DOI: 10.6503/THJCS.202506_55(2).0002

Didactic *Ci*-Poetry in the Late Ming Period: The Case of Cheng Gongyuan's *Xingxin Yan* (*Proverbs for Awakening Minds*)*

William Chin-fung Ng**
Department of Sinology
Goethe University Frankfurt

ABSTRACT

During the late Ming, a trend of moral exhortation became influential and permeated many different aspects of the society, including literature. Apart from traditional genres such as dramas and novels, literary works written on didactic themes can also be found amongst the widely circulated "morality books" (*shanshu* 善書), which were published to propagate orthodox ethical standards and values among the common public, and generally advise people to do good and refrain from bad deeds. A long-forgotten example of a morality book that combines literature and didacticism is the *Xingxin yan* 醒心諺 (*Proverbs for Awakening Minds*), an uncommon collection

* For the completion of this paper in 2020, I express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Philip Clart, my master's supervisor from the Department of Chinese Studies at the Leipzig University, for his invaluable guidance and support. An earlier version of this paper was then presented online on 15 April 2021, at "The Worst Chinese Poetry: A Virtual Workshop" hosted by the Department of East Asian Languages & Cultural Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Besides the three organisers, Prof. Thomas Mazanec, Prof. Li Xiaorong 李小榮, and Prof. Xu Hangping 徐杭平, I would like to thank all colleagues of the workshop for their critical comments on my paper. For the version published in the *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, I must also thank the three anonymous reviewers and the *Journal*'s editors for their insightful comments, suggestions, and meticulous proofreading and editing work. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the Editorial Board members of the *Journal* for their recognition of my paper. I am as well grateful to Mr. Adrian Ho-hin Law 羅皓軒 (The University of Hong Kong) and Mr. Simon Xunwen Yin 尹汛文 (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) for collecting some relevant scholarly works as references and Miss Kerstin Müller (Bielefeld University) for proofreading. All mistakes are mine.

** The author is a Ph.D. candidate of the Department of Sinology at the Goethe University Frankfurt. Author's email address: chinfung027@hotmail.com

of 210 morally instructive *ci*-poems (詞) composed by the late-Ming local militia member Cheng Gongyuan 程公遠. Among these 210 poems, 206 are composed to the *ci*-poetic tune pattern "Xijiang yue 西江月" ("West River Moon"), which was frequently used in didactic *ci*-poetry in the Ming period due to its simple and easy-to-recite rhythmic structure. Cheng's *ci*-poems are of low literary quality due to their use of vulgar language; however, they nonetheless effectively conveyed exhortative messages to people from all walks of life. By examining Cheng's poems that touch upon different themes, this article seeks to obtain a better understanding of how his works responded to the social trend of moral exhortation in the late Ming, as well as the reasons why Cheng chose to compose unrefined *ci*-poems lacking literary quality.

Key words: *ci*-poetry 詞 in the late Ming period, didactic *ci*-poetry, morality books, "Xijiang yue 西江月", *Xingxin yan* 醒心諺, Cheng Gongyuan 程公遠

1. Introduction

During the late Ming, the widely circulated "morality books" (*shanshu* 善書), which were published for the propagation of orthodox ethical standards and values among the common public, generally advised people to do good and refrain from bad deeds. One of the most popular types of morality books is the "ledger of merit and demerit" (*gongguo ge* 功過格), a self-evaluation system of one's own merits and demerits, which lists out the good and bad deeds, assigns merits and demerits to them, and urges people to be self-disciplined and perform moral acts in their daily life.[1] Some rare forms of morality books appeared as well, including those presented as literary collections that combined literature and exhortative messages. A long-forgotten example is the *Xingxin yan* 醒心諺 (*Proverbs for Awakening Minds*),[2] an uncommon collection of 210 *ci*-poems (詞) composed by a late-Ming local militia member named Cheng Gongyuan 程公遠 (?–?).[3] Among these poems, 206 are composed to the *ci*-poetic tune pattern titled "Xijiang yue 西江月" ("West River Moon"), which was frequently used in didactic *ci*-poetry during the Ming due to its simple and easy-to-recite rhythmic structure. As of yet, very little information about Cheng and his *Xingxin yan* exists, let alone specialised research about them. Only Gong Zongjie 龔宗傑 has commented on the *Xingxin yan*. By considering the number and content of the poems included in the book, Gong states that the *Xingxin yan* is a concentrated exemplification of moral exhortation through the use of *ci*-poetry in the Ming.[4] Indeed, a variety of traditional Confucian teachings and values are incorporated in the *Xingxin yan*, and help shed light on the moral thoughts that were

---

1 Sakai Tadao, "Confucianism and Popular Educational Works," in Wm. Theodore de Bary and The Conference on Ming Thought (eds.), *Self and Society in Ming Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), pp. 341–345; Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, *Zhongguo shanshu yanjiu* 中國善書研究 (expanded edition), trans. Liu Yuebing 劉岳兵 et al., vol. 1 (Nanjing: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe, 2010), pp. 14, 43–46.

2 All English translations of premodern Chinese texts appear hereafter in this paper, unless otherwise specified, are done by the author of this paper.

3 See Appendix for the list of *ci*-poem titles in the *Xingxin yan*.

4 Gong Zongjie, *Mingdai xiqu zhong de cizuo yanjiu* 明代戲曲中的詞作研究 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 2019), p. 134.

targeted at late-Ming people from all walks of life, especially those with lower levels of educational attainment. Cheng's poems are therefore written in plain and explicit language that is easy to understand. However, the didactic explicitness of these works also means that they came at the sacrifice of low literary quality.

Didactic *ci*-poetry did not first appear in the Ming dynasty, and coincidentally, many of these works were also written to the "Xijiang yue" tune. By looking at some of the distinguished examples of these poems, together with the *Xingxin yan*, which is precisely a collection of exhortative "Xijiang yue" poems, we can then observe the historical development of didactic *ci*-poetry in classical Chinese literature until the late Ming and obtain a better understanding of the moral thoughts, concepts, and discourses which are included and discussed in these works. This paper will first introduce the late-Ming trend of moral exhortation through morality books and the related scholarly studies. It will then investigate the linkage between *ci*-poetry and the trend of moral exhortation during the Ming and earlier periods. Afterwards, the paper will introduce Cheng Gongyuan and his *Xingxin yan*, followed by discussions of twelve of Cheng's poems that touch upon different themes, from which we will see how Cheng's works could respond to the social trend of moral exhortation and social issues in the late Ming, even though they may lack literary quality due to their subject matter.

2. The Late-Ming Trend of Moral Exhortation through Morality Books

Morality books, generally compiled by the Confucian-based gentry and intelligentsia, were premodern Chinese works of moral exhortation directly addressed to the general public that combined Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist thoughts with close connections to Chinese traditional beliefs and people's social life. They can be traced back to the Southern Song dynasty and their publication was proliferated during the late Ming and early Qing. At that time, China was plagued with various deep-seated social problems, including the serious urban–rural gap and disparity between the rich and poor, and the corruption of officials, as well as frequent natural disasters such as famine, and the ensuing civil unrests. These developed a trend of poor relief among the rich, local elites,

and some literati, who viewed spreading wealth as a means to accumulate virtues. With some degree of governmental cooperation, different charitable organisations emerged to help the poor and maintain social order, and helping educate the public became the major moral objective of these organisations. Under this objective, morality books are a major tool to spread moral education to the public.[5]

Most better-known morality books in history contained direct moral exhortations and teachings that were oriented to the general public in society, covering different aspects of their daily lives. This included conduct and attitude towards treating others, marriage, family relations, and funeral customs. These morality books often combined moral thoughts of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. While Confucianism emphasises ethics concerning interpersonal relationships and Buddhism stresses self-responsible "karmic retributions" (*yinguo baoying* 因果報應), Daoism underlines the notion of "inherited burden" (*chengfu* 承負) of evil fate passed down to future generations, thus alerting people to do good and accumulate blessings for descendants.[6] For instance, the Southern Song Daoist text *Taishang ganying pian* 太上感應篇 (*Treatise of the Exalted One on Response and Retribution*) directly sets out different items of admonitions and ultimately boils down to the Buddhist notion of "do no evil but follow all good deeds" (*zhu e mo zuo, zhong shan fengxing* 諸惡莫作，眾善奉行).[7] The ledgers of merit and demerit that prevailed in the late Ming and early Qing were more like moral codes of conduct. Good and bad deeds were listed in the ledgers and were labelled with their corresponding merit or demerit values. Users would then record their daily deeds and at the end of each year, they would calculate the total values of merits and demerits for determining the meritorious virtues accumulated by the users for review, thereby encouraging people to continue to do good and accumulate virtues.[8] There were also morality books in the form of family instructions (*jiaxun* 家訓), such as the *Liaofan*

---

[5] Angela Ki Che Leung 梁其姿, *Shishan yu jiaohua: Ming Qing shiqi de cishan zuzhi* 施善與教化：明清時期的慈善組織 (Beijing: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe, 2013), pp. 36–67, 125–130.

[6] For more on the *chengfu* notion, see Poo Mu-chou, *Ghosts and Religious Life in Early China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), pp. 131–132.

[7] Li Xinjun 李信軍 (ed. & trans.), *Daojiao quanshan shu: Taishang ganying pian shiyi* 道教勸善書：太上感應篇釋義 (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2009), p. 36.

[8] Cynthia Joanne Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 61–109.

si xun 了凡四訓 (*Liaofan's Four Instructions*), which was written by the late-Ming official Yuan Huang 袁黃 (1533–1606) to his son. It includes Yuan's account of his own life experiences, historical anecdotes, and direct exhortations, all of which emphasise the importance of continuous self-improvement to cultivate virtues.[9]

However, all of these morality books only consist of straightforward moral exhortations that do not possess literariness. In contrast, the *Xingxin yan* that this paper looks into is a *ci*-poetry collection which uses the prosodic *ci*-poems to perform the function of disseminating exhortative messages by morality books. This already shows the uniqueness of the *Xingxin yan*, which is further emphasised by its arranged structure of poetic contents for facilitating the spread of exhortations through *ci*-poems with specific themes.

As a topic that straddles Chinese religious studies as well as social and cultural history, the Ming–Qing trend of moral exhortation and related works have attracted many scholars' attention, both in China and abroad. Previous research on morality books focused on the relationship between morality books and Chinese social and cultural changes. As early as 1986, the historian Chen Yuan 陳垣 (1880–1971) paid attention to the morality books published in the early Qing from the perspective of traditional bibliographical studies (*banbenxue* 版本學).[10] But it was Japanese scholars, represented by Sakai Tadao (1912–2010), who introduced the study of morality books to the international academia. In the 1960s and 1970s, Sakai systematically researched the origins, types, religious connotations, and socio-cultural connections of morality books. He was the first to put forward the concept of "morality books movement" (*shanshu yundong* 善書運動) to summarise the prevalent trend of moral exhortation in the late Ming and early Qing that was propagated by morality books, and it remains a key concept in the study of morality books.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the study of morality books in China has been discontinued due to allegations of superstition until the 1980s. The mainland Chinese research of morality books were then focused on the study of

---

[9] Yuan Huang, *Liaofan si xun quanjie* 了凡四訓全解, ed. and trans. Han Fei 韓菲 (Beijing: Zhongguo Huaqiao chubanshe, 2018).

[10] Chen Yuan, "Ji Xu Zuanzeng jike Taishang ganying pian tushuo 記許纘曾輯刻太上感應篇圖說," in *Chen Yuan xueshu lunwenji* 陳垣學術論文集, vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), pp. 232–238.

Daoist-based works.[11] In the 1980s and 1990s, more scholars outside mainland China began to explore morality books. For example, American sinologist Cynthia Brokaw looked into the ledgers of merit and demerit from the perspective of social history, to see how the then intelligentsia responded to social changes and maintained social order through the compilation of these ledgers.[12] From a new angle regarding social institutions such as the establishment of charity organisations, another Hong Kong scholar Angela Ki Che Leung investigated the trend of moral exhortation and how it impacted the dissemination of morality books in the Ming and Qing.[13] In the 21st century, as the representative scholar of morality books, mainland Chinese scholar Wu Zhen 吳震 comprehensively probed into late-Ming to early-Qing morality books and exhortative thoughts from the perspective of the history of thought.[14]

As aforementioned, most of the existing studies on morality books are research of religious, ideological, or social history. By examining the *Xingxin yan*, a rare text combining morality book and *ci*-poetry collection, this paper aims to supplement the relevant studies on the way in which the moral exhortative thoughts were spread among the people in the late-Ming society. This paper could also demonstrate that there are still research lacunae to be filled in the correlation between morality books and Chinese literature.

3. "Xijiang Yue" and *Ci*-Poetry on Moral Exhortation in the Ming Period

Although *ci*-poetry was one of the major literary forms through which the trend of moral exhortation was seen to be promoted in Ming China, *ci*-poetry was not a widely popular literary form during the Ming dynasty. According to statistics, there are

---

[11] An example includes Chen Xia 陳霞, *Daojiao quanshan shu yanjiu* 道教勸善書研究 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1999).

[12] Cynthia Joanne Brokaw, *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit*.

[13] Angela Ki Che Leung, *Shishan yu jiaohua*.

[14] An example includes Wu Zhen, *Mingmo Qingchu quanshan yundong sixiang yanjiu* 明末清初勸善運動思想研究 (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan daxue chuban zhongxin, 2009).

approximately 20,000 *ci*-poems that were composed in Ming China.[15] Although this number is similar to that of the *ci*-poetry that appeared during the Song dynasty,[16] when the genre reached its high point, it is generally accepted that the literary development and trend of composition of *ci*-poetry was in a state of decline in Ming China, at least from the perspective of literary critics of the Qing dynasty. An early-Qing poet-official Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊 (1629–1709) once commented that "after the Song and Yuan dynasties, there were no outstanding *ci*-poets during the Ming which lasted [almost] 300 years" (*fu ci zi Song Yuan yihou, Ming sanbai nian, wu shanchang zhe* 夫詞自宋元以後，明三百年，無擅場者).[17]

There is a considerable number of Ming *ci*-poems that possess certain literary or aesthetic values. However, works with low literary quality can still be used as sources of cultural and social history, rather than of literary history. The latter type of *ci*-poetry may often be related to the prevalent trend of moral exhortation in the Ming period rooted in the syncretism of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, and publicised by popular literature. Due to a general increase in economic prosperity in the late Ming, more people, including the underprivileged and vagrants, could afford to educate themselves through reading popular literature like morality books, in order to attain certain social positions through acquiring relevant skills from these works for attending the civil service examinations.[18] Besides morality books, these unrefined *ci*-poems were also included in various popular literary genres and textual sources. They were widely read by different social classes at that time to cater to their readership. The more conventional genres like drama scripts, fiction, as well as "daily-use encyclopaedias" (*riyong leishu* 日用類書) and "commercial books" (*shangshu* 商書) were designated for common people and merchants respectively. However, this kind of Ming *ci*-poetry which performs didactic

---

[15] Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤 and Zhang Zhang 張璋 (eds.), "Fanli 凡例," in *Quan Mingci* 全明詞, vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), p. 1; Zhou Mingchu 周明初 and Ye Ye 葉曄 (eds.), *Quan Mingci bubian* 全明詞補編 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2007).

[16] Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 (ed.), "Fanli," in *Quan Songci* 全宋詞, vol. 1 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), p. 11; Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 (ed.), "Jianli 簡例," in *Quan Songci buji* 全宋詞補輯 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), p. 2.

[17] Zhu Yizun, "Shuicun qinqu xu 水村琴趣序," in *Pushuting ji* 曝書亭集, vol. 1 (Shanghai: Shijie shuju, 1937), *juan* 40, p. 491.

[18] Sakai Tadao, "Confucianism and Popular Educational Works," pp. 336–337.

functions remains underexplored.

The practice of conveying messages for ideological propagation or moral instruction had already emerged before the Ming. Most of these works were written to the tune of "Xijiang yue". With two stanzas, both 25 characters long, the tune of "Xijiang yue" originated from the music performed by the Music Bureau (*Jiaofang* 教坊), the Tang-period imperial department for music and entertainment.[19] It is short in length, simple in structure, and free in rhyming requirements.[20] Thus, the tune is suitable for a wide range of themes including emotion expressions, scenery descriptions, argumentative discussions, and narrative accounts, and could be written in elegant or demotic style, making it very popular among both the common people and intelligentsia in the Tang and Song. The tune was therefore also suitable for reason-related works like the *Xingxin yan*'s exhortative *ci*-poems.

At about 40%, religious works constituted most of the Northern Song "Xijiang yue" *ci*-poems. The early Northern Song Daoist priest Zhang Boduan 張伯端 (984–1082), who composed thirteen "Xijiang yue" *ci*-poems in his alchemical classic titled *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇 (*Essays on the Awakening of Truth*) in which he described his experience in carrying out alchemical practices and his reflections on life, can be regarded as a pioneer in using *ci*-poetry, particularly to the "Xijiang yue" tune, to serve a moralistic purpose.[21] However, as these works were written purely for propagating religious doctrines, they do not possess literariness. One of Zhang's *Wuzhen pian ci*-poems reads:

此道至神至聖	As this Way is utmostly sacred,
憂君分薄難消	it is worrying that those with little blessings are unbearable.
調和鉛汞不終朝	Needless to spend an entire morning to mix lead and mercury,

[19] For more on the study of "Xijiang yue", see Xie Taofang 謝桃坊 (ed.), *Tang Song cipu cuibian* 唐宋詞譜粹編 (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 2010), pp. 38–39; Xu Qian 徐倩, "Tang Song 'Xijiang yue' ci yanjiu 唐宋〈西江月〉詞研究," MA Thesis (Nanjing: Nanjing shifan daxue, 2012).

[20] Wang Wei-yung 王偉勇 and Hsueh Nai-wen 薛乃文, *Cixue mian mian guan* 詞學面面觀, vol. 1 (Taipei: Liren shuju, 2012), pp. 239–240.

[21] Zhang Zhongmou 張仲謀, "Mingdai huaben xiaoshuo zhong de cizuo kaolun 明代話本小說中的詞作考論," *Ming Qing xiaoshuo yanjiu* 明清小說研究, 1 (2008), p. 206.

早覩玄珠形兆　one could already catch sight of the traces of the [Way's] mysterious pearl.

志士若能修煉　If aspirational persons could practise alchemy,
何妨在市居朝　it does not matter whether they live in cities or work at the imperial court.
工夫容易藥非遙　The effort required is also easy and the elixir is far from difficult to obtain,
說破人須失笑[22]　such that others would laugh if this Way is revealed.

Still, many "Xijiang yue" *ci*-poems were lyrical. The Northern Song literary giant Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037–1101) wrote as many as thirteen "Xijiang yue" *ci*-poems, many of which were sentimental works.[23] For instance, Su wrote the *ci*-poem titled "Pingshantang 平山堂" ("Pingshan Hall") in memory of his friend and another literary giant Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007–1072):

三過平山堂下　By the time I stopped by the Pingshan Hall for the third time,
半生彈指聲中　Half of my lifetime had gone in a flick of the finger.
十年不見老仙翁　For ten years I have not seen the old immortal,
壁上龍蛇飛動　On the walls, dragons fly and serpents move.

欲弔文章太守　I want to commemorate the Prefect of Fine Composition,
仍歌楊柳春風　but instead, I sing the song for the willow and the spring breeze.
休言萬事轉頭空　Do not say that all things become empty in a blink of an eye.
未轉頭時皆夢　Even before your eyes blink, it is all just a dream.[24]

[22] Tang Guizhang (ed.), *Quan Songci*, vol. 1, p. 191.

[23] Xie Taofang (ed.), *Tang Song cipu cuibian*, pp. 38–39.

[24] I have followed the translation in the Stanford University's *Global Medieval Sourcebook* here. See "To the Tune 'The Moon over the West River'" (https://sourcebook.stanford.edu/sites/all/modules/custom/vm/

The subject matter of "Xijiang yue" *ci*-poems remained wide-ranging. Contrary to Zhang Boduan's works which barely contain artistic values, the Southern Song poet-official Zhu Dunru 朱敦儒 (1081–1179) wrote two famous "Xijiang yue" *ci*-poems that also deliver didactic messages, but in an unrestrained manner of a literatus with lyrical contents. One of them reads:

世事短如春夢	Worldly affairs are short as a spring dream;
人情薄似秋雲	Human sentiment is as thin as autumn clouds.
不須計較苦勞心	There is no need to compare and allow hardships to belabor the mind;
萬事原來有命	All things have their destinies.
幸遇三杯酒好	Luckily, I have three cups of good wine
況逢一朵花新	And have met a new blossom.
片時歡笑且相親	Joyful and laughing for a time when we come together;
明日陰晴未定	Whether tomorrow is bright or cloudy is uncertain.[25]

Regarded as one of Zhu's most well-known pieces, the poem begins with the advice "there is no need to compare and allow hardships to belabor the mind" (*bu xu jijiao ku laoxin* 不須計較苦勞心) in response to his argumentative remark regarding the illusory, yet destined secularities. Then the poem's tone changes into a carefree one and ends with an exhortative connotation of seizing the day. Zhang Zhongmou suggests that as Zhu's "Xijiang yue" works express a profound philosophy of life in simple language, they could therefore be recognised by literati while also broadly resonating with common readers.[26]

Turning to this paper's context, it can be noticed that since the Song dynasty, there had already been *ci*-poems that were written to the relatively short "Xijiang yue" tune for

VersioningMachine/texts/su_shi_pingshan_hall.html, last accessed on 18 June 2024). See also Su Shi, "Xijiang yue: Pingshantang," in Tang Guizhang (ed.), *Quan Songci*, vol. 1, p. 285.

[25] I have followed the translation by John Balcom here. See John Gill and Susan Tidwell (eds.), *After Many Autumns: A Collection of Chinese Buddhist Literature*, trans. John Balcom (Los Angeles: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2011), p. 193. See also Zhu Dunru, "Xijiang yue," in Tang Guizhang (ed.), *Quan Songci*, vol. 2, p. 856.

[26] Zhang Zhongmou, "Mingdai huaben xiaoshuo zhong de cizuo kaolun," p. 206.

delivering didactic messages. These works were usually composed in a generally simple language so that their exhortative themes could reach a broader readership. These characteristics are related to the overall mood brought out by the "Xijiang yue" tune, according to comments made by Qing literary critics. Wu Hengzhao 吳衡照 (1771–1829), a *ci*-poetic critic active in the Jiaqing 嘉慶 era (1796–1820), argues that "there are unrefined *ci*-poetic tunes, and it is the most difficult to compose good pieces by using tunes like 'Xijiang yue' and 'Yi jian mei' ['A Spray of Plum Blossoms']" (*ci you sudiao, ru Xijiang yue, Yi jian mei zhi lei, zui nande jia* 詞有俗調，如西江月、一翦梅之類，最難得佳), and points out the quality of being "unrefined" (*su* 俗) of "Xijiang yue" contrary to tune patterns which are more appropriate for writing "elegant" or "polished" (*ya* 雅) *ci*-poems.[27] Likewise, another late-Qing critic Xie Zhangting 謝章鋌 (1820–1923) values elegant *ci*-poems and despises "lusciously unexceptional" (*tianyong* 甜庸) tunes. These tunes include "Xijiang yue" and "Rumeng ling 如夢令" ("Dream-Like Lyric") as "vermin of literary elegance, and foxes and ghosts of sounds and rhythms" (*fengya zhi maozei, shenglü zhi hugui* 風雅之蟊賊，聲律之狐鬼) that often appear in "Daoist records, Buddhist *gathas*, and chit-chats in alleys and streets" (*Daolu Foji, xiangshuo jietan* 道錄佛偈，巷說街談).[28] Although there had still been a number of critically acclaimed "Xijiang yue" works since the Song period, these critiques show that "Xijiang yue" *ci*-poems still did not appeal to the refined literary taste for expressing emotions in a literarily cultured manner like most of the *ci*-poems did, at least in the view of some Ming and Qing literati. But precisely due to this impression, the tune pattern was instead being frequently used in didactic *ci*-poems that were targeted to people from all walks of life. One of the major reasons for this phenomenon, as Zhang Zhongmou suggests in his discussion on the frequent appearance of "Xijiang yue" *ci*-poems in Ming vernacular fictions, also lies in the rhythmic structure of the tune itself. In the tune pattern of "Xijiang yue", the pattern of having six, six, seven, and six characters in each of the four sentences in a stanza renders a moderate but at the same time cadenced and catchy poetic tone, which is suitable for composing instructive works for a popular audience by

[27] Wu Hengzhao, "Ci you sudiao," in *Lianziju cihua* 蓮子居詞話, in Tang Guizhang (ed.), *Cihua congbian* 詞話叢編, vol. 3 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), *juan* 3, p. 2454.

[28] Xie Zhangting, "Tianci yi xuandiao 填詞宜選調"; "Ci yi dianya 詞宜典雅," in *Duqi shanzhuang cihua* 賭棋山莊詞話, in Tang Guizhang (ed.), *Cihua congbian*, vol. 4, *juan* 3, p. 3360; *juan* 2, p. 3346.

employing easily understandable and recitable language.[29]

During the Ming dynasty, didactic pieces, many of which were written to the "Xijiang yue" tune, could be found in different types of non-literary texts widely circulated among the Ming people. One of them is the daily-use encyclopaedias that became especially popular during the late Ming period. As Sakai Tadao argues, these encyclopaedias, which covered a large assortment of topics, not only aimed at reaching the widest possible audience to fulfil the needs of the common people regardless of their social and economic status, but were also closely associated with the propagation of Confucian principles in order to enable civil service candidates to deal with the imperial examinations (*keju* 科舉) and realise their political aspirations.[30] Also, thanks to the rapid development of printing technologies, Confucian thoughts were further popularised in society at that time. This propagation was essentially a reflection of the continuing influence of the orthodox school of Wang Yangming 王陽明 (born Wang Shouren 王守仁, 1472–1529), the Ming Neo-Confucian leader who put forward the doctrine that every man can become a sage regardless of rank, wealth, and scholarly learning.[31] Often included in late-Ming daily-use encyclopaedias, these thoughts can be found in a collection of easy-to-recite, didactic poems, such as:

麁衣淡飯足矣	It is well enough to wear coarse clothes and eat simple food,
村居陋巷何妨	and what harm is there in living in village settlements or narrow alleys?
謹言慎行禮從常	One should speak and act cautiously and observe proprieties customarily,
反復人心難量	as it is difficult to gauge people's deceptive minds.
驕奢起而敗壞	Once started being arrogant, one becomes corrupted,
勤儉守而榮昌	but if one keeps being hardworking and thrifty, one

[29] Zhang Zhongmou, "Mingdai huaben xiaoshuo zhong de cizuo kaolun," p. 208.

[30] Sakai Tadao, "Confucianism and Popular Educational Works," pp. 331–338.

[31] Ibid., p. 339.

becomes prosperous.
骨肉貧者莫相忘 One should not disregard one's own kin even though they are poor,
都在自家心上[32] and one should be concerned about them in one's own mind.

This *ci*-poem was written as one of the four "Xijiang yue" pieces whose author is believed to be Xia Yan (1482–1548), a high official during the Jiajing 嘉靖 era (1522–1566) in the Ming.[33] Its main Confucian theme of exhorting people of both the lower class and better-off strata to observe proprieties and remain self-disciplined and frugal in their respective daily lives could thus be conveyed to a wide range of audience. Similar works also show the prevalence of Ming "Xijiang yue" *ci*-poems as works with more moral messages with a demotic style. This also explains why Cheng Gongyuan wrote "Xijiang yue" *ci*-poems for his *Xingxin yan* as the poetic tune was close to the commonplace language and suitable for exhortation.

4. Cheng Gongyuan and His Didactic *Ci*-Poetry

In addition to the daily-use encyclopaedias mentioned above, morality books are another highly popular textual source in the late Ming which contained and helped promote thoughts and the trend of didacticism. Due to a general increase in economic prosperity, education through reading popular literature like morality books became more affordable. This allowed especially the underprivileged to attain higher social positions by acquiring relevant skills necessary for attending the civil service examinations.[34] The contents of these morality books are mainly presented in forms like direct moral

[32] Xia Yan 夏言, "Xia Guizhou quanyu Xijiang yue 夏桂洲勸諭西江月," in Xu Qilong 徐企龍 (ed.), *Xin quanbu shimin beilan bianyong wenlin huijin wanshu yuanhai 2* 新全補士民備覽便用文林彙錦萬書淵海（二）(Jianyang: Jishantang, n.d.), in Sakai Tadao et al. (eds.), *Zhongguo riyong leishu jicheng* 中國日用類書集成, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Kyūko shoin, 2001), *juan* 24, p. 223.

[33] Wang Chao 汪超, "Lun Mingdai riyong leishu yu ci de chuanbo 論明代日用類書與詞的傳播," *Tushu yu qingbao* 圖書與情報, 2 (2010), p. 142.

[34] Sakai Tadao, "Confucianism and Popular Educational Works," pp. 336–337.

instructions, sometimes with illustrations which are known as *tushuo* 圖說, or through ledgers of merit and demerit.[35] Even so, there are morality books that exhort people through other means, one of which is *ci*-poetry. In order to further explore how this highly rhythmic literary form was applied in didactic literature published in the Ming period, this section will discuss Cheng Gongyuan's *Xingxin yan*, an interesting example of a morality book that uses solely *ci*-poems, with most of them written to "Xijiang yue". The poems propagate the core idea of practising good deeds and abstaining from vices. Through reading these works, we shall be able to identify the major themes Cheng's didactic *ci*-poetry addresses. Moreover, we can also find out what moral thoughts and related social issues Cheng tries to advocate and respond to through these poems.

4.1 Cheng Gongyuan and His *Xingxin Yan*

As Cheng Gongyuan has been long-forgotten as an author, not much information about him exists. Among accessible sources, there are only two texts that explicitly mention Cheng's life and his *Xingxin yan*, which are respectively found in the *Quan Mingci* and *Yimang tiba* 一氓題跋 (*Prefaces and Postscripts of Li Yimang*) by Li Yimang 李一氓 (1903–1990), a Chinese politician and scholar.[36] According to his short biographical account included in the *Quan Mingci*,[37] Cheng, with the "courtesy name" (*zi* 字) Tanran 坦然 and the "ordinary pseudonym" (*sanhao* 散號) Xuediaozi 學釣子, was born to a poor family in Fuxi 富溪, Haiyang 海陽.[38] Cheng's parents died when he was

[35] Ibid., pp. 341–345; Sakai Tadao, *Zhongguo shanshu yanjiu*, vol. 1, pp. 43–46.

[36] Li Yimang also researched on the past editions of the *Xingxin yan*. See Li Yimang, "Ming Chongzhen ben Xingxin yan 明崇禎本醒心諺," in *Yimang tiba*, ed. Wu Taichang 吳泰昌 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1981), pp. 181–182.

[37] Jao Tsung-i and Zhang Zhang (eds.), *Quan Mingci*, vol. 5, p. 2674.

[38] Concerning Cheng's place of origin, the place name "Fuxi, Haiyang" remains ambiguous. Apart from the city of Haiyang in Shandong province, there are many mainland Chinese places which were once also known as Haiyang, including the county of Xiuning 休寧 in Anhui province, and the city of Chaozhou 潮州 in Guangdong province, and the city of Tangshan 唐山 in Hebei province. As for the place name Fuxi, there are villages and towns of the same name that still exist in present day in provinces like Anhui, Jiangxi, Fujian, and Sichuan. Besides, there was once a place named Fuxi in the county of Haiyang in Chaozhou, Guangdong during the Song period. However, this Fuxi was no longer administered under Chaozhou in the Ming, thus Cheng could not be coming from the Fuxi, Haiyang in Guangdong. Another closest possibility of Fuxi, Haiyang, from which Cheng was originated is a village of Fuxi in Huizhou 徽州, Anhui. As this village is quite close to the county of Xiuning, which was once known as Haiyang, and

young. He was active between the later years of Wanli 萬曆 era (1573–1620) and the Chongzhen 崇禎 era (1628–1644). In 1629, Cheng took up a local militia position of *Bingcao zhishi* 兵曹執事 ("Manager of the Military Service Section") for the *Canjunsi* 參郡司 ("Assistant Commandery Office"). He remained there until 1632, when he finished his military service. Cheng then requested money from his superior for publishing the *Xingxin yan*, which was written when Cheng was still serving in office.

Turning to the *Xingxin yan*, the two-volume morality book consists of 210 *ci*-poems in total, with 103 written to the "Xijiang yue" tune and two to the "Zhegu tian 鷓鴣天" ("Partridge Sky") tune in each volume. Although the layouts of *ci*-poems of the two volumes are not identical, there are still similarities between them. Both volumes begin with two "Xijiang yue" works and end with one "Xijiang yue" and two "Zhegu tian" *ci*-poems as conclusions. These five works summarise the contents of the entire volumes. Then the remaining *ci*-poems first start with contents of more generic themes, followed by specific topics. It is common to find poems titled with the characters *quan* 勸 ("exhort") or *jie* 戒 ("forbid" or "abstain") for certain actions. Often, pieces that exhort readers to do something represent an area of lack or inadequacy, whereas works that advise against acts mean that the phenomena have become issues with negative consequences. The poems included in the first volume mainly encourage people to do good by discussing the different definitions and elements of being good in a direct and straightforward way, for example by directly writing about 20 topics that are related to basic, general Confucian values like "Xiao 孝" ("Filial Piety") and "Ti 悌" ("Fraternal Deference"). Cheng Gongyuan also attempts to exhort different members of the society by writing 44 poems that are specifically dedicated to people of different social classes, of different professions or occupations, and with different ethical or familial connections

considering that premodern editors also preferred using past or alternate place names, it is possible that Cheng came from Fuxi, Xiuning, in Anhui. Additionally, according to the Qing edition of the *Fujian tongzhi* 福建通志 (*Provincial Gazetteer of Fujian*) published during the Qianlong 乾隆 era (1735–1796), there was a Cheng Gongyuan who also came from Xiuning, but this Cheng was active during the Zhengtong 正統 era (1436–1449) in the mid-Ming period instead of the Wanli and Chongzhen eras in the late Ming. See Hao Yulin 郝玉麟 et al. (eds.), *Fujian tongzhi 2*, *Yingyin Wenyuange siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書, vol. 528 (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1986), *juan* 29, p. 451. Yet, based on the above, most likely the place of origin of Cheng Gongyuan was indeed Fuxi, near Xiuning in Anhui province.

such as "Shi 士" ("Scholar-Gentry") and "Fuzi 父子" ("Fathers and Sons"). Then, there are 36 poems that warn people of different social classes like "Yanliang shitai 炎涼世態" ("Vicissitudes of Life"), alerting readers to always be aware of the treacherous and complex life conditions.

The second volume consists of even more works (30 poems) that exhort people through admonitions, especially poems which warn, advise, or urge readers to eschew various bad deeds, for instance "Jiedu 戒賭" ("Abstaining from Gambling"). The volume then includes 70 poems that instruct members of the society to demonstrate traditional ethical codes and values, such as "Quan ji congliang 勸妓從良" ("Exhorting Prostitutes to Get Married"). Moreover, the way how certain poems are titled, especially those at the end of both volumes, is in line with the popular taste, including "Ruo lan zhen wuyi 若懶真無益" ("Laziness Really Has No Benefit") and "Wei qin zui yougong 惟勤最有功" ("Only Diligence Is the Most Meritorious"). The titles themselves form pairs of couplets in parallel structure, which facilitates memorisation and shows similarities to the three-character verses in classic texts suitable for teaching children, like the *Sanzijing* 三字經 (*Three Character Classic*) and *Dizigui* 弟子規 (*Regulations for Students*).

Li Yimang briefly argues that the major reason why "strange books" like the *Xingxin yan* emerged in the late Ming is that people's mental lives at that time were gradually moving towards a state of "hollowness" (*kongxu* 空虛) as a result of the collapsed basis of material life in the late-Ming society.[39] Besides, Li believes the so-called "moral" thoughts as advocated through the *ci*-poems in the *Xingxin yan*, which also serve to respond to the "immoral" social environment, to only be some "comments made by village worthies" (*xiangyuan zhi jian* 鄉愿之見).[40] Therefore, Li does not regard the

[39] Li Yimang, "Ming Chongzhen ben Xingxin yan," in *Yimang tiba*, pp. 181–182.

[40] According to the Confucian classic *Lunyu* 論語 (*The Analects*), the term *xiangyuan*, originally known as *xiangyuan* 鄉原, are referred to as "thieves of virtue" (*de zhi zei* 德之賊). See "Yanghuo 陽貨," in He Yan 何晏 et al. (annots.), *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏, in *Shisanjing zhushu* zhengli weiyuanhui《十三經注疏》整理委員會 (comp.), *Shisanjing zhushu*, vol. 23 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2000), *juan* 17, pp. 271–272. Another Confucian classic *Mengzi* 孟子 (*Mencius*) then defines village worthies as "those who are eunuch-like and flatter the world" (*yanran mei yu shi ye zhe* 閹然媚於世也者), or, those who ingratiate themselves with others. See Zhao Qi 趙岐 et al. (annots.), "Jinxin zhangju xia 盡心章句下," in *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子注疏, in *Shisanjing zhushu* zhengli weiyuanhui (comp.), *Shisanjing zhushu*, vol. 25, *juan* 14b, p. 477.

Xingxin yan as a well-written book in terms of its content. Still, Li, as a bibliophile and scholar of premodern Chinese texts, decided to include the *Xingxin yan* in his collection and write a postscript of it, because of its rareness in the late-Ming setting, the engraved painting which can be found in one of its editions, and particularly its very nature of a *ci*-poetry collection presented as a morality book. Also, although Li's comments on the book are relatively negative, they in turn reflect the important point that the *Xingxin yan* is a morality book written by a local from the low-income and grassroot social class, and the moral thoughts brought out by the artlessly written poems are therefore also based on the perspective of the low-income grassroots.

Despite the fact that the *Xingxin yan* is only one of many works in Ming popular literature composed by an unremarkable local militia member, it still reflects the mainstream trend of moral exhortation during the late Ming. The following sections will discuss and analyse a selection of *ci*-poems on three different themes. This includes introductory and concluding remarks, good and bad deeds, as well as moral code for women. This facilitates a better understanding of the moral thoughts Cheng applied in the poems and the social issues he addressed throughout these works.

4.2 Themes of *Ci*-Poems in *Xingxin Yan*

One of the most prominent features of the *Xingxin yan* is that the themes of its *ci*-poems are categorised for moral exhortation, which shows the author's meticulousness and reflects the complexity of the different facets of late-Ming society. As listed in the appendix, the themes of the *ci*-poems are indeed very extensive and specialised. They cover people's personal morals, their daily lives, family ethical relationships, folklore traditions, and even all walks of lives.

This paper analyses twelve *ci*-poems in the *Xingxin yan* which can be broadly divided into three main themes: introductory and concluding remarks, good and bad deeds, and moral code for women. The first category can be regarded as a general summary of the morality book's exhortative themes, whereas the second and third categories are subdivided elaborations that apply this core topic to various aspects of late-Ming social life. The second category involves issues concerning funerals, occupations, killing animals, and drowning girls. They touch upon late-Ming funeral customs,

vocational values, people's attitudes towards nature, and the anti-sexist behaviour arising from the idea that men are superior to women in traditional Chinese family ethics. As for the third category, it includes poems about Buddhist nuns returning to the laity, concubines, attending drama performances, and the sworn sisterhood of unrelated women. They respectively focus on monastics' attitudes towards Buddhist precepts, wife–concubine relations, views on banning female audience from theatre, and women's social life.

These *ci*-poems are chosen mainly because, on top of the *Xingxin yan*'s nature of a *ci*-poetry collection, they can more critically exhibit that the *Xingxin yan* is a morality book which deals more extensively and deeply with different practical problems of the late-Ming society than the aforementioned morality books. The introductory and concluding remarks prominently highlight the positioning of the *Xingxin yan* as a Confucian-based morality book. The other two categories are manifestations of people's life details from all walks of life in late Ming. Through these works, it is evident that everyday life could also involve discernment of good and evil, and that advising people to do good was a moral act of concern regardless of people's gender. They also provide a glimpse into how women were educated through popular texts like the *Xingxin yan* in the late Ming, when female education had been increasingly popularised. It could prove that the *Xingxin yan* is a morality book that performs all-encompassing, multi-faceted moral exhortation regardless of social class, identity, and gender.

Overall, as shown from the following examples, the special feature of the *Xingxin yan* is that, on top of other historical and contemporaneous morality books, it reflects the author's subjective opinions on some social problems and phenomena through the *ci*-poems. This not only echoes the late-Ming social trend of moral exhortation, but also profoundly demonstrates people's views on the then social reality. Displaying either the positive or negative sides of social phenomena, these *ci*-poems embody an in-depth understanding of the different facets of late-Ming social reality. This in turn demonstrates the significant contextual importance and contributions of the seldom-mentioned *Xingxin yan* to the late-Ming society.

4.2.1 Introductory and Concluding Remarks

Even though the *Xingxin yan* only comprises two volumes, it still has a neat parallel structure in terms of the layout of the *ci*-poems, as shown from the poem titles in each volume (see Appendix). This brings out the overall thematic framework of the morality book itself as well as the two volumes in a more prominent way. Looking at the poem titles, we notice that both volumes begin with two introductory "Xijiang yue" poems titled "Diaoyin 調引" ("Preface to the ['Xijiang Yue'] Tunes") and "Quanshi 勸世" ("Exhorting the World") respectively. While the "Diaoyin" introduces the objective of writing the *Xingxin yan* and the reason why Cheng Gongyuan uses simple language to do so, the poem titled "Quanshi" morally advises readers from whatever social class and is in line with the essential didactic function of morality books. For example, see the "Diaoyin" poem of the first volume and the "Quanshi" poem of the second volume:

Xingxin yan Vol. 1, #1: "Diaoyin" ("Xijiang yue" tune):

俗語從心發出	The unrefined speeches are delivered from my mind,
俚詞信口謳來	and the rustic words are only throwaway remarks.
百般世務逐條開	Hundreds of worldly affairs are set out one by one as entries,
一覽人人可解	so that everyone can understand when they read them.
膚淺皆因淺學	[The content of this book is] shallow simply because of my scant knowledge,
粗疏蓋爲疏才	and it is superficially written due to my inferior abilities.
漫將開豁下愚懷	My efforts to unfold the ignorants' minds [by my works] are to no avail,
難入高明眼界[41]	and they are difficult to fit with the scope of knowledge of the educated.

[41] Jao Tsung-i and Zhang Zhang (eds.), *Quan Mingci*, vol. 5, p. 2674.

Xingxin yan Vol. 2, #107: "Quanshi" ("Xijiang yue" tune):

富貴窮通繇命　One's affluences, nobilities, adversities, and prosperities are determined by fate,

興衰成敗憑天　and one's rises, declines, successes, and failures are dependent on the principles of heaven.

何須晝夜苦盤桓　Why should one be miserably puzzled by life day and night?

萬事豈繇人算　The ten thousand things are surely not contrivable by men.

不忮不求安分　By not being envious or covetous, one becomes contented with one's lot;

無驕無諂隨緣　by not being arrogant or servile, one follows conditions [in life].

強爲妄想總徒然　Unnatural behaviour and depraved thoughts are always pointless,

素位而行恬澹[42]　but by behaving oneself according to one's position can one's life become calm.

From the first stanza of the first volume's "Diaoyin" poem, it is known that one of the key objectives Cheng seeks to meet is to enable everyone, irrespective of their social status or education background, to comprehend the moral thoughts he wishes people to understand. In order to achieve this goal, Cheng thus uses "unrefined" (*su*) and "rustic" (*li* 俚) wordings to compose his poems, as this kind of naturally delivered language is the closest to the everyday language common people talk. Thus, the usage of the "Xijiang yue" tune as discussed above fits with the everyday language, and facilitates chanting and recitation of poems by the people. This allows Cheng's didactic instructions to be more easily and widely received and eventually understood by more people. Next, the second stanza of the poem contains seemingly humble words; however, the last two lines also imply that Cheng would like to educate all sorts of people, that is, both the "ignorants" (*xiayu* 下愚) and "educated" (*gaoming* 高明) through his *Xingxin yan*.

[42] Ibid., p. 2687.

As for the "Quanshi" poem of the second volume, its first stanza displays a strong fatalist thought and exhorts people to let go the worldly affairs that trouble them most throughout their lives, a notion also found in the afore-cited didactic "Xijiang yue" by Zhu Dunru. The second stanza follows this central idea and advises readers to always be contented with what they already have. Here, two expressions in the first two lines of the second stanza respectively, "not being envious or covetous" (*bu zhi bu qiu* 不忮不求) and "not being arrogant or servile" (*wu jiao wu chan* 無驕無諂), are cited from the *Lunyu*.[43] This not only indicates that Confucian thoughts are the dominant ideologies of the *Xingxin yan*, but also suggests again that the target audience of Cheng's works includes both the rich and poor, as shown particularly in the phrase "not being arrogant or servile". This actually originates from the quote "poor without being servile, rich without being arrogant" (*pin er wu chan, fu er wu jiao* 貧而無諂，富而無驕) by Zigong 子貢 (born Duanmu Si 端木賜, 520 B.C.–456 B.C.) in the first chapter of the *Lunyu*.[44] In this sense, as this poem presents the author's view on the rich and poor, it may be responding to the then social reality. It emphasises that human conditions such as wealth, gains and losses, success and failure could not entirely be controlled by human factors and advises the rich not to be proud and the poor not to be envious. This advice may have been given to prevent conflicts between the rich and the poor for maintaining social order as aforementioned.

The introductory poems in each volume are then followed by 100 "Xijiang yue" pieces on different themes. As aforesaid, the first volume focuses on direct exhortation while the second one mainly tells people to refrain from doing evil. Each volume ends with three concluding poems: one written to "Xijiang yue" and acting as the postface to the volume, and two written to "Zhegu tian", which summarise the whole volume by reiterating core ideas of moral exhortation and illustrating the ideal status of a civilised and educated society as expected by Cheng Gongyuan after people from different social sectors have read his *Xingxin yan*. In fact, there are some remarkable features among these concluding *ci*-poems. First, the *diaowei* 調尾 ("postfaces") of the two volumes are

[43] "Zihan 子罕"; "Xue'er 學而," in He Yan et al. (annots.), *Lunyu zhushu*, *juan* 9, p. 136; *juan* 1, pp. 13–14.

[44] "Xue'er," in He Yan et al. (annots.), *Lunyu zhushu*, *juan* 1, pp. 13–14.

titled "Li diaowei 俚調尾" ("Postface to the ['Xijiang Yue'] Tunes, under the Rustic Themes") and "Su diaowei 俗調尾" ("Postface to the ['Xijiang Yue'] Tunes, under the Unrefined Themes") respectively. Perhaps being set as the titles of the two volumes themselves, the characters *li* ("rustic") and *su* ("unrefined") indicate again the overall style of the *ci*-poems, although the characters still cannot accurately sum up the content of poems in each volume due to the variety of topics they cover. Taking the poem titled "Li diaowei" as an example, it reads:

Xingxin yan Vol. 1, #103: "Li diaowei" ("Xijiang yue" tune):

雖則不成文體	Although [my book] cannot develop into a literary genre,
也堪警省人心	it is still suitable for alerting people's minds.
惡思遷善作良民	Through correcting evil thoughts and reverting to good deeds, one acts as a good commoner;
善者更堅德行	and those who are benevolent become more steadfast in performing their virtuous acts [after reading my book].
展卷垂青一盼	By opening and reading my book and casting a favourable eye on it,
須臾薄俗還淳	harmful social customs can already be returned to pure simplicity after a short time.
高明上達愈存誠	While the educated and prominent personages preserve their sincerity to a greater extent,
奸究兇邪歸正[45]	the malignant, evil deeds of villainous renegades can be reverted to righteous deeds.

Another noteworthy point lies in the two "Zhegu tian" pieces. It is noticeable that in the first volume, the two "Zhegu tian" poems still centre around the promotion of one of the morality book's purports of "doing good will be rewarded and doing evil will be punished" from a microcosmic perspective in connection to the moral improvement of

[45] Jao Tsung-i and Zhang Zhang (eds.), *Quan Mingci*, vol. 5, p. 2687.

individuals, as shown by the antithetical poem titles "Congxie wu jieguo 從邪無結果" ("Doing Evil Yields Nothing") and "Guizheng you shoucheng 歸正有收成" ("Reverting to Righteous Deeds Brings Rewards"), which can be classified as direct exhortations. On the other hand, instead of composing instructive pieces, the two "Zhegu tian" poems in the second volume are written beyond the didactic function. While the first poem, with the title "Jing li qiankun da 靜裡乾坤大" ("The Universe Appears Vast When One's Mind Is Peaceful"), persuades people to forget worldly disillusions such as *shifei* 是非 ("rights and wrongs") and *rongru* 榮辱 ("honours and disgraces"), through depicting one's status of being carefree after one leaves these troubles behind,[46] the second "Zhegu tian" (also the very last poem of the *Xingxin yan*) links to the relationship between Cheng Gongyuan's personal views regarding his composition of didactic *ci*-poems and the macrocosmic, ultimate impacts on the state itself. As implied by the title "Taiping qixiang xin 太平氣象新" ("The State's Ambience Takes On a New Look in Peaceful Times"), this poem describes a propitiously peaceful scene of Ming China, which is also related to the first "Zhegu tian" with descriptions of one's peaceful mind.[47] As people can be more motivated to do good and abstain from bad deeds, they can then become less anxious about the detrimental effects the bad deeds will bring them, including family disputes and interpersonal conflicts. As a result, people can put aside their worries over time. If more and more people can do so after reading the *Xingxin yan*, less hatred will emerge and in the end the state will be able to achieve a prosperous and peaceful status more easily, which is obviously the ideal state of China in Cheng's mind. This also reflects Cheng's pursuit of the general moral improvement in the society at that time. The following is the "Zhegu tian" poem titled "Jing li qiankun da", from which we can see the ideal, trouble-free minds Cheng wishes people to possess, and can help construct his ideal state of China for the common good:

Xingxin yan Vol. 2, #209: "Jing li qiankun da" ("Zhegu tian" tune):

窺破世情空碌碌　　After understanding thoroughly that the worldly circumstances are empty bustles,

[46] Ibid., p. 2700.

[47] Ibid.

擺開俗慮獨悠悠	one can put aside the secular worries and become calm in solitude.
樵夫漁叟投機話	Woodcutters and old fishermen can take part in congenial conversations,
烟水雲山任意游	and roam over mist-covered waters and cloud-capped mountains at will.

歌一曲	By singing a song,
酒三甌	and drinking three cups of wine,
消却胸中萬斛愁	the ten thousand bushels of sorrow in one's inner mind can be dispelled.
是非不管從他辯	Pay no attention in rights and wrongs—let others argue over them;
榮辱無干得自繇[48]	by not involving oneself in honours and disgraces, one can attain freedom.

From the introductory and concluding poems discussed above, we can notice that Cheng Gongyuan tries to exhort everyone in the society to eschew bad deeds and thoughts and revert to good ones through his *ci*-poems. By doing so, Cheng believes that he can bring benefits to people from all walks of life and achieve the ultimate goal of creating an ideal society and state.

The four *ci*-poems with generic themes clearly indicate the *Xingxin yan*'s nature as a morality book based primarily on Confucian thoughts and written directly for the general public. Enshrined through the form of a *ci*-poetry collection, the *Xingxin yan* served to exhort people to good deeds like many other morality books. The examples above also show that the *Xingxin yan* is incorporated with some subjective outlooks on life by the author for promoting moral concepts. Furthermore, the *Xingxin yan* contains many unique and refined observations on different substantive phenomena in late-Ming society, some of which even involve critical comments. These observations are mainly found in the pieces with specific themes such as the examples below. The social observations enclosed

[48] Ibid.

in these *ci*-poems made the *Xingxin yan* more closely relevant to the social realities at that time and could communicate with the context of the late-Ming society in comparison to other morality books that exhort straightforwardly.

4.2.2 Good and Bad Deeds

In order to achieve the noble aspiration that people can eventually be freed from the annoyance which is, after all, caused by their morally wrong acts, what morally good deeds should one take the initiative to perform? On the contrary, what bad deeds should one abandon? This section will discuss four poems that are focused on different morally good and bad behaviour through incorporating Confucian principles. First, for good deeds, one of them concerns the topic of conducting funerals and burials for deceased parents or elders, on which Cheng comments as follows:

> *Xingxin yan* Vol. 1, #64: "Sangzang 喪葬" ("Funerals and Burials"; "Xijiang yue" tune):
>
> 喪葬稱家貧富　Funerals and burials should be conducted that match the economic conditions of households,
>
> 必須量力爲之　and must be carried out according to one's capability.
>
> 切休好勝強支持　One must not be emulative and force oneself to conduct funerals and burials [that do not correspond to one's financial capacity],
>
> 不稱反招人議　as their incompatibilities will in turn incur criticism from others.
>
> 果係有餘故儉　Conversely, if one is actually well-off but being deliberately frugal [when holding funerals and burials],
>
> 其人徹底卑微　this kind of person is thoroughly despicable.
>
> 爹娘面上討便宜　By seeking advantage from the deceased parents,
>
> 終是難成大器[49]　one, in the end, will hardly achieve great success.

[49] Ibid., p. 2682.

This poem advises people to prepare for funerals and burials based on their own, actual capacities, instead of conducting rites which do not match the financial status of their families. The moral advice of conducting rites for the deceased according to one's capability can already be found in Confucian classics of different dynasties, but most of them focus on the dismissal of the tradition of *houzang* 厚葬 ("costly burials"), which is in line with what Cheng comments on in the first stanza of his poem. For instance, in the *Liji* 禮記 (*Book of Rites*), Confucius 孔子 (born Kong Qiu 孔丘, c. 551 B.C.–c. 479 B.C.) once discussed funerals and burials with his disciple Zilu 子路 (born Zhong You 仲由, 542 B.C.–480 B.C.) and said, "[in burials,] as long as [the clothing] is enough to cover the hands, feet, and body of the deceased, and the body is then interred immediately, even if there is no outer coffin, one still carries out the rites which one's financial capacity permits [by doing so], and this can be said to discharge [all] the rites [required in burials]" (*lian shou zu xing, huan zang er wu guo, cheng qi cai, si zhi wei li* 斂手足形，還葬而無椁，稱其財，斯之謂禮).[50] Another related and more recent thought was put forward by the late-Ming Neo-Confucian scholar Chen Que 陳確 (1604–1677), a contemporary of Cheng who urges that lower-class people should conduct *jianzang* 儉葬 ("frugal burials"), instead of *bozang* 薄葬 ("simple burials"), and emphasises not to practise rites which are forbidden by Confucian principles or beyond one's capability.[51] On top of the phenomenon of poor households holding costly funerals and burials, Cheng precisely points out another aspect of incompatibility between rich households and thrifty rites in the second stanza of his poem. Compared to the households which cannot afford luxurious funerals and burials but still force themselves to organise them so, Cheng actually despises to a greater extent affluent people who pretend to be thrifty when they carry out funerals and burials for their family members, as he criticises in the second stanza of the poem. Cheng believes that this act humiliates oneself and one's family apart from drawing criticism, because such a hypocritical behaviour also reveals that one is trying to take advantage of the deceased parents and elders and seeking others' pity or material returns, instead of paying sincere respect to the dead. Thus, on another level, this

[50] "Tangong xia 檀弓下," in Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 et al. (annots.), *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義, in *Shisanjing zhushu* zhengli weiyuanhui (comp.), *Shisanjing zhushu*, vol. 12, *juan* 10, p. 343.

[51] Chen Que, "Jianzang shuo 儉葬說," in *Chen Que ji* 陳確集, vol. 2 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), *juan* 7, p. 496.

poem also reflects Cheng's condemnation that hypocrisy is indeed a bad deed which uncovers one's despicable personality.

Through this work, Cheng Gongyuan attempts to warn especially against people belonging to the middle class or above who can afford to hold more costly funerals and burials. This is believed to be a response to the increasingly extravagant funeral customs in the late Ming. In the early Ming, under the rule of the Emperor Taizu 明太祖 (born Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, r. 1368–1398), who adopted Confucian-based national disciplines, funeral customs were generally simpler as they followed Confucian etiquettes. Yet, in the late Ming, especially since the Wanli era, funerals became more luxurious regardless of social class. At the same time, with the flourishing of Buddhism, many more complicated Buddhist rituals penetrated into funeral customs.[52] It should be for this reason that Cheng, the Confucian representative, criticised the social phenomenon of increasingly extravagant funerals and burials at that time and advocated a return to rites within the limits of one's ability.

Besides funerals and burials, career is another crucial aspect which one has to deal with throughout life. As mentioned earlier, Cheng Gongyuan composed a series of exhortative poems for people of different professions. In fact, Cheng also makes comments on the fundamental issue of how one should choose a career for oneself, from which we can learn of his views towards various occupations and their relations with moral values. One poem runs as follows:

Xingxin yan Vol. 2, #151: "Zeyi zishen 擇藝資身" ("Choosing a Career to Make a Living"; "Xijiang yue" tune):

治生必須擇藝	In order to make a living, one must choose a career;
不擇恐壞心田	and if one does not choose a career, one's mind will likely be ruined.
寧學巫醫莫賣棺	One should rather learn how to become a shaman or a doctor than sell coffins,

[52] Ho Shu-yi 何淑宜, *Mingdai shishen yu tongsu wenhua: yi sangzang lisu wei li de kaocha* 明代士紳與通俗文化——以喪葬禮俗為例的考察 (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan shifan daxue lishi yanjiusuo, 2000), pp. 57–84.

三者心腸可見　　as the intentions of people of these three professions are discernible.

矢人欲利其鏃　　While fletchers seek to sharpen their arrowheads,
函人欲厚其堅　　armourers strive for reinforcing the resistance of their armours.
米商念念望荒年　　Rice merchants only hope for years of famine in every thought,
還是農夫心善[53]　　and it is still the farmers who are kind-hearted.

After directly advising people to choose their career carefully, Cheng lists out three occupations which involve life and death situations as examples, namely *wu* 巫 ("shamans"), *yi* 醫 ("doctors"), and *maiguan* 賣棺 ("coffin sellers"), and he clearly states his opinion that one should choose the former two jobs over the third one. As the issue of life and death always renders judgments of moral values, what Cheng puts forward here actually implies the moral favourability of services provided by people who work in these three professions, and he argues that shamans and doctors in general possess better moral intentions than coffin sellers based on the nature of their work. Although the sources of income of all three occupations depend upon others' sufferings, shamans and doctors can be described as being more ethically altruistic as they are responsible for curing patients or at least relieving their symptoms of health conditions, whereas coffin sellers rely on people's deaths to make a living. When adopting a different perspective, coffin sellers can still help the deceased to attain a certain dignity, as their bodies can be at least kept in coffins before being interred and receive "proper burials" (*anzang* 安葬), which was highly emphasised in the premodern, Confucian-oriented Chinese society, instead of being abandoned without proper care after death. However, due to different job natures, Cheng still differentiates the three occupations hierarchically regarding the consequences that are produced by people of corresponding professions with moral considerations, and this judgment can be linked to the comparison among another four occupations, including *shiren* 矢人 ("fletchers"), *hanren* 函人

[53] Jao Tsung-i and Zhang Zhang (eds.), *Quan Mingci*, vol. 5, p. 2693.

("armourers"), *mishang* 米商 ("rice merchants"), and *nongfu* 農夫 ("farmers"), in the second stanza of Cheng's poem. Here, Cheng juxtaposes two pairs of professions with the first one, fletchers and armourers, alluding to a quote by Mencius (born Meng Ke 孟軻, 372 B.C.–289 B.C.) from the Confucian classic *Mengzi*:

> 孟子曰：「矢人豈不仁於函人哉！矢人惟恐不傷人，函人惟恐傷人。巫匠亦然，故術不可不慎也。……人役而恥爲役，由弓人而恥爲弓，矢人而恥爲矢也。如恥之，莫如爲仁。……。」[54]
>
> Mencius said, "are fletchers really less benevolent than armourers? While fletchers only fear that [the arrows] they [make] cannot hurt people, armourers only fear that [the armours] they [make] will hurt people. This is the same for shaman-doctors and coffin makers. Therefore, one must be prudent when choosing one's occupation . . . . To work as a servant but ashamed of being so, is like bowyers who are ashamed of making bows and fletchers who are ashamed of making arrows. If one does ashamed of one's occupation, there is nothing better than practising benevolence . . . ."

The core notion conveyed by Mencius is that one should always "reflect on oneself" (*fan qiu zhu ji* 反求諸己) for the pursuit of "benevolence" (*ren* 仁) when working instead of being ashamed of what one does. What he tries to point out here also relates to one's occupation and the concomitant vocational psychology which is in the end associated with job natures. Owing to the different natures of work, one's mindset, especially towards one's job, can be easily changed, and in turn affect how others regard that specific occupation. This is also the reason why Mencius stresses that "one must be prudent when choosing one's occupation". The case of rice merchants and farmers that Cheng uses to conclude his poem actually touches upon this issue. Cheng believes that rice merchant is an immoral profession, as rice merchants always hope for years of famine and only care about their own profits. This contrasts with farmers who work hard to grow food for people and contribute to the common good. Of course, one cannot deny

[54] Zhao Qi et al. (annots.), "Gongsun Chou zhangju shang 公孫丑章句上," in *Mengzi zhushu*, *juan* 3b, pp. 115–117.

that these unscrupulous rice merchants did exist in the late-Ming society and eventually caused people including Cheng to think this way, but someone still has to be a rice merchant in order to sell rice to others and meet their demands. From this perspective of division of labour in modern terms, rice merchants can actually be regarded as moral because they also help contribute to the common good. This also applies to coffin sellers as mentioned earlier.

By highlighting such hierarchical differences of occupations, it also reflects late-Ming people's actual impressions of the various professions at that time. The poem expresses the view of respecting farmers and disdaining merchants, which contrarily demonstrates the late-Ming trend of praising commerce while belittling agriculture. Because of the increasing frequence of commodity economic activities in the late Ming, especially since the Jiajing era, the social atmosphere had changed from despising commerce to paying more attention to it.[55] Cheng's argument in favour of agriculture and against commerce should be an attempt to counteract this social trend, hoping to affirm the social values and function of farmers.

After looking at two poems which pay attention to the good deeds that one should practise regarding funeral rites and career choices respectively, another two poems centring on Cheng Gongyuan's exhortations urging people to refrain from two morally evil acts will be discussed as follows. The first example focuses on the vice of shooting birds:

Xingxin yan Vol. 1, #81: "Jie daniao 戒打鳥" ("Abstaining from Shooting Birds"; "Xijiang yue" tune):

夫子不射宿鳥	The Master did not shoot at roosting birds,
時人愛打春禽	but people nowadays love shooting at spring birds.
巢雛望母不歸林	Therefore, when their nestlings are awaiting their mothers which will never return to the woods,
乏食哀哀喪命	lacking food, they sorrowfully lose their lives.

[55] Xie Guozhen 謝國楨, *Mingmo Qingchu de xuefeng* 明末清初的學風 (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian chubanshe, 2006), pp. 53–56; Zhou Mingchu, *Wan Ming shiren xintai ji wenxue ge'an* 晚明士人心態及文學個案 (Beijing: Dongfang chubanshe, 1997), pp. 12–25.

但知傷生覓利	[These bird-shooters] only know how to hurt living beings to seek for benefits,
不怜母子離羣	without pitying the bird mothers and their babies which are separated from each other.
須聞因果早收心	One should know [the law of] cause and effect and restrain the mind as soon as possible,
免得輪迴報您[56]	lest the karmic cycle of life brings retribution on oneself.

Just by looking at the poem's title, one may already connect this piece with the thought of "protecting animals" (*husheng* 護生), which is one of the key Buddhist teachings and emphasised by Buddhist monastics of different periods, including the Ming Pure Land (*Jingtuzong* 淨土宗) master Yunqi Zhuhong 雲棲袾宏 (1535–1615).[57] The first line of the poem is taken from the *Lunyu* and states that "the Master fishes with a line instead of a net, and uses a corded arrow to shoot, but not at roosting birds" (*Zi diao er bu gang, yi bu she su* 子釣而不綱，弋不射宿).[58] From this, we notice that the thought of protecting lives can also be found among Confucian beliefs. Next, the second to sixth lines indicate why Cheng composes this poem: he would like to respond to and castigate the phenomenon that people at that time loved shooting at spring birds, which is an evil, ruthless act that mutilates or kills animals only for their own benefits or sheer pleasure. The last two lines then warn against these bird-shooters by using Buddhist terms including *yinguo* 因果 ("the law of cause and effect"), *lunhui* 輪迴 ("the karmic cycle of life"), and *baoying* 報應 ("retribution") shortened as *bao* 報 in the last line, which shows that Cheng actually incorporated non-Confucian concepts when he was writing his Confucian-oriented *Xingxin yan*. This poem and four more, namely "Jie yaoyu 戒藥魚" ("Abstaining from Drugging Fish"), "Quan fangqin 勸放禽" ("Exhorting to Liberate

[56] Jao Tsung-i and Zhang Zhang (eds.), *Quan Mingci*, vol. 5, p. 2684.

[57] For more on Zhuhong's advocacy of protecting animals and the avoidance of killing animals, see Yü Chün-fang, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Zhuhong and the Late Ming Synthesis* (fortieth anniversary edition), with a foreword by Daniel B. Stevenson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), pp. 71–105; Joanna Handlin Smith, *The Art of Doing Good: Charity in Late Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), pp. 15–42.

[58] "Shu'er 述而," in He Yan et al. (annots.), *Lunyu zhushu*, *juan* 7, pp. 104–105.

Birds"), "Jie shasheng 戒殺生" ("Abstaining from Killing Animals"), and "Jie shi yiwu 戒食義物" ("Abstaining from Eating Animals"), are also the only five poems included in the *Xingxin yan* that concern topics related to animal protection such as "liberating animals" (*fangsheng* 放生) and refraining from killing animals, which appear in various late-Ming popular didactic works in forms of tales and anecdotes.[59] As Joanna Handlin Smith also argues, this animal-saving fashion that flourished in the context of the late-Ming and early-Qing literati scene can actually be interpreted independently of Buddhist terms—as a social affair to be shared with the community and ultimately a way to preserve the social hierarchy they belong to through performing the good deeds of animal protection, alongside with other meritorious acts.[60] However, it is hard to tell by simply reading Cheng's poems whether the main reason behind Cheng's composition of these five animal-saving poems really lies in this social trend. It is also possible that Cheng wanted to respond to another prevalent but often ignored social trend of the late Ming that involved brutality towards animals and resulted from acts like enjoying watching bloody cockfights or holding lavish feasts.[61]

In addition to the killing of animals, Cheng Gongyuan, an upholder of Confucian virtues, also opposes the killing of human beings. The second example of bad deed condemned by Cheng is "drowning girls" (*ninü* 溺女), a form of female infanticide which also has a profound impact on China.[62] Cheng's poem reads:

Xingxin yan Vol. 2, #148: "Jie ninü 戒溺女" ("Abstaining from Drowning Girls"; "Xijiang yue" tune):

爲吝三年乳哺	In order to save three years of breastfeeding,
徒費十月懷躭	[one] exerts efforts for ten months of pregnancy in vain [by drowning infant girls].
竟將一命付清泉	By killing a life in a clear fountain in the end,

[59] Joanna Handlin Smith, *The Art of Doing Good*, pp. 19–21.

[60] Ibid., pp. 25–42.

[61] Ibid., pp. 16–17.

[62] For more on the history of female infanticide in China, see D. E. Mungello, *Drowning Girls in China: Female Infanticide since 1650* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008); D. E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (3rd edition) (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), pp. 134–139.

似覺天倫太慘	it seems that natural ethical relations are too miserable.
男女一般骨肉	Male and female are of the same flesh and blood,
何須兩樣相看	why should one regard them as two different types of people?
休嗟生女不如男	Do not sigh for giving birth to a daughter as being inferior to a son,
女有緹縈堪羨[63]	because if she is [virtuous] like Tiying, it is still enviable.

The issue of female infanticide appears in texts as early as the Warring States period like the *Han Feizi* 韓非子 (*[The Writings of] Master Han Fei*), which states that some parents at that time "congratulate each other when they give birth to a son, but when they give birth to a daughter they will kill her" (*chan nan ze xiang he, chan nü ze sha zhi* 產男則相賀，產女則殺之).[64] In response to this lasting social trend, the first line of Cheng's poem points out one of the major reasons why female babies were still often being killed by drowning in the late Ming, as many impoverished households could not afford to raise more children, besides other causes including the inherent culture concerning the preference of sons over daughters (*zhongnan qingnü* 重男輕女), and a desire for greater wealth.[65] The poem then criticises that drowning girls is simply a heartless act and urges readers not to treat male and female unequally at the end of the poem, by also mentioning Chunyu Tiying 淳于緹縈 (?–?), a young woman of the Han dynasty who was praised as a role model of filial piety by rescuing her father, Chunyu Yi 淳于意 (c. 250 B.C.–150 B.C.), from a death sentence imposed by the Emperor Wen of Han 漢文帝 (born Liu Heng 劉恆, r. 180 B.C.–157 B.C.) in 167 B.C.[66] Although Cheng alludes to the concept of filial piety in the very last line of the poem, into which at least a Confucian thought is

[63] Jao Tsung-i and Zhang Zhang (eds.), *Quan Mingci*, vol. 5, p. 2692.

[64] "Liufan 六反," in Wang Xianshen 王先慎, *Han Feizi jijie* 韓非子集解, annot. Zhong Zhe 鍾哲 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), *juan* 18, p. 417.

[65] D. E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800*, p. 134.

[66] Sima Qian 司馬遷, "Bianque Canggong liezhuan 扁鵲倉公列傳," in *Shiji* 史記, annot. Pei Yin 裴駰 et al., vol. 9 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), *juan* 105, p. 3380.

included, Confucianism itself, as D. E. Mungello argues, actually holds an ambivalent attitude towards female infanticide.[67] On the one hand, Confucian customs generally disregard infants as filial piety attaches importance to age over youth and it is also more expensive to bring up girls than boys because of the extra costs of dowries for marriages. But on the other hand, many literati stood against female infanticide based on its violation of the core Confucian principle of benevolence, as well as the disruption of nature's balance between *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽, which symbolise female and male respectively, leading to shortages in women.

Taking his stance against drowning girls, Cheng Gongyuan's poem explicitly shows that he sides with the literati in safeguarding the traditional Confucian values. Furthermore, in light of the fact that laws against female infanticide were often loosely enforced in premodern China due to the practical difficulties in rural areas where popular resistance to the enforcement was prevalent, this poem also serves to encourage more common people to give up killing infant girls and help reduce the tragedies caused by female infanticide. In social terms, the need for Cheng exhorting against drowning girls reflects such a problem was widespread. This anti-sexist act stemmed from the concept of favouring boys over girls in traditional ethics that deeply influenced premodern China. It often occurred in poor families without effective contraception.[68] While Cheng followed the governmental prohibition and the society's mainstream opinion to advise against drowning girls, the poem also directly critiques the idea of male's superiority over female (*nanzun nübei* 男尊女卑). Actually, the exhortative materials about drowning girls in the Ming were mainly presented in ledgers of merit and demerit. For example, Yunqi Zhuhong's *Zizhi lu* 自知錄 (*Records of Self-Awareness*) specifies that parents who drown their newborn kid is equivalent to a serious 50 demerits, and even states that "parents who kill their children without any offence tantamount to those who kill people of the world" (*fumu wuzui sha er, shi sha tianxia renmin ye* 父母無罪殺兒，是殺天下人民也).[69] This shows that drowning a daughter was already regarded as an anti-social

---

[67] D. E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800*, pp. 136–137.

[68] Chang Jianhua 常建華, "Mingdai niying wenti chutan 明代溺嬰問題初探," in Zhang Guogang 張國剛 (ed.), *Zhongguo shehui lishi pinglun* 中國社會歷史評論, vol. 4 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2002), pp. 121–136.

[69] Quoted in Chang Jianhua, *Hunyin neiwai de gudai nüxing* 婚姻內外的古代女性 (Beijing: Zhonghua

offence and Cheng's poem echoed this viewpoint.

4.2.3 Moral Code for Women

As illustrated by the poem titled "Jie ninü" in the previous section, we can see that the status of women was obviously not high in the premodern Chinese society, as they might be killed soon after birth. Even if they could grow up, their acts had to be bound by another set of strict moral code, which can also be found in the *Xingxin yan* as Cheng Gongyuan uses more than ten poems to describe and promote the ethical content of how women should behave in late-Ming China. This part will look at four pieces discussing what women should and should not do. Not only do they reflect the traditional, highly self-restrained image of premodern Chinese women, they also show that family interests always overrode women's individual interests in Ming China. The first example touches upon Buddhism again by urging Buddhist nuns to return to the laity:

Xingxin yan Vol. 2, #174: "Quan ni huansu 勸尼還俗" ("Exhorting Buddhist Nuns to Return to the Laity"; "Xijiang yue" tune):

美貌青年尼子	Good-looking, young Buddhist nuns,
雲堂強誦殘經	have to reluctantly recite fragmentary sūtras.
梅花紙帳豈無塵	The paper canopy beds, decorated with plum blossoms, are surely not dustless,
獨睡未嘗心穩	and [nuns who] sleep alone [in such beds] can never feel secure.
慾念靜中思動	In lustful thoughts, one thinks of moving in stillness;
淫僧月下敲門	and a lascivious monk knocks the door under moonlight.
不如還俗換紅裙	It will be better if nuns return to the laity, put on red-coloured wedding gowns,
配個知音必正[70]	and marry soulmates, which is certainly good.

shuju, 2006), pp. 194–195.

[70] Jao Tsung-i and Zhang Zhang (eds.), *Quan Mingci*, vol. 5, p. 2695.

By using phrases like *qiangsong* 強誦 ("reluctantly recite"), *canjing* 殘經 ("fragmentary sūtras"), *qi wuchen* 豈無塵 ("surely not dustless"), and *weichang xinwen* 未嘗心穩 ("can never feel secure") in the first stanza, Cheng believes that those young women who become Buddhist nuns are, after all, disinclined to learn Buddhist teachings, and they actually cannot resist the worldly temptations, especially those involving sex and lust which are mentioned in the first two lines of the second stanza. Particularly, Cheng uses the term "lascivious monk" (*yinseng* 淫僧) in line six to portray a lecherous, unorthodox image of a Buddhist monk who will instigate nuns to indulge in erotic desire or other deviant acts.[71] Due to these negative factors, Cheng concludes the poem by advising Buddhist nuns to return to the laity and, more importantly, to perform the morally good act of marrying their soulmates and starting family lives, instead of being clerics. All these signs seem to indicate that Cheng vilifies Buddhism in a belittling tone. However, it is still inconclusive to regard this poem as anti-Buddhist.[72] The reason to this can be demonstrated by the afore-discussed poem titled "Jie daniao" in which Buddhist concepts are used to urge people to stop shooting birds, the fact that even Wang Yangming combined Buddhist and Confucian thoughts in his interpretation of Neo-Confucian theories,[73] as well as the prevalence of the syncretism of the Three Teachings (*Sanjiao heliu* 三教合流 or *Sanjiao huitong* 三教會通) during Cheng's times. In fact, as Wu Junqing 鄔雋卿 argues, the anti-Buddhist sentiments in the late Ming, demonstrated particularly by the "lascivious monk" theme, which is also a literary image that frequently appeared at that time, had more to do with the convention of the literary culture of recreational literature at that time, and a deepening male anxiety about female

---

[71] Here the poem's sixth line itself is also likely borrowed from the famous poetic line "the monk knocks the door under moonlight" (*seng qiao yue xia men* 僧敲月下門), written by the Tang poet Jia Dao 賈島 (779–843). See Jia Dao, "Ti Li Ning youju 題李凝幽居," in Huang Peng 黃鵬 (annot.), *Jia Dao shiji jianzhu* 賈島詩集箋注 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2002), *juan* 4, pp. 110–113.

[72] Still, scholars like Ōki Yasushi 大木康 argues that an anti-Buddhist trend was initiated at the imperial court during the Jiajing period, and was manifested in the "evil Buddhist monk stories" (*eseng xiaoshuo* 惡僧小說) at that time. See Ōki Yasushi, "Mingmo 'eseng xiaoshuo' chutan 明末「惡僧小說」初探," *Zhongzheng Hanxue yanjiu* 中正漢學研究, 20 (2012), pp. 183–212.

[73] For more on examples of how Wang Yangming used Buddhist elements in his Neo-Confucian interpretations, see Chen Lai 陳來, *You wu zhi jing: Wang Yangming zhexue de jingshen* 有無之境——王陽明哲學的精神 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1991), pp. 218–222.

chastity.[74] In particular, concerning the latter factor, since the traditional Confucian family structure was a patrilineal one, women had to serve relentlessly only for the patrilineal kin group they belonged to, such that their religious pursuits could also be confined only within their families. In other words, women taking part in non-familial and non-Confucian religious activities was forbidden, not to mention becoming Buddhist nuns. In order to deter such behaviour, vernacular literature often portrayed monks as unchaste or lustful and also displayed both contempt for and fear of their sexuality between masculinity and femininity. But at the same time, neither did these literary works necessarily reflect that clerical conduct really declined at that time, nor did they advocate anti-clericalism.

Apart from monks, Buddhist nuns were also despised in the Ming. Proof for this phenomenon can be found in the *Nancun chuogeng lu* 南村輟耕錄 (*Tao Nancun's Records Written While Resting from Work in the Fields*), a collection of *biji* 筆記 ("brush-note essays") written by Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀 (1329–1410), a loyalist literatus during the late Yuan and early Ming. In one of his notes, Tao names nine low-status female professions, which were known as *san gu liu po* 三姑六婆 ("three aunties and six grannies"), and included nuns.[75] Ming households were advised to stay away from these women so as to get rid of the crimes and accompanying bad reputation they would bring to the families, as well as the detrimental influences on female members of the families, especially respectable ones. This advice exhibited male anxiety about ensuring their women's safety. Many families who abided by traditional Confucian proprieties also adopted this rule, including the precepts of Zhu Bolu's 朱柏廬 (1627–1698) family who warns that "the three aunties and six grannies are indeed fomenters of lascivious crimes" (*san gu liu po, shi yindao zhi mei* 三姑六婆，實淫盜之媒).[76] Furthermore, the status

[74] Wu Junqing, "Sex in the Cloister: Behind the Image of the 'Criminal Monk' in Ming Courtroom Tales," *T'oung Pao*, 105.5–6 (2019), pp. 545–586.

[75] *San gu* include *nigu* 尼姑 ("Buddhist nuns"), *Daogu* 道姑 ("Daoist nuns"), and *guagu* 卦姑 ("female diviners"). *Liu po* include *yapo* 牙婆 ("brokerage grannies"), *meipo* 媒婆 ("female matchmakers"), *shipo* 師婆 ("female shamans"), *qianpo* 虔婆 ("procuresses"), *yaopo* 藥婆 ("herb women"), and *wenpo* 穩婆 ("midwives"). See Tao Zongyi, "San gu liu po," in *Nancun chuogeng lu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), *juan* 10, p. 126.

[76] Zhu Bolu, *Zhuzi jiaxun* 朱子家訓, annot. Li Muhua 李牧華 (Lanzhou: Gansu renmin chubanshe, 1990), p. 1.

distinction of these professions also reflects people's impressions towards them based on the different natures of their work, as mentioned earlier in the poem titled "Zeyi zishen".

When it comes to the view of Buddhism, although it is hard to conclude that the poem is anti-Buddhist, it still expresses a negative image of Buddhism at that time. Concerning the then social context, this may imply a more far-reaching and prevalent issue among the then Buddhist community—the widespread phenomenon of monastics not observing the precepts. This damaged the image of Buddhists and further escalated the monastic decay problem throughout Ming China. According to Yü Chün-fang 于君方, Ming-period Buddhism had three major internal problems that led to the decline of monastic order, including the abuses of Chan 禪 practice, lack of discipline among monastics, and their secularised lifestyle for unorthodox and material pursuits.[77] Another *biji*, *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編 (*Collected Anecdotes of the Wanli Era*), by a Wanli-era bureaucrat Shen Defu 沈德符 (1578–1642), records that there were even monks wearing lavish clothes at that time, who went to luxury restaurants and theatres with non-Buddhists.[78] In this regard, Cheng may have explicitly persuaded Buddhist monks and nuns to return to the laity from a Confucian perspective so as to avoid them being continuously corrupted by the Buddhist community, which was already in a state of monastic decline at that time and thus had an inferior or somewhat distorted expression from society.

In addition to exhorting Buddhist nuns to return to the laity which relates to the different social categories in the late Ming as well as the patrilineal system, the *Xingxin yan* also concerns the different roles and status of women in traditional patriarchal families. The following shows a poem that revolves around the relationship between wives and concubines:

> *Xingxin yan* Vol. 2, #192: "Quan qi rongqie 勸妻容妾" ("Exhorting Wives to Accept Concubines"; "Xijiang yue" tune):

[77] Yü Chün-fang, *The Renewal of Buddhism in China*, pp. 170–190.

[78] Shen Defu, "Xuelang bei zhu 雪浪被逐," in *Wanli yehuo bian*, vol. 3 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), *juan* 27, pp. 692–693.

勸〔勤〕儉持家內助	If domestic helpmates, who run households diligently and frugally,
無兒產業成空	are childless, then the properties cannot be inherited.
良人納寵可依從	Wives can follow if their husbands take concubines,
自保賢名爲重	as self-protecting the virtuous reputation is of great importance.
不可相爭嫉妒	Wives should not conflict with or be jealous of concubines,
只宜遜讓含容	and it is only suitable for them to be humbly deferential and implicitly tolerant.
生男彼此運享〔亨〕通	By giving birth to a boy, both parties enjoy prosperous fortune,
暮景仗他侍奉[79]	and in later years of life they can rely on his service.

Advising "first wives" (*yuanpei* 元配) to accept concubines taken by their husbands, this piece contrasts with the poem titled "Jie qie shichong 戒妾恃寵" ("Forbidding Concubines to Rely on [Their Husbands'] Spoiling and Doting"), which centres on alerting concubines not to depend on being spoiled and doted upon by their husbands. Just from the two poem titles, we can already notice that Cheng's attitude towards the wife–concubine relations is to emphasise that wives and concubines should live harmoniously with each other, instead of striving for the husband's favour. However, the maintenance of such harmonious relations still serves the purpose of consolidating the patrilineal family system. As shown by the first stanza, even though wives run households satisfactorily, they will still be considered as of little value if they cannot give birth to sons for passing the familial properties to future generations. To ensure such inheritance and sustain the interests of the patrilineal kin groups to which they belong, many male

[79] Jao Tsung-i and Zhang Zhang (eds.), *Quan Mingci*, vol. 5, p. 2698.

members take concubines for the sake of producing heirs or additional heirs. Thus, Cheng advises wives to be tolerant of their husbands' decisions to take concubines and prevent having conflicts with them, so as to maintain the "virtuous reputation" (*xianming* 賢名) of the wives themselves and, more significantly, family honour. In the last two lines of the poem, Cheng then re-emphasises the importance of having boys, no matter whether they are born from the wives or concubines, such that both the wives and male offspring can enjoy good fortune. Besides, the wives' quality of life can also be ensured after the sons grow up and are able to support their parents financially. Of course, it will be ideal for wives to have their own sons. Yet, according to the theme of this poem, Cheng actually wants to imply that wives should be tolerant and feel grateful when concubines give birth to boys which can safeguard the interests of the whole family, including that of the principal wives. It is obvious that in the end, the wives' personal interests are dependent on the interests of the families and therefore it is considered morally good for wives to accept concubines as this increases the chances for patrilineal families to continue to exist.

This piece also brings up the issue concerning the status of wives and concubines in the Ming. At that time, the status difference between them in the family was still large. While wives had an absolute status in social and legal rights, and inheritance of properties, that of concubines was very low. Cheng's poem presents the fact that despite such difference in status, discord between wives and concubines was still common in families.[80] For instance, as mentioned in the poem, if the wife had no children but the concubine did, the former would often be jealous of the latter. In this regard, Cheng thus advises wives to accept concubines, emphasising that the overall harmony of the family is always more important than the interests of wives and concubines.

Although the two poems discussed above focus on Buddhist nuns and wives in families, both of them actually demonstrate the issues brought to women in the late Ming by the traditional Chinese patrilineal system. Through reading the following two pieces that regard social interactions, we can look at the other restrictions imposed on women in terms of moral considerations at that time. The first example concerns women watching

[80] Chen Baoliang 陳寶良, "Zheng ce zhi bie: Mingdai jiating shenghuo lunli zhong zhi qi qie guanxi 正側之別：明代家庭生活倫理中之妻妾關係," *Zhongguoshi yanjiu* 中國史研究, 3 (2008), pp. 123–144.

dramas:

> *Xingxin yan* Vol. 2, #198: "Jie funü guanxi 戒婦女觀戲" ("Forbidding Women to Watch Dramas"; "Xijiang yue" tune):
>
> 內眷勿容觀唱　Female dependents should not be allowed to watch dramas,
> 斜言恐動風情　as the unorthodox dialogues will probably arouse amorous feelings.
> 春心惹動最難禁　It is most difficult to inhibit desires incited by stirrings of love,
> 勾引閨門不謹　and it is indecent to seduce women who live in their quarters.
>
> 女起偷香之念　Maidens easily develop thoughts of having illicit affairs [with men];
> 孀懷竊玉之心　widows easily harbour intentions of indulging in sexual relations [with men].
> 不聞斜說不知音　Not hearing unorthodox words, one will not know lustful sounds;
> 內外須當嚴整[81]　women should be strictly decent both intrinsically and externally.

Explicitly urging women not to watch dramas, the first stanza shows that drama performances were considered as harmful to public morals in the late Ming, due to the alleged lustful connotations of their plots. These connotations, as Cheng stated in the second stanza, would negatively influence women of different ages and instigate them to take part in illicit affairs. In fact, since early Ming, the themes of drama performances had already been strictly limited by the *Da Ming lü* 大明律 (*Great Ming Code*) in order to achieve the aim of teaching morals to the audience,[82] and was in line with traditional

[81] Jao Tsung-i and Zhang Zhang (eds.), *Quan Mingci*, vol. 5, p. 2698.

[82] "Banzuo zaju 搬做雜劇," in Huai Xiaofeng 懷效鋒 (annot.), *Da Ming lü, fu Da Ming ling, Wenxing*

Confucian principles. At the same time, precisely because of these deep-rooted traditional values, especially the patriarchal thought of women being inferior to men such that women are only responsible for household duties without leaving their inner quarters, the act of women watching dramas, regardless of their themes, had long been prohibited by official authorities since the Yuan period when dramas started to flourish.[83]

From some primary sources, we can look into the strongly resistant attitude towards dramas and drama-watching by certain conservative Ming scholar-officials. Particularly, many families forbade women to watch drama performances, even at home. For instance, Chen Longzheng 陳龍正 (?–?), a late-Ming activist who organised *shanhui* 善會 ("charitable associations") and engaged in various benevolent activities for those underprivileged in the society, criticised dramatic and musical performances that were held at people's homes:

> 每見士大夫居家無樂事，搜買兒童，教習謳歌，稱為家樂，醞釀淫亂，十室而九。……優人演戲，無非淫媟，豈可令婦人童稚見之。[84]
>
> Whenever scholar-officials stay at home and find no pleasure, they search for and buy children, [hire musicians to] teach them to sing, and name their performances as "home music", which breed prurience and can be found in most of scholar-officials' families . . . . The dramas performed by these drama artists are nothing but obscene and how can they be watched by women and children?

Through this precept, it can be seen that many households in the Ming often hired actors

---

tiaoli 大明律　附　大明令　問刑條例 (Shenyang: Liaoshen shushe, 1990), *juan* 26, p. 202.

[83] However, the phenomenon of women ignoring the official prohibition of watching dramas appeared constantly in late imperial China, especially during the Qing. For a more detailed discussion on this issue, see Jiang Xiaoping 蔣小平, "'Jin' 'guan' jiaoliang: cong Ming Qing shiliao biji kan nüxing guanxi 「禁」「觀」較量：從明清史料筆記看女性觀戲," in Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan xiqu yanjiusuo *Xiqu yanjiu* bianjibu 中國藝術研究院戲曲研究所《戲曲研究》編輯部 (ed.), *Xiqu yanjiu*, vol. 85 (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 2012), pp. 256–269.

[84] See "Jiazai xia 家載下," in Wang Liqi 王利器 (ed.), *Yuan Ming Qing san dai jinhui xiaoshuo xiqu shiliao* 元明清三代禁毀小說戲曲史料 (expanded edition) (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), p. 171.

and musicians to conduct private theatrical shows, which are all regarded as licentious and therefore unsuitable for women and children to watch. Cheng, in the concluding part of his poem, also adopts the same narrative and stresses that women should maintain their strictly decent images without exposing themselves to unorthodox words from the unorthodox theatrical plays. Actually, by relating all dramatic performances to sexual matters and not conforming to proper moral values, thus prohibiting women from watching them, the poem proves again that women at that time were only supposed to remain chaste and dutiful to their families, instead of spending time in any morally irrelevant activities.

In fact, the poem also brings out the tensions between watching opera and women's social life in the social context at that time. Watching dramas was still a regular activity for many women. It is also a form of social education for them, allowing them to acquire social and cultural knowledge. However, at the same time, the late-Ming scholarly and intellectual classes always thought that drama was unfavourable to the people, thus advocating for the banning of drama.[85] In response to this tension, the poem adopts the stance of the intellectuals and supports forbidding drama for women.

Besides watching dramas, women in the late Ming were also dissuaded from forming "sworn sisterhoods" (*jiebai jiemei* 結拜姐妹 or *jiebai zimei* 結拜姊妹) with other unrelated women. Cheng Gongyuan's poem on this issue reads as follows:

> *Xingxin yan* Vol. 2, #200: "Jie jiejiao jiemei 戒結交姐妹" ("Forbidding [Women] to Form Sworn Sisterhoods"; "Xijiang yue" tune):
>
> 婦女結交姐妹　Women forming sworn sisterhoods,
> 此非良眷行藏　is not a proper conduct for good dependents.
> 往來無忌不隄防　[If they] socialise fearlessly without being cautious,
> 漫惹傍人誹謗　unrestrictedly, [they] attract slander from other people.
>
> 異姓密如膠漆　While [women with] different surnames should not stay closely connected with each other like glue and varnish,

[85] For a detailed discussion, see Ding Shumei 丁淑梅, *Qingdai yanju jinzhi yu jinxi zhiduhua yanjiu* 清代演劇禁治與禁戲制度化研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2020), pp. 135–144.

同胞遠若參商	those born of the same parents should not keep away from each other like the stars Shen and Shang.
親疏相反豈爲良	Reversing the closeness of relationship is surely not a good deed,
恐起誨淫情況[86]	which will probably cause the problem of debauching people.

The poem begins with the criticism of women making friends outside their families with other women with whom they share no blood relations, as this will draw suspicions to them of having unlawful bonds. Based on the fundamental Confucian principle of "having emotional differences towards different people according to degrees of intimacy" (*qinshu youbie* 親疏有別), Cheng states that women with different surnames, or, in other words, not related by blood, should not build close social networks together, whereas consanguineous relatives should, on the contrary, remain closely bonded. This again emphasises that women are only supposed to engage in activities within the households they belong to, otherwise they are likely to be accused of "debauching people" and corrupting public morals, by socialising with women who are not members of the same family. Concerning the friendship of sworn sisterhoods, more commonly known as "golden orchid sisterhoods" (*jinlan jiemei* 金蘭姐妹 or *jinlan zimei* 金蘭姊妹), they are usually formed by women who share similar interests or goals and involve rituals, such as oath-taking, for the formal establishment of the relationship.[87] But beyond this, the poem may also refer to sworn customs specifically among unrelated female courtesans, namely "handkerchief sisterhoods" (*shoupa zimei* 手帕姊妹), in the late Ming.[88] The opposition to sworn sisterhoods of unrelated women in general in Cheng's poem should be understood as a means to avoid the misunderstanding that ordinary women would be regarded as courtesans, who would likewise be sworn as "handkerchief sisters", thus also preventing debauchery as mentioned in the poem.

---

[86] Jao Tsung-i and Zhang Zhang (eds.), *Quan Mingci*, vol. 5, p. 2699.

[87] Li Xiangwen 李祥文, "Jiebai fengsu yanjiu 結拜風俗研究," *Shanxi shida xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 山西師大學報（社會科學版）, 36.6 (2009), pp. 100–103.

[88] Cui Ruonan 崔若男, "Shoupa zimei: Ming Qing Jiangnan diqu changji jiebai xisu yanjiu 手帕姊妹：明清江南地區娼妓結拜習俗研究," *Wenhua yichan* 文化遺產, 2 (2017), pp. 64–70.

Religious participation also causes this kind of sisterhood to take shape, including the organisation of *xianghui* 香會 ("pilgrimage associations") for women to offer incense and make pilgrimages at Buddhist or Daoist temples.[89] However, women burning incense was prohibited during the Ming, as the *Da Ming lü* includes a decree to severely punish women who burn incense in monasteries in order to put an end to blasphemy.[90] Every year, it was only during the period of celebration of the Lantern Festival (*Yuanxiaojie* 元宵節) when women were officially allowed to go to temples, offer incense, and attend celebratory activities together, which had become a custom over time.[91] As for the rest of the year, women participating in social activities with other women was still a taboo. Yet, many women probably still attended religious activities outside their home, and therefore there was a need for Cheng to try to alert women to abstain from such acts in his poem.

5. Conclusion

This paper has delved into the didactic *ci*-poetry composed by Cheng Gongyuan, a late-Ming local militia member. It begins with a discussion on the relations between *ci*-poetry and the didacticism during the Ming period. Although *ci*-poetry was not an extensively popular literary genre at that time, many didactic *ci*-poems still appeared in various types of popular literature. Most of these morally instructive poems, although not written in literary styles like those in the Song, were composed to the simple-structured "Xijiang yue" tune, which could facilitate the promotion of the prevalent social trend of moral exhortation in Ming China.

This paper focused on Cheng Gongyuan's *Xingxin yan*, an unresearched morality

[89] For a detailed discussion on the history of pilgrimages at various sacred sites in China, see Susan Naquin and Yü Chün-fang, "Introduction: Pilgrimage in China," in Susan Naquin and Yü Chün-fang (eds.), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 1–38.

[90] "Xiedu shenming 褻瀆神明," in Huai Xiaofeng (annot.), *Da Ming lü, fu Da Ming ling, Wenxing tiaoli*, *juan* 11, p. 87.

[91] Chen Hsi-yuan 陳熙遠, "Zhongguo ye wei mian: Ming Qing shiqi de Yuanxiao, yejin yu kuanghuan 中國夜未眠——明清時期的元宵、夜禁與狂歡," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊, 75.2 (2004), pp. 304–315.

book which serves to exhort readers to do good and abstain from morally bad acts through 206 "Xijiang yue" and four "Zhegu tian" *ci*-poems. The poems selected for analysis include introductory and concluding pieces, works which advise people to perform good deeds and eschew vices, as well as poems which pay attention to proper and improper behaviour of women. They not only prove that the *Xingxin yan* aimed at spreading virtuous messages to everyone in the society, but they also show that Cheng adhered closely to Confucian teachings and values as an author. Because of this adherence, most of his poems revolve around two major aspects. The first one involves issues related to an individual's life and the personal conduct of people belonging to different social strata, such as choosing a career in order to sustain one's life, and the problems emerging when people shot at birds and women chose to become Buddhist nuns. Through these topics, Cheng demonstrates his views towards different occupations and how they are associated with Confucian thoughts, the need for protecting animals from Confucian and Buddhist perspectives, and the issue of how Buddhist nuns may affect female chastity and the moral reputation of families. Another aspect covered by Cheng's poems deals with interpersonal relationships, traditions, and customs, particularly those related to families and communities in a collective sense. For instance, Cheng discusses the preparation of funeral and burial rites by families, the act of drowning infant girls, as well as the reasons why wives should accept concubines, and why women should not watch dramas and form sworn sisterhoods. Correspondingly, Cheng brings out his thoughts regarding the phenomenon of households conducting funeral and burial rites which do not match their financial status, how he castigates the corrupted customs of female infanticide, the significance of maintaining good relations between wives and concubines for safeguarding the interests of patriarchal families, the obscene impression of dramatic performances, and the problem of debauchery and offending public morals if women socialise with unrelated women. As we can see, even though Cheng mainly centres on topics related to personal behaviour and interpersonal bonds, the social trends and issues discussed in his poems are still very diverse.

At a strict literary level, Cheng Gongyuan's *ci*-poems are indeed not favourable, as they are written solely for the functional purpose of providing direct didactic instructions to people unidirectionally, without involving personal emotions of the author. In literary

terms, Cheng's *ci*-poems apparently follow the more intellectually oriented formula of "transmitting the Way [of the Ancients] by literature" (*wen yi zaidao* 文以載道) instead of the emotionally oriented tradition "poetry articulates [one's] preoccupations" (*shi yan zhi* 詩言志). As we can see, Cheng's works frequently "exhort" (*quan*) or directly make suggestions to "forbid" (*jie*) people from performing certain behaviours, with expressions such as "must" (*bixu* 必須) and "it is only suitable" (*zhi yi* 只宜). Leaving basically no room for readers to reflect on their own situations or the human condition as a whole, the *ci*-poems included in the *Xingxin yan* after all only possess functional significance and value. As for language, although allusions are used in Cheng's works, they mainly serve a didactic function. The little refined, figurative, or expressive rhetoric styles adopted in the verses are insufficient for creating an overall image of these *ci*-poems as aesthetically "non-vulgar" or even "elegant" (*ya*), the feature which is regarded as good in general. These factors all cause the lack of literary quality in Cheng's works.

However, from an educational perspective that is related to the textual form of morality books, the *Xingxin yan* is a very good teaching material guiding people to do good under the corresponding conditions of their own socio-economic backgrounds in the late-Ming context, as compared to other historical or then contemporary morality books that focused on direct moral instructions in a generic tone. Cheng's works can be described as "(aesthetically) bad poems for the (moral) good" that are connected with people's socio-economic backgrounds and even the maintenance of social order at that time. Cheng succeeded in using the "Xijiang yue" tune, which is suitable for composing popular-style *ci*-poems, to amplify and concretise exhortative thoughts for people regardless of their social classes, occupations, genders, and ages that often appear to be straightforward. These poems are helpful for performing a morality book's function of propagating didactic ideas for the general public to maintain a Confucian-based social order. They also uniquely include the author's thoughtful observations and subjective criticisms of the late-Ming social realities. Profoundly reflecting the complexity of late-Ming social life, these works made the *Xingxin yan* a morality book with distinctive contextual characteristics of that time.

Only twelve of Cheng Gongyuan's poems are discussed in this paper, with the rest of his works containing many other didactic messages closely in line with Confucian

thoughts, which are worth looking into as well. Along with the didactic *ci*-poetry found in various kinds of literature of different historical periods, the exhortative Chinese literary compositions are still a subject to be further studied for observing how these instructive ideas were propagated in premodern Chinese literature.

Appendix: List of *Ci*-Poem Titles in Cheng Gongyuan's *Xingxin Yan*

Volume 1

No.	Original title in Chinese	Original title in Hanyu pinyin	Translated title in English
Introductory part (Written to the "Xijiang yue" tune)			
1	調引	*Diaoyin*	Preface to the ["Xijiang Yue"] Tunes
2	勸世	*Quanshi*	Exhorting the World
Contents (Written to the "Xijiang yue" tune)			
3	孝	*Xiao*	Filial Piety
4	悌	*Ti*	Fraternal Deference
5	忠	*Zhong*	Faithfulness
6	信	*Xin*	Sincerity
7	禮	*Li*	Propriety
8	義	*Yi*	Righteousness
9	廉	*Lian*	Integrity
10	恥	*Chi*	Sense of Shame
11	士	*Shi*	Scholar-Gentry
12	農	*Nong*	Peasants
13	工	*Gong*	Artisans
14	商	*Shang*	Merchants
15	漁	*Yu*	Fishermen
16	樵	*Qiao*	Woodcutters
17	耕	*Geng*	Ploughmen
18	牧	*Mu*	Herdsmen
19	酒	*Jiu*	Alcoholism
20	色	*Se*	Lust
21	財	*Cai*	Avarice
22	氣	*Qi*	Temperament
23	君臣	*Junchen*	Rulers and Subjects
24	父子	*Fuzi*	Fathers and Sons

No.	Original title in Chinese	Original title in Hanyu pinyin	Translated title in English
25	夫婦	*Fufu*	Husbands and Wives
26	兄弟	*Xiongdi*	Elder and Younger Brothers
27	朋友	*Pengyou*	Friends
28	宗族	*Zongzu*	Clans
29	鄰里	*Linli*	Neighbours
30	親戚	*Qinqi*	Relatives
31	東道	*Dongdao*	Hosts
32	西賓	*Xibin*	Private Teachers
33	坐賈	*Zuogu*	Stationery Merchants
34	行商	*Xingshang*	Itinerant Merchants
35	大戶	*Dahu*	Landlord Households
36	佃戶	*Dianhu*	Tenant Households
37	里長	*Lizhang*	Village Heads
38	排年	*Painian*	Clerks and Runners on a Rotating Basis
39	甲首	*Jiashou*	Tithing Chiefs
40	東人	*Dongren*	Masters
41	僕從	*Pucong*	Servants
42	僧家	*Sengjia*	Buddhist Monastics
43	道家	*Daojia*	Daoist Priests
44	醫士	*Yishi*	Medical Scholars
45	術士	*Shushi*	Shaman-Officials
46	仕路	*Shilu*	Paths to Officialdom
47	訟師	*Songshi*	Litigation Masters
48	歇家	*Xiejia*	Agents
49	夥計	*Huoji*	Staffs
50	牙行	*Yahang*	Brokerage Firms
51	渡子	*Duzi*	Ferrymen
52	舟人	*Zhouren*	Boatmen
53	腳夫	*Jiaofu*	Porters
54	教子	*Jiaozi*	Educating Sons
55	訓女	*Xunnü*	Instructing Daughters

No.	Original title in Chinese	Original title in Hanyu pinyin	Translated title in English
56	義夫	*Yifu*	Righteous Husbands
57	節婦	*Jiefu*	Chaste Widows
58	媒妁	*Meishuo*	Matchmakers
59	婚姻	*Hunyin*	Marriages
60	娶婦	*Qufu*	Marrying Women
61	嫁女	*Jianü*	Marrying Off Daughters
62	續絃	*Xuxian*	Remarriages
63	繼室	*Jishi*	Second Wives
64	喪葬	*Sangzang*	Funerals and Burials
65	慎終	*Shenzhong*	Attentive to Parents' Funeral Rites
66	追遠	*Zhuiyuan*	Ancestor Venerations
67	興古禮	*Xing guli*	Promoting Ancient Rites
68	舉鄉約	*Ju xiangyue*	Organising Community Covenants
69	立義塾	*Li yishu*	Establishing Compulsory Schools
70	勸鄉宦	*Quan xianghuan*	Exhorting Village Gentry
71	警公子	*Jing gongzi*	Warning Sons of Privilege
72	勸少年	*Quan shaonian*	Exhorting Youth
73	慰困者	*Wei kunzhe*	Consoling the Confused
74	贈援兵	*Zeng yuanbing*	Advising the Relief Troops
75	示酋奴	*Shi qiunu*	Instructing Native Slaves
76	警賊盜	*Jing zeidao*	Warning Burglars and Robbers
77	諭丫剪	*Yu yajian*	Advising Pickpockets
78	警白捕	*Jing baibu*	Warning Thieves
79	警光棍	*Jing guanggun*	Warning Hooligans
80	戒藥魚	*Jie yaoyu*	Abstaining from Drugging Fish
81	戒打鳥	*Jie daniao*	Abstaining from Shooting Birds
82	勸放禽	*Quan fangqin*	Exhorting to Liberate Birds
83	戒殺生	*Jie shasheng*	Abstaining from Killing Animals
84	戒食義物	*Jie shi yiwu*	Abstaining from Eating Animals
85	警借什物	*Jing jie shiwu*	Warning for Borrowing Miscellaneous Items

No.	Original title in Chinese	Original title in Hanyu pinyin	Translated title in English
86	安命待時	*Anming daishi*	Being Contented with Life and Waiting for the Opportunities
87	平處諸兒	*Ping chu zhu er*	Treating Children Fairly
88	早赴酒筵	*Zao fu jiuyan*	Attending Banquets Early
89	戒賣官產	*Jie mai guanchan*	Abstaining from Selling State Properties
90	戒買官產	*Jie mai guanchan*	Abstaining from Buying State Properties
91	戒使假銀	*Jie shi jiayin*	Abstaining from Using Counterfeit Money
92	戒用重秤	*Jie yong zhongcheng*	Abstaining from Using Weighted Scales
93	炎涼世態	*Yanliang shitai*	Vicissitudes of Life
94	反覆人心	*Fanfu renxin*	People's Deceptive Minds
95	勸公門諸役	*Quan gongmen zhu yi*	Exhorting Civil Servants
96	勸莫進衙門	*Quan mo jin yamen*	Exhorting Not to Enter Government Offices
97	若懶真無益	*Ruo lan zhen wuyi*	Laziness Really Has No Benefit
98	惟勤最有功	*Wei qin zui yougong*	Only Diligence Is the Most Meritorious
99	休娶虛情妓	*Xiu qu xuqing ji*	Not to Marry False-Hearted Prostitutes
100	莫買旭奋產	*Mo mai kela chan*	Not to Buy Petty Properties
101	妻賢夫禍少	*Qi xian fu huoshao*	The Husband of a Virtuous Wife Seldom Suffers Misfortunes
102	子孝父心寬	*Zi xiao fu xinkuan*	A Filial Son Gratifies His Father's Heart-Mind
Concluding part			
103	俚調尾 (Written to the "Xijiang yue" tune)	*Li diaowei*	Postface to the ["Xijiang Yue"] Tunes, under the Rustic Themes
104	從邪無結果 (Written to the "Zhegu tian" tune)	*Congxie wu jieguo*	Doing Evil Yields Nothing
105	歸正有收成 (Written to the "Zhegu tian" tune)	*Guizheng you shoucheng*	Reverting to Righteous Deeds Brings Rewards

Volume 2

No.	Original title in Chinese	Original title in Hanyu pinyin	Translated title in English
Introductory part (Written to the “Xijiang yue” tune)			
106	調引	*Diaoyin*	Preface to the [“Xijiang Yue”] Tunes
107	勸世	*Quanshi*	Exhorting the World
Contents (Written to the “Xijiang yue” tune)			
108	富	*Fu*	Affluence
109	貴	*Gui*	Nobility
110	貧	*Pin*	Poverty
111	賤	*Jian*	Lowliness
112	天理	*Tianli*	Heavenly Principles
113	人心	*Renxin*	People’s Minds
114	創業	*Chuangye*	Starting Businesses
115	守業	*Shouye*	Safeguarding Businesses
116	置產	*Zhichan*	Acquiring Properties
117	遷居	*Qianju*	Changing Dwelling Places
118	公平	*Gongping*	Fairness
119	刻剝	*Kebo*	Harshness
120	立志	*Lizhi*	Setting Aspirations
121	戒性	*Jiexing*	Refraining from [Bad] Temper
122	慎言	*Shenyan*	Being Cautious in Speech
123	忍耐	*Rennai*	Patience
124	悔過	*Huiguo*	Repentance
125	遷善	*Qianshan*	Reverting to Good Deeds
126	種德	*Zhongde*	Cultivating Virtues
127	懷刑	*Huaixing*	Being Afraid of Laws
128	陰隲	*Yinzhi*	Hidden Merits
129	方便	*Fangbian*	Helping Others
130	存心	*Cunxin*	Preserving [Benevolent] Minds
131	積善	*Jishan*	Accumulating Merits
132	息訟	*Xisong*	Pacifying Disputes
133	省非	*Shengfei*	Reducing Quarrels

No.	Original title in Chinese	Original title in Hanyu pinyin	Translated title in English
134	禁邪	*Jinxie*	Forbidding Heterodoxy
135	却病	*Quebing*	Getting Rid of Illnesses
136	戒嫖	*Jiepiao*	Abstaining from Visiting Prostitutes
137	戒賭	*Jiedu*	Abstaining from Gambling
138	管軍官	*Guanjun guan*	Military Officials
139	牧民官	*Mumin guan*	Governors
140	警遏糴	*Jing etiao*	Warning against Closing Granaries [and Manipulating Food Supply]
141	慰厄遇	*Wei eyu*	Consoling about Encountering Misfortunes
142	警教唆	*Jing jiaosuo*	Warning against Abetment
143	戒驕傲	*Jie jiao'ao*	Abstaining from Being Arrogant
144	戒輕諾	*Jie qingnuo*	Abstaining from Making Promises Casually
145	戒犯上	*Jie fanshang*	Abstaining from Offending Superiors
146	警欺下	*Jing qixia*	Warning against Bullying Inferiors
147	戒苛禮	*Jie keli*	Abstaining from Over-Elaborate Formalities
148	戒溺女	*Jie ninü*	Abstaining from Drowning Girls
149	戒悔親	*Jie huiqin*	Abstaining from Breaking Off Engagements
150	戒多寵	*Jie duochong*	Abstaining from Polygynous Marriages
151	擇藝資身	*Zeyi zishen*	Choosing a Career to Make a Living
152	壯圖晚景	*Zhuang tu wanjing*	Planning for Old Age in the Prime of Life
153	愛惜祖屋	*Aixi zuwu*	Taking Good Care of Ancestral Houses
154	扶持門墻	*Fuchi menqiang*	Reinforcing Doors and Walls [for Houses]
155	不念舊惡	*Bu nian jiu'e*	Letting Go of Old Grudges
156	遠避嫌疑	*Yuan bi xianyi*	Keeping Far Away from Suspicions
157	萬事繇命	*Wanshi youming*	Everything Is Determined by Fate
158	求大丈夫	*Qiu dazhangfu*	Asking Forthright Men for Help
159	濟急時無	*Ji jishiwu*	Helping Others When They Are Most in Need

No.	Original title in Chinese	Original title in Hanyu pinyin	Translated title in English
160	光前可喜	*Guangqian kexi*	Shedding Lustre on Ancestors Is Gratifying
161	裕後莫圖	*Yuhou mo tu*	Not to Pursue Bringing Benefits to Posterity
162	自重有益	*Zizhong youyi*	Self-Respecting Is Beneficial
163	誇誕無成	*Kuadan wucheng*	Boasting Achieves Nothing
164	警煉爐火	*Jing lian luhuo*	Alerting about Refining [Elixir] in Furnace Fire
165	戒謀風水	*Jie mou fengshui*	Abstaining from Planning for Geomantic Purposes
166	戒伐墳木	*Jie fa fenmu*	Abstaining from Cutting Down Trees Planted beside [Ancestors'] Graves
167	戒胡怪人	*Jie hu guairen*	Abstaining from Blaming Others Rashly
168	戒使奸詐	*Jie shi jianzha*	Abstaining from Practising Evil Deceits
169	戒興盛會	*Jie xing shenghui*	Abstaining from Initiating Grand Assemblies
170	戒觀盛會	*Jie guan shenghui*	Abstaining from Visiting Grand Assemblies
171	清官有政	*Qingguan youzheng*	Non-corrupt Officials Are Politically Beneficial
172	妓美無情	*Jimei wuqing*	Beautiful Prostitutes Are Heartless
173	勸妓從良	*Quan ji congliang*	Exhorting Prostitutes to Get Married
174	勸尼還俗	*Quan ni huansu*	Exhorting Buddhist Nuns to Return to the Laity
175	勸遣大婢	*Quan qian dabi*	Exhorting to Release Maids [for the Sake of Their Marriages]
176	警省驛遞	*Jing sheng yidi*	Warning against Reducing Relay Courier Services
177	警管錢糧	*Jing guan qianliang*	Warning for Administering [the Affairs of] Taxes and Duties
178	戒僕習梨園	*Jie pu xi liyuan*	Forbidding Servants to Join the Pear Garden [Theatrical Troupe]
179	禁賊扳良善	*Jin zei ban liangshan*	Forbidding Framing Good People Viciously with False Accusations
180	戒妬有笑無	*Jie duyou xiaowu*	Abstaining from Envying of the Rich and Laughing at the Poor

No.	Original title in Chinese	Original title in Hanyu pinyin	Translated title in English
181	戒酷好博弈	*Jie kuhao boyi*	Abstaining from Obsessing about Gambling and Chess Games
182	戒濫交朋友	*Jie lan jiao pengyou*	Abstaining from Making Friends Indiscriminately
183	戒請客過豐	*Jie qingke guo feng*	Abstaining from Inviting Guests to Overly Sumptuous Dinners
184	勸早完國課	*Quan zao wan guoke*	Exhorting to Pay State Taxes as Soon as Possible
185	戒欺隱錢糧	*Jie qiyin qianliang*	Abstaining from Evading Taxes and Duties
186	勸富捨茶亭	*Quan fu she chating*	Exhorting the Rich to Make Donations for [Building] Tea Pavilions
187	勸諭閨門	*Quanyu guimen*	Exhorting [Married Women Who Reside in Their] Inner Quarters
188	奉侍公姑	*Fengshi gonggu*	Serving Parents-in-Law
189	和睦妯娌	*Hemu zhouli*	Harmonising [Relationship between] Sisters-in-Law
190	奉勸慈母	*Fengquan cimu*	Advising Kind Mothers
191	奉勸繼母	*Fengquan jimu*	Advising Stepmothers
192	勸妻容妾	*Quan qi rongqie*	Exhorting Wives to Accept Concubines
193	戒妾恃寵	*Jie qie shichong*	Forbidding Concubines to Rely on [Their Husbands'] Spoiling and Doting
194	警夫溺愛	*Jing fu ni'ai*	Warning Husbands against Loving Concubines [More than Wives]
195	諭婦胎教	*Yu fu taijiao*	Advising Pregnant Women on Prenatal Education
196	勸善處婢	*Quan shan chu bi*	Exhorting to Treat Maids Well
197	戒婦女燒香	*Jie funü shaoxiang*	Forbidding Women to Burn Joss Sticks [and Worship the Buddha]
198	戒婦女觀戲	*Jie funü guanxi*	Forbidding Women to Watch Dramas
199	戒婦女看燈	*Jie funü kandeng*	Forbidding Women to Visit Lighting Fairs
200	戒結交姐妹	*Jie jiejiao jiemei*	Forbidding [Women] to Form Sworn Sisterhoods
201	戒女子從師	*Jie nüzi congshi*	Forbidding Women to Learn from Teachers

No.	Original title in Chinese	Original title in Hanyu pinyin	Translated title in English
202	莫嫌貧困夫	*Mo xian pinkun fu*	Not to Disregard Poor Husbands
203	不棄糟糠婦	*Bu qi zaokang fu*	Not to Abandon Chaff Wives [of Poorer Days]
204	受恩宜退步	*Shou'en yi tuibu*	Better Step Back after Receiving Benefits [in Officialdom]
205	得意早回頭	*Deyi zao huitou*	[Better] Turn Back as Soon as Possible When Feeling Proud
206	了却些些債	*Liaoque xiexie zhai*	Settling Petty Debts
207	酬還浩浩恩	*Chouhuan haohao en*	Repaying Great Favours
Concluding part			
208	俗調尾 (Written to the "Xijiang yue" tune)	*Su diaowei*	Postface to the ["Xijiang Yue"] Tunes, under the Unrefined Themes
209	靜裡乾坤大 (Written to the "Zhegu tian" tune)	*Jing li qiankun da*	The Universe Appears Vast When One's Mind Is Peaceful
210	太平氣象新 (Written to the "Zhegu tian" tune)	*Taiping qixiang xin*	The State's Ambience Takes On a New Look in Peaceful Times

References

1. Classic Works

Chen Que 陳確. *Chen Que ji* 陳確集, vol. 2. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1979.

Hao Yulin 郝玉麟 et al. (eds.). *Fujian tongzhi 2* 福建通志（二）, *Yingyin Wenyuange siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書, vol. 528. Taipei 臺北: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan 臺灣商務印書館, 1986.

He Yan 何晏 et al. (annots.). *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏, in *Shisanjing zhushu* zhengli weiyuanhui《十三經注疏》整理委員會 (comp.), *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, vol. 23. Beijing 北京: Beijing daxue chubanshe 北京大學出版社, 2000.

Huai Xiaofeng 懷效鋒 (annot.). *Da Ming lü, fu Da Ming ling, Wenxing tiaoli* 大明律 附 大明令 問刑條例. Shenyang 瀋陽: Liaoshen shushe 遼瀋書社, 1990.

Huang Peng 黃鵬 (annot.). *Jia Dao shiji jianzhu* 賈島詩集箋注. Chengdu 成都: Bashu shushe 巴蜀書社, 2002.

Jao Tsung-i 饒宗頤 and Zhang Zhang 張璋 (eds.). *Quan Mingci* 全明詞. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2004.

Kong Fanli 孔凡禮 (ed.). *Quan Songci buji* 全宋詞補輯. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1981.

Li Yimang 李一氓. *Yimang tiba* 一氓題跋, ed. Wu Taichang 吳泰昌. Beijing 北京: Sanlian shudian 三聯書店, 1981.

Shen Defu 沈德符. *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬曆野獲編, vol. 3. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1959.

Sima Qian 司馬遷. *Shiji* 史記, annot. Pei Yin 裴駰 et al., vol. 9. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2014.

Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 (ed.). *Quan Songci* 全宋詞. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1965.

Tao Zongyi 陶宗儀. *Nancun chuogeng lu* 南村輟耕錄. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1959.

Wang Liqi 王利器 (ed.). *Yuan Ming Qing san dai jinhui xiaoshuo xiqu shiliao* 元明清三代禁毀小說戲曲史料 (expanded edition). Shanghai 上海: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1981.

Wang Xianshen 王先慎. *Han Feizi jijie* 韓非子集解, annot. Zhong Zhe 鍾哲. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1998.

Wu Hengzhao 吳衡照. *Lianziju cihua* 蓮子居詞話, in Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 (ed.), *Cihua congbian* 詞話叢編, vol. 3. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1986.

Xie Zhangting 謝章鋌. *Duqi shanzhuang cihua* 賭棋山莊詞話, in Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 (ed.), *Cihua congbian* 詞話叢編, vol. 4. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1986.

Xu Qilong 徐企龍 (ed.). *Xin quanbu shimin beilan bianyong wenlin huijin wanshu yuanhai 2* 新全補士民備覽便用文林彙錦萬書淵海（二）(Jianyang 建陽: Jishantang 積善堂, n.d.), in Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫 et al. (eds.), *Zhongguo riyong leishu jicheng* 中國日用類書集成, vol. 7. Tokyo 東京: Kyūko shoin 汲古書院, 2001.

Yuan Huang 袁黃. *Liaofan si xun quanjie* 了凡四訓全解, ed. and trans. Han Fei 韓菲. Beijing 北京: Zhongguo Huaqiao chubanshe 中國華僑出版社, 2018.

Zhao Qi 趙岐 et al. (annots.). *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子注疏, in *Shisanjing zhushu* zhengli weiyuanhui《十三經注疏》整理委員會 (comp.), *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, vol. 25. Beijing 北京: Beijing daxue chubanshe 北京大學出版社, 2000.

Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 et al. (annots.). *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義, in *Shisanjing zhushu* zhengli weiyuanhui《十三經注疏》整理委員會 (comp.), *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, vol. 12. Beijing 北京: Beijing daxue chubanshe 北京大學出版社, 2000.

Zhou Mingchu 周明初 and Ye Ye 葉曄 (eds.). *Quan Mingci bubian* 全明詞補編. Hangzhou 杭州: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe 浙江大學出版社, 2007.

Zhu Bolu 朱柏廬. *Zhuzi jiaxun* 朱子家訓, annot. Li Muhua 李牧華. Lanzhou 蘭州: Gansu renmin chubanshe 甘肅人民出版社, 1990.

Zhu Yizun 朱彝尊. *Pushuting ji* 曝書亭集, vol. 1. Shanghai 上海: Shijie shuju 世界書局, 1937.

2. Modern Works

"To the Tune 'The Moon over the West River,'" https://sourcebook.stanford.edu/sites/all/modules/custom/vm/VersioningMachine/texts/su_shi_pingshan_hall.html, last accessed on 18 June 2024.

Brokaw, Cynthia Joanne. *The Ledgers of Merit and Demerit: Social Change and Moral Order in Late Imperial China*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991. doi: 10.1515/9781400861941

Chang Jianhua 常建華. *Hunyin neiwai de gudai nüxing* 婚姻內外的古代女性. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2006.

———. "Mingdai niying wenti chutan 明代溺嬰問題初探," in Zhang Guogang 張國剛 (ed.), *Zhongguo shehui lishi pinglun* 中國社會歷史評論, vol. 4. Beijing 北京: Shangwu yinshuguan 商務印書館, 2002, pp. 121–136.

Chen Baoliang 陳寶良. "Zheng ce zhi bie: Mingdai jiating shenghuo lunli zhong zhi qi qie guanxi 正側之別：明代家庭生活倫理中之妻妾關係," *Zhongguoshi yanjiu* 中國史研究, 3, 2008, pp. 123–144.

Chen Hsi-yuan 陳熙遠. "Zhongguo ye wei mian: Ming Qing shiqi de Yuanxiao, yejin yu kuanghuan 中國夜未眠——明清時期的元宵、夜禁與狂歡," *Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo jikan* 中央研究院歷史語言研究所集刊, 75.2, 2004, pp. 283–329. doi: 10.6355/BIHPAS.200406.0283

Chen Lai 陳來. *You wu zhi jing: Wang Yangming zhexue de jingshen* 有無之境——王陽明哲學的精神. Beijing 北京: Renmin chubanshe 人民出版社, 1991.

Chen Xia 陳霞. *Daojiao quanshan shu yanjiu* 道教勸善書研究. Chengdu 成都: Bashu shushe 巴蜀書社, 1999.

Chen Yuan 陳垣. *Chen Yuan xueshu lunwenji* 陳垣學術論文集, vol. 1. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1980.

Cui Ruonan 崔若男. "Shoupa zimei: Ming Qing Jiangnan diqu changji jiebai xisu yanjiu 手帕姊妹：明清江南地區娼妓結拜習俗研究," *Wenhua yichan* 文化遺產, 2, 2017, pp. 64–70.

Ding Shumei 丁淑梅. *Qingdai yanju jinzhi yu jinxi zhiduhua yanjiu* 清代演劇禁治與禁戲制度化研究. Beijing 北京: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 中國社會科學出版社, 2020.

Gill, John, and Susan Tidwell (eds.). *After Many Autumns: A Collection of Chinese Buddhist Literature*, trans. John Balcom. Los Angeles: Buddha's Light Publishing, 2011.

Gong Zongjie 龔宗傑. *Mingdai xiqu zhong de cizuo yanjiu* 明代戲曲中的詞作研究. Hong Kong 香港: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2019.

Handlin Smith, Joanna. *The Art of Doing Good: Charity in Late Ming China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009. doi: 10.1525/9780520943506

Ho Shu-yi 何淑宜. *Mingdai shishen yu tongsu wenhua: yi sangzang lisu wei li de kaocha* 明代士紳與通俗文化——以喪葬禮俗為例的考察. Taipei 臺北: Guoli Taiwan shifan daxue lishi yanjiusuo 國立臺灣師範大學歷史研究所, 2000.

Jiang Xiaoping 蔣小平. "'Jin' 'guan' jiaoliang: cong Ming Qing shiliao biji kan nüxing guanxi「禁」「觀」較量：從明清史料筆記看女性觀戲," in Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan xiqu yanjiusuo *Xiqu yanjiu* bianjibu 中國藝術研究院戲曲研究所《戲曲

研究》編輯部 (ed.), *Xiqu yanjiu* 戲曲研究, vol. 85. Beijing 北京: Wenhua yishu chubanshe 文化藝術出版社, 2012, pp. 256–269.

Leung, Angela Ki Che 梁其姿. *Shishan yu jiaohua: Ming Qing shiqi de cishan zuzhi* 施善與教化：明清時期的慈善組織. Beijing 北京: Beijing shifan daxue chubanshe 北京師範大學出版社, 2013.

Li Xiangwen 李祥文. "Jiebai fengsu yanjiu 結拜風俗研究," *Shanxi shida xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 山西師大學報（社會科學版）, 36.6, 2009, pp. 100–103.

Li Xinjun 李信軍 (ed. & trans.). *Daojiao quanshan shu: Taishang ganying pian shiyi* 道教勸善書：太上感應篇釋義. Beijing 北京: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe 宗教文化出版社, 2009.

Mungello, D. E. *Drowning Girls in China: Female Infanticide since 1650*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008.

———. *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (3rd edition). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009.

Naquin, Susan, and Yü Chün-fang. "Introduction: Pilgrimage in China," in Susan Naquin and Yü Chün-fang (eds.), *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, pp. 1–38. doi: 10.2307/jj.8441747.6

Ōki Yasushi 大木康. "Mingmo 'eseng xiaoshuo' chutan 明末「惡僧小說」初探," *Zhongzheng Hanxue yanjiu* 中正漢學研究, 20, 2012, pp. 183–212.

Poo Mu-chou. *Ghosts and Religious Life in Early China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. doi: 10.1017/9781009086523

Sakai Tadao. "Confucianism and Popular Educational Works," in Wm. Theodore de Bary and The Conference on Ming Thought (eds.), *Self and Society in Ming Thought*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970, pp. 331–366.

Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫. *Zhongguo shanshu yanjiu* 中國善書研究 (expanded edition), trans. Liu Yuebing 劉岳兵 et al., vol. 1. Nanjing 南京: Jiangsu renmin chubanshe 江蘇人民出版社, 2010.

Wang Chao 汪超. "Lun Mingdai riyong leishu yu ci de chuanbo 論明代日用類書與詞的傳播," *Tushu yu qingbao* 圖書與情報, 2, 2010, pp. 140–144.

Wang Wei-yung 王偉勇 and Hsueh Nai-wen 薛乃文. *Cixue mian mian guan* 詞學面面觀, vol. 1. Taipei 臺北: Liren shuju 里仁書局, 2012.

Wu Junqing. "Sex in the Cloister: Behind the Image of the 'Criminal Monk' in Ming Courtroom Tales," *T'oung Pao*, 105.5–6, 2019, pp. 545–586. doi: 10.1163/15685322-10556P02

Wu Zhen 吳震. *Mingmo Qingchu quanshan yundong sixiang yanjiu* 明末清初勸善運動思想研究. Taipei 臺北: Guoli Taiwan daxue chuban zhongxin 國立臺灣大學出版中心, 2009. doi: 10.6327/NTUPRS-9789860193053

Xie Guozhen 謝國楨. *Mingmo Qingchu de xuefeng* 明末清初的學風. Shanghai 上海: Shanghai shudian chubanshe 上海書店出版社, 2006.

Xie Taofang 謝桃坊 (ed.). *Tang Song cipu cuibian* 唐宋詞譜粹編. Chengdu 成都: Sichuan renmin chubanshe 四川人民出版社, 2010.

Xu Qian 徐倩. "Tang Song 'Xijiang yue' ci yanjiu 唐宋〈西江月〉詞研究," MA Thesis, Nanjing 南京: Nanjing shifan daxue 南京師範大學, 2012.

Yü Chün-fang. *The Renewal of Buddhism in China: Zhuhong and the Late Ming Synthesis* (fortieth anniversary edition), with a foreword by Daniel B. Stevenson. New York: Columbia University Press, 2020. doi: 10.7312/yu--19852

Zhang Zhongmou 張仲謀. "Mingdai huaben xiaoshuo zhong de cizuo kaolun 明代話本小說中的詞作考論," *Ming Qing xiaoshuo yanjiu* 明清小說研究, 1, 2008, pp. 202–216.

Zhou Mingchu 周明初. *Wan Ming shiren xintai ji wenxue ge'an* 晚明士人心態及文學個案. Beijing 北京: Dongfang chubanshe 東方出版社, 1997.

晚明時期的勸善詞：以程公遠《醒心諺》為例

伍展楓
法蘭克福大學漢學系
chinfung027@hotmail.com

摘　要

晚明勸善之風遍及社會各方面，包括文學。除戲劇和小說等傳統文學體裁外，在當時廣泛流傳的善書中也可見以勸善為主題的文學作品。這些善書皆旨在向大眾宣揚正統道德標準和價值觀，勸人行善止惡。其中一部早遭遺忘的結合文學與勸善的善書，是由晚明地方民兵程公遠所撰的《醒心諺》，收錄了 210 闋具有道德教化意義的詞作。在這批詞作中，有 206 闋採用了詞牌〈西江月〉。蓋〈西江月〉詞式簡潔，易於誦讀，故常用於勸善詞。然而，亦因語言俚俗，程詞雖向社會各界明確傳達勸善旨意，作品的文學性卻不高。透過研析程氏《醒心諺》中不同主題的詞作，本文嘗試了解其作品如何回應晚明的勸善思潮和社會問題，並觀程氏創作這些粗俗且缺乏文學性之詞作的原因。

關鍵詞：晚明詞，勸善詞，善書，〈西江月〉，《醒心諺》，程公遠

（收稿日期：2024. 1. 22；修正稿日期：2024. 6. 28；通過刊登日期：2024. 8. 21）