

Understanding “Slandering”:
A Study of Luo Yin’s *Writings of Slandering*

Shiwei Zhou

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

Master of Arts

University of Washington

2020

Committee:

Ping Wang

William G. Boltz

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

Asian Languages and Literature

©Copyright 2020
Shiwei Zhou

University of Washington

Abstract

Understanding “Slandering”:
A Study of Luo Yin’s *Writings of Slandering*

Shiwei Zhou

Chair of the Supervisory Committee:
Professor Ping Wang
Department of Asian Languages and Literature

This thesis is an attempt to study a collection of fifty-eight short essays-*Writings of Slandering*-written and compiled by the late Tang scholar Luo Yin. The research questions are who are slandered, why are the targets slandered, and how. The answering of the questions will primarily rely on textual studies, accompanied by an exploration of the tradition of “slandering” in the literati’s world, as well as a look at Luo Yin’s career and experience as a persistent imperial exam taker. The project will advance accordingly: In the introduction, I will examine the concept of “slandering” in terms of how the Chinese literati associate themselves with it and the implications of slandering or being slandered. Also, I will try to explain how Luo Yin fits into the picture. Chapter two will focus on the studies of the historical background of the mid-to-late Tang period and the themes of the essays. Specifically, it will spell out the individuals, the group of people, and the political and social phenomenon slandered in the essays. Then, it will analyze the significance of the targets and Luo’s sentiments towards them. Chapter three will tackle the problem of “How did Luo slander?” from two perspectives. It will discuss the great variety of the prose genres Luo adopted in the fifty-eight essays, with special attention to his efforts to model the ancient-style literary genres and make innovative adaptations. Also, I will study the literary styles and metaphors that the author took to display his erudition and writing skills. Finally, the project will conclude with the answers to the research questions raised around “slandering” and shed light on the literary status and significance of the *Writings of Slandering* as well as Luo Yin.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to Professor WANG Ping and Professor William G. BOLTZ at the University of Washington, for their invaluable advice and patient guidance, and Dr. Ian CHAPMAN from the East Asia Library, for providing valuable information and resource for my research during the time of semi-quarantine. Also, it would not be possible for me to complete the thesis without the support of the Department of Asian Languages and Literature as well as Maurice D. and Lois M. Schwartz, who generously granted me the fellowship.

I am truly blessed to have parents who have always encouraged me to pursue my career. My gratitude goes to friends as well. At dawns and dusks, my sister-like friend HU Xi accompanied me through writer's blocks and personal ups and downs. HE Ling, whose friendship I have cherished for the last sixteen years, searched for rare-edition books for me from my faraway homeland.

It has been a time of hardships, for me and all. Still, dark days pass.

To the ones who care for me, I am much obliged.

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	6
II. On “The Slandered”-Analyses of Themes	30
II.1 An Overview of the Political and Social Environment during the Mid-to-late Tang Dynasty.....	30
II.2 On the Authorities.....	46
II.3 On Society and Time.....	64
III. On the Slandering Devices-Analyses of Prose Genres and Rhetorical Devices.....	76
III.1 On the Prose Genres.....	76
III.2 One the Rhetorical Devices.....	103
IV. Conclusion	119
Bibliography.....	131

INTRODUCTION

The Classical Chinese literature of over two thousand years has primarily represented a history of the ups and downs of the Chinese literati, as a group as well as individuals. Since the Spring and Autumn period, the emergence of the *shi* 士 group had introduced opportunities to establish oneself and one's words for those who were socially less privileged, those who fell out of the high aristocracy. For thousands of years, the Chinese literati, though often respected, were deprived of almost all means but fortunately endowed with the most potent tool-writing-to express themselves. The writings were by no means merely personal; instead, the messages to be and being delivered revealed so much. If we venture to understand the politics, the society, the well-being of all people, from the emperor to a peasant, one of the most effective ways, if not the only way, is to read the writings of the literati. That said, one can never expect the reading to be an easy task. The intentional and unintentional abstruseness consisted of the beauty and elegance of the writings. More importantly, the Chinese literati, as one of the most sophisticated groups of people, had no simple minds. The deciphering of the texts thus requires a careful reading of the minds of the literati. It calls for the understanding of their experience, mindset, value system, collectively and individually. Moreover, we should never ignore the tradition they inherited and followed as writers.

One universal tradition had been set up since the official establishment of the Confucian school in the Han 漢 dynasty. The fundamental moral principles in Confucianism-the Five Relationships (*wu lun* 五倫) had penetrated deep into every aspect of the lives of the Han Chinese. For the literati, the first and foremost concern was the appropriate handling of the relationship between the lord (*jun* 君) and the vassal (*chen* 臣). The scope, after Confucius's time, extended to apply to the ruler and the officials broadly. Whether one was holding a position at court as high as the Grand Councilor or as low as a clerk, he was to submit himself to the ruler with no resistance or even a slight hesitance. The golden rule in the *Analects* (*Lun yu* 論語) that "a lord should behave like a lord; a vassal should behave like a vassal" applied not only to those who fortunately held a

government post but also those who ambitiously pursued a career as a government official.¹ When the imperial examination was set up, millions of exam takers, although not yet employed, consciously behaved as officials-to-be. The most efficient tool for them to speak to the authorities, or even the “Son of Heaven” (*Tianzi* 天子), as part of their duties, was no other than writing.

The protagonist of this thesis-Luo Yin 羅隱 (833-910 C.E.) fell into the category of traditional Chinese scholars. His masterwork *Writings of Slandering* (*Chan shu* 讒書) was an excellent reflection and representation of an exam taker’s efforts to be a future *chen*. The prominent late Tang 唐 scholar Luo Yin, style-named Zhaojian 昭諫, was a native of Xindeng 新登 County of Yuhang 餘杭 Prefecture, located in what is now modern Hangzhou 杭州 of Zhejiang 浙江 Province. He was born in the seventh year of Dahe 大和 reign and lived through the end of the Tang dynasty.² Luo passed away in the third year of the Kaiyuan 開元 reign of the Later Liang 後梁 dynasty, at seventy-seven years old. As a passionate young scholar, Luo started his challenging and frustrating career as an imperial exam taker at the age of twenty-eight. Though talented and persistent, he failed the exam six times.³ Despite that he was excellent in composing poetry, Luo

¹The famous quote comes from the chapter “Yan Yuan” 顏淵:

齊景公問政於孔子。孔子對曰：“君君，臣臣，父父，子子。”

Lord Jing of Qi inquired of Confucius about the government. Confucius replied, saying: “A lord should behave like a lord; a vassal should behave like a vassal; a father should behave like a father; a son should behave like a son.”

See He Yan 何晏 (d. 249 C.E.) comm., *Lun yu ji jie* 論語集解, *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊, 6.17a-b

² Dahe was the name of Emperor Wenzong’s 文宗 (809-840 C.E.) reign. The seventh year was 833. The Tang dynasty ended in 907.

³ There have been debates on how many times Luo Yin failed the imperial exams. In *The Supplements to the History of the Five Dynasties* (*Wudai shi bu* 五代史補), the account was six times:

羅隱在科場恃才傲物，尤為公卿所惡，故六舉不第。

Luo Yin was arrogant and insolent because of his talents. He was especially hated by the aristocrats.

Therefore, he failed the imperial examination six times.

In *The Complete History of Wuyue* (*Wuyue bei shi* 吳越備史), the account was ten times:

凡十上不中第。

For the ten times that he took the imperial exam, he did not pass for one single time.

failed to attain an official post at the Tang government. The cause of the failure was probably more complicated than his unsuccessful attempts at the exams. It was a time of discord and corruption, where people suffered from wars and starvation. “The juniors of the powerful families made toasts and got drunk incessantly, while six or seven out of ten of the talented young scholars from the humble families were deprecated.”⁴ Hence, “when the result came out, the names on the list were all the juniors from the powerful and wealthy families.”⁵ He was, like many others who lacked aristocratic backgrounds, “pushed aside by the young nobles.”⁶ More likely, he was disliked or might even have been banned by the authorities for his acrimonious writings. In a time of peace and order, one expects lauds, while in a time of turmoil, the writings could be pungent and bitter. Luo expressed all his discontent with the social and political environment as well as his situation in his writings. The account in *The Old History of the Five Dynasties* (*Jiu Wudai shi* 舊五代史) concludes that “His poems were renowned all around the country, and he was especially good at historical subjects. Yet, the poems were mostly ridicule and mockery.” For this reason, Luo was unable to pass the imperial exam.⁷ Luo was even blunter in compiling his short essays than writing poems that he marketed the collection of his writings as “slandering”. As a result, “though popular,

See “Luo Yin dong gui” 羅隱東歸 in Tao Yue 陶岳 (d. 1022 C.E.), *Wudai shi bu* 五代史補, *Ziteng shuwu suokeshu* 紫藤書屋所刻書, 1.6a-6b; See also Qian Yan 錢儼 (937-1003 C.E.), *Wuyue bei shi* 吳越備史, *Sibu congan*, 1.45a

⁴ “貢舉猥濫，勢門子弟，交相酬酢，寒門俊造，十棄六七。” See Liu Xu 劉昫 (887-946 C.E.) comp., *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1975), 164.4278

⁵ “榜出，率皆權豪子弟。” See “Fang zheng” 方正 in Wang Dang 王彥 (fl. 1101-1110 C.E.), Zhou Xunchu 周勛初 comm., *Tang yu lin jiaozheng* 唐語林校證 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 3.214

⁶ “竟為貴遊子弟所排。” See Li Fang 李昉 (925-996 C.E.) comp., *Taiping guang ji* 太平廣記 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 184.1375

⁷ “詩名于天下，尤長於詠史，然多所譏諷，以故不中第。” See Xue Juzheng 薛居正 (912-981 C.E.), *Jiu Wudai shi* 舊五代史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976), 24.326

the *Writings of Slandering* only won fame for him [instead of a government post]).”⁸ Luo’s acrid writing style was not only a result of the darkness of society but possibly also a reflection of his personality. Based on the account in *The Biographies of the Tang Gifted Scholars* (*Tang caizi zhuan* 唐才子傳), Luo Yin “had an arrogant personality. He indulged in high-sounding tirades. When he arrived, all the audience felt his energy. He was fond of bantering and joking, and he always spoke up when he had feelings and thoughts.” Moreover, Luo Yin “squinted at others obliviously relying on his talent. People quite disliked him and shunned him. He regarded himself as worthy of given great assignments. Yet, he failed the imperial exams repeatedly and lived upon various mark lords one after another. He relied on others to accomplish things and deeply resented the House of Tang. His poetry and essays were mostly made up of ridicule and mockery. Even the deserted ancestral temple and wooden figurine, none of them could get away from it.”⁹ It would not be surprising that “most of the aristocrats and high officials were scorned by him” because Luo was “narrow-minded and impetuous,” and “he always made mockery and scorn.”¹⁰ The accounts were, of course, subjective opinions and should not be taken as complete truths. For one thing, it was unfair to claim that Luo “deeply resented the House of Tang”. When the House of Tang perished, Luo persuaded Qian Liu 錢鏐 (852-932 C.E.) to suppress the Later Liang government, which was established through usurpation. Although Qian did not take his advice, he regarded Luo as right-minded.¹¹

⁸ Luo Yin’s contemporary Luo Gun 羅衮 (fl. 900 C.E.) commented on the *Writings of Slandering* in a poem addressed to Luo Yin: “讒書雖盛一名休。” See Peng Dingqiu 彭定求 (1645-1719 C.E.) comp., *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 734.8386

⁹ “性簡傲，高談闊論，滿座風生。好諧謔，感遇輒發……隱恃才忽睨，眾頗憎忌。自以當得大用，而一第落落，傳食諸侯，因人成事，深怨唐室。詩文凡以譏諷為主，雖荒祠木偶，莫能免者。” See Xin Wenfang 辛文房 (fl.1300 C.E.), *Tang caizi zhuan* 唐才子傳 (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe 古典文學出版社, 1957), 156-157

¹⁰ “褊急性能，動必嘲訕。” See Xin, *Tang caizi zhuan*, 156-157
“王公大夫，多為所薄。” See Tao, *Wudai shi bu*, 1.6a-6b

¹¹ The late Tang warlord Qian Liu was the founder of the Wuyue 吳越 kingdom. He submitted himself to the rule of the Tang government, and then Later Liang and the Later Tang 後唐. He was entitled by the three

Luo Yin had drifted from place to place in his forties, wishing to find a patron. Finally, he was recognized at his homeland-Yuhang. When he returned at the age of fifty-five, the Regional Chief Qian Liu, who later became King of Wuyue, admired his talent and offered him various important posts in Luo Yin's later life.

The *Writings of Slandering* was compiled and named by Luo Yin in 867 when the disappointed scholar was thirty-five years old, had been staying in the capital, and preparing for the imperial exams for years. It is unclear how many and which essays Luo included in the collection when he first compiled it in the year of Dinghai 丁亥.¹² When he tidied up the collection and wrote the second preface two years later, there were obvious changes in the collection of the essays. For example, the article “Mourning for District Magistrate Cui” (“Diao Cui Xianling” 弔崔縣令) in Volume Five was written in the summer of the Dinghai year, while according to his first preface, the *Writings of Slandering* was compiled in the first month of the Dinghai year.¹³ Possibly, Luo

governments King of Yue 越, King of Wu 吳, and King of Wuyue 吳越, respectively. For Qian's biography, see Ouyang Xiu, *Xin Wudai shi* 新五代史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 67.835-844 and Xue, *Jiu Wudai shi*, 2133.1766-1773

For the account where Luo failed to persuade Qian, see Wu Renchen 吳任臣 (1628-1689 C.E.), *Shiguo chunqiu* 十國春秋 (Taipei: Guoguang shuju 國光書局, 1962), 77.31.1-31.2

¹² According to the Chinese Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches (*Tiangan dizhi* 天干地支) year-numbering system, the year of Dinghai is the twenty-fourth year in a sixty-year cycle, which was 867 C.E. according to the western calendar. Luo said in the preface:

丁亥年春正月，取其所為書誡之。

In the year of Dinghai, in the first month, he took out his writings and condemned them.

See “*Chan shu xu*” 讒書序 in Li Dingguang 李定廣 ed. and annt., *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian* 羅隱集係年校箋 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 2013), 661-662

I will use Li's version for all *Chan shu* articles in this thesis. Based on my interpretation of the texts, the punctuations may be altered and will not be specified.

¹³ The article said:

丁亥年夏前晉陽崔縣令死於通政里。

In the summer of the Dinghai year, Cui, the previous District Magistrate of Jinyang died at Tongzheng li.

See “Diao Cui Xianling” 弔崔縣令 in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 791-793

added some new articles that he wrote during the last two years into the collection. It is also possible that the later compilers did the job. One significant reason is that the themes, genres, and literary styles of the articles in Volume Five apparently differed from those in the other four volumes. The *Writings of Slandering* was by no means little-known during Luo's time, but it had almost been lost through the passing-down by later generations. The Southern Song 南宋 bibliophile Chen Zhensun 陳振孫 (1179-1262 C.E.) mentioned in the *Commented library catalog of the Zhizhai Studio* (*Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題), "Yin also had writings such as the *Allegories of Huaihai* (*Huaihai yuyan* 淮海寓言), the *Writings of Slandering*, and so on. I searched for them but have not found them."¹⁴ In the Yuan 元 Dynasty, Luo Yunshu 羅雲叔, a descendant of Luo Yin, reprinted the book. The edition was kept and made good use of by later editors.¹⁵ In the Ming 明 Dynasty, although people made private copies, it became hard to find fine editions from the Song and Yuan times. When the Qing 清 government compiled the *Siku quanshu* 四庫全書, the *Writings of Slandering* was absent in the *Collection of Luo Zhaojian* (*Luo Zhaojian ji* 羅昭諫集). The recent and most widespread and reputable version we have is the *Collectanea of the Pavillion of the Veneration of Classics* (*Baijinglou congshu* 拜經樓叢書) version. This collection includes the sixty essays in five volumes, with twelve pieces each. The contents of two essays in Volume Two were not extant anymore. It was compiled and printed for dissemination by the famous Qing Dynasty bibliophile Wu Qian 吳騫 (1733-1813 C.E.), who fortunately received a valuable private copy collated by his contemporary, another Qing bibliophile Wu Yifeng 吳翌鳳 (1742-1819 C.E.). The modern collated versions often took the *Baijinglou congshu* version as the base text and made references to scattered essays in *The Best of the Tang Period Literature* (*Tang wen cui* 唐文粹), *Supplement to the Best of the Tang Period Literature* (*Tang wen cui bu yi* 唐文

¹⁴ “隱又有淮海寓言及讒書等，求之未獲。” See Chen Zhensun, *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題, *Qing Wuyingdian juzhen ben* 清武英殿聚珍本, 16.29b

¹⁵ “近客徵學會公之遠孫雲叔來為學，一囚得拜觀。”；“新城楊冷君舊嘗梓行，久而失共板，雲叔不忍廢墜，割俸重刊，亦可謂克承先志矣。” See Wu Qian, “Luo Zhaojian *Chan shu* tici” 羅昭諫讒書題辭 in Luo Yin, Wu Qian comp., *Chan shu*, *Baijinglou congshu*, 1a-b

粹補遺), and *The Complete Tang Literature* (*Quan Tang wen* 全唐文). The following tables list the primary extant pre-modern and modern versions of the *Writings of Slandering*.

Pre-modern versions:

<i>Writings of Slandering</i> (5 volumes)	
1	李守信跋明鈔本 Ming dynasty Li Shouxin (added afterword) manuscript version
2	文徵明明鈔本 Ming dynasty Wen Zhengming manuscript version
3	宛委別藏本 (鈔本、影印本) <i>Wanwei Biechang</i> manuscript and photocopy versions
4	清張瓚瑞榴堂刻本 Qing dynasty Zhang Zan <i>Ruiliutang</i> print version
5	式訓堂叢書清刻本 Qing dynasty <i>Shixuntang congshu</i> print version
6	清芬堂叢書清刻本 Qing dynasty <i>Qingfentang congshu</i> print version
7	清寶米齋鈔本 (清董國華校) Qing dynasty <i>Baomizhai</i> manuscript version (collated by Qing dynasty Dong Guohua)
<i>Writings of Slandering</i> (5 volumes) and collation (1 volume)	
8	拜經樓叢書清嘉慶刻本 Qing dynasty Jiaqing reign <i>Baijinglou congshu</i> print and photocopy versions
9	重刊拜經樓叢書本 (光緒章氏刻、光緒校經堂刻) Qing dynasty Guangxu reign <i>Baijinglou congshu</i> reprint version (by the Zhang clan and <i>Jiaojingtang</i>)
10	邵武徐氏叢書清刻本 Qing dynasty <i>Shaowu Xushi congshu</i> print version
11	清嘉慶十二年刻本 Qing dynasty 12th year of Jiaqing reign print version

Modern Versions:¹⁶

¹⁶ The table is made in English translation for its neatness. For detailed bibliographical information, refer to Bibliography.

Publication Information	Book Name	Author	Base Text	Referencing Texts
Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983	<i>Luo Yin ji</i>	Yong Wenhua (collated)	Wu Qian <i>Baijinglou</i> version	1,4, <i>Tang wen cui</i> , <i>Tang wen cui buyi</i> , <i>Quan Tang wen</i>
Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1995	<i>Luo Yin ji jiaozhu</i>	Pan Huihui (collated and annotated)	Wu Qian <i>Baijinglou</i> version	4, <i>Tang wen cui</i> , <i>Tang wen cui buyi</i> , <i>Quan Tang wen</i>
Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2013	<i>Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian</i>	Li Dingguang (collated and annotated)	Wu Qian <i>Baijinglou</i> version	1,2,4,7, <i>Tang wen cui</i> , <i>Tang wen cui buyi</i> , <i>Quan Tang wen</i>

The primary concern of this thesis is the concept of slandering (*chan* 讒). The big questions are who are slandered, why are the targets slandered, and how in Luo Yin's *Writings of Slandering*. Before we dive into the long tradition of slandering in Chinese history and literary history, it is fundamental to understand the word *chan* and what it meant to Luo Yin.

The *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 entry for *chan* says:¹⁷

譖也。从言龜聲。士咸切。

It is to calumniate. It derives from 言. 龜 is the phonophoric. The pronunciation is the initial of 士 and the final of 咸.

The dictionaries which came about after Luo Yin's time also glossed the word *chan* in similar ways. For instance, the end Ming dynasty dictionary *Zheng zi tong* 正字通 says:¹⁸

崇飾惡言，毀善害能也。

It is lofty polishing and heinous words. It destroys the good and harms the capable.

¹⁷ See Xu Shen 許慎 (fl. 100 C.E.), ed. Xu Xuan 徐鉉 (916-991 C.E.), *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, *Sibu congkan*, 3a.6a

¹⁸ See Zhang Zilie 張自烈 (1597-1673 C.E.), *Zheng zi tong* 正字通, *Qingweitang keben* 清畏堂刻本, 30.88a

One may argue that the *Shuowen jiezi* only provided a synonym as the definition of the word, and as an end Ming dynasty dictionary, *Zheng zi tong* was not appropriate for explaining a Tang dynasty literary idea. The pre-Qin 秦 and Han literature, in this case, sheds light on the understanding of *chan*. The *Zhuangzi* 莊子 says:¹⁹

好言人之惡，謂之讒。

Being fond of speaking of others' badness, we refer to it as slandering.

The *Xunzi* 荀子 says:²⁰

傷良曰讒。

Harming the well-bred is called slandering.

The *Shuo yuan* 說苑 also says:²¹

蔽善者，國之讒也。

As for covering the good, it is the slandering of a state.

A fair interpretation of the word, which we can conclude from the texts above, is that slandering is an act of harming the good with words. Clearly, it is a disgraceful and despicable act and carries an extremely negative connotation. The slanderers are detested, while the slandered are

¹⁹ See “Yufu” 漁父 in Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩 (1844-1896 C.E.) comp., Wang Xiaoyu 王孝魚 ed., *Zhuangzi ji shi* 莊子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 1029

²⁰ See “Xiu shen” 脩身 in Yang Jing 楊倞 (fl. 800 C.E.) annt., *Xunzi* 荀子, *Sibu congkan*, 1.12a

²¹ See “Chen shu” 臣術 in Liu Xiang 劉向 (77-6 B.C.E.), *Shuo yuan* 說苑, *Sibu congkan*, 3.18b

sympathized throughout history, even if not by their contemporaries, by later generations. The slandering vassal (*chan chen* 讒臣) was not only the most typical character to the Chinese among all slanderers but also the most harmful figure to the state and the government whom everyone abhorred. In explaining the techniques of vassals, Liu Xiang castigated one of the “six malicious” conducts of vassals:²²

四曰智足以飾非，辯足以行說，反言易辭而成文章，內離骨肉之親，外妒亂朝廷，如此者讒臣也。

The fourth [malicious conduct] is called: “Their wisdom is enough to adorn the wrong; the argument is enough to make a persuasion. They reverse the words and change the sayings to make patterns and ornaments. Inside, they separate the closeness of families; outside, they are jealous and cause disorder to the court.” Those who are like this are slandering vassals.

One of the earliest well-known victims of slandering in Chinese history was Qu Yuan 屈原 (~343-278 B.C.E.). In “Nine Laments” (“Jiu tan” 九歎), Liu Xiang depicted Qu Yuan as a loyal vassal who suffered from slandering:²³

行叩誠而不阿兮，遂見排而逢讒。

His behaviors were genuine; besides he did not flatter;

He was pushed aside, and then he encountered slandering.

If Liu Xiang’s depiction of Qu Yuan and his experience were a retelling of plain facts, then the great Han historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (d. 86 B.C.E.) told the story from a more sympathetic way, which brought Qu Yuan to great attention through his influential work the *Records of the Grand*

²² See “Chen shu” in Liu, *Shuo yuan*, 2.2b

²³ See Hong Xingzu 洪興祖 (1090-1155 C.E.), *Chu ci bu zhu* 楚辭補注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), 282

Historian (Shiji 史記). In Sima Qian's account, the narrator and protagonist of the "Encountering Sorrow" ("Li sao" 離騷), Qu Yuan, composed this masterpiece because he "grieved for the fact that the king did not have a keen hearing, the slandering and calumniating covered the brightness, the malicious and distorted harmed the justice, and the proper and upright ones were not accepted." It was in "anxiety, worry, and deep thoughts" that he wrote the "Encountering Sorrow".²⁴

Besides sympathizing with the victim of slandering, Qu Yuan, Sima Qian also considered slandering to be fatal for a state, thus should be recognized by the ruler. In his "Author's Preface by the Grand Historian" ("Taishigong zixu" 太史公自序), he declared one of his motivations and goals for writing the *Shiji*:²⁵

故有國者不可以不知春秋。前有讒而弗見，後有賊而不知。

Therefore, never could those who own the state not know the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.

[Otherwise,] when there is slandering in front, they will not see it; when there are thieves behind, they will not know it.

Sima Qian was not the only one to realize and speak out the mischiefs that slandering would cause. Mengzi 孟子 (372-289 B.C.E.), when conversed with his disciple Gongsun Chou 公孫醜 about the appointment of Yue Zhengzi 樂正子 to administer the Lu 魯 government, spoke highly of Yue Zhengzi for his "being fond of the good". In explaining the situation in which those who are not fond of the good take charge, Mengzi said:²⁶

²⁴ It says, "屈平疾王聽之不聰也，讒諂之蔽明也，邪曲之害公也，方正之不容也，故憂愁幽思而作離騷。" See Sima Qian, *Shiji 史記* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 84.2482

²⁵ See "Taishigong zixu" in Sima, *Shiji*, 130.3298

²⁶ See "Gaozi" 告子 in Zhao Qi 趙岐 (108-201 C.E.) annt., *Mengzi 孟子, Sibū congkan*, 12.14b-15a

夫苟不好善，則人將曰：「訑訑，予既已知之矣。」訑訑之聲音顏色，距人於千里之外。士止於千里之外，則讒諂面諛之人至矣。與讒諂面諛之人居，國欲治，可得乎？

In general, if, and only if, he is not fond of the good, people will say, “How self-conceited he looks! He is talking to himself, ‘I have already known it.’” The language and looks of the self-conceit will keep people off at a distance of 1,000 *li*. When an officer stops 1,000 *li* off, slanderers, calumniators, flatterers, and sycophants will make their appearance. When he lives among slanderers, calumniators, flatterers, and sycophants, though he may wish the state to be put in order, is it possible for it to be achieved?

Hence, the Confucianists made their stance for slandering in the “Doctrine of the Mean” (“Zhong yong” 中庸):²⁷

去讒遠色，賤貨而貴德，所以勸賢也。

Discarding slandering and keeping oneself from the seductions of visual pleasures; regarding the materials as insignificant and the innate quality as valuable-this is the way for one to encourage worthy people.

The Confucianists were by no means alone in advocating the discarding of slandering. In fact, we can easily find unremitting discussions on the subject in the *Xunzi*. For instance, the chapter “Clearing up the Concealment” (“Jie bi” 解蔽) says:²⁸

故人君者，周則讒言至矣，直言反矣。

²⁷ See Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127-200 C.E.) comm., Lu Deming 陸德明 (d. 630 C.E.) ed., *Zuantu huzhu Liji* 纂圖互註禮記, *Sibu congkan*, 16.7b

²⁸ See “Jie bi” in Yang annt., *Xunzi*, 15.19b

Therefore, as for the lord of people, if he is encircled, then the slandering words would arrive, and the frank words would go the opposite way.

In “Playing the *xiang*” (“Cheng xiang” 成相), it says:²⁹

遠賢近讒，忠臣蔽塞主執移。

Staying away from the worthy ones and close to slandering, then the loyal vassals will be blinded and obstructed, and the ruler’s control will shift.

In reality, the slanderers in the past, and especially slandering vassals, did sabotage the stability of the state and cause the people to suffer. Bo Pi 伯嚭 (d. 473 B.C.E.), for instance, slandered the worthy and loyal vassal Wu Zixu 伍子胥 (d. 484 B.C.E.) in front of Fuchai 夫差 (d. 473 B.C.E.), King of Wu 吳.³⁰

吳太宰嚭既與子胥有隙，因讒曰：「子胥為人剛暴，少恩，猜賊，其怨望恐為深禍也。前日王欲伐齊，子胥以為不可，王卒伐之而有大功。子胥恥其計謀不用，乃反怨望。而今王又復伐齊，子胥專復彊諫，沮毀用事，徒幸吳之敗以自勝其計謀耳。今王自行，悉國中武力以伐齊，而子胥諫不用，因輟謝，詳病不行。王不可不備，此起禍不難。且嚭使人微伺之，其使於齊也，乃屬其子於齊之鮑氏。夫為人臣，內不得意，外倚諸侯，自以為先王之謀臣，今不見用，常鞅鞅怨望。願王早圖之。」

The Great Steward of Wu, Pi, had already had dissent with Zixu. Because of this, he slandered him, saying: “Zixu behaves in a rigid and violent manner. He has little grace and is suspicious. His resentment will probably become a great disaster. Previously, you, Your Majesty, wanted to attack the Qi, and Zixu took it as not ok. You, Your Majesty, attacked them and had extraordinary

²⁹ See “Cheng xiang” in Yang annt., *Xunzi*, 18.1b

³⁰ See Sima, *Shiji*, 66.2179-2180

achievements. Zixu was ashamed that his plan and strategy were not employed, so he turned over to resent you. Now, you, Your Majesty, are attacking the Qi again. Zixu acts without authorization and advances his opinions aggressively; he defamed you to facilitate his business, only hoping that Wu's failure would prove his plan and strategy better, and that is it. Now, you, Your Majesty, act on your own and exhaust the military force of the state to attack the Qi, but Zixu's remonstrance was not taken. Therefore, he quit coming to the court, pretended to be sick, and did not go. You, Your Majesty, do have to be prepared. In this situation, it is not hard [for him] to raise a disaster. Moreover, I, Pi, made people spy on him. When he went to the Qi as an envoy, he had already entrusted his son to the Bao family of Qi. In any particular case, concerning his acting as a vassal, inside, he does not get your intentions; outside, he relies on the various mark lords. He regards himself as an advisor of the late king. Since he is not made use of, he always feels dissatisfied and resents you. I hope you, Your Majesty, have plans for it in advance."

The slandering words were too convincing and bewildering to be ignored. Fuchai thus discarded Wu's advice to "ally with the State of Qi and fight against the State of Yue 越" and fell for Bo Pi's slandering and killed Wu Zixu. As a result, the State of Wu was defeated by the State of Yue, and the blinded ruler became Wu's last ruler.³¹

Another famous slandering vassal in Chinese history was Zhao Gao 趙高 (258-207 B.C). In his case, the victims were more than one. The *Shiji* accounted or tried to reproduce the heinous eunuch's crime of slandering Meng Yi 蒙毅 (d. 210 B.C.E.):³²

毅還至，趙高因為胡亥忠計，欲以滅蒙氏，乃言曰：「臣聞先帝欲舉賢立太子久矣，而毅諫曰『不可』。若知賢而俞弗立，則是不忠而惑主也。以臣愚意，不若誅之。」

³¹ For a detailed account of the story and Wu Ziyu's biography, see Sima, *Shiji*, 66.2171-2783

³² See Sima, *Shiji*, 88.2567

Meng Yi returned. Zhao Gao relied on this to offer plots to Hu Hai to show his loyalty and wanted to destroy the Meng clan.³³ Then he gave his words, saying: “I, your servant, heard that the late emperor had wanted to promote the worthy and establish the heir apparent for a long time, but Meng Yi admonished, saying ‘You cannot do it.’ If he knew that you were worthy but procrastinated to establish you, then it was being disloyal and also misleading the master. Based on my foolish thoughts, it is best to kill him.”

Zhao Gao’s crime did not end after Hu Hai threw Meng Yi into jail. When Hu Hai was finally established as the emperor, Zhao “stayed close to him.” He “maligned and spoke badly of the Meng clan, begging for them to be condemned and sentenced”. Also, he “instigated others to impeach them”.³⁴ The Meng Clan was eventually put to death due to slandering.

When the Grand Councilor Li Si became the target, Zhao Gao’s slandering was even more horrifying:³⁵

“夫沙丘之謀，丞相與焉。今陛下已立為帝，而丞相貴不益，此其意亦望裂地而王矣。且陛下不問臣，臣不敢言。丞相長男李由為三川守，楚盜陳勝等皆丞相傍縣之子，以故楚盜公行，過三川，城守不肯擊。高聞其文書相往來，未得其審，故未敢以聞。且丞相居外，權重於陛下！”

³³ Hu Hai 胡亥 (230-207 B.C.E.) was the second and last emperor of the Qin dynasty. When the First Emperor of Qin died during a journey, he usurped the throne with the aid of Zhao Gao and Li Si 李斯 (284-208 B.C.E.) and killed his older brother Fu Su 扶蘇 (d. 210 B.C.E.). See Sima, *Shiji*, 87.2548-2555

³⁴ It says: “胡亥聽而系蒙毅於代。前已囚蒙恬於陽周。喪至咸陽，已葬，太子立為二世皇帝，而趙高親近，日夜毀惡蒙氏，求其罪過，舉劾之。” See Sima, *Shiji*, 87.2567-2568

³⁵ See Sima, *Shiji*, 87.2558-2559

“As for the plot of Shaqiu, the Grand Councilor had participated in it.³⁶ Now you, Your Majesty, have already been established as the emperor, but the Grand Councilor’s honor has not been elevated. This is the case where his intention would also be to split the land and then become the king. Also, if you, Your Majesty, do not ask me, I, your servant, will not dare speak out. The Grand Councilor’s oldest son Li You is serving as the governor of Sanchuan. The Chu robbers like Chen Sheng are all bastards from the Grand Councilor’s neighboring counties. For this reason, the Chu robbers walk brazenly and transgress Sanchuan, but the gate guards are not willing to attack them. I heard that they exchange writings but have not managed to look into it. Therefore, I have not dared to report this to you. Besides, the Grand Councilor stays outside the court; he has greater authority than you, Your Majesty!”

Under Zhao’s slandering, Li Si’s death should bring no surprise. It is also apparent why the Qin Empire fell so quickly in mere two generations.

Closer to Luo Yin’s time, the notorious culprit for the An Lushan Rebellion (*An Lushan zhi luan* 安祿山之亂), the Prime Minister during Emperor Xuanzong’s 玄宗 (r. 712-756 C.E.) reign, Li Linfu 李林甫 (683-753 C.E.), would be considered as a contemporary slandering vassal by Luo Yin. Slightly different from his predecessors, Li Linfu did not just personally accuse the worthy officials of wrongdoings but instead incited others to make the accusations. The leveled-up slandering was equally effective. The victim Wang Zhongsi 王忠嗣 (706-749 C.E.) was deprived of the military authority and demoted. He died in depression one year after.³⁷ The resolute and steadfast official Yang Qian 楊謙 (d. 747 C.E.) suffered an even more tragic fate. Envied by Li for his excellent merits and growing attention from the emperor, Yang was slandered, and his

³⁶ The plot of Shaqiu 沙丘 referred to the usurpation of Hu Hai after the First Emperor of Qin died at Shaqiu (located in modern Hebei 河北 Province). See Sima, *Shiji*, 87.2548-2555

³⁷ See Liu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 103.3200-3201

entire family was exterminated.³⁸ Although the mishandled case was redressed, the victims were never able to resurrect.³⁹

Since slandering had been detested forever, it truly puzzles one in understanding Luo Yin's rationale for naming his collection of essays the *Writings of Slandering*. In the preface of the collection, Luo said:⁴⁰

他人用是以為榮，而予用是以為辱。他人用是以為富貴，而予用是為困窮。苟如是，予之書乃自讒耳。

Others use them to become glorious, but I use them to become humiliating. Others use them to be wealthy and honorable, but I use them to be constrained and poor. If, and only if, it is like this, my writings are indeed self-slandering, and nothing else!

The typical self-pitying tone the Chinese literati had carried throughout centuries cannot be more obvious in the three short sentences. By inserting the idea of “self-slandering”, Luo boldly declared himself to be one of the slandered, a victim. His failure in career was thus a result of being slandered. Moreover, the slanderer was no other than himself. If we try to understand Luo's statement, he declared himself to be both the worthy one who suffered from slandering and the malicious slanderer who put himself to the miserable situation. Could it even be possible? The answer is threefold. To become the slandered, one has to, first of all, have the worthiness to be envied. In the case of Luo Yin, he was undoubtedly confident about his talents. Secondly, the slandering words should distort the truth, which are accusations that could do harm to the victim.

³⁸ See Liu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 105.3226-3228; see also Sima Guang 司馬光 (1019-1086 C.E.), *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑒, *Sibu congkan*, 215.18b-20a

³⁹ See Dong Gao 董誥 (1740-1818 C.E.) comp., *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), 353.3574

⁴⁰ See “*Chan shu xu*” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 661-662

When we apply this formula to the *Writings of Slandering*, all the essays in the collection are supposed to be accusations to harm the author. More importantly, the contents are indeed slandering words that are far from the truth. There is no doubt that the essays are full of accusations. Yet, claiming them to be false and harmful was apparently part of the typical Luo-style sarcasm. One may argue that this was one of Luo's conservative ways of avoiding troubles when the collection offended the authorities. The truth is, the essays' straightforwardness in criticizing and condemning the targets would have left no room for reservation for Luo Yin in any possible way. Lastly, the slanderer should be a heinous figure and be spat by later generations. When Luo called himself a slanderer, the implication might be more complex than expected. On the one hand, he posed the question "Who is the slanderer?" to the readers; on the other hand, when he took the courage to speak up with his writings, there would definitely be waves of anger with shame aroused in the audience. The incomppliance would, therefore, foreseeably make him a malicious insurgent. Overall, the message Luo tried to deliver by the simple word "self-slandering" was never too subtle to digest; instead, it was intended to make a splash and, hopefully, win him what he thought he deserved.

It was, of course, a common practice for the Chinese literati to attract attention with writings. With the development of paper-making technology in the Tang dynasty, private writing had become prevalent. Compared with previously, it was much easier and more likely for the scholars' writings to be disseminated and eventually delivered to the court. Knowing that even a small piece of work like a quatrain may bring fame or calamity, the writers unavoidably included the authorities to the audience group when they wrote. Luo Yin was not an exception. In his second preface for the collection, he even made this clear:⁴¹

今年諫官有言，果動天聽。所以不廢《讒書》也，不亦宜乎？

⁴¹ See "Chan shu chong xu" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 797-799

This year, the remonstrative officials had some words, and as expected, they drew attention from the [Son of] Heaven. That is why I did not discard the *Writings of Slandering*. Isn't it proper?

Yet, since writing was almost the only powerful tool with which the scholars equipped to express opinions and make known of themselves, too much hope might be placed in it. In reality, an honorable official post in charge of practical duties was harder than one could imagine to get through excellent writings, especially outside the examination hall. The lesson can be learned from plenty of Luo's predecessors. Li Bo 李白 (701-762 C.E.), the renowned scholar who was highly gifted in poetry composition, did not earn a smooth political career. Though Emperor Xuanzong recognized his literary talents, Li was not offered a serious official role or entrusted with any serious tasks except entertaining the royal family.⁴² One should probably not go that far to call Li Bo a court jester, but he himself surely was not satisfied with his career development. Lots of poems were self-mockery and bitter complaints. One of the most famous couplets reads:⁴³

人生在世不稱意，明朝散髮弄扁舟。

Living my life in the world, yet my aspirations are not matched;

Tomorrow I will untie my hair and take up the flatboat.

Li Bo's contemporary, the other well-known scholar Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770 C.E.) was another example for Luo Yin. After failing the imperial exam, Du stayed in the capital city, Chang'an 長安, like all the ambitious scholars, to seek opportunities. After trying to present his writings to the celebrities for a decade, he received no luck and lived in poverty. Finally, in his early forties, Du's "Da li fu" 大禮賦 was presented to Emperor Xuanzong. Xuanzong thought highly of it and

⁴² For Li Bo's biography, see Liu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 190.5053-5054; see also Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007-1072 C.E.) comp., *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 202.5762-5764

⁴³ See Peng Dingqiu, *Quan Tang shi*, 177.1809

appointed him as a candidate for future government post openings. It was likely due to Li Linfu's obstruction that Du Fu was only offered a minor regional post four years later. The proud scholar declined in great disappointment but finally accepted another minor post when the government gave a counteroffer.⁴⁴ Du's tragic fate was no doubt shared by numerous Chinese scholars. Even in a society where polishing one's writings was almost the only way for one, who had no noble background, to excel, the functionality of writings could be surprisingly discouraging. Because it happened too frequently that talented scholars were depreciated, Du even grumbled that "good articles cannot be composed in a fate of success".⁴⁵

If Luo Yin's ambition behind every piece of essays was his hope to attract a broad range of readers, then his intention for compiling the *Writings of Slandering* was partly to impress a specific group of people—the examiners. The "Circulating the Scrolls" tradition (*xing juan* 行卷) in the Tang dynasty was one of the greatest stimuli for scholars to write. Since the examination at the Department of State Affairs (*Shangshu Sheng* 尚書省), to be called *Sheng shi* 省試 for short, which selected *jinshi* 進士, was not anonymous, the examiners would take into account the exam takers' writings outside the exam if they happened to have the chance to read their essays or poems. The competition at the *Sheng shi* was so severe that no exam takers would let go of an opportunity to earn extra points. Thus, the scholars presented their writings to celebrities, either the examiners themselves or those who were influential enough to speak up for them, hoping that their talents would be recognized. There were, of course, successful attempts by some fortunate scholars. The notable ones included Wang Wei 王維 (692-761 C.E.) and Bo Juyi 白居易 (772-846 C.E.).⁴⁶ Luo

⁴⁴ See Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 201.5736-5739; see also Xin, *Tang caizi zhuan*, 32-34

⁴⁵ “文章憎命達，魑魅喜人過。” See Peng, *Quan Tang shi*, 225.2424

⁴⁶ For the account of Wang Wei, see Xue Yongruo 薛用弱 (fl. 1000 C.E.), *Ji yi ji* 集異記, *Ming Zhengde Gu Yuanqing jikan* 明正德顧元慶輯刊, 2.2a-3a; for the account of Bo Juyi, see Wang, Zhou comm., *Tang yu lin jiaozheng*, 3.277

Yin's contemporary Pi Rixiu 皮日休 (834-883 C.E.), who was only one year younger than Luo, obtained the *jinshi* degree at his early thirties with his essay collection the *Preserve of Mr. Pi's Literature* (*Pizi wen sou* 皮子文藪). Encouraged, Luo also made great efforts in "Circulating the Scrolls". It was recorded in *Quan Tang wen ji shi* 全唐文紀事 that he presented the *Writings of Slandering* to numerous celebrities.⁴⁷

嘗以《讒書》上鄭尚書，上蘄州裴員外，上太常房博士，上秘監韋尚書，可謂汲汲於遇合矣。

He once presented the *Writings of Slandering* to Minister of Personnel Zheng, Ministry Councilor Pei of the Qi Prefecture, Erudite Fang of the Court of Imperial Sacrifices, Minister of Personnel Wei of the Imperial Inspector. It could have been referred to as ambitiously seeking a good judge for his talent.

Luo's toil was not repaid. We have no means to know what reactions and comments the celebrities had for the *Writings of Slandering*, but Luo's attempt after presenting the collection was, again, a failure. The discouraging examples such as Li Bo and Du Fu and the encouraging examples of Wang Wei, Bo Juyi, as well as his contemporaries, puzzled Luo Yin. Thus, in the *Writings of Slandering*, we see deliberate efforts in showing off his talents, sometimes with striking opinions and words, but we will also notice the occasional pessimism.

Nevertheless, it would be partial and unfair to regard Luo Yin's *Writings of Slandering* as a frustrated scholar's pretentious work to attract attention. The critical social and political issues that Luo addressed in the collection were not fabricated, if not exaggerated at all. In the preface, he also attempted to state his responsibility and ambition as a Confucian scholar:⁴⁸

⁴⁷ See Chen Hongchi 陳鴻墀 (b. 1758 C.E.) comp., *Quan Tang wen ji shi* 全唐文紀事, *Qing Fang Gonghui Guangzhou keben* 清方功惠廣州刻本, 118.29a

⁴⁸ See "Chan shu chong xu" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 797-799

卷軸無多少，編次無前後，有可以讒者則讒之，亦多言之一派也。而今而後，有請予以
嘩自矜者，則對曰：「不能學揚子雲寂寞以誑人。」

The scrolls are not differentiated by the amount of words, the ordering is not according to a
sequence. If there are those that can be slandered, then I slander them, and a school of speech is
supplemented as well. From now on, if there are people who ridicule me to please those who
congratulate themselves with claptrap, then I would respond: “I cannot learn from Yang Ziyun to
be hushed and alone to deceive others.”⁴⁹

In Luo’s opinion, keeping quiet and hiding for one’s safety and well-being was an unacceptable
act. Instead, a scholar should stand out and speak up. Although he used “slandering” to describe
his doings with his writings, at this point, it became all clear that “those that can be slandered”
were truly those that can be criticized; his act of “slandering them” was indeed an act of “criticizing
them”.

Two years later, when Luo wrote the second preface for the collection, he reiterated his
aspiration:⁵⁰

然文章之興，不為舉場也明矣。蓋君子有其位，則執大柄以定是非。無其位，則著私書
而疏善惡。斯所以警當世而誠將來也。自揚、孟以下，何嚙以名為？

⁴⁹ Yang Ziyun referred to the Western Han (202 B.C.E -9 C.E.) scholar Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53-18 B.C.E.). During Wang Mang’s 王莽 (45 B.C.E.-23 C.E.) reign, an official Liu Fen 劉棻 disobeyed Wang and was thus expelled. Because Liu studied ancient characters under the guidance of Yang Xiong, the officers in charge of the case went to arrest Yang at the Tianlu Gallery (Tianlu ge 天祿閣), where Yang worked. Scared, Yang jumped out of the window of the Tianlu Gallery and almost died. Although Yang was eventually exempted, the public commented, “Because he is hushed and alone, he jumped out of the gallery by himself.” See “Yang Xiong lie zhuan” 揚雄列傳 in Ban Gu 班固 (32-92 C.E.), *Han shu* 漢書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 87.3584

⁵⁰ See “*Chan shu chong xu*” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 797-799

Nevertheless, the stimulus of words and articles would be clear even if they were not composed for the exams. Presumably, if the junior lords have their positions, they will hold the big ax-handle to decide right and wrong. If they do not have their positions, they will compose private writings and then arrange the good and bad. This is what they use to warn the present age and then take precautions of the forthcoming. Ever after Yang Xiong and Mengzi, who has ever written with fame?

Certainly, we should not take the face value and believe that Luo was no longer craving for success in imperial exams. Still, his idea that when without a position to “hold the big ax-handle to decide right and wrong”, it was always his duty to “arrange the good and bad” with private writings. Also, he deemed the writings essential and served a significant purpose of “warning the present age and then taking precautions of the forthcoming”. This, of course, could be taken as words of branding himself, but the much less sarcastic and more serious tone in this paragraph took Luo out of his “flamboyant and loud” character. The usual “ridicule and mockery” were not in our sight, and we should not read this piece of declaration as Luo’s marketing practice.

That said, there was the last part, which should not be ignored but often was, that completes Luo’s rationale. The big goal of the “three establishments” the Chinese literati aspired to achieve over thousands of years was deeply rooted in everyone, including Luo Yin’s value system. It was fundamental to establish the innate power (*de* 德). Still, the benchmark is too difficult to set because, compared to the more material subjects: merits (*gong* 功) and words (*yan* 言), the innate power was not the easiest to make seen and evaluated. The establishment of merits was ideal, yet not always achievable or even accessible. Without a position, one lacked the means to take care of the people or fight in a battle. Hence, the best option for a scholar “not to perish” is to establish

words.⁵¹ For the literati, including Luo Yin, compiling one's writings was a clear gesture of trying to establish one's words. No one should ever need to spell out his desire not to perish, while the fact that everyone, Luo included, selects the works that satisfy themselves the most and amend the compilation subsequently, is the clearest indication.

Thus, the *Writings of Slandering* should be read as a Confucian scholar's outcry in the face of the late Tang's disorder, his ambition and efforts to establish words not to perish, as well as an unsuccessful exam taker's strategic move to impress the examiners and gain attention from the authorities.

⁵¹ “太上有立德，其次有立功，其次有立言。雖久不廢，此之謂不朽。” See Du Yu 杜預 (222-285 C.E.) and Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574-648 C.E.) comm., *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義, *Wuyingdian shisan jing zhu shu* 武英殿十三經注疏, 18.28a

II. ON “THE SLANDERED”-ANALYSES OF THEMES

II.1 An Overview of the Political and Social Environment during the Mid-to-late Tang Dynasty

The period where Luo Yin lived was by far the best for most people, dare we say the worst. In fact, the political and social environment was exceedingly gloomy. Emperor Wenzong, Li Ang 李昂, whose short reign lasted for fourteen years, fell under the control of the eunuchs after the failure of the Sweet Dew Incident (*Gan lu zhi bian* 甘露之變). Although believed to be a promising and benevolent ruler, Emperor Wenzong died in depression five years later, when Luo Yin was seven years old.⁵² The successor Emperor Wuzong 武宗, Li Yan 李炎 (814-846 C.E.) assumed the throne with the support of the eunuchs and was forced to kill Emperor Wenzong’s appointed heir apparent under the pressure of Qiu Shiliang.⁵³ Emperor Wuzong was a capable emperor. One of his greatest merits was to wipe out Qiu’s force. Nevertheless, The celebrated Huichang Resurgence (*Huichang zhongxing* 會昌中興) only lasted for six years. Being a fervent Daoist follower, Emperor Wuzong died of taking elixir at a young age of thirty-two.⁵⁴ The next emperor Li Chen

⁵² In 835, the twenty-seven-year-old emperor planned with his two minions, Li Xun 李訓 (789-835 C.E.) and Zheng Zhu 鄭注 (d. 835 C.E.) to kill a threatening group of eunuchs led by Qiu Shiliang 仇士良 (781-843 C.E.). Wenzong summoned Qiu to the backyard of an administration building, where he claimed to be observing the sweet dew. The plot was found out by Qiu, and the two parties engaged in a fierce fight. The battle ended with Qiu’s success. Over a thousand people were involved in the case and killed after the incident, including Li Xun and Zheng Zhu. Since then, Wenzong fell to be a puppet of the powerful eunuchs and never regained his authority. For the complete account of the Sweet Dew Incident, see Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 245.10a-13b

⁵³ Qiu Shiliang, style-named Kuangmei 匡美, was an eunuch who became powerful after the Sweet Dew Incident. For his biography, see Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 207.5972-5875

⁵⁴ Li Yan, originally named Li Chan 李漣, was a younger brother of Emperor Wenzong’s and son of Emperor Muzong 穆宗 (795-824 C.E.). For a complete biography of Li Yan, see Liu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 18.583-611; see also Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 10.240-245

李忱 (810-859 C.E.), Emperor Xuanzong 宣宗, ruled during Luo's teens. Similar to Emperor Wuzong, Emperor Xuanzong was also aided by the eunuchs' group to get the throne. After ruling shortly for thirteen years, he followed in Emperor Wuzong's steps and died of taking the elixir.⁵⁵ If the previous emperors' performances were still satisfactory, the conduct of the next ruler, Emperor Yizong 懿宗, Li Cui 李漼 (833-873 C.E.), was barely acceptable. The start of Emperor Yizong's reign was also when young Luo Yin began his journey as an imperial exam taker. The fourteen years during which Luo struggled to be recognized as a capable *chen* was unimaginably hard under Emperor Yizong's reign. Emperor Yizong was very fond of music, and he spent lavishly on banquets and events. The *Zizhi tongjian* recorded:⁵⁶

上好音樂宴遊，殿前供奉樂工常近五百人，每月宴設不減十餘，水陸皆備，聽樂觀優，不知厭倦，賜與動及千緡。曲江，昆明、灞澗、南宮、北苑、昭應、咸陽，所欲游幸即行，不待供置。有司常具音樂、飲食、幄帟，諸王立馬以備陪從。每行幸，內外諸司扈從者十餘萬人，所費不可勝紀。

The ruler was fond of music, banquets, and traveling. The number of musicians who served at the imperial palace was always close to five hundred. Every month, the banquets would be hosted no less than ten times. The delicacies were from both land and sea. He listened to music and enjoyed sceneries without feeling tired or satiated. When he granted a reward, its value easily reached a thousand strings of coins. Qujiang, Kunming, Bachan, the Southern Palace, the Northern Garden, Zhaoying, Xianyang, he would just start the journey wherever he wanted to visit.⁵⁷ He would not

⁵⁵ For a complete biography of Li Chen, see Liu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 18.613-616; see also Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 8.245-253

⁵⁶ See Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 250.20b-21a

⁵⁷ Qujiang 曲江 was a scenic spot in the southeast of the capital city Chang'an (modern Xi'an 西安) where the Qijing imperial garden located. Kunming 昆明 referred to the Kunming Lake (Kunming chi 昆明池), an artificial lake situated in the west of Chang'an. Bachan 灞澗 referred to the scenic area surrounded by Ba River (Ba shui 灞水) and Chan River (Chan shui 澗水) in Chang'an. The Southern Palace (Nan gong 南宮), also named Taiqing Palace (Taiqing gong 太清宮), was where Yang Yuhuan 楊玉環 (719-756 C.E.), Emperor

wait for the supplies to be ready. The officers in charge would always prepare music, food, and drink, large and small tents. The various kings would have their horses standing, ready for accompanying and following him. Every time he traveled or visited somewhere, the retinue from the various departments in charge of inner and outer affairs included more than one hundred thousand people. The amount of spending could not be counted.

Emperor Yizong's luxurious lifestyle was manifested in his fanaticism for Buddhism as well. The Great Anti-Buddhist Persecution initiated by Emperor Wuzong was not passed on by Emperor Yizong. As a faithful Buddhist, he spent lavishly on building Buddhist temples and Buddha statues as well as donating to the Buddhist monks. After Emperor Xianzong 憲宗 (778-820 C.E.) willfully and arbitrarily exhausted the financial resource to welcome the Buddha bones in 819, Emperor Yizong followed his path. In 873, he insisted on hosting a grand ceremony to welcome the Buddha bones despite the opposition from the court. The *Zizhi tongjian* recorded:⁵⁸

春，三月，癸巳，上遣敕使詣法門寺迎佛骨，群臣諫者甚眾，至有言憲宗迎佛骨尋晏駕者。上曰：「朕生得見之，死亦無恨！」廣造浮圖、寶帳、香輿、幡花、幢蓋以迎之，皆飾以金玉、錦繡、珠翠。自京城至寺三百里間，道路車馬，晝夜不絕。夏，四月，壬寅，佛骨至京師，導以禁軍兵仗、公私音樂，沸天燭地，綿亙數十里。儀衛之盛，過於郊祀，元和之時不及遠矣。富室夾道為彩樓及無遮會，競為侈靡。上御安福門，降樓膜拜，流涕沾臆，賜僧及京城耆老嘗見元和事者金帛。

In spring, in the third month, on the day of Guisi, the emperor sent the Imperial Envoy to the Famen Temple to welcome the Buddha bones. Among the various officials, those who

Xuanzong's beloved consort, served as a nun. The Northern Garden (Bei yuan 北苑) was one of the three imperial gardens surrounded the imperial palace. Zhaoying 昭應 was a city to the northeast of Chang'an, located in modern Lintong 臨潼. It was where the famous imperial holiday resort-Huaqing Palace (Huaqing gong 華清宮) located. Xianyang 咸陽 was a city to the west of Chang'an.

⁵⁸ See Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 252.10a

remonstrated were many. It went onto extreme where some spoke of how Xianzong passed away due to welcoming the Buddha bones. The emperor said: “If I am able to see it in my life, I will have no regrets when I die!” He extensively made pagodas, Buddhist curtains, carriages with censers, Buddhist banners and flags, and canopies, for welcoming the Buddha bones. All those were adorned with gold and jade, silk embroideries, and pearls and jadeite. Between the three hundred *li* from the capital city to the temple, carriages and horses were constantly passing on the road day and night. In summer, in the fourth month, on the day of Renyin, the Buddha bones arrived in the capital city. It was led by the armed Imperial Guards. The sound of public and private music resounded deafeningly and extended by dozens of *li*. The magnificence of the ceremonial guards was even more extreme than the suburb sacrifices. The time of Yuanhe had never been able to compare with it.⁵⁹ The wealthy families split, standing on two sides of the road, making decorated archways and hosting *Wuzhe* Assemblies.⁶⁰ They competed against each other to be the more extravagant ones. The emperor made his presence at the Anfu Gate, then he descended, prostrated himself in worship. His tears touched his chests. He distributed largess to the monks and the elders in the capital city who had seen the event in Yuanhe’s time.

Not only did Emperor Yizong indulge himself in pleasure, but he also failed to build a government with competent officials. During the fourteen years when he was in office, he employed in total twenty-one Prime Ministers. In addition to the extremely high turnover rate, most of the Prime Ministers were no better than mediocre. For example, the husband of Princess Qiyang 岐陽 (790-837 C.E.), Du Cong 杜棕 (794-873 C.E.), served as the Prime Minister at an early stage of

⁵⁹ Yuanhe 元和 was the name of Emperor Xianzong’s reign. The time of Yuanhe specifically referred to the event where Emperor Xianzong welcomed the Buddha bones in 819.

⁶⁰ The *Wuzhe* Assemblies (*wuzhe hui* 無遮會) was a ceremony for Buddhist almsgiving. The phrase *wuzhe* was translated from the Sanskrit term “pañca-vārsika maha”, meaning “no hinderance or prejudice”. See Ding Fubao 丁福保 (1874-1952 C.E.), *Encyclopedia Dictionary of Buddhist Studies (Fo xue da cidian 佛學大辭典)* (Shanghai: Foxue shuju 佛學書局, 1920), 2191

Yizong's reign. Although he received many privileges as Emperor Muzong's brother-in-law, his proficiency as a Prime Minister was heavily criticized. In the *Trivial Words of the Northern Dream* (*Bei meng suo yan* 北夢瑣言), Sun Guangxian 孫光憲 (896-968 C.E.) commented:⁶¹

棕尚憲宗岐陽公主，累居大鎮，復居廊廟。無他才，未嘗延接寒素，甘食竊位而已。有朝士貽書於棕曰：「公以碩大敦龐之德，生於文明之運。矢厥謨猷，出入隆顯。」極言譏之，文多不錄。時人號為「秃角犀」。凡蒞藩鎮，未嘗斷獄，繫囚死而不問，宜其責之。嗚呼！處高位而妨賢，享厚祿以豐己，無功於國，無德於民。富貴而終，斯又何人也！子孫不享，何莫由斯！

Cong married upward to Princess Qiyang, the daughter of Xianzong, so he stationed in important regions constantly, and then, he came back to serve at the court. He had no other talents, nor had he ever received or helped those from the humble backgrounds. He enjoyed feasts in his position without working, and that was it. There was a government official who presented a piece of writing to Cong, saying, “You, sir, were born in a refined and bright fate with gigantic and abundant innate strength. People talk about your strategies and schemes. When coming out and in, your affluence is apparent.” He used all means in writing to satirize Du Cong. The writing was long, and I did not take it down. People at that time called him “Bare-horn Rhino”. When he served as a regional military governor, he had never settled a lawsuit. He did not care to make an inquiry until the imprisoned suspect died. Just nice that he could lay the responsibilities on him. Alas! He remained in the high position but hindered the worthy ones, enjoyed the generous government salary to make himself wealthy. He made no merits to the state, showed no innate strength to the people. Ending his life in great wealth and value, who else could this be?! His descendants do not make sacrifices for him, so how about do not be like him!

⁶¹ See Sun Guangxian, *Bei meng suo yan*, *Qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書, 1.8b-9a

Du Cong was, of course, not the only notorious one. A popular poem, whose author was anonymous, was collected in *Quan Tang shi*, spread around among the people during Emperor Yizong's reign. It was a poem called "Ridicule the Four Prime Ministers" ("Chao si xiang" 嘲四相):⁶²

確確無餘事，錢財總被收。

商人都不管，貨賂幾時休。

Certainly, there is nothing for them to be bothered;

Our money and valuables are always extorted.

The merchants, they are all left ungoverned;

The bribery, when will it ever stop?

The four Prime Ministers who held an office and enjoyed all the privileges without doing a stroke of work included Cao Que 曹確 (d. 876 C.E.),⁶³ Yang Shou 楊收 (816-870 C.E.),⁶⁴ Xu Shang 徐商 (fl. 843-865 C.E.),⁶⁵ and Lu Yan 路巖 (829-874 C.E.). The simple quatrain spoke from the perspective of a commoner and described the situation where the high officials and the merchants deprived the people of the resources and shared all benefits among themselves. Clearly, the frequent replacements did not bring any improvement but caused people more considerable frustration.

One of the four Prime Ministers, Lu Yan, was especially unbridled. When he was in office, he showed no respect to the Son of Heaven but scorned him. Also, since the emperor endowed the

⁶² See Peng, *Quan Tang shi*, 872.9884

⁶³ For Cao Que's biography, see Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 181.5351-5352.

⁶⁴ For Yang Shou's biography, see Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 184.5392-5396.

⁶⁵ For Xu Shang's biography, see Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 113.4192-4193.

government to him, he then formed gangs and engaged in bribery. He lived in luxury and presumption, and he did not abide by the law. Moreover, he made an ally with Emperor Yizong's son-in-law, Wei Baoheng 韋保衡 (d. 873 C.E.), a famous treacherous court official. The infamous alliance gained so much power and suppressed the people. Hence, their lackeys were called "Ox-head devil jailors" (*Niutou Epang* 牛頭阿旁).⁶⁶

Wei Baoheng came into power when he married Emperor Yizong's beloved daughter Princess Tongchang 同昌 (849-870 C.E.). Only one year after the marriage, Princess Tongchang fell sick and died, which caused Emperor Yizong to be in deep grief. Surrounded by slanderers and flatters, Emperor Yizong was unable to take remonstrations. According to *Zizhi tongjian*, the fatuous emperor was deeply saddened and flew into a great rage that many were slaughtered and involved.⁶⁷

上痛悼不已，殺翰林醫官韓宗劭等二十餘人，悉收捕其親族三百餘人繫京兆獄。中書侍郎、同平章事劉瞻召諫官使言之，諫官莫敢言者，乃自上言，以為：「修短之期，人之定分。昨公主有疾，深軫聖慈。宗劭等診療之時，惟求疾愈，備施方術，非不盡心，而禍福難移，竟成差跌，原其情狀，亦可哀矜。而械繫老幼三百餘人，物議沸騰。道路嗟歎。奈何以達理知命之君，涉肆暴不明之謗！蓋由安不慮危，忿不思難之故也。伏願少回聖慮，寬釋繫者。」上覽疏，不悅。瞻又與京兆尹溫璋力諫於上前，上大怒，叱出之。

The emperor was sad and mourned incessantly. He killed more than twenty people led by the *Hanlin* imperial physicians Han Zongshao. He then carefully searched and arrested more than three hundred of their relatives and put them into prison at the capital. The Central Secretariat Gentleman/Manager of Government Affairs Liu Zhan called for the remonstrative officials and asked them to speak [of this matter]. None of the remonstrative officials dared to speak, so Liu

⁶⁶ “巖顧天子荒暗，且以政委己，乃通路遺，奢肆不法。俄與韋保衡同當國，二人勢動天下，時目其黨為‘牛頭阿旁’，言如鬼陰惡可畏也。” See Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 184.5397

⁶⁷ See Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 252.5a-5b

spoke to the emperor himself. He expressed his opinion: “The life being long and short is destined and depends on the person. Previously, the princess had illness; it was a great sorrow for Your Majesty’s fatherly love. When physicians like Zongshao made the diagnosis and gave the treatment, they only hoped for her recovery. They exhausted all means to treat her, and it was not the case that they did not try their utmost. Yet, disaster and blessings cannot be shifted; it unexpectedly became a mishap. When we understand their intentions and the situation, they could also be sympathized with and pitied. Nevertheless, you used weapons to arrest the over-three-hundred elderly and young people. The criticism from people is heated. The sighs are heard on roads and streets. What can one do when a lord who understands the principles and knows the mandate suffers from the unbridled, violent, and unwise smear! It was all due to the lack of concern about the dangers when secure and the lack of thinking of the difficulties in anger. I prostrate myself and hope you, Your Majesty, could slightly change your mind and leniently release those whom you arrested.” The emperor read the *shu* and was displeased. Zhan, again, joined with the mayor of Jingzhao, Wen Zhang, to try their best to remonstrate the emperor in front of him. The emperor was greatly enraged. He rebuked them loudly and ordered them to get out.

The elaborate account of the event depicted for us a harsh and imbecile emperor who not only failed to take remonstrations but also slaughtered the innocents. The unfortunate official Liu Zhan (d. 874 C.E.) was demoted, and his like-minded colleague, Wen Zhang (d. 870 C.E.), cried, saying, “Living without encountering the right time; What would be worth pitying if I die!”, and then he committed suicide.⁶⁸ The emperor was not the only one to blame; the nefarious Lu Yan and Wei Baoheng added fuel to the flames. Liu’s demotion did not satisfy them. They accused Liu of conspiring with the physicians to poison Princess Tongchang. Liu was exiled to the exceedingly

⁶⁸ “生不逢時，死何足惜！” See Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 252.5b

remote place, now in modern Vietnam, Huan Prefecture 驩州.⁶⁹ Besides, those who were affiliated with Liu at court were also demoted, including the Chief *Hanlin* Scholar Zheng Tian 鄭畋 (825-883 C.E.) and the Assistant to the Imperial Counsellor Sun Huang 孫瑄 (fl. 870). The *Jiu Tang shu* also recorded in detail the demotion of Zheng Tian, who was previously promoted due to the referral of Liu Zhan. Emperor Yizong, after reading Zheng's kind words in favor of Liu, gave a long and harsh comment and angrily expelled Zheng:⁷⁰

其年八月，劉瞻以諫囚醫工宗族，罷相，出為荊南節度使。畋草制過為美詞。懿宗省之甚怒，責之曰：「畋頃以行跡玷穢，為時棄捐，朝籍周行，無階踐歷。竟因由徑，遂致叨居，塵忝既多，狡蠹尤甚。且居承旨，合體朕懷。一昨劉蟾出籓，朕豈無意？爾次當視草，過為美詞。逞譎詭於筆端，籠愛憎於形內。徒知報瞻欬唾之惠，誰思蔑我拔擢之恩？載詳言偽而堅，果明同惡相濟。人之多僻，一至於斯！宜行竄逐之科，用屏回邪之黨。可梧州刺史。」

In the eighth month of the year, Liu Zhan was removed from the position of Prime Minister for remonstrating for the affair of imprisoning the imperial physician and his families. He was appointed as the Jingnan Military Commissioner.⁷¹ Tian, when drafting the imperial decree, covered his mistakes with kind words. Yizong realized it and was infuriated. He scolded him, saying: "Tian previously was abandoned by time because of his tainted behaviors. For the great path of becoming a government official at court, he had not set his foot on it,⁷² but he took the

⁶⁹ Liu Zhan was first demoted to be a Regional Inspector in Kangzhou 康州 (in modern Guangdong 廣東), but Lu Yan was still unsatisfied. He eventually made Liu be a Revenue Ministry Officer in Huan Prefecture. For a detailed account for the event, see Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 252.6a

⁷⁰ See Liu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 178.4631-4632

⁷¹ Jingnan Regional Commissioner (*Jingnan jiedushi* 荊南節度使) was in charge of the central area of modern Hubei 湖北 Province.

⁷² The phrase "great path" (*zhouhang* 周行) came from *The Book of Songs* (*Shijing* 詩經). The "Dong the Great" ("Da dong" 大東) in *xiaoya* 小雅 said, "Elegant the junior dukes are, walking on the great path." ("佻佻公子，行彼周行。"). The great path was only available for the aristocrats to walk on, and the plebeians were forbidden

wrong path to get the position which should not belong to him. Not only does he have lots of self-depreciatory expressions, but also, he is extremely cunning. Besides, he stays at the position of the Recipient of Edicts, so he should understand my intentions. Lately, Liu Zhan was going for a regional post, and how can I be unaware? This time when I took a look at the draft, he covered Liu Zhan's mistakes with kind words. He flaunts his crafts in writing, and he hides his love and hates within himself. He only knows about repaying Liu Zhan's gratitude for coughing and spitting;⁷³ does he ever think about my grace of promoting him? When he writes down the words carefully, they are deceivable yet firm. It is truly perspicaciousness and vileness supplementing each other. People's having too many misdeeds can be to such an extent! It is better to implement the punishment of exile to prevent from the party of the depraved people. He can be made the Regional Inspector of Wuzhou.”

Wei remained in power even after Princess Tongchang's death. When he came into conflict with his former partner Lu Yan, Wei slandered him in front of Emperor Yizong. Lu was therefore removed from his position and demoted to be a military commissioner in Xichuan 西川 Circuit.⁷⁴

to step on it. See Qu Wanli 屈萬里 (1907-1979 C.E.), *Shijing quanshi* 詩經詮釋 (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi 聯經出版事業公司, 1983), 389-390

⁷³ The phrase “coughing and spitting” (*ketuo* 欬唾) came from *Zhuangzi*. It said in “Old Fisherman” (“Yu fu” 漁父) that Confucius pled to wait at the downwind position to hear the coughing and spitting of the old fisherman. It referred to one's words and instructions. “竊待於下風，幸聞咳唾之音以卒相丘也。” See Guo comp., Wang ed., *Zhuangzi ji shi*, 1026

⁷⁴ It was recorded that Lu Yan and Wei Baoheng, when colluded with each other, gained great authority covering the entire state. The expanding power caused struggles and estrangement. Xichuan Circuit was located in modern Sichuan 四川 Province. For a detailed account of Lu and Wei, see Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 252.7a

Besides the notorious high officials who did nothing but harm to the state and people, the mid-to-late Tang was also troubled by the eunuchs who controlled the government tightly and intervened with the administration unscrupulously. The *Zizhi tongjian* recorded:⁷⁵

寶曆狎暱群小，劉克明與蘇佐明為逆，其後絳王及文、武、宣、懿、僖、昭六帝，皆為宦官所立，勢益驕橫。王守澄、仇士良、田令孜、楊復恭、劉季述、韓全誨為之魁傑。至自稱“定策國老”，目天子為門生，根深蒂固，疾成膏肓，不可救藥矣！

Baoli was inappropriately close to the petty servants; Liu Keming joined with Su Zuoming to make a rebellion. After that, King Jiang and the six emperors: Wen, Wu, Xuan, Yi, Xi, and Zhao, were all established by eunuchs.⁷⁶ The eunuchs became more and more arrogant, and their authority became greater and greater. Wang Shoucheng, Qiu Shiliang, Tian Lingzi, Yang Fugong, Liu Jisu, and Han Quanhui were the prominent ones.⁷⁷ It went to an extreme that one of them called himself “Emperor-Establishing Elderly Statesman”.⁷⁸ They viewed the Son of Heaven as

⁷⁵ See Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 263.17a

⁷⁶ Baoli 寶曆 was the name of Emperor Jingzong’s 敬宗 (r. 825-827 C.E.) reign, therefore referred to Emperor Jingzong here. The *Xin Tang shu* recorded that Emperor Jingzong was fond of ball games and night-hunting and often played with the eunuchs including Liu Keming 劉克明 (d. 827 C.E.) and Su Zuoming 蘇佐明. The emperor was ill-mannered and mistreated the eunuchs whenever he was displeased. One night, Emperor Jingzong came back from foxhunting and drank with the eunuchs. When he was half drunk and went to change, Liu Keming put out the candles and assassinated him. Then, Liu made the *Hanlin* imperial scholar Lu Sui 路隋 (775-835 C.E.) to fabricate an imperial decree to declare King Jiang 絳王 (d. 827 C.E.), the sixth son of Emperor Xianzong, the successor. See Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 208.5883-5884

⁷⁷ Wang Shoucheng 王守澄 (d. 835 C.E.) was a powerful eunuch who remained active during the reigns of Emperor Xianzong, Emperor Muzong, Emperor Jingzong, and Emperor Wenzong. Tian Lingzi 田令孜 (d. 893 C.E.) and Yang Fugong 楊復恭 (d. 894 C.E.) were eunuchs during Emperor Xizong’s 僖宗 (862-888 C.E.) reign. Liu Jishu 劉季述 (d. 901 C.E.) and Han Quanhui 韓全誨 (d. 903 C.E.) served under Emperor Zhaozong’s 昭宗 (867-904 C.E.) reign. For their biography, see Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 208.5882-5902

⁷⁸ Yang Fugong, in a letter to the rebelling warlord Li Maozhen 李茂貞 (856-924 C.E.), called himself the “Emperor-Establishing Elderly Statesman” and Emperor Zhaozong the “ungrateful disciple”. See Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 208.5889

their disciples. [Their authority] was deeply rooted. The illness [of the state caused by them] was too severe and at the final stage. It had not been able to be cured by medicine or saved!

One of the most astounding speeches made by the eunuchs was Qiu Shiliang's advice to his confederate on the ways to fool the emperor:⁷⁹

天子不可令閒，常宜以奢靡娛其耳目，使日新月盛，無暇更及它事，然後吾輩可以得志。慎勿使之讀書，親近儒生，彼見前代興亡，心知憂懼，則吾輩疏斥矣。

The Son of Heaven cannot be made idle. It is better for us to always use extravagance and luxury to entertain his ears and eyes. Keep [the entertainments] new and increase them day by day so that the emperor will have no time to pay attention to other things, and then, we can achieve our goals. Never make him read books or be close to the Confucian scholars. When he sees the flourishing and perishing of the previous generations, he will know to be worried and scared in his mind, and then we will be kept at a distance and rebuked.

The power-increasing of the eunuchs had benefited much from another political situation. Since the time of Emperor Muzong, the nearly forty-year-long Niu-Li Factional Strife (*Niu-Li dang zheng* 牛李黨爭) had started. The decades of power struggles at court lasted until Emperor Xuanzong's reign. It caused severe social conflicts and put the emperors' governing in crisis. Emperor Wenzong, when speaking of the factional strife, lamented: "It is easy to get rid of the bandits in Hebei Circuit, but it is hard to get rid of the parties and factions at court!"⁸⁰ Moreover,

⁷⁹ Ibid., 247.9b

⁸⁰ “去河北賊易，去朝廷朋黨難。” Ibid., 245.3a

the factional strife favored the growth of the prefectural military governors' power, which became one of the primary causes of the fall of the great dynasty.⁸¹

In addition, the shaky government was worsened by the mass rebellions. The most influential and detrimental uprising was the ten-year-long Huang Chao Rebellion (*Huang Chao zhi luan* 黃巢之亂) happened during Emperor Xizong's reign. The great turbulence was often regarded as the last straw that broke the camel's back. Although the rebellion was eventually suppressed, the Tang government was unable to recover from the damages. Shortly after about two decades, a participant of the rebellion, Zhu Wen 朱溫 (852-912 C.E.), overthrew the Tang government and started another chaotic era: the Five Dynasties.⁸² The Huang Chao Rebellion was indeed the most significant culprit for the fall of the Tang dynasty, but the unrest had appeared long before Emperor Xizong's time. At the start of Emperor Yizong's reign, the breakout of the Qiu Fu Rebellion (*Qiu Fu zhi luan* 裘甫之亂) manifested the serious social problems in the period. It was also the prelude

⁸¹ The Niu Faction (牛黨) was named after Niu Sengru 牛僧孺 (780-849 C.E.). It was a faction of officials from humble origins and passed the imperial examinations to get into the government; the Li Faction (李黨) was named after Li Deyu 李德裕 (787-850 C.E.). It was a faction of officials from aristocratic origins. It started during the reign of Emperor Muzong, in 821, and lasted during the reigns of Emperor Jingzong, Emperor Wenzong, and Emperor Wuzong. It ended at the start of the reign of Emperor Xuanzong, in 846. His clear dislike for Li Deyu, and systematic demotion of related officials, led to the complete defeat of the Li Faction. For a comprehensive research and discussion on the Niu-Li Factional Strife, see Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890-1969 C.E.), "Tangdai zhengzhi shi shulun gao" 唐代政治史述論稿 in *Chen Yinke xiansheng lunji* 陳寅恪先生論集 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo 中央研究院歷史語言研究所, 1971), 140-188

⁸² The Huang Chao Rebellion happened from 875 to 884. Huang Chao was born in a salt merchant's family. After failing the imperial exam, he involved himself in the salt smuggling business. The frequent frictions with the government caused him to join the revolt initiated by Wang Xianzhi 王仙芝 (d. 878 C.E.). In 881, he invaded Chang'an and established his regime: the Great Qi 大齊 government. Huang was cruel and narrow-minded. As a ruler, he lacked the proper military, political, and economic plans. The new regime was wiped out by the Tang government in 884. Zhu Wen, born a ruffian, who was initially with Huang, turned to the Tang government and defeated Huang. In 907, he overthrew the Tang government and established the Later Liang regime. For a detailed account of the Huang Chao Rebellion, see Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 255-256.4b; See Liu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 200.5391-5398 and Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 225.6451-6464 for Huang Chao's biographies. For Zhu Wen's biography, see Ouyang, *Xin Wudai shi*, 1.1-15 and Tao, *Wudai shi bu*, 1.1a-1b

of a series of rebellions that happened subsequently.⁸³ Only eight years after the Qiu Fu Rebellion subsided, the Pang Xun Rebellion (*Pang Xun zhi bian* 龐勛之變) took place.⁸⁴ The one-year uprising was of a larger scale and had a greater impact nationwide. As an exam taker, Luo Yin was also affected by the event. In “New Preface to the *Writings of Slandering*”, he recounted:⁸⁵

又一年，朝廷以彭虺就辟，刀機猶濕，詔吾輩不宜求試。

A year later, since the great serpent at Pengcheng was just killed,⁸⁶ and the weapons were still bloodstained, the court proclaimed that it was not suitable for fellows like us to take the imperial exam.

The political and social unrest during Emperor Yizong’s reign was deteriorated by the incapable emperor. The inherited issues from previous generations were magnified by the mindless acts of Emperor Yizong. Thus, the *Jiu Tang shu* gave a harsh but truthful comment on Emperor Yizong:⁸⁷

臣常接咸通耆老，言恭惠皇帝故事。當大中時，四海承平，百職修舉，中外無糝政，府庫有餘貲，年穀屢登，封疆無擾。恭惠始承丕構，頗亦勵精，延納讜言，尊崇耆德，數

⁸³ Qiu Fu (d. 860 C.E.) was engaged in the illegal trading of salt. He led over a hundred peasants to revolt in 859. The rebellion lasted for less than a year. Though the troops grew and won lots of battles, the Tang government successfully suppressed the rebellion in 860. For a detailed account of the Qiu Fu Rebellion, see Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 250.1a-6b

⁸⁴ From 868 to 869 C.E., Pang Xun (d. 869 C.E.), an assistant to the Xu Prefecture 徐州 (in modern Anhui 安徽 Province) commander, led a major rebellion by the detained soldiers from Xu Prefecture stationed at Gui Prefecture 桂州 (in modern Guangxi 廣西 Province), who could not return home as promised after six years. The rebellion was suppressed with Pang Xun’s death in a battle in 869. For a detailed account of the Pang Xun Rebellion, see Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 251.1b-19b

⁸⁵ See “*Chan shu chong xu*” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 797-799

⁸⁶ The great serpent referred to Pang Xun. Pengcheng 彭城 referred to the Xu Prefecture.

⁸⁷ See Liu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 19.684-685

稔之內，洋洋頌聲。然器本中庸，流於近習，所親者巷伯，所暱者桑門。以蠱惑之侈言，亂驕淫之方寸，欲無怠忽，其可得乎！……然猶削軍賦而飾伽藍，困民財而修淨業，以諛佞為愛己，謂忠諫為妖言。爭趨險陂之途，罕勵貞方之節。見豕負塗之愛豎，非次寵升；焦頭爛額之輔臣，無辜竄逐。是以干戈布野，蟲旱彌年，佛骨才入於應門，龍輻已泣於蒼野，報應無必，斯其驗歟！

I, an official, once had connections with the older people from Xiantong's time, and they talked about the past affairs of Emperor Gonghui.⁸⁸ During the time of Dazhong,⁸⁹ the whole country was in peace; the hundred-occupations were revived. There were no harmful administrations at central or regional governments. The national treasury had surplus; the yearly harvests were good for many years; the border regions had no trouble. When Gonghui first inherited the throne, he was also quite stimulated. He made efforts to take remonstrations, respected and worshiped the traditional morality. During the few harvests, there was much praise. Yet, his talent was mediocre, so he was influenced by those to whom he was closely learning with. Those whom he intimately acquainted with were eunuchs; those whom he drew close to were Buddhist monks. He took those big talk of beguiling nature and indulged himself in arrogance and extravagance. If he wanted to be free of laziness, how could it be possible!Even so, he still cut down the military expenditure but decorated the Buddhist temples, relied on people's money to build good karma. He took the flattery and fawning as caring for himself; he referred to loyalty and remonstrations as heresy. He was particularly inclined to take the path of hardships and dangers, but he rarely encouraged the integrity of honesty and uprightness. For the filthy and peremptory officials that he was fond of, he made exceptions to promote them; for the ministers who were stressed out and troubled by work, he made them flee and exiled for no wrongdoing. Therefore, wars were everywhere; locust plague and drought lasted for years. The Buddha bones just entered the main

⁸⁸ Xiantong 咸通 was the name of Emperor Yizong's reign (860-874 C.E.). Emperor Gonghui 恭惠皇帝 was Emperor Yizong's posthumous name.

⁸⁹ Dazhong 大中 was the name of Emperor Xuanzong's reign (847-860 C.E.). It was inherited by Emperor Yizong when he succeeded in the eighth month of 860.

gate of the palace; the emperor's hearse was already accompanied by crying at the wilderness.

Retribution surely comes; didn't Yizong just verify the rule?!

If the comments in the previous paragraph were given by “the older people from the Xiantong's time”, then the following judgment, which was even harsher, was made by the author:⁹⁰

邦家治亂，在君聽斷。恭惠驕奢，賢良貶竄。兇豎當國，憊人滿朝。奸雄乘釁，貽謀道消。

Whether the state and the family are in order or chaos depends on the lord's hearing and judgment. Gonghui was arrogant and extravagant, and the worthy and good ones were demoted or ran away. The fierce and peremptory ones were in charge of the state; the crafty sycophants filled up the court. The unscrupulous achievers made use of the frictions. Teachings of the ancestors and the Way declined.

Unfortunately, Emperor Yizong's son, his successor Emperor Xizong, was equally incompetent as a ruler. The comments in *Xin Tang shu* employed the Confucian idea “Interaction Between Heaven and Human” (*Tian ren gan ying* 天人感應) to draw the conclusion. It provided us with an overview of this chaotic and dark era:⁹¹

懿、僖当唐政之始衰，而以昏庸相继；乾符之际，岁大旱蝗，民悉盗起，其乱遂不可复支，盖亦天人之会坎！

When Yizong and Xizong ruled, the Tang government started to decay. Moreover, one succeeded the other with fatuity and imbecility. In the Qianfu Era, there were great drought and plague of

⁹⁰ See Liu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 19.685

⁹¹ See Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 9.281

locusts.⁹² People exhausted what they had, and robbery appeared. Its chaos then could not be borne again. It was probably the case where Heaven's intention fits with human behavior, wasn't it?!

II.2 On the Authorities

The first and foremost group that Luo Yin condemned in the *Writings of Slandering* was none other than the authorities. "The authorities" is certainly too broad a category and too vague a concept. It was audacious enough for Luo Yin to confront the authorities in writing, while the only step that Luo did not take, nor would any scholar do, was to spell out the names. That said, the identities of those that he "slandered" were almost transparent. The Son of Heaven was beyond doubt one of the targets.

In "Saving the Two Rulers of Xia and Shang" ("Jiu Xia Shang er di" 救夏商二帝), Luo compared the conducts of the two famous tyrants: Gui 癸 and Xin 辛 to the two sage-kings Yao 堯 and Shun 舜,⁹³ and he discussed the response to both groups from later generations:⁹⁴

⁹² Qianfu (874-879 C.E.) was one of the reign names of employed by Emperor Xizong.

⁹³ Gui 癸, posthumously named Jie 桀, was a famous tyrant and the last ruler of the Xia 夏 dynasty. He was fond of and trusted unduly the queen Meixi 妹喜 and was heedless of the government of the state. He was also known for killing the vassal Guan Longfeng 關龍逢 for his remonstrance with a cruel punishment called *paoluo* 炮烙. For Gui's biography, see Sima, *Shiji*, 2.88; see also Zhang Hua 張華 (232-300 C.E.), *Bo wu zhi* 博物志, *Qing Daoguang zhihaiben* 清道光指海本, 10.1a-1b

Xin 辛 is also known as King Zhou 紂王. He was also a notorious tyrant and the last ruler of the Shang 商 dynasty. His brutal deeds were innumerable, one of the most notable ones was that he cut open the belly of a pregnant woman in order to observe the unborn infant. For Xin's biography, see Sima, *Shiji*, 3.105-109.

Yao 堯, alias Tang Yao 唐堯, is a legendary emperor of antiquity. He was extolled by Confucius as the platonic idea of the morally perfected sage-king whose benevolence and diligence should serve as a model for future Chinese monarchs. He abdicated and ceded his throne to Shun 舜, alias Yu Shun 虞舜, who was also a legendary emperor of antiquity. For Yao and Shun's biographies, see Sima, *Shiji*, 1.15-48

⁹⁴ See "Jiu Xia Shang er di" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 671-672

癸與辛，所謂死其身以穴過者也，極其名以橫惡者也。故千載之後，百王有聞其名者，必縮項掩耳。聞堯舜者，必氣躍心跳。

We refer to Gui and Xin as people who end their lives to hide their transgressions, exhaust their fame to make the malevolence pervade [the world]. Certainly, after a thousand years, among the hundred kings, those who hear their names will definitely retract their necks and cover their ears; those who hear of Yao and Shun will definitely have their spirits jumping and hearts beating.

Furthermore, he concluded the essay by specifying the root cause of Gui and Xin's suffering of the treatment of "neck-retracting" and "ears-covering":⁹⁵

是故堯舜以仁聖法天，而桀紂以殘暴為助。

For this reason, Yao and Shun took humaneness and sageship to follow Heaven, but Jie and Zhou took cruelty and violence as assistance.

The brutal comments on Gui and Xin were by far the only complaints about the rulers of the ancient times. It does not require one's hard thinking to realize the one who would end his life to "hide their transgressions" and exhaust his fame to "make the malevolence pervade [the world]" was most likely Emperor Yizong. Considering the emperor's irrational and cold-blooded slaughter of the imperial physicians and their relatives after Princess Tongchang's death, it would be fair to rebuke him for "taking cruelty and violence as assistance".

⁹⁵ Ibid., 200

The other piece about the sage-kings in high antiquity was “The Strengths of the Three Rulers” (“San di suo chang” 三帝所長). Although the title deceptively suggested the essay to be a praise for benevolent rulers, the “strengths” was not the focus:⁹⁶

堯之時，民樸不可語，故堯捨其子而教之，澤未周而堯落，舜嗣堯理，跡堯以化之，澤既周而南狩，丹與均果位於民間，是化存於外者也。夏后氏得帝位，而百姓已偷，遂教其子，是由內而及外者也。然化於外者，以土階之卑，茅茨之淺，而聲響相接焉。化於內者，有宮室焉，溝洫焉，而威則日嚴矣。是以土階之際萬民親，宮室之後萬民畏。

During Yao’s time, the people were simple and could not be conversed with. For this reason, Yao gave up his son but instructed the people. Yao perished before his grace had comprehensively spread out. Shun inherited Yao’s principles and carried out Yao’s behests to transform them. When his grace completely spread out, he passed away when surveying the southern territory.⁹⁷ Dan and Jun were truly among the people.⁹⁸ This was the instance where the transformation stayed on the outside. When the sovereigns of Xia came into power,⁹⁹ the Hundred Clans had already been dishonest. So, he instructed his son. This was the instance where [the instruction] originated from the inside and reached to the outside. However, when transforming from the outside, although vulgar with earthy stairs and shallow with thatched hut roof, sound and echo are coming one after another. When transforming from the inside, although living in the imperial

⁹⁶ See “San di suo chang” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 666-668

⁹⁷ It was recorded in *Shiji* that Shun died when surveying the southern territory in the wilderness after succeeding Yao and ruling for thirty-nine years. “踐帝位三十九年，南巡狩，崩於蒼梧之野。” See Sima, *Shiji*, 1.44

⁹⁸ Dan 丹, also known as Danzhu 丹朱, was the son of Yao. Jun 均, also known as Shangjun 商均, was the son of Shun. They were both known for being unworthy. See Sima, *Shiji*, 1.20, 30, 44

⁹⁹ The legendary Xia dynasty is said to be the first hereditary dynasty in Chinese history. The vital member of the Xia clan, Yu 禹, also known as Yu the Great 大禹, was the founder. Instead of following the tradition of Yao and Shun to abdicate, Yu passed down the ruling power to his son, Ziqi 子啟. See Sima, *Shiji*, 2.83

palace and working on the canals and ditches,¹⁰⁰ the intimidation would be more and more rigorous. Therefore, during the time of earthy stairs, the myriad people came close; after the time of imperial palaces, the myriad people were intimidated.

In this essay, Luo Yin explained the distinctions between “transforming from the inside” and “transforming from the outside”. Yao and Shun employed the worthy people to manage the Sub-celestial Realm, while Yu gave the throne to his son. Although Yu was also considered as a great ruler who lived at a humble dwelling and worked hard for people, he could only make people be in awe of him. Sarcastically, Luo Yin blamed the people who were no longer honest for Yu’s choice, which made his “slandering” of Emperor Yizong even more severe. Apparently, Emperor Yizong could not fulfill his duty of transformation from the outside because he only favored those who he was close to. His unconditional trust in his sons-in-law was the best example. His careless spending on Princess Tongchang’s wedding was in sharp contrast with Yao and Shun’s earthy stairs and thatched hut roof.¹⁰¹ Even in a time when the people were not honest anymore, the emperor did not start the transformation from inside. Instead, Emperor Yizong’s luxurious and frequent holidays set examples for the bureaucrats. His indifference in government had a bad influence on the officials as well. Had caused so much pain to the state, Emperor Yizong’s intimidation did become more and more rigorous.

¹⁰⁰ The *Analects* had a paragraph in chapter “Tai bo” 泰伯 about Yu. Confucius complimented Yu, saying, “As for Yu, I have had nothing to complain.... He made his imperial palace humble and made great efforts for the canals and ditches.” “禹，吾無間然矣。卑宮室而盡力乎溝洫。” See He comm., *Lun yu ji jie*, 4.18a

¹⁰¹ When Princess Tongchang married Wei Baoheng, Emperor Yizong provided her with unaccountable dowries, which included exceedingly valuable utensils, adornments, household items, accessories made of gold, silver, jade, precious stones, and so on. For details, see Li, *Taiping guang ji*, 237.1825-2826

A more subtle piece was his essay “Unfulfilled Will of Old Man of Meng” (“Meng sou yi yi” 蒙叟遺意).¹⁰² Instead of making an upfront comparison between the sage-kings in high antiquity, Luo resorted to the mythical “High Gods” to deliver the message.¹⁰³

上帝既剖混沌氏，以支節為山岳，以腸胃為江河，一旦慮其掀然而興，則下無生類矣。於是孕銅鐵於山岳，滓魚鹽於江河，俾後人攻取之，且將以苦混沌之靈，而致其必不起也。嗚呼，混沌則不起矣，而人力殫焉。

The High Gods entirely cut open *Hundun*.¹⁰⁴ They took his limbs and joints to be mountains and his intestines and stomach to be rivers. They worried that if one day, *Hundun* turned over and activated himself, then the world would be left without living being. Therefore, they bred copper and iron at mountains and valleys, deposited fish and salt as sediments in rivers and streams. They made the latter people attack and deprive of the wreck, and they would also use this to bedevil *Hundun*'s spiritual power, causing him never to get up. Alas, *Hundun* would definitely be unable to get up, while human labor is also exhausted from this.

In the time of chaos, the legendary fictional figure *Hundun* could refer to many people. Among all, the military governors in charge of the outlying prefectures seemed particularly threatening to the Tang government. The destructive Pang Xun Rebellion during Emperor Yizong's reign was truly a result of the exhaustion of human labor. The garrison soldiers were enlisted to march to Guilin

¹⁰² The old man of Meng 蒙叟 referred to Zhuang Zhou 莊周 (369-286 B.C.E.), the purported author of the ancient text *Zhuangzi* 莊子, because he was from Meng County in the State of Liang 梁. See Sima, *Shiji*, 63.2143-2145

¹⁰³ See “Meng sou yi yi” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 665-666

¹⁰⁴ In *Zhuangzi*, the God of the Southern Sea, Shu 儻, and the God of the Northern Sea, Hu 忽, cut holes of the Central God *Hundun* 混沌, who had become a legendary fictional figure symbolizing the state of simplicity and purity in later texts, and caused him to die. See “Ying di wang” 應帝王 in Guo comp., Wang ed., *Zhuangzi ji shi*, 309

桂林 and fight the Nanzhao 南詔.¹⁰⁵ Despite the promise to allow the soldiers to go back home after three years, the government could not keep the words but forced the soldiers to stay for six years. In this case, the emperor's concern that the Nanzhao would "turn over and activate itself" might be allayed, but the exhausted human labor would bring more trouble. Moreover, the High Gods' behaviors of "breeding copper and iron at mountains and valleys" and "depositing fish and salt as sediments in rivers and streams" were hinting at the tight government control of salt and iron, which was to be blamed for the mass resistance and the unaccountable crimes. Even the Qiu Fu Rebellion, which happened at the beginning of Emperor Yizong's reign, was led by a salt smuggler.

In "Dragon's Being Miraculous" ("Long zhi ling" 龍之靈), Luo explained the relation between a dragon and water. It is apparent that the dragon referred to the emperor and water referred to the people:¹⁰⁶

龍之所以能靈者，水也。涓然而取，霈然而神，天之於萬物必職於下以成功，而龍之職，水也，不取於下則無以健其用，不神於上則無以靈其職。苟或涸一川然後潤下，涸一澤然後濟物，不惟濡及首尾，利未及施而魚鼈已敝矣。故龍之取也寡。

The reason why the dragon is able to be miraculous is because of water. Streaming the water, the dragon takes it; overflowing the water, the dragon shows its divineness. In relation to the myriad things, Heaven must attend to the subordinates to achieve merits. By the same token, as for the dragon's attending to water, if it does not take from a lower position, then there will be none to strengthen its function; if it does not show its divineness at a higher position, then there will be

¹⁰⁵ Nanzhao 南詔, whose people were disparagingly called the Southern barbarians (*Nan man* 南蠻) by the Han Chinese, was a kingdom that flourished in what is now southern China and Southeast Asia during the eighth and ninth centuries. During Emperor Yizong's time, its territory covered parts of modern Sichuan Province, Yunnan 雲南 Province, Guizhou 貴州 Province, Tibet, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, and Laos. See Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 222.6267-6295

¹⁰⁶ See "Long zhi ling" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 692-693

none to make its duties miraculous. If only it dries up a river and then moistens those at the lower position, dries up a swamp and then aids the things, then isn't it the case where the moisture reaches the head and the tail, but the fish and turtles have already died before the benefits could be delivered? Therefore, what the dragon takes will be little.

The first sentence spelt out the gist of the essay: “The reason why the dragon is able to be miraculous is because of water.” In other words, the ruler relies on the people to keep his position as the Son of Heaven. Luo discussed the key to “achieve merits” is to “attend to the subordinates”. The emperor should take care of the people instead of “drying up” them. When it happens, “the fish and turtles would be already died before the benefits could be delivered.” When people are exhausted before they can be taken good care of, it would be impossible for the ruler to take much. Compared with in some other essays, Luo Yin did not severely criticize the emperor in this piece but used an analogy to deliver a lesson for him.

Conversely, the essay “Emperor Wu of Han and Extolling at the Mountain” (“Han Wu shan hu” 漢武山呼) in Volume Four straightforwardly criticized the ruler.¹⁰⁷ In this essay, Emperor Yizong’s extravagant spending was harshly reprimanded by Luo Yin:¹⁰⁸

人之性未有生而侈縱者，苟非其正，則人能壞之，事能壞之，物能壞之。雖貴賤殊，及

¹⁰⁷ Emperor Wu of Han, born Liu Che 劉徹 (141-87 B.C.E.), was the fifth emperor of the Han dynasty. His posthumous name was Emperor Filial and Martial (Xiaowu Huangdi 孝武皇帝). In his fifty-four-year reign, he promoted the Confucian doctrines, poetic and musical arts. He is also known for his aggressive military expansion and territory exploration. Although generally considered a great ruler, his treatment to General Li Ling 李陵 (134-74 B.C.E.) and Sima Qian and their families, as well as the happening of the Case of Shaman Witchcraft (*Wu gu zhi huo* 巫蠱之禍) made him a controversial figure in Chinese history. For a detailed biography of Liu Che, see Sima, *Shiji*, 12.451-486

¹⁰⁸ See “Han Wu shan hu” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xian jiaojian*, 729-731

其壞一也。¹⁰⁹前後左右之諛佞者，人壞之也。窮游極觀者，事壞之也。發於感寤者，物壞之也。是三者有一於是，則為國之大蠹。孝武承富庶之後，聽左右之說，窮游觀之靡，乃東封焉，蓋所以祈其身而不祈其民，祈其歲時也。由是萬歲之聲發於感寤，然後逾遼越海，勞師弊俗，以至於百姓困窮者，東山萬歲之聲也。以一山之呼猶若見，況千口萬口者乎？是以東封之呼，不得以為祥，而為英主之不幸。

As far as people's inborn nature is concerned, there is none who is extravagant and unbridled upon born. If only one is to make their rightness into wrong, then people are able to spoil it; matters are able to spoil it; things are able to spoil it. Although the noble and the humble ones are far apart, when being spoiled, they become the same. As for the flatterers and fawners in front, behind, on the left, and on the right, they are the cases of spoiling by people. As for using up the resources for traveling and going to the extreme for sightseeing, they are the cases of spoiling by matters. As for those that come out of feeling and realization, they are the cases of spoiling by things. As for these three, if there is one of them, then it will act as a great vermin to the state. Xiao Wu inherited the wealthy and populous country from predecessors,¹¹⁰ listened to the persuasions from the left and right, pushed the waste of traveling and sighting to an extreme. Then he offered grand sacrifices in the east. Undoubtedly, he did so to pray for himself instead of praying for his people or the yearly and timely harvest. Because that sound of "Long live!" came out of correlative resonance [from Heaven], then, he crossed over the far-away land and transgressed the ocean, tired the troop and harmed the custom.¹¹¹ What caused the Hundred Clans

¹⁰⁹ Li's version followed the *Baomizhai* manuscript version and changed *ji* 及 into *ji* 級. I followed other versions to keep it as *ji* 及.

¹¹⁰ The predecessors referred to Emperor Wen of Han 漢文帝, Liu Heng 劉恆 (203-157 B.C.E.) and Emperor Jing of Han 漢景帝, Liu Qi 劉啟 (188-141 B.C.E.). The time of their reigns were called the Rule of Wen Jing (*Wen Jing zhi zhi* 文景之治). During the flourishing age, the two worthy emperors stabilized the early Western Han government and society, improved the people's well-being, and developed the economy. For biographies of Emperor Wen and Emperor Jing, See Sima, *Shiji*, 10.413-438, 11.439-449

¹¹¹ The *Shiji* recorded that when Emperor Wu of Han visited the Taishi Mountain 太室山 of Mount Song 嵩山, which locates in Henan 河南 Province, the retinue heard the extolling sound of "Long live!" when they were at the foot of the mountain. They asked people from above and below who extolled, but none did so. The emperor

constrained and destitute was the sound of “Long live!” in the eastern mountain.¹¹² To get extolling at one mountain was already like this, how can one imagine [getting it from] tens of thousands of mouths? For this reason, as for the extolling at the sacrifice at the eastern mountain, one cannot regard it as auspicious. Rather, it is indeed unfortunate for a wise ruler.

First of all, Luo stated: “As far as people’s inborn nature is concerned, there is none who is extravagant and unbridled upon born.” This was clearly suggesting Emperor Yizong. We can understand from *Jiu Tang shu* that “When Gonghui first inherited the throne, he was also quite stimulated. He made efforts to take remonstrations, respected, and worshiped the traditional morality. During the few harvests, there was much praise.” It was due to the spoiling of people, matters, and things that the rightness became the wrongness. Even more boldly, Luo pointed out that Yizong’s inborn nature was spoiled by the flatterers and fawners as well as the ceaseless traveling and sightseeing. When Luo talked about Emperor Wu’s selfish act of offering *Feng* and *Shan* sacrifices at Mount Tai, the target was, again, Emperor Yizong. One of Li Cui’s most widely criticized acts was his wayward decision to welcome the Buddha bones in 819. His ardent pursue of Buddhism was, by all means, his selfish hope for his longevity and the well-being of the next life. Emperor Yizong’s wish to hear the sound of “Long Live!” resembled Emperor Wu of Han. Consequently, the Hundred Clans were “constrained and destitute”. In the end, Luo concluded that the Buddha bones should not be regarded as auspicious but totally unfortunate for a wise ruler.

The target under the pen of Luo Yin was not merely the Son of Heaven; the wrong deeds were done with the urge of “the left and right”. The advancement of the despicable misdeeds was a

believed it to be the sound from Heaven, so he made the area a village and named it “Lofty Village” (Chonggao yi 崇高邑). See Sima, *Shiji*, 12.474

¹¹² The eastern mountain referred to Mount Tai 泰山 located in modern Shandong 山東 Province. Because Mount Tai was regarded as the peak of the area, it was the tradition for the Son of Heaven to offer the *Feng* 封 and *Shan* 禪 sacrifices at Mount Tai to pay homage to heaven and earth. For the *Feng shan* tradition, see Sima, *Shiji*, 28.1355-1404

result of the mutual work of the emperor and the authorities. Without the “fine words, an insinuating appearance, and excessive respect” of whom the emperor was close to, he would not be deceived by slandering and flattering.¹¹³ Conversely, without the benighted promotion of and trust in those slanderers and flatterers, the ruler would be free from the evil urges. In the *Writings of Slandering*, therefore, it is most common to see the criticism of both parties appear side by side.

The essay “Yi Yin Has Words” (“Yi Yin you yan” 伊尹有言) was one of the many examples.¹¹⁴ Luo Yin employed the reputable advisor Yi Yin to rebuke the shameless advisors in the current era. At the same time, he did not forget to compare Emperor Yizong to the ancient rulers:¹¹⁵

唐虞氏以傳授得天下，而猶用和仲、稷、高以醞釀風俗，堙洪水，服四罪，然後垂衣裳而已，百姓飲食而已，亦時之未漓，非天獨生唐虞之能理也。及商湯氏，以鳴條誓，放桀於南巢，揖遜既異，渾樸亦壞。伊尹放太甲，立太甲，則臣下有權始於是矣。而曰：「恥君之不及堯舜。」嗚呼！商湯氏之取，非唐虞氏之取也。商湯氏之時，非唐虞氏之時也。商湯氏之百姓，非唐虞氏之百姓也。商湯氏之臣，非唐虞氏之和仲、稷、高也。伊尹不恥其身，不及和仲、稷、高，而恥君之不見堯舜，在致君之誠則極矣，而勵己之事何如耳？惜哉！

Tang Yao and Yu Shun received the Sub-celestial Realm through abdication and handing over the throne. Yet, they still employed Hezhong, Ji, and Xie to ferment and brew the manners and

¹¹³ This famous quote comes from “Gong Ye Chang” 公冶長 in the *Analects*:

子曰：巧言、令色、足恭，左丘明恥之，丘亦恥之。

Confucius said: “As for fine words, an insinuating appearance, and excessive respect, Zuo Qiuming was ashamed of them; I am also ashamed of them.”

See “Gong Ye Chang” in He comm., *Lun yu ji jie*, 3.9a

¹¹⁴ Yi Yin, also known as Yi Zhi 伊摯, was a renowned advisor of Shang Tang 商湯, the first ruler of the Shang dynasty. Yi Yin’s greatest achievement was helping with the defeating of Jie of the Xia dynasty and the founding of the Shang dynasty. See Sima, *Shiji*, 3.94-99

¹¹⁵ See “Yi Yin you yan” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xian jiaojian*, 674-676

customs.¹¹⁶ They obstructed the floods and brought the four criminals to deference.¹¹⁷ Thereafter they hung down the upper and lower garments, and that is that! The Hundred Clans drank and dined, and that is that! Also, it was [because] that the age had not been a shallow one, not that Heaven only brought Tang Yao and Yu Shun's being capable-to-manage into existence. Reaching up to the age of Shang Tang, he took the chance of Mingtiao to pledge and expelled Jie to Nanchao.¹¹⁸ The practice of abdication was utterly different. The purity and simplicity were also damaged. Yi Yin expelled Tai Jia and then established Tai Jia, then the vassals and subordinates have started obtaining authorities.¹¹⁹ Yet, they said shame on the lord for not reaching up to Yao and Shun. Alas! What Shang Tang adopted was not what Tang Yao and Yu Shun adopted. The age of Shang Tang was not the age of Tang Yao and Yu Shun; The Hundred Clans of Shang Tang were not the Hundred Clans of Tang Yao and Yu Shun; the vassals of Shang Tang were not Hezhong, Ji, and Xie of Tang Yao and Yu Shun. Yi Yin was not ashamed of himself for not reaching up to Hezhong, Ji, and Xie, but was ashamed of the lord's not seeing Yao and Shun. In terms of the genuineness of bringing about a lord, it has been extreme, but what about the matter of exerting himself? How pitiful!

¹¹⁶ Hezhong 和仲 was a legendary figure who was believed to be an officer in charge of agriculture during Yao's reign. The legendary figure Ji 稷, or Hou Ji 后稷, was known as the God of Agriculture and appointed as the Grand Councilor by Yao. Xie 高, also known as Kui Qi 夔契, was also a legendary figure who was believed to be a worthy advisor of Shun's. See Sima, *Shiji*, 1.16-17, 38, 4.111-112

¹¹⁷ The four criminals referred to Gonggong 共工, Sanmiao 三苗, Gun 鯀, and Huandou 驩兜. One of Shun's merits was to suppress the four criminals. See Kong Anguo 孔安國 (fl. 100 B.C.E.) comp., Lu Deming ed., *Shang shu* 尚書, *Sibu congshu*, 1.8a-8b

¹¹⁸ The Battle of Mingtiao (*Mingtiao zhi zhan* 鳴條之戰) was the decisive battle through which the Shang overthrew the Xia. Shang Tang, the leader of the battle, caused Jie, the King of Xia, to flee to Nanchao 南巢 (modern Chaohu 巢湖, Anhui Province) after the fiasco. See Sima, *Shiji*, 3.95-96

¹¹⁹ It was recorded that the King of Shang, Tai Jia, was cruel and did not follow the rules of the Shang, so Yi Yin expelled him three years after he was established. Yi Yin took his place and governed for three years while Tai Jia reflected his mistakes at the Tong Palace (Tong gong 桐宮). Three years later, Yi Yin reinstated Tai Jia as the King. See Sima, *Shiji*, 3.99

In Luo Yin's opinion, the widely celebrated advisor Yi Yin was the culprit for establishing the tradition for the vassals and subordinates to obtain authorities. Yi Yin's maneuver of "expelling Tai Jia and then establishing Tai Jia" was clearly suggesting the eunuchs' incessant interference of the succession of the throne. On the one hand, he condemned the interferers for detesting the ruler's incapability instead of being ashamed of their own lack of capabilities. Luo commented that it was pitiful of them to make the best efforts to establish a lord but do nothing to improve themselves. On the other hand, the criticism of Emperor Yizong, or even the previous emperors, was equally relentless. The biggest crime he pointed out in the essay was their inability to employ the worthy ones. Yao and Shun had Hezhong, Ji, and Xie as their advisors even when "the age had not been a shallow one", a time when the management of the country was not too difficult a task. When Shang Tang stepped up, the tradition of abdication had been abandoned. It was an era when purity and simplicity were lost, and the people were not as tame as before. Under such an undesirable situation, the ruler failed to give promotion to the worthy people like Hezhong, Ji, and Xie but trusted the Yi Yin-alike. The "abdication tradition" apparently referred to the custom of succession without the eunuchs' interference, which had been abandoned. Besides complaining about the "changed time", a theme which will be discussed in greater detail in the next section, a more critical point which Luo Yin tried to make was Emperor Yizong's ineptitude in selecting talents. The twenty-one Prime Ministers who served during Emperor Yizong's reign and the exiled officials such as Liu Zhan and Wen Zhang proved Luo Yin's argument.

Another good example is the essay "Discourse on the Heavenly Rooster" ("Shuo tian ji" 說天雞). Although Luo did not use historical figures to state his points, the short allegory served the same purpose. Compared with the previous examples where he satirized the emperor by analogizing him with ancient emperors and the advisors, the story of a rooster-raiser was equally effective in terms of "slandering":¹²⁰

¹²⁰ See "Shuo tian ji" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 698-700

狙氏子不得父術而得雞之性焉，其畜養者，冠距不舉，毛羽不彰，兀然若無飲啄意，泊見敵則他雞之雄也，伺晨則他雞之先也，故謂之天雞。狙氏死，傳其術於子焉，乃反先人之道，非毛羽彩錯嘴距銛利者不與其棲，無復向時伺晨之儔，見敵之勇，峨冠俯步，飲啄而已。吁，道之壞也有是夫！

The son of Mister Ju did not inherit his father's technique but acquired the [knowledge of the] inborn nature of roosters.¹²¹ As for the rooster which he domesticated and raised, its cockscomb and spurs did not lift, nor were its hair and feathers beautiful. Looking dazed and befuddled, it seemed to have no intention to eat or drink. When it saw opponents, it became the most gallant one among others; when it came to crowing-at-dawn, it was ahead of others. Hence, people referred to it as the Heavenly Rooster. Mister Ju (Jr.) died and passed down his technique to his son, but his son went against his father's way. He would not accommodate any rooster that is without pretty multi-colored hair and feathers and dart-sharp beaks and spurs. The roosters would no longer cock at dawn on time or have the courage in front of opponents. They lifted their cockscomb high and hunched down strolling, and they drank and ate, and that was it. Alack! The damage of the Way can be to this extent!

From Luo's perspective, those in power resembled the roosters who "lifted their cockscomb high and hunched down strolling". In front of the people, the corrupted officials presented themselves as haughty superiors. The only thing they knew was to eat and drink-extorting resources from the people. They could not fulfill their duties to "cock at dawn on time". When Prime Minister Du Cong did care for the imprisoned suspects and deemed their deaths a chance to close the cases, his neglect of duty was not just about being on time but about performing it at all. When there were opponents, they lacked the courage to fight. The image of the roosters with pretty multi-colored hair and feathers and dart-sharp beaks and spurs reminds the readers of the four Prime

¹²¹ Ju 狙 was the name of a species of macaque. By using the name "Mister Ju", Luo Yin suggested that the man's business was raising macaques.

Ministers who held an office and dressed in silk and wore valuable gold and jade as accessories. They enjoyed all the privileges without doing a stroke of work. In the meantime, the emperor was also the target. Emperor Yizong did not learn the technique of governing the state from his predecessors but selected the useless advisors. Was he not the same as the son of Mister Ju Jr., who only picked the nice-looking roosters? At the end of the essay, Luo sighed, commenting that the propriety in Dazhong's time was lost in the hands of Emperor Yizong because he abandoned the Way.

There were also a number of essays that paid primary attention to the slanderers and flatterers surrounding the emperor. The first essay "Response on Wind and Rain" ("Feng yu dui" 風雨對) was one of the best examples in criticizing the power-manipulators.¹²²

風雨雪霜，天地之權也。山川藪澤，鬼神之所伏也。故風雨不時，則歲有飢饉，雪霜不時，則人有疾病。然後禱山川藪澤以致之，則風雨雪霜果為鬼神所有也，明矣！得非天之高不可以周理，而寄之山川；地之厚不可以自運，而憑之鬼神。苟祭祀不時，則饑饉作；報應不至，則疾病生。是鬼神用天地之權，而風雨雪霜為牛羊之本矣。復何歲時為？復何人民為？是以大道不旁出，懼其弄也，大政不聞下，懼其偷也。夫欲何言！

Wind, Rain, Snow, and Frost are the authorities of Heaven and Earth. Mountains, rivers, marshes, and swamps are where ghosts and spirits lurk. Certainly, if wind and rain do not come in season, then the year will suffer from hunger and famine. If snow and frost do not come in season, then people will suffer from ailment and disease. Knowing this, people pray to mountains, rivers, marshes, and swamps for the weather to come, then wind, rain, snow, and frost are indeed in the hands of ghosts and spirits. It has been manifest! Is it the case that Heaven is too high to manage comprehensively, so it entrusted it to the mountains and rivers; Earth is too thick to self-run, so it relied on ghosts and spirits. If, and only if, the sacrifices do not happen in seasons, then hunger

¹²² See "Feng yu dui" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 663-665

and famine will arise; if reward and acknowledgment are not presented, then ailment and disease will emerge. These are instances where ghosts and spirits make use of the authorities of Heaven and Earth, and wind, rain, snow, and frost has been serving as their source of [the sacrificial] oxen and sheep. Why, still, does it yearly and seasonally? Why, again, do people do it? For this reason, the great Way does not come out from the sides because we are afraid of their manipulation; the great administration does not heed the subordinates because we are fearful of their stealing. What would one like to say?!

Obviously, the ghosts and spirits referred to the government officials who seized power. They had in hand the authority which belonged to the Son of Heaven and enjoyed the “sacrifices” provided by people. When they could not get enough tributes from the people, they would make trouble. Even though the people wanted to speak to the emperor and seek help, the government officials blocked their way. Also, the ghosts and spirits lurked everywhere, from mountains and rivers to marshes and swamps. It suggested to the readers how extensive the abominable government officials were. Not only those who stayed close to the emperor and lived in the capital blinded the ruler but also the regional administrators, and even those who held lower positions deprived the people. Though one could easily understand Luo’s metaphor in this essay, he made it even more translucent at the end of the essay by making the blunt statement: “The great Way does not come out from the sides because we are afraid of their manipulation; the great administration does not heed the subordinates because we are fearful of their stealing.” Not a single name of the targets was given. Still, it is imaginable how powerful the essay was and how striking the celebrities might feel upon reading it when Luo Yin presented the *Writings of Slandering* to them. Surely, Luo Yin said that the ordering was not according to a sequence, but how could one ignore the significance of and the emphasis the compiler put onto the first essay of a collection?¹²³

¹²³ See “*Chan shu xu*” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 661-662

The “*Fu on Screen Wall*” 屏賦 also attacked the power-manipulators who separated the ruler from the people like a screen wall.¹²⁴

惟屏者何？俾蕃侯家，作道陞阨，為庭齒牙，爾質既然，爾功奚取？迫若蒙蔽，屹非裨補。主也物敵，¹²⁵賓也如讎。賓主牆面，職爾之由。吳任太宰，國始無人，楚委靳尚，斥逐忠臣。何反道而背德與，枉理而全身？爾之所憑，亦孔之醜。列我門閭，生我妍不？既內外俱喪，須是非相糺，屏尚如此，人兮何知？在其門兮惡直道，處其位兮無所施，阮何情而泣路，墨何事而悲絲？麟兮何歎？鳳兮何為？吾所以悽惋者在斯。

What on earth is a screen wall? In the vassals and noblemen's houses, it obstructs the way and acts like the teeth of the hall. Since your quality is so, how would you take credit for yourself? You press near like that which casts a shadow; you tower like the mountain peak but mend nothing. As for the host, he cannot observe; as for the guests, they also [regard the screen wall as] an enemy. The host and the guests face the screen wall; it is you that stand in the way. Since Bo Pi served as the Grand Councilor in the State of Wu, the state no longer had [worthy] people. Since the State of Chu employed Jin Shang, it had driven away and exiled the loyal vassals.¹²⁶ Why would they reverse the Way and turn their back on the innate strength, distort the innate quality, and then save themselves? What you rely on is extremely ominous.¹²⁷ You stand at my threshold,

¹²⁴ A *ping* 屏, variously called *pingfengqiang* 屏風牆, *yingbi* 影壁, and *xiaoqiang* 蕭牆, is a screen wall. It was used to shield an entrance gate in traditional Chinese architecture. See “Ping fu” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 701-703

¹²⁵ The *Quan Tang wen* version took *wu di* 物敵 as *wu du* 勿覩. My translation followed the *Quan Tang wen* version. See Dong comp., *Quan Tang wen*, 894.9331

¹²⁶ Jin Shang 靳尚 (d. 311 B.C.E.) was an official in the State of Chu during the Warring States period. He was known for slandering Qu Yuan in front of King Huai of Chu 楚懷王 (355-296 B.C.E.). For a detailed account of Qu Yuan and Jin Shang, see Sima, *Shiji*, 84.2481-2484

¹²⁷ The phrase *Yi kong zhi chou* 亦孔之醜 came from *Shijing*. “The New Moon of the Tenth Month” (“Shiyue zhi jiao” 十月之交) in *xiaoya* said, “The sun had eclipse; it was extremely ominous.” (“日有食之，亦孔之醜。”). See Qu, *Shijing quanshi*, 358-359

but do you adorn my dwelling? You already lost both inner quality and outer appearance, yet you confuse right and wrong. Even a screen wall is as such; how do we know about people? When it stands at the gate, it wrecks the straight lane; when it stays at its location, it serves no purpose. On which occasion did Ruan Ji cry by the road?¹²⁸ For which matter did Mozi grieve for the silk?¹²⁹ Why lament for the unicorn, and what of the phoenix?¹³⁰ It is for this that I am saddened and sorry.

At first sight, one may think that Luo Yin “slandered” the officials in a subtler way as compared with “Response on Wind and Rain”. Certainly, the image of an object is less relatable than a historical figure, especially one of a similar position. Still, the harsh accusations in the essay made it translucent that the screen wall truly referred to the officials who blinded the emperor. In Luo’s opinion, the officials, like a screen wall, “cast a shadow” but “do not mend things”. They deprived the people but did not take care of their duties. They stand in the way to prevent the ruler from hearing from the worthy officials, and the guests, who are waiting to offer their opinions, hated them like enemies. Moreover, Luo did not forget to refer to the abhorrent ancient officials: Bo Pi

¹²⁸ It was recorded that Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210-263 C.E.), one of the Seven Worthies of the Bamboo Grove (*Zhulin qi xian* 竹林七賢), often went out alone by a carriage spontaneously. He did not follow the tracks, and when he found himself at a place without trails, he cried hard and returned. See Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 (579-648 C.E.) comp., *Jin shu* 晉書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 49.1361

¹²⁹ When seeing people dyeing silk, Mozi 墨子 (d. 376 B.C.E) sighed, saying:
染於蒼則蒼，染於黃則黃，所入者變，其色亦變。五入必而已則為五色矣。故染不可不慎也！
When dyeing it in grey-green dye, it becomes grey-green; when dyeing it in yellow dye, it becomes yellow. When the dye changes, its color also change. After soaking the silk in the dye for five times, it has changed color for five times. Hence, as for dyeing, one must be careful!

See Mozi, *Mozi, Sibü congkan*, 13.5a-5b

¹³⁰ It is recorded that in the spring of the fourteenth year during Duke Ai of Lu’s 魯哀公 reign (494-468 B.C.E), the driver of Shusun 叔孫, named Chu Shang 鉏商, captured a unicorn (*lin* 麟) at the hunting. They thought it was inauspicious and thus gave it away. Confucius recognized the unicorn and then took it. He was saddened that during a time of chaos, the phoenix (*feng* 鳳), which came for worthy rulers, did not appear anymore, and nobody could recognize the auspicious unicorn. The story was recorded in *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, *Kongzi shijia* 孔子世家, the *Analects*, and so on. For a detailed account, see Du and Kong comm., *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi*, 59.12b-14a

and Jin Shang. By condemning their crimes of causing the emperors to expel the loyal officials and ignore the worthy ones, Luo successfully made the connection between an object, the screen wall, and the people he criticized. Luo also drew the readers' attention more straightforwardly by asking, "Even a screen wall is as such; how do we know about people?" In this case, we can see through the disguise and safely relate the screen wall to the officials who "confused right and wrong".

In "Affairs of the Old Man from Qi" ("Qi sou shi" 齊叟事), Luo used a tale to talk about the slandering of the officials. In this essay, Luo made no effort in urging the readers to make the connection between the story and real life; instead, he simply left some space for the readers to ponder:¹³¹

齊叟籍其業於沃衍之野，更子弟以主之。歲無水旱之害，無螟螣之患，而所入或有眾寡焉。叟曰：「豈吾之不信也如是。彼鄰媪者，始衣食於吾家。今雖外居，猶吾之家隸也。」俾督孟，以伺候叟子之長者。及將獲，農戶輒揮田具擊孟逐之。媪告孟以不直。叟扶孟，以仲代焉，農戶不之罪。及仲之為也，複然。媪亦以仲之不直告。叟復扶仲而用季。將行，有言曰：「叟之農戶未嘗如是之悖。自媪督制後，孟與仲皆為擊逐。今苟存媪，不唯基址之不留，而叟之子弟逐未艾也。」叟醒然而怒，逐媪而復孟仲之職，其秋如舊。則前之謀悖者果媪也，¹³²而農戶何能？

The old man from Qi had his business at a flat and rich field. He appointed his sons and younger brothers to be in charge alternately. The years were not harmed by floods or drought, not troubled by pests, but the amount of harvest often varied. The old man said: "Wasn't it my lack of information that caused this? As for that neighboring old woman, she ate and stayed at my house at first. Although living outside now, she is like a member of my family." The old man made the

¹³¹ See "Qi sou shi" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 725-727

¹³² The Li version took *mou* 謀 as *mei* 媒, I followed the *Quan Tang wen* version to use *mou*.

old woman oversee Meng so that she could keep an eye on the oldest son of the old man. When the harvest season came, the peasant household waved the farm tools to beat Meng and expelled him. The old woman told the old man that Meng was not upright. The old man whipped Meng and made Zhong the replacement. The peasant household did not blame him. When it was Zhong's turn, they did the same to him. The old woman, again, told the old man that Zhong was not upright. The old man then whipped Zhong and employed Ji. Ji was about to go to his post, and some people said: "The old man's peasants have never disobeyed him like this. Since the old woman began to oversee and regulate things, both Meng and Zhong were beaten and expelled. Now only the old woman is left. Not only the foundation of the family will not be left, but also the expelling of sons and younger brothers of the old man have not finished." The old man was awakened and infuriated. He expelled the old woman and then reinstated Meng and Zhong to their positions. That autumn, the harvest was like old times. So, the one who plotted and disobeyed was undoubtedly the old woman. What capabilities do the peasants have [to do that]?

In this essay, Luo Yin created the detestable character—a dubious old woman, to be an analogy for the slanders surrounding the emperor. The slandered characters Meng and Zhong could easily remind the readers of, again, Liu Zhan and Wen Zhang, who were exiled far and died in depression due to the slandering of Lu Yan and Wei Baoheng. Of course, Liu and Wen were not the only victims; the slanderers at court could not stop their plotting against loyal officials and disobeying the ruler. The old man, referring to Emperor Yizong, mistakenly trusted the slanderers and took them as his eyes and ears to gather information. The end in which the old man from Qi was awakened and expelled the old woman from his house was no more than Luo's unfulfilled wish. Emperor Yizong failed to take remonstrations even when the court was only left with people like the old woman. Because of the slanderers, his wrongdoings were never rectified.

II.3 On Society and Time

The authorities were not the sole targets in Luo Yin's *Writings of Slandering*. A great number of essays in the collection drew attention to the society and the time in which he lived as well as the people with whom he lived. Like many others, Luo made his way to the capital as a young scholar with the beautiful dream to excel in the imperial exam and the grand aspiration to serve the state. Nevertheless, scholars throughout the thousands of years shared the same fate much too often. In his preface to the *Writings of Slandering*, Luo said:¹³³

及來京師七年，寒饑相接，殆不以似尋常人。

Reaching upon the seventh year since he came to the capital city, with coldness and starvation coming one after another, he could barely resemble normal people.

The distress he suffered, which a lot of other scholars also suffered, came from not just the authorities but also society. More specifically, the common people that consist of society. During his stay in the capital city, Luo Yin must have had experienced much unfair treatment and seen many contemptuous looks being an unsuccessful exam taker. In a letter to Ministry Councilor Zheng, he said, “The date when I can ascend to the magnificent sky is not settled; they have disdainful looks between the temples.”¹³⁴ For a proud scholar, nothing could be worse than a “disdainful look” from his contemporaries. If Luo Yin's “slandering” of the authorities mainly derived from his moral responsibility as a Confucian scholar, then his “slandering” of the society seemed more private. The bitterness in writing presented to us his personal frustration and helplessness as a member of a society that he was dying to improve.

¹³³ See “*Chan shu xu*” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 661-662

¹³⁴ “丹霄無獨上之期，雙鬢有相輕之色。” See “A Letter to Ministry Councilor Zheng” (“Tou Zheng Yuanwai qi” 投鄭員外啟) in Dong comp., *Quan Tang wen*, 894.9335

Moreover, the lament of “the world upside down” and the use of the *topos* of “time’s fate” went hand in hand with his disappointment in his surroundings. The long-standing literary tradition of literati’s complaint of “not being in the right time” could be traced back to the Han *fu*. Having Zhuang Ji 莊忌 (188-105 B.C.E),¹³⁵ Sima Qian,¹³⁶ and Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (192-104 B.C.E.) as muses,¹³⁷ Luo’s plaint of the “time’s fate” appeared to be especially touching and striking.

For instance, the ignorance of the people was heavily disparaged in “Regarding Agriculture as Foundation” (“Ben nong” 本農). Though using agriculture as the topic, Luo Yin expressed his disappointment in people’s indifference towards the humaneness with a despairing tone:¹³⁸

有覆於上者如天，載於下者如地，¹³⁹而百姓不之知。有恩信及一物，教化及一夫，民則歸之。其猶旱歲與豐年也。豐年之民不知甘雨柔風之力，不知生育長養之仁，而曰：「我耕作以時，倉廩以實。」旱歲之民則野枯苗縮，然後決川以灌之，是一川之仁深於四時也，明矣！所以鄭國哭子產三月，而魯人不敬仲尼。

There are those that cover at the top like Heaven, support at the bottom like Earth, but the Hundred Clans do not know them. When the grace and trust [of some people] reach one thing, education and transformation [of some people] reach one man, the people pay allegiance to them. It is like a year of drought in comparison with a year of harvest. The people in a year of harvest do not

¹³⁵ Zhuang Ji was a renowned *fu* writer who lived in the Western Han period. His most famous piece of *fu* was “Mourning for Time’s Fate” (“Ai shi ming” 哀時命). See Hong, *Chu ci bu zhu*, 259-267

¹³⁶ The great Han historian Sima Qian was the author of “*Fu* on Grieving for Officer’s Talents Not Recognized” (“Bei shi bu yu fu” 悲士不遇賦). See Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢 (557-641 C.E.) comp., *Yi wen lei ju* 藝文類聚 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999), 541

¹³⁷ Dong Zhongshu, also a Western Han scholar, was the author of “*Fu* on the Officer’s Talents Not Recognized” (“Shi bu yu fu” 士不遇賦). See Ouyang, *Yi wen lei ju*, 541

¹³⁸ See “Ben nong” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 681-682

¹³⁹ The Li version swapped *shang* 上 with *xia* 下. I followed the *Quan Tang wen* version and the *Wen cui bu yi* version.

know the power of sweet rains and mild wind; they do not know the humaneness of breeding, raising, growing, and feeding. Yet, they say, “I plow and work according to time; I make sure to fill up the barn and the granary.” Conversely, when the people in a year of drought have fields dried up and sprouts wilted, they dredge the river for irrigation. This is the case where the humaneness of a river is more profound than the four seasons. It has been clear. For this reason, the State of Zheng shed tears for Zichan for three months,¹⁴⁰ but the people of Lu did not respect Zhongni.¹⁴¹

In this essay, Luo Yin compared the ungrateful people who ignore the worthy people that protect them like Heaven and Earth. Instead, they pay allegiance to those who occasionally offer grace to the people. When drought comes, people notice and thank the “humaneness of a river” but are ignorant of the constant nurturing of the four seasons. Luo excoriated the people in current society for taking things for granted. The power coming from the “sweet rains” and “mild wind” was neglected. It would be far-fetched to conclude that Luo Yin deemed himself as either Heaven and Earth or the four seasons. Rather, he was referring to the hardworking officials who put in tremendous efforts to keep society in order, even in “a year of drought”. Those who give grace and trust, education and transformation to merely a few could be interpreted as Emperor Yizong, and surely some government officials, who proclaimed a general amnesty whenever he changed a regnal name. As usual, Luo brought up ancient celebrities to highlight his regret and emphasize

¹⁴⁰ Zichan 子產 was the style name of Ji Qiao 姬僑 (d. 522 B.C.E.), the grandson of Duke Mu of Zheng 鄭穆公 (647-606 B.C.E.). Also known as Gongsun Qiao 公孫僑, he was a celebrated advisor in the State of Qi in the Spring and Autumn period. During his service, he conducted a series of reforms to improve the political and social situation of the state as well as the well-being of the people. He was greatly loved and esteemed. See Sima, *Shiji*, 42.1771-1775, 119.3101

¹⁴¹ Zhongni 仲尼 (551-479 B.C.E) was the style name of Confucius. Though a native of the State of Lu, his talent was not recognized in the Lu. Instead, he was chased out of his hometown. For a detailed biography of Confucius, see Sima, *Shiji*, 47.1905-1947

his lament. In comparing the treatment received by Zichan and Zhongni, his cry for “time’s fate” was clearly revealed.

The people of the Lu was ridiculed in another essay of his, “The Disciple of Zhuang Zhou” (“Zhuang Zhou shi dizi” 莊周氏弟子). Even more relentlessly, Luo Yin elaborated on society’s degeneration caused by the ignorance and ungratefulness of the people and their abandonment of the Confucian values and moral principles.¹⁴²

莊周氏以其術大於楚、魯之間，聞者皆樂以從之，而未有以嘗之。一日，無將特舉其族以學焉，及其門而周戒之曰：視物如傷者謂之仁，極時而行者謂之義，尊上愛下者謂之禮，識機知變者謂之智，風雨不渝者謂之信，苟去是五者，則吾之堂可躋，室可窺矣。無將跪而受其教，一年二年而仁義喪，三年四年而禮智薄，五年六年而五常盡，七年其骨肉雖土木之不如也。周曰：吾術盡於是。無將以化其族。其族聚而謀曰：「吾族儒也，魯人以儒為宗。今周之教，捨五常以成其名，棄骨肉而崇其術，苟吾復從之，殆絕人倫之法矣。」於是去無將而歸魯。魯人聞者，亦得以寢其志。故周之著書擯斥儒學，而儒者亦不願為其弟子焉。

Zhuang Zhou was influential among the Chu and the Lu for his techniques. Those who heard of the techniques were all willing to follow him, but no one had ever tried. One day, Wujiang specially gathered the entire kin-group to [inform them that he was going to] study under Zhuang Zhou.¹⁴³ When he reached Zhou’s door, Zhou warned him, saying: “As for seeing things as [one’s own] pain, we refer to it as humaneness; as for acting during urgency, we refer to it as propriety; as for respecting one’s superior and caring for one’s subordinates, we refer to them as ritual; as

¹⁴² See “Zhuang Zhou shi dizi” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 689-690

¹⁴³ The name Wujiang 無將 is writing the phrase *wu jiang* 無將, which first appeared in *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳, and was then frequently used in early texts to mean a person has the thought of rebelling. Luo Yin made up the name to satirize the Confucian rebels. See He Xiu 何休 (129-182 C.E.) annt., Xu Yan 徐彥 (fl. 800 C.E.) com., *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhu shu* 春秋公羊傳注疏, *Wuyingdian shisan jing zhu shu*, 4.11b

for identifying the opportunities and knowing the changes, we refer to it as wisdom; as for not changing in rains and winds, we refer to it as trustworthiness. If, and only if, you can get rid of the five qualities, then my hall can be stepped up to, and my chamber can be peeked at.”¹⁴⁴ Wujiang knelt down and received his instruction. After one, two years, he lost humaneness and propriety; after three, four years, his ritual and wisdom became shallow; after five, six years, the Five Conventions perished;¹⁴⁵ after seven years, his bones and flesh were not even close to dirt and wood. Zhou said: “My techniques have been exhausted to this point.” Wujiang used these to transform his kin-group. His kin-group assembled and had a discussion, saying: “Our family is Confucian, and the Lu people regard Confucianism as the ancestor. As for the current instruction of Zhou’s, it abandons the Five Conventions to achieve his fame, discards bones and flesh, but goes for his techniques. If, and only if, we also follow it, the law of human relations would most probably die.” Since then, they left Wujiang and returned to the Lu. The people of the Lu who heard about it managed to cease their intention [to study under Zhuang Zhou] as well. Therefore, Zhou’s writings attacked and rejected the Confucian learnings, while the Confucianists also did not wish to be his disciples.

The abandonment of the five conventions was Luo’s primary accusation against the people in his time. Although Luo did not point his finger to the entire society in this essay, he depicted the foolish man Wujiang, who was captivated by Zhuang Zhou’s learnings, to ridicule those who fell for the trend. In his opinion, the heterodox learnings or values that were popular at present could bring no good to anyone, just as how no one had gained from Zhuang Zhou’s techniques. Wujiang, representing the follower of those who were influential because of their techniques, finally had his

¹⁴⁴ The phrase “stepping up to the hall and peeking at the chamber” was an adaption of “stepping up to the hall and entering the chamber”, (*sheng tang ru shi* 升堂入室) which originated from the *Analects*. It was used to suggest the advancement of knowledge or techniques. See He comm., *Lun yu ji jie*, 6.5a

¹⁴⁵ The Five Conventions (*wu chang* 五常) referred to a set of Confucian codes of ethics originated in the Western Han dynasty. They are humaneness (*ren* 仁), propriety (*yi* 義), rituals (*li* 禮), wisdom (*zhi* 智), and trustworthiness (*xin* 信). See Ban Gu, *Bai hu tong de lun* 白虎通德論, *Sibu congkan*, 8.1a

bones and flesh not even close to dirt and wood. In a dark age like the mid-to-late Tang, deceiving, bribery, smuggling could all be the trendy techniques. As they were so influential, one could be too easily attracted to adopt the techniques. Still, Luo hoped for the best. In the voice of Wujiang's kin-group, he emphasized the importance of acting according to the five conventions because they should "take Confucianism as the ancestor". At the end of the essay, Luo's attention came back to those who did not abandon the Confucian tradition, which apparently referred to scholars like himself. Moreover, he made his point clear that even though the Confucian learnings were attacked and rejected, scholars like him would not wish to be the disciples of those who had techniques.

A more straightforward reproof of society can be found in the piece "The Market *Nuo*" ("Shi Nuo" 市儺) in Volume Three.¹⁴⁶ When the targets Luo Yin chose to "slander" became less sensitive, he often did not care to hide the sharp criticism under the metaphor of historical figures or objects. Rather, he bluntly called for attention to the detestable ones. "The Market *Nuo*" was typically explicit:¹⁴⁷

儺之為名，著於時令矣。自宮禁至於下俚，皆得以逐災邪而驅疫癘，故都會惡少年則以是時鳥獸其形容，皮革其面目，丐乞於市肆間。乃有以金帛應之者。吁，是雖假鳥獸以為名，其固為人矣，復安有為人者，則不得人之金帛。為鳥獸者，則可以得人之金帛乎？豈以鳥獸無知而假之則不愧也？以人則識廉恥而取之則愧焉？嗚呼！

The name of *Nuo* has come from the time and season. From the imperial palace to the countryside, all people use it to chase out disaster and maleficence and get rid of disease and plague. Therefore, at the time of *Nuo*, the malign young people in the city dress up like birds and beasts, use leather masks to cover their faces. And they go begging through markets and shops. Then, there are

¹⁴⁶ The *Nuo* rite was an ancient sacrificial ceremony offered to a bird-like god in hope of getting rid of disaster and maleficence. The tradition can be traced back to the Warring States period. The first textual account of the *Nuo* Rite can be found in the *Analects*. See He comm., *Lun yu ji jie*, 5.15a-15b

¹⁴⁷ See "Shi Nuo" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 709-710

people who respond to them with money and goods. Ah, although this is borrowing the bird's name, they are indeed human. Then why is it that when acting like a human, you cannot get people's money and goods; when acting as birds and beasts, you can get people's money and goods? Do they seriously feel no shame for dressing up like birds and beasts just because the animals have no awareness? If it is human, then they know honor and shame. If they take people's money and goods, then they will be ashamed of it. Alas!

The account of a specific and realistic event was rare in Luo Yin's *Writings of Slandering*. As a well-read scholar, he often indulged himself in the recalling of historical events. The *Nuo* rite being a popular social event, or even a festival, caught Luo's attention as an excellent manifestation of humanity's dark side and social issues. Taking the malign young people as targets, Luo angrily reprobated them for begging for people's money and goods under the disguise. The behavior was such an unacceptable one as they took advantage of the ignorant people and obtaining things without shame. Similarly, the people who gave alms to them were equally worthy of reprobation. The stupidity of giving out alms to human beings, who were perfectly capable of making a living through work, was unforgivable. Surely, they should have recognized that it was not a bird god under the leather mask, but the desire for blessings overwhelmed the saneness. If not in the costume of the bird god, the young people would receive nothing from people. Luo Yin could not help but gave an exclamation. The targets were, of course, not limited to the malign young people and those who foolishly wasted their money. Rather, the attention Luo tried to draw in the essay was to the loss of moral standards. The selfishness, ignorance, shamelessness, and mercilessness were detrimental but unfortunately invading the society. As an impoverished scholar, Luo struggled to seek help, but his efforts were in vain. Comparing himself to the swindles, how could he end the essay without the heavy sigh!

Another approach Luo Yin often took was a rather philosophical one. That being said, he never tried to bewilder the readers with abstruse "philosophical language and style" as Zhuangzi did.

Luo explained his logic with a few simple terms, and he never forgot to make the connection between “theory” and historical events. The essay “Heavenly Contrivance” (“Tian ji” 天機) in Volume Three falls into the category:¹⁴⁸

善而福，不善而災，天之道也。用則行，不用則否，人之道也。天道之反，有水旱殘賊之事。人道之反，有詭譎權詐之事。是八者謂之機也。機者，蓋天道人道一變耳，非所以悠久也。苟天無機也，則當善而福，不善而災，又安得饑夷、齊而飽盜跖？苟人無機也，則當用則行，不用則否，又何必拜陽貨而劫衛使？是聖人之變合於其天者，不得已而有也，故曰機。

When benevolent, then blessings; when not benevolent, then disasters-this is Heaven’s Way. If needful, then implement it; if not needful, then reject it-this is the human’s Way. Reversing the Heaven’s Way, then there will be matters of floods, droughts, cruelty, and persecution. Reversing the human’s Way, then there will be matters of treacherousness, deceitfulness, trickeries, and cheating. These eight things are what people refer to as “contrivance”. As for contrivance, they are probably merely a change of Heaven’s Way and human’s Way; they are not what can be taken as long-lasting. If, and only if, Heaven had no contrivance, then it should be that when benevolent, there are blessings, when not benevolent, there are disasters. How can it be the case where it causes Boyi and Shuqi to starve,¹⁴⁹ but makes Robber Zhi satiated?¹⁵⁰ If, and only if, human has

¹⁴⁸ See “Tian ji” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 721-722

¹⁴⁹ Boyi 伯夷 and Shuqi 叔齊 were both the sons of Lord Guzhu 孤竹君, a vassal in the Shang dynasty. Upon Lord Guzhu’s death, the oldest son Boyi and the youngest son Shuqi both modestly declined the inheritance of their father’s position and left the state. They tried to persuade King Wu of Zhou 周武王 (r. 1046-1043 B.C.E.) out of his plan to conquer the Shang but was not listened to. Almost killed by the outraged king, they fled to Mount Shouyang 首陽 (in modern Yongji 永濟, Shaanxi 陝西 Province) and starved themselves to death as they refused to eat anything under the realm of the Zhou. For a detailed account of Boyi and Shuqi, see Sima, *Shiji*, 61.2123

¹⁵⁰ Robber Zhi 盜跖 was a fictional figure in *Zhuangzi*. According to “Robber Zhi”, he was the younger brother of Liu Xiahui 柳下惠 (720-621 B.C.E.), a senior official at the State of Lu. He had nine thousand footmen. They marched at their will throughout the world, invaded and attacked the various mark lords. They broke into

no contrivance, it should be that if needful, then implement it, if not needful, then reject it. How, then, must they pay a return visit to Yang Huo but detain the envoy from Wei?¹⁵¹ As for this kind of change made by a sage, it is in accordance with Heaven that he cannot help but have them. Therefore, we call it contrivance.

From Luo Yin's perspective, although the reverse of Heaven's Way and human's Way was detestable and would cause calamities, it had been unavoidable. When the Way was reversed, it was called "contrivance", and people explained it as the change according to Heaven. One may not easily read the sarcasm behind the words of this essay as Luo, unlike in other essays, did not pose any rhetorical questions or make pitiful laments. Nevertheless, it was never his stand to approve the "change of the Way". The contrivance to him was an absolute pathetic representation of the degenerated society. All the excuses the people made to bring "treacherousness, deceitfulness, trickeries, and cheating" were attributed to an indispensable and practical contrivance. The truth that even a sage had to reverse the Way saddened him. More importantly, Luo carried his signature bitter tone to ask, a question to society and himself: "If even a sage cannot avoid it, why should I insist on following the Way?"

A piece with even subtler criticism was "Qin's Deer" ("Qin zhi lu" 秦之鹿). In this essay, Luo's mastery of historical subjects was, again, well reflected:¹⁵²

people's houses and herded their oxen and horses. Also, they took people's wives and daughters. See "Dao Zhi" in Guo comp., Wang ed., *Zhuangzi ji shi*, 990

¹⁵¹ Yang Huo 陽貨 was a government official at the State of Lu. Confucius disliked him for his immoral conduct, so he refused to meet him when Yang Huo requested. Yang gave Confucius a piglet as a gift, hoping that he would pay a return visit. Confucius did, though reluctant. For a detailed account of the story, see He comm., *Lun yu ji jie*, 9.1a-1b

During the Warring States period, the State of Wei 衛 sent an envoy to the State of Wei 魏 to be at their service. The envoy had never been summoned after three years upon arrival. For a detailed account of the story, see Liu Xiang comp., *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), 32.1163

¹⁵² See "Qin zhi lu" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xian jiaojian*, 740-741

世言秦鹿去而天下逐，是鹿為聖人器也，信焉。夫周德東耗，秦以力取諸侯，雖百姓欲從，而秦未嘗有意。故為秦者，反天下之歸，則五十年曠其數以逐人，而秦不得與。其下復焉謂逐其鹿？鹿不在聖人器而逐之者，逐秦耳。秦實鹿焉。六都傾潰，睥睨無已。奔勁足踐我黔庶，觥利穎觶我《詩》、《書》，彼非鹿而何？嗚呼！去道與德也，獸焉，不獨秦。

It is a popular saying that when the Qin's deer left, the entire world chased after it. This deer served as the symbol of the sage. It is true, indeed. The innate strength of the Zhou was exhausted in the east.¹⁵³ The Qin took the various mark lords with force. Although the Hundred Clans wanted to follow the Qin, the Qin had never had the intention [to allow it to happen]. Therefore, those who managed the Qin turned their back on the allegiance brought by the entire world; then, they wasted fifty years of its life to drive people away so that the Qin could not be joined with. Why would those at its lower level still talk about chasing after its deer? As for those who chased after the deer when it was not serving as the symbol of the sage, they were merely chasing after the Qin. The Qin was, in essence, the deer. The six cities collapsed,¹⁵⁴ people looked at them disdainfully and could not move their eyes away. It galloped sturdily, and the feet trod on us common people; the sharp tips of the antlers to gore my *Shi* and *Shu*.¹⁵⁵ If that was not the deer,

¹⁵³ The innate strength's exhaustion in the east referred to the event where the Zhou moved the capital to Luoyi 洛邑 (in modern Luoyang 洛陽, Henan Province). In 771 B.C.E., the capital of the Zhou, Haojing 鎬京 (in modern Xi'an, Shaanxi Province), was invaded by the Quanrong 犬戎 tribe, and King You of Zhou 周幽王 (d. 771 B.C.E.) was killed. King You's son, King Ping of Zhou 周平王 (781-720 B.C.E.) succeeded. King Ping abandoned the wrecked capital one year after his accession and moved eastward to Luoyi. Since then, the authority of the Zhou declined, and the various states thrived to fight for hegemony. See Sima, *Shiji*, 4.149

¹⁵⁴ The six cities referred to the capital cities of the six states during the Warring States period. They were: Yingqiu 營丘 (in modern Zibo 淄博, Shandong Province) of the State of Qi, Ying 郢 (in modern Jingzhou 荊州, Hubei Province) of the State of Chu, Ji 薊 (in modern Beijing 北京) of the State of Yan 燕, Xinzheng 新鄭 (in modern Zhengzhou 鄭州, Henan Province) of the State of Han 韓, Handan 邯鄲 (in modern Hebei Province) of the State of Zhao 趙, and Daliang 大梁 (in modern Kaifeng 開封, Henan Province) of the State of Wei 魏.

¹⁵⁵ *Shi* 詩 referred to *Shi jing* 詩經; *Shu* 書 referred to *Shu jing* 書經. Both texts were considered as the Confucian canons and belonged to the Five Classics (*wu jing* 五經) established in the Han dynasty. The deer's goring the

then what was it?! Alas, as for abandoning the Way and the innate strength, animals also do it, not just the Qin!

The first layer of the essay focused on the pretentious zealotry for the deer of the Qin—a symbol of the sageness. The passion for the deer was not a real passion for pursuing the sageness; instead, the people were chasing after the Qin—a symbol of power. Therefore, when “the six cities collapsed”, people showed no sympathy but “looked at them disdainfully”. The Qin can be read as the authorities who “took the various mark lords by force”. More specifically, the “various mark lords” represent the faithful yet vulnerable officials who were slandered, exiled, or even killed by the powerful eunuchs and high officials. The people, being indifferent to the “abandoning of the Way and the innate strength”, only paid attention to power. For the second layer, Luo switched gear to condemn the Qin as well as the deer itself. The powerful Qin wasted its fifty-year life to drive people away, which unsurprisingly referred to the malign officials’ ignorance of the people. The criticism of the deer conveyed a more profound implication. Although supposed to be the symbol of sacredness, the Way, and the innate strength, the deer was, in essence, the Qin, which symbolized the power and authority. The deer had abandoned its allotted fate—it not only “galloped sturdily and trod on us common people but also “used the sharp tips of the antlers to gore my *Shi* and *Shu*”. The disappearance of the sense of rightness was, from Luo Yin’s point of view, the ultimate tragedy of a society. In this essay, Luo made good use of the historical account to express his ideas. Throughout the passage, it seemed that he only talked about the decline of Zhou and the rising of the brutal Qin. In fact, the exhausted Zhou, collapsed six cities, gored *Shi* and *Shu*, and the merciless Qin were all suggesting groups and people in the current society.

books referred to the famous event of “burning of books and burying of scholars” (*fenshu kengru* 焚書坑儒) ordered by the first Emperor of Qin in 213 B.C.E. in order to eliminate the non-Qin accounts and strengthen the official governing of the Qin. See Sima, *Shiji*, 6.255

III. ON THE SLANDERING DEVICES-ANALYSES OF PROSE GENRES AND RHETORICAL DEVICES

This chapter will tackle the problem of “How did Luo Yin slander?” from two perspectives. It will discuss the great variety of the prose genres Luo adopted in the fifty-eight essays, with special attention to his efforts to model the ancient-style literary genres and make innovation in his own writings. Also, I will study the literary styles and metaphors that the author took to display his erudition and writing skills.

The big question of “How did Luo slander?” is not easy to answer. The variety of prose genres adopted by Luo, the diversified literary style, and the sophisticated metaphors embedded in the collection deserve a book-length examination. In this chapter, I hope not to merely make a generalization but look at individual essays or even sentences to analyze specific techniques.

III.1 On the Prose Genres

Every period of time has its featured literary genre that the authors favor and the audiences welcome. In terms of serving the purpose of establishing words, criticizing society and admonishing the ruler, and attract attention from the authorities, every genre owns its advantages and disadvantages. Hence, the judgment should never be placed on the genre itself but the quality of the writings. The short essay, as a literary genre, had gained much popularity and reputation since the late Tang period. According to Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936 C.E.), it “shined” while “the poetic style declined”. In Lu’s opinion, the survival of short essays merely depended on struggles and fighting. The following paragraph elaborated his argument:¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ See “Xiaopinwen de weiji” 小品文的危機 in Lu Xun 魯迅, *Nan qiang bei diao ji* 南腔北調集 (Beijing : Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 1973), 136

但羅隱的《讒書》，幾乎全部是抗爭和憤激之談；皮日休和陸龜蒙自以為隱士，別人也稱之為隱士，而看他們在《皮子文藪》和《笠澤叢書》中的小品文，並沒有忘記天下，正是一榻胡塗的泥塘裡的光彩和鋒鏢。明末的小品雖然比較的頹放，卻並非全是吟風弄月，其中有不平，有諷刺，有攻擊，有破壞。

Yet, Luo Yin's *Writings of Slandering* were almost all conversations of fighting and anger; Pi Rixiu and Lu Guimeng regarded themselves as hermits, and others also call them hermits.¹⁵⁷ Still, looking at their short essays in *Pizi wen sou* and *Lize cong shu*, they did not forget about the Sub-celestial Realm. They were indeed the luster and sharp dart in a completely messy muddy puddle. The short essays at the end of the Ming dynasty were, though, comparatively decadent and dissolute, not all were about chanting the wind and enjoying the moon. Among them, there were grievances, sarcasm, attraction, and extermination.

Whether the flourishing of short essays “depended on struggles and fighting” is debatable, but Luo Yin's adoption of this literary genre benefited him in achieving his writing goals well. This adoption, though seemed like a natural and practical choice, could not be discussed without paying some attention to the Ancient Style Prose Movement (*Guwen yundong* 古文運動), which started no longer than a century ahead of Luo's time. The *guwen* style, which in theory meant the prose style of the Han and pre-Han periods, was advocated primarily by Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824 C.E.) and Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773-819 C.E.). They sought to create a style to replace the parallel prose style that still dominated the court and official writing. They also believed that the reform of literary style should be accompanied by a moral reform that entailed a return to classical Confucian principles. In contrast to the ancient style, the parallel style was the most pervasive form of prose writing during the Six Dynasties 六朝 period. Parallelism is fundamental to most classical Chinese

¹⁵⁷ The late Tang scholar Lu Guimeng 陸龜蒙 (d. 881 C.E.), style-named Luwang 魯望, was a contemporary and friend of Pi Rixiu's. He did not pass the imperial exam and returned to his hometown Fuli 甫里 (in modern Suzhou 蘇州, Jiangsu 江蘇 Province) to live in leisure life. See Xin, Fu comp., *Tang caizi zhuan*, 145

writing, but the form that was cultivated in the late Six Dynasties period, variously known as *pianwen* 駢體, *pianwen* 駢文, or *siliu wen* 四六文 (prose in four-syllable and six-syllable lines), was an especially ornate, florid, artificial style. The *Guwen* Movement was not just about the reform of the literary style; its concern was the purpose of writing. Han Yu was traditionally attributed with advocating the idea that the purpose of literature is to sustain the Way (*wen yi zai dao* 文以載道). Also, he believed the role of literature was “to clarify the Way.” In one of his earliest essays, “Disquisition on remonstrating officials” (“Zheng chen lun” 爭臣論), written in 793, he says:¹⁵⁸

君子居其位，則思死其官；未得位，則思修其辭，以明道。我將以明道。

When a gentleman occupies his proper position, he is eager to give his life for the sake of his office. If he does not obtain a position, he is eager to cultivate his words in order to clarify the Way. My purpose [of literature] is to clarify the Way.

Luo Yin was a practitioner of the composition of ancient style proses, and his *Writings of Slandering* can be regarded as an excellent example to show the influence which he received from the movement. Among the fifty-eight essays in the collection, we cannot find the ornate, florid, artificial style of *pianwen*. Luo Yin often used one to two hundred words per essay to convey his ideas. Though rather short, these pieces were written in various prose genres. The frequently used genres include preface (*xu* 序), response (*dui* 對), memorandum (*shu* 疏), letter (*shu* 書), eulogy (*ming* 銘), stele inscription (*beiwén* 碑文), rapsody (*fu* 賦), disquisition (*lun* 論), biography (*zhuan* 傳), and so on. There are also some unconventional literary forms which came about closer to Luo Yin's time, such as discourse (*shuo* 說) and debate (*bian* 辯). The diversity in prose genre was apparently a scholar's effort to present his erudition and excellent writing skills. More significantly, it would be negligent, or even foolish, of us not to examine the functions each of the prose genres

¹⁵⁸ See Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200 C.E.) ed., *Zhu Wengong jiao Changli xiansheng wen ji* 朱文公校昌黎先生文集, *Sibu congkan*, 14.7a-9b

had. The unique characteristics of each of them will reveal Luo's mind as a "slanderer", much more than one can expect.

One of Luo Yin's favorite prose genres, which he used in five essays in the *Writings of Slandering*, was *fu*. As one of the most long-lasting literary forms in Chinese literature, *fu* had been favored by the court and the literati for thousands of years. Since the Han dynasty, *fu* had undergone much development in all aspects, including the themes, the language styles, the length, prosodic restrictions. In the Tang dynasty, the "regulated *fu*" (*lüfu* 律賦) became in fashion. The trend started because of the strict prosodic requirements of the imperial exam. In 714, during Emperor Xuanzong's reign, a scholar Li Ang 李昂 (fl. 714 C.E.) composed a regulated *fu*- "Fu on Flags" ("Qi fu" 旗賦) for the exam, which perfectly fulfilled the question setter's hard requirements on rhymes.¹⁵⁹ He was then selected as the Principal Scholar (*Zhuangyuan* 狀元). Thereafter, the exam-takers regarded Li Ang as the model and began to prepare themselves with the ability to write the regulated *fu*. The regulated *fu* had strict rules of form and expression and required the use of consistent rhymes throughout each piece. Because of its rigid restrictions, it is not surprising that the scholars paid more attention to the parallelism and rhymes than the ideas. It was one of the *Guwen* Movement's primary proposals to shift authors' attention to the ideas, and Luo Yin's *fu* in the *Writings of Slandering* echoed the proposition. One example is the "Fu on Autumn Insect with Preface" ("Qiuchong fu you xu" 秋蟲賦並序) in Volume One:¹⁶⁰

秋蟲，蜘蛛也。致身網羅間，實腹亦網羅間。愚感其理有得喪，因以言賦之曰：
物之小兮迎網而斃，物之大兮兼網而逝。而網也者，繩其小而不繩其大。吾不知爾身之
危兮，腹之餒兮。吁！

¹⁵⁹ See Li Fang comp., *Wen yuan ying hua* 文苑英華 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1966), 64.290

¹⁶⁰ See "Qiuchong fu you xu" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xianian jiaojian*, 668-669

The autumn insect is the spider. It places itself into the cobweb and also fills its belly within the realm of the cobweb. I, the stupid one, feel for its principles that there are gains and losses. Based on that, I take words to write a *fu* for it, which reads:

Petty is the thing, encountering the web it dies; great is the thing, joining the web it perishes. As for the web, it captures the petty but not the great. I do not know that your body is in stake, belly is in hunger. Alack!

Although Luo Yin named this piece as *fu*, it did not resemble a conventional *fu* in most aspects. First, it was as short as sixty-nine words. Certainly, we cannot compare this *fu* with the “grand *fu*” (*dafu* 大賦) mostly written in the Western Han period, but even when compared with the “small *fu*” (*xiaofu* 小賦) which became desirable later on, this piece is particularly short in length. The body of the *fu* starts after the preface, which only consists of forty-one words with only one parallel sentence: “Petty is the thing, encountering the web it dies; great is the thing, joining the web it perishes.” Second, the rhyming and tone of the piece were hardly taken care of due to its length. The only instance where rhyming took place was also the first sentence. Both “to die” (*bi* 弊) and “to perish” (*shi* 逝) belong to the departing tone (*qu sheng* 去聲) and the rime group *ji* (*ji bu* 霽部). Third, the parallelism was also ignored. Besides the first two lines, the number of syllables in each line varied. By disregarding the writing rules of the *fu*, Luo Yin declared his support for the literary reform as well as his disapproval of the flamboyant yet impractical regulated *fu*. Nevertheless, “*Fu* on Autumn Insect with Preface” was a *fu*-like essay not just because of the title. Luo Yin did employ some techniques to allow the piece to match the title. For instance, the choice of the subject was careful. Similar to other *fu* pieces in his collection, such as “Post *Fu* on Snow” (“*Hou xue fu*” 後雪賦), “*Fu* on Screen Wall”, and “*Fu* on Market” (“*Shi fu*” 市賦), this essay selected the most mundane object-spiders, as the topic. The choice reminds us of an important type of the small *fu*-the “*fu* on things” (*yongwufu* 詠物賦). It was not a coincidence that Luo tried to inherit the spirit of the “*fu* on things” to speak of his mind with the everyday things. As far as the language is concerned, Luo Yin also ensured the maintenance of some *fu* flavor. The repeated use

of the exclamatory particle *xi* 兮, for example, showed Luo's effort. In the first sentence, *xi* was inserted to be in the middle of each line, creating a "three syllables-*xi*-four syllables" structure. In the last two lines, *xi* was used again at the end of each line, which symbolizes a typical *fu* language style. Moreover, we should not ignore the preface. To imitate the ancient *fu*, Luo provided a preface for his "Fu on Autumn Insect". The structure and language style were also clichés. If we take a look at the preface of Cao Pi's 曹丕 (187-226) "Fu on Warbler" ("Ying fu" 鶯賦), which also happened to be a small piece, we will instantly notice the similarity.¹⁶¹

堂前有籠鶯，晨夜哀鳴，淒若有懷，憐而賦之曰：……

There is a caged warbler in front of the hall. It whimpers day and night. It sounds sad, like the warbler has its reason. I sympathize with it, so I wrote this *fu*, which reads: ……

The template is fairly easy to be observed-the author noticed the object and had some thoughts, so he decided to write a piece of *fu* for it. All the efforts put in by Luo Yin to emulate the *fu* style had created a sharp contrast to his efforts to disregard the style. By creating this contrast, Luo proved himself to be able to deliver his ideas without the rigid form undertaken by the regulated *fu* writers. Also, his adoption of this ancient literary genre was not simply a parody of the ancient literati but rather a salute to the great minds.

These short pieces of *fu* written by Luo Yin took advantage of the everyday objects to reveal his thoughts on serious issues. The combination of a seemingly innocent object and a severe "slandering" made the criticisms even more striking. In "Fu on Autumn Insect", his metaphor was to compare the spiders to the authorities who created the web-the rules and laws. The unjust behaviors of the rules and laws was revealed without reservation in one sentence: "As for the web, it captures the petty but not the great." Although no human figure was mentioned, the readers can

¹⁶¹ See Yan Kejun 嚴可均 (1762-1843 C.E.) comp., *Quan Shanggu san dai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991), 4.1075

immediately associate the “petty” with the common people and the “great” with those who were in power and wealthy. The merciless criticism behind a day-to-day subject in the style of *fu* could also be seen in “*Fu on Market*”. In this essay, Luo’s vivid description of the market made the chaotic and materialistic bureaucracy instantly visible. The following paragraph was especially expressive:¹⁶²

市之邊無近無遠，市之聚無蚤無晚，貨盈則盈，貨散則散，賢愚並貨，¹⁶³善惡相混，物或戾時，雖是亦非。工如善事，雖賤必貴。

The boundary of the market has no [regularity of] close or far; the gathering of the market has no [regularity of] early or late. When the goods are abundant, the market flourishes; when the goods are scarce, the market closes. The worthy ones and the stupid ones all sell goods. The high-quality goods and low-quality goods are mixed. The things may go against the season, then even if it was right, it turned wrong. If the craftsman is good at doing business, then even if the goods were cheap, they would definitely become expensive.

In this paragraph, Luo Yin reprimanded plenty of people and phenomena through the depiction of a market. The officials did not have a standard for taking care of the duties because all they cared about was the number of interests and benefits. When there was no interest, they disappear with no hesitation. In this hodgepodge, the good and the bad were mixed. Those worthy officials who possessed good qualities might be influenced and changed. Those who were unqualified, as long as they could use their words, money, and connections, could take important positions. Again, Luo took a slightly milder approach to satirize the dark society by hiding the targets behind a mundane subject. The use of the literary genre “*fu on things*” was especially effective in allowing the bitter sarcasm to slip in.

¹⁶² See “Shi fu” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 732-735

¹⁶³ The Li version followed the Wen Zhengming manuscript version to take *huo* 貨 as *qu* 趨 since the character was missing in the *Baijinglou* version. I followed other versions to take it as *huo*.

Another interesting prose genre that Luo Yin used more than once was *shuo*. Unlike many other genres, *shuo* did not have a long tradition. The favor for *shuo* was most widespread in Song 宋 dynasty when the short essays developed and became one of the most important literary genres of all. In the Tang, it was safer to categorize it simply as an indication of characteristics of the essay, which appeared in the title, instead of a real genre. The most well-known article written in the *shuo* format was Han Yu's "Discourse on Teachers" ("Shi shuo" 師說). Unsurprisingly, this format was one of Han's practices of advocating the *guwen* style. In "Discourse on Teachers", the language was plain and explicit. The author strived to present his ideas with logical reasoning. Although without abstruse metaphors, the essay was filled with uncomplicated examples to support the author's arguments.¹⁶⁴ As the name suggests, *shuo* is indeed a discourse given by an eloquent debater to express his opinions. The essay "Miscellaneous Discourse" ("Za shuo" 雜說) was clearly inspired by Han Yu, who composed a set of four "Miscellaneous Discourse" essays.¹⁶⁵ Although Luo only wrote one "Miscellaneous Discourse", he used various objects in this short essay, and the article faithfully inherited the *shuo* characteristics:¹⁶⁶

圭璧之與瓦礫，其為等差不俟言而知之矣。然圭璧者，雖絲粟玷類，人必見之，以其為有用之累也。為瓦礫者，雖阜積鬩盈，人不疵其質者，知其不能傷無用之性也。是以有用者，絲粟之過得以為跡。無用者，具體之惡不以為非。亦猶鏡之與水，水之於物也。泓然而可以照，鏡之於物亦照也，二者以無情於外，故委照者不疑其醜好焉，不知水之性也柔而婉，鏡之性也剛而健。柔而婉者有時而動，故委照者或搖蕩可移，剛而健者非缺裂不能易其明，故委照者亦得保其質。

¹⁶⁴ See "Shi shuo" in Zhu ed., *Zhu Wengong jiao Changli xiansheng wen ji*, 12.1b-2b

¹⁶⁵ The four articles are "Discourse on Dragons" ("Long shuo" 龍說), "Discourse on Treatment" ("Yi shuo" 醫說), "Biography of Mr. Cui Shan" ("Cui Shan jun zhuan" 崔山君傳), and "Discourse on Horses" ("Ma shuo" 馬說). See Zhu ed., *Zhu Wengong jiao Changli xiansheng wen ji*, 11.9b-11a

¹⁶⁶ See "Za shuo" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 690-692

When comparing jade and precious stones to rubbles, one would know their difference in quality without waiting to be told. But for jade and precious stones, even if there is a flaw as thin as silk or as tiny as grain, people will definitely see it, and they regard it as the bother of being useful. Being rubbles, even if the dirt heaps and the bricks stack up, people do not find fault in their quality because they know those cannot harm their nature of uselessness. Therefore, for those that are useful, a transgression like silk or grain will be sought out. For those that are useless, the malignance of a concrete form will not be taken as wrong. Also, it is like mirrors together with water and water's relation to things. The water is deep, so it can reflect things. Mirrors' relation to things is also reflection. Because these two show no affection to the outside, those who use them to look at themselves do not suspect their ugliness or beauty in them. They do not know that the nature of water is mild and tender, and the nature of mirrors is hard and strong. That which is mild and tender sometimes moves, so for using it to look at oneself, it may shake and shift. That which is hard and strong, none can change its clarity unless it breaks, so for using it to look at oneself, one will also manage to keep the reality.

In this *shuo* essay, Luo Yin did not care for perplexing concepts or fancy metaphors. The four objects, which can be categorized as “sundries”, were indeed worldly: jade and precious stones, rubbles, mirrors, and water. His language was particularly plain in this piece, so much so that it almost resembled a conversational speech that required no literacy to comprehend. In contrast, most of Luo's essays were heavily loaded with allusions that prevented the readers from understanding them without knowledge of history and the classics. In this essay, Luo even spared us the headache of identifying the arcane words and pretentious phrases. That said, the coherency of logic in this essay was never to be neglected. Luo made good use of comparisons between different objects to lay out his arguments. The sentences, although not in exact parallelism, if we count the number of words, were neatly arranged to be juxtaposed with each other.

For instance, in the first part of the essay, Luo compared the difference between jade and precious stones with rubbles. He straightforwardly presented his argument at the beginning that “one would know their difference in quality without waiting to be told.” Then, he elaborated on his ideas in two parallel sentences: the first one is an observation, and the second one is an inference. In the observation, he stated the fact that people noticed small defects in jade and precious stones but were tolerant of the huge fault in rubbles. In the inference, he concluded that the difference in people’s attitude was due to the usefulness of jade and stones and the uselessness of rubbles. This paragraph, although short and simple, could surely be regarded as an exemplary argumentative passage. The implication was also delivered effortlessly: the worthy ones were often faulted for small mistakes or wrongdoings, while the worthless ones, just because they made no constructive efforts, were exempted from the blame.

The second part of the “Miscellaneous Discourse” was equally clear and accessible. Instead of presenting the argument at the beginning of the essay, Luo saved it for the conclusion. To convince the readers that “The mild and tender thing may shake and shift. The hard and strong thing will manage to keep the reality”, Luo used two short sentences. First, he stated the fact that both mirrors and water can reflect one’s image, and people trust both of them because they showed no affection from their appearances. Second, he reminded the readers of the distinctions in the quality between the two things: one is soft and mild, while the other is hard and strong. Without further explanation, Luo ended the paragraph with a simple deduction. Again, it would not be exacting for the readers to pick up the hint: the fickle officials are like water, and they deceive; the upright officials are like mirrors, and they provide the truth.

If Luo Yin’s employment of *shuo* as a prose genre showed his excellency in logical reasoning as well as his capability and courage to abandon scholarly language style, then the essays in stele inscription form clearly reflected another side of Luo as a writer. His affectionate and passionate tone revealed him as a sentimental and righteous scholar.

The origin of the stele inscription can be traced back to the Qin dynasty. The pompous First Emperor of Qin, after conquering the six states and unifying China, traveled around to survey his territory. During the trips, he made people build steles and inscribe them with praises. These inscriptions, also known as *keshi* 刻石, are mostly not extant anymore. Nevertheless, by reading the records in *Shiji*, we can still understand the function of the stele inscriptions in its earliest forms—to record and eulogize the merits.¹⁶⁷ The Eastern Han dynasty was a period when the prose genre developed rapidly. The funeral and interment traditions encouraged the composition of stele inscriptions for common people. Writing became more personal, and the language, being influenced by *fu* and poetry, was often graceful and poetic. The best-known stele inscription writer in the Eastern Han dynasty was no other than Cai Yong 蔡邕 (132-192 C.E.). His most famous piece “Stele Inscription for Guo Youdao” (“Guo Youdao beiwen” 郭有道碑文) combined the short prose with a piece of four-syllable verse as the eulogy, giving a brief account of Guo’s life, complimenting his talents and morality, and lamenting the heartrending loss.¹⁶⁸ The later stele inscription writers had been largely influenced by Cai Yong but hardly excelled him until in the Tang dynasty when Han Yu brought the revived *guwen* style into the stele inscription writing. Releasing himself from the constraints of *pianwen*, Han Yu’s stele inscriptions, just like his other proses, were hardly ever in the ornate and flamboyant style. The renowned modern scholar Qian Zhongshu 錢鐘書 (1910-1998 C.E.) praised him, saying, “Han Yu finally broke the traditional form and made changes with something new.”¹⁶⁹ Han’s “Stele Inscription for Pacifying Huaixi” (“Ping Huaixi bei” 平淮西碑) did differ from Cai Yong’s “Stele Inscription for Guo Youdao” in

¹⁶⁷ See Sima, *Shiji*, 6.242, 244

¹⁶⁸ Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501-531 C.E.) comp., *Wen xuan* 文選 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), 58.2498-2503

¹⁶⁹ “韓愈始破舊格，出奇變樣。” See Qian Zhongshu, *Guan zhui bian* 管錐編, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994), 1527

many ways.¹⁷⁰ Besides the distinct subject matters, the prose and verses in Han's piece were both written in a smooth and neat manner. Even though the eulogy was in traditional four-syllable verses, Han's signature artless language style made this stele inscription an elegant piece. This extraordinary piece of stele inscription set a high benchmark for successors, but it also became a textbook model that many writers found useful to emulate.

In the *Writings of Slandering*, Luo Yin wrote two stele inscriptions: "Stele Inscription for the Three *Shu*" ("San Shu bei" 三叔碑) and "Stele Inscription for Master Mei" ("Mei xiansheng bei" 梅先生碑).¹⁷¹ Albeit both pieces were in the same literary form, the writing strategies were unlike. The slightly more conventional one was "Stele Inscription for Master Mei":¹⁷²

漢成帝時綱紐頽圯，先生以書諫天子者再三。夫火政雖失，而劍履間健者猶數百位，尚能為國家出力以斷佞臣頭，復何南昌故吏憤憤於其下？得非南昌遠地也？尉下寮也？苟觸天子網，突幸臣牙，特殛一狂人，噬一單族而已。彼公卿大臣，生殺喜怒之任，朋黨蕃衍之大，¹⁷³出一言作一事，必與妻子謀，苟不便其家，雖妾人婢子撻挽相制，¹⁷⁴而況

¹⁷⁰ For the article "Ping Huaixi bei", see Zhu ed., *Zhu Wengong jiao Changli xiansheng wen ji*, 30.8a-12a

¹⁷¹ The three *Shu* referred to the three younger brothers of King Wu of Zhou. They were Ji Xian 姬鮮, also known as Guan *Shu* 管叔, Ji Du 姬度, also known as Cai *Shu* 蔡叔, and Ji Chu 姬處, also known as Huo *Shu* 霍叔. They instigated the Rebellion of the Three Guards (*San jian zhi luan* 三監之亂), which was against the Zhou government under the Duke of Zhou's 周公 regency in the late eleventh century B.C.E., and failed. See Sima, *Shiji*, 4.132

Master Mei referred to Mei Fu 梅福 (fl. 16 B.C.E.-8 C.E.), style-named Zizhen 子真, a local military officer during the reign of Emperor Cheng of Han 漢成帝 (51-7 B.C.E.). He was known for reprimanding the Wang Mang faction. After almost being persecuted, he resigned and became a hermit. For Mei Fu's biography, see Ban, *Han shu*, 67.2917-2927

¹⁷² See "Mei xiansheng bei" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 741-745

¹⁷³ Li's version added *you* 有 before both *shengsha* 生殺 and *pengdang* 朋黨 following the *Quan Tang wen* version and *Tang wen cui* version. I followed the *Baijinglou* version to omit them.

¹⁷⁴ Li's version has *yi* 亦 before *yingwan* 撻挽 according to the *Quan Tang wen* version and *Tang wen cui* version. I followed the *Baijinglou* version to omit it.

親戚乎，況骨肉乎？故雖有憂社稷心，亦噤而不吐也。嗚呼，寵祿所以勸功，而位大者不語朝廷事，是知天下有道則正人在上，天下無道則正人在下。余讀先生書，未嘗不為漢朝公卿恨。今南游復過先生里，吁，何為道之多也！遂碑之。

During the time of Emperor Cheng of Han, the system and law were in ruins. The master sent up letters to remonstrate the Son of Heaven repeatedly. Although the “Fire Government” was lost,¹⁷⁵ among those who were allowed to carry swords and wear shoes to court,¹⁷⁶ the robust ones still accounted for hundreds. They still could contribute to the country by cutting off the heads of the sycophant vassals, so why was the former officer in Nanchang, staying at such a low position, so angry? Was it not that Nanchang was a far-off land?¹⁷⁷ Or *wei* was a low-level position?¹⁷⁸ If, and only if, he touched the net of the Son of Heaven or broke the teeth of the beloved vassals, it would just cause the killing of a crazy person, gnawing of a single clan, and that would be all. Those vassals and high officials made decisions of life and death based on their happiness and anger; their factions and parties were growing bigger and bigger. Before they spoke one word or did one thing, they would definitely discuss it with their wives and sons. If only it were not convenient

¹⁷⁵ Following the Qin government, the Han government had also adopted the Five Agents (*wuxing* 五行) theory, which was invented by Zou Yan 鄒衍 (305-240 B.C.E.) from the Warring States period. According to the theory, the mutual generation and overcoming of Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water were used to explain the interaction and relationships between phenomena, to describe the succession of dynasties. The Han dynasty was believed to be Fire in nature, succeeding the Qin, which was Water in nature. For an account of the First Emperor of Qin’s ceremonial practice of declaring the government a “Water Government”, see Sima, *Shiji*, 6.237

¹⁷⁶ Those who were allowed to carry swords and wear shoes (*jian lü* 劍履) referred to the high-level vassals who received special permission from the ruler not to follow the court etiquette. The phrase first appeared in *Shiji* in the account of Xiao He 蕭何 (257-193 B.C.E.), the heroic advisor of Liu Bang’s 劉邦 (256-195 B.C.E.), who received the honorable treatment for his excellent service. See Sima, *Shiji*, 53.2016

¹⁷⁷ Nanchang 南昌 was located in modern Jiangxi 江西 Province. The capital Chang’an during Emperor Cheng of Han’s reign was over seven hundred miles away from Nanchang.

¹⁷⁸ *Wei* 尉 was a fourth-ranking centrally appointed official in a district (*xian* 縣), in charge of local military and police matters, informally titled “Junior Repositor” (*shaofu* 少府), as subordinate to the Magistrate (*ling* 令) who was informally known as “Enlightened Repositor” (*mingfu* 明府). The title has often been rendered as District Defender. See Charles O. Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in Imperial China* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1985), 243

for their families, then even if concubines and maids stepped up and pulled them from two sides, [they would ignore them]. What was the need to even talk about their relatives? What was the need to talk about their bones and flesh? Therefore, even if they had the mind to concern about the government, they would shut up instead of speaking out. Alas! The favor from the ruler and the official salary are given to encourage merits, but those in high positions did not speak of the affairs of the court. From this, we know that when the Way exists in the Sub-celestial Realm, the upright people will stay above; when the Way does not exist in the Sub-celestial Realm, the upright people will stay below. I read the master's writings and could not help but feel exasperated about the vassals and high officials of the Han. Now, I traveled southward and passed by the master's dwelling again. Ah, what can I do with so much to say! Hence, I wrote this stele inscription for him.

Luo Yin's stele inscription for Mei Fu was not a traditional one. It was a short piece in which the eulogy was absent. Not only did Luo excuse himself from writing the rigidly formed verses, but he also provided a terse account of Mei's life. In fact, one could argue that Luo busied himself with complaining and lamenting in "Stele Inscription for Master Mei" that the perfunctory mentioning of Mei's experience fell into the category of grumbling. Instead of praising Mei's sage-like morality, most of Luo's attentions were on the attacking of "those who were allowed to carry swords and wear shoes to court". First, he reprimanded the hundreds of robust high officials for not "cutting off the heads of the sycophant vassals", then he sighed for Mei Fu, for he could only hold a low position in the far-off Nanchang angrily. Yet, Luo's compliment given to Mei was almost purely used to make a contrast to the selfish officials. The latter made decisions of life and death based on their happiness and anger and grew their faction and party but refused to speak of the matters of the government. Luo Yin compared Mei's extraordinary sense of responsibility to send letters to the ruler to rebuke the malign, with the courage to suffer from the fate of being killed, possibly with his family, to the despicable officials. The officials considered their personal interests before making every small decision. Then, he, again, grumbled that the high officials

ignored their duties to do merits when received the favor from the ruler and enjoyed the high governmental salary. Throughout the entire piece, Luo did not recall Mei Fu's merits and achievements in a reminiscent tone but filled it with bitter sarcasm and harsh criticism. With the absence of the light-hearted yearning, Luo used the stele inscription for Mei Fu to express his thoughts and feelings. Besides, the language of the essay was colored with resentment towards the lords and high ministers. He incessantly posed rhetorical questions, which was rare in a conventional stele inscription.

If “Stele Inscription for Master Mei” was a moderately altered version of a stele inscription, then “Stele Inscription for the Three *Shu*” would be considered exceedingly novel.¹⁷⁹

肉以視物者猛獸也，竊人之財者盜也。一夫奮則獸佚，一犬吠則盜奔，非其力之不任，惡夫機在後也。當周公攝政時，三叔流謗，故辟之、囚之、黜之，然後以相孺子。洎召公不悅，則引商之卿佐以告之。彼三叔者，固不知公之志矣。而召公豈亦不知乎？苟不知，則三叔可殺而召公不可殺乎？是周公之心可疑矣。向非三叔，則成王不得為天子，周公不得為聖人。愚美夫三叔之機在前也，故碑。

Those who make meals of what they see are ferocious beasts; those who steal people's money are robbers. When a man rouses, the beast will escape; when a dog barks, the robber will run away. It is not that their strength is not enough to commit crimes; rather, they are afraid of the contrivance that is behind. During the time of Duke of Zhou's regency, the three *Shu* spread rumors. Hence, Duke of Zhou killed one, imprisoned one, and exiled one. Then, he assisted the young boy to govern the country. When it came to the time when Duke of Zhao was displeased, he referred to the ministers and advisors in the Shang dynasty to inform Duke of Zhao [of his intention].¹⁸⁰ Those three *Shu* certainly had not known the Duke's intention, but how could Duke

¹⁷⁹ See “San Shu bei” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 719-721

¹⁸⁰ Duke of Zhao (Zhao Gong 召公), named Ji Shi 姬奭 (fl. 1020 B.C.E.), was a worthy advisor of the Zhou rulers. During King Cheng of Zhou's 周成王 (1055-1020 B.C.E.) time, he regarded Duke of Zhou's regency as

of Zhao also be unaware? If, and only if, he did not know, then was it that the three *Shu* can be killed but Duke of Zhao cannot be killed? This was the case in which the mind of Duke of Zhou had been suspicious. If not for the three *Shu*, then King Cheng would not be able to become the Son of Heaven, and Duke Zhou would not be able to become the sage. I, the foolish one, regard the fact that the contrivance of those three *Shu*'s went ahead as excellent, so I wrote this stele inscription [for them].

This piece of stele inscription was written for the three younger brothers of King Wu of Zhou: Ji Xian, Ji Du, and Ji Chu. The event which made them notorious was the Rebellion of the Three Guards, which happened during King Cheng of Zhou's time. Because of their jealousy of the well-respected Duke of Zhou, they spread rumors that Duke of Zhou was plotting for usurpation and allied with some mark lords for a rebellion. When Duke of Zhou suppressed the rebellion, he killed Ji Xian, imprisoned Ji Du, and exiled Ji Chu. For over a thousand years, Duke of Zhou was considered as one of the worthiest advisors. Sima Qian recorded his many merits in *Shiji*. One of the famous stories says that he, too anxious to meet the worthy guests who came to serve for him, could not finish his meal but spat out the food for three times.¹⁸¹ In this essay, Luo offered an unorthodox interpretation of these historical figures. In his opinion, Duke of Zhou did have the intention to usurp, but, fortunately, the three *Shu* prevented him from committing the crime. It was truly nipping it in the bud. To prove his point, Luo also compared the three *Shu* with Duke of Zhao, who also suspected Duke of Zhou's intention. Whether this essay reflects Luo Yin's genuine perception of Duke of Zhou, the three *Shu*, Duke of Zhao, and the historical event is undoubtedly beyond our capability to tell. Still, the emphasis was not on the three *Shu* but the Duke of Zhou type of people. Luo Yin's purpose was to point out that the Duke of Zhou type of people, those

inappropriate. In response to Duke of Zhao's suspicion, Duke of Zhou wrote "Lord Shi" ("Jun Shi" 君奭) to clarify his intention of assisting the young ruler and stabilizing the country. See "Jun Shi" in Kong comp., Lu ed., *Shang shu, Sibū congshu*, 10.1a-5a; for Duke of Zhao's biography, see Sima, *Shiji*, 34.1549-1562

¹⁸¹ See Sima, *Shiji*, 33.1518

who held great power and governed the country on behalf of the emperor, were extremely threatening. Precautions should be taken before they execute their detrimental schemes. Therefore, the applause for the three *Shu* was no more than an urgent call for precautions.

It is fair to say that Luo Yin merely borrowed the name of the prose genre *bei* to write in his signature subject-history. Hence, the expected features in a stele inscription could certainly not be found in “Stele Inscription for the Three *Shu*”. One of the advantages of the approach was the diversion of the readers’ attention from an outright “slandering” to a well-disguised one which could be taken as a lament, or a discussion on historical topics, at one’s first sight. The subtleness of making use of the stele inscription also adds variety and creativity to the collection.

Undoubtedly, Luo Yin had allowed himself to venture as many types of prose genres as possible, dare we say all the possible ones that he was exposed to. One of the most interesting ones, which one should not brush off, was the *shu*. Most of the prose genres that Luo used and have been discussed in this paper so far were in the personal category. Although not as private as letters, the *fu*, the discourse, and even the stele inscription, would be classified as the kind of writings that “speak of one’s mind”. In other words, the author uses them to express individualized ideas and emotions, or at least supposedly. The *shu*, on the contrary, requires one’s efforts to de-personalize in writing. As a literary instrument to communicate with the emperor, a *shu* was supposed to have serious themes, humble tones, and formal language. More importantly, a *shu* should possess careful and sincere thoughts for the ruler and the country, constructive advice, and practical solutions when needed. For the emperor was no idler, surely not supposed to be, only the government officials were the designated writers. Often times, the *shu* from lower-level officials were never fortunate enough to be placed on the emperor’s desk, though all were addressed to “Your Majesty”. The nature of the *shu* had its uniqueness as compared with other types of petitions. Liu Xie 劉勰 (465-521 C.E.) made an elaborate explanation of the four different types of petitions in the Han dynasty, each of which had its specific purpose: *zhang* 章 for expressing gratitude to

the ruler, *zou* 奏 for rebuking an official or officials, *biao* 表 for stating one's heartfelt thoughts, and *yi* 議 for offering one's dissent.¹⁸² *Shu*, according to Liu Xie, was originated in the Han dynasty. The term “*shang shu*” 上疏 (sending up *shu*) was a synonym of “*zou shi*” 奏事, which was a general term for submitting memorials.¹⁸³ The etymology of the word *shu* would shed light on the feature of this prose genre. *Shuowen* glossed it as “to make unobstructed” or “to make clear”, which denoted that a *shu* was meant to make the ruler's sight unobstructed, especially when that of his was blocked.¹⁸⁴ That is, to remind the ruler of his wrongdoings and offer one's suggestion.

Two of the exemplary *shu* pieces, not just well-known in Luo Yin's time but also handed down to us, were written by Jia Yi 賈誼 (200-168 C.E.) and Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580-643 C.E.). Both pieces were exemplary for valid reasons. On the one hand, the issues they brought up to the rulers deserved close attention. Jia Yi's “*Shu on Discussing Stockpiles*” (“*Lun ji zhu shu*” 論積貯疏) to Emperor Wen of Han 漢文帝 (203-157 B.C.E.), discussed a fundamental concern which must be addressed-agriculture. Wei Zheng's “*Shu on Admonishing Taizong to Have Ten Thoughts*” (“*Jian Taizong shi si shu*” 諫太宗十思疏) concerned the conduct of the emperor, which had remained to be one of the most popular and traditional topics of admonishment. On the other hand, their writings were in the most concise yet convincing style. “*Shu on Discussing Stockpiles*” started with Guanzi's 管子 (719-645 B.C.E.) quote. It made an example of ancient times and related it to the current situation. It stated the threats of ignoring the issue and then laid out the benefits of taking care of it. There was not a single sentence that did not concern the interests of the ruler and the country.¹⁸⁵ As for Wei Zheng's “*Shu on Admonishing Taizong to Have Ten Thoughts*”, there

¹⁸² See Liu Xie, *Wen xin diao long* 文心雕龍, *Sibu congkan*, 5.3a

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 5.10a

¹⁸⁴ See Xu ed., *Shuowen jiezi*, 14b.7a

¹⁸⁵ For “*Shu on Discussing Stockpiles*”, which had no title in *Han shu*, see Ban, *Han shu*, 24.1127-1134

were simple but thoughtful analogies employed so that the emperor could easily comprehend the idea without feeling lectured with lengthy and haughty speeches. The famous one was “water can carry a boat; it can also overturn it”, where the people were analogized to as water and regarded as having the power to support or overturn the government.¹⁸⁶ Both pieces had unadorned and functional language style; yet, in a sympathizing tone.

Luo Yin’s approach was not at all unconventional. As compared with his innovative writings of stele inscriptions and *fu*, the two pieces of *shu* in the *Writings of Slandering* were not out of the ordinary. Still, the sardonic label of Luo’s writings remained in these two essays. Instead of altering the form of the prose genre, he played with the themes and the language. It would be unfair, though, to generalize about the two pieces because they differed greatly in many aspects. The first one, “*Shu* on Request to Recall the Imperial Decree on the Day of Guisi” (“Qing zhui Guisi ri zhao shu” 請追癸巳日詔疏), was much more genial to start with.¹⁸⁷

歲貢賤臣隱，既以文不得意，且抱犬馬之疾於長安。夏五月，京畿旱，癸巳日，聞詔大京兆用器水，爐香，蒲籛，絳幡輩致於坊市外門，將以用舊法而召甘雨也。臣躄起病榻間，以為明。天子憂人，雖舜禹不如是之勤，幸甚幸甚。臣又聞水旱與天地同出，苟時或然，不可以倉卒除去。今秦地旱已逾月矣，而陛下禱祠亦已頻矣。天之高，地之厚，五岳之綿互，四瀆之宏遠，陛下命百執事啟祈外，何常不以心祝之？雖莖槁苗乾，而百姓不怨嗟者，其感陛下之誠深也。今以蒲籛輩為請者，豈陛下謂其能靈於岳瀆者乎？夫岳瀆視陛下之公輔，列陛下之土田，苟陛下憂，則嶽瀆亦憂矣。¹⁸⁸受祭據封者尚未能為

¹⁸⁶ “水能載舟，亦能覆舟。” For “*Shu* on Admonishing Taizong to Have Ten Thoughts”, which was initially named “The Second *Shu*” (“Di er shu” 第二疏) in *Quan Tang wen*, see Dong comp., *Quan Tang wen*, 139.1410

¹⁸⁷ See “Qing zhui Guisi ri zhao shu” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xian jiaojian*, 783-787

¹⁸⁸ Li’s version added *yi* 宜 after *yi* 亦 according to the *Quan Tang wen* version and *Tang wen cui* version. I followed the *Baijinglou* version to omit it.

陛下出力，彼蒲籬輩復何足以動天？臣竊為陛下不取也。臣又聞天之有雨澤，猶陛下之有渥恩。雨澤可以委曲干之，則陛下渥恩亦可以委曲干之矣。臣聞天子有左右史，將所以記事記言，然後付太史氏。臣必恐其得以容易編牘，今冒死請追癸巳日詔。苟若陛下法十六聖之教訓，雖五種棲野，而百姓不暇掇，豈蒲籬輩之所及乎？昔商湯之代，民不以旱為災，¹⁸⁹蓋仁聖之君在上也。今旱未及商代，而陛下憂已過矣。臣謹因旱以賀，冀百姓知陛下心。

I, Luo Yin, the petty annual imperial examination taker,¹⁹⁰ have already failed to excel with my writing, yet, I am currently staying in Chang'an in illness. In the fifth month in summer, the capital and its vicinities suffered from droughts. On the day of Guisi,¹⁹¹ I heard the imperial decree that the great Jiangzhao will have all of the water vessels, censers, calamus and bamboo splints, and red flags being placed outside the outer gate of the markets and residential areas.¹⁹² The old method will be used with these items to call for the long-expected rain. I, your servant, leaped out of the sickbed, thinking of this as a wise action. You, the Son of Heaven, concern yourself with people; even Yao and Shun were not as diligent as this. How fortunate! How fortunate! I, your servant, also heard that floods and droughts come out with [the intentions of]

¹⁸⁹ Li's version mistakenly took *han* 旱 as *zao* 早. I have corrected it according to other versions.

¹⁹⁰ The term *suigong* 歲貢 referred to the annual referral of scholars by individual prefectures (*zhoufu* 州府). These scholars should have excelled in the prefectural level exams and thus were qualified for taking the imperial exam held by the Department of State Affairs. See Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 44.1159

¹⁹¹ Guisi 癸巳 was the thirtieth day in a sixty-day cycle according to the Chinese Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches numbering system. The day of Guisi in 862 was the twenty-sixth of the fifth month.

¹⁹² Jingzhao 京兆 was a superior prefecture (*fu* 府) created in 713 C.E. by converting Yong Prefecture 雍州. It lay north of the Qin Mountains 秦嶺 in modern Shaanxi Province with Chang'an as its core. In the Tang dynasty, the markets (*shi* 市) and the residential areas (*fang* 坊) were separated from each other. The markets were surrounded by tall walls, and the gates would only open during the day when the markets were allowed to open. Each residential area was also guarded by walls. For detailed records of the *fang shi* system in the Tang dynasty, see Song Minqiu 宋敏求 (1019-1079 C.E.), Bi Yuan 畢沅 (1730-1797 C.E.) ed. *Chang'an zhi* 長安志, Harvard-Yenching Library Chinese Local Gazetteers Digitization Project- *Shan ben fang zhi* 善本方志, 9.1a-12a

Heaven and Earth. If only in some cases, the time is so, then they cannot be hastily gotten rid of. Now, the land of Qin has already had drought for over a month, and you, Your Majesty, have also prayed and offered sacrificial ceremonies frequently.¹⁹³ Lofty is Heaven; deep is Earth; stretching adjacent to each other are the Five Mountains;¹⁹⁴ wide and long are the Four Waterways.¹⁹⁵ Have not you, Your Majesty, besides commanding the many officers in charge to commence the prayer, also beseeched the rain with your heart? Even though stems wither and sprouts shrivel, the Hundred Clans do not complain or sigh. It is because they feel how sincere your wholeheartedness is. As for using the calamus and bamboo splint to pray for the rain now, how could it be that you, Your Majesty, refer to the method as more efficacious than the mountains and rivers? In any particular case, the mountains and rivers oversee Your Majesty's ministers, arrange Your Majesty's lands. If only you, Your Majesty, have worries, then the mountains and rivers would also become worried. Even those who receive sacrifices and hold enfeoffment have not been able to contribute their strength for Your Majesty, how can that calamus and bamboo splint, then, change Heaven's mind? I, your servant, also heard that Heaven's having the kindness of rain is like your having abundant grace. If the kindness of rain can be twisted and dry up, then your abundant grace could also be twisted and dry up. I, your servant, heard that the Son of Heaven had Left and Right Historiographers. They are responsible for taking down the matters and words and then submitting them to the Grand Historian.¹⁹⁶ I, your servant, cannot help but fear that they

¹⁹³ The land of Qin referred to Qin Prefecture 秦州, which located in modern Gansu 甘肅 Province.

¹⁹⁴ The Five Mountains (*wu yue* 五岳) were Mount Tai in modern Shandong Province, Mount Hua 華山 in modern Shaanxi Province, Mount Heng 衡山 in modern Hunan 湖南 Province, Mount Heng 恆山 in modern Shanxi 山西 Province, and Mount Song. See Zheng Xuan comm., *Zhou li* 周禮, *Sibu congkan*, 5.12b

¹⁹⁵ The phrase Four Waterways (*si du* 四瀆) first appeared in *The Ready Rectifier* (*Er ya* 爾雅). It referred to the four rivers: the Yellow River 黃河, the Huai River 淮河, the Ji River 濟河, and the Yi River 沂河. See Guo Pu 郭璞 (276-324 C.E.) annt. *Er ya*, *Sibu congkan*, 2.14a

¹⁹⁶ The Left Historiographer (*zuoshi* 左史) and the Right Historiographer (*youshi* 右史) were official designations originated in the Spring and Autumn period. The Left Historiographer was responsible for taking down imperial affairs, and the Right Historiographer was responsible for taking down the imperial words. In the Tang dynasty, there was little differentiation in duties between the two, but they belong to different departments.

will carelessly record and file your acts and words. Hence, now, I dare plead, even with my life at risk, that the imperial decree on the day of Guisi is recalled. If only, you, Your Majesty, follow the lessons and instructions from the sixteen sages, then even if the five grains lie in the wilderness, and the Hundred Clans have no spare time to pick them up, how can the things like calamus and bamboo splint reach up to it?!¹⁹⁷ In the past, during Shang Tang's generation, people did not regard droughts as a calamity because the humane and sage ruler was above. At present, the drought has not been comparable to that in Shang's era, but Your Majesty's worries have been too much. I, your servant, sincerely congratulate you for the drought and hope the Hundred Clans understand Your Majesty's mind.

This *shu* was written in very carefully, although it was unlikely for it to be presented to the emperor. Luo Yin identified himself at the beginning of the *shu*, which indicated an intention to submit this essay to someone from the authorities. At least, he considered the possibility high for it to be read by some high-ranked officials. Besides, the issue being addressed in the *shu* was specified, whereas his other essays tended to criticize people or phenomena in general. The emperor's imperial decree to use the old method to pray for rain was regarded as a sheer waste of money and manpower by Luo Yin. In his opinion, the emperor has already prayed and held sacrificial ceremonies frequently; any extra ceremonial efforts would be useless. The disapproval was harsh, but Luo took care of the tone to his best. The extravagant compliments to "Your Majesty" were beyond flattering. First, he applauded the imperial decree on the day of Guisi, which he actually strongly disagreed, by calling it "a wise action". Then, he thanked the emperor for being more diligent than Yao and Shun

The Left Historiographer reported to the Chancellery (*Menxia sheng* 門下省). The Right Historiographer reported to the Secretariat (*Zhongshu sheng* 中書省). See Ban, *Han shu*, 30.1715

¹⁹⁷ The phrase "sixteen sages" (*shiliu sheng* 十六聖) came from Emperor Yizong. In his "Amnesty Announcement" ("Dashe wen" 大赦文), Emperor Yizong said, "I, the emperor, have inherited the government from the sixteen sages". The sixteen sages referred to the sixteen Tang emperors from Emperor Gaozu 高祖, Li Yuan 李淵 (566-635 C.E.), to Emperor Xuanzong, excluding Empress Wu 武則天 (624-705 C.E.). See "Dashe wen" in Dong comp., *Quan Tang wen*, 85.896

on behalf of the fortunate people. Subsequently, Luo started to present his arguments that if the previous ceremonies, which were addressed to mountains and rivers, had not worked, then the current method, which required sundries like herbs and flags, would never work as well. The emperor should not pay too much attention to the superficial practices but “follow the lessons and instructions from the sixteen sages”. As long as he could be the “humane and sage ruler”, people would stop complaining even in difficult situations. The logic flowed smoothly, and the tone was appropriately submissive. The matter of having excessive ceremonies to pray for rain was neither serious nor offensive, especially when covered with enthusiastic acclaim. Yet, the expectation for the emperor to be humane and sage could be easily read as blame for not. More dangerously, a sensitive reader could regard the submissive tone and excessive praise as mere sarcasm. Certainly, one might instinctively think that Luo Yin was making use of the prose genre to “slander” in this *shu*, like what he did in other essays. Nevertheless, I would rather take this piece as a serious one. As mentioned, he identified himself as well as the specific event, which appeared to be unusual. Besides, in convincing the emperor of the uselessness of the ceremonies, he not only made himself clear with reasonable arguments but also cared to show his rare thoughtfulness. By attributing his suggestion to his fear of the careless historians, Luo was not sarcastic but diplomatic in offering opinions. The only sarcasm that could be easily noticed, if any, was his overly dramatic language, which was in opposition to Jia Yi and Wei Zheng’s plain language style.

The second *shu* was named “*Shu* on Declining the Official Position on Behalf of Summoned Gentleman Wei” (“Dai Wei Zhengjun xun guan shu” 代韋徵君遜官疏). On the contrary to “*Shu* on Request to Recall the Imperial Decree on the Day of Guisi”, this piece was utterly sardonic. The identity of the Summoned Gentleman Wei is not traceable anymore, but the vague account of his biography is sufficient for reading this essay:¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁸ See “Dai Wei Zhengjun xun guan shu” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 793-796

聖人纂極之二年，相臣上言北省官征四處士，而濠梁韋君居其一。詔下之日，韋君去世。故補其疏以榮之。逋臣遵言：去月某日，本州官吏跪將恩制，補臣左拾遺，拜舞渥澤，驚動村社。臣聞降玉帛所以崇德音也，舉遺逸所以敦風俗也，二者非有良左右不能行之，非有聖明之主不能成之。仰望丹闕，惟感唯賀。然臣者，履行曾不若凝籍輩，而執政徒以臣遠世有勳業於周，隋。洎曾高以來，於國家則未有絲髮用處。臣少而孱病，自念材具不可攀望多士，退縮山野，掀攬遺蠹，無片言以裨教化，無一字以紀休明，行坐語默，寢食而已。豈知宸造過聽，好爵下授，所謂飾獠狄以冠帶，饗爰居以酒食者也。況自陛下膺天緒，今內有良相，外有良將，家至戶到，未有一處不似唐、虞時。設置臣於諫署中，使臣說何道理，徒令四夷八蠻疑陛下有玩人之事。臣若詣闕之後，不唯陛下有玩人之事，臣已為百執事所玩，輾轉寤寐，惟恐濠梁之不堅，不知祿之可嗅也。夫四海至廣也，九州至大也，其間懷材負器在臣之右者，必千萬於臣。臣道不出人，家無餘蔭，一旦以韋布列於公卿門籍，臣復何面以對循陞歷級之人，何目以視不調久次之士？在陛下簪珥間，猶恐登用未盡，又安可以遽及逋臣？臣以是未敢奉詔，惟陛下哀之。死罪死罪！

In the second year after the Sage succeeded the throne,¹⁹⁹ the Prime Minister proposed that the officials of the Northern Department summon four private gentlemen,²⁰⁰ and Gentleman Wei from the area about Haoliang River was one of the four.²⁰¹ The day when the imperial decree was sent down, Gentleman Wei passed away. Therefore, I supplemented his memorandum to honor him. The fled vassal said:²⁰² one day in last month, the officer of my prefecture respectfully

¹⁹⁹ The Sage referred to Emperor Yizong. The second year after his succession (859 C.E.) was 860.

²⁰⁰ The Department of State Affairs, one of the Three Departments (*san sheng* 三省) that consisted of the top-level offices of the administration, was called the “Northern Department” (*bei sheng* 北省) because it was located in the northern part of the imperial palace. See Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 158.20a-20b

²⁰¹ The Haoliang 濠梁 River was variously called Hao River 濠水 and Shiliang River 石梁河. It was a river located in modern Anhui Province, joining the Huai River.

²⁰² Zun 遵 was the name of Summoned Gentleman Wei.

followed the beneficence system and supplemented me as the Reminder of the Left.²⁰³ I bowed with respect and danced having received the generous grace; the excitement spread throughout the entire village. I, your servant, heard that rulers send down jade and silk so that the innate strength will be respected and promote the hermits so that the social customs will be furnished. With regard to these two actions, neither can be implemented without good advisors, and neither can be achieved without sage and wise rulers. Looking up to your imperial palace, I only felt grateful and thankful. Yet, I, your servant, have no conduct resembling an official, yet the authorities employed me because my ancestors had meritorious contributions to the Zhou and the Sui.²⁰⁴ Since my great-great-grandfather and my great-grandfather, we have had not any use as slight as a string of hair to the country. I, your servant, have been frail since young. I have known that my talents do not qualify me to join the worthy officials, so I retired into the mountains and plains and drowned myself in the old books. I have not a short phrase to benefit the instruction and transformation, nor do I have a single word to manage the prosperous country. Walking, sitting, speaking, not speaking, sleeping, and eating. That is all I do. How would I know that Your Majesty mistakenly heard of me and sent down to me the great position and high salary? This is what people refer to as dressing up a gibbon with a cap and belt and feeding a seafowl with nice

²⁰³ The beneficence system (*enyin* 恩蔭), also called *menyin* 門蔭, referred to a system implemented in the Tang dynasty, originated in the Han dynasty, where a descendant of a worthy high-ranked official could have the chance to get an accelerated promotion. See Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 173.5372

The Reminder of the Left (*zuoshiyi* 左拾遺) was an official post under the Chancellery. Its responsibility was to remind the ruler of his wrongdoings and offer advice. Though not high-ranked, this central governmental post was in high demand for its excellent opportunities for networking and promotion. See Hucker, *A dictionary of official titles in Imperial China*, 425

²⁰⁴ There were many reputable government officials from the Wei clan in the Northern Zhou 北周 dynasty and the Sui 隋 dynasty. Among all, Wei Xiaokuan 韋孝寬 (509-580 C.E.) and Wei Shikang 韋世康 (531-597 C.E.) held significant positions. For their biographies, see Li Yanshou 李延壽 (fl. 7th century C.E.), *Bei shi* 北史 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 64.2259-2269; Wei Zheng 魏徵 (580-643 C.E.), *Sui shu* 隋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), 47.1265-1267

wine and food.²⁰⁵ Moreover, ever since Your Majesty inherited the throne, inside, there are good ministers; outside, there are good generals. When it comes to every household, there is not a single thing that does not resemble the times of Tang Yao and Yu Shun. If you place me, your servant, in the Remonstrance Office, then what ways and rules can I speak of? It will only make the aliens and barbarians suspect that you,²⁰⁶ Your Majesty, have instances of toying with people. If I, your servant, go to your palace, then not only will Your Majesty have instances of toying with people, I, your servant, will also be completely toyed with by the many officials. I tossed and turned in bed restlessly, simply fearing that I, the one from Haoliang, am not determined and do not know that the official salary can stink. In any particular case, the territory of the country is extremely broad. The nine prefectures are extremely large. People in the country who are talented and gifted, who are better than me, your servant, must be myriad. As for me, your servant, my Way is no better than that of others, and my family has no remaining protection from the ancestors. If, one day, you made Wei to be presented on the list of lords and ministers, what face do I, your servant, have then to meet those who assiduously work to be gradually moved up? What eyes do I have to see those officers who are not promoted and stayed at a lower position for long? Among Your Majesty's consorts,²⁰⁷ there is still fear that your patronage has not been extensive, how can it so quickly reach me, a fled vassal? For this reason, I, your servant, have not dared receive the imperial decree. My only hope is for you, Your Majesty, to pity me. A capital crime is mine! A capital crime is mine!

²⁰⁵ According to “The Speech of Lu” (“Lu yu” 魯語) in *Guo yu* 國語, “Yuanju” 爰居 was the name of a seafoal. See Shanghai shifan daxue guji zhengli zu 上海師範大學古籍整理組, *Guo yu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), 4.164

²⁰⁶ The phrase “aliens and barbarians” (*si yi ba man* 四夷八蠻) came from *Zhou li* and were used degradingly to refer to the non-Han Chinese in general. See Zheng, *Zhou li*, 8.24b

²⁰⁷ *Zan* 簪 and *er* 珥 were women's accessories. *Zan* was a hairpin, and *er* was a type of ear ornaments made of beads or jade stones. *Zan er* referred to the consorts of the emperor here.

It was satirical enough, first of all, to write a *shu* on behalf of a dead person. To speak under the mask of another is not different from writing fiction, as the liberty one possesses to express his true mind reaches to the maximum. Although the words were coming out of the mouth of the Summoned Gentleman Wei, the language and the tone tells us immediately that it was Luo Yin speaking. Similar to “*Shu* on Request to Recall the Imperial Decree on the Day of Guisi”, he enthusiastically and humbly thanked the emperor for appointing him as the Reminder of the Left. As usual, Luo used the most theatrical language. Not only did Wei bow and dance, but also, “the excitement spread the entire village.” The subsequent self-belittling and self-pitying brought our attention to the “slanderee”-the beneficence system. Instead of employing the real talents, the beneficence system was used, and often manipulated by the power holders, to promote those with backgrounds and connections. Wei’s self-deprecating was strikingly excessive, and his professed incapability was exactly true of Luo Yin’s perception of the Summoned Gentlemen. Their talents “do not qualify them to join the worthy officials” even though their ancestors had great merits and contributions to the country. Ironically, according to Wei, “Since my great-great-grandfather and my great-grandfather, we have had not any use as slight as a string of hair to the country.” Still, the government decided to employ someone who has “not a short phrase to benefit the instruction and transformation” or “a single word to manage the prosperous country”. Then, on behalf of Wei, Luo ridiculed the ridiculousness of the system for ignoring those who worked assiduously at a low-level position. His reference at the end to “Your Majesty’s consorts” was especially bold. By comparing the promotion of officials to favoring the consorts, Luo bitterly pointed out the emperor’s irresponsibility. Moreover, Luo did not forget about the high-ranked officials. When the bureaucracy incited so much hatred among people, Wei commented that the country was protected by good ministers and good generals. When the society was full of deceiving, bribery, crimes, and uprisings, Wei commented that “there is not a single thing that does not resemble the times of Tang Yao and Yu Shun” and he would have nothing to remonstrate. In this *shu*, Luo took all the advantages of the prose genre to deliver his criticism. The summoned gentlemen, the beneficence system, and the decision-makers-the high officials and the emperor all became the targets. The

ostensible praises, which distorted the truth, became the accusation. The pretentious attitude, even the standard closing line “a capital crime is mine”, added the absurdness to this piece.

III.2 One the Rhetorical Devices

Reading the *Writings of Slandering* is a meaningful and enjoyable experience because the relatability makes one thrilled and upset at times. The emotional control over the readers comes from one’s existing disgust at the abhorrent officials, the degenerated society, the fatuous emperor, and the avid interest-seekers-whoever Luo Yin was “slandering”. It also comes from the pertinent employment of the various prose genres. One significant aspect which has not been discussed but deserves no negligence is Luo Yin’s skillfulness in writing. Without the careful choosing of materials for metaphors and analogies as well as the deft use of rhetorical devices, sense would become nonsense, and laments would become groans.

As a brilliant writer, Luo was dexterous in the handling of materials and making good use of them for the most appropriate metaphors and analogies. In the fifty-eight essays, it was rare for Luo Yin to state his argument without making an analogy or a metaphor. The type of materials which he used most frequently was history. Luo’s erudition allowed him to refer to historical figures and events, sympathize with them, give comments on them, and sometimes offer novel interpretations. The examples are ubiquitous. In “Wooden Figurine” (“Mu ou ren” 木偶人), Luo used two historical figures, Chen Ping 陳平 (d. 178 B.C.E.) and Zhang Liang 張良 (250-186 B.C.E.) to condemn the superficiality of the people.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ See “Mu ou ren” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 731-732

漢祖之圍平城也，陳平以木女解之。其後徐之境以雕木為戲，丹牖之，衣服之，雖孿像勇態，皆不易其身也。是以後人其言木偶者，必以徐為宗。嘗過留，留即張良所封也。平與良皆位至丞相，是宜俱以所習漬於風俗。良以絕粒不反，今留無復絕粒者。而平之木偶，往往有之。其剗移人也如是！

When Emperor Gaozu of Han was besieged in Pingcheng, Chen Ping used wooden women to rescue him.²⁰⁹ After then, [the people in] the territory of Xu used carved wood for shows. They used cinnabar and vermilion to dye it, clothing to dress it. Even if the characters were ferocious and vigorous, they would never change the wooden figurine. For this reason, whenever the later generations speak of the wooden figurine, they will take Xu as the origin. I have once passed by Liu, where Zhang Ling was enfeoffed.²¹⁰ Ping and Liu both held the position as the Chancellor, so it would be easy for both of them to influence the customs and traditions with what they acquired. Liang used the method of fasting and not returning, while there is no one fasting in Liu now.²¹¹ On the contrary, there still is Ping's wooden figurine. This is how his carving knife changes people!

In this essay, Chen Ping's wooden figurine and Zhang Liang's fasting were put side by side to show people's different attitudes towards things that are "entertaining and easy" and "rewarding but hard", respectively. Sticking to one's principle is like fasting, which requires the discarding of

²⁰⁹ In 200 B.C.E., Liu Bang, Emperor Gaozu of Han, was besieged by the Xiongnu 匈奴 in Pingcheng (located in modern Shanxi Province) during his northward military campaign. Knowing the wife of the Xiongnu leader was jealous, Liu's advisor Chen Ping made wooden figurines and played them against the wall. The wife, when seeing it, was threatened by the beauties in the city and hence retreated. See Duan Anjie 段安節 (fl. 880 C.E.), *Yuefu za lu* 樂府雜錄 in Wu Guan 吳琯 (b. 1546 C.E.), *Zeng ding Gu jin yi shi* 增訂古今逸史, Harvard-Yenching Library Chinese Rare Books Digitization Project-Collectanea, 18.17a-17b

²¹⁰ Liu referred to Liucheng 留城. It was located in modern Peixian 沛縣, Jiangsu Province.

²¹¹ It was said that Zhang Liang started fasting after Liu Bang's government was stabilized, and he expressed his wish to become a Daoist monk. Sima Guang commented that Zhang's real intention was to get away from Liu Bang's possible political oppression, and his Daoist pursue was just an excuse. See Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 11.8a

one's career and worldly achievements. Conversely, making wooden figurines and playing them are entertaining, so everyone rushes for it. To make this statement, Luo Yin used the two historical instances, which seemed irrelevant at first sight, to make a reasonable comparison. In this case, the familiarity of the historical cases becomes secondary, whereas the metaphor behind is worth the most attention.

In some essays, history was discussed throughout the entire passage, while in some, Luo Yin dropped one or two lines with reference to a few historical figures or events just to support an argument. In “Discerning the Harm” (“Bian hai” 辨害), the historical account was subsidiary:²¹²

虎豹之為害也，則焚山不顧野人之菽粟。蛟蜃之為害也，則絕流不顧漁人之釣網。其所全者大而所去者小也。順大道而行者，救天下者也。盡規矩而進者，全禮義者也。權濟天下，而君臣立，上下正，然後禮義在焉。力不能濟於用，苟君臣上下之不正，雖抱空器，奚所設施？是以佐盟津之師，焚山絕流者也。扣馬而諫，計菽粟而顧釣網者也。於戲！

When the tiger and leopard are doing harm, one is to burn the mountain without considering the grains of the farmers. When the sea monsters are doing harm, one is to cut off the river without considering the fishing net of the fishermen. In these actions, those that are gotten rid of are insignificant, while those that are kept intact are significant. Those who follow the great Way and then implement it are the ones to save the Sub-celestial Realm. Those who try their best to obey the rules and then improve them are the ones to keep rites and propriety intact. The authorities contribute to the Sub-celestial Realm, and then the lord and the vassals are established, and the above and the below are upright. After that, rites and propriety are found within. If the power cannot be contributed to use, and if only the lord and the vassals, the above and the below are not upright, even though having the capability, where can it be placed and used? Therefore, the troops

²¹² See “Bian hai” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 723-725

that aided the Mengjin Pledge were those who burn the mountain and cut off the river.²¹³ The ones who held onto the horse and then remonstrated were those who consider the grains and mind the fishing net.²¹⁴ Alas!

To present his argument that one should not dwell on the insignificant things but get rid of them in order to keep the significant things intact, Luo Yin, at the end of the essay, made references to two historical accounts, the Mengjin Pledge and Boyi and Shuqi's remonstrations. In two terse sentences, he made analogies, and them in comparison. By analogizing the troops that aided the Mengjin Pledge to those who burn the mountain and cut off the river, he elaborated the advantage of keeping the significant things intact. By analogizing the ones who held onto the horse and then remonstrated to those who consider the grains and mind the fishing net, he reminded the readers of the disadvantage of not getting rid of the insignificant things. The whole idea of the essay was, of course, not simply about life philosophy; rather, Luo was speaking of the tiger, the leopard, and the sea monsters at court who were doing harm and thus should be removed. Hence, the analogies made with vassals and advisors could not be more appropriate.

The historical materials employed by Luo Yin were too numerous to mention. Yet, it was certainly not the sole type of material that he relied on. When legends, folktales, and fables appeared in the essays, the seriousness had transformed into a lighter spirit. Also, Luo did not shun the most

²¹³ The Mengjin Pledge (*Mengjin zhi shi* 孟津之誓) was a rally organized by King Wu of Zhou to pledge resolution before attacking King Zhou of Shang. After offering a sacrifice at King Wen's mausoleum, the troop reached Mengjin, which located in modern Henan Province by the Yellow River. Lots of vassals came with troops to support King Wu, but the campaign was withdrawn because King Wu thought it was not the best time. For a detailed account, see Sima, *Shiji*, 4.121

²¹⁴ The two men who held onto the horse and remonstrated were Boyi and Shuqi. After fled from Guzhu to Zhou, they tried to prevent King Wu from attacking the Shang. They questioned King Wu:

“父死不葬，爰及干戈，可謂孝乎？以臣弑君，可謂仁乎？”

“Your father died but was not yet buried; then you come to weapons. Can it be referred to as filial?

To assassinate the lord as a vassal, can it be referred to as humane?”

See Sima, *Shiji*, 61.2123

mundane materials. Creatures from nature and articles of daily use were often made use of. Unlike the historical materials, which would require no big effort to relate to the “slanderees”, these materials ought to be utilized more mindfully. If not, their trivialness would taint the great ideas, despite the playfulness they surely would provide. The essay “Casting Doubt on Phoenix Terrace” (“Yi Feng tai” 疑鳳臺) was a good example to examine Luo’s use of legends.²¹⁵

秦穆公女以吹簫降蕭史於臺上，後乘鳳皇而去，名其地曰鳳臺。吁，神仙不可以伎致，鳳鳥不可以意求。伎可致也，則黃帝不當有崆峒之學。意可求也，則仲尼不當有不至之歎。吾知其得志於逋逸間，而秦諱之不書，遂強鳳以神，強臺以名，然後絕其顧念之心。今江漢間復有史之跡，是愚婦惡夫淫其所以得矣。嗚呼，上行而下效，信而有證。故秦之道竟施於妄矣。

The daughter of Lord Mu of Qin made Xiao Shi descend to the Terrace by playing the bamboo flute. Then, they rode the phoenixes and left. The place [where they played and sang together] was named Phoenix Terrace.²¹⁶ Ah, one cannot become gods through knacks, and phoenixes cannot be sought with minds. If knacks can make one become a god, then the Yellow Emperor should not have had the learnings of Kongtong.²¹⁷ If minds can make them be sought, then Zhongni should not have had the laments of not arriving. I know that they fulfilled their wish by fleeing, but the Qin abstained from it and did not record it. Hence, they forcibly made the phoenix

²¹⁵ See “Yi Feng tai” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 697-698

²¹⁶ The legend says, the daughter of Lord Mu of Qin 秦穆公 (683-621 B.C.E), Nongyu 弄玉, when playing the bamboo flute one night, heard a man singing to her music. Could not locate the man, Nongyu fell sick. When the man, named Xiao Shi 蕭史, was found and brought to her, she recovered. The couple lived happily for a few years. One night, when they played the bamboo flute and sang together, as usual, two phoenixes arrived. They thus rode the phoenixes and left. See Wang Shumin 王叔岷 (1914-2008 C.E.), *Lie xian zhuan jiao jian* 列仙傳校箋 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan zhongguo wen zhe yanjiusuo choubeyu 中央研究院中國文哲研究所籌備處, 1995), 80-84

²¹⁷ It was said that the legendary ruler in antiquity, Yellow Emperor 黃帝, sought advice on governing the state and nurturing life from Guangchengzi 廣成子, a Daoist immortal, at Mount Kongtong 崆峒, which locates in modern Gansu Province. See “Zai you” 在宥 in Guo comp., Wang ed., *Zhuangzi ji shi*, 379

a god and named the place a “Terrace”, and then they [through this] cut off the mind of consideration and hope. Now, the traces of Xiao Shi appear again in the region of Jiang and Han. The two of them, the foolish woman and the malign man have indulged in what they used to achieve. Alas! When the above act, the below will follow. When it is trustworthy, there will be evidence. Therefore, the Way of Qin had eventually applied to falseness.

The supremacy in using this well-known legend was Luo’s acknowledgment of its unreliability. As beautiful as the love story was, Luo pointed out the nature of a legend. Its undependability was explained as an intentional deception. With this interpretation, he condemned the act of deceiving people to cover the immorality by the above. Then, he warned the authorities, those who should be ashamed of their lies, of the peril of their act being followed by the below.

In “Speech of Two Craftsmen” (“Er gongren yu” 二工人語), Luo Yin made up a short story about two craftsmen’s disagreement on the way of building a god statue:²¹⁸

吳之建報恩寺也，塑一神於門，土工與木工互不相可，木人欲虛其內，窗其外，開通七竅以應胸藏：「俾他日靈聖，用神吾工。」土人以為不可：「神尚潔也，通七竅應胸藏，必有塵滓之物點入其中，不若吾立塊而瞪，不通關竅，設無靈，何減於吾？」木人不可，遂偶建焉。立塊者竟無所聞。通竅者至今為人禍福。

When Wu built the Temple of Repaying Gratitude, they would set up a god's statue at the gate. The earth-worker and the woodworker did not agree with each other. The woodworker wanted to hollow its inside, make windows at its outside, and open seven apertures to allow the breasts to meet the organs. [He thought,] "Making the spiritual power a sage one, then it will be my work that makes the god useful." The earth-worker did not agree with this. [He thought,] "The god is still pure. When the seven apertures are opened and the breasts meet the organs, there will

²¹⁸ See “Er gongren yu” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 745-746

inevitably be things like dust and dirt tainting it or entering its inside. It is better for me to establish the chunk and then allow it to stare. I do not open the apertures. Even if it has no spiritual power, what will it deprive of me?" The woodworker did not agree, so he built one to pair with it. The one that established a chunk eventually has no way to be heard. The one that opened the apertures still endows disasters and blessings to people.

This short story was fairly easy to read thanks to the unadorned language and, more importantly, the middlebrow yet interesting material he chose to make the metaphor. The two craftsmen were undoubtedly not the emphasis of this essay. Instead, the two god's statues, one in a chunk, one with seven apertures, were the focus. Although the one in a big chunk had its purity, no one cared for it; the one which was contaminated by dust and dirt had been worshiped. The irony was an attack against the officials who abandoned their purity and gained the power to control people's well-being. The metaphor was not immediately clear, but the image of a dominating official would appear vividly in front of the readers when combined with the explicit language.

The example of "Pitying the Two Feathered Creatures" ("Bei er yu" 悲二羽) was a discussion of the birds-another almost inappropriate subject to appear in a serious piece of writing. Yet, the adoption of animals as well as everyday articles adds variety to the collection. Also, the high level of difficulty in using them for metaphor proved Luo's skills in writing well:²¹⁹

舞鏡之禽，墮洲之翠，南方之所珍也，而工簪珥者以為容。雖犀象之遠，金玉之貴，必以間之。及舉宮而飾，傾都而市，金玉犀象之不暇給，而二羽之用曾不銖兩焉。蓋以羽之輕而金玉犀象之重，苟發其顏色則可，而較其進則不可也。所悲者，舞鏡之時，墮洲之日爾。

²¹⁹ See "Bei er yu" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 737-738

The pheasant that dances in front of the mirror,²²⁰ the kingfisher that falls down to the isle,²²¹ they are what the southern region regards as valuable, and the craftsmen make hairpins and earrings to decorate them. Even though [the tusks of] rhinos and elephants are far; gold and jade are expensive, people always use them as their accessories. It reached to the extreme that they make the entire imperial palace to adorn them and search through the whole city to buy [materials for making accessories]. When gold and jade as well as [the tusks of] rhinos and elephants are not enough to meet the demand, but the amount that the two birds use is little. Concerning the lightness of the feathers and the heaviness of gold, jade, and [the tusks of] rhinos and elephants, if only one is to manifest the birds' beautiful appearance, then it is fine, but if one is to compare them with the tributes, then it is not acceptable. What we pity is the time when the pheasant dances in front of the mirror and the day when the kingfisher falls down to the isle, and that is it!

A handful of objects were mentioned in this piece: gold, jade, the tusks of rhinos and elephants, and of course, the two birds: pheasant and the kingfisher. Unlike how an author would take advantage of people's knowledge of and familiarity with the nature of the historical figures and events or legends and folktales, he had to endow the birds and objects with qualities-qualities that fit with his argument. In this case, Luo emphasized how light the two feathered creatures were and how valuable and rare the materials were. Through the sharp contrast, the readers would easily see the irony that the entire imperial palace and the markets were searched through in order to gather

²²⁰ The story came from *The Garden of Strangeness* (*Yi yuan* 異苑). See Liu Jingshu 劉敬叔 (fl. 417-426), *Yi yuan*, *Qinding siku quanshu*, 3.2a

山雞愛其毛羽，映水則舞。魏武時，南方獻之。帝欲其鳴舞而無由。公子蒼舒令置大鏡其前，雞鑿形而舞不知止，遂乏死。韋仲將為之賦其事。

The pheasant loved its feathers. It danced whenever it saw its reflection in water. During the time of King Wu of Wei (Cao Cao 曹操), the south presented it. The king wanted its singing and dancing but could not make it. Prince Cangshu (Cao Chong 曹沖) asked people to place a big mirror in front of it. The pheasant observed itself and then danced without knowing to stop. Then, it died of exhaustion. Wei Zhongjiang (Wei Dan 韋誕) wrote a *fu* about the event for it.

²²¹ For the account of the kingfisher (*cuinia* 翠鳥), see Ouyang, *Yi wen lei ju*, 92.1609

valuable items to decorate the birds. The analogy should be read together with the following account from *Jiu Tang shu*:²²²

懿宗以伶官李可及為威衛將軍……可及善音律，尤能轉喉為新聲，音辭曲折，聽者忘倦。京師屠沽效之，呼為「拍彈」。同昌公主除喪後，帝與淑妃思念不已，可及乃為歎百年舞曲。舞人珠翠盛飾者數百人，畫魚龍地衣，用官絁五千匹。曲終樂闕，珠璣覆地，詞語悽惻，聞者涕流，帝故寵之。嘗於安國寺作菩薩蠻舞，如佛降生，帝益憐之。可及嘗為子娶婦，帝賜酒二銀樽，啟之非酒，乃金翠也。人無敢非之者……

Yizong made the imperial artist Li Keji the Mighty Guarding General...Keji was specialized in music and especially good at singing aloud to improvise new songs. The melody, lyrics, keys, and tune patterns would make the listeners forget about their tiredness. Those who were engaged in degrading work in the capital city copied it and called it *paitan*.²²³ After Princess Tongchang's mourning ended, the emperor and Consort Shu could not stop pining for her.²²⁴ Hence, Keji composed a piece of dance music called "Sigh for Perishing". Hundreds of dancers were adorned with pearls and jade; the floor was covered with fish and dragon patterned fabrics, and they cost five thousand bolts of official silk. When the song ended, and the music stopped, the beautiful sound encompassed the ground, the words were saddening, and the listeners shed tears. Therefore, the emperor favored him. He once performed the dance "Pusa man" at the Anguo Temple.²²⁵ He

²²² See Liu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 177.4607-4608

²²³ The literary meaning of *tugu* 屠沽 is [people who] slaughter and sell wine. It referred to those who work in degrading occupations.

²²⁴ Consort Shu (*Shu fei* 淑妃), surnamed Guo 郭, was the mother of Princess Tongchang. For her biography, see Ouyang, *Xin Tang shu*, 77.3511

²²⁵ "Pusa man" 菩薩蠻 was the name of a tune pattern that became popular in the Tang dynasty. During Emperor Xuanzong's reign, the Nüman State (*Nüman guo* 女蠻國) paid tribute to the Tang, and their people tied up their hair in a high bun and wore golden hats. They covered themselves with accessories made of jade-like precious stones. People called them the team of "Pusa man". So, the musicians and geishas composed the song called "Pusa man". See Wang Yiqing 王奕清 (1664-1737), *Qinding ci pu* 欽定詞譜, *Qinding siku quanshu*, 5.1a

was like a buddha descending from heaven, and the emperor liked him more than before. Once, when Keji's son got married under Keji's arrangement, the emperor granted him two silver wine cups. When they opened them, there was no wine but gold and jade. No one dared to speak of him as wrong...

The two feathered creatures that were “valued by the south” for their beauty and dance were the exact portray of Li Keji. It was needless to say how ridiculous it was for the emperor to grant an artist the title of a general. Also, the favor from the emperor even prevented people from speaking of Li as wrong. Hence, Luo Yin's metaphor in which the two birds were decorated excessively was not exaggerating. Li Keji might not be the only case. Emperor Yizong's enthusiasm for music, traveling, and Buddhism must have encouraged the flatterers to do everything they could to please him. It would not be surprising that a talented musician or an enlightened monk was brought to the emperor. Although regarded as valuable in the south, the two birds were received too well. It was not that those were presented to Yizong were really worthy of being received so well; rather, the emperor's irrational passion for those who resemble the feathered animals caused the shortage of the precious materials. The nonsensical action of decorating two birds not only reflected how the emperor ignored the government of the country but also showed how the fawners facilitated the nonsensical business just to satisfy the ruler. Also, Luo elaborated on the nature of the two birds: the excessive decoration might manifest their beautiful appearance, but the birds would never be able to be compared with the precious tributes. Indeed, no matter how carefully they were adorned, they did not belong to the group of talents. Luo named this piece “Pitying the Two Feathered Creatures”, and he pitied the deaths of the two birds at the end of the essay. How would they deserve to be pitied if they were not valuable? Is it not pathetic that the pheasant danced in front of the mirror until it was exhausted to death? Is it not sad that the kingfisher fell down to the isle because it was taken away from its own nest? Li Keji, for instance, should never hold such a high position. When Emperor Yizong passed away, he fell out of favor and was expelled by Emperor

Xizong and died.²²⁶ Luo's explicit description of the qualities of the materials clarified the seemingly abstruse metaphor. With the tangible objects, Luo criticized the intangibles: the emperor's fatuous fascination for trivialities, the flatterers' despicable efforts to please the ruler, as well as the "talents" who strived to impress the emperor but could not escape from tragic fates.

Making use of the various types of materials was not Luo Yin's only means. He was specialized in using rhetorical devices to add liveliness to the essays. The best satire would never be produced without the use of rhetorical questions and antiphrasis. As cynical as he was, Luo often posed rhetorical questions to force the readers to be startled, to ponder, and to be convinced or enlightened. Sometimes, he generously offered his answer with a heavy sigh, while most of the time, the questions were left open for the readers to answer.

The use of rhetorical questions and antiphrasis was particularly well executed in "Danzhu and Shangjun Are Not Unworthy" ("Dan Shang fei bu xiao" 丹商非不肖). With his favorite historical materials, Luo made some subtle metaphors in this essay. The gist is not easy to fathom because of the intensive use of rhetorical devices:²²⁷

理天下者必曰陶唐氏，必曰有虞氏，嗣天下者必曰無若丹朱，無若商均。是唐虞為聖君，丹商為不肖矣。天下知丹商之不肖，而不知丹商之為不肖，不在於丹商也。不知陶虞用丹商於不肖也。夫陶唐之理，大無不周，幽無不照，遠無不被，苟不能肖其子，而天下可以肖乎？自家而國者，又如是乎？蓋陶唐欲推大器於公共，故先以不肖之名廢之，然後俾家不自我而家，而子不自我而子，不在丹商之肖與不肖矣。不欲丹商之蒙不肖之名於後也。其肖也，我既廢之矣；其不肖也，不凌逼於人。是陶虞之心示後代以公共，仲尼不泄其旨者，將以正陶虞之教耳，而猶湯放桀、武王伐紂焉。

²²⁶ See Liu, *Jiu Tang shu*, 177. 4608

²²⁷ See "Dan Shang fei bu xiao" in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 683-684

As for managing the Sub-celestial Realm, we inevitably speak of Tang Yao, and we inevitably speak of Yu Shun. As for inheriting the Sub-celestial Realm, we inevitably say, “Not someone like Danzhu, not someone like Shangjun.” It is because that Tang Yao and Yu Shun acted like a sage lord, but Danzhu and Shangjun had acted like unworthy sons. The [people of the] Sub-celestial Realm know about the unworthiness of Danzhu and Shangjun, but they do not know that Danzhu and Shangjun’s being unworthy was not decided by Danzhu and Shangjun. They do not know that Tang Yao and Yu Shun put them in the position of being unworthy. As for the principles of Tang Yao and Yu Shun, they cover even the great things, illuminate even the dark things, shelter even the things far. If only they could not make their sons worthy, how could the [people of the] Sub-celestial Realm be worthy? [Take the principle] from households and apply to the state, is it also like this? It was all because that Tang Yao and Yu Shun wanted to promote great talents to the public that they banished them on the basis of their being unworthy. Then, they made households not becoming one self’s but stay households, and sons not becoming individual selves but remain sons. It was not decided by whether or not Danzhu and Shangjun are worthy. They did not want Danzhu and Shangjun to be wrongly perceived as unworthy by the later generations. If they are worthy, then I have already banished them; if they are unworthy, they are not able to maltreat or threaten people. This was the case where Tang Yao and Yu Shun showed their fairness and justice to later generations. The reason why Zhongni did not reveal their intention was because he wanted to make the instruction of Tang Yao and Yu Shun an orthodox, and that was it. Besides, it was similar to Shang Tang banished Jie, and King Wu attacked Zhou.

The history of Yao and Shun, Danzhu, and Shangjun were well-known, but Luo’s interpretation, again, was eye-catching. The striking title “Danzhu and Shangjun Are Not Unworthy” immediately caught the readers’ attention. In this essay, he explained that the two notorious sons of the two worthy rulers were not necessarily unworthy. The fathers banished them in order to “promote the great talents”. Also, in this way, the rulers showed their fairness and justice to later generations. The ones whom Luo Yin “slandered” were precisely the Yao and Shun-alike. They

banished the “not unworthy” ones, proposing that great talents should be promoted instead. Yet, those being promoted were not great talents in reality. The subtleness of the metaphor lies in the discrepancy between real history and Luo’s interpretation. Besides the cases of Danzhu and Shangjun, Luo used another two examples. There had been no controversy that Jie and Zhou were cruel rulers of the Xia dynasty and the Shang dynasty, but Luo claimed that they might not be unworthy. It was Tang and King Wu’s intention to promote the great talents that they were banished and attacked. If the great talents were promoted as promised, then we would have the well-managed states like during Yao, Shun, Tang, and King Wu’s time. In Luo Yin’s time, not only the great talents were not promoted, but also the society was in chaos. For this reason, Luo sarcastically said, “If they are worthy, then I have already banished them; if they are unworthy, they are not able to maltreat or threaten people.” The antiphrasis was used throughout the entire piece, which made it more abstruse than other pieces. The rhetorical questions, on the contrary, gave readers some clues in understanding his ideas. By asking “If only they could not make their sons worthy, how could the [people of the] Sub-celestial Realm be worthy?”, Luo implied that the two innocent sons were indeed not unworthy because the Sub-celestial Realm was put in order, and the ability to manage a country well enabled Yao and Shun to educate their sons well. The easy question encouraged readers to see the impossibility of the unworthiness of the two sons and then realize Luo’s use of antiphrasis in the whole passage.

The rhetorical devices created puzzles in “Danzhu and Shangjun Are Not Unworthy”, while “Words of the Gallant and Virile Ones” (“Ying xiong zhi yan” 英雄之言) was a different case. In this essay, Luo’s approach was rather conventional yet effective.²²⁸

物之所以有韜晦者，防乎盜也。故人亦然。夫盜亦人也，冠屨焉，衣服焉，其所以異者，退遜之心，正廉之節不常其性耳。視玉帛而取之者，則曰牽於寒餓；視家國而取之者，

²²⁸ See “Ying xiong zhi yan” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 685-687

則曰救彼塗炭。牽於寒餓者，無得而言矣，救彼塗炭者，則宜以百姓心為心。而西劉則曰：「居宜如是。」楚籍則曰：「可取而代。」意彼未必無退遜之心，正廉之節，蓋以視其靡曼驕崇，然後生其謀耳。為英雄者猶若是，況常人乎？是以峻宇逸游，不為人所窺者，鮮也。

The reason why things refrain themselves from revealing their fine qualities is that they are preventing themselves from robberies. Hence, people are the same. In any particular case, the robbers are also humans. They wear caps and shoes, clothes and garments. What makes them different is that the mind of modesty and humbleness, the temperament of uprightness and honesty are not made normal in their nature, and that is all. As for seeing jade and silk and then taking them, they say it is caused by coldness and hunger. As for seeing the households and the country and then taking them, they say it is saving them from miseries. As for those who are involved in coldness and hunger, if they have no gains, they would speak. As for those who save others from miseries, it is appropriate for them to take the mind of the Hundred Clans as mind. Nevertheless, Liu Bang, in his case, said: “A comfortable residence is like this.”²²⁹ Xiang Yu, in his case, said: “I can take and replace him.”²³⁰ I suppose that they did not necessarily lack the mind of modesty and humbleness and the temperament of uprightness and honesty. It was all because that they saw the extravagance, lavishness, haughtiness, and loftiness of the Qin, and then they bore their plots, and that was it. Even those who act as gallant and virile people are as such, should not the commoners be let alone? Therefore, among the lofty buildings and carefree traveling, there are few that are not peeked at by people.

²²⁹ Xi Liu 西劉 referred to Emperor Gaozu of Han, Liu Bang, because he established the Western Han dynasty. *Shiji* and *Zizhi tongjian* both recorded that when Liu invaded the Qin and entered the imperial palace, he was fascinated and captivated by its extravagance, so he intended to stay and enjoy the life of luxury. See Sima, *Shiji*, 8.362; see also Sima, *Zizhi tongjian*, 9.2b

²³⁰ Chu Ji 楚籍 referred to Xiang Yu 項羽 (232-202 B.C.E.) because he was from the State of Chu and named Ji. *Shiji* recorded that when he saw the First Emperor of Qin visiting the Kuaiji County 會稽 (located in modern Jiangsu Province) in 210 B.C.E by the roadside, he said to his uncle Xiang Liang 項梁 (d. 208 B.C.E.): “As for that person, he can be taken and replaced.” See Sima, *Shiji*, 7.296

By naming this piece “Words of the Gallant and Virile Ones”, Luo had already begun severe condemnation and satire. The “gallant and virile ones” were by no means the respectable heroes in a conventional sense. Instead, the antiphrasis suggested to the readers the immorality, selfishness, and superficiality of them. In Luo Yin’s opinion, those who overturned a government and replaced the former ruler, though with a claim to “save others from miseries”, were indeed pursuing their personal desires. If they were to “save others from miseries”, they ought to take good care of the people, but none had kept their promises. Liu Bang was avid for the fine residence, while Xiang Yu was eager to obtain the authority. How could these usurpers be regarded as heroes when they were no better than robbers? Yet, Luo did not express his resentment outright but posed this rhetorical question: “Even those who act as gallant and virile people are as such, should not the commoners be let alone?” Surely, if we take the face value, commoners should be excused for bearing plots when seeing “extravagance, lavishness, haughtiness, and loftiness”. But it would be naive for us to think Luo Yin was simply admitting the inevitable dark side of humanity. The true message, which was awaiting being read carefully, gave the exact opposite idea—none should be forgiven for robbery. The commoners were often put into jail for taking jade and silk, and the big robbers who committed crimes with a grand excuse were even more detestable.

An even more straightforward usage of rhetorical questions can be found in “Revering Fame” (“Wei ming” 畏名). This short essay told a simple story with scanty seventy-nine words. Luo Yin’s conception in this piece was not to impress readers with powerful parallelism or overwhelming historical accounts. Instead, he wished to convey his ideas in an explicit way:²³¹

瞭者向瞶者語於暗，其辟是非，正興替，雖君臣父子之間，未嘗以牆壁為慮。一童子進燭，則瞶者猶舊而瞭者噤不得呻。豈其人心有異同？蓋牽乎視瞻故也。是以退幽谷則思行道，入朝市則未有不畏人。吁！

²³¹ See “Wei ming” in Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 718-719

A sighted person spoke to a blind person in the dark. The speech criticized the right and wrong, corrected the flourishing and replacing. Even when it involved the lord and vassals, the father and sons, they never regarded the walls as a concern. A boy servant came in and lit a candle. Then, the blind person was still like before, but the sighted person shut up and could not recite anything. How could it be that people's minds are different? It was all because it related to the sights and seeing. Therefore, when retreating to a secluded valley, one thinks about implementing the Way; when entering the court and markets, no one will not be intimidated by others. Oh!

Luo Yin's argument in this essay was clear. The sighted person dared not speak after a candle was lit, while the blind person, being ignorant of the change of situation, did not stop conversing with him. The meaningful conversations about the right and wrong, the flourishing and replacing, the lord and vassals, indicating the remonstrations and the valuable suggestions, would be curbed when one moved from the private to the public space. Luo Yin asked: "How could it be that people's minds are different?" Before the readers gave the easy answer, he answered on our behalf: "It was all because it related to the sights and seeing." Moreover, he concluded by relating the story to reality. He explained that by telling this story, he simply wanted to complain, "when retreating to a secluded valley, one thinks about implementing the Way; when entering the court and markets, no one will not be intimidated by others." The court and markets were indeed the intimidating places for one to speak the truth.

CONCLUSION

With the fifty-eight extant essays, this paper has strived to fathom the concept of “slandering”. It was through the challenging task of translating the short essays that I began to comprehend Luo Yin’s metaphor and sense his tone. It was through the investigation of history and the comparison of Luo with other writers and their works that I started to understand Luo in the large picture of the late Tang society and literary realm. The translation has been selective; the investigation and comparison have been cursory, but a conclusion must be drawn to answer the big questions set at the commencement of the research: Who are slandered? Why are the targets slandered? How in Luo Yin’s *Writings of Slandering*?

If we set all ambiguities aside, the first target was not the rulers but Emperor Yizong. Having lived through Emperor Yizong’s reign, the sorrowful years of enduring the emperor’s follies instigated Luo’s merciless attack. The bureaucracy and bureaucrats came next. To be specific, the eunuchs who, though not the primary determinant of the troubled society during Emperor Yizong’s reign, wielded enormous influence on the imperial successions. Also, we have a series of incompetent Prime Ministers such as Yang Shou, Lu Yan, Cao Que, and Xu Shang, together with the princesses’ husbands Du Cong and Wei Baoheng. The names of the lower-level bureaucrats and regional officials are hard to trace, but they are not under any condition off the list. Lastly, the people and society. Luo Yin’s condemnation was targeted at the decay of the Confucian moral standards and the thriving of vile acts. Bribery, smuggling, as well as swindle, were all torments for society. The victims, obviously, were commiserated but, at the same time, reviled for they swallowed the misery or were even idiotically unaware of all the oppression. Luo Yin “slandered” them because he ached for the country, for the people, and also for the crestfallen years he lived as a destitute scholar.

Despite his agony, disgust, pity, and despair, Luo Yin did not ramble on with the many emotions. The delicately compiled collection has shown his best effort in writing. He explored a wide range of prose genres, ancient or novel, to create variety. The succinctness of the essays did not hinder these experiments; rather, it was a breath of fresh air for a traditionally lengthy stele inscription, verbose *fu*, or loquacious argumentative essays. In terms of materials, Luo Yin hardly preferred current events or his contemporaries. Instead, he had an eye on the historical account, the fables, the unconscious objects from daily life that he used to analogize the filthy world. As for the methods of handling the materials, Luo Yin gracefully integrated implicitness and explicitness in the rhetoric. Implicitly, he dropped hints to the readers with rhetorical questions and encouraged their pondering with antiphrasis. Explicitly, he logically structured his arguments and offered a concluding line after esoteric metaphors. With all the endeavor, the *Writings of Slandering* deserved to be the textbook for “slandering”.

The great Tang dynasty was a legendary period for Classical Chinese literature. The almost three-centuries-long dynasty allowed scholars to realize so many literary possibilities, including the invention of new genres, the development of new themes, and the integration of the old and the new. It was too busy an era that readers from later times were overwhelmed with too much to cope with. The Tang poetry, if anyone has to read anything about Classical Chinese literature, would often be the choice. As far as the Tang prose is concerned, we have Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan, who led the *Guwen* Movement and left us with plenty of revolutionary and elegant pieces of essays to peruse. Besides, the emergence of the Tang short stories (*chaunqi* 傳奇) has occupied the time of lots of enthusiastic scholars. It should not be surprising that Luo Yin and the *Writings of Slandering* have engaged so few readers and researchers.

In the field of Chinese literary historiography, little attention has been paid to Luo Yin and his *Writings of Slandering*. More than a century ago, the British sinologist Herbert A. Giles wrote *A History of Chinese Literature* in 1901, the first such survey in English, which was, as Professor

Giles claimed, not even available in Chinese.²³² Since then, the grand project of writing Chinese literary historiography in the Chinese language has invited so much participation. Among all, Zheng Zhenduo's 鄭振鐸 (1898-1958 C.E.) *The Illustrated Edition of History of Chinese Literature* (*Chatu ben Zhongguo wenxue shi* 插圖本中國文學史), which was published in 1932, and the *History of Chinese Literature* (*Zhongguo wenxue shi* 中國文學史), written by Lin Geng 林庚 (1910-2006 C.E.) and published in 1947 were widely praised. In Zheng's book, he devoted an entire chapter to the *Guwen* Movement but with a focus only on Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan's prose. The late Tang short essay did not earn a place, nor was Luo Yin introduced as a poet.²³³ In Lin Geng's work, he took the chronological approach and divided the thousands of years into different eras. Our protagonist Luo Yin was mentioned in the "Silver Era" (*baiyin shidai* 白銀時代), but fell into the chapter of "The Approaching of Vernacular Language" ("Kouyu de jiejin" 口語的接近), where Lin introduced Luo's employment of vernacular language in his poems.²³⁴ After the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, more attention has been paid to the previously neglected authors and works. For example, the milestone in the field of Chinese literary historiography, the one edited by You Guoen 游國恩 (1899-1978 C.E.) and published in the 1960s, gave more attention to Luo Yin and the *Writings of Slandering* compared with its predecessors. Although not thoroughly, this version did introduce Luo Yin as more than a poet. His short essays in the *Writings of Slandering* were briefly discussed.²³⁵ Similarly, credits were given to Luo in the four-volume *History of Chinese Literature* (*Zhongguo wenxue shi* 中國文學史) edited by Yuan Xingpei's 袁行霈 in 2005, which has become a popular textbook for the college education. Although the author placed him after Pi Rixiu and Lu Guimeng, and the account was one short

²³² See "Preface" in Herbert A. Giles, *A History of Chinese Literature* (New York: Grove Press INC., 1958), v

²³³ See Zheng Zhenduo. *Chatu ben Zhongguo wenxue shi* (Beiping: Pushe chubanshe 樸社出版社, 1932), 367-376

²³⁴ See Lin Geng, *Zhongguo wenxue shi* (Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe 清華大學出版社, 2009), 425-427

²³⁵ See You Guoen, *An Outline of the History of Chinese Literature* (*Zhongguo wenxue shi dagang* 中國文學史大綱) (Hong Kong: Shenghuo, dushu, xinzhishi 生活，讀書，新知三聯書店, 1979), 140-141

paragraph, several short essays from Luo's collection were mentioned.²³⁶ In Luo Zongqiang's 羅宗強 *The Developmental History of Classical Chinese Literature (Zhongguo gudai wenxue fazhan shi 中國古代文學發展史)*, which came about in 2003, late Tang short essays finally earned an independent section in the chapter of "The Development of Tang Proses" ("Tang dai sanwen de fazhan" 唐代散文的發展). In this chapter, Luo Yin and the *Writings of Slandering* were talked about together with Pi and Lu.²³⁷ Despite the limited space and short discussion, it was a rare instance. The Zhang Peiheng 章培恆 (1934-2011 C.E.) version, which preceded the Luo and Yuan versions, gave an entire page to Luo Yin. Different from the other three versions, Zhang's version made reference to *Tang caizi zhuan* to offer the readers a perspective in Luo Yin's personality. Also, it tried to depict Luo as a vivid character through a comprehensive, though abbreviated, discussion of both his poems and short essays.²³⁸

In the field of Sinology in the Western academic world, Luo Yin has certainly not attracted enough audiences yet. In *Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*, Stephen Owen perfunctorily mentioned Luo Yin and his *Chan shu* when he introduced Du Mu 杜牧 (803-852 C.E.) and his essay "Culpable Words" (Zuiyan 罪言). He commented, "such collections (of Du Mu's) were entitled with the unpleasant consequences anticipated by the author, such as Luo Yin's *Writings to be Slandered (Chanshu)*, whose stylized satire and moral posturing supposedly kept him from passing the examination."²³⁹ The *Columbia History of Chinese Literature*, which did not take the

²³⁶ See Yuan Xingpei, *Zhongguo wenxue shi* (Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe 高等教育出版社, 1999), X

²³⁷ See Luo Zongqiang and Chen Hong 陳洪 ed., *Zhongguo gudai wenxue fazhan shi* (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe 南開大學出版社, 2003), 164-167

²³⁸ See Zhang Peiheng ed., *Zhongguo gudai wenxue fazhan shi 中國古代文學發展史* (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe 復旦大學出版社, 1997), 257-258

²³⁹ See Stephen Owen, *Cambridge History of Chinese Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 351

conventional chronological approach but emphasized the development and achievement of the various literary genres, gave no word for Luo Yin.

The merit of highlighting and categorizing late Tang short essays should be attributed to Lu Xun, whose comments in “Xiaopinwen de wei ji”, written in the 1930s, have been cited in almost all books of literary historiography and scholarly papers of the subject. It was Lu’s article that underlined the extraordinary genre as well as brought the three late Tang short essay writers: Luo Yin, Pi Rixiu, and Lu Guimeng together. Nevertheless, the writing of Chinese literary historiographies has fallen into the perfect preset template but hardly made any progress. On the one hand, the satirical feature of late Tang short essays has become a label, which seems too fit to be removed. Fit as it is, the struggles Luo Yin had had in “slandering” the malign and despicable ones and leaving a chance for his career have been ignored. On the other hand, the uniqueness of Luo Yin and his writings has been effaced and often blended in with Pi and Lu.

The short essays composed by Pi Rixiu were in an equally harsh tone as of in Luo’s essays, if not harsher. When reading his “Reading the Strategies of Sima” (“Du Sima fa” 讀司馬法), for instance, none would fail to notice his straightforwardness.²⁴⁰ The essay started with the following astounding statement:²⁴¹

古之取天下也以民心，今之取天下也以民命。

²⁴⁰ *The Strategies of Sima* (*Sima fa* 司馬法) is a text discussing laws, regulations, government policies, military organization, military administration, discipline, basic values, tactics, and strategy. During the fourth century B.C.E., King Wei of Qi 齊威王 (378-320 B.C.E.) made officials write a book on ancient military strategies and included the strategies of General Sima Rangqie’s 司馬穰苴 in King Jing of Qi’s 齊景公 (d. 490 B.C.E.) time. See Sima, *Shiji*, 64.2160

²⁴¹ See Dong comp., *Quan Tang wen*, 799.8382

As for taking the Sub-celestial Realm in the ancient times, it was by means of people's will; as for taking the Sub-celestial Realm in the current time, it is by means of people's lives.

The difference is, if Luo Yin still tried to hide his radical opinion under historical figures, fables, and sundries, then Pi Rixiu certainly did not care for any form of camouflage. Bold statements could easily be found in most of his essays. Another example is his "Writings of Living in Seclusion at Lumen" ("Lumen yin shu" 鹿門隱書).²⁴²

古之殺人也怒。今之殺人也笑。

古之用賢也為國。今之用賢也為家。

古之酤釐也為酒。今之酤釐也為人。

古之置吏也，將以逐盜。今之置吏也，將以為盜。

As for killing people in ancient times, it caused anger; as for killing people in the current time, it causes laughter.

As for employing the worthy ones in ancient times, it was for the state; as for employing the worthy ones in the current time, it is for households.

As for being in roaring drunk in ancient times, it was because of wine; as for being in roaring drunk in the current time, it is because of people.

As for sending officers to posts in ancient times, they would make them chase away robbers; as for sending officers to posts in the current time, they would make them be robbers.

Pi's plain and blunt language style in his short essays was in sharp contrast with Luo's. More faithfully modeled Han Yu and Liu Zongyuan's *guwen* style, Pi's works were powerful but less

²⁴² Lumen referred to Mount Lumen 鹿門山, which locates in modern Xiangyang 襄陽, Hubei Province. It has become a famous scenery spot because many famous hermits had stayed there, such as Pang Degong 龐德公 from the end of the Eastern Han dynasty, Meng Haoran 孟浩然 (689-740 C.E.), and Pi Rixiu. Ibid., 798.8369

pungent than Luo's. The outright reprimanding of the fatuous rulers and malicious officials was out of the satire category.

Compare with Pi Rixiu, Lu Guimeng added more spice into his short essays. Still, he often spelled out his critical opinions toward the targets even after allusions and metaphors. For example, in one of his most well-known pieces, "Stele Inscription for the Abandoned Temple" ("Ye miao bei" 野廟碑), he analogized the corrupted officials to the wooden and earthy god statues in the temple. This three-paragraph essay was longer than any of the essays in Luo Yin's *Writings of Slandering*. The second paragraph where Lu depicted the pathetic people worshipping the useless statues reminds readers of Luo's "Response on Wind and Rain", but his concluding paragraph drew a clear line between his writing style and Luo's. Instead of dropping hints like Luo, Lu's excoriation was without reservation:²⁴³

土木其形，竊吾民之酒牲，固以無名；土木其智，竊吾君之祿位，如何可儀！

Their bodies are made of wood and earth, and they steal us people's wine and livestock. They certainly rely on the fact that they have no name. Their wisdom is like wood and earth, and they steal our emperor's salaries and positions. How can they be modeled?

As indignant as Luo Yin was, he seldom extended the dialogues to the current world as frankly as such. If Luo scolded the officials for their stupidity in Lu's way, he would never have presented this collection to any officials. Lu Guiming's bluntness was also manifested in how he did not shun writing the real events. In "Recording the Rice Rats" ("Ji dao shu" 記稻鼠), he made use of the drought during Emperor Xizong's reign and the rice rats as materials to excoriate the ruthless and greedy officials. When Luo Yin discussed the drought in "*Shu* on Request to Recall the Imperial Decree on the Day of *Guisi*", his carried a submissive tone, a typical humble tone of a Confucian

²⁴³ Ibid., 801.8418-8419

chen to belie his true intentions; whereas Lu surely had not considered the possibility of his essay being read by the ruler, thus minded not being cordial in any sense in his writing. As outspoken as he was, he gave the time “in the year of Jihai during the Qianfu reign” at the start of the essay.²⁴⁴ After describing the appalling situation people were in, he explicitly drew readers’ attention to the officials:²⁴⁵

況乎上捃其財，下啗其食。率一民而當二鼠。不流浪轉徙聚而為盜何哉。春秋蟲螽生大有年皆書，是聖人於豐凶不隱之驗也。余學春秋，又親蒙其災，於是乎記。

Moreover, those who stay above took their money; those who stay below eat their food. In all cases, one person has to bear two rats. They do not rove in distant lands and migrate to other places but turned to be robbers. Why is that? In *Chunqiu*, the emergence of locusts and the year of great harvest were all recorded. It is the case that proves that the sages hide neither the harvest nor the bad year. I am studying the *Chunqiu*, and I have experienced the disaster myself; therefore, I note it down.

Without covering his disgust, Lu called the officials rats and declared a victim of the disaster. Although Lu’s spicy language and heavy usage of rhetorical devices made his writings different from his friend Pi Rixiu, his candidness had driven him out of the class of satire writers.

When narrowing down the scope to the research of Luo Yin and his *Writings of Slandering*, the potential of more achievements is great. In Mainland China, there are three milestones for the research in this area. The first landmark is the publication of the *Chronology of Luo Yin (Luo Yin nian pu 羅隱年譜)* in 1937 by the late Qing scholar Wang Dezhen 汪德振 (1910-1973 C.E.).

²⁴⁴ The year of Jihai 己亥 during the Qianfu 乾符 reign was 879 C.E.. Qianfu was the name of Emperor Xizong’s reign. Jihai 己亥 was the thirty-six year in a sixty-year cycle according to the Chinese Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches year-numbering system.

²⁴⁵ See Dong comp., *Quan Tang wen*, 801.8408

Sharing the same hometown as Luo, Wang Dezhen was personally an admirer of his. This serious and significant piece of work did not receive many scholarly responses until fifty years later when recent scholars made slight corrections and supplements.²⁴⁶ The second milestone was the publication of the first modern version of the collection of Luo Yin's works by Zhonghua shuju in 1983. This collated collection contained poems and collections of essays of Luo Yin's, including the *Writings of Slandering*. The word choice and punctuation were far from perfect, but the groundbreaking work laid the foundation for future research. The most recent achievement was Li Dingguang's *Emendation and Annotation for All Works of Luo Yin* (Luo Yin ji xi'nian jiaojian 羅隱集繫年校箋) published in 2013. This collection was carefully collated with great resources and meticulously annotated. The quality of the annotation provided by Li Dingguang, a specialist in the studies of Luo Yin, is much improved than the first annotated Luo Yin collection edited by Pan Huihui 潘慧惠 in 1995. The three milestones of the field have provided valuable resources but have not yet aroused enough scholarly attention. The discussions of Luo Yin's works in academic papers have been elaborations of the above-mentioned foundational studies, let alone book-length research of Luo Yin and the *Writings of Slandering*.

If the Chinese scholarship in this field is waiting to bloom, then the western scholarship is still in its infancy. In 1992, the Belgian sinologist Jan A.M. De Meyer wrote "De politieke filosofie van de dichter Luo Yin (833-910)" ("The Political Philosophy of the Poet Luo Yin (833-910)") in Dutch as his Ph.D. dissertation at Ghent University. Since then, not only has not Luo Yin been carefully studied as a poet, but we also have had almost no research done for the *Writings of*

²⁴⁶ There are primarily three scholarly papers in response to Wang Dezhen's *Chronology of Luo Yin*. Li Zhiliang 李之亮 published "Supplements and Corrections of *Chronology of Luo Yin*" ("*Luo Yin nian pu bu zheng*" 《羅隱年譜》補正) in 1986; Li Dingguang published "Verification of Luo Yin's Life Stories" ("*Luo Yin shengping shiji bianzheng*" 羅隱生平事跡辨證) in 2006; Chen Peng 陳鵬 published "Chronology of Luo Yin and his works" ("*Luo Yin nian pu ji zuopin xinian*" 羅隱年譜及作品系年) in 2011. For bibliographic information, see Bibliography for full reference for the three works.

Slandering. There has been no translation, no major research papers, book chapters, let alone book-length studies on this valuable collection.

The need for research in this area does not simply come from the lack of it. Rather, the excellence of Luo Yin's writings is the call. His shrewdness in observation, carefulness in choosing materials and appropriateness in using them, adeptness in making analogies, as well as the clarity in logic and structure made him an outperformer in his time. More importantly, in between the *Guwen* Movement and the return of *pianwen* led by Li Shangyin 李商隱 (813-858 C.E.), Luo's satirical short essays were not solely an extension of Han and Liu's *guwen* style, nor were they in any way close to Li's abstruse *pianwen*.²⁴⁷ The briefness of the essays and the profoundness of the sarcasm enabled Luo Yin's writings to be of his own class, a class neither the writings of Pi Rixiu nor those of Lu Guimeng belonged to.

Besides, Luo Yin's writings should never be read separately without a deep understanding of his unfortunate experience and arrogant personality. Despite the unkind comments given by almost all biographical accounts that Luo was such a pompous fellow, through a careful and comprehensive study of his letters, be them to friends or celebrities, his genuineness and modesty in the writings will provide us with fresh perspectives. Unconstrained and proud as Luo Yin could be, the identity of a worried Confucian scholar and an aspiring imperial exam taker was a tattoo which he could never erase from his writings. And never forget the arduous task of "establishing words", the grand wish embedded in the minds of every writer, including Luo Yin. I hope not to establish my words but bring attention to the establishment of Luo Yin's "slandering".

²⁴⁷ The late Tang poet Li Shangyin was also known for his contribution to the revival of *pianwen*. His collection of *pianwen*, *Siliu essays of Fannan* (*Fannan siliu* 樊南四六), was the origin of the name *siliu wen*. Qian Jibo 錢基博 (1887-1957 C.E.) said that Li Shangyin was the harbinger of the Song writers. See Jiang Zuyi 蔣祖怡 (1913-1992 C.E.), *Pianwen yu sanwen* 駢文與散文 (Hong Kong: Guangzhi shuju 廣智書局, 196-), 60

Struggles and bitterness have been revealed in the paper, but Luo Yin's misery and hope certainly deserve further discussions. I will end the paper with Luo's *magnum opus*, the quatrain "Self-expression" ("Zi qian" 自遣), in which we see his deep desire for appreciation under the disguise of a carefree attitude.²⁴⁸ So little appreciation had he received in his lifetime, but it is never too late for more understanding now.

得即高歌失即休，多愁多恨亦悠悠。

今朝有酒今朝醉，明日愁來明日愁。

When getting it, sing aloud; when losing it, let go;

Much worries, much regret, yet, leisurely, I still am.

Get drunk today as the wine is here today;

Worry tomorrow as worries come tomorrow.

²⁴⁸ See Li, *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian*, 107

Bibliography

- Ban Gu 班固. *Han shu* 漢書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1962.
- Chen Hongchi 陳鴻墀. *Quan Tang wen ji shi* 全唐文紀事. *Qing Fang Gonghui Guangzhou keben* 清方功惠廣州刻本.
- Chen Peng 陳鵬. “Chronology of Luo Yin and his works” (“Luo Yin nian pu ji zuopin xinian” 羅隱年譜及作品系年). *Journal of Ancient Books Collation and Studies* 古籍整理研究學刊, no. 2 (March 2011): 35-39.
- Chen Yinke 陳寅恪. *Chen Yinke xiansheng lun ji* 陳寅恪先生論集. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiu yuan lishi yuyan yanjiu suo 中央研究院歷史語言研究所, 1971.
- Chen Zhensun 陳振孫. *Zhizhai shulu jieti* 直齋書錄解題. *Qing Wuyingdian juzhen ben* 清武英殿聚珍本.
- Ding Fubao 丁福保. *Fo xue da cidian* 佛學大辭典. Shanghai: Foxue shuju 啟明書局, 1920.
- Dong Gao 董誥. *Quan Tang wen* 全唐文. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987.
- Du Yu 杜預 and Kong Yingda 孔穎達. *Chunqiu Zuo zhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義. *Wuyingdian shisan jing zhu shu* 武英殿十三經註疏.
- Duan Anjie 段安節. *Yuefu za lu* 樂府雜錄. Harvard-Yenching Library Chinese Rare Books Digitization Project-Collectanea.
- Fang Xuanling 房玄齡. *Jin shu* 晉書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974.
- Giles, Herbert A.. *A History of Chinese Literature*. New York: Grove Press INC., 1958.
- Guo Pu 郭璞. *Er ya* 爾雅. *Sibu congkan* 四部叢刊.
- Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩. Edited by Wang Xiaoyu 王孝魚. *Zhuangzi ji shi* 莊子集釋. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995.
- He Xiu 何休 and Xu Yan 徐彥. *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhu shu* 春秋公羊傳注疏. *Wuyingdian shisan jing zhu shu*.
- He Yan 何晏. *Lun yu ji jie* 論語集解. *Sibu congkan*.

- Hong Xingzu 洪興祖 (1090-1155 C.E.), *Chu ci bu zhu* 楚辭補注. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006.
- Hucker, Charles O.. *A dictionary of official titles in Imperial China*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1985.
- Jiang Zuyi 蔣祖怡. *Pianwen yu sanwen* 駢文與散文. Hong Kong: Guangzhi shuju 廣智書局, 196-.
- Kong Anguo 孔安國. Edited by Lu Deming 陸德明. *Shang shu* 尚書. *Sibu congshu*.
- Li Dingguang 李定廣. *Luo Yin ji xinian jiaojian* 羅隱集繫年校箋. Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 2013.
- Li Dingguang. “Verification of Luo Yin’s Life Stories” (“Luo Yin shengping shiji bianzheng” 羅隱生平事跡辨證). *Shantou University Journal (Humanities & Social Sciences Bimonthly)* 汕頭大學學報 (人文科學社會版) 22, no.6 (2006): 10-14.
- Li Fang 李昉. *Taiping guang ji* 太平廣記. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961.
- Li Fang. *Wen yuan ying hua* 文苑英華. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1966.
- Li Zhiliang 李之亮. “Supplements and Corrections of *Chronology of Luo Yin*” (“Luo Yin nian pu bu zheng” 《羅隱年譜》補正). *Journal of Zhengzhou University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*. 鄭州大學學報 (哲學社會科學版), no.6 (1986): 84-91.
- Lin Geng 林庚. *Zhongguo wenxue shi* 中國文學史. Beijing: Qinghua daxue chubanshe 清華大學出版社, 2009.
- Liu Jingshu 劉敬叔. *Yi yuan* 異苑. *Qinding siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書.
- Liu Xiang 劉向. *Shuo yuan* 說苑. *Sibu congkan*.
- Liu Xiang. *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1978.
- Liu Xie 劉勰. *Wen xin diao long* 文心雕龍. *Sibu congkan*.
- Liu Xu 劉昫. *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975.
- Lu Xun 魯迅. *Nan qiang bei diao ji* 南腔北調集. Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1973.
- Luo Zhenqiang 羅振強 and Chen Hong 陳洪. *Zhongguo gudai wenxue fazhan shi* 中國古代文學發展史. Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe 南開大學出版社, 2003.

- Meyer, Jan. A.M. De. “De politieke filosofie van de dichter Luo Yin (833-910).” (“The Political Philosophy of the Poet Luo Yin (833-910)”) Ph.D. diss.: Ghent University, 1992.
- Mozi 墨子. *Mozi 墨子. Sibü congkan.*
- Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修. *Xin Tang shu 新唐書.* Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975.
- Ouyang Xiu. *Xin Wudai shi 新五代史.* Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974.
- Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢. *Yi wen lei ju 藝文類聚.* Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999.
- Owen, Stephen. “The cultural Tang (650–1020)”. In Stephen Owen edited. *Cambridge History of Chinese Literature.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Pan Huihui 潘慧惠. *Luo Yin ji jiaozhu 羅隱集校注.* Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe 浙江古籍出版社, 1995.
- Peng Dingqiu 彭定求. *Quan Tang shi 全唐詩.* Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979.
- Qian Yan 錢儼. *Wuyue bei shi 吳越備史. Sibü congkan.*
- Qian Zhongshu 錢鐘書. *Guan zhui bian 管錐編.* Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994.
- Qu Wanli 屈萬里. *Shijing quanshi 詩經詮釋.* Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi 聯經出版事業公司, 1983.
- Shanghai shifan daxue guji zhengli zu 上海師範大學古籍整理組, *Guo yu 國語.* Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978.
- Sima Guang 司馬光. *Zizhi tongjian 資治通鑒. Sibü congkan.*
- Sima Qian 司馬遷. *Shiji 史記.* Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959.
- Song Minqiu 宋敏求. Edited by Bi Yuan 畢沅. *Chang'an zhi 長安志.* Harvard-Yenching Library Chinese Local Gazetteers Digitization Project- *Shan ben fang zhi 善本方志.*
- Sun Guangxian 孫光憲. *Bei meng suo yan 北夢瑣言. Qinding siku quanshu.*
- Tao Yue 陶岳. *Wudai shi bu 五代史補. Ziteng shuwu suokeshu 紫藤書屋所刻書.*
- Wang Dang 王讜. Commentary by Zhou Xunchu 周勛初. *Tang yu lin jiaozheng 唐語林校證.* Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987.
- Wang Shumin 王叔岷. *Lie xian zhuan jiao jian 列仙傳校箋.* Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan zhongguo wen zhe yanjiusuo choubeyu 中央研究院中國文哲研究所籌辦處, 1995.

- Wang Yiqing 王奕清. *Qinding ci pu* 欽定詞譜. *Qinding siku quanshu*.
- Wu Qian 吳騫. "Luo Zhaojian *Chan shu tici*" 羅昭諫讒書題辭. In Luo Yin 羅隱. Compiled by Wu Qian. *Chan shu* 讒書. *Baijinglou congshu* 拜經樓叢書.
- Wu Renchen 吳任臣. *Shiguo chunqiu* 十國春秋. Taipei: Guoguang shuju 國光書局, 1962.
- Xiao Tong 蕭統. *Wen xuan* 文選. Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986.
- Xin Wenfang 辛文房. *Tang caizi zhuan* 唐才子傳. Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe 古典文學出版社, 1957.
- Xu Shen 許慎 and Xu Xuan 徐鉉. *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字. *Sibu congkan*.
- Xue Juzheng 薛居正. *Jiu Wudai shi* 舊五代史. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1976.
- Xue Yongruo 薛用弱. *Ji yi ji* 集異記. *Ming Zhengde Gu Yuanqing jikan* 明正德顧元慶輯刊.
- Yan Kejun 嚴可均. *Quan Shanggu san dai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1991.
- Yang Jing 楊倞. *Xunzi* 荀子. *Sibu congkan*.
- Yong Wenhua 雍文華. *Luo Yin ji* 羅隱集. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983.
- You Guoen 遊國恩. *Zhongguo wenxue shi dagang* 中國文學史大綱. Hong Kong: Shenghuo, dushu, xinzhi sanlian shudian 生活，讀書，新知三聯書店, 1979.
- Yuan Xingpei 袁行霈. *Zhongguo wenxue shi* 中國文學史. Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe 高等教育出版社, 1999.
- Zhang Hua 張華. *Bo wu zhi* 博物志. *Qing Daoguang zhihaiben* 清道光指海本.
- Zhang Peiheng 章培恆. *Zhongguo gudai wenxue fazhan shi* 中國古代文學發展史. Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe 復旦大學出版社, 1997.
- Zhang Zilie 張自烈. *Zheng zi tong* 正字通. *Qingweitang keben* 清畏堂刻本.
- Zhao Qi 趙岐. *Mengzi* 孟子. *Sibu congkan*.
- Zheng Xuan 鄭玄. Edited by Lu Deming 陸德明. *Zuantu huzhu Liji* 纂圖互註禮記. *Sibu congkan*.
- Zheng Xuan. *Zhou li* 周禮. *Sibu congkan*.
- Zhu Xi 朱熹. *Zhu Wengong jiao Changli xiansheng wen ji* 朱文公校昌黎先生文集. *Sibu congkan*.