Temple, Marketplace, Teahouse and Schoolroom: Local Settings and Social Contexts of Prosimetric Texts in Chinese Popular Traditions

Workshop at Leipzig University, July 13, 2019
Room S202, Schillerstr. 6, 04109 Leipzig, Germany
Conveners: Roland Altenburger, Philip Clart, Vincent Durand-Dastès
Sponsor: Confucius Institute Leipzig

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Paper title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Berezkin, Rostislav</td>
<td>Dizang Stories in the Funerary baojuan Storytelling in Changshu, Jiangsu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clart, Philip</td>
<td>Late Qing and Republican Prosimetric Works on the Exploits of Han Xiangzi 韓湘子</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cui Yunhua 崔蘊華</td>
<td>Inside and Outside the Temple: Beijing Temple Activities and Folk Culture in zidishu of the Qing Dynasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durand-Dastès, Vincent</td>
<td>What’s in a Name? Female Voices of Slander and Protest in the Li Cuilian Borrowing a Corpse to Be Reborn Ballad and Baojuan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idema, Wilt</td>
<td>The Precious Scroll on the Red Gauze (Hongluo baojuan 紅羅寶卷): Issues of Authorship and Audience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Zhenzhen</td>
<td>‘A Plaint to Heaven’ in Local Literary Anthologies from Rural Shandong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wu Zhen 吳真</td>
<td>现存最早道情&lt;云门传&gt;与山东地方社会》(Yun-men Zhuan: The Earliest Extant Daoqing and Its Shandong Social Contexts)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lü Mengzheng 呂蒙正 (946-1011) was a celebrated scholar-official of the Northern Song who served as chief councilor three times, after he had passed the palace examination as primus (zhuangyuan 状元) in 977. Prior to reaching such supreme success in life, however, he had experienced extreme hardships. Brought up by his divorced and sent-away mother in Luoyang, at least according to legend, he lived in some kind of cave dwelling, perhaps at a monastery, where he studied hard, while living on begging alms. In Yuan and Ming drama, episodes from his early life in extreme poverty and suffering from social discrimination, but also showing promise of a brilliant future, were elaborated on stage (Wang, C. K. 1984). The story of Lü Mengzheng became a paradigmatic rags-to-riches narrative that appealed to young examination scholars to remain upright and focus on learning also in dire straits.

While Lü Mengzheng biographically is not known to have been teaching elementary school, there nevertheless are at least two different versions of a prosimetric narrative in late-Qing to early-Republican Youth Book (zidishu 子弟書) and Big Drum (dagu 大鼓) repertories entitled ‘Lü Mengzheng Teaching’ (Lü Mengzheng jiaoxue 呂蒙正教學). These texts tell about how Lü, in great distress, takes up a teaching position the conditions of which, however, turn out to be so shabby and humiliating that he ultimately decides to walk out of it and rather to suffer from hunger and poverty. And indeed, the following year he passes the palace examination with distinction. The main body of the text, in its two different versions, points out, in careful detail and with sarcastic delight, the degrading material employment conditions a poor schoolteacher had to endure.

This theme is better known from a sketch in the Wooden Clapper (bangzi 梆子) style, entitled ‘Schoolmaster He Teaching’ (He xiansheng jiaoshu 和先生教書), that has also been preserved in a number of late-Qing and early-Republican editions. This text must have been derived from an earlier sketch, erroneously entitled ‘Riot in the Classroom’ (Nao guan 鬧館) and spuriously attributed to the famous early-Qing author Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640-1715) (cf. Lu, Z. 2014). The present paper proposes a study of the versions of ‘Lü Mengzheng Teaching’ and their comparison to ‘Schoolmaster He Teaching’ and its predecessors.

*****

Dizang Stories in the Funerary baojuan Storytelling in Changshu, Jiangsu

Rostiskav Berezkin
Fudan University

Areas around Changshu city in Jiangsu remain one of few places in China, where storytelling aimed at the salvation of dead souls survived until now. At present funerary and memorial services in private houses remain important occasions for baojuan storytelling in Changshu.
which is carried out by professional performers – “masters of telling scriptures”. Their history can be traced back to the late 19th – early 20th century. These assemblies have quite rich repertoire, as they usually last for around eight hours, and several subjects related to popular Buddhist deities and characters appear on these occasions. Several narratives performed there can be traced back to baojuan texts of the 17th-19th century, though they appear in Changshu in the local modified versions. The present article discusses special features of Dizang Baojuan that is usually recited at the beginning of each funerary and memorial assembly (held on the thirty-fifth day after a person’s death) in comparison with the similar woodblock-printed texts of the Qing dynasty. There are several versions of Dizang’s hagiography that are used in Changshu depending on special circumstances of religious assemblies. Many of them do not have Buddhist canonical origins, but represent the interpretation of this deity in Chinese popular literature of the late imperial period. Present research demonstrates the transformation and domestication of the figure of Dizang, a Buddhist savior of the dead in Chinese Buddhism, in the folk ritual environment of Lower Yangzi region. It mainly uses materials that the author obtained during his fieldwork in Changshu.

*****

Late Qing and Republican Prosimetric Works on the Exploits of Han Xiangzi 韓湘子

Philip Clart
Leipzig University

This paper offers a survey of Qing and Republican period prosimetric versions of the Han Xiangzi story, including but not limited to such texts as the Han xian baozhuan 韓仙寶傳 (a.k.a. Baihe zhuan 白鶴傳), the Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing 韓湘子九度文公道情 (lithographic ed., Minguo?), and Huitu Han Xiangzi zhuan 繪圖韓湘子傳 (lithographic ed., Minguo?). Building on earlier work, I will compare the arrangement of key plot elements and explore possible intertextual linkages among them.

*****

Inside and Outside the Temple:
Beijing Temple Activities and Folk Culture in zidishu of the Qing Dynasty

Cui Yunhua
China University of Political Science and Law

Zidishu 子弟书 (‘youth book’) is a prosimetric genre that was popular in the bannermen society of the Beijing area during the Qing dynasty. Some of its texts, such as Lingguanmiao 灵官庙, Xu Lingguanmiao 续灵官庙, Guang Huguosi 逛护国寺, Biyuns 寶云寺 and Kuoda nainai ting shan hui xi 阔大奶奶听善会戏, involved local temples and related cultural activities. Some of these items describe the lively scenes of temple fairs in Beijing, where they were also being sold as either prints or manuscripts. Some of these descriptions provide
important source material on folk-cultural practices in the Capital. They also include
descriptions of charity performances in the temples of Beijing. For instance, the text entitled
Biyunsi describes the changes in the Biyun Temple in the course of a renovation. Its
meticulous descriptions have considerable historical and documentary value. Moreover,
charity performances in the temples are also being described, such as in the text entitled
Kuoda nainai ting shan hui xi, which is about a bannerwoman who visits a temple to watch a
play performed as a non-commercial charitable activity. It tells something about folk charity
activities at temples. Finally, the two works focusing on the Lingguan Temple even denounce
lewd behavior and immoral acts at the temple and expose their basic incompatibility with the
religious solemnity of the place. Employing techniques of literary irony, they dramatize these
tensions.

*****

What’s in a Name? Female Voices of Slander and Protest in the Li Cuiyan Borrowing a
Corpse to Be Reborn Ballad and Baojuan

Vincent Durand-Dastès
INALCO

The somewhat mysterious story of “Liu Quan bringing the melons to Hell” appears in literary
history as a very short and ancillary episode of the Xiyou ji cycle, been told in the space of a
few lines in chapter 12 of the 16th century edition: when resurrected Taizong looks for a
messenger to deliver to Hell the melons he promised to give the Judges of Hades, Liu Quan
volunteers: after a quarrel, his wife has committed suicide, and he longs to see her again,
dead or alive. Both spouses will be eventually resurrected as a reward for Liu Quan’s
successful mission.

As all the episodes directly or indirectly linked with Tang Taizong’s descent to Hell,
the story has been developed and replicated in many format of the performing genres (plays,
prosimetric texts, ballads), especially the ones linked to religious celebrations. It is also a
common theme in religious art (Ten kings painting). Thus, we may find Precious scrolls and
other prosimetric texts about it from Gansu to Yunnan, from Beijing to Jiangsu.

After briefly listing the different existing version of the story, our paper will focus on
two very different avatars of the tale in late Imperial baojuan: Western Gansu’s Liu
Quan jin gua baojuan and Northern Jiangsu’s Cuiyan baojuan. The first baojuan, a rather short texts, focuses clearly on Liu Quan as its main character and
has as a major theme the quest for the melon (in wintery northern China) and their delivery to
Hell, ending by a praise of the text “Repaying the loan for life”. The Jiangsu baojuan, by
contrast, does not care much for the melon story, and has Li Cuiyan, Liu Quan’s wife, as its
main protagonist, spending a fascinating amount of narrative retracing the circumstances of
her tragic forced suicide in the first part of the story. We even have from the same area a
ritual ballad called Tang Chan were the death of Cuiyan occupies no less than 50 pages
in a modern published version.

After commenting and trying to explain this long suicide scene (could the text have
been possibly used in funerals of suicides?), we’ll try to bring into the discussion a puzzling
intertextual element: it has been long noted that the melon story’s female protagonist has the
same name as the defiant bride in the prosimetric 16th century text Kuaizui Li Cuiyan 快嘴李
翠莲. In the Jiangsu baojuan, however, not only Cuilian, but also another character carrying a name not unknown in vernacular literature, Granny Wang (Wang po 王婆) appears on stage: both may be characterized as two sides of conventional feminine voice in vernacular literature: as Wang represents the clownish and evil “long tongue” slanderer (it is she who will succeed in having the too innocent Cuilian’s husband distrust his wife), Cuilian’s voice allows us to hear, not the funny bride’s complaints, but the sorrow of the virtuous and betrayed wife, expressing both rage for her fate and love for her doomed children.

*****

The Precious Scroll on the Red Gauze (Hongluo baojuan): Issues of Authorship and Audience

Wilt L. Idema
Harvard University

The Precious Scroll on the Red Gauze (Hongluo baijuan 紅羅寶卷) has as one of the earliest narrative precious scrolls attracted the attention of senior scholars in the field such as Ma Xisha and Che Xilun. Following a summary of the contents, this paper will discuss the formal elements of the text and look into the history of the text, offering a hypothetical reconstruction of the development of the text that resulted in the preserved printed edition of the Ming dynasty. The final section of the paper will discuss issues of authorship and audience, arguing that the contemporary fate of the genre as “folk literature” may be very misleading in understanding the audience of text in late-imperial China of the Ming.

*****

‘A Plaint to Heaven’ in local literary anthologies from rural Shandong

Zhenzhen Lu
University of Hamburg

Wentian ci 問天詞 (‘A Plaint to Heaven’; in some versions Hentian ci 恨天詞) is a prosimetric work from Shandong which has been attributed variously to Pu Songling (1640-1715) and to his grandson Pu Lide 蒲立悳 (1683-1750). While containing many references to the classical literary tradition, the drum lyric employs a lively vernacular to expound on Heaven’s injustices from the course of history to the events of the mundane life. In Zichuan county in rural Shandong, the native place of Pu Songling, the work circulated in manuscript anthologies which often also contained two other vernacular works attributed to Pu, Churi ji qiongshen wen 除日祭窮神文 (Plea on the last day of the year to the Deity of Impoverishment) and Qiongshen da wen 窮神答文 (Reply by the Deity of Impoverishment), as well as texts on the subject of impoverished schoolmasters. This paper examines these texts together with the manuscript anthologies which contained them, with glimpses into a world of local literary transmission, where lower-level literati were readers, copyists, and transmitters of a lively culture of vernacular writing.
The Ming block-printed version of *Yun-men Zhuan* (云门传) is the earliest *Daoqing* (道情) in existence. Its stylistic features have been preliminarily studied in Patrick Hanan’s pioneering research in 1973. This article will explore the regional contexts in which the text was formed—Yunmen Mountain, Qingzhou (青州), Shandong Province, as well as the relationship between the prosimetric and verse narrative and its social contexts, from the dimensions of geographical names, Taoist temples, medical books and verses that appear in *Yun-men Zhuan*.

First, the story of Li Qing (李清) has been recorded in *Ji-yi Ji* (集异记) early in the Tang Dynasty. Based on this, *Yun-men Zhuan* expanded the narrative, especially adding elements concerning Shandong local society, such as geographic environment, Taoist temples and so on. The locale where the story took place—Yunmen Mountain has already become a well-known *grotto-heavens* and blessed sites (洞天福地) from the 6th Century A.D.. The geographical features of Yunmen Mountain that described in *Yun-men Zhuan* can be compared with records in the extant *local gazetteers* of Qingzhou. The latter part of *Yun-men Zhuan* records in detail the tragic experience of the Li Qing family during the period of Wang Shichong's occupation of Qingzhou, Li Qing's opposition to Emperor Gaozong's Fengshan offerings (封禅) in Mt. Taishan, and his ascent to become an immortal in the reign of Emperor Xuanzong. These new plots in *Yun-men Zhuan* reflect the collective memory of Qingzhou local society for the history of the Tang Dynasty.

Second, in *Yun-men Zhuan*, Li Qing received a medical book from an immortal entitled *Daguan Bencao* (大观本草), also known as "this book is block-printed in Shandong Province". *Daguan Bencao* is an important medical literature work which compiled by TANG Shen-wei (唐慎微) in Northern Song Dynasty. After its publication in Kaifeng during the Daguan Period (1107-1110), there was another edition in Pingyang, Shanxi Province. But in Ming Dynasty, the most widespread version was the one that republished in the fourth year of Chenghua (成化四年) (1468) by Yuan Jie, governor of Shandong Province. Later, Shandong government repeatedly reprinted this edition until the sixth year of Longqing (隆庆六年) (1572). By tracing the history of *Daguan Bencao*, we can not only judge the date of the completion of *Yun-men Zhuan*, but also explore the prosperity of commercial medicine fairs in Qingzhou during Ming Dynasty through Li Qing's experience as a doctor in Qingzhou.

Third, Shandong was the place where the Complete Perfection school of *Daoism* (全真教) was founded in the Yuan Dynasty. Wang Chongyang (王重阳) and his disciples created a large number of Taoist words to facilitate the preaching to the public. The traces of Quanzhen Taoism in *Yun-men Zhuan* are not obvious, but the verses in it used a lot of ten-syllable verse (十字词), showing the stylistic features of *Daoqing* in Yuan and Ming Dynasties. Tune titles in *Yun-men Zhuan* such as *Yin jiao si* (银搅丝) are new variants of five watches of the night(五更道情) that appeared in the Ming Dynasty, which has a
background of Quanzhen Taoism and was collected in anthologies of Yuan Dynasty such as Yuefu Qunzhu (乐府群珠).

In Patrick Hanan’s pioneering research, as the earliest known Daoqing text, the textual characteristics of the Ming-copied Book of the Cloud Gate Transmission have been studied in depth. This paper will explore the context and environment of The Cloud Gate Transmission from various perspectives, such as place names, Daoist temples, medical books, and verse, to understand the relationship between Daoqing literature and local society.

One, Li Qing’s story, which was already recorded in the TANG dynasty’s ‘Record of Oddities’, was further expanded in The Cloud Gate Transmission, especially by adding more narrative elements related to the local society (geography, temples). The setting of the story—Cloud Gate Mountain—was known as a famous paradise in the Six Dynasties period. The geographical characteristics of this mountain can be compared with existing local historical records. The latter half of The Cloud Gate Transmission provides detailed accounts of Li Qing’s family during the occupation of the city by Wang Shucheng in the Tang dynasty, and his opposition to the Tang dynasty’s efforts to secure a sacred mountain. These added narratives in The Cloud Gate Transmission reflect the collective memory of the local society towards Tang history.

Two, In The Cloud Gate Transmission, Li Qing received a medical book titled Daxuan Bencao, also known as “This book is from Shandong.” Daxuan Bencao was compiled by Tang Shenwei during the Northern Song dynasty, but it was not widely circulated until the Gaochao period (1468 AD). The book was first printed in Shandong, followed by another edition in Pingyao. Later, the book was frequently printed in Shandong, especially under the reign of the Yongle emperor (1472 AD). By examining the history of The Cloud Gate Transmission, we can determine the dating of the text, and also, by considering Li Qing’s experiences as a medical practitioner, we can understand the commercial development of the local “drug market”.

Three, Shandong is the birthplace of the Quanzhen sect, which was founded by Wang Zong and his disciples, who created many religious lyrics to spread their teachings. The Daoqing characteristics of The Cloud Gate Transmission are not evident, but its verse largely uses the ‘cross verse’, which is a characteristic of Yuan and Ming Daoqing literature. TheCloud Gate Transmission also uses the ‘silver thread’ verse form, which is a new variation of the Daoqing literature of the Yuan dynasty.

---

**Draft Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:00-09:15</td>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>Altenburger, Clart, Durand-Dastès</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09:15-10:00</td>
<td>The Precious Scroll on the Red Gauze (Hongluo baojuan 紅羅寶卷): Issues of Authorship and Audience</td>
<td>Idema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00-10:45</td>
<td>Dizang Stories in the Funerary baojuan Storytelling in Changshu, Jiangsu</td>
<td>Berezkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:45-11:00</td>
<td>Tea/coffee break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00-11:45</td>
<td>What’s in a Name? Female Voices of Slander and Protest in the Li Cuilian Borrowing a Corpse to Be Reborn Ballad and Baojuan</td>
<td>Durand-Dastès</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Session</td>
<td>Speaker(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:30</td>
<td>Late Qing and Republican Prosimetric Works on the Exploits of Han Xiangzi 韓湘子</td>
<td>Clart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-14:00</td>
<td>Lunch break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00-14:45</td>
<td>Inside and Outside the Temple: Beijing Temple Activities and Folk Culture in zidishu of the Qing Dynasty</td>
<td>Cui</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30-16:00</td>
<td>Tea/coffee break</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:00-16:45</td>
<td>‘A Plaint to Heaven’ in Local Literary Anthologies from Rural Shandong</td>
<td>Lu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:45-17:30</td>
<td>现存最早道情＜云门传＞与山东地方社会＞(Yun-men Zhuan: The Earliest Extant Daoqing and Its Shandong Social Contexts)</td>
<td>Wu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:30-18:30</td>
<td>Final discussion</td>
<td>Altenburger, Clart, Durand-Dastès</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19:00</td>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>