of Sacred Benevolence* was finished, copies were ordered to disseminate it to “all under heaven.” Official copies reached at least all the Song prefectures, some temples, garrisons, and overseas to Koryō.¹²⁵ An account in *Yijian zhi* records an unusual incident in Shu Prefecture (in present day Anhui) in 1146 when the print blocks of *Prescriptions of Sacred Benevolence* were reproduced there: It is said that five alcoholic and lazy craftsmen made several mistakes in the printing blocks and were struck to death by lightning.¹²⁶ Illustrated medical books are particularly useful. An official once commented:

*Illustrated Materia Medica*¹²⁷ is the most crucial [handbook] for households. [With it,] one would know the medicinal properties of doctors' prescriptions; as for daily diet, fruits, and vegetables, one would know what to avoid.¹²⁸ Yet there are occasions when frequently used herbs are recorded by different names, and that makes it difficult to

¹²⁵ *Song shi* 461.13508, *Song hui yao jigao li*.62.35, 36, 39.

¹²⁶ *Yijian zhi bing* 12.464, “The Carving Craftsmen of Shu Prefecture” 舒州刻工. The same story is also recorded in another Song anecdote collection, *Touxia lu* (*Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan* vol.4, 3887).

¹²⁷ The *Zhonghua shuju* edition punctuates as 圖經·本草 (geography books, *material medica*). But judging from the context, since the whole paragraph does not mention geography at all, I believe that it should be 圖經本草 (illustrated *material medica*), a type of medical books produced during the Song. The book catalog section (“Yiwen zhi”) of *Song shi* lists a title, *Bencao tujing* 本草圖經 (*Illustrated Materia Medica*, 20 juan), compiled by Su Song 蘇頌 (*Song shi* 207.5319). The Song edition of Su Song's *Illustrated Materia Medica* is no longer extant. Fragments of it are preserved in *Zhenglei bencao* 證類本草 and *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目. Anhui Science and Technology Press (Anhui kexue jishu chubanshe) has tried to restore it based on the above two books and a twentieth-century mimeograph edition (*Bencao tujing*, preface and the editor's notes). Another book of illustrated *material medica* is the one compiled by Kou Zongshi, *Tujing yanyi bencao* 圖經衍義本草 (*Illustrated Expanded Commentaries of Materia Medica*), preserved in *Dao zang*.

¹²⁸ That is, to avoid eating things that would become poisonous when mixed.

find the correct ones. Among the official publications of Po[yang] County, there is one titled “Various Names of *Materia Medica*,” recording the alias names of all medicinal ingredients. Yet it appears to be too long and inconvenient to use.¹²⁹

圖經本草，人家最不可缺。醫者處方，則便可知藥性；飲食果菜，則便可知避忌。然其間有常用之藥，而載以異名，卒難尋究。鄱郡官書，有本草異名一篇。盡取諸藥它名登載，似覺繁冗。

A handbook with illustrations of all kinds of herbs is certainly more efficient than a list of all the different names. Capable of reproducing images fast and precisely, printing in the Song therefore improved the dissemination of medical knowledge not only quantitatively but also qualitatively.

How did those mass produced and widely circulating medical books affect Song people’s lives? A story from *Yijian zhi* relates how a Song official deals with his rather serious disease:

[When] Shi Kangzu was the magistrate of Guangde (in present day Anhui), he served [the deity] King Zhang piously with caution. Later when he was transferred to Wencui, he had an ulcer on the left side of his chest [...] For half a year, he tried numerous treatments but none worked. [...] He then prayed earnestly in front of King Zhang’s shrine, and dreamed of [King Zhang] speaking to him, “If you want to recover, simply infuse Xiangfu (Nutgrass Galingale Rhizome, *Rhizoma Cyperi*) in natural ginger juice and take it.” He woke up and called his son. They looked it up in the *Classic of Materia Medica* and confirmed that what the book said about these two ingredients matched his symptoms. He consulted a doctor. The doctor also said that the prescription was reasonable. He then removed the root hair of Xiangfu, soaked it in ginger juice for one night, ground two *qian* of rice, and drank the infusion. Soon after

¹²⁹ *Youhuan jiwèn* 1.3.

he took a few doses, the pus flowed out and the hard tumor gradually disappeared. He recovered after that.¹³⁰

時康祖為廣德宰，事張王甚謹。後授溫倅，左乳生癰...荏苒半載，百療莫效...。亟禱王祠下，夢聞語曰：「若要安，但用薑自然汁，製香附服之。」覺，呼其子，檢《本草》視之，二物治證相符。訪醫者，亦云有理。遂用香附去毛，薑汁浸一宿，為末二錢米飲調。才數服，瘡膿流出，腫硬漸消，自是獲愈。

Just as medical books incorporated prescriptions of diverse origins, people in the Song acquired recipes from multiple sources. Mysterious sources were not separated from the orthodox ones. While Shi Kangzu in this story acquires this recipe from a divine dream, a rather mysterious source, he is able to analyze the ingredients by using medical classics. He checks the medical book by himself *before* checking with a doctor.

Another story in *Yijian zhi* records how Kangzu is cured of a twenty-year heart ailment by adopting a prescription from the state-sponsored book mentioned earlier, *Prescriptions of Sacred Benevolence*:

During the reign of Chunxi (1174-1190), [Kangzu] served as the controller-general in Wenzhou. The prefect Han Ziwen saw [his suffering from the disease] and felt sympathy for him. Han looked through the section on lumbago in the *Prescriptions of Sacred Benevolence*, and showed Kangzu both Cold and Hot causes of the disease and let him choose for himself. Kangzu said, “I am such an old man and have been weak for long. How would I dare to use prescriptions for the Hot!” He tentatively picked up a prescription from the Cold category and took it along with antlers. After ten days the pain was eased [...] More than a month later, his crouched back became straight and

¹³⁰ *Yijian zhi zaibu* 1794.

no longer hurt, and his heart disease was cured as well. He told some doctors about this, and none of them were able to explain the effect.¹³¹

淳熙間，通判溫州，郡守韓子溫見而憐之，為檢《聖惠方》載腰痛一門冷熱二症示之，使自擇。康祖曰：「某年老久羸，安敢以為熱！」姑作寒症治療，取一方，用鹿茸者服之。逾旬痛減...洎月餘，腰屈復伸，無復呼痛，心漏亦愈。以告醫者，皆莫能測其所以然。

As Robert Hymes points out, in the Song, doctors were not the only group of people with medical knowledge. There is occasionally a “scholar who had learned enough from medical texts to treat his family and friends.”¹³² Two cases above seem to further suggest that one does not have to be all that well-learned to consult medical texts. What Kangzu and the prefect do is simply looking for specific herbs and prescriptions from the books that respond to the symptoms. Medical books of this kind therefore function more as reference books than something that has to be thoroughly studied before use. In addition, as in the previous story, doctors are not portrayed as omniscient, authoritative figures. Rather, it is the patient who looks for possibilities, does research, and makes choices.

The above story of Kangzu was in turn incorporated into later medical books, such as *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目 (*Compendium Materia Medica*, by Li Shizhen, 1518-1593).¹³³ Successful cases on the one hand contributed to the variety of prescriptions listed in medical books, and on the other hand seemed to be an important source of authority and credibility for a book. A preface to the Ming reprint of the Southern Song book *Nüke baiwen* 女科百問 (*A Hundred Questions for Women's Medicine*, by Qi Zhongfu 齊仲甫) recounts what had led to the

¹³¹ *Yijian zhi zaibu* 1794.

¹³² Hymes 1987: 33.

¹³³ *Bencao gangmu* 17.1169-70.

effort of the reprint:

[A copy of this book] was stored in the house of Mr. Jin Rong'an, the adjunct administrator in my hometown. Mr. Nazhai (i.e. Wang Lun 王綸) took it and transcribed a copy. Whenever encountering women in the country with disorders corresponding to the questions and answers in the book, he applied its prescriptions on them. [The prescriptions] were always immediately effective. [Mr. Nazhai] once spoke to Mr. Shigang of Taibao, "This book can contribute to benefiting the *yin* (or medicine for women). Why not have it printed and let it circulate?"

往藏於吾鄉少司馬容菴金公家，訥齋翁取而錄之，每遇國中女婦諸證，凡與所問答相合者，即用其方療之，靡不立效。嘗語太保石岡公曰：「此書有功濟陰，盍梓之以傳？」¹³⁴

The authority of this book does not come from itself but from its reputation among users. The author's original preface in 1220 also states that there may well be mistakes and defects in this book, and he welcomes practitioners to test and to correct it.¹³⁵

Perhaps the most unexpected way of using medical books is recorded in *Maoting kehua* 茅亭客話 (*Record of the Thatched Hut Dweller*, by Huang Xiufu 黃休復, late 10th-early 11th century): It tells about a commoner named Jia Jutai from the Later Shu (934-965). He and his wife are both in their middle age. They only have one son, who suddenly becomes ill and cannot be cured by all the medicine they have tried. Jia and his wife then "put a copy of *Qianjin fang* (i.e. Sun Simiao's *Beiji qianjin yaofang*) piously in the loft of their house, burn incense day and night, face Mount Emei and pray to Perfect Sun (i.e. Sun Simiao) for help" (虔誠置千金方一部

¹³⁴ *Nüke baiwen xuxu.1a.*

¹³⁵ *Nüke baiwen yuanxu.2a.*

於所居閣上，日夜焚香，望峨嵋山告孫真人禱乞救護). After a few days, Jia and his wife have the same dream that a white-robed old man comes and tells them how to treat their son: “Your son is ill because he did not inherit enough *qi* from his parents when born. Now I will instruct you: every day at dawn you both take turns to blow air and let your son open his mouth and inhale the air. After three days, your son will recover” (汝男是當生時受父母氣數較少。吾今教汝，每旦父母各呵氣，令汝男開口而咽之。如此三日，汝男當愈). The parents do as told and their son gradually recovers. The parents then both enter the Daoist order and “constantly pay offerings to Perfect Sun with no neglect.”¹³⁶ The couple is very likely illiterate, and it is just a good idea to pray directly to the deified author instead of reading the book. But this insufflation treatment is not seen in Sun’s book. While Sun advised that each household should have a copy of his book in case of emergency, he probably would not have thought that someone would simply use a copy of his book almost as a talisman.

Patients and non-specialists could appeal to both the scholarly and non-scholarly traditions at will. They could ask gods for help, could check medical books by themselves, or could even worship the physical copy of a medical book and pray to the (deified) author for help. They might or might not consult a doctor. It was not simply men who could do this; anecdotes in *Yijian zhi* show that women non-specialists also encroached on the doctors’ professional realm by using knowledge from the scholarly tradition and presenting a different perspective on their treatments.

3. Women in medical practice

Stories from *Yijian zhi* suggest that women in the Song held medical opinions as well.

¹³⁶ *Maoting kehua* 4.418.

They might or might not acquire medical knowledge through reading,¹³⁷ yet in several stories women's medical opinions correspond to the scholarly tradition. In the first story below, the woman's knowledge and ability to talk about medicine is part of the unexplained details that the author took for granted, while in the second story, there seems to be a variety of ways to interpret it.

We have seen part of the first account in Chapter One. Here is the whole story: A young official meets a lady when touring West Lake, and they develop a romantic relationship. But the man fails to persuade the lady's parents to betroth her to him before leaving for another post. Five years later when he comes back, he encounters this lady again and they live together for half a year. One day the lady suddenly confesses to him that she is in fact a ghost—she has been dead for four years since he leaves. She then teaches him how to survive intercourse with a ghost:

“[My] *yin* influence has penetrated throughout your body. You will soon have serious diarrhea. Yet you should take the Stomach Soothing Powder (*pingwei san*) to nourish and stabilize your *jing* essence and Blood.” Having heard this, the man was stunned for quite a while, and then said: “I once read *Yijian zhi* and found that Sun Jiuding also took this recipe when encountering a ghost. I thought that the properties of the ingredients in this recipe were moderate. How does it have such effect?” The lady said: “It uses Cangzhu (*Rhizoma Atractylodis*), the highest grade of herbs, to repel malignant influences.”¹³⁸

「陰氣侵君已深，勢當暴瀉，惟宜服平胃散，以補安精血。」士聞語驚惋良久，乃云：「我曾看《夷堅志》，見孫九鼎遇鬼，亦服此藥。吾思之藥味皆平，何得功

¹³⁷ It is not anything surprising that women in the Song, especially those from the upper class, read books (Ebrey 1993: 120-124).

¹³⁸ “The Lady of West Lake” 西湖女子, *Yijian zhi zhijia*.6.754-55.

效如是？」女曰：「其中用蒼朮去邪氣，上品也。」

The lady in this story is not a mysterious spirit of unknown origin or a “fox lady” of the sort that often appears in *zhiguai* stories. She is the daughter of a gentry family. The recipe that she suggested, the “Stomach Soothing Powder,” is not anything esoteric either, but a classical prescription and also listed in *Taiping huimin hejiju fang* 太平惠民合劑局方 (*Prescriptions of the Medical Bureau for Benefiting the People Under the Great Peace*, first published in 1078-1085, revised and edited till ca. 1252. *Prescriptions of the Medical Bureau* hereafter).¹³⁹ Furthermore, her pointing out the crucial role of Cangzhu in this recipe echoes the Northern Song imperial doctor Kou Zongshi’s 寇宗奭 comment on this herb in his *Bencao yanyi* 本草衍義 (*Expanded Commentaries of Materia Medica*, first published in 1116):

Ancient prescriptions and the *Classic of Materia Medica* simply mention *zhu* and do not distinguish Cangzhu (gray *zhu*) from Baizhu (white *zhu*, *Rhizoma Atractylodis Macrocephalae*, or Largehead *Rhizoma Atractylodis*). Ever since the Hermit Tao distinguished the two kinds of *zhu*,¹⁴⁰ people often favor Baizhu. Today people simply treasure the rare and only use Baizhu, oftentimes leaving Cangzhu aside. However, Cangzhu is the most crucial ingredient in some ancient recipes such as the Stomach Soothing Powder and has immediate effect. People still do not realize that.¹⁴¹

古方及本經止言朮，未見分其蒼、白二種也。只緣陶隱居言朮有兩種，自此人多貴白者。今人但貴其難得，惟用白者，往往將蒼朮置而不用。如古方平胃散之類，蒼朮為最要，藥功尤速，殊不詳。

¹³⁹ *Taiping huimin hejiju fang* 3.76. First compiled in 1107-10, expanded and distributed throughout the empire by the court during the Southern Song.

¹⁴⁰ Referring to “Baizhu” and “Chizhu” recorded in Tao Hongjing (452-536)’s *Variorum of Materia Medica*.

¹⁴¹ *Bencao yanyi* 7.2a.

According to Kou, recognizing the importance of Cangzhu and its medicinal properties is his particular insight. Judging from the insignificance of Cangzhu in earlier texts, valuing this herb is very likely a Song innovation. The lady-ghost's medical suggestion therefore shows that she is not only familiar with the classical tradition but also knowledgeable about new developments in *materia medica*.

The young official's reaction also gives us a clue to how to read the story. At first he is stunned at the fact that the woman he has been living with is a ghost, but soon after the shock, he turns to a conversation with the lady regarding the prescription that she offers. The fact that the lady knows so much about medicine does not really confuse him. It is almost impossible to precisely estimate how common it was for women in the Song to know medicine, but for this story to make sense to its contemporary audience, women must have had certain access to the scholarly tradition of medical knowledge.

Another even more intriguing story in *Yijian zhi* tells about a sick woman claiming to be possessed by an ancestor's spirit and arguing with her doctor:

The wife of Li San, an official from Rao Prefecture, née Yang, was the daughter of a government clerk. She caught a seasonal disease in the spring of the fifth year of Shouxi (1194) and summoned the village doctor Zheng Zhuang to treat it, but he failed. A few days later she suddenly rose up and talked and behaved like a man. She called Li San and said, "I am the spirit of the ancestor whom you enshrine in the main hall. Your family has been cautiously preparing pure offerings. I think of your extreme sincerity, knowing your wife's sickness, and I come to help. You may summon the doctor again." In a short while, the doctor came. Yang scolded him by name. [The doctor] Zhuang said, "Why do you suddenly despise me like this!" Yang responded, "I am a god. Why

can't I call you by your name! You have been using monkshood (*fuzi*) in your prescriptions and have caused harm to people's lives. Don't you dare to do that again!" Zhuang denied having used monkshood. Yang said, "It was in the prescription you gave the other day. Why do you lie to me?" Zhuang began to feel scared. Yang continued, "Fetch me the Bamboo Leaves and Gypsum Decoction (*Zhuuye shigao tang*) so that at least it neutralizes [the toxicity of monkshood] and eases [my symptoms.]" Zhuang tried to get out of it by saying, "I do not know the ingredients of this recipe." Yang was infuriated and scolded again, "How ridiculous it is that a doctor does not know this recipe!" She then listed the ingredients and dosage without the slightest deviation [from the standard recipe.] Zhuang then prepared one dose for her. She drank it and then fell asleep peacefully. When awake, she took another dose. The next day her symptoms were gone.¹⁴²

饒州士人李三妻楊氏，郡吏之女也。紹熙五年春染時疾，招里醫鄭莊治療，未愈。數日後忽瞿然起坐，語言舉止若男子，呼李生曰：「吾為中堂神主，汝家從來香火嚴潔，吾念汝至誠，聞婦病困來相救，可喚醫者來。」少頃，醫來。楊斥其姓名。莊曰：「何得遽爾見輕！」楊曰：「我是神道，如何叫汝姓名不得。汝平日用附子入藥，煞損了人性命，復敢然邪！」莊拒以未嘗用。楊曰：「昨日所下某散實有之，而欺我何也？」莊始悚怖。又曰：「便煮竹葉石膏湯飲之，使我至少緩已無及矣。」莊辭曰：「不知此藥所用幾種。」楊大怒叱之曰：「醫人不識此藥方，真可笑！」即歷舉名品分兩，無分毫差。莊於是以一服進。接而飲之，飲訖，冥然就睡。及醒，再服一盃。明日遂安。

¹⁴² "The Wife of Li San" 李三妻, *Yijian zhi zhijing*.9.952-53.

Again, this prescription, Bamboo Leaves and Gypsum Decoction, has an orthodox source—it first appears in an Eastern Han medical classic *Shanghan lun* 傷寒論 (*Treatises on Cold Damage Disorders*) and is included in the Song book *Prescriptions of the Medical Bureau*.¹⁴³ It should not be surprising that members of a gentry family would have a chance to look at the book or have hear of some of the prescriptions. But the main problem is the voice and the gender of the patient, Lady Yang. There are different ways to interpret this story. Should we follow the storyteller's logic, simply regard Yang as a woman possessed by a male spirit? Or are there other possibilities? For example, the woman behaved abnormally because of her trance during her illness, and that behavior was interpreted as being possessed when the story was told. Or perhaps, knowing those herbs and prescriptions struck others as being strange, so they readily believed that she was not herself—this would be less possible if, as shown in the previous story, people in the Song were not surprised at women with medical knowledge. Still another possibility is that she consciously spoke by making use of the ancestor's voice in order to give weight to her opinion on her own treatment—this interpretation offers the possibility of resisting the storyteller's logic and reading women's agency between the lines. In any case, first of all, this story echoes what we have seen earlier, that both old medical classics and new Song compilations were readily accessible for at least the gentry class in the Song dynasty. Men and women were both able to participate in diagnostic discussions and to search for and to choose prescriptions for themselves. Secondly, although we can never know for sure, there is a chance that Lady Yang in this story is wide-awake and speaking out of her own medical knowledge. In that case, the patient can not only resist certain treatment but also give her own opinion on the choice of remedies. She knows medicine better than the doctor does.

¹⁴³ *Shanghan lun* shang.584-87, *Taiping huimin hejiju fang* 2.45.

If the previous story puzzles us with too many possible readings, this one is much more straightforward:

Lu Yang, the village doctor of Shuiyang (under the governance of Xuancheng), styled Yiruo, is praised for his [medical] skill. During the Jianyan reign period (1127-1131), Northerner Zhu Xinlao, a junior compiler, took refuge in the South and brought his family to live in a boat. His wife had a sudden fast heart rate. He summoned Lu to treat her. The wife said to Lu, “My *qi* and Blood has been weak throughout my life, so I cannot take cool-natured medicines. Now although I have a fast heart rate, the cause is different from the disorder of thirst.¹⁴⁴ It is instead because of the disturbance and lack of sufficient food during this refuge. You should never judge by the superficial symptoms and prescribe me cool-natured medicines. My husband loves alcohol and thus has the disorder of thirst. He always prefers cool-natured medicines as his major prescriptions. *There is no need to discuss this with him.* I have privately stored pearls that can be traded for medicine. You just buy me good medicine. I would like you to know the real problem of my sickness and so urgently told you about it.” Lu took her pulse, diagnosed her as suffering the *yang* symptom of Cold Damage, and prepared the Minor Bupleurum Decoction (*Xiao chaihu tang*). The woman said, “The fragrance smells like *chaihu* (Bupleurum). You should closely check. I would immediately die if I take this.” Lu said, “It is not *chaihu*. Please ease your mind and drink it.” The woman seriously repeated again, yet Lu eventually insisted [that he did not add *chaihu*]. Immediately after taking the decoction, the woman began vomiting and having diarrhea one after the other. She became extremely weak yet still cried out, “Instructor Lu, I will argue with you in front of the court in the netherworld!” After saying that,

¹⁴⁴ Disorders of thirst (*keji*) is related to the kidneys.

she died.¹⁴⁵

宣城管內水陽村醫陸陽，字義若，以技稱。建炎中，北人朱莘老編修避亂南下，挈家居船間。其妻並心躁，呼陸治之。妻為言：「吾平生氣血劣弱，不堪服涼劑。今雖心躁，元不作渴。蓋因避寇驚憂，失飢所致。切不可據外證投我以涼藥。編修嗜酒，得渴疾，每主藥必以涼為上，不必與渠議也。我有私藏珍珠，可為藥直。君但買好藥見療。欲君知我虛實，故丁寧相語。」陸診脈，認為傷寒陽證，煮小茈胡湯以來。婦人曰：「香氣類茈胡，君宜審細。我服此立死。」陸曰：「非也，幸寧心飲之。」婦人又申言甚切，陸竟不變。才下咽，吐瀉交作，婦遂委頓，猶呼云：「陸助教，與汝地獄下理會！」語罷而絕。

The woman in this story is certainly herself. Before the doctor says anything, she offers her own diagnosis to her symptoms. Her analysis shows her knowledge of basic medicine: to diagnose according to the patient's distinct physical condition, to distinguish radical symptoms from superficial ones (*neizheng/waizheng*), and the cool or warm nature of the ingredients. She tells the doctor not to discuss her condition with her husband because her husband would make the wrong diagnosis. She insists on control over her own treatment and is confident in her medical knowledge. The latter half of the story recounts that the doctor Lu made a similar mistake to yet another patient and caused the patient's death. A few years later, Lu died of a sudden disease. Before he died, he saw the ghosts of the two patients chasing after him.¹⁴⁶ The narration confirms the woman's judgment and blames the doctor for being stubborn and not listening to her advice.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ "Doctor Lu of Shuiyang" 水陽陸醫, *Yijian zhi ding*.10.619-20. Italics mine.

¹⁴⁶ *Yijian zhi* 620.

¹⁴⁷ There are several stories in *Yijian zhi* revealing Song people's lack of confidence in the doctors surrounding them, not simply one who works in small villages but also a medical officer in the official army (*zhijia*.3.733) and even

In another story, a woman attempts to conceal her pregnancy by claiming that it is the symptom of “*gu*” 蠱: At first, her mother remarried and sold her to an official’s household as a concubine (or in fact more like a maidservant). While she was at the official’s household, the official’s son had sex with her (perhaps raped her). When her step-father died, her mother took her back. The official’s son continued seeing her secretly until she moved and lodged with an Yi family. But she found herself pregnant. Yi’s wife asked how come she was unmarried but pregnant. She said, “Since I was sold by my step-father, I have been holding [imbalanced] *qi* and that developed into *gu*. Therefore my abdomen distends. It is not pregnancy” (自為繼父所賣，抱氣成蠱，故腹皤然，非孕也).¹⁴⁸ This “*gu*” problem with abdomen distension caused by upset emotions seemed new to Song medicine. There is no mention of it in extant Song medical books except that *All-Inclusive Good Prescriptions for Women* lists in its last chapter (“Supplementary Prescriptions”) a “Costus Root Powder” (*muxiang san* 木香散), which treats women’s spleen-*qi*, Blood-*qi*, Blood-*gu*, *qi-gu*, Water-*gu*, and Mineral-*gu*.¹⁴⁹ Here it does not specify the cause, but “spleen-*qi*” is usually associated with emotions such as anger.¹⁵⁰ A Ming medical book explains more in detail the causes and symptoms of such illness, and costus root is still one of the crucial ingredients among the prescriptions.¹⁵¹ The girl in the story is from an extremely poor family, most likely illiterate, not to mention unlikely to have the chance to read medical books. The illness of *qi-gu* that she mentions might have been a popular notion during the Song and was later incorporated into the scholarly tradition. It is also interesting if we consider why she does not use “Ghost Fetus” (*guitai* 鬼胎)—also a common notion about false pregnancy during the

one who has served in the imperial medical academy (*zhiyi*.7.745).

¹⁴⁸ “Assistant Magistrate Zhao’s Concubine” 趙主簿妾, *Yijian zhi zhiyi*.10.869.

¹⁴⁹ *Furen daquan liangfang* 24.652.

¹⁵⁰ *Sanyin jiyi bingzheng fanglun* 11.131.

¹⁵¹ *Gujin yitong daquan* 30.986, 990-94.

Song—as her excuse. Perhaps it is because she wants to keep the child since the standard treatment for Ghost Fetus is a quasi-abortion.¹⁵² The story proceeds intriguingly with the mother, short of money to pay the rent, falsely accusing the Yi family’s son of raping her daughter. Both the daughter and Yi’s son are arrested for interrogation. Some supernatural incident happens and makes the daughter tell the truth. In the end the mother is punished, but the daughter is excused and successfully gives birth to a boy.

4. The limit of medicine

In addition to cases where women appear to be more knowledgeable in medicine than men and their diagnoses are proven more accurate than doctors, in one account the woman is even praised for choosing remedies other than medicine to treat her bodily disorder. It is not simply that professional doctors’ authority was constantly challenged during the Song, medicine of the scholarly tradition was not always the first choice even for the elite or the noble class. The story is about the wife of Empress Xiang’s nephew, née Zhou, who is attacked by several mysterious figures in a dream and becomes sick. Those figures “resemble the popular ghostly figures painted in temples” (若世間神廟所畫鬼物). Although medical books offer prescriptions for “attacked by ghosts” and “dreaming of evil ghosts” and so forth,¹⁵³ and there are Daoist priests, masters (*fashi*), and others providing exorcist services,¹⁵⁴ this lady Zhou “thought that medicine could not help with this, and she never believed in exorcisms that are practiced in society. So she only prayed to the family shrine for protection” (周自念此非醫所能為，而世間禳禳事又素所不信，但默禱家廟求祐). In the end, she is cured with the intervention of the deity

¹⁵² For studies on the notion of “Ghost Fetus” in medical books, see Wu 2002, Chen 2010, 2011.

¹⁵³ For example *Taiping shenghui fang*, juan 56.

¹⁵⁴ For a study on Daoist exorcism in the Song, see Davis 2001.

of her family shrine. Hong Mai notes that he heard this story from the lady's second son, named Fang.¹⁵⁵ The son must have been proud of his mother's decision and the efficacy of their family shrine to spread word of about it. While the imperial court patronized large-scale compilation and circulation of medical books, this woman as an imperial relative could at the same time be praised for her wise judgment on treatments for her own body. When in need of help, people appealed to various resources and made their own judgments. Medicine was simply one among many forms of knowledge. It was not the only way through which people dealt with their bodies; nor did it represent the only or the most orthodox discourse on the human body and illnesses.

The increasing prescriptions for women's fertility and growing complexity in women's medicine during the Tang-Song period echoed the persistent concern for continuing family lines. However, the patriarchal system did not always work hand in hand with medicine. Kou Zongshi, an imperial doctor of the Northern Song, in the preface of his book *Expanded Commentaries of Materia Medica*, reveals his frustration when treating some female patients:

Although treatment for women has been developed into a specific medical specialty, there are occasions when the principles of the sages [i.e. medicine of the scholarly tradition] cannot be fully carried out. Women of distinguished families live in the inner quarters. [When consulting with a doctor,] they hide behind the curtain and cover their wrists with a piece of silk. In this way, the doctors can neither wield the power of observing the patients' complexion nor fully utilize the skill of feeling the pulse. Two out of the four [crucial methods for diagnosis] are thus unavailable. [...] If the pulse of the patient does not reflect her disease, and the doctor cannot see her body and complexion, how can the doctor give the right prescription simply according to the pulse? In such cases, how can he fully apply his medical skill? This is a common

¹⁵⁵ "The family shrine of the Xiangs" 向氏家廟, *Yijian zhi jia*.12.107-8.

complaint among doctors and has not been solved for generations. [When encountering such a situation,] the doctor unavoidably asks for more details about the patient. The patient and her family then regard the doctor's tedious questions as a sign of his incompetence and are unwilling to take the medicine that he prescribes. There are numerous cases like this. [...] This is certainly difficult!¹⁵⁶

治婦人雖有別科，然亦有不能盡聖人之法者。今豪足之家，居奧室之中，處帷幔之內，復以帛蒙手臂，既不能行望色之神，又不能殫切脈之巧。四者有二闕焉。... 若患人脈病不相應，既不得見其形，醫人止據脈供藥，其可得乎？如此言之，於能盡其術也？此醫家之公患，世不能革。醫者不免盡理質問。病家見所問繁速，為醫業不精，往往得藥不肯服。似此甚多。...可謂難也已！

Kou as a doctor complains about his lack of sway over his female patients. The patient's family in turn, rather than pushing her to follow the doctor's instructions, side with the patient and do not fully trust the doctor—even though the doctor is someone who, like the author of the book, works in the imperial medical bureau and teaches at the medical academy. The two authorities (one of medicine of the scholarly tradition, and one of the patriarchal family) both attempt to situate women under their own system and yet conflict with each other: the doctor wants professional access, while the family insists on protecting their women from inappropriate contact. The reason that women's treatment is considered “ten times more difficult than men's,”¹⁵⁷ at least according to this doctor, is not simply because women's bodies are more complicated or alien to men's, but also the conflict between the two systems.

Taking into consideration the nature of Song medical books and how medical knowledge

¹⁵⁶ *Bencao yanyi* 3.1a-b.

¹⁵⁷ *Beiji qianjin yaofang* 2.16a.

was used and discussed in Song society can change the way that we analyze gender in Song medicine. There are gender discourses and sex differentiation theories embedded in Song medical books, to be sure, but they are divergent and inconsistent, representing sources from different time periods and of various traditions. Compiled with an all-inclusive approach and circulating all over the country, Song medical books became open and multivocal resources that provided patients with more choices. The state-sponsored compilation and publication of medical books, instead of strengthening the authority of the medical profession, actually increased the accessibility of medical knowledge and exposed it to public discussion and appropriation, in which women also participated. Patients in the Song, including women, instead of listening to whatever the doctor said, appealed to a variety of sources, did research by themselves, made choices among multiple alternatives, and constantly challenged the doctor's authority. Moreover, medicine did not always serve the need of the patriarchal system or Confucian values. Different traditions contradict and sometimes contending with each other in dealing with men's and women's bodies. This is also true in terms of the issue of sex and sexual desire, as I will now discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter III

Medicine, Exorcism, and Beyond:

Contending Treatments of Sexual Desire and the Female Body

I have argued in the first two chapters that *Yijian zhi* and Song medical books, both rich sources for Song perceptions of female sexuality, contain diverse and even contradictory voices due to the ways they were compiled. Now, how do we understand passages concerning female sexuality in those all-inclusive medical books? How do we read stories related to this subject in fragmentary and multivocal anecdotes? How do the genres of Song medical books and anecdote collections make a difference to the ways female sexuality is represented? Unlike modern norms that are established on the basis of the statistical majority,¹⁵⁸ in premodern China, as in medieval Europe, the healthy, the legitimate, and the morally right is not necessarily the common or the majority. Norms concerning female sexuality also diverge greatly not simply from one type of source to another but even within one book compiled by a single author. In this chapter I trace the development of relevant discussions concerning female sexuality in the medical and the *zhiguai* traditions from ancient to Song times, look at how female sexuality is constructed in both traditions, and examine the contending treatments of sexual desire and the female body in Song medical books and anecdotal accounts.

¹⁵⁸ Lochrie 2005: 1-25.

1. Pathologizing the “single *yin*”¹⁵⁹

Female sexuality is discussed in varied ways in Song medical books. There are both exclusion¹⁶⁰ and inclusion of earlier sources, as well as some elements that seem new from the Song. The notions and sentences that Song medical books adopt may come from different contexts with different rationales and concerns. I will first examine those rationales and concerns, and then highlight the problems resulting from Song medical books’ selective incorporation of earlier materials along with their own concerns. I will argue that the construction of female sexuality in the medical tradition, before and during the Song, was always a byproduct of other concerns, and that Song medicine’s pathologizing the sexuality of “women without men” is not an attempt to reinforce the existing marriage system as Hsiu-fen Chen suggests, but rather the result of its problematic integration of sources from different traditions.

The Southern Song doctor Chen Ziming in his *Furen daquan liangfang* (*All-Inclusive Good Prescriptions for Women*, 1237) theorizes the pathology of “single women” in the section titled “On the Prescriptions for Single Women’s Cold and Heat like Intermittent Fevers” (寡婦寒熱如瘧方論):

¹⁵⁹ I do not call it “women’s sexual frustration” as Hsiu-fen Chen does (Chen 2011) because what the medical texts describe is really (mature) women without sexual contact with men. We never know whether or not those women were sexually frustrated. I would like to call attention to the contrived link between “women without sexual contact with men” and “sexually frustrated women,” a link that is constructed (rather coincidentally and discrepantly than systematically or uniformly) by Song and earlier doctors and Chen seems to have taken for granted.

¹⁶⁰ The most apparent (and perhaps the only) part excluded from Song medical books are those related to the tradition of “bedchamber arts” (*fangzhong* 房中), i.e. sex manuals. Works on “bedchamber arts” underwent a transformation in genre (from being catalogued under philosophical schools of thought (*zi*) to medicine) during the Sui and the Tang dynasties, and was further marginalized in late imperial medicine (Furth 1994). Certain elements might have also been excluded from the “bedchamber arts” tradition much earlier than the Song. Some scholars argue that the ancient “bedchamber arts” had two branches, “*yang yang*” 養陽 (nourishing the *yang*) and “*yang yin*” 養陰 (nourishing the *yin*), and the “*yang yin*” branch had been demonized and gradually excluded the latest during the Han (J. Li 1996: 1-32, Z. Li 2008: 26). The exclusion of “bedchamber arts” from Song medical books requires further study. Here I focus on locating and contextualizing Song inclusion of earlier sources. I will argue that although Song medical books exclude almost everything from the Bedchamber tradition, there is one thing that they preserve, consciously or not: the recognition of women’s *desire*. But such selective inclusion leads to some theoretical problems, which I will further explain.

Since antiquity there has not been a thorough discussion on the illnesses of *gua*fu [i.e. women without husbands, see explanations below] other than the biography of Master Imperial Granary [i.e. the Western Han doctor Chunyu Yi] [in *Shiji*] and the brief mention by Chu Cheng (d.483). By saying “*gua*,” it means just what Mencius states, “those without a husband are called *gua*.” This refers to those such as nuns and widows, who are single *yin* without *yang*, want [or, are ready for] men and yet cannot have one, and therefore become sick. The *Book of Changes* says, “As the energy of Heaven [*yang*] and Earth [*yin*] mingle, all creatures become crystalized [into living beings]. As the essence of male and female mate, all creatures generate.” Sole *yang*, single *yin*, how can it work? For those who live in the women’s quarters, their desires germinate (*yuxin meng*) but lead nowhere, therefore resulting in the *yin* and the *yang* forces contending with each other, producing sudden cold and sudden heat, which appear similar to intermittent fevers (*nueji*) and may eventually lead to fatigue disorder. There are also symptoms such as blocked menses, filthy white leucorrhea, phlegm buildup, headaches, heartburn, facial moles and warts, meagerness, et cetera; all are the illnesses of single women. In their pulse manifestation, the pulse of the Liver appears string-like, over *cunko* [upper wrist] and reaches *yuji* [in between the thumb and the wrist]. The causes of such pulses are all illnesses due to ample Blood. The classic says: When a man’s Essence (*jing*) is ample, he thinks of a mate; when a woman’s Blood is ample, she is ready to conceive children. One may comprehend most of the principles by observing the Essence and the Blood.¹⁶¹

寡婦之病，自古未有言者。惟倉公傳與褚澄略而論及。言寡者，孟子正謂「無夫曰寡」是也。如師尼、喪夫之婦，獨陰無陽，欲男子而不可得，是以慳慳成病也。易

¹⁶¹ *Furen daquan liangfang* 6.167-68. Underlines mine. Parts of the translation cf. Hsiu-fen Chen 2011: 53-54. What Hsiu-fen Chen quotes and translates is a summary and paraphrase of the original passage by a Ming doctor, Xue Ji (1486-1558).

曰：「天地絪縕，萬物化醇；男女媾精，萬物化生。」孤陽、獨陰，可乎？夫既處閨門，欲心萌而不遂，致陰陽交爭，乍寒乍熱，有類瘧疾，久則為勞。又有經閉、白淫、痰逆、頭風、膈氣痞悶、面姁、瘦瘠等證，皆寡婦之病。診其脈，獨肝脈弦出寸口而上魚際。究其脈源，其疾皆血盛而得。經云：男子精盛則思室，女子血盛則懷胎。觀其精血，思過半矣。

In this passage, Chen ambitiously constructs a rather overarching pathology concerning women lacking sexual contact with men. It begins with his claim that the illnesses of “*guafu*” has not drawn much attention up to his time, followed by his unusual definition of the word “*guafu*”: Different from its common usage meaning simple widows,¹⁶² Chen uses it as a general term referring to all women without a husband. In fact, this whole passage is largely taken from Xu Shuwei’s 許叔微 (ca. 1080-1154) *Shanghan jiushi lun* 傷寒九十論 (*Treatises on Nineteen Manifestations of Cold Damage*), and Chen only cites Xu’s name when discussing the prescriptions and quoting a clinical case where Xu treats a nun.¹⁶³ Furthermore, references to single or widowed women’s sex-related problems exist in the Bedchamber tradition as well. The Tang book *Beiji qianjin yaofang* that Chen draws heavily from dedicates a whole section to “nourishment in the bedchamber” (房中補益), which also mentions men and women’s mutual sexual dependence.¹⁶⁴ Chen seems to have intentionally ignored it. However, I will argue, there is one thing that Chen, consciously or not, inherits from the Bedchamber tradition: to approach women’s sexuality not simply from the perspective of reproduction but also that of sexual desire. The first underlined phrase “need men and yet cannot have one” (*yu nanzi er buke de*) is a direct

¹⁶² For instance, in both *Shiji* and *Yijian zhi*, *guafu* refers to widows (*Shiji* 129.3260, *Yijianzhi ding*.13.647).

¹⁶³ *Shanghan jiushi lun* 76, *Furen daquan liangfang* 6.168-69. I will discuss Xu’s case and his interpretation of Chunyu Yi and Chu Cheng later.

¹⁶⁴ *Beiji qianjin yaofang* 27.490a. Further analysis later.

quote from the biography of Chunyu in the *Shiji* (*Records of the Grand Historian*). In its original context, I will soon explain, it is in fact quite vague what “*yu nanzi*” means. Yet Chen simply interprets it as “desires germinate but lead nowhere” (the second underlined phrase, *yuxin meng er busui*), which is a paraphrase of Xu Shuwei’s “desires frequently germinate but cannot be fulfilled” (*yuxin lümeng er bushi qi yu* 欲心屢萌而不適其欲).¹⁶⁵ Meanwhile, by quoting the *Book of Changes*, Chen theorizes the necessity of heterosexual intercourse from the laws of reproduction. Now, there is an unexplained link in Chen’s theory: one between the reproductive imperative and women’s sexual desire. This link is new in the medical tradition. Before I turn to earlier texts for more evidence, Chen’s quote from an unknown “classic” provides a clue: “When a man’s Essence is ample, he thinks of a mate; when a woman’s Blood is ample, she is to ready conceive children.” Quite apparent, the subject of this quote is men’s and women’s reproductive bodies. But it uses different verbs for men and for women. When men’s reproductive bodies are mature, they *think* of having a mate (*si shi*); and yet women simply conceive children (*huai tai*). There is no mention of what women *think* or *desire*. The notion of “*xie sheng*” (ample Blood) and its relevance to *guafu*’s illnesses are also new, which is perhaps developed from Chu Cheng’s theory on Blood (to be discussed below)—since the following sentence, also the last sentence of this passage, “One may comprehend most of the principles by observing the Essence and the Blood,” is a direct quote from Chu Cheng.¹⁶⁶ However, following Xu Shuwei, Chen’s attribution of “ample Blood” to the cause of the pulse manifestations described in the biography of Chunyu may have departed from the original context of Chunyu’s case. And Chu Cheng’s theory on women’s Blood focuses mainly on the physiology of the reproductive body and has little to do with desire.

¹⁶⁵ *Shanghan jiushi lun* 76.

¹⁶⁶ *Chushi yishu* 33.

1.1 Female sexuality in pre-Song medicine and the Bedchamber tradition

The original passage in the biography of Chuyu in *Shiji* that both Chen Ziming and Xu Shuwei refer to is the following:

King Jibei's maidservant Han fell ill from pain in her loins and back, with periodic fevers. All the other doctors diagnosed her ailment as [a typical case of] cold and heat. [Chunyu] Yi read her pulse and said that [her ailment is due to] inner coldness, and that she must have menstrual blockage. Chunyu then let the medicine enter her body [i.e. using an herbal steam method to let the vapor get into the body through the vagina]. Her menses immediately restarted, and her ailment was cured. The cause was that she wanted/was ready for men and yet could not have one. Chunyu knew about [the cause of] her ailment because as he read the pulse; he analyzed it and found her Kidney pulse slim and disconnected. Slim and disconnected pulses are manifestations of difficult and tough [illnesses]. Therefore Chunyu's diagnose was menstrual blockage. Her liver pulse was string-like and over the top of the left wrist. Therefore Chunyu diagnosed that she wanted/was ready for men and yet could not have one.¹⁶⁷

濟北王侍者韓女病要背痛，寒熱。醫皆以為寒熱也。臣意診脈，曰：內寒，月事不下也。即竄以藥，旋下，病已。病得之欲男子而不可得也。所以知韓女之病者，診其脈時，切之，腎脈也，喬而不屬。喬而不屬者，其來難、堅，故曰月不下。肝脈弦，出左口，故曰欲男子不可得也。

It is interesting to note here that the maidservant does not seem to mention her menstrual problems, and the other doctors also fail to accurately diagnose her problem. Chunyu only

¹⁶⁷ *Shiji* 105.2808-9. Parts of the translation cf. Chen 2011: 51.

detects it from her pulse manifestation. While he suggests that the woman's menstrual blockage is due to her lack of sexual contact with men and explains the pulse manifestations of the two, he does not make clear the connection—why the lack of sexual contact with men leads to menstrual blockage and how the Kidney pulse and the Liver pulse are causally related. But the woman's lack of sexual contact with men really does not matter much for this case. What Chunyu treats, after all, is simply menstrual blockage. He does not make the woman no longer “*yu*” men—whether he is incapable, does not want to, or does not even care. He does not mention Blood or ample Blood.¹⁶⁸ Even more tricky here is how we should translate “*yu*” in this context. *Yu* as a verb in classical Chinese is associated with not simply desire and intention but also necessity, (mechanical) tendency, and the future tense. It is ambiguous here whether Chunyu means that the woman desires men or her mature and reproductive body is in need of, or ready for, men. In other words, the woman's lack of sexual contact with men is a given because of her identity as the king's maidservant; but it is unclear whether the problem resulting from her celibacy is one of sexual frustration or simply an imbalanced reproductive body. Perhaps influenced by modern sexology and heteronormativity, modern readers may easily assume the former without a second thought. However, the fifth-century doctor Chu Cheng suggests the latter.

Chu Cheng's *Chushi yishu* 褚氏遺書 (*Chu Cheng's Posthumous Work*, late fifth century)¹⁶⁹ is the other source that Chen Ziming refers to. The passage related to female

¹⁶⁸ In the tradition of Chinese medicine, the Liver is in charge of Blood, and the Liver pulse manifests Blood problems. Following Hsu Shuwei and Chen Ziming, doctors of late imperial China also interpret this case as a “ample Blood” one (J. Li 2005: 252). In this passage, however, Chunyu does not specify if it is a problem of “ample Blood” (血盛) or “weak Blood” (血弱). We also do not know whether the herbal steam that he uses is one that “suppresses *yin*” (抑陰) or “facilitates *yin*” (益陰). The two opposite diagnoses and treatments concerning women's lack of sexual contact with men coexist rather inconsistently in Hsu Shuwei's and Chen Ziming's books. (See discussions below.)

¹⁶⁹ The Ming doctor Xu Chunfu 徐春甫 and the *Siku quanshu* editors from the Qing believed that this book was in

sexuality is in the section of “*jing xie*” (Essence and Blood):

Once a woman’s menstruation begins, it will be imbalanced if she does not have intercourse with men for more than ten years; it will also be imbalanced if she thinks of intercourse with men within less than ten years. Such imbalances lead to the old Blood not being discharged and the new Blood circulating irregularly. [The Blood] may either permeate into bones or transform into tumors. And even if she later has intercourse, it may be hard for her to produce children. Intercourse with too many men dries up the fluid and exhausts the woman. Producing too much breast milk (i.e. producing too many children) dries up the Blood and kills the woman. One may comprehend most of the principles by observing the Essence and the Blood.¹⁷⁰

女人天癸既至，十年無男子合則不調，未十年思男子合亦不調。不調則舊血不出，新血誤行，或漬而入骨，或變而之腫，或雖合而難子。合男子多則瀝枯虛人，產乳眾則血枯殺人。觀其精血，思過半矣。

Although Chu uses the verb “*si*” (think), what he really describes is the physiology of women’s reproductive body: The right timing for women to conceive and reproduce, the right and wrong circulations of Blood, and the physical problems emerging from a female body which is ready for sex with men and to conceive but the act is deferred, or one that is not ready but the act hastened. This passage immediately follows a parallel passage on men, which describes the irregular circulation of *jing* when the man has sex with women before his *jing* is ready to ejaculate (*jing wei tong* 精未通) or after his reproductive organs have ceased to function (*yin yi*

fact a product from the mid-10th century and only attributed to Chu Cheng. Modern scholars have diverse opinions (*Chushi yishu jiaoshi* 65-69).

¹⁷⁰ *Chushi yishu* 33.

wei 陰已痿).¹⁷¹ The section of “*wen zi*” (questions on begetting sons) repeats that point that in order to successfully produce sons, men and women have to consummate their marriage at their proper ages. “Now if a woman, before reaching the age of *ji* (proper age to get married, fifteen to twenty) and her menstruation just beginning, already has sex with men, then her *yin-qi* would be lost prematurely. [Her *yin-qi*] would be damaged before maturing and disturbed before growing solid. Therefore she would not conceive even if she has intercourse, and would not give birth even if she conceives, and even if she has children they would be weak and short-lived” (今未笄之女，天癸始至，已近男色，陰氣早洩，未完而傷，未實而動。是以交而不孕，孕而不育，育而子脆不壽).¹⁷² Chu Cheng’s main concern is reproduction and the physiology of men’s and women’s reproductive bodies and not women’s sexual desire. He is not concerned with whether a woman is sexually frustrated or satisfied. Women have to have sex with men, and more importantly at the proper age, in order for their Blood to circulate regularly and their reproductive bodies to function smoothly.

Pre-Song sources that do talk about sexual desire are the Bedchamber works. However, the concerns of Bedchamber works are very different from the medical tradition that Song doctors acknowledged. One passage from Tao Hongjing’s 陶弘景 (452-536) *Yangxing yanming lu* 養性延命錄 (*Record on Nourishing and Prolonging Life*), quoted by several later medical books, states:

Men must have women. Women must have men. If [a man] thinks of intercourse because of loneliness, his life would be shortened and hundreds of illnesses emerge.

Ghosts/demons would take the opportunity to have intercourse with him, and the semen

¹⁷¹ *Chushi yishu* 32-33.

¹⁷² *Chushi yishu* 57. The context is that the king asks Chu Cheng why he cannot have sons even though he has drafted “pre-*ji* women from good families” (未笄之女) into his court.

that he loses from one [act of intercourse with ghosts/demons] equals that from a hundred times [of regular intercourse].¹⁷³

凡男不可無女，女不可無男。若孤獨而思交接者，損人壽，生百病，鬼魅因之共交，失精而一當百。

Here the author explicitly states that sexual “thoughts” (*si*) make one ill. However, the whole chapter, as we can easily tell from the title “The Damages and Benefits of Having Sex with Women” (御女損益), is written specifically for men and not for women. The reason that “men must have women” is because sexual thoughts eventually lead to men’s loss of their semen much more than usual. There is no mention at all why women must have men. The sentence “women must have men” is simply a rhetorical antithesis to “men must have women,” and perhaps also men’s projection of their desire on women. The core concern is to make the best use of “*jing*” (Essence, or semen in this context). The opening sentence to this chapter states, “The Way is to treasure *jing*. Giving it [to women] generates children; keeping it nourishes one’s own body” (道以精為寶，施之則生人，留之則生身).¹⁷⁴ It warns men about the danger of losing their *jing*: “When a man’s *jing* is scarce, he becomes ill. When his *jing* is exhausted, he dies” (精少則病，精盡則死).¹⁷⁵ Not only is there no mention of women or women’s “problems” with sexual desire, but women are more often than not simply tools for nourishing and prolonging men’s lives. The author suggests, for example, that men constantly change their sex mates: “Once desire emerges, change the partner. Changing partners prolongs life” (欲一動，則輒易人，易人可長生).¹⁷⁶ With

¹⁷³ *Yangxing yanming lu* 6.259. This passage is quoted by later medical books such as *Beiji qianjin yaofang* (Tang) 27.490a, *Ishinpō* (Heian Japan, by Tanba Yasuyori, 912-995) 28.1133, and *Gujin yitong daquan* (Ming, by Xu Chunfu, 1520-1596) 98.1354, 99.1394.

¹⁷⁴ *Yangxing yanming lu* 6.242.

¹⁷⁵ *Yangxing yanming lu* 6.254.

¹⁷⁶ *Yangxing yanming lu* 6.250. It conforms with Charlotte Furth’s observation on the genre of “*fang zhong*” from later Bedchamber works (Furth 1994: 133-39).

its detailed instruction on intercourse, from positions and movements to frequency and timing, this chapter in *Yangxing yanming lu* articulates how to benefit men through intercourse with women.¹⁷⁷ This is fundamentally different from the logic that we have seen in Chunyu, Chu Cheng, Xu Shuwei, or Chen Ziming, that assumes heterosexual intercourse (at the proper age) simply solves the problem. More importantly, the ideal state (even though it is rather theoretical than practical), in fact, is “no sexual thoughts”:

Supreme men separate beds. Middle men use a different blanket. Sleeping alone is more beneficial than taking a thousand doses of medicine.¹⁷⁸

上士別床，中士異被。服藥千裏，不如獨臥。

Men cannot be without women. Without women, his mind moves. His mind moves and his spirit (*shen*) is fatigued. His spirit is fatigued and his life is shortened. It would be the best if one truly has no sexual thoughts. However, there is not even one such person among ten thousand. Some forcefully withhold [their sexual thoughts], and yet it is difficult to maintain and easy to lose. That makes men lose semen and have turbid urine, and leads to the illness of intercourse with ghosts/demons.¹⁷⁹

男不欲無女，無女則意動，意動則神勞，神勞則損壽。若念真正無可思而大佳，然而萬無一焉。有強鬱閉之，難持易失，使人漏精尿濁，以致鬼交之病。

Men should have sex with women not because, as modern readers might assume, that sex is “natural” and no (heterosexual) sex is unhealthy or perverted. Instead, it is because mediocre men cannot control their thoughts and in that sense it would be even worse to repress them.

Although Bedchamber works also talk about reproduction, the principle of “nourishing

¹⁷⁷ Only in one place where it quotes a short passage from a “*Xian jing*” (*Immortal Classic*), which teaches “the way for both men and women to reach immortality” (男女俱仙之道) (*Yangxing yanming lu* 6.269).

¹⁷⁸ *Yangxing yanming lu* 6.245.

¹⁷⁹ *Yangxing yanming lu* 6.248.

one's own body" is very different from (and almost the opposite of) that of "generating children." While Chu Cheng warns that having sex too early may kill a woman and urges the king to find women above twenty in order to have sons, Bedchamber authors advise their (male) audience to find young and even immature maidens. To list a few, *Yufang mijue* 玉房秘訣 (*Secrets of the Jade Chamber*, Sui-Tang) advises men to "have sex more with young girls and not to ejaculate frequently" (多御少女而莫數瀉精);¹⁸⁰ *Yufang zhiyao* 玉房指要 (*Principles of the Jade Chamber*)¹⁸¹ proposes that men "should simply have young girls whose breasts have not developed and whose flesh is ample" (但欲得年少未生乳而多肌肉者耳).¹⁸²

Bedchamber works from Sui-Tang times begin to graphically imagine and pathologize women's (unfulfilled) desire for men. *Ishinpō* 医心方 (*Prescriptions at the Heart of Medicine*)¹⁸³ quotes *Yufang mijue*:

Cainü¹⁸⁴ asks: "What is the cause of intercourse with ghosts/demons?"

Pengzu¹⁸⁵ responds: "Due to the lack of intercourse between *yin* and *yang*, [the woman's] desire becomes intense, and so ghosts/demons assume the [human] form and have intercourse with her.

采女曰：何以有鬼交之病？

彭祖曰：由於陰陽不交，情欲深重，即鬼魅假像與之交通。

An explicit link between women's lack of heterosexual sex and their unfulfilled sexual desire is

¹⁸⁰ *Ishinpō* 28.1131.

¹⁸¹ This title does not appear in any other extant texts. The date is uncertain. Ma Jixing suggests that it was compiled after *Sunü jing* 素女經 (Sui-Tang) (Ma 1985: 58).

¹⁸² *Ishinpō* 28.1132.

¹⁸³ *Ishinpō* is the earliest extant medical book in Japan, compiled by the imperial doctor Tanba no Yasuyori (912-995) of the Heian court. The book was finished in 984 and included materials from more than two hundred Chinese texts seen in Japan at the time (Li 2008: 351).

¹⁸⁴ Cainü is a mythological figure, who is said to have obtained the Dao in young age and looks like a fifteen when at the age of a hundred and seventy (*Yangzang yanming lu* 6.255).

¹⁸⁵ Pengzu is also mythological figure associated with longevity, an attributed voice frequently seen in Bedchamber works.

spelled out here. This is also the earliest extent source I have seen that constructs female sexuality from the viewpoint we may call “imperative heterosexuality.” However, if we continue to read Pengzu’s comment, it betrays its real concerns:

The way of ghostly/demonic intercourse surpasses that of humans. [The woman] would gradually become enchanted by it, yet she would keep it a secret, not let others know, and enjoy it on her own. And she may eventually die alone without anyone knowing why.¹⁸⁶
 與之交通之道，其有勝於人。久則迷惑，諱而隱之，不肯告人，自為佳，故至獨死而莫之知也。

While *Yangxing yanming lu* describes the damage of men’s intercourse with ghosts as loss of semen a hundred times worse than usual, here it simply says that women’s comparable problem causes death without explaining the pathology. It is as though the real danger is that women find better forms of sex (alternatives to that with men?) and simply enjoy them on their own. The real concern here is not with fulfilling women’s sexual desire, and perhaps less about caring for women’s health, but rather with preventing women’s sexual body from going beyond men’s control.¹⁸⁷ The treatments to such “illness” are of three kinds: to have intercourse with men, to burn herbs or minerals, and to take medicine. Similar to *Yangxing yanming lu*, this book gives instructions on *how* to conduct the intercourse treatment instead of simply assuming heterosexual sex or marriage solves the problem.¹⁸⁸ Another option is to burn sulfur and smoke the woman’s vagina. Compared with the first option, this one is more exorcistic than erotic with its effect that

¹⁸⁶ *Ishinpō* 21.862.

¹⁸⁷ Charlotte Furth also observes that men’s power of control is an essential concern and constructs sexual difference in the Bedchamber genre (Furth 1994: 135-37).

¹⁸⁸ “Let the woman have intercourse with men (single or plural uncertain) without the men ejaculating. Continue to do it day and night and do not rest. She would surely recover in less than seven days. If the man is fatigued and cannot conduct it on his own, it would be fine simply inserting deeply without move” (但令女與男交而勿瀉精，晝夜勿息困者，不過七日，必癒；若身體疲勞，不能獨御者，但深按勿動亦善). *Ishinpō* 21.862.

“the ghosts leave in tears” (鬼涕泣而去).¹⁸⁹

While Bedchamber works imagine female sexuality as desiring and in need of men, they do not seem to always require participation of “men.” *Ishinpō* quotes *Daqing jing* 大清經 (*The Classic of Great Purity*)¹⁹⁰ in the section on “Prescriptions for Women Wanting Intercourse with Men” (治婦人欲男交方):

Women aged twenty-eight, twenty-nine, or twenty-three, twenty-four, with ample *yin-qi*, who want to have men, cannot control themselves, and lose appetite. The hundred vessels (*mai*) mobilize the body; the pulse manifestation of awaiting *jing* is solid. Fluid is discharged [from the vagina] and stains the clothes. There are worms like horsetails in the vagina, which are three *fen* long. The red-headed ones are mobile, and the black-headed ones are still.

Treatment: Make a jade stem (i.e. phallus) with dough, length and size free, wrap it with filtered soy sauce and two pieces of cotton cloth, and insert it into the vagina. The worms would then attach to it and come out. Repeat pulling and inserting it and the woman would feel as if having a man (*daifu*).

女人年廿八九，若廿三四，陰氣盛，欲得男子，不能自禁，食飲無味，百脈動體，候精脈實，汁出污衣裳。女人陰中有蟲如馬尾，長三分，赤頭者悶，黑頭者沫。

治之方：用面作玉莖，長短、大小隨意，以醬清及二辨綿裹之，納陰中，蟲即著來出，出復納，如得大夫。

This description and treatment is an intriguing mixture of many ambiguities: We do not know whether the subject women are man-less women or simply those with superfluous sexual desire.

¹⁸⁹ *Ishinpō* 21.862.

¹⁹⁰ Date unknown. This title also does not appear elsewhere in extant sources (Ma 1985: 59).

We do not know whether it is the women's superfluous desire (or “*yin-qi*”) generates the “worms” or that the worms lead to symptoms of wanting men. And we certainly do not know what the “worms” (parasites?) are. It seems as though the dough-made dildo is simply to hook out the worms, and yet why does it have to be in phallus shape? While the main function of the dildo is to drag the worms out, it also makes the woman feel “as if having a man.” My point of view is that while this “treatment” reflects an imagination of male-/phallus-centered female sexuality, it also reveals the awareness that women do not always require a real “man.”

Concurrent medical texts also seem to recognize the possibility of male and female homosexuality. *Zhubing yuanhou lun* (*On the Origins and Symptoms of Various Diseases*, 610), while warning against people who newly recover from Cold Damages having sex, adds such a sentence:

If [men], when just recovered, have intercourse with virgin boys, their illness usually would not relapse. Even though it does, it would not necessarily cause death.¹⁹¹

若瘥後與童男交接者，多不發復，復者，亦不必死。

Zhubing yuanhou lun also has a passage explaining the concept of contagion through (heterosexual) intercourse called “*yin-yang yi*” (*yin-yang* exchange):

The illness of *yin-yang* exchange is caused by one's intercourse with men or women who have recently caught Cold Damages and have not fully recovered. It is called *yin-yang* exchange. For the situation that a woman catches the illness through intercourse with a newly recovered man, it is called *yang* exchange. For the situation that a man catches the illness through intercourse with a newly recovered woman, it is called *yin* exchange. If it is between two men or two women, the illness does not pass.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 8.276.

¹⁹² *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 8.275 (also 9.300-301, 10.322). Underline mine. This passage is quoted by later medical

陰陽易病者，是男子、婦人傷寒病新瘥未平復，而與之交接得病者，名為陰陽易也。其男子病新瘥未平復，而婦人與之交接得病者，名陽易。其婦人得病新瘥未平復，而男子與之交接得病者，名陰易。若二男二女，並不相易。

There is no verb given in the original text for the subjects “two men” and “two women.” But if *yin-yang yi* only happens under the condition of intercourse, plus the previous passage from the same book explicitly mentions men having sex with “virgin boys,” it seems plausible that the sentence means: intercourse between two men and two women does not lead to *yin-yang yi*. The author Chao Yuanfang did not explain why *yin-yang yi* only happens between a *yin* and a *yang*—perhaps it is considered a special side effect of the dynamics of *yin* force and *yang* force, while intercourse between two *yin* or two *yang* do not have that effect.¹⁹³ We may perhaps consider it as a kind of trivialization of non-heterosexual sex. However, it is really hard to judge the significance or legitimacy of certain kind of “intercourse” by its pathological effect, since *Yangxing yanming lu* states that men’s intercourse with ghosts/demons costs a hundred times more semen than with women.

When speaking of women’s “problems” caused by lack of sexual contact with men, Chunyu Yi is quite ambiguous, and Chu Cheng’s concern is more to construct a physiology of the reproductive body than to analyze women’s sexual desire. Only in the Bedchamber genre do authors talk about sexual “desire,” although what they really treat is neither women’s sexual desire or “sexual frustration” but the female sexual body beyond men’s control. The Bedchamber authors’ anxiety betrays their awareness of the fact that women may pursue sexual

books such as *Waitai miyou* (Tang) (2.97a, 3.124a), *Puji fang* (Ming) (146.1440), and *Gujin yitong daquan* (Ming) (25.923).

¹⁹³ It is interesting that Ming doctors began to explain the cause from emotions/desires. Zhu Su says it is because “[the person] newly recovers and yet generates inappropriate (sexual) desire” (病新瘥而動淫慾也) (*Puji fang* 146.1440); Xu Chunfu even interpret “*yi*” as “mobilized/agitated” (by inappropriate desire) (卻被淫慾之邪動易) (*Gujin yitong daquan* 14.686).

pleasure without men. The reproductive body requires the opposite sex, but the sexual body does not. Chu Cheng and the Bedchamber texts approach female sexuality in distinctly different ways. But elements in various contexts from different traditions are selectively and rather awkwardly put together in Song medical books.

1.2 Song development

Neither Chen Ziming nor Xu Shuwei was the first physician during the Song to comment on the problem of women's sexual desire. However, their Song predecessors speak of this issue from different approaches. Kou Zongshi of the Northern Song in the first *juan* of *Bencao yanyi* (*Expanded Commentaries of Materia Medica*, 1116) brings up the issue of emotions as a critical factor in illness. One passage concerns specifically virgin boys and girls:

There are virgin boys and maidens who accumulate thoughts in their mind and have too many worries. That often leads to fatigue and depletion. For boys their spirit and appearance become distracted; for girls their menstruation stops. Worry and anxiety hurt the Heart. The Heart is hurt and the Blood becomes irregular and exhausted. The Blood is irregular and exhausted and so the spirit and appearance become distracted and the menstruation stops.¹⁹⁴

世有童男、室女，積想在心，思慮過當，多致勞損。男則神色先散，女則月水先閉。何以致然？蓋愁憂思慮則傷心，心傷則血逆竭，血逆竭故神色先散，而月水先閉也。

This kind of fatigue disorder, according to Kou, cannot be fully treated by medicine but the patients have to “work on changing their thoughts on their own.”¹⁹⁵ Kou does not say what exactly the “thoughts” are, but since his subjects are “virgin boys and maidens,” a category

¹⁹⁴ *Bencao yanyi* 1.5b-6a. Underline mine.

¹⁹⁵ *Bencao yanyi* 1.6a.

marked by their sexual experience, sexual thoughts should at least be part of it. And yet sexual thoughts are not all of it. This passage belongs to a larger paragraph in which Kou refers to Buddhist ideas to discuss the damage of emotions and desires to one's body. It is not solely about sexual desire, nor does it have much to do with a reproductive body. It is a different pathology from Chu Cheng's reproductive physiology. The symptoms of boys and girls are separate and yet the cause is the same: irregularity and depletion of Blood (血逆竭), which is also different from Chen Ziming's "guafu" whose disorders caused by "ample Blood" (血盛). Moreover, Kou never says all virgin boys and girls have this problem but only those who "think/worry" too much.

Qi Zhongfu also talks about court ladies, nuns, and widows in his *Nüke baiwen* (*One Hundred Questions on Women's Medicine*, 1220). His fourteen-seventh question is "What are the causes of intercourse with ghosts/demons at night?" (夜與鬼交者，何也?)

The answer: Humans have the Five Viscera, in which reside the Seven Spirits. When a person's viscera-qi is ample and spirits strong, demonic forces and ghosts cannot intrude. If one fails to ingest and nourish one's body regularly, and the Blood and the qi become depleted and weak, ghosts/demons would then invade and cause damages. This is why many women dream of intercourse with ghosts. They appear unwilling to meet people, talk and laugh on their own as if confronting someone, and occasionally cry in sorrow. The pulse appears slow, some resembles the pecking of a bird. Their complexions appear unchanged. These are all illnesses caused by demons. It is said that some court ladies, nuns, and widows nowadays dream of intercourse with ghosts, absorb demonic qi, which eventually becomes tumors, and some even develop into ghost/demonic fetuses. There are many such cases.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ *Nüke baiwen* 1.60b-61a. Underlines mine.

答曰：人有五臟，臟有七神。臟氣盛則神強，外邪鬼魅不能干犯。若攝養失節，而血氣虛衰，鬼邪侵損。故婦人夢中多與鬼魅交通，其狀不欲見人，如有對忤，并獨言獨笑，或時悲泣者是也。其脈來遲，或如鳥啄。顏色不變。皆邪物病也。說今宮中人、尼師、寡婦，曾夢中與鬼魅交通，邪氣懷感，久作癥瘕，或成鬼胎，往往有之。

The first half of this passage (to “These are all illnesses caused by demons”) is a paraphrase of the section on women’s intercourse with ghosts from *Zhubing yuanhou lun*, one that I have quoted in Chapter Two. The latter half (from “It is said that...”) is perhaps new or from a source now lost. If it was taken from another source, it was likely a contemporary one since it begins with the phrase “it is said that nowadays.” It is a rather confusing combination of earlier and contemporary sources: While the first half says that this illness is simply caused by the imbalance of ingestion and nourishment and hence the depletion of Blood and *qi*, the latter half, targeting “court ladies, nuns, and widows,” seems to imply that such illness has something to do with a person’s sexuality. Qi Zhongfu did not explain why “court ladies, nuns, and widows” are more likely to have “imbalanced ingestion and nourishment” making them susceptible to intercourse with ghosts. But he was not the first Song doctor who adopted this language.

Chen Ziming’s asserted innovation in the pathology of “single women” is directly adopted from Xu Shuwei (ca. 1080-1154), who records this case with a nun in *Shanghan jiushi lun*:

A nun suffered from ill Wind and fatigue, intermittent cold and fever, red face and fast heartbeats, and periodic sweats. The other doctor(s) diagnosed and treated it as Cold Damage and Warm Fever (*wennue*). Seeing her come back and forth from cold and fever, they thought that her illness had reached its peak, and so let her take both Major

Bupleurum Decoction (*Da chaihu tang* 大柴胡湯) and Minor Bupleurum (*Xiao chaihu tang* 小柴胡湯) all together. In a few days her symptoms became worse. My diagnosis was as follows: The two hands were not affected. Her *yin* pulse appeared string-like, long, and reached *yuji* [in between the thumb and the wrist]. It was not Cold Damage but aroused *yin* in absence of *yang*. It was just like the court maidservant's illness that Chunyu cured. I prescribed the medicines that suppressed *yin*. And she recovered in a few days.

一尼病惡風體倦，乍寒乍熱，面赤心煩，時或有汗。他醫以傷寒溫瘧治之，見其寒熱往來，時方疫氣大作也，大小柴胡雜進，數日愈甚，轉劇。予診之曰：兩手不受邪，厥陰脈弦長而上魚際，此非傷寒，乃陰動不得陽也。此正與倉公治一繡女病同。投以抑陰等藥，數日愈。

Analysis: In the past Chu Cheng said that separate prescriptions should be made for nuns and widows;¹⁹⁷ he had reasons. Nuns and widows live alone, melancholy, single *yin* without *yang*; their desires frequently germinate but cannot be fulfilled, therefore resulting in the *yin* and the *yang* forces contending with each other, creating sudden cold and sudden heat, and sweat due to depletion and fatigue, all similar to Warm Fever, and would eventually lead to fatigue disorder. I remember the biography of Chunyu in the *Shiji*, which records the case of King Jibei's maidservant, who fell ill from [pain] in her loins and back, with periodic fevers. All other doctors diagnosed her ailment as [a typical case of] cold and heat. And yet Chunyu said, the illness was caused by her desiring¹⁹⁸ men and her inability to have one. How did he know? Because he took the pulse, and that

¹⁹⁷ There is no mention of nuns or widows in *Chushi yishu* at least in the current extant version. The only passage concerning female sexuality is quoted above.

¹⁹⁸ While in the original context the meaning of *yu* is ambiguous, here as Xu Shuwei quotes it, he unambiguously means (sexual) desire.

of the Liver appeared string-like and over *cunko* (upper wrist). Essence (*jing*) is the leading factor for men; Blood is the leading factor for women. When a man's Essence is overflowing, he thinks of a mate; when a woman's Blood is ample, she is ready to conceive. The Liver is in charge of Blood. The long string-like Liver pulse over *cunko* and *yuji* is the manifestation of ample Blood and desire for men. And yet the treatments for nuns and widows should particularly be separated from those for common women.¹⁹⁹

論曰：昔褚澄云治師尼寡婦別制方，蓋有為也。師尼寡婦，獨居怨曠，獨陰而無陽，欲心屢萌而不適其欲，是以陰陽交爭，乍寒乍熱，虛汗倦怠，全類溫瘧，久久成癆瘵矣。嘗記史書倉公傳載濟北王侍者繡女，病腰背寒熱，眾醫皆為寒熱也。倉公曰：病得之欲男子而不可得也。何以知之？診其脈，肝部弦出寸口，是以知也。男子以精為主，女子以血為主。男子精溢則思室，女子血盛則懷胎。肝攝血者也，今肝脈弦長上寸口及魚際，則血盛欲男子之候也。然則治師尼寡婦，尤不可與尋常婦人一概論也。

Xu's book was not as well-known and widely circulated as Chen Ziming's. Yet Xu's groundbreaking theory on the pathology of "nuns and widows" was integrated into Chen's book. This passage of Xu's is significant in its several "firsts" among extant medical texts: It is the first to target nuns and widows (not Chu Cheng), to interpret Chunyu's case in terms of "ample Blood," and to interrelate sexual desire with the reproductive body through the notion of "ample Blood." As I have argued, prior to the Song, it was only in the Bedchamber tradition did physicians (or *yangsheng* 養生 specialists) talk about women's sexual desire. Song doctors such as Xu Shuwei and Chen Ziming, while intentionally excluding the Bedchamber tradition

¹⁹⁹ *Shanghan jiuoshi lun* 76. Underlines mine.

from their orthodox medicine,²⁰⁰ consciously or unconsciously inherited Bedchamber authors' imagination of female sexual desire and further combined it with their constructive of the reproductive body. To pathologize "*guafu*," to associate "women lacking sexual contact with men" with sexual frustration, and to further theorize it within the physiology of the reproductive body—having these three together is new. It is a result of Song medical authors' selective integration of earlier sources. Xu creates a link that combines women's sexual and reproductive bodies. Women's sexual desire is not simply related to but generated by her reproductive function. It is different from Kou Zongshi, who perceives virgin boys' and girls' problem as caused by excessive thoughts that should be dealt with by the patient's own control of his/her thoughts. And yet Xu simply uses medicine to suppress the "ample Blood." Unlike Bedchamber texts, which present rather diverse ways to respond to female sexual desire, Xu and Chen simply assume marriage or sexual contact with men solves the problem. If the woman's status quo does not allow it, they use medicine to suppress the symptom. Their concern is not about how to fulfill women's desires but to make sure women's sexual/reproductive body is under (medical) control. Women's sexual "frustration" is less a result of their observation than something that they create to explain the illness of a certain group of women, a byproduct of the physiology of the reproductive body.

However, Xu and Chen's pathologization of female celibacy leads to a paradox and a dilemma: The reproductive body is the cause of both right and wrong, of both necessary and excessive sexual desire. Ample Blood leads to both successful conception and *guafu*'s intermittent fever. The doctors may find marriage and consummation the easiest solution for young maids, who are anyway bound to get married with or without the doctor's advice, but they

²⁰⁰ It is not coincidental obliviousness or a problem with textual transmission but intentional exclusion because Chen Ziming draws extensively from Sun Simiao's *Beiji qianjin yaofang*, in which a whole section is dedicated to Bedchamber arts, which is completely left out in Chen's book.

can only give prescriptions to nuns and those married and widowed. Such pathology does not really serve to reinforce the marriage system. Quite the contrary, it (unintentionally) threatens the system by providing physiological arguments against chastity and a legitimate rationale for women's desires.

Another problem caused by the combination of women's reproductive and sexual body is the confusion in the diagnosis and treatment of menses blockage: Is it a symptom of ample or weakened Blood and should it be treated by nourishing or suppressing *yin*? Although Xu Shuwei claims that the illness of the nun he treated is the same as the court lady that Chunyu treated, his prescription of the medicine that "suppresses *yin*" seems different from Chunyu's method of burning and smoking to facilitate menses. Unlike Chunyu's case, Xu's sicked nun does not seem to have the problem of menses blockage. When Kou Zongshi mentions maidens' menses blockage, his opinion is that it is due to the "irregular circulation and exhaustion of the Blood" (血逆竭), which is also caused by excessive sexual desire. Chen Ziming in another chapter of his book, "Prescriptions on Maidens' Fatigue Disorder due to Menses Blockage," also quotes Kou Zongshi and another Jin doctor, who states that maidens' menses blockage is largely due to "depleted *yin* and weakened Blood" (陰虛血弱) and should be treated with medicine that "nourishes Blood and increases *yin*" (養血益陰). To suppress the ample Blood or to nourish the weakened Blood obviously belong to two different kinds of pathology, and yet are both incorporated into Chen Ziming's *All-Inclusive Prescriptions for Women*.

2. Desire, intercourse, pregnancy: Unstable categories

The word medical texts use for sexual intercourse—"jiao" (交), or "jiaotong" (交通), *jianjie* (交接)—is not confined to this usage. It is a rather general term meaning interaction,

connection, exchange, or intercourse in its broader definition. The other word commonly used is “*he*” (合), which is also a general term meaning to combine, to integrate, to put together, or to meet. It depends purely on the context whether or not it means something sexual. There is no specific term for sex in general in classical Chinese but the general terms *jiao*, *he*, some euphemisms (such as *xiani* 狎昵—to share intimacy, *tongqin* 同寢—to sleep together), and some (also not specific) terms for illicit sex (such as *jian* 姦, *luan* 亂). There is no category as distinct as “sex/uality” in the modern context. *Jiao* or *he* (or sometimes “*gan*” 感—affection) in premodern Chinese contexts carried connotations that would not necessarily be considered “sexual” from a modern point of view. Concepts and categories based on modern sexology were not always the case, as I have shown with the example of the construction of female sexuality in medical and Bedchamber texts up to Song times. It took a long time for the (scholarly) medical tradition to combine the sexual (or the desiring) and the reproductive bodies, to theorize a female body in need of men, and at the same time to exclude too much detail on women’s sexual desire and potentials. In *zhiguai* literature and Song anecdotes, (sexual) desire, intercourse, and reproduction/pregnancy are also unstable and ambiguous categories.

Intercourse, legitimate or not, does not necessarily lead to reproduction. Reproduction is not always a result of intercourse, either. The story about the female deity Chenggong Zhiqiong in *Soushen ji* (*Record in Search of the Supernatural*, early 4th century) tells that the deity (once an orphan before ascending to heaven) is sent by the supreme god (*tiandi*) to marry the man named Xian Chao out of the sympathy for her difficult childhood. The deity says to Xian Chao that she is a deity and so cannot give birth to children for him, but she also has no jealousy and so would not interfere with his (real) marriage. The deity stays with him for several years even after Xian’s parents arrange a marriage for him, and only leaves when Xian incautiously lets

others know about this relationship. Yet they meet again after five years, and from then on the deity descends to Xian regularly on certain days of a year. A contemporary literatus composed a rhapsody-poem for this deity and in the preface he says, “I asked those close to Xian who know about this. They said when the deity lady comes, they can all smell fragrance and hear her voice. It is thus evident that this is not out of Xian’s own sexual illusions and fantasy (淫惑夢想). [...] Those who are approached by ghosts and demons all become ill and emaciated. But now Xian is safe and sound, eats and sleeps with a deity, and is content with affection and desire (縱情兼慾). Is it not marvelous!”²⁰¹

Liu Yuanru studies stories about sex anomalies (including transsexuals, hermaphrodites, and asexual reproduction) in Six Dynasty *zhiguai* and argues that those stories all carries the same moral message: “Sex against the norm is always ineffective sex, which fails to generate children,” and it is to “reinforce the traditional ethics of ‘reproducing lives.’”²⁰² Liu puts normal and abnormal relationships into several sub-categories according to their models of “intercourse” and “reproduction.” Those that fail to produce human progeny (because they are infertile or produce monstrous babies) are labeled by Liu as “*yichang*” 異常 (abnormal). Not simply is Liu’s definition of the “norm” (*chang* 常) more of a modern assumption than a result of historical analysis, the above story of Chenggong Zhiqiong is also at odds with the “moral message” that she observes. The sexual relationship between the man and the deity is not a common one but certainly not illicit or morally wrong. This human-deity “marriage” is

²⁰¹ *Soushen ji* 7.125-27. Daniel Hsieh regards this story as one of the “beginnings of literati love story,” which always happens between a man and a woman who is not his wife. Wives belong to a different domain from women such as courtesans. Hsieh calls it the “division or splitting of women” that inhibited the development of “love” (Hsieh 2008: 19). Hsieh’s observation may explain better *chuanqi* works from the Tang than sources from the Six Dynasties. There are quite a few accounts from the Six Dynasties relating the very romantic relationship between husbands and wives accompanied with supernatural incidents. Song literature also portrays vividly and touchingly love and destiny between couples (Ebrey 1993: 53-59). Hsieh seems to underestimate the power of discourse on destiny and romantic relationships as a gentle form of the myth of marriage system.

²⁰² Liu 2002: 67.

legitimate from the very start: it is a gift from the supreme god to the deity as compensation for her being orphaned in childhood. The legitimacy is further confirmed at the end by the fact that Xian is not only happy but also remains healthy and peaceful. And this relationship is even recognized by others through their providing testimonies and composing poetry. What Xian acquires is a sexual, affective, and even intellectual (the deity is extremely lettered) companion. The deity does not bear children, help him with officialdom, or grant him any material benefit. Reproductive sex is one kind of norm, but not the only kind. Reproduction is not always the criterion for a legitimate sexual relationship, either.²⁰³

More interestingly, in the *zhiguai* literature, pregnancy does not always require the woman's sexual intercourse with a man. In some cases, as Liu Yuanru also points out, the woman gives birth to non-humans (beast-like monsters or irregular-shaped flesh and blood) due to intercourse with ghosts or demons. In other cases, the woman may give birth to either human or non-human child *without* sexual intercourse with anyone. One account in *Soushen houji* 搜神後記 (*Later Record in Search of the Supernatural*, by Tao Qian 陶潛, 365-427) tells that a woman while washing clothes by the river, “felt something unusual inside her body. She at first did not pay attention to it, and later realized that she was pregnant” (覺身中有異, 復不以為患, 遂妊身). She then gives birth to three creatures and all are just like eels. As they grow up, they become water dragons (*jiao* 蛟). Whenever it rains, the three water dragons return to see their mother. Later when the woman dies, they come to her tomb and cry hard for several days.²⁰⁴ What the woman bears in this story are not human beings but not monstrous either, and it is not a result of

²⁰³ For the most obvious, criminal sexual behaviors such as adultery, fornication, and rape can produce children as well. And they are no less sinful because of their reproductive potential. It is unlike the sexual hierarchy in Thomas Aquinas' theology, which holds that rape is considered less sinful than masturbation, sodomy, and bestiality because it can lead to conception (Schultz 2006: 18-19).

²⁰⁴ *Soushen houji* 7.545.

sexual intercourse or anything sexual or erotic. It is a case of “*ganyun*” 感孕 (affective pregnancy), in which a woman conceives not by sexual intercourse but mysterious forces. *Ganyun* cases are most frequently seen in the birth myths of ancient sages. The chapter of “*ganying*” 感應 (affection and resonance) in *Soushen ji* records several such stories: The Yellow Emperor’s mother Fubao is “affected” (*gan*) one night when seeing great lightning surrounding the Big Dipper and gives birth of the Yellow Emperor after twenty-five months.²⁰⁵ Emperor Zhuanxu’s mother Nüshu is affected and pregnant with Zhuanxu at a night when the Alkaid star shines over the moon.²⁰⁶ Emperor Yao’s mother Qingdu is affected by a red dragon that she encounters by the river and becomes pregnant with Yao.²⁰⁷

Furthermore, in some Song anecdotes, as we will see below, when a girl or a woman is “possessed” or “enchanted” by a demon or a deity, it is often both physical (sexual) and spiritual (psychological). And yet her “desire” may be separated from her consciousness, and her virginity may even be restored after the demon/deity is exorcised. Female sexual desire in these stories seems not only irrelevant to the reproductive body but almost a (demonic) disease in itself. Literature scholars, while insightfully analyzing the difference between women possessed/enchanted by male ghosts/demons and men seduced by female ghosts/demons, often emphasize women as being passive and the female Other as the object and not the subject of desire.²⁰⁸ Nevertheless, as I am about to argue, stories about enchanted and possessed women already appear quite diverse and complicated in Six Dynasties *zhiguai* and are even more so in Song anecdotes. And if we do not limit our sources to a single type of stories or genre, we will often find that the discourse constructed in one account/text can simply be deconstructed in

²⁰⁵ *Soushen ji* 4.75.

²⁰⁶ *Soushen ji* 4.76.

²⁰⁷ *Soushen ji* 4.77.

²⁰⁸ For example, Mei 1997, Huntington 2000, Zeitlin 2007.

another.

3. The enchanted and possessed: Divergence from the medical models

While medical and Bedchamber authors consider single/widowed women more susceptible to ghostly intercourse and conception and explain the cause as bodily depletion and/or lack of sexual contact with men, popular religion and exorcism approach the problem from different (and sometimes conflicting) angles. In cases where maidens are enchanted or possessed by ghosts, demons, or deities, there is almost no mention of their sexual status or bodily condition; if their desire is ever addressed, it always comes after the possession. There are also as many cases of non-celibate women (wives, prostitutes, shamans) having intercourse with ghosts/demons (ranging from fervently active to innocently passive and resolutely resistant). Some of them are described as attractive or loose, and in some cases it is unclear why they are picked by the demons. Some women's excessive desire simply has nothing to do with their sexual relationship with men.

Students of Chinese literature are familiar with the formula of Chinese ghost stories: a young, elegant scholar is approached by an enchanting female ghost—the man's life is endangered by the sexual contact with the ghost while the ghost attempts to use the man's *yang* energy to come back to life. Both Judith Zeitlin's study of ghosts and Rania Huntington's of foxes in Ming-Qing literature keenly point out the gender factor in considering human beings' association with foxes and ghosts—a moral or a medical issue happening in an erotic or a pathological context. Zeitlin notices that in *Liaozhai* 聊齋 (by Pu Songling 蒲松齡, 1640-1715), although there are cases of both a female ghost tempting a man and a male ghost molesting a woman, whenever a female ghost approaches a man and is restored to life, "it is

almost always in an erotic context”; while a woman molested by a male ghost is “almost always in the context of illness” and is treated by medical or exorcist means.²⁰⁹ Similarly in fox stories, when a man encounters a vixen, the focus is on how the man deals with his sexual desire and self-control; whereas when a woman is molested (or sometimes possessed) by a male fox, she oftentimes loses her mind and needs an outside force for help.²¹⁰ Zeitlin further shows how, through a process of feminizing the ghost, female ghosts became the corporealization of emotions and desire. The frightening and malignant female ghosts from earlier times were further transformed in seventeenth-century elite production of ghost fiction into “timid, vulnerable, fragile creatures in need of male sympathy, protection, and life-giving power.” Those powers are wielded mainly through sexual contact.²¹¹ In Qing fox stories, Huntington convincingly argues, although vixens were imagined as the embodiment of lust, their sexual desire is instead veiled by the focus on men’s desire and the link between vixens’ sexual behavior and other parasitical aims, such as absorbing men’s energy (*jing*) in order to reach immortality.²¹²

Mei Jialing’s observation on the gender relationship in human-ghost erotic stories from Six Dynasties *zhiguai* is similar to Zeitlin’s and Huntington’s on Ming-Qing: While female ghosts either depend on men’s *jing* to revive or provide material benefit for men, in the very few stories about women and male ghosts, the women are all of low social status and “passively enchanted by the male ghosts.” Together these stories reveal “men’s deepest desire for patriarchal privileges.”²¹³ However, if we look at more cases than simply human-ghost stories, Mei’s conclusion would seem limited. For example, the story of Chenggong Zhiqiong simply

²⁰⁹ Zeitlin 2007: 14-15. Medicine in the seventeenth century has developed a more complicated theory on treating women’s emotions and desire. As Hsiu-fen Chen shows in her study on medical discourse on female sexual desire, late imperial doctors (one case from the Yuan and many from the Ming on) began to apply “emotion treatment” (*qingzhi liaofa* 情志療法) to their female patients in cases of intercourse with ghosts (Chen 2010, 2011).

²¹⁰ Huntington 2000: 109-13.

²¹¹ Zeitlin 2007: 24.

²¹² Huntington 2000: 86-91.

²¹³ Mei 1997: 95-127.

does not fit in the ghost story formula. And those women who are “passively enchanted by male ghosts” are in fact active respondents if we take a further look. While Mei looks for the “common beliefs and desires” from Six Dynasties *zhiguai*, which she also regards as anecdotes,²¹⁴ I look for divergence. I do not limit my source to a particular type of story but more broadly examine how female sexuality is depicted diversely in different stories and at the same time look at the (inconsistent and even contradictory) attempts to understand and regulate women’s desires and sexual bodies. While Ming-Qing fiction authors based many of their stories on Song and pre-Song prototypes, they had also refined the narrative and at the same time reduced the diversity and multivocality of earlier stories.

3.1 Active respondents: Cases from the Six Dynasties

Cases of women’s sexual/erotic experiences from the Six Dynasties are few but already quite diverse. In two stories the women are tricked by dog-demons in the disguise of humans. One is from *Soushen ji*, which tells that a man during the mourning period for his mother suddenly enters his wife’s room and has sex with her. Later he comes in again and yet does not say a word to his wife. His wife blames him for breaking the mourning rules. The man then realizes that there must have been a demon. He finds that it is a white dog stealing his mourning clothes and turning into a human. He kills the white dog. And his wife “was ashamed and died of sickness.”²¹⁵ The other is from *Soushen houji* and quite similar to the first one: A yellow dog disguises itself as the woman’s husband and has sex with her; after the trick is exposed, the woman dies of shame. Yet there is one thing different in the latter story: The woman is described

²¹⁴ Mei 1997: 113.

²¹⁵ *Soushen ji* 19.321.

as “young and beautiful,” while her husband is already sixty and often sleeps out; therefore she is “deeply unhappy.”²¹⁶ But if we put together the two stories, it becomes irrelevant whether the woman in question is abstinent or lustful. While they reveal a shared anxiety about women’s desire and sexual bodies not impermeably guarded and a convenient solution that such incautious (if not loose) women should simply die of shame, such cases of demonic intercourse portray women as active respondents and exceed contemporary medical explanation and treatment. Woman’s responses seem to vary not according to their sexual status but their social-familial identity. Another story in *Soushen houji* tells about a group of consorts (or courtesans, *ji* 妓) of a king from the Eastern Jin enchanted by a monkey-demon, who assumes the body of a handsome and pleasant young man. All the consorts are pregnant and give birth to monstrous monkey-babies. The king finds out and kills the monkey and all the monkey-babies. But his consorts do not die in shame but cry out to lament for their loss.²¹⁷

The next two stories, one from *Yiyuan* 異苑 (*Collection of the Strange*, by Liu Jingshu 劉敬叔, 5th century) and the other from *Youming lu* 幽明錄 (*Record between the Dark and the Bright*, by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶, 403-444), portray two maids living happily together with the demons.²¹⁸ The first one relates:

Guo Qingzhi of Luling has a maid named Caiwei, who is young and beautiful. During the years of Xiaojian reign (454-456) of the Song, there suddenly came a person who claimed to be a mountain spirit. He appeared as a naked man more than a *zhang* tall, yellow color on his chest and arms, clean and nice appearance, speaking in an elegant accent. He

²¹⁶ *Soushen houji* 6.539.

²¹⁷ *Soushen houji* 6.531.

²¹⁸ The two stories are what Mei Jialing refers to as examples of women “passively enchanted by male ghosts” (Mei 1997: 106-7). However, the texts in fact are not clear how “passive” the women are. At least they are no less active in response to the demons/ghosts than men in those female ghost/vixen stories.

called himself Ghost Sir Yellow and came to have intercourse with the maid. The maid said that she was willing to serve him as a human. The ghost therefore came to her frequently. He constantly stays invisible and occasionally reveals himself. His physical appearance changes and never stays the same: suddenly large and suddenly small, sometimes as vapor and sometimes stone, sometimes like a small ghost and sometimes a woman, sometimes leaving only footprints like birds or beasts, sometimes like a man more than two *zhang* tall, and sometimes as a goose and leaving footprints as large as a plate. No matter whether the doors and windows are open or closed, he can enter in miraculously. He plays and laughs with the maid just as a human being would.²¹⁹

廬陵人郭慶之，有家生婢，名采薇，年少，有美色。宋孝建年中，忽有一人，自稱山靈，如人裸身，形長丈餘，胸臂皆有黃色，膚貌端潔，言音周正，呼為黃父鬼，來通此婢。婢云：意事如人。鬼遂數來。常隱其身，時或露形。形變無常，乍大乍小，或似煙氣，或為石，或為小鬼，或為婦人，或如鳥獸足跡，或如人，長二尺許；或似鵝，跡掌大如盤。開戶閉牖，其入如神。與婢戲笑，如人也。

This maid is also described as “young and beautiful,” and that is perhaps why she is approached by the ghost. But the ghost only continues to come with the maid’s (active) consent. Also it is interesting to note that while this ghost first reveals to the maid as a tall man, he (or it?) can also appear as a woman. The maid is not forced, tricked, or ashamed, nor does she seem to be enchanted and lose her consciousness. The other story is somewhat more mysterious and ambiguous:

During the Yongjia reign period (307-313), the ancestor of the Chao family of Taishan was the magistrate of Xiang District and resided in Jinling. One of their maids went out to

²¹⁹ *Yiyuan* 6.653.

collect firewood. Suddenly someone followed the maid, approached and greeted her.

Then they exchanged affection [*tongqing*, may be a euphemism for sexual intercourse].

The person followed the maid home, stayed there and would not leave. Chao worried that it would cause misfortune and always sent the maid out at night. The whole family could hear that person and the maid singing and talking and yet no one could see him except for the maid. Whenever eating and drinking with the maid, he always played the flute and sang: “The night is silent and clear; my flute sounds pure and high. If you want to know who I am, my surname is Guo and personal name Changshen (longevity).”²²⁰

永嘉中，泰山巢氏先為相縣令，居在晉陵。家婢采薪，忽有一人追之，如相問訊，遂共通情，隨婢還家，仍住不復去。巢恐為禍，夜輒出婢。聞與婢謳歌言語，大小悉聞，不使人見，見形者唯婢而已。每與婢宴飲，輒吹笛而歌，歌云：閑夜寂已清，長笛亮且鳴。若欲知我者，姓郭字長生。

We do not know (and nor does the narrator) who this mysterious person is except for his name. It is also not quite clear how this maid interacts with him from the beginning. But she does not seem to be tricked, possessed, or forced. The relationship does not seem to affect the woman’s work as a maid except that she cannot stay in the house during the night. It is not treated as a case of illness or medical possession, either. All the stories so far have one thing in common: Whether the woman is tricked, enchanted, or seduced, she remains conscious and responds actively. What makes a difference to the women’s responses is their status and social identity rather than their physical or sexual condition.

The most intriguing case is perhaps that of Wu Wangzi, an ordinary girl who becomes a

²²⁰ *Youming lu* 703.

semi-deity for three years because of her relationship with the deity Marquis Su²²¹:

In the eastern village of Mao District, Guiji, there was a girl, surname Wu, personal name Wangzi, age sixteen, with adorable appearance. Someone from her village in charge of a sacrifice festival invited her to go along. She went and while walking along the pond, she met an elegant man with unusually magnificent appearance. He rowed a boat smoothly with the strength equal to more than ten people. He sent someone to ask Wangzi where she was heading. After Wangzi answered, he said to her, “I am now going to the same place. You may take my boat and go with me.” Wangzi declined and said she would not dare to. The man suddenly disappeared. As Wangzi arrived and paid homage to the deity shrine, she saw the man from the boat sitting solemnly in the shrine, none other than the statue of Marquis Su. He asked why Wangzi came late, and then threw two tangerines to her. From then on, he frequently revealed himself to Wangzi, and finally bestowed affection upon her [*jiang qinghao*, also a euphemism for sexual intercourse with affection]. Whatever Wangzi wanted, he bestowed on her from the air. Once she wanted to eat fish, and a pair of fresh carps appeared as she wished. Accounts of Wangzi’s fragrance [i.e. her deific efficacy] were told in several villages. She had been quite efficacious. The people of a whole county worshiped and paid offerings to her. After three years, Wangzi suddenly had other thoughts, and the deity ceased to interact with her.²²²

會稽鄞縣東野有一女子，姓吳，字望子。年十六，姿容可愛。其鄉里有鼓舞解事者要之，便往。緣塘行，半路忽見一貴人，端正非常人。乘船，手力十餘，皆整頓。令人問望子今欲何之。其具以事對。貴人云：「我今正往彼，便可入船共去。」望子辭不敢，忽然不見。望子既到，跪拜神座，見向船中貴人儼然端作，即蘇侯神像也。

²²¹ Marquis Su (Su Jun 蘇峻, d.328) was a rebellious general of the Eastern Jin.

²²² *Soushen houji* 3.504-5.

問望子來何遲，因擲兩橘與之。數數現形，遂降情好。望子心有所欲，輒空中下之。曾思啗膾，一雙鮮鯉應心而至。望子芳香流聞數里，頗有神驗，一邑共奉事。經歷三年，望子忽生外意，便絕往來。

Again, Wangzi in this story is not passively possessed by the deity. She is clearly conscious and acts according to her own will. The deity seems to wish to monopolize her, but what he does is simply leave her when she thinks of others.

3.2 The dynamics in sexual possession and exorcism: Cases from *Yijian zhi*

Compared with the Six Dynasties cases, demons/deities from Song stories seem much harder to deal with. That might have something to do with the “new therapeutic movement” movements in the Song, to use Edward Davis’ term.²²³ Demons and gods were believed capable of possessing women not only sexually but also physically and spiritually. The most common solution is to find an exorcist ritual master, but that does not always work. Like physicians of various kinds depicted in Song anecdotes, there are exorcists of many kinds as well and they range from very powerful ones to mediocre quacks. While Song medicine pathologizes (although problematically) female sexual desire, Song exorcism demonizes it. Unlike in Six Dynasties *zhiguai*, where women respond to sexual proposals with full consciousness no matter whether appropriate or not, in *Yijian zhi*, oftentimes a woman’s expression of sexual desire itself is already a sign of being possessed and losing herself. Here are two examples:

When Lian Shizhong served as the magistrate of Xincheng District in Lin’an, in the magistrate’s office complex there was a tower. Outside of the tower there was an old candlenut tree, which was as thick as a circle by one person’s two arms. Its shade was

²²³ Davis 2001.

quite wide. Shizhong has a daughter, who was fifteen at that time. Once as she ascended the tower and looked outside, suddenly she acted as if someone was talking and laughing with her. From then on, she put on make-up and stayed up in the tower every day no matter whether it was windy, rainy, cold, or hot. Shizhong felt strange about it and so summoned exorcists and looked for medicine to treat her. But she never stopped. Her family saw that she simply smiled and talked to the candlenut tree, suspected that the tree's demonic power was the cause, and ordered someone to cut it down. The girl was shocked and cried out bitterly, "Mr. Candlenut!" several times. Then the anomaly ceased, and the girl was fine. When asked about what had happened previously, she knew nothing.²²⁴

練師中為臨安新城丞，丞廨有樓，樓外古桐一株，其大合抱，蔽蔭甚廣。師中女及笄，嘗登樓外顧，忽若與人語笑者。自是日事塗澤而處樓上，雖風雨寒暑不輟。師中頗怪之，呼巫訪藥治之，不少衰。家人但見其對桐笑語，疑其為祟，命伐之。女驚嗟號慟，連呼「桐郎」數聲。怪乃絕，女後亦無恙。詢其前事，蓋恍然無所覺也。

The daughter of the Fang family in Pujiang, Wuzhou, was enchanted by demons before she married. Every day pass noon, she put on heavy ornaments and flowers and went to bed. She would only wake up after two *shi* [four hours] and always appeared tipsy and filled with joy. Her elder brother asked her why, and she replied, "I cannot say. There is no pleasure in the world comparable to this." [Her family then found several Daoist priests to treat her but all were defeated by the demon. Eventually the Heavenly Master Zhang of Dragon-Tiger Mountain (Longhu shan Zhang tianzhi) successfully reported it to the court of heaven and solved the problem.] From then on, the girl has been peaceful as

²²⁴ "Mr. Candlenut of Xincheng" 新城桐郎, *Yijian zhi bing*.7.421.

usual. The next year when she married, she was still a virgin.²²⁵

婺州浦江方氏女，未適人，為魅所惑。每日過午，則盛飾插花就枕，移兩時乃寤，必酒色著面，喜氣津津然。女兄問其故。曰：「不可言，人世無此樂也。」……自是女平安如常，踰年而嫁，則猶處子云。

In both stories, it is simply the girl's expression and manifestation of sexual/erotic desire that leads to their family's suspicion of demonic possession. There is no mention of any other "supernatural" incident in either story detected by the girl's family before they decide it is a case of demonic possession. Expression of desire itself is the only anomaly. Although both women in question are maidens—a kind of "*guafu*" that Song medicine considers susceptible to "(dreaming of) intercourse with ghosts/demons" either because of excessive thoughts (Kou Zongshi) or the lack of *yin-yang* contact (Xu Shuwei, Chen Ziming)—neither problem is solved by working on self-control (they already lose themselves), medicinal prescriptions, or a normative *yin-yang* contact (i.e. marriage). In a way reminiscent of the medical pathologization of *guafu*, to demonize female sexual desire is not an attempt to reinforce the marriage system—the problem has to be solved before the girl can marry; marriage cannot solve the problem.²²⁶ It is a reconceptualization of female sexuality, but a different one from the medical tradition. While Song medical books pathologize single/widowed women and (unintentionally) legitimize women's (certain kind of) sexual desire, in both stories the manifestations and expressions of desire are separated from the woman herself: sometimes from her consciousness (the former girl is ignorant of her enchantment) and sometimes her physical body (the latter girl is still a virgin!). Although, the Fang's daughter's resistance to tell her brother about her secret joy reminds us of

²²⁵ "The Daughter of Fang" 方氏女, *Yijian zhi* bing.10.446-47.

²²⁶ In another story, after both Daoist priests and Buddhist monks fail to fight with the demon, some suggests the girl's father to simply get her married. But the groom is scared away by the demon on the wedding night (*Yijian zhi* bu.15.1691).

the familiar anxiety we have seen in Bedchamber texts.

While exorcism approaches female sexuality from a distinct angle from medicine (and there are variations in exorcism as well), people simply try whatever is available at hand. “Summoning exorcists and looking for medicine” seem standard procedures. But no treatment brings guaranteed effect. Effective solutions and women’s conditions and reactions vary in almost every story. In the first story above neither exorcist rituals nor medicine works but simply cutting the tree solves the problem, while in the second one only the most prestigious and righteous Daoist master is capable of fulfilling the mission. In another story, after the demon (in fact a deity in this case) is exorcized away, the girl not only remembers everything but deeply regrets the loss of her lover and eventually fails to get married.²²⁷ Sometimes it is the woman’s own action of resistance that surpasses all means of exorcism: In one story a married woman has been harassed by fox demons for several years and no means of exorcism she has tried works. However, she remains conscious the entire time and has been troubled by it. Eventually when the demons hurt her husband and mother-in-law as they attempt to fight with them, the woman rises up, scolds the demons, and stabs them. All demons turn into stone and never come again.²²⁸ Different from the first two stories, in the last two what really matters is the woman’s own will: whether she is unwilling to let go or not.

While the Fang’s daughter keeps her demonic lover secret, some girls speak out when they are found pregnant and blamed by their parents. The daughter of an official surnamed Huang gets pregnant before getting married. Her parents suspect that she has had an affair and secretly query her. She “cried and said, ‘I truly have not had an affair. But whenever I sleep, in between dreams and reality, there is always a Daoist priest carrying me to a silent room, inviting

²²⁷ “The Daughter of Yong” 雍氏女, *Yijian zi bu*.15.1690-92.

²²⁸ “The Wife of Chen” 陳氏妻, *Yijian zhi ding*.19.699-700.

me for drink and feast, and doing the matter of the bedchamber with me (行房室之事). I am therefore pregnant. I have been feeling shame and regret for a long time but did not dare to disclose it.” Her father thinks that it must be the Maoshan magicians’ (茅山方士) doing (since they have just moved and lodge in a Buddhist temple very close to Maoshan, or Mount Mao)²²⁹, and finds a way to catch the suspect—a Daoist priest in a nearby temple. He brings the priest to the district court, where the priest confesses that what he uses is called “The Technique of Jade Maidens in Love with Gods” (玉女喜神術).²³⁰ Another village commoner’s girl is also found pregnant before marriage and is blamed by her parents. She says, “Every night after dusk, a man in yellow climbs over the wall, enters through the window, and forces me to have intercourse. This is why I am pregnant.” Her family then wait there at night and stab the man, who turns into a yellow dog. They then use medicine to abort the demonic fetus.²³¹ In both cases the women are conscious of what is going on. There might be many reasons that such stories were told, and I would not simply interpret them from a modernist approach. But as I have illustrated in the first two chapters and will provide additional evidence in later chapters, the possibility of disguising adultery with medical or religious/exorcistic rhetoric was a reality in Song society.

4. Desiring women in the Song

One story from *Yijian zhi* about the romance between a prostitute and a deity is at odds with both the contemporary medical and exorcistic discourses and also stands out when compared with the later literary conventions:

²²⁹ The Maoshan branch of Daoism was founded by Tao Hongjing, the author of the *Yangxing yanming lu*, which includes a chapter of the Bedchamber arts that I have cited several times earlier in this chapter.

²³⁰ “The Technique of Jade Maidens in Love with Gods” 玉女喜神術, *Yijian zhi ding*.19.694.

²³¹ “Two Dog Demons” 二狗怪, *Yijian zhi ding*.20.703.

In Yongkang garrison [in modern day Sichuan] there was a prostitute.²³² One day when paying homage at the temple of the King of Divine Manifestation, she saw [the statue of] a grand and tall horseman outside of the temple gate. He had a magnificent face and physique. The embroidered drapery on both his thighs seemed to flutter. She intently gazed at him and became so enamored that she did not want to leave until the evening when her family (most likely the pseudo-family in the brothel) forced her to go home. She felt lost, unhappy, and could not concentrate. The next day, a guest came and asked to stay for the night. His appearance was just like the horseman statue that she had fallen in love with. The prostitute was in a transport of joy and thought it was a belated but destined meeting. This man left at dawn and returned at dusk for several nights in a row. One day he suddenly wept and said: “I am in fact not human but the horseman in the temple. Because of your affection I broke the rules and came to you. I repeatedly skipped my night duties and was caught by the superior. I am sentenced to a beating on the back and exile with penal labor and will leave tomorrow. For use when I pass your door, please buy some more paper money for me.” The prostitute also wept and promised to do what he asked. When the time came, this man carried the iron cangue, blood dropping all over his body, with his face tattooed “send to such-and-such place,” followed by two robust soldiers. He passed by the prostitute’s house and made his farewells. The prostitute set up a sacrifice and burned paper money (i.e. mortuary money made in paper prepared for the dead as offerings), cried and saw him off. The next time when she visited the temple, the statue had already toppled to the ground.²³³

²³² It is unclear here if this woman (“*changnü*” 倡女 in the original text) is simply a prostitute or closer to a courtesan—a specific class of women in the Song. For discussions on courtesans and the Song society, see Beverly Bossler 2002.

²³³ “The Prostitute of Yongkang” 永康倡女, *Yijian zhi jia*.17.146.

永康軍有倡女謁靈顯王廟，見門外馬卒頎然而長，容狀偉碩，兩股文繡飛動，諦觀慕之，眷戀不能去。至暮，家人強挽以歸，如有所失，意忽忽不樂。過一夕，有客至求宿，其儀觀與所慕丈夫等。倡喜不勝情，自以為得客晚。其人遲明即去，黃昏復來。留連數宿，忽泣曰：「我實非人，乃廟中廄卒也。以爾悅我，故犯禁相就。屢不赴夜直，為主者所糾，得罪，明日當杖脊流配。至時，過爾家門，幸多買紙錢贈我。」倡亦泣許之。如期，此卒荷鐵校，血流滿體，刺面曰「配某處」，二健卒隨之，過辭倡家。倡設奠焚錢，哭而送之。他日詣廟，偶人仆地矣。

There is no exorcism applied or implied. It is against the medical theory: prostitutes are the kind of women who perhaps are the least in lack of sexual contact with men. It stands out from the convention in Ming-Qing literature by depicting sexual fantasies from the perspective of a woman. The narrative starts with a female gaze at a tempting, masculine body: grand and tall, handsome-looking, and the “drapery on both his thighs seemed to flutter.” This statue of a temple guardian is apparently not made to be sexually tempting. However, the woman’s desire and her gaze turn a sacred statue into a sexual being and further summons the spirit to come to her—“because of your affection I broke the rules and came to you,” says the horseman. The woman’s desire is placed at the center of the scene and activates the relationship. The physical attraction comes first and soon develops into an emotional bond. There is no explicit or implicit suggestion of physical damage or moral defects directly related to their sexual intercourse—the ghost-deity would perhaps be punished in the same way for skipping night duty for other reasons. The sad ending further serves as an expressive element to arouse readers/listeners’ sympathy rather than to serve as a warning of any kind.

In elite men’s writings, prostitutes are easily associated with dangerous sexual desire. Huntington in her study of fox tales has discussed the similarity between foxes and prostitutes:

they are both “sexually aggressive, available women of unknown origins, whom men pursue at their own cost.” The association between foxes and prostitutes further materializes the danger of unregulated sex. Huntington also insightfully points out a crucial distinction between foxes/prostitutes as a category and as an individual: “Both foxes and prostitutes are considered evil as a category, but could be remarkably good as individuals.”²³⁴ However, interestingly in this story, the prostitute is not portrayed as either good or bad. She certainly does not belong to the evil category, yet she is not particularly nice as an individual, either. Rather, she is depicted as emotionally expressive and sexually active, but not in a negative way. Unlike any prostitute stories in Tang *chuanqi* or Ming-Qing fiction, there is no description of any physical traits of the prostitute. Instead, we have the prostitute’s gaze at the statue as the prologue and her sexual desire and emotional waves as the body, and a tragic but romantic farewell as the ending—almost as if it is not simply a story about the prostitute but also one that was told and appreciated by the prostitutes’ community. In that sense, the woman’s identity as a prostitute may not necessarily be an apologetic disguise but also a sign of the targeted audience or even the source from which the story originated. This interpretation corresponds to what I have argued in the first chapter about the multivocality in *Yijian zhi* and Hong Mai’s own statement about the diverse sources of his record.

In the following chapters, I will use two case studies to demonstrate that desiring women from the Song not simply benefited from but also contributed to the formation of Song popular culture, and that traveling stories not simply reflect but also inspire women’s expressions and pursuits of desire and sexual autonomy.

²³⁴ Huntington 2000: 96.

Chapter IV

Deviant Viewers and Gendered Looks: Erotic Responses to Images and Song Visual Culture

This chapter examines erotic responses to publicly displayed images as told in Song popular anecdotes. I would like to begin with where the last chapter ends: The prostitute of Yongkang falls in love with the horseman statue, and by her passionate gaze and intense desire, she makes it come alive and spend nights with her. When the horseman deity is punished for skipping night duties and exiled, his statue correspondingly topples to the ground.²³⁵ In the last chapter I use this story as an example of how female sexuality can be talked about in Song anecdotes in distinctly different ways from the ways it is represented in medical theory, exorcist solutions, or literati's fictional writing. In this chapter I seek to compare such stories with the traditions of live images and to contextualize them within Song visual culture and popular religion.

Stories about arousal by images and consequent miraculous events similar to “The Prostitute of Yongkang” are not uncommon from the Song and can certainly be understood in the context of Song popular religion. For example, it is not that the prostitute turns an inert statue into a living person but that the horseman deity is already present and simply responds to her affection. In the Song popular religious world, according to Valerie Hansen, gods demanded accurate depictions of themselves. Statues were thought to be inhabited by gods and formed an

²³⁵ *Yijian zhi* jia.17.146.

important visual aid for people to identify their gods. To Hansen, “The Prostitute of Yongkang” was one of the most startling cases revealing gods’ ability to assume human form and to think and act like human beings.²³⁶ But erotic responses to statues were never the correct response within the realm of popular religion. Besides, episodes of sexual interaction with images by no means only happened or were told within the context of Song popular religion—a commercial statue could come alive, too. Anecdotes about deities’ images coming to life and having affairs with their viewers could hardly be incorporated into temple gazetteers or inscriptions as proof of the efficacy of the temples and their gods. This is not to say that morally ambivalent sexual elements did not exist in Song popular religion. In fact, the deity Wutong, popular during the Song, was believed to be able to give and to take away wealth capriciously and was notorious for raping wives and daughters. Richard von Glahn’s study of the Wutong cult demonstrates the thriving of demonic deity cults and the “eudaemonistic” orientation (which is characterized by transactions between gods and worshipers) in Chinese religion that is at odds with the moral equilibrium, the other fundamental orientation that von Glahn identifies.²³⁷ What I would like to call attention to here are instances where the viewer clearly violates the rule of viewing—not the kind of rule written or assigned by any higher authority but those tacitly accepted when an image is made and displayed—and the image responds. These records sometimes contain elements that can be used to justify (or simply to make sense of) such licentious encounters. For example, many images in question are those of ghosts, demons, or lesser and even fallen gods—in other words, only those evil or inferior spirits would respond sexually to human. Some viewers may be punished (mechanically or by supernatural force) for their blasphemous behaviors and thoughts. However, moralized explanations cannot prescribe how a story is told in the beginning. Even in

²³⁶ Hansen 1990: 52-57.

²³⁷ von Glahn 2004: 16.

textual sources, there are still cases where people are not punished (and sometimes even rewarded) for their relationships with deities who are neither evil nor inferior.

David Freedberg reflects upon the issue of the “fusion and elision of image and prototype,” drawing on a series of stories about live images and arousal by image from medieval Europe. The “cognitive relation between looking and enlivening; between looking hard, not turning away, concentrating, and enjoying on the one hand, and possession and arousal on the other” that Freedberg observes in the medieval European cases are stunningly similar to our Song Dynasty ones. Some statues were believed to be inhabited by demons and could be “[deprived] of their powers within an acceptable category of rationality, by magical means or by breaking them.” Some cases of sexual interaction happen in visions or dreams, but they reveal the same process of rationalization. Freedberg makes an insightful point that arousal by images is not necessarily a result of the way the image is rendered (such as a nude) or the conditioning of certain cultural conventions (popular affection for Virgin Mary, for example), but a result of looking and gazing. Images come alive because the beholders want them to do so. “Arousal by sight of picture is not simply a matter of arousal by sight of a particular alignment of features [...] but precisely a matter of arousal by sight of [a] picture.”²³⁸ Viewers’ responses to images are arbitrary. One reacts sexually to a certain image not necessarily because it is particularly sensuous; solemn statues may similarly attract deviant viewers, for instance, or viewers for whom the solemn has been eroticized. Now, on the one hand, Freedberg reminds us that erotic responses to images are almost universal and do not need to be explained; on the other hand, our Song stories need to be understood in terms of their cultural-historical context.

Stories about arousal by images from the Song provide a distinct angle to look at popular response to (usually but not always) religious images: the inappropriate and arbitrary ones, which

²³⁸ Freedberg 1989: 319-332.

do not conform to the right functions of those images and often require extra effort to justify and rationalize. Those stories were not told based on a systematic set of beliefs but together shaped a heterogeneous visual culture that intertwined popular religious beliefs with unpredictable ways of viewing. I seek to excavate the historical significance of such stories through contextualizing them within three interrelated traditions: live images in art criticism, stories about miraculous images in popular religion, and sexual encounters with supernatural beings in tales and anecdotes. We will see different agents at work: sometimes it is the deity/demon behind the image, sometimes the image maker, and sometimes (especially when the way of viewing is licentious) the viewer. Circulation of such stories is a contested sphere where viewers' unruly responses and various attempts to understand and deal with them coexist.

It is especially tricky to read stories about women's sexual encounter with images. Sometimes a familiar pattern emerges, contrasting men seduced by female ghosts and women by male ghosts. Sometimes there is not much difference between those of men and women, as we see in the example of "The Prostitute of Yongkang." But does "The Prostitute of Yongkang" really expose untainted female sexual desire or simply another male fantasy, or women's internalization of men's projection of how the masculine body should be viewed by women? What if there is no "untainted" female sexual desire, no "authentic" female way of looking at all? In a folk society where people talk about people who look, touch, feel, and desire, could such talk be inspirational if their meanings are unstable?

1. Masterpieces vs. magic paintings: Living images in art criticism

There was an old tradition in Chinese art criticism that a successful work of art comes with supernatural effects—generates its own life, absorbs the spirit (or *hun* 魂) of its prototype,

or affects the natural or supernatural world in one way or another. Whether or not people did believe this is one thing, but it was at least a conventional rhetoric generally adopted by art critics. According to Shou-chien Shih, this “*ganshen tongling*” 感神通靈 tradition declined since the mid-Tang, after the An Lushan Rebellion. Although the decline of this tradition resulted in Zhang Yanyuan’s 張彥遠 (ca. 820-876) misinterpretation of Du Fu’s compliment on Han Gan’s master skill in horse painting, in his *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記 (*A Record of the Famous Painters of All the Dynasties*, preface 847), Zhang still preserves those *ganshen tongling* stories from earlier times.²³⁹ For example, Zhang records that the painter Zhang Sengyou (fl. early 6th century) from the Liang Dynasty, famous for his Buddhist painting, once paints four dragons on the mural of a Buddhist temple in Jinling (modern day Nanjing) without dotting their pupils. Zhang Sengyou explains that the dragons would fly away if he does. Others think it absurd and insist that he finishes the eyes. When he does the eyes for two dragons, “thunder and lightning broke the wall and the two dragons rode the clouds and flew into the sky,” while “the other two dragons with their pupils unpainted remained behind.”²⁴⁰ Another Tang source also records that the eminent religious painter Wu Daozi (ca. 686-760) once draws a donkey on the wall of a monk’s room, and at night all the furniture of the room is broken by the donkey.²⁴¹ Certainly not all finely made images come alive, but good painters at least make their images *seem* alive.²⁴² Some images do not simply become alive but generate a mysterious link to their prototypes. It is said that Gu Kaizhi (ca. 344-405) is once attracted by a girl in the neighborhood, and so he paints the girl on a wall and sticks a nail at the heart. The girl then suffers from a pain

²³⁹ Shi 1996: 55-85.

²⁴⁰ *Lidai minghua ji* 7.90.

²⁴¹ *Taiping guangji* 212.1623. This account is from *Lushi zashuo* 盧氏雜說, written by Lu Yan 盧言 (fl. late 9th century) (Lu 2006: 206).

²⁴² For example, Liu Bao’s painting of the Milky Way made the viewers feel hot, and the North Wind cold (*Lidai minghua ji* 4.60); Liu Shagui painted sparrows on the wall, and the emperor thought them real (8.97).

in her heart and only recovers after Gu removes the nail.²⁴³ Figures created by great painters' brushes can have their own spirits. *Lidai minghua ji* also records another episode concerning Zhang Sengyou: His painting of two foreign monks from Tianzhu is torn into two (with one figure on each) during the Houjing Rebellion (548-552). One is held and treasured by Lu Jian. Once when Lu is seriously ill, he dreams of a foreign monk saying to him, "I have a companion from whom I have long been torn apart and separated. He is now at the home of the Li family in Luoyang. If you will seek him and reunite us, I shall surely help you with my divine power." Lu finds the painting of the other monk at the specified place and brings it back, and his illness is cured.²⁴⁴

Stories about mural paintings that become real dragons are certainly much more exciting than those about images that only seem alive. However, Zhang Yanyuan does not accentuate a difference in nature between the two. As for those even more bizarre stories, many of which are from the *zhiguai* literary tradition, Zhang does not seem to see a need for further explanation, either—they are simply more vivid illustrations of the painter's dazzling skill. What is at issue is always the artist, or the image-maker, one who can make the image resemble the prototype so completely. To paint an image so lively it comes alive demonstrates one's artistic achievement. These ancient stories continue to be recorded in several later works of art criticism such as *Xuanhe huapu* 宣和畫譜 (*Xuanhe Painting Catalogue*).²⁴⁵

Guo Ruoxu 郭若虛 (fl. 1071-80), however, has a different definition of "yi" 藝, or true

²⁴³ *Lidai minghua ji* 5.68. The *Jin History* says that at first the girl refused Gu's courtship; Gu then painted her image on the wall and stuck the nail in it. When the girl suffered from heartache, Gu showed his concern and won her heart before secretly removing the nail (*Jin shu* 92.2405).

²⁴⁴ *Lidai minghua ji* 7.90. C.f. Acker 1974, vol. II: 175.

²⁴⁵ For example, *Xuanhe huapu* includes the same story of dotting the pupils for Zhang Sengyou's entry (1.5), and also mentions Gu Kaizhi's neighbor girl and Wu Daozi's donkey (2.13). For detailed research on *Xuanhe huapu* and Song Huizong's collections, see Ebrey 2008; for more examples of *Xuanhe huapu*'s inclusion of earlier art criticism valuing verisimilitude, see Ebrey 2008: 282-83.

art, and breaks the continuity between image and its prototype. In the very end of his *Tuhua jianwen zhi* 圖畫見聞誌 (*Experiences in Painting*, written in the 1070s), Guo creates a new category, “magic paintings” (*shuhua* 術畫), to include all works that are not just paintings but images that in one way or another transcend their inert nature—either becoming alive, attracting live creatures, or possessing certain supernatural traits. The purpose of defining this category is to distinguish these “magic techniques (*fangshu* 方術) and bizarre anomalies (*guaidan* 怪誕)” from “true” paintings. Such legends as Zhang Sengyou’s dragons and Gu Kaizhi’s neighbor girl are eliminated from those great painters’ accounts. Guo further recounts a story about a painting battle in the Later Shu (934-965) court between a “magician” (*shushi* 術士) and Huang Quan, the famous court painter specializing in bird and flowers. It begins with the magician painting a magpie in the east corner of the courtyard, and soon a flock of birds gather around the painting and chirp. When it is Huang Quan’s turn to paint another magpie in the west corner, there is no flocking or chirping. The king of Shu asks Huang why, and the latter replies, “What Your Majesty’s subject (i.e. Huang) painted is an artistic painting (*yihua* 藝畫), while what [the magician] did was a magical painting (*shuhua* 術畫). This is why there is a difference in whether the birds chirp.” And the king concurs. Guo goes on with another pair of contrasts: the Daoist priest Lu Xizhen from the early Song and four famous painters (Bian Luan, Huang Quan, Xu Zhao, and Zhao Chang). It is said that whenever Lu paints a flower on the wall, it immediately attracts bees. Guo comments that the four great painters’ paintings would never attract bees in that way. What Lu Xizhen and the magician do is commonly seen in works of art criticism such as *Lidai minghua ji* as a high compliment. However, for Guo, there is a difference in nature between paintings that are simply paintings and those with “magical” effects. Not only that, but Guo holds a moral criticism against such “magic painters,” who “gain merits and fame

through deceit and bring confusion to true art” (眩惑取功，沽名亂藝). The difference between truly great painters and magic painters is the same as that between upright officials and treacherous ones. To make one’s painting come alive is further equated to those episodes of “strange magic” recorded in *Youyang zazu*, many of which have little to do with the art of painting.²⁴⁶

Tuhua jianwen zhi represents a radical departure from the *ganshen tongling* tradition as identified by Shou-chien Shih. But there is one thing in common in all the above stories of either magicians or true artists from *Lidai minghua ji*, *Tuhua jianwen zhi*, *Youyang zazu*, and other *biji/zhiguai* literature: They are all about the painter or the image-maker and not about the viewer, nor the spirit behind the image (such as that of a deity). They are a kind of public manifestation rather than a particular response of one beholder. Other kinds of stories about live images, however, marginalize the image maker while putting the viewer under the spotlight. They are those about rather inappropriate but all too common responses to images: the erotic ones. Many (but not all) of the images said to come alive and interact with their viewers are full size mural paintings or statues at religious sites. Those stories are told in a similar context as those about religious miracles, but the viewers take very different roles.

2. Deities step in: Miraculous icons in the Song

While Zhang Yanyuan attributed the miraculous effects of paintings (including religious ones) to the painter’s masterful skill and Guo Ruoxu accused those who made their paintings come alive of being deceitful magicians, many Song people who erected temples and worshiped their gods regarded miraculous images as the gods’ own doing. In several *Yijian zhi* stories,

²⁴⁶ *Tuhua jianwen zhi* 6.93-94. English translations c.f. Soper 1951: 103-4. *Youyang zazu* 5:54, 56. *Lidai minghua ji* also draws sources from *biji/zhiguai* anecdotes but only those emphasizing painting skills.

deities take active roles in the process of making and displaying their imagery. In one record, Hong Mai relates the experience of his own father-in-law, the magistrate of Yidu during the Xuanhe reign (1119-1126). It is when the people of the county raise money to repair the temple of “Immortal Song,” a deity who is believed to have just relieved the locals from a drought. But Immortal Song’s identity is rather obscure, and that becomes a problem as the people try to make a statue of him/her. The original shrine does not have his/her image, and thus people in the county “did not know whether the deity was male or female. After looking into several illustrated gazetteers and consulting the elders, they still had no clue.” It is only after Hong’s father-in-law dreams of a female deity descending to the courtyard of his office that he announces that the statue should be made female.²⁴⁷ In this case it seems that the only thing they have to get right is the sex of the deity. Other physical traits do not matter that much. Perhaps there was already a standard model for the imagery of female deities during the Song. In some art criticism texts the authors praise certain painters for their ability to accurately depict the afterworld because they have traveled there. In this case, however, it is the magistrate (rather than the craftsman) who has the vision and the deity herself comes in and makes sure her statue is made right.

Those who have visions are not always social superiors. Another entry in *Yijian zhi* records a family drama in a Zhang household, where a maid commits suicide but is miraculously brought back to life. She recounts that while dead, she sees two officials—one in purple and the other in green—speak to each other, “Let go! Let go! Since her family has prayed for her, why do we not yield?” The next day Zhang prepares offerings and summons ritual masters to show appreciation for the gods who save the maid. Yet the maid looks at the portraits used in the ritual and says that they are different from what she sees. Then they open a scroll on the side of the shrine, which a concubine brings in when marrying into this family and no one has ever opened,

²⁴⁷ “Immortal Song of Yidu” 宜都宋仙, *Yijian zhi*, bing, 14.483.

and sees one god in purple and the other in green precisely like what the maid has seen. The two gods “saw the maid and seemed to smile.”²⁴⁸

Another story completely marginalizes the role of the craftsman in the making of deities’ statues: A man named Yang Xun one evening while drunk sees his deceased uncle riding on a horse toward him. His uncle tells Xun that he has become a deity titled the “Judge of Loyalty, Filial Piety, Chastity and Righteousness” (忠孝節義判官). Xun and his family then plan to build a shrine for his uncle. They “hired a craftsman to make a statue. The craftsman’s skill had always been low. But when the statue was finished, it looked exactly like Wei (the uncle). They then knew Wei’s efficacy” (因呼工造像，工技素拙。及像成，與緯不少異。始知其神).²⁴⁹

Those who tell the story of the Zhang family’s maid, as Hong Mai records it, emphasize that the maid has not seen the scroll of the two gods before. Song people seemed aware that people could see things in dreams or in any kind of trances based on what they have seen. Another story in *Yijian zhi* follows that pattern: An old village woman in Huzhou has an arm ailment for a long time. One night she dreams of a lady in white robe offering to heal her arm in exchange for the old woman healing the lady’s. The old woman then goes to town to the Temple of Supreme Serenity as the white-robed lady instructs, and tells a monk about her dream. The monk then brings her to the west hall where there is a statue of the white-robed Guanyin whose arm has been damaged during the repair of the temple. The old woman then has the statue

²⁴⁸ “Zhang’s Maid and the Deities’ Portraits” 張婢神像, *Yijian zhi*, zaibu, 1813.

²⁴⁹ “The Judge of Loyalty, Filial Piety, Chastity and Righteousness” 忠孝節義判官, *Yijian zhi*, bing, 14.485-86. Valerie Hansen also notices that not only statues were important for the gods in Song popular religion but also the accuracy of the depictions (Hansen 1990: 54-55). But instead of placing the burden on the image maker, some seemed to believe that the gods (if they were efficacious) would take charge of it. It might not be a good thing for artists of religious paintings/statues as they might not receive the credit even though the images they produced were fine and efficacious. The pictorial format indeed plays an important role in the efficacious power of a religious image (Huang 2005: 63), especially in its normal religious context. However, as we will see in many Song stories, the viewer twists the meaning of a certain image out of its given context and enjoys its “magical power” in rather deviant ways.

repaired, and her own arm soon heals.²⁵⁰ This story offers an intriguing aspect of the physicality of religious imagery, that statues are not simply symbolic but the physical places that deities inhabit. Even though they may not be the deity itself (it would be hard to imagine the omnipresent Guanyin being limited to one statue), the statues are physically connected to the deities; or, to put it this way, they are the bodies of the deities. This is the common ground of Song stories about religious miracles and erotic interactions. However, at least according to what the story says, the old woman has not seen the Guanyin statue before. She only follows the direction given by the white-robed lady in her dream to go to the temple. There is no active viewer at play in this story. In many *Yijian zhi* stories, the gods can pick anyone whom they want to manifest themselves and pass messages to; those the gods pick only realize what has happened and who the gods are when they see their images sometime later.²⁵¹ This pattern is the opposite of many stories about erotic interactions.

3. Gendered looks: Two stories from the late Tang

Two intriguing stories from the late Tang vividly depict a man's and a woman's trouble with religious images. Both concern religious images in Buddhist temples. At first glance they seem to illustrate a pattern similar to that in those ghost and fox stories where men are active and women are forced. However, they are different in one respect: they show a sensitivity to looking that is not commonly seen in other stories. We can see more than one form of attempt to stabilize the dynamics between images and viewers and to regulate the act and desire of looking.

The first story tells about a monk being punished for his lewd reaction to a statue in his

²⁵⁰ "Guanyin Healed [An Old Woman's] Arm" 觀音醫臂, *Yijian zhi*, jia.10.88. As Valerie Hansen points out, an almost identical record was included in the temple's inscription (Hansen 1990: 22-23), which means that this story was recognized by the temple clergy and patrons.

²⁵¹ There are of course many exceptions. Stories in *Yijian zhi* can never be reduced to a single pattern.

temple. The monk Xingyun, when cleaning the temple halls to prepare for the Yulan Ghost Festival in early autumn, “saw a statue or portrait of a *huasheng* (化生, or transformative beings, demons/deities born by transformation) in front of the Buddha, whose posture was seductive and appearance beautiful, holding a lotus in her hand, as if she had other thoughts toward the viewers.” The monk teasingly says to others, “If there were a woman like this in the mundane world, I would make her my wife.” That night as the monk returns to his quarter, someone knocks the door saying, “Here comes the lotus lady!” The monk opens the door and sees the lady, attended by a maid, extremely beautiful and charming. She tells the monk that because of his words she suddenly has mundane thoughts and is degraded into a human being, and now only wants to serve him. The monk, like many of those seduced by female ghosts in ghost stories, is first dubious and reluctant. The lady further says, “You, master, came to see me in front of the Buddha and said to others that if you met someone resembling me you would make her your wife. I remember so vividly your words. Touched by your words, I sincerely wish to devote myself to you.” She shows the monk another *huasheng* from her sleeves, and he finally realizes that she is no normal human being. The lotus lady has the maid make the bed, while the monk is “astonished and also glad.” He spells out his last worry that the monastery would not allow him to keep women. The lotus lady laughs and promises him that she is a celestial being and would not be caught by ordinary people. The two of them then whisper softly to each other and put out the candles. Meanwhile, some boys are eavesdropping the entire time outside of the room. The boys soon hear the monk crying out painfully. They try to see into the room by the light, but the doors and windows are solidly locked. They can only hear sounds of munching and chewing bones and someone scolding fiercely in a “barbarian” (*hu* 胡) accent saying, “You wicked bald donkey [*tulü* 秃驢, a derogatory term for monk]! Sent away from home and head shaved [to

become a monk], how dare you have such obscene thoughts! Even if I were a real woman, I would never be your wife!” When others in the temple all wake up and break into the room, they see two *yakshas*²⁵² with saw-like teeth and wild hair, as tall as giants, roaring and leaping away. The story ends with a report of the aftermath: “Some monk(s) later saw on the mural of the Buddha’s seat two *yakshas* looking exactly like what they saw the other night.²⁵³ There were still bloodstains around their lips.”²⁵⁴

This story tells people how they are not supposed to “appreciate” and react to religious images and the danger and punishment that follows when they do. In many ways it resembles the pattern of many female ghost stories (or fox stories) where the female ghost comes to seduce the man; if the man accepts (sometimes after some insincere reluctance), he would gradually fall ill or die. In some stories there is someone who steps in—either a friend, a family member, an elder, a Buddhist monk or a Daoist priest—and tries to wake him from his indulgence. The narrative

²⁵² Or *yakṣa* (夜叉, 藥叉), demons in Buddhism that are originally “malignant, violent, and devourers (of human flesh)” (Soothill 1977: 253b). Subjugated *yaksha* become guardians of Dharma (*Taisho* 449:14.404).

²⁵³ To have *yakshas* painted below the Buddha’s seat seemed a convention in early Dunhuang caves; they often appear on the lowest panel of the central pillar such as in cave 254 (fig. 1, 2), 248 (fig. 3), 288 (fig. 4), 428 (fig. 5), 290 (fig. 6).

²⁵⁴ This story is included in the category of *yaksha* in *Taiping guangji*. According to the Zhonghua shuju version, it is taken from *Hedong ji* 河東記 (*Taiping guangji* 357.2828-29). Chao Gongwu 晁公武 (1105-1180?) in *Junzhai dushu zhi* 郡齋讀書志 attributes *Hedong ji* to a Xue Yusi 薛漁思. We do not know much about Xue Yusi except that he was a Tang person, born in Hedong (modern day Shanxi). However, Chao Gongwu, according to the version of *Hedong ji* he saw at his time, comments that this book “records strange and abnormal things; its preface claims that it is to continue Niu Sengru’s (779-847) book [i.e. *Xuanguai lu* 玄怪錄]” (Lu 2006: 209). If *Hedong ji* is an attempt to continue *Xuanguai lu*, it cannot be written before the ninth century. The original text: 經行寺僧行蘊，為其寺都僧。嘗及初秋，將備盂蘭會，灑掃堂殿，齊整佛事。見一佛前化生，姿容妖冶，手持蓮花，向人似有意。師因戲調所使家人曰：「世間女人，有似此者，我以為婦。」其夕歸院，夜未分，有款扉者曰：「蓮花娘子來。」蘊都師不知悟也，即應曰：「官家法禁極嚴，今寺門已閉，夫人何從至此？」既開門，蓮花及一從婢，妖資麗質，妙絕無倫。謂蘊都師曰：「多種中無量勝因，常得親奉大圓正智。不謂今日，聞師一言，忽生俗想。今已謫為人，當奉執巾鉢。朝來之意，豈遽忘耶？」蘊都師曰：「某信愚昧，常獲僧戒，素非省相識，何嘗見夫人，遂相給也。」即曰：「師朝來佛前見我，謂家人曰：儻貌類我，將以為婦。言猶在耳。我感師此言，誠願委質。」因自袖中出化生曰：「豈相給乎？」蘊師悟非人，迴惶之際，蓮花即顧侍婢曰：「露仙可備帷幄。」露仙乃陳設寢處，皆極華美。蘊雖駭異，然心亦喜之，謂蓮花曰：「某便誓心矣，但以僧法不容，久居寺舍，如何？」蓮花大笑曰：「某天人，豈凡識所及。且終不以累師。」遂綢繆敘語，詞氣清婉。俄而滅燭，童子等猶潛聽伺之。未食頃，忽聞蘊失聲，冤楚頗極。遽引燎照之，至則拒戶闔，禁不可發。但聞啗牙齧舌嚼骨之聲，如胡人語音而大罵曰：「賊秃奴，遣爾辭家剃髮，因何起妄想之心？假如我真女人，豈嫁與爾作婦耶？」於是馳告寺眾，壞垣以窺之，乃二夜叉也。鋸牙植髮，長比巨人，哮叫拏獲，騰蹕而出。後僧見佛座壁上，有二畫夜叉，正類所睹，唇吻間猶有血痕焉。

usually describes in much more detail the female ghost's physical enchantment and her intentions other than her sexual desire for the man—just as Rania Huntington observes in many fox stories, the (male) narrators have little interest in the sexuality of the “alien kind” but rather focus on how men conquer sexual temptation or fail to.²⁵⁵ This story as well shows no interest in female sexuality—the temptress is not even the actual lotus lady but the demon-guardian who assumes female form only to trap the lewd monk. However, unlike other erotic ghost stories in which the ghost/demon comes to the man for no particular reason (perhaps simply because he passes a tomb or lodges in the deep mountain), stories like this one have to explain where the man's fantasy comes from in the first place. Because what arouses him is an image that is not supposed to arouse people sexually but at the same time is believed to be able to manifest itself in human form, it requires extra effort on the part of the narrator to condemn the man's desire while defending the sanctity of the image. Meanwhile, people still can and even are encouraged to look at this image, to look hard but not too hard. There is a fine line.

Now the text in fact allows multiple readings. This story, like many *Yijian zhi* stories that I have discussed in the first chapter, shows traces of oral transmission. There are ambiguous and incoherent elements as well as witnesses at play. The story seems to come from a collection of reports by many witnesses: those who hear the monk's inappropriate joke in the beginning, the eavesdropping kids, those who break into the room and see the two *yakshas*, and lastly the monk who finds the bloodstains on the mural. There is not a single scene in this story that happens without a witness. That may be a consequence of the author's excellent skill as a narrator, yet may as well reveal to some extent how this story came into being through gossip and hearsay. Ambiguous meanings and incoherent details would not be surprising if the story comes from multiple sources (and perhaps has been told and retold many times before being written down).

²⁵⁵ Huntington 2000: 86-91, 2003: 178-83.

One example is that the demon-disguised lotus lady at first says that she has been degraded into a human being yet later claims that she is still a celestial being that ordinary people cannot reach. This is not completely inexplicable—perhaps it is simply an unnoticed flaw in the whole plot; or a degraded deity is still an unusual human being. Or, whoever tells the story adds a sentence to the character’s mouth that caters to the listeners’ curiosity, and the story becomes disproportionately detailed in the conversation between the monk and the lotus lady—the trap scene. Another example is the ambiguous role of the two *yakshas*. Do they act as guardians and come to punish the monk for his lewdness (then do they really have to spend so much time trapping him before eating his bones?) or reveal their demonic nature and take advantage of the monk’s moral weakness? These different possibilities have different implications concerning the way people understand images that come alive and how to stabilize viewing. If it is the former, it implies that to the popular eyes, images in temples are not symbolic or simply visual aids for sermons or rituals; a hall full of images of the Buddha, bodhisattvas, celestial beings, guardians, and demons is a hall full of their bodies that are sensational themselves and also sensuous to viewers—no matter what the high clergy would say or what those images are made for. If it is the latter, it could mean that only images of demons respond to people’s deviant ways of viewing, while other images remain inert. But people can make their arbitrary choice to believe in one way or another, or even a mixture of both.

Some intellectuals come up with more philosophical explanations as to why images come alive. The second story from the late Tang tells about a fourteen-year-old girl’s problem with a mural painting in a Buddhist temple during the early reign of Emperor Xiaowen (r. 471-500) of the Northern Wei, in the city of Ye (modern day Handan, Hebei). The girl is the daughter of a military officer and has been suffering from a disease caused by evil spirits (*yaobing* 妖病) for

years. Numerous healers have come but none knows exactly the cause of her ailment. One day her family brings her to a Daoist master named Yuan Zhao, who is known for using the Rites of Ultimate Heaven (*Jiutian fa* 九天法) to fend off evil spirits. Yuan Zhao sees the girl and says, “This disease is not caused by the enchantment (*mei* 魅) of foxes but by demonic paintings (*yaohua* 妖畫). [...] The symptoms you described correspond to those enchanted by one among the attendants of the Four Celestial Gods²⁵⁶ in Buddhist temple murals.” The girl’s father confirms Yuan’s words by saying, “I used to pray in front of the mural of the God of the East on the eastern wall of the Yellow Flower Temple in Yunmen, and often brought my daughter there. My daughter often feared the god on the mural and was frightened by nightmares. She dreamed of evil ghosts who possessed her and laughed. That is how she became ill.” The master then begins a conversation with the messenger of the God of the East, asking the god to hand over the demon who has enchanted the girl. When it comes, all hear the sound of thunder and rain. It has disheveled hair, red eyes, a giant nose, a square mouth, protruding teeth, bird-like claws, and two legs with long hair, wearing leopard fur as clothes. It is escorted by three other gods with long canine teeth and eight with dark red eyes and eyebrows. The family confirms that it is exactly what the girl has always described. The master then sprinkles boiled water on it, and it vanishes, leaving behind only something like an empty bag. The girl immediately recovers. Later when the father goes back to Ye and looks for the original mural in the temple, the image of the god seems to have been washed off. After hearing the father recount what has happened, a monk in the temple tells him that on the day when the master fights with the god/demon, there are unusual wind and clouds in the middle of the day, and he hears sounds of people fighting around the

²⁵⁶ In Mogao Cave 100 (Five Dynasties), Dunhuang, the Four Celestial Gods/Kings (of the East, the North, the South, and the West) are painted at the four corners of the ceiling. There are *yakshas*, celestial ladies, and other lesser gods flanking the central deity (fig. 7a-d).

mural. That night, the image of this one god appears washed off.²⁵⁷

Unlike the last story centered on the viewer's behavior, this story downplays the girl's agency—her act of looking—and the sexual implication seems deliberately sanitized. Although the girl's symptoms (having nightmares and laughing on her own, according to her father) are precisely those of “(dreaming of) intercourse with ghosts” in medical books used at that time,²⁵⁸ the gods are described as physically demonic and fearsome rather than sexually attractive; the girl's response to the image, only told through her father, does not go beyond fear. Like women molested by (male) ghosts or foxes in *zhiguai* stories, the girl, considered passively “enchanted” (if not possessed) by the malignant god, is treated by exorcism (and earlier perhaps medicine too).²⁵⁹ The problem then becomes the image itself (or the spirit that is attached to the painting)

²⁵⁷ *Taiping guangji* 210.1611-12, originally from Lin Deng 林登, *Xu bowu zhi* 續博物志. There is also some textual discrepancy in it: At the end it says that Yuan Zhao is the teacher of the famous Daoist master Kou Qianzhi. Yet according to the *Wei History*, Kou Qianzhi had been active in the early fifth century, much earlier than Emperor Xiaowen's reign, when the story is said happened (*Wei shu* 114.3049-50). The Daoist hagiography *Lishi zhenxian tidaotongjian* dates Kou's birth and death years to 365-448 (HY 296, 560-1 – 561-1). The original text: 後魏孝文帝登位初，有魏城人元兆能以九天法禁絕妖怪。先鄴中有軍士女年十四，患妖病累年，治者數十人並無據。一日，其家以女來謁元兆所止，謁兆，兆曰：「此疾非狐狸之魅，是妖畫也。吾何以知？今天下有至神之妖，有至靈之怪，有在陸之精，有在水之魅，吾皆知之矣。汝但述疾狀，是佛寺中壁畫四天神部落中魅也。」此言如何？其女之父曰：「某前於雲門黃花寺中東壁畫東方神下乞恩，常攜此女到其下。」又「女常懼此畫之神，因夜驚魘，夢惡鬼來，持女而笑，由此得疾。」兆大笑曰：「故無差。」因忽與空中人語，左右亦聞空中有應對之音。良久，兆向庭嗔責之云：「何不速曳。亟持來。」左右聞空中云：「春方大神傳語元大行：『惡神吾自當罪戮，安見大行。』」兆怒。向空中語曰：「汝以我誠達春方，必請致之，我為暫責，請速鑱致之。」言訖。又向空中語曰：「召二雙牙、八赤眉往要。不去聞東方。」左右咸聞有風雨之聲。乃至。兆大笑曰：「汝無形相，畫之妍致耳。有何恃而魅生人也？」兆謂其女曰：「汝自辨其狀形。」兆令見形。左右見三神皆丈餘，各有雙牙長三尺，露於唇口外，衣青赤衣。又見八神俱衣赤，眼眉並殷色，共扼其神，直逼軒下，蓬首目赤，大鼻方口，牙齒俱出，手甲如鳥，兩足皆有長毛，衣若豹鞞。其家人謂兆曰：「此正女常見者。」兆令前曰：「爾本虛空，而畫之所作耳。奈何有此妖形？」其神應曰：「形本是畫，畫以象真，真之所示，即乃有神。況所畫之上，精靈有凭可通。此臣所以有感，感之幻化。臣實有罪。」兆大怒，命侍童取礮瓶受水，淋之盡。而惡神之色不衰。兆更怒，命煎湯以淋。須臾神化，如一空囊。然後令擲去空野。其女於座即愈。而父載歸鄴，復於黃花寺尋所畫之處，如水之洗，因而駭歎稱異。僧雲敬見而問曰：「汝此來見畫歎稱，必有異耶，可言之？」其人曰：「我女患疾，為神所擾。今元先生稱是此寺畫作妖。」乃指畫處所洗之神。僧大驚曰：「汝亦異人也！此寺前月中，一日晝晦，忽有惡風玄雲，聲如雷震，遶寺良久。聞畫處如擒捉之聲，有一人云：『勢力不加元大行，不如速去。』」言訖，風埃乃散，寺中朗然。晚見此處一神如洗。究汝所說，正符其事。」兆即寇謙之師也。

²⁵⁸ *Zhubing yuanhou lun* 40.1149, *Beiji qianjin yaofang* 12.227b. The key word used to describe the cause of the girl's illness, “enchantment” (*mei* 魅), is the same word commonly used to refer to ghosts or other supernatural beings seducing (or possessing) human beings sexually.

²⁵⁹ Zeitlin 2007: 14-15, Huntington 2000: 109-13.

rather than the girl who looks at the image.

Before the master fights the god, the narrative is interrupted by a conversation between the two parties concerning a rationalistic inquiry: Paintings are inert; where does the spirit come from? The Daoist master asks the god twice how it became alive out of a pure image: “You have no real appearance. All the beauty you have is simply painted. What do you rely on to enchant human beings?” And, “You are originally nonexistence and simply created by the painting. How do you assume such a demonic body?” The god answers, “My form is originally a painting. A painting is to represent true existence. Since [a painting is] where the true existence is manifested, it generates spirits. Besides, a painting is what spirits can inhabit/possess. That is how I was able to affect [the girl] and to transform [into this body]. I am truly guilty” (形本是畫，畫以象真，真之所示，即乃有神。況所畫之上，精靈有凭可通。此臣所以有感，感之幻化，臣實有罪).²⁶⁰ In contrast to the last story where the narrator(s) (and perhaps the listeners too) readily accept the anomalous ending that a religious image (good or evil) would come alive, this story doubts that images (even religious ones) are capable of transcending their inert nature. The conversation can also be read as one between the *ganshen tongling* tradition and a skeptic of it. But in the religious context, it is the god (the “guilty”) who actively possesses the image regardless of whether it is created by the hand of a master or a less able painter.

Unlike miraculous stories about religious icons, erotic interaction with images often requires extra effort to rationalize, to explain why the images of the gods come alive and have sex with people. It might not be a good story to tell for a temple that (the images of) their gods respond to men’s sexual fantasies or harass women even in admonitory tones. Although erotic responses can be just as common as pious ones (and they could both come from passionate and

²⁶⁰ *Tai ping Guangji* 210.1161-62

intense looks), they are often told and understood in very different ways. It is usually in stories of the former kind that we see an emphasis on the viewer's active response, except when the viewer is female. In Song stories, we continue to see this trait, yet the gender difference as well as the boundaries between erotic and pious responses to religious images are sometimes blurred. Viewers' arbitrary responses and the belief system(s) of popular religion seemed mutually constitutive.

4. Deviant viewers in *Yijian zhi*

Many stories about erotic encounters with living images from the Song are recorded in *Yijian zhi*. The patterns of encounter and rationalization are diverse, and the narrator's attitudes are often ambiguous. The physicality of the images (both paintings and statues) is more pronounced, and the beholders sometimes not only look but also touch. Women viewers are also depicted as deviant and aggressive.

One story is quite similar to that of the monk and the two *yakshas*: A young man and his friend visit a shrine and see the mural painting of several female musicians. He loves a particularly beautiful one and jokingly says to his friends that all he wishes is to have this woman as his wife. That night the woman comes to him in a dream, and they keep this relationship for a long time. The woman gradually becomes more and more like a real person living in his room, and others can see her as well. Unlike the two *yakshas*, the woman is not immediately malignant. The story says that the man "indulged himself to the extreme and never realized his wrong doings" before he finally dies.²⁶¹ It is not entirely clear whether the man's death is due to the woman's harmful nature or simply his indulgence; or perhaps there is no clear cut distinction between the two. In other stories, some men quit the relationship before it is too late and

²⁶¹ "Ma Xianjue" 馬先覺, *Yijian zhi* bing.7.426-27.

consequently survive,²⁶² and some relationships do not prove at all harmful. One man even keeps the woman as his wife for several years. That story is interestingly told in flashback. It first recounts how a young scholar surnamed Wang²⁶³ meets and marries an unusual woman, and then tells how people at that time explain why that happens by tracing an earlier event. It is said that the young man Wang has just passed the final stage of the civil service examinations and is on his way back from the capital. When lodging in an inn, he sees from a distance a young woman in the inner quarters, who, according to the owner of the inn, is the daughter of a supervisor of some official bureau. Wang “could not keep his eyes off her.” The owner helps introduce him to the woman’s mother, who agrees to marry her to him. Wang then brings the woman home to Jinan. She lives with him for four or five year and gives birth to two sons. She brings a maid with her when first marries and never eats or wears anything that is not made and served by the maid. At night the maid simply sleeps by her bed. One day she suddenly tells Wang that she does not feel well and needs a rest, and asks him not to enter the room. Moments later, there is thunder and lightning and pouring rain. The room is filled with firelight. When all is calm, the two women disappear. *Yijian zhi* goes on to recount that earlier when the young man passes by a temple of the Dragon Mother on his way to the capital, he is attracted by the statue of the Dragon Lady (the daughter of the Dragon Mother) and thinks that a wife like her would be good. As he leaves the temple, a giant snake coils on his saddle and only leaves after he goes back in the temple and apologizes in front of the statue. Hong Mai records, “Later he had the unusual experience (i.e. his marriage with the mysterious woman). Those who knew about this suspected that it was all the Dragon Lady’s doing” (後遇茲異，識者疑其龍所為云).²⁶⁴

²⁶² For example, “The Clay Fetus” 土偶胎, *Yijian zhi jia*.17.146; “Candidate Pan” 潘秀才, *Yijian zhi ding*.13.646.

²⁶³ *Yijian zhi* says that he is from the clan of the Vice Grand Councilor, Wang Qingzeng (參政王慶曾).

²⁶⁴ “Scholar Wang of Jinan” 濟南王生, *Yijian zhi ding*.2.547-48.

Like many other *Yijian zhi* stories, this one preserves traces of its oral transmission and audience response. The two parts of the story seemed to have once circulated separately, and those who heard of (or witnessed) both put them together and speculated about the causation. This story is a mixture of many traditions: The theme of men encountering goddesses is one with a long history in literature. But the pattern of encounter in this case resembles that in female ghost stories: a traveling examination candidate lodges at (or passes by) a large house complex where he meets a beautiful woman (the ghost) and her family. Yet the lifestyle of Wang's wife (the unusual way of eating and close relationship with another women—her maid in this case) and the way that she and her maid disappear are not normal elements in either goddess or ghost stories but are commonly seen in legends of female Daoist transcendents (which I will discuss in detail in Chapter Five). Maybe because the woman is a deity, the man in this story is not harmed by the sexual contact as many others are in ghost stories; unlike some female ghosts who are eventually incorporated into (or tamed by) the family system, the woman is only his wife temporarily. As for the second part of the story—Wang's affectionate reaction to the Dragon Lady's statue—we have seen its predecessors in sources at least from the late Tang. However, Wang is not punished (directly or indirectly) for his irreverent offense against the Dragon Lady as is the monk by the two *yakshas*.

In many Song stories, destroying the image solves people's problems. Sometimes destruction is accompanied by medicine or rituals of exorcism and sometimes not. But no matter what is behind the image, it is almost always crucial to deal with the physical image itself. It is unlike the late Tang story discussed above where the Daoist priest deals with the "demonic painting" by fighting the demon itself and the disappearance of its painting on the mural is the result. In "The Clay Fetus" that I quote in Chapter One, the clay wet nurse that the temple

custodian is in love with does not come in dreams or assume another form. It is the clay statue itself that moves and has sex with the man. When the abbot tries to “rescue” the man, he simply beats the woman from the back and takes the clay fetus from her shattered clay body to use as medicine.²⁶⁵ Many statues in popular religious sites from the Song were made of clay and perhaps in life size, which might have made them so similar to real human beings.²⁶⁶ The wet nurse statues is said to be situated in the Hall of the Mother of Nine Sons (*Jiuzimu* 九子母, or *guizimu* 鬼子母), that is, Hariti, a Buddhist demon-goddess associated with epidemics and childbirth.²⁶⁷ Some Hariti images from the Song are still extant in Dazu, Sichuan: In Beimen cave 122, Hariti sits in the center of the niche, and a wet nurse with her breasts exposed sits on the right side (fig. 8, 8a). In Shimenshan niche no.9, similarly, Hariti sits in the center, while the wet nurse sits on the upper right. In this niche we can see more clearly a baby in the wet nurse’s embrace sucking at one breast and its hand resting on the other. The main figures in this niche are made in almost live size: the Hariti is 161 centimeter tall (fig.9, 9a). The motif of breast-feeding woman with her breasts exposed appears in several Song pictorial images. The most vivid and well-preserved one is perhaps the sculpture of the breast-feeding mother in Baodingshan, Dazu: The nipples are clearly sculpted with the left one right in the child’s mouth and the right one in

²⁶⁵ “The Clay Fetus” 土偶胎, *Yijian zhi* jia.17.146. It is not the earliest textual reference to icons of Hariti and her attendants making troubles. A Five Dynasties *biji*, *Yutang xianhua* 玉堂閑話, by Wang Renyu 王仁裕 (d. 956), records that a young lay Buddhist was enchanted by the statue of Hariti (whose “adornments and figure quite unusual” 裝塑甚奇) and had a relationship with a beautiful woman for almost a year. The story also ends up with some monk destroying the statue and the problem solved (*Taiping guangji* 368. 2931).

²⁶⁶ *Yijian zhi* records such a story: A young man named Huang was famous for his bravery although lack of talent for studying. One day some villagers challenged him to bring a hundred coins to a temple where he had once taken its offerings and to put one coin on the hand of each clay figure. Huang accepted the challenge and went immediately. Two young men followed him and took the shortcut to the temple and pretended to be one of the clay figures. When Huang came and was distributing the coins in front of the clay figures, one of the two young men suddenly grabbed his arm and scared him. Huang thought it was one of the clay figures came alive and loudly called to the major deity (*dawang* 大王) of the temple to discipline his little subjects (*xiaogui* 小鬼) (*Yijian zhi* bing.14.488-89).

²⁶⁷ For the textual reference and iconography of Hariti in China, see Zhao 1931, Murray 1981-82, Lesbre 2000, Xie 2009.

between the child's thumb and index finger. Similar to the one in Shimenshan, the Baodingshan carving also has the child sucking at one breast and the hand resting on the other. The seated breast-feeding mother is 110 centimeter tall (fig. 10). Two painted examples are *The Skeleton Puppet Master* (*Kulou huanxi tu* 骷髏幻戲圖) (fig. 11) and *The Peddler and Playing children* (*Shidan yingxi tu* 市擔嬰戲圖) (fig. 12).

Another story records that a *xiucai* (local licentiate in the examination system) surnamed Pan is said to have met a woman by the lotus pond outside of his academy. He spends every night with her for almost two months and gradually becomes weak. The instructor detects their secret relationship and warns Pan that this woman is certainly not human and will cause his death. The instructor then tells him to attach a needle with red thread to the woman's clothes when she comes that night. The next morning all students of the academy go out and search every temple and shrine in that area. Some finally find on the wall of the Peach Blossom Temple a painting of an immortal lady with red thread on her skirt. They then scrape off her image and shatter the wall. The woman never comes again.²⁶⁸ No specific exorcist rituals are mentioned in this story. Destroying the image automatically undermines its power. But sometimes the destruction of the image kills the deity/demon,²⁶⁹ while at times it simply means the deity/demon goes elsewhere.²⁷⁰ There is no fixed formula in terms of the relationship between deities/demons/ghosts and their imagery.

A soldier named Wang Fu from Jianchang is said to have a similar experience. *Yijian zhi* says that Wang meets a young woman at midnight while on the night shift. In a few months he becomes thin and weak. His father, on discovering their relationship, chases the woman up to the

²⁶⁸ "Licentiate Pan" 潘秀才, *Yijian zhi*, ding 13.646.

²⁶⁹ Especially when the existence of deity/demon is created by the image *per se*. See also *Kuoyi zhi* 2.26 (where the clay figures left from spring festivals become demons and are destroyed by the local governor), and the next two stories.

²⁷⁰ Such as the horseman statue in "The Prostitute of Yongkang."

Shrine of the Heavenly King. The next morning the father searches inside the shrine and believes the statue of an attendant maid holding a makeup case was the woman. He makes his son stand in front of the statue, where the son only bents his head without saying a word. The father then shatters the statue. And *Yijian zhi* says that the son “covered his face and cried regretful tears, and died after half month” (掩面嗟惜墮淚，踰旬而死).²⁷¹ Here the original wording “*jiexi*” 嗟惜 implies that the man is regretful, or feels pity, that the statue is destroyed. The cause of his death is ambiguous too. There is no straightforward clue to whether he dies of his relationship with the woman/statue or his grief at losing her.

Religious images may have miraculous (or demonic) power but there are non-religious images that ensnare people simply because they are made lively and attractive. In the Song, images of vivid and tangible bodies were not only displayed in temples and popular religious sites but also on market streets. A story in *Yijian zhi* tells about a human-shaped commercial sign causing trouble:

In the fourth year of Xuanhe (1122), a young fruit vendor in the capital one night met a beautiful woman elaborately made-up. She approached and talked to the vendor, and invited him to a certain place where they shared intimacy. The woman also gave him quite a lot clothes and luxury goods. From then on he met her every night and received more gifts from her. His clothes became more and more gorgeous but he looked weaker and weaker. Neither medicine nor exorcism could cure him. There was a chief of the imperial guard named Liu, who had been fasting and did not eat anything but frankincense (*ruxiang* 乳香) and water. He could subjugate evil creatures. People in the capital called him Master Liu the Frankincense Taker. The vendor’s parents brought their

²⁷¹ “Wang Fu of Jianchang” 建昌王福, *Yijian zhi zhijia*.7.766.

son to Liu and asked for help. Liu looked at the son and shouted, “That creature eventually caused trouble. I have long suspected that it would do evil. Now it has.” They then together visited the house of the obstetrician (*chanke yizhe* 產科醫者) Madam Chen. At the door of Chen’s house there was a wooden carving of a woman, ornamented with clothes, crowns, and earrings. Whenever the paint faded, the Chens would repaint the statue and replace its clothes. It had been there since their father and grandfather’s time, and no one knew how old it was. Liu uncovered its headscarf and had the vendor look at its face. It looked exactly like the woman he met every night. Liu then set up an altar at the Chens’ house, paced the diagrams, and performed rituals. He burned the carving with forty-nine torches. The anomaly ceased.²⁷²

宣和四年，京師鬻果小民子，夜遇婦人，豔粧秀色，來與語，邀至一處，相與燕狎，頗得衣物之贈。自是夜夜見之，所獲益多。民服飾驟鮮華，而容日羸悴，醫巫不能愈。有禁衛典首劉某，持齋戒不食，但啖乳香飲水，能制鬼物。都人謂之喫香劉太保。民父母偕往懇祈。劉呼視其子曰：「此物乃為怪耶。吾久疑其必作孽，今果爾。」即共造產科醫者陳媳婦家。陳之門刻木為婦人，飾以衣服冠珥，稍故暗則加采繪而更新其衣，自父祖以來有之，不記歲月矣。劉揭其首髻，令民子視之，則宛然夜所見者。乃就其家設壇位，步野作法，舉火四十九炬焚之，怪遂絕。

Unlike images of deities that are supposed to mirror (or host) existing divine (or demonic) beings, this wooden woman generates life out of the physical wooden body *and* the Chen family’s multi-generational attention to her. *Taiping guangji* also includes several stories about figurines (*ouxiang* 偶像) becoming demons from the Tang and the Five Dynasties, but groups them into

²⁷² “Madam Chen” 陳媳婦, *Yijian zhi ding*.9.611.

the same category of “Transformative Demons (*jingguai* 精怪)—Miscellaneous Utensils (*za qiyong* 雜器用)” together with stories about shoes, pillows, brooms and the like becoming demons and assuming human forms.²⁷³ Later in the Song, however, as showed in *Yijian zhi* and other Song sources, people on the one hand were obsessed with making statues life-like—in terms of shape, size, contours, and adornment—and on the other hand were very afraid of them. The fear went hand in hand with the obsession.

5. Beyond masculine looks

The gender issue in the two stories from the late Tang lies in the different rendering of men’s and women’s trouble with images. Craig Clunas observes that during the Ming many elite men despised illustrated books and considered women more susceptible to images than men. Ming erotic novels depict men bringing “spring paintings” (*chunhua*, or erotic paintings) to women to stimulate them, which reflects “a male fantasy [...] about how women will respond to pictorial representation.”²⁷⁴ But the problem of “The Prostitute of Yongkang” is that the encounter is too similar to those rather typical stories of men desiring female images; it just switches the sex of the human and the statue—the viewer who is the subject of gaze, desire, and obsession is now a woman. Precisely because of such similarity I hesitate to read it naively as a pure expression of female sexual desire from a woman’s perspective. The prostitute is not more susceptible *but just as susceptible* to images as men are. There are numerous possible readings—from the most subversive to the most moralistic ones. I have proposed in the last chapter that this story might have originated among the prostitutes before reaching Hong Mai. Here I add: But even if that were the case, what the story reflects is neither any sort of

²⁷³ *Taiping guangji* 368. 2930-32.

²⁷⁴ Clunas 1997: 33, 156-58.

“authentic” women’s voice nor another fiction coming out of male fantasy but rather the internalization of a hegemonic aesthetics about how the masculine body should be viewed and desired by women. But if we leave aside the object of her desire, the subjectivity embodied in this narrative is significant: A body that was once supposed to be looked at, desired, and shopped now looks, desires, and shops in a pantheon of assorted accessible bodies, and even talks about it. No one brings erotic images to her but she turns the statue (not a demonic one) into something erotic and seductive. One might say, it is precisely because the subject is a prostitute that such erotic talk is possible. Certainly we cannot rule out the possibility that some man invented this story following all the familiar conventions from female ghost/deity stories and simply switched the sex of the main characters. But if that was the case, we would have an even more subversive result, because this “male fantasy” directly contradicts the concurrent medical discourse that intercourse with ghosts is a symptom of unfulfilled sexual desire to which “*guafu*” are particularly susceptible.

That the main character is a prostitute might have eased the anxiety about the circulation of such a story. But young girls desire, too. In another *Yijian zhi* story, a girl who is later taken as the wife of a deity first meets the deity when looking around the murals in a temple of the Daoist god Zhenwu. Similar to the late Tang story, the girl’s agency in the act of looking is left out, as the deity is said to have “stood beside the girl and fixed his eyes on her.” Yet unlike in the late Tang story, where the girl is said to be horrified by the god, in this story the girl seems to enjoy her relationship with him. The deity lives with the girl and her family as if her husband and brings wealth to them for several years until the father, under the pressure of people’s gossip, tries to chase him away. The father summons a Daoist priest and subsequently a Buddhist monk but both fail and are insulted by the deity. Some then tell the father to get his daughter married,

but the groom is scared away by the deity on the wedding night. After the deity is finally exorcised by a potent Daoist master, the author says, “The girl stayed unmarried, and no one dared to propose a marriage arrangement for her. After her parents died, she made her living on her own by selling wine. She shed tears whenever thinking of the happiness that she had had with the young man [i.e. the deity]” (女在家，亦無人敢議親，父母繼亡，獨當鑪賣酒。每憶疇昔少年之樂，至潛然隕涕).²⁷⁵ This story also, although tragically, shows the stubbornness of the girl’s (perverted) sexuality, as she failed to be rectified along with exorcism of the deity. In some *Yijian zhi* stories the enchanted/possessed girls fully recover and successfully marry after the ghosts/deities are chased away. But that is not the case in this story. If this was a moral warning, it must have been based on an even stronger fear of untamable female sexuality.

A similar case is treated and recorded in a medical context in a fourteenth century text: Hua Boren (Hua Shou 滑壽, 1304-1386) records in his *Clinical Testimonies* that the daughter of Yang Tiancheng, the ritual attendant of the Temple of Benevolence and Filial Piety, once roamed around the temple at dusk and saw [the statue of] a yellow-dressed deity. She felt attracted (*jue xindong* 覺心動) and that night dreamed of having sex with the deity. Her abdomen gradually grew large as if she were pregnant. Hua was asked to treat this problem and diagnosed it as “Demonic Fetus” (*guitai* 鬼胎). The girl’s mother told Hua what had happened. Hua then prescribed a recipe for breaking the blood [of the uterus wall] and abortion. The girl, after discharging more than two *sheng* of something like tadpoles and fish eyes, recovered.²⁷⁶

滑伯仁《醫驗》謂仁孝廟廟祝楊天成一女，薄暮遊廟廡，見黃衣神覺心動，是夕夢

²⁷⁵ “The Daughter of Yong” 雍氏女, *Yijian zhi* bu.15.1690-92.

²⁷⁶ *Yixue zhengchuan* 1.13.

與之交，腹漸大而若孕。邀伯仁治，診之曰：此鬼胎也。其母道其由，與破血墮胎之藥，下如蝌蚪魚目者二升許遂安。

This record says that the girl *saw* the deity and *felt* attracted before dreaming of the deity and conceiving a demonic fetus. The Ming doctor Yu Tuan 虞搏, who includes this case in his *Orthodox Transmission of Medicine* (*Yixue zhengchuan* 醫學正傳, preface 1515), disputes that the “deity” is the cause of the girl’s illness:

How would it be rational that a statue made of clay and wood could have intercourse with human beings and have semen to conceive a fetus? Alas! It was not that the god enchanted the girl, but the girl let herself be enchanted by the god. I speculate that [it was because] the girl had grown into an adult without having a husband and was precisely at a period of having endless unfulfilled desires.²⁷⁷

豈有土木為形能與人交而有精成胎之理？噫！非神之惑於女，乃女之惑於神耳。意度此女年長無夫，正所謂思想無窮，所願不遂也。

In between Yu’s condemnatory words we see the emergence of the doctor’s awareness of the girl as the subject of her desire. As Hsiu-fen Chen points out, doctors from late imperial times began to emphasize the patient’s will and emotions as the “inner causes” of disease and thus within the scope of medical treatment.²⁷⁸ As discussed in the last chapter, targeting the treatment for “dreaming of intercourse with ghosts” at single and widowed women only appeared in medical

²⁷⁷ *Yixue zhengchuan* 1.13.

²⁷⁸ Chen 2010: 701-36. Chen takes for granted those temples where women encounter deity/demon lovers as *yinzi* 淫祠 (licentious/illegitimate cults). But as I have been arguing, not only lewd images or licentious cults arouse sexual responses. During the Song, as Valerie Hansen indicates, “*yin*” simply meant unofficial or unauthorized. Many temples were neither officially granted titles nor considered “licentious,” the act of granting titles was less one of exclusion or suppression of other temples than to enable those recognized deities to continue performing miracles. Local officials would pay homage to unofficial temples as well (Hansen 1990: 85-87). In the above *Yijian zhi* story, the girl’s father is a local official (named Yong Zhang 雍璋, the special administrator of the winery 酒庫專知官 in Jiankang) and she goes with her mother to the Temple of Zhenwu—the orthodox central Daoist deity. It is possible that the temple is not granted official titles, but the story would not make much sense for the temple to be a licentious one.

books since the Song, and “The Prostitute of Yongkang” tells us unambiguously that it is not only those without men who let themselves be enchanted by gods. Certainly, (male) doctors were not the only ones who could talk and write about female sexuality. Yu Tuan’s critical comment challenges the sexual innocence of all girls that are said simply to be passively “harassed,” and simultaneously turns those good daughters and wives whom have so commonly been treated as the object/victim of sexual desire into the subject/suspected miscreant. But such a discrepancy may not always be the result of a conscious ideological contest but rather differences in types of experts. While exorcists deal with the gods/demons, physicians treat human beings. It seems reasonable that an exorcist says that it is the spirit’s fault while a doctor regards the woman as responsible (either physically or mentally) for her own health.

If stories about having a relationship with deities are not uncommon and sometimes such a relationship is even beneficial to the individual, how can one be positive that what he/she encountered is a deity rather than a demon? Oftentimes the decision is made by the image itself. But just as people believe that images can come alive and deities can assume human forms, humans can play tricks by making use of familiar imagery as well. *Yijian zhi* records that a monk attempts to seduce a married woman. The woman “liked him but pretended to refuse.” One night when she enters his room, the room is bright, and she sees the monk wearing a gold-gridded *kasaya* and sitting on a blue lotus seat, “resembling the images of Buddhas and bodhisattvas painted nowadays” (類世所畫佛菩薩然).²⁷⁹ The monk tells her that he is a deity and will help her reach nirvana. The wife then stays for the night and begins a relationship with the monk. The story ends when the husband tries to catch the monk, and the monk and the wife along with all

²⁷⁹ Zhao Zhifeng (b. 1159), the leader of a lay Buddhist cult in Dazu, Sichuan, also made his own image (and earlier practitioners whom he claimed genealogy to) similar to that of the Buddha and bodhisattvas in the Baodingshan cave complex: sitting cross-legged on the lotus seat, clouds sprouting from the head, and in the cloud seat one or more Buddhas (fig. 13, 14, 14a).

the furniture and belongs disappear altogether.²⁸⁰ In such an emerging culture that encourages image making, displaying, viewing, and talking about people's experience of interaction with images, women who look and desire seem to have the capacity to turn sacred images into something erotic, stick to their sexual perversion, and even use religious imagery as justification for sexual transgression.

*

In *Tuhua jianwen zhi*, Guo Ruoxu complains how popular taste has had a negative (in his eyes) impact on the making of women's images in religious paintings:

Look over a succession of paintings by famous masters of the past, of "golden boys and jade girls," genii and immortals, or constellations. [In them you will find] female forms and faces whose look of severe correctness yet [reveals] an antique purity of soul. Theirs is naturally a stately and dignified beauty, which inspires the onlooker to look up to them in reverence. But the painters of today lay store only on pretty faces, to captivate the eyes of the crowd. They do not achieve the principles and meaning of painting. The viewer should bear this in mind.²⁸¹

歷觀古名士，畫金童玉女及神僊星官，中有婦人形相者，貌雖端嚴，神必清古，自有威重儼然之色，使人見則肅恭，有歸仰之心。今之畫者，但貴其姘麗之容，是取悅於眾目，不達畫之理趣也。觀者察之。

This passage reveals a perceived shift in the ways of depicting women²⁸² as well as a worry, if not a fear, of the corruption of religious art by popular taste. What Guo worries about is not

²⁸⁰ "Monk Ding of Xujiang" 盱江丁僧, *Yijian zhi ding*.19.695. Hong Mai footnotes that this account is told by a Daoist hermit named Huang Yanzhong.

²⁸¹ *Tuhua jianwen zhi* 1.11. Translation cf. Soper 1951: 18.

²⁸² For the shift in visual representations of women in paintings during the Tang-Song period, see Blanchard 2001.

simply the quality of religious art but also the moral decline that such images may cause or represent. His worry is about both image making and ways of viewing. While Guo puts most of the blame on the “painters of today,” he also recognizes the viewer’s ability (and therefore the responsibility) to reject what is twisted by the (errant) trend in popular religious art. However, what he might not have considered is the fact that even those “whose look of severe correctness” “[reveals] an antique purity of soul” might not always “inspire the onlooker to look up to them in reverence.” How an image is viewed results from not simply the way it is made and the context where it is displayed but also its accessibility and its (oftentimes unruly) viewers, not simply what people are told it is but what people really think it is. Just as Guo recognizes the viewers’ agency and expect them to reject the sensuous approach of image makers, the (deviant) viewers with that agency may as well project their sexual fantasies to those images intended to evoke “severe correctness” rather than to “captivate the eyes of the crowd.”

Art critics from the Tang and the Song attributed the supernatural power of images to the painter/image maker. In the religious world, living images demonstrated the deities’ efficacy and their intervention in the process of producing and displaying their portraiture. It is in stories about people’s erotic interaction with images that we see significant emphasis on the viewers’ active roles. When people tried to understand their (and others’) experiences of live images and sexual encounters, the meanings of those images and the world that they represent, their interpretations became part of the “vernacular religious culture,” to use Richard von Glahn’s term.²⁸³ Circulating anecdotes about images coming alive and having affairs with people (their

²⁸³ Von Glahn uses the notion of “vernacular” to understand Chinese popular religion, emphasizes “the instantiation of this religious culture in manifold forms in history” in contrast to an overarching “structure,” and illustrates how in such vernacular religious culture the very mundane orientation clashed with the moral one through the case of the Wutong cult (von Glahn 2004). My conclusion here agrees with von Glahn’s approach in the sense that I accentuate how people’s arbitrary (in particular erotic) responses to images contributed to, rather than was conditioned by, the shaping of Song religious visual culture.

passionate viewers) were not simply the result but a constitutive element of such a visual culture. People's arbitrary responses to publically displayed images and the attempts to rationalize them also contributed to the formation of Song conceptions of the supernatural realm.

Talks of erotic encounters with images from the Song might not be free of male conditioning of the sort identified by Freedberg, whether told by a man or a woman.²⁸⁴ But perhaps the subversive potential of women who look and desire did not lie in how or by whom their stories were told but a space where one could follow one's own viewing desires and even be rewarded for doing so. Such a space existed not in a particularly unusual story but in between many discrepant and imperfect stories. As we (and Song people as well) juxtapose contradictory discourses from multiple traditions and various contexts, counter-discourses arise automatically.

²⁸⁴ Freedberg 1989: 318.

Chapter V

Untold Desires:

Religious Women and a Potential Queer Space

In her path-breaking book, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China*, Tze-lan Sang notices that in two significant stories from late imperial China (late seventeenth century) that touch upon female same-sex desire, the women first encounter each other both in Buddhist nunneries. Albeit both stories are fictional ones written by elite men, they nonetheless reflect the potential (and perhaps the fear) that Buddhist nunneries function as “one of the rare public places where women from respectable families could by chance become acquainted with unrelated women,” where exchanges of looks between actual women could happen just as intensely as described by the male authors.²⁸⁵ In this chapter, I explore the emergence of a potential queer space for women in premodern China that was generated not simply by the development of religious institutions in Chinese society, but also by women’s creative uses of circulating stories about religious models from the sixth to thirteenth centuries. It was related to women’s religious practices but not restricted to the physical space of nunneries. I focus on stories in anecdotal and hagiographical collections from the late Six Dynasties to the Song about women who, either because of their religious practice or by manipulating religious rhetoric and conventions, reject marriage and sexual relationships with men—in other words,

²⁸⁵ Sang 2003: 73-74.

women whose sexual bodies are not available to men.²⁸⁶ I will examine the mysterious relationships between Daoist women and their female immortal friends as recorded in many stories, as well as real partnerships among women (and sometimes men too) who shared the same faith.

In the previous chapters I have discussed how Song anecdotes, especially those recorded in *Yijian zhi* (*Record of the Listener*), preserve voices of people from different social strata and how people are able to make use of all kinds of circulating knowledge in diverse ways in dealing with their sexual desire and bodily disorders. Here I argue for yet another possible way of reading anecdotes and other circulating stories as inspirations for a contemporary audience. I trace the evolution of how stories about religious women were told from the late Six Dynasties through the Song, present evidence of people making use of religious language and conventions in various ways to serve their own needs, and argue for the usefulness of religious models for their creative readers, especially for women to create a potential queer space.

1. In search of a women's queer history of premodern China

The study of queer history in the premodern world has gone beyond simply looking for precursors of what is considered homosexuality in the modern sense. Scholars have pointed out not simply that the notion of “homosexuality” is modern, the notion of “heterosexuality” and the contrast between them are modern inventions as well.²⁸⁷ To assume heterosexuality as the norm in the premodern world can result in distortion of history.²⁸⁸ To study sexuality of the past is to

²⁸⁶ This makes such a space different in nature from what Tze-lan Sang calls “literary fantasy of utopian polygamy” in Ming-Qing fiction (Sang 2003: 49-52).

²⁸⁷ See, for example, Lochrie 2005, Schultz 2006.

²⁸⁸ James Schultz 2006: 14-29.

look at how this “fictional unity” was formed historically, how the “normal” and the “queer” were constructed at different times and in different places. As I have argued in Chapter Three, in premodern China up to Song times, sexual norm(s) meant differently to different authors/narrators in different genres/traditions. Song doctors began to pathologize women lacking sexual contact with men and to consider that the normal female sexual body should follow the principles of its reproductive function. In popular exorcism, it was oftentimes those women who expressed their sexual desire blatantly and who failed to be restored to innocence that were regarded abnormal. Underlying the two conflictive discourses on female sexuality was a similar anxiety about female sexuality beyond men’s comprehension and control. However, in this chapter, I will look at several stories about Buddhist nuns, Daoist women, and female transcendents, some of whom are widowed or even divorced. Some are vigorous and try every means to avoid sexual contact with men; some, after freeing themselves from marriage, intimately associate with men and women unrelated to them. It is in this sense that I describe what I find in my sources a “female queer space”: a space where women’s sexual bodies are not available to their husbands and one that allows women not to (or not simply to) desire men. It is not simply about “female same-sex desire” that Tze-lan Sang examines but the socio-cultural conditions under which more possibilities could emerge.

It is true in imperial China as well as medieval Europe that, in sharp contrast to male same-sex relations, textual references to female same-sex desire are extremely scarce.²⁸⁹ Tze-lan Sang, grappling with the scarcity of sources, examines “the ways in which previous social structures and female same-sex relations may have been mutually defining and constitutive.”²⁹⁰ Sang compares literary representations of female-female intimate relations written by men and

²⁸⁹ Sang 2003: 42, Karras 2005: 109-12.

²⁹⁰ Sang 2003: 41.

by women from late imperial China, pointing out the trivialization of female-female desire in men's writings and the limited expressions in women's writings. Male writers fantasized love and desire between women as either a cure to women's jealousy in a polygamous marriage or an imperfect, temporary substitute for sex between men and women. Female writers, on the other hand, even though boldly depicting women attracted to women, could not go into physical details as male writers did in depicting sex between men.²⁹¹ Sang also excavates from few and scattered sources the harsh situations that a woman-favoring woman would face in premodern China—if not compromising to a polygamous marriage, she could only either choose religious celibacy or, as a few anecdotes recount, to die or to simply disappear from the normal society.²⁹² However, “religious celibacy,” which Sang regards as one of the few pathetic options for woman-favoring women in premodern China, can precisely create an all-female space that would appear “queer” in some Song people eyes (such as Chen Ziming). Sang's methodological claim that social structures and female same-sex relations are mutually constitutive is nevertheless inspiring. In addition to looking for textual traces of any possible form of “queer” female sexuality, I examine the mutual impact between the development of popular religion, including the circulation of stories of religious models, and the existence of a female queer space during the Song.

2. Stories before the Song

Buddhists and Daoists began to record the lives of their distinguished practitioners as soon as the two religions prospered in Chinese society. Biographies of Buddhist nuns and female Daoist transcendants/immortals began to be compiled in the sixth century. The earliest extant

²⁹¹ Sang 2003: 49-52, 60-65, 91-94.

²⁹² Sang 2003: 52-60.

book dedicated specifically to female practitioners is Shi Baochang's 釋寶唱 *Biqiuni zhuan* 比丘尼傳 (*Lives of the Nuns*, compiled in or about 516), recording Buddhist nuns who lived from the early fourth to early sixth centuries.²⁹³ Ma Shu's 馬樞 (522-581) *Daoxue zhuan* 道學傳 (*Biographies of Students of the Dao*, compiled during the last quarter of the sixth century, *Students of the Dao* hereafter) is the earliest Daoist hagiography with a separate chapter on female transcendents.²⁹⁴ The famous Daoist master Du Guangting 杜光庭 (850-933) of the Tang dynasty compiled *Yongcheng ji xian lu* 壙城集仙錄 (*Records of the Assembled Transcendents of the Fortified Walled City, Assembled Transcendents* hereafter), recording stories of female immortals from legendary times and female transcendents of his time.²⁹⁵ Shen Fen's 沈汾 (937-975) *Xu xian zhuan* 續仙傳 (*Continued Traditions of Transcendents*) includes sixteen entries of transcendents, three of which are female. The early Song dynasty imperially commissioned collection of legends and anecdotes, *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (*Extensive Records from the Period of Great Peace*, published in 981), preserves many stories from earlier hagiographies that are no longer extant. *Biji* collections from Tang-Song times sometimes adopt stories from religious texts, or one story is recorded by a *biji* writer and a religious author at the same time. Canonical hagiographies compiled in later dynasties incorporate stories originally recorded in *biji* as well.

Students of Chinese religion are all familiar with portraits from these time periods of girls

²⁹³ For an introduction to and full English translation of this book, see Tsai 1994. Three other collections of Buddhist nuns' biographies from around the same time period are all lost.

²⁹⁴ This book is only extant in fragments. For a thorough study and English translation of the fragments of the book, see Bumbacher 2000.

²⁹⁵ This book is preserved in three different versions—in *Taiping guangji*, *Yunju qiqian* and *Daozang*. For a thorough study and English translation, see Cahill 2006. In this chapter, I use "transcendents" for those who were once human and later became immortals, "immortals" for those who are immortals from the beginning or the legendary figures of the remote past, and "human-immortals" for those who are viewed as immortals but continue to be active in the world like humans.

who are exceptionally intelligent and immersed in Buddhist or Daoist scriptures or other religious practices since childhood but have to face marriage one day when they grow up. There are stories, especially in earlier hagiographies, telling about women who resort to suicide or fleeing their home to resist marriage. Some demonstrate their unusual religious callings by performing miracles in front of their family or the whole village, while others have no choice but to marry and resume practice in their old age. In stories of later times we begin to see more and more compromises, negotiations, and new strategies. There are women who successfully reject arranged marriage simply by recounting their visions in dreams or spiritual journeys, ones who divorce their husbands and build up intimate relationships with other women sharing religious interests, and ones who are married but live in a separate room from their husbands and host “female immortals” in their own rooms. How do we read such stories that are often told within strong religious contexts and include visions, miracles, and many other supernatural elements?

When studying biographies of religious women in premodern China, contemporary scholars, on the one hand, follow the authors’ expectations—paying attention to those women’s outstanding religious performance, ability to live an austere life, and discipline of the body through fasting, sexual abstinence, meditation, and so on, while deliberately downplaying the miraculous incidents (“matters of faith,” to use Suzanne Cahill phrase) that do not seem to mean much to the modern audience.²⁹⁶ On the other hand, they are also aware of the variety of reasons women take up a religious calling—for example, religion is a way to escape from reproduction and other kinds of family labor that they otherwise could not avoid. Those secular reasons are particularly apparent when the conflict between religious pursuits and family/marriage duties became less and less a problem for most religions and sects that had adjusted to meet the

²⁹⁶ Cahill 2003: *passim*, 2006: 2.

expectations of Chinese society.²⁹⁷ Kathryn Tsai's introduction to her translation of *Lives of the Nuns* states that in addition to religious training, for women "the convent also provided a refuge from such vicissitudes of life as unwelcome marriage, flight from war, homelessness, lack of protection, or frustrated intellectual ambitions."²⁹⁸ Stephan Bumbacher also points out women's secular motives for joining the Daoist order by comparing *Students of the Dao* and Liu Xiang's 劉向 (77-6 B.C.) *Lie nü zhuan* 列女傳 (*Biographies of Women*), contrasting women's life within and outside of the Daoist religion, stressing the life style and choices that only women who left the family and entered the Daoist order could have.²⁹⁹ Suzanne Cahill studies *Assembled Transcendents* and lists all possible reasons for women to enter convents in Tang times, such as to escape poverty, to avoid marriage and childbirth, to retire after the death of the emperor (for imperial consorts), et cetera.³⁰⁰

All these approaches accentuate the agency of Buddhist and Daoist women either in vigorous religious pursuits or in struggles with the family and the gender system in society. Interestingly, however, while many scholars address both religious and secular reasons for women to fight for celibacy, the implicit assumption seems to exclude the possibility of women with interests other than heterosexuality or religious sexual abstinence. Cahill, for example, interprets women's sexual abstinence only in social terms as a "refusal to reproduce" and in

²⁹⁷ Kathryn Tsai notices that, in contrast to the majority of men recorded in *Gaoseng zhuan* (*Lives of Eminent Monks*, by Shi Huijiao, 497-554) that are of rather humble origin, most women in the *Lives of the Nuns* appear to be daughters of upper class families (Tsai 1994: 7-8). If that reflects the religious environment for women of the sixth century, it stands in sharp contrast with what Susan Mann observes from the eighteenth century, where women's practice of Buddhism had been domesticated and entering a nunnery was never appropriate for elite women (Mann 1997: 10, also cited by Sang 2005: 52). As I will show later in this chapter, in *Lives of the Nuns*, eminent monks often side with the girls who are determined to become nuns and preach to their parents that the Buddhist order is higher than the secular ones. Yet in Song stories, monks are summoned by the family to dissuade their daughter from leaving home and becoming a nun.

²⁹⁸ Tsai 1994: 7.

²⁹⁹ Bumbacher 2000: 504-24.

³⁰⁰ Cahill 2006: 18. Also see Despeux and Kohn 2003: 111-15.

religious terms as a requirement for ritual practice.³⁰¹ While modern scholars no longer read hagiographies simply as religious testaments as the authors might have expected, and have paid attention to the social context and non-religious factors of women's religious pursuit, none seems to consider other sexual desires and intimate relations among religious women as yet another possible and meaningful way to read the text.

Hagiographies differ from anecdotal collections such as *Yijian zhi* in that the former usually carry strong religious messages from the author/compiler while the later do not necessarily do so. Nonetheless, they share at least two critical characteristics: first, they were both expected to be read as faithful accounts, and second, folklore and popular hearsay constitute a crucial element in their sources. The selection, the phrasing, and the tone are up to the author, especially if he aims at religious reform. However, as I will show later in this chapter, if his sources come from stories already well-known to people (or at least to people of a certain place where the story was developed), to make his account sound faithful to the audience, he cannot be the only agent in his writing. Therefore, I read those sources not simply from the author's perspective or from that of a modern reader. Rather, I consider the ways that such stories were passed down and circulated, analyze different voices preserved even in one story, and speculate what such stories could have meant for the contemporary audience—how useful they might be for those who looked for alternatives or how many different meanings they might carry for people with different interests. Due to the limitation of my sources, I do not have direct sources to show how people received a specific story. I therefore propose a series of methods to achieve my goals: Firstly, as I have done in previous chapters, I excavate the multivocality of such “traveling stories.” Secondly, I collect evidence of people at the time indeed making use of circulating stories diversely to serve their own needs. Finally, I argue for the potential of certain

³⁰¹ Cahill 2006: 18.

stories to be read and used creatively especially for women to pursue different paths or create room for unstable sexuality.

2.1 Sixth-century Buddhist record: *Lives of the Nuns*

Buddhist monks and nuns in China are expected to observe absolute celibacy, although one can always choose to be a lay Buddhist without leaving the family, and women, especially in later imperial times, were encouraged to practice Buddhism this way—reciting or transcribing sutras at home, hosting eminent nuns, patronizing temples, et cetera. Yet even in earlier times, becoming a nun often requires much greater effort and resolution than lay practice at home. Sometimes a woman must confront her family in drastic ways. Among the sixty-five biographies I examine, thirteen mention a women’s negotiation with or protest against her parents over marriage.

Some parents compromise when promised greater blessings. An Lingshou 安令首, who “was intelligent and fond of study” since childhood, has a conversation with her father and tries to dissuade him from arranging a marriage for her. Her father consults Fotucheng, an eminent monk from the West Regions who converts the founder of the Later Zhao kingdom. Fotucheng shares with him a vision of his daughter preaching in front of the masses as a monk in her previous life. Fotucheng further tells him that letting his daughter become a nun would bring blessings and fortune to the family. The father then consents to her decision.³⁰² As mentioned earlier, the author of *Lives of the Nuns*, also a monk, presents the Buddhist order as superior to the secular. And the way that the most eminent monk of that time reconciles the conflict between Buddhist principles and family duties is to claim that a daughter becoming a nun would bring

³⁰² *Biqiuni zhuan* 1.7. Tsai 1994: 20-21. English translations of *Biqiuni zhuan* are taken from Tsai 1994 unless otherwise noted.

blessings to her family.

Others threaten their families with suicide. Sengji 僧基 protests against the marriage that her mother arranges for her with a drastic hunger strike. All her relatives come and talk to her, but none is able to get her to change her mind. After seven days, her mother calls her fiancé, who is “a man of devout faith.” Seeing that his bride is dying, he voluntarily relinquishes the marriage. After the hunger protest, she becomes famous. Close and distant relatives send offerings, local governors come and visit, and many others admire her departure from the household to become a nun.³⁰³ Tanhui 曇暉 swears not to marry at the age of eleven and is prepared to burn herself to death if she is forced to. A monk and a nun help her hide in a temple. A regional inspector who is friendly to Buddhism hears of this and persuades the mother of Tanhui’s fiancé to let her become a nun.³⁰⁴

One girl simply runs away from home before the wedding and an eerie miracle happens: Sengduan 僧端 takes an oath to become a Buddhist nun and not marry. However, her beauty attracts wealthy families proposing marriage, and her mother and brother finally arrange one for her. Three days before her wedding, she runs away from home and hides in a Buddhist temple. She recites the *Guanyin Sutra* with tears in her eyes day and night. After three days, she sees an image of the Buddha telling her that her bridegroom will die soon. The next day, her bridegroom is gored to death by an ox. She is therefore able to leave her home and become a nun.³⁰⁵

Still others manage to change their parents’ minds by relentless unwomanly behaviors. Jingxiu 淨秀 asks to leave home and join the convent at the age of twelve, but her parents do not consent. She then concentrates on transcribing sutras and giving offerings to temples, “nether

³⁰³ *Biqiuni zhuan* 1.22-23. Tsai 1994: 28.

³⁰⁴ *Biqiuni zhuan* 4.182.

³⁰⁵ *Biqiuni zhuan* 2.79. Tsai 1994: 49-50.

enjoying secular pleasures nor wearing silks and brocades nor applying any cosmetics.” She keeps at this eccentric lifestyle till the age of nineteen when her parents finally let her go to the convent and become a nun.³⁰⁶ Shi Huihui 釋惠暉 devotes herself to Buddhism from childhood, adopting a vegetarian regimen and studying sutras. She does not receive permission from her parents to become a nun until the age of seventeen, when she follows her father on a mission, behaving “sharp, aggressive, brave, and vigorous,” with the result that she “achieved what others could not achieve.”³⁰⁷ In these two cases, the woman’s resolution to join the convent is expressed not simply through devotion for Buddhism but also resistance to being socialized as a woman.

Those who have married use other means. One woman seems to take her husband’s occasional flaw as a great opportunity to divorce. Miaoxiang 妙相, the daughter of an aristocrat, is married to another aristocrat. She asks for a divorce and to become a nun because her husband “did not observe etiquette during the mourning period (*jusang shili* 居喪失禮),” that is, he has sex with her during the mourning period for his parent. Her father thus consents to her request.³⁰⁸

After successfully avoiding marriage and becoming nuns, these women are given the freedom to associate more closely with other women of shared religious interests. They adore each other and live and travel together. Huixu 慧緒, who “looked like a man rather than a woman,” leaves her household at the age of eighteen and joins the convent in Jingzhou (in modern day Hubei), where she meets an eminent nun from the capital named Yin. Yin “saw Huixu and was impressed. They clicked regardless of the age difference and together practiced

³⁰⁶ *Biqiuni zhuan* 4.164. Tsai 1994: 87.

³⁰⁷ *Biqiuni zhuan* 4.208. My own translation.

³⁰⁸ *Biqiuni zhuan* 1.12-13. My own translation. Tsai’s translation does not convey the sexual implication here.

Buddhism.” They then live together for a summer.³⁰⁹ To describe those eminent nuns as masculine and unwomanly on the one hand reflects the author’s notion of gender hierarchy (practicing Buddhism helps a woman become a better person, that is, more like a man), on the other hand reveals those women’s efforts to break gender boundaries.

Most stories about Buddhist nuns from the Song are preserved in anecdote collections. While Buddhist nunneries became less and less an available option for elite women during the Song, as I will elaborate below, new resources emerged. Many of the patterns that women negotiate with their families over the issue of marriage seen in *Lives of the Nuns* are still perpetuated in Song stories, and yet there are intriguing variations in details.

2.2 Daoist attitudes toward marriage and sex

Compared to Buddhism, attitudes toward marriage and sex are much more diverse and sometimes ambiguous within the Daoist tradition as seen in both the Daoist canon and transcendents’ biographies. *Zhengyi fawen taishang wailu yi* 正一法文太上外籙儀 (*Highest Observances for Outer Registers According to the Code of Orthodox Unity*), a scripture of the Celestial Masters (Tianshi 天師) tradition from the Six Dynasties (220-581), lists five categories of women qualified to receive Daoist registers: unmarried daughters (*chunü* 處女), daughters who are unwilling to marry and leave home (*chujianü* 出家女), married women (*jiāfu* 嫁婦), widows (*guāfu* 寡婦), and daughters who once married and later returned home (*guijunü* 歸居女). The last category includes women who “once marry and their husbands die, who violate the seven rules [which result in divorce], or whose birth times and life charts cause harm to their husbands and are divorced” (凡嫁喪夫，或犯七出，或年命相剋，致使離居). The Daoist

³⁰⁹ *Biqiuni zhuan* 3.149. My own translation.

convents provide such women with shelter: “[I]f they are unable to support themselves, return to their parents’ homes, and are still trapped in difficulties, they may follow a master and join the order” (不自存立，還依本家，憂患相纏，歸命師門). According to the list, ideally, women at all stages are eligible to receive Daoist registers, and the system generally accepts women with various motives and in different situations. Yet the regulations under each category suggest that the Daoist masters do not have a higher authority over their female disciples than the parents and husbands over their daughters and wives. For unmarried daughters, their parents submit the vow on behalf of them to a master; for married women, their husbands do it with the consent of the parents-in-law.³¹⁰ Meanwhile, the phrasing of the vow seems to connote the greater value of marriage versus the celibate life for women. The vow for “daughters who are unwilling to marry and leave home” says that “[my daughter] carried a deep sin [in her previous lives] and therefore was born a woman. She is weak, foolish, and stubborn, not willing to marry” (先緣罪重，生受女身，尪弱愚頑，不願出嫁). Whereas the vow for married women says: “[my wife] is fortunate to be able to receive the great Dao by virtue of her lot [from her previous lives]. Even though endowed with women’s weakness, she is able to attach to my register” (幸藉宿緣，得奉大道。雖稟女弱，得依道民).³¹¹

The diverse Daoist attitudes toward sex and the “bedchamber arts” in pre-Tang times reflect the heterogeneous nature of early Daoism. To summarize Lin Fushi’s conclusion, before the fifth century, bedchamber arts were one of the major practices in the Celestial Masters tradition. During the fifth and sixth centuries (Northern and Southern Dynasties), the New

³¹⁰ *Zhengyi fawen taishang wailu yi* (HY 1243) 321b-322b.

³¹¹ *Zhengyi fawen taishang wailu yi* 322a. Both Bumbacher and Despeux have discussed this passage with the emphasis on women’s equal rights to join the Daoist order and the open attitude of Daoism toward single women. Generally that is true, but there are more nuances in the wording of the vows. Bumbacher 514-15. Despeux and Kohn 111-13.

Celestial Masters reform began to criticize sexual practice aimed at longevity through “retaining the semen and nourishing the brain (*huan jing bu nao* 還精補腦),” while still recognizing it for the purpose of facilitating reproduction (especially begetting a son). Meanwhile, leaders of the Highest Clarity (Shangqing) and the Numinous Treasure (Lingbao) schools harshly criticized all kinds of bedchamber arts although there is evidence of exceptions in actual practice.³¹² The Highest Clarity tradition in the Northern and Southern Dynasties further proposed sexual abstinence even between married couples, as recorded in one of its classic scriptures *Zhen’gao* 真誥 (*Declarations of the Perfected*):

For the perfected who have companionship, what they treasure is the idea of company and the dual partnership. Although they are named husbands and wives, they do not do what ordinary couples do.³¹³

夫真人之偶景者，所貴存乎匹偶，相愛在於二景。雖名之為夫婦，不行夫婦之跡也。
(運象篇)

The calamity caused by men’s attachment to women and wealth is greater than imprisonment. Those who are imprisoned may one day be pardoned. Yet the guilt cannot be redeemed for those who relentlessly indulge themselves in sexual desire regardless of the danger to life. Emotional attachment causes harm to people just like holding a torch and walking against the wind. [...] The poison of greed, anger, and foolishness resides in one’s body. If one does not rid himself of the source of calamity by means of the Dao, he will inevitably be in danger.³¹⁴

夫人係於妻子、寶宅之患，甚於牢獄桎梏。牢獄桎梏，會有原赦。而妻子情慾，雖

³¹² Lin 2008: 333-402.

³¹³ *Zhen’gao* (HY 1016), “Yunxiang pian,” 2.2.

³¹⁴ *Zhen’gao*, “Zhenmingshou,” 6.8-9.

有虎口之禍，已猶甘心投焉，其罪無赦。情累於人也，猶執炬火逆風行也...貪慾、恚怒、愚癡之毒，處人身中，不早以道除斯禍首，必有危殆。(甄命授)

Those who pursue immortality should avoid intercourse with women. On the ninth day of the third month, the second day of the sixth month, the sixth day of the ninth month, and the third day of the twelfth month, one should not see women in the inner quarters. [...] On those days, the three spirits of men and women emerge from the pupils of the eyes. Women's spirits attract men. Men's spirits attract women. Their intercourse results in woes and causes damage to spirit and mind. [...] On those days, you should not see any women even your dearest women or beloved wives.³¹⁵

求仙者，勿與女子。三月九日、六月二日、九月六日、十二月三日，是其日，當入室，不可見女子。...是日，男女三尸出於目珠瞳之中，女尸招男，男尸招女，禍害往來，喪神虧正。...子至其日，雖至寵之女子，親愛之令婦，固不可相對。(協昌期)

As all three passages suggest, teachings regarding sexual abstinence in *Zhen'gao* target mainly the male audience, in order to warn male practitioners of the damage that women, even their wives, could cause to them through sexual intercourse. Yet the three passages convey slightly different messages. In the first passage, the author seems to value a certain spiritual connection that is non-sexual, an affectionate companionship between couples. The second one does not focus on sex itself but men's various obsessions that prevent them from pursuing the Dao, condemning desire and affection toward wives as the most dangerous and distracting. The third one proposes sexual abstinence only on specific dates in order to match the activity of the body gods (god-spirits that are believed to reside in each organ) and to avoid harm.

Hagiographies preserve even more diverse perspectives than do ritual/doctrinal scriptures.

³¹⁵ *Zhen'gao*, "Xiechangqi," 10.25.

This is true sometimes even in one work compiled by a single author. *Xu xian zhuan* 續仙傳 (*Continued Traditions of Transcendents*, compiled in the tenth century) is a good example. In *Xu xian zhuan*, the account of “Yijun Wang Lao” 宜君王老 (Old Wang of Yijun) records that Old Wang adores Daoism and has been performing good deeds, and “his wife was also supportive and did the same things diligently” (其妻亦同心不倦). One day, an old Daoist master visits them and stays for several months. After drinking the miraculous wine made by the Daoist master, Old Wang, his wife, and the whole family, including their livestock, ascend to heaven together.³¹⁶ Marriage seems advantageous for both the husband and the wife in this story since they are able to support and accompany each other when pursuing the Dao. The fruit of their devotion is shared by the whole household. There is no mention of sex as either a hindrance or facilitator of their practice. Whereas Jin Keji 金可記, a Daoist practitioner of Shilla (Korea) who visits the Tang during Xuanzong’s reign (712-756), is recorded as being uninterested in the court ladies that the emperor bestows on him. He “stayed alone in a quiet room” and does not let court ladies and eunuchs approach. Every night court ladies and eunuchs hear sounds of people chatting and laughing from his room and some even see male and female immortals occupying the room.³¹⁷ It is frequently seen in accounts of Daoist men and women that they host immortals in their secluded rooms.

Also in *Xu xian zhuan*, two male practitioners (Song Xuanbai 宋玄白 and Qian Lang 錢朗) are said to be practicing the bedchamber arts for longevity—a practice that has been rejected by all the Celestial Masters, the Highest Clarity, and the Numinous Treasure schools since the fifth century. Song Xuanbai “purchased two or three beautiful concubines whenever settling

³¹⁶ *Xu xian zhuan* 1.3b-4b.

³¹⁷ *Xu xian zhuan* 1.11b-12b.

down in one place, and left them behind when leaving” (到處住則以金帛求置二三美妾，行則捨之). Qian Lang followed a Daoist master in the Eastern Mountain during Tang Wenzong’s reign (827-841) and “acquired the technique of nourishing the brain and retaining the essence, and the alchemy of longevity” (師於東嶽道士，得補腦還元、服鍊長生之術). Both of them, according to the accounts, become immortals—Song ascends to heaven, and Qian is “liberated from the corpse” (*shijie* 尸解).³¹⁸

2.3 Daoist women before the Song

Echoing the ambiguous attitudes toward sex and marriage in both the Daoist canon and diverse stories of Daoist men who achieved immortality, Daoist women responded to marriage and married life in varied ways.

The famous female transcendent of the late-third and early-fourth centuries, Madam Wei (Wei Huacun 魏華存, the daughter of Duke Wenkang in Juyang, Minister of Education during the Jin dynasty), became the role model for those who wished to practice Daoism but were unable to escape from marriage. According to *Assembled Transcendents*, Madam Wei has an interest in Daoism and the way of immortals from childhood. She reads Daoist scriptures and other classics, practices a Daoist regimen to regulate the *qi*, and does not meet with people even if they are her relatives. She wishes to live in seclusion and avoid marriage, but her parents do not allow it and marry her off to an official. After fulfilling her familial duties—giving birth to two sons and raising them—she resumes her religious practice and lives in a separate room.

Three months after resuming practice, the deities come and give her scriptures to follow to reach

³¹⁸ *Xu xian zhuan* 1.12b-14a, 2.20a-b. “*Shijie*” (liberation from the corpse) is a form of post-mortem immortality performed by less advanced adepts who “seemingly die like any other mortal, but in reality achieve purification of their body a smelting process in the Extreme Yin palace.” See Seidel 1987: 230-31.

immortality.³¹⁹ Another similar account concerns *Xue Xuanton* 薛玄同 of the ninth century. She is the wife of Feng Hui, the vice governor of Hezhong. Not until after twenty years of marriage does she speak of her longtime wish to practice Daoism. From then on, she “stayed in a separate room from her husband with the excuse of illness” (稱疾獨處), burns incense and recites *Huangting jing* (*Classic of the Yellow Courtyard*)³²⁰ every day. Years later, deities come to her room and give her an elixir. She then prepares herself through meditation and fasting. Her husband is not aware of these activities and often despises her. During the Huangchao rebellion (874-889), she and her husband flee elsewhere. Later, she takes the elixir and dies with her body miraculously disappearing from the coffin.³²¹

There are also cases where marriage and married life are not considered a hindrance to the Dao. The wife of Cheng Wei 程偉妻, described by *Assembled Transcendents* as “one who achieved the Dao,” can perform magic and assist her husband with unusual powers. Her husband “was also interested in ‘the technique of yellow and white’ [Daoist alchemy] but failed to produce an elixir.” She then makes one for him, but it does not work because he “was not destined to achieve immortality.” She then dies and is “liberated from the corpse.”³²² There is no mention of any family conflict or ascetic lifestyle in this account. The wife of Cheng Wei only ascends to immortality after failing to help her husband join her way.

There are also records of women who ascend to immortality partially because of marrying human-immortals. The woman of Yangdu 陽都女, born with an extraordinary physiognomy, is a wine shop owner. When the human-immortal Duzi (Man with a Calf) from the Black Mountain travels to Yangdu, she “loved him and so served and accompanied him [i.e.

³¹⁹ *Taiping guang ji* 58.356-57.

³²⁰ A scripture related to Madam Wei that includes techniques of visualizing the body gods. HY 331, 332.

³²¹ Also from *Assembled Transcendents*. *Taiping guang ji* 70.437-38, *Yunji qi qian* 116.2569-70.

³²² *Taiping guang ji* 59.367.

married him].” They live together for several decades in Yangdu, where people witness them picking unusual peaches (immortal food) and walk at a flying speed. Afterwards, “the couple left together,” and “some saw them selling peaches and dates in winter by Mount Pan.”³²³ Quite different from many Daoist women who try every means to avoid marriage or sharing a room with their husbands, the woman of Yangdu’s pursuit of Daoist immortality originates from her affection toward another immortal man. They live together, practice the Dao, and leave together. This record also shows how elements in hagiographies often come from popular hearsay. Those immortals/transcendents are sanctified by people in certain localities before being incorporated into canonical hagiographies.³²⁴

Some Daoist accounts, however, record women taking drastic actions to resist marriage. Song Yuxian 宋玉賢 of the Six Dynasties dresses herself as a Daoist nun on her wedding day and refuses to perform the bridal rites.³²⁵ Xiaoyao 逍遙 of the eighth century threatens her parents with suicide. It is note-worthy that Xiaoyao differs from other cases in that she is only a village girl and does not seem to have any background in Daoist training before encountering a lady-immortal (identified as the embodiment of an earlier transcendent, Madam Fan). After meeting this lady-immortal, Xiaoyao immediately becomes her disciple and follows her home. Xiaoyao’s parents “chased after her, beat her with sticks, scolded and forced her home.” She then protests by attempting to hang herself to death. In the end, her parents relent. Such dramatic and drastic action taken by a village girl who most likely has no previous contact with Daoism follows a rather curious encounter between the two women:

The lady’s hair at the temples was as dense as a cloud. [Her body] was plump and as

³²³ From *Assembled Transcendents. Taiping guangji* 60.371.

³²⁴ Daoist hagiographies also adopt stories from the *zhiguai* and *biji* traditions. (To be discussed below.)

³²⁵ From *Students of the Dao*. Bambacher 2000: 295-96.

white as snow. She walked with a stick and dragged her shoes, yet was able to move several hundred *li* in one day. Suddenly, she met a village girl named Xiaoyao, aged sixteen, splendidly beautiful, who carried a basket to pick chrysanthemums. Meeting the gaze of the lady, Xiaoyao was unable to take a step. The lady looked at her and said: “So you love me. Why don’t you join me?” Xiaoyao happily threw away the basket, tidied up the upper pieces of her clothes, became her disciple, and followed the lady home.³²⁶

媼鬢翠如雲，肥潔如雪，策杖曳履，日可數百里。忽遇里人女，名曰逍遙，年二八，艷美。攜筐採菊，遇媼瞪視，足不能移。媼目之曰：「汝乃愛我，可同之所止否？」逍遙欣然擲筐，歛衽稱弟子，從媼歸室。

There is no mention of an exchange of ideas or a religious calling, only two sensually attractive and active bodies, an aggressive gaze, a straightforward invitation, and an unhesitant response. What this passage reflects is perhaps the author’s dramatization of the attraction of the Dao and his fantasy of beautiful female immortals/transcendents. And yet it also reveals the possibility that a free, itinerant female Daoist meets, attracts, and leaves with another ordinary woman. The author’s depiction of the attraction between the two women is loaded with erotic overtones.

The reasons for resisting or escaping marriage can be very complicated, although hagiography authors often put an emphasis on women’s determination to practice the Dao and miraculous interventions. The record of Qi Xiaoyao 戚逍遙 in the *Continued Traditions of Transcendents*, presents many such intertwining motives and hardships:

Miss Qi was named Xiaoyao as a Daoist. She was a native of Nangong, Jizhou [in modern day Hebei]. Her father earned his living as an instructor. When Xiaoyao was a teenager, her emotions were quite subdued; she did not play children’s games and had an

³²⁶ From *Assembled Transcendents*. *Taiping guang ji* 60.373.

interest in the Dao. Her parents knew this and often gave favors to people to accumulate spiritual merits. When her father taught her *Nü Jie* [*Admonishment for Women*, written by Ban Zhao 班昭 in the first century], she read it and said, “it concerns only the mundane,” and instead diligently recited *Laozi xian jing* [*The Immortal Classic of Laozi*, this text is not seen elsewhere in extant sources or catalogs]. At the age of fifteen when the matchmaker visited, she heard and sensed the ominous. When she was twenty, her parents married her to a farmer, Ji Xun, of the same village. Her parents-in-law treated her harshly and blamed her for neglecting the agricultural work. Yet Xiaoyao only engaged in Daoist practice—fasting, purifying [the body and the mind], and meditating—and paid no attention to livelihood. Ji Xun also reproached her several times. Xiaoyao then asked her parents-in-law to let her return to her parents’ home. When she returned, her parents also rejected her. Not able to work on the mundane, she then requested to serve her parents-in-law by staying alone in a secluded room and practicing Daoism. Ji Xun and her parents were all suspicious that she might plan something else. They subsequently abandoned her in a hut. Yet Xiaoyao only nourished herself with fragrant water, fasted, and meditated. [...] Ji Xun’s family and neighbors all considered her evil and crazy. At night, people heard sounds of chatting in her room, however at dawn they only saw her sitting alone and so were not really scared. Three days later, in the morning when people woke up, the whole family heard the sound of a house breaking like thunder, and saw only Xiaoyao’s clothes and shoes left in the room. In the sky there were splendid clouds and smoke, divine birds and cranes flying and crying, immortal music and fragrant sedans, and attendants with colorful clothes lining up. Xiaoyao and all the immortals appeared together in the clouds. People clearly heard her parting words. Ji

Xun ran and informed Xiaoyao's parents. They came and also saw her. People in the whole village all came to look and were amazed.³²⁷

戚氏，道名逍遙。冀州南宮人也。父教授生徒以自資。而逍遙十餘歲，情頗清澹，不為兒戲，有好道心。父母亦知之，常行陰德於人。而父以《女誡》授於逍遙，覽之曰：「此常人事耳。」遂取《老子仙經》誦之不輟。及笄，媒氏詣其家，聞之以為不祥。迨二十歲，父母以適同邑薊潯耕織之家。而舅姑嚴酷，責之以蠶農怠惰。而逍遙晨暮以齋潔修淨為事，殊不以生計在意。薊潯亦屢責之。逍遙白舅姑，請退返於父母家。及父母家，亦逼（迴）〔迫〕。於是以不能為塵俗事，願獨居靜室修道，以資舅姑。薊潯與父母俱有他疑，乃棄之於一室。而逍遙但資香水，為絕食、靜想。...薊潯家及鄰里悉以為妖狂。夜聞室內有人言話聲，及曉見獨坐，亦不驚。又三日，晨起，舉家聞屋裂如雷，但見所服衣履在室內，仰視半天有雲霞煙靄煥赫，鸞鶴飛鳴，復有仙樂香輶，綵仗羅列。逍遙與眾仙俱在雲中，歷歷聞分別言語。薊潯馳報逍遙父母，到猶見之。邑郭之人咸奔觀望，無不驚歎。

Xiaoyao's father teaches her to read in order to learn about women's virtues. However, she uses that ability to read things outside of her father's curriculum, which nourishes her interest in Daoism, and results in her failing in the ideal roles for women as wives and daughter-in-laws. As an educated woman able to study Daoist scriptures and compose poetry, a marriage into a farmer's family means frustrated intellectual interests and unbearable labor. Without her family's support, she is isolated but still fortunate enough to live in a house and continue her practice. Although Xiaoyao's behaviors—indifference to means of livelihood, dedication to fasting and meditation, seclusion from her husband inside a room from which people hear chatting at

³²⁷ *Xu xian zhuan* 1.21b-22b. Underlines mine.

night—are all commonly seen in stories of other Daoist (and also Buddhist) women, she is deemed by her husband’s family and neighbors as “evil and crazy” (also “queer” in a way). Before the stunning miracle happens, her husband and parents-in-law even suspect that she may “plan something else”—as if one can actually plot through a disguise of religious practice.

Daoist women’s drastic protests against marriage and their painstaking negotiations would appear more curious if we consider the rather tolerant attitude in the Daoist canon toward married women receiving registers and those hagiographical accounts regarding couples practicing the Dao and achieving immortality together. Some of them may simply wish to avoid labor and all kinds of marriage duties; others may struggle with their family’s misunderstanding. Yet still others who do not seem to face any such difficulties still try every means to escape married life, and Pei Xuanjing 裴玄靜 is one of them. The account of Pei Xuanjing is interesting in two respects: the different uses of one religious model and the textual incoherence.

3. The curious case of Pei Xuanjing

Pei Xuanjing is a female transcendent said to have lived in the ninth century. Her story is recorded in the tenth-century Daoist hagiographical collection, *Continued Traditions of Transcendents*:

Pei Xuanjing was the daughter of Pei Sheng (the magistrate of Goushi) and the wife of Li Yan (the district defender of Hu). From childhood she was smart and quick in memorizing the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of Documents* which her mother taught her. Upon reaching fifteen, she dressed in clothes she made herself. She was interested in the Dao and therefore asked her parents to let her stay in a secluded room and wear those clothes. Her parents were also interested in the Dao and therefore agreed to her requests.

She offered incense and paid homage to images of Daoist deities. When maids served her, she never allowed them to enter the room. While she lived alone, at times there were sounds of women chatting and laughing from her room. But when her parents peeped inside, they saw no one. When they asked her about it, she said nothing. Her thoughts were clear and her desires few. She used proper etiquette and was never impolite to even her close relatives. At the age of twenty, her parents wanted to marry her to Li Yan. Upon hearing of it, she strongly objected and expressed the desire to devote herself to Daoism in order to enlighten the world. Her parents tried to dissuade her: “Marriage is the necessary ritual for women. The timing of a woman cannot be missed, and etiquette should not be violated. If you enter a Daoist order and do not succeed [i.e. do not become a transcendent], there will be no way back. Madam Wei of Nanyue [i.e. Wei Huacun] also married and had children before ascending to the highest rank of transcendents.” She then married Li Yan and fulfilled etiquette. Yet not a month after marriage, she told Li Yan: “Since I have been practicing Daoism, the gods do not allow me to be your wife. Please stop it.” Li also admired Daoism and therefore consented to her request. She then stayed in a separate room, burned incense, and meditated. At night, Li heard sounds of chatting and laughing in Pei’s room and was somewhat suspicious. Afraid of disturbing his wife, he peeped from a chink in the wall and saw that the whole room was bright and full of unusual fragrance. There were two young ladies of elegant bearing wearing phoenix haircoils and colorful dresses and a few beautiful maids wearing cloud haircoils and silk robes attending from the side. Pei was talking with the two ladies. Li Yan was amazed and left. The next day he asked Pei about this. Pei answered: “Yes. Those were my immortal companions from Kunlun [where the highest female immortal, Queen Mother

of the West, resides] paying a visit to me. They already knew that you peeped and stopped you with magic when you were unaware of it. In the future, you shall not peep anymore lest you would be chastised by them. Even so, I am not destined to be your wife and will not stay in this world for long. I am concerned that you have no descendents. When the immortals come again, I will ask them about this.” One night, a celestial lady descended into Li’s room. After a few years, she came again, gave Li a baby, and said: “This is your son. Pei will leave soon.” Three days later, five clouds hovered in the sky, celestial ladies played music, and a white phoenix carried Pei toward the northwest and ascended to heaven. It was the eighth year of Dazhong (854), the eighteenth day of the eighth month, at Li’s villa in Gongdao village, Wen district.³²⁸

裴玄靜，緱氏縣令昇之女，鄆縣尉李言妻也。幼而聰慧。母教以《詩》、《書》，皆誦之不忘。及笄，以婦功容自飾，而好道。請于父母，置一靜室披戴。父母亦好道，許之。日以香火瞻禮道像。女使侍之，必逐於外。獨居，別有女伴言笑。父母看之，復不見人，詰之不言。潔思閑淡。雖骨肉常見，亦執禮，曾無慢容。及年二十，父母欲歸於李言。聞之，固不可，唯願入道，以求度世。父母抑之曰：「女生有歸，是為禮。婦時不可失，禮不可虧。儻入道不果，是無所歸也。南嶽魏夫人亦從人育嗣，後為上仙。」遂適李言。婦禮臻備。未一月，告于李言：「以素修道，神人不許為君妻，請絕之。」李言亦慕道，從而許焉。乃獨居靜室焚修。夜中聞言笑聲，李言稍疑，未之敢驚，潛壁隙窺之，見光明滿室，異香芬馥。有二女子，年十七八，鳳髻霓衣，姿態婉麗。侍女數人，皆雲髻綉服，綽約在側。玄靜與二女子言談。李言異之而退。及旦問於玄靜。答曰：「有之。此崑崙仙侶相省。上仙已知君窺，以術止之

³²⁸ *Xu xian zhuan* 1.20a-21b.

而君未覺。更來慎勿窺也，恐君為仙官所責。然玄靜與君宿緣甚薄，非久在人間之道。念君後嗣未立，候上仙來，當為言之。」後一夕。有天女降李言之室。經年，復降，送一兒與李言：「此君之子也。玄靜即當去矣。」後三日，有五雲盤旋，仙女奏樂，白鳳載玄靜昇天，向西北而去。時大中八年八月十八日，在溫縣供道村李氏別業。

This account also embodies several themes that we have seen multiple times so far in stories of Buddhist and Daoist women: unusual intelligence and tendency toward religious practice from childhood, distance from people while intimately associating with (female) immortals, struggle with the conflict between marriage/familial duties and religious pursuits, and divine intervention that helps resolve the conflict and demonstrates the woman's achievement of the Dao. Another story of the same volume, the account of Xie Ziran 謝自然, records that Xie is a Daoist woman who does not marry, “adored the virtue of Madam Wei of the Southern Mountain,” and follows her model by traveling to prestigious religious sites all over the country by the age of forty.³²⁹ Yet the model of Madam Wei is used to the opposite effect Pei Xuanjing's parents, who persuade their daughter to marry and not to become a nun. What Pei views as a conflict does not seem to be one for her parents. Each party takes a different stance, although they all practice Daoism. Pei's parents suggest the most pragmatic way: to fulfill familial duties before practicing Daoism. They do not seem to consider it more important for women to marry than to learn the Dao, but rather, as parents, they worry about a worse situation in which their daughter does not succeed in the Dao and has already missed the time for marriage. Pei, nonetheless, seeks every possible chance to avoid marriage. Pei's husband believes in Pei's calling while still retaining a slight suspicion.

³²⁹ *Xu xian zhuan* 1.17b.

The narrator's focus is rather apparent: the woman's talent, her will and determination, and the miraculous power of the Dao. He seems to care less about whether or not Daoist women should marry while emphasizing that the Dao is powerful enough to help a Daoist woman fulfill (or bypass) her marriage duties in miraculous ways. This story then leaves several intriguing questions beyond the author's concern. As we have seen in the previous sections, there are numerous cases of couples practicing Daoism together recorded within the Daoist tradition. Pei's parents and husband are both interested in Daoism and supportive of her Daoist practice. Then what, after all, makes her unrelentingly reject marriage? She further chooses not to share her religious passion with her husband and simply asks him to stay away by appealing to heavenly authority. But her "religious calling" seems to have changed before and after marriage. When taking her parents advice to marry, she seems also uncertain about whether or not she can achieve transcendence. To marry a man who also respects Daoism seems to be a secure move. Yet only a month after marriage, she suddenly takes a firm attitude on behalf of the gods—if, as she claims, the gods do not allow her to marry, why did they not reveal the message to her before the wedding? It seems that for Pei's gods, Pei's husband is an easier target to deal with than her parents.

For Qi Xiaoyao, the intelligent woman who marries a farmer, the most "ominous" aspect about marriage is perhaps her frustrated talent and the pressure of labor. Yet for Pei, marrying an official who is also a fervent Daoist, the only aspect that she tries every means to avoid is sharing a room with her husband. Pei may represent a tradition that advocated sexual abstinence (such as the Highest Clarity), but it may also simply be the case she is in fact making use of that tradition. Besides, quite different from what the Highest Clarity classics presume, that sexual desire is the greatest obsession and people who practice Daoism should endeavor to refrain from

it, Pei simply appears to be uninterested in sex, or to be more precise, sex with her husband. As for Pei's husband, a "fervent Daoist," who should be rather familiar with the Daoist tradition where there are numerous records of practitioners hosting immortals in their rooms, he still maintains a slight suspicion for a moment—what piqued his suspicions?

It seems that the story of Pei Xuanjing reveals traces of a woman who strategically withdraws from marriage and a sexual relationship with her husband, step by step—if the incoherence is not just a result of textual transmission. But no matter whether things actually happened as recorded and transmitted, the story can be read this way (or whatever way that the reader/listener finds meaningful), and the strategies can be learned. Just as the model of Madam Wei can be used so differently by people with different concerns, Pei's story may as well become another useful model to inspire later people in unexpected ways. Pei's story, like the account of Qi Xiaoyao, also shows that people at that time were aware that women might be planning something else in the name of religion.

4. Canonical hagiographies and popular anecdotes: Textual interaction and popular intervention

Before turning to Song stories of religious women, many of which are from anecdotal collections, I will explain the textual interaction between canonical hagiographies and popular anecdotes and the reason that I regard both as "traveling stories." The purpose of compiling hagiographies is often to create religious models—through including and excluding, omitting and embellishing. However, as previously mentioned, models of religious women are not created solely by hagiography authors or religious authorities. Hagiography authors collect their sources from earlier texts (such as *zhiguai* stories and *biji* anecdotes), contemporary hearsay, and popular

cults. For example, *Assembled Transcendents* adopts the story about a female immortal marrying a man from *Soushen ji*, one that I have translated and discussed in Chapter Three. That story is later incorporated in the early Song collection of anecdotes, *Taiping guangji*, with a footnote indicating *Assembled Transcendents* as its source.³³⁰ Several stories from *Yijian zhi* are as well adopted by a thirteenth-century Daoist hagiography, *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世真仙體道通鑑 (*Comprehensive Mirror of True Transcendents Embodying the Dao of the Ages*, by Zhao Daoyi 趙道一, prefaced in 1294, *Comprehensive Mirror of True Transcendents* hereafter).³³¹

When a story becomes well-known among a considerable group of people, the hagiography author may have a hard time tailoring it to his ideal. *Taiping guangji* records a story from *Chuanqi* 傳奇 (*Tales of the Strange*, a *zhiguai* work from the Tang) about Feng Zhi 封陟, a man approached by a female immortal. He regards her as an evil spirit and rejects her. She comes several times and even leaves poems to express her feelings, but the man never consents to a relationship. The narrative vividly reports their back-and-forth conversations. Not accepted by Feng Zhi, the immortal finally gives up and leaves. Three years later, the man dies of a disease. His ghost is chased and arrested by the infernal messengers. On their way to the court of Hell, they encounter the immortal that he once rejected. The messengers pay homage to her. She recognizes Feng Zhi and grants him twelve more years of life. Feng “took a long time to recover from this trauma. Thinking of what he did to the immortal, he deeply regretted it in tears.”³³² An almost identical story is told in *Comprehensive Mirror of True Transcendents* under the title of “Zisu yuanjun” 紫素元君 (the Primordial Sovereign of Purple Purity). Feng Zhi in this version is named Ren, and his lifespan is elongated for three instead of twelve years. Despite such

³³⁰ *Taiping guangji* 61.379-80.

³³¹ Such as the stories of female transcendents Chen Qiongyu and Wu Yuanzhao.

³³² *Taiping guangji* 68. 424-26.

discrepancies in minor details, a commentary is inserted at the end of the story saying, “This is how true immortals descend and test men. Ren was able to keep his integrity, and therefore his life was lengthened by three years” (此乃真仙下試於人也。任生能不失正，是以延壽三載).³³³ The author awkwardly reverses the original logic of the story. The regretful male protagonist who is rescued out of the female immortal’s sympathy becomes a righteous one who is rewarded for not being seduced.

The author could have told a better story than simply removing the sentence of “regret in tears” and adding an awkward comment if he had greater control over his writing. But hagiographies are supposed to record “true” accounts. If a story has already become well known to people, to incorporate it into hagiographies the authors would have to make compromises with the generally accepted version. That is similar to the way that Hong Mai has to sacrifice the quality of his writing to keep the methodology of “faithfully recording” his sources in his *Yijian zhi*. Hagiographical accounts of religious women therefore conform to my definition of “traveling stories”—stories that travel across time and space, pass from person to person before and after being written down, and are both influenced by and influential to their contemporary audience.

Another thing worth noticing in the case of Feng Zhi/Zisu Yuanjun is that the author of *Comprehensive Mirror of True Transcendents* shows us yet another example how stories can be twisted and reinterpreted even in a very awkward way.

5. New strategies, new details: New “queer space” for women in the Song

³³³ *Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* (HY 296) 4.872b.

Inspiring as they might be, the means that Buddhist and Daoist women from pre-Song times used to confront their families are nonetheless too drastic and impractical for most people. Religious women depicted in Song anecdotes no longer threaten their families with suicide. They come up with new strategies: When reporting their encounters with deities or journeys to the otherworld, most of them recount what happened in their dreams instead of physically disappearing from the room or ascending to heaven in front of the whole village. In Song anecdotes we also see new details about religious women associating with other men and women and new ways for them to support themselves economically.

The Perfected Wu (Wu Yuanzhao 武元照), as recorded in *Yijian zhi*, is a commoner's daughter in Guiji, who "would not take breast milk if her mother ate meat that day." When she grows up, her mother arranges her marriage into a rich family of the town. After the arrangement is made, she becomes unhappy. When taught women's work (spinning and weaving), she sits and pretends to be asleep. Her mother becomes irritated and is about to punish her. She apologizes and says:

I dare not be lazy. But last night, I dreamt that a god in golden armor informed me that Madam Earth was summoning me. I went with him into a grand hall in the clouds and saw the High Perfected sitting in the hall with Jade Women (celestial maidens) attending her. She summoned me up to the hall and warned me: "You were originally a Jade Woman. In the past, you committed certain transgressions and therefore were temporarily relegated to the mortal world. You will return after thirty-six years. Do not eat regular meals after returning home. Disregard mundane business." When I woke up, I wanted to fast. However, mother, you forced me to eat. I again dreamed that the god furiously said: "I have ordered you not to eat. Why do you disobey my warning?"

非敢怠也。昨夢金甲神告以后土〔夫人〕見召，與之偕往，入雲霄間廣殿下，見高真坐殿上，玉女列侍，招我升殿，戒曰：「汝本玉女，頃坐累暫謫塵境，三紀復來，汝歸休糧，（遂）棄人間事。」及覺，欲不食，而母見強。又夢神怒曰：「命汝勿食，違吾戒何也？」

Having heard this, Wu's mother is startled and says to her: "You, my child, are truly an unusual person. I will turn down the marriage so that you can fulfill your mission." She henceforth takes on her Daoist career, traveling around, healing people's illnesses, and building connections with men and women.³³⁴

The Buddhist nun Fawu does an even better job in reporting dreams of her spiritual journey, thereby successfully escaping marriage. According to *Touxia lu* 投轄錄 (*Record of my Guests*), she is the daughter of the Chen family in Qingyuan. She is smart from childhood and able to recite the *Diamond Sutra*. Her parents marry her to her cousin, and her mother-in-law loves her. On the first day of the second month in year three of Yuanyou (1088), she suddenly cuts her hair in the Buddhist hall at her parents' house to show her resolution to become a Buddhist nun. Her mother holds her and cries. All family members gather and try every way to dissuade her, but nothing works. Her family then summons an eminent monk to preach to her the importance of filial piety for Buddhists. However, she interrupts the monk with a bow and recounted her journey to the netherworld:

On the first day of the first month, in the afternoon, when I was sitting [meditating] in the hall, everything in front of me suddenly became dark. I saw a fire light up from afar and walked toward it. After walking for several *li*, I entered a gate with a board inscribed "Gate of Retribution." A judge in green holding a file said to me: "What did you come for?"

³³⁴ "The Perfected Wu" 武真人, *Yijian zhi ding*.14.653.

Why are you here? Do you know there are retributions awaiting you?” I was startled and asked, “Since birth I have never done anything evil. How can there be any retribution?” The judge said, “Your current husband was your wife in your previous life. In your previous life, he/she hurt your left ear out of jealousy and caused your death. Now he/she has become your husband in this life. It is precisely your turn to make it even now.” I said, “Even though he owes me this, I do not want to exact revenge.” The judge said, “He deserves to be punished. It is not up to you.” I said, “If I exact revenge, he would also seek revenge in return, and the vicious circle would never end.” The judge said, “That is not true. It is just like murder cases in the world. The guilt cannot be erased without punishing the culprit.” I said, “The guilt will be erased if I do not hold any hatred. [...]”³³⁵

正月一日晡時，在道堂坐。忽見眼前黑暗，見遠處有火光，舉身從之。約行數里，入大門，榜曰「報冤門」，有綠衣判官持簿籍曰：「汝為何來，何為至此？汝有宿冤當報，知否？」法悟心悸，對曰：「我得生人間，未曾為惡，何得有冤？」判官曰：「汝前世之妻，乃汝今生之夫。以嫉妒故，傷汝左耳，因而致死。今反為汝之夫，合正其命。」法悟曰：「我雖有此宿冤，心不欲報。」判官曰：「此自當報，不由汝心。」法悟曰：「我若報冤，冤冤相報，無有了期。」判官曰：「不然。如世間殺人，若有不償報者，其冤終在。」法悟曰：「我但不生嗔恨，冤自消釋。...」

Either out of their faith in Buddhism or fear of retribution, her parents-in-law consented to her wish to become a nun. In *Lives of the Nuns*, monk Fotucheng persuades An Lingshou's parents to let her leave home and become a Buddhist nun; Tanhui and Sengduan hide in Buddhist temples with the help of monks and nuns when running away from marriage. However, in this Song story,

³³⁵ *Touxia lu* 3863.

the situation reverses: Fawu's family go to the monk for help in dissuading their daughter/daughter-in-law from entering the nunnery. In response to the changing Buddhist attitude toward the ways women practice Buddhism, women in the Song came up with new strategies with their courage—Fawu confronts the monk and her whole family with her magnificent, if not frightening, speech—and by making use of new resources—miraculous dreams conveying divine messages that prevailed in Song popular religions.

In Song anecdotes, more female Daoist practitioners no longer hide in their secluded rooms but enter the public sphere and associate intimately with men and women outside of their families. The growing “market” for exorcisms in Song society came along with the emergence of the lay Daoist ritual masters (*fashi*),³³⁶ which included women as well as men. The latter half of “the Perfected Wu” story continues to tell how Wu earns her living by healing people with talismans and exorcisms. A girl is believed to be possessed by evil spirits, and the male Daoist master whom the girl's family first summons is not only unable to solve the problem but also humiliated by the ghost. Wu comes, and the girl welcomes her, “smiling and talking as if she had completely recovered.” They “walked hand in hand upstairs and spent three nights together.” The girl then returns to a normal state. In addition, Wu also heals an official's chronic foot disease by a magical massage that facilitates the circulation of *qi* in his body. The official hosts Wu overnight and observes divine clouds and spirits surrounding Wu's body. Later Wu comes back to this official's house and stays for over a year. When she decides to leave, no one is able to stop her.³³⁷

Another account in *Yijian zhi* tells about a woman named Wen, the daughter of a local official. She is once married to the son of the Chen family in Xiuzhou, but later divorced and

³³⁶ Davis 2001.

³³⁷ *Yijian zhi* ding.14.654.

stays with her original family to practice Daoism. The story does not mention why she divorces. Later she meets another young Daoist woman named Yang, who is “also the daughter of a gentry family.” They live together in the Wen household. When Wen’s father is transferred to another prefectural post and their whole family move there, Yang also follows.³³⁸

From the sixth century to the Song, similar stories about religious women with meaningful new elements are continually told. Religious symbols and vocabularies are shared by different traditions and exchanged among communities. People emulate previous models in their own distinct ways. Hagiographies are meant for setting up models yet cannot be entirely free of people’s arbitrary interpretation and use. The circulation of inspiring stories about religious women and their creative readers/listeners, the development of popular religion, and the increasing possibility of women’s economic independence during the Song generated both ideological and material conditions for a potential female queer space where women might be able to live a life without their sexual bodies subordinate to husbands and the family system, and where they could be exposed to intimate relationships with other women or men.

6. Two fake female immortals

I am not the first one to suspect women’s religious callings, vision, and even miracles can be faked. As mentioned above, as early as the Six Dynasties, records show from time to time people’s suspicion toward religious women. There are two intriguing full episodes of fake female immortals recorded by Song scholar-officials, one from the Northern and the other from the Southern Song. The first one is recorded by Huang Xiufu 黃休復 (fl. late 10th-early 11th centuries) in his *Maoting kehua* 茅亭客話:

³³⁸ “The Daoist Yang” 楊道人, *Yijian zhi jia*.19.173-74.

There was a Daoist priestess from Sui County [in present day Sichuan], surname You. I do not recall her personal name. During the late Taiping Xingguo Reign period (976-984), she passed by Chengdu and visited Qingcheng and several nearby Daoist abodes. She had an antique and elegant manner and appearance, adept at discussing the supreme principles of the Dao. She looked as if in her twenties, did not eat or drink, and claimed that she had obtained the secret of Daoist alchemy [for longevity]. There was an old man with white hair and mustache and a humpback, taking charge of the duties of burning incense and cleaning, attending the priestess and constantly scolded by her. There was another Daoist priest Zhang Wujing, named Daoming, who was in his forties and also an attendant of the priestess. Zhang said that the priestess was one hundred and twenty years old, and that the old attendant was her far grandson. Elite and commoners in Shu City admired and followed her. Some even offered money and goods to trade for her elixirs. Those who learned *pigu* [a Daoist practice of fasting] from her were as many as people in a busy market. The Prefect of that time was Admonitor Xin Zhongfu, who feared that the priestess was demonic and so sent her out of the town and let her move about the Daoist abodes. And yet there were still people learning from and patronizing her who followed. After several years, a hermit Liu also from Sui County came to town, I therefore talked to him about the priestess. The hermit laughed and said, “I simply recall that she eloped with [her lover] Zhang Daoming. Now I see her dwell in the Gengchu Abode. The old man that you saw previously was her father.” Alas! Those who followed her simply respected her with sincerity and yet were deceived as naïve kids. Can one not be cautious of the misleading!³³⁹

³³⁹ “The Female Master” 女先生, *Maoting kehua* 4.422.

遂州女道士游氏，不記名。太平興國末，經過成都，遊青城及諸仙化。儀質古雅，善談至道，容貌可二十餘，不飲食，云得丹砂之妙。有一叟，髭髮皓然，腰脊傴僂，執焚香灑掃之役，侍於女冠之後，常遭叱辱。又有張五經道士名道明，年過四十，亦為女冠侍者，云此女冠者，百二十歲，老侍者乃遠孫爾。蜀城士民仰從之，至於納貨求丹，就師辟谷者如市焉。時知府辛諫議仲甫恐其妖，遣出城，任遊諸化，猶有師資者隨行。經數年，有遂州劉山人到城，休復因話女冠之事，山人笑云：「只自那時與張道明于飛，至今見住庚除化。向來老侍者，即女冠之父也。」嗟乎！師問者但存誠敬之，為其所欺如稚孺，得不戒於所惑乎！

The other one is recorded by Zhou Mi 周密 (1232-1308) in his book *Guixin zazhi* 癸辛雜識:

In Jingyi Village, Gaoan Prefecture, Rui County [in present day Jiangxi], there is a man named Zheng Qianli. He has a daughter called Ding Erniang. In the autumn of the year Yiyou (1249), her father was sick, and she sliced part of her thigh for medicine, curing her father.³⁴⁰ The next year when the girl went out to draw water from the well, suddenly clouds emerged from earth and took her away to the sky. There were witnesses who saw the purple clouds that accompanied the girl's ascendance. Then the head of the village reported this to the county, the county to the prefecture, and the prefecture to the court, asking for imperial recognition for them to build a temple for this girl in honor of her filial piety.³⁴¹ When the court had not responded for a long time, the village people simply erected a Female Transcendent Shrine for the girl by themselves. People's prayers to the shrine often got answered. Thousands of believers were attracted from near and far

³⁴⁰ For an interesting case study of the practice "slicing the thigh to heal one's parents" (*gegu liaoqin*) in relation to Song popular religion, see Yü 2001: 338-47.

³⁴¹ A standard process for local cults during the Song to ask for imperial recognition. The court used the method of recognition on the one hand to gain local support, and, on the other hand, to wield control and inspection over local cults. See Hansen 1990.

to come and pay homage. The next year, the village suffered a drought. The local gentry resubmitted the request [for imperial recognition of their cult]. The prime minister of that time, Hong Qi, styled Weiyi, was somewhat suspicious of this cult, reviewed their previous memorial, and secretly sent a prefect-level official to investigate it. Coincidentally, the Que family in Xinjian Prefecture had just hired a maid of unclear origin but resident in Jingyi Village. The official summoned a mediator to inquire and found out that the maid was in fact the so-called Female Transcendent Zheng. The fact was that the girl, after becoming engaged, had an affair and became pregnant. Her father was ashamed of it, and therefore sold her through several hands to another village, disguised the whole thing as a transcendent miracle, and bribed the village people to be the patrons of this cult. That was how it was. One can see similar things in Han Yu's (768-824) poems "Xie Ziran" and "The Lady of Huashan," as well.³⁴² As for those so-called "female transcendants" nowadays, I wonder if all are like this.³⁴³

瑞州高安縣旌義鄉鄭千里者，有女定二娘。己酉秋，千里抱疾危甚，女割股和藥，疾遂瘥。至次年，女出汲井之次，忽雲湧於地，不覺乘空而去。人有見若紫雲接引而升者，於是鄉保轉聞之縣，縣聞之州，乞奏於朝，立廟旌表以勸孝焉。久之未報，然鄉里為立仙姑祠，禱祈輒應，遠近翕然，趨之作會，幾數千人。明年苦旱，里士復申前請。時洪起畏義立為宰，頗疑其有他，因閱故牒，密遣縣胥廉其事。適新建縣有闕氏者雇一婢，來歷不明，且又旌義人，因呼牙僧訊，即所謂鄭仙姑也。蓋此女初已定姻，而與人有奸而孕，其父醜之，遂宛轉售之傍邑，乃設為仙事以掩之，

³⁴² Both poems are sarcastic of famous female transcendants of the time. Xie Ziran is precisely the one whose biography in *Xu xian zhuan* I quote above. Han Yu does not challenge the authenticity of the female transcendants' religious devotion or miracles but simply implies that those are all heresy. *Han Yu quanji jiaozhu* 19-20, 935.

³⁴³ "The Female Transcendent Zheng" 鄭仙姑, *Guixin zazhi* 5717.

利其施享之人，以為此耳。昌黎〈謝自然〉、〈華山女〉詩，蓋亦可見。然則世俗所謂仙姑者，豈皆此類也耶？

Huang's and Zhou's revelation of the secret behind "female transcendents" provides evidence that my reading of religious rhetoric as a strategy that women could use to create a potential queer space is not simply a modern projection. Their accounts reflect both an anxiety (among some but not all intellectuals—since apparently many intellectuals were also into such cults) about the growing number and influence of female transcendent cults, and a reality that some women were making use of religious conventions and rhetoric to serve other purposes, including to disguise their unacceptable sexuality.

*

In the stories about religious women we have seen in Song and pre-Song hagiographies and anecdotes, although their unusual behaviors (including sexually unattainable to husbands) are later extolled as religious models, they are at first considered abnormal, suspicious, and even evil or demonic by contemporaries. They are thus "queer" with the presence of certain forms of sexuality that resist normative regulation and understanding. It had always been tricky to decide whether those queer women are evil/demonic or sacred/exceptional. Although some intellectuals distrusted and criticized (if not feared) them, others (including their fathers, local officials, members of the elite) worshiped and even conspired with them. The transformation of narratives about religious women from the Six Dynasties to the Song reflects not simply changes in society and religious institution but also women's efforts to deal with and their contribution to those changes.

Conclusion

I write this dissertation with a simple belief that gender and sexuality have histories. They are not natural or instinctive but historically invented conceptual categories to designate, to differentiate, and to classify human bodies, identities, behaviors, and relationships. “Sexuality...once did not exist, and at some time in the future may not exist again,” as Jeffery Weeks keenly argues.³⁴⁴ Several questions have to be asked before we can study the histories of sexuality or female sexuality of a certain time and place: What was considered sexual and what was not? How was the sexual body constructed? How did the sexual body matter to the gender system? The danger of jumping into this topic without asking what after all “sexuality” is is to assume that “sexuality” is already a known given and what we need to do is simply to sort out historical references to this natural human phenomenon. As a result, we may find that intellectual discourse on and social institutions surrounding it change with the times, but our assumptions about sex/uality remain unchanged, and those assumptions can lead to neglect, if not misinterpretation, of critical evidence. On the contrary, when enabling a constant dialogue between myself and my sources, I found that female sexuality in Chinese history had once been perceived and experienced in inspirationally different ways and those ways had been changing.

*

In Chinese history, reproduction, intercourse, and sexual desire had not always been relevant to one other in sources at least up to Song times. There is no specific term for “sex” in

³⁴⁴ Weeks 2003: 6.

classical Chinese; nor was there a category in premodern China as distinct as “sex/uality” in the modern context. In *zhiguai* literature, ancient sage kings are believed to be born out of “affective pregnancy” without sexual intercourse; some women are also said to be “affected” by certain supernatural forces and conceive monstrous babies. Literati of the Tang fanaticized female deities with no reproductive ability or emotions of jealousy descending and having love affairs with them. Reproductive sex is a kind of norm under certain conditions but not the only kind. In medical texts, the reproductive body and the desiring body had not been correlated until the Song. When making correlations between women’s bodily disorders (in particular irregular menses) and their man-less sexual status, pre-Song doctors explained the cause simply through a physiology of women’s reproductive bodies and made no reference to women’s sexual desire: Such women are sick (or have menstruation problems) because their bodies are ready to conceive but have not. Neither Chunyu Yi of the Western Han or Chu Cheng from the fifth century was concerned with whether or not women’s sexual desire was satisfied or how. While Chu Cheng theorized the necessity of (timely) heterosexual intercourse from the laws of reproduction, he also indirectly recognized both male and female homosexuality, which was not considered wrong, inferior, or less significant, although Chu did not go into details. In Bedchamber works, many of which were written particularly for men of the noble class, celibacy is ideally the best for one’s health; sexual abstinence is only harmful when men fail to control their desire and suffer from the side-effects such as losing a hundred times more *jing* than usual by intercourse with ghosts. Female sexuality is mentioned sometimes simply as a counterpart of men’s; other times, the texts betray men’s projection of their own desire onto women and their attempt to control women’s sexual bodies through theorizing women’s sexual dependence of men. However, interestingly while recording treatments for women’s unfulfilled sexual desire, the texts imply that women

have alternative ways for sexual pleasure with or without men's presence or approval. When speaking of either men's or women's sexual desire, Bedchamber authors make no correlation to their reproductive bodies.

Talks and ideas concerning female sexuality changed significantly from the Six Dynasties to the Song. Song doctors began to make explicit claims about the link between reproductive imperative and women's sexual desire and read this link back in Chunyu's case and Chu Cheng's work. This link, however, was not a result of careful argument but selective integration of earlier texts and (perhaps unconscious) influence by the Bedchamber works' construction of female sexual desire. The category of *guafu*, or husband-less women, was created for a general pathology of all women whose sexual bodies are unavailable to men. In Six Dynasties *zhiguai*, whether a woman is (sexually) tricked, enchanted, or seduced by a demon/ghost, she acts as an active respondent to the object and to her own desire. However, in most Song anecdotal cases, young girls' expressions of sexual desire are treated as cases of spirit possession and considered separate from their consciousness. This, in turn, represents a reconceptualization of female sexuality very different from, and even contradictory to, that in the medical tradition.

In both intellectual and popular sources written or recorded by elite men, the imagination, fantasy, and fear of women's sexual desire are extremely diverse and complicated. The attempts to theorize and to control women's sexual bodies prove to be inconsistent and contradictory, and do not always cooperate well with the patriarchal family system. Sometimes women with their sexual bodies independent from men are imagined lonely, unhappy, or ill; other times women are expected to be sexually innocent, passive, or desireless. Song doctors' pathologization of *guafu* (unintentionally) challenges the marriage system by providing physiological arguments against chastity and a rationale for women's (certain kind of) desire. Meanwhile, stories about possessed

girls, desiring women, and resourceful “transcendents” and nuns in anecdotes further challenge the medical construct of *guafu*.

Elite men’s voice(s) are not the only thing that I hear from my sources. I also see multivocality and inspiring potential in them: the diversity of perspectives and traces of popular intervention and appropriation. *Yijian zhi* as a work of “faithful recording,” I have argued, reflects to certain extent how stories circulated among people of various backgrounds in Song society, and preserves very different approaches to gender, sex, and the body. Unlike earlier *zhiguai* or *chuanqi* works, narratives in *Yijian zhi* are often fragmental with inconsistent details and ambiguous moral codes. Although some values appear more frequently than others, there are almost always episodes that challenge or twist those values. Diverse and contending treatments of women’s sexual bodies were all discursive, to be sure; however, taken together, they became resources and options for individuals to deal with, to represent, and to communicate with others their bodies and desires in order to put themselves in the best possible position. Anecdotal records like *Yijian zhi* also help me contextualize talks and ideas concerning female sexuality in Song society: how they were received, interpreted, applied, and appropriated. Evidence shows that Song people were aware of (and anxious about) the possibility and some occurrences of people making use of medical, religious, or exorcistic rhetoric prevalent at that time to disguise their sexual transgressions or to contrive other things. Records of such occurrences make other seemingly genuine ones suspicious and unsteady the way we read them as historians. The nuances of queerness that I found in the source materials lie in those dispositions of one’s sexual body that resist stabilization by the narrators (such as the unhappy girl selling wine on her own after her deity lover is chased away) and those attempts to confront the norms and to take advantage of the contradicting nature of the norms.

Women's expressions of sexual desire and their efforts to pursue bodily autonomy were dialectical to social, institutional, and ideological changes from the Six Dynasties to the Song. Women's such expressions and efforts appeared different from men's not because they were different in nature but because of their different positions in the traditional family and gender system. For example, a man would normally have much more control on his sexual body than his wife does: If he decides not to have sex with his wife anymore, he could simply do so; whereas a woman would need a good reason and powerful enough resource to do the same thing. From the Six Dynasties to the Song, women's strategies to resist marriage and sexual relationships with their husbands changed along with changes in religious institutions, popular beliefs in transcendentals and dreams, and the emergence of professional ritual masters. The former not only was influenced but also contributed to the development of the latter.

*

Discourse on the normative and the queer changes. When Hong Mai wrote *Yijian zhi*, he did so simply out of his strong interest in the strange and to witness the existence of the supernatural world. But as his dynasty (Song) and its northern neighbor (Jin) fell to the Mongols, a fourteenth-century commentator regarded stories recorded in *Yijian zhi* and its sequels (*Xu yijian zhi*, by Yuan Haowen) all as proofs of the famous Confucian aphorism, "Before a state comes to its end, there must be demons and evils" (國家將亡，必有妖孽).³⁴⁵ The strange then becomes the queer, and the queer body is associated with the body of the state. One direction that I envision to develop from this dissertation is to further uncover the relationship between the gendered sexual body and the body of the state—the political significance of queer bodies as moral/political heresy. For instance, the different approaches to the issue of sex transformation

³⁴⁵ Yuan Houwen *quanji* 48.1115. This aphorism is from *Liji*, "Zhongyong," 895b.

worth further investigation. *Yijian zhi* records two cases of women transforming into men: one is described as a mistake by the reincarnation bureau of the netherworld; the other is the effect of Daoist elixir. Both stories are told in a morally neutral tone, and the two FTMs are accepted by their families and communities as soon as their bodies are confirmed truly and completely male.³⁴⁶ The *Later Han History* tells about a distinguished wizard (*fangshu zhi shi* 方術之士) named Xu Deng, who is said to have transformed from a woman to a man. He attracts many followers and is thus executed by the local magistrate for “misleading people” (惑眾). Yet people continue to witness miracles in his shrine.³⁴⁷ Confucian commentaries, however, regard such incidents as signs (but not the cause) of political turbulence.³⁴⁸ Zhou Mi from the thirteen century recorded a case where a maid is executed after resisting sexual violation against her lord (a military officer) and being found that she “had two parts on her body [i.e. male and female genitals], and the deceitful forms in the front and in the back belong to different sexes” (身具二形，前後姦狀不一).³⁴⁹

Branching off from this dissertation, I wish to seriously consider the politics of queer bodies and violence against them through incorporating sources concerning transsexuals and hermaphrodites, adultery in legal cases, and those rather conventional sources in Chinese intellectual history such as the Neo-Confucian discourse on gender, sex, and desire and the Buddhist on emotions and desire. With what I have done in this dissertation, I envision new insights into and more thorough contextualization of the above materials. In the long term, I will continue the inquiry into the significance, conditions, and resources for people to be queer at

³⁴⁶ *Yijian zhi* 370-71, 730.

³⁴⁷ *Hou Han shu* 82.2741-42. This biography is later incorporated into a Song Daoist hagiography, *Sandong qunxian lu* 16.523.

³⁴⁸ *Wenxian tongkao* 308.2418, *Taiping yulan* 887.4074.

³⁴⁹ *Guixin zazhi* 37.

their time and the possibility that some might have chosen a queer life albeit knowing all the disadvantages.

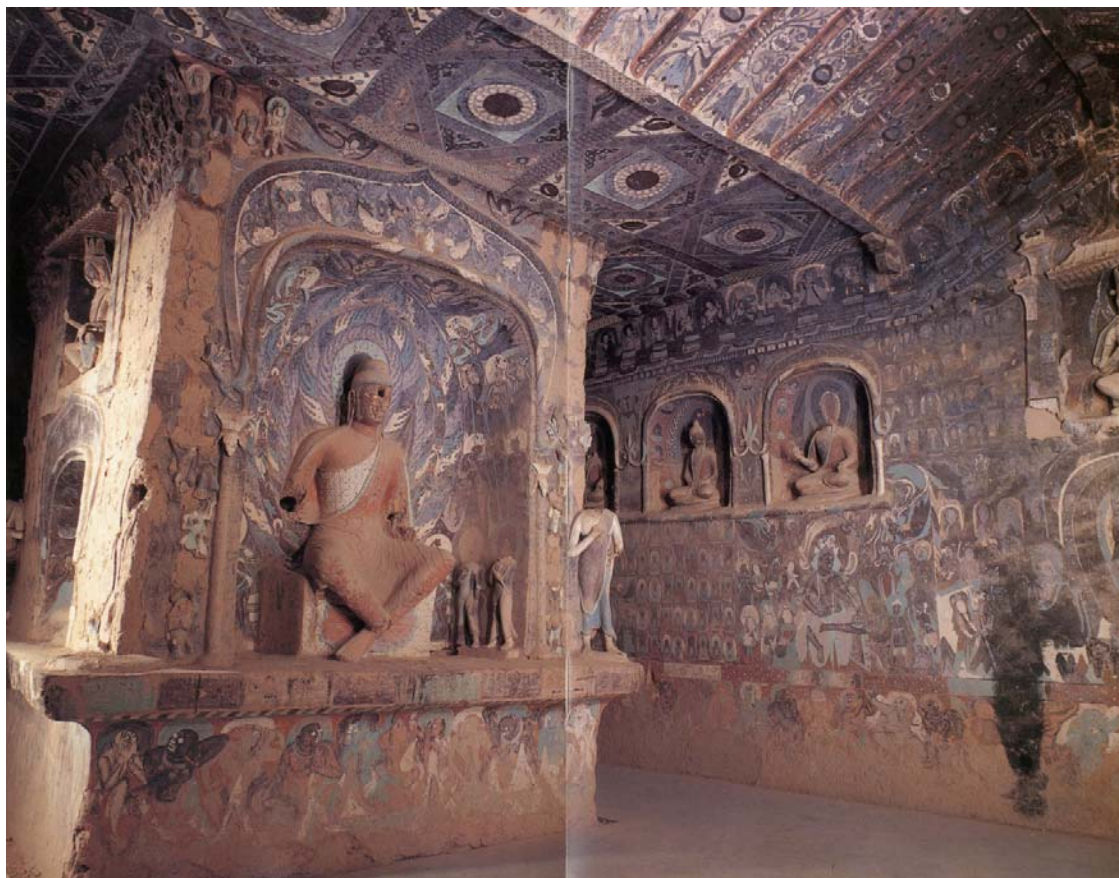


Fig. 1: Dunhuang, Cave 254, Northern Wei (439-534). *Yakshas* are on the base of the central pillar, beneath the Buddha's seat. (*Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogaoku*, vol.1, pl.26)



Fig. 2: Dunhuang, Cave 254, the base of the central pillar, East side (detail). Two *yakshas*. (*Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogaoku*, vol.1, pl.29)

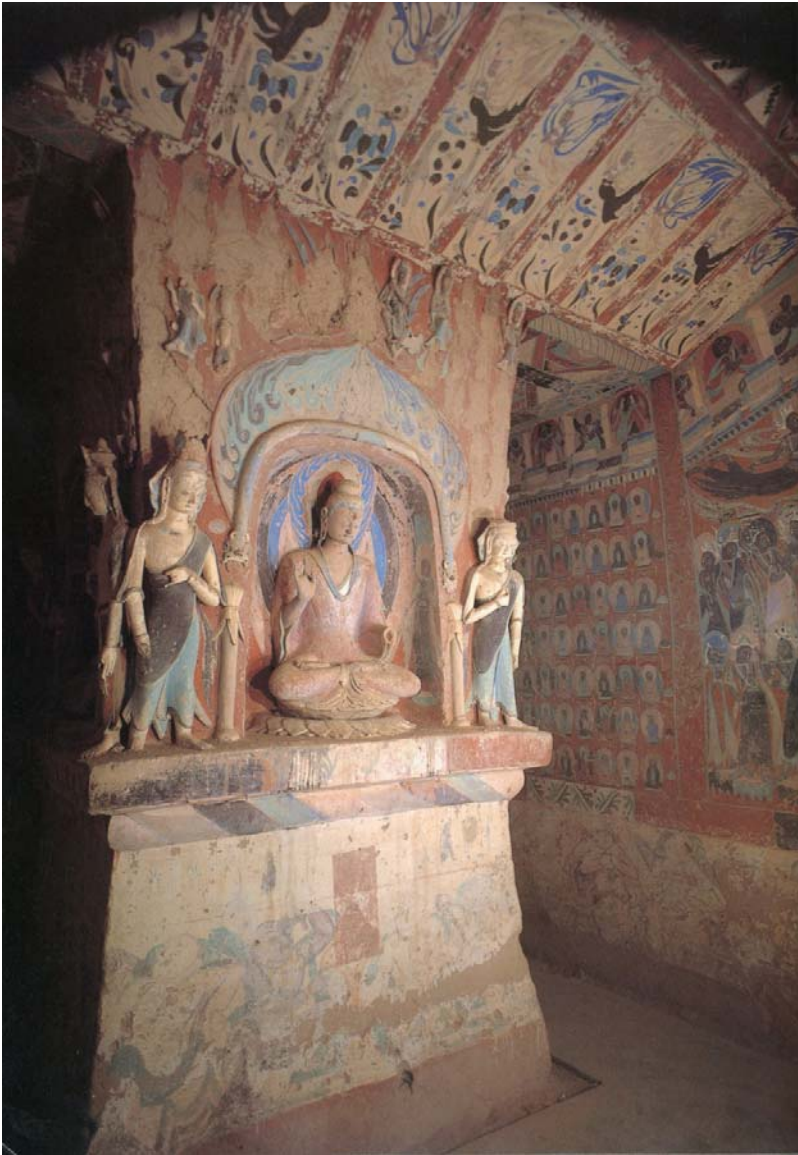


Fig. 3: Dunhuang, Cave 248, Northern Wei. (*Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogaoku*, vol.1, pl.79)



Fig. 4: Dunhuang, Cave 288, Western Wei (535-556). (*Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogaoku*, vol.1, pl.108)



Fig. 5: Dunhuang, Cave 428, Northern Zhou (557-581). (*Dunhuang: Caves of Singing Sands. Buddhist Art from the Silk Road*, pl.49)

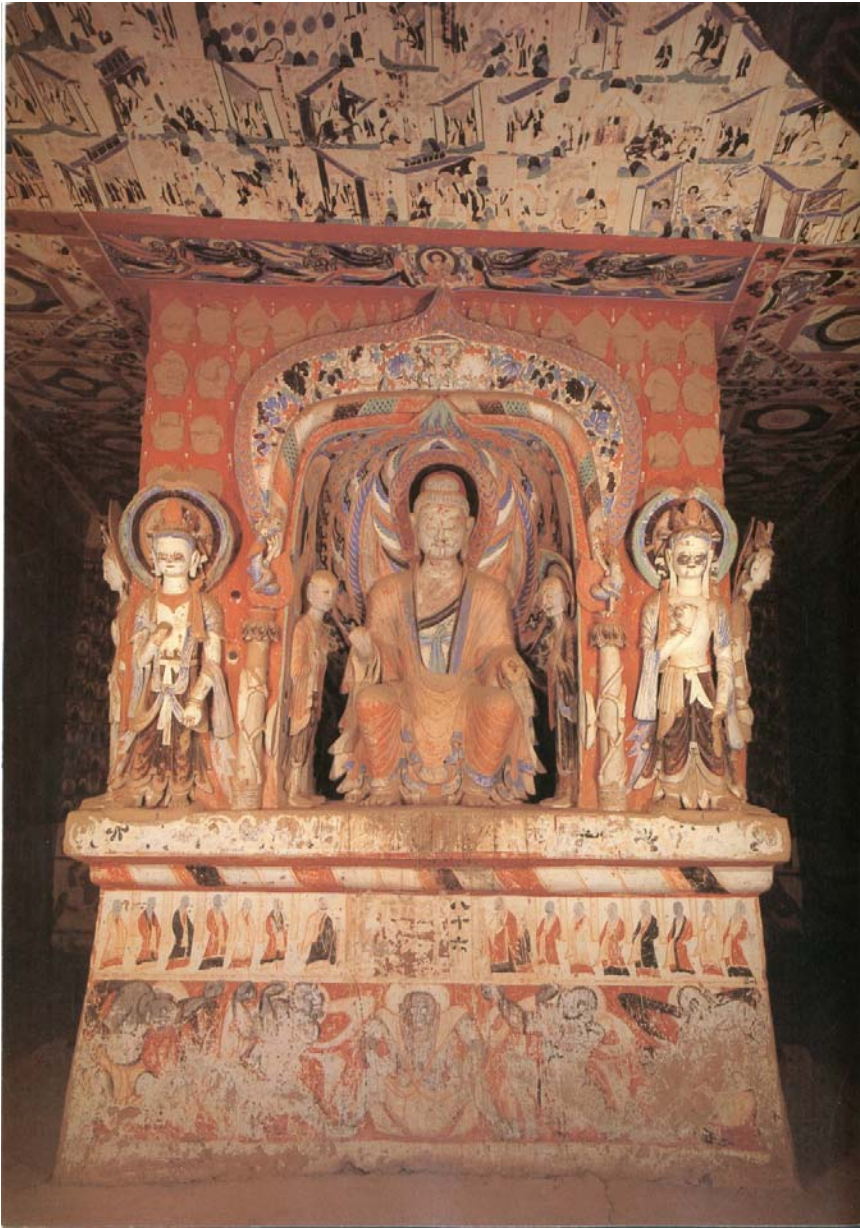


Fig. 6: Dunhuang, Cave 290, Northern Zhou (557-581). (*Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogaoku*, vol.1, pl.174)



Fig. 7a: Celestial King of the East. Dunhuang Cave 100 (Five Dynasties), northeast corner of the ceiling. (*Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogaoku* vol. 5, pl. 26)



Fig. 7b: Celestial King of the North. Dunhuang Cave 100, northwest corner of the ceiling. (*Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogaoku* vol. 5, pl. 27)



Fig. 7c: Celestial King of the South. Dunhuang Cave 100, southeast corner of the ceiling. (*Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogaoku* vol. 5, pl. 28)

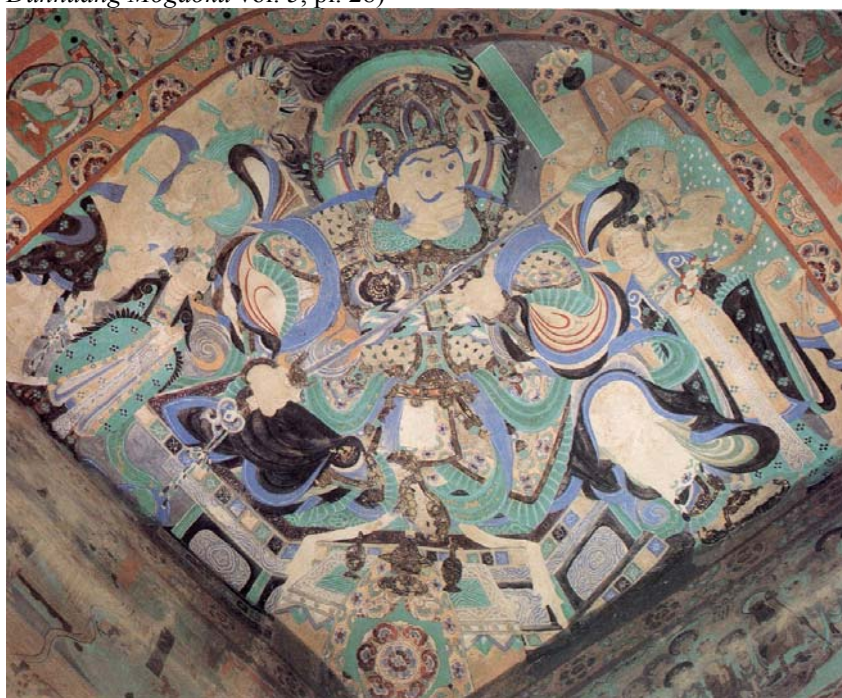


Fig. 7d: Celestial King of the West. Dunhuang Cave 100, southwest corner of the ceiling. (*Zhongguo shiku: Dunhuang Mogaoku* vol. 5, pl. 29)



Fig. 8: Hariti niche. Hariti at the center. A breast-feeding wet-nurse on the outer right. Beimen Cave 122, Dazu, Sichuan. (Photographed by Megan Bryson)



Fig. 8a: Breast-feeding wet nurse. Beimen Cave 122, Dazu, Sichuan. (Photographed by Megan Bryson, detail)



Fig. 9: Hariti Niche. Shimenshan Niche no.9, Dazu, Sichuan (Southern Song). (*Dazu shike diaosu quanji* vol. 4, pl. 66)



Fig. 9a: Wet-nurse. Shimenshan Niche no.9, Dazu, Sichuan (Southern Song). (*Dazu shike diaosu quanji* vol. 4, pl. 66, detail)



Fig. 10: Baodingshan, Dazu, Sichuan (1177-1249): Beast-feeding mother. (*Dazu shike diaosu quanji* vol. 2, pl. 81)



Fig. 11: Li Song (fl. 1190-1230), *The Skeleton Puppet Master* (*Kulou huanxi tu* 骷髏幻戲圖), fan painting, ink and color on silk. (*Zhongguo huihua quanji*, vol. 4, pl. 35)



Fig. 12: Li Song, The Peddler and Playing Children (Shidan yingxi tu 市擔嬰戲圖), fan painting, ink and color on silk. (Zhongguo huihua quanji, vol. 4, pl. 34)



Fig. 13: Zhao Zhifeng (center) and his disciples. Baodingshan, Dazu, Sichuan (1177-1249). (Angela Howard, *Summit of Treasures*, fig.12)



Fig. 14: Master Fu. Baodingshan, Dazu, Sichuan (1177-1249). (Angela Howard, *Summit of Treasures*, fig.46, detail)



Fig. 14a: Master Fu. Baodingshan, Dazu, Sichuan. (Angela Howard, *Summit of Treasures*, fig.47)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations:

- CSJC – *Congshu jicheng* 叢書集成. Shanghai: Shanghai Commercial Press.
- HWLC – *Han Wei Liuchao biji xiaoshuo daguan* 漢魏六朝筆記小說大觀. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999.
- HY – *Combined Indices to the Authors and Titles of Books in Two Collections of Taoist Literature: Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series No. 25.*
- SKQS – *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書. Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983-1986.
- SYBJ – *Song Yuan biji xiaoshuo daguan* 宋元筆記小說大觀. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001.
- TWDBJ – *Tang Wudai biji xiaoshuo daguan* 唐五代筆記小說大觀. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000.
- XXSKQS – *Xuxiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995-2002.

Primary Sources:

- Beiji qianjin yaofang* 備急千金要方 (*Prescriptions Worth a Thousand for Emergencies*), by Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581-682). Taipei: Zhongguo yiyao yanjiusuo, 1990.
- Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目 (*Compendium Materia Medica*), by Li Shizhen 李時珍 (1518-1593). Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1975.
- Bencao tujing* 本草圖經 (*Illustrated Materia Medica*), by Su Song 蘇頌 (1020-1101). Shang Zhijun collated. Hefei: Anhui kexue jishu chubanshe, 1994.
- Bencao yanyi* 本草衍義 (*Expanded Commentaries of Materia Medica*), by Kou Zongshi 寇宗奭. First published in 1116. XXSKQS.
- Biqiuni zhuan* (*Biqiuni zhuan jiaozhu*) 比丘尼傳校註 (*Lives of the Nuns*) (ca. 516), by Shi Baochang 釋寶唱. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006.
- Chushi yishu* (*Chushi yishu jiaoshi*) 褚氏遺書校釋 (*Chu Cheng's Posthumous Work*), by Chu Cheng (d. 483). Collated and annotated by Zhao Guohua. Zhengzhou: Henan kexue jishu chubanshe, 1986.
- Dazu shike diaosu quanji* 大足石刻雕塑全集. Guo Xiangying, Li Shumin eds. Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000.
- Dunhuang: Caves of Singing Sands. Buddhist Art from the Silk Road.* Text, Roderick Whitfield; photography, Seigo Otsuka. London: Textile & Art Publications, 1995.
- Furen daquan liangfang* 婦人大全良方 (*All-Inclusive Good Prescriptions for Women*), by Chen Ziming 陳自明 (1190-1272). Punctuated and collated by Yu Ying'ao et. al. Prefaced in 1237. Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe

- Guixin zazhi* 癸辛雜識, by Zhou Mi 周密 (1232-1298). Punctuated and collated by Wu Qiming. *Lidai shiliao biji congan* 歷代史料筆記叢刊. *Tang Song shiliao biji* 唐宋史料筆記. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988.
- Gujin yitong daquan* 古今醫統大全, by Xu Chunfu 徐春甫 (1520-1596). Compiled in 1556-1566. Edited by Cui Zhongping et al. Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1991.
- Han Yu quanji jiaozhu* 韓愈全集校注, by Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824). Compiled by Qu Shouyuan and Chang Sichun. Chengdu: Sichuan daxue chubanshe, 1996.
- Hou Han shu (Xinjiaoben Hou Han shu bing fubian shisan zhong)* 新校本後漢書并附編十三種, by Fan Ye 范曄 (398-445). Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1981.
- Ishinpō* 医心方, by Tanba no Yasuyori 丹波康賴 (912-995). Compiled in 982. Annotated by Zhao Mingshan et al. Shenyang: Liaoning kexue jishu chubanshe, 1996.
- Jin shu (Xinjiaoben Jin shu)* 新校本晉書, by Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (578-648) et. al. Edited by Yang Jialuo. Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1980.
- Kuoyi zhi* 括異志, by Zhang Shizheng 張師正 (b. 1016). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006.
- Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記, by Zhang Yanyuan 張彥遠 (fl. 847-875). Prefaced in 847. *Huashi congshu* 畫史叢書, vol.1. Taipei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1974.
- Liji (Liji zhushu)* 禮記注疏. In *Chongkan Songben shisanjing zhushu fu jiaokanji* 重刊宋本十三經注疏附校勘記. Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1965.
- Lishi zhenxian tidao tongjian* 歷世真仙體道通鑑 (*Comprehensive Mirror of True Transcendents Embodying the Dao of the Ages*). By Zhao Daoyi 趙道一. Prefaced in 1294. HY 296.
- Maoting kehua* 茅亭客話 (*Record of the Thatched Hut Dweller*), by Huang Xiufu 黃休復 (fl. late 10th-early 11th centuries). Collated and punctuated by Li Mengsheng. SYBJ.
- Nüke baiwen* 女科百問 (*One Hundred Questions on Women's Medicine*), by Qi Zhongfu 齊仲甫. Prefaced in 1220. XXSKQS.
- Puji fang* 普濟方 (*Prescriptions of Grand Salvation*), by Zhu Su 朱橚 (d. 1425). Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1959.
- Qianjin yifang* 千金翼方 (*Supplement to Prescriptions Worth a Thousand*), by Sun Simiao 孫思邈 (581-682). Taipei: Zhongguo yiyao yanjiusuo, 1974.
- Sandong qunxian lu* 三洞群仙錄, by Chen Baoguang 陳葆光 (Song). HY 1248.
- Sanyin jiyi bingzheng fanglun* 三因極一病症方論 (*Treatises on the Three Ultimate Origins of All Illnesses and Their Prescriptions*), by Chen Wuzhe 陳無澤. Compiled in ca. 1174. *Chen Wuzhe yixue quanshu*. Beijing: Zhongguo zhongyiyao chubanshe, 2005.
- Shanghan jiushi lun* 傷寒九十論 (*Treatises on Nineteen Manifestations of Cold Damage*), by Xu Shuwei's 許叔微 (ca. 1080-1154). *Xu Shuwei yixue quanshu*. Beijing: Zhongguo zhongyiyao chubanshe, 2006.
- Shanghan lun* 傷寒論 (*Treatises on Cold Damage Disorders*), by Zhang Ji 張機 (145-208).

- Edited by Li Peisheng. Taipei: Zhiyin chubanshe, 1999.
- Shiji (Xin jiaoben Shiji sanjia zhu)* 新校本史記三家注, by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145-86 B.C.). Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1981.
- Song hui yao jigao* 宋會要輯稿 (*Compiled Draft of Song Dynasty Institutions*), compiled by Xu Song 徐松 (1781-1848). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1957.
- Song shi (Xin jiaoben Song shi)* 新校本宋史 (*New Edited Song History*), by Tuo Tuo 脫脫 (1238-1298) et al. Taipei: Dingwen shuju, 1978.
- Song xingtong* 宋刑統, by Dou Yi 竇儀. Punctuated and collated by Xue Meiqing. Beijing: Falu chubanshe, 1999.
- Songdai chuanqi ji* 宋代傳奇集. Li Jianguo ed. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001.
- Songren yishi huibian* 宋人軼事彙編, collected by Ding Chuanjing 丁傳靖 (Qing). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981.
- Soushen houji (Xinji soushen houji)* 新輯搜神後記 (*Latter Record in Search of the Supernatural*), by Tao Qian 陶潛 (365-427). Collected and collated by Li Jianguo. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007.
- Soushen ji (Xinji soushen ji)* 新輯搜神記 (*Record in Search of the Supernatural*), by Gan Bao 干寶 (fl. ca. 317). Collected and collated by Li Jianguo. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007.
- Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, by Li Fang 李昉 (925-996). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008.
- Taiping huimin hejiju fang (Zengguang taiping huimin hejiju fang)* 增廣太平惠民和劑局方 (*Expanded Prescriptions of the Medical Bureau for Benefiting the People Under the Great Peace*), by Chen Shiwen 陳師文 et al. CSJC.
- Taiping shenghui fang* 太平聖惠方 (*Prescriptions of Sacred Benevolence Under the Great Peace*), by Wang Haiyin 王懷隱 et al. Compiled in 978-992. Taipei: Xinwenfeng chubanshe, 1980.
- Taiping yulan* 太平御覽, by Li Fang 李昉 (925-996) et al. In *Sibu congkan sanbian* 四部叢刊三編, Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1975.
- Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. Takakusu Junjiro, et al., eds. 100 vols. Tokyo: Daizo Shuppankai, 1922-33.
- Tang Song chuanqi xuan* 唐宋傳奇選. Edited and annotated by Zhang Youhe. Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1964.
- Tuhua jianwen zhi* 圖畫見聞志, by Guo Ruoxm 郭若虛 (fl. 1071-80). CSJC.
- Tujing yanyi bencao* 圖經衍義本草 (*Illustrated Expanded Commentaries of Materia Medica*), compiled by Kou Zongshi 寇宗奭, collated by Xu Hong 許洪. HY 768-769.
- Touxia lu* 投轄錄 (*Records from My Guests*), by Wang Mingqing 王明清. Compiled in 1159. Shanghai guji chubanshe ed. SYBJ.
- Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考, by Ma Duanlin 馬端臨 (Yuan). Taipei: Taiwan shangwu

- yinshuguan, 1987.
- Xianchun Lin'an zhi* 咸淳臨安志, by Qian Shuoyou 潛說友. *Song Yuan fangzhi congkan* 宋元方志叢刊. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990.
- Xu xian zhuan* 續仙傳 (*Continued Traditions of Transcendents*), by Shen Fen 沈汾 (937-975). SKQS.
- Xuanguai lu* 玄怪錄, by Niu Sengru 牛僧儒 (779-846). TWDBJ.
- Xuanhe hua pu* 宣和畫譜 (*Xuanhe Painting Catalog*). SKQS.
- Yangxing yanming lu* (*Xinyi yangxing yanming lu*) 新譯養性延命錄 (*Record of Nourishing and Prolonging Life*), by Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (452-536). Annotated and translated by Zeng Zhaonan. Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 2009.
- Yijian zhi* 夷堅志 (*Record of the Listener*), by Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123-1202). Punctuated and collated by He Zhuo. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006.
- Yixue zhengchuan* 醫學正傳, by Yu Tuan 虞搏. Prefaced in 1515. In *Zhonghua yishu jicheng* vol. 25. Beijing: Zhongyi guji chubanshe, 1999.
- Yiyuan* 異苑 (*Collections of the Strange*), by Liu Jingshu 劉敬叔 (5th century). HWLC.
- Youhuan jiwen* 遊宦紀聞 (*Record of What I Heard during My Itinerant Officialdom*), by Zhang Shinan 張世南. Zhang Maopeng annotated. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981.
- Youming lu* 幽明錄 (*Record between Dark and Bright*), by Liu Yiqing 劉義慶 (403-444). HWLC.
- Youyang zazu* 西陽雜俎, by Duan Chengshi 段成式 (?-863). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981.
- Yuan Haowen quanji* (*zengdingben*) 元好問全集 (增訂本), by Yuan Haowen 元好問 (1190-1257). Taiyuan: Shanxi guji chubanshe, 2004.
- Yunji qiqain* 雲笈七籤, by Zhang Junfang 張君房. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003.
- Zhen'gao* 真誥 (*The True Edict*), by Tao Hongjing 陶弘景 (452-536). Completed in 499. HY 1016.
- Zhengyi fawen taishang wailu yi* 正一法文太上外籙儀 (*Highest Observances for Outer Registers According to the Code of Orthodox Unity*). Six Dynasties. HY 1243.
- Zhongguo shiku. Dunhuang Mogaoku.* 中國石窟. 敦煌莫高窟. 5 volumes. Dunhuang wenwu yanjiusuo ed. Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1982-1987.
- Zhubing yuanhou lun* (*Zhubing yuanhou lun jiaozhu*) 諸病源候論校注 (*On the Origins and Symptoms of Various Diseases*), by Chao Yuanfang 晁元方. Compiled in 610. Annotated by Ding Guangdi. Beijing: Renmin weisheng chubanshe, 1991-1992.

Secondary Sources:

- Acker, William R. B. *Some T'ang and Pre-T'ang Texts on Chinese Painting*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974.
- Blanchard, Lara C. W. 2001. "Visualizing Love and Longing in Song Dynasty Paintings of

- Women.” PhD Dissertation. University of Michigan.
- Bray, Francesca. 1997. *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bossler, Beverly. 2002. “Shifting Identities: Courtesans and Literati in Song China.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. 62.1:5-37.
- Bumbacher, Stephan Peter. 2000. *The Fragments of the Daoxue zhuan: Critical Edition, Translation and Analysis of a Medieval Collection of Daoist Biographies*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
- Cahill, Suzanne E. 2003. “Discipline and Transformation: Body and Practice in the Lives of Daoist Holy Women of Tang China.” In *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, edited by Dorothy Ko et al., 251-78. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- _____. 2006. *Divine Traces of the Daoist Sisterhood: “Records of the Assembled Transcendents of the Fortified Walled City” by Du Guangting*. Magdalena: Three Pines Press.
- Campany, Robert Ford. 1996. *Strange Writing: Anomaly Accounts in Early Medieval China*. Albany, N. Y.: State University of New York Press.
- Cass, Victoria. 1999. *Dangerous Women: Warriors, Grannies and Geishas of the Ming*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Chen, Hsiu-fen. 2011. “Between Passion and Repression: Medical Views of Demon Dreams, Demonic Fetuses, and Female Sexual Madness in Late Imperial China.” *Late Imperial China* 32.1: 51-82.
- Chen, Xiufen (Hsiu-fen Chen) 陳秀芬. 2010. “Zai mengmei zhi jian: Zhongguo gudian yixue duiyu ‘meng yu gui jiao’ yu nüxing qingyu de gouxiang” 在夢寐之間：中國古典醫學對於「夢與鬼交」與女性情欲的構想. *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 81.4: 701-36.
- Clunas, Craig. 1997. *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Davis, Edward L. 2001. *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*. Honolulu, Hawai’i: University of Hawai’i Press.
- Davis, Richard H. ed. 1998. *Images, Miracles, and Authority in Asian Religious Traditions*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.
- Despeaux, Catherine, and Livia Kohn. 2003. *Women in Daoism*. Cambridge, MA: Three Pines Press.
- DeWoskin, Kenneth J., J. I. Crump, Jr. 1996. *In Search of the Supernatural : The Written Record*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- Dikötter, Frank. 1995. *Sex, Culture and Modernity in China: Medical Science and the Construction of Sexual Identities in the Early Republican Period*. Honolulu, Hawai’i: University of Hawai’i Press.
- Ebrey, Patrica Buckley. 1993. *The Inner Quarters: Marriage and the Lives of Chinese Women in the Sung Period*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.

- _____. 2002. *Women and the Family in Chinese History*. New York: Routledge.
- _____. 2008. *Accumulating Culture: The Collections of Emperor Huizong*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1990. *The History of Sexuality. Vol. I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Vintage Books.
- Freedberg, David. 1989. *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Furth, Charlotte. 1994. "Rethinking Van Gulik: Sexuality and Reproduction in Traditional Chinese Medicine." In Christina K. Gilmartin et al. eds., *Engendering China: Women, Culture and the State*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Pp.125-46.
- _____. 1999. *A Flourishing Yin: Gender in China's Medical History, 960-1665*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Goldin, Paul Rakita. 2002. *The Culture of Sex in Ancient China*. Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Goldschmidt, Asaf. 2009. *The Evolution of Chinese Medicine, Song Dynasty, 960-1200*. New York: Routledge.
- Grant, Beata. 2008. "Women, Gender and Religion in Premodern China: A Brief Introduction." *Nan Nü* 10: 2-21.
- Gregory, Peter, and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. Eds. 1999. *Buddhism in the Sung*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Hansen, Valerie. 1990. *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Howard, Angela F. 2001. *Summit of Treasures: Buddhist Cave Art of Dazu, China*. Trumbull, CT: Weatherhill.
- Hsieh, Daniel. 2008. *Love and Women in Early Chinese Fiction*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.
- Huang, Shih-shan Susan. 2005. "Imagining Efficacy: The Common Ground between Buddhist and Daoist Pictorial Art in Song China." *Orientalism* 36.3 (April, 2005): 63-69.
- Huntington, Rania. 2000. "Foxes and Sex in Late Imperial Chinese Narrative." *Nan Nü* 2.1: 78-128.
- _____. 2003. *Alien Kind: Foxes and Late Imperial Chinese Narrative*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center.
- Hymes, Robert. 1987. "Not Quite Gentlemen? Doctors in Sung and Yuan." *Chinese Science* 8: 9-76.
- _____. 2005. "Truth, Falsity, and Pretense in Song China: An Approach through the Anecdotes of Hong Mai." *Chūgoku shigaku* 中國史學 (Tokyo) 15: 1-26.
- _____. 2006. "Getting the Words Right: Speech, Vernacular Language, and Classical Language in Song Neo-Confucian 'Records of Words.'" *Journal of Song-Yuan Studies* 36: 25-55.
- Inglis, Alister D. 2006. *Hong Mai's Record of the Listener and Its Song Dynasty Context*. Albany,

- N. Y.: State University of New York Press.
- _____. 2007. "A Textual History of Hong Mai's *Yijian zhi*." *T'oung Pao* 93: 283-368.
- _____. 2009. Translated. *Yijian zhi xuan* 夷堅志選. *Selections from Record of the Listener*. Beijing: Waiwen chubanshe.
- Judge, Joan, and Hu Ying. 2011. Eds. *Beyond Exemplar Tales: Women's Biography in Chinese History*. Berkely, Calif.: University of California Press.
- Karras, Ruth Mazo. 2005. *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing unto Others*. New York: Routledge.
- Ko, Dorothy. *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- _____. 2005. *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.
- Lebre, Emmanuelle. 2000. "La conversion de Hārītī au Buddha: origine du thème iconographique et interprétations picturales chinoises." *Arts asiatiques* (Paris: A. Maisonneuve) 55: 98-119.
- Lee, Jen-der. 2003. "Gender and Medicine in Tang China." *Asia Major* 16.2: 1-32.
- Leung, Angela Ki-che. 2003. "Medical Learning from the Song to the Ming." In Paul Smith and Richard von Glahn eds., *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Asia Center. Pp.374-398.
- Li, Jianmin 李建民. 1996. "Furen meidao kao: Chuantong jiating de chongtu yu huajie fangshu" 「婦人媚道」考—傳統家庭的衝突與化解方術. *Xin shixue* 新史學 7.4: 1-32.
- _____. 2005. "Dumai yu Zhongguo zaoqi yangsheng shijian: Qijing bamai de xin yanjiu zhi er" 督脈與中國早期養生實踐—奇經八脈的新研究之二. *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 76.2: 249-313.
- Li, Xiaojiang 李小江 et. al. 2002. *Lishi, shixue yu xingbie* 歷史、史學與性別. Nanjing: Jiangxu renmin chubanshe.
- Li, Zhende (Jen-der Lee) 李貞德. 1997. "Han Tang jian qiuzi yifang shitan: Jianlun fuke lanshang yu xingbie lunshu" 漢唐間求子醫方試探：兼論婦科濫觴與性別論述 (Reproductive Medicine in Late Antiquity and Early Medieval China: Gender Discourse and the Birth of Gynecology). *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 68.2: 283-367.
- _____. 2008. *Nüren de Zhongguo yiliao shi: Han Tang zhijian de jiankang zhaogu yu xingbie* 女人的中國醫療史—漢唐之間的健康照顧與性別. Taipei: Sanmin shuju.
- _____. 2009. Edited. *Zhongguo shi xinlun. Xingbie shi fence* 中國史新論. 性別史分冊. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan; Lianjing chubanshe.
- Lin, Fushi 林富士. 2008. "Luelun zaoqi Daojiao yu fangzhongshu de guanxi" 略論早期道教與房中術的關係 (On the relationship between early Daoism and the bedchamber arts). In *Zhongguo zhonggu shiqi de zongjiao yu yiliao* 中國中古時期的宗教與醫療. Pp.333-402.

- Taipei: Lianjing chubanshe.
- Liu, Yuanru 劉苑如. 2002. *Shenti, xingbie, jieji: Liuchao zhiguai de changyi lunshu yu xiaoshuo meixue* 身體・性別・階級：六朝志怪的常異論述與小說美學. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo.
- Lochrie, Karma, Peggy McCracken, and James A. Schultz eds. 1997. *Constructing Medieval Sexuality*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Lochrie, Karma. 2005. *Heterosyncrasies: Female Sexuality When Normal Wasn't*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Lu, Jintang 盧錦堂. 2006. *Tai ping guangji yinshu kao* 《太平廣記》引書考. Pan Meiyue and Du Jiexiang eds. *Gudian wenxian yanjiu jikan* 古典文獻研究輯刊, ser. 3, vol. 2. Taipei: Huamulan wenhua chubanshe.
- Luo, Shiping 羅世平. 2006. "Zhang Yanyuan *Lidai minghua ji* de zhengli yu yanjiu." *Zaoxing yishu xuekan* 造型藝術學刊 (2006): 51-69.
- Ma, Jixing 馬繼興. 1985 "Yixin fang zhong de gu yuxue wenxian chutan" 『医心方』的古医学文献初探. *Nihon ishigaku zasshi* 日本医史学雜誌 31.3: 30-74.
- Mann, Susan. 1997. *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press.
- _____. 2007. *The Talented Women of the Zhang Family*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.
- McKnight, Brian E. 1992. *Law and Order in Sung China*. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Mei, Jialing 梅家玲. 1997. "Liuchao zhiguai ren gui yinyuan gushi zhong de liangxing guanxi: yi xingbie wei zhongxin de kaocha" 六朝志怪人鬼姻緣故事中的兩性關係—以「性別」問題為中心的考察. In Hong Shuling et. al. eds., *Gudian wenxue yu xingbie yanjiu* 古典文學與性別研究. Taipei: Liren shuju. Pp. 95-127.
- Sang, Tze-lan D. 2003. *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Schultz, James A. 2006. "Heterosexuality as a Threat to Medieval Studies." *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 15.1: 14-29.
- Seidel, Anna. 1987. "Post-Mortem Immortality or: The Taoist Resurrection of the Body." In S. Shaked, D. Shulman, G. G. Stroumsa eds., *Gilgul: Essays on Transformation, Revolution and Permanence in the History of Religions*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987.
- Shi, Shouqian (Shou-chien Shih) 石守謙. 1996. "'Gan wei hua rou bu hua gu' biejie: jianlun 'ganshen tongling' guan zai Zhongguo huashi shang de moluo 「幹惟畫肉不畫骨」別解—兼論「感神通靈」觀在中國畫史上的沒落." In *Fengge yu shibian: Zhongguo huihuashi lunji* 風格與世變：中國繪畫史論集 (Taipei: Yunchen wenhua), pp.55-85.
- Soothil, William Edward and Lewis Hodous. 1977. *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms: with Sanskrit and English Equivalents and a Sanskrit-Pali Index*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. Reprint of the 1937 ed. Published by K. Paul, London.

- Soper, Alexander Coburn. *Kuo Jo-Hsü's Experiences in Painting (T'u-Hua Chien-Wen Chih): An Eleventh Century History of Chinese Painting Together with the Chinese Text in Facsimile*. Washington, D.C.: American Council of Learned Societies, 1951.
- Tsai, Kathryn Ann. 1994. *Lives of the Nuns: Biographies of Chinese Buddhist Nuns from the Fourth to Sixth Centuries*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Owen, Stephen. 1996. *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911*. New York, N. Y.: W. W. Norton & Company.
- Von Glahn, Richard. 2004. *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Weeks, Jeffery. 2003. *Sexuality*. Second edition. London: Routledge.
- Wile, Douglas. 1992. *Art of the Bedchamber: The Chinese Sexual Yoga Classics including Women's Solo Meditation Texts*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Wilms, Sabine. 2005. "“Ten Times More Difficult to Treat”: Female Bodies in Medical Texts from Early Imperial China.” *Nan Nü* 7.2: 182-215.
- Wu, Yi-li. 2002. "Ghost Fetuses, False Pregnancies, and the Parameters of Medical Uncertainty in Classical Chinese Gynecology.” *Nan Nü* 4.2: 170-206.
- _____. 2010. *Reproducing Women: Medicine, Metaphor, and Childbirth in Late Imperial China*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.
- Xie, Mingliang 謝明良. 2009. "Guizimu zai Zhongguo: Cong kaogu ziliao tansuo qi tuziang de qi yuan yu bianqian" 鬼子母在中國—從考古資料探索其圖像的起源與變遷. *Guoli Taiwan daxue meishushi yanjiu jikan* 國立台灣大學美術史研究集刊 (Taipei: Institute of Art History, National Taiwan University) 27.
- Xie, Mingxun 謝明勳. 2011. *Liuchao zhiguai xiaoshuo yanjiu shulun: Huigu yu lunshi* 六朝志怪小說研究述論：回顧與論釋. Taipei: Liren shuju.
- Xu, Man. 2011. "Gender and Burial in Imperial China: An Investigation of Women's Space in Fujian Tombs of the Song Era (960-1279)." *Nan Nü* 13: 1-51.
- Yan, Huiqi 顏慧琪. 1994. *Liuchao zhiguai xiaoshuo yilei yinyuan gushi yanjiu* 六朝志怪小說異類姻緣故事研究. Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe.
- Yates, Robin D. S. 2005. "Medicine for Women in Early China: A Preliminary Survey." *Nan Nü* 7.2: 127-81.
- Yü, Chün-Fang. 2001. *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Zhao, Bangyan 趙邦彥. 1931. "Jiuzimu kao" 九子母考, *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊 2/3: 261-74.
- Zeitlin, Judith T. 2007. *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

VITA

Hsiao-wen Cheng

EDUCATION

June 2012 Ph.D.	University of Washington, Seattle	History
June 2005 M.A.	National Taiwan University	Chinese Language and Literature
June 2002 B.A.	National Taiwan University	Chinese Language and Literature

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Fellowship for Doctoral Candidate, 2011-2012: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica (Taiwan).

China Times Young Scholar Award, 2010-2011: China Times Cultural Foundation (New York).

Graduate School Dissertation Fellowship, Spring 2010: Graduate School, University of Washington.

Aldon Duane Bell Award for Women's History, 2008-2009: History Department, University of Washington.

Hsiao Kung-Chuan Fellowship, 2008-2009, Autumn 2010: China Studies Program, University of Washington.

History Departmental Fellowship, Autumn 2006-Winter 2007, Autumn 2009: History Department, University of Washington.

Outstanding Student Scholarship, 2005-2010: Hsing Tien Kong Culture and Education Development Foundation (Taiwan).

Mr. and Mrs. Sung Pin-Yi Memorial Scholarship, 2003-2004: Department of Chinese Language and Literature, National Taiwan University.

PUBLICATIONS

“Authority or Alternative? Rethinking Gender and the Circulation of Medical Knowledge in Song China, 960-1279.” *Gender Forum: An Internet Platform for Gender and Women's Studies*, 24 (2009). Cologne, Germany: English Department, University of Cologne.

<http://www.genderforum.org/issues/apparatus-xy/authority-or-alternative/>

“A Theme and Its Variations: Reflections on the Theory Traveling from Dai Zhen (1724-1777) to Ling Tingkan (1757-1809) and Zhang Xuecheng (1738-1801)” (In Chinese). *Studies in Chinese Literature*, 19 (Dec. 2004). Taipei: Department of Chinese Literature, National Taiwan University.