

TO ENTERTAIN AND RENEW: OPERAS, PUPPET PLAYS
AND RITUAL IN SOUTH CHINA

by

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Abstract

Operas and puppet plays have long been performed both to entertain gods and people, and to thank the gods for renewing the life forces of the community. Such performances are carried out all over China. With special attention devoted to the religious dimensions of Cantonese opera in Hong Kong and marionette theatre in western Fujian, this Ph.D. thesis is a preliminary attempt to examine the religious traditions of regional operas in south China. Supplemented by some written sources, the present study is based on face-to-face interviews with actors and puppeteers, as well as direct observations of their religious practices.

The first research aim is to discuss the inseparable relationship between traditional opera and religion in China (especially the southeastern part) from the ancient periods up to the present. Important or auspicious occasions are often accompanied by puppet or/and opera performances. The second aim is to examine the beliefs and practices of actors of regional operas in south China, especially Cantonese opera players and marionettists in western Fujian, with special attention devoted to the birthday celebrations their main occupational deities. It is important to point out that no single forms of Chinese traditional opera can be classified in terms of “either-or” categories. The question is a matter of degree. Traditional literary operas contain some religious elements and ritual operas also include some literary or artistic elements. There are neither absolute traditional literary operas nor absolute ritual operas in China. The present study is concerned both with the ritual functions of operas and plays in the communities where they are performed, and with the beliefs and taboos of the performers themselves. Actors or puppeteers of both types of opera usually worship a group of deities as their occupational deities. Hence, their beliefs can be characterized as polytheistic. Moreover, the beliefs and practices of performers of various types of regional operatic genre in south China are related to some extent since the worship of Chinese theatre deities was spread from place to place by lineages, merchants and opera troupes during the imperial times.

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INTRODUCTION

Research Aims

The present study has two research aims: 1. Discuss the relationship of local operas and puppet plays to religious activities in south China, with special emphasis on Guangdong and Fujian. 2. Examine the beliefs, rituals and ritualistic plays of performers of regional operas in south China, with special attention devotes to Cantonese opera (literary opera) and marionette theatre in western Fujian (ritual opera).

Basic Concepts

In the *Sociology of Religion*, Joachim Wach (1898 – 1955) identifies the worship of different kinds of social associations, such as families, kinship groups, local communities, gender groups, age associations, secret societies, mystery societies, ecclesiastical bodies and sects, in many great civilizations, including China (Wach 1957, 54 – 107).

In Chinese society, operas and puppet plays have long been performed both to amuse gods and people,¹ and to thank the gods for renewing the life forces of the community. Mircea Eliade (1907 – 1986) states that festivals, which are remembered and regularly repeated, function to renew people's vital forces. In his excellent work, the *Patterns in Comparative Religions*, he says:

The religious festival is the reactualization of a primordial event of a sacred history in which the actors are the gods or semi-divine beings. But sacred history is recounted in the myths. Hence the participants in the festival become contemporaries of the gods and the semi-divine beings. They live in the primordial [or sacred] time that is sanctified by the present activity of the gods. The sacred calendar periodically regenerates time because it makes it coincide with...the strong and pure time. The religious experience of the festival, that is, participation in the sacred, enables man periodically to live in the presence of the gods. (Eliade 1959, 105)

In Chinese society, festivals, such as deities' birthdays (*dan* 誕) and *jiao* 醮 (Rites for Purification), are times when sins are eliminated, demons or evil spirits are warded off, and people's vital forces are renewed. Professor Daniel Overmyer states:

The term "ritual" is defined as symbolic actions directed toward an entity believed to have powers beyond those of ordinary humans, to petition for aid, offer thanks or seek forgiveness. These actions can include offering gifts such as

¹ In some cases, operas also function to entertain ghosts.

food or incense, and can be accompanied by bowing, prayers, chants or the recitation of texts. Their hope is to establish a temporary reciprocal relationship between the worshiper and the sacred entity to facilitate petition and response. (Overmyer's email message)

It is important to emphasize that due to limited time and resources, this Ph.D. thesis could not deal with death rituals and the plays that are performed on these occasions. In her book, *Listening to Theatre*, Elizabeth Wichmann explains:

Traditional Chinese theatre, often called Chinese opera or simply Chinese theatre in English, is termed *xiqu* [戲曲] (lit. theatre of song). *Xiqu* dates from at least as early as the Yuan dynasty (1271 – 1368). There are more than three hundred and sixty different forms since at least the middle of the Ming dynasty (1368 – 1644). Each of these forms developed in a particular region of China; many therefore have names reflecting their region of origin. (Wichmann 1992, xiii)

It is important to point out that Chinese people often use the names of musical and dialectal forms to name their various types of regional operatic genre (both human opera and puppetry). There are five kinds of puppetry performed in China nowadays. These are rod puppetry, marionette plays, glove puppetry plays, wire puppetry and shadow puppet plays. All of them have names that reflect their musical styles, dialectal forms, or places of origin.

Operas and puppet performances are carried out all over China, but this thesis mainly focuses on south China, especially the southeastern part, including Zhejiang 浙江, Anhui 安徽, Hunan 湖南, Jiangxi 江西 and Guangdong 廣東, with special attention devotes to western Fujian and the Hong Kong 香港. Furthermore, a broader perspective is added by occasionally mentioning the situations of southwest China, such as Guangxi 廣西, Sichuan 四川 and Guizhou 貴州.

Research Settings

Fujian and Guangdong are situated along China's southeast coast. In ancient times, these regions were the lands of the Baiyue Tribes 百越族 (Hundreds of Ethnic Yue Peoples). Among these southern aboriginal tribes, there were two major groups. They were the Minyue 閩越 and the Nanyue 南越. The Min district (present-day Fujian province) was inhabited by Minyue people. The Nanyue people lived beyond the Nanling Mountains 南嶺, a place that is known as Guangdong nowadays. From the Qin dynasty onwards (around the third century B.C.), the Han

Chinese moved into the southeast and intermingled with the Baiyue aborigines. These Baiyue people were gradually assimilated into Han Chinese culture. Today, Guangdong and Fujian are mainly inhabited by Cantonese, Hakka, Fulao 福佬 (*Hoklo*) and the She people. In addition, there are Hokkien-speaking boat people and Cantonese-speaking water-people (*shuishang ren* 水上人) or boat people (*danjia* 蛋家 or 蟹家)² living and working along the coast of southeast China.

The core areas of my study are Baisha Town 白砂鎮 in Shanghang County 上杭縣 of Longyan Municipality 龍岩市 (Fujian), Qingshui Township 青水鄉 in Yong'an City 永安市 of Fujian, and the Pearl River Delta in Guangdong, especially Hong Kong. In Ming and Qing periods, Qingshui in Yong'an City fell within the administration of Yanping Fu 延平府, a prefecture of the Minbei 閩北 region; and Baisha in Shanghang County fell with the administration of Tingzhou Fu 汀州府, a prefecture of the Minxi 閩西(western) region. If we see a map of Fujian, Qingshui Township of Yong'an is in the central western part of Fujian. Baisha Town of Shanghang lies on the southwest of the province. Qingshui Township of Yong'an City in central western Fujian is occupied by Hakka, She and Hokkien. Though there are some ethnical variations, they share many common customs and beliefs owing to long-term interaction. Some marionette performers in this region are not merely players (Ward 1979, 18). They are also ritual specialists of the Liyuan Sect 梨園教 of the Lüshan School 閩山派. Although the local religions in these rural areas were forbidden after the 1950s (especially during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution), ritual or liturgical operatic activities have gradually revived since the 1980s because of the relaxation of religious policy. Today, there are three marionette troupes in Qingshui Township. The history of the No. 1 Popular Marionette Company of Qingshui Township (Qingshui Xiang Mu'ou Yituan 青水鄉木偶一團), which is also known as Wanfu Tang 萬福堂 (the Hall of Ten Thousand Happiness) Marionette Troupe, can be traced back to the eighteenth century (or possibly earlier). Today, Mr. Wang Hua (the impresario of this troupe) is both a marionettist and a vernacular priest of the Liyuan Sect of the Lüshan Tradition. He received his ordination from a local Lüshan master, whose office or headquarters is located in Huainan Township 槐南鄉 of Yong'an City. The No. 2 and No. 3 Companies were formed in the early 1980s. None of the members of these two companies are ritual specialists of the Liyuan Jiao. Before the Cultural Revolution, the Wanfu Tang Marionette

² For a discussion on Cantonese, Hakka Fulao, the She and water-people, please refer to Section 3.1. of Chapter Three.

Troupe mainly performed in *Daqiang* 大腔 style, a local variant of the *Yiyang Qiang* 弋陽腔. Wang Hua has adopted the *Luantan* 亂彈 musical style in his performances since 1978. Moreover, he holds regular celebrations on Lord Tian's birthday. I observed the deity's 2003 birthday ceremony 2003 (the year *guiwei* 癸未), which took place at his house (the headquarters of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe).

Baisha Town of southwestern Fujian is a Hakka township, where rituals or celebrations of the Hakka families or lineages are often accompanied by marionette performances. Moreover, there are settlements of the She lineages in the northwestern and southern parts of the county. Hakka is the dominant dialect in these mountainous areas. *Gaoqiang* musical style was very popular in Baisha and other local Hakka areas before the late Qing period. Marionette plays have been sung in both *Gaoqiang* and *Luantan* since late nineteenth century, when the *Luantan* melodic style (*Han* operatic style 漢劇) was introduced to these regions. It is important to point out that owing to the influence of the Chinese Communist movement, *Gaoqiang* marionettists, who are also local Liyuan Jiao priests, have already stopped performing rituals of this school in the late 1920s. In recent years, some local customs have been resumed, such as Tian Gong's birthday ceremony that is held in the Hall of Lord Tian at Shui Zhu Yang Village of Baisha. I observed this birthday celebration on August 9, 2004 (the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month of the year *jiaxin* 甲辛). My discussion in Chapter Five is mainly based on the firsthand observations mentioned above.

Hong Kong shares local religious activities and cultural traditions with neighboring communities in southeast China. Its population includes Cantonese (*Bendi ren* 本地人), Hakkas, Chaozhou people 潮州人, Hailufeng people 海陸豐人 and water-people (both Cantonese-speaking and Hokkien-speaking). Hence, Cantonese opera, *Chaozhou* opera, *Hailufeng* opera 海陸豐戲 and Cantonese rod puppet plays are performed in the city. There were many subcultural differences (such as dialects and food) between these ethnic groups several decades ago. Nevertheless, there has been decreasing diversity of subcultural practices mainly due to the influence of the mass media and the universal education system, though some distinctive religious activities of these ethnic groups still exist up to the present. "The younger generation, almost without exception, speaks standard Cantonese." (Johnson 2000, 44) As a result, Cantonese opera has become the most popular theatrical genre performed in Hong Kong. This operatic genre is "disseminated chiefly through productions staged for the celebration of traditional and annual festivals, within the ritual context, in rural, temporary theatres, and for

making a profit, within the commercial context, in urban, permanent theatres.” (Chan 1991, 1 – 2) The former is commonly known as ritual performances (*shengong xi* 神功戲) or “performances for the deities as a charitable and pious deed.” The later is referred to as *xiyuan xi* 戲院戲, “performance in a permanent theatre.” (Chan 1991, 2) The religious activities and ritual performances, which were condemned on the Mainland, especially during the Cultural Revolution, continue to exist in Hong Kong today.³ Before June 30, 1997, the British colonial government treated Chinese customs and practices with great tolerance since these traditions did not pose serious threat to its rule (cf. Ward 1985, 161 – 162). From July 1, 1997 onward, Hong Kong has been a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China. Since China’s socialist system and policies have not been adopted in Hong Kong, ritual performances and other kinds of religious activities continue to flourish in both urban and rural areas. As the hub of ritual performances and Chinese festival traditions in the Pearl River Delta region, Hong Kong is a suitable area for my study. Huaguang Shifu 華光師傅 (Master of Splendid Brightness) is the most venerable deity of the Cantonese opera profession. Members of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong (Xianggang Bahe Huiguan 香港八和會館), the guild of Cantonese opera professionals, have arranged a grand celebration on his birthday (the twenty-eighth of the ninth lunar month) since the early 1950s. On November 18, 1996 (the twenty-eighth of the ninth month of the year *bingzi* 丙子), Professor Daniel Overmyer (my research supervisor) and I observed this celebration, which was a typical example to illustrate how the guild members celebrate the god’s birthday. Chapter Four of the present study discusses the details of this birthday rite.

The Literary-Ritual Continuum (Model)

No single forms of Chinese traditional opera can be classified in terms of “either-or” categories. The question is one of degree. It is perhaps best to think of a continuum⁴ that ranges

³ My 1999 M.A. thesis, “The Popular Religion of Female Employees in Cantonese Opera,” deals with the religious beliefs and practices of female Cantonese opera troupe members in a great detail (complete with a detailed bibliography and many quotations).

⁴ In *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences* (edited by Julius Gould and William L. Kolb), E. A. Gellner states that the “term model or theoretical model is an expression occurring within the sciences and in accounts of the working of the sciences. It designates any one of a range of things which form a kind of continuum...” (Gellner 1964, 435) In other word, this term is derived from natural sciences. In my thesis, the term “continuum” refers to “a continuous extent, series, or whole.” (cf. Flexner 1987, 440) When professionals of various kinds of regional opera talk about opera genres in China, they often call these opera genres as “*xiongdì jūzhong* 兄弟劇種 (brother opera genres),” which implies that they originated from or at least closely related to *nanxi* 南戲 (southern operas). Hence, they share some common artistic and religious traditions. Actors of these opera genres often have had frequent interactions and they absorb beliefs and artistic elements from each other. Musicians, actors, merchants, refugees, officials and different ethnic groups, such as Cantonese, Hakkas, and the She people, contributed to the development

from absolute literary opera to absolute ritual opera, though there are neither entirely literary operas nor entirely ritual operas in China. The distribution of operas along the continuum varies according to time and place. Literary operas (*weren xi* 文人戲) contain less religious elements in comparison with ritual operas (*yishi xi* 儀式戲). Cantonese opera is a good example of literary opera. It contains sophisticated visual, aural, dramatic elements. Entertainment, which mainly takes place in permanent theatres,⁵ is the most important function of Cantonese opera. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that Cantonese opera and other kinds of refined opera also contain religious elements, such as auspicious plays and exorcistic plays.⁶ In the case of local communities, Cantonese opera troupes in Hong Kong are usually invited to stage ritual performances in large-scale communal rituals, such as *jiao* festivals, which cost a lot of money. Based on the religious traditions of Cantonese opera, this thesis also discusses about the religious dimensions of other kinds of literary opera, such as *Chaozhou* opera 潮州戲 in Guangdong, and Liyuan opera 梨園戲 and Puxian opera 莆仙戲 in Fujian.

Marionette theatre in both central western and southwestern Fujian are two good examples of ritual opera. In China, ritual operas are often performed in conjunction with religious rituals. Their most important function is exorcism. In other words, they are not staged if no rituals or ceremonies are performed. Unlike urban commercial theatre, ritual operatic shows are usually performed at temporary or public stall in rural areas or villages, which cost less money in comparison with the cost of the performances of literary opera, which often take place at urban commercial theatre. Based on the religious dimensions of Fujian marionette theatre, the present study also examines other kinds of ritual operas in south China. The eighty volumes in the *Studies in Ritual, Theatre and Folklore Series (Minsu quyi congshu* 民俗曲藝叢書), published and edited by Wang Ch'iu-kuei, are major references. Moreover, ritual operas also consist of artistic elements, though they are less elegant in comparison with those of the refined operas.

With regard to the first research aim mentioned above, many prominent scholars, such as Barbara E. Ward, Li Yih-yuan 李亦園, Tanaka Issei 田仲一成, Wang Ch'iu-kuei, Colin P. Mackerras, David Johnson, Chan Sau Yan 陳守仁 and Yung Sai-Shing 容世城,⁷ have already

of these regional operas by spreading their performing art and the religious aspects from place to place when they traveled to or settled in various areas.

⁵ It is important to point out that today in Hong Kong the Cantonese opera professionals also celebrate the birthday of their primary patron deity in permanent theatre or Chinese restaurant, where auspicious plays are performed.

⁶ With regard to this point, please see my discussion below.

⁷ For their publications, please see my discussion below.

pointed out the close relationship between traditional opera and religion in Chinese society. Their studies offer new insights into the field. Based on their thorough studies, my study traces the intersection between opera (including puppetry) and religion from ancient periods (around 2500 B.C.) to the present time (A.D. 2004).

The second research aim examines the beliefs and practices of performers of regional operas in south China, such as Cantonese opera, *Gaoqiang* 高腔 and *Luantan* 亂彈 marionette theatre in western Fujian, *Puxian* opera 莆仙戲 in southeastern Fujian, and *Dejiang Nuo* 德江儺 theatre in Jiangxi. Actors and puppeteers observe taboos, pay tribute to their occupational deities, honor their deceased masters and perform ritualistic plays. They usually worship a group of patron deities. One is honored as the primary or main deity and the others are considered to be associated gods. For instance, marionettists in western Fujian worship Lord Tian as their primary god. Master Huaguang is honored as the most venerable god by the Cantonese opera profession. Annual rituals are held in order to celebrate the deities' birthday. In my opinion, there are three types of ritualistic plays, exorcistic plays or rites (*quxie xi* 驅邪戲), auspicious plays (*jiqing xi* 吉慶戲), and liturgical plays. The origin of exorcistic plays or rites can be traced back to the *Nuo* rites or theatre mentioned. In usual cases, this kind of play must be staged at the beginning of the opening evening. Actors or marionettists believe that this type of play functions to ward off evil spirits and purify the performing site. Within a ritual operatic series, regional opera players would stage several auspicious plays before main performances start. According to Chinese operatic tradition, these plays function to offer festival or birthday greetings to local deities and bring auspiciousness (such as scholarly honor, longevity, happiness and sons) to the spectators. *Fashi xi* 法事戲 (liturgical plays) is a special kind of main performance, in which rituals or liturgies are put on. In other words, a section of the *fashi xi* is also a rite within a liturgical series. Literary opera, such as Cantonese opera and *Chaozhou* opera 潮州戲, contain many artistic elements. Actors of these refined operas also stage exorcistic plays and auspicious plays. However, they would not perform liturgical performances. With regard to ritual operas, some *Nuo* performers and marionettists are not merely players. Their rites or plays are a blend of shamanic cults, Daoist liturgies and Tantric Buddhism. In normal cases, these local priests (performers) observe fewer taboos than the actors of literary opera who are not ritual masters. Besides the exorcistic plays and auspicious plays, they also present liturgical plays. It is also important to point out that their performances contain some artistic elements. For instance, actors of *Guichi Nuo* 貴池儺 theatre in Anhui and the Earth Play (*Dixi* 地戲) in Guizhou also

stage literary plays for entertainment. In other words, no single forms of Chinese traditional opera (including puppetry) can be classified in terms of “either-or” categories. It is perhaps best to think of a continuum that ranges from literary opera to ritual opera. Moreover, the subcultural beliefs and practices of performers are not completely separate. They derived from the same origin to some extent.

During the late Song and early Ming period, the Mulian opera 目連戲 (a southern opera play) spread from Zhejiang to Jiangxi, where it mingled with local music and developed into a new musical style known as *Yiyang Qiang* 弋陽腔. Besides artistic skills, the local actors of *Yiyang* opera also honored the patron deities of the *nanxi* actors (Lord Tian and Lord Dou) as their occupational gods. Today, players of many regional operas in southeastern China still pay tribute to these two deities. This rite was spread to various areas by actors, Hakka people and merchants who traveled in or settled in this region (mentioned in Section 1.3. of Chapter One and Section 3.1. of Chapter Three). It is likely that before the eighteenth century, when the *Pihuang* singing style had not yet flourished in the Canton Delta, the worship of Huaguang and the performing skills of the ritualistic play *Xianghua Shan Da Heshou* 香花山大賀壽 (Great Birthday Greetings of the Fragrant Flower Mountain) was spread to the Canton Delta by the opera troupe members from Anhui, who often staged Mulian operas. Actors of regional operas in Guangxi 廣西 also honor Huaguang as their most venerable patron deity. In Fujian, beliefs concerning Lord Tian are mainly divided into two traditions. In the first place, Puxian opera, Quanzhou marionette theatre, Liyuan opera fall within the category of the *nanxi* system. These operas are popular in southeastern Fujian and part of Taiwan. Performers of these operatic genres worship Lord Tian, who is believed to be related Lei Haiqing 雷海青, a loyal musician during the reign period of Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 of the Tang dynasty (r. A.D. 712 – 756). Lord Tian or Lei Haiqing is also a tutelary deity of this coastal region, where temples are dedicated to him. In the second place, *Gaoqiang*, *Daqiang*, *Siping* 四平 and *Ciming* 詞明 marionette theatrical genres fall within the category of the *Yiyang* operatic system. Members of these troupes worship Lord Tian and his two sworn brothers, Lord Dou 竇公 and Lord Guo 郭公, as their occupational deities. Moreover, *Luantan* 亂彈 marionettists and *Han* operatic performers also worship these three deities. Actors of many operatic genres in Jiangxi and Anhui⁸ also honor these gods as their patron gods.⁹

⁸ These operatic genres are descendants of the *Yiyang* opera.

⁹ For detailed discussion on this point, please see Section 6.3. Chapter Six of my thesis later.

Research Process

This project was carried out for a period of three years (from 1995 to 1996; and from 2002 to 2004). I did fieldwork in Vancouver and Hong Kong in 1995, 1996 and 2002, and western Fujian (both central western and southwestern) from 2003 to 2004. The Behavioral Ethical Review for this research was accepted by the UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board. Cantonese opera professionals in Hong Kong and Vancouver were selected. With regard to central western and southwestern Fujian, local scholars, officials, marionettists and villagers in selected villages were recruited. Criteria for their selection included willingness to cooperate, and knowledge and experience concerning rituals and theatre. I established trusting relationships with these interviewees and had face-to-face interviews with them. These interviews were conducted in Mandarin or Cantonese. In each interview, I stated clearly my background information, explained the purposes and procedures of the research, as well as clarified what I hoped to discuss with them. I also emphasized that their participation in this research project was entirely voluntary and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Moreover, I asked them if it would be acceptable for me to include their names in my Ph.D. thesis. Their identifying information would not be released without their approval. In each interview, I had “a general plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked in particular words and in a particular order.” (Babbie 1989, 253) I asked the interviewees or informants’ names, ages, ethnic group (such as Hakka or Cantonese) and native places. For villagers or local people, they were asked to talk about their communities, lineages, the history of local areas, and their beliefs and activities, such as locations of shrines, temples and ancestral halls. With regard to Cantonese opera actors and marionettists in western Fujian, I inquired about the religious traditions of their profession, including taboos, patron deities, and details concerning the birthday celebrations of their occupational deities. These informants did most of the talking. It is important to point out that their oral consent was sought, but requesting them to sign a formal consent form was perceived by them as a risk and a lack of trust. In every case, I asked the permission of those I interviewed to take notes, photos and type recording. Hence, I had their oral consent, though none of them signed the consent form. During the Cultural Revolution (1966 – 1976), marionettists in both southwestern and central western Fujian were forced to give up their religious activities that have been revived today. They are still suspicious towards outsiders to some extent. With regard to the Cantonese opera profession, Cantonese opera actors are still not accustomed to sign any agreements, contracts or consent forms related to their

performances and business. Owing to these reasons mentioned above, asking each of the informants to sign a written consent form would have ruined the whole project.

Notebook, tape recorder, pen, video camera and camera were the basic tools of my field research. As a researcher, one of my duties is to collect valid and reliable epirical data. Thus, I took numerous photos of marionettes, actors, effigies and marionettists; made video recordings of rituals and marionette performances, as well as photocopied many liturgical manuals and some written scripts in the field. Moreover, face-to-face interviews were done at my informants' homes or the headquarters of marionette or opera troupes. In many cases, I jotted notes and used a tape recorder to record what was said. However, it is important to point out that decisions about when and how to take jottings, make video recordings and tape recordings must be considered in the context of the broader set of relations with those in the setting. Since I established trusting relationships with my informants, they kindly allowed me to take notes during interviews and used a tape recorder to capture what they said. When I took notes, I recorded the times and dates, as well as the relevant information of the interviews. After each trip, I listened to the tape recordings and wrote down all the details. With regard to rituals and performances, I tried my best to videotape the whole procedure and took pictures. I also noted my observantions afterward as soon as possible. When I visited a temple, I usually took photos, interviewed temple attendants or devotees, sketched the layout of the construction and marked the arrangement of the altars, such as the positions of the deities' effigies. Moreover, in accordance with the rules of the UBC Behavioural Ethics Board, the data and tapes (both audio and video) will be kept at my home for least five years after the completion of the thesis for reference.

As mentioned above, my M.A. thesis examines the beliefs and religious practices of women in Cantonese opera. Chapter Four of this study is based on this M.A. thesis. Face-to-face interviews and direct observation were two research methods applied for gathering information. From 1995 to 1996, I interviewed Cantonese opera people in Vancouver, Hong Kong and Guangzhou. Owing to the assistance of Dr. Elizabeth Lominska Johnson (my committee member and curator of the UBC Museum of Anthropology), I was able to have face-to-face interviews with Master Wong Toa 黃滔 (a distinguished musician of Cantonese opera for over seventy years), Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen 陳國源 (a famous designer of Cantonese opera costumes), Ms. Chen Shaozhen 陳少珍 (a prominent actress of female roles in Guangzhou), and Mr. Alex Hung 孔加峰 and Ms. Winne Poon 潘倩影 (famous performers) in winter 1995. I

studied Cantonese operatic singing art with Ms. Bai Xuemei 白雪梅 (a distinguished artist and instructor of Cantonese opera) in July and September 1996. Then I went to Hong Kong to conduct research. In November, 1996, I met Professor Chan Sau Yan 陳守仁 (Department of Music, Chinese University of Hong Kong) and he gave me much valuable advice. Professor Bell Yung (Department of Music, the University of Pittsburgh, USA)¹⁰ also gave me some good advice when I met him at the University of Hong Kong in November, 1996. Professor Chan Sau Yan introduced me to Ms. Au Man Fung 區文鳳 (a local scholar and famous scripwriter of Cantonese opera). We both went to Guangzhou to attend the 1996 Guangzhou International Guangdong Opera Festival and Conference, where we met many local scholars (such as Lai Bojiang 賴伯疆 and Mo Rucheng 莫汝城 and Xie Binzhou 謝彬籌), as well as some famous performers, such as Luo Pinchao 羅品超 and Chen Shaotang 陳少堂. After returning to Hong Kong, I continued to conduct face-to-face interviews with some Cantonese opera performers, including Wu Zhen 吳貞, a veteran actor of military roles; Koo Hung Kin 顧鴻見 (an experienced martial arts actor); and Leung Sum Yee Summy 梁森兒, a distinguished actress of principal male roles.

From November 6, 2002 to December 25, 2002, I went to Hong Kong to take a course on the performing art of the Quanzhou marionette theatre. Yang Qingyi 楊清意, who was the instructor of this course, comes from Quanzhou in Fujian. He gave me two versions of the play *Da Chu Su* 大出蘇 (*The Complete Performance of Su*).¹¹ In addition, I also interviewed him in December, 2002. In this face-to-face interview, I asked him some questions concerning the play *Da Chu Su* mentioned above.

Due to the assistance of Professor Chen Zhiping and Professor Chen Shixiong, I was admitted into the theatrical program at the College of Humanities of Xiamen University 廈門大學 in Fujian in February 2003. Professor Chen Shixiong is the leading theatrical expert in the college. Ye Mingsheng (a native of Shouning County 壽寧縣 in Fujian) is a friend of Professor John Lagerwey and Professor Daniel L. Overmyer. Since he conducted research in the province for over ten years, he has been able to cultivate trusting relationships with some marionettists,

¹⁰ Professor Bell Yung was a visiting professor at the University of Hong Kong in 1996.

¹¹ The *Da Chu Su* is a ritualistic play of the Quanzhou marionette theatre. It is often staged before the main performances begin. The marionette troupe members believe that it functions to exorcise evil spirits and purify the stage. Please see Section 6.2.1. of Chapter Six for a brief description of this play.

local scholars and people. Accompanied by him, I went to western Fujian three times to do fieldwork (in 2003 – 2004).

In 2003 I went to Fujian twice to do fieldwork. With regard to my first trip (April 2003), I first met Ye Mingsheng at Fuzhou on April 17, 2003. Both of us went to the Xinluo District 新羅區 of the Longyan Municipality 龍巖市, where we visited the Lianhua Miao 蓮花廟 (the Lotus Temple). In addition, we also met Mr. Liu Yuan 劉遠, who is a retired cadre of the Minxi Historical Museum 閩西歷史博物館, Longyan Municipality, Fujian. Mr. Liu is a very good friend of Ye. He is an expert in local religion and marionette theatre. At his study, he gave me a detailed explanation of beliefs about Tian Gong 田公 (Lord Tian), who is a tutelary god and the most venerable patron deity of Fujian marionette theatre, in various parts of the province. We left Longyan and went to Shui Zhu Yang Natural Village 水竹洋自然村 of the Shanghang County 上杭縣. We visited the Tian Gong Tang 田公堂 (the Hall of Tian Gong), where grand celebrations are still held on the deity's birthday. This hall is the only temple of Tian Gong in southwestern Fujian. Moreover, I also visited local shrines, interviewed marionette performers, collected liturgy manuals and watched marionette performances.

On April 21, 2003, we left Shanghang and went to Qingshui Township 青水鄉 of central western Fujian. Mr. Hu Shilian 胡仕廉, the official who in charge of local cultural affairs, gave us a thorough introduction to local customs of the Han and the She people at the Qingshui Museum. Moreover, three of us also visited the Ancient Stage (Gu Xitai 古戲台) which was erected in A.D. 1724. Then, we went to the Fengtian Cun 豐田村, a local village of the Qingshui Township. This famous village is the base of the Fujian *Daqiang* opera. We watched the *Daqiang* opera, a local variant of the *Yiyang* music style, which was performed by the Fengtian Daqiang Operatic Troupe 豐田大腔戲劇團. Besides watching traditional dramas, we interviewed troupe members, and visited local shrines and ancestral halls. On the way back to Qingshui, three of us visited a local temple, and the Luodou Ci 羅兜祠 (the Ancestral Hall of the Silk Bag), where Wang Shenzhi 王審之 and other ancestors of the Wang lineage are worshipped. After lunch, we went to Mr. Wang Hua's home, which is located in Huang Jing Shan 黃景山 of Qingshui Township in central western Fujian. Wang Hua is the impresario of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe. At his dining room, he told me about the taboos observed by marionettists, legends of local deities, as well as the details concerning the birthday

celebration of Lord Tian (his patron deity). I also took photos of his effigy of Lord Tian, which was placed on the altar in the main hall of his house.

My second field trip started on July 22, 2003 when two of us went to the Neilu Village 內爐村 of the Xiyang Township 西洋鎮 in the Yong'an district. We found there a small effigy of Tian Gong which had been made before the end of the Ming dynasty. It is believed to be the oldest image of the deity found in Fujian. We interviewed some local villagers and visited the Tian Gong's temple, which is known as the Hall of Prosperous Incense (Xinghuo Dian 興火殿). We then left the Neilu Village and went to Mr. Wang Hua's home at Huang Jing Shan, where grand ceremony took place on Tian Gong's birthday. The marionette performances lasted four days and five nights.¹²

For the third trip, we went to Longyan again on August 7, 2004. After discussing with Mr. Liu Yuan about the local Hakka religious activities and marionette shows at his home, we met Liang Lunyong 梁倫勇 (a member of the Liang lineage of Shu Zhu Yang Village in Baisha Town) and his wife, Li Yanhong 李艷紅, who is a *Luantan* marionettist. On the way, they told me their local customs and practices. On August 8, 2004, we visited the Temple of the Lady (Furen Gong 夫人宮), which is situated at the Zhongyang Village 中洋村 of Baisha Town. I interviewed two female temple attendants and observed a simple rite that was performed by them. We then visited the Temple of the Guardians for the Crown Prince (Taibao Gongwang Miao 太保公王廟), where I took some photos. The birthday celebration of Lord Tian, which was held on August 9, 2004 (the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month), took place at the Hall of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Tang 田公堂) and the public stage beside the hall. I observed the rites, watched marionette performances, took many photos, as well as made video recordings of the rituals and marionette shows. Moreover, I also had interviews with Liang Lizhong 梁利忠 and Liang Lunjin 梁倫錦 (members of the Liang lineage), Wang Rongchang 王榮昌, the impresario of the Marionette Company of Caixia Village in Panjing Township (Panjing Xiang Caixia Cun Mu'ou Jutuan 洋境鄉彩霞村木偶劇團), and Shen Zhanhe 沈沾和 (a local vernacular priest).

Documentary Sources

Let us take a look at a few works that are directly related to my research. One of the earliest written source on the legend of Tian Gong is recorded in the *Huitu sanjiao yuanliu soushen daquan* 繪圖三教源流搜神大全 (*A Completed Investigative Collection Concerning the*

¹² For a thorough depiction of this annual rite, please refer to Section 5.4. of Chapter Five.

Illustrations of the Origins of Deities of Three Religions, known as the *Soushen daquan* 搜神大全 below), which was published in the Ming dynasty. In the text under the title “Fenghuo yuan Tian yuanshuai 風火院田元帥 (Marshal Tian of the Heavenly Department of Wind-and-Fire),” Tian Gong or Tian Yuanshuai is not described as an individual deity but appears in a group. They were three brothers of the same surname Tian. These three brothers were called Tian Gouliu 田苟留, Tian Hongyi 田洪義 and Tian Zhibiao 田智彪. Since they were excellent singers and dancers, Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 appointed them as imperial musicians and entertainers in the Kaiyuan 開元 reign period (A.D. 713 – 741). The text also states that they possessed great abilities and infinite supernatural powers. They cured the sickness of the Empress Dowager, and assisted the Celestial Master in exorcising the underwater pest demons. Besides the text, the *Soushen daquan* also contains a picture of the deity. In the depiction, actors of four different role types surround Tian Gong who appears as an individual deity. A crab’s feet are painted around his mouth. Legends concerning Lord Tian of various kinds of marionette theatre and opera in Fujian are closely related to the story records in the *Soushen daquan*.

The Min zaji 閩雜記 (*Miscellaneous Records of Min*) by Shi Hongbao 施鴻保 is another early source that offers discussion on the legend of Lord Tian. Written during the mid Qing period, this work states the worship of Lei Haiqing 雷海青 in Xinghua 興化 (Putian nowadays) and Quanzhou. Lei Haiqing is believed to be a loyal imperial musician during the reign of Tang Xuanzong. In Xinghua district temples dedicated to Lei Haiqing were commonly known as Yuanshuai Miao 元帥廟 (Temples of the Marshall). In Quanzhou his temples were commonly called Xianggong Miao 相公廟 (Temples of the Young Lord). Local people in these two areas worshipped Lei Haiqing as tutelary deity who possessed the ability to cure smallpox and measles. Shi Hongbao also points out that in Fuzhou the Wudai Yuanshuai 五代元帥 (The Marshall of the Five Dynasties) was worshipped as a local deity. His face was white and a crab’s feet were painted around his mouth. Two lads and two maidens, who held traditional Chinese musical instruments in their hands, surrounded him. According to local beliefs, he was a young scholar in the Five Dynasties. One day someone drew a crab’s feet around his mouth when he fell asleep. Regarding this prank as a humiliation, he refused to take food and died soon. He became a ferocious ghost and often took possession of a spirit medium’s body. No one dared to offend him. Shi Hongbao argues that the story mentioned above was a false rumor. Wudai Yuanshuai and Lei Haiqing were in fact the same deity.

The legends of Master Huaguang (the primary deity of the Cantonese opera profession) is recorded in the *Nanyou ji* 南遊記 (*Journey to the South*).¹³ Moreover, in the *Soushen daquan*, Marshal Ma (a Daoist deity who is closely associated with Huaguang/the Five Manifestations/the Five Supernatural Powers) is reborn three times, and had experienced almost the same kinds of difficulties and hardships as Huaguang in the *Nanyou ji*.

In modern times, both Piet van der Loon, David Johnson and Guo Qitao in the west are pioneers in the study of ritual and opera. In his article, “Zhongguo xiju yuan yu zongjiao yidian kao 中國戲劇源於宗教儀典考 (Chinese Theatre Originated from Rituals: An Investigation, translated by Wang Ch’iu-kuei and Su Youzhen 蘇有貞),” Piet van der Loon explores the origin of Chinese traditional theatre and the functions of some ritualistic plays. The book *Ritual Opera Operatic Ritual: “Mu-lien Rescues his Mother” in Chinese Popular Culture*, edited by David Johnson, consists of eight articles that examine the ritual functions of Mulian opera.

The eighty volumes in the *Studies in Ritual, Theatre and Folklore Series (Minsu quyì congshu* 民俗曲藝叢書) published and edited by Professor Wang Ch’iu-kuei emphasize the inherent relationship between ritual and opera. Based on fieldwork conducted by local scholars, these studies discuss ritual operas in thirteen different Chinese provinces. The series contain many valuable materials that offer great contributions to the field of Chinese traditional theatre and local customs.

The *Traditional Hakka Society Series*, under the general editorship of John Lagerwey of the École Française d’ Extrême-Orient (EFEO), were written by local scholars, such as Yang Yanjie 楊彥杰 of the Fujian Academy of Social Sciences 福建社會科學院 and Fang Xuejia 房學嘉 of Jiaying University 嘉應大學 in Guangdong. These books record the local customs, rituals and temple festivals in the Hakka areas of southwestern Fujian and eastern Guangdong, including Meixian 梅縣 (eastern Guangdong), Changting 長汀, Shanghang 上杭, Liancheng 連城, Ninghua 寧化, Yongding 永定, etc.

Ethnography in China Today: A Critical Assessment of Methods and Results, edited by Professor Daniel Overmyer with the assistance of Shin-yi Chao 趙昕毅, includes twenty articles that offer critical reviews of books published in two series, the *Minsu quyì congshu* and the *Traditional Hakka Society Series* mentioned above. In his article, “Chinese Ritual and Ritual Theatre,” Professor Wang Ch’iu-kuei discusses the purposes, timing, funding, personal networks and methodology of the research project “Chinese Regional Theatre in Its Social and Ritual

¹³ For a summary of this book, please refer to Appendix Ten of the present study.

Context (from July 1991 to July 1996),” which was funded by the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation. The first part (Parts A, B, C and D) of this book include reviews of books in the *Studies in Ritual, Theatre and Folklore Series* that deal with ritual operas in southwest, eastern and north China. Reviews of the books concerning eastern Guangdong, western Fujian and southern Jiangxi in the *Traditional Hakka Society Series* are provided in the second part of the work. This book offers comprehensive analysis concerning the Chinese ritual theatre and local customs.

Based on the contents of the five books of capital life in Northern and Southern Song periods, Wilt Idema and Stephen H. West discuss the situations of Chinese theatre and actors from the early twelfth to the mid fifteenth century in their excellent work, *Chinese Theater, 1100 – 1450: A Source Book*. I have benefited from the English translations of some of the contexts of the five books mentioned above.

With regard to the history of Cantonese opera, the *Yueju shi* 粵劇史 (*A History of Cantonese Opera*, 1988) by Lai Bojiang 賴伯疆 and Huang Jingming 黃境明; the *Yueju yanjiu tonglun* 粵劇研究通論 (*An Overview Study of Cantonese Opera*, 1988) by Leung Pui Kam 梁沛錦; the *Zhongguo xiqu zhi Guangdong juan* 中國戲曲志廣東卷 (*History of Chinese Opera – Guangdong*, 1993) edited by Xie Binchou 謝彬籌; and the *Guangdong Xiqu Jianshi* 廣東戲曲簡史 (*A Brief History of [Traditional] Operas in Guangdong*, 2001) by Lai Bojiang offer general and comprehensive discussions on the historical development, the repertoires, the performing art of Cantonese opera, *Chaozhou* opera and other sixteen kinds of opera, as well as the beliefs and practices of performers of these regional operas in Guangdong.

Barbara Ward is the pioneer in the study of the religious traditions of Cantonese opera. In three of her articles, “Not Merely Players: Drama, Art and Ritual in Traditional China (1979),” “The Red Boats of the Canton Delta: A Historical Chapter in the Sociology of Chinese Regional Drama” in *Zhongyang yanjiu yuan guoji hanxue hui lunwen ji* (1980), and “Regional Operas and Their Audiences: Evidence from Hong Kong” in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China* (1982), Ward discusses the religious dimensions of Cantonese opera. The first article examines the ritual role of Cantonese opera in the performance of the exorcistic play *Ji Baihu* 祭白虎 (the Worship of the White Tiger). The layout of red boats is described in the second article. The third one explains the ritual performances of regional operas that are popular in Hong Kong and their frequency. In addition, Barbara Ward and Joan Law’s book, *Chinese Festivals in Hong Kong*, records the details of the annual festivals in Hong Kong.

Chan Sau Yan's *Shengong yueju zai Xianggang* 神功粵劇在香港 (*Ritual Performances of Cantonese Opera in Hong Kong*, 1996a) explains, the worship of patron deities and the performances of ritualistic plays of the Cantonese opera profession in Hong Kong. His another book, *Shengong xi zai Xianggang* 神功戲在香港 (*Ritual Performances in Hong Kong*, 1996b), records the ritual performances and beliefs of performers of Cantonese opera, *Hailufeng* opera and *Chaozhou* opera, which flourish in the SAR.

Professor Tanaka Issei is one of the greatest scholars in the field of Chinese traditional theatre and religion. During the past decades, he conducted in-depth research throughout China, especially south China. His studies, such as *Chūgoku saishi engeki kenkyū* 中國祭祀演戲研究 (*Research on Chinese Ritual Theatre*, 1981) and *Chūgoku no sōzoku to engeki* 中國の宗族と演劇 (*Lineage and Theatre in China*, 1985), throw light on the close relationship between festival celebrations and operatic performances on important or auspicious occasions, such as *jiao* and birthdays of deities. His publications lay the foundation for the present study.

The *Zhongguo xiqu zhi Fujian juan* 中國戲曲志福建卷 (*History of Chinese Opera – Fujian*, 1993) edited by Ke Ziming 柯子銘 offers general descriptions concerning twenty different kinds of operas that are now performed in the province. It also records the history, the artistic skills and the repertoires of these operatic genres. The beliefs and religious activities of the actors of these regional operas are also mentioned in this volume. Moreover, the UBC Asian Library has a whole series of the *History of Chinese Opera (Zhongguo xiqu zhi)* of different Chinese provinces, which offer considerable information concerning the beliefs and practices of performers of regional operas throughout China.

Edited by Ye Mingsheng and Yang Rong 楊榕 in 2002, the book *Fujian xiqu hangye shen xinyang yanjiu* 福建戲曲行業神信仰研究 (*Research on Belief in Fujian Opera Patron Deities*) covers a wide range of topics concerning the legends and worship of Lord Tian in various areas of Fujian. It includes twenty-four articles written by local Chinese scholars. Moreover, the *Fujian kuilei xi shilun shangxia ce* 福建傀儡戲史論上下冊 (*A Discussion of the History of Fujian Puppet Theatre*, 2 Vols.), which was written by Ye Mingsheng and published in 2004, offers detailed discussion on the historical development, performing art and religious traditions of marionettists of various types of puppetry in Fujian.

Liu Xiaoying 劉曉迎's article "Yong'an shi huang jing shan wanfu tang daqiang kuilei xi yu huanyuan yishi 永安市黃福堂大腔傀儡戲與還願儀式 (The Ritual of Repayment of Vows, and the Daqiang Marionette Opera of the Wanfu Hall in Huang Jing Shan of Yong'an City)" in

Minsu quyí 民俗曲藝 (*Theatre and Folklore*, Vol. 135, 2002), is the first and so far the only study on religious activities of marionettists in the Qingshui area of central western Fujian. Liu is an associate research fellow of the Sanming Art Museum, Fujian 福建三明市藝術館.

In his article, “Comic Inversion and Cosmic Renewal: The God of Theater in the Ritual Traditions of Putian,” Kenneth Dean offers complete translations of a number of ritual texts and ritualistic plays related to the worship of Tian Gong (or Tian Du Yuanshuai 田都元帥). Dr. Robin Ruizendaal’s doctoral dissertation entitled “Marionette Theatre in Quanzhou (1999)” “attempts to place the Quanzhou marionette theatre in a wider social context on the basis of fieldwork” which was carried out during the early 1990s (Ruizendaal 1999, 8).

Contents

A word about the contents of my thesis is necessary. This dissertation includes three main parts. Part One, which consists of Chapters One and Two, offers a historical review concerning the connexion between opera and religion in southeast China, and describes the historical development of marionette theatre in western Fujian (central western and southwestern) as well as the historical development of Cantonese opera in the Pearl River Delta. Chapters Three, Four and Five are included in Part Two, which focuses on contemporary period, especially after the 1940s. Chapter Three examines the occasions when Cantonese operatic series are staged in Hong Kong, and when marionette shows are performed in central western and southwestern Fujian. Religious beliefs and practices of Cantonese opera performers, with emphasis on the birthday celebration of Master Huaguang, are discussed in Chapter Four. With special attention devoted to the birthday ceremonies of Lord Tian, Chapter Five is a thorough depiction of the religious beliefs and practices of marionettists in central western and southwestern Fujian. The concluding remarks (Part Three) is an analysis of the ritual functions of operas and marionette plays in the local communities of south China, as well as the beliefs and practices of the performers of various types of operatic genre in this region. Most of the Chinese terms are romanized according to the Hanyu Pinyin system. Place names and personal names in Hong Kong are romanized according to the usages of the Hong Kong government. For the reference style of this thesis, I use the author-date system mentioned in the *Chicago Manual of Style*.¹⁴

¹⁴ Please see the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 13th ed, revised and edited by the Editorial Staff of the University of Chicago Press (1982) pp. 400 – 401.

CHAPTER ONE

Opera and Religion: An Overview

The main purpose of this chapter is to examine the connection between religion and opera (both puppet and human) in Chinese society, with special emphasis on the situations of south China, especially the southeastern part. The development of various kinds of opera genres in south China are also discussed. In order to provide a general framework, this chapter is divided into three sections according to different periods.

1.1. Ritual Activities and Antecedents of Chinese Traditional Opera (2697 B.C. – A.D. 960)

The history of ritual operas in ancient China can only be reconstructed from scattered fragments of information. From antiquity down to the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618 – 907), a number of rituals or entertainments, such as rites of exorcism (*Nuoli* 儺禮), hundred games (*Baixi* 百戲)¹⁵ puppetry, story-telling (*Shuoshu* 說書), *Canjun xi* 參軍戲 (the adjutant play)¹⁶ and dance plays,¹⁷ emerged in China. Exorcistic rites (*Nuoli* 儺禮) and hundred games (*Baixi* 百戲) appeared before or during the Eastern Han period (A.D. 25 – 220). *Shuoshu*, *Canjun xi* and dance plays were very popular in the Tang dynasty. Among these activities, it is believed that both *Nuoli* and puppetry have direct contributions to the rise of ritual operas and the development of religious activities.

¹⁵ The hundred games were often staged in the imperial palace. The *jiaodi xi* 角抵戲 (horn butting game), and other types of acrobatic skill, martial arts and magic tricks were displayed in these entertainments. “The most direct contribution of the *baixi* to the rise of Chinese drama is probably in the field of acting techniques: the dazzling display of acrobatic virtuosity and spectacle in general are some of the most enthralling aspects of the traditional Chinese theater.” (Idema 1982, 4 - 5) Mr. Huang of the Eastern Ocean (*Donghuang Gong* 東黃公) was a popular *jiaodi xi* 角抵戲 (horn butting game) in China around the third century. There was an immortal known as Donghuang Gong. He possessed supernatural abilities to subdue tigers and snakes. However, he gradually lost this power when he grew old and was finally killed by a tiger (Zhang 1989, 18 – 20). In some cases, puppet shows and shadow plays also fell within the category of the hundred games.

¹⁶ In its most basic form, the adjutant play had “a humorous dialogue between the eternal comic duo of the straightman and the fool, ending in a fight.” (Idema 1982, 5) Through amusement, this play functioned to mock governmental policies and give advice to the rulers.

¹⁷ The *Lanling Wang* 蘭陵王 (the Prince of Orchid Mound), *Botou* 撥頭 and the *Tayao Niang* 踏搖娘 (the Stepping and Singing Woman) were dance plays that developed in the sixth century. In his excellent work, *A History of Chinese Drama*, William Dolby points out that the Lanling Wang was a story about a prince who wore a mask in the battles mainly because of his effeminateness. The *Botou* was spread to China from Western Regions (Xiyu 西域) or Central Asia. It was about a non-Chinese who was eaten by a tiger. His son took revenge by killing the wild animal. The Stepping and Singing Woman was first performed in the sixth century. There was an ugly scholar who failed in his career. He was often drunk and maltreated his charming wife. “She would air her grievances and lament to the neighbours, expressing her sorrows in songs... Their contemporaries made a skit on this, in which a strapping man in woman’s clothing would dance or ‘step’ slowly on stage or into the area of performance, singing the wife’s songs as he went. These songs or melodies were accompanied by woodwind and string instruments.” (Dolby 1976, 6; cf. Zhang 1989, 21).

In remote antiquity, exorcism, shamanism, divination, and ancestral and god worship were common practices. Many ancient Chinese also believed in the existence of evil spirits and demons. Shamans or Great Exorcist(s) (Fangxiang Shi 方相氏) would perform exorcistic rites (*Nuo*) in order to ward off evil elements and calamities. Until today, exorcism is still the most important function of the ritualistic plays of many Chinese traditional opera genres. This tradition is closely related to the *Nuo*, which have a long history. The *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (*Script Explained and Characters Elucidated*) explains that the term *Nuo* is an onomatopoeic word similar to the shouting sound made by the exorcists when they were driving away evil spirits or pestilences. The word is cognate with *nan* 難, meaning difficulty or calamity. (Zhu [1833] 1983, 712, Qu 2003, 65 - 81) According to Chinese legends, Momu 嫫姆 (the third imperial concubine of the Yellow Emperor 黃帝)¹⁸ took charge of clearing the path for moving coffin of the Yellow Emperor's empress (Leizu 嫫祖) (Qu 2003, 372). Rao Zongyi 饒宗頤 and Qu Liuyi 曲六乙 argue that Shang Jia 上甲, a predynastic ancestor of the Shang dynasty (ca. 1500 – 1040 B.C.), created the *shang* 禘 (rites of exorcism)¹⁹ during the Xia dynasty 夏朝 (ca. 2100 – 1600 B.C.) (Qu 2003, 71; Rao 1993, 31). It is believed that these rites of exorcism, which took place in the palace, were performed by shamans. They sang, danced, and most probably wore costumes and make-up in the rituals. During the Zhou dynasty (1027 – 256 B.C.), palace exorcistic rites were held three times a year (the first month of spring, the second month of autumn and the twelfth month). The last exorcism was known as *Danuo* 大儺 (Great Exorcism). According to Guo Qitao, the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli* 周禮) notes:

Draped in bear skins, wearing [masks with] four yellow-and-golden eyes (*huangjin simu* 黃金四目), with their upper bodies clothed in black and lower bodies in red, raising up dagger-axes and holding aloft shields, [the Fangxiang] marshaled the *baili* 百隸 [lower-level official liturgists who were in charge of the “five types” of masses or servants called *wuli* 五隸] in performing exorcism, searching houses (*suoshi* 索室) to expel pestilence. On the occasion of the “Great

¹⁸ Qu Liuyi says that besides the shamans, anyone could serve as a temporary exorcist in the exorcism during ancient times.

¹⁹ Qian Mao 錢萼 (a specialist of the Chinese *Nuo* theatre) states that according to Zheng Xuan 鄭玄, the Chinese character *shang* has three meanings. In ancient times, Chinese people addressed the spirits of the restless dead (*gui* 鬼) as *shang*. The name of the rite of expulsion was known as *shang*. Moreover, the process of expelling these spirits was also called *shang*. Since these harmful spirits were believed to cause illness and disasters, the rites of exorcism (*shang*) were performed in order to purify the gate, the windows, the eaves, the well, the hearth and the impluvium of a house (Qian 2000, 17).

Funeral” (Dasang 大喪), [the Fangxiang] marched ahead of the coffin [to clear the path]. Upon arriving at the graveyard, they jumped into the open grave, and stroked its four corners with dagger-axes to expel the spirits of tree and rocks (*fangliang* 方良) (cf. Guo 2003, 22).

The passage mentioned above indicates that Fangxiang 方相 or Fangxiang Shi 方相氏 were great exorcists.²⁰ It is important to point out that they were not shamans. They were middle ranking officials in the Zhou bureaucratic system. In the exorcistic rituals, they had to look for demons or evil spirits in many directions. Similar to the actors nowadays, they wore costumes and performed a series of movements. The Great Funeral was another occasion when Fangxiang had to perform rites to get rid of evil forces. Moreover, the *Danuo* (Great Exorcism) was also performed by common people in the twelfth month. As the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語) says, “When the men of his village hold their Expulsion Rite, he²¹ puts on his Court dress and stands on the eastern steps.” (translated by Waley 1956, 149)

The palace and popular *Nuo* rituals continued to flourish during the Qin dynasty (221 – 207 B.C.). For instance, before the Confucian scholars were buried alive, the Qin court ordered Fangxiang to perform a *Nuowu* 儺舞 (exorcism dance) for them. In the Former or Western Han dynasty (202 B.C. – A.D. 9), palace exorcistic rites were reduced to twice a year (in the first month and the twelfth month) (Bodde 1975, 81 - 82). The *Ancient Rituals of the Han Dynasty* (*Han jiuyi* 漢舊儀) states that in the *Nuo*, the rite of sowing the five grains was performed, drums were played and arrows were shot from peach-wood bows. Besides Fangxiang and *baili*, there were also 120 boys participated in the exorcism. The *Danuo* that took place in the court continued to develop in the Eastern or Later Han period (A.D. 25 – 220). According to the *Later Han History* (*Hou Hanshu* 後漢書), its procedure was very complicated, though it was only held once every year. As Guo Qitao summarizes:

In the Later Han, the Fangxiang, in the same demonic or soldier dress described in the Rites of Zhou, still led the Great Nuo, now also called *zhuyi* 逐疫 (expel pestilence). But the twelve beasts were added, in correspondence to twelve specifically named deities who fought twelve demons or evil forces. They were joined in the *nuo* procession by one hundred and twenty boy exorcists (*zhenzi* 佺

²⁰ According to Qian Mao, there were four great exorcists (the Fangxiang) in the *Nuo* rites during the Zhou dynasty (Qian 2000, 21).

²¹ The word “he” here refers to Confucius.

子), selected from young eunuchs (*zhonghuangmen zidi* 中黃門子弟, literally, the siblings of the Central and Yellow Gate), aged between ten and twelve. In fact, eunuchs were in charge of Great Nuo rituals to expel evil ghosts (*egui* 惡鬼) from the forbidden center of the palace. The ghosts to be expelled included the untended spirits of people who had died unnatural deaths...The targets for expulsion still included the spirits of the trees and rocks, which nevertheless began to be called the one-legged *kui* 夔, or, in Yue [越] (that is, in what was to become eastern Jiangnan), the mountain goblins (*shanxiao* 山魃). In terms of specific ritual formats, the following scene is particularly interesting. Before the dance by Fangxiang and the twelve beasts, which preceded the exorcism procession, “the [chief] eunuch initiated *chang* 倡²² (singing a song), and boy exorcists joined in (*he* 和).” The exorcising song then detailed twelve deities and demons...(Guo 2003, 45)

Puppets are commonly known as *mu'ou* 木偶, *kuilei* 傀儡 (魁欄) or *kuilei zi* 魁礮子 in Chinese. Though it is not absolutely clear when puppetry originated, its earliest appearance was most probably in connexion with ancient death rites and exorcism. Slaves were often buried alive with their deceased masters before and during the Shang dynasty (c. 1500 – 1040 B.C.). This practice gradually died out and mortuary figurines (*yong* 俑) made of straw were placed in tombs as substitutes for the living human beings. From the Zhou dynasty to the Eastern Han period, different types of *yong* (made of wood and moist clay), such as entertainers, musicians, soldiers and servants, were buried with the dead in order to provide entertainment and expel evil spirits for the decedents. Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (A.D. 127 – 200)²³ explains that mortuary figurines (*yongs*) were models of human (*ouren* 偶人). They had features and mechanisms which enabled them to move like living human beings. By the Han dynasty, and possibly earlier, the mortuary figurines already had mobile limbs. As Tsao Pen-yeh 曹本冶 states:

...Archaeological excavations have yielded many such *yongs*, some of which had movable arms that were made separately and later fitted onto the main body of the *yong*. Also significant is the *yong* found in the Province of Shangdong in 1979 where two Han tombs were excavated. Among the recovered thirteen *yongs* [193 cm in height], there was a near-human sized *yong* made of

²² The character *chang* here means to initiate singing.

²³ Zheng Xuan was a great philologist of the Confucian classics in the Later Han dynasty (A.D. 25 – 200).

thirteen wooden pieces which formed a jointed movable wooden skeleton. Movements such as sitting, kneeling and bending forward and backward were possible. Furthermore, there were many holes along the *yong*'s legs and lower torso, suggesting strings could be passed through these holes to control the movements of these parts. These archaeological findings reveal that at least during the Han period, mortuary figurines were quite capable of making body movements resembling those of human beings... (Tsao 1987, 80)

Ying Shao's *Fengsu tongyi* 風俗通義 (*Comprehensive Meaning of Customs*)²⁴ mentions that “*kuilei* 魁欄 were performed at felicitous gatherings, parties and weddings, during the period A.D. 168 – 89, but that they were really a funeral ritual with music or a funeral entertainment (*kuilei wei sangjia yue* 魁欄為喪家樂).”²⁵ (Dolby 1978, 98). In *A History of Chinese Drama*, William Dolby also states:

Some form of puppetry existed as early as the Han dynasty, wooden models being used for dancing and singing acts at wedding and other auspicious banquets. These may have derived from mortuary figurines installed with mechanisms to allow movement similar to some ways to the mobile-limbed statues of ancient Greece and Egypt, to certain mediaeval church figures in Europe and to some African idols, all of which are sometimes also associated with the antecedents of puppetry (Dolby 1976, 4 – 5).

²⁴ Ying Shao 應劭 (A.D. 165 – 204) was a scholar and an official in the later years of the Eastern Han. In his excellent work, *Fengsu tongyi*, he discusses the customs and manners of Chinese society during the Han period.

²⁵ Instead of mortuary figurines, Sun Kaidi 孫楷第 (an expert on Chinese puppetry) argues that in the Western Han dynasty, the term “*kuilei* 魁欄” in the sentence “*kuilei wei sangjia yue* 魁欄為喪家樂” referred to Fangxiang (the great exorcist of the *Danuo* 大難 mentioned above). The character “*yue* 樂” meant entertainment or singing. His work, *Kuilei xi kaoyuan* 傀儡戲考原 (*An Examination of the Origins of [Chinese] Puppetry*), states that puppets have often been associated with singing and performance. The *yong* is only a model of human being with no implications of performances or entertainment. Fangxiang, who wore costumes and performed in the *Nuo* rituals, was more closely related to performance. Hence, Sun insists that Fangxiang is more likely to be the antecedent of Chinese puppetry (Sun 1983, 142 – 147). Sun's arguments are criticized by Zhou Yibai 周贻白, a prominent specialist in Chinese traditional operas. In the *Zhongguo xiju yu kuilei xi yingxi* 中國戲劇與傀儡戲影戲 (*Chinese Operas, Puppet Shows and Shadow Plays*), Zhou states that in the Western Han period, the term ‘*kuilei*’ was not often used in connexion with entertainment or performance. In the sentence ‘*kuilei wei sangjia yue* 魁欄為喪家樂,’ the term “*kuilei*” referred to mortuary figurines, and the character ‘*yue* 樂’ might either mean ritual or performance at that time. Moreover, he also points out that according to the *Hou Hanshu* (the *Later Han History*), there were models of human (*ouren* 偶人) buried beneath the Shang Ganquan 上甘泉 Imperial Way. The *ouren* that resembled human beings were made of wood. Since the *yong* 俑 (mortuary figurines) were also known as *ouren* before and during the Han times, Zhou proposes that the origin of puppetry is directly related to these mortuary figurines (Zhou 1983, 215 – 220). Other scholars, such as Jo Riley, states that *kuilei*, Fangxiang and *yong* are etymologically related to the term *qitou* 魁頭, meaning ugly head. Ugliness is a sign of an exorcist (Riley 1977, 80 – 84, 110 – 112).

Military exorcism (*Junnuo* 軍儺) first appeared in China during the early years of the fourth century, when Wang Cheng 王澄²⁶ ordered his troops to perform the rite for the purpose of displaying military power. This tradition continued to develop in the later periods. By the Northern Qi dynasty 北齊 (A.D. 550 – 577), the number of participating youths in the palace exorcism was doubled from the 120 of the Han to 240. These lads were divided into six teams. Led by Fangxiang and the twelve beasts, they beat drums, blew horns, made a din and marched around the inner palace. In order to send away evil elements, they left the palace through the Southern Gate and went out of the capital city. The emperor and officials who had received the rank of 6-b (*cong liupin* 從六品) and above attended the ceremony (Qu 2003, 468). From the Sui period (A.D. 581 – 618) to the Five Dynasties era (A.D. 907 – 970), palace *Nuo* rituals continued to flourish, as did popular exorcism in the society. Fangxiang was still the great exorcist and the lads were active participants in the palace rituals. The highlight of these ceremonies was the rite of ripping apart living animals (such as roosters and goats) for the purpose of driving away evil spirits (*zhesheng* 磔牲). By the end of the Tang Dynasty, there were 500 lads participating in the palace exorcism.²⁷ This court ceremony was accompanied by lion dances, singing and dancing, such as the Dance of Fangxiang and the Prince of Orchid Mound (Fangxiang Lanling Wang Wu 方相蘭陵王舞). *Nuo* troupes (儺隊) joined the processions in temple festivals that took place in prefectures and counties. Temples dedicated to the deities of exorcism, such as Nuogong 儺公 (The Father of Exorcism) and Nuomu 儺母 (The Mother of Exorcism), were built in Shaanxi 陝西 and Henan 河南. By the end of the ninth century, “Luo Yin 羅隱, the magistrate of Qiantang 錢塘 (a coastal county in what would be Jiangnan) coined the term *Shinuo* 市儺 (market exorcism) to describe how exorcism rituals had become secularized and informalized in local society.” (Guo 2003, 35 - 36) With regard to the situations of northwest China, the Dunhuang liturgical manuscript *Erlang wei* 兒郎偉 (*Great Lad Exorcists*) states that military *Nuo* rituals were performed in order to expel demons and praised the achievements of Zhang Huaishen 張淮深, the military commissioner of Shazhou 沙州 (Dunhuang). According to this liturgical text, some new exorcising deities appeared in

²⁶ Wang Cheng was the prefectural governor of Jingzhou 荊州 during the reign period of Jin Huidi 晉惠帝 (r. A.D. 290 – 306).

²⁷ During the early Tang period, the number of participating youths was reduced to twenty-four.

popular *Nuo* rites. They were Zhong Kui 鍾馗,²⁸ the King of Hell (Yanluo Wang 閻羅王), the City God (Chenghuang 城隍), the Seven Virtuous Persons of Penglai (Penglai Qixian 蓬萊七賢), etc. Written by Zhang Yehu 張野胡 in A.D. 757, part of the *Huanjing Le* 還京樂 (*the Joy of Returning to the Capital*)²⁹ also notes:

...Zhong Qu 鍾驅³⁰ is bold and powerful.

Running with quick steps in the mortal world, I can overturn seas...

I have never stopped catching ghosts.

Let's take a look at the precious sword that I am holding in my hand.

The blade is just sharpened.

I [would] kill [all] the ghosts and goblins... (Qu 2003, 548 – 549)³¹

The above information clearly reveals that Zhong Kui came to play an important role in *Nuo* rites from the middle of the sixth century onwards. In Northern Taiwan, nowadays, actors perform the exorcistic or ritualistic play Dancing Zhong Kui (*Tiao Zhong Kui* 跳鍾馗)³² in order to purify new stages and new buildings (such as temples and houses).

From the Era of North-South division (A.D. 316 – 589) to the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618 – 907), puppet shows about Guo Gong 郭公 (Lord Guo) were often staged in both the palace and the society. Guo Gong, who was also known as Guo Lang 郭郎 (Lad Guo) or Guo Tu 郭秃 (Baldy Guo), was a comic character in the performance. These plays were so popular that Guo Tu, Guo Lang, or Guo Tu became to be used as a general term for puppet shows. It is important

²⁸ In ancient times, Chinese people used the *chui* 椎 (mallet) as a weapon to strike demons or evil spirits. This *chui* was known as Zhong Kui 終葵. It is believed that Zhong Kui 鍾馗 (the ghost killer) was originally a personification of Zhong Kui (the *chui*). According to Chinese popular beliefs, Zhong Kui was famous for his literary skill, though he was very ugly. He was admitted as the Prize Candidate in the imperial examination. When the Emperor saw his repulsive face, he refused to admit Zhong Kui as the Number One Scholar and ordered him to leave the palace at once. Zhong Kui committed suicide due to this great humiliation. The Emperor was very sorry and bestowed on him the title Qumo Dashen 驅魔大神 (the Great Spiritual Chaser of Demons). Another version of the legend says that during the Kaiyuan 開元 reign period, Zhong Kui exorcised the evil spirit that caused Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty 唐玄宗 to fall sick. The emperor ordered Wu Daozi 吳道子 (a prominent Chinese artist) to paint a portrait of Zhong Kui. This portrait was reprinted and distributed to the officials. Since then, the cult of Zhong Kui gradually became popular (Werner 1994, 249 – 250). Authors of fiction and drama scripts also wrote stories about him. Today, actors of Hebei Clapper opera (Hebei Bangzi 河北梆子) often perform the play *Zhong Kui Jiamei* 鍾馗嫁妹 (Zhong Kui Marries Off His Sister).

²⁹ Similar to the *Erlang wei*, the *Huanjing Le* is also a Dunhuang liturgical text.

³⁰ During Tang and Song times, Chinese characters such as 魁 (*kui*), 葵 (*kui*) and 馗 (*kui*), were read as 驅 (*qu*) in some parts of China (Qu 2003, 548).

³¹...鍾驅 (馗) 勇猛，世間趨，能翻海...抓鬼不曾閑。看我手中寶劍，刃新磨，斫妖魅，共邪磨 (魔) ...

³² In the performance of *Tiao Zhong Kui*, the actor who impersonates Zhong Kui appears onstage. Holding a seven-constellation sword in his hand, he dips the tip of his sword in the blood of a cock. Then, he sprinkles the blood on the stage for the purpose of purification. All his stage movements are accompanied by firecrackers. Marionettists in northern Taiwan also stage this ritual play (Wang 1997, 158).

to emphasize that there is a close relationship between Lord Guo and Lord Tian (Tian Gong 田公), the primary patron deity of marionette theatre in southwestern and central western Fujian. Marionettists believe that this deity possesses supernatural power to drive away demons and evil spirits.

According to William Dolby, elaborate automata that were mechanically or hydraulically operated were made for various rulers before and during the Tang period. Besides feasts or celebrations, these automata were also used in death rites. For instance, in his work, the *Fengshi jianwen ji* 封氏見聞記 (*A Record Concerning the Knowledge of the Fengs*), Feng Yan 封演 states:

From the Heavenly Treasure reign-period [742 – 56] onwards at funerals the sacrificial platforms...came to be as high as eighty or ninety feet, using three to four hundred boards for the framework, and exhausting the bounds of technical inventiveness. During the Great Era reign-period [766 – 78], for the burial day of Xin Yunjing 辛雲京, Imperial Commissioner of Taiyuan [in present Shanxi province], the authorities of the various provinces sent people to contribute to the sacrificial service. The Fanyang 范陽 [a province in the region of present-day Hebei province] sacrificial platform was the highest and biggest. There were figures in the likeness of Yuchi 尉遲 [i.e. Yuchi Gong 尉遲公, better known as Yuchi Jingde 尉遲敬德, 585 – 658], Duke of E 鄂公, and the Turkic Warrior General 突闕鬥士, carved out of wood, moving by mechanisms, and completely lifelike. When the sacrifices were over, and the hearse was about to go past, the representatives from Fanyang called out to them, “The rites are not yet complete!” The hearse stopped again, and they set forth figures of Xiang Yu 項羽 [232 – 202 B.C.] and the High Progenitor of the Han [i.e. Liu Bang 劉邦, Emperor Gaozu 高祖] at Goose Gate 鴻門. When they had at last completed this, the mourners all opened the cloth curtain, ceased their weeping, and watched the play. When the service was completed, the bereaved announced to the representatives, “Your sacrificial platform was excellent. We reward you with two horses.” (Dolby 1978, 106 – 107)

Yuchi Gong was a loyal general in the early Tang period and Liu Bang was rescued by Fan Kuai 范噲 at the Goose Gate Banquet. Hence, the main aim of this performance was to

praise the loyalty of Xin Yunjing (the deceased), who was a famous general and official of the Tang court. In his book, *Xianggang chuantong mu'ou xi tanyuan* 香港傳統木偶戲探源 (*An Investigation into the Origins of the Traditional Puppet Theatre in Hong Kong*), Yang Qingyi 楊清意 argues that except for rod puppets (*Zhangtou Kuilei* 杖頭傀儡)³³, other types of puppet were not suitable to be used in the performance that took place on such a high platform. In other words, from his point of view, the automata mentioned in the above passage were rod puppets.

String puppet (marionette)³⁴ plays already existed in China during the Tang dynasty. A poem, attributed to Emperor Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. A.D.712 – 756), says, “They’ve made an old man, wood-carved, pulled by string, chicken-skinned, crane-white haired, like the genuine thing. In a trice the show’s over, he’s solitary, slack, - just as in this dream-borne life of a human being.” (Dolby 1978, 105) In addition to automata, rod puppets and string puppets, dish bell puppet (*Panling Kuilei* 盤鈴傀儡)³⁵ shows also flourished in Chang’an 長安 (present-day Xi’an 西安) during the Tang dynasty.

String puppet shows first appeared in Fujian by the end of the Tang period. For example, in his *Muren fu* 木人賦 (*Rhapsody on Wooden Dolls*), Lin Zi 林滋 (around A.D. 843) states:

[The marionettes] are manipulated by [plucking] the strings...
As they dance for joy,
They would turn towards the left and twitch the right [side of their bodies].
They are installed with mechanisms that enable them to move...
[These shows] relate to the five phases,
[And] surpass all the hundred games... (Ye 2004, 2)³⁶

Lin Zi, who was a successful candidate in the highest imperial examination, was a native of Min Xian 閩縣 (modern Fuzhou). According to local traditions, Daoist priests, diviners, ritual masters and geomancers are known as masters of the five phases (*wuxing xiansheng* 五行先生).

³³ The *Zhangtou Kuilei* is a kind of “puppet which has its head resting on a single wooden or bamboo stick, with two curved sticks sticking out left and right for its arms. It really has no legs, but if the action of kicking out a foot or raising a leg is required, the puppeteer or an assistant sticks out his [or her] hand with a false foot on it. This puppet is able to turn its head, and to stretch its arms upwards, downwards, backwards, and forwards.” (Dolby 1978, 107). Today, rod puppet shows are still popular in some parts of China, such as Beijing and Huizhou 惠州 in Guangdong.

³⁴ Several strings or wires are attached to various parts of the puppet body. Puppeteers manipulate the puppets from above by plucking the appropriate strings.

³⁵ The dish bell was a kind of leather-thronged cymbal importing from the Kirgiz and other non-Chinese of Central Asia (Dolby 1978, 105).

³⁶ 動以從繩...手舞足蹈，必左旋而右抽；藏機關以中動...貫彼五行，超諸百戲... (cf. Ye 2004, 2).

Hence, Lin Zi's rhapsody is a typical example to indicate the intersection of religion and marionette theatre in Fuzhou during the ninth century.

Though the first half of the eighth century was the most stable and brilliant era in the history of the Tang dynasty, the empire was shattered by the end of the ninth century when the warlords transformed their military regions into independent kingdoms. During this period of disunity, Fujian fell under the rule of the Wang family³⁷ who established the Kingdom of Min (A.D. 897 – 946). Rulers of the Min Kingdom bestowed lavish funds on Buddhism and sponsored the erection of more than five hundred Buddhist temples. Monks were estimated to number from 40,000 to 50,000. String puppet plays and other types of *Baixi* were often staged at these temples, such as the Snow Mount Monastery (Xuefeng Si 雪峰寺) that is located in Minhou County 閩侯縣 of Fuzhou. Quanzhou Prefecture was another area where string puppet shows were popular (Ye 2004, 2 – 3). At the Xinghua 興化 district (Putian 莆田), hundred games were closely associated with religious activities. For example, when Master Fabei 法備 (a famous monk from Fuzhou) visited the prefecture, the hundred games were staged in order to welcome and entertain him. Moreover, in rural areas of Xinghua, *Baixi* (hundred games) players, who came from local villages, worshipped Tian Zu 田祖 (Ancestor of the Field) or Tian Shen 田神 (the Deity of the Field) when they performed in spring and autumn rites. Tian Zu was considered to be an agricultural fertility deity. The history of this cult can be traced back to the Zhou dynasty (1040 – 256 B.C.). Some Chinese scholars argue that the origin of the Tian Gong cult is closely related to the worship of Tian Zu.³⁸

Guangdong 廣東 fell under the rule of the Southern Yue (Nanyue 南越) in the early Western Han period (203 – 110 B.C.). Zhao Tuo 趙佗 was the founder of this kingdom. The ruins of the imperial palace of the Southern Yue were discovered in Guangzhou in 1977. Among all the excavations were many tiles engraved with Chinese characters. The term “*guanji* 官伎 (female entertainers of the court)” was inscribed on some of these tiles. This is evidence to indicate that dancing, singing and even the hundred games were very popular palace

³⁷ The three Wang brothers, Wang Shenchao 王審潮, Wang Shenbang 王審邦 and Wang Shenzhi 王審知, were the founders of the state of Min. They came from Guangzhou Prefecture 光州 of Henan Province 河南省. They joined Wang Xu's 王緒 rebel army in A.D. 885 and conquered many areas of Fujian. Later, Wang Xu was forced to commit suicide and Wang Shenchao became the ruler of the state. After his death, Wang Shenzhi succeeded his brother as the king of Min. The Min Kingdom mainly controlled the northeastern part of Fujian. Today, the ancestral hall of this lineage is situated at Guangkeng Natural Village 光坑自然村 of Longwu Village 龍吳村 in Qingshui Township 青水鄉, Fujian. Annual worship is held annually on the eleventh day of the eighth lunar month. Mr. Wang Hua 王華, one of my informants, is a descendant of Wang Shenzhi (Mary Yeung, notes).

³⁸ Please see Section 6.3. of Chapter Six for a discussion on this point.

entertainments at that time. As in Fujian, the hundred games continued to flourish in Guangdong during the Tang dynasty. According to Lai Bojiang 賴伯疆 (a prominent historian of local operas in Guangdong), they were performed in Guangzhou and Chaozhou 潮州 on deities' birthdays and during the Ghost Festival. In the Five Dynasties Era (tenth century), the Liu 劉 family ruled over the whole Lingnan 嶺南 region (modern Guangdong and Guangxi 廣西). The Lius of the Southern Han (A.D. 917 – 971), such as Liu Chang 劉鋹 (the last ruler), were very extravagant. He called himself “*xiaoxian dafu* 蕭閑大夫 (the Grand Master of Leisure)” and kept more than 20,000 eunuchs and entertainers. Hundred games that lasted many days and nights were often staged in the palace (Lai 2001, 9).

1.2. Theatre and Popular Religion in the Song and Yuan Periods (A.D. 960 – 1368)

1.2.1 General Background

“The rise of Song dynasty (A.D 960 – 1276) was accompanied by epochal changes in all aspects of Chinese society and culture, changes sufficiently great to mark the transition from Tang to Song as the turning point between China’s early imperial and late imperial eras.” (von Glahn 2004, 130) These political, economic, social and religious changes contributed to the rapid development of Chinese traditional theatre. “Most profound of all of these transformations was the shift in the center of gravity of Chinese civilization from the Yellow River valley in the north to the Yangtze valley in the south.” (von Glahn 2004, 130) From the eighth century onward, civil wars and invasions provoked massive migration to the Yangtze River basin and the southeastern coast. In A.D. 609, North China and Northwest China had by far the highest population densities. However, this situation changed when the population of South China grew rapidly in the course of the eighth to twelfth century. For instance, “the population of Middle Yangtze East grew by over 3,100%, Lower Yangtze by 817%, and Southeast Coast by 695%...” “The population density of the Middle Yangtze East region grew by a staggering 2,760%, that of the Lower Yangtze by 700%, and that of the Southeast Coast by 685%...” “By the twelfth century, the demographic center of gravity had shifted from north China to the eastern coastal region, south from the Yangtze to Quanzhou 泉州, and to the valleys of the Lower Yangtze, the Gan 贛, and the Zhe 浙.” (Johnson 1985, 410 – 411) The growth of population in these southern areas was accompanied by an increase in agricultural production. At the Lower Yangtze and South China, new arable land was created and new strains of early ripening rice were introduced due to the long growing season. Owing to the improvement of irrigation systems and the construction of polders and terracing, as well as the growth of the rural population, the southern

region already produced a grain surplus by the eighth century. One consequence of the increase in agricultural wealth was the growth of commercial activities. For example, Jacques Gernet says:

Almost every region was famous for some product or other: southern Hebei 河北 for iron, the neighborhood of Lake Taihu 太湖 for rice, Fujian for cane sugar, Sichuan 四川 and Zhejiang 浙江 for paper, Chengdu 成都, Hangzhou 杭州 and the towns on the lower Yangtze for printed books, and so on. The appearance of big mercantile agglomerations in the empire as a whole, and more especially in the Yangtze basin, in Sichuan and on the coasts of Fujian and Zhejiang, led to a general reorganization of trade routes and a development of exchanges inside the regions and between the regions themselves...(Gernet 1996, 321)

Since economic life became more and more complex and specialized, many city dwellers engaged in wholesale, banking and manufacturing activities. Paper money was used as a new currency of exchange. Villages developed into towns or cities, and towns or districts became metropolises. Bianliang 汴梁 (modern Kaifeng 開封) in Henan 河南; Lin'an 臨安 (modern Hangzhou 杭州) and Wenzhou 溫州 in Zhejiang; Fuzhou and Quanzhou in Fujian; and Chaozhou 潮州 in Guangdong were very busy and populated cities. Furthermore, the shattering of the ward system also hastened the process of urbanization and commercialization. In the Tang and the Five Dynasties Era (A.D. 907 – 1127), there was no sharp distinction between city and countryside. Besides the national capitals, most cities were quite small. Life in cities was under the strict control of the government. Walls separated cities into wards and cities gates were shut off at night. Trade was conducted in the walled enclosed markets, which were regulated according to strict schedules. Nevertheless, the structure of the newly developed cities and the life style of the city dwellers were very different. “The old cellular plan of the typical north Chinese city, with its honeycomb of walled wards, and walled enclosed markets, was replaced by a much freer street plan, in which trade and commerce could be conducted anywhere within the city or its outlying suburbs.” (Johnson 1985, 413). The curfew was abolished and city gates were unlocked at night. Business and amusement quarters remained open to dawn. Due to the process of urbanization and the tremendous economic expansion, wood-block printing appeared for the first time in cosmopolitan cities with huge populations, such as Bianliang (Kaifeng),

Beijing³⁹, Lin'an, Fuzhou and Quanzhou 泉州. The rise of commercial printing also led directly to the increase in literacy and the expansion of public entertainments or amusements. Various types of performance which involved dance, song, narrative, acrobatics and mimicry were staged in palaces, markets and villages.

With regard to the specific situation of southeast China, central control by the Song court was re-established in A.D. 978. By then, Quanzhou of Fujian already became a major entrepot of the South Seas trade. Quanzhou had links with all major ports and oversea communities.⁴⁰ Since most of the barren land in Fujian was not suitable for cultivation, many capable people preferred to become officials, Daoists, monks and players. (Tanaka 1970, 109) Some Fujian performers even visited and staged their performances at Hangzhou. Throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Fujian enjoyed a remarkable prosperity and the population continued to grow. During the late eleventh century, Fujian had a population of around 2,050,000 and the number of households was more than 1,050,000. Owing to immigration, the number of households and the population of the province increased to about 1,600,200 and 3,000,000 respectively towards the end of the Southern Song (Jiang 1992, 1). Members of the royal family who sought momentary ease often indulged themselves in banquets and entertainments. Besides keeping private troupes, they also hired itinerant troupes to stage performances. Moreover, many lineages also migrated from north China or Jiangnan areas 江南地區 (such as Zhejiang 浙江) and settled in the province during this period. Some of these new immigrants, who were good at theatrical performances, brought their artistic skills to the southeastern region. Owing to these reasons, local operas (both human and puppet) came to flourish in Fujian from the Song era. Guangdong also afforded some glimpses of puppetry and human performances during the Song and Yuan times, when Canton had already become the second largest entrepot in the South Seas trade. In A.D. 1304, more the 180,000 households settled in Guangzhou Route (*lu* 路)⁴¹ (Lai 2001, 23). There were large resident communities of Arab and Persian traders. In addition, Chinese settlers gradually penetrated the province, bringing their culture with them. Sources hint

³⁹ In the Jin Era and the Yuan Dynasty, Beijing was known as Zhongdu 中都 and Dadu 大都 respectively.

⁴⁰ Since Quanzhou was one of the largest international ports during the Song age, it had frequent cultural exchanges with other civilized societies in the world. Hence, both Chang Renxia 常任俠 and Xu Dishan 許地山 suggest that there was a close relationship between the Indian string puppet theatre and the origin of the Quanzhou marionette theatre (cf. Yang 2001, 123). In my opinion, more thorough studies have to be done in order to prove this connection.

⁴¹ In the Yuan Dynasty, the *lu*, which was under the supervision of circuit agencies, was governmental region governed by a Route Command (*zongguan fu* 總管府) (Hucker 1985, 64).

that some forms of entertainment were spread to Guangdong from other parts of China, especially Zhejiang and Fujian.

Besides the political, economic and social changes mentioned above, the religious culture of the Song also hastened the rise of the ritual operatic activities. Elites of local communities thought that one way to enhance group status and cohesion was to obtain official titles for their tutelary deities. Since unofficial or unauthorized sacrifices were labeled as licentious cults (*yinsi* 淫祀), they petitioned the Song court to award titles to their patron deities. Owing to the Jurchen invasion and a shortage of funds, the Southern Song (A.D. 1127 – 1279) court rapidly increased the number of titles granted to popular deities. The main purposes of this policy were to obtain the blessing of the deities and the financial support of local elites, who had contributed a lot of funds to the court for these canonizations. In addition, local leaders also took charge of collecting taxes and maintaining social order (Hansen 1990, 128 and 158). All these developments contributed to the rise of regional cults, such as the worship of Wutong 五通 (the Five Supernatural Powers)⁴²/Wuxian 五顯 (the Five Manifestations), and belief in Lord Tian in south China. It is important to point out that the basic principle of deity worship under the Song and Yuan times was reciprocity, “a mutual exchange of gifts and favors between gods and worshippers, so that both gain[ed] from the transaction.” (Overmyer 1986, 69) On the one hand, people required the blessing and protection of deities. On the other hand, deities wanted people to offer them delicious food, new temples, beautiful images and proper titles. In order to please their tutelary deities, devotees would hold celebrations on the gods’ birthdays. These rituals were often accompanied by operatic performances.

Chinese people believe that the spirits of the dead would be punished for their sins in the underworld according to the principle of karmic retribution. There are ten courts in purgatory and each of them is presided over by an infernal king. The history of this concept of hell can be dated back at least to the Song dynasty. From the tenth century onward, this idea was propagated by didactic murals, paintings on the walls of temples and monasteries and Buddhist texts. As von Glahn says:

The baroque elaboration of the tribulations of purgatory attested to abiding anxieties about not only one’s own postmortem fate, but especially that of one’s ancestors. Such concerns were most keenly expressed through the mythology and

⁴² Wutong were believed to be a type of mountainous demon called Shanxiao 山魃. They were one-legged goblins that often caused disasters to people. Later, the Buddhist term “*wutong*” became a label for these Shanxiao demons. Nowadays, at Fujian, some people still believe the existence of these mountainous evil spirits.

ritual practices centering on the figure of Mulian [目連] (Skt. Maudgalyāyana), a disciple of the Buddha who became universally acclaimed in Chinese culture as the paragon of filial devotion to the salvation of ancestors. In Tang and Song times, Mulian was closely associated with the Avalambana Feast (popularly known as the Ghost Festival) held on the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month to alleviate the suffering of sinners in purgatory...(von Glahn 2004, 142)

It is important to point out that the tradition of performing Mulian operas in the Ghost Festival can be traced back to the Northern Song dynasty (or possibly earlier).⁴³ Moreover, another significant religious development in the early Song period was the iconography of Guanyin 觀音 (the Goddess of Mercy). According to Richard von Glahn, Guanyin was always represented as a male deity down to the end of the Tang dynasty. However, in many Chinese temples, this bodhisattva has been represented as a woman since the Northern Song dynasty. She wears a white robe and holds a white lotus flower. This feminine form of Guanyin originates from the Tibetan Buddhism. In the Tantric literature, Buddhas and bodhisattvas appear in multiple forms, masculine and feminine, gentle and terrible. It is believed that Guanyin Clothed in White is the gentle aspect of Tara, which is often called by the Tibetans as the White Tara. Moreover, this transformation was also related to the Miaoshan 妙善 story. Guan Daosheng 管道昇 (A.D. 1262 – 1319), wife of the painter and calligrapher Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫 (A.D. 1254 – 1322), compiled the *Guanyin Dashi zhuan* 觀音大士傳 (*Life of the Mahāsattva Guanyin*). The goddess was a virgin in the story. She “was born in the West with the name Miaoshan, youngest daughter of King Miaozhuang.” (Dudbridge 2004, 44) Today, white-robed Guanyin often appears onstage in the performances of Mulian operas and Cantonese opera, such as the ritual play *Xianghua Shan Da Heshou* 香花山大賀壽 (the Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain).⁴⁴

The major schools of Thunder Rituals (*Leifa* 雷法)⁴⁵ absorbed a new set of talismans, mudras and mantras from Tantric Buddhism, which spread to Chang’an 長安 [present-day Xi’an 西安] during the Tang dynasty (around the eighth century). Shin-yi Chao states that Fujian was

⁴³ Please refer to Section 1.2.2. of this Chapter for the description of Mulian variety play.

⁴⁴ For discussion on this ritualistic or auspicious play of Cantonese opera, please refer to Section 4.3. of Chapter Four of this dissertation.

⁴⁵ From the Song up to the present, the main aims of the Thunder Rituals are to “incorporate and manipulate the powers of thunder both to punish the world’s baleful powers and to promote the world’s forces of life...” (Skar 1997, 165) For the relationship between the Leifa and the Lüshan rites, please see Section 5.4. of Chapter Five of this dissertation.

“the native place of influential Daoist masters of the Thunder Ritual, such as Tan Zixiao 譚紫霄 (ca. 935- 939) from Quanzhou.” (Chao 2002, 201 - 202) The Wuyi Mountains in northwestern Fujian was a “hotbed of Daoism and local religions.” The Wuyi Lord (Wuyi Jun 武夷君) was canonized as an official deity in the Han dynasty. The Wuyi Mountains, which was considered to be one of the thirty-six grotto heavens, “became a center of the Southern Branch of the Inner Alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) school in the twelfth century (Southern Song dynasty) after Patriarch Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾⁴⁶ moved there.” (Chao 2002, 202) Moreover, according to Professor Michael Saso, all the sects of *Leifa*, such as the Way of the Pure and Bright (Jingming Dao 淨明道),⁴⁷ attributed “the founding of the method to Xu Xun 許遜, a legendary Daoist said to have died in A.D. 374.” (Saso 1978, 235). He was also considered to be the founder of the Jingming Dao. Later, Xu Xun was (and still is) worshipped by the priests (including marionettists) of the Lüshan Tradition as their primary patriarch. In addition to Buddhist monks and orthodox Daoist priests, a class of vernacular priests (*tu daoshi* 土道士) or ritual specialists also emerged during the Song dynasty. These local priests “specialized in one or another set of liturgical therapies for exorcising demons and restoring health to afflicted persons.” (von Glahn 2004, 154) They adopted or imitated “the patron deities and repertoires of liturgies and spells” of Tantric Buddhism and different schools of Thunder Rituals (von Glahn 2004, 154). The origin of the Lüshan Sect is closely related to the traditions of these vernacular priests.

⁴⁶ Bai Yuchan’s original name was Ge Changgeng 葛長庚. Because his stepfather’s family name was Bai, his name was changed to Bai Yuchan. His literary names included Ruhui 如晦, Ziping 紫平 and Baisou 白叟. He styled himself Haiqiong Zi 海瓊子, Hainan Weng 海南翁, Wuyi Sanren 武夷散人 and Shenxiao Sanli 神霄散吏. His ancestral home was in Minqing 閩清, Fujian, but he was born in Qiongzhou during the Southern Song dynasty. After he grew up, he became a Daoist priest and possessed divine powers. His master, Chen Nan 陳南 (d. 1213), was a Daoist priest and a famous master of Thunder Rites (*Leifa* 雷法). In order to practice the Way, he went to auspicious Daoist places (such as Mount Wuyi 武夷山 and Mount Lu 廬山) and lived a secluded life. His famous disciples included Zhan Jirui 詹繼瑞, Peng Si 彭耜, Liu Yuanchang 劉元長 and Cheng Shoumo 陳守默. The *Haiqiong Bai Zhenren yulu* was compiled by his disciples, including Liu Yuanchang and Peng Si. It records Bai’s opinions upon shamanistic cults, therapeutic practices, scriptural traditions and disciplinary rules (Boltz 1987, 178). With regard to his teachings, “Bai Yuchan “integrates ideas of Chan Buddhism into Daoism by stressing that the highest Dao lies in a man’s mind, and a man’s mind is Dao itself.” (“The Five Southern Patriarchs – Bai Yuchan,” in <http://www.eng.taoism.org.hk>). He also argues that there is a direct relationship between one’s Inner Refinement and his Thunder Skills. He has been considered to be the Fifth Patriarch of the Southern Lineage of the Golden Elixir Sect.

⁴⁷ From the Tang dynasty onward, Xu Xun was considered to be the founder and one of the patriarchs of the Jingming Dao. In fact, the school was founded by He Shoucheng 何守澄 by during the Song dynasty. He was known as “He Zhengong 何真公 inside the sect. He ordained more than 500 disciples and stressed loyalty and filial piety, whereas the previous worship for Xu Xun in the Tang dynasty emphasized only filial piety.” (<http://www.eng.taoism.org.hk/general-daoism/major-daoist-sects/pg1-3-17.asp>) It is said that the Way of the Pure and Perspicacious is closely related to the Numinous Treasure Sect (Lingbao Pai 靈寶派).

The Quanzhen Jiao 全真教 (the Complete Perfection Tradition), which emerged in the Song and Yuan periods (A.D. 960 – 1368), still remains as one of the two main Daoist sects today. Its founder was known as Wang Zhe 王喆 or Wang Chongyang 王重陽 (A.D. 1113 – 1169). He was a native of Shanxi province. After repeated failures in his career, he claimed to receive a secret formula and started to practice the Way in a cave on Zhongnan Mountain 終南山 in Shaanxi 陝西. In A.D. 1167, he went to Shandong to preach the teaching of the Complete Perfection. Ma Yu 馬玉 (Ma Danyang 馬丹陽), Tan Chudian 譚處端, Liu Chuxuan 劉處玄, Qiu Chuji 邱處機, Wang Chuyi 王處一, Hao Datong 郝大通 and Sun Bu'er 孫不二 were his seven famous disciples. Three years later, Patriarch Wang returned to Shanxi with four disciples. However, he passed away en route in Bianliang. His disciples continued to glorify his religion in north China, in Shandong, Henan, Hebei and Shanxi. In A.D. 1222, Qiu Chuji visited Chinggis Khan at his Central Asian court. The sect “reached the height of its influence in the first decades of the thirteenth century, and for a time was favored over Chinese Buddhism by Mongol rulers.” (Overmyer 1987, 279) Owing to the influence of the Quanzhen sect, the contents of some Yuan *Zaju* 元雜劇 (variety plays), such as *Wang Shizu Sandu Ma Danyang* 王師祖三度馬丹陽 (Patriarch Wang Thrice Converts Ma Danyang) and *Kaitan Chanjiao Huangliang Meng* 開壇闡教黃梁夢 (Opening the Preaching Mound, Elucidating Teachings: The Yellow Millet Dream), were mainly about the seven Quanzhen masters and the eight immortals (Idema 1982, 90). These kinds are commonly known as *duotuo ju* 度脫戲 (deliverance plays).⁴⁸

Various types of operatic performance that laid the foundation of Chinese traditional theatre began to develop from the tenth century onward. The *Nuo* theatre continued to flourish throughout the country. Henan 河南, Shanxi 山西 and Hebei 河北 were major centers of “variety plays (*Zaju* 雜劇)”⁴⁹ in north China. *Nanxi* 南戲 (southern operas)⁵⁰ or Wenzhou *zaju*

⁴⁸ “The Yuan plays in which the eight immortals figure form part of a large and homogeneous group of plays that we might call ‘deliverance plays.’ Their common central theme is how a Daoist master, by hook or crook, makes an originally reluctant disciple aware of the impermanence of human existence and leads him or her toward immortality.” (Idema 1982, 305)

⁴⁹ No scripts of the Song *Zaju* 宋雜劇 have been preserved to the present. Hence, our knowledge concerning this form of entertainment is limited. According to Professor Bell Yung’s *Cantonese Opera: Performance as Creative Process*, it was a kind of short comic entertainment that included singing, dancing, speech and acrobatics. In the performance, melodic and percussion instruments were used for accompaniment, and actors wore make-up and costumes. Professor Yung says that the Yuan *Zaju* 元雜劇, which was the most popular type of theatrical performance during the Yuan dynasty (A.D. 1280 – 1468), was mainly accompanied by stringed instruments. The principal male role (*zhengmo* 正末) and the principal female role (*zhengdan* 正旦) had the monopoly of singing the suite, “a series of single arias (*qu* 曲) unified by the same tonal mode (*diao* 調) for the tunes, and by a single rhyme which runs through all the verse of the text.” (Yung 1989, 2) Only one of them sang in any one act or throughout

溫州雜劇 originated in Wenzhou 溫州 of southern Zhejiang in the early twelfth century. Musicians, story-tellers, dancers, actors and puppeteers often staged their performances in permanent quarters, which were known as *wazi* 瓦子 (tiles), *washi* 瓦市 (tile markets), *wasi* 瓦肆 (tile booths) or *washe* 瓦舍 (tile huts).⁵¹ Within these amusement parks, there were theatres called *goulan* 勾欄 (hook balustrades) or *kanpeng* 看棚 (viewing awnings). Meng Yuanlao's 孟元老 *Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華錄 (*The Eastern Capital: A Record of the Dream of Hua*), a work written around 1147, states that five types of puppetry already existed in the capital during the Northern Song dynasty. These were water puppets (hydraulic automata, *Shui kuilei* 水傀儡), rod puppets (*Zhangtou kuilei* 杖頭傀儡), gunpowder operated puppets (*Yaofa kuilei* 藥發傀儡),⁵² shadow puppets (*Yingxi* 影戲)⁵³ and string puppets (marionettes, *Xuanxian kuilei* 懸線傀儡). Chapter Seven of this record says that water puppet shows and other types of *Baixi* were performed in the palace when the emperor ascended the Linshui Dian 臨水殿 (the Hall that Overlooks the Water) to give a feast to his officials. Water puppets were manipulated to dance, whirl and play football in the water (Meng [1147] 1956, 226 – 228). Moreover, in Kaifeng, acrobatics, dance, puppet shows and various types of performance were staged by famous actors, dancers or marionettists in the *wazi*. As the section *jingwa jiyi* 京瓦伎藝 (Capital Tiles and Skills) of the *Dongjing menghua lu* says:

...Variety plays (or Comedies) with rod puppets: Ren Xiaosan 任小三.

Everyday, he [stages] his first performance of small variety plays at the fifth watch. If one is slightly too late, one cannot get to see it.

the performance. Each play had four main acts, with sometimes the addition of one or two short “wedge acts” (*xiezi* 楔子).

⁵⁰ In his excellent work, *The Rise of the Peking Opera (1770 – 1870): Social Aspects of the Theatre in Manchu China*, Colin P. Mackerras states that *Nanxi* was “based partly on the folk-songs of the local villages and cities. Each piece began with an explanatory prologue, and the number of scenes was not fixed.” (Mackerras 1972, 2). It was mainly accompanied by percussion instruments. Moreover, its seven role categories were *sheng* 生 (male roles), *dan* 旦 (female roles), *mo* 末 (old male roles), *wai* 外 (supporting male roles), *tie* 貼 (supporting female roles), *jing* 淨 (painted face roles) and *chou* 丑 (comic roles). All *Nanxi* actors sang in the performance.

⁵¹ The term *washe* means that when audience and actors gathered together, it was like piling tiles together. It was like the falling apart of tiles when all people dispersed.

⁵² Powder operated puppets are small dolls which are displayed (or performed) by means of gunpowder. These dolls are made to demonstrate a series of predetermined movements when fireworks are set off in an open area. In Hakka areas of southwestern Fujian, this type of entertainment is known as “*huoshu yinhua* 火樹銀花 (fire trees and silver flowers).”

⁵³ In the Northern Song stage, shadow puppets were made of carved bamboo and plain paper. Later, they were made of sheep-skins adorned with colors.

String puppets: Zhang Jinxian 張金線.⁵⁴

Powder operated puppets: Li Waining 李外寧.

Various Hand Feats Requiring Strength: Zhang Zhenmiao 張臻妙, Wen Nuge 溫奴哥, Mo Boji 沒勃臍, Zhen Gejiang 真個強, Xiao Diaodao 小掉刀.

Foot Stick Ball: Hunshen Yan 渾身眼, Li Zongzheng 李宗正, Zhang Ge 張哥.

Narration of History: Sun Kuan 孫寬, Sun Shiwu 孫十五, Ceng Wudang 曾無黨, Gao Shu 高恕, Li Xiaoxiang 李孝詳...

Shadow plays: Dong Shiwu 董十五, Zhao Qi 趙七, Cao Baoyi 曹保義, Zhu Po'er 朱婆二, Mei Kuntuo 沒困駝, Feng Sengge 風僧哥, Zu Liujie 俎六姐...(Meng [1147] 1956, 215; cf. Idema 1982, 18 – 19).

The fall of the Northern Song (A.D.1127) was one of the major factors that contributed to the development of operatic genres in southeast China. After the establishment of the Song court in Hangzhou [Lin'an], many northerners also escaped to the south, where the population continued to grow, commercial life became far more specialized, and theatrical activity began to flourish. There were no less than twenty-three *wazi* in Hangzhou. Actors or entertainers staged various kinds of performances in palace and market. The *Ducheng jisheng* 都城記勝 (*Recording the Splendors of the Capital City*) and the *Wulin jiushi* 武林舊事 (*Old Affairs of the Martial Grove*), two records concerning the daily life and customs of Lin'an in the Southern Song Dynasty, state that entertainments such as football, variety plays, telling of jokes, acrobatics and puppet shows, were very popular in the capital. *Shui kuilei* (water puppets), *Yingxi* (shadow puppets), *Zhangtou kuilei* (rod puppets), *Rou kuilei* (flesh puppets)⁵⁵ and *Xuansi* 懸絲 (or *Xuanxian*) *Kuilei* (string puppets or marionettes) were the five types of puppet used in the shows. Lu Jinxian 盧金線 and Zhang Jinxian 張金線 were prominent marionettists. Zhang Fengxi 張逢喜 and Zhang Fenggui 張逢貴 were good at performing flesh puppet shows. The four famous rod puppeteers were Zhang Xiao Pushe 張小僕射, Liu Xiao Pushe 劉小僕射, Chen Zhongxi 陳中喜 and Chen Zhonggui 陳中貴. Sai Baoge 賽寶哥, Yao Yuxian 姚遇仙, Wang Ji 王吉, Jin

⁵⁴ In Song periods, the marionettes were also known as *Jinxian kuilei* 金線傀儡 (golden-string marionettes). Today, the term *Jinxian xiwen* 金線戲文 (golden-string play-texts) is still found in the liturgical manuals that are possessed by some of the Lushan marionettists in central western Fujian.

⁵⁵ Zhou Yibai interprets the term *Rou Kuilei* as glove or hand puppet. However, Sun Kaidi argues that the flesh puppet show is a kind of performance that acted by human beings rather than wooden dolls. Ye Mingsheng points out that in a flesh puppet show, strings are attached to the limbs of the actors. They then imitate the stiff mechanical movements of the marionettes.

Shihao 金時好 and Liu Xiao Pushe were water puppeteers who achieved considerable fame. The name Zhang Jinxian mentioned above also appears in the *Wulin jiushi*. In other words, after the downfall of the Northern Song Dynasty, this famous string puppeteer most probably escaped from Kaifeng to Hangzhou, where he continued to perform in palace and amusement parks.

Performers and puppeteers started to form their own occupational associations in the Southern Song period. In the *Mengliang lu* 夢梁錄 (*A Record of the Millet Dream*), a work on the daily life of Hangzhou, Wu Zimu 吳自牧 mentions puppet guilds. He points out that “during the lantern festival on the fifteenth of the first month, the puppets of the twenty-four puppet guilds at Sujia Lane 蘇家巷 of Guan Lane Mouth 官巷口 have bright and gorgeous attire, fine ladies⁵⁶ wear flowery coats and jeweled, emerald-laden head-dresses, and have slim willowy waists, as supplely graceful as real women.” (Meng [1147] 1956: 140; Dolby 1978, 116) It seems likely that Erlang Shen (the Deity of the Second Lad) was already considered to be a venerable deity by actors and puppeteers, since one of his temples was erected at this Guan Lane Mouth (Meng [1147] 1956, 252). Moreover, at Hangzhou, the number of performers from Fujian and Sichuan was impressive. Written around A.D. 1250, the *Old Man of West Lake's Record of the Multitudinous Splendors* (*Xihu laoren fansheng lu* 西湖老人繁勝錄) records, “...the guild of the Fujian *baolao*⁵⁷ 福建鮑老 consists of more than 300 people. The guild of the Sichuan *baolao* 川鮑老 also has more than 100 people.” (Meng [1147] 1956, 111)⁵⁸

⁵⁶ The meaning of the term *xidan* 細旦 (fine ladies) is not clear. It probably refers to female roles.

⁵⁷ Though the term “*baolao*” is often associated with marionette theatre, it actually refers to the actors of large puppet heads or masked dancers in parades.

⁵⁸ ...福建鮑老社，有三百餘人；川鮑老亦有一百餘人。

In Fujian, Puxian opera 莆仙戲⁵⁹ and Liyuan opera 梨園戲⁶⁰ appeared in Xinghua 興化 (present-day Putian 莆田 and Xianyou 仙游) and Quanzhou respectively. In his *Houshan shihua* 後山詩話 (*Houshan's Talks on Poetry*), Chen Shidao 陳師道 (A.D. 1053 – 1101) notes a poem about marionettes, which was written by Yang Yi 楊億 (a native of Pucheng 浦城 in northern Fujian). This poem indicates the existence of puppet performances in Fujian around the early eleventh century. As part of Yang's poem says, "The *baolao* at the feast laughs at Mister Guo [Lord Guo], laughs that his dancing sleeves are too sloppy..." (Dolby 1978, 104) Some of the poems written by Liu Kezhuang 劉克庄 (A.D. 1137 – 1269) from Putian describes marionette performances. Two of his poems are written as follows:

The strings of Mister Guo have broken, and everything has come to a halt.
A monkey remains as a monkey⁶¹ once its costume and headgear have been taken off.
Where has Master Yan of the stage gone to?
How many disappointed people are standing in front of his stage? (Liu 1967, 194, translated by Robin Erik Ruizendaal)⁶²
The stage is empty, the audience has dispersed and it is very cold.
Yesterday, there was still a bustling crowd.

⁵⁹ The origin of Puxian opera can be traced back to the Song dynasty, when the hundred games (*baixi* 百戲) and southern operas (*Nanxi* or *Wenzhou Zaju*) were very popular. It is believed that there is a close relationship between Puxian opera and these two kinds of operatic performance (Ke 1993, 59 – 60). Puxian opera is sung in Puxian dialect. Today, it is still popular in Putian, Xianyou, Huian 惠安, Fuqing 福清 and Yongtai 永泰.

⁶⁰ According to van der Loon, Liyuan (Pear Garden) Opera is the traditional opera genre in southern Fujian. This name "strikes the outsider as inappropriate, since 'Pear Garden,' originally the location of the imperial conservatoire during the Tang, is a poetic term for theatre in general." (van der Loon 1992, 15) Liyuan Opera has been performed in the Minnan 閩南 cultural areas (such as Quanzhou, Zhangzhou 漳州, Xiamen 廈門 and Taiwan 台灣) since the Song period. From the late Tang onwards, this opera genre was cultivated in three traditions. The origins of these three types of troupe "remain a matter of speculation." (van der Loon 1992, 15) They were *xia'nan lu* 下南路 (lower south tradition), *shang lu* 上路 (upper tradition) and *qizi ban* 七子班 (seven-actor troupes). The *xia'nan* 下南 (lower south) absorbed elements from local dancing and singing in the late Tang period. It is believed that the upper tradition (*shanglu* 上路) tradition was closely related to the *Wenzhou Zaju*. Performers of both the *shanglu* and *xia'nan* troupes were adults. During the Southern Song and Yuan times, many nobles of the Song court and their private troupes were forced to flee to southern Fujian. These private troupes were called *qizi ban* 七子班 (troupes of seven boys) or *xiao liyuan* 小梨園 (Little Pear Garden) since the roles were arranged into seven types and all troupe members were boy-actors (Wu 1994, 1 - 28).

⁶¹ Ruizendaal does not offer a complete translation of this line. In my opinion, its meaning is derived from the popular Chinese idiom *muhou erguan* 沐猴而冠. A monkey remains as a monkey, though it is bathed and dressed in silk. In other words, it is still an animal even if it imitates human gestures and looks like human beings. I think that in this poem, the word "monkey" here refers to Mister Guo. Manipulated by the marionettist, it imitates human behavior and gestures onstage. However, it remains as a stiff wooden doll once the performance is over.

⁶² 郭郎線斷事都休，卸了衣冠返沐猴，棚上偃師何處去，誤他棚下幾人愁。

My sons and daughters did not know that the time and place [of the performance] had changed,

And they all cheered because they wanted to go to the city to see another show (Liu 1967, 194, translated by Robin Erik Ruizendaal).

Besides marionette performances, rod puppet and glove puppet shows also flourished in Fujian as early as the Southern Song period. At Guangzhou, we find mention of female entertainers around the mid fourteenth century. For example, in the *Song of Canton* (*Guangzhou ge* 廣州歌), Sun Fen 孫蕢 (A.D. 1334 – 1390) says that Fujianese female singers and Cantonese girls were as beautiful as flowers. (Lai 2001, 24) In other words, besides local entertainers, female singers from Fujian also performed in Guangzhou. By the end of the Yuan dynasty, local operas also evolved in eastern Guangdong (present-day Haifeng Xian 海豐縣 and Lufeng Xian 陸豐縣). Bamboo Horse Plays (*Zhuma Xi* 竹馬戲) spread to this region from Zhangzhou of Fujian in the Song times. In the performance, actors had to wear bamboo horses (made of bamboo frameworks). The play *Zhaojun Hefan* 昭君和番 (*Zhaojun Pacifies the Barbarians*)⁶³ were usually performed. Besides the *Zhuma Xi*, the *Baizi Xi* 白字戲 (Common Opera) was also developed in eastern Guangdong. Chapter Five of the *Local History of the Jieshi Garrison*⁶⁴ (*Jieshi weizhi* 碣石衛志) notes:

There are two kinds of opera often performed in our district. One is known as the Common Tongue (*Bazi* 白字), which is also called the Pear Garden (*Liyuan* 梨園). Many actors are boys. It has more civil acts than fighting scenes, [and] is sung in local dialect. I was told that when the Minnan people came and settled [here] in the past, they brought with them the Common Opera (*Baizi Xi*), which already existed [in the area] since the Song and Yuan [periods]. The other one is known as the *Zhengyin Xi* 正音戲 (Refined Opera), which is spoken [and

⁶³ This tragedy is derived from the Yuan miscellany play *Hangong Qiu* 漢宮秋 (*Autumn in the Han Palace*). With regard to its plot, Emperor Yuan 漢元帝 of the Han dynasty sends Mao Yanshou 毛延壽 (his imperial painter) on a tour to select charming girls. Wang Qiuqun is a very beautiful girl. However, his father fails to bribe Mao Yanshou. As a result, Mao retaliates upon the lady by drawing an ugly portrait for her. “The emperor eventually discovers her and is enraptured. Mao escapes to the Hunnish khan bearing a true portrait of Lady Splendour [Wang Zhaojun]. As intended, the khan is so struck by the portrait that he demands her as his wife as the price for peace with Chinese. The grief-stricken emperor is forced to acquiesce, and he and Lady Splendour take the saddest leave of one another.” (Dolby 1976, 46 – 47) Later, the lady drowns herself in the Amur River and Mao Yanshou is executed.

⁶⁴ The Jieshi Garrison was established in the early Ming period (around A.D. 1550) at the southeastern part of Haifeng Prefecture. The armies that settled in this area were entrusted with the task of defending the southeastern frontier. The *Jieshi weizhi* was published during the reign period of Jiajing 嘉靖 (A.D. 1522 – 1566) of the Ming dynasty. Unfortunately, the original text of this local history has already lost in the course of time.

sung] in [vernacular] official language. Both civil and military plays are performed. It is commonly called Grand Opera (*Daxi* 大戲). [Troupe members] of different role types are adults or middle-aged persons. Historical plays are usually staged. Moreover, [these performances] often take place at the stages of temples... (Lai 2001, 22)⁶⁵

The above information indicates that the *Baizi xi*, which already evolved in eastern Guangdong in the mid fourteenth century, was closely related to the local music and operas of southeastern Fujian. According to Lai Bojiang, *Zhengzi xi* did not exist in the region until the early Ming (around the end of the fourteenth century). In the case of puppetry, the 1933 edition of the *Hainan Dao zhi* 海南島志 (the *Local History of Hainan Island*) states that there were already rod puppet troupes (*zhangtou mu'ou ban* 杖頭木偶班) on the island during the Yuan Dynasty. Some people think that this type of puppet show was directly introduced from Fujian. Xie Yanlin 謝衍琳, a prominent rod puppeteer of Hainan, says that it was first spread to Zhejiang from Henan, and was further introduced to Hainan Island from the Jiangnan 江南 region.

1.2.2 Performances and Religious Activities

From the Song periods onwards, puppet plays and human operas already penetrated the religious life and culture of the Chinese people. Puppetry, human operas, *Nuo* rites, and different forms of entertainment were often performed on important or auspicious occasions. First, exorcistic masked rites (*Nuo*), which retained elements of *Baixi* 百戲 (hundred games) and other kinds of popular art, continued to develop throughout the country. In the Northern Song dynasty, over a thousand ritualists took part in the Great Exorcism, which was performed in the inner palace on New Year's Eve. It is important to point out that Fangxiang Shi 方相氏 (Great Exorcist) already disappeared from the imperial exorcism parade during the Northern and Southern Song. Due to the influence of the popular religion and Daoism, many new deities, such as Zhong Kui, Jindu Tongjia Jiangjun 金鍍銅甲將軍 (the Gold-Plate Copper Armor General), Menshen 門神 (the Door God), Liuding Liujia Shen 六丁六甲神 (the Six Deities of Light and the Six Deities of Darkness),⁶⁶ Tudi 土地 (the God of the Locality) and Zaojun 灶君 (the Stove

⁶⁵ 吾邑常演之戲有二焉，一曰白字，亦名梨園，多童伶，戲多文少武，唱鄉音；聞白字戲，戲隨閩南人入籍本邑而來，宋元已有之。一曰正音戲，講官話，文武兼演，俗名大戲；行柱角色，多是成年或老壯人，多演歷史戲，且多在廟堂戲台演出…

⁶⁶ According to Chinese beliefs, the Liuding Liujia Shen are personifications of the *liuding* 六丁 and the *liujia* 六甲. The *liuding* are the six combinations beginning with the fourth Heavenly Stem of the sixty combinations of the ten

God), were involved in this palace ritual. The Great Exorcism was not performed in the palace in the Yuan dynasty (A.D. 1264 – 1368).⁶⁷ At the prefecture and county levels, the Guilin Qingjiang military *Nuo* troupes (Guilin Qingjiang junnuo 桂林靜江軍儺) of Guangxi were very famous in Song. In his *Lao Xue'an biji* 老學庵筆記 (*Notes of the Old Learning Hut*), Lu You 陸游 (A.D. 1125 – 1210)⁶⁸ says that a Qingjiang military exorcistic troupe usually possessed over 800 masks. *Da Ye Hu* 打夜胡 (beating the dark night) or *Da Ye Hu* 打夜狐 (beating the night fox),⁶⁹ which was a kind of *Qigai Nuo* 乞丐儺 (beggar exorcism), was very popular in Bianliang (Kaifeng), Lin'an (Hangzhou) and Fuzhou. In his *Mengliang lu* (preface dated either A.D. 1274 or A.D. 1334), Wu Zimu says that this kind of popular *Nuo* usually took place at Lin'an in the twelfth lunar month. As he notes, "From the beginning of this month, beggars in the market places (three to five persons in one troupe) impersonate deities, ghosts, judges in Hades, Zhong Kui, [Zhong Kui's] younger sister and so forth. Beating gongs and drums, they beg for money from door to door. [This tradition] is commonly known as *Da Ye Hu* 打夜胡 (beating the dark night), which also means exorcism."⁷⁰ (Meng [1147] 1956, 181) In addition, Chapter Forty of the *Local History of the Three Mountains* (*Sanshan zhi* 三山志)⁷¹ says that *Da Ye Hu* 打夜狐 was often performed in Fuzhou prefecture⁷² at the end of the lunar year (Liu [1182] 2000, 644).

Heavenly Stems and the twelve Earthly Branches. They are *dingmao* 丁卯, *dingchou* 丁丑, *dinghai* 丁亥, *dingyou* 丁酉, *dingwei* 丁未 and *dingsi* 丁巳. The *liujia* are the six combinations beginning with the first Heavenly Stem of the sixty combinations of the ten Heavenly Stems and the twelve Earthly Branches. They are *jiazi* 甲子, *jiayin* 甲寅, *jianchen* 甲辰, *jiawu* 甲午, *jiashen* 甲申 and *jiashu* 甲戌.

⁶⁷ In the Yuan era, the imperial exorcism was performed by shamans according to the Mongolian tradition. In the rite, the whole body of the emperor, the empress and the crown prince were tied by threads (made of white and black wool). The shaman employed smoke or fumes to get rid of evil emanations from them. The date of exorcism was determined by divination. It usually took place after the sixteenth of the twelfth lunar month. Moreover, on the fifteenth of the second month, soldiers, lamas, musicians and many ethnic minorities took part in the imperial procession. This ritual mainly functioned to expel demons or evil spirits (Qu 2003, 598 – 601).

⁶⁸ Lu You was a patriotic poet during the later period of the Northern Song and the early period of the Southern Song.

⁶⁹ As mentioned in the main text, *Da ye hu* 打野胡 or *Da ye hu* 打夜狐 is a type of *Qigai Nuo*. It derived from the term *xiehu* 邪呼, which was a sound made by the exorcists in the *Nuo* rites. The origins of some local operas, such as Ping opera 評劇 and Yue opera 越劇, can be traced back to the *Qigai Nuo* (Kang 1999, 19 – 26).

⁷⁰ 自入此月，街市有貧丐者三五人為一隊，裝神鬼、判官、鍾馗、小妹等形，敲鑼擊鼓，沿門乞錢，俗呼為打夜胡，亦驅儺之意也。

⁷¹ The *Sanshan zhi* was written in A.D. 1182 by Liang Kejia 梁克家 (A.D. 1128 – 1187). Liang was a native of Qingyuan district 清源 (Quanzhou 泉州市 nowadays). He passed the imperial examinations in A.D. 1160 and was appointed as prime minister of the Southern Song court in the eighth year (A.D. 1177) of the Qiandao 乾道 reign period and in the ninth year (A.D. 1188) of the Chunyou 淳佑 reign period respectively. The *Sanshan zhi* is the first local history of Fujian province (Liang [1182] 2000, preface).

⁷² During the Southern Song dynasty, Fuzhou prefecture included twelve counties. They were Minxian 閩縣, Houguan 侯官, Huai'an 懷安, Changle 長樂, Fuqing 福清, Yongfu 永福, Minqing 閩清, Gutian 古田, Changxi 長溪, Ningde 寧德, Luoyuan 羅源 and Lianjiang 連江.

In the Song period, wealthy families employed the *Nuo* rituals to drive away evil elements on important occasions, such as weddings and funerals. This kind of exorcistic rite was usually held in the main hall of a house or mansion.⁷³ For example, Liu Tang 劉鏜 (A.D. 1219 - ?), who was a prominent scholar during the Southern Song, was a native of Nanfeng County 南豐縣 in Jiangxi. He wrote the poem *Guannuo* 觀儺 (Watching the Exorcism) after observing a *Nuo* rite (or performance) at a funeral. Part of the poem is as follows:

...The drumming sound was loud and the fluting was clear.

[Ritualists] transformed [themselves] into ghosts and deities [so as to] present an opera.

The malevolent spirit with disheveled hair [held] an iron stick-shaped weapon...⁷⁴

Wearing ochre clothes and a blue mask, his eyes sparked with fury.

A charming lady⁷⁵ with red clothing covered her face with a banana-leaf fan.

A man with bushy whiskers⁷⁶ wore a green ribbon and held a cattail sword.

He turned somersaults and was [a deity] with square shoulders.

Opening his mouth, he licked and dried the lips with his tongue...⁷⁷ (Qu 2003, 656)

The translation mentioned above clearly indicates that the ritualists or players performed the story of Zhong Kui. They wore make-up and costumes in this *Nuo*, which was already considered by Liu as a kind of operatic performance. Besides Jiangnan and Fujian, exorcistic rites also emerged in Guangdong. For example, in rural areas of southwestern Guangdong, the worship of Lei Shen 雷神 (the Thunder God) was very popular in the Leizhou Peninsula from the Song onward.⁷⁸ In order to expel evil spirits and pay tribute to the deity, the *Nuo* was held on the fifteenth of the first lunar month. In usual cases, six to eight players would participate in the performance. Wearing wooden masks and costumes, actors held axes and impersonated local deities, such as Lei Shen, the Grandfather and Grandmother of the Locality (Tudi Gong 土地公 and Tudi Po 土地婆), and the Five Military Officials of the Thunder (Wulei Jiangguan 五雷將官 or Wulei Guanjiang 五雷官將). Their costumes had five colors that represent the five directions

⁷³ This kind of *Nuo* rite is known as *tangnuo* 堂儺 (hall exorcism).

⁷⁴ *Guduo* 骨朵 is also called *jingua* 金瓜 (golden melon-shaped weapon). It was a kind of weapon carried by a guard of honor in imperial times. It was used as a torture instrument before the Song dynasty.

⁷⁵ Qu Liuyi states that the term charming lady (*cha'nü*) refers to Zhong Kui's younger sister.

⁷⁶ According to Qu Liuyi, the term *ranweng* 髯翁 (the man with bushy whiskers) refers to Zhong Kui (the ghost fighter).

⁷⁷ ...鼓聲淵淵管聲脆，鬼神變化供劇戲...夜叉蓬頭鐵骨朵，赭衣藍面眼迸火...紅裳姪女掩蕉扇，綠綬髯翁握蒲劍，翻筋斗臂膊寬，張頤吐舌唇吻干...

⁷⁸ At Leizhou Peninsula, severe thunderstorms often occur. They cause casualties and destruction to crops. Hence, thunder has been worshipped by local people since the ancient times.

or the five phases. These actors took part in the procession and visited every household within the domain. At the main hall of each house, a *Nuo* dance was performed, incense and candles were burnt, sacrificial food was displayed, and fireworks were set off. After the parade, a paper boat was burnt and released onto the river so as to send off ghosts or demons. It is important to emphasize that besides exorcism, *Nuo* rituals had also become a form of entertainment by the Song periods. As Zhu Xi 朱熹 comments, “Exorcism, though an archaic ritual, is very close to play.” (cf. Guo 2003, 36) The developments of the *Nuo* rites had contributed to the rise of *shexi* 社戲 (popular performances given on religious festivals).

Second, the origin of Mulian operas can be dated back to the Tang dynasty when the Sanskrit play about Mulian spread to China from Turfan 吐魯番. The variety play *Mulian Rescues His Mother* (*Mulian jiumu* 目連救母) first appeared in the history of Chinese traditional theatre during the Northern Song dynasty, mainly due to the influence of Buddhist scriptures, transformation texts (*bianwen* 變文), precious volumes (*baojuan* 寶卷),⁷⁹ and a new concept of purgatory. The *Dongjing menghua lu* states that this play was performed at Bianliang [Kaifeng nowadays] in the seventh lunar month. As Stephen F. Teiser translates:

...The fifteenth day of the seventh month was the Zhongyuan Festival. For several days before, the markets sold items for the dark world...In the most crowded areas such things as fruits, produce, and flowering plants were sold, and the Scripture on Mulian, the Most Honorable was printed and sold. Bamboo poles were split to form tripods several feet tall, and at their tops were fashioned spaces for lamps. They were called *yulan* bowls. Clothes and money for the dark regions were placed on top and they were burned.

⁷⁹ The Story Mulian (Maudgalyāyana) Rescues His Mother first appears in the *Yulan pen* 盂蘭盆 (Ulambanapātra) Sutra (*Sutra of the Sacrificial Feast for Hungry Ghosts Spoken by the Buddha*). Its main theme is to glorify Buddhist ideas and the principle of filial piety. The scripture states that Maudgalyāyana’s mother suffers in purgatory after her death. As a hungry ghost, she is in torment and receives no food. Owing to the assistance of the Buddha, Maudgalyāyana is able to save his mother and all other hungry ghosts from suffering in hell. Besides the Buddhist sutras, both *bianwen* (transformation texts) and the *baojuan* (precious volumes), such as *Mulian jiumu chuli diyu shengtian baojuan* 目連救母出離地獄升天寶卷 (*The Precious Volume of Mulian Rescues His Mother From Purgatory and Ascends to Heaven*) and *Mulian sanshi baojuan* 目連三世寶卷 (*The Precious Volume Concerning the Three Lives of Rebirth of Mulian*), also contributed to the development of the Mulian story. The transformation texts are written in alternating verse and prose, and arose during the Tang and Five Dynasties. There are three surviving *bianwen* concerning the story of Mulian. These are *Mulian yuanqi* 目連緣起 (*The Conditional Origin of Mulian*), *Da Mu Jian Lian mingjian jiumu bianwen* 大目犍連冥間救母變文 (*The Transformation Text of the Great Mulian Rescues His Mother from the Dark Regions*) and *Mulian bianwen* 目連變文 (*The Transformation Text of Mulian*). The first two are complete texts and the last one is incomplete text (Mair 1989, 100). The history of Mulian Operas can be dated back to the Northern Song period, when the variety play *Mulian Saves His Mother* occurred onstage during the Ghost Festival.

After the seventh night, musicians from the entertainment quarters [*goulan* 勾欄] staged the variety play, “Mulain Saves His Mother.” It ran straight through the fifteenth day and drew throngs of spectators...

Those who had new graves to care for outside the city walls went there to worship and to sweep them off. Carriages and horses came from the palace to Daoist temples to visit graves. Officials from each temple sent ten monks to the Bureau of Sacrifices, where a great assembly was held, mountains of money were burned, and sacrifices were made for army officers and war dead, and a sacred area set up for orphan souls (Teiser 1989, 200 – 201; Meng [1147] 1956, 49 – 50).

Not much is known about the actual performance of the Mulian variety play. Presumably it retained many elements of the hundred games (*Baixi* 百戲) and farce performances.

Third, during the Song and Yuan periods, temple festivals and ritual performances (human or puppet) were already inseparable from each other. In north China, there were many multi-surnamed villages and the farmland was quite evenly owned by different families. Temples dedicated to tutelary deities instead of ancestral halls were focal points of local worship. As Daniel Overmyer explains:

[In north China], families of different surnames living in one small community meant that lineages were not strong enough to maintain lineage shrines and cross-villages organizations, so at best they owned small burial plots and took part only in intra-village activities. Village leaders were chosen from among men of good reputation from landowning families; these leaders were responsible for settling disputes, dealing with local government, organizing crop protection and planning for collective ceremonies. All these factors tended to strengthen the local protective deities and their temples as focal points of village identity and activity...(Overmyer 2005, 13 – 14)

Variety plays were often staged at temple festivals in Shanxi 山西 and Henan 河南, two major centers of the northern *Zaju*. Permanent stages built in Shanxi from the early eleventh century onward are evidence of this. For example, the *Wuting* 舞亭 (Dancing Pavilion) of the Temple of the Earth Empress (Houtu Miao 后土廟) at Qiaoshang Village 橋上村 of Wanrong

County 萬榮縣 was constructed in A.D. 1007. In A.D. 1168, at Yibi Village 伊辟村 of Hongdong County 洪洞縣, the stage of the Temple of the Eastern Mountain (Dongyue Miao 東岳廟) was built. In his book, the *Zhongguo xiju shi* 中國戲劇史 (*The History of Chinese Theatre*), Professor Tanaka Issei records twelve permanent stages that were erected in Shanxi during the Yuan Dynasty. For instance, at Dazhao Village 大趙村 of Wanrong Xian, the Dancing Hall (Wuting 舞廳) of the Temple of the Millet King (Niuwang Miao 牛王廟) was erected in A.D. 1271. At Zhangjia He Village 張家河村 of Shilou County 石樓縣, the permanent stage of the Monastery of the Guard of Mountain (Dianshan Si 殿山寺) was built around the mid fourteenth century. (Tanaka 2002, 120 – 125).

Besides rural areas, temple festivals also took place in Bianliang (modern Kaifeng), the capital city of the Northern Song dynasty. The birthday celebration of Guankou Erlang 灌口二郎 (the Second Retainer of Irrigation Works)⁸⁰ or Erlang Shen 二郎神 (the Second Lad Deity)⁸¹ was accompanied by various types of performance. Chapter Eight of the *Dongjing menghua lu* offers a detailed description of this celebration. As Wilt Idema translates:

...On the twenty-fourth of the [sixth month] is the birthday of the Second Retainer of the Irrigation Works [whose temple] is located outside the western part of the District City: this is an extremely flourishing and grand [celebration]. The temple is located about a mile outside the Gate of Ten-thousand Victories (Wansheng Men 萬勝門) which, by imperial bestowal, became the Temple of Spiritual Protection (Shenbao Guan 神保觀). On the twenty-third day the

⁸⁰ In my opinion, the term Guankou Erlang can also be translated as the Second Lad of Guankou.

⁸¹ The identity of Erlang is rather complex. It is believed that he is a deity who possesses power to prevent fierce floods. He is known as Li Bing 李冰, Li Erlang 李二郎, Zhao Yu 趙煜, Deng Xia 鄧遐 or Yang Jian 楊戩. According to the *Daojiao da cidian* 道教大辭典 (*A Comprehensive Dictionary of Daoism*), Li Bing was a prefect of Shu 蜀 (present-day Sichuan) during the Warring States period. In order to improve the people's livelihood, he carried out a policy to open up wasteland and regulate watercourses. Moreover, he once transformed himself into an ox and killed a dragon that caused floods. Hence, a temple was built in order to honor him. The Song Court bestowed him the title Guangji Wang 廣濟王 (the King of Great Salvation). Li Erlang was Li Bing's second son. He helped his father to subdue dragons and regulate rivers. His temple was located in Guankou 灌口. During the Song period, he was canonized and worshipped in the state rituals. In the Sui Dynasty (A.D.581 – 618), Zhao Yu studied with Li Yu 李鈺 at Qingcheng Mountain 青城山 of Sichuan. Emperor Yang (r. A.D. 605 – 618) appointed him as the prefect of Jiazhou 嘉州 since he was a man of virtue. He also possessed great abilities and killed a dragon that caused fierce floods. By the end of the Sui, he abandoned worldly affairs and lived in reclusion. Later, he continued to demonstrate his supernatural power and was canonized by Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 of the Northern Song (r. A.D.968 – 1022) as Qingyuan Miaodao Zhenjun 清源妙道真君 (the True Ruler of Pure Source and Marvelous Way). With regard to Deng Xia, he was a native of Zhejiang around the mid third century. Similar to both Li Bing and his second son, he was honored as a deity mainly because he killed a dragon that did harm to local people. According to the *Investiture of the Gods (Fengshen yanyi 封神演義)*, Yang Jian is the Jade Emperor's nephew. He has three eyes and possesses great supernatural power (Min 1995, 8).

Imperial Palace sends toys made by the Bureau of the Rear Garden, the Office of Calligraphic Arts and other places, including polo sticks, crossbows and bows, arrows and darts, saddles and bridles, bits, and birdcages. All are exquisitely wrought and they are taken to the temple with musicians leading them on their way. In front of the [main] hall [of the temple] a music loft is set up on the Open Dais and the Court Entertainment Bureau and the Military Music Column perform music interchangeably with comedy and dance. The Bureau of Provisions provides food and there are twenty-four courses through the night, each with its own prescribed interval and sequence. When the twenty-fourth arrives, everyone strives at the fifth watch change of the night to burn joss. There are those who even stay overnight at the temple and get up at midnight in order to be the first.

When dawn comes, the various offices and the common people of various guilds offer many gifts. The associations perform on the Open Dais and the gifts that are presented are numbered in the myriads. The Hundred Entertainments are presented from morning and there is every conceivable kind, including staff climbing, fancy footwork, rope walking, boxing, drums and clappers, little songs, cock-fighting, joke-telling, parodies of country bumpkins, riddles, impromptu, comic feats of strength, comic boxing, wastrel comedy, fruit hawking, imitation of sounds, broad-bladed knives, dissembling as spirits, stick-drum, shields and staves, and magic tricks (*daoshu* 道術). (Meng [1147] 1956, 47 - 48; Idema 1982, 46 - 47)

In his excellent work, *Hangye shen chongbai: Zhongguo minzhong zaoshen yundong yanjiu* 行業神崇拜：中國民眾造神運動研究 (*Worship of Trade Gods: Studies of Chinese God-making Movement[s]*), Li Qiao 李喬 points out that Erlang Shen was the most popular patron deity of Chinese theatre in the Ming Dynasty (A.D. 1368 - 1644), though he no longer enjoyed general popularity during the Qing period (A.D. 1644 - 1912).

In comparison with north China, permanent stages were rare in the south during the Song and Yuan. Nevertheless, temple festivals were very popular in this region. Various types of popular art performance, such as *Nanxi* 南戲 (southern operas), *Baixi* 百戲 (hundred games) and dance, were presented in these religious ceremonies. According to the article “Nansō-jidai no Fukuken chihō-geki ni tsuite 南宋時代の福建地方劇について (A Study on Local Plays in

Fujian Through the South Song Dynasty),” operas and puppetry were closely associated with local religious practices in Fujian from the early twelfth century onward. Before and during the Tang period, the worship of the *she* 社 (earth), which took place in spring and autumn, was the most important agricultural rite in everyday life. Shamans played a dominant role in these rituals. In the Song period, the prosperity of the market economy functioned to increase the wealth and power of the landlords and merchants. These local elites and lineage leaders hired actors or puppeteers to stage theatrical performances at market places (*xushi* 墟市) in order to attract crowds of people. Ancient shamanic rituals no longer gratified the needs of the people. In order to pay tribute to their tutelary deities, landlords, merchants, and officials collected and donated money for the construction of temples and public stages. Local communities or territorially-related group also formed associations (*shehu* 社會) or religious festival associations (*saihui* 賽會) in order to manipulate these regular communal celebrations. Temple festivals were often held on the birthdays of local deities. Devotees took part in the processions, and troupes were invited to stage performances in front of these temples. Public stages or booths (made of earth or straw) were usually surrounded by temporary stalls and gambling tables, where local people gathered together to do business and to spend their leisure time (Tanaka 1970, 102 – 118). Similar activities also existed in the Jiangnan area.

In Fujian, temple festivals were often accompanied by marionette performances. Liu Kezhuang 劉克莊 (A.D. 1137 – 1269), a prominent poet from Putian, wrote two poems about the string puppet shows that were staged in the temple festival of the Xiangying Miao 祥應廟 (the Temple of Auspiciousness and Efficacy). One of his poems says:

The whole lane is empty; all the people have gone out to play.
 The candlelight is brilliant, as in the Lantern Festival.
 An elder in the mountain has just woken up.
 He is not aware of the people who are bustling about onstage.
 Idle women return to look for [their] lost earrings.
 [I] feel regret about the dispersal, [and] that’s no fault of his.⁸²
 [Since] the customs become simple,
 [I don’t know] how many Yan Shi⁸³ are [still here] today. (Liu 1967, 180)⁸⁴

⁸² Literally, the character “*qu* 渠” can be translated as him, her or it. The exact meaning is not clear.

⁸³ Yan Shi 偃師 was good at making and manipulating puppets. He often staged performances for King Mu of Zhou 周穆王 (947 – 928 B.C.) (Wang 1996, 193 – 195).

The tradition of celebrating local deities' birthdays also existed in Guangdong province. Different kinds of performance were performed on these auspicious occasions in order to please and entertain the gods. Since Guangzhou was already a major port by Song times, many people who engaged in foreign or overseas trade worshipped the Nanhai Shen 南海神 (the Deity of the South Sea)⁸⁵ as their protective deity. They believed that this deity possessed supernatural power to calm storms. The Nanhai Shenmiao 南海神廟 (the Temple of the Deity of the South Sea) was erected in A.D. 594. Besides occasional worship, annual celebrations also took place at the temple on the deity's birthday (the twenty-third of the second month). Many merchant ships were brought to anchor near the shore. Travelers and traders went ashore to visit the temple. Children's troupes (*xiao'er dui* 小兒隊), a kind of *shehuo* 社火 (popular performances given on religious festivals), were arranged to perform dancing and singing. Lai Bojiang argues that the tradition of the *xiao'er dui* performances was brought to Guangdong by settlers who migrated from Bianliang [Kaifeng]. Two of Liu Kezhuang's narrative poems record the annual ceremony of Nanhai Shen's birthday. They are as follows:

Incense is burnt at myriad houses in town.

Fireworks are [set off] in the second month.

The whole town turns out

To celebrate [the festival at] the Temple of the Deity of the Sea.⁸⁶

There are children's troupes⁸⁷ of the Eastern Temple

A south wind [brings] large trading ships.

I don't know to what extent

Canton today resembles ancient Yangzhou.⁸⁸ (Lai 2001, 11)

Fourth, besides temple festivals, the *shexi* 社戲 (performances given on religious festivals) was also associated with other annual rituals. Some officials and scholars criticized these local customs as licentious cults. However, their complaints are strong evidence of the close connection between religious activities and performances. For instance, in a proclamation

⁸⁴ 空巷無人盡出嬉，燭光過似放燈時，山中一老眠初覺，棚上諸君鬧未知。游女歸來尋墮珥，鄰翁看罷感牽絲；可憐朴散非渠罪，薄俗如今幾偃師。

⁸⁵ The Nanhai Shenmiao is situated at Miaotou Village 廟頭村 in Huangbu 黃埔 of Guangzhou. According to popular legend, the Nanhai Shen, who was known as Danzhu 丹朱, was the son of Emperor Yao 堯帝. He was exiled to the south and became the founding ancestor of the Miao people 苗族. After he passed away, he was worshipped by local people as the Deity of the South Sea. Tang and Song emperors bestowed titles on him.

⁸⁶ 香火萬家市，煙花二月時；居人空巷出，去賽海神祠。

⁸⁷ In the performance, members of the children troupes wore costumes and paraded through the streets.

⁸⁸ 東廟小兒隊，南風大賈船，不知今廣市，何似古揚州。

announced in A.D. 1192, Zhu Xi (A.D. 1130 – 1200) states that in towns and villages, “it is forbidden, upon the pretext of expelling disasters and praying for blessings, to collect money and perform string puppet shows.” (cf. van der Loon 1992, 22)⁸⁹ Moreover, Chen Chun 陳淳 (A.D. 1153 – 1217), one of Zhu Xi’s disciples, was a local scholar of Zhangzhou. He submitted a petition to Prefect Fu Bocheng 傅伯成 (A.D. 1143 – 1226). From his viewpoint, all the performances related to “the invitation of winter” were licentious plays. His petition reads as follows:

It is one of the evil customs of this region that, after the autumn harvest, actors assemble in the villages to perform licentious plays. This custom is called the invitation of winter. Groups of worthless young men join and organize bands of several dozens of itinerant riffraff. [The young men] are called the heads of play. They go from door to door to collect money, in order to finance the theatre or puppet plays⁹⁰ of the actors. They put up stages in densely populated areas and thoroughfares in order to attract a large audience. In the markets and outside the gates they compete with each other, disregarding all regulations. From the seventh and eighth month of the present autumn onward it is the season for these performances, and they are rampant in the villages in the countryside. It is called play and pleasure, but in reality it causes great harm (Ruizendaal 1999, 28 – 29; cf. van der Loon 1992, 22)

It is important to point out that though officials or scholars tried to restrict the local customs mentioned above, their attempts could not check the rapid rise of these religious and theatrical activities.

Fifth, written sources show that private banquets were often accompanied by puppet shows in Fujian during the Song. The *Local History of Lianjiang 連江 District*, which was published during the Yongzheng 雍正 reign period (A.D. 1723 - 1735) of the Qing dynasty, notes that Cai Jing 蔡京 (A.D. 1047 – 1126)⁹¹ was very fond of watching Fujian marionette and flesh puppet shows. As Ye quotes, “...[When] Grand Tutor Cai⁹² celebrated his birthday, actors

⁸⁹ 不得以禳災為名，斂掠錢物，裝弄傀儡。

⁹⁰ According to Mr. Ye Mingsheng, these were shows that performed with marionettes.

⁹¹ Cai Jing was a powerful and imperious official during reign period of Huizong of Northern Song (A.D. 1101 – 1125). He later was sent into exile by Emperor Yinzong (r. A.D. 1126 – 1127) and died en route in Tan Zhou 潭州 (present-day Changsha 長沙 of Hunan 湖南).

⁹² This was the official title of Cai Jing.

displayed their skills. A guest used threads to tie the limbs of the lad for the purpose of performing a flesh puppet show. The spectators considered this to be inauspicious...” (Ye 2004, 20)⁹³ Besides his birthday, Cai Jing also watched puppet performances at other annual festivals. For instance, “During the reign of Emperor Huizong, the official residence bestowed on Cai Jing, was extremely large. At the Mid-Autumn Festival, family banquets took place at the Hall of Six Cranes, where people were ordered to perform marionette plays...”⁹⁴ (Ye 2004, 120)

Popular religious practices and ritual theatre continued to flourish during the Yuan dynasty, though the Yuan court imposed a repressive policy on these activities. For instance, Chapter One Hundred and Five of the *History of the Yuan Dynasty* (*Yuanshi* 元史) enumerates the following laws, “All the people are forbidden to give offerings of thanks to deities [and] delude the populace...All the people are prohibited from playing with beasts, snakes and marionettes...”⁹⁵ “Anyone who [breaks the laws] will be punished severely.”⁹⁶ (Song, [Ming] 1976, 2684 - 2685; Yang 2003, 131) Nevertheless, the suppressive policies of the Mongols could not stop the rapid rise of theatrical and religious activities throughout China.

1.3.Theatre and Local Religion During the Late Imperial Periods and the Republican Era (A.D. 1368 – 1940)

1.3.1 General Background

The Ming and Qing were a golden age of Chinese traditional theatre. Various types of opera arose in different parts of China. Since the situations of theatrical activities were very complicated, a detailed depiction concerning different kinds of regional opera throughout the country lies well outside the scope of this thesis. Too much narration means that the length would spin quickly out of control. Thus, my discussion below mainly focuses on the operatic activities in Jiangnan areas and southeastern China (Fujian and Guangdong). Throughout the Ming and Qing dynasties, many precious volumes and novels, such as *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (*A Journey to the West*), *Haiyou ji* 海遊記 (*Records of Sea Travels*), and *Nanyou ji* 南遊記 (*Journey to the South*),⁹⁷ were published. For instance, the popular legend of Guanyin is well recorded in the *Xiangshan baojuan* 香山寶卷 (*The Precious Volume on Fragrant Flower Mountain*). The 1773 edition of this previous volume describes how Miaoshan achieved

⁹³ ...蔡太師作壽日，優人獻技，有客以絲系僮子四肢，為肉頭傀儡戲，觀者以為不祥...

⁹⁴ 徽廟時，蔡京賜第極其高大，中秋日，常在六鶴堂家宴，使人演傀儡戲...

⁹⁵ 諸以非理性迎賽祈禱，惑眾亂民者，禁之...

⁹⁶ 諸弄禽蛇、傀儡...禁之，違者重罪之。

⁹⁷ The heroine in the *Haiyou ji* is Chen Jinggu 陳靖姑 and the protagonist in the *Nanyou ji* is Huaguang. For detailed discussions on these two novels, please see Appendices Eight and Ten respectively.

enlightenment. As Professor Overmyer says, “The *baojuan* opens with an introduction to its origin and purpose, and then proceeds to the story of a young princess in a land far away, who, after a long struggle, becomes enlightened and discovers that in fact she is Guanyin. This story in effect provides mythic background for the cult of Guanyin of a thousand eyes and arms, who sees and aids all...” (Overmyer 1999, 40) Based on these sectarian texts and stories, playwrights created large numbers of new plays or repertoires that were performed in public. Their popularity had a considerable influence on the popular religious beliefs of performers. With regard to theatrical development, Mulian operas and exorcistic masked performances (*Nuo* theatre) continued to develop and penetrate the religious life of the common people. *Nuo* theatre had reached its mature stage and absorbed much essence from local operas and novels. After the downfall of the Northern Song dynasty, the Mulian operatic tradition spread from the north to the southeastern coastal region, such as Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Fujian. The play *Mulian Jiumu* 目連救母 (Mulian Rescues His Mother) became a popular item in the repertoire of southern opera (*Nanxi* 南戲). The southern operatic performance of Mulian (*Nanxi Mulian* 南戲目連) was introduced to Yiyang 弋陽 district of Jiangxi around the late Yuan period and early years of the Ming. Southern opera continued to develop and adopted local musical elements of the Yiyang region. As a result, a new kind of operatic genre, *Yiyang Qiang* opera 弋陽腔,⁹⁸ flourished in this district and its surrounding areas (such as southern Anhui, and central and northern Jiangxi) during the mid fifteenth century. Hence, some Mulian operatic experts argue that “Mulian operatic performance connected Song-Yuan (southeastern coast) *Nanxi* and Ming (southern inland of Jiangxi and Anhui) *Yiyang* melody.” (Guo 1994, 49). In Jiangxi and Anhui, the Mulian Story mingled with other religious and heroic stories, such as the legends of Guanyin and the Monkey King, and the stories of Yue Fei 岳飛 and Guan Yu 關羽. This development contributed to the rise of the *Mulian liantai benxi* 目連連臺本戲, an operatic series that lasted many days and nights. The evolution of the Mulian operatic tradition reached a new peak in the

⁹⁸ The *Yiyang Qiang* opera flourished during the middle of fifteenth century and gradually died out around the sixteenth century. Its music was high, noisy and energetic. The *bangqiang* 幫腔 (helping chorus) was one of the most important features of this opera genre. In usual cases, “one person would start singing and then several would take up the tune.” (Mackerras 1972, 5) Moreover, *bangqiang* was often sung in falsetto and was an octave higher. The basic line structure was *changduan ju* 長短句 (uneven line length). In order to explain the texts to the less refined audience, five- or seven-character lines, which were written in colloquial speech, were inserted at the beginning, middle or end of a passage. These extra lines or sections were termed *gundiao* 滾調. “Guo sections could be sung (*gunchang* 滾唱) or spoken (*gunbai* 滾白). (Mackerras 1971, 71 – 72) It is important to emphasize that although the *Yiyang Qiang* no longer exist nowadays, its variants or descendants can still be heard in many parts of China, such as Guangdong, Fujian, Hunan, Anhui and Beijing.

late sixteenth century when Zheng Zhizhen 鄭之珍 (A.D. 1518 – 1595), a native of Qimen County 祁門縣 in Anhui, composed the massive script the *Mulian jiumu quanshan xiwen* 目連救母勸善戲文 (*Mulian Rescues his Mother: An Opera for Goodness*),⁹⁹ which was a synthesis of Confucian ideas and Buddhist teachings. Zheng’s version soon spread to different provinces, such as Shanxi 山西, Hebei 河北, Jiangxi 江西, Jiangsu 江蘇, Zhejiang 浙江, Hunan 湖南, Sichuan 四川 and Fujian. “After his victory over the revolt of the Three Feudatories in A.D. 1681, Emperor Kangxi 康熙皇帝 (A.D. 1662 – 1722) “decreed a public celebration at which Mulian was presented, on specially-constructed stages, using live animals, including tigers and elephants.” (Johnson 1989, 3) Based on Zheng Zhizhen’s script and the first version of the *Quanshan jinke* 勸善金科 (*Golden Rules of Goodness*), Zhang Zhao 張照 (Minister of the Ministry of Punishments) wrote the second version of the *Quanshan jinke*¹⁰⁰ during the early years of the Qionlong reign period (around A.D. 1733).

The four major theatrical forms or singing styles that flourished in these periods were *Yiyang Qiang* 弋陽腔, *Kunqiang* 崑腔 or *Kunshan Qiang* 崑山腔 (two descendants of *Nanxi*),¹⁰¹ *Bangzi Qiang* 梆子 (Clapper Opera)¹⁰² and *Pihuang* 皮簧.¹⁰³ These performing or singing styles

⁹⁹ The *Mulian jiumu quanshan xiwen* (preface dated A.D. 1582) comprises three volumes, which is designed to be presented on three consecutive nights.

¹⁰⁰ Zhang Zhao’s *Quanshan jinke* consists of 240 scenes which are sub-divided into ten volumes. In the Qing dynasty, the performance of this Mulian play that took place in the palace usually lasted ten days.

¹⁰¹ *Kunqiang* or *Kunshan Qiang*, which is often accompanied by flutes, is a kind of Chinese traditional tune that dominated the Chinese theatrical world from the mid sixteenth century to the mid seventeenth century. *Kunshan Qiang* music were composed to the prosody of northern and southern *qu* 曲 [arias] with their uneven line length, dramas principally performed to it came to be referred to by the abbreviated term *Kunqu* 崑曲.” (Dolby 1976, 92) Similar to the *Yiyang Qiang*, *Kunqiang* was also derived from *Nanxi* 南戲 (southern operas). *Kunqiang* did not flourish until it was improved by Wei Liangfu 魏良輔 in the middle of the Ming period. Not much is known about the lives of these two great theatrical experts. “Liang Chenyu (A.D. 1520? – 1580?) came from Kunshan. He studied the newly arranged style of singing deeply, experimenting with it and examining the Yuan *Zaju* with a view to adapting them to the *Kunqu*. He then wrote a piece about the famous beauty Xishi 西施 of the fifth century B.C. and it became called *Huansha ji* 浣紗記 (The Washing Silk). It was staged with the tunes of Kunshan and won great popularity...” (Mackerras 1971, 74) Wei Liangfu was a native of Zhangyu 章豫 (Nanchang 南昌 nowadays) in Jiangxi (born sometime after A.D. 1522). Later, he moved to Taicang 太倉 (a place near Kunshan) of Jiangsu. Wei was a distinguished musician and herbalist in Jiangnan areas. He used his knowledge of local music to create the *Shuimo Qiang* 水磨腔 (Water Polishing Music), which was also known as *Kunshanqiang* or *Kunqiang*. By the end of the sixteenth century, *Kunqiang* was introduced to many parts of China. Many *chuanqi* 傳奇 (marvel tales) that were written in the Ming and Qing dynasties were sung in *Kunqiang*. During the Qing Dynasty, Chinese traditional operas were classified into two main types: the *yabu* 雅部 (elegant operas) and the *huabu* 花部 (flower operas). Besides *Kun* opera, all other opera genres were categorized as *huabu*. Some *paizi* 牌子 (fixed tunes) that are frequently heard in Cantonese opera performances originated from *Kunqu* (or *Kunju* 崑劇).

¹⁰² *Bangzi Qiang* was another important musical style. Shanxi 陝西 is believed to be its place of origin. The Clapper opera is also called *Qinqiang* 秦腔 since Qin 秦 is a normal name for Shanxi province. By the end of the eighteenth century, *Bangzi Qiang* was already very popular in many regions of China, such as Beijing, Henan, Hebei,

were introduced from their birthplaces to other districts, where they were altered to suit local tastes. Local actors incorporated these new performing elements (such as tunes, staging, stories and costumes) and transformed their own opera genres. For instance, *Daqiang* human opera 大腔戲,¹⁰⁴ *Daqiang* marionette theatre 大腔傀儡戲, *Siping* human opera 四平戲,¹⁰⁵ *Siping*

northeastern Guangdong, Shandong and Gansu. Clapper opera has been mainly accompanied by stringed and percussion instruments. The clapper (made of date wood) is the most important musical instrument of this theatrical form since it functions to beat the rhythm of the *Bangzi* tune.

¹⁰³ The *Pihuang*, which has been popular since the mid nineteenth century, is a combination of two styles of vocal music. These are *Xipi* 西皮 and *Erhuang* 二簧(二黃). It is believed that *Xipi* was descended from *Qinqiang* 秦腔 mentioned above. The *Xipi* tune in Cantonese Opera is called *Bangzi* 梆子. Colin Mackerras states that according to Ouyang Yuqian 歐陽宇倩, in Hubei 湖北, “singing is called skin (*pi* 皮), so that a section of song is called a stretch of skin.” Hence, “it is reasonable to assume that *Xipi* was originally the name given in Hubei to the method of singing popular in the west, that is, Shaanxi 陝西.” (Mackerras 1972, 10) The most likely explanation of the place of origin of the *Erhuang* style is Yihuang 宜黃 district of Jiangxi. The *Erhuang* style was introduced to Anhui and became one of the most important musical melodies in the province. Companies or troupes which performed *Erhuang* were called Anhui troupes (*Huiban* 徽班).

¹⁰⁴ Around the middle of sixteenth century, the *Yiyang* tune was heard in Beijing, Nanjing, Jiangxi, Hunan, Fujian and Guangdong, where local dialects, musical elements and tastes of local people accounted for regional variations. With regard to the situation of Fujian nowadays, the *Yiyang* melody is called *Daqiang* in its central western areas. In southwestern and northeastern areas, it is known as *Gaoqiang* and *Siping Qiang* respectively. It is called *Ciming Qiang* 詞明腔 at Fuzhou and Pingtan 平潭 areas. *Daqiang* human opera is mainly performed in mountainous areas of central Fujian, such as Yong'an 永安, Datian 大田, Shaxian 沙縣 and Youxi 尤溪. Qianmei Village 乾美村 of Youxi County and Fengtian Village 豐田 of Qingshui Township 青水鄉 are the core of this operatic tradition. Fengtian Village is occupied by the Xiong 熊 and Xing 邢 lineages, who moved from Shibi 石壁 (present-day Shicheng 石城) of southern Jiangxi to Fujian in the late thirteenth century. *Daqiang* human opera was introduced to Fengtian Village by Xiong Mingrong 熊明榮 around A.D. 1450. He learnt the opera when he returned to Shicheng to worship his ancestors. Later, the Fengtian *Daqiang* Opera Troupe 豐田大腔戲劇團 was formed. Troupe members often stage performances on important occasions, such as Chinese New Year and birthdays of local deities. Before the early 1980s women had no opportunity to join a troupe. It is important to point out that all troupe members are part-time actors. They are farmers who learn the art in their spare time. Since it belongs to the *Yiyang Qiang* system, the *bangqiang* (helping chorus) and the *gundiao* are two important features of the *Daqiang* opera. The basic line structure is *changduan ju* (irregular line length). Fixed tunes (a series of northern and southern arias) are employed in the performances. The singing of this opera genre is high and energetic. It also has absorbed musical components from Daoist music. Various types of percussion instrument, such as the drum, big gong, small gong, big cymbals, small cymbals and double-reed conical pipe, are used in the performance. The four role categories of the *Daqiang* human opera are *sheng* (male roles), *dan* (female roles), *jing* (painted face roles) and *chou* (comic roles). These four roles are further sub-divided into nine different types of characters. They are *zhengsheng* 正生 (principal male roles), *xiaosheng* 小生 (young male roles), *fusheng* 夫生 (old male roles), *zhengdan* 正旦 (principal female roles), *xiaodan* 小旦 (young female roles), *fudan* 夫旦 (old female roles), *dahua* 大花 (principal painted face roles), *erhua* 二花 (supporting painted face roles) and *sanhua* 三花 (comic roles). *Daqiang* opera is sung in vernacular official language (*tu guanhua* 土官話). Actors mainly sing and speak in *dasang* 大嗓 (large-voice or natural voice), though their basic voice is a combination of *dasang* and *xiaosang* 小嗓 (small-voice or falsetto) (Mary Yeung's notes).

¹⁰⁵ Mr. Liu Sha 劉沙 (a distinguished scholar of Chinese traditional opera) argues that the *Siping qiang*, which belongs to the *Yiyang Qiang* system, originated in Huizhou of Anhui. By the middle of the sixteenth century, it was heard in Jiangxi, Fujian, Nanjing 南京, Yangzhou 揚州 and Hangzhou 杭州. It is believed that this singing style was spread to north and northeastern Fujian in the late Ming period. Accompanied by percussion music, the singing of *Siping Qiang* is high, energetic and syllabic. The *bangqiang* 幫腔 (helping chorus) is one of its characteristics. That is, “one person would start singing and then several would take up the tune.” (Mackerras 1972, 5) Within the *bangqiang*, the last syllable of each line must be a level tone. In order to explain the texts to the audience of the common class, extra syllables or lines are inserted at the beginning, middle or end of a passage. These padding

marionette theatre 四平傀儡戲 and *Gaoqiang* marionette theatre 高腔傀儡戲, which have been performed in Fujian since the mid Ming era, belong to the *Yiyang Qiang* theatrical system. Besides Fujian, opera genres of the *Yiyang Qiang* tradition were also very popular in other provinces, such as the *Chenhe Gaoqiang* opera 辰河高腔戲¹⁰⁶ in Hunan and the *Qingyang Qiang* opera 青陽腔戲¹⁰⁷ in Anhui. Since the late nineteenth century, the *Pihuang* singing styles have been the dominant vocal music of many regional operas, such as Beijing opera, Cantonese opera, Cantonese rod puppet theatre,¹⁰⁸ *Minxi Han* opera 閩西漢劇,¹⁰⁹ *Guangdong Han* opera 廣東漢劇,¹¹⁰ and *Luantan* marionette theatre 亂彈傀儡戲 in western Fujian.

sections or characters are termed *gundiao* 滾調. With regard to its metrical patterns, *wuyan ban* 無眼板 (no eye meter, 4/4), *sanban* 散板 (dispersed meter) and *yiban ban* 一眼板 (one eye meter, 2/4) are the three major types of metrical pattern used in the *Siping* songs. Actors sing in both falsetto and natural voice (Liu 1999, 81 – 91).

¹⁰⁶ According to Professor Ellen R. Judd, the *Chenhe Gaoqiang* is “found along the common borders of Hunan, Sichuan, Guizhou, and Hubei, but concentrated in the small space of four counties in western Hunan.” (Judd 1996, 22) Besides *Gaoqiang*, this operatic genre also absorbed musical elements from ballads, work songs (*haozi* 號子), *Kunqiang*, *Luantan* and *Diqiang* 低腔, a type of melody that is accompanied by double-reed conical pipes (*suona* 嗩吶). In addition, *Nuo* theatre in Hunan also had an impact on this regional opera. Before the late Qing Dynasty, the *Chenhe Gaoqiang* opera roles were classified into eight types. Today, they are simplified into five principal role categories. These are *sheng* 生 (male roles), *xiaosheng* 小生 (young male roles), *dan* 旦 (female roles), *jing* 淨 (painted face roles) and *chou* 丑 (comic roles).

¹⁰⁷ The *Qingyang Qiang* began to flourish in southern Anhui in the sixteenth century. Besides *Yiyang Qiang*, it also adopted musical elements from the *Yuyao Qiang* 餘姚腔, which originated in Yuyao 餘姚 of Zhejiang province. The *Yuyao* melody evolved from *nanxi*. However, not much is known about its singing style (Mackerras 1971, 66). Many *chuanqi* (marvel tales) were sung in *Qingyang Qiang*, which was more elegant and ornamented in comparison with the *Yiyang Qiang*. Couplets and four-line poems (five- or seven-characters in each line) were inserted at the beginning, middle or end of a passage. These *gun* sections could be spoken (*gunbai* 滾白) or sung (*gundiao* 滾調) by actors. With regard to its metered metrical patterns, “the fast manner of singing used in the *gundiao* was known as *liushui ban* 流水板 [flowing-water-meter or four accented beats, 1/4].” (Mackerras 1971, 72) Moreover, the *Qingyang Qiang* opera was also sang in *yiban sanyan* 一板三眼 (one accented beat and three unaccented beats, 4/4). Unlike *Yiyang Qiang*, the *banqiang* (helping chorus) of *Qingyang Qiang* was usually divided into three sections. One performer started singing in the first section. The drummer took up the tune in the second section, and then other percussionists sang in unison in the third section (Liu 1999, 142 – 144). This operatic genre gradually died out in the course of time.

¹⁰⁸ The history of Cantonese rod puppet theatre (*Guangdong Zhangtou Mu'ou Xi* 廣東杖頭木偶戲) can be traced back to the late nineteenth century (around A.D. 1870). This kind of performing art was once called *Shoutuo Jingxi* 手托京戲 (Hand-held Beijing opera) after local opera troupes in Guangdong were banned due to the suppression of the Taiping Uprising (For detailed description concerning the influence of Taiping Uprising on Cantonese troupes, please refer to Section 2.3. of Chapter Two) According to Professor Tsao Pen-yeh 曹本野, there are two types of rod puppetry in Guangdong today. These are the rod puppet theatre of the Leizhou Peninsula 雷州半島, and that of the Dongguan 東莞 and Huizhou 惠州 regions. The style of Dongguan and Huizhou has puppets “with a large head and a short neck (about one foot in length) which enable more flexibility in the head movements. However, it is very tiring for the puppeteer because he has to raise his arms high above his head during performance so that the audience can see the puppets.” (Tsao 1987, 83) The puppet, which has no legs, is around two feet four inches to three feet in length. It consists of three parts. These are the head, the shoulders and the arms. This style of puppet theatre still exists in Hong Kong. The puppets from Leizhou Peninsula have a three-foot neck extension and their head movements are less flexible. They are easier for manipulation in comparison with the former style. The Cantonese rod puppet theatre absorbs many musical and religious elements from Cantonese opera.

¹⁰⁹ The *Han* operas in both Fujian and Guangdong are also known as *Nanbei lu* 南北路 (the north-south tradition), *Waijiang Xi* 外江戲 (outside operas) or *Luantan* 亂彈. *Xipi* 西皮 and *Erhuang* 二簧 are two kinds of dominant

Operatic activities have been very popular throughout China since the early years of the Ming dynasty. Political, economic, social, and religious factors accounted for the great expansion of regional operas in China, especially Jiangnan 江南 (such as Jiangsu 江蘇 and Zhejiang 浙江) and southeastern areas (Fujian and Guangdong). In the first place, the Ming emperors had enormous enthusiasm for operas. Emperor Taizu 太祖 (r. A.D. 1398 – 1401) and his imperial family showed great interest in northern and southern operas. He collected a large number of plays and arias. His descendants were also playgoers. As William Dolby says:

A number of the imperial clan became leading play-wrights themselves.

Emperor Chengzu [成祖] (r. 1402 – 24) ordered the compilation of a gigantic collection of literature which included many story-tellers' tales, over a hundred Yuan and Ming *Zaju*, and thirty-four *Nanxi*. Emperor Xianzong [憲宗] (r. 1465 – 87) was said by a near-contemporary to have been so fond of listening to plays and songs that his quest for them 'almost exhausted the world of their editions.' Emperor Wuzong [武宗] (r. 1506 – 21) shared the same inclinations in this respect and would generously reward people who presented such editions to him. Three gentlemen together presented him with several thousand volumes of plays, songs and stories...The interest in drama [or opera] remained strong at court for the rest of the dynasty. There were huge acting establishments in the imperial courts, and the emperors were mostly very drama-conscious. Emperor Xizong

vocal music in *Minxi Han* opera. This operatic genre also absorbs musical elements from *Kun* opera, *Gaoqiang*, Buddhist music and deities. Concerning its text structure, lines are written according to the rule of two-line parallelism. Within each couplet, the last syllable of the first line must be an oblique tone while the last syllable of the second line must be a level tone. Each line of the verse can have seven or ten characters (syllables). The usual division of a seven-written-character line is into three semantic units of two, two, and three written-characters. A ten-written-character line is usually divided into three semantic units of three, three, and four written-characters. The *yiban yiyen* 一板一眼 (2/4), the *yiban sanyan* 一板三眼 (4/4), the *youban wuyan* 有板無眼 (1/4) and the *sanban* 散板 (free measure) are the four types of metrical pattern used in the songs. The roles of *Minxi Han* opera are arranged into six types. These are *sheng* 生 (male roles), *dan* 旦 (female roles), *chou* 丑 (comic roles), *gong* 公 (old male roles), *po* 婆 (old female roles) and *jing* 淨 (painted face roles). The basic voice of young male roles and young female roles is falsetto. All old male roles, comic roles and old female roles sing in natural (true) voice. The basic voice of painted face roles is a combination of falsetto and natural voice. *Tu guanhua* 土官話 (vernacular official language) is the dominant stage language. The accompanying orchestra is composed of both melodic and percussion instruments (Wang 1999, 71 – 75).

¹¹⁰ The *Guangdong Han* opera was introduced to Guangdong in the middle of the nineteenth century. The major characteristics of its performing art are similar to those of *Minxi Han* opera mentioned above. Before the 1950s, performers of these two regional operas often maintain close contact and had cultural exchanges. Some actors of the *Minxi Han* opera, such as Lin Nanhui 林南輝, Zhang Quanzhen 張全鎮 and Zhang Fuzhen 張富鎮, joined *Guangdong Han* opera troupes and acknowledged *Guangdong Han* opera players as their teachers. During the Second World War, some *Guangdong Han* operatic performers (such as Qiu Ying 邱影 and Guo Weizheng 郭維正) escaped to western Fujian and became members of *Minxi Han* opera troupes (Wang 1999, 49).

[熹宗] (r. 1621 – 7) even acted in a play – playing the part of an emperor! (Dolby 1976, 77)

Their support and interest enhanced the development of both elegant and ritual operas. For example, Zhu Youdun 朱有燉 (A.D.1379 – 1439), Prince Xian of Zhou 周憲王, was one of the greatest playwrights in the Ming dynasty. He was also the author of the *Chengzhai Zaju* 誠齋雜劇 (*Variety Plays of Chengzhai*), an excellent work that had significant influence on the rise of ritual performances. One of Zhu's major contributions was his transformation of the deliverance plays (*dutuo ju* 度脫戲), such as the story of the eight immortals, into auspicious or festive plays. As Lin Chih-ly 林智莉 comments:

The *Chengzhai Zaju* contains thirty-one plays by Zhu Youdun, Prince Xian of Zhou...Having studied all these thirty-one plays I discovered nineteen of them are religion-related...By analyzing these nineteen plays, I find the most significant contribution of Zhu's to the development of religious drama [opera] is his innovation of "festive plays." Festive plays, with the purpose of festival celebration, challenge the monopoly of "*dutuo* plays" (deliverance plays) and offer a new direction in the development of religious drama. Zhu adopts the structure and materials of *dutuo* plays of the Yuan dynasty but alters the characterization and plot structure, in order to fit in the atmosphere of festivals. He also changes the tragic tone of *duotuo* plays to a joyful one of festive plays, and creates a new act of "Blessings of All Gods," an episode of inviting all gods to attend the festival and bestow blessings. This new act, presenting an image of a group of benevolent gods lead by Xi Wangmu [西王母] (Goddess of the West) and Baxian [八仙] (the eight immortals), reinforces the ritual function of gods' blessing. Zhu's plays are very popular and long lived. They have become models for later festive plays, such as court plays in their writings and productions. They gradually replaced *dutuo* plays and have repeatedly been put on in all occasions of festivities and celebrations. Until these days, some celebrations episodes are even excerpted for use in all kinds of temple festival rituals (Lin 2004, 88 – 89).

In the second place, some princes held commands in places of strategic importance in north China, such as Taiyuan 太原 of Shanxi and Tongguan 潼關 of Shaanxi. In order to provide entertainments for these princes and their families, the Ming emperors sent imperial troupes to stage performances for them. These princes who were theatrical fans maintained

usually the court actors in their own residences. Their active interest in operas to a certain extent strengthened the connexion between opera and religion. Following the example set by the imperial families, many common people became addicts of opera. In Shanxi, Henan and Hebei, temple festivals were often accompanied by opera performances. Moreover, some court performers did not return to Beijing and settled in these areas after retirement. They transmitted their performing skills to local people and had made a contribution towards the development of popular religious theatre.

Though opera was their great enthusiasm, the Ming emperors were also well aware of the power of operas among the ordinary populace. Thus, they imposed strict controls on the activities of the performers and the content of the plays. For instance, actors and their families were prohibited from taking part in the imperial examinations. This law was reinforced in A.D. 1369. "In 1389 officers and soldiers stationed in the capital were forbidden to learn 'singing' on pain of having their tongues cut out." (Dolby 1976, 77) All the performances should function to glorify or propagate Confucianism, such as loyalty and filial piety. Anyone who performed "anything offensively familiar towards or blasphemous about emperors and kings or virtuous sages and saints such as Confucius" were severely punished (Dolby 1976, 77). Though these restrictions had considerable influence on the development of Chinese theatre, they could not check the rapid rise of ritual performances in rural areas.

In the third place, Quanzhou and Canton on the southeast coast were great ports for maritime trade. In addition, the Pearl River Delta was both an agricultural and industrial center. Canton's famous fruits, the lychee 荔枝 and the lungan 龍眼, found national markets throughout the country. Foshan was a major center of the iron industry. The iron products made in Foshan were exported to different parts of China. Timber and tea from northwest Fujian had a wide national market. Fujian became "a primary producer of fermented black tea for export to the West in the eighteenth century...Production increased almost sixfold between 1719 and 1762. In the decade 1760 – 1771, about 48 percent of the tea shipped out of Canton originated in Fujian. By 1800 this figure had risen to 69 percent." (Naquin 1987, 170) According to Colin P. Mackerras, Jiangnan was China's major economic center. "Most of the empire's key sources of wealth, including rice, salt, tea-leaves, cotton, silk, porcelain and lacquerware," were produced in this region. The economic pre-eminence of Jiangnan and southeastern areas greatly enhanced the growth of inter-regional trade in both the Ming and Qing periods. "One result of this thriving inter-regional trade was that many merchants moved from their home town or county to other parts of China for the purpose of carrying on trade." (Mackerras 1972, 18) South China was

endowed with waterways, such as the Yangtze River, the Grand Canal, the Min River and the Pearl River. Products were mainly transported by trading vessels. In mountainous areas (such as western Fujian), materials and commodities were carried overland by mules or in carts. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, *huiguan* 會館 (native-place associations) spread to the commercial or metropolitan centers of different provinces, such as Shanxi, Anhui, Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong. Guild members often hired operatic troupes from their native homes for performances to entertain themselves and their patron deities. Itinerant troupes made use of the boats to travel from place to place. Some wealthy merchants even had their own private operatic troupes. The spread of opera genres tended to follow the expansion of the trade routes.

In the fourth place, the southern part of China (such as Jiangsu 江蘇, Guangdong and Fujian) was a region occupied by powerful lineages. These lineages owned common property, and dominated villages and market places. The growth of wealthy lineages was accompanied by an increased emphasis on religious practices. Regular rites were held on the birth and death anniversaries of ancestors so as to enhance lineage or family solidarity and uphold the principle of filial piety. Grand celebrations took place in annual festivals and operas or puppet plays were usually performed on these important occasions.

In the fifth place, there was a strong connexion between Daoism and theatre under the Ming and Qing. The Celestial Masters of the Zhengyi Sect 正一派 (Orthodox Unity) had been highly respected by the court since the Song dynasty. By the Yuan dynasty, the descendants of Zhang Daoling 張道陵 [the first Celestial Master] were granted the highest position in the Hierarchy of Orthodox Oneness. Daoism on Mt. Longhu 龍虎山 (the headquarters of the Zhengyi Sect) in Yingtan Municipality 鷹潭市 of Jiangxi continued to develop throughout the Ming dynasty. The sect had most official support “and hence was able to consolidate its position as the standard of orthodox Daoism.” (Overmyer 1987, 284) For example, “the forty-third-generation master, [Zhang Yuchu 張宇初], was given charge of compiling a new Daoist canon in 1406, a task completed between 1444 and 1445. It is this edition that is still in use today” (Overmyer 1987, 284) Zhang Yuanqing 張元慶, the forty-seventh-generation master, married the daughter of the Duke of Founding the State (Chengguo Gong 成國公). The forty-ninth-generation master, Zhang Yongxu 張永緒, married Dingguo Gong’s 定國公 (the Duke of Bringing Peace to the State) daughter. These noble marriages were arranged by the emperors. Until the early years of the Qing dynasty, the Celestial Masters were empowered to hold nationwide ordinations at Mt. Longhu and various regions of China. The Daoist priests of the Zhenyi

Sect often joined forces with local officials to suppress local cults, especially shamanistic activities. Owing to the great influence of this sect, religious activities of local communities were arranged according to the structure or sequence of the Zhengyi Daoist liturgies. From the Ming dynasty onwards (possible earlier), some leading *Nuo* actors and marionettists were vernacular priests¹¹¹ whose rituals were a combination of shamanistic cults and the Zhengyi Daoist liturgical tradition (Lai 2003, 119). They incorporated Daoist elements (such as talismans, mudras and Daoist music) into their rites and paid tribute to many Daoist gods, such as the Three Pure Ones. The Zhengyi Sect also contributed directly to the development of the *Yiyang* tune and Mulian operas. As Guo Qitao explains:

...According to Jiangxi local old actors, the *Yiyang* melody originated from Daoist performance of Mulian. In Yiyang County, located in central Jiangxi and close to one of so-called “four great Daoist mountains,” Longhu Shan, “professional” Daoist preachers used *Daoshi Qiang* 道士腔 (Daoist Tunes) to present Mulian stories while performing *daochang* 道場 (Daoist rites for relieving the souls of the dead). Buddhist monks in their rituals performed Mulian too. But Buddhist-style (in terms of tunes) Mulian performance was usually directed by local lineage heads and acted by temporary troupes of local amateur farmers, which were disbanded immediately after the performance...(Guo 1994, 50)

In the sixth place, theatrical activities continued to flourish in Jiangnan (the center of *Kun* opera) during the Qing Dynasty. The periodic tours of Emperor Kangxi 康熙皇帝 and Emperor Qianlong 乾隆皇帝 enhanced the development of opera genres in the area. In the case of Emperor Qianlong, he visited the south (such as Yangzhou 揚州) six times. His visits enhanced the development of opera genres in the area. As Mackerras states:

...When Emperor Qianlong (r. 1736 – 1796) visited the south in 1784, the leading citizens of Suzhou tried to plan appropriate entertainment for him. But in all the city’s troupes there was at least one weak point. The eminent *dan* 旦 actor

¹¹¹ Today, vernacular priests still perform rituals for the people in local communities. They are called by different names, such as *fashi* 法師 (ritual master) or *shigong* 師公 (grandmaster) in the south and southeast, *duangong* 端公 in the southwest and *zhangtai shi* 掌壇師 (masters who take charge of the altars) in Sichuan 四川. In Fujian and northeastern Guangdong, many of them are ritual specialists of the Lüshan Tradition. Vernacular priests in Hunan and Guangxi are ritual specialists of the Meishan Tradition 梅山教. Besides the Three Pure Ones, they worship Tang Daoxiang 唐道相, Ge Dingzhi 葛定志 and Zhou Huzheng 周護正, the Sanyuan Zushi 三元祖師 (the Three Primordial Grandmasters), as their patriarchs. There is a close relationship between the Lüshan Tradition and the Meishan Tradition. For instance, the ritual play *Haiyou Ji* 海遊記 (Records of Sea Travels), which is a major repertoire of Fujian marionette theatre, is also staged by *Nuo* actors in Hunan. Some of the talismans that are used by the priests of these two sects are almost the same.

Jin Dehui 金德輝 suggested combining all the best artists of Suzhou 蘇州, Hangzhou and Yangzhou into one company. The proposal was taken up and proved such a success that the troupe stayed together after the Emperor left. It was given the name Qixiu 啟秀 and appears to have survived into the nineteenth century...(Mackerras 1972, 49)

The content of the above passage clearly reveals that without the visit of Emperor Qianlong, the Qixiu Troupe (the most famous opera troupe in Jiangnan areas) would not have been formed. The emperor's southern tours hastened the growth and spread of Jiangnan opera genres (especially *Kun* opera). In Guangzhou of Guangdong, fourteen out of forty-seven outside troupes (*waijiang ban* 外江班)¹¹² that staged performances in A.D. 1791 came from Zhejiang and Jiangsu. During the eighteenth century, many opera actors who staged operas in Beijing were natives of the Jiangnan region. For example, Li Guiguan 李桂官 (a prominent *Kun* opera performer) came from Suzhou. Tian Bao'er 天保兒 was also a native of Suzhou. He originally staged *Kun* operas but then gave them up in favor of the Clapper opera. In addition, many boy-actors in Beijing were recruited from the lower Yangtze region, such as Suzhou, Yangzhou and Anhui. The information mentioned above clearly indicates that opera genres of the Jiangnan region (especially the *Kun* opera) exerted great influence on the development of other local operas in southeast China. The popularity of *Kun* opera declined from the early nineteenth century onwards. At Beijing, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, both Emperor Xianfeng 咸豐皇帝 (r. A.D. 1851 – 1861) and Empress Dowager Cixi 慈禧太后 had enormous enthusiasm for opera. For example, in A.D. 1884, actors from outside the court performed in the palace on the Empress's fiftieth birthday. From that time until 1910, major opera companies of Beijing often staged performances in the palace compound. Cixi's love for opera was an important factor in the development of Beijing opera.

1.3.2. Performances and Religious Activities

From the Ming Dynasty onwards, opera was already a vital part of the religious life of the Chinese people. Human operas and puppetry were often staged on auspicious or important occasions. First, the tradition of the worship of theatre gods can be dated back to the Ming dynasty (and possibly earlier). For example, Qingyuan Zushi 清源祖師 (Patriarch Qingyuan) or Erlang Shen 二郎神 was the most popular patron deity of Chinese traditional performers in the

¹¹² Outside troupes were made up of actors who came from other provinces, such as Anhui, Hunan, Hubei, Fujian, Jiangsu and Zhejiang.

Ming dynasty. Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 (A.D. 1550 – 1616), one of the greatest playwrights in the history of Chinese theatre, says that this deity was worshipped by the opera troupes of the Haiyan opera troupes¹¹³ in Yihuang County 宜黃 of Jiangxi. General Tian and General Dou (Tian Dou Er Jiangjun 田竇二將軍) were also honored as adjunct deities (Tang, 1973: 1127). However, the cult of Qingyuan Zushi gradually declined by the end of the Ming period. Laolang Shen (Old Lord God) or Minghuang of the Tang dynasty 唐明皇 (A.D. 712 – 756) became the most venerable patron deity of actors of different kinds of operatic genre in the north and the eastern coastal areas. In the late Qing period, Beijing opera actors worshipped Laolang Shen or Tang Minghuang as their main patron deity. They also paid tribute to other adjunct gods, such as the God of Joy (Xishen 喜神).¹¹⁴ In southeast China, actors of local operas of the *Nanxi* – *Yiyang Qiang* system usually honored Lord Tian or Marshal Lord Tian as their most venerable occupational god, though his legends were different due to local variations. At Guangdong, the tradition of paying tribute to deities of theatre can be traced back to the early sixteenth century (around A.D. 1509). For example, according to the *Jiuhe bufu shu* 糾劾不法疏 (*A Memorial About the Impeachment of [Chen He's 陳鶴] Illegalities*)¹¹⁵, there was an influential actor known as Chen He 陳鶴. He often took the effigy (or tablet)¹¹⁶ of the occupational deity¹¹⁷ with him when he visited various areas of Guangdong. He also required the officials in each place to gather local players to stage performances for the purpose of expressing gratitude to the tutelary deities (cf. Tanaka 1972, 88). Professor Tanaka argues that presumably Chen He was the

¹¹³ According to Mr. Liu Sha 流沙 and Professor Colin Mackerras, the *Haiyan* singing style, which evolved from southern operas (*Nanxi*), began to flourish during the middle of the fifteenth century. The *Zhejiang guanhua* 浙江官話 (official language of Zhejiang) was the dominant stage language. Unlike the *Yiyang Qiang* opera, *banqiang* (chorus) was not a major element of the Hanyan opera. *Pipa* 琵琶 (short-necked plucked lute), *xiangban* 象板 (clapper), *yueqin* 月琴 (short-necked plucked lute) and *zheng* 箏 (kite) were musical instruments used in the performance. *Hanyan Qiang* was introduced to Yihuang County of Jiangxi by Tan Lun 譚綸 (A.D. 1520 – 1577). He was granted the degree of *jinshi* 進士 (advanced scholar) in A.D. 1544 “and later rendered valuable service against Japanese pirates on the southern coast. In 1566 he became Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi. Soon after, he was recalled to Beijing and his last years were spent in the military defense of the empire.” (Mackerras 1971, 67; Liu 1999, 381 - 393) This musical style no longer existed after the late seventeenth century.

¹¹⁴ The God of Joy was a doll that used to represent the baby onstage. While onstage, “players could play with the doll as the drama required, but after their exit had to pay it respect. To avoid the necessity of a continuing worship, the face of the doll was usually turned downwards.” (Mackerras 1972, 224)

¹¹⁵ The *Jiuhe bufu shu* was written by Wu Tingju 吳廷舉 (A.D. 1467 – 1532) in A.D. 1509. Wu, who was also known as Xianchen 獻臣 (style) or Donghu 東湖 (alias), was a native of Wuzhou 梧州 in Guangxi 廣西. He obtained the degree of *jinshi* (advanced scholar) in the twenty-third year of the Chenghua reign period (A.D. 1488). When he was in the *zhixian* 知縣 (district magistrate) of Shunde County 順德縣 in Guangdong, he destroyed two hundred and fifty licentious temples. This memorial is included in his work, the *Collected Writings of Donghu* (*Donghu wenji* 東湖文集) (Zhang, 1999: 1057).

¹¹⁶ The original text does not offer any information of this point.

¹¹⁷ The identity of this deity is unknown.

impresario of an opera troupe at that time, and the practice of worshipping patron deities was already popular within the operatic profession during the mid-Ming era. During the early Qing period, local or indigenous troupes (*bendi ban* 本地班)¹¹⁸ in Foshan already considered Master Huaguang as their patron deity. In the late nineteenth century, Master Huagaung was (and still is) the most primary patron deity of the Cantonese opera profession. Master Tian, Master Dou (Tian Dou Ershi 田竇二師), Master Zhang Wu 張五師傅 and Grandfather – Lord Tan (Tan Gong Ye 譚公爺) were (and still are) worshipped as associated deities.¹¹⁹

Moreover, similar to other professions, the tradition of founding occupational organizations to protect their own interests was already very popular among the Chinese traditional performers, especially in the Qing dynasty. For instance, at Beijing, the occupational organization of Beijing opera actors was known as the Liyuan Gonghui 梨園公會 (the Association of the Pear Garden). Its headquarters was situated in the southeast of the Outer City beside the Jingzhong Miao 精忠廟 (the Temple of Absolute Devotion). In Hunan, Xiang opera 湘劇 actors formed their own guild in A.D. 1752. Performers in Jiangnan areas, such as Shaoxing 紹興, Yangzhou 揚州 and Nanjing 南京, also established their occupational associations. In Guangdong, Chaozhou opera players founded the Chaoyin Liyuan Lianyi She 潮音梨園聯誼社 (the Fellowship of the Pear Garden of Chaozhou Music) around the late nineteenth century (Lai 2001, 185 – 186). In A.D. 1889, Cantonese opera performers founded the Association of Eight Harmonies (Bahe Huiguan 八和會館) at Guangzhou. Grand celebrations were held and auspicious plays were performed on the birthdays of the patron deities, especially the birth anniversary of Master Huaguang (the twenty-eighth of the ninth month).¹²⁰ In his Ph.D thesis, “Marionette Theatre in Quanzhou,” Robin Erik Ruizendaal states that puppeteers in Qunghzhou City founded a guild by the end of the Qing dynasty. The headquarters was located in the Xuanmiao Guan 玄妙觀 (the Daoist Temple of Mystery), which dedicated to the Jade Emperor. By casting divination blocks, a new head of the guild was chosen every year according to the will of the Jade Emperor. On the birthday of Tian Gong (the ninth day of ten ninth lunar month), the best puppeteers of each role type would staged performances together. All members of the guild would participate in a feast that was arranged by the head (Ruizendaal 1999, 31 – 32). In addition to god sacrifices, performers of local operas under the

¹¹⁸ For the explanation of *bendi ban*, please refer to Section 2.3 of Chapter Two.

¹¹⁹ Please see Section 4.3. Chapter Four for detailed discussion on the legends of these deities.

¹²⁰ With regard to the descriptions of the Bahe Huiguan and the birthday of Master Huaguang, please refer to Section 2.3. (Chapter Two) and Section 4.3. Chapter Four respectively.

Ming and Qing had to (and still have to) observe many occupational taboos. Many of the traditions mentioned above still exist today.

Second, opera or puppet performances were closely associated with private banquets or celebrations. During the Ming and Qing times, people in southeast China hired human or puppet troupes to stage *huanyuan xi* 還願戲 (plays for the repayment of vows). In Xinghua 興化 (Putian 莆田 nowadays) of Fujian, the ritual play *Yuan* 願 (Vow) was often performed on auspicious occasions, such as birthdays of elders, and one month (*miyue* 彌月) after the birth of a son. People offered this play as a gift to express their gratitude to Tian Gong Yuanshuai 田公元帥 (Marshal Lord Tian) or Tian Gong 田公 (Lord Tian) for his blessing and protection. In Putian, Lord Tian was (and still is) both a tutelary deity of the local communities and a patron god of the Puxian marionettists as well as Puxian operatic performers throughout Ming and Qing times (cf. Dean 1994, 683 – 731; Yang 2000, 7 - 100). *Gaoqiang* marionette theatre was very popular in Hakka areas of southwestern Fujian, such as Wuping 武平, Changting 長汀 and Shanghang 上杭. The Hakkas offered marionette plays, such as the *Huagaung Zhuan* 華光傳 (the Legend of Huaguang), *Guanyin Zhuan* 觀音傳 (the Legend of Guanyin) and *Furen Zhuan* 夫人傳 (the Legend of the Lady), to their local deities so as to repay their vows. This type of performance was called *xianghuo xi* 香火戲 (plays of incense fire). Moreover, according to Volume Eleven of the *Information Concerning the History of Fujian Operas* (*Fujian xiqu lishi ziliao di shiyi ji* 福建戲曲歷史資料第十一輯), Xu Zonggan 徐宗幹 (A.D. 1796 – 1866)¹²¹ wrote, “I have held my office for five months. On the ninth day of the third lunar month, gentry and common people congratulated me on my fiftieth birthday. The doors along the streets were decorated with colored streamers. All the families burnt incense. The lantern plays [shadow puppet plays]¹²² lasted for three days. Though they were being banned, [these traditions] did not come to a halt.”¹²³ (Ye 2004, 48) In the case of the Pearl River Delta of Guangdong Province, wealthy

¹²¹ Xu Zonggan, whose style (*zi* 字) was Shuren 樹人, was a native of Tongzhou 通州, Jiangsu 江蘇. He was bestowed the degree of *jinsshi* 進士 (advanced scholar) in the twenty-fifth year of the Jiaqing 嘉慶 reign period (A.D. 1820). During the reign of Daoguang 道光, he served as a district magistrate of Qufu 曲阜 and Taian 泰安 in Shandong 山東. Then, he was appointed as a circuit intendant in different parts (such as Zhangzhou 漳州 and Taiwan) of Fujian. He was promoted to the rank of Governor (*xunfu* 巡撫) of Fujian in the reign period (A.D. 1862 – 1874) of Tongzhi 同治. Moreover, he also assisted Zuo Zongtang 左宗堂, the Governors-general (*zongdu* 總督) of Fujian and Zhejiang, to suppress the Taiping Uprising.

¹²² In China, shadow puppet plays is a kind of puppetry “in which flat figures are passed between a light source and a translucent screen and their shadows are then observed from the other side of the screen.” (Tsao 1987, 82) Hence, this form of puppet show is also known as *dengxi* 燈戲 (light play).

¹²³ 在任五月，紳民於三月初九日，為余祝五旬生日，沿門懸彩，比戶焚香，燈戲三日，禁之不止。

families often erected permanent stages in their courtyards. For example, Pan Zhenchen 潘振辰¹²⁴ possessed an elaborate stage for private entertainment. The stage had a capacity of over 100 actors.

Third, ancestral worship was sometimes accompanied by human or puppet performances. For example, until the nineteenth century, the Wei lineage 魏氏 of Lanfeng 蘭風 in Yuyao 餘姚 County (Zhejiang) paid tribute to their ancestors four times a year. Operas were performed so as to entertain the ancestors in the Winter Rites. According to the genealogy (dated 1909) of the Chen lineage 陳氏 in Xiaoshan 蕭山 of the same province, lineage leaders offered plays as gifts to their ancestors during the Qingming Jie 清明節 (the Festival of Clearness and Brightness) (cf. Mackerras 1972, 21 and 23). Furthermore, in northeastern Guangdong, operas were also presented as part of ancestral worship. As the 1661 edition of the *Chaozhou Prefectural History* notes, “Ancestors are worshipped in the second month of spring. Operas are often performed in wards and rural areas. As a [local] proverb says, “There are lanterns in the first month and operas in the second month.”¹²⁵ With regard to the Long Lineage 龍氏 of Daliang Village 大良村 in Shunde County 順德縣, plays would be performed at the ancestral hall if a lineage member passed the provincial or palace examination. (Tanaka 2002, 289). Furthermore, Tanaka also says that according to the 1916 edition of the *Genealogy Concerning the Xie Lineage of Fang Village in Panyu County (Panyu Fangcun Xieshi zupu 番禺芳村謝氏族譜)*, Beijing style operas (*jingxi* 京戲)¹²⁶ were performed in the forty-fourth year of the reign period of Kangxi 康熙 (A.D. 1705), when two ancestral altars were formally installed in the ancestral hall. The performance which lasted three days began on the second of the eighth month.

Fourth, theatrical performances (both human and puppet) and temple festivals were inseparable from each other in Chinese society. This tradition, which was already popular in the Song Dynasty, continued to flourish during the Ming and Qing periods. At southwestern Fujian, in the third year of the reign period of Zhengde 正德 (A.D. 1509), a temple festival took place in the Zhongqian Temple 中乾廟 of Kanxia Village 坎下村 at Shaowu County 邵武縣. A marionette play was put on in order to celebrate the birthday (the fifth day of the eighth lunar

¹²⁴ Pan Zhenchen, who was a native of Fujian, was one of the richest and most famous Hang 行 merchants of the during the reign period of Qianlong (A.D. 1736 – 1795).

¹²⁵ 仲春祀先祖，坊鄉多演戲。諺曰：「孟月燈、仲月戲。」

¹²⁶ During the Kangxi reign period (A.D. 1662 – 1722), the *Kun* opera, the *Jiang Qiang* 京腔 opera (a local variant of the *Yiyang Qiang* operas), the *Han* opera and the Clapper opera were popular traditional operas in Beijing. Hence, it is reasonable to believe that the term “*jingxi*” refers to these opera genres.

month) of the tutelary deity. In coastal areas of Fujian, such as Xiamen and Quanzhou, leaders of local communities hired puppet (both marionette and glove puppet) troupes and/or operatic companies for honoring the local deities with auspicious plays on their birthdays. These theatrical activities usually took place at temporary or permanent stages that were usually located in front of temples. The worship of Tian Gong was already very popular in Xinghua (present-day Putian) of southeastern Fujian during the early years of the Ming dynasty (possibly earlier). This deity was (still is) both worshipped by performers and people of local communities. The Ruiyun Miao 瑞雲廟 (the Temple of Auspicious Clouds)¹²⁷ that dedicated to Lord Tian was erected around the late fourteenth century. It was rebuilt and repaired several times during the Ming and Qing dynasties. A permanent stage was also constructed in front of the temple by the end of the Ming. Until the Republican Era, annual celebrations took place on the ninth day of the fourth month and the twenty-third of the eighth month (birthdays of Tian Gong). In the ceremonies, Daoist priests were invited to recite scriptures, a procession was formed of musicians, and bearers of ritual banners and umbrellas. Strong men who carried sedan chairs of the deities also took part in the parade. There was a deafening sound of beating the gongs and drums. The procession marched through the local villages in order to purify the territory and to offer blessing to the villagers. Puxian operas were also performed at the permanent stage in order to entertain Lord Tian and other tutelary deities (Yang 2000, 33- 38). The rituals usually lasted three days. In the Canton Delta of Guangdong Province, temple festivals were usually accompanied by opera performances. For example, Chapter Eleven of the 1754 edition of the *Foshan Zhongyi xiangzhi* 佛山忠義鄉志 (*The Local History of Zhongyi Township in Foshan*)¹²⁸ offers the following depiction:

¹²⁷ The Ruiyun Miao is situated at Touting 頭亭 of Gongchen Village 拱辰村 in Putian County, Fujian

¹²⁸ Chapter Eleven of the *Foshan Zhongyi xiangzhi* (dated A.D. 1754) is recorded in the 1997 edition of the *Zhongguo difang zhi minsu ziliao huibian zhongnan juan xia* 中國地方志民俗資料匯編中南卷下 (*A Complete Collection Concerning the Materials of Folk Customs of the Chinese Local Histories, The Central Southern Section*, Vol. 2).

The birthday of Beidi 北帝 (Northern Emperor)¹²⁹ is on the third day of the third lunar month, when villagers go to the Lingying Ci 靈應祠 (the Temple of Efficacy)¹³⁰ to worship [the deity]. All wards are decorated with festoons [and] operas are performed. It is known as “the Festival of the Double Three (*Chongsan Hui* 重三會)”...The birth anniversary of Tianfei 天妃 (the Heavenly Consort) is on the twenty-third day. Tianfei takes charge of the water region. People serve her reverently since they live in a land that abounds in rivers and lakes. Operas are performed so as to repay her blessing [and] banquets are arranged in order to welcome her. [Nevertheless, all these gifts] are not as good as those that are offered to Beidi.¹³¹ (Ding 1997, 700)

Fifth, many permanent stages were built in south China from the late fourteenth century onwards. This is a more strong evidence to reveal the close relationship between temple festivals and operas. *The Guangdong Volume of the Chinese Operatic History* records twenty-eight permanent stages. Four of them were built in the Ming era, such as the Stage of the City God Temple at Jiesheng Town 捷勝鎮 in Haifeng County, and the Stage of the Lord Guan Temple in

¹²⁹ The Northern Emperor (Beidi) is commonly known as the Great Perfect Warrior Emperor (Zhenwu Dadi 真武大帝) or the Deity of Deep Dark Warrior (Xuanwu Shen 玄武神). In Guangdong, people usually address him as Beidi. In ancient China, Xuanwu was the name of the northern seven of the twenty-eight constellations. According to Chao Shinyi 趙昕毅, “the symbol of Xuanwu was originally a turtle, and under the Eastern Han, it later evolved into a turtle coiled by a snake, but sometimes, the turtle still appeared alone...” (Chao 2003, 15) In the tenth century, Zhenwu was personified and worshipped as a deity. The *Wondrous Scripture of Zhenwu of the North Told by the Heavenly Worthy of Primordial Commencement* (*Yuanshi tianzun shuo beifang Zhenwu miaojing* 元始天尊說北方真武妙經) says that Zhenwu, who was the son of King Jingle 淨樂 (Pure and Joyful) and Queen Shansheng 善勝 (Virtue Triumph), was born on the third day of the third lunar month during the reign period of Kaihuang (A.D. 589 – 504) of the Sui Dynasty. He renounced the throne and swore to assist the Jade Emperor to subdue demons and evil spirits. After cultivating the Way on Mt. Wudang 武當山 for forty-two years, he attained immortality and ascended to Heaven in full daylight (Chao 2003, 82 – 83). Song emperors bestowed titles upon him. In order to avoid using the name of an imperial ancestor (Zhao Xuanlang 趙玄朗), the term “Xuanwu (Deep Dark Warrior)” was changed to “Zhenwu (Perfect Warrior).” He was worshipped in the state rites during the Ming Dynasty. Hence, many temples for this deity were erected in different parts of the country.

¹³⁰ Besides the Zhenwu temple on Mt. Wudang, the Lingying Ci or Zumiao 祖廟 (Original Temple) at Foshan is another famous temple dedicated to Zhenwu or Beidi. The *Foshan zhongyi xiangzhi* notes that this temple was first erected during the Song period. Nevertheless, it was burnt down by bandits in the Yuan Dynasty. Merchants and local community leaders rebuilt it in A.D. 1373. During the mid Ming period, bandits and privates often caused troubles at Guangdong. Local people of Foshan formed militia and vowed to defend their native place in front of Zhenwu. They believed that the rebellions were suppressed mainly due to the efficacy of Zhenwu. In order to express their thankfulness to the deity, local leaders donated money to expand the temple. Furthermore, they also requested the Ming Court to grant official recognition to their temple. After detailed investigation, “the court bestowed the name “Zhongyi Township (Zhongyi Xiang 忠義鄉) to Foshan, and listed the Zumiao on the official ‘register of sacrifices (*sidian* 祀典)’ and issued a document, number 424, to the Guangdong Administration and Provincial Censor that requesting them to support the temple’s sacrifices and maintenance...” (Chao 2003, 230)

¹³¹ 三月三日，北帝神誕，鄉人士赴靈應祠肅拜，各坊結彩演劇，曰“重三會”...廿三日，天妃神誕。天妃，司水鄉，人事之甚謹，以居澤國也。其演劇以報，肅筵以迓者，次于事北帝。

Nan'ao County 南澳縣. These two permanent stages were erected in A.D. 1380 and A.D. 1579 respectively. The others were mainly erected during the Qing Dynasty, such as the Wanfu Tai of the Foshan Original Temple mentioned above. This stage was called Huafeng Tai 華封台 (the Stage of Prosperity and High) when it was first constructed in A.D. 1658. It was renamed as Waifu Tai in A.D. 1684 and repaired four times during the Qing period. Besides the Pearl River Delta, permanent stages for ritual performances were also erected in Chaozhou, Nanxiong 南雄 and Zhenjiang 湛江.¹³² Many permanent stages were also built in different parts of Fujian. For example, in Qingshui Township of Yong'an City, the Ancient Stage of the Bridge of Eternal Peace (Yongning Qiao Gu Xitai 永寧橋古戲台) was constructed in A.D. 1724. The Stage of the Near Water Temple (Linshui Gong 臨水宮) in Gutian 古田 was erected in A.D. 1875. The permanent stage of the Ruiyun Miao (the Temple of Auspicious Clouds) was built around the end of the Ming dynasty. Similar to the situations of Guangdong, most of these permanent stages in the countryside were erected in the Qing Dynasty. It is important to point out that human opera performances usually took place at these permanent stages during temple festivals. Puppet shows were usually performed at small temporary stages (made of bamboo poles), which could be erected inside a private house, on a permanent straw stage, or in front of a temple. Permanent theatres also began to appear in large cities (such as Fuzhou and Quanzhou) before the downfall of the Qing Empire in A.D. 1911. Large numbers of permanent stages were also erected in other southern provinces, such as Hunan, Anhui and Jiangxi, during the Ming and Qing times.

Sixth, operas and puppet performances were already associated with annual and *jiao* festivals throughout the Ming and Qing Dynasties. In China, operas or puppet plays were popular entertainments during Chinese New Year. Chapter Thirty Eight of the *Book of Min* (*Minshu* 閩書) states that in Zhangzhou, around the mid Ming era, shadow puppet plays were performed in the first lunar month (from the tenth to the sixteenth) so as to celebrate the first full moon (He [1613] 1994, 950). According to the *Wuchu fengtu lu* 吳楚風土錄 (*A Record of the Social Customs of Wuchu*), spring performances (*chuntai xi* 春台戲) were presented in Suzhou every year. During the second and third months, “village bullies and strong men of the markets would build stages in the thinly populated areas. The people would contribute money for the performance of operas and everybody, both men and women, would gather to watch. It was

¹³² Modern theatres, such as the Sea Pearl Theatre (Haizhu Xiyuan 海珠戲院) and the Peaceful Theatre (Qingping Xiyuan 清平戲院), were constructed in urban areas of Guangdong province from the late nineteenth century onward.

called ‘spring stage dramas [or operas]’ (*chuntai xi*) and was designed to pray for good fortune for the peasants.” (Mackerras 1972, 34) Similar customs also existed in different parts of Guangdong. For example, the 1784 edition of the *Local History of Nan’ao County* (*Nan’ao xianzhi* 南澳縣志), notes that money was collected from each household in the local communities. On the second day of the second lunar month, animals were slaughtered and operas were performed in the county for the purpose of giving offerings of thanks to the Locality God. This celebration was known as *chun qifu* 春祈福 (praying for blessing in spring). In addition, the 1874 edition of the *Local History of Heyuan County* (*Heyuan xianzhi* 河源縣志) states that before or during the reign period of Tongzhi 同治 (A.D.1862 – 1874), miscellany operas were staged on the day before Spring’s Beginning (*lichun* 立春)¹³³ so as to worship the Deity of Bearded Grain (Mangshen 芒神) and welcome the clay ox (*ying tuniu* 迎土牛).¹³⁴ (Ding 1997, 734 and 780) These rites which usually took place at suburbs were also very popular in other parts of south China.

A *jiao* festival is “a large-scale communal ritual staged in order to pacify wandering ghosts, to purify the community’s territory and to reach a cosmic renewal.” (Liu 2003, 75) All the local deities of the communities are invited to take part in the ceremonies and to enjoy opera or puppet performances. For example, at Xiaolan Town of Zhongshan County 小欖鎮中山縣 in Guangdong,¹³⁵ the *jiao* festival of the Chrysanthemum Exhibition (Jühua Hui 菊花會) that usually lasted three to five days took place in A.D. 1814, 1874 and 1934. In other words, it was arranged at sixty-year intervals. These activities, which were often held in the tenth lunar month, were dominated by powerful lineages, such as the Hes 何氏, the Liangs 梁氏, the Lis 李氏 and the Mais 麥氏. Many members of these lineages passed the imperial examinations and had *gongming* 功名 (scholarly honors or official ranks). Besides chanting classical poetry and enjoying the great beauty of the chrysanthemum, the local inhabitants also invited monks and Daoist priests to perform the *jiao* ritual, and hired operatic troupes to stage performances. Temporary stages were erected in front of the ancestral halls and temples, such as the ancestral hall of the He lineage, the ancestral hall of the Mai lineage, the Temple of Guanyin (Guanyin

¹³³ Spring’s Beginning is the first of the twenty-four solar nodes. It fluctuates between January 21 and February 20.

¹³⁴ In these rituals, azure banners were set up and figures of an ox and a husbandman were displayed at the eastern suburb. These figures served to remind people to devote to their time to agricultural activities (Ding 1997, 734).

¹³⁵ Xiaolan Town of Zhongshan County is situated at the Pearl River Delta. In the early Ming period, garrison troops opened up the land and grew food grain in the area. Later, large lineages gradually migrated from the north and settled in Xiaolan. By the end of the Qing dynasty, it was occupied by forty to sixty lineages and its population was more than 4,000 (Tanaka 1989, 1128).

Miao 觀音廟), the Temple of the Heavenly Empress (Tianhou Miao 天后廟), and the Temple of Holy Emperor Guan (Guan Shengdi Miao 關聖帝廟). In 1814 and 1874, outside troupes (*waijiang ban* 外江班)¹³⁶ from other provinces, such as Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Anhui and Hunan, were hired to stage *Kun* operas and *Gaoqiang* operas. Cantonese opera had reached its full development during the 1930s. Hence, the Daluo Tian 大羅天 (A Great Collection under Heaven) Troupe and the Renshou Nian Troupe 人壽年 (Long Life Every Year), the two most famous Cantonese opera troupes at that time, were employed for ritual performances in 1934. Prominent actors, such as Bai Jurong 白駒榮 (an actor of young male roles), Ma Shiceng 馬師曾 (an actor of comic and male roles) and Qianli Ju 千里駒 (an actor of female roles) took part in the performances (Tanaka 1989, 1113 – 1165). The information mentioned above indicates that the large lineages of Xiaolan Town were very wealthy and powerful since they were able to hire the most distinguished actors for ritual performances. Before the 1950s, marionettists in Shanghang County of southwestern Fujian sometimes performed operatic series in *jiao* festivals that usually lasted seven days and seven nights.

Seventh, in south China, Mulian operas (both human and marionette) were mainly performed on four religious occasions. These were the Ghost Festival, death rituals, exorcism and birthdays of deities. As had been the case during the Song, Chinese people in the Ming and Qing continued to believe that Mulian ritual performances functioned to placate the hungry ghosts and rescued them from endless suffering in purgatory. Thus, the Mulian operatic tradition was very popular in Hunan, Jiangxi, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, etc. Concerning the situations of Hengyang 衡陽 in Hunan, the Qianlong 乾隆 (r. A.D. 1736 – 1795) edition of the *Local History of Qingquan County* (*Qingquan xianzhi* 青泉縣志) notes, “The Zhongyuan Festival is on the fifteenth day [of the seventh lunar month]...At that night, food is specially prepared for offering sacrifices to the water [ghosts]. Ritual money is burnt at the doorway after the worship...The Ulambanapātra may also be held, the hungry ghosts are fed, [and] the rive lanterns are lit. The city dwellers perform different kinds of repertoire, [such as the stories of] Mulian, Guanyin and King Yue [Yue Fei].” (Liu 1997, 52)¹³⁷ In southeastern Fujian, the *Shimo ji* 拾墨記 (*A Record Concerning the Collection of Writings*) quotes the following passage from the *Lianjiang lizhi* 連

¹³⁶ For explanation of the term *waijiang ban*, please refer to Section 2.3. of Chapter Two.

¹³⁷ 十五日中元節...其夜又特設饌水祭。祭畢，焚冥於門，又或...設孟蘭會，放焰口，點河燈。市人演目連、觀音、岳王諸劇。

江里志 (the *Local History of Liangjiang District*),¹³⁸ “People of Puyang very much [believe in] ghosts and shamans. All villagers gather in the local communal temple where offerings are made on the fifteenth of the seventh month. Daoist priests are often invited to ascend the altar and perform the Ritual for Purification. Marionette plays are staged all night until dawn (from [the hour of] *shen* 申 to [the hour of] *yin* 寅¹³⁹).”¹⁴⁰ Apparently some of these puppet shows were Mulian operas. Before and during the Republican era, people of Yongchun County 永春縣 of the Quanzhou district also arranged operatic performances or marionette shows in the Ghost Festival. The 1930 edition of the *Yongchun xianzhi* 永春縣志 (the *Local History of Yongchun County*) notes, “In the seventh month, ‘the Ulambanapātra’ for releasing the dead take place at many Buddhist and Daoist temples. A lot of ritual money is offered. This is known as *pudu* 普度 (saving all the dead from sufferings). In order to entertain the deities, troupes of seven roles or marionette [troupes] are invited to stage the stories of Mulian Rescues His Mother and Xuanzhuang Goes on a Pilgrimage for [Buddhist] Sutras.”¹⁴¹ (Ding 1997, 1302) In addition to the Ghost Festival, Mulian operas were also staged in death rites for the purpose of rescuing the ancestors from purgatory. “In Fujian and Taiwan, segments of the Mulian story or a version of the entire opera were (and still are) presented as an integral element in funeral rituals, with mourners, funeral professionals, and even monks acting the parts...” (Johnson 1989, 3) The 1839 edition of the *Local History of Xiamen* (*Xiamen zhi* 廈門志) also states that in funerals, sections of the Mulian opera series were performed and monks also participated in the performances. Men and women watched together without observing the principle of gender segregation. In Quanzhou and Putian of southeastern Fujian, death rituals were (and still are) also accompanied by Mulian ritual performances.

People in south China believed that the Mulian operas functioned to ward off ghosts and evil elements. This kind of *ping'an xi* 平安戲 (tranquility operas) was very popular in Shaoqing County of Zhejiang before and during the early twentieth century. According to the 1937 edition of the *Zhonghua fengsu zhi* 中華風俗志 (the *Local History of Chinese Customs*), segments of

¹³⁸ The *Lianjiang lizhi* was written around A.D. 1696 by Zheng Delai 鄭得來.

¹³⁹ The characters *shen* and *yin* refer to two of the twelve two-hour periods in which the day was traditionally divided. The hour *shen*=3p.m. – 5p.m., and the hour *yin*=3a.m. – 5a.m.

¹⁴⁰ 莆陽人好鬼巫，中元祭祀，鄉人皆集社廟，每延黃冠登壇設醮，演傀儡，自申至寅，達旦而罷。

¹⁴¹ 七月是月也，寺觀多作“盂蘭盤會”以荐亡，廣施楮錢，謂之“普度”。召七子班或木頭戲演《目連救母》及《玄奘取經》故事以娛神。

the Mulian operatic series were once staged in Shaoqing at the temple of the Locality God in the fifth and sixth months for the purpose of exorcism. As David Johnson translates:

These [tranquility] operas are performed day and night. Those presented during the day are the same as ordinary operas, but at dusk many actors impersonating the Demon King, lesser ghosts, and all sorts of frightful creatures form into troupes and parade through the village, accompanied by gongs, drums, and banners. The popular term for this is “Summoning the Dead” (*zhao sang* [召喪]). People say that its purpose is to call together the minor ghosts to go and watch the opera. Women and children watch, too. They put peach branches and peach leaves in their hair, which they say keep the ghosts away. When “Summoning the Dead” is over, the actors go up on the stage and begin the opera. The work that is usually performed is “Mulian Rescues His Mother.” While the opera is being presented, many actors costumed as evil ghosts cavort around the base of the stage. At daybreak, they are driven underneath the stage. It is said that this means that all the evil ghosts of the village have been driven away...[Those in the audience] must stay until dawn. If anyone leaves before the opera is over...a real ghost will certainly follow them home...(Hu 1988, 48- 49; Johnson 1989, 10 – 11)

Owing to the influence of Buddhism, Guanyin or the Goddess of Mercy was a very popular deity in the Quanzhou district towards the late Tang period. Under the Ming and Qing, she already became one of the ritual lords of the Tantric Sect (Yujia Jiao 瑜珈教), a sub-sect of the Lüshan Tradition. According to Mr. Ye Mingsheng, Mulian marionette plays that were staged on her two birthdays (the nineteenth of the second month and the nineteenth of the ninth month) often lasted seven days and seven nights. Moreover, the birthday of the City God and the *jiao* festivals (rites for purification) were other auspicious occasions when Mulian marionette plays were performed in Quanzhou during the imperial times. This tradition has continued to exist up to the present. Since the late nineteenth century (and possibly earlier), Cantonese opera actors have performed the auspicious play *Xianghua Shan Da Heshou* 香花山大賀壽 (the Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain) at least once a year on the birthday (the twenty-eighth of the ninth month) of Master Huaguang 華光 (the Master of Splendid and Brightness), the most venerable deity of the Cantonese opera profession. This play is an extract

of Scene Nine of Zheng Zhizhen's massive Mulian script.¹⁴² Today, this play is still staged on Master Huaguang's birthday by the Cantonese opera actors in Hong Kong.¹⁴³ This tradition gradually died out in Mainland China after the 1950s.

Eighth, in addition to the Mulian marionette operas mentioned above, Chinese people in the Ming and Qing also employed other marionette ritual plays and *Nuo* rites to exorcise evil elements. In the early seventeenth century, local people of Pucheng County 莆城縣 in northern Fujian invited marionettists to stage performances in order to send off the *Liuxia Sha* 流霞煞 (Flowing Killers).¹⁴⁴ This was (and still is) a kind of lesser rite (*xiao fashi* 小法事) known as *qianxia* 遣霞 (driving away the killers). As the following passage notes:

[At] Dajin Suo, a woman was pregnant for ten months. The marionette play *Wuxian Chuanqi* 五顯傳奇 (the Story of the Five Manifestations)¹⁴⁵ was once performed in [her] home. There was a little genie in the performance. He had a blue face with protruding teeth and a pair of horns on his head. The woman immediately felt panic when she saw him. She entered the chamber and delivered a child that had a strange and monstrous appearance. It looked just like what she had seen [in the performance]. [Right after] he was born, [the child] jumped and howled [like the] genie. The woman was frightened and called [her] aunt at once. Her aunt killed him with a mallet. The performance which took place in the hall had not yet ended.¹⁴⁶ (cf. Lin1983, 44)

Imperial enthusiasm for exorcism clearly declined in the Ming and Qing. The Ming court did not resume the palace exorcistic rites until the reign period of Xiaozong 孝宗 (A.D. 1488 – 1505). The Great *Nuo* was performed once every year on New Year's Eve. Fangxiang was still the great exorcist and boys were active participants in the ritual. The tradition of palace

¹⁴² For a brief description of Zhen Zhizhen's Mulian script, please refer to Section 1.3.1 of this chapter.

¹⁴³ Please refer to Section 4.3. of Chapter Four for a detailed depiction concerning the auspicious play *Xianghua Shan Da Heshou*.

¹⁴⁴ According to popular beliefs, Liusha is a kind of water killer that hinders the development of an embryo. It also causes pregnant women to fall sick. The custom of performing the *qianxia* rite still exists in northern Fujian nowadays. In the rite, small fishes and little shrimps that symbolize the Xia are caught and put into a pot. Then, this pot would be taken to the riverfront and the small fishes and shrimps would be released into the river.

¹⁴⁵ The Story of the Five Manifestations is also known as the *Huaguang chuan* 華光傳 (the *Legend of Huaguang*), the *Dadi chuan* 大帝傳 (the *Legend of the Great Emperor*) or the *Nanyou ji* 南遊記 (*Journey to the South*). The plot of this play is about Huaguang, the Deity of Fire, who subdues demons and saves his mother from hell. For a detailed depiction of the *Nanyou ji*, please refer to Appendix Ten of this thesis. It is believed that this play functions to expel Liuxia, a kind of water killer.

¹⁴⁶ 大金所一民婦懷孕彌月，家中偶抹傀儡，演《五顯傳奇》。場中扮一小鬼使，藍面獠牙，頭生二角。婦見之忽驚，就寢所，產一兒，異形怪狀，與適所見，分毫無別。落地即作鬼聲，叫喚跳躍。婦恐怖，亟呼姑，姑引鐵椎擊死之，堂中戲場猶未終也。

exorcism no longer existed in the Qing dynasty (Qu 2003, 680 – 683). By contrast, popular and military exorcistic rituals or masked performances prevailed over the south, such as Anhui, Hunan, Hubei, Jiangxi, Guangxi, Guangdong, Guizhou 貴州 and Yunnan 雲南. Mr. Qu Liuyi says that from the Ming dynasty onwards, exorcistic rites already mingled with various kinds of popular performance art, such as *Baixi* (hundred games) and *Nanxi* (southern operas). They also absorbed important elements from popular fictions (such as the *Story of the Three Kingdoms*) and singing styles (such as *Yiyang Qiang*). In common society, exorcistic masked plays (*Nuoxi* 儺戲) were performed in the *Nuo* rites. *Nuo* plays were already very popular in the middle and lower Yangtze regions (especially Anhui and Jiangxi) during the first half of the sixteenth century (possibly earlier). Later, these plays were spread to southwestern China by soldiers and migrants from Jiangnan. In the case of Anhui, the first written source that records the term *Nuoxi* is the *Local History of Chizhou Prefecture* (*Chizhou fuzhi* 池州府志).¹⁴⁷ In his excellent work, *Chōgoku fukei engeki kenkyū* 中國巫系演劇研究 (*Shamanistic Theatre in China*), Issei Tanaka says that he observed the *Nuo* plays of Liujie Township 劉街鄉 in Guichi County 貴池縣 in February 1990. The rites and performances in 1990 were organized by inhabitants of local villages (from seventh to the sixteenth of the first month).¹⁴⁸ In addition to *Nuo* rituals and *Nuo* dances,¹⁴⁹ *Nuo* plays were also presented in order to ward off plagues and demons, and to entertain the ancestors and local deities, such as Prince Xiao Tong 蕭統 (the God of Locality).

¹⁴⁷ *The Chizhou fuzhi* was published during the Jiajin 嘉靖 reign period (A.D. 1522 – 1566) of the Ming dynasty.

¹⁴⁸ According to Tanaka's research in February 1990, these villages included Yincun Yao Village 殷村姚村, Maotanyao Village 茅坦姚村, Nanshanliu Village 南山劉村, Anmanliu Village 岸門劉村, Shanliyao Village 山里姚村, Chaxiwang Village 茶溪汪村, Shanwaiyao Village 山外姚村, Sha Lai Keng Wang Village 沙來坑汪村, Shuangxiwang Village 雙溪汪村, Taihezhang Village 太和章村, etc. These villages were mainly inhabited by the Yaos 姚氏, the Lius 劉氏, the Wangs 汪氏, and the Dais 戴氏.

¹⁴⁹ Presumably the *Nuo* rites and performances of Liujie Township at Guichi County in Anhui are still presented once a year. In the 1990 performance, the five *Nuo* dances were *Wusan* 舞傘 (Umbrella Dance), *Da Chi'niao* 打赤鳥 (Beating Red Birds), *Kuixing* 魁星 (the Big Dipper), *Tiao Caishen* 跳財神 (the Dance of the God of Wealth), and *Sanxing Gongzhao* 三星拱照 (the Blessing of the Three Dippers). According to local customs, the Umbrella Dance "is performed to welcome god and usually sole dance. An elder leads children with umbrella masks to the stage and reads watchwords, and then withdraws." The origin of this dance can be traced back to the Qing dynasty (Lü 1998, 14). The *Da Chi'niao* is a relic of the Chu 楚 culture. Local people believe that the red birds are the symbol of ill omen. In order to obtain fortune, they have to shoot the red birds with peach slingshots. The main themes of the Big Dipper and the Blessing of the Three Dippers are to offer longevity, happiness, salary and scholarly honor to people. It is believed that the Wu Caishen functions to bestow wealth to the local villagers. According to local beliefs, the god of wealth is Zhao Gongming. It is important to point out that Zhao Gongming is also the leading character in the performance of the *Ji Baihu* 祭白虎 (the Worship of the White Tiger), an exorcistic play of Cantonese opera.

Liu Wenlong Goes to Examination (*Liu Wenglong Gankao* 劉文龍趕考)¹⁵⁰ and *Meng Jiang Nü* 孟姜女 (Meng Jiang Girl)¹⁵¹ were the two *Nuo* plays performed in the ceremony, which often took place at the ancestral halls of different lineages (Tanaka 1993, 475). In these performances, the *Nuo* players wore masks and costumes, spoke in local dialect, performed conventional stage movements, and sang in *Gaoqiang* 高腔 (a local variant of *Yiyang Qiang*) and *Nuoqiang* 儺腔.¹⁵² In the case of Guizhou 貴州, the *Dixi* 地戲 (Earth Plays), a kind of military exorcistic masked play, flourished in Anshun district 安順地區 throughout the Ming and Qing. Nevertheless, the term *Dixi* was not found in any written sources or local history until the Daoguan 道光 reign period (A.D. 1821 – 1850) of the Qing dynasty. Many scholars believe the *Nuo* theatre spread to Guizhou from the Jiangnan region, especially Jiangxi and Anhui. As Issei Tanaka explains, “It is said that during the early [period] of Ming [dynasty], immigration to Guizhou province was systematically promoted by the soldier-farmers. Large number of villagers from Jiangnan, especially Anhui, Jiangxi, [and] Jiangsu 江蘇, migrated to the Anshun district of western Guizhou. They mainly opened up the plain from Anshun to Pingba 平壩. These people came from Jiangnan and they were also Chinese (Han) who [tried to] preserve the Jiangnan culture...” (Tanaka 1993, 371).¹⁵³ Moreover, he also states, “The masked plays, which are known as *Tiaoshen* 跳神 [Dancing Gods] or *Dixi* [Earth Plays], are passed down from generation to generation by oral tradition among the inhabitants of these garrison villages in Anshun ...I think

¹⁵⁰ Liu Wenlong Goes to Examination is an early repertoire of *Nanxi* (southern operas). It is collected in the *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典 (*A Great Dictionary of Yongle*). With regard to its plot, Liu Wenlong and Song Zhong 宋中 are schoolmates. They plan to go to the capital to take the imperial examination. Before Liu Wenlong leaves, his wife (*née* Xiao 蕭氏) gives him three tokens. Liu Wenlong passes the examination and becomes an official. Song Zhong fails in the examination and returns to the village. He forces Liu’s wife to marry him and asks Ji Po 吉婆 (the Lucky Mother) to be his matchmaker. Liu Wenlong dreams of his wife in trouble. He then returns home and rescues his wife. The married couple are reunited after his wife Xiao verifies the three tokens (Lü 1998, 49 – 56).

¹⁵¹ “The story of Meng Jiang Girl originates from the tale of [Meng] Qiliang [孟起良] wife’s tears and how her earthshaking cry, which even pushes over from the Great Wall built under Qin Shihuang’s 秦始皇 [the First Emperor of the Qin dynasty] tyranny.” (Lü 1998, 57). Meng Jiang Girl is also an early repertoire of *Nanxi*.

¹⁵² The *Nuoqiang* is a kind of ditty which originates from singing narratives, such as work songs, folk songs and *lianghua lao* 蓮花落. With regard to its text structure, lines are written according to the rule of two-line parallelism. Within each couplet, the last syllable of the first line (upper line) is usually an oblique tone while the last syllable of the second line (lower line) is often a level tone. The last syllable of the lower line must rhyme and the thirteen rhyme categories (*shisan zheyun* 十三韻) are used. Each line has six or seven characters. The usual division of a six-written-character line is into two segments of three and three written-characters. A seven-written-character line is usually divided into three segments of two, two, and three written-characters. Padding syllables can be added to the verse. The *Nuo* plays are usually sung with natural voice, though the *bangqiang* is sung with falsetto. The gong and the drum are the main percussion instruments used in the performances (Lü 1998, 160). Presumably it includes some musical essences of the *Yiyang* style.

¹⁵³ ...明初、貴州省に対して組織的に屯田兵による移住が推進され、特江南安徽、江西、江蘇の郷民が大量に貴州西辺の安順地区辺安順地区に移住し、安順から平壩に至る平原地帯に密集して屯田村…開をいたという。この人々は、江南人であり、江南文化伝承する中國人（漢族）である…

that [the masked plays] spread from Jiangnan, especially Anhui and Jiangxi areas, to this district...” (Tanaka 1993, 373)¹⁵⁴ According to his fieldwork in 1990, the Earth Plays of the Garrison of the Zhan Lineage 詹家屯 in Anshun were performed twice a year. The Ceng lineage 曾氏¹⁵⁵ and the Zhans 詹氏¹⁵⁶ took charge of the rites and performances. These *Nuo* plays were presented during Chinese New Year (from the first to the fifteenth of the first month) and in the Ghost Festival (from the fourteenth to the sixteenth of the seventh month). In Chinese New Year, exorcistic rites were performed in order to ward off evil spirits and purify the domain. Earth plays were offered as gifts to entertain and please the local deities (especially the God of Locality) and the ancestors. Devotees requested the gods and ancestors to bestow good harvest and peace. *Dixi* were performed in the Ghost Festival so as to ward off evil elements and appease the spirits of the brave departed. Since the ancestors of the Cengs and the Zhans were soldiers, the main themes of their *Nuo* plays were to glorify heroes and uphold the principle of loyalty. With regard to the Ghost Festival in 1990, Tanaka notes that the *Nuo* players performed the play Guan Yunchang Decapitates Ma Liang at Bai Mapo (*Bai Mapo Guan Yunchang Zhan Ma Liang* 白馬坡關雲長斬馬良) on the fourteenth day, and the Story of Zhao Zilong Rescues the Lord (*Zhao Zilong Jiuzhu* 趙子龍救主) on the fifteenth. The War of Tongguan (*Tongguan Zhizhan* 潼關之戰) and the Large-Scale War Between Ma Chao and Cao Cao (Ma Chao Dazhan Cao Cao 馬超大戰曹操) were the two plays performed on the sixteenth.¹⁵⁷ It is believed that there is a strong connexion between the Anshun *Dixi* and the *Nuo* plays of Nanfeng County in Jiangxi.¹⁵⁸ The case studies mentioned above clearly reveal that besides exorcism, the *Nuo* theatre was already a kind of entertainment during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Today, Guichi *Nuoxi* and Anshun *Dixi* are still popular in Anhui and Guizhou respectively.

¹⁵⁴ ...この安順の屯田村...の住民の間には、跳神、或は、地戲と呼ばれる仮面劇が伝承されている...、江南、特安徽、江西地区から、この地に入ったものと考えられる。

¹⁵⁵ The founding ancestor of the Cengs, Ceng De 曾德, was a native of Nanfeng County 南豐 in Jiangxi, where exorcistic masked performances (*Nuoxi*) were very popular. In the seventh year of the Hongwu 洪武 reign period (A.D. 1375) of the Ming, Ceng De was the General of Military Expedition (Zhengyuan Jiangjun 征遠將軍) who led his armies to go on a punitive expedition to the southwest (Yunnan and Guizhou). Later, he and his troops settled in the Anshun district of Guizhou (Tanaka 1993, 379).

¹⁵⁶ The founding ancestor of the Zhan lineage came from Anhui. He was the adjutant of Ceng De, the founding ancestor of the Ceng lineage.

¹⁵⁷ The contents of these plays are extracted from the *Story of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sangu yanyi* 三國演義). Besides the *Sangu yanyi*, other heroic plays, such as the *Fengshen yanyi* 封神演義 (the Investiture of the Gods) and *Xue Rengui Zhengdong* 薛仁貴征東 (Xue Rengui Goes on a Military Expedition to the East), are still very popular nowadays.

¹⁵⁸ The *Nuo* theatre of Nanfeng in Jiangxi is a kind of mummery. Instead of the actors, the musicians sing and speak in the performance. The actors only perform a series of movements.

Ninth, in cities and towns, people who engaged in different occupational activities formed guilds in order to protect their own interests and consolidated group unity. In usual cases, members of the same occupational association worshipped a patron deity (or a group of patron deities). They often held banquets and hired opera troupes to stage performances on important occasions. For instance, Sun Simiao 孫思邈 was worshipped by the Chinese herbalists as one of their occupational deities. Members of herbal guilds in Shandong, Shanxi, Hebei, Suzhou and Guangdong hired troupes to present operatic performances in order to entertain him on his birthday (the eighth day of the fourth month). Mazu 媽祖 (Grandma), the Goddess of the Sea, was already considered to be the patron deity of the Chinese sailors before and during the early seventeenth century. There were temples dedicated to her in all coastal provinces as well as in localities along major rivers. Regular and occasional sacrifices were offered to the goddess in order to request for her blessing. Sailors from Xiamen of Fujian visited Mazu's temples and offered marionette plays as sacrifices to her. At Foshan of Guangdong, in 1767, the headquarters of the dyestuff guild caught fire when actors were staging performances there. As a result, hundreds of people died in this accident. In my opinion, this tragedy is evidence to indicate that the celebrations of the profession associations were often accompanied by opera performances. Moreover, in cities or towns of Jiangnan, sojourning merchants from different parts of China founded their own guilds. They donated money to build temples for Lord Guan 關公. These temples also served as headquarters of these associations, where annual celebrations were held on his birthday (the thirteenth of the fifth month). Temporary stages were erected at the streets and opera troupes were hired for ritual performances (Jiang 1992, 358). Besides occupational organizations, people (especially merchants) also organized their own *huiguan* 會館 (native-place associations) in the cities, such as Fuzhou, Guangzhou and Yangzhou. Operas were also performed in these associations in spring and autumn so as to entertain patron deities and fellow townsmen. Some wealthy merchants even erected permanent stages in their *huiguan*.

In sum, *Nuo* rites and puppetry already had a close connection with religious practices since ancient times. The Song dynasty was a watershed in the history of Chinese theatre and religion. This development was supported by political, economic, social and religious factors. Variety plays (*Zaju*) and southern operas (*Nanxi*) emerged, actors and puppeteers began to found their own guilds, and five types of puppet shows and various kinds of performance were often performed in Kaifeng (Bianliang), Hanzhou (Lin'an) and Fuzhou. Many opera genres that developed in the Ming and Qing dynasties originated from *Nanxi* and *Zaju*. In the Song and

Yuan, birthdays in wealthy families, annual rites and temple festivals were often accompanied by puppet shows or (and) operas. The Ming and Qing were a golden age of Chinese traditional theatre. There was a close relationship between political, social, economic and religious transformations, and the rise of theatrical activities in south China at that time. Both Mulian operas and *Nuo* theatre had fully developed and penetrated into the religious life of all the people. Four major types of musical style, *Yiyang Qiang*, *Kunqiang*, Clapper music and *Pihuang*, flourished throughout China. Players and puppeteers worshipped patron deities and formed occupational associations in order to obtain the blessing of the gods and consolidate group solidarity. Private feasts, ancestral worship and temple festivals were important occasions for ritual performances. Mulian operas were usually staged during death rituals and the Ghost festival in southern China. The *Nuo* theatre functioned to exorcise evil elements in the local communities, and entertain both supernatural (gods and ancestors) and human spectators. In big cities, members of professional organizations and native-place associations often hired opera troupes to stage performances on the birthdays of their patron deities. All these transformations mentioned above have shaped the religious and theatrical culture of almost all the Chinese people nowadays.

CHAPTER TWO

The Historical Development of Fujian Marionette Theatre and Cantonese Opera

Since Cantonese opera and marionette theatre in central western and southwestern Fujian are case studies of the present study, it is important to trace the historical development of these operatic genres. Marionette theatre is the most popular type of performance in western Fujian.¹⁵⁹ Cantonese opera is one of the fourteen local operas performed in Guangdong province (Chan 1991, 1). The Pearl River Delta is the core area of this operatic tradition.

2.1. The History of Marionette Theatre in Southwestern Fujian

Shanghang County¹⁶⁰ is considered to be the place of origin of marionette theatre that flourishes in Hakka areas of Fujian province. Some *Gaoqiang* marionettists, who have ritual names, are vernacular priests of the Liyuan Jiao 梨園教 (a sub-sect of the Lüshan School 閩山派).¹⁶¹ Instead of entertainment, their rites or ritual plays mainly function to exorcise evil spirits and demons. The names of their troupes usually incorporate the Chinese character “*tang* 堂” or “*tan* 壇.” Shanghang marionette theatre is divided into two major schools, the Huangtan School 黃潭派 and the Baisha School 白砂派. The former, which is also called the Lower Ward School (*Xiafang Pai* 下坊派), is popular in eastern and southern parts of Shangtang (such as Huangtan, Zhongdu 中都 and Lanxi 蘭溪). The latter, which is also known as the Upper Ward School (*Shangfang Pai* 上坊派), flourishes in western and northeastern areas of the county (such as

¹⁵⁹ Fujian marionette theatre can be classified into two main schools. One is the Southern School that flourishes in the coastal area, such as Quanzhou and Jinjiang 晉江. The other one is the Northern School that develops in the mountainous region, such as Minxi 閩西 and Yong'an 永安. For thorough analysis concerning the marionette performances in coastal areas, please refer to Dr. Robin Erik Ruizendaal's Ph.D thesis, “Marionette Theatre in Quanzhou.”

¹⁶⁰ Shanghang 上杭, Yongding 永定, Wuping 武平, Liancheng 連城 and Changting 長汀 are the five Hakka counties in southwestern Fujian.

¹⁶¹ The Liyuan Jiao (the Sect of the Pear Garden) mainly flourishes in Fujian, Zhejiang and Hunan. Local priests of this sect are both puppeteers and ritual specialists. Most of them are farmers who stage marionette plays in their leisure time. In the case of Fujian, the Liyuan sect is very popular in mountainous areas, where marionettes are used as a means to perform rites and plays. Ritual and marionette performance “reciprocate and complement each other; plays are performed in rituals, and within the plays rituals are performed; rituals make use of plays, and plays are assisted by rituals.” (Ye 1999, 111) Today, a marionette ensemble usually comprises twenty-four or three-six bodies. The twenty-four bodies correspond to the twenty-four celestial mansions and the three-six bodies represent the thirty-six constellations. Local people usually address the Liyuan Jiao priests as *xiansheng* 先生 (teachers), *shiguan* 師公 (grandmasters), *wangshi* 尪師 (Lüshan priests) or *daoshi* 道師 (masters of the Way). Unlike performers of other regional operas, priests (marionettists) of this sect occupy a high social status within the local communities. In usual cases, a Liyuan Jiao priest is prohibited from transmitting the liturgical methods to other non-kinship disciples, though he can teach them the art of performance. Besides the Three Pure Ones, the Celestial Master and the Three Ladies, one of the most typical characteristics of this sect is the worship of Tian Gong 田公 (Lord Tian). The priests consider him to be one of their ritual lords. Moreover, it is important to emphasize that Liyuan priests would not perform funeral rites. The main function of their rituals or performances is to drive away evil spirits and demons.

Baisha,¹⁶² Jiaoyang 蛟洋 and Gutian 古田). Marionette performers of the former tradition often devote special attention to the art of singing. Marionettists of the latter tradition stress techniques of manipulating the strings. The marionettes of the Huangtan School are larger than those of the Baisha School.

The marionette opera of the *Xiafang Pai* spread to Huangtan County from Jiangxi during the middle of the Qing Dynasty. However, my discussion below only concentrates on the rise of marionette opera of the Upper Ward School, with special attention devoted to the situations of Baisha Town that directly relate to main themes of this thesis. The history of marionette performances in Baisha Town dates from the early Ming period. There are two views concerning how marionette theatre was spread to Shanghang. In the first place, it is said that during the early Ming era, Lai Fakui 賴法魁 (賴發奎), Li Fazuo 李法佐 (左), Li Fayou 李法佑 (右) and Wen Faming 溫法明¹⁶³ (four villagers of Zhangkeng Village 樟坑村 in Baisha Town) went to Hangzhou in Zhejiang to learn the performing skills of marionette theatre. They took eighteen marionettes with them when they returned home.¹⁶⁴ Later, the number of puppets increased from eighteen to twenty-four.¹⁶⁵

In the second place, it is believed that Shui Zhu Yang Natural Village of Baisha is the birthplace of the marionette theatre of southwestern Fujian. According to the *Genealogy of the Liangs* (*Liangshi zupu* 梁氏族譜), Shijiu Lang 十九郎, the founding ancestor of the Liang Lineage, migrated to Shanghang County of Fujian from the Qiantang 錢塘 District of Hanzhou in Zhejiang during the Southern Song Dynasty (A.D. 1127 – 1279). The ancestors of the sixth generation moved to Shui Zhu Yang of Baisha during the Tianli 天曆 reign period (A.D. 1328 – 1330) of the Yuan Dynasty. Moreover, the *Liangshi zupu* also notes:

Yuanchun Gong 緣春公 [was] the ancestor of the seventh generation. [He and] his wife (*née* Que 闕氏) had one son...He brought Lord Tian with him [when

¹⁶² Baisha Town is situated at the eastern part of Shanghang. The town occupies an area of 195 square kilometers, which is divided into twenty-two administrative villages. In the early 1990s, its population was around 2,400. This town is occupied by more than twenty lineages. Among them, the Yuans 袁氏 and the Fus 傅氏 are the two largest lineages. They claim the overwhelming majority of the population and dominate the affairs of the community. In the Qing dynasty, some members of these lineages were successful candidates in the provincial examinations. Two members of the Yuan lineage and two members of the Fu lineage were successful candidates in the palace examinations and acquired the degree of *jinshi* 進士 (advanced scholars). It is important to point out that many degree holders of the Fus were successful candidates in the military examinations (Yang 1996, 55-56).

¹⁶³ All the four names mentioned above are religious names that incorporate the Chinese character of *fa* 法 or *fa* 發. In other words, these marionettists were not merely players. They were also ritual specialists of the Lüshan School in the early years of the Ming Dynasty.

¹⁶⁴ These eighteen marionette bodies are known as the eighteen arhats (*shiba luohan* 十八羅漢).

¹⁶⁵ These twenty-four bodies are called the twenty-four heavens (*ershi si zhutian* 二十四諸天).

he returned] from Zhejiang. Shifu Gong 時富公 [was] the ancestor of the eighth generation. [He and] his wife (*née* Ceng 曾氏) had one son. His deceased parents were buried together at Bei Tou Wo Li 背頭窩里. He performed marionette [plays]. The style name of the ancestor of the ninth generation was Shengyu 盛魚. [He and] his wife (*née* Wen 溫氏) had one son...He performed marionette [shows and] composed arias. Tinglan Gong 廷蘭公 [was] the ancestor of the tenth generation. [He and] his wife (*née* Li 李氏) had one son. His deceased parents were buried together in [a spot] on the opposite side of Youfang 油房. He performed marionette [plays] (Mary Yeung's notes).¹⁶⁶

Wanqi Gong 萬祈公 of the eleventh generation had five sons. Shanglun 尚綸 (the eldest son) and Shangying 尚瑛 (the third son) became marionettists. Members of these two branches (*fang* 房) passed on the tradition of marionette performances from generation to generation for over four hundred years. The marionette troupe of the first branch and that of the third branch were known as Jinfeng Tang 金鳳堂 (the Hall of the Golden Phoenix) and Longfeng Tang 龍鳳堂 (the Hall of Dragon Phoenix) respectively. In order to consolidate group solidarity, Panxiu Gong 攀秀公 of the seventeenth generation proposed to form the Association of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Hui 田公會) and the Association of Chen Ping (Chen Ping Hui 陳平會)¹⁶⁷ in the *gengwu* 庚午 year of the Qianlong 乾隆 reign period (A.D. 1750). At that time, the Association of Lord Tian had twenty-four members, whose membership was on a hereditary basis. Annual celebrations were held at the Hall of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Tang 田公堂) on the deity's birthday (the twenty-fourth of the sixth month), when the impresarios of local marionettists gathered together. They offered food, tea, incense and ritual money to the deity. After the worship, a feast and an annual meeting were usually held at a member's home. The rules or regulations of the guild were recited by all the members in the meeting. The host who took charge of the annual ritual and meeting was chosen by lot. The guild possessed *gutian* 谷田 (rice fields) that financed the expenses of the rites and banquets. Besides paying tribute to Tian Gong, this annual

¹⁶⁶ 七世祖：緣春公，(配) 關氏，生一子...從浙江地帶來田公；八世祖：時富公，(配) 曾氏，生一子，考妣合葬背頭窩里，弄傀儡；九世祖：字盛魚，妻溫氏，生一子...作傀儡，編曲；十世祖：廷蘭公，(妻) 李氏，生一子，考妣合葬油房對面，作傀儡。

¹⁶⁷ Chen Ping is one of the patron deities worshipped by marionettists in both southwestern and central western Fujian. For a detailed discussion on the legend of this deity, please refer to Section 5.3. of Chapter Five.

gathering and ceremony also aimed at enhancing group solidarity. Moreover, marionettists in Baisha also celebrated Chen Ping's birthday (the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month), especially when they had prosperous business throughout the year. This ritual also took place at the Tian Gong Hall. Since most *Gaoqiang* and *Luantan* troupes did not need to perform on that day, three to four hundred marionettists participated in the celebration.

Similar to most marionette troupes in Baisha Town, members of both Jinfeng Tang and Longfeng Tang sang in *Gaoqiang* (a local variant of the *Yiyang Qiang*) before the late Qing period. Owing to the influence and popularity of *Luantan* 亂彈 (mainly *Xipi* 西皮 and *Erhuang* 二黃 musical styles), most marionettists began to perform their plays in these tunes from the late nineteenth century onward. The Longfeng Tang of the third branch of the Liang family was transformed from a *Gaoqiang* troupe¹⁶⁸ to a *Luantan* troupe at that time. Liang Xiangli 梁祥禮 (A.D. 1900 – 1962)¹⁶⁹ of the twenty-first generation was the most famous marionettist of this troupe in modern times.

The Hall of Splendid Success (Huacheng Tang 華成堂) of Dajin Village 大金村¹⁷⁰ in Baisha Town was another famous marionette troupe during the late Qing period and the early

¹⁶⁸ At first, a *Gaoqiang* marionette troupe only had one performer and one percussionist. In the performance, the marionettist took charge of manipulating the string dolls, reciting speech and singing arias. The musician had to play all the percussion instruments, such as drum, gong and cymbal. Moreover, both of them would sing in unison. This type of troupe was known as *dan Gaoqiang* 單高腔 (single *Gaoqiang*). Later, since more hands were needed for performances, the number of troupe members was increased from two to three (two performers and one percussionist). Some marionette troupes even comprised of four members (two puppeteers and two percussionists). This kind of troupe was called *shuang Gaoqiang* 雙高腔 (double *Gaoqiang*) or *sanjiao ban* 三角班 (three-role troupe). By the end of the Qing Dynasty, there were usually six to seven members in a *Luantan* marionette troupe or *liujiao ban* 六角班 (six-role troupe) (Mary Yeung's notes).

¹⁶⁹ Mr. Liang Xiangli's nickname was Li Guai Tou 禮怪頭. He was the impresario of the Longfeng Tang Marionette Troupe. Besides performing the *Luantan* marionette plays, he was also very good at playing the double-reed conical pipe (*suona* 嗩吶). Furthermore, he also created special techniques of string manipulation and invented many new stage instruments. His memory was so good that he could recite one hundred and sixty-eight scripts (Wang 1999, 100). According to Mr. Ye Mingsheng, his performing skills were the best among all the marionettists in Baisha during the twentieth century. Mr. Liang Lizhong 梁利忠, one of my interviewees, was Mr. Liang Xiangli's son. Liang Lizhong was not a marionette performer. He was a retired primary school teacher. In order to preserve and spread the performing art of marionette theatre, Mr. Liang Lizhong recently bought a set of marionettes and invited a retired puppeteer to pass on the techniques to children in local villages.

¹⁷⁰ The Dajin Administrative Village is composed of seven natural villages. These are Daping Li 大平里, Shu Zhu Yang, Jinfeng 金豐, Aotou 凹頭, Aobei 凹背, Niulan Ke 牛欄窠 and Huangwu 黃屋. Most of the lineages migrated from Shibi Village of Ninghua County during the Song or Yuan dynasties. The total area of the arable land of Dajin Administrative Village is approximately 1,254 *mu* (around 1.26 *mu* per capita). Most villagers engage in farming activities. Daping Li Natural Village is a single-lineage community that inhabited by the Cengs 曾氏. The founding ancestor of this lineage moved to Shanghang by the end of the twelfth century. Since their genealogy was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, it is very difficult to find out the detailed history of this lineage. Nevertheless, all the elders agree that the population of the lineage is more than 300 and the youngest generation belongs to the twenty-fifth generation. Mr. Ceng Ruilun 曾瑞倫, the impresario of the Huacheng Tang Marionette Troupe 華成堂 (the Hall of Splendid Success), belongs to the nineteenth generation (Mary Yeung's notes).

Republican era. The ancestors of the Ceng lineage migrated from Shibi 石壁 of Ninghua County 寧化縣 to Shanghang during the Southern Song Dynasty. This *Gaoqiang* troupe was founded by Ceng Yangjin 曾仰錦 (A.D. 1860 – 1932) in the late nineteenth century. He transmitted his performing skills to his son (Ceng Menghe 曾夢河) and his disciple (Yuan Yili 袁宜立).¹⁷¹ Ceng Menghe (A.D. 1890 – 1934), whose religious name was Ceng Faxing 曾法興, had five sons. Ruilun 瑞倫 (the eldest son), Ruifen 瑞芬 (the second son) and Ruilin 瑞林 (the fourth son) inherited the tradition of marionette performances. Both Ceng Yangjin and Ceng Menghe passed away in the early 1930s. Since then, Ceng Ruilun (A.D. 1915 -), whose religious name is Ceng Faming 曾法明, has been the impresario of the Huacheng Tang. The tradition of marionette theatre also spread from Baisha Town to other Hakka areas in southwestern Fujian, such as Tangfeng Village 塘豐村 and Zhangshu Village 樟樹村 of Shanghang County, Shizhai Xia Village 石寨下村 of Kanshi Town 坎市鎮 in Yongding County 永定縣, Laiyuan Township 賴源鄉 of Liancheng County 連城縣, and Yuankeng Township 元坑鄉 of Tufang Town 涂坊鎮 in Changting County 長汀縣.

During the Republican era, there were twenty-seven *Gaoqiang* troupes and 108 *Luantan* troupes respectively. Hence, the total number of marionette troupes was 135 (Wang 1999, 96). From 1928 to 1934, southwestern Fujian was under the control of the Chinese Communist Party. At this Hakka region, the base of the Chinese Soviet Republic was established in Changting on March 21, 1932 (Fu 1995, 2). Many prominent marionettists, such as Qiu Bishu 邱必書 (A.D. 1892 – 1981) and Xu Chuanhua 徐傳華 (A.D. 1906 – 1988), were devotees of the Chinese Communist movement. It is important to point out that owing to the influence of the Communist movement, many local customs were regarded as “superstitious practices.” As a result, at Baisha Town, Tian Gong’s image, which was placed at the altar of the Hall of Lord Tian, was destroyed; the annual religious activities of the Tian Gong Hui and the Cheng Ping Hui were discouraged or banned; and Mr. Ceng Ruilun 曾瑞倫 (the impresario of the Huacheng Tang in Dajin Village of Baisha) stopped performing the rituals of the Lüshan Tradition, such as the Rite for Breaking the Womb (*Potai* 破胎), and the Rite for Crossing the Barriers (*Guoguan*

¹⁷¹ Yuan Yili (A.D. 1910 – 1981), whose nickname was Lige Tou 立哥頭, was a prominent marionette actor of comic roles in the twentieth century. He was a native of Zhongyang Village 中洋村 in Baisha Town at Shanghang County. He learnt the techniques of marionette plays from Ceng Yangjin and Yuan Pengtong 袁鵬通 (?- 1946) (Wang 1999, 101).

過關).¹⁷² The Chinese Communists abandoned all the guerilla bases in south China by 1934 because of the intensive attack of the Guomindang troops. They broke out of the Guomindang encirclement and escaped to Yanan 延安 of Shaanxi province 陝西省.

From 1937 to 1945, marionette performers in southwestern Fujian continued to stage revolutionary plays so as to support the CCP and the War of Resistance Against Japan (Kangri Zhanzheng 抗日戰爭). Owing to gender prejudices, there were no female marionettists before the 1949 Revolution. Since the early 1950s, women have been allowed to learn the techniques of marionette plays and become puppeteers. At Shanghang province, there were altogether seventy-one marionette troupes in 1954. Among them, twenty-seven troupes performed in *Gaoqiang* and forty-four troupes staged *Luantan* plays. Due to the support of the local government, many marionette companies were formed at different parts of southwestern Fujian, such as Shanghang, Yongding and Liancheng. Prominent actors went to Fuzhou, Shanghai, Beijing and even Eastern Europe to stage marionette plays. They performed in front of the Soviet specialists and the Chinese Communist leaders (such as Zhu De 朱德 and Zhou Enlai 周恩來) at Beijing in 1955. During the Cultural Revolution, most marionette troupes were forced to disband. In the case of Dajin Village and Shui Zhu Yang Village of Baisha Town, some marionettists were condemned and denounced by the Red Guards. The religious activities of the marionette actors were severely criticized as “superstitious.” Their stage properties and ritual instruments, such as painted scrolls, seals and string dolls, were burnt. The Tian Gong Tang mentioned above was completely demolished.

Since the early 1980s,¹⁷³ the Chinese government has adopted a more tolerant policy on religion, and local customs and marionette performances have been revived in southwestern Fujian. Shrines or temples have been erected or rebuilt. At Shui Zhu Yang Natural Village, Mr. Liang Lizhong of the twenty-second generation of the Liangs and his son (Liang Lunyong 梁倫勇) raised funds to rebuild the Tian Gong Tang. On August 13, 2001, a grand inauguration was held at this temple in order to celebrate its restoration and the unveiling of Tian Gong's new

¹⁷² For detailed descriptions of the Rite for Breaking the Womb and the Rite for Crossing the Barriers, please see Section 5.4. of Chapter Five of this thesis.

¹⁷³ Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping 鄧小平, the government of the People's Republic China adopted the open door policy in late 1970s in order to acquire advanced foreign technology and investment rapidly. Since then, China has been opened up to the outside world. “Joint ventures with foreign business concerns, countertrade factors and special economic zones for trade and foreign investment” are the three major components of this policy (Wang 1992, 301). The departure of the repressive policies of the Cultural Revolution and the adoption of the open door policy has led to an acceptance “of broader diversity of social and economic practices, including a relaxation of party policy on religion” since the early 1980s (Potter 2003, 13).

effigy (*The Genealogy of the Liangs* 2001, 151). Annual worship there on Tian Gong's birthday has recently resumed. In order to entertain their patron deity (deities), marionette plays are performed on the open stage (made of wood and earth) beside the hall after the ritual.¹⁷⁴ During the 1980s and 1990s, Mr. Ceng Ruilun (the impresario of the Huacheng Tang at Dajin Village of Baisha) often took the lead to arrange the construction of local shrines and temples. He was also very active in marionette performances. Besides Shanghang County, his troupe even went to Changting County and Jiaoling County 蕉嶺縣 in northeastern Guangdong to stage marionette plays during the Chinese New Year or on other auspicious occasions, such as birthdays and *huanyuan* 還願 rites (the repayment of vows). Before the early 1990s, the Hall of Splendid Success (Huacheng Tang) comprised of four permanent members. They were Ceng Ruilun 曾瑞倫 (the impresario of the troupe), Ceng Xianfang 曾先芳 (Ruilun's eldest son), Ceng Fafang 曾發芳 (Ruilun's second son) and Ceng Tianshan 曾添山 (Fafang's eldest son).¹⁷⁵ Today, in southwestern Fujian, the boundary between *Gaoqiang* marionette theatre and *Luantan* marionette theatre is blurred. Most marionette players can perform in these two artistic styles. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that Mr. Ceng Ruilun still insists on performing in *Gaoqiang*,¹⁷⁶ though the *Luantan* plays¹⁷⁷ are more popular in Hakka areas. In his performances, local Hakka dialect is the dominant stage language. The old male roles (*laosheng* 老生), painted face roles (*hualian* 花臉) and comic roles (*chou* 丑) sing in natural voice. Other characters sing in a falsetto voice. The *bangqiang* (a typical hallmark of the *Yiyang* system) is also sung in falsetto. The arias are accompanied by percussion instruments, the gong, the cymbals, the small gong, the woodblock and the small war drum. Mr. Ceng possesses a twenty-four marionette ensemble known as the twenty-four heavens (*ershi si zhutian* 二十四諸天).¹⁷⁸

2.2. The History of Marionette Theatre in Central Western Fujian

¹⁷⁴ For a detailed depiction of Tian Gong's birthday celebration, please refer to Chapter Five of this dissertation.

¹⁷⁵ Both Ceng Fafang and Ceng Tianshan are now working at Shenzhen 深圳 in Guangdong. Besides his family members, Ceng Ruilun also passes on the tradition of *Gaoqiang* marionette theatre to his disciples (such as Ceng Dongshan 曾東山 and Wang Changrong 王昌榮) after the late 1940s.

¹⁷⁶ *Gaoqiang* marionette theatre has absorbed important elements from Daoist music and mountain songs (*shange* 山歌). It employs over twenty fixed tunes (*qu* 曲). The slow meter (*manban* 慢板), the fast meter (*jinban* 緊板) and the lead-in-meter (*daoban* 導板) are the three major metrical patterns. The slow meter is alternately articulated by one accented beat and unaccented beat (*yiban yiyen* 一板一眼, 2/4). The fast meter has *ziyou ban* 自由板 (free meter) or *youban wuyan* 有板無眼 (four accented beats and no unaccented beats, 1/4). The lead-in-meter is also a kind of free meter (Ye 1995, 220).

¹⁷⁷ The dominant stage language of the *Luantan* play is *tu guanhua* 土官話 (vernacular official language) (Wang 1999, 16).

¹⁷⁸ Please see Appendix One for a brief description of the *Gaoqiang* marionettes.

The central western and northern parts of Fujian fall within the sphere of influence of *Daqiang* marionette theatre. These areas include Songxi 松溪, Pucheng 浦城, Jian'ou 建甌, Nanping 南平, Youxi 尤溪, Yong'an 永安 and Datian 大田.¹⁷⁹ Shifu Administrative Village 石伏行政村 of Nanpiang and Qingshui Township 青水鄉 of Yong'an are considered to be the birth places of *Daqiang* marionette theatre. Similar to the situations of southwestern Fujian, some *Daqiang* marionettists are ritual specialists of the Lüshan Tradition. The most important function of their ritual plays or rites is to ward off evil elements and plagues. The names of their troupes often incorporate the Chinese character “*tang* 堂” or “*tai* 臺.” My discussion only focuses on the marionette tradition of Qingshui Township which is directly related to the main themes of this dissertation.

As mentioned above, Qingshui Township of Yong'an district is one of the two birth places of *Daqiang* marionette theatre. The 1989 edition of *the Local History of Qingshui* (*Qingshui xiangzhi* 青水鄉志) states:

Puppetry was originally known as marionette [theatre]. Strings are used to support the torso. Different shapes of face are made, [and the marionettes] are dressed in various types of costume. [This] is a kind of opera, which marionettists perform by manipulating the strings [from above]. It is said that [marionette plays] were performed in Daqiu 大丘 [Village] during the last years of the Ming dynasty. By the end of the Qing, Wang Jinbei 王金備 [who came from] Huang Jing Shan 黃景山 [Village]¹⁸⁰ was famous for [his great skill] in marionette performances (YSQX 1989, 324).¹⁸¹

We have seen that there were already marionette performances in Daqiu Village of Qingshui Township by the end of the Ming dynasty. During the Jiaqing and Daoguang reign periods (A.D. 1794 – 1850) of the Qing dynasty, *Daqiang* marionette theatre spread from

¹⁷⁹ All these districts were subordinate to the Yanping prefecture in the Ming and Qing dynasties.

¹⁸⁰ Huang Jing Shan, which is 800 meters above sea level, is an administrative village of Qingshui Township. It is three kilometers from the location of the township administration (*xiang zhengfu* 鄉政府), sixty-four kilometers from Yong'an City and 350 kilometers from Fuzhou. Neighboring villages are Qingshui 青水 to the east, Baiqi Qiu 百芑邱 to the south, Fengtian 豐田 to the west and Longwu 龍吳 to the north. The total area of land of Huang Jing Shan is slightly above 7,000 *mu*, of which about 560 *mu* are paddy fields. In the Republican era, the total population of the village was 157. There were about 175 inhabitants in 1951. According to the census of the district in 1982, the total population was about 430. In 2003, Huang Jing Shan Village had a population of 560, and there were 120 households (Liu 2002, 98; Mary Yeung's notes).

¹⁸¹ 木偶戲，原名傀儡，系用線支持身架，塑以各種面型和各種服裝，演員以線牽動表演的一種戲劇。據傳明末時，曾在大丘演出。清末時，有黃景山王金備演傀儡戲有名。

Qingshui Township to two neighboring counties, Datian 大田 and Youxi 尤溪.¹⁸² It is believed that some marionettists at that time also learnt *Daqiang* human opera. The Daoguang (r. A.D. 1821 – 1850) edition of the *Yong'an xianzhi* 永安縣志 (the *Local History of Yong'an County*)¹⁸³ records, “During the Jiaqing and Daoguan reign periods of the Qing, “Xiao Alou 肖阿樓,¹⁸⁴ a *Gaoqiang* marionettist from Huainan 槐南 [of Yong'an], also learns *Daqiang* [human] opera. Hence, there are [artistic] exchanges between marionette theatre and *Daqiang* [human] opera in the performance.” (YSZB 2004, 987)¹⁸⁵ As mentioned in Chapter One, the history of *Daqiang* human opera can be traced back to the middle of fifteenth century. The *Yiyang* opera, which is known as *Daqiang* opera in central western Fujian, was introduced to Fengtian Village 豐田村¹⁸⁶ of Qingshui Township by Xiong Mingrong 熊明榮 (a native of the village) around A.D. 1450. He learnt the opera when he returned to Shicheng County 石城 of Jiangxi 江西 to worship his ancestors. Later the Fengtian *Daqiang* Opera Troupe 豐田大腔戲班 was formed. The Wang 王 lineage occupied Guangkeng Village 光坑村 of Qingshui Township from the mid-tenth century onwards, when Wang Yanzheng 王延政 (Wang Shenzhi's 王審知 fourth son)¹⁸⁷ and his two sons settled in the village in A.D. 943 for the purpose of watching over the tomb of their grandmother (Xushi 徐氏). It is said that in the middle of the fifteenth century, the Wang lineage declined and left just one member. This man married uxorilocally into a family of Shiba Yu 十八盂 at Shang Shan Yang Village 上山洋村 in A.D. 1453. Apparently this man was a marionette performer. The Fengtian *Daqiang* Operatic Troupe often performed in neighboring villages. This Wang descendant learnt the *Daqiang* tune from the Fengtian *Daqiang* troupe members when they staged performances at Shiba Yu. His descendants returned to Guangkeng during the Qianlong reign period (A.D. 1736 – 1795) of the Qing dynasty. Then, one branch of the Wang lineage migrated to Huang Jing Shan and introduced the *Daqiang* marionette theatre to the village. Moreover, it is important to point out that similar to the situations of southwestern Fujian, *Luantan* 亂彈 human opera¹⁸⁸ was already very popular in central western Fujian by the

¹⁸² These two counties are in the northeast of Qingshui Township.

¹⁸³ Yong'an was a county of Fujian province at that time.

¹⁸⁴ The nickname of Xiao Alou was Kuilei Lou 傀儡樓.

¹⁸⁵ 槐南高腔木偶藝人肖阿樓兼學大腔戲，故木偶戲常與大腔戲交流演出。

¹⁸⁶ Fengtian Village is occupied by the Xiong lineage 熊氏 and the Xing lineage 邢氏.

¹⁸⁷ For Wang Shenzhi and the Min Kingdom, please see Section 1.1. of Chapter One.

¹⁸⁸ In central western Fujian, *Luantan* is known as *Xiaoqiang* opera 小腔戲, *Waijiang* 外江 (Outside) opera, or *Han* opera 漢劇. The *Luantan* is mainly a combination of two singing styles, *Xipi* 西皮 and *Erhuang* 二黃. It has been

end of the Qing dynasty. Presumably some *Daqiang* marionettists began to incorporate this musical style in their performances.

Mr. Wang Hua 王華 (1947 -), one of my chief informants, is the impresario of the Wanfu Tang 萬福堂 (the Hall of Ten Thousand Happiness), the most famous *Daqiang* marionette troupe or company of Huang Jing Shan in Qingshui Township. According to the genealogy of the Wang lineage, he is a descendant of Wang Shenzhi, the founder of the Kingdom of Min. Mr. Wang, whose religious name and lineage name (*zuming* 族名) are Wang Facheng 法成 and Wang Chengming 承命 respectively, belongs to the forty-second generation of the lineage. Both his grandfather¹⁸⁹ and father were prominent marionettists in Yong'an districts and nearby areas (such as Youxi 尤溪 and Datian 大田). Not much information is known about the history of marionette performances of the Wang family. His father, Wang Jinbei 王金備 (d. 1962), was the most distinguished marionettist of central western Fujian in the contemporary age. Wang Jinbei's lineage name was Wang Changzhong 王長忠 and his religious name was Wang Facun 王法存. Possessing unique artistic skills, he could manipulate several marionettes together in the performances. His stage speech and song lyrics were always full of humor. For the purpose of saving money, he preferred to recite the percussion passages himself rather than employ percussionists for accompaniment. In other words, he was sometimes the only marionettist who presented the shows. Wang Jinbei passed away in 1962 while he was performing in Shangjing Town 上京鎮 of Datian County. After the death of his father, Wang Hua inherited the troupe at the age of thirteen. He and his stepbrother (Zhong Zhutao 鍾祝濤) continued to stage marionette performances until 1966. As a Chinese communist, Wang Hua took all his stage properties to the headquarters of the production brigade during the mid 1960s. Some of his stage instruments and liturgical manuals were destroyed or lost in the Cultural Revolution. Owing to the support of the local government, religious and performing activities revived after the late 1970s. Wang Hua started to stage marionette plays again in 1978. He brought a marionette ensemble from Shanghang County 上杭縣 of southwestern Fujian. In 1985, he invited marionette masters from Changting to teach his two sons, Wang Maoman 王茂滿 (1970 -) and Wang Maoyuan 王茂圓 (1972 -), to perform marionette plays. Mr. Zhong Jinyou 鍾金有 (1963 -), Wang Hua's son-in-law, is a

called *Xiaoqiang* opera since actors of female roles and young male roles speak and sing in the small-voice (*xiaosang* 小嗓), which is also called the falsetto voice (*jiasang* 假嗓).

¹⁸⁹ His grandfather was called Wang Zichong 王子重, whose religious name was Wang Faxin 王法新.

percussionist in the troupe. Wang Hua's Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe, which comprises fifteen members, is also known as the No. 1 Popular Marionette Company of Qingshui Township 青水鄉民間木偶一團. It is important to point out that there are also female performers in the troupe. Besides the No.1 Marionette Company, the No.2 and No.3 Companies¹⁹⁰ were founded in the early 1980s. However, none of the members of these two companies were ritualist specialists of the Liyuan Jiao. These two companies stage performances throughout the year, especially in the first month and the seventh month. They also celebrate Tian Gong's birthday on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth lunar month.

Before the Cultural Revolution, the Wanfang Tang Marionette Troupe mainly performed in *Daqiang* style, a local variant of the *Yiyang Qiang*. The *bangqiang* (helping chorus) was sung in falsetto. There were only one marionettist and one musician in the troupe. The music was high and energetic. Musical instruments employed were the large gong, the small gong, the large cymbal, the small cymbal and the small drum. The fixed tunes (*paizi* 牌子) were sometimes accompanied by the *suona* 噴呐 (double-reed conical pipe). *Tu guanhua* 土官話 (vernacular official language) was used in the marionette performances. Mr. Wang Hua introduced *Luantan* marionette plays from southwestern Fujian after 1978. Since then, the *Pihuang* style has become the dominant vocal music in the performances. The number of marionettists in a performance has increased. There are usually two to three marionette performers, and three to five musicians. Besides percussion instruments, string instruments, such as the *yangqin* 揚琴 (dulcimer) and the *jinghu* 京胡 or *diaogui* 吊龜 (two-string spike fiddle) are also used for accompaniment. The Qingshui dialect 青水話 is now the dominant stage language.

Mr. Wang Hua is a ritual specialist of the Liyuan Jiao. His second son, Wang Maoyuan, whose religious name is Wang Wenxian 王文顯, is both a marionettist and a ritual specialist. He is a vernacular priest of the Yujia Jiao 瑜珈教 (Tantric Sect) or the Fazhu Gong Jiao 法主公教 (the Sect of the Sage Lord Zhang), a sub-sect of the Lüshan Tradition. Mr. Wang Hua and his sons are only part-time performers. Their regular occupation is farming. Wang Hua is often hired by local villagers to perform rituals or ritual plays. He occupies high social status in the local communities. Qingshui people believe that, in Schipper's words, he is "the intermediary

¹⁹⁰ At present, Wang Chenglie 王承烈, Wang Xingquan 王興權, Wang Chengxiu 王承秀, Wang Chenglu 王承祿 and Wang Xingda 王興達 are members of the No. 2 Popular Marionette Company of Qingshui Township 青水鄉民間木偶二團. Wang Chengshang 王承商, Wang Chengfang 王承芳, Wang Chengfeng 王承鋒, Wang Chenghui 王承輝, Wang Maolin 王茂林, Lin Guifeng 林桂鳳 (female) and Wang Maoxuan 王茂軒 are members of the No. 3 Popular Marionette Company of Qingshui Township 青水鄉民間木偶三團.

between the divine and human spheres, the invisible master who makes the puppets (mostly the clowns) perform the gestures of the exorcism, gestures which on other occasions are by himself...” (Schipper 1993, 45) He worships Tian Gong as the most venerable patron deity and pays tribute to a number of associated gods. Grand celebrations are often held on Lord Tian’s birthday (the twenty-fourth of the sixth month). A series of marionette performances that lasts four days and five nights is staged in order to entertain the deity. Mr. Wang Hua possesses a marionette ensemble that comprises more than thirty-six puppets.¹⁹¹ In the Republican era, a marionette actor in central western Fujian received only seven or eight *sheng* 升 of rice or soybeans instead of money as remuneration for one day’s performance. Today, a series of marionette shows can cost approximately \$2000 (RMB).

2.3. The History of Cantonese Opera in the Pearl River Delta

A historical review concerning the development of Cantonese opera in the Pearl River Delta is necessary for the present study. As mentioned in Chapter One, there were already entertainments and performances in Guangdong before and during the Southern Song Dynasty. Nevertheless, operatic activities did not flourish in the Canton Delta until the mid sixteenth century, when various types of opera genre, especially *Yiyang Qiang* 弋陽腔 (also known as *Gaoqiang* 高腔 in Guangdong), *Kunqu* 崑曲 and *Pihuang* 皮簧 (皮黃), were brought to the region by opera troupes from other provinces. All these theatrical or singing styles had great influence on the shape of present-day Cantonese opera.

By the end of the Ming Dynasty, theatrical performances were already very popular in Guangdong. Besides actors, actresses also took part in ritual performances. Zhang Liren 張麗人 (A.D. 1621 – 1644) was the most famous female performer in the Canton Delta at that time. The gravestone epitaph of Zhang Liren states:

Zhang 張 was Liren’s 麗人 surname. Her mother, who was an entertainer from Jiangsu 江蘇, was bought and taken to Guangdong since she was good at singing. Zhang, who was [an actress] of female roles, was [also] known as Erqiao 二喬¹⁹²...[In] towns and villages, [all the people] (men and women, old and young) praised her beauty...In early autumn, Liren traveled together with many performers to the village markets [and] staged plays in order to give offerings of

¹⁹¹ Please see Appendix Two for a brief description of the marionette ensemble.

¹⁹² According to Lai Bojiang, Zhang Liren was born in Guangzhou. She passed away during the reign period of Chongzhen 崇禎 of the Ming dynasty (around A.D. 1644) (Lai 2001, 45).

thanks to the deities. She lived in [a place] which was called the Temple of the Two Water Kings (Shui Erwang Miao 水二王廟).¹⁹³ (Tanaka 1972, 88)

Lai Bojiang 賴伯疆, an expert in the history of Cantonese opera, argues that both Liren and her mother were great performers of *Kun* opera since her mother came from Jiangsu. It is likely that Liren learned performing skills from her mother. In the early year of the Qing dynasty (or possibly earlier), troupes in the Canton Delta were classified into two major types. These were the *waijiang ban* (outside troupes or troupes from other provinces) and the *bendi ban* 本地班 (local or indigenous troupes). The indigenous troupes employed Cantonese singing narratives, *Gaoqiang* 高腔 (a local variant of the *Yiyang* melody) and *Kunshan Qiang* in their performances. It is also believed that they sang and spoke in both Cantonese and stage official language (*wutai guanhua* 舞臺官話). Today, *Liuguo Fengxiang* 六國封相 (the Six States Invest a Prime Minister), *Tianji Songzi* 天姬送子 (the Celestial Maiden's Offering of a Son) and *Yuhuang Dengdian* 玉皇登殿 (the Jade Emperor Ascends the Hall), are relics of this *Gaoqiang* 高腔 tradition. In the performances of these auspicious plays, the musicians (especially the woodblock player) would sing the *bangqiang*, which is a hallmark of the *Yiyang Qiang* system.

Indigenous or local troupes were active in Foshan 佛山 and the neighboring areas. Foshan 佛山 was already a famous town in China during the eighteenth century. Since it was a centre of metallurgy and ironmongery, many professional guilds of these industries were established in the town, which had a population of around 200,000 (Naquin 1987, 183). Members of these associations held regular ceremonies on their patron deities' birthdays; local troupes were often employed to present operas for these celebrations. Outside towns or cities, local actors also traveled on red boats (or opera boats) and staged ritual performances in rural areas.

Zhang Wu 張五 or Tanshou Wu 癱手五 (Unfolded Hand – the Fifth),¹⁹⁴ one of the five patron deities of the Cantonese opera profession, was credited with the introduction of various kinds of performing art to the indigenous performers in Foshan during the early eighteenth century. In order to consolidate group solidarity, actors of the *bendi ban* formed the Qionghua Huiguan 瓊花會館 (the Guild of the Beautiful Flower) and erected the Qionghua Shuibu 瓊花

¹⁹³ 麗人姓張氏，母吳倡也。以能歌轉買入粵…張旦二喬名…城市鄉落，童叟男女，無不艷稱之…時在新秋，麗人隨諸優於村虛，賽神為戲，宿於所謂水二王廟者。

¹⁹⁴ For a brief biography of Zhang Wu, please see Section 4.2. of Chapter Four of this thesis. He was also known as Tanshou Wu because one of his arms was paralyzed.

水埠 (the Pier of the Beautiful Flower)¹⁹⁵ at Da Ji Wei 大基尾 of Foshan.¹⁹⁶ Later, a branch association was also established in Guangzhou. With regard to the popular religious practices of local performers, annual worship was usually held at the guild. The *Menghua suobu* 夢華瑣簿 (*Fragmentary Notes Concerning the Dream of Hua*), which was written in A.D.1842 by Yang Maojian 楊懋建, states:

The Qionghua Huiguan (the Guild of the Beautiful Flower) is situated at Foshan Town 佛山鎮 in Guangzhou. It is a place where [indigenous] actors give offering of thanks to [their patron deities]. Incense sticks and candles are burning endlessly. In the annual worship, [members of] all the troupes collectively choose an actor of male roles, who has never impersonated servants and mean fellows in the performance throughout his life, to take the deity's effigy out of the shrine and put it in a colored pavilion. A Hua 阿華, a performer of young military roles, is the only person who has carried the deity's image for several decades. There has been no change [of this] until now... (Yang 1974, 754)¹⁹⁷

The annual rituals mentioned above usually took place at the Qionghua Gong 瓊花宮 (the Temple of the Beautiful Flower) of the Guild of the Beautiful Flower.¹⁹⁸ Though there is no information concerning the identities of the patron deities mentioned above, it is almost certain that they were (and still are) the five occupational gods of the local performers. They were (and still are) Huaguang Shifu 華光師傅 (Master of Splendid Brightness), Tian Dou Ershi 田竇二師 (Master Tian and Master Dou), Tan Gong Ye 譚公爺 (Grandfather – Lord Tan) and Zhang Wu Shifu 張五師傅 (Master Zhang Wu). It is important to point out that before and during the eighteenth century, Master Huaguang was both a tutelary deity of Guangzhou and Foshan, and an occupational god of the iron-mongers in Foshan. Besides the birthday of their patron deities,

¹⁹⁵ The exact time of the establishment of the Qionghua Huiguan is unknown. In the mid 1940s, some Cantonese opera performers saw a stele at the Qionghua Shuibu (the Pier of the Beautiful Flower). The eight Chinese characters *daming wanli qionghua shuibu* 大明萬曆瓊花水埠 (the Pier of the Beautiful Flower, which was [erected] in the Wanli Era of the Great Ming) were inscribed on this stele. Hence, some scholars (such as Lai Bojiang) argue that the Qionghua Huiguan was established during the reign period of Wanli (A.D. 1573 – 1620). However, some other scholars insist that this guild was not founded until the early eighteenth century.

¹⁹⁶ Da Ji Wei is located in the northeast part of Foshan.

¹⁹⁷ 廣州佛山鎮瓊花會館，為伶人報賽之所，香火極盛。每歲祀神時，各班共推生腳一人，生平演劇未充廝役下賤者，捧神像出龕入彩亭。數十年來，惟武小生阿華一人捧神像，至今無以易之...

¹⁹⁸ For a detailed discussion on this point, please refer to the following website:

<http://www.chinafoshan.net/history/3c/200203220014.html>

indigenous actors also celebrated the Festival of Celestial Blessings (*tiankuang jie* 天貺節)¹⁹⁹ on the sixth day of the sixth lunar month. For instance, the Daoguang edition of the *Streets and Roads of Foshan* (*Foshan jielu* 佛山街路) says:

Helmets for performances are sold in Dongsheng Street. There are also the headquarters of the opera troupes. When opera troupes travel on opera boats and visit the rural areas, they are unable to accept bookings [in Foshan Town]. [Hence], headquarters that [serve as] the booking agencies [of these troupes] are founded. All opera boats are moored to [the pier] of the Qionghua Huiguan. In the [Festival] of Celestial Blessings, all troupes gather [their] members together to worship and redeem vows to the deities. Three to four troupes or seven to eight troupes may present joint performances. [The atmosphere] is extremely joyful (cf. Lai 2001, 108).²⁰⁰

Guangzhou or Canton was both a political and commercial centre from the eighteenth century onwards. At that time, Guangzhou had a population “estimated at between 600,000 and 800,000.” (Naquin 1987, 183) Edward J.M. Rhoads’s article on the *Merchant Associations in Canton, 1895 – 1911* offers the following depiction:

Canton functioned as a center of political administration and as a central market for much of Lingnan 嶺南, the region “south of the ranges.” Politically, it was both the nerve center of an administrative system that encompassed two provinces and the center of the several layers of administration within its own neighborhood. During the Qing period, it was the seat of the governor-general who ruled over both Guangdong and Guangxi 廣西 and of the governor of Guangdong, until the two posts were amalgamated in 1905. (Earlier, in the Ming period, the provincial capital had been located at Zhaoqing 肇慶, fifty miles upriver from Canton. It was moved to Canton in 1630, reportedly so that the provincial officials would be better situated to keep an eye on the foreign traders) Canton was also the seat of Guangzhou prefecture, which took in the surrounding

¹⁹⁹ Each year, indigenous troupes began their performances on the birthday of Guanyin (nineteenth of the sixth month). These local troupes were dispersed by the end of the fifth lunar month. From the first to the eighteenth of the sixth month, performers who did not return to their homes would live in the Qionghua Huiguan and participate in the celebration of the Festival of Celestial Blessings.

²⁰⁰ 東勝街，賣戲盔，有班館，若戲船下鄉不能承接，故設館代之。瓊花會館，俱泊戲船。每逢天貺，各班集眾酬愿，或三、四班會同唱演，或七、八班合演不等。極甚興鬧。

fourteen counties, and within the prefecture, of the two counties of Nanhai 南海 and Panyu 番禺...

Canton was equally important as a commercial city, as the irregularity of its physical layout would suggest. Located in the middle of the densely populated Pearl River Delta at the confluence of the West, North, and East rivers, Canton had long been the hub of a marketing network that covered most of Guangdong and Guangxi. It was also an entrepot for South China's foreign trade with Southeast Asia and beyond. It enjoyed its greatest prosperity in the days of the "Canton system," the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, when all the goods of China flowed south to Canton for export to the West...(Rhoads 1974, 99 – 100)

Owing to the above reasons, many businessmen and gentry from other provinces congregated in Guangzhou. Many guilds were established on an occupational basis. Sojourning merchants and scholars founded native-place associations (*huiguan* 會館) at Guangzhou (Rhoads 1974, 103). They often invited opera troupes from their home provinces to Canton for performances. These troupes "brought or introduced a variety of opera styles to the Guangzhou area where they came to be known collectively as outside troupes (*waijiang ban*)..." (Ferguson 1988, 53). Until the mid nineteenth century, the *waijiang ban* occupied a dominant position in the Guangzhou operatic profession. For the purpose of protecting their own interests and enhancing group unity, the outside troupes established their own occupational association. This professional union was known as the Waijiang Liyuan Huiguan 外江梨園會館 (the Guild of the Pear Garden of Outside Troupes). One of the epitaphs (set up in A.D. 1780) of the association states that there were altogether thirteen outside troupes, over sixty percent of which came from Anhui. According to another epitaph that was erected in A.D. 1791, only eleven years later, the total number of registered outside troupes had increased to forty-seven. Most of these troupes came from Hunan 湖南 and Anhui. Moreover, the guild also included outside troupes from other provinces, such as Jiangxi 江西, Jiangsu 江蘇, Guangxi, Fujian and Henan 河南. By the end of the eighteenth century, fifty-three outside troupes joined the Waijiang Liyuan Huiguan. The membership of the guild was over 1,000 (Lai 2001, 85 – 89). From this time onwards, the outside troupes incorporated artistic elements from local troupes. These indigenous troupes also absorbed important elements from different kinds of opera genre from these outside troupes. In

the early nineteenth century, some of these local troupes began to extend their sphere of influence to the suburb of Guangzhou. It was “this atmosphere of cross-fertilization – outside troupes absorbing local Cantonese elements; local troupes absorbing elements from non-indigenous, transplanted regional opera genres; and the ultimate blurring of at least the musical boundaries between outside and local troupes – that provided a context for the embryonic development of Cantonese opera.” (Ferguson 1988, 55)

Under the leadership of Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全, the Taiping Uprising broke out in A.D. 1850, lasted sixteen years and raged through sixteen provinces. A leader of the Heaven and Earth Society (Tiandi Hui 天地會), Chen Kai 陳開, took part in the uprising in A.D. 1854. Li Wenmao 李文茂 (also known as Yunmao 雲茂), a member of the Tiandi Hui and a native of Heshan County 鶴山縣 in Guangdong, followed on his heels. Li was a prominent local actor of painted face roles of the Troupe of the Phoenix Appearance (*Fenghuang Yi Ban* 鳳凰儀班). Many members of the Guild of the Beautiful Flower also responded to his appeal and joined the revolutionary activities. Li organized them into three different army groups. These were the *wenhu jun* 文虎軍 (civil tiger army), the *menghu jun* 猛虎軍 (fierce tiger army) and the *feihu jun* 飛虎軍 (flying tiger army).²⁰¹ Li and his troops “dressed for battle in the flamboyant costumes of their opera profession, and these, being based loosely on Ming Dynasty toggery, superficially reinforced the basic sentiment and aim of the Heaven and Earth Society: to overthrow the Qing and restore the Ming (*fanqing fuming* 反清復明).” (Ferguson 1988, 58)

After they failed to capture Guangzhou in A.D. 1854, the armies retreated to Zhaoqing and finally were able to conquer a number of counties in Guangxi. Li established the Kingdom of Dacheng 大成國 in Liuzhou 柳州. Li Wenmao never forgot his previous professional traditions. After proclaiming himself as the King of Calm and Peace (*Pingjing Wang* 平靖王), he often wore opera costumes and paid tribute to local deities. For example, when his military troops were stationed at Liuzhou City, Li and his officials (local performers) visited local temples on the first and the fifteenth of each month. In these rituals, Li wore a ceremonial robe, a sword, and a golden crown which was decorated with a pair of pheasant feathers. His officials also put on ceremonial robes. In fact, all their court dress was opera costumes. Moreover, after his troops conquered Liuzhou and Qingyuan 慶遠 (present-day Yishan 宜山 area of Guangxi), Li also

²⁰¹ The civil tiger army consisted of actors of military roles and young military roles. The fierce tiger army included players of painted face roles and supporting painted face roles. The flying tiger army was comprised of performers who were good at acrobatics and martial arts.

ordered the common people to arrange operatic performances in order to express thankfulness to deities and celebrate his victories. For example, in the Instructions from the King of Calm and Peace (*Pingjing Wang*), Li Wenmao states:

Let it be known that the king's troops stationed in Liu.²⁰²

They continue to conquer prefectures, subprefectures, counties and cities.

Common people must be rescued from great miseries.

Corrupt officials and moneybags should all be killed.

The Kingdom of Dacheng wins resounding fame throughout [the universe].

We are all in charge of [maintaining] peace and tranquility.

Everyone lives in contentment and prosperity.

The powerful army surrounds and protects the beautiful capital.

Today, Qing Prefecture²⁰³ is being captured as well.

I specially give orders to stage the plays in order to give thanks to the deities.²⁰⁴

The king benevolently shares [his] happiness with the common people.

[The masses are allowed] to roam around the streets and lanes at night.

Gambling is prohibited while [they are] watching plays.

Otherwise, the penalty is not mild.

The grand celebration [could] only last three days.

[Anyone] who comes to blows and creates trouble(s) will certainly be punished (Lai 2001, 129).²⁰⁵

The revolutionary armies were unable to seize Guilin 桂林 in A.D. 1858. They were forced to retreat to Huaiyuan Shan 懷遠山 (Mt. Huaiyuan) at Rongxian 融縣, where Li Wenmao passed away in A.D. 1861. Chen Kai was also captured by the Qing armies. In order to suppress Li's uprising, the Qing government burnt down the Qionghua Huiguan, put a strict ban on all local troupe performances, and executed many local players. As a result, many valuable sources concerning the popular religious practices of the *bendi ban* were lost or destroyed. Some local performers who joined the uprising stayed at Guangxi and never returned to Guangdong. They earned their living by joining the Guangxi opera troupes. In the Canton

²⁰² The Chinese character "Liu 柳" refers to Liuzhou 柳州 of Guangxi.

²⁰³ The term Qingfu 慶府 refers to Qingyuan Prefecture 慶遠府 (present-day Yishan 宜山 area of Guangxi).

²⁰⁴ The identities of these deities are not clear. In order to celebrate his victories, Li Wenmao would most probably pay tribute to Huaguang (the patron deity of local operatic troupes) and other local deities.

²⁰⁵ 照得王師鎮柳，連克府州縣城。要救百姓水火，貪官財主殺清。大成國威遠振，大齊共掌太平。人人安居樂業，雄兵拱衛秀京。而今又克慶府，特令唱戲酬神。王恩與民同樂，街巷晚頭通行。睇[看]戲不准開賭，如違罪責非輕。盛典限行三日，打較[架]滋事必懲。

Delta, many indigenous actors who survived after the catastrophe either labeled themselves Beijing Opera troupes (*Jingban* 京班) or sought to be admitted to outside troupes (*waijiang ban*). As a result, they learned many new musical and performing elements, such as the *Pihuang* 皮簧 singing style, from the outside troupe players. The ban on indigenous troupes was relaxed in the late 1860s. Then, a new local artist organization known as Jiqing Gongsuo 吉慶公所 (the Auspicious Guild) was established in Huangsha 黃沙 of Guangzhou in A.D. 1868. In A.D. 1889, the Jiqing Gongsuo was renamed as Bahe Huiguan 八和會館 (the Guild of the Eight Harmonies), which included eight different sub-unions.²⁰⁶ Both Mr. Wu Zhen 吳貞 (a prominent actor of principal military roles) and Master Wong Toa (a distinguished musician and teacher of Cantonese opera) told me that guild members worshipped Master Huaguang, Tiandou Ershi 田竇二師 (Master Tian and Master Dou), Tangong Ye 譚公爺 (Grandfather – Lord Tan), and Master Zhang Wu as their occupational deities. Moreover, the local troupes already overwhelmed the outside troupes, and Guangzhou replaced Foshan as the theatrical centre of these local Cantonese performers. Forty-one indigenous troupes performed in Guangzhou during the late nineteenth century. The *Yiyang* melody and the *Kunqu* lost their popularity. The *Banghuang* 梆簧 (梆黃) singing style²⁰⁷ has become the most important vocal music in Cantonese operatic performances.

²⁰⁶ According to Colin Mackerras, the prohibition was revoked as a result of a dramatic event. In A.D. 1868, Rui Lin 瑞麟, the governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi, hired two famous local actors, Xin Hua 新華 (performer of military roles) and Goubi Zhang 鈎鼻張 (player of female roles), to stage performances in his mansion for celebrating his mother's birthday. When Goubi Zhang was impersonating a young female role onstage, Rui Lin's mother suddenly cried. She then summoned Goubi Zhang to her presence and adopted him since he looked like her deceased daughter. "She made him dress in women's clothes, and became her daughter in order to comfort her old breast." (Mackerras 1975, 148). Owing to this special relationship, Xin Hua and Goubi Zhang requested that Rui Lin revoke the ban on local operatic performances. They succeeded in resuming their profession and set up the Bahe Huiguan. There were eight sub-unions within this professional association. They were the *Zhaohe Tang* 兆和堂 (the Hall of Million Harmonies), consisting of actors of old male roles, young male roles, and principal painted face roles; the *Qinghe Tang* 慶和堂 (the Hall of Celebration and Harmonies), consisting of players of various painted face roles; the *Fuhe Tang* 福和堂 (the Hall of Blessing and Harmonies), consisting of performers of female and military female roles; the *Xinhe Tang* 新和堂 (the Hall of New Harmonies), consisting of actors of male and female comic roles; the *Yonghe Tang* 永和堂 (the Hall of Forever Harmonies), consisting of performers of military and young military roles; the *Dehe Tang* 德和堂 (the Hall of Virtue Harmonies), consisting of acrobats; the *Shenhe Tang* 慎和堂 (the Hall of Considerate Harmonies), consisting of staff who took charge of bookings; and the *Puhe Tang* 普和堂 (the Hall of Universal Harmonies), consisting of musicians (Leung 1993, 44). During the Republican era, the guild's functions remained unchanged, though its name was altered several times. After the establishment of the government of the People's Republic of China in A.D. 1949, the Bahe Huiguan was regarded by the Communists as a feudal organization. Since A.D. 1958, the Chinese Communist government has established complete control over the activities of its members.

²⁰⁷ The *Banghuang* is a combination of two musical styles: *Bangzi* 梆子 (Xipi 西皮) and *Erhuang* 二簧(二黃). With regard to its text structure, lines are written according to the rule of two-line parallelism. Within each couplet, the last syllable of the first line (also known as upper line) must be an oblique tone while the last syllable of the second line (also known as lower line) must be a level tone. According to Master Wong Toa, each line of the verse can have seven or eight or even ten characters (syllables). Each line is further subdivided into two, three or four

From A.D. 1898 to A.D. 1911, Cantonese opera underwent three major changes. First, blind female singers were very popular in restaurants and tea houses. Without wearing costumes, they sang Cantonese opera songs and performed simply stage movements. Second, many public theatres were built in Guangzhou. Wealthy families no longer ran their own private troupes. Third, owing to the influence of western culture and Dr. Sun Yat-sen's revolutionary ideas, some Cantonese opera actors joined the *zhishi ban* 志士班 (integrity troupes), which were organized by the revolutionaries (such as Chen Shaobai 陳少白 and Huang Luyi 黃魯逸). There were about twenty to thirty *zhishi ban* at that time. Actors of these integrity troupes began to incorporate naturalistic movements and spoken plays into the performance of Cantonese opera. They wore contemporary and western costumes on the stage. In order to propagate the revolution, some innovative performers tried to replace *zhongzhou yin* 中州音 (central dialect)²⁰⁸ with Cantonese dialect as the dominant stage language.

One of the effects of the downfall of the Qing Dynasty and the influence of the western culture was the loosening of the patriarchal system. Women had more opportunities to express their own views and broaden their minds through travel, study and working. In the Pearl River Delta, some women who came from poor families²⁰⁹ engaged themselves in the Cantonese opera profession. The first female Cantonese opera troupe, the *Minghua Ying* 明花影 (Shadows of Brightness Flowers), was formed in A.D. 1919, when the Bahe Huiguan also extended membership to female professionals. A number of female Cantonese operatic troupes, such as the *Jinghua Yanying* 鏡花艷影 (Beautiful Shadows of Flowers in a Mirror) and the *Tianxian Le* 天仙樂 (the Happiness of Celestial Beings), were founded during the 1920s. Li Xuefang 李雪芳,

segments. Extra syllables known as padding syllables, may be added to the verse in order to clarify the meaning of the content (Wong 1995, 1; Yung 1989, 70). Traditionally, the musical notation of *Banghuang* and other kinds of tunes in Cantonese opera are known as *gongche* 工尺. Its seven basic tones are *ho* 何, *shi* 士, *yi* 乙, *shang* 上, *che* 尺, *gong* 工, and *fan* 反. In comparison with the western musical notation, Professor Bell Yung states that “*ho*=Sol, *shi*=La, *yi*=Si, *shang*=Do, *che*=Re, *gong*=Mi, and *fan*=Fa” (Yung 1989, 15). With regard to the metrical pattern, the *yiban sanding* 一板三叮 (one strong beat followed by three weak beats), the *yiban yiding* 一板一叮 (one strong beat followed by one weak beat), the *liushui ban* 流水板 (evenly stressed beats) and the *sanban* 散板 (no beats) are the four types of metrical pattern used in the *Banghuang* songs. As far as I know, the *Bangzi* tune is used for more relaxed occasions, while the *Erhuang* melody is used for more solemn occasions in Cantonese performance. All together, there are about twenty-five different kinds of *Bangzi* melodies and eleven *Erhuang* tunes respectively.

²⁰⁸ According to Cantonese operatic traditions, *zhongzhou yin* is also commonly known as *Guilin guanhua* 桂林官話 (the official language of Guilin), *wutai guanhua* 舞台官話 (the stage official language) or *xipeng guanhua* 戲棚官話 (the official language of opera sheds). The term *Guilin guanhua* suggests that there might be a close relationship between Cantonese opera and *Guiju* (Guilin opera).

²⁰⁹ It is important to point out that most female troupe members came from the lower classes. Social or moral prejudices against actors (especially female performers) existed in wealthy or upper class families. Upper class women would be expelled from their families if they became actresses.

Huang Nüxia 黃女俠 and Tan Lanqing 譚蘭卿 were the three most famous Cantonese operatic actresses at that time. Their high standard of performances was widely recognized. Many actresses also traveled to various parts of Guangdong (such as Hong Kong) and Guangxi (such as Nanning 南寧 and Guilin 桂林) to stage performances. With regard to the achievement of the performing art of Cantonese opera, Cantonese replaced the *zhongzhou yin* as the main stage language. Traditionally, actors of young male roles sang in a falsetto tune (*jiasheng* 假聲). Since “the Cantonese tonemic system or framework is significantly lower in pitch than that of other, especially northern, dialects,” the change to Cantonese dialect “went hand in hand with the abandonment of the male falsetto style and the emergence of the *pinghou* 平喉 voice category.”²¹⁰ (Ferguson 1988, 72 and 74) Bai Jurong 白駒榮²¹¹ was one of the great pioneers of these innovations.

Mixed troupes²¹² were completely banned before the 1930s. In Hong Kong, Sir Lo Man Kam 羅文錦 requested the Hong Kong government to remove the ban. He argued that since men and women could watch performances together,²¹³ actresses and actors should be allowed to perform together onstage. As a result, the ban on mixed troupes was removed in Hong Kong in 1933. The first Cantonese operatic mixed troupe was called *Daluo Tian* (A Great Collection under Heaven), which was formed by Ma Shiceng 馬師曾 (a prominent actor of principal male roles and comic roles) and Tan Lanqing 譚蘭卿 (a famous actresses of principal female roles and comic roles). At Guangzhou, Bai Jurong and Suzhou Mei 蘇州妹 founded the first mixed troupe in 1936. It was called *Guotai Nannü Jutuan* 國泰男女劇團 (The Mixed Company of the National Peace). These mixed troupes were also commonly known as Guangzhou – Hong Kong big troupes (*shenggang daban* 省港大班). They mainly performed at permanent theatres in large cities, such as Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Foshan and Macau. Besides these urban troupes, there were also male troupes, *guoshan ban* 過山班 (cross-mountain troupes) and *baxian ban* 八仙班 (troupes of eight immortals). Male troupes often traveled on red boats and staged ritual

²¹⁰ According to Professor Chan Sau-yen., voice delivery in Cantonese opera music is “referred to as *qiangkou* 腔口, which is also known as *hou* 喉 (throat)...*Pinghou* is a natural voice production; the vocal range is approximately from C below middle C to G above middle C.” (Chan 1991, 9)

²¹¹ Bai Jurong (1892 – 1974), a native of Longtan Village 龍潭村 in Shunde 順德, is regarded as one of the five great masters of Cantonese opera. He was a prominent actor of young male roles. His three daughters, Bai Xuexian 白雪仙, Bai Xuemei 白雪梅 and Bai Xuehong 白雪紅, are also famous Cantonese opera performers. He succeeded to alter the singing style of young male roles by replacing falsetto and *zhongzhou yin* with natural voice and Cantonese dialect respectively.

²¹² A mixed troupe includes both female and male members. There were mixed troupes overseas before the 1930s.

²¹³ During the 1930s, women and men were required to sit separately while they were watching performances.

performances in rural areas. The troupes that crossed the mountains were active in the mountainous areas of Leizhou Peninsula and Guangxi province. There were cultural exchanges between the *guoshan ban* and the Guangxi troupes. For example, Wei Shaobo 韋少波 (a Cantonese opera actor who was active in Leizhou Peninsula) was a disciple of Chen Shaoqing 陳少清 (a prominent performer of Yong opera 邕劇 in Guangxi)²¹⁴. Li Mingyang 李名揚 (a distinguished actor of Yong opera) formally acknowledged Xiong Shizhen 熊世珍 (a well-known Cantonese opera in Leizhou) as his master (Huang 1986, 143). Members of the *baxian ban* were peasants who only staged plays in the slack season. The *banxian ban* was a kind of small troupe that only comprised eight to ten members. These troupes were mainly active in northeast parts of Guangzhou, including Zengcheng City 增城市 and Longmen City 龍門市 of Huizhou district 惠州.

Two great Cantonese opera reformers emerged during the 1930s. This is also a period when both Xue Juexian 薛覺先 and Ma Shiceng 馬師曾 contended for hegemony (*Xue Ma zhengxiong* 薛馬爭雄).²¹⁵ In order to attract spectators and to improve the performing art, these two distinguished masters reformed outdated rules and outworn practices of the Cantonese operatic profession. For instance, Xue Juexian²¹⁶ simplified the ten role categories into a system of six major roles.²¹⁷ Western musical instruments, such as violin, xylophone, cornet, banjo, guitar, saxophone, were introduced into the accompanying orchestra. Ma Shiceng established the first scenery department in Cantonese opera history. In addition, both of them also created new ways and styles of vocal production. Their newly created singing styles are still called *xueqiang* 薛腔 and *maqiang* 馬腔. Most Cantonese opera troupes were disbanded when the Second World War broke out in 1937 in China. Many players escaped to Shaoguan 韶關, Hakka areas (north and northeastern Guangdong) and Guangxi. For instance, Guan Dexing 關德興 MBE (a patriotic Cantonese opera actor) staged patriotic plays in different areas of Guangxi, including Guixian 貴縣, Liuzhou 柳州, Nanning, and Guilin in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

²¹⁴ Yong opera is an operatic genre that flourishes in southern and western Guangxi, southwestern Guangdong, Eastern and southern Yunnan, and northern part of Vietnam. The Nanning district (Yong Prefecture) of Guangxi is the core area of performance. This type of regional opera belongs to the *Pihuang* system 皮簧系統. It absorbs elements from Cantonese opera, *Qi* opera 祁劇 (an operatic genre of Hunan 湖南) and *Gui* opera 桂劇 (a regional opera of Guangxi). The vernacular official language of Yongzhou is the dominant stage dialect (Zhou 1995, 79).

²¹⁵ It is important to emphasize that though Xue Juexian and Ma Shiceng contended for hegemony, their competition never ruined their long-term friendship.

²¹⁶ Xue Juexian is one of the five great masters of Cantonese opera. He was a distinguished actor of civil-military roles. In some cases, he also impersonated female roles.

²¹⁷ Please see Appendix Four for a detailed description.

During the 1940s, the Triumph Company (Shengli Jutuan 勝利劇團), which was formed by Ma Shiceng, operated in Guangxi province. Under the leadership of Xue Juexian, troupe members of the Juexian Sheng Jutuan 覺先聲劇團 (The Company of the Herald of Awakening) also performed in Guangxi areas, which included Nanning, Guilin, Tiandong 田東, Baise 百色 and Guixian (Huang 1986, 160). Moreover, a substantial number of performers lived in seclusion in order to avoid staging performances for the Japanese armies. Cantonese opera troupes were reorganized after the war. Actors continued to perform in both urban and rural areas. Since all the red boats were destroyed by the late 1930s, the gaily-painted sampan became a major means of transportation for Cantonese opera troupes during the 1940s.

After the establishment of the government of the People's Republic of China in October 1949, the Chinese Communist Party severely attacked the traditional patriarchal system and the Confucian ideas (such as the principle of gender segregation), and advocated equality between the genders. For instance, the Marriage Law of the PRC, which was promulgated on May 1, 1950, states that marriage should be based on "the free choice of partners, on monogamy, on equal rights for both sex, and on the protection of the lawful interests of women and children." (Che 1979, 61) These policies enabled female performers in Chinese opera to achieve upward social mobility. Since the early 1950s, mixed troupes have been very popular. The practice of teaching boys to perform female roles gradually died out. Cantonese opera actresses and their male counterparts frequently performed together onstage. During the 1950s, players were still hired for ritual performances in temple festivals. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the Chinese government's policy towards the theatre was based on Mao Zedong Thought. The Chinese operatic profession must "express the correct Party line on ethical and all other matters. Art is part of the superstructure of society; it is affected by the economic base, which it can influence in turn. On artists falls the duty of ensuring that their work benefits the broad mass of the people and not of the bourgeoisie." (Mackerras 1975, 165) In response to the governmental policies, Cantonese opera performers revised the contents and texts of the plays. Any passages and sentences that contained so-called "superstitious or religious elements" were deleted. The name of the Guild of the Eight Harmonies was altered three times. From 1958 to 1985, all activities of the guild were banned. Almost all Cantonese opera troupes were under the control of the Communist party. Performers were not allowed to worship their patron deities. Moreover, students of the Guangdong Cantonese Opera School 廣東粵劇學校 had to take regular political courses. During the Cultural Revolution, local religious activities and ritual

performances were completely banned. Model operas were the only repertoires performed by actors of various types of regional opera (such as Cantonese opera, *Chaozhou* opera 潮州戲²¹⁸ and *Qiong* opera 瓊劇)²¹⁹ at that time. Similar to the situations of the marionettists in western Fujian, many prominent actors in Guangdong were criticized and denounced at public meetings. Some of them were locked up in cowsheds since they were labeled as bad elements. It is important to point out that though the Chinese communists tried to suppress the popular religious practices of Cantonese opera actors, they never could eliminate their faith in Master Huaguang. In other words, it was easy to suppress the actors' religious activities but difficult to control their beliefs and thought. For example, one actress told me that during the 1960s, she often prayed silently for the blessing of the patron deity before she started her performances. Religious policies towards local operas and customs have been more relaxed since the early 1980s. The post-Mao government has permitted some freedom of religious beliefs and practices. Hence, ritual performances have been resumed in some rural or mountainous areas, such as Meixian 梅縣 of northeastern Guangdong (a Hakka area). The activities of the Guild of the Eight Harmonies have been revived from 1985 onwards. Cantonese opera performers worship Master Huaguang at the guild on his birthday (the twenty-eighth of the ninth lunar month). After the rite, all of them dine together at Taotao Ju 陶陶居 (a famous teahouse at Guangzhou).

After the 1949 Revolution, many Cantonese opera actors moved from Mainland China to Hong Kong. Operatic activities were very popular in Hong Kong at that time. A number of new opera troupes or companies were formed. In order to transmit the performing skills to the next generation, some experienced performers also opened Cantonese opera schools. Though some

²¹⁸ In his excellent work, *Ritual Performances in Hong Kong (Shengong xi zai Xianggang 神功戲在香港)*, Professor Chan Sau-yen states that the origin of Chaozhou opera can be traced back to southern operas (*Nanxi* 南戲). The history of this opera genre dates from the middle of the Ming Dynasty (before and around the early sixteenth century) (Chan 1996b, 29). During that time, Chaozhou actors performed in local artistic styles. They developed Chaozhou opera by incorporating *Nanxi*, *Kun* melody 崑曲 and *Yiyang* musical style 弋陽腔 into their performances. Chaozhou opera orchestration relies on stringed, wind and percussion instruments (Siu 1997, 25). Today, roles in Chaozhou opera are basically classified into four different types. These are *sheng* 生 (male roles), *dan* 旦 (female roles), *jing* 淨 (painted face roles) and *chou* 丑 (comic roles). The Chaozhou dialect is the dominant stage language. Arias of the same musical mode form a song-suit. In Hong Kong, Chaozhou opera is often staged in the Ghost Festival (the fifteenth day of the seventh month).

²¹⁹ *Qiong* opera (also called *Hainan* opera 海南戲), is a kind of opera performed in Hainan province 海南省, the Leizhou Peninsula of Guangdong and southeastern part of Guangxi. It absorbs important elements from the Hainan marionette theatre, the *Yiyang Qiang*, the local Daoist music and the *Pihuang* singing style. Today, *Pihuang* is the dominant vocal music of this opera genre. Both the *Hainan Hua* 海南話 (local dialect) and the vernacular official language are used in the performances. The *Qiong* operatic roles are arranged into five major types, which are *sheng* (young male roles), *dan* (female roles), *jing* (painted face roles), *chou* (comic roles) and *mo* (middle age and old male roles). These five types are further sub-divided into approximately twenty different role categories (Yang ed. 1998, 73 – 75, 390 – 395).

actors, such as Ma Shiceng 馬師曾 and Hong Xiannü 紅線女 (a prominent actress of principal female roles) returned to Guangzhou in the mid 1950s, Cantonese opera activities continued to flourish in Hong Kong. The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong (Xianggang Bahe Huiguan 香港八和會館), a professional association of Cantonese opera, was founded in 1953.²²⁰ Since then, guild members have held celebrations on the birthdays of their patron deities, especially the birthday anniversary of Master Huaguang. Regular sacrifices are also offered to these occupational gods everyday.²²¹ From the 1950s to the 1990s, ritual performances were extremely popular in Hong Kong. For example, in 1965, almost all the performances were ritual performances in rural areas. There were only two opera troupes performing in permanent theatres (Leung 1982, 265). From August 1983 to July 1984, 468 days had Cantonese opera performances. 66.45% of the performances were staged for religious purposes. In other words, 331 days out of 468 days had ritual performances (Chan ed. 1988, 15). During the 1980s, a local community would usually spend HK\$70,000 to HK\$80,000 on a series of four-day performances. However, an operatic series that was staged by a famous troupe might cost more than HK\$200,000. In recent years, actors from the Mainland (Guangdong) have wanted to come to Hong Kong to stage ritual performances.²²² Since they are considered to be illegal workers, they are refused both by the Immigration Department of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the administrative committee of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong. Today, owing to the economic depression, local community leaders are unwilling to spend so much money on ritual performances. It is important to point out that besides Hong Kong, popular religious activities of the Cantonese opera profession are also very active in Macau and overseas Chinese communities, such as Singapore, Canada and U.S.A.

In sum, both the *Yiyang Qiang* and the *Kun Qiang* flourished in different parts of China after the sixteenth century (or possibly earlier). At Guangdong both local troupes (*bendi ban*) and outside troupes (*waijiang ban*) either performed in these musical styles or incorporated their major elements into the performance. *Daqiang* human opera, *Daqiang* marionette theatre and *Gaoqiang* marionette theatre in the mountainous area of Fujian were very popular from the mid

²²⁰ The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong is a work union of the Cantonese operatic profession in Hong Kong. Ms. Fang Yanfen 芳艷芬 is the permanent honorary president of this association. The guild has over 1,000 members. There are six sub-unions within this professional organization. They are the Union of Cantonese Opera Actors, the Union of Musicians, the Union of Affairs, the Union of Costumes and Stage Properties, the Union of Stage Light and Scenery and the Baihe Cantonese Opera College.

²²¹ For detailed descriptions, please see Sections 4.2. and 4.3. of Chapter Four of this thesis.

²²² In March 16, 2005, Professor Elizabeth Johnson met Professor Chan Sau-yen in Hong Kong on my behalf. Professor Chan was sick at that time. My grateful thanks are due to Professor Johnson and Professor Chan.

Ming to the mid Qing. These three opera genres belong to the *Yiyang Qiang* opera system. The *Pihuang* singing style widely spread throughout China during the late nineteenth century. Since then, the *Banghuang* tunes (*Xipi* and *Erhuang*) have been the dominant vocal music of Cantonese opera. *Luantan* human opera (also known as *Xiaoqiang* opera or *Han* opera) was also introduced to western and southwestern Fujian around this time. Both the *Gaoqiang* theatre and the *Daqiang* theatre absorbed important elements from *Luantan*, a local variant of the *Pihuang* style. In the Pearl River Delta and the southwestern part of Fujian, occupational associations were founded in order to protect the interests and consolidate the solidarity of the professions. Chinese actors of various kinds of local opera usually honor a group of patron deities. In usual cases, one is worshipped as the primary deity and the others are considered to be associated gods. Cantonese opera actors and marionettists in central western and southwestern Fujian pay tribute to their occupational deities. Huaguang, the most venerable patron god of the Cantonese opera profession, is also worshipped by some Fujian marionette players as an adjunct deity. Tian Gong is the most venerable occupational god of the Fujian marionettists. Presumably Tian Gong and Dou Gong (an associated deity of the Fujian marionettists) are related to Tian Dou Ershi (Master Tian and Master Dou), two adjunct gods of the Cantonese opera profession. However, not much information is known about this point. Furthermore, it is important to point out that both Master Huaguang and Tian Gong are also tutelary deities in many parts of southeast China.

In Mainland China, Cantonese opera actors and marionettists in southwestern and central western Fujian were forced to stop all their religious activities (or all kinds of activities) during the Cultural Revolution. After the late 1970s, marionettists in mountain areas of Fujian resumed their performing activities and liturgies. Today, Cantonese opera actors in Guangzhou hold simple rites to celebrate Master Huaguang's birthday. In Hong Kong and other Cantonese communities, grand celebrations still take place on this auspicious occasion. It is important to emphasize that in southeast China, performers of various types of local operas are seldom influenced by the *Pihuang* religious tradition, though they learnt much of its artistic essence. In other words, their subcultural religions still preserve many elements of *Nanxi* and *Yiyang Qiang* traditions.

CHAPTER THREE

Opera and Religion in Contemporary Chinese Societies: Western Fujian and Hong Kong

Chapter One discusses the close relationship of local operas and puppet plays to popular festivals in the history of Chinese theatre. Today, in western Fujian (Baisha Town and Qingshui Township) and Hong Kong SAR, religion and theatre are still inseparable from each other. With special attention devoted to Cantonese opera in Hong Kong and marionette theatre in western Fujian, this chapter examines when, how and why ritual performances or operas are staged.

3.1. General Background

Fujian and Guangdong are situated along China's southeast coast. Today these two provinces are mainly inhabited by Cantonese,²²³ Hakka,²²⁴ Fulao (Hoklo),²²⁵ and the She

²²³ In his book, *Ethnic Groups and Social Change in a Chinese Market Town*, C. Fred Blake states that Cantonese (*Punti* or *Bendi* 本地) "are descendants of northern soldiers, refugees, exiles who fought and mingled with indigenous peoples" of the Lingnan 嶺南 region (Blake 1981, 8). Though northern settlers penetrated this area from the Qin dynasty onward, the greatest wave of migration did not occur until the Song periods (A.D. 960 – 1279), when thousands of refugees from the north crossed the five Ridges (Wuling 五嶺) through the Meiguan Ancient Post Road (Meiguan Guyidao 梅關古驛道) and settled in Zhuji Lane (Zhuji Lane 珠璣巷) of Shashui Village 沙水村 in Baochang County 保昌縣 (known as Nanxiong County 南雄縣 nowadays). By the end of the thirteenth century, a large number of Zhuji Lane residents started to migrate southward to the Pearl River Delta. "It was an exodus because a total of hundred and thirty-four surnames and thousands of people were involved. They helped to spread the more advanced Central Plain culture and production techniques to the then still relatively uninhabited southern frontier." (<http://www.legacy1.net/nanxiong.html>, June 26, 2004) Moreover, the ancestors of the five large lineages in Hong Kong (the Dengs 鄧氏, the Hous 侯氏, the Pengs 彭氏, the Liaos 廖氏, and the Wens 文氏) moved to the New Territories from Jiangxi around the Song dynasty and the Yuan period (A.D. 1264 – 1368). The Dengs were the first of the five to settle in the area (around A.D. 973). Members of these five lineages are Cantonese, though the Liaos who came from Tingzhou 汀州 of western Fujian have a Hakka origin (Baker 1966, 26 – 27).

²²⁴ According to Chen Zhiping 陳支平, the ancestors of the Hakka came from North and Central China. They migrated southward in order to avoid turmoil caused by wars. There were five waves of migration of the Hakka. First, they first moved to the eastern Yangtze valley in the fourth century. Second, by the end of the Tang dynasty (around the ninth century), a large number of Hakka ancestors began to migrate from Yangtze to Gannan 贛南 (southern Jiangxi) and southwestern Fujian, where many of them first settled in Shibi 石壁 district of the present Ninghua County 寧化縣 and then moved southward to other mountainous areas, such as Tingzhou (known as Changting 長汀 nowadays), Liancheng 連城, Wuping 武平, Shanghang and Yongding 永定. Third, the Hakka moved to northern and northeastern Guangdong during the twelfth century. Fourth, Hakka people migrated from the mountainous areas of northeastern Guangdong and expanded to the rich Pearl River Delta around the mid-seventeenth century. "In the delta the Hakkas usually became tenants on lands owned by Cantonese lineages." (Naquin 1987, 178) Fifth, the Hakka continued to disperse in Hong Kong, the Leizhou Peninsula 雷州半島, and Hainan Island 海南島, when the Hakka led Taiping Uprising was suppressed by the Qing court during the mid-nineteenth century. The expansion of Hakka people into Cantonese areas erupted into communal feuds (*xiedou* 械斗) over the control of land and water. In order to protect themselves, Cantonese lineages built walled villages (Naquin 1987, 180). From the late seventeenth century onwards, Hakkas began to erect multistory rectangular or round fortified houses (*tulou* 土樓). Though there are local variations, Hakka is still the dominant dialect in major Hakka areas (such as southwestern Fujian, northeastern Guangdong and southeastern Jiangxi) today. Owing to the process of assimilation, many Hakkas of the younger generation in Hong Kong can not speak their own native dialect.

²²⁵ It is believed that the ancestors of the Fulao began to migrate from North China to the Min area by the end of the Western Jin 西晉 dynasty (around A.D. 316). A large number of them moved to the southeastern part of Fujian (such as Quanzhou) in the early Tang period (around the seventh century), when Chen Yuanguang 陳元光 (the

people.²²⁶ There are also Hokkien-speaking boat people and Cantonese-speaking water-people (*shuishang ren*) or boat people (*danjia*)²²⁷ working and living along the coast of southeast China. The southwestern and central western parts of Fujian are inland mountainous areas. Baisha in Shanghang County of southwestern Fujian is a Hakka town, where rituals or celebrations of the Hakka families or lineages are often accompanied by marionette performances. Moreover, there are settlements of the She lineages in the northwestern and southern parts of the county. Hakka is the dominant dialect in these mountainous areas. Qingshui Township of Yong'an City in central western Fujian is occupied by Hakka, She, and Hokkien. Though there are some ethnic variations, they share many common customs and beliefs owing to long-term interactions. As mentioned in Chapter Two, some marionette performers in Baisha and Qingshui of western

Sacred King who Opens Up Zhangzhou 開漳聖王) and his soldiers went to the area to put down the rebellions. The Fulao began to migrate to the eastern coast of Guangdong (Blake 1981, 10 – 11; Xie 2002, 120 – 165) from the Northern Song dynasty onwards (A.D. 960 – 1127) onwards. They settled in Chaozhou Prefecture and Huizhou Prefecture (Haifeng County and Lufeng County). The Fulao who lived in Chaozhou became Chaozhou people and those who settled in the Hailufeng district became the Hailufeng people. A large number of them moved to Hong Kong during the late imperial era. Due to economic hardship, some Hailufeng people stole into Hong Kong to earn a living during the 1960s. The dialects that are spoken by the Fulao fell within the category of the Minnan 閩南 or Hokkien dialect system.

²²⁶ The ancestors of the She practiced slash-and-burn agriculture. Today, the total population of this ethnic group is around 600,000. The She people mainly inhabited in the mountainous areas of Fujian, Zhejiang, Guangdong, Jiangxi and Anhui. According to Xie Chongguang 謝重光 (an authority on Hakka culture), the She people are the result of the intermingling of Baiyue aborigines, Hakkas and Wuling Man 武陵蠻 (or Wuxi Man 五溪蠻). The Wuling Man, or Wuxi Man, is an aboriginal tribe that migrated from Luo Cheng 羅城 (present-day Wang Cheng 望城 of Hunan) to southeast China before the Sui dynasty (A.D. 581 – 618) (Xie 2002, 18 – 55). Similar to the Miao 苗 and the Yao 瑤, the She people call themselves the descendants of Pangu 盤古 (Panghu 盤瓠). It is said that Panhu was a dog that killed the enemy of Emperor Ku 帝嚳 (Gaoxin Shi 高辛氏) and “was rewarded by the emperor with a princess (the third daughter of the emperor) for a wife.” Since Panhu was unwilling to serve in the court, he and his tribe went into the mountains and lived in seclusion (Wiens 1967, 103). Mr. Zhong Yongkang 鍾永康, a senior of Bai Qi Qiu Village 百芑坵 (a She Village) in Qingshui Township of Yong'an City (Fujian), told me that according to local customs, villagers must bury a dead dog near a river where its corpse can be easily carried away by the running water. Moreover, they are not allowed to eat dogs. Today, however, many young villagers do not observe this taboo.

²²⁷ In his book, *Minzhong jikao* 閩中稽考 (*An Investigation into [the Ancient History] of Fujian*), Lu Meisong 盧美崧 states that the Chinese character “*dan* (蛋 or 蜃)” is found in many ancient Chinese books and records. From the viewpoint of many Chinese scholars, the boat-people are descendants of the aborigines of southeast China. However, some western scholars (such as Myron L. Cohen) argue that they are of Austronesian descent. These water-people or boat-dwellers are fishermen who live and work along the inner rivers and the coast of southeastern China. They live on their boats, junks, or sampans. They were classified as *jianmin* 賤民 (mean people) during the imperial periods. Hence, they were prohibited from taking the imperial examinations and placed at the bottom of the social hierarchy. In 1953, the total population of water-people in Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi was around 900,000 (Lu 2002, 164). There were approximately 50,000 water-people in Hong Kong during the early 1950s (Ward 1954, 196). They often clustered in fishing towns or villages. In Hong Kong, water-people can be classified into two types. They are Cantonese-speaking boat-people and Hokkien-speaking boat people. Hokkien boat-people usually come from the Hailufeng region of Guangdong. It is important to point out that in Hong Kong, the term *danjia* or Tanka 蛋家 (egg families) usually refers to Cantonese-speaking water people. From their viewpoint, Tanka (egg people or egg families) is a derogatory term used to abuse them. Hence, they prefer to be addressed as “water-people (*shuishang ren* 水上人).” In recent years, the population of water-people has greatly decreased since many of them live ashore and no longer engage in fishing and transport.

Fujian are not merely performers. They are also ritual specialists of the Liyuan Sect of the Lüshan School. Although the local religions in these rural areas were interrupted after the 1950s (especially during the Cultural Revolution), ritual or liturgical operatic activities have gradually revived since the 1980s because of the relaxation of religious policy. Marionette performances are very popular in both Baisha and Qingshui since local villagers believe that they function to exorcise evil spirits. Moreover, the costs of performances are inexpensive. Many of these marionette shows are mounted by a single family (or several families). Thus, marionettists are seldom invited to stage performances in large-scale communal rituals, such as *jiao* festivals. Besides marionette plays, *Han* opera and *Daqiang* opera are also closely associated with ritual activities in western Fujian. It is also important to emphasize that marionettists in this region never perform in funerals. They are only involved in rituals or performances for the living.

Hong Kong shares local religious activities and cultural traditions with neighboring communities in southeast China. It has been host for Cantonese (*Bendi ren*), Hakkas, Chaozhou people, Hailufeng people²²⁸ and water-people (both Cantonese-speaking and Hokkien-speaking). Hence, Cantonese opera, *Chaozhou* opera, *Hailufeng* opera²²⁹ and Cantonese rod puppet plays are performed in Hong Kong. In her article, “Regional Operas and Their Audiences: Evidence from Hong Kong (published in 1985),” Barbara Ward notes:

Hong Kong today contains more than five million people living on just under four hundred square miles of land, most of which is steep, barren mountainside. Every year in this small area about two hundred temporary theaters are erected for theatrical performances, most but by no means all of them in rural areas. Very nearly all these temporary theaters are built in connection

²²⁸ From the Song times onward, Hokkien speakers (Fulao) began to migrate to the southeastern coast of Guangdong, where they settled in Chaozhou Prefecture, and the Haifeng and Lufeng areas of Huizhou Prefecture. The Fulao who inhabited in Chaozhou became the Chaozhou people and those lived in the Hailufeng district became the Hailu Feng people. Then, some of them migrated to Hong Kong during the late imperial era. During the early 1960s, some Hailu Feng and Chaozhou people stole into (*toudu* 偷渡) Hong Kong in order to earn a living. In other words, the Fulao or *Hoklo* ethnic group in Hong Kong mainly comes from Chaozhou and Hailu Feng of eastern Guangdong.

²²⁹ *Hailufeng* opera is also known as *Huizhou* opera 惠州戲 and *Fulao* opera 福佬戲. In fact, *Hailufeng* opera includes three kinds of operatic genre, *Xiqin* opera 西秦戲 (Clapper opera of western Shaanxi), Common opera (*Baizi Xi*) and Refined opera (*Zhengyin Xi* or *Zhengzi Xi* 正字戲). *Xiqin* opera was spread to eastern Guangdong and southern Fujian during the late Ming and early Qing times. It is also called *Luantan* opera. As mentioned in Section 1.2.1. of Chapter One, *Baizi Xi* was already heard in eastern Guangdong during the Song and Yuan periods (in the mid-fourteenth century). It absorbs many local artistic elements. *Zhengyin Xi* did not appear in the area until the early Ming time (around the end of the fourteenth century). Refined opera and Common opera are sung in vernacular official language and local dialect respectively. In Hong Kong, *Hailufeng* opera was very popular during the 1960s, when many new immigrants came from Haifeng and Lufeng counties. The first *Fulao* opera troupe, which was called the Huizhou Opera Troupe (*Huizhou Jutuan* 惠州劇團), was comprised of fifty members. This troupe was dispersed in 1987 due to lack of spectators (Chan 1996b, 32 – 33).

with festivals of the popular religion. I do not know how many of the temporary theaters are used by more than one regional type of opera troupe before being dismantled, but the number may be in the region of fifty or sixty. Taking the higher figure, we have a total of about two hundred and eighty sets (or runs) of festival-opera performances a year. Of these, the large majority (more than sixty-five percent) are performed by Cantonese troupes, the next largest proportion (about twenty-five percent) by Chaozhou troupes and the smallest proportion (about ten percent) by Huizhou troupes. At a very rough estimate, then, about one thousand and six hundred Cantonese operas, six hundred and fifty Chaozhou operas, and four hundred Huzhou operas are performed annually in temporary “matshed” theaters on ritual occasions in town and country...(Ward 1985, 162 – 163)

In the 1990s, there were around thirty Cantonese opera troupes. The average of ritual performances was seven hundred days per year (two sets of performances within one day). Five Chaozhou opera troupes performed one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty days of ritual operatic series on average. Ninety-five percent of them were ritual performances. The *Hailufeng* operatic troupes only staged twenty days of ritual performances on average (Chan 1996a, 27). There were many subcultural differences (such as dialects and food) between these ethnic groups several decades ago. Nevertheless, there has been decreasing diversity of subcultural practices mainly due to the influence of the mass media (T.V. and film) and the universal education system, though some distinctive religious activities of these ethnic groups still exist up to the present time. “The younger generation, almost without exception, speaks standard Cantonese.” (Johnson 2000, 44) As a result, Cantonese opera has become the most popular theatrical genre performed in Hong Kong. Chaozhou opera and Hailufeng opera are not performed so often today. It is important to point out that unlike marionette theatre in western Fujian, ritual performances in Hong Kong are large-scale and expensive. They are communal activities organized by leaders of local communities, who take charge of collecting money from local people and hiring the opera troupes.

3.2. Occasions for Performances in Western Fujian and Hong Kong

In southeastern China, ritual operatic series are staged on auspicious or important occasions. These are birthdays of gods, Rites for Purification (*jiao*), Chinese New Year, the Ghost Festival and ancestral worship. Moreover, operatic activities are also associated with occasional religious practices.

3.2.1. Birthdays of Deities

In Hong Kong and western Fujian (southwestern and central western), birthday celebrations of gods are usually accompanied by operas or (and) puppet performances. People in southeast China worship innumerable deities at household altars,²³⁰ local shrines and community temples. Their common religion can be characterized as a polytheistic and humanized system. All living creatures and natural phenomena can become gods. There is a reciprocal relationship between deities and devotees. Believers have to show their reverence by offering sacrifices, such as delicious food, splendid residences (temples) and good entertainment, to their tutelary gods. In return, deities are expected to demonstrate their efficacy by giving blessings (such as protection of life and property) to the worshippers. In order to demonstrate their reverence and please the gods, devotees arrange operas or (and) puppet shows for entertainment. However, if the gods cannot react properly or cannot show their efficacy, they would lose their credit among the people.

In Qingshui Township of central western Fujian, there were fifty-seven temples, 1,356 god images and thirty-five sedan chairs of deities during the 1990s. Villagers pay tribute to many gods, such as Tian Gong (Lord Tian), Wugu Zhenren 五谷真人 (True Person of the Five Cereals), Zhanggong Fazhu 張公法主 (Ritual Lord Zhang),²³¹ Guan Gong Yuanshuai 關公元帥 (Marshal Lord Guan), Guanyin (the Goddess of Mercy), Zhao Da Yuanshuai 趙大元帥 (Great Marshal Zhao),²³² San Furen 三夫人 (the Three Ladies),²³³ Huaguang 華光, Kanggong

²³⁰ Many Chinese people worship deities and ancestors at home. These gods include Guanyin (the Goddess of Mercy), the Stove God (Zaojun 灶君), the Heavenly God (Dangtian 當天), the God of Locality (Tudi 土地) and Door God (Menshen 門神).

²³¹ Zhanggong Fazhu, whose name was Zhang Sheng 張聖, Zhang Ciguan 張慈觀, or Zhang Ziguan 張白觀, was a native of Yongtai County 永泰縣 of Fujian Province in the Song dynasty. His nickname was Zhang Chutou 張鋤頭. When he was young, he was a cowherd and a maker of hoe handles. After eating one half of an immortal peach, he became a half immortal. His three maternal uncles, Jiang Qi 江七, Jiang Ba 江八 and Jiang Jiu 江九, were believed to be priests of the Lüshan Tradition. Owing to their influence, he learnt ritual methods of the school. In his middle age, he became a monk and studied Tantrism with the King of Nagarjuna (Longshu Wang 龍樹王). He then became a half Daoist, half Buddhist ascetic. Chen Jinggu was defeated by him in a struggle and became his sworn sister. His first temple, which was erected in A.D. 1183, was destroyed in 1970 and rebuilt in 1979. Today, in central western and central eastern Fujian, he is considered to be a tutelary deity of the peasants and a ritual lord of the Tantric Sect (Yujia Jiao 瑜珈教) of the Lüshan School. His devotees also addressed him as Zhang Shengjun 張聖君 (Sage Lord Zhang). They believe that he often demonstrates his supernatural power by subduing demons or ghosts, stopping droughts and protecting children. He has many adopted children. On his birthday (the twenty-third day of the seventh month), annual celebrations are held in various areas, such as Qingshui Township of Yong'an district and Pangu Township 盤古鄉 of Yongtai County. The Square Pot Monastery (Fanghu Si 方壺寺) in Pangu and the Hall of Auspicious Clouds (Xiangyun Tang 祥雲堂) in Qingshui are temples dedicated to him. His cult is also very popular in Taiwan (Overmyer 2003, 1 – 13).

²³² Great Marshal Zhao is worshipped as one of the gods of wealth in Chinese society. According to Chinese legends, there were ten suns in ancient times. Hou Yi 后羿 shot down nine of them with his arrows. Eight of these

Houwang 康公侯王 (Marquis King – Lord Kang),²³⁴ Mashi Zhenxian 馬氏真仙 (True Immortal – Lady Ma) and Linshi Zhenxian 林氏真仙 (True Immortal – Lady Lin).²³⁵ These deities are

nine suns transformed themselves into ghosts and caused problems (such as illness). One sun transformed himself into a man. He was a native of Mt. Zhongnan 中南山 whose name was Zhao Lang 趙朗. He was also called Zhao Xuanlang 趙玄朗, Zhao Xuantan 趙玄壇 and Zhao Gongming 趙公明. Later, Zhao lived in seclusion on Mt. Qingcheng 青城山 in the Shu state 蜀國 (present-day Sichuan) and became a disciple of the Celestial Master. After the accomplishment of the alchemical work, the Celestial Master gave him a gold elixir. He took the drug and became an immortal. Before the Yuan dynasty (A.D. 1264 – 1368), he was often considered to be a deity of plagues. The fiction *Investiture of the Gods* (*Fengshen yanyi*) states that Zhao Gongming, who fought for Emperor Wu of the Zhou dynasty, was a very great warrior. Unfortunately, he was killed by a form of sorcery. Later, his spirit was released from purgatory by the Most High Original Lord (Yuanshi Tianzun 元始天尊). In order to praise his bravery, Yuanshi Tianzun canonized him as “President of the Ministry of Riches and Prosperity.” (Werner 1994, 171) Today, in many Chinese temples, he is “depicted riding on a black tiger, with a black and long-bearded face, a rod and treasure in both hands, and wearing an ancient military uniform.” (www.eng.taoism.org.hk/daoist-beliefs/immortal&immortalism/pg2-4-6-1.asp) He is also regarded as the protector of the Mystery Altar (Xuantan 玄壇). It is believed that he possesses supernatural power to bestow wealth, get rid of disasters and inauspiciousness, and bring good luck. Besides western Fujian, his cults are very popular in various parts of southern China, such as Anhui and Guangdong. In the case of Cantonese opera, he is the leading character in the performance of the ritual playlet *Ji Baihu* 祭白虎 (the Worship of the White Tiger), which is also known as *Tiao Xuantan* 跳玄壇 (Dancing Xuantan) or *Tiao Caishen* 跳財神 (the Dance of the God of Wealth).

²³³ The Three Ladies are Chen Jinggu 陳靖姑 (or Chen Jingu 陳進姑), Lin Jiugu 林九姑 and Li Sangu 李三姑. People in western Fujian believe that Lin Jiugu is the Holy Mother in Heaven (Tianshang Shengmu 天上聖母) or Mazu 媽祖 (Grandma), who was born in the Northern Song dynasty (around A.D. 960) on Meizhou Island 湄州島 of Fujian. Among the Three Ladies, Chen Jingu is considered to be the most venerable goddess.

²³⁴ The cult of Kangong Houwang was spread to central western Fujian from the north. Not much is known about the hagiography of this deity.

²³⁵ According to local legends of Yong’an district, Mashi Zhenxian (True Immortal – Lady Ma) or Ma Wuniang 馬五娘 was born in Yong’an County by the end of the Tang dynasty (around the late ninth century). Her father was called Ma Daxiang 馬大相. She fell sick soon after her marriage. Thus, her husband abandoned her. Ma Daxiang (her father) was very ashamed and tried to drown her. Jiutian Xuannü 九天玄女 (Mysterious Girl of Nine Heavens) rescued her, led her to the Baizhang Yan 百丈岩 (the Cliff of a Hundred Zhang) and bestowed an immortal peach on her. After eating the peach, she became an immortal and ascended to heaven. In Chapter Six of the *Min History* (*Minshu* 閩書), He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠 (a local scholar in the late sixteenth century) states that the goddess was a native of Jingning County 景寧縣 in Zhejiang. Some modern scholars (such as Lin Guoping 林國平 and Peng Wenyu 彭文宇) also think that the cult of Lady Ma was spread to Fujian from Zhejiang (Lin 1993, 193 – 194). In Qingshui Township, the Ditong Ting 砥東亭 (the Pavilion of Subduing [Evil Spirits from] the East) and the Temple of the First Peak (Yiding Guan 一頂觀) of Huang Jing Shan Village are temples dedicated to her. With regard to Linshi Zhenxian (True Immortal – Lady Lin) or Lin Qiniang 林七娘, she was born in Mt. Wenbi 文筆山 of Yong’an County in the eight year of the Xuande 宣德 reign period of the Ming dynasty (A.D. 1433). She suffered from skin ulcers whenever her father arranged a marriage for her. When she was young, she already showed her supernatural abilities by foretelling weather, curing illness, and channeling water towards the fields. In the first year of the reign period of Jingtai 景泰 (A.D. 1450), her father tried to marry her off again. On the wedding day, she sat in a sedan chair and was carried by chair men to her husband’s house. On the way, she threw a leaf into a local river and the leaf turned into a fish. All the chair men tried their best to catch the fish and Lady Lin seized the opportunity to run away. She went to a ditch where she achieved immortality and ascended to heaven. Her cult was soon spread to central and northern Fujian. She was granted the title “Lin Qianqi, the Distinguished True Immortal who is the Lord of the Palace of Manifestation and Magnificence (Xianzhu Hongming Gongzhu Lin Xianqi Xian Zhenxian 顯著宏明宮主林賢七顯真仙). During the reign period of Chongzhen 崇貞 (A.D. 1628 - 1643), the Empress could not feed the Crown Prince since she had diseased breasts. Lin Qiniang demonstrated her supernatural power again by transforming herself into a wet-nurse and nourished the Crown Prince with the milk of her breasts for more than a month. Without realizing her true identity, Emperor Chongzhen asked her about her native place. She told the emperor that she came from Mt. Wenbi of Yong’an in Fujian. Later, she left the palace and nobody saw her again. In order to express his thankfulness, the emperor canonized her as the Goddess of the

also worshipped by local people of Youxi 尤溪 and Datian 大田.²³⁶ Most of them are considered to be deities of the peasants who live in the mountainous areas. It is believed that these local gods often show their efficacy by helping the local people to overcome all kinds of difficulties. In their birthday ceremonies, local operas are performed and vernacular Buddhist and Daoist scriptures are recited. Candles, incense, spirit money, cocks, ducks, dried fish, tea, and wine are major sacrificial items. There are also processions along the streets and paths. Effigies of deities are placed in sedan chairs and carried on the shoulders of strong men. Accompanied by bearers of ritual banners and umbrellas, music and martial arts groups, and adult and children opera players, the gods' images are carried around the boundaries of the local community in order to purify the territory and offer blessings to the villagers. Opera performances usually take place at permanent stages that are erected opposite to temples. Some of these stages and temples are built on geomantic bridges (*fengshui qiao* 風水橋).²³⁷ For example, leaders of Canghai Village 滄海村 and Sanfang Village 三房村 in Qingshui Township celebrate the birthdays of Guanyin (the nineteenth day of the second month and the nineteenth day of the sixth month). In order to entertain the goddess and the audience, they often hire *Han* opera actors to perform at the Stage of the Hualong Qiao 化龍橋戲臺 (the Bridge of the Transforming Dragons) in Canghai Village. In usual cases, the performances last three days and three nights. Furthermore, in other local villages (such as Qingshui Village 青水村, Luqiu Village 爐丘村 and Dongjing Village 東井村) of Qingshui Township, operas are also offered to Marshal Lord Guan (the thirteenth of the fifth month) and Marquis King – Lord Kang (the seventh day of the seventh lunar month) as gifts on their birth anniversaries (Liu 2002, 103 – 104).

The Ancient Stage of the Bridge of Eternal Peace (Yongning Qiao Gu Xitai 永寧橋古戲臺), which is situated at Zhaidou Natural Village 寨兜自然村 of Qingshui Village in Qingshui

Wet-Nurses who Nourishes the Infants (Ruyin Niangniang, Busi Yangyou Yuangjun 乳飲娘娘、哺飼養幼元君). Since then, her cult has been very popular among the people. In Qingshui Township of Yong'an district, her temple is situated at Fengtian Administrative Village. She is also worshipped as an adjunct deity in the Didong Ting and the Yiding Guan, where Lady Ma is honored as the main deity. Most devotees of Lady Ma and Lady Lin are women. They believe that the goddesses would offer them sons or grandsons. Their birthdays are celebrated on the first day of the seventh lunar month (Mary Yeung's notes).

²³⁶ Youxi and Datian are located in the northeast and the southeast of Qingshui Township respectively.

²³⁷ In western Fujian (both southwestern and central western), local people believe that a *fengshui* (geomantic) bridge that extends across a main stream functions to block the flow of vital energy out of their own village. Moreover, a geomantic bridge, a geomantic tree (*fengshui shu* 風水樹) and a small altar of the Zunwang 尊王 (Venerable King) or the Gongwang 公王 (Duke King) are often situated at the place where a stream leaves the village (water exit). In central western Fujian, gods of locality are known as Zunwang. Local people in southwestern part of the province usually address them as Gongwang.

Township (central western Fujian), is strong evidence that *Daqiang* opera and *Han* opera are often performed on birthdays of tutelary deities. This geomantic bridge, which was built in A.D. 1724, stretches across the Cheng River 澄江. Besides the stage, it is also comprised of the Lingyuan Gong 靈元宮 (the Temple of Efficacious Origin), the Ancient Stage (Gu Xitai 古戲台), the Didong Ting 砥東亭 (the Pavilion of Subduing [Evil Spirits from] the East), and the Juxing Ting 聚興亭 (the Pavilion of Accumulating Prosperity). The Lingyuan Gong is a temple dedicated to Wugu Zhenren (True Person of the Five Grains), Zhanggong Fazhu (Sage Lord Zhang), and Zhao Da Yuanshuai (Great Marshal Zhao). Lady Ma and Lady Lin are main deities worshipped at Didong Ting. The Juxing Ting is dedicated to the Sansheng Minzhu Zunwang 三聖民主尊王 (the Three Sacred Venerable King of the People).²³⁸ Both the Ancient Stage and the Temple of Efficacious Origin are situated on the Bridge of Eternal Peace, which has a capacity of seven hundred people. The stage is opposite to the temple. There are make-up compartments and dressing rooms backstage. According to the inscription on the wall of the backstage area, members of the Troupe of Harmony and Prosperity (Hexing Ban 合興班) performed at the Ancient Stage on Great Marshal Zhao's birthday in the year *gengyin* 庚寅 (the seventeenth year of the Guangxu 光緒 reign period, A.D. 1890). Their performances lasted three days and four nights (from the fifth to the eighth of the third month). Within the operatic series, four sections of *Daqiang* plays were staged on the opening evening. The Story of the White Rabbit (*Baitu Ji* 白兔記),²³⁹ a popular play in the *Daqiang* repertoire, was presented on the second day. In the year *xinchou* 辛丑 (the twenty-seventh year of the Guangxu reign period, A.D. 1901), a *Han* opera (also known as *Xiaoqiang* opera) troupe also staged a ritual operatic series during Great Marshal Zhao's birthday celebration. The performance, which took place at the Ancient Stage, stretched over four nights and three days (from the sixth to the ninth of the third month). (Mary

²³⁸ The Sansheng Minzhu Zunwang is a locality god whose temple is located near the water exit.

²³⁹ The Story of the White Rabbit is a repertoire of *nanxi* (southern operas). Liu Zhiyuan 劉知遠 and Li Sanniang 李三娘 are the two leading characters. With regard to the plot of this play, Liu Zhiyuan marries Li Sanniang and lives with her family. Since he is very poor, Sanniang's elder brother (Li Hongyi 李洪一) and his wife looks down on him. After the death of his parents, Li Hongyi forces Liu Zhiyuan to work in a vegetable garden and write a letter to divorce Sanniang. Liu Zhiyuan and Sanniang separate. Liu joins the army in order to earn a living and establish merit. As a woman of virtue, Sanniang refuses to compromise with his elder brother. Li Hongyi is very angry and forces his younger sister (Sanniang) to work day and night in the mill. Later, Sanniang is pregnant for ten months and gives birth to a son (Liu Chengyou 劉承佑). Without any knives or scissors, she gnaws off the umbilical cord. Hence, her son's pet name is Yaoqi Lang 咬臍郎 (the Lad of Biting Away the Umbilical Cord). She then asks Dou Lao 竇老 (a loyal servant) to deliver the infant to Liu Zhiyuan. Many years later, Liu Zhiyuan achieves success and wins recognition. Yaoqi Lang grows up and meets Li Sanniang when he is hunting for a rabbit. The family is reunited and Sanniang forgives her elder brother (Zhang 1989, 249 – 260).

Yeung's notes). Today, local people still honor the deity by offering both *Daqiang* and *Xiaoqiang* operas as gifts to him on his birthday. Members of the Fengtian Daqiang Opera Troupe,²⁴⁰ such as Xing Chengbang 邢承榜 (the impresario) and Xiong Deqin 熊德欽 (an actor of principal female roles), told me that they are often invited to stage performances at the Ancient Stage of the Bridge of Eternal Peace during the seventh month, when birthday ceremonies for Zhanggong Fazhu (the twenty-third of the seventh month), as well as Lady Ma and Lady Lin (the first of the seventh month) are held at the Temple of Efficacious Origin (Lingyuan Gong) and the Pavilion of Subduing [Evil Spirits From] the East (Didong Ting) respectively. In these performances, the Fengtian Daqiang Troupe members often present ritualistic plays, such as the Eight Immortals (*Baxian* 八仙), the Investiture of a King (*Fengwang* 封王) and the Reunion (*Tuanyuan* 團圓), before the main operatic item starts.

In Qingshui Township of central western Fujian, Lord Tian (Tian Gong) is not only an occupational deity of marionettists and human actors but also a tutelary god of the local communities. Villagers believe that he accedes to every plea. On April 25, 2003, Mr. Wang Hua, the impresario of the Wanfu Tang (the Hall of Ten Thousand Happiness) Marionette Troupe, told me a legend about his efficacy.²⁴¹

Once upon a time, a fire broke out when a local villager practiced slash-and-burn cultivation in the mountain. Since he was unable to put out the fire, this villager immediately knelt down and prayed to Tian Gong for help. He also promised to offer gifts to the deity in return. Using his straw sandals as divination blocks, he cast them on the ground and got a positive response.²⁴² Tian Gong

²⁴⁰ As mentioned in Section 1.3 of Chapter One and Section 2.2 of Chapter Two, Fengtian is an administrative village of Qingshui Township. It is occupied by two Hakka lineages, the Xiongs 熊氏 and the Xings 邢氏. In 2003, the population of the Xiongs is 330 and that of the Xings is 120. *Daqiang* opera was introduced to the village by Xiong Mingrong 熊明榮 (an ancestor of the thirteenth generation of the Xiong lineage) around A.D. 1450. Since then, the Fengtian Daqiang Opera Troupe has been formed and the performers (villagers) have passed down the artistic skills from generation to generation. There were fourteen members in the troupe during 2002. They were Xing Chengbang (impresario), Xiong Dexing (actor of principal female roles), Xing Fada 邢發達 (actor of principal painted face roles), Xiong Shengjia 熊生家 (actor of comic roles), Xing Shaoren 邢紹仁 (actor of old male roles), Xing Shaokong 邢紹孔 (actor of principal male roles), Xiong Changming 熊長明 (actor of supporting male roles), Xing Shenglin 邢盛麟 (actor of young female roles), Xiong Shenglai 熊生來 (actor of old female roles), Xiong Zonghua 熊宗華 (actor of principal painted face roles), Xing Chengyang 邢承揚 (actor of old female roles), Xing Changshun 邢長順 (actor of comic roles), Xiong Chunjiang 熊春江 (drummer) and Xiong Chunmu 熊春木 (actor of young male roles).

²⁴¹ The interview took place at Wang Hua's home.

²⁴² One sandal landed on the obverse side (with sole downward) and the other one landed on the reverse side (with sole upward).

accepted his requests. After a while, the rain came down in torrents and the fire was quenched (Mary Yeung's notes).

It is important to point out that in this area, Tian Gong is seldom worshipped in individual households. Unlike the situations of southeastern Fujian, Tian Gong temples are seldom found in western Fujian (both central western and southwestern parts). None of the local temples or shrines in Qingshui Township are dedicated him. As noted in Chapter Two, Wang Hua, who is a marionettist and a vernacular priest of the Liyuan Sect of the Lüshan Tradition, possesses an image of the deity, which is placed at the main altar of his house. Thus, in order to express their gratitude to Lord Tian for his blessings, local devotees visit Wang Hua's home and pay tribute to the deity in his birthday celebration. Incense, candles, paper money, candies, dried fishes, tea, and wine are major sacrifices. Some of them even offer one or two section(s) of marionette plays as a gift (or gifts) to the god. Mr. Wang and his assistants are invited to perform these performances, which last several days and nights.²⁴³ Besides Tian Gong, Wang Hua and his marionette troupe also stage marionette plays on the birthdays of other local deities. For example, in the year *gengchen* 庚辰 (2000), leaders of the Tangquan Village 湯泉村 in Taihua Township 太華鄉 of Datian County hired them to present marionette plays on the birthday of Kanggong Houwang (Marquis King – Lord Kang). The performance lasted seven consecutive days (from the twenty-fifth of the seventh month to the second of the eighth month). Three sections were performed every day and each section cost \$100 (RMB).

Today, in Qingshui (central western Fujian), Xing Chengbang, the impresario of the Fengtian Daqiang Opera Troupe, still keeps the tradition of offering incense to Lord Tian and other patron deities, such as Master Dou 竇師父 and Master Guo 郭師父,²⁴⁴ before the troupe starts the performances. In the past, the Fengtian Daqiang Opera Troupe possessed an effigy of Lord Tian. Annual celebrations were held on his birthday (the twenty-fourth day of the sixth lunar month). Nevertheless, at the end of the Ming dynasty (around A.D. 1644), the troupe thought that Tian Gong did not demonstrate his efficacy to protect them. Hence, they sold this image to a Lai lineage 賴氏 member, who lived in Caijia Shan Village 蔡家山²⁴⁵ of Neilu Administrative Village 內爐行政村 in Xiyang Town 西洋鎮 at Yong'an district. From then on,

²⁴³ For a detailed description of Lord Tian's birthday celebration in the year *guiwei* 癸未 (2003), please refer to Section 5.4. of Chapter Five of this dissertation.

²⁴⁴ With regard to a detailed depiction of the legends of Master Dou and Master Guo, please see Section 5.3. of Chapter Five of this thesis.

²⁴⁵ Caijia Shan Village of Neilu Administrative village is on the southwest of Qingshui Township. It is inhabited by the Lais 賴氏, the Mas 馬氏 and the Lins 林氏. This small village only has a population of around one hundred and there are around twenty households.

the Fengtian Daqiang Opera Troupe no longer celebrated Lord Tian's birthday. As Laurence G. Thompson states, "When public confidence in the power of a deity has waned, he [or she] will be neglected and eventually forgotten." (Thompson 1996, 55) It is important to point out that when Lord Tian's image²⁴⁶ was invited to (or sold to) Caijia Shan Village from Fengtian Village during the mid-seventeenth century, the deity was worshipped by the Daqiang Opera Troupe of Caijia Shan Village as an occupational deity. Today, however, Caijia Shan villagers no longer perform *Daqiang* opera. They honor Tian Gong as the venerable tutelary god of the territory. There are two temples dedicated to the deity. One is the Hall of Prosperous Incense (Xinghuo Dian 興火殿),²⁴⁷ which is located in the Caijia Shan Village. The other one is the Ancestral Temple (Zumiao 祖廟) that sits on a local hill. It is believed that Lord Tian possesses supernatural power to cure sickness and bestow prosperity upon devotees. In order to honor him, villagers arrange annual ceremonies on his birthday (the twenty-fourth of the sixth lunar month). On the twenty-third day, villagers or devotees take the incense burner of the Xinghuo Dian (the Hall of Prosperous Incense) along with them to the deity's ancestral temple, which stands on the top of the hill. They burn a small piece of coal in the big incense burner of the ancestral temple. After the coal is burnt, they collect some ash and put it in the incense burner of the Hall of Flourishing Incense, which is taken back to the Xinghuo Dian. The incense burner and Tian Gong's effigy are placed at the main altar of the temple. On the main festival day, many believers kowtow to the god. Candles, spirit money, bundles of incense, ducks, dried fish, cocks, tea, and wine are offered to him. Vernacular ritual specialists are invited to recite the scriptures concerning the legend of Lord Tian. For the purpose of purifying the territory, firecrackers are set off and the god's image is taken on a procession around the boundaries of the village. It is important to point out that in the past these annual rituals were often accompanied by *Xiaoqiang* or *Daqiang* opera performances. Mr. Ma Chunsheng 馬春生 (an elder who is responsible for keeping Lord Tian's effigy) said that when he was a child, he watched operas twice on Tian Gong's birthday. Operatic troupes from local areas, such as Sanbai Liao Village 三百寮村 of Qingshui Township and Guixi Village 桂溪村 of Xiyang Town, were hired for performances in these regular celebrations. The tradition of offering operas as gifts to the deity had already died out seventy years ago (Mary Yeung's notes).

²⁴⁶ This is the oldest image of Lord Tian discovered in Fujian at present. Today, Ma Chunsheng 馬春生 (an elder of Caijia Shan Village) takes charge of keeping this effigy. Except during Lord Tian's birthday, the image is stored at Mr. Ma's home at ordinary times.

²⁴⁷ This Tian Gong temple was first known as Fenghuo Dian 風火殿 (the Hall of Wind and Fire). Ma Chunsheng renamed it as Xinghuo Dian several decades ago.

In southwestern Fujian, most Hakka people in the Baisha district of Shanghang County worship many local deities, such as Lord Tian (Tian Gong), the Three Ladies (San Furen), Tian Hou 天后 (Heavenly Empress) or Mazu 媽祖 (Grandma)²⁴⁸ the Three Great Immortal Masters (Sanda Xianshi 三大仙師),²⁴⁹ Wugu Zhenxian 五谷真仙 (the True Immortal of the Five Cereals), Dingguang Gufo 定光古佛 (the Ancient Buddha of Stability and Brightness),²⁵⁰ and Guanyin (the Goddess of Mercy). Moreover, every village or township in the county has its own Duke-King(s) (*Gongwang* 公王). Their shrines or temples are usually situated at (or near) water exits

²⁴⁸ It is important to point out that in this Hakka area, Tian Hou is worshipped as one of the Three Ladies whose name is Lin Jiugu. In some cases, however, she is worshipped as the Goddess of the Sea. Devotees address her as Mazu (Grandma) or Tian Hou (Heavenly Empress). The Mazu cult was spread to the mountain region from the coastal area of the province during the reign period of Chenghua 成化 (A.D. 1465 - 1487) of the Ming dynasty. Ye Mingsheng and I visited a temple, which is located in Linjiang Township 臨江鎮 (county seat) of Shanghang on August 10, 2004. The images of the Three Ladies (Chen Jinggu, Lin Jiugu and Li Sangu) and the individual effigy of Tian Hou resided in the temple.

²⁴⁹ According to local beliefs, the Three Great Immortal Masters are Huang Qiweng 黃七翁 (or Huang Shifu 黃師傅), his son (Huang Jixian 黃繼先 or Huang Shisan Lang 黃十三郎) and his son-in-law (Xing Cheng 倖成 or Xing Balang 倖八郎). They were vernacular priests in Shanghang during the early Song period (around the tenth century). Huang Qiweng's family lived in Hubei for generations. Owing to political chaos, Huang Zhongsu 黃忠肅 (Huang Qiweng's father) and his wife migrated from Hubei to Shanghang of southwestern Fujian. They settled at Mt. Zijin 紫金山 and gave birth to a son (Qiweng). Qiweng practiced the Way and soon achieved immortality. He was considered to be the reincarnation of the Most High Old Lord (Taishang Laojun 太上老君). Later, he married a young lady (*née* Dong) and had a son, whose name was Jixian or Shisan Lang. Xing Cheng was Qiweng's son-in-law and disciple. The Three Great Immortal Masters often assisted local villagers to solve their problems, such as curing sickness and killing wild animals. One day, three of them disappeared on the cliff of Mt. Zijin when they were warding off evil spirits. It is said that they received the title Ganying Huguo Aimin Sanda Zhenxian 感應護國愛民三大真仙 (the Three Efficacious True Immortals who Protect the County and Cherish the People) after saving the life of an imperial concubine of Emperor Renzong 仁宗 (r. A.D. 1023 - 1063) of the Northern Song dynasty.

²⁵⁰ Dingguang Gufo was an accomplished monk in the Northern Song dynasty (around A.D. 934 - 1015). He is also known as Dingguang Dashi 定光大師 (the Great Master of Stability and Brightness), Dingguang Pusa 定光菩薩 (the Bodhisatta of Stability and Brightness), Dingying Dashi 定應大師 (the Great Master of Absolute Efficacy), or Shengweng 聖翁 (the Sacred Father). The *Linting zhi* 臨汀志 (the *Local History of Linting*) states that the deity, who was born in Tong'an County 同安縣 (known as Tong'an District 同安區 today) of southeastern Fujian, was considered to be the incarnation of the Dipamkara Buddha 燃燈佛. His name was Zheng Ziyang 鄭自嚴. He was a son of a low ranking official. He became a monk at the age of eleven. In his youth, he went to Jiangxi and acknowledged Xifeng 西峰 and Yuanjing 圓淨 (two great monks) as his masters. He returned to Fujian and settled at Nan'an Yan 南安岩 of Wuping County 武平縣 in A.D. 964. Then, he was invited to Tingzhou Prefecture 汀州府 in A.D. 1011 and lived in a monastery that was built for him. Four years later, he passed away at the age of eighty-two. It is believed that he possessed supernatural power to bestow rain, subdue snakes and tigers, dredge channels, and solve many problems of the people. Owing to his efficacy, he was worshipped as a venerable deity in Fujian (especially western Fujian), northeastern Guangdong, Jiangxi and Zhejiang. (Lin 1993, 281 - 294; cf. Lagerwey 1999b, 77 - 129). In Baisha Town of Shanghang, before the 1949 Revolution, effigies of Dingguang Gufo were worshipped at the Monastery of Respect and Blessings (Chongfu Si 崇福寺) and the Flourishing Monastery (Yingfeng Si 盈豐寺), which was also known as Shipo An 石陂庵 (the Nunnery of Rocky Slope). The former was built in A.D. 1473 and the latter was erected in A.D. 1574. There were two images of the deity in each of these monasteries. In the past, these effigies were invited to local villages (such as Tangfeng 塘豐, Zhongyang 中洋 and Wutian 梧田), where *jiao* rites took place at the beginning of the fifth lunar month. The most important aspect of the *jiao* sequence of each village was a procession of men who carried an image of the deity around their community. These religious activities were forced to stop after the early 1950s. Today, the cult of Dingguang Gufo is resumed to some extent.

(*shuikou* 水口), where a stream leaves the village. For example, the *Gongwang* of Daping Li Village 大坪里村 of Dajin Administrative Village in Baisha Town (Shanghang County) is known as Bazui Gongwang 叭嘴公王 (the Duke-King with an Open Mouth).²⁵¹ Its shrine is located near the water exit opposite to Daping Li Village. Local villagers offer daily and year round sacrifices to this tutelary deity.

Today villagers in this Hakka area mainly arrange marionette performances for the birthday celebrations of two popular deities. They are Lord Tian and Chen Jinggu 陳靖姑 (or Chen Jingu 陳進姑)²⁵². As mentioned in Section 2.1. of Chapter Two, the Hall of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Tang), which was turned into a bullpen during the Cultural Revolution, was completely restored in August 2001. It is important to point out that this newly constructed hall is the only temple dedicated to Lord Tian in the southwestern part of the province. In addition to the marionettists, people of the local communities also offer regular sacrifices (such as the first and the fifteenth of each month) to him at the temple. According to local beliefs, he is not only a patron god of the marionette troupes but also a tutelary deity who possesses supernatural power to get rid of plague and pests. In order to redeem their vows to Lord Tian, believers drape his effigy with red clothes and offer candles, spirit money, bundles of incense, wine, tea, and glutinous rice balls to him on his birthday (the twenty-fourth of the sixth month). Marionette shows are also performed on the public stage (made of straw, wood and earth) beside the Hall of Lord Tian.²⁵³

The cult of the Three Ladies (Chen Jingu, Lin Jiugu and Li Sangu) is very popular in various areas of Fujian province. Besides being ritual lords of the Lüshan Sect, they are also worshipped as protectors or saviors of infants and pregnant women. Among the Three Ladies, Chen Jingu is considered to be the most venerable goddess. She is also known as Danai Furen 大奶夫人 (the Eldest Lady), Chen Furen 陳夫人 (Lady Chen), Shunyi Furen 順懿夫人 (the Lady of Gentleness and Virtue), or Linshui Furen 臨水夫人 (the Near Water Lady). According to local legend, Chen Jingu was born in Gutian around the middle of eighth century. She married at the age of twenty-four and died from begging rain for the local people during her pregnancy. After death, she became a goddess who possessed supernatural power to protect people, especially women and children. In Baisha Town of southwestern Fujian, Hakka women

²⁵¹ The image of Bazui Gongwang, which is made of iron, is only about seventeen centimeters in height. It looks like a wide mouthed Pekingese dog sitting on the ground.

²⁵² Instead of Chen Jingu, the Hakka people in southwestern Fujian address the goddess as Chen Jingu.

²⁵³ For a detailed depiction of Lord Tian's birthday celebration in 2004, please refer to Section 5.5. of Chapter Five.

address Lady Chen as “*mushen* 母神 (mother goddesses)” or “*poshen* 婆神 (grandma goddess).” They form voluntarily associations and raise funds for the worship of the Three Ladies. These organizations are known as *furen hui* 夫人會 (Lady Associations). In most cases, an elder woman who is highly respected would be selected as the head of a *furen hui*. Members organize celebrations on the birthdays of the Three Ladies²⁵⁴ (especially Chen Jinggu’s birth anniversary). Lady Chen’s birthday is on the fifteenth of the first month, when celebrations are held at the Temple of the Ladies (Furen Gong 夫人宮), which is situated at the Zhongyang Village 中洋村 of Baisha Town. This temple was built in the mid 1990s. It consists of one main hall and two side halls. With regard to the arrangement of the altar inside the main hall, it includes an elongated table and a square shaped table. On top of the elongated table stand three effigies of the Three Ladies. Each of them is mounted on a horse. Behind these images stands a fixed dais. Upon this dais, there are two larger effigies. The one on the right is the Jade Emperor (Yudi 玉帝) and the one on the left is the Queen Mother (Huangmu 皇母 or Wangmu 王母). Chen Haiqing’s 陳海青 image²⁵⁵ stands beside the Jade Emperor’s effigy. Incense burners are placed on a square shaped table which is set up in front of the elongated altar. The images of the God of Locality (Tudi 土地) and his wife are also found in the main hall. In addition, images of the God of Wealth, the God of Literati, and the Deity of the Five Cereals are put on the altar of one of the side halls. Ye Mingsheng and I visited this temple on August 8, 2004. Liang Xiulian 梁秀蓮,²⁵⁶ the elder woman who takes charge of the temple affairs, told us that Lady Chen, a famous goddess who is believed to be a protector of women and children, has many adopted sons and daughters. In her birthday rituals, these adopted children and their parents would go to the temple to pay tribute to Chen Furen. Members of the Lady Associations are active participants in these annual rites. Pork, fish, spirit money, bundles of incense, candles, tea, and wine are

²⁵⁴ The birthday of Lin Jiugu and the birthday of Li Sangu fall on the sixteenth of the seventh month and the sixteenth of the tenth month respectively.

²⁵⁵ Chen Haiqing is worshipped as one of the ritual lords of the Haiqing 海青教 Sect and the Lady Sect of the Lüshan School. According to local beliefs, he is the elder brother of Chen Jinggu. Lin Qiugu and Li Sangu are his two sworn sisters. Chen Haiqing’s image was donated by a female devotee when the Temple of the Ladies was constructed in the mid 1990s. This woman is a villager in Baisha Town. Before the 1960s, her family possessed images of Chen Jinggu and Chen Haiqing. Her house was searched and her household property was confiscated during the Cultural Revolution. When the two effigies were being taken away from her house, she struggled with the Red Guards and managed to grasp one of them. She then took one look at the image and realized that it was not Chen Jinggu but Chen Haiqing. She preferred to be criticized rather than give up the effigy. When the local religious activities were revived in the early 1980s, she once again made offerings to the Three Ladies and Chen Haiqing. Later, at the request of many female villagers, she donated Chen Haiqing’s image to the Furen Gong (Ye 1995, 122).

²⁵⁶ Liang Xiulian is the elder sister of Liang Lizhong, one of my informants in southwestern Fujian. She is a temple attendant of the Furen Gong.

major sacrifices. In order to express their gratitude and repay their vows, they offer marionette shows as gifts to the goddess. The performance may last three days. The play *Furen Zhuan* 夫人傳 (the Legend of the Lady) is usually staged on this auspicious occasion. Forty to fifty tables would be set up for a large feast that takes place at the courtyard of the temple.²⁵⁷

In addition to Lord Tian and Chen Jinggu, the Three Great Immortal Masters (Sanda Xianshi) are also popular deities in Baisha Town of Shanghang County (southwestern Fujian). Similar to the Three Ladies, they are usually worshipped as a group. Their small portraits appear in the liturgical paintings of the local vernacular priests or ritual specialists of the Lüshan Tradition. In many villages of the county, people address them as *gongye* 公爺 (venerable grandfathers) or *fuzhu* 福主 (the Lords of Wealth). They believe that these immortals often demonstrate their efficacy by guarding the water exit where a stream leaves the village, exorcising evil spirits or demons, protecting domestic animals, bestowing rain, and subduing tigers and wolves. At Guofang 郭坊 (the county seat)²⁵⁸ of Shanghang, local people mainly believe that these gods are good at curing illness. From the Southern Song dynasty (around A.D. 1259) to the 1960s, the Temple of the Immortal Masters (Xianshi Gong 仙師宮), which stood at the southwest of Guofang, was the main temple dedicated to the three deities. In case of sickness, devotees would visit the temple and ask for a prescription by shaking a numbered, two-foot-long divination slip (*yaoqian* 藥簽) out of a round canister, which contained one hundred of this kind of slip.²⁵⁹ Local people believed that these immortals were very “*ling* 靈 (efficacious)” and their prescriptions were very effective. Annual rites were held on Huang Qiwen’s birthday (the sixth day of the sixth lunar month). Grand ceremonies took place once every six years (in the years of *jia* 甲 and *si* 巳)²⁶⁰ for the purpose of celebrating his birthday. As John Lagerwey summarizes:

...The immortal Master has his birthday on 6/6, and once every sixth year, a major festival was put on in his honor. The four wards of the county seat shared

²⁵⁷ Besides regular worship, devotees would invite Liang Xiuliang and her collaborator (the two temple attendants) to perform a simple ritual when their family members fall sick. I observed this rite on August 8, 2004. In the rite, they wore red turbans around their heads and waists. Blowing their ritual spiral shells, they invited Chen Jinggu to descend to the mortal world and exorcised the evil spirits that caused illness. Sticks of burning incense were planted in the brazier that stood on the main altar. The sick person was represented by one of his/her garments. The temple attendants used the incense smoke to purify the clothes, a symbolic gesture of expelling evil elements from the sick. A lot of spirit money was burnt outside the temple at the end of the rite (Mary Yeung’s notes).

²⁵⁸ It is now known as Linjiang Town 臨江鎮.

²⁵⁹ Two kinds of divination slips were offered in the Xianshi Gong. These were *yaoqian* and *fuqian* 福簽 (blessing slips). The *yaoqian* dealt with sickness or people’s health. With regard to other daily problems, devotees would seek advice from the deities by drawing the *fuqian* at the temple.

²⁶⁰ The term *jia* and *si* refer to the heavenly stems of the years.

responsibility for the First Lord of Wealth (*fuzhu*),²⁶¹ and the second and third lords – his son and son-in-law, were taken care of by different sections of the fifth ward,²⁶² outside the town walls. Sick children who had been given to the Immortal Master as his little dogs joined the parade wearing dog caps. Opera could go on for a month, but the beheading of the black mosquito was the festival's climactic event; after three days of parading, on the afternoon of 6/4, the procession went outside Westgate to a large opera area. There, a person dressed as a black mosquito was first beheaded, then chased into the river by persons dressed as the Wulang spirit[s]. The black mosquito was then burned...²⁶³ (Lagerwey 1998, 24)

In usual cases, *Han* opera troupes, *Chaozhou* opera troupes and *Gaoqiang* marionette troupes were hired to perform at Huang Qiwen's birthday rituals. The funds for the shows were donated by wealthy merchants of the local communities. Popular repertoires, such as the Legend of the White Snake (*Baishhe Zhuan* 白蛇傳),²⁶⁴ and Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai (*Liang Shanbo Yu Zhu Yingtai* 梁山伯與祝英台),²⁶⁵ were often staged in order to entertain the deities.

²⁶¹ The First Lord of Wealth refers to Huang Qiwen. The Second and Third Lords of Wealth are Xing Balang and Huang Shisan Lang respectively. Xing Balang's birthday is on the twenty-seventh of the twelfth month and Huang Shisan Lang's birthday is on the third of the ninth month (Lin 1998, 383).

²⁶² According to Lagerwey, the word *fang* 坊 (ward) originally refers to "an enclosed city block or neighborhood...In Minxi countryside, it is often used, in combination with a surname, to identify distinct villages..." The most appropriate translation of this word is "territorially defined liturgical unit." (Lagerwey 1998, 41) The county seat of Shanghang was divided into five wards. They are Fufang 福坊, Lufang 祿坊, Shoufang 壽坊, Kangfang 康坊 and Ningfang 寧坊. The first four wards were domains of the first lord (Huang Qiwen). Ningfang was the domain of the second and third lords.

²⁶³ According to local beliefs, the Wulang spirits 五郎神 (the Spirits of the Five Lads) were the Five-Fury Spirits (Wuchang Shen 五猖神) who guarded the Temple of the Immortal Masters. The black mosquito represented the evil element or spirit that was expelled by the Wulang spirits.

²⁶⁴ The *Baishhe Zhuan* is a play with a romantic theme. Bai Suzhen 白素貞 is a semi-divine white snake that practices the Way for over a millennia. Though she can attain immortality very soon, she is very unhappy because of loneliness. She and her maid (the Green Snake) transform themselves into young women and visit the West Lake. On their way, they meet a young and handsome man whose name is Xu Xian 許仙. Bai Suzhen is immediately attracted by him and both of them fall in love with each other. Bai is pregnant soon after their marriage. Fahai 法海, the abbot of the Jinshan Si 金山寺 (Monastery of the Gold Mountain), secretly exchanges Xu Xian's regular wine for his realgar wine (a kind of wine that can reduce any humanized goblins back to their monstrous forms). Xu offers the realgar wine to his wife, who is not aware of Fahai's plot. She drinks the realgar wine and is reduced to her original form at once. Xu is scared to death. In order to save Xu Xian's life, the White Snake goes to Mt. Kunlun 崑崙山 to steal the immortal herb. After being rescued by his wife, Xu Xian is kidnapped at the Jinshan Si by Fahai. The White Snake tries to rescue her husband but is defeated by the monk. She then gives birth to a son whose name is Xu Shilin 許仕林. Bai totally loses her supernatural power within the month following her confinement. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Fahai catches Bai with his magic bowl and buries her alive under the Thunder Peak Pagoda (Leifeng Ta 雷峰塔). Sixteen years later, Xu Shilin grows up and tries to save his mother.

²⁶⁵ With regard to the plot of this play, Zhu Yingtai is a virgin who loves study. She disguises herself as a lad and goes to Hangzhou, where she studies in an academy and meets Liang Shanbo, a talented and good-looking student.

The operatic series that stretched over one month also included all-night shows, which started after the end of the evening performances. People from various areas, such as Wuping County 武平縣, made their pilgrimage to the Temple of the Immortal Masters on this auspicious occasion. Moreover, the temple theatre was surrounded by temporary food stalls and gambling tables. All these were ideal places for people living in the county seat and other areas to gather together to spend their leisure time and to improve their inter-personal relationships. Though the tradition of celebrating Huang Qiweng's birthday had already died out several decades ago, Hakkas living in the local areas still worship the Three Immortal Masters at the Temple of the Return of the Dragon (Huilong Gong 回龍宮) and other local temples (Lin 1998, 375 – 398).

With regard to the situation of Hong Kong, participants in local religion worship a lot of gods, such as Guanyin, Huang Daxian 黃大仙 (Great Immortal Huang),²⁶⁶ Lord Guan (Guandi), Tian Hou (Heavenly Empress),²⁶⁷ Tan Gong 譚公 (Lord Tan),²⁶⁸ Che Gong 車公 (Lord Che),²⁶⁹ and Hong Sheng 洪聖 (Sage Hong), residing in the supernatural world. Since Hong Kong was a fishing port in the past, some of these patron deities are believed to be the protectors of boat people and sailors. Their birthdays are major festivals often associated with traditional operatic performances. For instance, there were fifty-three sets of festival operas performed on the birthdays of deities by Cantonese opera troupes in 1990. Among them, five were staged in Hong

Zhu Yingtai has a deep feeling of affection toward him. Later, Zhu's father orders her to return home. Before she leaves, she tells her *shimu* 師母 (the wife of her teacher) that she is a maiden. After his *shimu* tells him the truth, Liang Shanbo is very happy and goes to Zhu Yingtai's home to propose a marriage. Nevertheless, he discovers that Zhu is betrothed to another man. Liang immediately falls sick and passes away very soon. On the wedding day, Zhu also commits suicide by dashing her head against Liang's grave. Both of them die for love and transform themselves into two butterflies.

²⁶⁶ Huang Daxian whose name is Huang Chuping 黃初平 is a Daoist god. His cult was introduced to Hong Kong from Guangzhou in the early twentieth century (Lang 1993, 1). Similar to the Three Immortals in southwestern Fujian, Huang Daxian in Hong Kong is considered to be a deity who is good at curing sickness. In case of illness, devotees seek advice from him by drawing *yaoqian* (divination slips) at the Huang Daxian Temple in Kowloon.

²⁶⁷ In coastal regions of southeast China, Tian Hou or Mazu is considered to be a goddess. People in eastern Fujian and Taiwan address her as Mazu. Hong Kong people usually address her as Tian Hou. In other words, "the Tian Hou worshipped in Hong Kong and the Mazu worshipped in Taiwan and Fujian are the same deity..." (Liu 2003, 72) However, unlike the Taiwan devotees, Hong Kong worshippers do not trace the genealogical roots of their Tian Hou temples to the goddess's ancestral temple in Meizhou of Fujian. According to local beliefs, an image of Tian Hou "was founded washed up on the beach, and a small shrine was built to house it. The small shrine was then rebuilt into a bigger one, and finally the deity became the community's patron god." (Liu 2003, 72)

²⁶⁸ With regard to the legend of Lord Tan, please see Section 4.2. of Chapter Four of this thesis.

²⁶⁹ According to Chinese legends, Che Gong, whose birthday is on the second of the first lunar month, was a native of Jiangxi in the Song dynasty (A.D. 1127 – 1279). He was a military official of the Song court. After suppressing a revolt in Jiangnan, he was promoted to great marshal. Many people venerated his loyalty and righteousness. They worshipped him as one of their patron deities. Once upon a time, many villagers of Shatin 沙田 suffered from infectious disease. Local elders asked for his blessings and paid tribute to his effigy. Later, the epidemic was cleared and the local residents dedicated a temple (the Temple of Che Gong) to him in order to express their gratitude.

Sheng's birthday rituals and twenty-three were presented at the Tian Hou festival (Chan 1996a, 3).

Hong Sheng's birthday is on the thirteenth day of the second lunar month. Not much is known about the hagiography of this deity. "One story is that he was a good official in Kwangtung [Guangdong] Province in the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618 – 907) who knew how to foretell the weather. Another claims that he is really the Dragon King who rules the Southern Seas." (Ward 1995, 29) Many Hong Kong boat people worship him as their patron deity and hold annual celebrations on his birthday. According to the *Chūgoku saishi engeki kenkyū* 中国祭祀演劇研究 (*Ritual Theatres in China*), a grand celebration took place on Kau Sai Chau 濠洲 (Jiaoxi Zhou)²⁷⁰ on Hong Sheng's birthday in 1980. The festival lasted four days and five nights (from the tenth to the fourteenth of the second month). The Hong Sheng Temple on the island was rebuilt in the third year of the reign period of Guangxu (A.D. 1877) during the late Qing period. On the fifteenth day of the first month, leaders of the local representatives of the festival were chosen by casting two divination blocks in front of the effigy of the god at his temple. Cantonese boat people of Kau Sai Chau, land people in Sai Kung (Xi Gong), members of the Sai Kung Fishing Commerce Association and Villagers in Pak Sha Wan 白沙灣 (Baisha Wan) were active participants who donated more than fifty thousand Hong Kong dollars for the rituals. Cantonese-speaking Daoists of the Zhengyi Tradition 廣東正一道士 (*nahm mouh lo* 喃嘸佬) were hired to perform *jiao* rituals. Daoist scriptures were recited and water ghosts were fed. There were also lion and unicorn dances. The climax of the festival was the distribution of the *huapao* 花炮 (flower-cannons). In all there were totally thirty flower-cannons, which were assigned to thirty flower-canon associations (*huapao hui* 花炮會) by lottery. These flower-cannons would be brought back for redistribution after twelve months.²⁷¹ The Heroic and Precious Troupe (Yingbao Jutuan 英寶劇團) was hired to stage Cantonese operatic series²⁷² for

²⁷⁰ Kau Sai Chau is an island off the southeast coast of Sai Kung 西貢 (Xi Gong).

²⁷¹ A flower-cannon is a large, colorful construction of paper, built on a frame carried on the shoulders of several young men. It is meticulously made and decorated with many ornaments and small shrines. Each of these shrines contains a small image of the main god of the festival. Before the late 1960s, young men of each flower-canon association would scramble for numbered sticks that were shot out of mini firecracker rockets. Nevertheless, this exciting game was banned after the 1967 riots. Since then, the flower-cannons have been distributed to the *huapao hui* by lot (Liu, 2003: 75).

²⁷² In the case of Cantonese opera, ritual performances are staged in the form of operatic series since these ceremonies usually last for four days and five nights. During the late Qing period, there were four types of operatic items within each operatic series. These were the regulated plays (*lixi* 例戲), the *Kun* operatic items (*Kunqu*) that were sung in stage official language (*zhongzhou yin*), the three operatic items (*san chutou* 三出頭) that were sung in Cantonese, and the dawn shows or performances (*tianguang xi* 天光戲) (Chan 1991, 57; Leung 1992, 46 – 47). The

the celebrations. Many famous opera performers, such as Luo Jiaying 羅家英 (an actor of civil-military roles), Ruan Zhaohui 阮兆輝 (an actor of young male roles), Li Baoying 李寶瑩 (an actress of principal female roles), Ren Binger 任冰兒 (an actress of supporting female roles), and Xin Haiquan 新海泉 (an actor of principal painted face roles) took part in the performances. The Six States Invest a Prime Minister (*Liuguo Fengxiang* 六國封相),²⁷³ the Celestial Maid Offers a Son (*Tianji Songzi* 天姬送子),²⁷⁴ and the Dance of Promotion (*Tiao Jiaguan* 跳家官)²⁷⁵ were

tradition of performing the *Kun* operatic items died out in the early twentieth century. Today, in Hong Kong, ritualistic playlets, main operatic items and dawn shows are three kinds of operatic items in a ritual performance. Ritualistic playlets are compulsory and formalized religious programs. In normal cases, two ritual playlets are performed in an operatic series. Main operatic items usually start at about 7:30 p.m. after the performances of the ritual playlets. They are often performed by famous actors according to well written scripts. Dawn shows or performances start at about 11: p.m. after the performance of the main operatic items. They normally last for three or four hours and finish at dawn. Dawn shows are improvisatory plays which do not have well written scripts. However, it is important to note that nowadays they are not always staged in Hong Kong (Chan 1991, 56).

²⁷³ *Liguo Fengxiang* (Six States Invest a Prime Minister) is also called *Qicai Liuguo Fengxiang* 七彩六國封相 (the Colorful Six States Invest a Prime Minister). Its content is that in the late Warring States period (around 333 B.C.), Su Qin 蘇秦 had successfully united the six states, Qi 齊, Chu 楚, Yan 燕, Han 韓, Zhao 趙, and Wei 魏, to fight against the state of Qin. Thus, rulers of these six states decided to appoint Su Qin as the Prime Minister. Before and during the Republican Era, seventy-four performers took part in the performance of this play. Therefore, the most important purpose of putting on this auspicious play at that time was to demonstrate the size of the operatic troupes rather than emphasize its auspicious attributes. Today, however, Cantonese opera troupes usually present a simplified version of this play in festivals, with only a few actors participating. *Liuguo Fengxiang* originated from scene Thirty-Four, *Su Qin Baixiang* 蘇秦拜相 (Su Qin [is] Appointed Prime Minister), of the Story of the Golden Seal (*Jinyin Ji* 金印記), a marvel tale (*chuanqi* 傳奇) that was written by Su Fu 蘇復 around the fifteenth century. This *chuanqi*, which consists of forty-two scenes or sections, describes how Su Qin, a strategist in the Warring States period, spared no effort to achieve success in his political career. Plays concerning Su Qin's stories have been sung in *Kunqiang*, *Gaoqiang* and other melodic styles since the Ming and Qing dynasties. Today, sections of these plays are still found in some dramatic works, such as the *Research on the Gaoqiang Music of Xiang Opera* (*Xiangju gaoqiang yinyue yanjiu* 湘劇高腔音樂研究), the second volume of the *Zhui baiqiu* 綴白裘 (*A Patched Cloak of White Fur*), a collection of both *Kun* opera and Clapper opera repertoires (compiled in A.D. 1777), and the *Xiangju Dipaizi yinyue* 湘劇低牌子音樂 (*The Dipaizi Music of Xiang Opera*). The *Dipaizi* is a kind of vocal music used in *Xiang* opera (an operatic genre that has flourished in Hunan since the eighteenth century). It is said that the *Dipaizi* is local variant of *Kunqiang*. The horizontal flute and double-reed (*suona* 嗩吶) conical pipe are musical instruments used for accompaniment. Besides the *Dipaizi*, *Kunqiang*, *Gaoqiang* and *Luantan* are the three other types of vocal music used in *Xiang* opera. As mentioned in Section 2.2. of Chapter Two, there were over forty outside troupes (including opera troupes from Hunan and Jiangsu) staging their performances in Guangzhou during the middle of the Qing period. Hence, it is reasonable to believe that these outside troupes, especially the Hunan and Jiangsu troupes, spread the repertoires concerning the story of Su Qin to Guangdong at that time.

²⁷⁴ For the performance of this auspicious play, please refer to Section 4.3. of Chapter Four.

²⁷⁵ *Jiaoguan* (Promotion to the Rank of an Official), which is also known as *Tiao Jiaoguan* (Dance of Promotion), is a mummery. It has been an auspicious play of many regional operas since the Ming dynasty (cf. Lin 2004, 62 – 63). According to Chinese beliefs, this play functions to bestow scholarly honor and good fortune upon the audience. In the case of Cantonese opera, the only male performer who takes part in the performance impersonates Wei Zheng 魏徵 (A.D. 580 – 643), a famous imperial censor during the reign period of Emperor Taizong 太宗 (A.D. 627 – 649) of the Tang dynasty. The actor wears a mask, a formal robe and a gauze hat with long wings at the side. There is a small piece of wood horizontally attached to the reverse of the mask. The actor wears the mask by holding this piece of wood in his teeth. Thus, he can neither speak nor sing in the performance. Holding an ivory tablet with his hands, he appears onstage and walks to the stage front, where he shows two red scrolls (one after another) to the spectators. One states the four Chinese characters, “*fengtiao yushun* 風調雨順 (May the Weather be Good).” Another says the following, “*guotai min'an* 國泰民安 (May the State Prosper and the People Enjoy Peace).” All his

ritual plays performed in the operatic series. In addition, minor role actors²⁷⁶ also presented dawn shows (*tianguang xi* 天光戲) after the main performances ended. (Tanaka 1981, 559 – 569). Today, at Kau Sai Chau, Hong Sheng's birthday celebrations are still accompanied by Cantonese opera performances. For instance, the Troupe of New Gathering Heroes (Xin Qunying Jutuan 新群英劇團) was invited to perform on this auspicious occasion in 2004 and 2005. Long Guantian 龍貫天 (an actor of civil-military roles) and Yin Feiyan 尹飛燕 (an actress of principal female roles) were the two leading actors in the performance. Besides Kau Sai Chau, Hong Sheng's birthday celebrations also take place in other coastal areas or fishing villages of Hong Kong, such as Po Tai O 布戴澳 (Budai Ao) and Sha Lo Wan 沙螺灣 (Shaluo Wan).²⁷⁷ These auspicious events are all accompanied by Cantonese opera performances.

In Hong Kong, Cantonese opera players earn most of their income from staging ritual performances on Tian Hou's birthday (the twenty-third of the third month).²⁷⁸ Leaders of local communities arrange grand celebrations on her birthday. In most cases, Cantonese operatic performances are offered as gifts to entertain the goddess. For example, Tanaka Issei says that in 1979, the Young Phoenix Singing Troupe (Chufeng Ming Jutuan 雛鳳鳴劇團) staged an operatic series at Castle Peak Bay 青山 in Tuen Mun 屯門. The Tian Hou Temple, which is located near Castle Peak Bay, was constructed before the early eighteenth century. Long Jiansheng 龍劍笙 (an actress of civil-military roles), Mei Xueshi 梅雪詩 (an actress of principal

stage movements are accompanied by the small gong. Today, this short mummery only lasts about thirty seconds. It is important to point out that besides the *Tiao Jiaguan* that is staged by a male player, the *Nü Jiaguan* 女加官 (Promotion of a Woman to the Rank of an Official) is also an auspicious play of Cantonese opera. Its performance requires only the participation of one actress. The melody *Yiding Jin* 一錠金 (One Gold Ingot) commences (played by the horizontal flute), then this female performer come onstage. Holding an ivory tablet, she wears a formal crown and formal robe embroidered with dragons. She performs a routine of movements in order to display the following four Chinese characters: “一 (*Yi*)”, “品 (*Pin*)”, “夫 (*Fu*)”, “人 (*Ren*)” (Lady of the First Rank). At the beginning, she stands upright with her feet together and arms extending sideways at shoulder level to display the character “一”. Then, she opens her mouth and stands upright with hands akimbo to demonstrate the character “品”. After finishing these movements, she extends her arms sideways and stands with feet apart to display the character “夫”. Finally, in order to show the character “人”, she stretches out her left arm (or right arm) and bends her elbow to the left side (or the right side). In the Canton Delta, the *Nü Jiaguan* 女加官 (the Promotion of a Female Official) was always performed for upper class women on their birthdays during the late imperial period. In traditional Chinese society, the future of a wife depended on the success of her husband in the imperial examinations and the official career. If the wife was a lady of the first rank, her husband must be a first rank official. This play was often staged at private birthday parties due to its auspicious message (Mary Yeung's notes). This short play is not often performed in Hong Kong nowadays.

²⁷⁶ Most of these minor role actors are apprentices.

²⁷⁷ Sha Lo Wan is situated at the northwestern coast of Lantau Island.

²⁷⁸ Cantonese opera actors worship Tian Hou when they celebrate the birthday of Master Huaguang (the most venerable patron deity of Cantonese opera profession) on the twenty-eighth day of the ninth lunar month.

female roles),²⁷⁹ Liang Xingbo 梁醒波 (an actor of comic roles), and Jing Cibo 靚次伯 (a male performer of military roles) were leading performers. They staged auspicious plays; main operatic items, such as *Dinü Hua* 帝女花 (the Flowery Princess),²⁸⁰ and dawn performances, such as *Xiao Gandong Tian* 孝感動天 (the Filial [Act] that Moves the Heaven),²⁸¹ in the performance, which stretched over five consecutive nights and four days (from the twentieth to the twenty-fourth of the third month). In addition to Cantonese opera, residents of Castle Peak also staged a large parade that boasted a spectacular array of flower-cannons. The tradition of staging Cantonese operatic series on the goddess's birthday continues to exist in Castle Peak Bay today. Local representatives hired the Ming Zhisheng Jutuan 鳴芝聲 (the Troupe that Sings Beautiful Songs) to perform on this auspicious occasion in 2005. Prominent actors, such as Gai Minghui 蓋鳴輝 (an actress of civil-military roles)²⁸² and Wu Meiying 吳美英 (an actress of principal female roles), took part in the performance.

Tian Hou is the most popular deity worshipped in Hong Kong. Thus, besides Castle Peak Bay, her birthday is celebrated in many other areas of the city. For example, in 1980, the Jue Xinsheng Jutuan 覺新聲劇團 (the Troupe that Discovers New Tunes) was also hired to stage ritual performances for her birthday ceremony at the Taipo Old Market 大埔舊墟 (Dapu Jiuxu). The Tian Hou Temple of the Taipo Old Market was built before A.D. 1692. The Heavenly Empress is honored by both the boat people and the land people of the local community. They contributed funds for the costs of her birthday rites, such as hiring Cantonese opera performers, preparing the *huapao* contest, and constructing the temporary performance hall, shrine, and altar.

²⁷⁹ Long Jiansheng and Mei Xueshi are disciples of Ren Jianhui 任劍輝 and Bai Xuexian 白雪仙. Ren Jianhui, who passed away in 1989 at the age of seventy-seven, is the most popular actress of civil-military roles. She is also considered to be one of the greatest singers in South China. Bai Xuexiang is a very famous actress of principal female roles. Her father, Bai Jurong, is one of the five great masters in Cantonese opera. Both Ren Jianhui and Bai Xuexian were founders of the Immortal Phoenix Singing Troupe (Xianfeng Ming Jutuan 仙鳳鳴劇團, 1956 – 1969). After their own troupe was dispersed, they assisted their disciples to found the Chufeng Ming Jutuan.

²⁸⁰ With regard to the plot of the play *Dinü Hua*, Princess Changping 長平公主 was the elder daughter of Emperor Chongzhen 崇禎皇帝 (r. A.D. 1628 – 1644), the last emperor of the Ming dynasty. She fell in love with Zhou Sixian 周世顯 (a young official). Emperor Chongzhen betrothed Changping to Shixian. Hence, Shixian became the imperial son-in-law. They were separated when they escaped from the Forbidden Palace after the downfall of the Ming dynasty. Later, they were reunited at the Weimo Nunnery 維摩庵. The Qing government soon discovered the nunnery and sent troops there to capture them. Changping and Shixian had no choice but to pretend to surrender to the Qing court. The imperial couple returned to the Forbidden Palace again and the Qing emperor was very pleased to see them. They asked the Qing emperor to arrange a national funeral for the late Ming emperor and release the Crown Prince (Changping's younger brother) of the late Ming dynasty. The Qing emperor promised to do so. After the funeral, Shixian and Changping committed suicide by taking poison under the flowered camphor tree. Their spirits ascended to the Heavenly Palace and lived happily together forever (Tang 1957, 92).

²⁸¹ The main theme of this play is about a filial son whose mother is seriously sick. He prays to Heaven for her full recovery.

²⁸² Gai Minghui is a disciple of Lin Jiasheng 林家聲 (a distinguished Cantonese opera actor of civil-military roles).

Before the ritual begins, the traveling image of the goddess was physically transferred from her temple to the seat of honor in a special shrine facing the performance hall. Members of the troupe, such as Lin Jiasheng 林家聲 (a distinguished actor of civil-military roles)²⁸³ and Wu Meiying 吳美英 (an actress of principal female roles), took part in the performance that lasted five nights and four days (from the twenty-first to the twenty-fifth of the third month). After the Cantonese opera performance was completed, *Hailufeng* and *Chaozhou* plays were staged in order to entertain Tian Hou and both the Hailufeng and Chaozhou spectators.

Moreover, in his PhD thesis, “Cantonese Puppet Theatre: An Operatic Tradition and Its Role in the Chinese Religious Belief System,” Alan L. Kagan states that in Hong Kong, Cantonese rod puppetry and marionette plays of the Hakka tradition, which spread to Hong Kong from southwestern Fujian, were staged in ritual operatic series at birthday celebrations of local deities (such as Tian Hou and Guanyin) before and during the late 1970s. These puppet performances usually took place at Causeway Bay, Sai Kung (Xigong) 西貢, Shek O (Shi’ao 石澳), or Cheung Chau (Changzhou 長洲) (Kagan 1978, 40 – 85). Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the marionette theatre of the Hakka tradition has now died out in Hong Kong.

3.2.2. Rites for Purification

The main purpose of the Rites for Purification (*jiao*), which are held at regular intervals, is to provide community rebirth and renewal. They function to exorcise evil elements by accumulating the *yangqi* 陽氣 and weakening the *yinqi* 陰氣 of the local communities. Most of these festivals are mounted once every seven or ten years. In some cases, however, they are organized once every thirty or sixty years. In southeast China, *jiao* rites are performed by Zhengyi Daoists or local vernacular priests. Operas or puppet shows are often staged in connexion with this community festival. Not much is known about the details of *jiao* in Qingshui Township of central western Fujian. As far as I know, these rituals are sometimes performed on deities’ birthdays by local vernacular priests of the Yujia Jiao 瑜珈教 (Tantric Sect), a sub-sect of the Lüshan School.²⁸⁴ *Xiaoqiang* or *Han* opera and *Daqiang* human opera

²⁸³ Lin Jiasheng is a disciple of Xue Juexian (one of the five great masters in the history of Cantonese opera).

²⁸⁴ The Yujia Jiao, which is also known as the Sect of the Sage Lord Zhang (Fazhu Gong Jiao 法主公教), has been very popular in central and southern Fujian (such as Yongtai, Youxi, Datian and Yong’an), and Taiwan Island. Vernacular priests of this sect worship the Most High Old Lord (Taishang Laojun), the Celestial Master, and Xu Xun as their patriarchs. They also honor the Sage Lord Zhang mentioned in Section 3.2.1. as the most venerable ritual Lord. At Qingshui Township in Yong’an City, a Yujia priest usually puts on a black gown and a monk hat for civil rituals.

are staged for the enjoyment of the local gods. Marionette troupes seldom take part in these large-scale community festivals.

With regard to the situation of Hakka areas in southwestern Fujian, large-scale communal *jiao* rituals are not often held today, though some religious practices have been resumed since the early 1980s. Nevertheless, before the early 1950s, the *jiao* was widely celebrated among the Hakkas in this region. For instance, the three Duke-kings who Demonstrate [Their] Efficacy (Xianying Gongwang 顯應公王)²⁸⁵ are worshipped as tutelary deities of the Baisha Town in Shanghang County. The Temple of the Guardians for the Crown Prince (Taibao Gongwang Miao 太保公王廟), which is situated at the interaction of Wutian 梧田 Village and Tangfeng 塘豐 Village, is dedicated to them. This temple was first constructed around A.D. 1711 (possibly earlier) and was demolished in 1958. A new temple was built at the original site in 1993. Their images and tablets are placed at the main altar of the temple. Local villagers commonly address them as Xianying Fuzhu Taibao Da Gongwang 顯應福主太保大公王 (the Eldest Duke-king, who is the Blessing Lord and Guardian of Efficacy), Xianying Fuzhu Taibao Er Gongwang 顯應福主太保二公王 (the Second Duke-king, who is the Blessing Lord and Guardian of Efficacy) and Xianying Fuzhu Taibao San Gongwang 顯應福主太保三公王 (the Third Duke-king, who is the Efficacious Blessing Lord and Guardian). Their birthdays fall on the first, the twentieth and the twentieth-first of the fifth month. Before the 1950s, *jiao* festivals were often held in winter at the temple once every five years.²⁸⁶ These grand celebrations, which lasted seven days and eight nights, involved about thirty-eight different surnames living in fifty-three natural villages. Thousands of inhabitants took part in the rites. In most cases, seven monks and nine nuns were hired to recite sutras. According to Liang Lizhong (one of my informants and a villager of the Shui Zhu Yang Natural Village in Baisha), eight priests of the Furen Jiao (Lady Sect) of the Lüshan School were hired to perform a series of liturgies, such as inviting the deities (*yingshen* 迎神), preparing the sacred altar (*jietan* 結壇), dispatching the Memorial (*fabiao* 發表),²⁸⁷

²⁸⁵ According to local beliefs, these gods were three of the thirteen adopted sons of Li Keyong 李克用 (A.D. 856 – 908), a sinicized Turk who assisted the Tang court by leading the Shatuo 沙陀 Tatar troops to suppress the Huangchao 黃巢 Revolt. With regard to the origin of this cult, a local villager of Shanghang, whose surname was Li 李, took the spirit tablets of the deities with him when he returned to the county from Zhejiang (Yang 1996, 70). Later, the Temple of the Guardians for the Crown Prince was built.

²⁸⁶ Some inhabitants said that the *jiao* rites took place once every three years.

²⁸⁷ Before the 1950s, the date and time of this large-scale communal festival were announced to the local deities in the rite *fabiao*.

hoisting the Flag (*yangfan* 揚幡),²⁸⁸ reciting the Three Official Canons (*nian Sanguan Jing* 唸三官經),²⁸⁹ making offerings (*shanggong* 上供), saving solitary ghosts (*dugu* 獨孤), lowering the flag (*xiefan* 謝幡), and seeing off the gods (*songshen* 送神). These vernacular priests also demonstrated their supernatural abilities by climbing up the blade ladder (made of fifty blades) and sitting in meditation on a very high platform. Moreover, both *Gaoqiang* and *Luantan* marionette plays were presented for three consecutive days. Due to professional etiquette, vernacular priests would stop their rites when the marionette players were presenting onstage. While they were performing rituals, the marionettists would stop their performances. As a result, villagers could take part in the *jiao* as well as watching the marionette plays.

Besides the large-scale festival mentioned above, members of individual villages also arranged small-scale *jiao*. For example, *jiao* rituals took place once every year at Zhongyang 中洋, Pengxin 朋新, Chengxia 城廈, Jiatian 甲田, Tulou Ping 土樓坪, Wutian 梧田, Bisha 碧砂, Fufu 扶福, and Dake 大科. At Lingbei 嶺背, Zhangheng 章橫, Fengyuan 豐源, and Zaokang 早康, they were held twice a year. With regard to Tangfeng 塘豐 and Wugang 梧崗, *jiao* rites were organized three times a year (Yang 1996, 73). Since these village-level rites were held frequently before the 1950s, images or tablets of the Gongwang seldom resided in their temple at that time because all of them would be invited to other villages by devotees.²⁹⁰ This tradition no longer exists today. Ye Mingsheng and I visited the Taibo Gongwang Miao (Temple of the

²⁸⁸ This flag functioned to attract the attention of the local gods and exorcise all evil spirits.

²⁸⁹ The peace and prosperity of a place would be disturbed by the increased numbers of evil elements, such as hungry ghosts and demons, mainly due to the sins of the local people. Thus, the *Sanguan jing* was chanted in order to purify the area and request the forgiveness of the Heavenly Emperor, the Earthly Emperor and the Water Emperor who control the three realms (heaven, earth and water).

²⁹⁰ Besides the *jiao* rituals mentioned above, grand celebrations were also held at the Temple of the Guardian for the Grown Prince during Chinese New Year. Before 1949, these rituals took place on the third and the sixth of the first month. They were organized by two local organizations: the Fugang 福綱 and the Chaogang 潮綱 (the Fuzhou Association and the Chaozhou Association). Before and during the Republican Era, the Fugang and the Chaogang were guilds of the local scholars and Chaozhou merchants of Guangdong respectively. In Baisha, local scholars and merchants enjoyed superior intellectual or economic status. In order to protect their own interests, local scholars founded the Fugang and the Chaozhou merchants formed the Chaogang. On these two days, thousands of people living in fifty-three natural villages dressed up and went to the Gongwang temple, where they offered incense and candles to the deities. Both men and women were active worshippers. Local leaders, government officials and elders also participated in the ceremonies. According to local traditions, the Fuzhou Association took charge of the ceremony on the third day. Eight pigs were major sacrificial items. These pigs were cleaned and carried to the temple. After measuring their weight, the pigs were slaughtered and offered to the deities. The sacrificial meat was distributed to the members of the convoy according to their shares (*gufen* 股份) in the organization. However, each member still had to pay 2/3 of the market price for their own portions. In the ceremony, the organization used a lottery to select pig raisers for the celebration of next year. The Chaozhou Association was responsible for the ceremony on the sixth day. Six pigs were raised and offered to the gods. Similar to the celebration on the third day, sacrificial meat was distributed to the members according to their shares in the organization. Pig raisers were also selected by lottery (cf. Yang 1996, 73 – 78).

Guardians for the Crown Prince) on August 8, 2004. The temple attendant told us that though *jiao* rituals have been revived in recent years, they are arranged on a very small scale in comparison with those that took place before the 1949 Revolution. There are no marionette performances staged in the *jiao* nowadays.

In Hong Kong, theatrical activities are often associated with *jiao* festivals. In my opinion, the most well-known *jiao* in Hong Kong today is the Rites for Peace and Purification [under] the Patronage of the Great Emperor of the Mysterious Heaven (Xuantian Dadi Taiping Qingjiao 玄天大帝太平清醮), which takes place on Cheung Chau 長洲 (Changzhou) Island. This celebration, which is commonly known as the Cheung Chau Bun Festival, is held once every year at the beginning of the fourth lunar month. The rites and theatrical activities take place in an open space near the Temple of the Northern Emperor (or the Great Emperor of the Mysterious Heaven). The dates for the festival are not fixed but chosen by the deity through divination. With regard to the history of the temple, Tanaka Issei states:

The origin of the Temple of the Northern Emperor goes back to the mid-Qing period, when people from Hailufeng of Huizhou Prefecture went to the Ancient Temple on Mt. Xuanwu to invite the incense fire of the Supreme Emperor of the Mysterious Heaven in the forty-second year of the Qianlong reign period (1777). Later, in the forty-eighth year of the Qianlong reign period [1783], people from Huizhou and Chaozhou [elected] Lin Yuwu (a native of Guishen County of Huizhou Prefecture) to be the chief leader and built the temple, which was then renovated by people from Huizhou Prefecture in the third year [1823] [and] the eighteenth year of the Daoguang reign period [1838], [and] the eighth year of the Xianfeng reign period [1858]. It is said that [the temple underwent] the fourth renovation in the twenty-ninth year of the Guangxu reign period (1903). This time, owing to lack of money, [the Huizhou natives] began to ask the people from Guangzhou Prefecture to join the renovation. In the beginning the worship organization was only formed by people from Huizhou and Chaozhou. It was not until the twenty-ninth year of the Guangxu reign period that people from Guangzhou Prefecture also took part in the [organization and] the [participants]

from [all these] three prefectures (Guangzhou, Huizhou [and] Chaozhou) founded an alliance²⁹¹ (Tanaka 1981, 67).

The Cheung Chau Bun Festival has been carried out by Hailufeng, Chaozhou and Cantonese groups since the late Qing period, when serious disasters often occurred on the island. Some inhabitants of Cheung Chau also believe that the *jiao* first took place at the Victoria Peak district on Hong Kong Island. “Many people died in this overcrowded district when it was hit by bubonic plague. A Hailufeng resident took the Beidi [Northern Emperor] out from his own domestic altar, put the deity on the street, and asked that the pestilence be stopped. Other residents offered incense and prayers. After sometime, the disease subsided.” (Choi, 1995: 110) In order to placate ghosts and exorcise evil spirits, a *jiao* was celebrated annually at the district. Nevertheless, owing to the tightening of the fire prevention laws, this festival was later transferred to Cheung Chau. Before the ceremony, temporary shelters, altars and a theatrical hall are built in the open space near the Temple of the Northern Emperor. His effigy and images (or tablets) of other local gods, such as Guanyin, Guandi (Lord Guan), Pak She (Beishe) Tian Hou 北社天后, Tai Shek Hau (Dashi Kou) Tianhou 大石口天后 and Nam Tam (Nandang) Tian Hou 南丞天后, are put on sedan chairs and transferred to the temporary deity sheds by the representatives of the organizing committee. The Cheung Chau boat people take the image of their patron deity (Hongsheng) to the ritual area themselves. Hailufeng priests of the Zhengyi Tradition are hired to perform a three-day *jiao*, during which all the inhabitants must abstain from meat and only vegetarian food is available on the island. Within these three days, a series of Daoist liturgies are performed, including *kaiguang* 開光 (opening eyes ritual for paper images), *yang fangan* 揚幡竿 (hoisting the nine flagpoles), *qingshen* 請神 (inviting the gods), *sanchao sanchan* 三朝三懺 (three offerings and three repentances), *nian Sanguan Jing* 唸三官經 (reading the Three Officials Canon), *ji shuiyou* 祭水幽 (feeding the hungry ghosts in water),²⁹² *qian huachuan* 遣花船 (sending off the flower boat),²⁹³ *banfu* 頒符 (distributing the

²⁹¹ 北帝廟の由來は清中期にさかのぼるもので乾隆四十二年（一七七七）に惠州府海陸豊出身者が故郷惠州府の玄武山古廟にゆき、玄天上帝の香火を請迎したのがはじまりであるという。やがて、乾隆四十八年に惠州、潮州の二郡出身者が惠州府歸善県出身者の林郁武を正総理として、廟宇創建し、その後は、道光三年、同治十八年、咸豊八年にわたり何れも惠潮府出身者により重修された。つづいて光緒廿九年（一九〇三）に第四次重修があり、この時、費用不足の故をもってはじめて広州府出身者に加入を求めたという。祭祀組織も、当初は惠潮二府出身だけで構成されていたが、光緒廿九年に至って、広州府出身者を加え、広惠潮三府連合の形となった。

²⁹² In order to feed the water ghosts, the Hailufeng Daoist priests recite scriptures and the local people throw a lot of food into the sea.

talismans),²⁹⁴ *fangsheng* 放生 (freeing captive animals), *chaoyou* 超幽 (feeding the hungry ghosts),²⁹⁵ *xiefan* 謝幡 (lowering the flagpoles) and *songshen* 送神 (sending off the deities). Residents of Cheung Chau and devotees from other different places make offerings at the Temple of the Northern Emperor. The climax of the festival is the scramble for the buns. In their book, *Chinese Festivals in Hong Kong*, Barbara E. Ward and Joan Law offer the following description concerning this popular activity before and during the late 1970s:

The central features of this festival are three huge conical bamboo and paper towers – about sixty feet tall – each one covered all over with layer upon layer of pink and white buns. Each bun is a part of the grand offering to the ghosts which is one of the main purpose of the festival, and also a symbol of good fortune and a talisman against sickness for whoever is lucky enough to obtain it.

The towers dominate the festival and the distribution of the buns at midnight on the last night is the climax towards which everything moves. At midnight, after the ghosts have had their fill of the spiritual essence of the buns, the congregation is invited to scramble for the material remains. A concerted rush by all the young men present carries some right to the top and leaves others spread-eagled across the surface of the towers, stripping buns as fast as they can. In about three and a half minutes there is nothing left but scaffolding and torn paper...(Ward 1995, 42)

Since one of the bun towers collapsed during the competition in 1977, the scramble was prohibited from 1978 to 2004. Buns were distributed to all the people. The rite of scrambling for the buns was resumed in 2005.²⁹⁶ For reasons of public safety, there were only twelve competitors participating in this exciting game in 2005. In order to entertain the local deities and

²⁹³ In his article, “Reinforcing Ethnicity: The *Jiao* Festival in Cheung Chau (published in 1995),” Choi Chi-Cheung writes that in the rite *qianchuan*, a flower boat (made of paper) filled with unclean objects and a duck that symbolizes impurity is sent off to the sea. The Chinese character “*ya* 鴨 (duck),” which is pronounced as “*uup*” in Cantonese and “*ahh*” in Hailufeng dialect, is “phonetically close to danger or bad luck.” (Choi 1995, 119) These polluted objects are being sent towards the boat people’s area.

²⁹⁴ According to the article “Reinforcing Ethnicity: The *Jiao* Festival in Cheung Chau,” a Daoist priest would distribute talismans (*banfu*) primarily to the Hailufeng and Chaozhou people in the rite. He cuts the comb of a cock and lets the blood drip onto the talismans. [Those so] blessed, the Huizhou [Hailufeng] and Chaozhou people, will paste the talismans on the main door and kitchen of their homes or carry them on their bodies for protection.” (Choi 1995, 119) The cock symbolizes the spirit of life (*yang* 陽) and the duck mentioned above represents inauspiciousness and uncleanness (*yin* 陰). By throwing the duck away and receiving the cock’s blood, local people believe that they can obtain good luck and get rid of misfortune.

²⁹⁵ In the *chaoyou* rite, many food and paper clothes are offered to the wandering ghosts that gather around the ritual area. The Dashi Wang 大士王 (King of the Ghosts) that is represented by a large paper image dominates the whole procedure. This paper effigy is also burnt at the end of the ritual.

²⁹⁶ In 2007, the buns for competition was made of plastic.

the audience, leaders of the organizing committee employ both Cantonese opera and *Hailufeng* opera troupes to perform on this auspicious occasion. The *jiao* rituals are usually accompanied by Cantonese operatic series that stretch over five days and six nights. After the completion of the *jiao* and the Cantonese opera performances, *Hailufeng* opera actors start their performances that last for two days and three nights. Besides the theatrical performances, the procession is also a spectacular sight. Effigies of the deities are put in their respective sedan chairs and carried around the entire festival area. “The stars of the parade are youngsters who dress in costumes with heavy make-up and are tied to an intricate system of rods and wires and float above the heads of the crowd.”²⁹⁷ Except for the boat people’s area (Sai Wan or Xiwan 西灣), the procession winds through the narrow streets of Cheung Chau. The whole island is full of activity and all the residents and visitors have a very joyful time.

The Deng [Tang] lineage 鄧氏²⁹⁸ of Kam Tin (Jintian 錦田) in Yuen Long (New Territories, Hong Kong) holds a seven-day *jiao* once every ten years. In his article, “The Dang of Kam Tin and Their Jiu Festival (published in 1989),” Chan Wing-hoi records this complex festival that took place in 1985 (the year *yichou* 乙丑). As Professor Elizabeth Johnson summarizes:

In 1985, Kam Tin held a *ta tsiu* [*dajiao* 打醮] festival, as it does every ten years...The *ta tsiu* was an expensive commitment, costing about \$1,000,000 in all, paid for by villagers’ subscriptions and lineage trusts. The festival was organized by the Tang [Deng], through a painstaking system of selecting ritual representatives by casting divination blocks. Resident outsiders were included in the festival, but could not be organizers. Their names were also listed and read out, but in separate categories from the Kam Tin Tang. Neighboring villages participated by sending congratulatory banners and by visiting the site with their lion or unicorn dance teams. They were formally received by Kam Tin elders.

A matshed was built for the main rituals, which were performed by four hired Taoist [Daoist] priests. After the seven days of the festival, opera

²⁹⁷ For a brief description of the Bun Festival, please see the following website: http://www.yourrooms.com/hong_kong_hotels/festivals.htm

²⁹⁸ In his article, “The Five Great Clans of the New Territories,” Hugh D. R. Baker says that the ancestors of the Dengs first inhabited in Yuen Long around A.D. 973. Their first village was Kam Tin. In the early thirteenth century, one branch of the lineage moved from Kam Tin to Ping Shan 平山. Later, another branch hived off to Ha Tsuen. Around A.D. 1368, some lineage members left Kam Tin and settled in Lung Kwat Tau and Tai Po Tau (Daputou 大埔頭). The Dengs own large pieces of land that are suitable for paddy-growing (Baker 1966, 28).

performances were held in the matshed for five days. During the festival itself, puppet operas were given on a special stage.

Among the main events of the festival were the posting of the memorial with participants' names, a procession around the villages to pay respect to the gods, a similar procession to a related village and to Yuen Long for the same purpose, a procession with the King of Ghosts, and offerings to ghosts on the last night. For the third procession, a huge paper image of the King of Ghosts was carried by a large number of young men, accompanied by a gong, through the villages, first the North Side and then the South Side. Its purpose was to exorcise evil things, and the face of the image was pointed towards places where such things might be. At the end of the ceremonies and the opera performances, all the gods who had been invited were escorted back to their shrines (Johnson 2000, 187 – 188).

This event took place again in the year *yiyou* 乙酉 (2005), when Cantonese-speaking Daoists were hired to perform a series of liturgies. They were priests of the Zhengyi Sect (*nahm mouh lo* 喃嘸佬). After the seven-day *jiao*, Cantonese opera was staged in the temporary hall. Cantonese rod puppetry was also held on a special stage.²⁹⁹

3.2.3. Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year (from the first to the fifteenth of the first month) is a time of universal celebration and family reunion. People worship deities and ancestors, kowtow or bow to senior members of their families, give red packet money to their juniors, and visit their relatives and friends with gifts. Operatic series are often staged during this annual festival for entertaining divine and human spectators. For example, at Gufang Village 古坊 of Zhongdu Township 中都鎮³⁰⁰ in Shanghang County (southwestern Fujian), the Temple of the Five Manifestations (Wuxian Gong 五顯宮), which stands at the water exit of the village, is dedicated to Huaguang Dadi or Huaguang Gongwang 華光公王 (the Duke-King of the Five Manifestations). Qianli Yan (Thousand-li Eye) and Shunfeng Er (Favorable-wind Ear) are the two adjuncts of Huaguang. Images of these three deities are placed at the main altar of the temple. The Wuxian Gong,

²⁹⁹ With regard to a depiction of the Kam Tin *jiao* Festival in 2005, please see the following websites: <http://www.yl.hk/kamtin/index.htm>; http://corp.mus.cuhk.edu.hk/html/Program/2005/sgq2005_06-12.htm

³⁰⁰ Zhongdu Township is on the south of Shanghang. Gufang is “situated five *li* from the township market center of Zhongdu.” It is a multi-lineage village inhabited by the Hakka and the She. The Zhangs 張氏 and the Zhongs 鍾氏 (She people) have settled in the village since the early fourteenth century. Besides Zhongdu Township, Huaguang is also worshipped as *Gongwang* (Duke-King) in other areas of southwestern Fujian.

which was constructed around the late Ming period and was rebuilt three times during the Qing dynasty, was torn down during the Cultural Revolution and renovated again in the 1990s. Before the 1949 Revolution, the most important event was the *Gang Gongwang* 扛公王 (Carrying the Duke-King) Rite, which took place in the first month. In the rite, images of Huaguang and his two assistants were placed on their respective sedan chairs and carried around the whole territory in a procession. Accompanied by music and a roar of firecrackers, the procession entered the village and stopped at thirty-six points, where all the villagers (both Hakka and She) offered sacrifices to the gods and welcomed them with kowtows. After the parade, *Han* operatic series were performed for the enjoyment of gods and people. As Lao Gewen 勞格文 (John Lagerwey) notes:

...Huaguang, the patron saint of the entire village [Gufang], is referred to locally either as the “one-footed demon king” or the Gongwang of the Five Manifestations (Wuxian)...The biggest local event was the procession of Huaguang on 1/15. It was organized on a rotating basis by four sectors (*jia* [甲]),³⁰¹ each of which was trans-lineage. After the parade, which stopped at some thirty offering points in the village, Huaguang was rushed back to his “temporary palace” to watch *Han* opera until the 17th, when he was brought back to his Wuxian palace [temple] (Lagerwey 1998, 12).

Though theatrical activities sometimes continued to take place at the temporary stage until the nineteenth day of the first month, images of the deities would be taken back to the temple on the seventeenth day. A large pig was killed inside the temple and offered to the gods. Local leaders and other honorable guests took part in a banquet in order to celebrate this auspicious occasion. The seats in front of the stage were divided by a passage running through the middle. Owing to the principle of gender segregation, male and female spectators must sit separately. Anyone who violated this rule would be severely punished. It is important to point out that in a certain year before 1949, local representatives hired a marionette troupe to stage performances since they were unable to invite a *Han* opera troupe at that time. As a result, many disasters occurred in the district. Villagers thought that marionette performances were unorthodox theatrical activities. Huaguang was provoked by these poor performances. He demonstrated his efficacy by giving them punishments. Even fowls and dogs were not left in peace. Hence, local leaders dare not to arrange marionette performances in this annual ritual

³⁰¹ Members of each sector formed an association (*ganghui* 綱會) and possessed a ritual field.

anymore. Although the *Gang Gongwang* Rite no longer exists today, Huaguang is still worshipped as the most venerable tutelary god in Gufang Village of Zhongdu Township. Besides him, the Three Immortal Masters, the Heavenly Empress, Guanyin and the True Immortal of the Five Cereals mentioned above are also popular deities within the region (Zhong 1998, 143 – 184).

Today, in Baisha of Shanghang (southwestern Fujian), *Luantan* and *Gaoqiang* marionette plays are often performed for entertainment during the New Year celebrations. For instance, when I interviewed Wang Rongchang 王榮昌,³⁰² the impresario of the Troupe of the New Splendid Hall (Xinhua Tang 新華堂), on August 9, 2004, he told me that he and his troupe are often very busy throughout the first lunar month since they have to present marionette plays in local villages (Mary Yeung's notes). In usual cases, funds for hiring the marionettists are donated by each family in the community. The operatic series usually last several days and nights. Only auspicious repertoires are performed at the New Year. With regard to the situations of central western Fujian, Wang Hua, the impresario of the Wanfu Tang (the Hall of Ten Thousand Happiness) Marionette Troupe of Huang Jing Shan in Qingshui Township, said that he and other troupe members often stage performances in local villages and two neighboring counties (Youxi and Datian) in the first lunar month. Preparations for the performance usually start one month before the New Year period. In order to contact the host family or representatives of local communities, Wang Hua would first send an assistant to different areas within his performing territory. This man often takes the scripts along with him since local leaders (or host families) would like to choose their favorite *Luantan* and *Gaoqiang* marionette repertoires. Moreover, he also discusses with them the cost and the duration of the shows. At Fengtian Administrative Village in Qingshui (central western Fujian), the Fengtian Daqiang Troupe, which is formed by members of the Xings and the Xiongs, often present *Daqiang* operatic performances at the Yuqian Tang 雨錢堂 (the Hall of Raining Money),³⁰³ the ancestral hall of the third branch of the Xiong lineage, on the fifteenth day of the first month. (Mary Yeung's notes; Liu 2002, 111)

³⁰² Wang Rongchang is a native of Caixia Village 彩霞村 in Panjing Township 泮境鄉. He is a disciple of Ceng Ruilun, the most prominent *Gaoqiang* marionettist in Baisha district, Shanghang.

³⁰³ The Xiong lineage is divided into five branches. The ancestral hall of the third branch is known as Yuqian Tang 雨錢堂 (the Hall of Raining Money). Once upon a time, a lineage member who was an honest and upright official passed away. He left no money for his own funeral. Suddenly, rain and copper coins came down in torrents. Members of the Xiong lineage believed that Heaven bestowed this money upon his family. Hence, they named their ancestral hall as Yuqian Tang in order to express their gratitude to Heaven.

In Hong Kong, opera performances are often associated with New Year ceremonies, which are mainly organized by the Hakka. For example, the *Chūgoku saishi engeki kenkyū* 中国祭祀演劇研究 (*Ritual Theatres in China*, by Issei Tanaka and published in 1981) states that before the early 1980s, the Lins 林氏 (a Hakka lineage) of Shek Po Tsuen 石埗村 (a walled village) in Yuen Long 元朗 held the Grand Colorful Lantern Festival (*Denghua Dahui* 燈花大會) every year in the first month (from the fourteenth day to the seventeenth day). In this annual celebration, festive lanterns were hung in the ancestral hall and the temporary theatre hall. The main entrance of the village and the shrine of the God of the Locality (Tudi 土地) were also decorated with lanterns. The performance hall, which stood directly opposite the ancestral hall, was erected at an open space outside the main entrance of the walled village. Gods and ancestors were invited to watch the operatic series, which stretched over three days and four nights (Tanaka 1981, 644 – 650).³⁰⁴ In addition, Sam Mun Tsai 三門仔 is a village situated at Tai Po 大埔. Before and during the 1980s, it was mainly inhabited by the Hakka (land people) and the Cantonese (boat people). Villagers celebrated Chinese New Year and the Birthday of the Great King (Dawang 大王)³⁰⁵ at the beginning of the first lunar month (from the second day to the sixth day). These annual rites were often accompanied by lion dances and Cantonese opera performances. Nevertheless, Daoist priests were not hired for these rituals. Besides the Dawang, all deities of the nearby areas were invited to the village to watch the plays. In 1987, the New Year performance of this village that lasted three days and four nights, was staged by the members of the Troupe of the Colorful Dragon and Phoenix (Cai Longfeng Juntuan 彩龍鳳劇團), such as Yuan Zhaohui 院兆輝 and Yin Feiyan 尹飛燕. This New Year rite still exists in Sam Mun Tsai today. From the second to the fourth of the first month, the Colorful Phoenix Singing Troupe (Caifeng Ming Jutuan 彩鳳鳴劇團) was hired to stage Cantonese opera in 2004. Actors and actresses, such as Liu Huiming 劉惠鳴, Deng Meiling 鄧美玲 and Li Mingheng 李名亨, took part in the performance.

3.2.4. Ghost Festival

³⁰⁴ In Guangdong, *Han* opera is performed in the northern and northeastern parts of the province. These areas are native places of most Hakkas in Hong Kong. However, owing to the influence of Cantonese culture, *Han* opera is not popular in Hong Kong. Hence, many Hong Kong Hakkas hire Cantonese opera troupes for ritual performances. Moreover, the operatic series that are staged for Cantonese communities usually stretch over four days and five nights. In normal cases, however, the performance for the Hakka only last three days and four nights (Tanaka 1981, 647 – 648).

³⁰⁵ Similar to the function of the *Zunwang* (Venerable kings) or *Gongwang* (Duke-Kings) in the villages of western Fujian, the Dawang is a tutelary god who guards Sam Mun Tsai Village.

The Ghost Festival is also known as Yulan Festival or Zhongyuan (Middle Origin) Festival.³⁰⁶ According to Chinese beliefs, hungry ghosts (*gui* 鬼) are restless spirits of the dead “who are angry because they died unjustly or their graves have been neglected.” (Overmyer 1986, 121) They often cause problems in order to take revenge and draw people’s attention. The seventh lunar month is a particularly dangerous time, when the gates of purgatory stand open and the ghosts are free to wander about in the world of the living. In order to placate them, Chinese people offer them gifts in household and communal rites. In addition to restless spirits, ancestors are also objects of worship in the Ghost Festival. Today, Mulian operatic series are performed during the seventh month in southeastern Fujian. In Hakka areas (such as Shanghang) of southwestern Fujian, however, the tradition of performing Mulian marionette plays in the Ghost Festival died out during the late 1920s and the early 1930s when the region became the initial staging base of the Chinese Communist Party. In central western Fujian (such as Qingshui Township of Yong’an district), Mulian operas and marionette plays are not performed in the Ghost Festival, as far as I know (Mary Yeung’s notes). The reason for this is unknown and more studies have to be done in order to clarify this point.

The Ghost Festival is widely observed by people in Hong Kong. They worship their ancestors in front of their household altar. In addition, they offer sacrifices, such as spirit money, incense, candles, ducks, cooked rice, tea, and wine, to the hungry ghosts beside the pavement. Besides these family rites, large-scale community rituals are held everywhere in Hong Kong. For instance, in the article “Yaumatei and the Yulan Festival,” Chiu Hang-shi says:

...In Hong Kong over sixty communal Yulan celebrations take place every year in temporary structures of bamboo and zinc sheets, built in open areas such as playgrounds or football fields. Some are organized by associations of Hoklo people (about eight) and some by associations of Cantonese people (again about eight). However, the majority of these large-scale communal celebrations in temporary structures – about fifty every year – are mounted by associations of Chiu Chow [or Chaozhou] people...(Chiu 1999, 152)

³⁰⁶ The origin of the Yulan Festival (the fourteenth of the seventh month) is closely related to the Buddhist story Mulian Rescues His Mother (*Mulian jiumu*). There are three Daoist Origin Festivals. These are the Shangyuan 上元 (Upper Origin) Festival, the Zhongyuan Festival (the fifteenth of the seventh month) and the Xiayuan 下元 (Lower Origin) Festival. The Shangyuan Festival is associated with the Heavenly Official (Tianguan 天官), the Zhongyuan Festival with the Earthly Official (Diguan 地官), and the Xiayuan Festival with the Water Official (Shuiguan 水官). Since the Earthly Official is connected with the dead, the Zhongyuan Festival is a festival for the deceased (cf. Chiu 1999, 151).

Relatively small-scale communal rites also take place in many temples. Most of them are organized by Cantonese people. Chiu Hang-shi records the Yulan Festival of the Yaumatei 油麻地 Chiu Chow Association that took place in 1996 (from the twelfth to the fifteenth of the seventh month). He explains that since Yaumatei was an area where many people died during the Second World War, the Chiu Chow wharf coolies started this annual public charitable work for the hungry ghosts. The festival held in 1996 took place at a park in the district. On the twelfth day, Tianhou; Tian, Di, Fu, and Mu 天地父母 (Heaven, Earth, Father and Mother); and other deities were invited to the festival site in a procession. The incense burner, which was available for auction every year, was also brought back by the procession. Government officials were invited to attend the ritual. Members of a Buddhist Society for Scripture Recitation (Nianjing Foshe 唸經佛社) were hired to chant Buddhist scriptures, such as the Amitābha Sutra and the Great Compassion Repentance text (Chiu 1999, 157). It is important to point out that none of the members of this Buddhist society were monks. Many of them were trained as performers in opera troupes. The climax of the festival was the sending of offerings, such as spirit money and food, to the hungry ghosts. The whole procedure was dominated by the Tai Si Wong (or Dashi Wang 大士王),³⁰⁷ which was represented by a huge paper figure. On the fifteenth day, representatives of the Yaumatei Chiu Chow Association offer sacrifices to all the deities who presided over the rites. They also distributed rice (a catty or two) to anyone who came to the festival site. It is believed that this rice could bring good fortune. Moreover, Chaozhou operatic series were performed during this four-day festival. It was put on for the enjoyment of deities, ghosts and people. Both civil and military plays were staged in order to suit every different taste of the audience. As Chiu Hang-shi explains:

The opera creates an environment rich in sound and sight, with a bustle of noisy and happy people. A successful opera shows that the Festival at large is successful, and that the association organizing it is financially sound enough to take care of the expenses (about a hundred thousand dollars for the opera alone in 1996, not including the construction of the temporary theatre in which it was performed) – in other words, the opera helps give the Chiu Chow community and its leaders “face” within the broader Yaumatei community (Chiu 1999, 155).

Besides the Chaozhou people, the Hailufeng or Hoklo people also mount annual rites in the Ghost Festival, which is often accompanied by operatic performances. For example, in

³⁰⁷ The Tai Si Wong who serves as a policeman in the rite is believed to be a manifestation of Guanyin.

Chapter Five of the *Chūgoku gōson saishi ken'yū: Chihōgeki no kenkyō (Village Festivals in China: Backgrounds of Local Theatres*, published in 1989), Tanaka says that the Hailufeng people in Chai Wan 柴灣 on Hong Kong Island hired Hailufeng Daoist priests to perform the *jiao* ritual at the beginning of the seventh month (from the first day to the third day). The Ancestral Father and Mother (Xianren Gongma 先人公媽),³⁰⁸ the Tian, Di, Fu and Mu, the Ancestral Buddha of the Great Saint (Dasheng Fozu 大聖佛祖),³⁰⁹ the Three Origin Officials (Sanguan 三官), Tian Hou, and Bogong 伯公 (Granduncle) were invited to the festival site to preside over the rites. The funds for the festival are not only donated by the Hoklos but also by Cantonese people living in the community. From 1966 to 1987, operatic performances were staged by *Hailufeng* operatic troupes. Cantonese operatic troupes were hired for ritual performances from 1988 onwards. However, since there is no suitable site for the performance in recent years, neither *Hailufeng* opera nor Cantonese opera is put on during the Ghost Festival that takes place at Chai Wan.³¹⁰

3.2.5. Ancestral Worship

Ancestors are spirits of the dead within the same patrilineal groups whose relationships with their descendants are based on blood ties. In comparison with deities, they are relatively weak, though some of them can be elevated to become local gods. They are “transformed by funeral and memorial rituals into sources of blessing for descendants” (Overmyer 1986, 120). In order to request the blessings of their ancestors and uphold the principle of filiality, people in southeast China often make regular offerings to their ancestors that are held at ancestral halls, home altars and graves. In southwestern and central western Fujian, ancestral cults that take place at halls are often associated with marionette performances and other kinds of entertainment.

Daping Li 大平里 Natural Village of Dajin Administrative Village in Baisha Town (southwestern Fujian) is inhabited by the Ceng lineage 曾氏, which is further sub-divided into three branches. One of my informants, Mr. Ceng Ruilun (the impresario of the Huacheng Tall Marionette Troupe), is a member of this lineage. The ancestral hall of the Cengs was built in the

³⁰⁸ This deity, who is also known as the Immortal Father and Mother (Xianren Gongma 仙人公媽) or the Sacred Father and Mother (Shengren Gongma 聖人公媽), is considered by the Hailufeng people as their common ancestral god (Tanaka, 1981: 763).

³⁰⁹ The Dasheng Fozu is the Monkey King (Sun Wukong 孫悟空).

³¹⁰ The University of Hong Kong conducted the Hong Kong Oral History Archives Project in 2003. Mr. Ngai Leung Cheung 魏娘章 was one of the informants of this project. He gave interviews on October 18 and October 23, 2003. Details of these interviews are copied on CDs. In an interview on October 18, 2003, Mr. Ngai gave an oral account of this point. Mr. Ngai is Mary May Ying Ngai's 魏美英 father. Mary (a PhD Candidate in the Department of Asian Studies, UBC) has these CDs. She kindly lent them to me. I am very grateful to her for her support and help.

middle of the Qing dynasty (around the nineteenth century) and was partly destroyed by fire in 1978. The veneration of ancestors here was forced to stop from the 1950s to the late 1970s. From 1978 to 1990, regular worship that took place at the hall and the tombs was held once a year on the day of the spring equinox (*chunfen* 春分). Nevertheless, this rite has been carried out twice a year since 1990 mainly because *chunfen* is a busy time in farming. The lineage Headman and the branch headmen take charge of managing the worship. Each family sends one man to participate in this regular offering. All the families share the responsibility for contributing money and food. In the rite, a simple elegiac address is read; sacrifices, including chicken, duck, fish, glutinous rice balls, bean curd, fruit, wine, tea, candles, spirit money, and bundles of incense are offered. The lineage headman and all other participants kowtow towards the spiritual tablet³¹¹ of their ancestors. Most sacrificial items mentioned above are prepared by the families that have newly born sons. Other families offer whatever they like. After the ceremony, women are allowed to enter the hall and offer incense to the ancestors. In addition to the hall worship, the Cengs also visit the tombs or graves of their ancestors on the day of the spring equinox. Worship at tombs is often performed after the hall worship. The Lineage Headman and the Branch Headmen lead the lineage members to six tombs to worship their common distant ancestors. Besides removing weeds, offering sacrifices and performing kowtows, lineage members also worship the Deity of the Earth (Houtu 后土), and sprinkle the tombs with the cock's blood for purification. After paying tribute to the distant ancestors, the Branch Headmen and their members visit the graves of the branch ancestors. Furthermore, in order to entertain themselves and the ancestors, opera troupes, musicians and marionette troupes are hired to perform at the ancestral hall. Some of these entertainments, such as the marionette plays, usually stretch over two or three consecutive days. In recent years, young lineage members have not been satisfied with traditional operas, so lineage elders have replaced operas or marionette plays with movies in order to suit their tastes. At the end of the ceremony, a large banquet is held in the ancestral hall. Members of the Ceng lineage who reside in other villages are also invited to join the feast.

³¹¹ With regard to Cantonese lineages in Hong Kong, tablets of distant ancestors are placed at the main altar of an ancestral hall. It is important to point out that each male ancestor and his wife are represented by one tablet. Hence, many spiritual tablets are found in the ancestral hall of a Cantonese lineage. However, unlike the Cantonese traditions, all the distant ancestors of a Hakka lineage (both in Guangdong and Fujian) are only represented by one large tablet, which is placed at the main altar of an ancestral hall.

Wang Shenzhi 王審知, a ruler of the Min Kingdom, is considered to be one of the founding ancestors of the Wang lineage in Qingshui Township of central western Fujian. As the *Local History of Qingshui Township (Qingshui xiangzhi*, printed in 1989) says:

The revered lord Wang Shenzhi and his [two] brothers showed deep filial respect to their parents. They brought their mother (*née* Xu 徐氏) to Guangkeng 光坑 (originally known as Kungang Jing 昆崗境; present-day [Guangkeng Natural Village 光坑自然村], Longwu [Administrative] Village 龍吳行政村, Qingshui Township.) where the Ancestral Hall of the Silk Bag (Luodou Ci 羅兜祠) stands nowadays. They lived there for three years. The revered lord Wang Shenzhi and his mother, Lady [Wang] (*née* Xu), are the founding ancestors of the Wang lineage of the Luodou Ci at Guangkeng (YSQX 1989, 426).³¹²

As mentioned in Section 2.2. of Chapter Two, Wang Hua (the impresario of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe in Huang Jing Shan of Qingshui) and his two sons (Wang Maoman and Wang Maoyuan) are the descendants of Wang Shenzhi. I interviewed Wang Hua at his home on April 24, 2003. He told me that the annual ancestral worship of the Wang lineage is held on the eleventh day of the eighth lunar month at the Ancestral Hall of the Silk Bag that was renovated in 1981. The portraits of Wang Shenzhi and his two brothers (Wang Shenchao 王審潮 and Wang Shenbang 王審邦) are placed at the main altar the hall. This grand rite is organized by the lineage committee. Members of the Wangs who live in other areas of Fujian, such as Anxi, Jinjiang 晉江, Yong'an and Sanming 三明, donate money for the worship. Some of them even travel to Qingshui to take part in the ritual. A banquet often takes place at the hall after the rite. Marionette plays are sometime staged at the ancestral hall for the enjoyment of the ancestors and the lineage members. Over 100 members of the Wang lineage participated in the ceremony in 1998. The Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe performed the play *Eight Hundred Years of Life (Babai Shou 八佰壽)*³¹³ for entertainment (Liu 2002, 101 – 103; Mary Yeung's notes). Besides the Han, Qingshui Township is also occupied by the She people. For example, the Zhongs 鍾氏 (a She lineage) that reside in Baiqi Qiu 百芑丘 Administrative Village offer regular sacrifices to their ancestors at the Qingming Jie 清明節 (Clear and Bright Festival). Zhong Yongkang 鍾永康 (an elder of the Zhong lineage and Wang Hua's brother-in-law) said that before the 1950s this

³¹² 王審知公昆仲事親至孝，攜其母親徐氏在光坑(原名昆崗境今屬青水鄉龍吳村)羅兜祠居住下來，為時三載，王審知公暨其母徐氏夫人，為光坑羅兜祠王氏開基始祖。

³¹³ For a detailed description of the play *Babai Shou*, please see Section 5.5. of Chapter Five.

annual rite was accompanied by three types of entertainment. Members of the second branch performed *Xiaoqiang* opera repertoires and those of the fourth branch sang *Daqiang* arias. Gunpowder operated puppetry was also displayed for amusement by the fifth branch. As far as I know, large lineages in Hong Kong do not arrange operas for their ancestors in spring rites or Qingming Festival.

3.2.6. Occasional Events

In central western and southwestern Fujian, marionette plays are also related to irregular rites. First, marionette plays, such as the *Babai Shou* (Eight Hundred Years of Life), are sometimes performed at birthday banquets for the enjoyment of the elderly persons whose birthdays are being celebrated. These performances, which are arranged by individual families, usually take place at ancestral halls or main halls of the hosts' houses. Second, in southwestern Fujian, marionette performances are also associated with the Rite for Installing the Dragon (*Anlong* 安龍) when new houses or temples are completed. The main aim of this ritual is to invite the local *fengshui* dragon to reside in these new constructions. In normal cases, a *Gaoqiang* marionette troupe is hired for a five-day performance. The rite *Anlong* was banned after the early 1950s but has revived recently (Lagerwey 1994, 318).

Third, since the living conditions are still backward in western Fujian today, many inhabitants (both male and female) in these mountainous areas have to deal with many problems, such as sickness, childbirth difficulties, and natural disasters. In order to overcome these difficulties, they pray to their patron deities for assistance. In return, they offer marionette plays and other kinds of sacrifices as gifts to the gods. For example, Chen Qiju 陳其桔 is a peasant of Houde Cun 厚德村,³¹⁴ which is a natural village of Huangcheng Administrative Village 黃城行政村 in Shangjing Township 上京鄉 at Datian County 大田縣 (central western Fujian). One day in 1985, a fire broke out when Chen Qiju and his uncles cleared a hillside for cultivation. He immediately requested the Great King Jiao Mang 蕉蟒大王 to put out the fire. In return, he promised to offer the marionette play *Duxian Ji* 度仙記 (the Story of Delivering an Immortal)³¹⁵ as a gift to the deity. Since his economic conditions improved in 2000 (the year *gengchen* 庚辰), he decided to redeem his vow or promise (*huanyuan* 還願) and invite the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe of Huang Jing Shan in Qingshui Township for a three-day performance. Mr. Wang Hua chose an auspicious time for the ritual after consulting the almanac and calculating

³¹⁴ Houde Natural Village is twenty-five kilometers from Huang Jing Shan Village in Qingshui Township.

³¹⁵ For a summary of the play *Duxian Ji*, please see Appendix Five of this thesis.

the eight characters (*bazi* 八字)³¹⁶ of Chen Qiju and his family members. The ritual, which took place at the main hall of Chen's house, stretched over three days (from the ninth to the eleventh of the eleventh month). In the morning of the first day, the Wanfu Tang troupe arrived at Chen's house. A temporary stage was erected at the main hall and an altar was set up in front of the stage. The image of Tian Gong (Lord Tian), incense burners and sacrificial items were placed at the altar. In order to purify the stage and the ritual area, Wang Hua performed the Rite for Sealing the Stage (*Fengtai* 封台).³¹⁷ After the rite was finished, the marionettes of Jiao Mang and his two subordinates (Huanghou 黃猴 and Baitu 白兔) were placed at the center of the stage. Wang Hua sent a memorial to invite Lord Tian, the Three Ladies and the Great King Jiao Mang to the ritual area. Jiao Mang, who was represented by a banana tree, was invited to the altar in a procession. Accompanied by percussion music and firecrackers, Wang Hua and the other participants in the procession went to the place where the banana tree grew. Seeds of tea-oil trees were burnt and the banana tree was removed from the soil. They brought the banana tree and the ash of the tea-oil-tree to Chen Qiju's home. The ash was put inside an incense burner which stood at the altar in front of the stage, and the banana tree was placed at the side of the altar. Afterwards, Wang Hua murmured the following incantation:

I sincerely invite the Heavenly King. The Heavenly King that has merit for protecting the people was originally a sacred animal of the *si* 巳³¹⁸ palace. Being delivered and transformed into a human being by Guanyin, he appeared in the Grotto of the Red Cliff [and soon] married into the Liu family. Immortal Master Canghai 倉海仙師 transmitted the true methods [to him].

Possessing infinite supernatural power, I (The Heavenly King) save thousands of people. Huang Hou 黃猴 and Bai Tu 白兔 are my generals. Yang Tong 楊通 and Li Shi 李石 are my soldiers. Anyone who is in great danger begs me for help. I myself quickly descend to the mundane world.

³¹⁶ This method of fate extrapolation was initiated by Xu Ziping 徐子平 in the Northern Song dynasty. His theory determines fate according to the stem-branch combinations of one's horoscope. That is, any given horoscope should consist of four pillars (the year pillar, the month pillar, the day pillar and the hour pillar). Each of them is designated by a composition of one heavenly stem and one earthly branch. The four pillars altogether comprise of eight characters (four stems and four branches). This fate calculation technique is known as the Ziping system, the method of the four pillars (*sizhu fa* 四柱法), or the judgment of the eight characters (*pi bazi* 批八字).

³¹⁷ Please refer to Section 5.4. Chapter Five for a detailed description of the Rite for Sealing the Stage.

³¹⁸ "Si" is the sixth of the twelve Earthly Branches. It represents the snake among the Twelve Animals (*Shi'er Shengxiao* 十二生肖).

Quickly! Quickly! I act in accordance with the order of the Great Sage of the Heavenly King! (Liu 2002, 146)³¹⁹

After he recited this Incantation of Jiao Mang, Wang Hua said, “The Heavenly King Jiao Mang is present (*Jiao Mang Tianwang dao* 蕉蟒天王到).” The marionettist who manipulated Jiao Mang’s marionette onstage had to answer “Present (*dao* 到)!” After all these liturgies were finished, Chen Qiju held a banquet at his home on the afternoon of the first day. Many of his relatives and friends attended the feast. The Wanfu Tang troupe performed the first section of the *Duxian Ji* in the evening. The second and the third sections of the play were staged in the afternoon and evening of the second day. On the third day, the fourth and the fifth sections were presented. The marionette players put on the last section of the performance in the afternoon of the fourth day. Wang Hua performed the Rite for Rewarding the Army (*Shangjun* 賞軍) after the shows ended. Members of the Chen family offered incense, tea, wine, fish, a cock, fruit and candles, and spirit money to all the tutelary deities. Then, these gods were sent off and the banana tree was taken back to its original place (Liu 2002, 142 – 155).

In Hong Kong, Cantonese opera troupes are sometimes hired to perform on special occasions. For instance, when Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen 陳國源 (an advisor of Cantonese operatic art and a prominent designer of Cantonese opera costumes) assumed a leading position in the administrative committee of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong (Xianggang Bahe Huiguan) some years ago, he invited Cantonese opera actors to present the auspicious play *Tiao Jiaguan* 跳加官 (Dance of Promotion) in a banquet for the celebration of this happy event. In addition, the Worship of the White Tiger (*Ji Baihu* 祭白虎), an exorcistic play of Cantonese opera, is occasionally performed in the opening or inauguration ceremonies of new temples and buildings. It is believed that this play functions to ward off evil spirits and demons. For example, in her excellent article, “Not Merely Players: Drama, Art and Ritual in Traditional China,” Barbara Ward says:

...In 1975 at Sai Kung [Xigong 西貢], in Hong Kong’s New Territories, a development comprising several modern blocks of shops and high-rise flats was declared open in an official ceremony, which included the (also symbolic but hardly magical) act of cutting a red, white and blue ribbon performed by a high-

³¹⁹ 謹請天王，天王護民有功，原是巳宮之神獸，觀音點化得成人，赤壁洞中現身處，劉家招婿結姻緣，倉海仙師傳正法，法力無邊救萬民，黃猴白兔是我將，楊通李石是我兵，有人急難來禱請，親身迅降到凡間。吾奉天王大聖救急急如律令!...

ranking member of the British administration. On the preceding evening the actors already engaged to perform operas in the town in connexion with a temple festival were asked to perform the [Worship of] the White Tiger [*Ji Baihu*]...(Ward 1979, 32)

Moreover, Ward also explains that the main purpose for performing the White Tiger was to purify the new buildings which were situated at “reclaimed land where people had never lived before...In other words, the players were acting here as exorcists for the community, not at all for themselves: like priests.” (Ward 1989, 32) With regard to the details of this play, Ward also notes:

...Suddenly the musicians broke into a distinctive rhythm on percussion alone and a black-faced, black-beard male-role figure entered stage right bearing aloft in his right hand a three foot stave from which dangled a string of exploding fire crackers...He ran straight across (upstage, in front of the backcloth), off stage left and then immediately round backstage and on again stage right, without the firecrackers, to take up a pose on top of the table (centre front stage) facing stage left with the stave held at the ready...There then entered, stage left, a crouching figure clad in a fairly close-fitting yellow costume with a long tail and a grinning cat-like mask: the White Tiger. Running on all fours, the Tiger came down stage left to the front where he discovered a piece of raw pork and mimed eating it. Meanwhile the god descended from his mountain and took up an attacking pose and the two proceeded to fight until the blackfaced figure overcome the Tiger, bestrode his prostrate body, and then fitting his mouth with a kind of bit made of metal chain – obligingly produced by the property man at the right moment – rode him off backwards, up stage left. As the two disappeared, a rather ragged shout come from behind the backcloth, the property man came forward to remove a row of chairs which had been placed along the front of the stage, and the orchestra immediately struck up the first notes of the usual opening performance... (Ward 1979, 30 – 31)

In sum, the local customs and ritual operatic traditions mentioned in Chapter One still exist in southeast China today. In the Mainland, these rites and practices were discouraged or banned after the 1949 Revolution. Nevertheless, they have been revived to some extent since the early 1980s. Ritual performances in Hong Kong have continued to flourish without any

interruptions. In both western Fujian (southwestern and central western) and Hong Kong, ritual operatic series are performed on important or auspicious occasions. These are deities' birthdays, Rites for Purification (*jiao*), Chinese New Year, Ghost Festival and other irregular worship. In Hong Kong, Cantonese opera series are not performed in annual ancestral sacrifices, such as Qingming (Clearness and Brightness) Festival and Chongyang (Double Nine) Festival. However, people in western Fujian usually offer marionette plays as gifts to their ancestors in annual worship.

CHAPTER FOUR

Religious Beliefs and Practices of Cantonese Opera Performers

Cantonese opera professionals observe many occupational taboos, and offer regular and occasional sacrifices to their patron deities and deceased colleagues. In Mainland China, these religious practices were banned by the Chinese government, especially during the Cultural Revolution. Though some of these customs have been revived since the early 1980s, the tradition of holding large-scale celebrations on the birthday of Master Huaguang (the most venerable deity of Cantonese opera profession) no longer exists. In Hong Kong SAR (one of my study areas), these occupational traditions are still preserved up to the present time. The main aims of this chapter are to examine the legends of the occupational deities of the Cantonese opera profession and the details of the annual worship of these gods, which have been held by the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong (Xianggang Bahe Huiguan), a work union of the Cantonese opera profession in Hong Kong since 1953.

4.1. Taboos for Cantonese Operatic Performers

A taboo is a strong prohibition or restriction that excludes something from use, approach, or mention because of its sacred and inviolable nature. This term, which is derived from the Polynesian word “tabu,” often has specific religious or ritual associations. Anyone who violates such bans or restrictions is subject to both social and supernatural punishments. Cantonese opera actors (or employees) have to observe many taboos that are related to their profession. These taboos or restrictions can be classified into two major types: general taboos and feminine (or gender) taboos. General taboos are adopted to constrain the behavior of both male and female troupe members. Feminine taboos are specially imposed on women in Cantonese opera.

As mentioned in Appendix Three, *hongchuan* (red boats) were an important form of transportation for Cantonese opera troupes in the Pearl River Delta before the late 1930s. Most of the troupes that traveled in red boats were male troupes.³²⁰ According to the professional

³²⁰ Though Cantonese operatic female troupes were formed in the early twentieth century, it is important to point out that only the four big female troupes could afford to travel in red boats. These four troupes were the Qunfang Yanying 群芳艷影 (Beautiful Shadows of the Myriad Flowers), the Jinghua Ying 鏡花影 (Mirrored Images of the Flowers), the Jin Chaiduo 金釵鐸 (the Golden Hairpins and Bells) and the Qionghua Ying 瓊花影 (Shadows of the Beautiful and Fragrant Flowers). Besides performing in the commercial theatres, these female troupes also staged opera performances in rural areas of Nanhai 南海, Panyu 番禺 and Shunde 順德. They usually went there by traveling in red boats. For other small female troupes, they only presented their performances on the roof of large department stores, at large teahouses, and in private mansions. When a female troupe traveled in red boats (the Heaven boat and the Earth boat), it usually comprised approximately sixty members, including actors, musicians and a number of property men, cooks, laundry men, barbers and boatmen. It is important to emphasize that female troupe members to a great extent outnumbered the male troupe members.

precepts of the Cantonese opera profession, women were not allowed to bestride the deck of a red boat. If the deck was walked across by women, all the troupe members had to purify it by burning paper ingots, incense and candles (Wu 1993, 19). Besides this feminine taboo, troupe members had to observe a number of general taboos when they went on red boats. For instance, they were prohibited from swimming and fishing in the rivers. Otherwise, the minor military roles would make mistakes and hurt each other in their performances. Red boats were also known as dragon boats and the carp was believed to be the incarnation of the dragon. Therefore, all troupe members were not allowed to eat carp (Wu 1993, 19 – 20). When eating other kinds of fish, they were forbidden to turn the fish upside down (a gesture that symbolized the sinking of a boat). In an interview on September 15, 1995 that took place at the garden outside the Department of Asian Studies (UBC), Ms. Chen Shaozhen 陳少珍 (a prominent Cantonese opera actress of principal female roles in Guangzhou) told me that troupe members who lived in red boats were prohibited from saying “*dai jiezi* 帶戒子 (wearing rings),” a metaphorical expression for a boat striking on a rock (Mary Yeung’s notes). Furthermore, troupe members should avoid urinating everywhere in the wild. Even if they needed to do so, they must say “excuse me” beforehand. Otherwise, they would cause big troubles for themselves. In his work, *Liyuan huajiu diyi er ji* 梨園話舊第一、二集 (*Pear Garden Discussions of Old [Traditions]*, 2 Vols.), Master Wong Toa states that during the early twentieth century, Xin Shilun 新世倫 (an actor of principal young male roles) had a disciple called Li Chang 李昌. Both of them often went on red boats. One night, when their troupe staged ritual performances in Taishou (Toi Shan 台山), Li Chang went ashore and urinated somewhere near the red boat after he prepared a nighttime snack for his master (Xin Shilun). Nevertheless, he forgot to say “excuse me” before excreting urine. As a result, this unwanted or unclean substance was sprinkled on some wandering ghosts. After their performance ended, Xin Shilun and other troupe members looked everywhere for Li Chang. They found that he was eating mud and grass in a swamp. Xin Shilun and his colleagues believed that he was possessed by ghosts or evil spirits. Da’niuju 大牛俱 (an actor of supporting painted face roles)³²¹ held Li Chang’s middle finger tightly with a pair of chopsticks. Speaking through Li’s mouth, the wondering ghosts said that they were polluted by his urine. Da’niuju immediately promised to offer a lot of sacrifices to them if they were willing to forgive Li Chang. After a while, Li recovered his consciousness and the senior troupe members made

³²¹ According to common beliefs of the Cantonese opera profession, an actor of supporting painted face roles is a representative of the White Tiger in a troupe. He has nothing to be superstitious about (*baiwu jinji* 百無禁忌).

him eat a lot of uncooked water chestnuts. He had a bad attack of diarrhea for three consecutive days and nights. Grass and mud were emptied from his bowels. The next morning, Da'niuju ordered Li Chang to burn a lot of spirit money and make regretful acknowledgement of his fault. A few days later, however, Li Chang suddenly spoke incoherently and all the troupe members believed that he was possessed by the ghosts again. Xin Shilun had no choice but to take Li back to his parents who lived in Guangzhou (Wong 1998, 5 – 6).

During the 1940s, *panting* 盤艇 (basin boats or vessels)³²² were a major transport means of the mixed troupes.³²³ Troupe members who traveled on basin boats also had to observe the general taboos mentioned above. For example, they were not allowed to eat carp, say inauspicious words, and fish and swim in the rivers. In addition, there were feminine taboos imposed on female troupe members. As Ms. Chen Shaozhen recalled and dictated:

The bow of a basin boat was known as the dragon head. It was a sacred place for worshipping the deities. Thus, unlike their male colleagues, actresses and other female troupe members were prohibited from entering the basin boat from the bow, something which was commonly called “*qi longtou* 騎龍頭 (riding on the dragon head).” They were only allowed to enter the boat through the side windows. Moreover, it was strictly forbidden to give birth on the boats (Mary Yeung's notes).³²⁴

Besides red boats and basin boats, Cantonese opera performers also need to observe many taboos in performing halls (both temporary and permanent) or theatres. Some general and feminine taboos are directly related to the purification rites for new stages. Before and during the 1940s, *guoshan ban* (cross-mountain troupes), which were very active in southwestern Guangdong, often staged the Great Ritual for Initiating the Stage (*Da Potai* 大破台)³²⁵ when a theatre or a permanent hall was a new one that had never been used for operatic performances. The main aim of this exorcistic play/rite was to purify the new stage. Mr. He Jianfeng 何劍鋒 (an actor of the supporting painted face role) stated that before the performance of this ceremony, all troupe members were strictly prohibited from chatting inside or outside the performance hall or theatre. Women never participated in this ritual since they were considered to be polluted. He

³²² The basin boat was a form of transportation for Cantonese opera troupes during the 1940s. The tradition of traveling in basin boats had gradually died out after the late 1940s.

³²³ Mixed troupes have been popular since the 1930s. A mixed troupe includes both male and female members.

³²⁴ 盤艇的船頭稱作龍頭，是供奉神明神聖的地方，所以，跟男同事不同，女演員和其他團員被禁止從船頭進盤艇，俗語叫作騎龍頭，她們只准從旁邊的穿口進入盤艇；還有，在船上嚴禁分娩。

³²⁵ In my opinion, this tradition was adopted from the ritual practices of opera troupes in Guangxi.

also emphasized that if an actor failed to thrust his halberd through the ceiling of the stage, all the troupe members would run away and refuse to stage the performances since they believed that the whole stage was completely occupied by evil spirits that were too powerful to be exorcised. The tradition of the *Da Potai* has died out in southwestern Guangdong since the 1950s. Instead of the *Da Potai* mentioned above, Cantonese opera troupes that were active in the Pearl River Delta before the 1949 performed the exorcistic play *Ji Baihu* 祭白虎 (the Worship of the White Tiger), which is also known as *Jitai* 祭台 (Offering to the Stage), *Tiao Xuantan* 跳玄壇 (Dancing the Black Altar), *Tiao Caishen* 跳財神 (Dancing the God of Wealth), *Xuantan Fuhu* 玄壇服虎 (The Black Altar Subdues the Tiger), *Damao* 打貓 (Striking the Cat), or *Potai* 破台 (Initiating the Stage), to drive away evil elements from a new performing site where theatrical activities had never taken place. This tradition no longer exists in the Mainland today. However, Cantonese opera troupes in Hong Kong continue to uphold this custom. In his excellent work, *Shengong yueju zai Xianggang* 神功粵劇在香港 (*Ritual Performances of Cantonese opera in Hong Kong*), Chan Sau Yan says that there are a number of taboos related to this exorcistic play or rite. For example, actresses are prohibited from taking part in the performance. Within a few hours before the performance, people who are not members of the troupe have to retreat from the performing site. All troupe members would remain silent before this play is finished. They are strictly forbidden to speak other persons' names before the execution of the play. Otherwise, the person whose name has been spoken would be hurt by the White Tiger. (Chan 1996b, 51). Moreover, in a face-to-face interview on November 28, 1996 in Hong Kong, Ms. Leung Sum Yee Summy 梁森兒³²⁶ told me the following experience concerning the Worship of the White Tiger:

Once upon a time, the Cantonese Opera Troupe of the Han Customs (Hanfeng Yueju Tuan 漢風粵劇團) performed in the Queen Elizabeth Gymnasium. I was a member of the troupe at that time. Since the gymnasium had never been used for Cantonese opera performances before, the play (or rite) *Ji Baihu* was executed in order to purify the stage. Before the rite or performance started, all of us hid quietly at the backstage area. I also informed the new

³²⁶ Ms. Leung Sum Yee is an experienced actress of civil-military roles and excellent teacher of Cantonese opera. On May 26, 1994, she formed the Hong Kong Cantonese Opera Workshop 香港粵劇工作坊, which was renamed Kim Sum Cantonese Opera Company 劍心粵劇團 on September 30, 1996. Then, its name was again changed to Kim Sum Cantonese Opera Company Ltd. 劍心粵劇有限公司 on April 28, 1999. One of Ms. Leung's great contributions to the profession is that she teaches the performing skills to the younger generation. Many of her students are children and teenagers.

performers that they should not call other persons' names. However, an experienced percussionist suddenly called my name. I was quite unhappy. I did not know why he violated this taboo. Since he was my senior, I thought for a while and responded to him. After becoming a research assistant of Dr. Chan Sau Yan, I had more opportunities to witness the *Ji Baihu*. I realized that nowadays, most of the Cantonese opera performers still observe the taboo of "shutting the mouth" before and during the performance of this rite or play. Nevertheless, some younger actors do not pay much attention to this taboo (Mary Yeung's notes).

A ritual operatic series that takes place at the temporary hall usually lasts four days and five nights. Today, this kind of ritual performance is still very popular in Hong Kong. On the opening evening of the performance, troupe members are not allowed to chat and put on makeup until the principal comic role actor has written "*daji* 大吉 (great auspiciousness)" on a board surrounded with flowers or on a big pillar near the stage right rear. This rite is known as *kaibi* 開筆 (the beginning of makeup). The character "ji" should be written as "吉" instead of "吉." Otherwise, the performers would be unable to open their mouths. All actors are strictly prohibited from practicing their voices until the auspicious play *Liuguo Fengxiang* 六國封相 (Six States Invest a Prime Minister) has been performed. Otherwise, they would lose their voices or forget their texts and melodies in their performances.

In the *Liyuan huajiu diyi er ji* (*Pear Garden Discussions of Old [Traditions]*, 2 Vols.), Master Wong Toa says that "Whenever the [play] *Yeshen Guohuai* 夜審郭槐 (the Night Trial of Guo Huai)³²⁷ is staged, the minor role actors who impersonate the small ghosts should avoid

³²⁷ The Night Trial of Guo Huai was a story about Judge Bao (A.D. 999 – 1062) who wiped out an imperial concubine's disgrace. During the reign period of Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 (r. A.D. 998 – 1022) of the Northern Song dynasty, one of his concubines, *née* Li 李妃 (Imperial Concubine Li), gave birth to a son. However, his another concubine (*née* Liu 劉妃) plotted against Li by ordering Guo Huai to swap her son with a civet. Li was expelled from the palace by the emperor. Later, some loyal female court attendants secretly took this child to the home of His Royal Highest (the eighth brother of Emperor Zhenzong). When the child was about eight years old, the Emperor conferred the title of Crown Prince on him. He was raised up by Imperial Concubine Liu 劉妃. After Emperor Zhenzong died, the Crown Prince ascended the throne and became the fourth emperor, Renzong 仁宗 (r. A.D. 1023 - 1063), of the Northern Song. One day, Judge Bao (Bao Gong 包公) met Imperial Concubine Li at the Caozhou Bridge and discovered that she was framed by Imperial Concubine Liu. Bao Gong promised to try his best to rehabilitate her status and reputation. Since the wicked Guo Huai was a major witness and criminal of this crime, Judge Bao got Guo drunk and then disguised himself as the King of Hell. After he sobered up, Guo thought that he was in Hell. He confessed his sins and told the truth since he was afraid of being confined in the purgatory forever. Guo Huai was put to death and Imperial Concubine Liu was taken to the cold palace, where disfavored queens and concubines were banished. Emperor Renzong reunited with Imperial Concubine Li.

looking at the mirrors after they wear the masks. Otherwise, they would discover innumerable ghosts in the mirrors which scare them out of their wits.” (Wong 1998, 10)³²⁸

Moreover, there are also general taboos related to stage properties. For example, players and other troupe members should not trample on battle axes and long melon-shaped mallets. In both ritual and theatrical performances, these stage weapons have to be used in pairs. They can only be used for showing one’s glory and Cantonese opera actors are forbidden to use them for fighting. Otherwise, they would bring troubles upon themselves. Furthermore, troupe members are prohibited from kicking the costume and miscellaneous trunks³²⁹ in the backstage area. Otherwise, they would lose their voices (Wong 1998, 11).

Besides the general taboos mentioned above, female troupe members also have to observe some feminine (or gender) taboos in performance halls or theatres. For instance, during menstruation and pregnancy, they should not have any contacts with the sacrificial items for the worship of their patron deities. They can only show their respect to the gods by bowing in front of their images that are placed at the altar. According to Ms. Summy Leung, pregnant actresses were prohibited from performing onstage in the past mainly because they were considered to be polluted. Today, however, no one observes this precept. In addition, after purifying their bodies, female performers in Cantonese opera can impersonate deities when menstruating. The main reason is due to the consideration of the survival of the Cantonese opera troupes. In an interview on September 27, 1995 at her daughter’s home in Burnaby (Canada), Ms. Chen Shaozhen explained that economic benefit is the vital interest of all the members of a troupe. The existence of the troupe mainly depends on the support of the audience. Many of the female performers are their idols. Thus, they are willing to spend money to watch the performances of their favorite actresses. If these actresses are periodically absent from performances due to menstruation, their fans would not spend money to buy tickets. As a result, no one is willing to hire the troupe (Mary Yeung’s notes).

From the early twentieth century up to the present time, women in Cantonese opera are still strictly prohibited from sitting on the deity trunk in the backstage area and any other places. As Master Wong Toa states:

13 凡演「夜審郭槐」，手下扮小鬼戴了面具，切忌照鏡，否則會在鏡中發現無數鬼魂，便嚇到魂不附體。
³²⁹ According to the Cantonese operatic traditions, costumes are kept in the costume trunks. Miscellaneous trunks are used to store helmets and other small stage properties, such as lanterns, cups, and stationery.

If a female role has mistakenly sat on the top of the deity trunk (this trunk stores the tablets of the masters) or has wrongly stepped on the husk powder³³⁰ bucket (the [paper] tablet of Master Zhang Qian 張騫 is stuck on this bucket),³³¹ the miscellaneous trunk uncle³³² would give a white beard to a black beard [role] and provide an ink tray instead a wine-cup tray for the stage without any reason. Therefore, the miscellaneous trunk uncle is very afraid of female roles walking near the deity trunk since it is a sacred place which should not be bestrode and polluted (Wong 1998, 11)³³³

Before and during the early twentieth century, men often played female roles in Cantonese opera performances.³³⁴ After putting on their costumes and makeup, they were also required to observe the taboo mentioned above since they were considered to be women at that time.³³⁵

Moreover, there are two feminine taboos directly related to the traditions of the Cantonese opera guilds. As mentioned in Section 2.2. of Chapter Two, the Bahe Huiguan (the Guild of the Eight Harmonies) in Guangzhou was formed in A.D. 1899. During the Republican era, the guild's function remained unchanged, though its name was altered several times. Many activities of the guild members were banned by the Chinese government after the 1950s. In the history of the Bahe Huiguan, all the chairpersons were men and male players who performed female roles also had no right to occupy this post. In Hong Kong, from 1953 to 2007, nine

³³⁰ Husk powder is made by burning the husks of grain. In a Cantonese opera show, actors of martial art roles spread this kind powder on their hands, costumes and soles in order to prevent themselves from slipping on the stage when they perform somersaults.

³³¹ Master Zhang Qian or Zhang Wu 張五 is one of the five patron deities of the Cantonese opera profession. Please refer to Section 4.2. of this chapter for a brief description of his legend.

³³² The miscellaneous trunk uncle is a troupe member who takes charge of the stage properties.

³³³ 要是女角坐錯在神箱(此箱乃藏師傅神位用)或錯踏牙灰桶上(此桶貼有張騫師傅神位)的話，雜箱叔會無端端將白鬚給與黑鬚戴，明明台口用酒杯盤，會錯給筆墨等等；所以雜箱叔最忌女角行近神箱，因為神聖所在，不容跨騎污蔑之意。

³³⁴ This practice had gradually died out after the 1930s when the ban on mixed troupes was removed during the early 1930s.

³³⁵ As mentioned in the main text, actors of female roles were regarded as women after they had put on their costumes and makeup. Thus, they were also forbidden to sit on the deity trunk. However, it is important to point out that the male performer who played the character of Taohua Nü 桃花女 (The Lady of the Peach Blossoms) did not need to observe this taboo. Taohua Nü is a female character in the *Yuhuang Dengdian* (The Jade Emperor Ascends the Hall). During and before the early 20th century, the actor who acted as Taohua Nü was not constrained by this feminine taboo mainly due to two reasons. First, from the performers' view point, the actor who impersonated this character had an equal status with their occupational deities since Taohua Nü is a deity in the *Yuhuang Dengdian*. Secondly, performing this character was very tiring for the actor since he had to wear heavy armor and shoes representing bound feet. After putting on these shoes, he would be very exhausted since he had to stand and walk on tiptoe. Therefore, he was allowed to lean on the deity trunk while waiting to ascend the stage at stage right rear.

people were elected to the post of chairperson of the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan (the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong). All of them were men. The first woman who occupied this leading post was Wang Ming Chun 汪明荃 (a famous star and an actress of principal female roles).³³⁶ Moreover, in Hong Kong, members of the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan have held grand celebrations on the birthday of Master Huaguang since the early 1950s. Each year before his birthday rite, a male member would purify his two images (big one and small one). This “sacred task” that takes place at the main hall of the headquarters of the association is never performed by a female member since she is considered to be unclean.³³⁷

4.2. The Five Patron Deities and Other Tutelary Gods

As noted earlier, in southeast China the religious traditions of performers of various kinds of traditional opera can be characterized as polytheistic. They often honor a group of patron gods. In normal cases, one is worshipped as the primary (or main) deity and the others are considered to be associated or adjunct deities. Cantonese opera employees pay tribute to five occupational deities. Among them, Huaguang Shifu (Master of Splendid Brightness) or Master Huaguang is the most venerable one. The Two Masters of Field and Hollow (Tiandou Ershi), Grandfather – Lord Tan (Tangong Ye) and Zhang Wu Shifu or Zhang Qian Shifu (Master Zhang Wu or Master Zhang Qian)³³⁸ are worshipped as associated deities. The worship of Huaguang, which originated from Wuyuan of Huizhou (present-day Jiangxi), has been popular in different parts of south China, such as Anhui, Guizhou, Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong and Guangxi since the late Ming period (or possibly earlier). Huaguang is not only an occupational god of the performers but also a tutelary deity of the local people. Today, at the headquarters of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong, the large seated effigy of Master Huaguang is placed at the large altar in the main hall. His image wears an official robe and a crown. The main feature of the deity is that he has three eyes. His effigies are also found in the headquarters of many Cantonese opera troupes. The term “Tiandou 田竇” first appears in the *Tang Xianzu quanji, di'er ji 湯顯祖全集(二)* (*A Collection of [the Writings of] Tian Xianzu*, Vol. 2, [Ming]

³³⁶ Wang Ming Chun left the post in 1997. The present chairperson is Chan Kim Sing 陳劍聲, who is a prominent actress of civil-military roles. She has been elected five times to this post (1997 – 1999, 1999 – 2001, 2001 – 2003, 2003 – 2005, and 2005 – 2007). It is important to point out that though women would not be elected to the post of chairperson, Ms. Liang Yanfang 梁燕芳 (whose stage name is Fang Yanfen 芳艷芬), has been the permanent honorary president of the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan up to the present time. She is a distinguished actress of principal female roles. Before she retired in the late 1950s, she donated a flat to the association. The site of the former organization building was located in this flat. In order to express their gratitude to her, Cantonese opera employees have honored her as the permanent honorary president of their guild.

³³⁷ For a brief depiction of this rite, please see Section 4.3. of this chapter.

³³⁸ Besides the Cantonese opera profession, people who practice the Yongchun style 詠春派 (a kind of martial art) also worshipped Zhang Wu as their patron god (<http://www.singpao.com/20030729/feature/419078.html>).

1973). Its origin is also related to the *Huitu sanjiao yuanliu soushen daquan (wai erzong)* 繪圖三教源流搜神大全 (外二種) (*An Illustrated Comprehensive Collection Concerning the Deities and Origins of the Three Religions, and Two Other Records*). Tiandaou Ershi are represented as young boys. Their images usually stand at the left and right sides of Master Huaguang's effigy (see Figures 4.1. and 4.2.). Let us take a look at the legends of these five patron deities of the Cantonese opera profession.

With regard to the legend of Huaguang, the *Jin Wah Sing yishu yanjiu* 振華聲藝術研究 (*A Research into the Art of Jin Wah Sing*) states:

...His birthday is on the twenty-eighth day of the ninth lunar month. He is the God of Fire in Heaven who received an order from Yuhuang Dadi 玉皇大帝 (The Jade Great Emperor) to descend to the mortal world and investigate why *Yuhuang Dengdian* (The Jade Emperor Ascends to the Hall) was being performed among ordinary people. [Yuhuang instructed Huaguang that] if they had spoken of wrongly of the Heavenly Palace, he could immediately burn down [their stage]. Huaguang descended to the mortal world [and] perceived that the operas they performed were reprimanding villains and protecting the state. [There were] no derogatory remarks about the Heavenly deities at all. Therefore, he did not burn down [their stage]. The performers were grateful to him for his preservation of [their stage]. [Since then], they have worshipped him as the highest and the most venerable deity (Wong 1993, 1).³³⁹

I interviewed Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen 陳國源, a famous designer of Cantonese opera costumes, at the Elite Cantonese Opera Musical Society (Qunying Yueju Yinyue She 群英粵劇音樂社)³⁴⁰ in Richmond (Canada) on September 13, 1996. He gave a similar but more detailed oral account of his legend:

When Yuhuang Dadi saw that Cantonese opera players performed *Yuhuang Dengdian* (The Jade Emperor Ascends the Hall), he was very angry. He sent Huaguang, his adopted son, to the mortal world to burn the stage of the performers. Huaguang descended to the secular world and enjoyed watching the

³³⁹ ...誕辰乃九月廿八日，祂是天上之火神，奉玉皇大帝之命，下凡調查；何以民間有演「玉皇登殿」？如有說天宮不是，可即用火焚之。華光下凡見所演是劇，乃懲奸衛國，絕無說天神之壞話。因此沒有燒到，伶人們感謝祂，得以保存，故奉祂為最高至尊之神。

³⁴⁰ The Elite Cantonese Opera Musical Society was formed by Mr. Alex Hung 孔加峰 and Ms. Winnie Poon 潘倩影 (a married couple). Their business ended after the death of Mr. Hung in the late 1990s.

opera. As a result, he forgot to execute his errand on time. In order to deceive the Jade Emperor, he showed himself on a costume trunk and told the players about the orders of the Yuhuang Dadi. He taught the performers to burn straw at an open area near the backstage area so that smoke would ascend to the heaven. Huaguang hoped that in this way, the Jade Emperor would be deceived. Up in the Celestial Palace, Yuhuang sent Qianli Yan 千里眼 (Thousand-li Eye) and Shunfeng Er 順風耳 (Favorable-wind Ear)³⁴¹ to investigate why Huaguang did not return to report on his mission for such a long time. These two deities immediately discovered that Huaguang had swindled the Jade Emperor. However, since they were good friends of Huaguang, they kept the secret for him and reported to Yuhuang Dadi that Huaguang had already carried out his mission. The performers well understood that because of the admirable plan of Huaguang as well as the assistance of Qianli Yan and Shunfeng Er, their lives and properties were preserved. Since then, in order to express their gratitude to Huaguang, the Cantonese operatic performers (both female and male) have offered daily worship to him. They also held regular celebrations on his birthday (Mary Yeung's notes).

In an interview at her daughter's home at Burnaby on September 19, 2005, Ms. Chen Shaozhen offered the following depiction concerning the legend of Tiandou Ershi (the Two Masters of Field and Hollow):

Their birthday is on the twenty-fourth of the third month. It is said that one day, when two martial arts actors were practicing martial arts on the path in a field, two children came out from a hole in the midst of the field and fought a whole day with each other and then disappeared. The performers thought that they were deities who came to teach them special skills of martial arts. Since they did not know the names of these two gods, they addressed them as Tiandou Ershi because they had come out of a hole in the field (Mary Yeung's notes).³⁴²

In the *Liyuan huajiu diyi er ji* (*Pear Garden Discussions of Old [Traditions]*, 2 Vols.), Master Wong Toa states that one day, during the reign period of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty, Gao Lishi 高力士 (the most favorite eunuch of Emperor Xuanzong) saw two children

³⁴¹ Professor Daniel Overmyer told me that images of these two deities are also found in Tianhou temples.

³⁴² ...誕辰乃三月廿四日，據傳說，某一天，當兩個打武演員在田間小徑上練功之際，有兩個小孩從田中的竇洞走出來互相對打，他們打了一整天然後消失；伶人認為他們是神明，來教他們特別的武功。因伶人們不知這兩位神祇姓甚名誰，故稱他們為田竇二師，因他們是從田竇中鑽出來的。

wearing colorful clothes and dancing in the field. After a while, they ran into a hole in the field. Later, he dreamed about these two children, who taught him the Rainbow Skirts and Feathery Garment Dance (Nichang Yuyi Wu 霓裳羽衣舞). After he woke up, Gao Lishi transmitted this dance to the court entertainers or dancers of the Pear Garden. Since the performers and entertainers did not know the names of these two gods, they addressed them as Tiandou Ershi because they hid themselves inside a hole in the field (Wong 1998, 41).

With reference to Tangong (Lord Tan), his birthday is on the eighth day of the fourth month. Many Cantonese opera troupe members or employees believe that Tangong is a local deity.³⁴³ His cult was spread from Huizhou to the Pearl River Delta during the late imperial period. Today, there are two Tangong temples on Hong Kong Island. One is at Wong Nai Chung Gap (Huangniyong Xia 黃泥涌峽) and the other is at Shau Kei Wan (Shaojiwan 筲箕灣). I visited the Tangong Temple at Wong Nai Chung Gap on November 16, 1996. The epitaph of the temple states:

It is said that Xiansheng Tangong 仙聖譚公 (Holy Immortal – Lord Tan)³⁴⁴ is a patron deity of fishermen. His native place was Huizhou³⁴⁵. He lost his parents in early boyhood [and] relied on his grandmother for nurture. In his childhood, he could foretell the future and cure illness in marvelous ways. Moreover, he was able to summon wind and rain,...send down sweet dew, calm storms, [and] perform miracles. So, fishermen had a great respect for him...At the age of twelve, he became an immortal [and] was canonized as a deity... (Mary Yeung's notes).³⁴⁶

From the epitaph mentioned above, it is reasonable to believe that men and women in Cantonese opera worship Tangong mainly because he could control weather and cure sickness. Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen even told me an interesting story concerning why Lord Tan, a local god, is worshipped by Cantonese operatic employees as one of their patron deities. He said that in the

³⁴³ Master Wong Toa says that Lord Tan was a blind musician in the past. He was an expert on playing all kinds of Chinese musical instruments. Hence, Cantonese opera actors and musicians worship him as one of their patron gods (Wong 1998, 41).

³⁴⁴ In his article, "The God of Theatre of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong (Xianggang Bahe Huiguan xishen Tangong kao 香港八和會館戲神譚公考)," Professor Wong Shiu Hon 黃兆漢 points out that according to Chapter Forty-Four of the *Local History of Huizhou Prefecture (Huizhou fuzhi 惠州府志)*, Lord Tan's name is Tan Gongdao 譚公道. In order to obtain immortality, he practiced the Way at Mt. Jiulong 九龍山 in Huizhou of Guangdong (Wong 1993, 55 - 57).

³⁴⁵ Huizhou is a place in the southeastern part of Guangdong.

³⁴⁶ 據云仙聖譚公為漁民庇護之神，原籍惠州；幼失怙恃，賴祖母鞠育。幼時能知未來，治病神妙，更能呼風喚雨，...降甘露、息風暴，顯奇跡。漁民推崇備至...年十二登仙，籍奉為神...

late Qing period, when a male troupe was traveling in red boats, a severe storm came up all of a sudden. The “four great head persons (*sida touren* 四大頭人),³⁴⁷” after searching for a while, found that a young woman was hiding inside the galley of one of their red boats. She was the lover of a cook. According to traditional religious precepts of the Cantonese opera profession, women were not allowed to enter the red boats. Otherwise, all troupe members would suffer great misfortune. For this reason, the *sida touren* immediately forced this young woman to leave their boat at once. They put her in a large wooden bucket and let her drift about helplessly in the wind and waves. As a result, she was drowned in the river and became a malign ghost. In order to take revenge, this “water ghost” burnt down the masts of all red boats that sailed across the river. Hence, all Cantonese operatic troupe members were afraid of it. However, one day, when the ghost was burning a mast of a red boat, a charm was blown up to the mast by a blast of wind. The fire was immediately put out by a sudden downpour. Mr. Chan stated that this charm, which was obtained from a Tangong temple, was owned by a troupe member who traveled in the red boat. As decades passed, this story became more and more popular among the Cantonese operatic employees (Mary Yeung’s notes).

Last but not least, Zhang Wu or Zhang Qian is also an important occupational deity of the Cantonese operatic profession. His birthday falls on the twenty-eighth of the third lunar month (Wong 1993, 1). Mr. Chen Feilong, a prominent actor of female roles, offered the following description concerning his legend:

Zhang Wu, whose nickname was Tanshou Wu 攤手五 (Unfolded Hand – the Fifth)³⁴⁸, was a famous actor in Beijing³⁴⁹ during the Yongzheng 雍正 reign period (around A. D. 1723)... He was dissatisfied with the despotic [rule of the Qing Court]. His speeches were anti-Qing. As a result, he was seized by [the Qing Court]. He escaped to Guangdong [and] concealed himself at Foshan. When he was in Foshan, he taught all he knew about operatic arts and martial arts to the local Cantonese operatic performers... [In addition], he also rearranged [the

³⁴⁷ The “four great head persons (*sida touren*)” were experienced performers who had comprehensive knowledge concerning the precepts of the Cantonese operatic profession. In normal case, the *sida touren* of a Cantonese operatic troupe would comprise one female role performer, one military role actor, one young male role player and one young military role actor. Nowadays, the system of *sida touren* no longer exists.

³⁴⁸ Zhang Wu had such a nickname mainly because one of his arms was paralyzed.

³⁴⁹ Mr. Wu Zhen (an experienced actor of military roles) argued that Zhang Wu was a native of Hubei, the place of origin of the *Han* opera. During the Yongzheng reign period, *Kun* opera and the *Jingqiang* 京腔 (a local variant of *Yiyang Qiang*) were the two most popular kinds of traditional opera sung in Beijing. Hence, it is reasonable to believe that what Zhang Wu taught to the operatic performers in Foshan were the different performance styles of *Han* opera, *Yiyang* opera and *Kun* opera.

Cantonese operatic roles] into ten types:³⁵⁰ (i) *mo* 末 (Old Male Roles), (ii) *jing* 淨 (the Red-faced Role)³⁵¹, (iii) *sheng* 生 (Male Roles),³⁵² (iv) *dan* 旦 (Female Roles),³⁵³ (v) *chou* 丑 (Comic Roles),³⁵⁴ (vi) *wai* 外 (Painted Face Roles),³⁵⁵ (vii) *xiao* 小 (Young Male Roles), (viii) *tie* 貼 (Supporting Female Roles),³⁵⁶ (ix) *fu* 夫 (Old Female Roles), (x) *za* 雜 (Miscellaneous Roles)³⁵⁷ ... [Zhang Wu's classifications] enabled a more clear division...He [therefore] made very great contributions to [the development of Cantonese opera]. Hence, people in Cantonese opera respect him as Zhang Xianshi 張先師 (Late Master Zhang)... (Chen 1983, 131)³⁵⁸

As mentioned above, Cantonese opera troupe members or employees believe that the whole universe is full of supernatural officials. They embrace and respect an unlimited number of deities without caring for their historical or hagiographic origins. In addition to these five occupational or patron deities, they also pay tribute to other tutelary gods of the Cantonese cultural area. For instance, as mentioned in Section 4.1, many actors of the older generation had experiences of traveling on basin boats during the 1940s. Besides paying respect to the occupational deities, Ms. Chen Shaozhen told me that they also worshipped their own private gods, such as Celestial Master Zhang, Guanyin and Maitreya. They usually put small images of these gods in their sleeping areas and offered daily incense to them (Mary Yeung's notes). Today, in Hong Kong, Cantonese opera players honor the five patron deities as well as other local gods. For example, Guan Dexing 關德興 MBE (a patriotic Cantonese opera performer),

³⁵⁰ Today, Cantonese operatic roles are classified into six major types. For a detail description, please refer to Appendix Four.

³⁵¹ Performers of the red-faced role often impersonated Guan Gong (Lord Guan) in operatic performances.

³⁵² In normal cases, performers of male roles acted as middle-aged men (with or without official rank). They often wore "the three tufts", a kind of long black beard, in their operatic performances.

³⁵³ Players of female roles usually impersonated young elegant women.

³⁵⁴ The comic roles were sub-classified into two types: male comic roles and female comic roles.

³⁵⁵ According to the Cantonese opera traditions before the early 1930s, the term "*wai*" referred to painted face characters. Actors of this role type often impersonated treacherous ministers (such as Cao Cao 曹操 and Dong Zhuo 董卓).

³⁵⁶ Performers of young male roles usually acted as young warriors, young civilians, and young civil-military officers. Players of supporting female roles often impersonated middle-aged women, female warriors, and maids.

³⁵⁷ The miscellaneous roles were further sub-divided into several types, such as supporting painted face roles, minor roles and warrior roles.

³⁵⁸ 張五(綽號攤手五)是雍正年間(公元1730年左右)北京的一位名伶...他是不滿專制,言論反清,致被緝。他逃亡來粵,匿居佛山。他在佛山時,把他懂的劇藝、武功,全部傳授給當地的粵劇伶人...他又把粵劇的角色,調整成十類,如一末、二淨、三生、四旦、五丑、六外、七小、八夫、十雜,使分工明確。他對粵劇是有很大貢獻,因此,粵劇班中人尊之為張先師...

who often attended Master Huaguang's birthday celebration, was also a loyal disciple of Jinhua Shengmu 金花聖母 (the Holy Mother of Golden Flowers) or Jinhua Furen 金花夫人 (the Lady of Golden Flowers). One of her temples is located in Pingzhou (Peng Chau 坪州). On July 30, 2004, I visited this temple and saw that some devotees were offering incense to her at that time. An inscription on the wall of the temple notes:

In the twenty-seventh year of the reign period of Emperor Qianlong (A.D. 1762), Lai Guomin 賴國民 (the humble subject) moored his boat under the shade of a banyan tree when he went to Peng Chau to collect medicinal herbs to cure his wife's sickness. He also made a vow to the big stone beside the tree. As expected, his wife made a quick recovery. [He wished] to express his gratitude to the Holy Mother of Golden Flowers (Jinhua Shengmu 金花聖母), who demonstrated her efficacy and revealed her divine will to him. Beside the [banyan] tree, he erected the Temple of Golden Flowers (Jinhua Miao 金花廟)³⁵⁹ that continues to exist today.³⁶⁰

According to the brief introduction of the Jinhua Miao, Sister Lan 蘭姐 (the person who took charge of the temple affairs) and other leaders of Peng Chau raised funds to renovate this temple in 1978. Master Guan Dexing was doing business in Japan during 1981. A few days before her birthday (the seventeen day of the fourth month) in the same year, the Holy Mother of Golden Flowers appeared in front of Master Guan when he was sitting in meditation in his spare time. She asked him whether he could assist the Peng Chau residents to raise money for rebuilding her temple. Mr. Guan promised to help them. At the same time, Sister Lan also dreamed about Jinhua Shengmu, who told her to meet and welcome Guan on her birthday. Guan returned to Hong Kong from Japan. Accompanied by his disciples and friends, he went to Ping

³⁵⁹ The brief introduction of the Jinhua Miao states that Jinhua Shengmu is one of the nine supreme deities in Heaven. Her father was a military instructor. She was very intelligent, and possessed both literary and martial talents. She often robbed the rich in order to help the poor. One day, she hid herself in a grotto when she was chased by yamen runners and officers. Later, local villagers discovered that there was a human shape fossil inside the grotto. They immediately offered kowtows to it. As decades and then centuries passed, stories or miracles concerning the goddess were spread throughout the country. She often demonstrated her efficacy by helping the fishermen and farmers. It is said that the court bestowed the title "Jinhua Puzhu Huifu Furen 金花普主惠福夫人 (the Lady of Golden Flowers, who is the Universal Lord of Kindness and Fortune)" on her. Around two hundred years ago, Lai Guomin (a herbalist) went to Peng Chau to collect herbs in order to cure his wife's illness. On the island, he saw that a fisherman worshipped the tablet of the goddess. He also paid tribute to her tablet and requested her to cure his wife. As a result, his wife soon recovered from sickness. In order to express his thankfulness, he returned to Peng Chau and built the Temple of Golden Flowers.

³⁶⁰ 乾隆二十七年，即公元一七六二年，草民賴國民為其妻治病，到坪州採藥，把船泊在榕樹下，並向樹旁巨石許願。果然，其妻病癒，為了答謝神恩，又得金花聖母顯靈啟示，在樹旁建造金花廟留存至今。

Chau and paid tribute to the goddess at her temple in her birthday celebration. From then on, Guan visited the temple every week. Moved by his piety, the goddess transmitted “the Secret Formula of Learning Stunts (*Liangong Mijue* 練功秘訣)” to him. She also foretold his future. She told him that he would achieve a higher social status in the future. Guan formally acknowledged her as his master. In 1982, Guan and Master Lu Zhifu 陸智夫 went to Peng Chau to worship Jinhua Shengmu on her birthday, when their disciples performed dragon and lion dances for celebration and entertainment. They also collected money in order to expand the Temple of Golden Flowers. Moreover, Master Guan offered daily sacrifices to the goddess and possessed her effigy. In his birthday celebration, all the people who attended the feast had to worship the image first before they offered congratulations to him. Later, he was made an MBE mainly because he often provided aid to the elderly people. Before he went to U.S.A. in 1995, Guan visited the Jinhua Temple at Peng Chau again in order to say “good-bye” to the Holy Mother of Golden Flowers. She appeared before him once again and asked him whether he would like to devote himself to releasing all beings from suffering. Guan told her that he was very willing to do so. Guan passed away in 1996. The day after his death, the goddess informed Sister Lan and other devotees that Guan had already achieved immortality since he accumulated a lot of merit. The title “Hufa Da Jiangjun 護法大將軍 (the Supreme General who Protects the Doctrine)” was conferred upon him. 103 days after Guan’s death, Guan Hanquan 關漢泉 (his son) and his disciples took his standing effigy to the Jinhua Miao at Peng Chau. Sister Lan and other local leaders welcomed them and respectfully placed his image at the altar (see Figure 4.3). Since then, Guan Hanquan and Lu Songmao 陸松茂 (Lu Zhifu’s son) have visited the temple every year on the birthday of the goddess. They also arrange lion and dragon dances on this important occasion.

4.3. Regular and Occasional Sacrifices to the Patron Deities

Cantonese opera employees offer regular worship to their patron deities mentioned above. Before and during the 1940s, they paid tribute to the gods every day at home altars, headquarters of the troupes, red boats, and basin boats. They performed daily rites in front of their family altars and at headquarters of the troupes. When traveling in red boats or basin boats, they burnt daily incense in front of the images of their private gods that were put in their own bunks or sleeping areas. With regard to the five occupational deities, their effigies were installed in public shrines³⁶¹ of the vessels. Simple sacrifices were offered to them every day. Nowadays, in Hong

³⁶¹ Please see Appendix Three for the locations of public shrines in red boats.

Kong, both men and women in Cantonese opera perform daily rites in front of their household altars, at headquarters of the troupes, the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong and the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan Yueju Xueyuan 香港八和會館粵劇學院 (The Bat Wo Institute of Cantonese Opera in Hong Kong).³⁶² As Ms. Winnie Poon (Mr. Alex Hung's wife and an actress of female roles) explained, "It is just like saying 'good morning' or 'hello' to a senior every day." However, with regard to daily rites that are held at the headquarters of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong and its sub-unions, it is important to point out that men instead of women take charge of burning incense to the deities. This is because most of the regular staff are senior males. For instance, before and during 1996, Mr. Zhong Zhaohan 鍾兆漢 (a retired actor and regular staff of the institute) was responsible for paying daily tribute to Master Huaguang at the Bat Wo Institute of Cantonese Opera in Hong Kong. The worship took place in front of the altar of the institute.

As mentioned above, Master Huaguang is the most venerable deity of the Cantonese opera profession. Members of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong have arranged a grand celebration on his birthday (the twenty-eighth of the ninth lunar month) since the early 1950s. On November 18, 1996 (the twenty-eighth of the ninth month of the year *bingzi* 丙子), Professor Daniel Overmyer and I observed this celebration, which was a good example to illustrate how the guild members celebrate the god's birthday. There were six major procedures in the rite. First, before Master Huaguang's birthday, a male member of the Xianggang Bahe Huiguan would purify his big and small images. This rite took place at the main hall of the headquarters of the guild. On November 23, 1996, I interviewed Mr. Gu Hongjian 顧鴻見, a senior actor of martial art roles who took charge of purifying the deity's effigies. He told me, "I am the one who is responsible for purifying Huaguang Shifu's images. The procedure is simple but solemn. I take a bath and use pomelo leaves to clean myself. Then, with greatest respect, I also use pomelo leaves and water to purify his effigies. Of course, women are forbidden to perform this task." (Mary Yeung's notes) In an interview at the Elite Cantonese Opera Musical Society (Richmond) in September 1996, Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen even said, "Our secretary³⁶³ is a woman. Thus, last year (1995), just before the beginning of this rite, I told her to leave the main hall and stay in the office until the ceremony ended." It is important to point out that as a

³⁶² The Bat Wo Institute of Cantonese Opera in Hong Kong is a sub-union of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong.

³⁶³ The term "our secretary" here refers to the secretary of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong.

famous designer of Cantonese opera costumes, Mr. Chan would make a new official robe and headgear for the images of Master Huaguang once every few years (Mary Yeung's notes).

Second, in the 1996 ceremony, martial art actors³⁶⁴ took the small effigy of Huaguang and a small tablet from the headquarters of the association to the Haicheng Great Restaurant 海城大酒樓,³⁶⁵ which was located at Tsim Sha Tsui (Jianshaju 尖沙咀) in the Kowloon Peninsula. In the performing hall of the restaurant, Huaguang's small image and the tablet of the deities were put on an altar, which stood beside the large stage. This altar included a square-shaped table, an elongated table, and a pair of scrolls. The tables were covered with a red table cloth. On top of the square shaped table stood a red dais. Upon this dais, there was placed a small image of Huaguang. Behind him was a tablet inscribed with the titles of six deities: Wuxian Lingguan Huaguang Xianshi 五顯靈官華光先師 (Late Master Huaguang – The Efficacious Official of the Five Manifestations), Tianhou Yuanjun 天后元君 (The Original Ruler – Heavenly Empress), Tiandou Ershi (The Two Masters of Fields and Hollows), Tangong Yie (Grandfather – Lord Tan), and Zhang Qian Xianshi (Late Master Zhang Qian) (see Figure 4.4). Two vases of flowers were put respectively to the right and left sides of the red dais. In front of the dais stood a lotus flower lamp and several dishes of offerings such as chicken, apples, oranges and red buns. The altar was extended by the use of an elongated table that was placed in front of the square shaped table. On top of this subordinate table there was a big incense burner, a pair of candle stands with candles lit, a teapot, a bundle of incense, and several sacrificial dinner-sets including chopsticks, teacups and wine-cups. In addition, pagoda incense (a kind of coiled incense) and a pair of scrolls were vertically hung down from the ceiling. The inscription on the right scroll read: “*zongheng haoqi lingxiaohan* 縱橫浩氣靈霄漢 (The natural greatness of [his] spirit pervades the Heaven)”. The one on the left read: “*dandang qionghua yao huolun* 淡蕩瓊花耀火輪 (May the light, great and beautiful flower illumine the fire wheel)” (Mary Yeung's notes). With regard to the arrangement of the stage, a sign of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong was on the back curtain. A big platform stood below this sign. A

³⁶⁴ In normal cases, martial art actors are men and they have to practice different kinds of acrobatic skill, such as somersaults and weapon combats. They can easily hurt themselves during the course of training. There are almost no women trained as performers of this role type since they could not tolerate to go through such a strict training course.

³⁶⁵ In the 1996 birthday celebration, both the ritual performance and the banquet took place at the Haicheng Great Restaurant. However, this Chinese restaurant no longer exists. Hence, on Huaguang's birthday, ritual performances and a feast are held at two different places. For example, on October 30, 2005 (the twenty-eighth of the ninth month of the year *yiyou* 乙酉), the ritualistic plays were staged at the Gaoshan Juchang 高山劇場 in Kowloon and the feast was held at the Mingdu Restaurant 明都酒樓 in Central District on Hong Kong Island.

large piece of yellow carpet was placed on the stage floor. In front of the stage, over five hundred chairs were prepared for the audience. They were divided into three groups and arranged into rows.

Third, Ms. Wang Ming Chun, the first female chairperson of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong, took the lead to offer incense sticks to Master Huaguang and other patron gods. Then, guests and other guild members also paid tribute to the deities. Professor Overmyer and I also offered incense to them. Both male and female members of the association took part in preparing the sacrificial items mentioned above.

Fourth, after paying tribute to the patron gods, all the honorable guests and members of the new administrative committee of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong took their seats onstage. Mr. Wang Ming Chun delivered a speech. Members of this new administrative committee assumed office on this “auspicious occasion.”

Fifth, in recent years, Cantonese opera players usually perform two auspicious plays, *Xianghua Shan Da Heshou* 香花山大賀壽 (Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain) and *Tiangzi Da Songzi* 天姬大送子 (The Celestial Maiden’s Great Bestowing of a Son), at Master Huaguang’s birthday rite (see Figures 4.5 and 4.6). These plays are offered as gifts to their patron deities, especially Master Huaguang. They are performed in stage official language and accompanied by percussion instruments, such as cymbals, small gong, woodblock, large gong, gong with high rim, and *suona* 嗩吶 (double-reed conical pipe).³⁶⁶ The Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain is an extract of Scene Nine of Zheng Zhizhen’s massive Mulian script (prefaced dated A.D. 1582). The plot of *Xianghua Shan Da Heshou* is very simple. Guanyin (the heroine) obtains the Way at the Purple Bamboo Grove (Zizhu Lin 紫竹林). All the immortals offer congratulations to her. Owing to their requests, she makes a display of her eight miraculous transformations.³⁶⁷

³⁶⁶ The *suona* is a kind of wind instrument.

³⁶⁷ The earliest literary source of the legend of Miaoshan was “the stele inscription written by Chiang Chih-ch’i [Jiang Zhiqi 蔣之奇] based on a text shown to him by Huaizhou [Huaizhou 懷書], the abbot of Hsiang-shan [Xiangshan 香山] Monastery...The abbot claimed that a pilgrim monk from Mt. Chung-nan [Zhongnan 終南], in Shensi [Shanxi 山西], brought it when he visited Hsiang-shan Temple. The anonymous pilgrim, in turn, claimed that the original author was [Dao Xuan] 道宣(A.D. 596 – 667), an eminent monk in the Tang dynasty.” (Yü 2001, 99) Miaoshan’s story was recorded in the popular devotional texts entitled *Xiangshan baojuan* 香山寶卷 (*Precious Volumes of the Fragrant Mountain*) during the thirteenth century. Guan Daosheng 管道昇(A.D. 1262 – 1319), wife of the painter and calligrapher Zhao Mengfu 趙孟頫(A.D. 1254 - 1322), compiled the *Guanyin Dashi zhuan* 觀音大士傳 (*Legend of the Mahāsattva Guanyin*). It is a story about Miaoshan 妙善, the youngest daughter of King Miaozhuang 妙莊 (the ruler of the Kingdom of Xilin 西林). Nevertheless, Miaoshan refused to get married when she reached the age of marriage. Her wish was to attain enlightenment and save all living beings from suffering. She retreated to the White Sparrow Nunnery and began to cultivate the Way. King Miaozhuang was very

Based on the script mentioned in Appendix Six, the performance of a complete version of the Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain takes about four hours. Today, however, a simplified version of this play is usually staged on Master Huaguang' birthday. In his 1996 birthday celebration, about forty actors participated in the performance, which lasted about one hour and fifteen minutes.³⁶⁸ Ms. Wang Chaoqun 王超群, a famous actress of principal female roles, acted the character of the Goddess of Mercy.³⁶⁹ The 1996 performance of this play is summarized as follows:

At the beginning of the show, the Eight Immortals, Han Zhongli 漢鍾離, Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, Zhang Guolao 張果老, Cao Guojiu 曹國舅, Li Tieguai 李鐵拐, Han Xiangzi 韓湘子, He Xiangu 何仙姑, and Lan Caihe 藍彩和³⁷⁰ appeared onstage. Each of them introduced

angry. He sent troops to burn down the nunnery. Miaoshan was captured by the soldiers. The king had her executed. However, the Jade Emperor was touched by her determination to attain perfection. He ordered the King of Hell to send her soul back to her body. Thus, Miaoshan was restored to life. The Buddha appeared in front of her. He instructed her to go to Xiangshan (The Fragrant Mountain) to cultivate the Way. He also bestowed on her an immortal peach. After eating this peach, she immediately obtained immortality. Miaoshan attained enlightenment after nine years' cultivation at Xiangshan 香山. All immortals, such as the Dragon Kings, the gods of the Five Peaks, and the Eight Immortals, went to offer their greetings to her. Later, King Miaozhuang became seriously sick. Miaoshan cured her father by offering her eyes and hands as medicine. Then, she used her supernatural power to recover her eyes and hands. Owing to her filial affection, the Jade Emperor bestowed on her the title of Truly Pitying and Truly Benevolent Bodhisattva. Her two sisters, who had been converted, also became bodhisattvas. With regard to King Miaozhuang, after his full recovery, he renounced the throne and followed Guanyin (Miaoshan) to cultivate the Way (Werner 1994, 251 – 187; and Dudbridge 2004, 10 – 65). As decades and centuries passed, this story was spread throughout China. Many scriptwriters, such as Zheng Zhizhen mentioned above, incorporated parts of her story into their plays or works. The Cantonese opera play *Xianghua Shan Da Heshou* originated from Zheng Zhizhen's massive Mulian script.

³⁶⁸ The three arias, *Liangzhouxu* 梁州序 (Lingzhou Prelude), *Paige* 排歌 (Permutation Song) and *Sanchunjin* 三春錦 (Three Spring's Brocade) appear in the script of this play mentioned in Appendix Six. Nevertheless, these three arias were not sung in the 1996 performance. Moreover, according to the script, many characters, such as the Happy Buddha, the Long Brow Buddha, the Lame Buddha, the Hunchbacked Buddha, the monk with big head and big belly, the Carp Demon, the Shrimp Demon, the Oyster Demon, and the Tortoise Demon, would appear onstage and perform series of stage movements. However, all these characters were omitted in the 1996 performance.

³⁶⁹ In the 1996 performance, Ms. Wang Chaoqun (the actress who impersonated Guanyin) wore an embroidered formal robe with rippling-water sleeves and rounded precious-stone belt, and a pair of embroidered flower shoes. Her hairdressing was decorated with pink silk lotus. Her dress indicated her exalted position as a bodhisattva. According to traditional Chinese theatrical practices, only high-ranking gods in the celestial bureaucratic system and noblewomen in the mundane world are qualified to wear official robes in ceremonies. In other words, the make-up of Ms. Wang was in keeping with the historical prototype of this venerable goddess. When she put on her make-up and appeared onstage, her presence stimulated the spectators to recall the compassion, charity and altruism of Guanyin, which they had learnt from history and legends. As a result, they became intoxicated by the show and believed that the Goddess of Mercy had really descended to the mortal world to bestow good fortune on them.

³⁷⁰ The Eight Immortals are considered to be the protectors of Daoism. According to Chinese popular legends, Lü Dongbin was a scholar in the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618 – 907). He met Han Zhongli in an inn near Handan on his way to Chang'an, which is known as Xi'an nowadays. While Han Zhongli was heating a jug of sorghum wine, Lü went to sleep and in a few moments dreamed a long life of fifty years. This is the incident referred to in Chinese literature in the phrase "sorghum wine dream". When Lü awoke, he realized the vanity of the mortal world. Thus, he was converted by Han Zhongli and soon became an immortal. Of Li Tieguai we know that he could send his soul on visits. One day, when his soul left his body for a journey to Huashan, he told his disciple to take charge of his body for six days and to cremate it on the seventh if he had not returned. However, his disciple burnt his body on

themselves after performing a series of stage movements. Han Zhongli said that since Guanyin obtained the Way, they had to go to the Purple Bamboo Grove (Zizhu Lin) to offer their greetings. Then, they all exit the stage. The Four Dragon Kings,³⁷¹ Ao Guang 敖廣, Ao Shun 敖順, Ao Xiang 敖詳 and Ao Bian 敖邊, came onstage from the stage right rear. They introduced themselves one after another. Similar to the Eight Immortals, they went to the Zizhu Lin to celebrate the birthday of the Goddess of Mercy. After they entered the backstage, the Three Holy Mothers, Lishan 梨山, Putuo 普陀 and Weiling 威靈, appeared onstage. After introducing themselves, they also went to Zizhu Lin to pay tribute to the Compassionate Mother (Guanyin). The Eight Immortals and the Four Dragon Kings came onstage again. They met the Three Holy Mothers when they were enroute to the Purple Bamboo Grove. All the immortals mentioned above made their exit after they performed a sequence of conventional movements.

The Eight Female Celestials entered the stage. Each of them held a paper flower pot decorated with paper flowers. They performed a series of stage movements, such as playing, planting flowers in the garden, and using their paper flower pots to display the four great Chinese characters, “*tian*天, *xia*下, *tai*太, *ping*平 (Peace Reigns Over the World). After completing their performance, the Eight Female Celestials entered the backstage. Sun Wukong 孫悟空 (the Monkey King) and the little monkeys appeared onstage. Martial art actors impersonated the little monkeys. In order to demonstrate their consummate skills to the audience, they executed some acrobatics, such as *Dafan* 大番 (Great Somersault), *Shigou* 屎鉤 (Filth Hook), *Cefan* 側番 (Side Somersault) and the *Gundi Hulu* 滾地葫蘆 (Guards Roll on the Ground).³⁷² After they

the sixth day. When Li's soul returned, it had no choice but to enter the corpse of a lame beggar. After entering this vile body, he went about on an iron crutch. He often wandered about and cured sick people. Zhang Guolao was an official of the Tang court. One day, he gave up his post and became a hermit. He often rode his white donkey backward, facing the animal's tail. Lan Caihe was born in the Tang dynasty. Lan was a young person of indeterminate sex. He (or she) was a street singer who always donated money to the poor. One day, he (or she) left the mortal world and ascended to the celestial palace. It is believed that Han Xiangzi lived in the mid Tang dynasty. He was the nephew of Han Yu 韓愈 (a great poet). In order to achieve immortality, he became a disciple of Lü Dongbin. With regard to He Xiang, it is said that she lived in the time of Empress Wu (A.D. 684 – 705) of the Tang dynasty. She retreated in the mountains for a long period of time. Later, she met Lü Dongbin, who offered her a peach. After eating the fruit, she became an immortal. Cao Guojiu was the brother of an empress of the Northern Song dynasty (A.D. 960 – 1127). He was converted by Han Zhongli and Lü Dongbin (cf. Schipper 1993, 160 – 166).

³⁷¹ According to Chinese popular beliefs, the Four Dragon Kings live in crystal palaces in the depth of the sea. Their most important duty is to send down rain. They make regular reports to the Jade Emperor every year in the third month. Many aquatic officials assist them to govern their territorial waters (Werner 1994, 210 – 212). The Dragon King of the Eastern Sea is the leader of the Four Dragon Kings.

³⁷² According to Master Wong Toa, *Dafan*, *Shigou*, *Cefan* and *Gundi Hulu* are four types of acrobatics often displayed by martial arts actors. To begin the performance of *Dafan*, the player stands upright with his face to the backstage (or to the audience). He then bends his elbow to the left side (right side). After placing his palms on the floor of the stage, he leaps his left (right) foot and whips up his right (left) leg and bends his torso forward for a

finished these stage movements, they carried a large peach (made of paper) and walked onstage. Then, all of them (including Sun Wukong) entered the backstage.

The Gold boy who held a willow peach, and the Jade Girl who held a sweet vase, led out the Goddess of Mercy. Guanyin, holding a horse-hair whisk, came onstage and said, “The barge of Compassion conveys all the living beings across [the ocean of misery]. What is the golden rule? It is the Goddess of Mercy in the Purple Bamboo Grove (*Cihang puduo jiu zhongsheng* 慈航普渡救眾生. *Jinke yulü wei hewu* 金科玉律為何物? *Zizhu Lin zhong Guanshiyin* 紫竹林中觀世音).”³⁷³ Guayin then ascended the throne. The Eight Immortals, the Four Dragon Kings and the Three Holy Mothers entered and gave greetings. Moreover, Sun Wukong offered a large peach as a gift to the Compassionate Mother (Guanyin). The goddess invited all the immortals to the Bodhi Grotto to enjoy a vegetarian feast. Then, all the characters entered the backstage.

leftward (rightward) somersault. Finally, he lands on his feet and stands upright with his face to the backstage (If the actor stands with his face to the audience when he begins his actions, he would conclude his movements by standing with his face to the audience). With regard to the performance of *Shigou*, it starts with the martial arts performer standing upright and facing the backstage (or facing the audience). The actor then bends his elbow to the left side (right side). After placing his palms on the floor of the stage, he leaps his left (right) foot and whips up his right (left) leg and bends his torso forward for a leftward (rightward) somersault. Finally, he lands on his feet and stands upright facing the audience (If the player stands facing the audience when he starts these actions, he would conclude his movements by standing on the floor of the stage and turning his back to the audience). To start the performance of *Cefan*, the martial arts actor stands upright. He then leaps on his left (right) foot and whips up his right (left) leg and then bends his body forward for a leftward (rightward) somersault. Finally, he lands on his right (left) foot and then on his left (right) foot. In the performance of *Gundi hulu*, the martial arts performer sits on the floor of the stage with his legs crossed. Maintaining this position, he rolls on the floor as if he cannot be toppled. It is important to point out that based on the script mentioned in Appendix Six, martial arts actors would present forty-one types of acrobatics, such as *Zhuangzhong* 撞鐘 (Striking the Bell), *Shiba luohan* 十八羅漢 (Eighteen Arhats) and *Xiangba* 象拔 (Elephant’s Trunk), in the performance of a complete version of the *Xianghua Shan Da Heshou*. The performance of *Zhuangzhong* requires the participation of about nine martial art actors. First, four of them stand upright facing each other to form the first level (base). On top of their shoulders, stand two other martial art actors. They hold their hands together and form the second level. Then, on top of these two actors’ shoulders, stands another player who forms the third level. As a result, all these seven actors pile up and form the shape of a bell. Second, a martial art actor holds a large gong and stands on the ground at one side. Another performer acts as a bell clapper. His limbs are held separately by the four actors who form the first level (the base). In other words, he is held horizontally in the mid-air. After holding his limbs, the four actors push his head to beat the gong. Finally, the martial art performer who forms the third level turns a side somersault and jumps down. While he is jumping down, some other actors wait on the ground in order to hold him. In the performing of the *Shiba luohan*, martial art players form a human pyramid by piling up themselves into several levels. To begin, some of them stand on the stage to form the base. On top of their shoulders stand several other actors, who form the second level and so on. The better the techniques of these performers are, the more levels they can form (Mary Yeung’s notes). The performance of *Xiangba* requires the participation of nine martial art actors. These performers divide themselves into three groups (each group has three actors). Performers in each group queue up and walk onstage in the shape of a “∞.” However, almost all the forty-one types of acrobatic skill were omitted in the 1996 performance.

³⁷³ These song texts are different from those stated in the script of this play mentioned in Appendix Seven. According to the script, Guanyin says, “Immaculate and reverent, I cultivate my person, cultivate my person. Within the Bodhi Grotto, in the Purple Bamboo Grove, I hear the cries of the world... Thanks to the Jade Emperor, I have received an imperial appointment and I am the Universal Savior, who rescues those in difficulty and distress and shows great compassion to those in sorrow...” (For the English translation and the Chinese text of these few sentences, please refer to Appendix Seven of this dissertation).

The Dragon Subduing Arhat (Xianglong Luohan 降龍羅漢) came onstage from stage right rear. He paused for a while and performed a routine of movements at stage center. The Dragon entered the stage. Both of them presented a sequence of conventional movements and exited. Then, the Tiger Taming Arhat (Fuhu Luohan 伏虎羅漢)³⁷⁴ appeared onstage. He paused for a while and the Tiger entered. After fighting for a while, the Fuhu Luohan subdued the Tiger. Both of them entered the backstage from stage left rear. Moreover, Wei Tuo 韋陀³⁷⁵ came onstage, presented a routine of movements at stage front, and exited.

The Goddess of Mercy, the Eight Immortals, the Four Dragon Kings and the Three Holy Mothers reentered the stage. All the immortals requested Guanyin to display her eight miraculous transformations. The goddess transformed herself into a dragon, tiger, general, prime minister, fisherman, forester, farmer and scholar.³⁷⁶ After Guanyin completed her eight transformations, the Gods of Peace and Harmony (Hehe Erxian 和合二仙) led out Immortal Liu Hai.³⁷⁷ He introduced himself at stage front and then offered congratulations to the Compassionate Mother. After performing a routine of movements, he tossed the gold coins (made of paper) to the audience. The large peach was also taken to the stage center. A child came out from the peach and tossed the gold coins. Everyone in the performing hall became frenzied since the gold coins were believed to be a kind of auspicious gift. I saw that all the performers onstage rushed towards Immortal Liu Hai and the child in order to get as many gold coins as possible. Many spectators also rushed to the stage and picked up as many coins as they could. Even Ms. Wang Ming Chun, the chairperson of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong joined in. Those who could not get any coins waved their hands and shouted to the actor who impersonated Immortal Liu Hai. I was lucky enough to get one of them. After the performance was completed, all the characters entered the backstage.

³⁷⁴ The Xianglong Luohan and the Fuhu Luohan are believed to be two of the Eighteen Arhats, a group of protectors of the Buddhist Law. According to Buddhist beliefs, Sākyamuni had once ordered sixteen of his disciples to remain in the mortal world until the future Buddha Maitreya's coming. The legend of these sixteen arhats was introduced to China by Xuanzhuang 玄奘 in the Tang dynasty. Around the 10th century, both the Dragon Subduing Celestial General and the Tiger Taming Celestial General were added to this group (cf. Wu 1993, 64).

³⁷⁵ It is believed that Wei Tuo is a protector of the Buddhist Law. He is "one of the generals under the southern Mahārāja guardian in a temple" (Soothill 1962, 317). In the 1996 performance, the actor who impersonated Wei Tuo wore armor and held a pestle. His make-up was in keeping with the historical prototype of this deity.

³⁷⁶ According to Buddhist beliefs, Guanyin is a bodhisatta who always uses expedient methods (*upaya*) to enlighten sentient beings. She delays her entry into *nirvana* (*niepan* 涅槃) and remains in the world until she has enlightened all living beings, whether they are human beings or animals, rich or poor, men or women. She assumes their forms and teaches them to detach themselves from egoistic pursuits.

³⁷⁷ According to Chinese common beliefs, Liu Hai lived in the Five Dynasties era (A.D. 907 – 970). He met a Daoist master and achieved immortality. Since then, many Daoist devotees have worshipped him as a deity. Besides, my informants stated that Liu Hai is also called Cao Bao 曹保. It is believed that he is a deity who bestows wealth on people.

The plot [of the Celestial Maiden's Great Bestowing of a Son] is based on the story of Dong Yong [董永] and the Celestial Maiden [仙姬]. In order to obtain money for his father's funeral, Dong Yong sells himself [as a bondman] and is working very hard. Moved by his filial affection, the Celestial Maiden descends to the mundane world to become his wife. She helps to support their living by weaving but returns to heaven when the time comes. Dong Yong, who is left alone [in the mortal world], [makes a great effort to] study [well]. He passes [the imperial examinations and becomes] "the Prize Candidate." When he is parading through the streets, he hears immortal music from heaven and the Celestial Maiden descends. She [then] presents their son, who was born in the celestial realm, to Dong Yong and returns to heaven again³⁷⁸ (Tanaka 1981, 550).

The Celestial Maiden's Great Bestowing of a Son (*Tianji Da Songzi*)³⁷⁹ is often performed at Master Huaguang's birthday celebrations. The performance of this auspicious play is mainly based on the script mentioned in Appendix Seven.³⁸⁰ According to this script, the play includes thirteen arias. Nevertheless, owing to limited time, Cantonese opera actors seldom sing all these arias in the performance on Huaguang's birthday. The show usually lasts about half an hour. In the 1996 performance, Mr. Luo Jiaying 羅家英 (a prominent actor of civil-military roles) impersonated Dong Yong. Ms. Nam Hung (Nan Hong 南紅), a famous actress of principal female roles, portrayed the Celestial Maiden. Luo Jiaying sang the arias *Anzhijian* 俺

66 筋は董永、仙姬の故事を踏まえる。父の葬礼費を得るため身を売って刻苦している董永の孝心に感じた天姫が、下凡して董永の妻となり、織布によりその生活をたすけるが、期限が来て天界に帰る。残された董永は、勉學して狀元に合格し、「遊街」を行なっている内に天界から仙樂が聞こえ、天姫が天界から降ってきて、天界で生んだ二人の間の一子を董永に渡して再び天界に去って行くという筋である。

³⁷⁹ According to Chinese traditional beliefs, bearing a son for the continuation of the father's family line is the most important purpose of marriage. In the performance of *Tianji Da Songzi*, the actor who portrays Dong Yong is considered to be a representative of the audience. In other words, the Celestial Maiden's offering a son to Dong Yong symbolizes that she bestows sons to all the spectators. The love story of the Celestial Maiden and Dong Yong first appears in Duhuang transformation texts, such as the *Dong Yong zhongge* 董永仲歌 (The Second Song of Dong Yong); and other written sources, such as Chapter Fifty-Nine of the *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (*Extensive Gleanings of the Regin of Great Tranquility*). Based on these sources, playwrights wrote plays concerning this story. The *Tianji Songzi* has been a popular auspicious repertoire of many regional operas since imperial times. The Cantonese operatic version of this play is an extract from a *Yiyang Qiang* play known as *Zhijin Ji* 織錦記 (The Story of Weaving Silk), which was written by Gu Jueyu 顧覺宇 (an actor and a playwright of *Yiyang* opera) in the middle of the sixteenth century. The original text of the Story of Weaving Silk was lost. Mo Rucheng states that the content of the play is basically the same as that of *Xianji Tianjie Chonghui* 仙姬天街重會 (Reuniting with the Celestial Maiden at the Heavenly Street), one act of the *Zhijin Ji* (Mo 1987, 9). Cantonese opera actors and scholars considered the play *Tianji Songzi* to be a relic of the *Gaoqiang* tradition.

³⁸⁰ In Hong Kong today, besides Master Huaguang's birthday, a simplified version of this play is often performed in ritual performances that are arranged by leaders of the local communities. The English translation of this short (simplified) version is also recorded in Appendix Seven.

只見 (All I See), *Zheguiling* 折桂令 (Breaking Off the Cassia Bough), *Luoyan'er* 落雁兒 (Wild Goose Falling), and *Yuanlinhao* 園林好 (Gardens and Forests Fine). In addition, he also sang part of the *Xiajiangnan* 下江南 (Down South of the River) and the *Qingjiangyin* 清江引 (Clear River Prelude). The arias *Bubujiao* 步步嬌 (The Beauty Steps Forth), *Jiangshui'er* 江水兒 (River Water) and *Xingxingling* 倖倖令 (A Lucky Order)³⁸¹ were sung by Nam Hong. According to my memory, the songs *Lin'erjiang* 麟兒降 (The Unicorn Son Descends), *Cheng'en* 承恩 (Receiving Imperial Favor), *Fenglaiyi* 鳳來儀 (The Phoenix Comes) and *Chengchangfeng* 乘長風 (Mounting Strong Winds), which appear in the script, were not heard in the performance. Together with the six actresses who impersonated the Celestial Maiden's sisters, they performed a series of complex conventional actions, such as *Fangongzhuang* 反宮裝 (Transforming Palace Costumes)³⁸², *Huakaimen* 花開門 (Flowers Open the Gates), *Yanmen* 掩門 (Closing the Gate) and *Chuansanjiao* 穿三角 (Threading Through the Triangle).³⁸³ All the characters went offstage after the Celestial Maiden gave the son to Dong Yong.

Sixth, in Huaguang's 1996 birthday celebration, there was an intermission (about three hours) after the ritual performances ended. Many guests and members of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong spent this time in playing *majiang* (*mah-jong* 麻將), a very popular gambling game for the Chinese people.

Seventh, a large banquet was held at the Haicheng Restaurant in the evening. Many guests and most members of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong joined the feast. I also attended the banquet. The staff of the association auctioned off the auspicious objects, which were stage properties used in the performance of the two auspicious plays mentioned above. These auspicious items included He Xiang's precious lotus, Han Zhongli's precious fan, Lü Dongbin's precious sword, the Tiger Taming Celestial General's Diamond Ring, Liu Hai's large golden coin and Wei Tuo's pestle-like weapon. It is believed that they would bring good fortune to all the people. Hence, many guests and guild members were eager to spend quite a lot of money to buy them.

³⁸¹ With regard to the English translation of all these song texts, please refer to Appendix Seven of this dissertation.

³⁸² According to Master Wong Toa, Transforming Palace Costumes are only worn by the Celestial Maiden and her six sisters in the play *Tianji Da Songzi*. In the past, actresses who impersonated these characters wore red palace robes onstage. When they met Dong Yong, they lifted up the red front panels of their red robes to the back for the purpose of displaying the ornamental palace robes. Since the 1970s, this kind of unique costume has been replaced by a new style of palace robe, which is not as heavy as the old type.

³⁸³ For the explanation of the movements *Huakaimen*, *Yanmen* and *Chuansanjiao*, please see Appendices Eleven, Twelve and Thirteen of my M.A. thesis, "The Popular Religion of Female Employees in Cantonese Opera (pp. 194 – 201)."

In comparison with Master Huaguang's birthday rituals, the celebrations of other patron deities' birthdays are held on a much smaller scale. For instance, Cantonese opera actors celebrate the birthday of the Two Masters of Field and Hollow (Tiandou Ershi) on the twenty-fourth day of the third lunar month, when some performers would put on simple make-up and stage an auspicious play, such as the Main Repertoire of Birthday Greetings (*Zhengben Heshou* 正本賀壽),³⁸⁴ at the headquarters of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong. Some Cantonese opera performers told me that in normal cases, only the martial arts actors celebrate Master Zhang Wu's birthday (the twenty-eighth of the third month). His birthday rites are usually held at the headquarters of the Luanyu Tang 鸞輿堂 (the Hall of the Imperial Carriage).³⁸⁵ Paper money, candles, incense sticks, wine, tea, chickens, and pig bowels are major sacrifices. Cantonese opera performers seldom present auspicious plays on this occasion. After the worship, chicken, wine, and pig bowels are distributed among all the members of the Luanyu Tang.

In addition to regular sacrifices, Cantonese opera employees also offer occasional worship to their patron deities when they come across important events or serious problems. For instance, in the Canton Delta, many Cantonese opera troupes traveled in red boats or basin boats during the Republican era. When these troupes sailed across Ganzhu Tan 甘竹灘 (a rapid stream in Shunde 順德), all members would pray piously to their occupational deities at the head of their vessels and scatter paper money all around in order to appeal for security (Mary Yeung's notes). Today, Cantonese opera troupe members in Hong Kong still pay tribute to their patron deities and other tutelary gods occasionally. Whenever a Cantonese opera troupe is hired to stage a ritual operatic series, all the troupe members must visit the temple of the main deity before they start their performances. For example, in an interview on November 18, 1996 in Hong Kong, Ms. Summy Leung said that a few years ago, the Hanfeng Yueju Tuan (The Cantonese Operatic Troupe of the Han Customs) was employed by the local communities of Po Toi Island (Putai Island 蒲苔島) in Hong Kong for celebrating the birthday of the Lady of Golden Flowers (Jinhua Furen). At that time, she was a troupe member and often took part in the ritual performances. After arriving at the performing site, she went together with all other

³⁸⁴ With regard to a brief introduction of this auspicious play, please refer to Section 6.2. of Chapter Six of this dissertation.

³⁸⁵ Luanyu Tang (a guild of the martial arts player) is a sub-union of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong. On Master Huaguang's birthday mentioned above, the martial arts actors are responsible for putting his small effigy in an imperial carriage and carrying it to the restaurant where the celebrations take place. Thus, their work union is called the Hall of the Imperial Carriage.

troupe members to the Temple of the Lady of Golden Flowers. All of them offered incense and paper money to the goddess. Then, they also worshipped their patron deities at the backstage area (Mary Yeung's notes).

According to the 1754 edition of the *Foshan Zhongyi xiangzhi* (*The Local History of Zhongyi Township in Foshan*), two temples in Foshan were dedicated to Huaguang. There were eleven Huaguang temples erected in the district during the early Republican era. In other words, the worship of Huaguang had already spread to the Pearl River Delta in the middle of eighteenth century (or possibly earlier). Cantonese people believe that Huaguang is a god of fire. As far as I know, there is only one Huaguang Temple³⁸⁶ in Hong Kong today. It is located at Wong Hang (Huangkeng 黃坑) Village of Tai O (Da'ao 大澳) on Lantau Island. The history of this temple can be traced back to the twenty-second year of the reign period of Emperor Guangxu 光緒 (A.D. 1896). Cantonese opera actors visit the temple occasionally. For instance, members of the Troupe of New Gathering Heroes (Xin Qunying Jutuan 新群英劇團), such as Ruan Zhaohui 阮兆輝 (an actor of civil-military roles and young male roles) and Yin Feiyan 尹飛燕 (an actress of principal female roles), went to the Huaguang Temple to worship Master Huaguang when they were hired to stage ritual performances at Tai O in February 2003. Besides offering sacrifices to Master Huaguang, they also performed the auspicious play *Zhengben Heshou* (Main Repertoire of Birthday Greetings) and *Tiao Jiaguan* (Dance of Promotion) at the temple in order to honor and entertain him.³⁸⁷

4.4. Regular and Occasional Sacrifices to Deceased Masters or Colleagues

In the Pearl River Delta, Cantonese opera employees offer daily incense to their deceased masters or colleagues at home altars, sleeping areas of red boats or basin boats, and headquarters of Cantonese opera troupes before and during the 1940s. Nowadays, in Hong Kong, daily worship usually takes place at home altars and headquarters of Cantonese operatic troupes. In Canton, before the 1950s, Cantonese opera employees paid tribute to their late masters or troupe members at Sanyuan Li 三元里 and Songhua Gang 松花崗 (two common burial sites of deceased colleagues or masters) during the Qingming (Clearness and Brightness) Festival 清明節. With regard to the situations of Hong Kong, annual rites have been held at the Bahe Xianren Jinian Bei 八和先人紀念碑 (The Ancestral Monument of the Eight Harmonies), which is

³⁸⁶ Though this temple is known as Huaguang Miao 華光廟, the principal or main deity of the temple is the Seven Hands and Eight Arms (Qishou Babei 七手八背), whose image stands at the center of the main altar. The reason for this arrangement is unknown. Please refer to Figure 4.7.

³⁸⁷ For a brief depiction, please refer to the following website: <http://www.wanfaiyin.com/skying-03a.htm>

situated at the Wo Hop Shek (Hehe Shi 和合石) Cemetery in the New Territories. Members of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong contributed money to build this monument. In normal cases, young and middle-age guild members seldom take part in these annual cults since most of them are very busy at work. The senior members take charge of arranging the worship. They visit the monument every year in the Qingming Festival, when they bow to their late masters and colleagues and offer sacrifices (such as incense sticks, candles, wine, paper money, fruit, and roast pig) to them.

In addition to regular worship, Cantonese opera employees also offer occasional sacrifices to their late masters or colleagues. For example, when a Cantonese opera troupe is hired to stage ritual performances, all the troupe members would pay tribute to the deceased colleagues if their graves are located near the performing site. In normal cases, they would perform this rite before the first evening performance. All the offerings, such as incense, sweets, fruit, wine, tea, and pork, are prepared by the male and female troupe members. Incense and paper money are burnt and music is played in order to appease and entertain the invisible spirits. At the end of the rite, the troupe members would shout, “*gaosheng xiangliang* 高聲響亮 (have a loud and bright voice).” This ritual is known as *Ji Xianren* 祭仙人 (Offering to the Ancestors). Moreover, before the second evening’s performance, troupe members also worship the spirits of their late masters and colleagues at the backstage area. Sweets that are used as offerings in the rite are often distributed among the performers. According to the beliefs of the Cantonese opera profession, actors would have a good voice after eating these auspicious sweets. Performers also “offer incense at the edge of the stage before the start of each of the performances.” (Chan 1991: 53)

As for death rituals, most Cantonese opera employees were very poor before and during the Republican era. If they died at big cities such as Guangzhou, the Guild of Eight Harmonies (Bahe Huiguan) would hold funerals for them. Nevertheless, if they passed away in rural areas or on boats (red boats or basin boats), there were no burial rites and mourning observances for them. In an interview on September 27, 1995 in Vancouver, Ms. Chen Shaozhen said:

While traveling on basin boats, a senior actor would usually be in charge of the funeral services. When a troupe member passed away, he would put the troupe’s rice ladle on the floor. Troupe members threw their donations, such as money and jewels, into the ladle. Since most of the troupe members were suffering from economic hardship, their donations were only enough to buy a

poor coffin and bury the deceased colleague nearby. No funeral specialists (such as monks, nuns and a *fengshui* master) were employed for the simple rite. Troupe members washed and dressed the corpse, and carried the coffin to the burial site. In normal cases, descendants of the deceased troupe member did not participate in the ritual since they lived too far away (Mary Yeung's notes).

As far as I know, the funeral services of the red boat troupes were the same as those troupes that traveled in basin boats. By contrast, Cantonese opera actors and other employees have improved their economic and social status today. When they pass away, their funeral services take place at funeral homes. Each deceased member of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong could obtain several thousand dollars for the burial rite from the guild. For example, from 1990 to 1993, the amount was four thousand Hong Kong dollars per late member. When those poor actors died, the guild would pay for their funerals. Some famous performers, such as Li Xiangqin 李香琴 (a prominent actress of female roles) and Chen Haoqiu 陳好求 (a distinguished actress of female roles), are kindhearted souls. They always donate money for funeral expenses of their deceased colleagues (Mary Yeung's notes). In addition, Ms. Summy Leung stated that when those famous performers pass away, their disciples hold splendid funeral services and put on mourning for them. For instance, when a great master of Cantonese opera, passed away in 1997, his wife and four children (two sons and two daughters) participated as mourners in his funeral rite that lasted for several days. They wore mourning dress made of hemp and sackcloth. Moreover, members of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong observed mourning for him. Sacrifices such as rice, incense, flowers and paper articles were offered to him. Daoist priests were invited to chant scriptures. The burial took place at the Junk Bay Chinese Permanent Cemetery. A prominent geomancer was in charged of the burial ritual.

In brief, Cantonese opera employees observe taboos, worship the five patron deities and other tutelary gods, and offer sacrifices to their deceased colleagues or masters. There are four reasons for them to observe taboos. First, unlike some marionettists in western Fujian, Cantonese opera performers are not Daoists or local vernacular priests who possess supernormal abilities to invoke deities and subdue (or expel) evil elements. Hence, they have no choice but to observe taboos (a passive means) in order to avoid making the deities and evil spirits angry. Second, general taboos are used to uphold the moral code within the Cantonese opera troupes. In an interview at his home in Hong Kong on December 12, 1996, Mr. Wu Zhen 吳貞 (whose stage name is Xin Jinshanzhen 新金山貞) stated that in the past there were usually about sixty to

seventy members in a Cantonese operatic troupe. Most of them were illiterate and superstitious. Therefore, taboos could serve as a supernatural means to maintain the order of the troupe (Mary Yeung's notes). Moreover, Ms. Chen Shaozhen also offered the following explanation:

For Cantonese opera troupes, property preservation is very important. All the miscellaneous items and stage equipment are expensive. If they are preserved well, they can be used for over five decades. However, it is difficult to impose any practical sanctions on the troupe members. Thus, taboos are used to uphold moral principles. For example, both male and female troupe members are prohibited from kicking the drama trunks. If they violate this taboo, they would lose their voice (Mary Yeung's notes).

Third, traditional religious prejudice against women is the most important reason for imposing feminine taboos on Cantonese opera actresses and other female troupe members. Women in Cantonese opera are considered to be unclean because of menstrual flow and postpartum discharge, two unwanted discharges from the body that are regarded as polluted. According to the beliefs of the Cantonese opera profession, these two substances have evil power that weaken the *yangqi* 陽氣 of their patron deities and strengthen the *yinqi* 陰氣 of the evil spirits. Thus, when female troupe members are menstruating or within a month after child bearing, they should not touch the sacrifices. In addition, they are also believed to be transmitters of evil power since they have more opportunities to touch these two ejected substances. Hence, even when they are not menstruating or have not recently given birth to a child, they also have to observe a number of feminine taboos mentioned in Section 4.1. Fourth, power struggle is another reason to explain why feminine taboos are imposed on women in Cantonese opera. I had an interview with Mr. Chan Kwok Yuen on September 13, 1996 at the Elite Cantonese Opera Musical Society (Qunying Yueju Yinyue She 群英粵劇音樂社) in Richmond, B.C. (Canada). He told me that during the 1930s, a very prominent actor of female roles stated, "Actresses are becoming more and more popular. We must try our best to weaken their influence both within and without the occupation." (Mary Yeung's notes) Mr. Chan even thought that the feminine taboos are intentionally imposed on Cantonese opera actresses by their male counterparts. That there were no women elected to the post of chairperson of the Cantonese opera guild until 1991 is a good example to support his viewpoint.

Cantonese opera employees offer regular and occasional sacrifices to their gods and late masters mainly due to four reasons. In the first place, they believe that their occupational deities and deceased colleagues or masters are very "*ling* 靈 (efficacious)." From their viewpoint, pious

offerings can move the deities and spirits of late masters or colleagues to show their efficacy by giving blessings. Irreverence could provoke them to demonstrate their efficacy by giving punishments. For example, Mr. Ye Furuo 葉弗若 was a famous actor of comic roles in the Juexian Sheng Jutuan 覺先聲劇團 (The Company of the Herald of Awakening) during the mid-twentieth century. Since he came from a middle-class family and received western education, Ye considered the religious practices of his colleagues as “superstitious acts.” He never offered incense to the occupational gods or performed the rite *kaibi*³⁸⁸ until the Two Masters of Field and Hollow (Tiandou Ershi) demonstrated their supernormal power. One day, when he looked at the mirror in the backstage area, he suddenly saw that the two effigies of Tiandou Ershi, which stood at the altar, turned into two children. They jumped to the ground from the altar and performed dancing and martial arts. Ye was scared out of his wits. Then, someone suddenly called him. When he looked at the mirror again, he saw that the two children had disappeared and the two images of Tiandou Ershi reappeared at the altar. He immediately offered incense to the two masters and other patron deities. From then on, he often worshipped them piously since he believed that they were very “*ling*.” (Wong 1998, 43 – 44)

Mr. Alex Hung (a late actor of Cantonese opera) also said that pious offerings and respect of Cantonese opera players would move Master Huaguang to bless them during their performances as well as in their daily lives. He remembered that he once lost his camera. He searched it for a very long time but still could not find it. Then, he prayed devoutly to Master Huaguang. A few days later, he found it in one of his costume trunks. Moreover, Cantonese opera performers and other employees also believe that their occupational deities are very sensitive to disrespect and improper worship. They would punish those who provoke their anger. As Ms. Winnie Poon (Mr. Alex Hung’s wife and an actress of Cantonese opera) recalled and stated, “One day, there was an actress, who was menstruating, and did not worship Master Huaguang’s image before rehearsal. As a result, when she came onstage, she forgot the metrical patterns. I told her that she should make a low bow to the god, though she could not offer incense to him. She took my advice and bowed in front of his image. As a result, nothing more happened to her.” (Mary Yeung’s notes) Ms. Summy Leung also said, “My mother (an experienced actress) and many of my seniors told me that if I do not pay tribute to Master Huaguang and other patron deities, anything that happens to me, such as dizziness and fever, would be punishment from these professional gods. As an actress for over thirty years, I have

³⁸⁸ For a depiction of this rite, please see Section 4.1. of this chapter.

gradually internalized this kind of belief.” In addition, Ms. Leung told me that when she was still a child, one day she was busy with her costumes and make-up before a performance. Hence, she did not bow to the effigy of Huaguang in the backstage area. However, when her mother asked her whether she had sacrificed to the Master, she replied “Yes!” As a result, she got a headache after her performance. Her seniors told her that this was because she did not worship Master Huaguang and thus was punished by him (Mary Yeung’s notes). As far as I know, she is still a very pious worshipper of her patron deities today since she deeply believes that they are very efficacious. She set up a shrine for these professional gods at the headquarters of the company and offers daily worship to them.

With regard to the worship of deceased masters and colleagues, the most common form of reciprocal relationship is food sharing. For example, sweets that have been offered to these late masters before the second evening’s performance in an operatic series would be distributed to all the performers of a troupe. These sweets are considered to be “food blessed with supernatural power.” Thus, players believe that they would possess a bright voice after eating them.

In the second place, many Cantonese opera employees think that they have moral responsibilities for offering regular sacrifices to their late masters. As a popular Chinese proverb says, “A master for one day is a father forever (*yiri weishi zongshen weifu* 一日為師終身為父).” According to the traditions of the Cantonese opera profession, disciples should serve their masters as they serve their parents. They have to respect and take care of the daily necessities of their masters. After their masters pass away, they have to go into mourning for them and worship them regularly. Today, Cantonese opera performers still uphold this Confucian principle by paying tribute to their late masters in both regular and occasional rites.

In the third place, Cantonese opera actors and their colleagues organize annual rituals to celebrate their deities’ birthdays mainly because they want to reinforce group solidarity. The birthday celebration of Master Huaguang is a good example to support this viewpoint. Members of the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong spend large sums of money each year in celebrating Huaguang’s birth anniversary. For instance, they spent about 562,000 Hong Kong dollars for his birthday in 1992. Most guild members would participate annually in this solemn and important occasion. Through their intense interaction with one another in this sacred time, “...a sort of electricity is formed by their collecting which quickly transports them to an extraordinary degree of exaltation. Every sentiment expressed finds a place without resistance in

all the minds, which are very open to outside impressions; each re-echoes the others and is re-echoed by the other..." (Durkheim 1965, 247)

In the fourth place, overcoming anxiety that is caused by the harsh working environment and the specific nature of their jobs is also another reason for Cantonese opera performers and other employees to honor their gods and late masters. Before the 1950s, both living and working circumstances of the Cantonese opera employees were very poor. Red boats or basin boats where they lived and stages where they staged performances were made of bamboo and wood. Owing to their limited equipment for fire prevention, troupe members were very afraid of fire that could burn down their properties and cause danger to their lives. In order to overcome this fear, they tried to obtain divine protection by offering sacrifices to their professional deities and late masters. Among all their patron saints, Master Huaguang's blessings were the most important since he is considered to be the god of fire. Moreover, in an interview, one actor explained, "Male and female players always impersonate historical figures in their performances according to the outlines or scripts instead of their real biographies. Therefore, actors are very afraid of provoking the anger of the spirits of these deceased persons. In order to appease their anger, performers often pay tribute and offer a lot of spirit money to them." (Mary Yeung's notes) Nevertheless, other actors think that the deceased would not take revenge on those performers who portray them in Cantonese operatic performances.



Figure 4.1. The Shrine of Master Huaguang (November 28, 1996, the Headquarters of the Bat Wo Institute of Cantonese Opera, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon, Hong Kong)

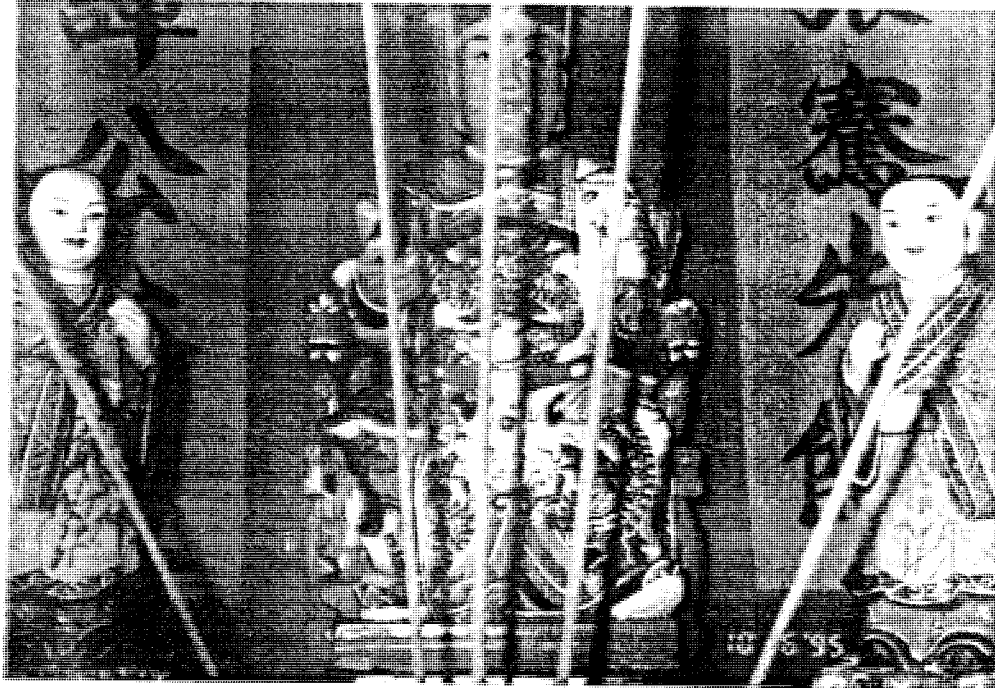


Figure 4.2. The Shrine of Master Huaguang and the Two Masters of Field and Hollow

Middle Seated Image: Master Huaguang

Standing Images: The Two Masters of Field and Hollow

By Courtesy of the UBC Museum of Anthropology



Figure 4.3. The Shrine at the Temple of Golden Flowers (July 30, 2004, Ping Chau, Hong Kong)

Large Seated Image: The Lady of Golden Flowers

Standing Bronze Effigy: Guan Dexing (The Supreme General who Protects the Doctrine)

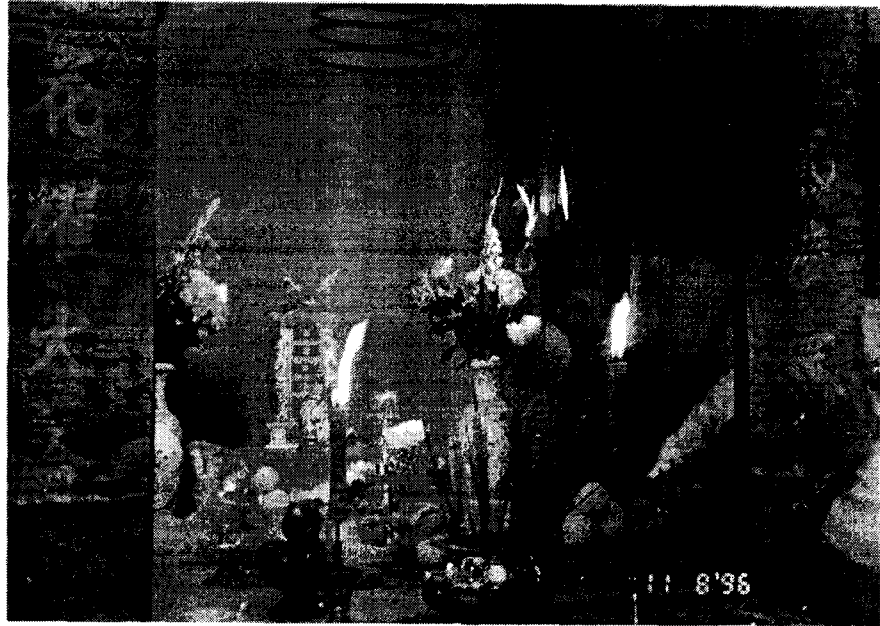


Figure 4.4. A View of the Shrine on Master Huaguang's Birthday (November 8, 1996, the Haicheng Restaurant, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong)



Figure 4.5. A photograph of Guanyin in the Performance of the Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain on Huaguang's 1996 Birthday



Figure 4.6. A Scene from the Performance of the Celestial Maiden's Great Offering of a Son on Huaguang's 1996 Birthday (November 8, 1996, the Haicheng Restaurant, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong)



Figure 4.7. Effigies of the Seven Hands and Eight Arms, Master Huaguang and Guanyin
(December 18, 1996, the Huaguang Temple, Tai O, Lantaou Island, Hong Kong)

Large image at the Center: the Seven Hands and Eight Arms

Small Red Image: Master Huaguang

White Image: Guanyin

CHAPTER FIVE

Religious Beliefs and Practices of Marionettists in Western Fujian

Similar to Cantonese opera performers in Hong Kong, marionettists in western Fujian also observe taboos and offer regular and occasional sacrifices to their patron deities. Their religious traditions are closely associated with the customs or religious activities of the local society. Though these religious activities were banned during the Cultural Revolution, some of them have been revived since the early 1980s. The major purposes of this chapter are to discuss the legends of the occupational deities of the profession, and the details of the annual worship of Lord Tian (Tian Gong), the most venerable god of the profession.

As noted in previous chapters, some marionette performers in western Fujian are not merely actors but also vernacular priests of the Liyuan Jiao (the Sect of the Pear Garden), a subsect of the Lüshan Tradition. Their common religions are a loosely integrated system of the Lüshan School and the local theatrical traditions. Instead of receiving their ordination from the Heavenly Master, whose office is situated at Mt. Longhu in Yingtang Municipality of Jiangxi, they are ordained by local vernacular masters. Vernacular priests of the Liyuan Jiao sing in *Gaoqiang* or *Daqiang* (two local variants of *Yiyang Qiang*) in their performances, though some of them may also perform in *Luantan* or *Han* operatic style. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that not all the *Gaoqiang* or *Daqiang* marionettists are Liyuan Jiao priests, and none of the *Luantan* marionette players are ritual specialists of this Lüshan sect. As mentioned in the Introduction, Qingshui Township of Yong'an City in central western Fujian and Baisha Town of Shanghang County at Longyan Municipality in southwestern Fujian are the core areas of my study. Today, there are three marionette troupes in Qingshui Township. The history of the No. 1 Popular Marionette Company of Qingshui Township (Qingshui Xiang Mu'ou Yituan 青水鄉木偶一團), which is also known as Wanfu Tang (the Hall of Ten Thousand Happiness) Marionette Troupe, can be traced back to the eighteenth century (or possibly earlier). Today, Mr. Wang Hua (the impresario of this troupe) is both a marionettist and a vernacular priest of the Liyuan Sect of the Lüshan Tradition. He received his ordination from a local Lüshan master, whose office or headquarters is located in Huainan Township 槐南鄉 of Yong'an City. The No. 2 and No. 3 Companies were formed in the early 1980s. None of the members of these two companies are ritual specialists of the Liyuan Jiao. As mentioned earlier, before the Cultural Revolution, the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe mainly performed in *Daqiang* style, a local variant of the *Yiyang Qiang*. Wang Hua has adopted the *Luantan* musical style in his performances since 1978.

Moreover, he often holds regular celebrations on Lord Tian's birthday. Mr. Ye Mingsheng and I observed the deity's 2003 birthday ceremony (the year *guiwei* 癸未), which took place at his house (the headquarters of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe). As noted in Section 2.2. of Chapter Two, owing to the influence of the Chinese Communist movement, *Gaoqiang* marionettists, who are also local Liyuan Jiao priests, had stopped performing rituals of this school in the late 1920s. In recent years, some local customs have been resumed, such as Tian Gong's birthday ceremony that is held in the Hall of Lord Tian at Shui Zhu Yang Village of Baisha. On August 9, 2004 (the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month of the year *jiaxin* 甲辛), we also observed this birthday celebration. My discussion in this chapter is mainly based on the firsthand observations mentioned above. It is important to point out that this ceremony was observed by devotees and spectators, who came from nearby local villages, such as Qingshui, Huang Jing Shang, Bai Qiqiu, Canghai 滄海, Sanfang 三房, Huainan 槐南, Luoxi 羅溪, Guokeng 過坑, and Longwu 龍吳, of Qingshui Township. They mainly spoke Qingshui dialect. Most of the audience (around ten to twenty) were old women and children. Male devotees also visited the headquarters of Wanfu Tang (Wang Hua's house) to pay tribute to Lord Tian and other tutelary deities. The spectators sit on wooden benches placed in front of the temporary stage, which was erected at the main hall of Mr. Wang's house.

In southwestern Fujian, *Gaoqiang* musical style was very popular in Baisha and other local Hakka areas before the late Qing period. Marionette plays have been sung in both *Gaoqiang* and *Luantan* since late nineteenth century, when the *Luantan* melodic style (*Han* operatic style) was introduced to these regions.

5.1. Taboos for Marionettists in Western Fujian

Marionette performers in western Fujian need to observe some occupational taboos. For example, in an interview at his home on April 24, 2003, Wang Hua told me that marionettists have to observe four major taboos. Most of these religious restrictions are associated with women, though there are no feminine taboos that are imposed especially on female troupe members. First, the clothes of a Liyuan Jiao priest should not be washed together with any women's clothes (including those of his female family members). According to Mr. Wang, women are considered to be unclean since they have more opportunities to touch menstrual flow and postpartum discharge. Their clothes are often polluted by these two unwanted substances from the body. As a vernacular priest of the Liyuan Jiao of the Lüshan Sect, Wang Hua believes that if he violates these religious restrictions, his supernatural power would be weakened by the

evil power of these polluted substances, and the rituals that are performed by him would become inefficacious. It is important to point out that troupe members who are not vernacular priests do not need to keep this religious restrictions. Second, after washing their clothes, local people often hang the wet clothes on bamboo sticks in order to dry them in the sun. These bamboo sticks, which may be used to hang women's clothes, should not be used to erect marionette stages.³⁸⁹ Third, in some cases, marionette shows are staged at the house of a local villager. The temporary stage is usually set up at the main hall of the house. Troupe members (especially male members) should avoid standing or walking underneath the staircase, which is erected behind the main hall.³⁹⁰ In addition, drama trunks that are used to keep puppets and stage properties should not be placed over there. Otherwise, they are easily stepped over by the female members of the host family, who often climb up and down the stairs when they are doing housework. This is a general taboo imposed on both male and female troupe members. It is believed that any troupe member (especially men) who is stepped over by women would suffer misfortune. Fourth, in order to preserve the property of a troupe, all members of the troupe are prohibited from sitting on the drama trunks. Since female marionettists only appear after the 1949 Revolution, there are fewer taboos imposed on them.

In southwestern Fujian, marionettists in Baisha District of Shanghang County also have to observe some occupational taboos. For example, the *Minxi xiju shi ziliao huibian dijiu ji* 閩西戲劇史資料匯編第九輯 (*A Collection of Materials on the History of Operas of Western Fujian*, Vols. 9) states that whenever there are no performances, marionette troupe members have to store all the stage properties inside the drama baskets. The detachable head of the Da Tian Gong (Great Lord Tian) marionette should not be placed at the bottom of the drama basket. In order to show their respect, troupe members must put it on top of all other materials. Otherwise, inauspicious events would occur (MXSZ 1986, 13). Moreover, in marionette performances, the *xiaoluo* 小鑼 (small gong) is a kind of percussion instrument used for accompaniment. It is struck with a thin, flat strip of wood, which is like a “tongue” in shape. Hence, this small piece of wood is commonly known as “Lord Tian’s tongue (Tian Gong she 田公舌). According to the

³⁸⁹ Besides Hakkas and Hokkiens, Qingshui Township of Yong’an City in central western Fujian is also occupied by the She people. Women of this ethnic group can also obtain the Jiufeng Wenfa 九鳳文法 (Civil Methods of the Nine Phoenixes) of the Lüshan Tradition through the ordination rite (cf. Chan, 1995a: 67). Not much is known about the rite for obtaining these civil ritual methods. However, it is important to note that this religious practice is also popular among the Hakka and Hokkien women in central western Fujian. Women who have been ordained are considered to be pure. Therefore, their clothes can be washed together with those of the Lüshan priests.

³⁹⁰ In central western Fujian, a village house is a two-story building. The main hall is on the ground floor. There is a staircase behind the main hall that connects the two levels. The staircase does not consist of any risers (vertical front part of the step).

professional precepts, marionettists are forbidden to use it to stir burning charcoals. It is believed that if Lord Tian's tongue is polluted by the breeze, marionette players would lose their voice in the performance (MXSZ 1986, 16).³⁹¹

5.2. Patron Deities of Marionettists in Central Western Fujian

Marionettists in Qingshui Township of central western Fujian pay tribute to a group of occupational or patron gods. Among them, Tian Gong (Lord Tian), who is also known as Laolang Shifu 老郎師傅 (the Venerable Lad Master), Tian Gong Yuanshuai 田公元帥 (Marshal Lord Tian), Tian Gong Shifu 田公師傅 (Master Lord Tian), or Jiutian Fenghuo Yuan Tian Gong Yuanshuai 九天風火院田公元帥 (Marshal Lord Tian of the Wind and Fire Department of the Ninth Heaven),³⁹² is the most venerable one. Mr. Wang Hua said that his father (Wang Jinbei), a prominent *Daqiang* marionette performer in central western Fujian in modern times, honored Tian Gong as the most venerable patron god. The old image of Lord Tian, which Wang Hua inherited from his father, was depicted wearing a formal robe, with a wooden gourd in his right hand.³⁹³ This old effigy was burnt after the new one was made in 1983. The new standing image, which is made of camphor wood, is about thirty-five centimeters in height. It is dressed in a red embroidered gown with a red belt tied at the waist. Over the gown, it wears a loose outer garment with long sleeves covered the hands. Its face dressing is red. The right hand is lifted above its head. The left arm hangs down freely from the shoulder. Moreover, the hairstyle of this image consists of a long braid at the back of the head, with a half-moon shape shaved into the hair above the forehead. On some important or auspicious occasions, such as his birthday (the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month), it also wears a crown, which was offered to him as a

³⁹¹ Besides the marionettists, local villagers of Baisha Town also have to observe some taboos that are related to marionette performances. For instance, a pregnant woman is not allowed to watch marionette plays. Otherwise, she would give birth to a freak. From the viewpoint of the local people, puppets are infused with the spiritual force of the deities they represent. In other words, they are not only spring dolls but also gods. Thus, local villagers dare not touch or play with the marionettes, a gesture that is considered to be irreverent.

³⁹² None of my informants could tell me why Lord Tian has such title. In my opinion, this title originated from the *Huitu sanjiao yuanliu soushen daquan* (*An Illustrated Comprehensive Collection Concerning the Deities and Origins of the Three Religions*), a book which was published during the Ming period (the exact date of its publication is still unknown). The legend of Lord Tian is recorded in this book under the title "Fenghuo Yuan Tian Yuanshuai 風火院田元帥 (Marshal Tian of the Department of Wind and Fire)." (HSYS [Ming] 1990, 242). Moreover, according to Kristofer Schipper, Chapter Forty of the *Great Law of the Numinous Treasure of the Highest Clarity* (*Shangqing lingbao dafa* 上清靈寶大法) states that the function of the Department of Wind and Fire is to deliver all documents, letters and talismans from the mundane world to the gods in Heaven. Lord Tian is believed to be the head of this department. Hence, all the messages that are forwarded to the deities must go through his hands. "All those who want to celebrate a ceremony should first present a writ to him to beseech him to correct errors in the addresses." (Schipper 1966, 88)

³⁹³ In the book *Huitu sanjiao yuanliu soushen daquan*, Lord Tian is portrayed sitting on his throne, with a gourd in his right hand (HSYS [Ming] 1990, 241; Ye 2002, 33 and 39). Wang Hua told me that the appearance of the old image of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe is similar to the illustration of this patron god mentioned in this book, which was published in the Ming dynasty.

gift some years ago by one of his devotees (See Figure 5.1.).³⁹⁴ This standing effigy is put inside a shrine,³⁹⁵ which is placed at the altar of the Hall of Restoration (Zaifa Tang 再發堂), the main hall of Wang Hua's house. Mr. Wang told me that he would bring along this small image of Lord Tian whenever he goes to other places to stage performances. Besides the effigy mentioned above, he also possesses two marionettes of Lord Tian. These are the Marionette Deity of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Shen'ou) and the Da Tian Gong (the Eldest Lord Tian). As mentioned in Appendix Two, Tian Gong Shen'ou is a "sacred object." In normal cases, it is hung at the center of the stage before the performance begins and at the time when there are intervals (See Figure 5.2.). This marionette is not arranged to impersonate any characters in performances. The Eldest Lord Tian (Da Tian Gong) is arranged to portray comic characters in the shows, such as Chen Haiqing in the performance of the play *Huangjun Gushi* 皇君故事 (the Legend of the Sovereign Empress).³⁹⁶ In his article, "Yong'an Shi Huang Jing Shan Wanfu Tang daqiang kuilei xi yu huanyuan yishi 永安市黃景山萬福堂大腔傀儡戲與還願儀式 (The Ritual for Repayment of Vows, and the *Daqiang* Marionette Theatre of the Wanfu Tang at Huang Jing Shan in Yong'an)," Liu Xiaoying 劉曉迎 records the following legend of Lord Tian, which is popular among the marionette troupe members in Qingshui Township:

It is said that the Great Jade Emperor in Heaven had seven daughters and one son. His son, who was the youngest child, was called Jinxing Taizi 金星太子 (The Crown Prince of the Golden Constellation). Jinxing Taizi once fought with a great immortal.³⁹⁷ Abusing his own power, he hurt the immortal's foot. Therefore, the great immortal poured out his complaints before the Great Jade Emperor. The Great Jade Emperor was very angry after hearing [his grievance]. He claimed that he would punish the Crown Prince. At that time, Jinxing Taizi wanted to return to the palace. When he knew that his father was very angry, he descended to the mundane world [in order to] escape punishment. He came to the

³⁹⁴ Members of the No. 3 Marionette Company also own an image of Lord Tian. However, it does not look like the one which is possessed by the No. 1 Company (Wanfu Tang) mentioned above. The effigy of the No. 3 Company is around forty centimeters in height. Its face dressing is white. Holding a battle axe with its right hand, it wears a necklace, a red robe, a black belt tied at the waist and a pair of black boots with thick sole. The small effigy stands in a shrine that is about forty-five centimeters in length.

³⁹⁵ Zhong Yongkang 鍾永康, Wang Hua's brother-in-law, offered this shrine as a gift to Lord Tian in 1984. The shrine is around forty centimeters in length. Mr. Zhong is an elder of Bai Qi Qiu 百芑邱 (a She village) in Qingshui Township. He is also an expert in the history and customs of the She people.

³⁹⁶ For the English translation of this story, please refer to Appendix Eight.

³⁹⁷ A member of the No. 2 Marionette Company of Qingshui Township said that this "great immortal" is Li Tieguai 李鐵拐.

Iron-plate Bridge on Mount Jinyin at Zhejiang. There was a large piece of field beside the bridge. [Thus, Jinxing Taizi named himself as Tian Qingyuan]. His last name was “Tian 田” and “Qingyuan 清源” was his first name. He went to Chen Shunhe’s 陳順和 (also known as Chen Baiwen 陳百萬) home in the evening and requested to stay there overnight.

Chen Baiwan greeted Tian Qingyuan and said to him, “My son, [since] you want to stay at my home, I should treat you cordially. [As] an ancient proverb states, ‘Guests who come to seek temporary lodging [can be compared to] birds come to rest in a wood.’ [We] should help assist them. Nevertheless, [since] I am engaged in some minor affairs tonight, it isn’t a good time for [you to stay here.]” [Chen Baiwan] this said with an expression of reluctance. Tian Qingyuan inquired [about the matter] and said, “What happened? I’ll know whether or not I can help you if you can tell me [the truth].” “My daughter is sick. Every night, I have to prepare the three sacrifices,³⁹⁸ wine, and paper money and display them at the intersection outside the main entrance so as to pacify [the ghosts] and ensure that my daughter is well. Otherwise, her illness would become more serious. Tonight, therefore, is not a good time [for you to stay here],” Chen Baiwan answered. When he heard this, Tian Qingyuan already knew what happened and had a good idea in his mind. “Lord [Chen], I can help you to solve this problem. You don’t need to prepare anything tonight. Tell the young lady³⁹⁹ to sleep in another room and let me sleep in her chamber. She will be perfectly well,” said Tian Qingyuan in an unruffled spirit. Chen Baiwan was very pleased when he heard this. He treated Tian Qingyuan cordially and [invited Tian] to stay at his home.

Tian went to the young lady’s chamber after taking supper. Transforming himself into the young lady, he lay down on her bed and pretended to be sick. When the third night watch was announced, thirty-six ghosts came truculently and entered the young lady’s chamber. “How dare you not to offer us any food tonight! Let’s see how we settle with you!” shouted the thirty-six ghosts. As soon as they tried to grasp the young lady, Tian Qingyuan showed his true form and threw his magic weapon (wooden gourd) on the floor. Those hands of the ghosts that were

³⁹⁸ The three sacrifices are pig, sheep and cow.

³⁹⁹ The term “young lady” here refers to Chen Baiwan’s daughter.

used to grasp the lady were stuck to the wooden gourd. The ghosts cried for help and begged Tian Qingyuan to forgive him. Tian Qingyuan asked, “Where do you come from? You’re the wandering ghosts that caused the young lady to fall sick. You’d better tell me the truth. Otherwise, I won’t forgive you!” The wandering ghosts answered, “We are altogether thirty-six ghosts that come from different places, such as Hangzhou, Suzhou, Jizhou and Shangdong. We beg the master⁴⁰⁰ to rescue us.” [What the ghosts did] puzzled Tian Qingyuan. “Why don’t you leave [Chen’s] house after eating up the food? Why do you still cause the young lady to become ill everyday?” asked Tian in an interrogatory tone. “Master, you don’t understand our difficulties. Her father is a millionaire who can offer us enough food and money every night. If we go to other poor families, they can only give us a little. All the ghosts don’t have enough to eat. [Thus], we have no choice but to go to Chen’s home everyday. There is nowhere for us to go,” replied the leader of the ghosts. Tian Qingyuan said, “Ghosts, you can go with me if you are homeless. Don’t cause anyone to fall sick again!” All the ghosts knelt down immediately and said, “Master, we are very grateful to you for providing shelter [and food] for us.”

Tian Qingyuan kept on worrying though he released the young lady from suffering. He [thought to himself], “It’s really a problem because they all go with me. They need [a lot of] food and money. How can I get all these for them?” He borrowed thirty-six marionettes from Liu Bang (Han Gaozu 漢高祖)⁴⁰¹ and told the thirty-six wandering ghosts to infuse the marionettes with their spiritual force. At ordinary times, they performed the *Daqiang* marionette plays to entertain the audience. In the morning, Tian ordered them to look far from the sky and went everywhere to assist common people who were suffering from disasters. They also helped to get rid of their worries and difficulties. In order to express their thankfulness, people would certainly offer them food and money. [Thus], the problem of making a living for the ghosts was solved. This is the origin of [the tradition of] of marionette theatre...(Liu 2002, 117 – 118)⁴⁰²

⁴⁰⁰ The word “master” here refers to Tian Qingyuan.

⁴⁰¹ Liu Bang or Han Gaozu (r. 202 – 195 B.C.) was the founder of the Western Han dynasty (202 B.C. – A.D. 9).

⁴⁰² 話說天上玉皇大帝生有七個女兒，一個兒子，其兒子最小，叫金星太子。有一次金星太子和個大仙打架，仗勢踢痛了大仙之腳，於是大仙向玉皇大帝告狀。玉皇大帝聽後大怒，聲稱要責罪於太子。當時，金

In addition, Liu Xiaoying also says that when Tian Gong borrowed the marionettes from Emperor Gaozu (Liu Bang), he requested the emperor to bestow a horizontal stage scroll on him. The emperor sat opposite to both the left and right prime ministers. The left prime minister wrote the character “*feng* 風 (wind).” The right prime minister wrote the character “*yuan* 院 (department).” Emperor Gaozu wrote the character “*huo* 火 (fire).” However, since he sat opposite to the two prime ministers, the term “Fenghuo Yuan” was written as “風 院” instead of “風火院.” Today, these three Chinese characters still appear on the horizontal scroll of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe, which is hung on the stage during performances. The character “*huo* (fire)” is still written upside down.

Besides Tian Gong, Wang Hua and other marionettists in Qingshui (whether they are vernacular priests or not) also worship a number of patron deities. They are Lord Dou (Dou Gong 竇公 or Dou Qingqi 竇清期), Lord Guo (Guo Gong 郭公 or Guo Qingxuan 郭清選), Master Chen Ping 陳平師傅, the Gods of Peace and Harmony (Hehe Erxian 和合二仙), the Lady of Golden Flowers (Jinhua Xiaojie 金花小姐), the Lady of Silver Flowers (Yinhua Xiaoniang 銀花小娘), the Third Granduncle (Sanbo Gonggong 三伯公公), the Fourth Granduncle (Sibo Popo 四伯婆婆), the Thousand-li Eye (Qianli Yan), the Favorable-wind Ear (Shunfeng Er), Principal Male Roles of Hangzhou (Hangzhou Zhengsheng 杭州正生), Principle Female Roles of Suzhou (Suzhou Zhengdan 蘇州正旦), Female Minor Roles of Quanzhou (Quanzhou Meixiang 泉州梅香), Tu Lao of Shandong (Shandong Tu Lao 山東土老) and Wang

星太子正準備回宮，聞父皇大怒，怕責罰他，便下凡人間，來到浙江金印山鐵板橋。橋邊有塊大田地，便取「田」為姓，名清源。於太陽落西時分來到陳順和百萬富翁家投宿。

陳百萬接待了田清源，對他說：「小後生，你要在我家住宿，理當接待，自古道，人來投宿，鳥來投林，理當方便。只是我家今晚有點小事情，很不方便。」面露難色。田清源不由探問道：「什麼事情？若能講我聽，看能否幫助你。」陳百萬說：「家中小女生病，每晚要準備三牲、酒禮、紙錢在大門外路口設和，方保女兒今晚平安。如果沒有及時設和，小女病情就會加重，故今晚不太方便。」田清源見如此說，心中明白，輕鬆說道：「員外，這個事情我能幫助你。今晚東西不要準備，可叫小姐到別房安睡，把小姐的房間讓我睡即可，可保小姐平安無事。」陳百萬聽此說，十分高興，熱情款待田清源住下。

田清源吃過晚飯，來到小姐房間，變成小姐模樣，躺在床上裝作生病的樣子。三更時分，有三十六個鬼氣勢洶洶地來到小姐房，開口大罵：「今晚怎敢不準備東西給我們大家吃，看我們怎麼收拾你。」說完即動手拖小姐。田清源變回原人，用寶貝「木瓜」丟於地上，把動手的鬼手都糊在木瓜上，那些鬼不由叫苦連天，請求田清源搭救。田清源問：「你們是那裡來的野鬼，來弄小姐生病，如不從實招來，對你們不客氣。」野鬼答：「我們是從杭州、蘇州、吉州、山東等地集在一起的三十六個野鬼，請師父搭救。」「為什麼人家拿東西給你們吃後不離開，還要天天來弄小姐生病呢？」田清源不解地盤問。領頭的野鬼答：「師父有所不知，她父親是百萬富翁，天天晚上會拿東西和錢財給我們，如果到其他地方貧苦的人家，東西給得少，眾鬼不夠吃，只好天天如此，又沒別的地方去。」田清源便說：「你眾野鬼沒地方前去，那就隨我前往，再不要弄人生病了。」眾野鬼忙跪下道：「多謝師父收留。」田清源雖然解脫了小姐的病因，心下卻生憂慮：眾鬼隨我前去也是個問題，他們要吃要錢，我從哪裡去拿呢？他就到漢高祖劉邦那借來三十六個傀儡，叫三十六個野鬼投入傀儡，平常演大腔傀儡戲給觀眾取樂。上午他叫眾鬼在半空中查看，哪裡百姓有災難，就去幫助他們排憂解難，百姓自然答謝，解決了中野鬼的吃用問題。傀儡戲又由此產生……

Er of Jizhou (Jizhou Wang Er 吉州王二). Marionette performers in Qingshui believe that Chen Ping is the first person in history who invented or made a puppet. According to Liu Xiaoying, Chen Ping was a strategist of Emperor Gaozu. In 206 B.C., the Xiongnu 匈奴 troops besieged Baideng City (Baideng Cheng 白登城). The emperor was inside the city. In order to rescue him, Chen Ping made a marionette of a charming woman and hung it on the city wall. Since the wife of the Xiongnu King was a jealous woman, she worried that her husband would take the beautiful woman⁴⁰³ as his concubine after the city fell. She succeeded in persuading her husband to withdraw the troops, and the siege of Baideng City was raised. Cheng Ping did a deed of merit (Liu 2002, 119). It is believed that both Dou Gong (Dou Qingqi) and Guo Gong (Guo Qingxuan) are sworn brothers of Tian Gong. Local marionette troupe members usually address them as San Tian Gong (Three Lords of Tian). All the three marionette companies in Qingshui possess marionettes of the Three Lords of Tian, which fall within the category of comic roles. Not much is known about the legends of other associated gods mentioned above. In addition to these patron deities, Wang Hua, who is both a marionettist and a priest of the Liyuan Jiao of the Lüshan Tradition, also worships a number of Lüshan gods, including the Three Pure Ones (Sanqing), the Ninth Lad of Lüshan or Xu Xun (the Lüshan Patriarch), the Three Ladies (Chen Sigu, Lin Jiugu and Li Sangu) and Zhanggong (the Sage Lord Zhang).

Besides the occupational gods mentioned above, members of the three marionette companies in Qingshui (whether they are Liyuan Jiao priests or not) also worship other tutelary deities, such as Guanyin, Wugu Zhenren (True Person of the Five Cereals), Zhanggong Fazhu (Ritual Lord Zhang), Huaguang,⁴⁰⁴ Kanggong Houwang (Marquis King – Lord Kang), Mashi Zhenxian (True Immortal – Lady Ma), and Linshi Zhenxian (True Immortal – Lady Lin).⁴⁰⁵

5.3. Patron Deities of Marionettists in Southwestern Fujian

Similar to the marionettists in Qingshui of Yong'an City, both *Gaoqiang* and *Luantan* marionette performers in Baisha Town of Shanghang County (southwestern Fujian) worship a group of patron deities. In addition to Lord Tian who is worshipped as the most venerable god, they also pay tribute to Chen Ping, the Immortals of Peace and Harmony (Hehe Erxian), Guankou Erlang 灌口二郎 (the Second Retainer of Irrigation Works),⁴⁰⁶ Lord Dou (Dou Gong), Lord Guo (Guo Gong), the Lady of Golden Flowers (Jinhua Xiaojie), the Lady of Silver Flowers

⁴⁰³ The wife of the Xiongnu King did not realize that the beautiful woman was only a puppet.

⁴⁰⁴ As mentioned in Chapter Four, Huaguang is both a local deity in Guangdong and an occupational god of the Cantonese opera profession.

⁴⁰⁵ For a detailed description of their cults and legends, please see Section 3.2.1. of Chapter Three.

⁴⁰⁶ As mentioned in Section 1.2. 2. of Chapter One, Guankou Erlang was the most popular patron god of Chinese theatre during the Ming dynasty, though he no longer enjoyed general popularity in the Qing period.

(Yinhua Xiaojie 銀花小姐), the Third Granduncle (Sanbo Gonggong) and the Third Grandaunt (Sanbo Popo). Moreover, these marionettists also worship many local gods, such as the Three Great Immortal Masters (Sanda Xianshi), Wugu Zhenxian (the True Immortal of the Five Cereals) and Bazui Gongwang (the Duke-King with an Open Mouth).⁴⁰⁷

With regard to the legends of Tian Gong and Chen Ping that are popular among marionettists in Baisha, Ye Mingsheng says that once upon a time, when Liu Bang (Emperor Gaozu of the Han dynasty) was in Baideng City, he was besieged by hostile forces. In order to rescue the emperor, Chen Ping (the prime minister) made a marionette of a beautiful woman and hung it on the eastern gate of the city wall. He then ordered Tian Gong (Lord Tian), Emperor Gaozu's son-in-law, to stage puppetry by manipulating the marionette. When the barbarian soldiers were intoxicated with the performance, Liu Bang took the chance to flee from Baideng City. After returning to the palace, Emperor Gaozu commended Tian Gong for his bravery. In order to show his appreciation, the emperor used his hands to hold up Tian's head.⁴⁰⁸ Later, plague prevailed in Baideng City. Lord Tian told the emperor that this calamity was caused by the twenty-four marionettes⁴⁰⁹ since the court did not offer them any reward after the siege of Baideng city was lifted. The emperor canonized these puppets as Marionette Gods (Kuilei Shen 傀儡神). The pestilence immediately disappeared. Lord Tian was dismissed from office some years later. He took along the twenty-four string dolls (Marionette Gods) with him and made a living as a marionette performer (Ye 1995, 73 – 74). Moreover, another version of the legend is that Tian Gong was originally a *Gaoqiang* marionettist. However, since too many people invited him to stage puppet plays, he sang himself hoarse. As a result, he lost his sweet voice and was often out of tune. In the performance, his musician used the *huqin* (two-stringed spike fiddle) for accompaniment in order to cover up his weakness. As decades and centuries passed, Tian's unique way of performing developed into a new theatrical style known as *Hanju* (Han Opera) or *Luantan*. Since then, not only *Gaoqiang* marionette players but also *Luantan* marionettists have worshipped Tian Gong as their occupational god.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁷ For a detailed discussion of their cults and legends, please refer to Section 3.2.1. of Chapter Three.

⁴⁰⁸ During imperial times, an official had to bow his head and kneel down when he had an audience with the emperor. Otherwise, he would be punished for ignoring the emperor's majesty.

⁴⁰⁹ As mentioned above, Chen Ping only made one marionette. The legend does not explain why there were totally twenty-four marionettes.

⁴¹⁰ In Changting (a local Hakka county near Shanghang), there is another legend about Lord Tian associated with the development of regional operas. It is said that Tian Gong, who was the patron god of Chinese theatre, had two disciples. One of them was very good at playing drums and other musical instruments. By contrast, the artistic skills of the other one was very poor. One day, this poor disciple once again played his drum badly in the performance. Tian Gong was so angry that he broke one of his drumsticks and then passed away. Each of these two disciples made an image of Tian Gong. Before performances began, they offered incense to their master. The

The worship of Tian Gong spread to Baisha in the early Ming dynasty. Since then, sacrifices have often taken place at the Hall of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Tang). As the *Genealogy of the Liangs* (*Liangshi zupu*) states:

Yuanchun Gong 緣春公 of the seventh generation is the founding ancestor of Shui Zhu Yang [Village]. He learnt [the performing skills] of marionette theatre at Hangzhou 杭州 of Zhejiang 浙江 in the early Ming [around the mid fourteenth century]. [When he returned home], he took the incense fire⁴¹¹ of Lord Tian (the founder and the patron deity of theatre) along with him and reverently placed it at the Hall of Lord Tian in the village. Thereafter [the skills of performance] passed down through generations. Masters of marionette troupes from everywhere visited [the Hall of Lord Tian] and made annual offerings. [Marionette performances] flourished during the mid-Qing. In the *gengwu* 庚午 year of the Qianlong [reign period] (A.D. 1750), Panxiu Gong 攀秀公 (Fakui 法魁)⁴¹² of the seventeenth generation took the lead in forming the first Guild of Lord Tian, which was comprised of seven people. The annual gathering and the worship of the patron deity, which took place at the Hall of Lord Tian in Shui Zhu Yang, fell on the twenty-fourth of the sixth month...Lord Tian's effigy was demolished in "the communist [movements which lasted] eighteen years." On August 13, 2001 (the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month), a grand inauguration was held at the Hall of Lord Tian [in order to celebrate] the restoration of the hall and the unveiling of the effigy of Lord Tian...(Mary Yeung's notes)⁴¹³

outstanding disciple who played his drum with a pair of sticks went to Hunan and became the founder of the Qi opera (Qiju 祁劇), a regional opera that is popular in Hunan. *Pihuang* is the dominant musical style in the performances of this operatic genre. Since one of his drumsticks was broken by his master (Tian Gong), the poor disciple could only beat his drum with one stick. Today, percussionists of *Gaoqiang* marionette troupes still play their drums with one stick.

⁴¹¹ The term "*xianghuo* (incense fire)" may refer to an image, a picture, an incense burner, or a tablet that represents Tian Gong. There are no details concerning this point.

⁴¹² Fakui was the religious name of Panxiu Gong. In other words, he was a vernacular priest. Since *Luantan* did not replaced *Gaoqiang* as the dominant musical style in southwestern Fujian until the late nineteenth century, it is reasonable to argue that Panxiu Gong, who took the lead in forming the Tian Gong guild during the mid-eighteenth century, was a *Gaoqiang* marionette player.

⁴¹³ 水竹洋開基祖七世祖緣春公于明初浙江杭州學會傀儡戲，以隨行香火帶回田公祖師(戲神)，安奉于村中心田公堂內，從此，前傳後教，祖代相傳，傀儡戲在本地區傳播開了，各路戲班師傅每年來朝拜，到清中葉很是繁盛。乾隆庚午歲十七世攀秀公法魁牽頭首次組成田公會(七人組成)，定于每年六月廿四日在水竹洋田公堂聚會朝拜戲神。...田公堂“田公”偶像毀于十八年“共產”。2001年8月13日(農曆六月廿四日)在田公堂舉行了隆重的“田公堂”修復開放暨“田公”偶像揭幕儀式。...

Today, the Tian Gong Tang is the only temple dedicated to Lord Tian in southwestern Fujian (Hakka areas). This newly constructed miniature temple, which is a roofed, open-fronted, doorless red structure, stands in front of the ancestor hall of the Liang lineage of Shui Zhu Yang Natural Village. With regard to the layout of the hall, a horizontal inscribed board is hung on the wall right opposite to the entrance. Tian Gong Tang, the name of the temple, is inscribed on the plaque. A couplet (written in black ink on two vertical scrolls of red paper) is also put on the wall. The first line of the couplet reads: “Chen Ping *zuo kuilei* 陳平作魁儡 (Chen Ping made marionettes).” The second one reads: “Tian Gong *yan mu'ou* 田公演木偶 (Lord Tian performed puppetry).” There is an elongated red altar in front of the wall. The golden seated effigy of Tian Gong is placed on a red dais, which stands at the center of the altar. Confucius’s standing image and the seated image of Wenchang 文昌⁴¹⁴ are put respectively to the right and left sides of the red dais. The seated image of Lord Tian is dressed in an official cap and a formal robe. It also wears a black belt around the waist (see Figure 5.3.). A large incense burner is placed on the red square table, which is put in front of the elongated altar. As mentioned in Section 3.2.1. of Chapter Three, Tian Gong is not only an occupational deity of the marionettists but also a tutelary god of local areas. Thus, local villagers who are not marionettists and marionette troupe members often visit the Hall of Lord Tian.

Some marionettists also possess Lord Tian’s images. Thus, they perform daily worship at the household altar. In addition, most marionette troupes (both *Gaoqiang* and *Luantan*) own the marionettes of the Three Lords of Tian (San Tian Gong). Besides effigies and string dolls, *Gaoqiang* marionettists who are also Liyuan Jiao priests also possess liturgical painted scrolls (*shentu* 神圖). These paintings, which are considered to be “sacred objects,” are usually

⁴¹⁴ The name “Wenchang” originated from the collective name of the six stars of the Wenchang constellation. In A.D. 1316, Emperor Renzong 仁宗 of the Yuan dynasty bestowed the title of “Zitong Dijun 梓潼帝君 (Emperor Zitong)” on Wenchang. He also granted the title “Fuyuan Kaihua Wenchang Silu Hongren Dijun 輔元開化文昌司祿宏仁帝君 (Emperor Wenchang, the Promoter of Benevolence and Controller of Wealth Who Serves the Origin and Initiates Salvation)” to the Zitong spirits. The cult of Zitong and the worship of Wenchang gradually mingled together. As decades and then centuries passed, many official titles were bestowed on him. It is said that Emperor Wenchang, who lived on Mt. Qiqu 七曲, was called Zhang Yazi 張亞子 or Zhang Yu 張育. He made himself the King of Shu (Sichuan). Later, he stood up to the invasion of Fu Jian 苻堅, the ruler of the Former Qin (around A.D. 374), and died in the battle. In order to honor him, local people dedicated a shrine to him at Mt. Qiqu in Zitong County. According to Chinese beliefs, he takes charge of all the appointments and promotions of officials through examinations. Since the Yuan dynasty, many students, scholars and intellectuals have worshipped him as the most venerable deity. Nowadays, many Chinese people pay tribute to him. Local villagers of Baisha District worship him because they hope that the deity would offer blessings to their children so that these children can obtain excellent academic results and find good jobs in the future (Kleeman, 1993: 45-74; <http://www.eng.taoism.org.hk/daoist-beliefs/immortals&immortalism>).

composed of six, seven, eleven, or twelve rows of divinities.⁴¹⁵ In normal cases, figures of Tian Gong and other adjunct deities of the profession are in the last (bottom) row of a painted scroll. Pictures of ritual lords of the Lüshan Tradition and other tutelary gods, such the Three Ladies and Huaguang, also appear in the liturgical paintings. As mentioned in Section 2.1. of Chapter Two, Mr. Ceng Ruilun, whose religious name is Ceng Faming, is the impresario of the Hucheng Tang (the Hall of Splendid Success) Marionette Troupe. He has two painted scrolls. One consists of six rows and the other one comprises eleven rows. With regard to the former one, it was donated to him as a gift by the female devotees of Le Gu Tang Village 樂古潭村 of Jiaoling 蕉嶺, a Hakka county in northeastern Guangdong. Each row includes three deities. On the bottom row (the sixth row), seated in the center is a white-faced Tian Gong. It is dressed in a formal robe and an official hat with two hands at the side.⁴¹⁶ To the left of this figure is the Third Granduncle and to the right is the Third Grandaunt. The fifth row includes the Intendant of the Great Year (Dangnian Taisui 當年太歲), King Ksitagarbha (Dizang Wang 地藏王) and Herbalist Lu (the Immortal Master 盧醫仙師). Lady Chen, Lady Lin and Lady Li, who are tutelary deities and ritual lords of the Lüshan School, appear in the fourth row. The third row consists of three gods. They are the Heavenly God Who Bestows Blessings (Cifu Tianguan 賜福天官), the Earthly God Who Remits Punishment (Shezui Diguan 赦罪地官) and the Water God Who Gets Rid of Disasters (Jie'e Shuiguan 解厄水官). Bodhisattva Huaguang, Bodhisattva Guanyin and Bodhisattva Caishen (the Wealth God) are in the second row. On the top row, seated in the center is the Jade Great Emperor. To the left is the Buddha and to the right is the

⁴¹⁵ The liturgical paintings that are found in southwestern Fujian normally consist of six, seven, eleven or twelve rows. According to Buddhist beliefs, there are four main kinds of suffering (*ku* 苦): *sheng* 生 (birth), *lao* 老 (age), *bing* 病 (sickness) and *si* 死 (death). Presumably the Liyuan Jiao priests in this Hakka region are influenced by these Buddhist ideas. They count the rows of their liturgical painted scrolls according to the sequence of the following terms: *sheng* (birth), *lao* (age), *bing* (sickness), *si* (death), and *ku* (suffering). The first row corresponds to “*sheng* (birth),” the second “*lao* (age),” the third “*bing* (sickness),” the fourth “*si* (death),” the fifth “*ku* (suffering),” the sixth “*sheng* (birth),” the seventh “*lao* (age),” the eighth “*bing* (sickness),” the ninth “*si* (death),” the tenth “*ku* (suffering),” the eleventh “*sheng* (birth),” the twelfth “*lao* (age)” and so on. Since both the sixth- and the eleventh-row correspond to “*sheng*,” most painted scrolls are composed of either six or eleven rows.

⁴¹⁶ As mentioned above, Tian Gong helped to lift the siege of Baideng City and rescue Emperor Gaozu of the Han dynasty. Thus, the emperor bestowed an official title upon him. In order to show his appreciation, the emperor also used his hands to hold up Tian’s head. His figure, which is found in the six-row painted scroll owned by Cen Ruilun, wears a formal robe and an official hat with two hands at the side. These hands are believed to be Emperor Gaozu’s hands. Furthermore, according to marionettists in Lingcheng (a Hakka county near Shanghang), Lord Tian was once a bandit who robbed the wealthy in order to aid the needy. Later, he became a famous marionette performer. Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty heard about Tian and summoned him to stage performances in the palace. As a commoner, Tian bowed his head since he dared not see the emperor. In order to view his facial expression in the performance, the emperor used his hands to hold up Tian’s head. Similar to the situations of Shanghang County, figures of Lord Tian are also found in many painted scrolls, which are owned by marionettists in Lingcheng. The deity is depicted wearing a formal robe and gauze hat with two hands at the side. It is said that these two hands are Emperor Xuanzong’s hands.

Most High Old Lord (Taishang Laojun 太上老君). As mentioned above, the latter one comprises of eleven rows, totaling fifty-six divinities. The figure of Chen Ping appears in the sixth row. Pictures of the Three Ladies are included in the eighth row. Figures of the five occupational gods of the marionettists are found in the eleventh row. They are the Third Grandaunt, the Lady of Silver Flowers, the Lady of Golden Flowers, the Third Granduncle, and Lord Tian,⁴¹⁷ who is the principal deity of this row. Pictures of other local gods, such as Huaguang, Wugu Zhenxian (the True Immortal of the Five Cereals), Dingguang Gufo (the Ancient Buddha of Stability and Brightness), the Guardians for the Crown Prince (Taibao Gongwang),⁴¹⁸ and Guanyin (the Goddess of Mercy) also appear in this liturgical painting. Besides Ceng Ruilun, some other Liyuan Jiao priests (marionettists) in Baisha of Shanghang also possess painted scrolls. As far as I know, the arrangement of their paintings is very similar to the arrangement of those that are owned by Mr. Ceng. It is important to point out that *Luantan* marionettists do not possess any liturgical painted scrolls since they are not Liyuan Jiao priests.

5.4. Worship of Lord Tian in Central Western Fujian

Mr. Wang Hua possesses an image of Tian Gong, which is often placed at the home altar of his house. In an interview on April 24, 2003 at his home, Mr. Wang told me, “I offer incense sticks to Tian Gong twice a day (morning and night). I would offer more incense sticks to him on the first and the fifteenth of each month.” (Mary Yeung’s notes) In addition, he also offers occasional sacrifices to Lord Tian and other patron gods. For example, Mr. Wang and his troupe members would make occasional worship to their patron deities when they are hired by local villagers to stage marionette shows. They offer incense to the gods before they start their performances. Besides being a marionettist and a Liyuan Jiao priest, Wang Hua is also a famous fortune teller in Qingshui. According to the plots of the popular plays, he created the thirty-six Efficacious and True Slips of the Three Venerable Lad Masters, Tian, Dou [and] Guo (Tian, Dou, Guo Sanwei Laolang Shifu Lingying Zhenqian 田竇郭三位老郎師傅靈應真簽) in 1987. The contents of these thirty-six slips are inscribed on a wooden board, which is hung on the side wall of the main hall of his house. Occasionally, local villagers would go to his house to pay tribute to Tian Gong and request his advice. They kneel in front of the small image of the deity, while shaking a numbered stick out of a round canister. Before he tells their fortune by interpreting the

⁴¹⁷ This figure of Lord Tian looks like the one that is found in the six-row painted scroll mentioned above.

⁴¹⁸ For descriptions concerning the worship and legends of Wugu Zhenxian, Dingguang Gufo and Taibao Gongwang, please see Sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2. of Chapter Three of this dissertation.

contents of the slips, Wang Hua would offer incense sticks to the effigy of Lord Tian. This occasional rite takes place at the main hall of his house (cf. Liu 2002, 121).

In Qingshui Township and other areas of central western Fujian, the birthday of Tian Gong is on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth lunar month. Grand celebrations are held and puppet plays are presented on this auspicious occasion. This annual worship often lasts several days and nights. As mentioned above, from the twenty-third to the twenty-sixth of the sixth month of the year *guiwei* (July 22 – 26, 2003), I stayed at Wang Hua's home, the headquarters of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe, to observe the birthday ceremony of Tian Gong, which took place at the main hall of his house. This section focuses on a description of the sequence of this event.

Day One (July 22, the Twenty-Third)

In the afternoon, all the eight members⁴¹⁹ of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe gathered at Mr. Wang Hua's house. Wang Hua, Wang Maoman (the eldest son of Wang Hua), Wang Maoyuan (the second son of Wang Hua),⁴²⁰ Chen Chu'nong 陳初農,⁴²¹ and Wang Chunmei 王春妹⁴²² were the five marionette players who manipulated the string dolls in the performances. There were also three musicians involved in the performances. They were Zhong Jinyou (the drummer),⁴²³ Zhong Jinhuang 鍾金煌,⁴²⁴ who played the dulcimer (*yangqi* 揚琴), as well as Lin Yingxiang 林應相,⁴²⁵ who played the double-reed conical pipe (*suona*) and the two-string spike fiddle (*jinghu* 京胡 or *diaogui* 吊龜). Before the ceremony began, these troupe members prepared rice balls (*miguo* 米糰), and erected a temporary stage at the main hall of Wang Hua's house (see Figure 5.4.). The stage, which faced the courtyard, was made of bamboo, wood and cloth. It was around three feet above the ground of the main hall. Its two sides were decorated with colored or red cloth. There were two red horizontal scrolls (one behind another) stretched

⁴¹⁹ Most of these troupe members are part-time performers. Their regular occupation is farming.

⁴²⁰ As mentioned in Section 2.2. of Chapter Two was born in 1947. His two sons, Wang Maoman and Wang Maoyuan, were born in 1968 and 1972 respectively. Wang Maoyuan is both a marionettist and a vernacular priest of the Yujia Jiao (Tantric Sect) or the Fazhu Gong Jiao (the Sect of the Sage Lord Zhang), a sub-sect of the Lüshan Tradition.

⁴²¹ Chen Chu'nong is a native of Guokeng 過坑 Administrative Village in Qingshui Township. He was born in 1972.

⁴²² In the 2003 performance, Wang Chunmei, who was born in 1968, was the only female member in the troupe. She is a native of Longwu 龍吳 Administrative Village, Qingshui.

⁴²³ As mentioned in Section 2.2. of Chapter Two, Zhong Jinyou was born in 1963. He is Wang Hua's son-in-law and a native of Sanfang 三房 Administrative Village in Qingshui.

⁴²⁴ Zhong Jinhuang is a native of Sanfang Administrative Village in Qingshui. He was born in 1968.

⁴²⁵ Lin Yingxiang, the oldest member of the troupe, was born in 1945. He is a native of Sanfang Administrative Village.

across the top of the stage. The sentence “*fayang fengya* 發揚鳳雅⁴²⁶ (glorifying the beauty of music)” was written on the front scroll, which was donated to the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe in 2000 (the year *gengchen* 庚辰) by devotees of Yangqing Township 洋卿鄉 at Datian (a county on the southeast of Qingshui). The sentence on the back scroll read, “*tuichen chuxin* 推陳出新 (putting forward new ideas).” In addition, a narrow platform was constructed behind the backdrop (or at the backstage).⁴²⁷ It was about two feet above the stage floor.⁴²⁸ All the marionettes⁴²⁹ were hung on horizontal poles behind the backdrop and the platform. A large mat was put on the stage floor. The Marionette Deity of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Shen’ou) was made to sit at the center of the stage since the troupe members believe that this “sacred object” functions to ward off evil spirits or demons from the performing site. A small rectangular table covered with embroidered cloth was placed in front of it onstage. As mentioned in Appendix Two, this large puppet wore a crown and red robe with long sleeves covering the hands. Its face was red and a pair of long white feathers was stuck in its head. In front of the stage, there was a main altar decorated with red embroidered cloth. Upon it stood the small effigy of Lord Tian mentioned above. Two candles were put to the right and left sides of the altar. Incense sticks were planted in the incense burner that was put in front of Tian Gong’s effigy. Other sacrifices, including rice balls, three cups of tea, five cups of wine, biscuits, crystal sugar, ready cooked pork, three red eggs, and dried fishes, were also displayed on the altar (see Figure 5.5.).

At about 7:30 p.m., Wang Hua performed the Rite for Sealing the Stage (*Fengtai* 封台) so as to conceal the souls of the troupe members and spectators from the evil spirits or demons, as well as to summon the deities to guard the performing site. This rite was divided into two parts. In the first place, Mr. Wang muttered the eight Chinese characters, “*huang* 皇, *di* 帝, *bu* 不, *zuo* 作, *wan* 萬, *ren* 人, *ming* 命, *gong* 宮 (the emperor does not create constellations in which myriad of people are born),” while pressing the appropriate points in his left hand with his left thumb. This finger gesture is known as pinching the Palm of Ten Thousand People (*Wanren Zhang* 萬人掌). According to Mr. Wang Hua, points on the joints of the finger represent the twelve earthly branches. The joint between the ring finger and the palm represents “*zi* 子,” the


⁴²⁶ One of the meanings of the character “*feng* 鳳” is music.

⁴²⁷ According to the traditions of the marionette troupes in Qingshui, marionettists stand upon the platform and control the puppets from above by plucking the strings that are tied to the control boards and attached to various parts of the puppet bodies.

⁴²⁸ In marionette performances, string dolls are made to perform on the stage floor (onstage). The performers stand on a narrow platform, which is erected behind the backdrop, and manipulate the puppets from above.

⁴²⁹ For the details of the marionettes of the Wanfu Tang, please refer to Appendix Two of this dissertation.

joint between the middle finger and the palm represents “*chou* 丑,” the joint between the index finger and the palm represents “*yin* 寅,” the first joint of the index finger represents “*mao* 卯,” the second joint of the index finger represents “*chen* 辰,” the end of the this finger represents “*si* 巳,” the end of the middle finger stands for “*wu* 午,” the end of the ring finger stands for “*wei* 未,” the end of the little finger stands for “*shen* 申,” the second joint of the little finger stands for “*you* 酉,” the first joint of the little finger stands for “*xu* 戌,” the joint between the little finger and the palm stands for “*hai* 亥,” and the middle joint of the middle finger stands for the center of the nine palaces (see Figure 5.6.).

As mentioned above, the birthday ceremony of Tian Gong that I observed took place in the year *guiwei* (2003). In other words, the earthy branch of this year was “*wei*.” At the beginning of the rite, Wang Hua stood in front of the main altar. Facing the altar and the stage, he muttered the character “*huang* 皇” and pressed the end of his ring finger (*wei*) with his thumb. While pinching the end of the little finger (*shen*) with his thumb, he murmured the character “*di* 帝.” Mumbling the word “*bu* 不,” he pinched the second joint of his little finger (*you*) with his thumb. He then pressed the first joint of his little finger (*xu*) with his thumb and muttered the word “*zuo* 作” at the same time. When he mumbled the character “*wan* 萬,” his thumb pinched the joint between his little finger and his palm (*hai*). Pressing the joint between his ring finger and his palm (*zi*), he muttered the word “*ren* 人.” After pinching the points of “*chou*,” the joint between the middle finger and the palm, he murmured the word “*ming* 命.” He continued to performed the *Wanren Zhang* by pressing the point “*yin*” (the joint between his index finger and his palm) with his thumb and mumbling the character “*gong* 宮” at the same time. Then, he wrote the secret character “,” which represents the Great Emperor of the North Pole Star of Purple Subtlety (Beiji Ziwei Dadi 北極紫微大帝),⁴³⁰ on the point *yin* in his left hand with his left thumb.⁴³¹ Towards the end of the first part of the rite, his left hand touched his lips gently for a few seconds, a gesture of inhaling the spiritual force of the deity through the mouth.

⁴³⁰ According to Chinese beliefs, the Beiji Ziwei Dadi is one of the Four Celestial Ministers (*Siyu* 四御). Situated in the Middle Heaven (Zhongtian 中天), he is honored as the master of all the stars. He assists the Jade Emperor to administer Heaven and Earth, the sun and the moon, constellations and the climate of the four seasons. Liyuan Jiao priests in western Fujian also believe that he possesses power to subdue all spectres.

⁴³¹ Marionettists who are not priests have to use incense sticks to write the secret name of Ziwei Dadi.


In the second place, Wang Hua held the incense sticks at shoulder level and wrote the secret names (*hui* 諱)⁴³² of the deities with them in various areas of the stage (see Figure 5.7.). As mentioned above, the stage that faced the courtyard consisted of two tiers, the stage floor and the narrow platform that was erected at the backstage. The procedure was as follows: first, Mr. Wang lit three red incense sticks in front of the main altar. Holding these incense sticks with his right hand and five pieces of spirit money with his left hand, he ascended the narrow platform from stage right rear. Second, he held the incense at shoulder level and stood at the center of the platform. Facing the courtyard, he wrote the five secret names, (風), (火), (電),⁴³³ (雲), (霸),⁴³⁴ in the air with the burning incense sticks. These characters were written from right to left in two horizontal lines as shown in Figure 5.8. Third, turning round with his back to the courtyard, he wrote the secret names or characters of the Three Pure Ones (Sanqing 三清), the Schools of the Numinous Treasures (Lingbao Pai 靈寶派), and the world (*shijie* 世界) with the burning incense sticks (see Figure 5.9.).










Fourth, Wang Hua, who still stood at the center of the platform, turned towards the courtyard again and looked up at the ceiling of the house. Holding the incense sticks at shoulder level, he wrote the secret character of the Three Pure Ones ((三清)) in order to seal the ceiling. He held the yellow paper money with his right hand, lit it and allowed it to burn almost to his fingers. Then, he blew it out into the air. Fifth, he descended the platform from stage left rear and entered the stage. Standing on the stage floor, he used the incense sticks to write the secret characters of the Five Agents (Wuxing 五行), wood ((木)), fire ((火)), gold ((金)), water ((水)) and earth ((土)), in five different directions (east, south, west, north and center). Sixth, he wrote the secret name of the Favorable-wind Ear (Shunfeng Er) and that of

⁴³² As mentioned in Section 1.2.1. of Chapter One, various schools of *Leifa* (Thunder Rituals) absorbed new elements from the Tantric Buddhism, which was spread to Chang'an (Xi'an nowadays) around the eighth century A.D. A class of vernacular priests or ritual masters also emerged in China after the Tang dynasty. They adopted spells, talismans, mudras, secret characters, and deities of the Tantric Buddhism and different schools of Thunder Rituals. Priests of the Lüshan Sect, one type of these ritual specialists, in southeast China absorbed many important elements from Tantric Buddhism and various schools of the Thunder Rituals (including the Zhengyi Sect) in their liturgies from the Song dynasty onwards. Today, the Lüshan Sect is still very popular in southeast China, especially Fujian. Due to the influence of the Thunder Rituals, each secret character or name of this school "has the character for rain on the top half, and three dots signifying water on the [left side] of the bottom half." (Lagerwey 1987, 54) Moreover, each of these words also consists of a spiral line that represents rolling thunder, or two projecting strokes that symbolize lightning flashes. It is believed that thunder and lightning, which are usually accompanied by heavy rainfall, function to subdue or ward off evil spirits or demons. Thus, by lengthening the strokes or the spiral line, the effect of the character would be tremendously increased (cf. De Groot 1969, 1040)


⁴³³ These three names refer to the Department of Fire and Wind (Fenghuo Yuan). Tian Gong is believed to be the head of this celestial department.

⁴³⁴ Owing to limited time, I was not able to ask Wang Hua about the meanings of these two secret characters or names.

Lord Guan (Guan Gong) with the incense sticks, while standing on the stage floor and facing stage left. Holding the incense sticks at shoulder level and facing stage right, Mr. Wang wrote the secret name of the Thousand-li Eye (Qianli Yan) and that of Zhao Gongming in the air. The names of the Qianli Yan and Shunfeng Er were written vertically as shown in see Figure 5.10. Seventh, Wang Hua walked to the stage center, where the Marionette Deity of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Shen'ou) was sitting on a chair. A small rectangular table was placed in front of the puppet. Resting on one knee beside the Tian Gong Shen'ou, Wang consecrated this large marionette by writing two secret characters in front of it with the incense sticks (see Figure 5.11.). Then, Wang Hua stood up. Facing stage left, he wrote, “.” These characters, which represent the Department of Wind and Fire of Nine Heavens, and the Ziwei Dadi, were written vertically. He also wrote the same characters while facing stage right.⁴³⁵ Eighth, he ascended the platform behind the backdrop from stage right rear. While standing at the center of the platform and facing the courtyard, he then wrote two talismans, the Mysterious Chop of the Numinous Treasure (Lingbao Xuanzhan 靈寶玄斬) that functioned to catch and kill hundreds of ghosts; and the Three Thousand Disciples of the Jade Dragon (Yulong Dizi 玉龍弟子) that functioned to transform the marionette troupe members into disciples of the Jade Dragon, with the burning incense sticks (see Figures 5.12 and 5.13.).

As mentioned above, all the string dolls of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe were hung at the backstage behind the platform. Since the liturgical play *Huangjun Gushi* was staged at Lord Tian's 2003 birthday ceremony, Wang Hua consecrated the marionettes that represented the leading characters (Lady Chen, Lady Lin, Lady Li and Chen Haiqing). Standing in front of these puppets, he wrote the following secret names with the incense sticks: “,” which symbolizes Lady Chen; “,” which stands for Lady Lin; and “,” which represents Lady Li. Then, he also wrote Chen Haiqing's secret name as shown in Figure 5.14. Ninth, with his back to the courtyard, Wang Hua stood upon the platform and wrote the two secret words, “” and “,” vertically in each of the three different sides (right, center, and left). Tenth, after descending from stage left rear, he entered the stage and then walked to stage right rear, where all the percussion instruments were placed. He wrote the secret characters of the gong (), the drum (), the small gong (), the small drum () and the

⁴³⁵ In the past, marionettes were hung at the two sides of the stage. Though he no longer hangs his marionettes at stage left and stage right, Wang Hua still uphold the tradition by writing secret characters on these two sides of the stage.

cymbals ()⁴³⁶ with the incense sticks. Before the Rite for Sealing the Stage was finished, Wang Hua leaped off the stage and planted the three incense sticks in the incense burner, which was put on the altar that stood in front of the stage.

After dinner, the troupe members removed the Marionette Deity of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Shen'ou) from the stage. Around 8:30 p.m., they began to present Scene One (or Section One) of the liturgical play⁴³⁷ *Huangjun Gushi* (the Legend of the Sovereign Empress).⁴³⁸ The performance of this play, which stretched over four days and five nights, was accompanied by cymbals, drums, gongs, *diaogui* (two-string spike fiddle), dulcimer (*yangqing*), and *suona* (double-reed conical pipe). The marionettists manipulated the string dolls and sang in Qingshui dialect. The performance was based on the *huaben* 話本 (script for story-telling) mentioned in Appendix Eight. The Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe (the Wang family) has possessed this script since the late nineteenth century. It is important to point out that the Legend of the Sovereign Empress is basically a *Daqiang* play. However, owing to the popularity of *Han* opera (*Luantan* opera), Wang Hua and his troupe members often perform this play in *Luantan* style. Since a detailed translation of the *huaben* is offered in Appendix Eight, my depiction below is only a summary of this play.

One day, during the reign period of Emperor Renzong of the Northern Song dynasty, Guanyin (the Buddha Mother)⁴³⁹ combed her hair, while sitting on her lotus throne at Mt. Putuo 普陀山 (see Figure 5.15.). By accident, she dropped a white hair and the comb in the sea. The white hair and the comb turned into the White Serpent (Baishe 白蛇)⁴⁴⁰ and the Black Tiger Demon (Wuhu Jing 烏虎精)⁴⁴¹ respectively. She immediately cut off three fingernails and ordered her attendant to take them to three families (Chen 陳, Lin 林 and Li 李) in Fujian. Chen Sigu 陳四姑 was born into the Chen family of Gutian County, and Lin Jiugu 林九姑 and Li Sangu 李三姑 were born into the Lin family and Li family respectively. The White Serpent

⁴³⁶ In my opinion, these pseudo-Sanskrit words are closely related to the Tantric Buddhism, which was spread to China around the eighth century A.D. The exact meanings of these characters are unknown.

⁴³⁷ In Fujian, *fashi xi* 法事戲 (liturgical plays) is a special kind of main performance, in which rituals or liturgies are put on. In other words, a section of the *fashi xi* is also a rite within a liturgical series. Liturgical plays are performed by marionettists who are also vernacular priests or ritual specialists of the Liyuan Sect of the Lüshan Tradition. The performance of a liturgical play often lasts three days and nights or five days and nights.

⁴³⁸ According to Mr. Wang Hua, this play is also known as *Baishe Ji* 白蛇記 (the Story of the White Serpent).

⁴³⁹ In the performance, the marionette that represented Guanyin wore a white robe with rippling-water sleeves. Its hairdressing was decorated with a red lotus. It also held a horse-hair whisk with its right hand.

⁴⁴⁰ The puppet that performed the character of the White Serpent appeared onstage with disheveled long white hair. It also wore a white mask and a red skirt.

⁴⁴¹ The marionette that was arranged to portray the Black Tiger Demon had a black tiger head. It was dressed in a black waistcoat in the performance.

forced the local people of Fujian to dedicate a temple to her. In order to subdue the snake demon, Chen Sanlang 陳三郎,⁴⁴² the eldest brother of Sigu, went to Mt. Xue to learn the ritual methods from the Ritual Lord of the Thundering Heaven (Leitian Fazhu 雷天法主).⁴⁴³ After staying at Mt. Xue for three years, he went home and transmitted the ritual methods to his younger brother (Chen Haiqing 陳海清). The performance of this section ended before midnight, when almost all the spectators (local villagers) had already left Wang Hua's house. For the purpose of warding off evil spirits, the Marionette Deity of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Shen'ou) was placed at the center of the stage.

Day Two (July 23, the Twenty-Fourth)

The second day was the *zhengdan* 正誕 (main or actual day) of the celebration. Mr. Wang Maoyuan, whose religious name is Wang Wenxian,⁴⁴⁴ performed the Announcement Ritual (*Fabiao* 發表) and the Offering Ritual (*Shanggong* 上供) at 7:30 a.m. after all the troupe members had eaten breakfast, which was provided by Wang Hua. Before the rite *Fabiao* began, sacrifices (such as rice balls, glutinous rice cakes, candies, a ready cooked duck, biscuits, dried fishes, three red eggs, three cups of wine, and three cups of tea), three incense burners, a memorial (*shuwen* 疏文), a small cup of pure water, and ritual instruments, including a dragon horn, a pair of small ritual bells, a commanding knife (*lingdao* 令刀),⁴⁴⁵ as well as two pieces of divining blocks,⁴⁴⁶ were displayed on the main altar. Four big red candles and bundles of incense were lit. In front of the main altar, there was an extra altar, which was set up in the rear of the main hall near the courtyard (see Figure 5.16.). The distance between the main altar and the extra altar was about five feet. There were documents, a dish of biscuits, three cups of wine,

⁴⁴² Chen Sanlang was dressed in an azure embroidered garment, a red civilian hat and a pair of shoes with thick soles. There was a small piece of red rectangular cloth secured under the chin, a kind of costume style that originated from the tradition of *Han* opera.


⁴⁴³ In the *Society and the Supernatural in Song China*, Edward L. Davis states that Mt. Xue or the Snowy Mountain has been identified with Mt. Sumeru in the Himalayas since imperial times. Tantric Buddhism was spread to China from Central Asia and Tibet. The Himalaya is a mountain range in Asia, separating the Indian subcontinent from the Tibetan Plateau. Hence, Mt. Xue has been regarded as a ritual site of the Yujia Jiao (Tantric Sect) of the Lüshan Tradition. The Leitian Fazhu is Zhang Gong Fazhu (the Sage Lord Zhang), the most venerable god or ritual lord of this sub-sect. It is believed that he resides in Mt. Xue. In the performance on Lord Tian's 2003 birthday, the puppet that represented this deity wore a black mask, a tripartite black beard, and a armor that was decorated with four small azure pennons (worn on the back) and a black snake (made of paper). It held a sword with its left hand and its long black hair was combed backward.

⁴⁴⁴ As mentioned above, Wang Wenxian is Wang Hua's second son. Though he is a priest of the Yujia Jiao (Tantric Sect) of the Lüshan Tradition, he performed the rites according the practices of the Liyuan Jiao (Pear Garden Sect) of the Lüshan School. In addition, he was also a marionettist in the performance of Lord Tian's 2003 birthday ceremony.

⁴⁴⁵ The commanding knife is around one foot in length. Its handle is decorated with four copper coins.

⁴⁴⁶ These two divining blocks are connected together by a long red band which is around four feet in length.

a cup of tea, three dishes of rice, a dish of candies, a bowl of cooked pork, a bowl of red eggs and a small incense burner on the extra altar. Incense sticks and a pair of small candles were lit and planted in the small incense burner.

Wang Wenxian wore a black gown and black monk hat in the Announcement Ritual. At the beginning of this rite, he stood in front of the main altar and faced the marionette stage. With his right hand, he formed the gold sword gesture (ring finger and little finger stiff). In order to infuse it with divine force, he rotated this right hand's sword above the burning incense several times and wrote the secret character “”⁴⁴⁷ on the tip of his left middle finger. After repeating these hand gestures twice, he clasped both hands together with the fingers interlocking, and raised the hands to the level of his eyebrows (palms facing inward). His joined palms turned outward. After the hands were moved away from each other, his left thumb pinched the tip of his left middle finger. At the same time, his right thumb also pressed the tip of his right middle finger. The thumb and middle finger on each hand formed a circle (palms turned outward and pointed upward). After flipping his middle fingers (both left and right) several times, he patted the small cup of water, which was put on the main altar, with the tip of his left middle finger. The water was then transformed into *fushui* 符水 (purified symbolic water). He raised his left hand to the level of his belly (palm upward). The fingertips of his right hand (palm downward) patted his left palm three times. Then, he continued to perform a series of movements. The fingers of his both hands were interlocked on the inside once again. Raising his joined hands overhead with arms straight, he squatted on both legs, while moving his hands downward. He soon stood up and repeated these series of movements once again.

Then, accompanied by drum beats, Wang Wenxian performed the *Bugang* 步罡 (Pacing the Mainstay or Guideline),⁴⁴⁸ including the Mainstay of the Three Terraces (*Santai Gang* 三台罡),⁴⁴⁹ the Mainstay of the Nine-Phoenix for the Destroying of Filth (*Jiufeng Pohui Gang* 九鳳

⁴⁴⁷ This secret character means the purification of the body.

⁴⁴⁸ The origins of *Bugang* are closely related to the Steps of Yu (Yubu 禹步). It is said that Emperor Yu suffered from foot disease and walked with a limp since he climbed mountains and cross streams in order to regulate rivers and watercourses. Later, many shamans imitated his way of walking. The steps of the Big Dippers are considered to be the imitation of Emperor Yu's way of walking. Another version of the story is that when Emperor Yu regulated rivers, he saw a big bird at seaside. This bird, which was good at breath incantations (*jinzhou shu* 禁咒術), walked in a strange way. Yu imitated its unique way of walking and finally developed the Step of Yu. *Bugang* has occurred as an element of Daoist ritual since the third century A.D. There are various kinds of steps in Daoist rituals. Besides walking the guidelines with their feet, Daoist priests also perform them by pinching appropriate points on their palms. Vernacular priests of the Lüshan sects adopt all these liturgical skills in their rites.

⁴⁴⁹ According to the *Dongzhen shangqing taiwei dijun bu tiangang fei diji jinjian yuzi shangjing* 洞真上清太微帝君步天綱飛地紀金簡玉字上經 (the Superior Scripture in Jade Characters on Gold Tablets for Pacing the Heavenly Guideline and Flying on the Terrestrial Filaments of the Sovereign Lord of the Great Tenuity of the Dongzhen

破穢罡), and the Mainstay of the Northern Dipper (*Beidou Gang* 北斗罡), by pressing the appropriate points in his left hand.⁴⁵⁰ While performing the *Santai Gang*, he murmured, “My head is concealed by the Three Terraces. [My] soul is tranquil. [Any demons or evil spirits] that invade our realm die out at once! Quickly! Quickly! In accordance with the laws!” (Wang n.d., 1)⁴⁵¹ In order to purify his body, he performed the *Jiufeng Pohui Gang*. When he pinched the appropriate points (given in parenthesis) in his left hand, he muttered the following incantation, “The nine-phoenix soars and destroys the filth in ten directions (*shen*). The golden lad leads the way (*chen*). [I] enter and exit the brilliant chamber (*si*). I go up in audience before the Golden Gate (center). In person I behold the Jade Emperor (*hai*). All the filth disappears at once (*yin*)! Quickly! Quickly! In accordance with the laws!”⁴⁵² (Wang n.d., 1; cf. Lagerwey 1987, 75) Then, his left hand touch his lips gently for a few second, a gesture of inhaling the divine force of the mainstay through his mouth.

After performing the Mainstay of the Northern Dipper⁴⁵³ with his left hand and inhaling the corresponding divine force through his mouth, he pressed the appropriate points (given in parentheses) in his left hand, while muttering the corresponding incantation for hiding himself (both soul and body) in the five dippers:

I respectfully ask the Sovereign of the Eastern Dipper to conceal my body (*mao*), the Sovereign of the Southern Dipper to conceal my shape (*wu*), the Sovereign of the Western Dipper to conceal my figure (*you*), the Sovereign of the Northern Dipper to conceal my soul (*zi*), and the Sovereign of the Central Dipper to conceal my appearance (*zhong*). I am now concealing myself in the midst of the cloud. Thousands of deities subdue [the evil spirits] together. [The demons]

Shangqing Canon), the Three Terraces are stars of the Big Dipper Constellation. They are known as Xujing 虛清, Liuchun 六淳 and Qusheng 曲生, which bestow longevity and blessings upon people. They also function to get rid of disasters throughout the mortal world (Min 1995, 74). Moreover, it is believed that the Three Terraces are three pairs of stars. Each terrace consists of two stars. They are the staircase of Heaven. The Liyuan Jiao priests also adopt this kind of mainstay or guideline in their rituals.

⁴⁵⁰ A Daoist priest or vernacular priest would usually perform “the *bugang* simultaneously as a walk on the ground and a walk with the thumb in his left hand.” (cf. Andersen 1991, 166) Nevertheless, as far as I know, Wang Wenxian did not tread the steps with his feet in the Announcement on July 23, 2003.

⁴⁵¹ 吾有三台蓋頂，魂魄安寧，有犯我界，立便消滅亡，急急如律令！

⁴⁵² 九鳳翱翔破穢十方(申)，金童引道(辰)，出入華房(巳)，上朝金闕(中)，親面玉皇(亥)，一切厭穢立便消亡(寅)，急急如律令！


⁴⁵³ The Northern Dipper comprises seven stars. They are Tanlang 貪狼, Jumen 巨門, Lucun 祿存, Wenqu 文曲, Lianpo 廉破, Wuqu 武曲, and Pojun 破軍.

die out themselves. Quickly! Quickly! In accordance with the laws! (Wang, n.d., 1)⁴⁵⁴

After muttering the above spell, he continued to stand in front of the main altar. While pinching the appropriate points (given in parentheses) in his left hand, he mumbled the following spell:

I respectfully invite the Envoys of the Five Thunders to descend to [the altar] to open the Gate of Heaven (*hai*), to close the Door of the Earth (*si*), to stay in the Gate of Man (*shen*), [and] to block the Road of the Demons (*yin*). [There are] golden beams (一)⁴⁵⁵ [and] jade pillars (丨)⁴⁵⁶. The hearts of the demons are pierced (丿)⁴⁵⁷. The bellies of the demons are smashed (ㄩ)⁴⁵⁸. The four mountains are encircled. The five seas are blocked.

I reverently invite the Seven Ancestral Immortals [and] the Seven Ancestral Masters⁴⁵⁹ to light the fire. The heavenly fire is lit (*hai*). The earthly fire is lit (*si*). The fire of the year, the fire of the month, [and] the fire of the hour [are lit] (*wu*). There are the pure fire of the sun of the Tantric three *samādhis* [and] the pure fire of the main hall of Mt.Lu. The fire in front of the disciple's body, the fire behind the disciple's fire, the fire at the left side of the disciple's body [and] the fire at the right side of the disciple's body are burnt away. All the filth is eliminated at once! Quickly! Quickly! In accordance with the laws! (Wang, n.d.: 2)⁴⁶⁰

After purifying himself, Wang Wenxian pressed with his left thumb the point of his own destiny⁴⁶¹ in his left hand. Then, he wrote the secret character of the Star of the Great Emperor of the Purple Subtlety () with the thumb on this point, while murmuring the corresponding

⁴⁵⁴ 謹且東斗星君蓋吾身(卯)，南斗星君蓋吾形(午)，西斗星君蓋吾體(酉)，北斗星君蓋吾魂(子)，中斗星君蓋吾相(中)，吾今只在雲中藏，千神齊降伏，萬鬼自滅亡。急急如律令！

⁴⁵⁵ Owing to limited time, I was not able to ask Wang Wenxian about the meaning this stroke. I think that it may symbolize the golden beams.

⁴⁵⁶ This “丨” may be a symbol of the jade pillars.

⁴⁵⁷ In my opinion, this stroke may symbolize that the demons' hearts are pierced.

⁴⁵⁸ This left-falling stroke may symbolize that the demons' bellies are smashed.

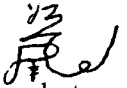
⁴⁵⁹ In my opinion, the term “Zuben Qixian 祖本七仙” and Zuben Qishi 祖本七師” can also be translated as “the Seventh Ancestral Immortal” and “the Seventh Ancestral Master” respectively.

⁴⁶⁰ 謹且五雷使者下來開天門(亥)，閉地戶(巳)，留人門(申)，塞鬼路(寅)，橫金樑(一)，直玉柱(丨)，穿鬼心(丿)，破鬼肚(ㄩ)，羅四山，賽五海(寅)。

謹且祖本七仙、祖本七師發火，發起天火(亥)，發起地火(巳)，年火月火日火時火(午)，瑜珈三昧太陽真火，廬山正殿真火，燒卻弟子身前火、身後火、身左火、身右火，一切厭穢立便消亡。急急如律令！

⁴⁶¹ Since Wang Wenxian was born in 1972 (the year *renzi* 壬子), he pinched with his left thumb the point *zi* in his left hand.

spell. His left hand then touched his lips gently for a while, a gesture of inhaling the divine force of the deity through his mouth.

That done, Wang Wenxian turned towards the extra altar (see Figure 5.17.). Standing in front of this altar and facing the courtyard, he began to purify various areas of the performing site. Liturgical texts were chanted. The sentences of these texts were punctuated by series of strokes on the small drum. While bowing to the extra altar, he shook the small ritual bells and the commanding knife (*lingdao*) with his right hand and left hand respectively. He then held these ritual instruments at shoulder level and made rolling motions with both hands. Dipping the symbolic water with the copper coins of the *lingdao*, he sprinkled water on all sides, a symbolic gesture of purifying the spectators, troupe members, sacrifices, as well as different parts of the performing site. After these movements were completed, he held the small ritual bells between the thumb and the little finger of his right hand. The dragon horn was held inverted in his left hand. Sounding the dragon horn and shaking the bells, he chanted the liturgical text for inviting celestial generals and divine messengers, including the Two Stewards of Yin and Yang of Mt. Lu (廬山陰陽二總管), the Envoys of the Talismans (Zhifu Shizhe 直符使者), the Soldiers of the Five Camps (Wuying Bingma 五營兵馬) as well as the Copper Horses of the Three Heavens (Santian Tongma 三天銅馬), to descend to the altar to guide the performing site and to dispatch the documents to Heaven. Three cups of wine and other sacrifices, which were displayed on the extra table, were offered to them. Wang Wenxian then read out the contents of the announcement (*guanwen* 關文).⁴⁶² After reading this document, he held the rectangular box envelope (made of white paper)⁴⁶³ that contained three incense sticks and the report (*zhuangbiao* 狀表)⁴⁶⁴ with his left hand. This paper box was signed, stamped and sealed. Picking up some incense ash with his fingers, he wrote the talisman of wind and fire ()⁴⁶⁵ and two trigrams⁴⁶⁶ on top of the box envelope with this ash. He also used the ash to write a secret character at two ends of the box envelope (see Figure 5.18.). After wrapping the envelope with the *guanwen* and a piece of yellow paper money, he chanted the liturgical texts for ordering the Copper Horses of the Three Heavens to dispatch the documents (both the *guanwen* and the

⁴⁶² The announcement (*guanwen*) is a summary of the contents of the report. It announces the place, date and time of the ritual and the list of deities that are invited to attend the rite. Owing to limited time, I was not able to record the full texts of the *guanwen* and *zhuangbiao* when I did research in the field.

⁴⁶³ This rectangular box envelope was about ten centimeters in length.

⁴⁶⁴ According to the traditions of the Liyuan Jiao, *zhuangbiao* is an invitation letter that is sent to the deities by the priest. It expresses loyalty to the deities and invites them to descend to the altar or the performing site.

⁴⁶⁵ I think that this talisman represents fire and wind, which may imply the Department of Wind and Fire of the Nine Heavens. As mentioned above, it is believed that Lord Tian is the head of this department.

⁴⁶⁶ These two trigrams, Li 離 (☲) and Xun 巽 (☴), correspond to fire and wind respectively.

zhuangbiao) to the Heavenly Court for the purpose of inviting Tian Gong to descend to the altar, and to notifying other divinities of Lord Tian's birthday celebration. These documents were taken to the courtyard and placed on a large mat (made of thick rattan). In order to prevent the ash from falling on the ground, Wang Maoman (the eldest son of Wang Hua) held the mat at shoulder level while the documents and paper money were burning on it. Wang Wenxian continued to stand in front of the extra altar and face the courtyard. Dipping the symbolic water with his right middle finger, he raised his right hand to the level of his eyebrows⁴⁶⁷ and wrote the three secret characters (雷), (靁), (霆) in the air with his right middle finger. They were written from top to bottom in a vertical line. Filling his mouth with symbolic water, he paced the Mainstay of the Three Terraces (turned clockwise) and spewed out the water. Accompanied by drum beats, he sang the liturgical texts, sounded the dragon horn and shook the small ritual bells with his right hand. Wang Wenxian then turned towards the main altar. He then bowed to the main altar several times, while holding the dragon horn horizontally with both hands. After this rite ended, the extra altar was removed.

Before the Offering Ritual started, all members of the Wangfu Marionette Troupe stood in front of the main altar and the stage.⁴⁶⁸ Holding incense sticks with both hands, each of them bowed to the small effigy of Lord Tian that stood at the main altar and the Tian Gong Shen'ou that was placed at the center of the stage. After they offered the incense to the god, Wang Wenxian began to perform the rite. Accompanied by drum beats, he sprinkled symbolic water on all sides and chanted the corresponding liturgical texts for the purification of the performing site. Then, he turned towards the courtyard. On his knees, he sounded the dragon horn (which was held in his left hand), shook the small ritual bells with his right hand, and chanted the liturgical texts for inviting a list of patron deities⁴⁶⁹ to descend to the altar and ascend their thrones (see Figure 5.19.). Whenever he invited a god, he stood up and turned towards the main altar. While holding his ritual instruments, he performed the mudrā *jinqiao* 金橋 (golden bridge), a “symbolic passage” between the god's temple and the altar, which is shown in Figure 5.20. Then, he threw the divining blocks on the floor in front of the main altar. After obtaining a

⁴⁶⁷ The palm turned both upward and outward (with the thumb and middle finger forming a circle).

⁴⁶⁸ As mentioned above, the main altar was set up in front of the stage.

⁴⁶⁹ These deities included Lord Tian, Lord Dou, Lord Guo, the Perfect Golden Dipper, Chen Ping, Guanyin, the Patriarch of Mt. Lü (Xu Xun), the Sage Lord Zhang, the three Sovereign Empresses (Lady Chen, Lady Lin and Lady Li), the liaison officials (*gongcao* 功曹) who take charge of the year, the month, the day and the time, the Soldiers of the Five Camps, the venerable kings (*zunwang*) and all other tutelary gods.

positive response of the god,⁴⁷⁰ he turned towards the courtyard, knelt down, and continued to invite another deity by repeating the same series of movements mentioned above. After all the deities ascended their thrones, he read out the memorial, which was presented by the troupe members to Lord Tian and other gods who attended the ceremony, in front of the altar. This memorial stated the purpose of this celebration, where and when it took place, as well as the names of the gods. The document also recorded that the troupe members and the local villagers offered a lot of sacrifices to the deities. After reading the memorial, Wang Wenxian folded it up and put it on the incense burner, where it was burnt. At the same time, a lot of paper money was burnt and firecrackers were set off at the courtyard. In order to know whether the deities accepted the gifts or not, he cast the divining blocks four times. Each time, he got a positive response of the deities. Facing the main altar, he sounded the dragon horn while shaking the small ritual bells with his right hand. He held the horn horizontal to the level of his belly. Then, he performed a series of finger gestures with his left hand,⁴⁷¹ while murmuring the corresponding spells. Towards the end of this ritual, he touched his lips gently with this hand in order to inhale or swallow the divine force through his mouth. The rite concluded at around 8:45 a.m.

At about 9 a.m., some villagers came to Wang Hua's house to watch the performance. There were around ten spectators sitting in front of the stage. Ms. Wang Taoying 王桃英 (a female devotee) came to Wang Hua's home to redeem a vow to Tian Gong on behalf of her sworn elder brother (Zhong Zhaokuang 鍾兆筐).⁴⁷² She invited Wang Hua to perform the Ritual for the Repayment of Vows (*huanyuan* 還願). Wang wrote a memorial (*suowen*) for her and her sworn elder brother. Then, they both stood in front of the main altar and offered incense to Lord Tian. Wang Hua read the memorial:

Wang Taoying (the female devotee) made a vow on behalf of her [sworn elder] brother, Zhong Zhaokuang, who was born at the hour *yin* 寅 on the seventh of the seventh lunar month in the year *renyin* 壬寅(1962). He is now forty-two years old. On the twentieth day of the second month of the year *gengchen* 庚辰 (2000), he faced the sky and requested the Three Masters (Tian, Dou [and] Guo),

⁴⁷⁰ In central western Fujian, divining blocks are made of rams' horns. That is, a pair of divining blocks is made by cutting a ram's horn into two halves (one side flat and the other round). A round and flat side up together indicates a positive response (yes answer). In the Offering Ritual mentioned above, a positive response implied that the god already descended to the altar to attend Lord Tian's birthday celebration.

⁴⁷¹ I was not able to ask Wang Wenxian about the details of these finger gestures. According to the *Fabiao xiangong ke* 發表獻供科 (*Liturgical Manual of Rituals for Announcement and Offerings*) of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe, I think that what he performed was the Mainstay of the Three Terraces (Wang, n.d., 15)

⁴⁷² Zhang Zhaokang did not attend this celebration in person.

who were canonized by the Jade [Emperor], to protect him and turn calamities into blessings. [The vow] was made on the twenty-third day of the second lunar month of the Great Year *gengchen*.

Our grateful thanks are due to [the deities]. We dare not be ungrateful for such a long time. Today is [an auspicious day] chosen by divination. Disciples of the Pearl Garden are invited to stage [a section of] the golden-string play-text⁴⁷³ (Mary Yeung's notes).⁴⁷⁴

After reading this document, Wang Hua burnt it along with paper money. Firecrackers were set off. He then cast his divining blocks several times on behalf of Wang Taoying and Zhong Zhaokuang in order to know how Tian Gong would respond to the offerings (See Figure 5.21.). Each time he obtained a “yes” answer, which indicated that Lord Tian had accepted the devotees' sacrifices. In addition, Wang Hua also gave two talismans of Tian Gong⁴⁷⁵ to Wang Taoying. As mentioned in the above memorial, these two devotees offered one section (or scene) of an operatic series to the deity. Since the liturgical play *Huangjun Gushi* (Legend of the Sovereign Empress) was performed in Lord Tian's 2003 birthday celebration, what they offered was Scene Two of this marionette play.⁴⁷⁶ Members of the Wanfu Tang Troupe were invited to perform this scene. Nevertheless, before they performed the scene, four auspicious plays,⁴⁷⁷ the Promotion to the Rank of an Official (*Jiaguan* 加官), the Investiture of a King (*Fengwang* 封王),⁴⁷⁸ the Reunion (*Tuanyuan* 團圓)⁴⁷⁹ and the Perfect Golden Dipper (*Taibai Jinxing* 太白金

⁴⁷³ The term “*jinsi xiwen* 金絲戲文 (golden-string play-text)” here refers to a marionette play-text.

⁴⁷⁴ 許愿信女王桃英為兄鍾兆筐，主命壬寅年七月初七日，歲寅時建生，行庚四十二歲，自于庚辰年二月廿日，因火燒山急唯(危)之時，誠心當天禱且(請)玉封田竇郭三位師傅祈保平安，移凶化吉者；太歲庚辰年二月廿三日許。

有感理當答謝，不敢久負前恩，卜取今月今日命且(請)梨園弟子搬演金絲戲文。

⁴⁷⁵ Before the Ritual for the Repayment of Vows began, Wang Hua stamped a Tian Gong seal on each of the talismans of Tian Gong. Local people in Qingshui believe that Lord Tian's talismans function to ward off all kinds of evil spirit or demon.

⁴⁷⁶ As mentioned above, Scene One of this play was already performed in the first evening.

⁴⁷⁷ The origin of the performances of the ritualistic plays can be traced back to the early Ming period. Local villagers in Central Western Fujian believe that these auspicious plays function to bring scholarly honor, longevity, happiness and sons to them.

⁴⁷⁸ The Investiture of a King is a story about a military official called Han Qinhu 韓擒虎. His story still appears in Dunhuang manuscripts. According to his legends, he assisted Emperor Wen 文帝 (r. A.D. 581 – 604) of the Sui 隋 dynasty (A.D. 581 – 618) to defeat the armies of the Chen 陳 dynasty in the south (A.D. 577 – 586). In order to praise his contributions, Emperor Wen conferred honorable titles on him. After he died at the age of fifty-five, the Jade Emperor appointed him the King of Hell (Yanluo Wang 閻羅王).

⁴⁷⁹ The Reunion (*Tuanyuan*), which is a mummery, is an extract taken from the *Poyao Ji* 破窯記 (Story of the Broken Cave) or Lü Mengzheng 呂夢正, a popular southern opera (*nanxi*). It has been performed since the Yuan dynasty. The *zaju* (miscellany plays) and *Yiyang Qiang* scripts of this play still exist nowadays. With regard to the plot of the *Poyao Ji*, Liu Mao 劉懋 (the Prime Minister) has a beautiful daughter. In order to choose a husband, his daughter throws a silk ball from a brilliant tower. Lü Mengzheng, a poor scholar, catches the silk ball. Since he has

星),⁴⁸⁰ were presented onstage. These performances were accompanied by percussion instruments (including drum, *suona*, and gong), a feature of the *Daqiang* style of the *Yiyang Qiang* tradition.

The performance of the auspicious play *Jiaguan*, which involved two characters, began after the Marionette Deity of Lord Tian was removed from the stage.⁴⁸¹ Accompanied by percussion music, the marionette that represented the lady and the string doll that performed the character of Chen Ping (the official)⁴⁸² were made to appear onstage. Holding a red scroll, the lady wore a crown, a red embroidered robe with rounded precious belt, and a pair of embroidered shoes. The scroll stated the four Chinese characters, “*jiaguan jinjue* 加官進爵 (winning promotion).” Chen Ping was dressed in a red embroidered official robe with long white sleeves and rounded precious belt, and red official hat with square wings at side. A small piece of azure rectangular cloth was worn under the chin. Moreover, this puppet also held an ivory tablet. Manipulated by the marionette, the lady handed the red scroll to Chen Ping. Then, these two marionettes were made to leap off the stage, stand in front of the main altar and offer kowtows to the small image of Lord Tian, which was placed at the main altar (see Figure 5.22.). Then, the red scroll was placed on the main altar and the puppets were taken away. Wang Hua gave this red scroll to Wang Taoying (the female devotee).

After the performance of the *Jiaguan* ended, the marionette actors staged the Investiture of a King (*Fengwang* 封王), which was accompanied by drum, gongs, and *suona*. At the beginning of the performance, Han Qinhu sat at the center of the stage, where a table was placed in front of him. This young male character wore a red embroidered official robe with rounded precious belt and long white sleeves, as well as an official hat with square wings at side. Holding an ivory tablet (made of wood), the Royal Attendant wore a golden official cap, black official robe and black long beard entered the stage from stage left rear. When Han Qinhu knelt

no money and scholarly honor, Liu Mao is unwilling to marry off his daughter. However, his daughter insists to marry Lü. The Prime Minister expels them from the family. Due to poverty, the married couple reside in a broken cave. Later, Lü goes to the capital to take the imperial examinations and wins the title of the Number One Scholar. He then returns to the broken cave and reunites with his wife. His father-in-law (Liu Mao) views him in a new light (Zhang Vol.2, 1989, 225). *Tuanyuan* is also an auspicious play of Chaozhou opera. In Hong Kong, it is often staged by Chaozhou opera players in ritual performances.

⁴⁸⁰ The Perfect Golden Dipper (*Taibai Jinxing*), which is also called *Xianjun Xiafan* 仙君下凡 (the Immortal Lord Descends to the Mundane World), is closely related to the Scene *Jinxing Xiafan* 金星下凡 (the Golden Dipper Descends to the Mortal World, Scene One) of the *Gaoqiang* Mulian opera in southern Anhui 皖南目連戲 (Zhu 1998, 17).

⁴⁸¹ After the performance of the first day was finished, this puppet was placed onstage for exorcism.

⁴⁸² *Jiaguan* is also a popular ritualistic playlet in Cantonese opera. The only male performer who takes part in the performance impersonates Wei Zheng 魏徵 (A.D. 580 – 643), a famous imperial censor during the reign period of Emperor Taizong 太宗 (A.D. 627 – 649) of the Tang dynasty.

onstage, the Royal Attendant proclaimed the imperial decree, which stated that Han Qinhu had made great contributions to the state. Hence, the emperor bestowed the title of Dingguo Gong 定國公 (the Duke who Brings Stability to the State), as well as three cups of imperial wine upon him. The Royal Attendant and Han Qinhu then entered the backstage from the left rear and the right rear of the stage respectively.

There were two characters who took part in the performance of the Reunion (*Tuanyuan*). Two marionettists controlled the marionettes in this performance. The puppet that represented the Prize Candidate (Lü Mengzheng) and the string doll that acted the character of the lady (the Prize Candidate's wife) were made to come onstage. The Prize Candidate wore a red official robe with rounded precious belt, and red official hat with square wings at side. The lady was dressed in a crown and red official robe with hoop belt. Manipulated by the marionette performers, the Prize Candidate and the lady bowed to each other three times at the front of the stage. Then, they both walked to the back of the stage. Facing the backdrop, they were made to kneel down, performed kowtows and then entered the backstage. The series of movements mentioned above were accompanied by percussion music.

The auspicious play *Taibai Jinxing* (the Perfect Golden Dipper) was presented right after the performance of the Reunion was completed. The plot of this play is about the Perfect Golden Dipper, who descends to the mortal world to offer blessings (such as longevity, peace and prosperity) to the devotees. When the performance began, the Perfect Golden Dipper, which was represented by the marionette of old male roles, appeared onstage. Holding a horse-hair whisk, this celestial deity wore a white gown and white long beard. A piece of red cloth was draped over the puppet's head. Accompanied by percussion music, the Perfect Golden Dipper introduced himself, sang an aria, walked a few circuits of the stage, and then made his exit.

After these four auspicious plays were performed, members of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe presented Scene Two of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress. The White Serpent married the Black Tiger Demon (Wuhu Jing) after she was defeated by him. These two demons appeared in the dreams of Li Si and Zhang San in order to force them to dedicate a temple and offer children to them as gifts. At the house of the Chen family, Chen Sanlang transmitted the ritual methods of Mt. Xue to Chen Haiqing (his second younger brother).⁴⁸³

⁴⁸³ In the 2003 performance, Haiqing became a vernacular priest after he learn the ritual methods of Mt. Xue from Sanlang. Thus, the marionette that represented him was dressed in a black jacket and short red skirt with a belt tied at his waist. Holding a dragon horn with its left hand, it grasped a *shiling* (small ritual bells) with its right hand. Moreover, it also wore a *wufo guan* 五佛冠 (a crown of five Buddhas), which is made of hide with five sections or leaves. Each of these sections bears a small picture of the Buddha.

Zhang San went to their home and requested them to catch the two demons. After he arrived at the temple of the demons, Haiqing wrote the document for summoning the celestial soldiers. Since he was dead drunk, he wrote the date of the exorcistic rite wrongly. Later, Sanlang also went to the temple. Nevertheless, the celestial generals did not descend to the altar when he summoned them since the date appeared in the document was incorrect.⁴⁸⁴ The performance of this scene ended before noon.

In the afternoon of the second day (around 2:50 p.m.), a married couple brought their twin sons to Wang Hua's home (the headquarters of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe). Some years ago, they requested Lord Tian to bestow a son upon them. In return they promised to offer him gifts, including marionette plays. Later, the wife of this couple gave birth to twins. Their sons were three years old in 2003. Mr. Wang and his troupe members put on the four auspicious plays mentioned above. In order to repay their vow, this married couple repaid their vows by offering the play *Shuangxi Linmen* 雙喜臨門 (Double Happiness Has Blessed the House), an extract from the play *Baolian Deng* 寶蓮燈 (the Precious Lotus Lantern); and two scenes (Sections Three and Four) of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress as gifts to Tian Gong. The marionettists first presented the play *Shuangxi Linmen*. At the beginning of the performance, Liu Wenxi 劉文錫, who was also known as Liu Yanchang 劉彥昌, appeared onstage. He wore a red formal robe, which was decorated with long white sleeves and hoop belt; red official hat with square wings at side; as well as long black beard. Wearing a golden official cap, black ceremonial robe and long black beard, the Royal Attendant also entered the stage. Liu Yanchang knelt down, while the Royal Attendant was announcing the imperial decree, which stated that Liu was raised to a more important rank. After the Royal Attendant exited, Liu's second wife, Wang Guiying 王桂英, came onstage. She was dressed in a red formal robe with long white sleeves. Over the robe, she wore an embroidered shawl and a green skirt. She and her husband (Liu Yanchang) sat at the right- and left-side facing the audience. They both sang an aria and then made their exit. Then, Liu's first wife, the Third Holy Mother of Mt. Hua (Huashan San Shengmu 華山三聖母), appeared onstage. She was dressed in a long sleeved red robe and a

⁴⁸⁴ When the second scene of the *Huangjun Gushi* was staged, Yu Shengdi 俞勝娣 (a female devotee) came to Hua Wang's home. She invited Wang to perform the Ritual for the Repayment of Vows (*huanyuan*). She also placed her offerings, including crystal sugar, apples and bean curd, on the main altar. Standing in front of this altar, both Wang Hua and Yu Shengdi offered incense to Lord Tian. As mentioned above, Wang read a memorial in this ritual, burnt it along with bundles of paper money, and threw his divining blocks on the ground several times. In addition to the sacrifices, Yu Shengdi also offered a new official cap with long wings at the side as a gift to Tian Gong. Towards the end of the rite, she made a vow to the deity and promised to offer one section of a liturgical play as a gift to him on his birthday in 2004.

white turban around her head. Over the robe, she also wore a shawl, and a green skirt with a white belt tied at her waist. Since she violated the celestial laws by marrying Liu, the Second Lad God (Erlang Shen), who was her elder brother, imprisoned her under Mt. Hua, where she gave birth to a son. Holding a long walking staff, the Locality God of Mt. Hua (Huashan Tudi 華山土地), who wore a pair of red trousers, a white garment, and a full white beard, entered the stage. The Third Holy Mother of Mt. Hua handed her newly born son to the Locality God and asked him to give the baby and a letter to Liu Yanchang. The Tudi offered the baby to Liu Yanchang. At the same time, Liu's second wife (Wang Guiying) also gave birth to a son. Thus, Liu had two sons. This marionette performance concluded with both Liu Yanchang and Wang Guiying entering the backstage. Then, the troupe members performed the four auspicious plays mentioned above. After these performances ended, Wang Hua presented the ritual *huanyuan* for the married couple and their sons in front of the main altar. A memorial was read and burnt, and a pair of divining blocks was thrown on the ground several times in order to know whether or not Lord Tian had accepted the gifts. Towards the end of the rite, Wang Hua gave them a talisman of Tian Gong. This married couple and their two sons stood in front of the main altar and bowed to the deity three times.

After the Ritual for the Repayment of Vows was completed, the troupe members staged Scene Three of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress, which was offered to Tian Gong and other local deities by the married couple mentioned above. Chen Sanlang went to the temple of the White Serpent, where he was defeated by this snake demon and her husband (the Black Tiger Demon). In order to protect him, the Sage Lord Zhang (or the Ritual Lord of the Thundering Heaven) concealed him inside a large golden bell. Thus, the two demons could not eat him for the time being. Haiqing went home and informed his father about Sanlang's situation. His father, who was known as Chen Jiyi or Chen Jianyi, immediately fell into a faint. After he regained consciousness, Chen Jiyi beat and scolded Haiqing. His only daughter, Chen Sigu,⁴⁸⁵ decided to go to Mt. Lü to learn the ritual methods for the purpose of rescuing her eldest brother (Sanlang). Chen Jiyi ordered Haiqing to go together with her.

At about 5:30 p.m., a female villager of Qingshui Administrative Village 青水村 and a Yujia Jiao priest arrived at Wang Hua's home. This local priest, who wore a black gown and

⁴⁸⁵ In the performance of this scene, Sigu was dressed in a red embroidered robe with long white sleeves. Over the robe, she wore a colorful shawl, and an azure skirt with a white belt tied at his waist.

black monk hat, performed the ritual *huanyuan* for this lady in front of the main altar,⁴⁸⁶ which was set up at the main hall of Wang Hua's house. The guests and all the troupe members had dinner after 6 p.m. Scene Four of the *Huangjun Gushi*, which was also offered to Tian Gong by the married couple mentioned above, was staged at 8 p.m. The White Serpent knew that Sigu and Haiqing wanted to go to Mt. Lü to learn the ritual methods. Therefore, she transformed herself into Sigu and went to the sacred mountain, where she took away all the liturgical manuals by deceiving Xun Jiulang,⁴⁸⁷ the patriarch of Mt. Lü. Using cunning, Sigu and Haiqing got back all the liturgical manuals.

Around 9 p.m., Zhou Jingping 周景平 (a native of Xiangpu Village 香蒲村 of Jianshe Town 建設鎮 in Datian County) came to the headquarters of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe (Wang Hua's home) to redeem his vows to Tian Gong. There were a few villagers staying at the main hall. Wang Hua gave him a talisman of Lord Tian. Standing in front of the main altar, he performed the ritual *huanyuan* for him. He read a memorial and cast his divining blocks several times. The memorial and bundles of paper money were burnt, and firecrackers were set off. Moreover, Zhou Jingping redeemed his vows by offering Scene Five of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress and other sacrifices, including incense sticks, candles and food, such as eggs, crystal sugar, biscuits, and dried fish,⁴⁸⁸ as gifts to Tian Gong and other local gods. For the purpose of offering blessings to Zhou Jingping and his family, the troupe members staged the four auspicious plays noted earlier.

From 9:20 p.m. to 10:45 p.m., Section or Scene Five of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress was presented onstage. Both Chen Haiqing and Chen Sigu⁴⁸⁹ obtained ritual methods at Mt. Lü. Before they go down the mountain, Xu Jiulang (their master) told them that they must help people out of danger or difficulties. On their way home, they rescued a dog and a blind woman. Haiqing taught the woman how to communicate with the spirits of the dead and took her to the Bridge of Hundred Flowers. She became a spirit medium. After the performance of

⁴⁸⁶ I did not interview this Yujia Jia priest since I had no chance to introduce myself to him before he started to perform the Ritual for Redeeming Vows. He left Wang Hua's home soon after the rite was finished.

⁴⁸⁷ In the 2003 performance, the marionette of Xu Jiulang wore a white ceremonial robe, an official cap, and a full black beard.

⁴⁸⁸ This food was left on the main altar for a while until the deities had eaten its inner essence. Before he left, Zhou Jingping took the offerings home. He and his family members ate the food that was blessed with divine power (cf. Overmyer 1986, 70)

⁴⁸⁹ In the performance of Scene Five, Chen Sigu already became a female priest of the Lüshan Tradition. Hence, from this scene onwards, her make-up was different from that of the previous scenes. In Scene Five, she wore a ceremonial robe with long sleeves and a shawl as a covering for the shoulders. Under her robe, she was dressed in a red skirt with a white belt tied at her waist. She also wore a bound crown with five sections. Moreover, she held a dragon horn with her left hand and grasped the small ritual bells between the thumb and the little finger with three middle fingers of her right hand.

this scene ended, Wang Wenxian (Wang Hua's second son) performed the Night Offering (*Wangong* 晚供) for the purpose of inviting Lord Tian and other deities to accept the sacrifices. Wearing a black gown and black monk hat, he performed a series of liturgies (such as making hand gestures and murmuring spells), while standing in front of the main altar and facing the stage. Shaking the hand bell with his right hand, he purified the five directions with the symbolic water, read a memorial and summoned the Copper Horses of the Three Heavens to deliver this document to Heaven. The procedure of the Night Offering Ritual was very similar to that of the Offering (*Shanggong*) mentioned before. The *Wangong* was completed at about 11:20 p.m. In order to expel all evil spirits from the altar and the altar, the Marionette Deity of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Shen'ou) was made to sit on a chair at the stage center.

Day Three (July 24, the twenty-fifth day)

After breakfast, the Marionette Deity of Tian Gong was removed from the stage. Wang Hua performed the ritual *huanyuan* for a local devotee.⁴⁹⁰ In order to bring good fortune to this devotee, members of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe presented the four auspicious plays onstage. This devotee offered Scene or Section Six of the *Huangjun Gushi* as a gift to Tian Gong. This section of the liturgical play began at 9:15 a.m. Chen Sigu and Chen Haiqing lodged in an inn. Lin Jiugu and Li Sangu,⁴⁹¹ who wanted to go to Mt. Lü to learn the ritual methods, met Sigu. These three ladies and Haiqing became sworn brothers and sisters. At the inn, Haiqing and Sigu taught the ritual methods of Mt. Lü to Jiugu and Sangu. Transforming the inn into a golden precious hall, Haiqing and Sigu invited Xu Jiulang (the patriarch of Mt. Lü) to come to the hall and ascend the throne (see Figure 5.23.). He bestowed the liturgical manuals and the ritual instruments on both Sangu and Jiugu.⁴⁹² In other words, they were recruited as new soldiers of the Lüshan Tradition. After the performance of this scene ended, the troupe members had lunch together.

Around 3 p.m., a female villager came to the Wang Hua's house to ask him to perform the ritual *huanyuan* for her family. The four auspicious plays were put on. Scene Seven of the *Huangjun Gushi*, which was offered by this woman as a gift to Tian Gong, was presented onstage right after the Ritual for the Repayment of Vows ended. At the beginning of the performance of this section, Sigu and Haiqing returned home. Wang Sixuan 王思選 (a young

⁴⁹⁰ The devotee did not come to Wang Hua's home on that day. Hence, I was not able to interview this person in the celebration.

⁴⁹¹ Each of these two goddesses wore a red embroidered robe with long white sleeves, a green skirt over the robe, and a shawl as a covering for the shoulders.

⁴⁹² In addition to the red embroidered robes, Lin Jiugu and Li Sangu also wore bound crowns with five sections after they became female priests of Lüshan Tradition. Jiugu and Sangu grasped a sword and a horsewhip respectively.

scholar)⁴⁹³ sent his domestic servant to invite the Mituo Master to his home to capture the Western Glow Goblin (Xixia Jing 西霞精) and the Clever Ghost (Lingjing Gui 靈精鬼). The Mituo Master,⁴⁹⁴ who charged Wang 250 taels of silver for exorcism, failed to expel these two demons. The performance of this scene was finished in the evening. After dinner, Wang Hua performed the Ritual for Repayment of Vows for a local family. In addition to paper money, incense, candles, and delicious food, this family also offered Scene Eight and Scene Nine of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress to Lord Tian as gifts. After the performance of the four auspicious plays was completed, troupe members put on these two sections. In the performance of these two sections, Haiqing went to Wang Sixuan's home to subdue the Western Glow Goblin and the Clever Ghost. Transforming herself into Chen Sigu, the White Serpent went to Mt. Mao to learn the ritual methods. The patriarch of Mt. Mao realized that she was not the true Sigu. Thus, he expelled her from the mountain. The performance ended before midnight. The Marionette Deity of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Shen'ou) was once again put onstage for the purpose of warding off all evil spirits from the performing site.

Day Four (July 25, the twenty-sixth day)

The Marionette Deity of Lord Tian was taken away from the stage by one of the troupe members. The performance of Scene Ten of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress began after the ritual *huanyuan* and the four auspicious plays ended. As mentioned in Scene Three, Chen Sanlang, the eldest brother of Haiqing and Sigu, went to the temple of the White Serpent to subdue this snake demon and her husband (the Black Tiger Demon). However, he was defeated by them. The Sage Lord Zhang concealed him in a large golden bell in order to protect him from being eaten by the two demons. In the performance of Scene Ten, Chen Haiqing and Chen Sigu went to the White Serpent's temple to rescue their brother. Sounding their horns, they summoned Lin Jiugu and Li Sangu to go to the temple to assist them.

The puppets that represented these four deities were made to present a series of liturgical movements, such as pacing the astral mainstays (*bugang*) and performing a ritual dance on four sides of the stage. Manipulated by the marionettists, these puppets performed the Ritual for Summoning the [Celestial] Armies (*Zhaojun* 召軍) (see Figure 5.24.). Since this was a rite within the play, Wang Hua and his two sons (Wang Maomen and Wang Wenxian) who controlled these marionettes in the performance sounded their dragon horns and small ritual bells.

⁴⁹³ In the performance, Wang Sixuan was also known as Wang Shixiang 王世祥.

⁴⁹⁴ In the performance, the comic marionette body that represented the Mituo Master had a patch of white in the center of its face, enclosing the eyes and nose. In addition, it wore a red monk hat and an azure gown with long white sleeves.

Each of these male actors wore a red turban around his head, a special kind of makeup of the Liyuan Jiao priests of the Lüshan Tradition. Accompanied by drums and gongs, they sang the Text for Guarding the Camps (*Zhenying Wen* 鎮營文):⁴⁹⁵

I just now invite⁴⁹⁶ the disciples of the Lushan [Sect].⁴⁹⁷ [These are] the Three Boys of the Three Masters That Summon the Military Forces [and] the Three Lads of the Three Masters That Summon the Military Forces. The nine battle arrays of the Eastern Camp are summoned. There are ninety-nine thousand soldiers. Wearing helmets and armor, all [of them] hold spears, sharp swords, and flaming flags. The mothers⁴⁹⁸ deployed troops and horses. Troops and horses are deployed [in order to] guard the Eastern Camp. The military forces of the Eastern Camp protect the people of the township. The Net General [surrounds the township] over and over. The Web General [surround it] over and over again. Stretching-out the nets and webs, they go to the Southern Camp. The divine troops [come quickly] without delay!

The eight arrays of the Southern Camp have eighty-eight thousand soldiers. The six arrays of the Western Camp have sixty-six thousand soldiers.

The five arrays of the Northern Camp have fifty-five thousand soldiers. The three arrays of the Central Camp have thirty-three thousand soldiers.

The soldiers of the Left Camp and the general of the Left Camp are summoned to lead the troops for me. They are summoned to guard the Left Camp. The soldiers of the Front Camp and the general of the Front Camp are summoned to lead the troops for me. They are summoned to guard the Front Camp. The soldiers of the Right Camp and the general of the Right Camp are summoned to lead the troops for me. They are summoned to guard the Right Camp. The soldiers of the Rear Camp and the general of the Rear Camp are summoned to lead the troops for me. They are summoned to guard the Rear Camp.

⁴⁹⁵ While the troupe members were singing this passage, the audience or devotees offered incense to Lord Tian, Chen Haiqing and the Three Ladies (Chen Sigu, Lin Jiugu and Li Sangu). From their viewpoint, the ritual mentioned above was not merely a part of the performance. They believed that this rite also functioned to summon the celestial armies, who would ward off all kinds of evil spirit and demon from their community.

⁴⁹⁶ In Qingshui dialect 青水話, the term “*zanqing* 暫請” is pronounced as “*jianqie* 漸且.”

⁴⁹⁷ The term “Lushan 廬山” here refers to “Lüshan 閩山.” Ye Mingsheng says that the pronunciation of the character “Lu 廬” is very similar to the pronunciation of the character “Lü 閩” in Fujian dialects.

⁴⁹⁸ The term “*muniang* 母娘” here refers to Chen Jinggu, Li Sangu and Lin Jiugu, the three ritual lords of the Lüshan Sect.

The Eastern Incantation Master and the King of the Eastern Sea are summoned to lead the troops for me. They are summoned to guard the Eastern Camp. The Western Incantation Master and the King of the Western Sea are summoned to lead the troops for me. They are summoned to guard the Western Camp. The Southern Restriction Master and the King of the Southern Sea are summoned to lead the troops for me. They are summoned to guard the Southern Camp. The Northern Restriction Master and the King of the Northern Sea are summoned to lead the troops for me. They are summoned to guard the Northern Camp. The Central Restriction Master and the King of the Central Sea are summoned to lead the troops for me. They are summoned to guard the Central Camp.

I dispatch Liu Wengen 劉文根 (the Incantation Master of the Gate of Heaven), [and] Liu Wengao 劉文稿 (the Incantation Master of the Door of Earth). Descending [from heaven], General Tang leads [his] troops to guard the Door of Man. Descending [from heaven], General Ge leads [his] troops to block the Way of Demons. The Way of Man is clear. The Way of Demons is blocked. Numerous horses go through the Door of Man. The Gate of Hell is locked up. [Even a tiny] needle is not allowed to pass through.

One lock seals off the source of the stream. Demons leave the houses and drift with the current.

Two locks seal off the exit of the stream. Demons and slave ghosts drift with the current.

Three locks seal off the middle reaches of the stream. Demons and slave ghosts disappear completely. [They are sealed off] again and again. [They are sealed off] again and again. Demons leave the houses. [Quickly! Quickly!] Let's cut off [all] the roots!

[The deities] soar across the skies⁴⁹⁹ and go to the flowery stage (Wang 2003, 1).⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁹ In my opinion, the term “*feihun zouma* 飛魂走馬” should be written as “*feiyun zouma* 飛雲走馬.”

⁵⁰⁰ 漸(暫)且(請)廬(閭)山門下招軍招馬三師三童子、招軍招馬三師三童郎，招到東營九陣軍，軍馬九千九萬人。人人頭帶頭帽身帶甲，手攀長槍利劍火焰旗，母娘排兵連排馬，排兵排馬鎮東營，東營軍馬保鄉民。羅圍將軍下三匝，羅網將軍下三重，牽羅掛網過南營，神兵火急莫延遲。南營八陣軍，軍馬八千八萬人；西營六陣軍，軍馬六千六萬人。北營五陣軍，軍馬五千五萬人；中營三陣軍，軍馬三千三萬人。

Owing to the assistance of the five camps, Sigu and Haiqing succeeded in burning down the White Serpent's temple, capturing the Black Tiger Demon and saving Sanlang. Three of them returned home and their father was very happy. Sanlang was appointed by the Jade Emperor as the Immortal Master of the Southern Gate of Heaven. Sigu married Wang Er 王二⁵⁰¹ through a parental betrothal. The performance of Scene Ten ended at 11:30 a.m.

A female devotee, who is a native of Guokeng 過坑 Administrative Village in Qingshui Township, arrived at the Wanfu Tang (Wang Hua's home) before noon. She was around sixty years old in 2003. Wang Hua performed the Ritual for the Repayment of Vows for her family. Besides sacrifices, such as tea, candies, dried fish, and eggs, this old lady also redeemed her vow by offering Scene Eleven of the *Huangjun Gushi* as a gift to Lord Tian. I interviewed her after lunch. She told me, "A few years ago, I made a vow to Tian Gong here."⁵⁰² I requested that he bestow children upon my daughter-in-law (her third son's wife). In return I promised to offer Lord Tian sacrifices and one section of an operatic series as a gift to him. Later, she gave birth to a son and a daughter. Today, I come here to redeem my vow and make another vow to the god. I ask him to bestow one more child to my daughter-in-law." (Mary Yeung's notes) In order to offer blessings to this lady and her family, troupe members staged the four auspicious plays, *Jiaguan*, *Fengwang*, *Tuanyuan* and *Taibai Jinxing*. A red scroll used as a stage instrument in the performance of *Jiaguan* bore the Chinese characters, "zhaocai jinbao 招財進寶 (bringing in wealth and riches)." Wang Hua gave this scroll and a talisman of Lord Tian to the lady. After the performance of these four plays, Scene Eleven of the *Huangjun Gushi* was staged. Since the White Serpent confessed her sins, Master Liuren 六壬, the patriarch of Mt. Mao, accepted her as his disciple and bestowed the ritual instruments and liturgical manuals of Maoshan upon her.

招到左營兵、左營將，為吾領兵，招來鎮左營；招到前營兵、前營將，為吾領兵，招來鎮前營；招到右營兵、右營將，為吾領兵，招來鎮右營；招到後營兵、後營將，為吾領兵，招來鎮後營。

招到東禁師、東海王，為吾領兵，招來鎮東營；招到西禁師、西海王，為吾領兵，招來鎮西營；招到南禁師、南海王，為吾領兵，招來鎮南營；招到北禁師、北海王，為吾領兵，招來鎮北營；招到中禁師、中海王，為吾領兵，招來鎮中營。

吾發天門禁師劉文根，地戶禁師劉文稿，唐將軍領兵下來鎮人門，葛將軍領兵下來塞鬼路，人道通、鬼道絕，人門重重通走馬，鬼門關鎖不容針。

一把鎖訣鎖除源溪頭，邪魔鬼出家隨水走。

二把鎖訣鎖除源溪口，邪魔奴鬼隨水流。

三把鎖訣鎖除源溪中，邪魔奴鬼斷無蹤。

三匝連三重，三重連三匝，邪魔鬼出家，**吡吡唧唧**斷根源。

飛魂走馬赴花臺。

⁵⁰¹ When the marionette that impersonated Wang Er first appeared onstage, it wore a civil hat and an informal robe. Moreover, a small piece of red rectangular cloth was secured under its chin, a kind of costume style that originated from the tradition of *Han opera*.

⁵⁰² The word "here" referred to Wang Hua's home (the headquarters of the Wanfu Tang).

After saying farewell to her master, the White Serpent took these ritual treasures along with her when she left the mountain. The Sage Lord Zhang used tactics to take away her ritual treasures. The White Serpent was very angry. Since her temple was already burnt down by Haiqing and Sigu, she had nowhere to go. She could not help but continue to eat people. Wang Er (Sigu's husband) went to the capital to take the imperial examinations. The emperor conferred the title of the Prize Candidate on him. Sigu was granted the title of the Lady of the First Rank. Wearing a red ceremonial robe and an official hat with square wings at the side, Wang Er returned home in glory. The performance was finished around 4 p.m.

Scene Twelve of the *Huangjun Gushi* began at 9 p.m. after the Ritual for the Repayment of Vows and the four auspicious plays were presented. Sigu was pregnant. Wang Er left home in order to assume office in another province. Enroute, he and his domestic servant could not cross a river since it was in flood. Sigu realized that this calamity was caused by the White Serpent. Haiqing helped Sigu to take the child out of her womb and hid him at home. This son was named Wang Jixiang 王吉祥. Together with Lin Jiugu and Li Sangu, Sigu and Haiqing went to the riverside to save Wang Er. They also set up an altar on the river, where they performed the Ritual for Summoning the [Celestial] Armies (*Zhaojun*) so as to subdue the snake demon.⁵⁰³ In order to kill Sigu, the White Serpent poured the postpartum discharge on her. Sigu immediately lost her supernormal powers and sank into the river. Xu Jiulang (the patriarch of Mt.Lü) sent four ducks⁵⁰⁴ to rescue her from the water. Sigu then swore to protect all pregnant women and their infants. The snake demon also went to Sigu's home and took her son (Wang Jixiang) away. After the show ended, the Marionette Deity of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Shen'ou) was once again placed onstage.

Day Five (July 26, the twenty-seventh)

Around 9:40 a.m., Section Thirteen of the *Huangjun Gushi* was offered by a female villager who came to the Wanfu Tang to redeem her vows. She invited Wang Hua to perform the ritual *huanyuan*. Mr. Wang gave her a talisman of Tian Gong. After removing the Tian Gong Shen'ou, the marionette players staged the four auspicious plays for the purpose of bringing good luck to her family. With regard to the performance of Scene Thirteen of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress, Zhang Baiwan 張百萬, who was a millionaire, had a beautiful

⁵⁰³ As mentioned above, when the marionette performers who manipulated the puppets sang the Liturgical Text for Guarding the Camps (*Zhenying Wen*), the audience planted incense sticks in three incense burners that were placed on the main altar.

⁵⁰⁴ According to the stories of Chen Sigu or Chen Jinggu, ducks saved the goddess from the river when she battled the White Serpent. Hence, Lüshan priests would not use ducks as sacrifices when they pay tribute to Lady Chen in their liturgies.

daughter. The White Dog Goblin (Baigou Jing 白狗精) indulged in her charms. Transforming himself into a handsome man, this goblin went to Zhang Baiwan's house. Zhang married his daughter to him. On the wedding day, this false man appeared in his original form in the bridal chamber after he was dead drunk. When his wife (Zhang's daughter) saw him, she was scared out of her wits. She told her father that her husband was a dog goblin. Zhang immediately sent a servant to the Bridge of Hundred Flowers to inquire about the blind woman. She told the servant to go to Gutian to invite Chen Haiqing to catch the demon. After knowing the truth, Zhang Baiwan sent his servant to invite Haiqing to help him. Haiqing soon went to Zhang's house, where he summoned the celestial soldiers to subdue the White Dog Goblin. Moreover, Zhang's daughter was pregnant since she had had sexual intercourse with this dog demon (false man). Haiqing took nine small dog goblins out of her womb. One of these dog goblins escaped and the others were buried alive. The troupe members completed this section of the play before noon.

In the afternoon, Wang Hua performed the ritual *huanyuan* for a local family. The troupe members also put on the four auspicious plays. Then, Scene Fourteen of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress was performed. Gu Zaixing 顧再興, a young scholar, was eaten by the White Serpent. Gu Zhonghua 顧中華, Gu Zaixing's father, asked Haiqing and Sigu to save his son. They both brought Zaixing back to life. The snake demon was able to flee from the celestial nets and earthly snares that were set by Sigu and Haiqing. Then, Gu Zaixing went to the capital to participate in the imperial examinations. He was granted the title of the Prize Candidate.⁵⁰⁵ The White Serpent went to the palace, where she ate up the empress and the thirty-six consorts. She then turned herself into the empress. Pretending to be sick, she asked her husband (Emperor Renzong of the Northern Song dynasty) to get Chen Sigu's heart for her. She deceived the emperor,⁵⁰⁶ saying that Sigu's heart was the only medicine that could cure her illness. The emperor ordered Bao Gong (Lord Bao)⁵⁰⁷ to go to Gutian to get Sigu's heart. The performance stopped when the troupe members had dinner.

Around 7:50 p.m., Mrs. Zhong 鍾太太 (a native of Wukeng 烏坑 Natural Village of Sanfang 三房 Administrative Village in Qingshui Township) arrived at the Wanfu Tang. A few years before 2003, she made a vow to Lord Tian at the Wanfu Tang. Her son, who was a

⁵⁰⁵ This part of the story is not found in the main text of the *huaben* (script for story-telling) mentioned in Appendix Eight.

⁵⁰⁶ The emperor was dressed in a golden crown and ceremonial robe embroidered with dragons.

⁵⁰⁷ The marionette that represented Bao Gong in the performance put on a black ceremonial robe and black official hat with long wings at the side. In addition, it also wore a full black beard and black mask with exaggerated white brows.

confirmed gambler, lost a house through gambling. Thus, she requested the god to help her family. In return she promised to offer one section of a play as a gift to the deity. Later, her daughter succeeded in buying back the house. For the purpose of expressing her thankfulness to Tian Gong, she came to Wang Hua's home (the Wanfu Tang) again to repay her vow. Mr. Wang performed the Ritual for the Repayment of Vows for her. Scene Fifteen of the *Huangjun Gushi* was offered by her as a gift to Tian Gong. In order to bring good fortune to her family, troupe members presented the four auspicious plays onstage. As mentioned above, a red scroll used as an instrument in the performance of the *Jiaguan* was given to the devotee who repaid her vows (vow). Mrs. Zhong got the red scroll, which was inscribed with the following Chinese characters, “*shengyi xinglong* 生意興隆 (may the business be prosperous).” Wang Hua also gave her a talisman of Lord Tian. The performance of Scene Fifteen of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress began at about 8:15 p.m. right after the four plays were staged. Both Haiqing and Sigu went to the palace to see the emperor. Sounding their dragon horns, they summoned Lady Lin and Lady Li. Four of them performed the Ritual for Summoning the [Celestial] Armies (*Zhaojun*). While manipulating the puppets, the puppeteers sang the Liturgical Text for Guarding the Camps (*Zhenying Wen*).⁵⁰⁸ The celestial soldiers and generals descended from Heaven. Since Haiqing and his sworn sisters set up the celestial nets and earthly snares, the White Serpent was unable to escape. Chen Sigu caught her and cut her body into four pieces. Moreover, Chen also brought the consorts back to life. However, the emperor did not love them anymore since their limbs were mutilated. Sigu sent them to the Bridge of Hundred Flowers to become *nimu* 奶姆 or *naimu* 奶母 (nurses). Owing to their great contributions, the emperors enfeoffed Lady Chen, Lady Lin and Lady Li as the Three Sovereign Empresses. Haiqing was granted the title of the General who Assists the State. Sigu and Haiqing returned home and their two sworn sisters (Lady Lin and Lady Li) went together with them. The whole family was reunited (see Figure 5.25.). The performance of the whole play ended around 10:30pm. As he did in the night of the second day, Wang Wenxian (Wang Maoyuan) performed the Night Offering Ritual (*Wangong*), which lasted about twenty minutes.

That done, the Ritual for Breaking the Womb (*Potai* 破胎) and the Ritual for Crossing the Barriers (*Guoguan* 過關) were performed.⁵⁰⁹ Around 11 p.m., parents or grandparents of

⁵⁰⁸ The spectators or devotees who watched the play planted incense sticks in the incense burners that stood on the main altar.

⁵⁰⁹ In normal cases, these two rituals, which function to ward off evil elements or demons, are associated with the marionette performance of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress (*Huangjun Gushi*). They are often presented after the performance of this liturgical play. Local people in central western Fujian believe that the Three Ladies have a

four families came to the Wanfu Tang to consult Wang Hua about the destiny of their children or grandchildren. Some spectators continued to stay at Wang's home in order to observe these two liturgies. In the ritual *Potai*, raw eggs were used as a kind of tool for divination (*danbu* 蛋卜).⁵¹⁰ Each family needed to provide five to nine eggs for the rite.⁵¹¹ When this rite began, the Marionette Deity of Lord Tian, and the puppets that impersonated Chen Haiqing and the Three Ladies, were made to stand onstage with their backs to the backdrop. While the drummer was striking the drum, the male marionettists manipulated these string dolls chanted the liturgical texts. Wang Hua, who wore a red turban around his head and a black gown, sat on a stool at stage left. A large bowl and some sacrifices (such as meat, rice balls, and peanuts) were put in a sieve, which was placed on the stage floor in front of Mr. Wang. All the raw eggs were put in a basket beside him. For each family, he cut the shell of five to nine raw eggs after murmuring an incantation. He cut each of these eggs at its circumference with his commanding knife (*lingdao*) and dropped it in a large bowl (see Figure 5.26.). The yolks, which must not be broken, served as mirrors to reflect the children's fate. Wang Hua examined these yolks with his *lingdao* in order to see if there were any signs of sickness caused by contradictions between various elements in their horoscopes.⁵¹² All the eggs were eaten up by the members of the Wanfu Tang Troupe after the completion of Lord Tian's 2003 birthday celebration.

The Ritual for Breaking the Womb ended around 11:30 p.m. Before the Ritual for Crossing the Barriers began, members of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe set up a bridge onstage. The two bridge piers were made of trunks and the roadway of the bridge was made of a piece of long red cloth. A rice bushel and a box of *guoren* 糰人 (rice dolls) were placed at the

special mission and supernormal power concerning the salvation of pregnant women and the protection of infants. According to Wang Hua, the Ritual for Breaking the Womb (*Potai*) is not held for children who are under four months. This is because when Tian Gong and other deities drive always evil spirits or killers in the rite, these children would be easily injured by them. It is important to point out that the rite *Potai* and the rite *Guoguan* mentioned above are less complicated than those that are performed by other Lüshan priests in Fujian.

⁵¹⁰ The origin of using eggs for divination is closely related to the ancient shamanic rites of some ethnic minorities in south China. The Zhuang people 壯族 and the Yao people 瑤族 use eggs as a tool to foretell their health or choose an auspicious site for burial (Lü 1998, 371 – 372, 576 – 577).

⁵¹¹ In normal cases, the family that invites Wang Hua to perform the Ritual for Breaking the Womb needs to offer five to nine eggs. Members of this family have to obtain these eggs from five to nine families. In other words, they can only get one egg from each family. If their child likes to play with water, they have to obtain a duck egg from one family. It is important to point out that they cannot obtain egg from a family that involves in “white (funeral and mourning) affair 白事.” Otherwise, inauspiciousness would be transmitted to them. Moreover, if there is a pregnant woman or an infant within a family, this family should not give egg to another family. Otherwise, the fetus or the baby would be hurt (Mary Yeung's notes).

⁵¹² It is believed that in the Ritual for Breaking the Womb, the color of the eggs (especially the yolks) reflects the health of a child. For instance, if there is a red filament in the yolk of an egg, the child, whose fate is reflected by the yolk, may suffer from herpes zoster (*shengshe* 生蛇). If the yolk contains a black point, the child, whose fate is reflected by it, may suffer from illness since he/she is scared out of his/her wits (Mary Yeung's notes).

head of the bridge. Inside the rice bushel were a mirror, a constellation tablet, and a lit oil lamp. A wooden basin and a red plastic plate were put inside a rice bucket, which lay underneath the red cloth (the roadway of the bridge). There was a small rice duck on the plate.⁵¹³ A memorial and many sacrificial items, such as meat, cooked chicken, glutinous rice balls, tea and wine, were placed on the main altar, which was set up in front of the stage. Devotees offered incense sticks to Lord Tian and other local gods. Wang Hua wore a red turban around his head and a black gown. He performed the rite for children from fourteen different fourteen families. Accompanied by drum beats, marionettists began to chant the Liturgical Text for Crossing the Barriers and Inviting the Deities (*Guoguan Bingshen Ke* 過關稟神科).⁵¹⁴ The Chen Haiqing marionette was made to stand at stage center and move its right hand gently, a gesture of performing ritual methods. The bridge was transformed into the Bridge of Hundred Flowers (Baihua Qiao 百花橋), the small rice dolls into longevity humans, and the rice bushel into the Northern Dipper⁵¹⁵ The nurses (*nimu* or *naimu*), who are believed to take charge of reincarnation were also invited.⁵¹⁶ When Wang Hua sounded his dragon horn, other puppeteers continued to sing the Liturgical Text for Crossing the Barriers and Inviting the Deities mentioned above. The Marionette Deity of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Shen'ou) and the marionettes that represented Xu Xun (the patriarch of the Lüshan Tradition), the Sage Lord Zhang and the Three Ladies (Chen Sigu, Lin Jiugu, Li Sanu) were taken out from the backstage and hung above the bridge with

⁵¹³ In Qingshui of central western Fujian, the pronunciation of the character “ya 鴨” is similar to that of the character “e 厄.” Thus, according to local traditions, the rice duck symbolizes inauspiciousness or misfortune (*eyun* 厄運) in the Ritual for Crossing the Barriers.

⁵¹⁴ For the contents of the Liturgical Text for Crossing the Barriers and Inviting the Deities, please refer to Appendix Nine of this thesis.

⁵¹⁵ According to Daoist beliefs, “the Southern Dipper decrees life and the Northern decrees death.” From entering the womb, a person’s destiny “is transferred from the Southern Dipper to the Northern Dipper. Therefore, he [or she] who prays for longevity must worship [the Northern Dipper].” (please see the following website:

<http://www.eng.taoism.org.hk/daoist-beliefs/immortals&immortalism>)

⁵¹⁶ According to Chinese beliefs, the Baihua Qiao is a sacred realm where souls are sent to rebirth. As mentioned in the Legend of the Sovereign Empress, the consorts of Emperor Renzong of the Northern Song dynasty were eaten up by the White Serpent. Later, Lady Chen resuscitated them. They became the nurses (*nimu* or *naimu*) of the Bridge of Hundred Flowers. Their major duties are to protect the children until they reach the age of sixteen, and take charge of sending souls for reincarnation from the bridge. In addition, they can also change the infant in his/her mother’s womb (*huantai* 換胎). If there is a contradiction between the celestial stems (*tiangan* 天干) or earthly branches (*dizhi* 地支) of a child’s eight characters (*bazi* 八字), this child is said to carry a barrier (*guan* 關) or a killer (*sha* 煞). For example, a barrier occurs when the celestial stem of the hour of birth is against the celestial stem of the month of birth, the celestial stem of the day contradicts the earthly branch of the hour, or the earthly branch of the year is incompatible with that of the hour. It is believed that a child baring a barrier (or barriers) has “an uncertain identity.” He/she is claimed by his/her parents from previous lives, who are unwilling to separate from him/her. The nurses (*nimu*) would think that there is a cleavage between the child’s destiny and that of his/her parents from the previous life. Thus, they would take away his/her soul and reincarnate it in the womb of another woman. In other words, the child “is already half taken in a future reincarnation, in another mother.” (Baptandier 1994, 544 and 575) The main aims of the Ritual for Crossing the Barriers are to fix the child “in the present life and patrilineage,” and to protect the child by exorcising the killer (killers).

their backs to the audience (see Figure 5.27.). Manipulated by a marionettist, each of these string dolls held the clothes of the children⁵¹⁷ with their hands and crossed the bridge back and forth. These actions symbolized that all the evil elements or killers that harmed the children were warded off by the deities, and these children had passed all barriers or difficulties of their childhood and adolescence (before the age of sixteen). Kneeling at stage front, Wang Hua put a stamp of the Most High Old Lord (Taishang Laijun 太上老君) on the collar of each set of clothes. These clothes were then returned to the parents and grandparents of the children. He then distributed the talismans of the Most High Old Lord and the rice dolls to them. After reading out the memorial, he burnt it in front of the main altar. He threw his divining blocks on the stage floor several times in order to know the deities' responses. Towards the end of the rite, the rice duck that symbolized misfortune was sent off to the local river.

At midnight, an extra altar was set up in the rear of the main hall near the courtyard. The distance between the main altar and the extra altar was around five feet. Various offerings, such as a towel representing the forage for the celestial horses,⁵¹⁸ dried fish, red eggs, rice balls, pig heads, and nine cups of wine, were placed on this extra altar. Then, the Ritual for Rewarding the Armies (*Shangjun Ke* 賞軍科) began. Wang Wenxian, who performed this rite, wore a black monk hat and black gown. He stood in front of the extra altar and faced the courtyard (see Figure 5.28.). Accompanied by drum beats, he performed the constellation steps with his left hand as he did during the Announcement Ritual in the morning of the second day. While striking the small gong, he chanted the liturgical text for awarding the nine camps, the Copper Horses of the Three Heavens (Santian Tongma 三天銅馬), the armies of the Most High Old Lord, the soldiers of the Three Ladies, the military forces of the patriarch of the Lüshan Tradition, the armies of the Three Lords of Tian (Tian, Dou and Guo), the soldiers of the Sage Lord Zhang, the military forces of Lady Ma (Mashi Zhenxian), the troops of Lady Lin (Linshi Zhenxian), etc. Turning towards the main altar and the stage, he bowed to the main altar and continued to strike the gong. He turned towards the extra altar again. While bowing to this altar, he kept on singing the liturgical texts and striking the gong. After he finished these liturgical movements, he read

⁵¹⁷ In the rite *Guoguan*, the children who carry barriers (*guan*) or killers (*sha*) were represented by their clothes. For each child, his/her parents or grandparents brought some of the child's clothes to the Wanfu Tang. These clothes were tied with a red string. Three ritual instruments, scissors, ruler, and copper coin, were also tied to these clothes. It is believed that these ritual instruments function to exorcise evil spirits or demons. Ye Mingsheng said that in the past, the strings used to tie the children's clothes were made of threads of five colors (white, black, azure, red, and yellow), which symbolized the dragon gods of the five directions. These threads should be obtained from elderly people who have had many children and grandchildren (Mary Yeung's notes).

⁵¹⁸ In the past, a piece of ramie (*zhuma* 紵麻) instead of a towel was used as a sacrificial item in the rite *Shangjun*. The ramie is a kind of forage for the horses.

out the certificate of rewarding the armies (*shangjun die* 賞軍牒) and then burnt it in front of the main altar. He also cast his divining blocks in order to make sure that the celestial armies accepted the offerings. When the firecrackers were set off, paper money was burnt at the courtyard. Standing in front of the extra altar with his back to the stage, he trod the constellation steps, including the Mainstay of the Northern Dipper and the Mainstay of the Three Terraces, and performed a series of hand gestures, including the Mudrā of the Three Original Armies (Sanyuan Junbing Jue 三元軍兵訣), the Wasp Mudrā (Huangfeng Jue 黃蜂訣), as well as the Mudrā of the Donkey and Horse that Carry the Food (Lüma Yunliang Jue 驢馬運糧訣) (See Figures 5.29., 5.30., and 5.31.) In addition, nine cups of wine were poured on the ground. Towards the end of the rite, he stood between the main altar and the extra altar, while writing the five secret characters or names, (雷), (陽), (雲), (龍), and (電) in five directions (east, south, west, north and center). After the Ritual for Rewarding the Armies ended, all the deities excepted Lord Tian were sent off. Standing in front of the main altar with his back to the courtyard, Wang Wenxian sang the corresponding liturgical text while writing the spell, “(風)(電)(雷)(雲)(龍)” (sending off the cloud carriages and phoenix carts)” in the air with the seal of the Most High Old Lord. This incantation was written from top to bottom in a vertical line. Tian Gong was invited to stay on the throne at the flowery stage of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe (Wang Hua’s home). Wang concluded the rite with a series of mudrās. Lord Tian’s 2003 birthday celebration, lasting altogether four days and five nights, ended before 1 a.m. on July 27, 2003 (the twenty-eighth of the sixth month). Both Ye Mingsheng and I took refreshment with all the members of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe. We returned to Fuzhou early the next morning.

5.5. Worship of Lord Tian in Southwestern Fujian

Marionettists in Baisha Town of Shanghang County offer both regular and occasional worship to their occupational deities, especially Lord Tian. For instance, Mr. Ceng Ruilun, the impresario of the Huachang Tang (the Hall of Splendid Success) Gaoqiang Marionette Troupe, makes regular sacrifices to Lord Tian and other tutelary deities. Since he possesses a Tian Gong image, he pays tribute to it at the home altar every day once he gets up at 5 a.m. Then, he visits all the local shrines and temples, including the Hall of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Tang), which is located in Shui Zhu Yang Natural Village. He offers incense sticks to Lord Tian inside the temple. It is important to point out that unlike Mr. Ceng, many marionette troupe members (both

Gaoqiang and *Luantan*) do not pay tribute to their patron gods every day. However, some of them also offer occasional worship to the gods before they start their performances.

As mentioned in Section 2.1. of Chapter Two, marionettists formed the Association of Chen Ping (Chen Ping Hui) and held annual celebrations on Master Chen Ping's birthday (the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month). However, this tradition had already died out seven decades ago. Marionette troupes have offered yearly worship to Lord Tian at the Tian Gong Tang since the late eighteenth century (or possibly earlier), though this practice was interrupted after the 1950s, especially during the Cultural Revolution. The Hall of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Tang), which is situated at Shu Zhu Yang Natural Village of Baisha Town, was restored in 2001. Since then, the tradition of celebrating Lord Tian's birthday (the twenty-fourth of the sixth lunar month) has been revived. This annual rite takes place at the Hall of Lord Tian and a public stage (made of earth and wood) beside the hall. On August 9, 2004 (the twenty-fourth of the sixth month of the year *jiashen*), both Ye Mingsheng and I observed the birthday celebration of Lord Tian, which was organized by the Committee of Dajin Village in Baisha Town (Baisha Zhen Dajin Cun Weihui 白砂鎮大金村委會) and the Research Association of the Hakka Marionette Cultural Art (Kejia Mu'ou Wenhua Yishu Yanjiu Hui 客家木偶文化藝術研究會), an organization that is formed by local marionette performers in the district. In comparison with Lord Tian's 2003 birthday ceremony in Huang Jing Shan of Qingshui Township, the procedure of this deity's 2004 birthday celebration in Baisha, which only lasted one day, was much more simple.

At about 8 a.m., Ceng Ruilun (a *Gaoqiang* marionettist and a Liyuan Jiao priest of the Lüshan Tradition) performed the Ritual for Opening the Stage (*Kaitai Yishi* 開台儀式) at the Hall of Lord Tian. Unlike Mr. Wang Hua mentioned above, Ceng Ruilun did not perform any complicated hand gestures or write any secret names of the gods with burning incense sticks. At the beginning of the ritual *Kaitai*, Mr. Ceng held a bundle of incense sticks with both hands and knelt at the entrance of the Tian Gong Tang (see Figure 5.32.). Facing the local villagers who stood at the main path outside the temple, he recited the Text for Inviting the Deities (*Qingshen Shu* 請神書), while giving the incense sticks to Liang Lunjin 梁倫錦⁵¹⁹ one by one. Mr. Liang, who was the incense attendant in this rite, planted these incense sticks in the incense burner that stood outside the Hall of Lord Tian and in the large incense burner that was placed on the altar inside the hall. The *Qingshen Shu* reads as follows:

⁵¹⁹ Liang Lunjin, who is a native of Shui Zhu Yang Village, is a *Gaoqiang* marionette performer.

The incense smoke is curling up in the air. Gods are ten thousand *li* away. Gods are in Heaven. Prostrating myself [before the altar], I (the disciple) burn (burns) incense and venerably invite [the deities]. I invite the liaison official⁵²⁰ who takes charge of the year, the liaison official who takes charge of the month, the liaison official who takes charge of the day, [and] the liaison official who takes charge of the time. I [summon] the liaison officials to send [messages]. Gods of the universe, the three rays of the sun and the moon, the Jade Great Emperor, the Buddha of the West, the Perfect Golden Dipper,⁵²¹ the Seventh Lad who Brings Treasures, the Lord of the Gold Star, Guanyin – the Mother Buddha, the Lad and the Girl, King Nagarjuna – the Great Saint, the Great Perfect Warrior General, the Three Official Great Emperors, the Great Emperor of Efficacious Office, the Thousand-li Eye, the Favorable-wind Ear, the Perfect Immortal of the Five Cereals, Crown Prince Nazha, the Civil-Military Sage, the Heavenly Sacred Mother, Late Master Chen Ping, the Second Lad Deity of Guankou, the Four Great Celestial Generals (Wang, Guan, Ma [and] Zhao), the King of Hell in Heaven, Grandmother Goddess,⁵²² the Three Ladies of the Near Water Hall of the Near Water Temple (Gutian County, Fuzhou Prefecture), Great Ritual Master Haiqing, the soldiers and generals of the five camps, the five lads of the five premature deaths, Li Sishu (the Flower-Father of the head of the bridge), the Flower-Mother of the Pear Garden,⁵²³ the Three Great Immortal Masters⁵²⁴ who Obtain the Way at Mt. Zijin, [all the deities] in the Assembly of the Three Religions (Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism), Guanyin of the Southern Sea who Saves [all living beings] from misery, the Arhats of the Eighteen Layers, the Twenty-Four Heavens, thousands of Buddhas [and] millions of sages in the Lingshan Assembly, Herbalist Lu (the Immortal Master), the liaison officials who cure sickness, Sage Cangjie, the Three Official Emperors of the Southern Grotto, Sage Confucius, the Dragon Original Duke-King who Assists the State, the Mysterious Heavenly Supreme Emperor of Mt. Shuangji, Master Lord Tian,

⁵²⁰ In my opinion, the term “*gongcao* 公曹” should be written as “*gongcao* 功曹.”

⁵²¹ According to Ye Mingsheng, some characters of this liturgical manual are written wrongly. The term “Dabo Xingjun 大帛星君 (the Grand Silk Dipper)” should be written as “Taibai Xingjun 太白星君.” (Ye 1995, 200)

⁵²² The term “Mazi Niangniang 馬子娘娘” should be revised as “Mazu Niangniang 媽祖娘娘.”

⁵²³ The term “Liyuan Huamu 梨園花母” should be revised as “Liyuan Huamu 梨園花母.”

⁵²⁴ The Three Great Immortal Masters refer to Huang Qiwen, his son (Huang Jixian or Huang Shisan Lang), and his son-in-law (Xing Cheng or Xing Balang). For their legends, please see Section 3.2.1. of Chapter Three.

the Lady of Golden Flowers, the Young Goddess of Silver Flowers, the Third Granduncle, the Third Grandaunt, the Great Duke-King of Baisha, the Senior Official of the Dark Stone Golden Essence who Takes Charge of the Emperor's Diet, the Three Blessings of the Curve Source, the Fifty-Fifth Lad of Wuke Kou, the Eldest Granduncle of the Cutting Edges of Scissors, the Four Duke-Kings (Bushel, Rice, Gully [and] Stone), the Three Saints of Maqian and Magong, the Celestial Official who Offers Blessings to Cattle Pens and Caves, the Three Great Immortal Masters of the Bridge of the Hall of Transformation, the Buddha Mother of My Own Family, [and] the Star God of Today. All [these deities] arrive at the hall, take [their] seats and receive the pure incense (Ye 1995, 197).⁵²⁵

Holding [the incense sticks] with another hand, I prostrate [myself] and invite the gods in heaven and earth, the three rays of the sun and moon, the great void of the past, secret detective gods, the Blessing Lord of the Whole Township, all the venerable gods, who [guard the stream] that flows from its source to the place where it leaves [the township] (water exit). I have already chanted [the names of the gods] of this year.⁵²⁶ Historic sites and spirit altars, the Dipper of the Supreme Yang, the Dipper of the Supreme Yin, the Official who Takes Charge of the Eastern Kitchen, the Stove Gods of the Five Emperors, the City God of Tingzhou Prefecture, the City God of Shanghang County, and the incense fire⁵²⁷ of [all] families arrive together at the hall and take [their] seats (Ye 1995, 198).⁵²⁸

⁵²⁵ 香煙定定，神之萬里，神在空中。弟子低頭，焚香拜請。拜請：年是公曹(功曹)、月是公曹(功曹)、日是公曹(功曹)、時是公曹(功曹)、公曹(功曹)傳走；天地神明，日月三光，玉皇大帝，西天佛祖，太上老君，招寶七郎，大帛星君(太白星君)，觀音佛母，童子童女，龍樹王大聖，真武大將軍，三官大帝，靈官大帝，千里眼，順風耳，定光古佛，五谷真仙，哪吒太子，文武聖人，天上聖母，陳平先師，灌口二郎神，王關馬趙、四大天將，天上閻君、馬子娘娘(媽祖娘娘)，福州府古田縣、臨水宮臨水殿、三大夫人、海清大法師，五營兵將、五殤五郎，花公橋頭李思叔、梨園花母(梨園花母)，紫金山得道黃倖三大仙師，儒釋道三教會上，南海救苦觀音，十八層羅漢，廿四位諸天，靈山會上，千千諸佛，萬萬聖賢，盧醫仙師，治病功曹，蒼頡聖人，南巖洞三官大帝，至聖孔子，助國龍源公王，雙髻山玄天上帝，田公師傅，金花小姐，銀花小娘，三伯公公，三伯婆婆，白砂大保公王，烏石頭金精光祿大夫，流源壩三聖福，巫科口伍十伍郎，剪刀口楊大伯公，斗米坑石四公王，麻前麻公三聖，牛欄窠賜福天官，化堂橋三大仙師，本家觀音佛母，當天太歲，一切到堂座位，受領清香。

⁵²⁶ The exact meaning of the phrase “*xiannian yinian* 現年己念[唸]” is unclear. In my opinion, this phrase can be translated as “I have already chanted [the names of the gods] of this year.”

⁵²⁷ The term “*xianghuo* (incense fire)” may refer to images, pictures, incense burners, or tablets that are placed at the household altar of each family.

⁵²⁸ 轉手拜請：天地神明，日月三光，虛空過往，暗察神祇，合鄉福主，諸位尊神，上通溪源，下至水口，現年己念(現年己唸)，古蹟神壇；太陽星君、太陰星君、東廚司命、五帝灶君、汀州府府城隍、上杭縣縣城隍，家居香火，一切到堂座位。

Holding [the incense sticks] with another hand, I prostrate [myself] and invite the founding ancestor, the great-grandfather [and] the relatives of my lineage. The household deities of my family [are invited]. The incense is burning and the fragrant smoke [is curling up in the air]. The Dragon deities of the Five Directions, the Locality Gods of the Five Directions [and] the Stove Gods of the Five Emperors [are also invited]. I (the disciple) have (has) not yet struck the gongs and drums.⁵²⁹ Don't blame it on me! Don't blame it on me! The Three Immortals (Yang, Zeng [and] Liao) are seated and received the pure incense together. First, I invite [all the deities and ancestors] to take their seats at the altar. Second, I invite them to receive [the offerings]. I summon them three times and invite them three times. The gods in heaven are invoked to mount the clouds and ride the mist.⁵³⁰ The gods on earth are invoked to get off carriages and mount on horses. The gods in water are invoked to propel the boat(s) with oars.⁵³¹ They come respectfully.⁵³² [Burning] the incense, I summon them to the altar. The void of the universe, secret detective gods, all the venerable deities of the whole township, the incense fire of [all] families, the seniors who hand down [the traditions] by oral instructions, the incense fire that is taken along with us, the Dragon King and the God of Locality, I (the disciple) come (comes) to beg for positive responses [of these gods] (Ye 1995, 198).⁵³³

After he recited the above liturgical text, Mr. Ceng threw his divining blocks (made of wood) on the temple floor and obtained positive answers from Lord Tian as well as other gods. He turned towards the main altar and continued to rest on both knees. Facing the effigies inside

⁵²⁹ The term “*xiangluo xianggu* 向鑼向鼓” should be revised as “*xiangluo xianggu* 響鑼響鼓.” In the past, a disciple would strike the gong once after he set up the temporary stage. The main aim of this percussion strike was to notify his master (the marionettist) that the performance would begin very soon. He then played the *naotai* 鬧台 (bustling stage) percussion passage in order to hurry his master to mount the platform behind the backdrop. If his master did not ascend the stage, he would strike the gong for the third time so as to urge the master to mount the platform and start the performance (MXSZ 1986, 15).

⁵³⁰ In my opinion, the term “*tengyun baowu* 騰雲抱霧” should be revised as “*tengyun jiawu* 騰雲駕霧.”

⁵³¹ Ye Mingsheng states that the term “*yaochuan baijiang* 遙船拜槳” should be written as “*yaochuan baijiang* 搖船擺槳.” (Ye 1995, 200)

⁵³² The meaning of the term “*gonggong* 宮宮” is not clear. I think that it should be written as “*gonggong* 恭恭.”

⁵³³ 轉手拜請：本家堂上，始高曾祖，一脈宗親，本家家神，香火香煙，五方龍神、五方土地、五帝灶君。弟子未向鑼向鼓（響鑼響鼓），莫去怪前、莫去怪責。楊、曾、廖三仙座位，一同受領清香。當壇一請到座，二請受領，三召三請；在天請神騰雲抱霧（騰雲駕霧），在地請神退車跨馬，在水請神遙船拜槳（搖船擺槳），宮宮（恭恭）來到，某某神明；弟子來請乞聖答。

the hall, he recited the liturgical text for offering wine to the gods. That done, he then recited the Incantation for Killing the Cock (*Ge Xiongji Zhou* 割雄雞咒):

The first cup of wine [is offered]. The first cup of good wine [is offered]. The families of the devotees are auspicious and prosperous. The second cup of wine [is offered]. The second cup of good wine [is offered]. I (the disciple) light (lights) bundles of incense sticks in front of the altar. The third cup of wine [is offered]. The third cup of good wine [is offered]. Baleful spirits and hundreds of killers are warded off by the red flower.⁵³⁴

This cock is not an ordinary cock. In front of the altar, the master sends [the] sacred cock [to me]. This sword is not an ordinary sword. The master bestows the sword of killing demons upon me. Bodhisattva – the Second Lad King, [just come] quickly in accordance with the statutes and ordinances! (Ye 1995, 199)⁵³⁵

When Ceng Ruilung was reciting the above text, Liang Lunjin cut the neck of the cock gently with a kitchen knife. The blood of this cock was sprinkled on the paper money and the floor of Tian Gong Tang. While Mr. Ceng was reciting the Liturgical Text for Burning the Paper Money (*Shao Zhiqian Ci* 燒紙錢詞), Mr. Liang burnt the paper money outside the Hall. Then, Mr. Ceng offered kowtows to Lord Tian and other deities in front of the altar. He also threw his divining blocks on the floor in order to know whether or not the gods accepted the offerings. Firecrackers were set off outside the hall at the end of this rite.⁵³⁶

Three rows of chairs and tables were placed on the public stage (made of wood and earth) beside the Hall of Lord Tian. After the completion of the ritual *Kaitai* mentioned above, all the guests were invited to take seats on the stage. Five of them, including me, were invited to

⁵³⁴ In my opinion, the term “*honghua* 紅花” here refers to the blood of the cock. Since cocks crow at dawn, Chinese people often associate them with the sun that represents *Yang* or righteousness. They also believe that their blood has supernormal power to weaken the *Yinqi* 陰氣 of the evil spirits and strengthen the *Yangqi* 陽氣 of the local communities. (cf. De Groot 1969, 965 – 970).

⁵³⁵ 一盃酒、一盃漿，信主家門大吉昌；二盃酒、二盃漿，壇前弟子香火旺；三盃酒、三盃漿，凶神百煞紅花當。此雞不是非凡雞，師傅壇前送神雞；此劍不是非凡劍，師傅贈我斬邪劍。二郎王菩薩，急急如律令救。

⁵³⁶ It is important to point out that while Ceng Ruilung was performing the Ritual for Opening the Stage, some female devotees (or villagers) also worshipped Tian Gong at the Hall of Lord Tian. They offered candles, incense, wine, tea, biscuits, cooked chicken and fruit to him. They also kowtowed to his effigy, which was placed on the main altar of the temple. At the same time, Ms. Liang Xiulian, an attendant of the Furen Gong (the Temple of the Ladies) in Zhongyang Village of Baisha, also performed the ritual *huanyuan* for two families in the hall. Ms. Liang draped red clothes, which were offered to Lord Tian by these families, on the effigy of the god. She also offered bundles of incense sticks and kowtows to Tian’s image. In addition, she also worshipped Confucius and the God of Literature (Wenchang), whose images are also placed on the main altar inside the Tian Gong Tang.

deliver a short speech or say a few words (see Figure 5.33.). Around 8:30 a.m., the guests descended the stage. All the tables and chairs were removed from it. Mr. Ceng Ruilun presented the exorcistic play⁵³⁷ *Tiao Tian Gong* 跳田公 (Dancing Lord Tian). From the viewpoint of the marionettists, the main purpose of this exorcistic play is to demonstrate Great Lord Tian's supernormal abilities and excellent martial arts skills, which function to scare away all the demons as well as evil spirits. In the performance, percussion instruments were used for accompaniment, a characteristic of the *Gaoqiang* style. The *Da Tian Gong* 大田公 (Great Lord Tian) was the only marionette used in this performance (see Figure 5.34.). It was barefooted and it wore a jacket as well as a pair of trousers of the lower classes. The buttons of its jacket were undone in order to demonstrate the unrestrained character of the deity. Before the *Tiao Tian Gong* began, a small wooden rectangular table was put at the center of the stage and a small wooden chair was placed behind it. When gongs and cymbals started up, Ceng Ruilun brought the marionette of Great Lord Tian to the stage center. Manipulated by him, the string doll displayed a series of stunts: walking round the small table, sitting on it for a while, striding over the length of the table three times, bending backward into a semicircle in order to thrust out its belly and male genitals,⁵³⁸ and jumping over the chair⁵³⁹ twice. Afterwards, Mr. Ceng made the *Da Tian Gong* marionette walk round the table twice, sit on the chair for a few seconds and leap over it again. At the backstage, the percussionists recited:

There is a sound of drums and gongs. The deities are [reverently] invited. Household deceased masters do not need to be scared. The Third Granduncle sits on the central altar. The Dragon God is invited to descend to [the altar] to serve as a witness. The obscure incense smoke rises into the rosy clouds. We reverently invite [the master] of the Iron-plate Bridge in Hangzhou. We invite the master of the head of the Iron-plate Bridge. Mounting the clouds and riding the mists, [the master] descends from the sky.

Burning a pure incense stick, we respectfully invite the Great King Tian of Hangzhou to protect the devotee's family against disasters, and to endow the disciples with a loud and bright voice. In front of the altar, we make a libation [to

⁵³⁷ The origin of exorcistic plays (or rites) can be traced back to the *Nuo* rites (or theatre) mentioned in Chapter One. In usual cases, this kind of play must be staged at the beginning of the opening evening.

⁵³⁸ The main aim of this gesture is to show that Great Lord Tian is free to do whatever he wants and has nothing to be superstitious about.

⁵³⁹ While in the air, the puppet was made to kick up its feet with toes pointing forward.

the deity]. Pairs of sacred flowery candles are lit. We pray for blessings! May calamities be eliminated and auspiciousness bestowed [upon us]!⁵⁴⁰ (Ye 1995, 60)

The performance concluded when the marionette walked round the table again and entered backstage. After this exorcistic play ended, young marionettists (boys and girls) demonstrated their excellent skills of manipulating the string dolls, such as performing a lion dance, throwing a gourd, and beating a flower-drum. Then, the *Luantan* marionettists presented the *Han* opera *Yang Liulang Dianbing* 楊六郎點兵 (Yang Liulang Reviews Soldiers) onstage (see Figure 5.35.). This short play was mainly sung in vernacular official language (*tu guanhua*). A small rectangular wooden table was placed at the stage center. Two puppeteers made the marionettes that acted the characters of the adjutant and two *yamen* runners entered the stage. The adjutant was dressed in a helmet and red amour decorated with small pennons (worn on the back). A small piece of white rectangular cloth was secured under the puppet's chin, a typical kind of costume of the *Han* operatic style. Each of the two *yamen* runners wore a red jacket, red skirt and official cap. Three of them stood at stage left in a horizontal line. Manipulated by a marionette player, the marionette that represented Yang Liulang appeared onstage. It wore a black beard, an official cap, and a formal robe. A small piece of red rectangular cloth was worn under its chin. Walking towards stage centre, it stood behind the rectangular table. Since Emperor Zhenzong 真宗 of the Northern Song dynasty (r. A.D. 998 – 1022) was encircled by enemy forces at Mt. Tongtai 潼台山, Yang Liulang (one of the lionhearted generals of the Yang family) gathered all his soldiers and led them to Mt. Tongtai to save the emperor. The marionettists concluded the performance with an aria. All the marionette troupe members and guests had lunch at noon. From 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m., the Discussion Meeting of the Research Association of the Hakka Marionette Cultural took place at Mr. Liang Lizhong's house. Members of many local marionette troupes in Baisha Town participated in the meeting. Both Ye Mingsheng and I also attended the meeting. Mr. Ye was invited to give a speech.

The evening performance began at about 8:00 p.m. In order to celebrate Lord Tian's birthday, members of the Marionette Company of Caixia Village in Panjing Township (Panjing Xiang Caixia Cun Mu'ou Jutuan 泮境鄉彩霞村木偶劇團)⁵⁴¹ presented two auspicious plays,

⁵⁴⁰ 一聲鑼鼓請神明，家堂先師莫著驚，三伯公公中壇坐，請下龍神作證明。香煙縹緲透雲霞，拜請杭州鐵板橋，鐵板橋頭請師傅，騰雲降露 (In my opinion, this compound should be revised as “*tengyu jiawu* 騰雲駕霧”) 下雲霄。一炷清香，拜請杭州田大王，蓋保信主一家無災難，轉保弟子聲響亮。奉獻壇前酒和漿，神花燭火成對雙，化災祈福降吉祥。

⁵⁴¹ Wang Rongchang 王榮昌, who is both a *Gaoqiang* and *Luantan* marionettist, is the impresario of this troupe. Though he is Ceng Ruilun's disciple, he is not a Liyuan Jiao priest. Liang Weilai 梁偉來, Liang Qishan 梁其山,

Promotion to the Rank of an Official (*Jiaguan* 加官) and the Reunion (*Tuanyuan* 團圓); as well as the *Gaoqiang* play *Babai Shou* 八百壽 (Eight Hundred Years of Life) onstage. Gongs and drums were percussion instruments used for accompaniment. As mentioned above, the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe in Huang Jing Shan of Qingshui (central western Fujian) used two marionettes to perform the auspicious play *Jiaguan* (a mummery) in Lord Tian's 2003 birthday celebration. However, the Marionette Company of Caixia Village in Panjing Township only used one puppet in the 2004 performance. Accompanied by percussion music, the marionette that represented the high ranking official was made to appear onstage. It wore an embroidered official robe and a gauze hat with long wings at the side. Holding a tablet with its left hand, it walked towards a small rectangular table placed at the center of the stage. A red scroll inscribed with four characters, *jiaguan jinjue* 加官進爵 (winning promotion), was put on the table. The marionette picked up the red scroll and showed it to the spectators. After bowing to the four sides of the stage, it entered the backstage from stage left rear. The performance of the Reunion, which was staged by the Panjing Xiang Caixia Cun Mu'ou Jutuan on Lord Tian's 2004 birthday in Shui Zhu Yang of Baisha (southwestern Fujian), was the same as its performance in the deity's 2003 birthday ceremony presented by the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe in Huang Jing Shan of Qingshui (central western Fujian).

After the performance of the two auspicious plays was finished, members of the Marionette Company of Caixia Village in Panjing Township performed the *Gaoqiang* play *Babai Shou* (Eight Hundred Years of Life), which lasted about one hour (see Figures 5.36.).⁵⁴² This play was sung and spoken in both local Hakka dialect and vernacular stage language (*tuguanhua*). The musicians sat behind the backdrop. Since it is a *Gaoqiang* repertoire, percussion instruments, including woodblock, big gong, cymbals, small gong and drum, were used for accompaniment. Moreover, the troupe members sang in *bangqiang* (helping chorus),⁵⁴³ one of the main features of the *Yiyang* operatic tradition. The two marionettists who manipulated the puppets stood behind the backdrop. When gongs and cymbals started up, the marionette that performed the character of Zhao Qiankun entered the stage. This old gentleman wore a scholarly

Liang Wenrong 梁文榮 and Liang Dongshan 梁東山 are his disciples and took part in the performance on Lord Tian's 2004 birthday.

⁵⁴² The story is about Zhao Qiankun 趙乾坤, who is already seventy-three years old, requests the Deities of Happiness, Office and Longevity (Fu 福 Lu 祿 Shou 壽) to bestow him long life. These three gods altogether bestow on him seven hundred and twenty-seven years of age. He was also renamed Zhao Pengzu 趙彭祖. As a result, he lives to the age of eight hundred.

⁵⁴³ In the 2004 performance, the *bangqiang* was often sung in falsetto and was an octave higher. One marionette started singing and then other troupe members took up the tune.

hat, an informal blue robe with long white sleeves and a full grey beard. After introducing himself, he summoned his domestic servant, who entered the stage from stage right rear. This servant was dressed in a black garment and a pair of black trousers. The buttons of the garment were undone. Zhao Qiankun ordered the servant to go to see his son, Zhao Hongjun 趙鴻均, who passed the imperial examinations and obtained the title of the Prize Candidate. Then, both Zhao and the servant exited the stage. Wearing a ceremonial robe with long white sleeves and gauze hat with square wings at the side, Zhao Hongjun sat on a chair that was placed at the stage center. The domestic servant came onstage and bowed to him. He told the servant to inform his father that he had to go to the capital to assume office. He could not return home until three years later. The troupe members sang in *bangqiang*. Both Zhao Hongjun and the domestic servant entered the backstage. Accompanied by the percussion music, Zhao Qiankun appeared onstage again. Then, the domestic servant also entered the stage and stood in front of his master. “When will my son come back?” asked Zhao Qiankun. The domestic servant replied, “He has to stay in the capital for three years.” Zhao said to himself, “My son can only return home after three years. I’m now seventy-three years old. I’m afraid that I can’t see him anyone.” He lamented to heaven and went off in a faint. The marionette that controlled the puppet of Zhao Qiankun started singing and the other troupe members took up the tune (*bangqiang*). The Peach Lady (Taohua Nü 桃花女), who was Zhao Qiankun’s adopted daughter, entered the stage. She wore an embroidered robe with long sleeves. Her hair was decorated with golden flowers (made of paper). After a *Gaoqiang* aria was sung, Zhao told her that he might not have the chance to meet with his son again. The Peach Lady suggested that he consult a famous fortune-teller. Zhao took her advice and ordered his domestic servant to search for the fortune-teller. Then, all these three characters (Zhao, the Peach Lady and the servant) entered the backstage from stage left rear. The fortune-teller, who wore an azure robe and a Buddhist hat, entered the stage from stage left rear. The domestic servant led out Zhao Qiankun. Zhao asked the fortune-teller about his life-span. The fortune-teller told him that he would die very soon. Zhao immediately burst into tears and entered the backstage. Both the fortune-teller and the domestic servant also made their exit. The Peach Lady and Zhao appeared onstage again. She suggested that her adopted father (Zhao Qiankun) set up an altar at the head of the Bridge of Pheonix (Fenghuang Qiao 鳳凰橋) in order to beg the Deities of Happiness, Office and Longevity to bestow long life on him. Then, they both entered the backstage. An altar was set up at the stage center. The three deities descended from Heaven (came onstage). The God of Happiness wore a full black beard, an

official cap, and a white embroidered robe with long sleeves. The God of Office was dressed in an official cap, a full black beard and an azure ceremonial robe with long sleeves. The God of Longevity wore a full white beard, an official cap, and a red embroidered robe with long sleeves. He held a long walking staff with his left hand. There was a piece of red cloth draped on the hat of each god. Zhao also entered the stage and knelt at stage left. The God of Happiness approached him and asked, “Do you come to beg for wealth?” Zhao shook his head. The god then asked, “Do you come to beg for fortune?” Zhao also shook his head. “Do you come to beg for longevity?” the god asked him for the third time. Zhao nodded for “yes.” The god said to him, “I bestow on you 300 years of age.” “I bestow on you another 300 years of age,” the God of Office stood in front of him and said. The God of Longevity also approached him and said, “The God of Happiness bestows on you 300 years of age. The God of Office also bestows on you 300 years of age. I bestow on you 127 years of age. We altogether offer you 737 additional years of age. You are now 73 years old. Thus, you will live to the age of 800. Zhao Qiankun isn’t a suitable name for you. “*Qian*” represents “the heaven” and “*kun*” represents “the earth.” You can’t bear such a great name. From now on, you’re called Zhao Pengzu.” The God of Longevity restored to Zhao a youthful appearance. The three deities returned to Heaven (exited the stage). Zhao’s grey beard turned black at once. He went home (entered the backstage) after expressing his thankfulness to the deities. At the end of the show, a *Gaoqiang* aria was sung. One marionettist started singing and the other troupe members picked up the tune. After the performance concluded, all the troupe members took refreshment at the main hall of Mr. Liang Lizhong’s house. Early the next morning (around 8 a.m.), Mr. Ceng Ruilun performed the rite for sending off the deities who had been invited by him to attend Lord Tian’s birthday celebration. Incense sticks, candles and paper money were offered in this short ritual, which took place at the Hall of Lord Tian. I left Shui Zhu Yang Village after lunch.

5.6. Worship of Deceased Masters and Colleagues

In southwestern and central western Fujian, marionette masters and their disciples are usually descended from the same family. The marionette theatrical techniques are passed down from generation to generation. Marionettists would offer regular worship to the deceased masters, who are also their ancestors. Daily and monthly sacrifices take place at household altars. Annual cults are often held at ancestral halls and graves, especially in the Festival of Clearness and Brightness (Qingming Jie 清明節). In some cases, senior or experienced marionettists not only transmit their performing skills to male members of their own families but also to non-family members. Unlike Cantonese opera performers, marionette troupe members would not pay

tribute to deceased colleagues or masters who are not their own ancestors. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that some deceased marionettists can become ancestral deities of the profession. For example, Lai Fakui 賴法魁 (賴發奎), Li Fazuo 李法佐 (左), Li Fayou 李法佑 (右) and Wen Faming 溫法明 (villagers of Zhangkeng Village 樟坑村 in Baisha Town) are believed to be the first four marionettists who spread the marionette theatrical skills to Baisha Town of Shanghang County. Their names are still found in the liturgical manuals of some marionette performers in the region. As [*the Liturgical Manual Concerning*] the *Command Association of Lord Tian, Shui Zhu Yang, Daping Li, Baisha* (*Baisha Daping Bao Shui Zhu Yang Tian Gong Chihui* 白砂大坪保水竹洋田公敕會) records, “I once again invite the grandmasters. [They are] Wen Faming 溫法明, Lai Fakui 賴法魁, Li Fazuo 李法左, Li Fayou 李法右, Li Faqiong 梁法瓊, Qiu Fafeng 丘法奉 [and] Liang Fakui 梁法魁 ... (BDLS n.d., 4)”⁵⁴⁴ Today, some marionette players still chant their names and worship these founding masters before the performances begin. In other words, they are honored by the marionette troupe members as ancestral gods.

As far as I know, death rituals of the marionettists in western Fujian conform to those of the people of the local communities. In Baisha of southwestern Fujian, *xianghua heshang* 香花和尚 (incense-flower monks)⁵⁴⁵ are hired to perform rites in funerals. Whether the deceased is a marionettist or not, the incense-flower monks would pray for quick passage of the spirit of the dead through the ten courts of the Hell and chant scripture for releasing the spirit from the bloody pool in purgatory if the deceased is a married woman who had given birth to children before death. The descendants of the dead would go into mourning and purify the corpse. Qingshui Township of central western Fujian falls within the sphere of influence of the Yujia Sect of the Lüshan Tradition. Thus, in a funeral of an old marionettist or villager, priests of the Yujia Sect are invited to perform a series of liturgies for easy passage of the spirit of the dead through purgatory. All his descendents wear mourning dress that is made of hemp and sackcloth. The corpse is washed and garbed in the shroud. In order to take on the fertility of the deceased, the descendents or mourners would ask the priests to perform two or three plays concerning sexual desires. (cf. Watson 1988, 127 - 128)⁵⁴⁶ The funeral is usually concluded within three

⁵⁴⁴ 再來拜請師公溫法明、賴法魁、李法左、李法右、李法瓊、丘法奉、梁法魁...

⁵⁴⁵ Incense-flower monks are married Buddhist ritual specialists in western Fujian. They honor Pu'an 普庵 as their ritual lord. The worship of Pu'an is popular in western Fujian, southern Jiangxi and Taiwan. It is believed that Pu'an is a “half-Buddhist, half-Daoist” and possesses supernormal abilities to heal people and subdue evil spirits or demons (Ye 2000b, 384 - 451).

⁵⁴⁶ These plays would not be performed in the funeral of a young person.

days. It is important to point out that if the deceased is a Liyuan Jiao marionettist, his liturgical manuals are buried with him.⁵⁴⁷

In brief, marionette troupe members in central western and southwestern Fujian observe less occupational taboos than Cantonese opera troupe members in Hong Kong. In my opinion, there are two possible explanations for this phenomenon. First, as mentioned in Section 4.1. of Chapter Four, women in Cantonese opera need to observe many feminine (or gender) taboos. In western Fujian, however, there were no female marionettists from the imperial periods to the late 1940s.⁵⁴⁸ Although women have been allowed to learn the performing skills of marionette theatre since the early 1950s, male troupe members or marionettists still outnumber their female counterparts today. Therefore, unlike the Cantonese opera profession, there are almost no feminine occupational taboos imposed on female marionette troupe members in western Fujian, though male marionettists who are Liyuan Jiao priests have to observe a few taboos that are related to women. Second, some Liyuan Jiao priests are believed to possess supernormal power for exorcism. Instead of adopting passive means (observing taboos), they adopt positive means, such as writing secret names (*hui*) and chanting liturgical texts, to ward off spectres or evil elements.

⁵⁴⁷ Not much is known about the death rituals of the marionettists or local villagers in western Fujian. More studies have to be done in order to clarify this point.

⁵⁴⁸ The history of the Lüshan School can be traced back to the late Tang period, when female shamans were very active in south China. However, their popular religious activities were often suppressed by the government in later periods. For instance, Emperor Huizong 徽宗 (r. A.D. 1101 – 1125) of the Northern Song dynasty “inaugurated an unprecedented effort to centralize and systematize the certification of temples and cults. Huizong reversed his predecessors’ policy of allowing local jurisdictions to compile their own registers of sacrifices...and instead sought to establish a uniform national register. Above all, Huizong’s policies aimed to curb the activities of spirit mediums and restrict the conduct of religious observances...” (von Glahn 2004, 190) The Ming court also prohibited shamanistic cults by written laws. As the Code of the Ming dynasty states, “If any *shiwu* [師巫] or ‘Wu-ist master’ pretends to call down heretical gods or spirits, writes charms, or pronounces spells on water,...or invokes saints, calling himself *duangong* [端公] or ‘orthodox lord’, *taibao* [太保] or ‘chief patron or protector,’ or *shipo* [師婆], ‘female master,’ he or she, being the principal offender, shall be strangled, or, being an accessory, shall receive a hundred blows with the long stick followed by banishment for life to a distance of three thousand miles...” (DeGroot 1969, 1242) In the Ming dynasty, the Zhengyi Sect 正一派 obtained strong official support and the Celestial Master (Tianshi 天師) was confirmed as a guardian of orthodoxy within Daoism. The position of the Tianshi was passed down from generation to generation according to the hereditary principle. Within the Zhang family, ritual skills were only transmitted to male members. In order to escape the suppression of the government, local ritual specialists, spirit mediums, or shamans labeled themselves as Daoist priests. They incorporated elements of the Zhengyi Daoist Sect, such as talismans, Daoist music and mudras, into their liturgies. They also worshipped many Daoist gods, such as the Three Pure Ones and Celestial Master Zhang. Moreover, many large lineages already settled or even consolidated their power in Fujian during the early years of the Ming dynasty. Influenced by the patriarchal system and the hereditary tradition of the Zhengyi Daoism, various sects of the Lüshan School, such as the Sect of the Pear Garden (Liyuan Jiao), would only transmit the ritual skills to their male offspring. After the 1949 Revolution, women are allowed to learn the performing skills of marionette theatre. However, they are still prohibited from learning the liturgical or ritual methods of the Liyuan Jiao of the Lüshan Tradition.

Similar to the religious beliefs of Cantonese opera performers, the religious traditions of marionette troupe members in western Fujian (both central western and southwestern) can be characterized as polytheistic. Marionettists in these mountainous areas honor a group of patron deities. Lord Tian is worshipped as the primary god and others, such as Lord Dou, Lord Guo and Master Chen Ping, are considered to be associated deities. In addition, as mentioned in Sections 5.2. and 5.3., Wang Hua pay tribute to the Three Lords of Tian (Lord Tian, Lord Dou and Lord Guo). They own puppets of these three deities. In *Fujian kuilei xi shilun shangxia ce* 福建傀儡戲史論上下冊 (*A Discussion of the History of Fujian Puppet Theatre, 2 Vols.*), Ye Mingsheng states that these three marionettes belong to the *chou* category. According to him, Lord Guo is in fact Guo Gong (Mister Guo), who was also known as Guo Lang 郭郎 (Lad Guo) or Guo Tu 郭秃 (Baldy Guo). As mentioned in Section 1.1. of Chapter One, Guo Gong was a popular comic character in marionette performances from the Era of North-South division (A.D. 316 – 589) to the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618 – 907). Moreover, the worship of Lord Tian and Lord Dou originated from the religious traditions of *Haiyan* opera troupes in Yihuang County of Jiangxi before and during the middle of the sixteenth century. Presumably the cult of the Two Masters of Fields and Hollows (Tiandou Ershi), two adjunct deities of the Cantonese opera profession, can also be traced back to this religious tradition. In fact, performers of many opera genres (local variants of the *Yiyang* theatrical style) in Jiangxi and Anhui also worship Lord Tian and Lord Dou as their patron deities. Thus, it is reasonable to argue that the subcultural religious practices of the Cantonese opera profession and those of the subcultural religious activities of marionette performers in central western and southwestern Fujian are not completely separate from each other. They derived from the same origin to some extent.

It is important to note that there is a close relationship between the subcultural religious traditions of the marionette performers and the cultural religious system of the local society. In Shu Zhu Yang Village of Baisha (southwestern Fujian), Lord Tian is not only a god of marionette theatre but is also a tutelary god of Baisha Town. Members of marionette troupes and other local people pay tribute to him at his temple. In Huang Jing Shan of Qingshui Township, Wang Hua performed the Ritual for the Repayments of Vows (*huanyuan*), the Ritual for Breaking the Womb (*Potai*) and the Ritual for Crossing the Barriers (*Guoguan*) for the local devotees or villagers when he and his troupe members celebrated the birthday of Lord Tian in 2004. Each of the fifteen sections of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress was offered as a gift to Tian Gong by local worshippers. There were liturgies in the performances, such as the Ritual

for Summoning the Armies (*Zhaojun*), as well as performances in the liturgies, such as the ritual *Guoguan*, in which the marionettes that represented Xu Sun, Lord Tian, the Three Ladies and the Sage Lord Zhang enacted a series of liturgical movements. Hence, ritual and opera (or marionette theatre) are inseparable from each other. The boundary between the subcultural religious traditions of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe and the cultural religious system of Qingshui district is blurred.

In the case of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe in Huang Jing Shan of Qingshui, the Ritual for Sealing off the Stage (*Fengtai*) was performed in Lord Tian's 2003 birthday celebration. In this rite, Wang Hua performed the Palm of Ten Thousand People (*Wanren Zhang*) and exorcised demons or ghosts by writing the secret names of the deities with three burning incense sticks. The figure of the Wanren Zhang and the secret names or characters of the patron deities also appear in the *Fengtai miben* 封台秘本 (*The Secret Liturgical Manual for Sealing the Stage*), which is possessed by the Fengtian Daqiang Operatic Troupe (Xing n.d., 12 – 19). Before the early 1950s, the impresario of this Daqiang opera troupe performed the Palm of Ten Thousand People and wrote secret names of deities with burning incense in the Ritual for Sealing the Stage (*Fengtai*). Today, this tradition no longer exists. As mentioned in Section 2.2. of Chapter Two, *Daqiang* opera (a local variant of the *Yiyang* theatrical system) was introduced to Fengtian Administrative Village of Qingshui Township from Shicheng of Jiangxi around the mid-fifteenth century. By the end of the Ming dynasty, marionettists in this area incorporated this musical style in their performances. Presumably they also adopted the religious traditions of the *Daqiang* opera.

Section 1.1. of Chapter One states that puppets were already known as *mu'ou* 木偶, *kuilei* 傀儡 (魁欄) or *kuilei zi* 魁礮子 before the Han dynasty. The earliest appearance of puppetry was closely associated with exorcism. Since the ancient times, Chinese people have believed that puppets or marionettes function to ward off spectres. In Shui Zhu Yang Village of Baisha Town (southwestern Fujian), the exorcistic play *Tiao Tian Gong* (Dancing Lord Tian) was staged at the beginning of the performance in Lord Tian's 2004 birthday celebration. It is important to point out that in addition to the birthday of this patron deity, marionette troupes also present this exorcistic play in order to purify the performing site before they start a series of marionette plays. According to local beliefs, Lord Tian possesses supernormal power that can expel all evil elements from the district. Moreover, at Tian Gong's 2003 birthday celebration at the Wanfu Tang in Huang Jing Shan of Qingshui (central western Fujian), the marionettes of the Three

Ladies and Chen Haiqing were often made to perform series of liturgical movements, which are considered to be exorcistic rites, in the performance of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress. The above evidence clearly reveals that puppetry or marionette theatre in western Fujian is often in connexion with exorcism.

Within a ritual operatic series, players of regional operas in southeast China would stage several auspicious plays before main performances start. According to Chinese operatic tradition, these plays function to offer festival or birthday greetings to local deities and bring auspiciousness to the spectators. The tradition of performing these plays in festivals dates from the early Ming dynasty. As mentioned in Section 1.3. of Chapter One, Zhu Youdun (Prince Xian of Zhou) transformed deliverance plays into auspicious plays. Sections 5.4. says that the Perfect Golden Dipper (*Taibai Jinxing* 太白金星), Investiture of a King (*Fengwang* 封王), Dance of Promotion (*Tiao Jiaguan*), and Reunion (*Tuanyuan* 團圓) are short plays performed in central western Fujian. At the 2003 birthday celebration of Lord Tian which was held at the Wanfu Tang of Huang Jing Shan at Qingshui (central western Fujian), these four short plays were associated with the Ritual for the Repayment of Vows (*huanyuan*) performed by Wang Hua before the performance of each section of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress began. According to local beliefs, they function to bring scholarly honor, longevity, happiness and sons to the devotees who redeemed vows to Lord Tian. The Perfect Golden Dipper and the Reunion, two auspicious plays, were also staged on the deity's 2004 birthday, which took place at Shui Zhu Yang of Baisha in southwestern Fujian. In the case of Cantonese opera, troupe members also present auspicious plays before the beginning of a ritual operatic series.

The basic structures and contents of Lord Tian's 2004 birthday ceremony were more simple in comparison with those of the deity's 2003 birthday celebration that took place at Wang Hua's house. Wang Hua, who is both a *Daqiang* marionettist and a Liyuan Jiao priest, performed a series of complex liturgies and the liturgical play *Huangjun Gushi* in this birthday ritual, which stretched over four day and five nights. Since southwestern Fujian was a military base of the Chinese Community Party during the late 1920s and early 1930s, many local Liyuan Jiao traditions of the Lüshan Sect have already died out today. Thus, unlike Mr. Wang Hua, Mr. Ceng Ruilun and other *Gaoqiang* marionettists in Baisha, who are Liyuan Jiao priests, did not perform any complex liturgies at the Tian Gong Tang in Shu Zhu Yang Village on the god's birthday. In other words, the 2003 birthday celebration of Lord Tian organized by the Wang Hua contained more religious elements than Lord Tian's 2004 birthday ceremony, which was held by the marionette troupes and local villagers in Baisha (southwestern Fujian).

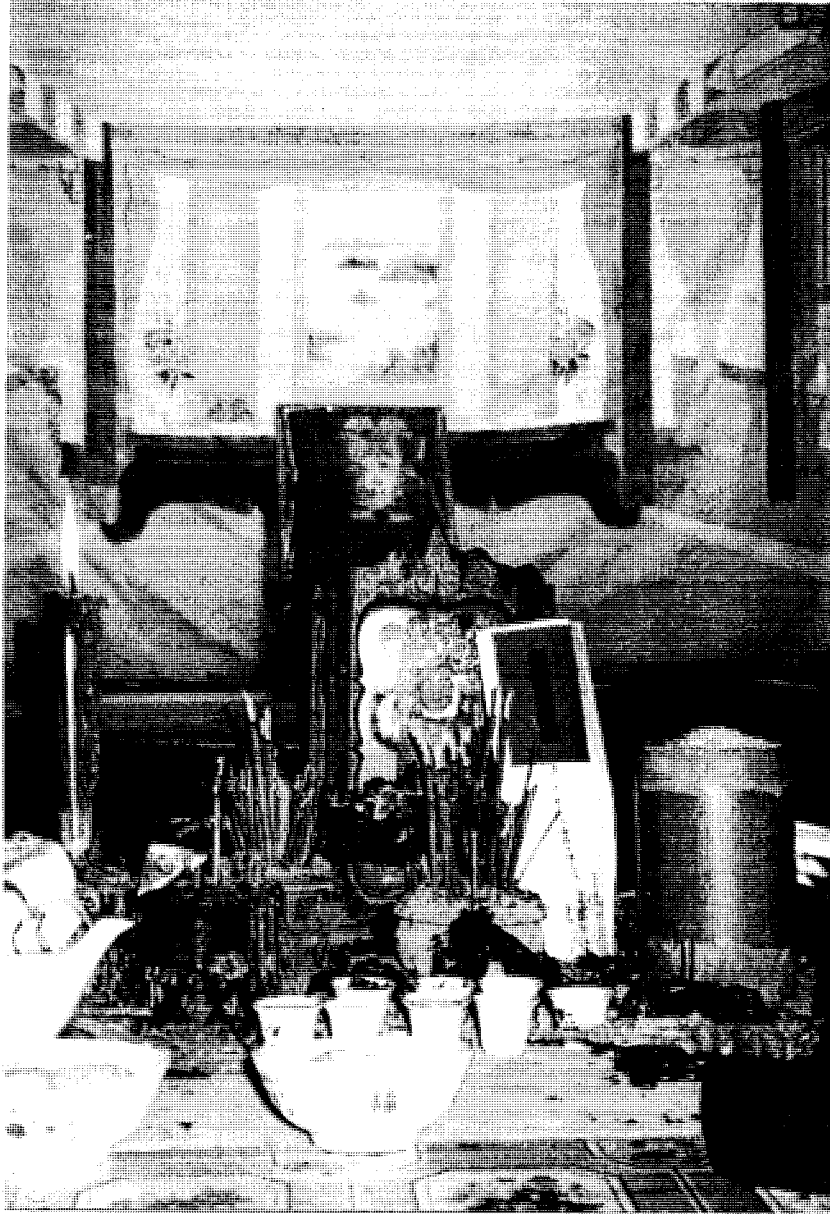


Figure 5.1. The Image of Lord Tian (July 22, 2003, Wang Hua's House, Huang Jing Shan Village, Qingshui Township, Central Western Fujian)



Figure 5.2. The Marionette Deity of Lord Tian (July 23, 2003, Wang Hua's House, Huang Jing Shan Village, Qingshui Township, Central Western Fujian)

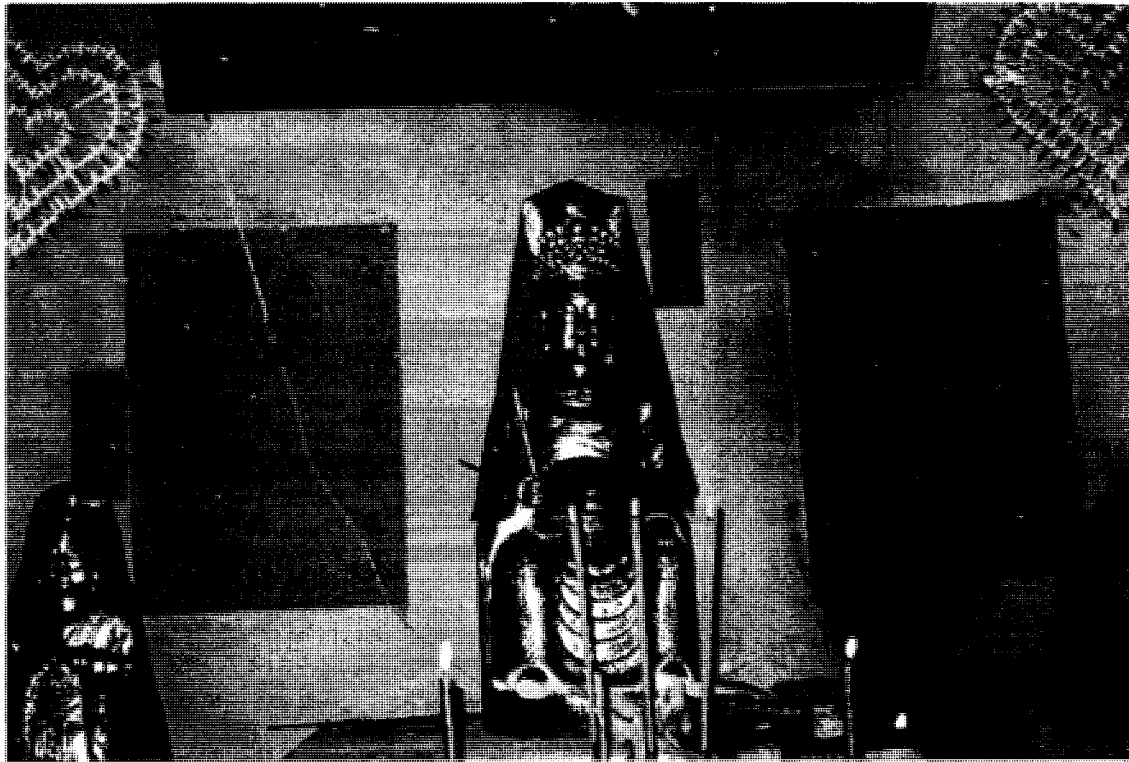


Figure 5.3. The Effigy of Lord Tian (April 19, 2003, the Hall of Lord Tian, Shui Zhu Yang Natural Village, Baisha Town, Southwestern Fujian)



Figure 5.4. The Temporary Stage in the Main Hall of Wang Hua's House (July 22, 2003, Huang Jing Shan Village, Qingshui Township, Central Western Fujian)

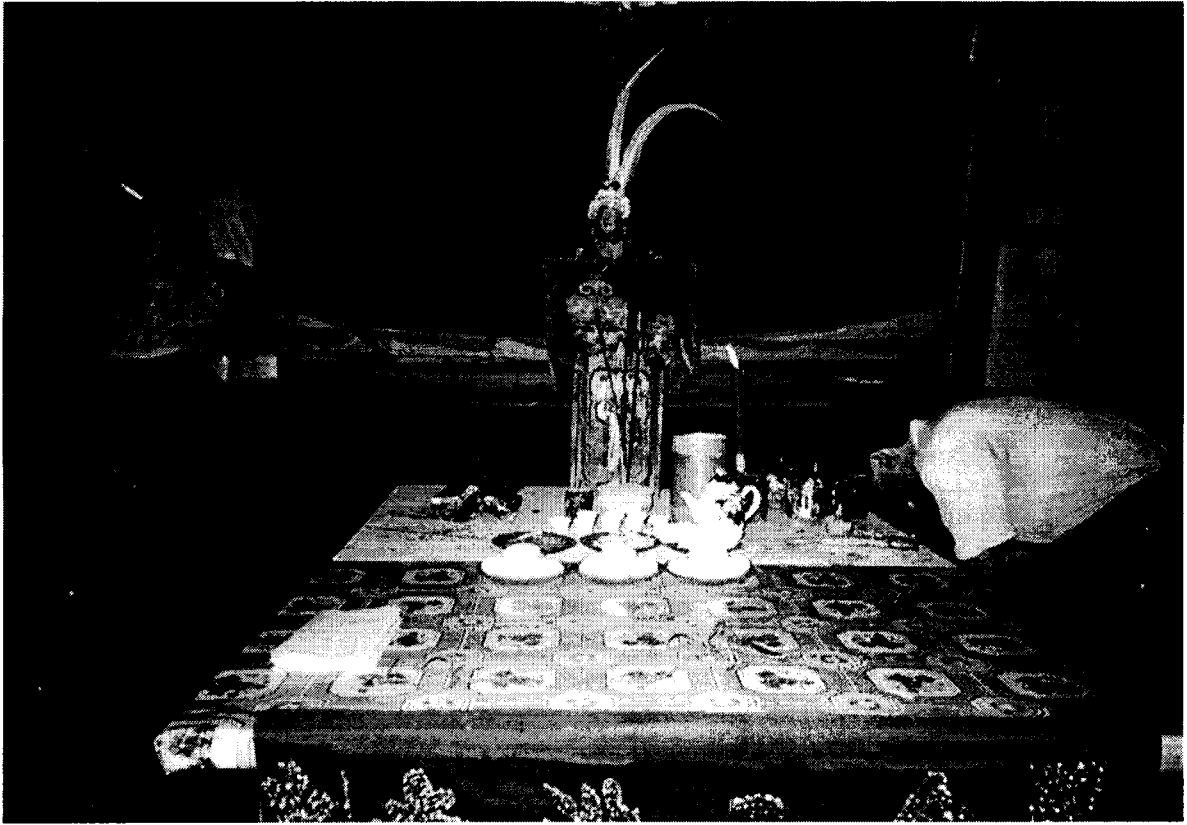


Figure 5.5. The Main Altar in the Main Hall of Wang Hua's House (July 22, 2003, Huang Jing Shan Village, Qingshui Township, Central Western Fujian)

Figure 5.6. The Appropriate Points of the Twelve Earthly Branches in the Left Hand (This figure is removed from the thesis due to copyright reason)

Source: John Lagerwey, *Taoist Ritual in Chinese Society* (New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987) p. 17.



Figure 5.7. Wang Hua Performing the Ritual for Sealing the Stage on Lord Tian's 2003 Birthday (July 22, 2003, Wang Hua's House, Huang Jing Shan Village, Qingshui Township, Central Western Fujian)

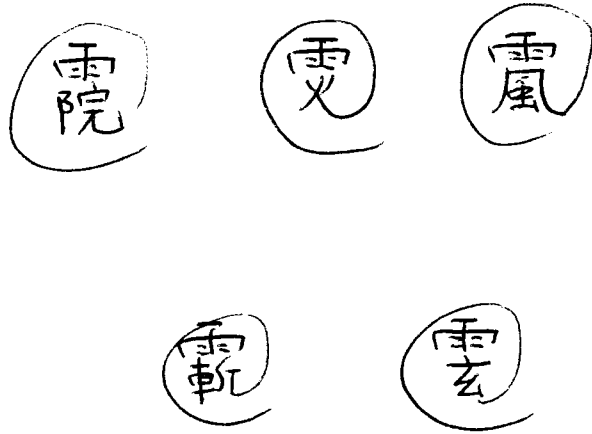


Figure 5.8. The Secret Names of the Department of Fire and Wind of Nine Heavens

Source: Wang Hua, *Yiming keyi ben* 佚名科儀本 (*A Nameless Manual of Liturgy*) of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui Township, Central Western Fujian, p. 25.

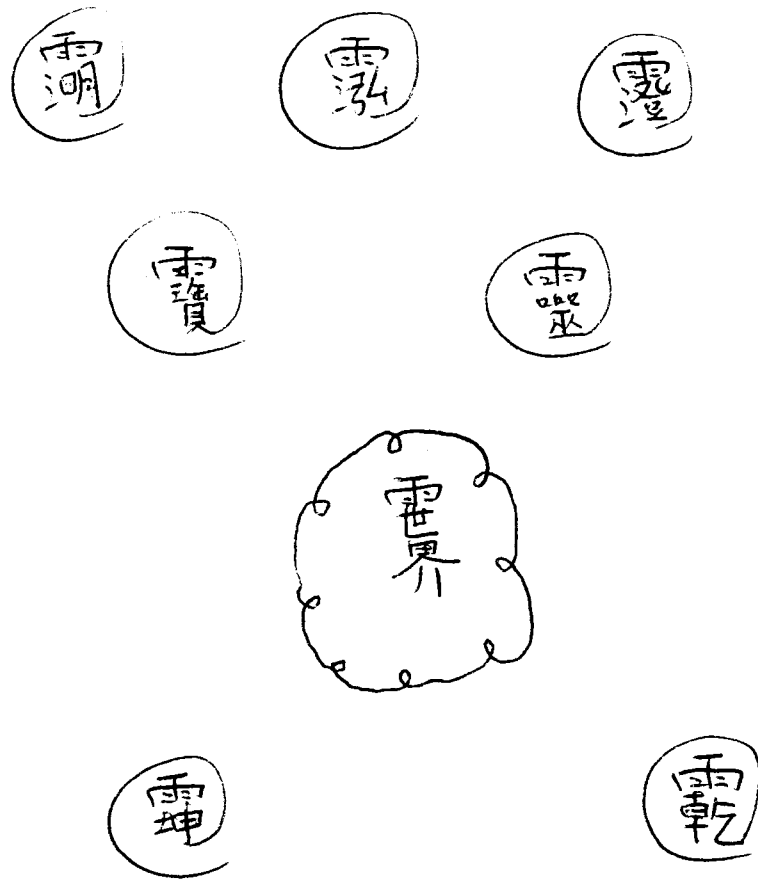


Figure 5.9. The Secret Characters of the Three Pure Ones, the School of the Numinous Treasures and the World

Source: Wang Hua, *Yiming keyi ben (A Nameless Manual of Liturgy)* of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui Township, Central Western Fujian, p. 26.

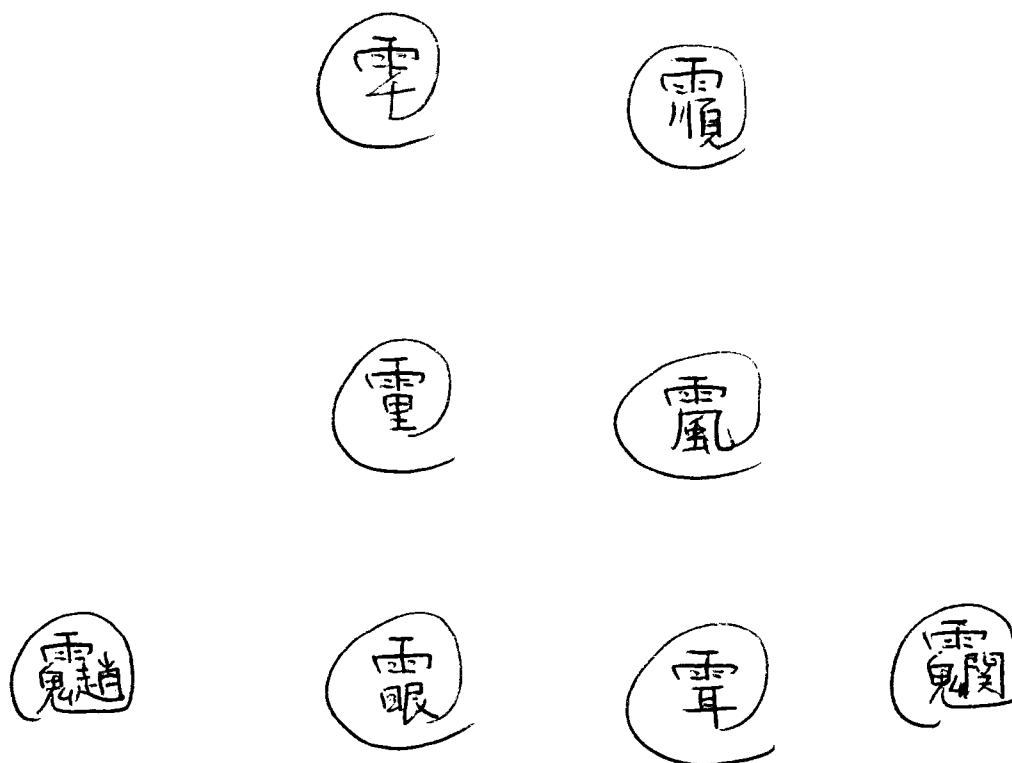


Figure 5.10. The Secret Names of the Favorable-Wind Ear, Lord Guan, the Thousand-*li* Eye and Zhao Gongming

Source: Wang Hua, *Yiming keyi ben (A Nameless Manual of Liturgy)* of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui Township, Central Western Fujian, p. 25.



Figure 5.11. The Secret Name of the Marionette Deity of Lord Tian of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe

Source: Wang Hua, *Yiming keyi ben (A Nameless Manual of Liturgy)* of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui, Central Western Fujian, p. 26.

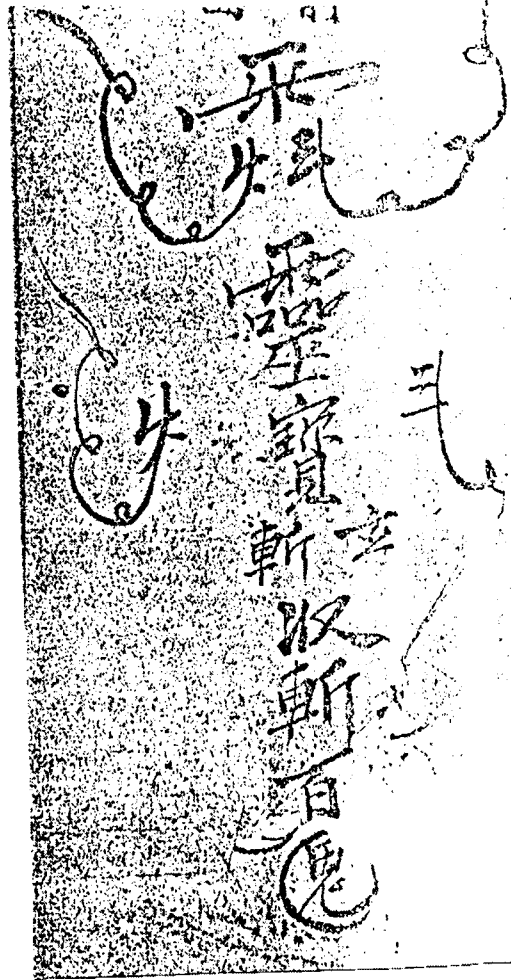


Figure 5.12. The Talisman of the Mysterious Chop of the Numinous Treasures

Source: Wang Hua, *Yiming keyi ben (A Nameless Manual of Liturgy)* of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui, Central Western Fujian, p. 27.

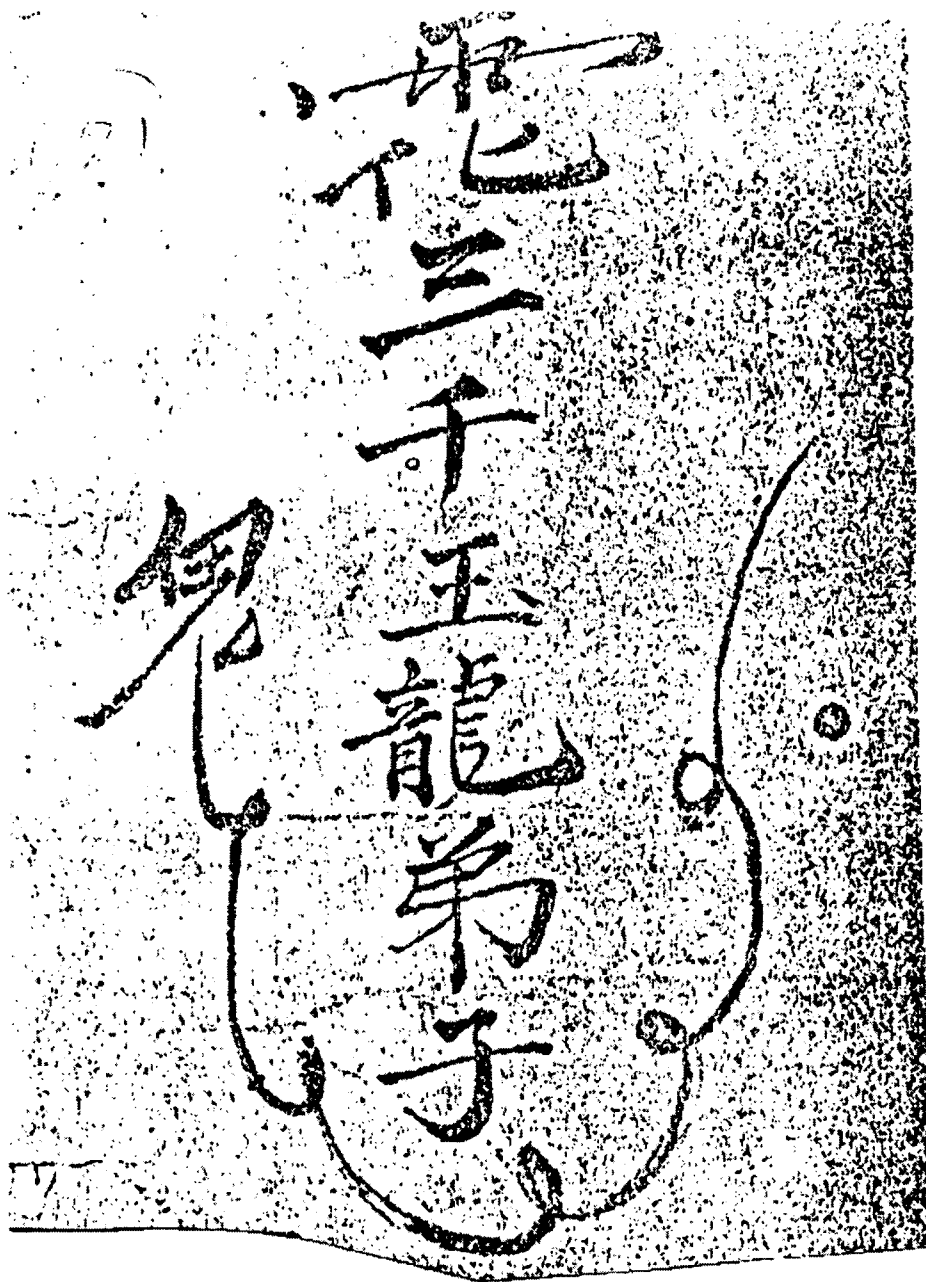


Figure 5.13. The Talisman of the Three Thousand Disciples of the Jade Dragon

Source: Wang Hua, *Yiming keyi ben (A Nameless Manual of Liturgy)* of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui, Central Western Fujian, p. 27.

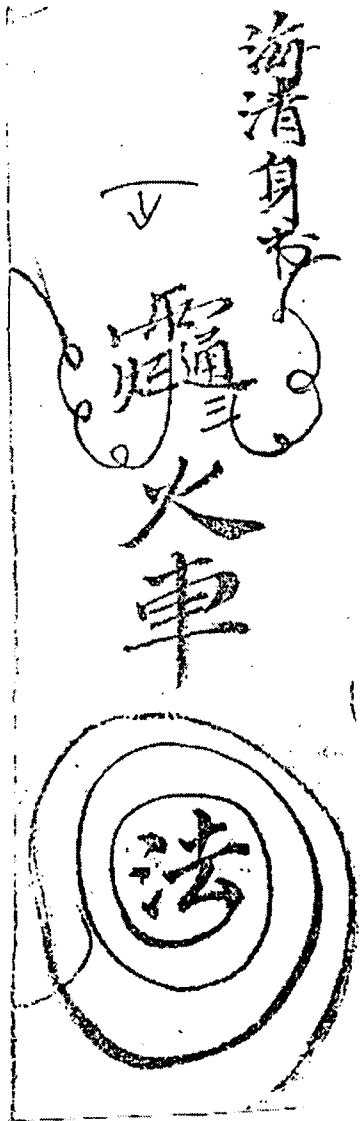


Figure 5.14. The Secret Name of Chen Haiqing

Source: Wang Hua, *Yiming keyi ben* (*A Nameless Manual of Liturgy*) of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui, Central Western Fujian, p.31.



Figure 5.15. A Photo of Guanyin in the Performance of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress on Lord Tian's 2003 Birthday (July 22, 2003, Wang Hua's House, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui, Central Western Fujian)



Figure 5.16. An Extra Altar at the Main Hall of Wang Hua's House in Lord Tian's 2003 Birthday Celebration (July 23, 2003, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui, Central Western Fujian)



Figure 5.17. Wang Wenxian Performing the Announcement Ritual at the Main Hall of Wang Hua's House on Lord Tian's 2003 Birthday (July 23, 2003, Huang Jing Shan Village, Qingshui Township, Central Western Fujian)



Figure 5.18. Wang Wenxian Writing the Above Secret Character with Incense Ash in the Announcement Ritual on July 23, 2003, Wang Hua's House, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui, Central Western Fujian

Source: Wang Hua, *Fabao xiangong ke* 發表獻供科 (*The Liturgical Manual for Announcement and Offerings*) of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui, Central Western Fujian, p. 13.



Figure 5.19. Wang Wenxian Performing the Offering Ritual at the Main Hall of Wang Hua's House in Lord Tian's 2003 Birthday Celebration (July 23, 2003, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui, Central Western Fujian)



Figure 5.20. The Golden Bridge Mudrā

Source: Wang Wenxian, *Hunxuan Tan 混玄壇* ([*The Liturgical Manual of the Altar of Chaotic Mystery*]), p. 8.



Figure 5.21. Wang Hua Performing the Ritual for the Repayment of Vows Lord Tian's 2003 Birthday Celebration (July 23, 2003, Wang Hua's House, Huang Jing Shan Village, Qingshui Township, Central Western Fujian)

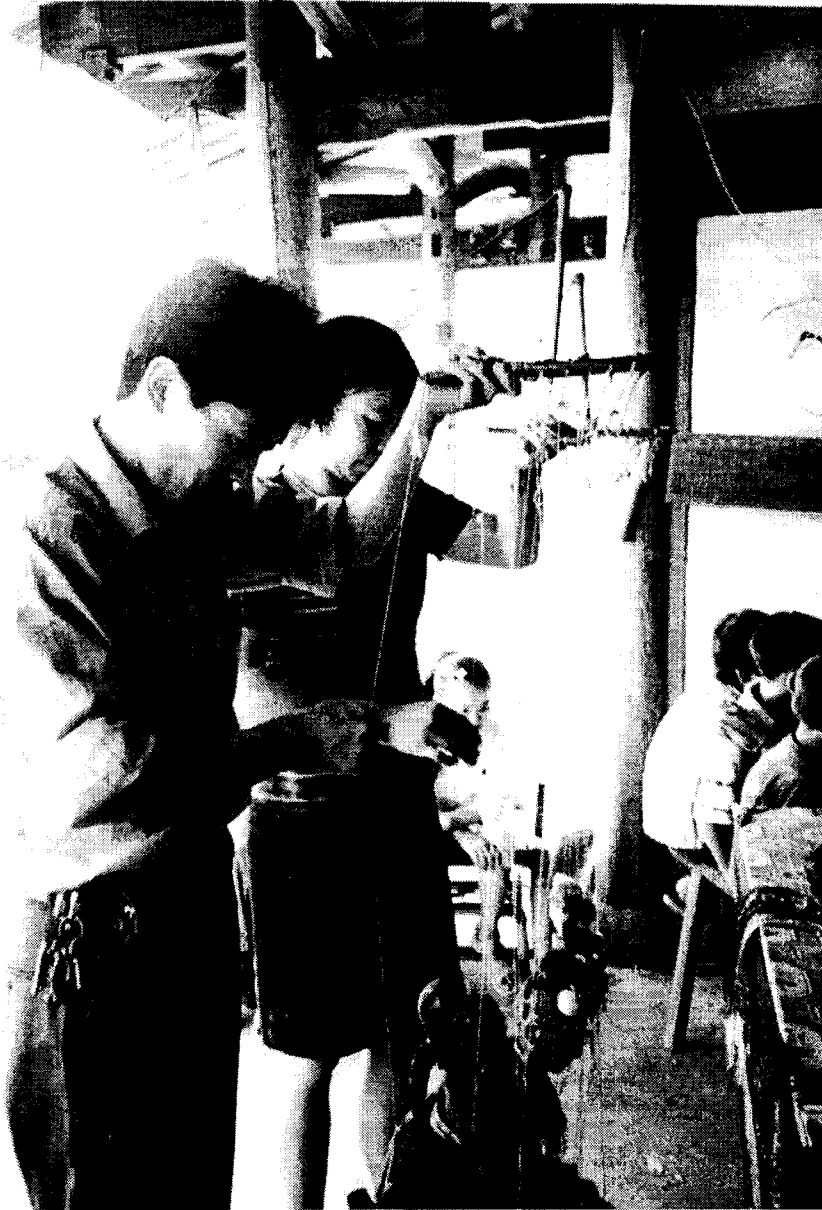


Figure 5.22. A Scene from the Performance of the Dance to Promotion in Lord Tian's 2003 Birthday Celebration (July 23, 2003, Wang Hua's House, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui, Central Western Fujian)

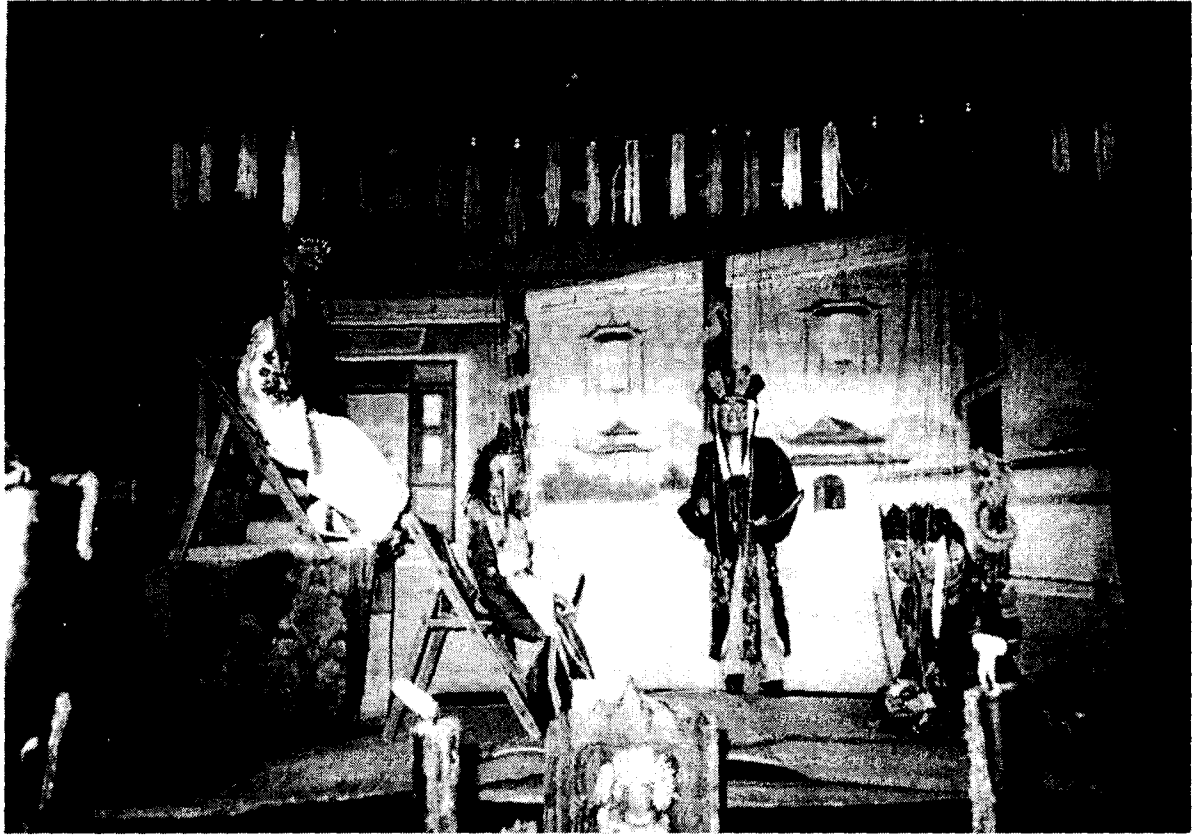


Figure 5.23. A Scene from the Performance of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress on July 24, 2003 at the Main Hall of Wang Hua's House in Huang Jing Shan of Qingshui, Central Western Fujian



Figure 5.24. The Ritual for Summoning the [Celestial] Armies in the Performance of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress on Lord Tian's 2003 Birthday (July 25, 2003, Wang Hua's House, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui, Central Western Fujian)

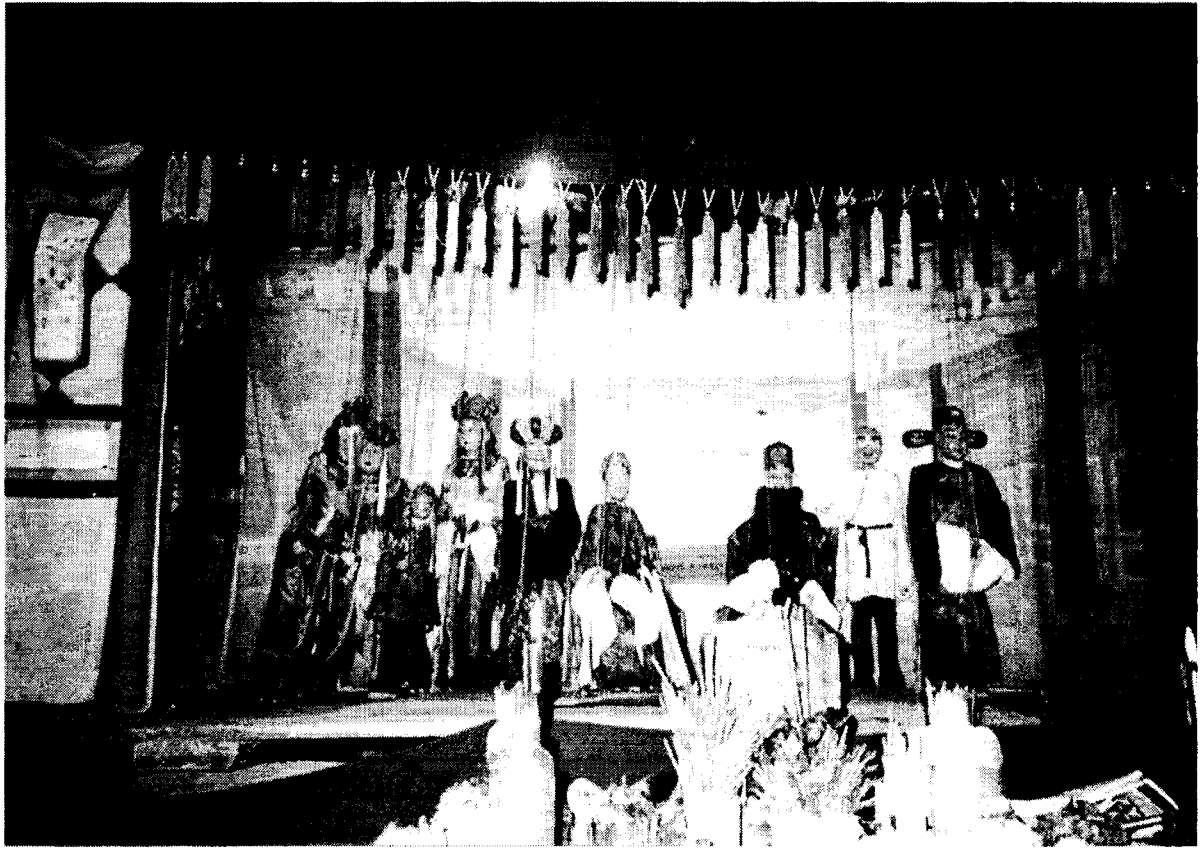


Figure 5.25. A Scene from the Performance of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress on July 26, 2003 at Wang Hua's House in Huang Jing Shan of Qingshui, Central Western Fujian



Figure 5.26. Wang Hua Performing the Ritual for Breaking the Womb on July 26, 2003 at the Main Hall of His House, Huang Jing Shan, Qingshui, Central Western Fujian

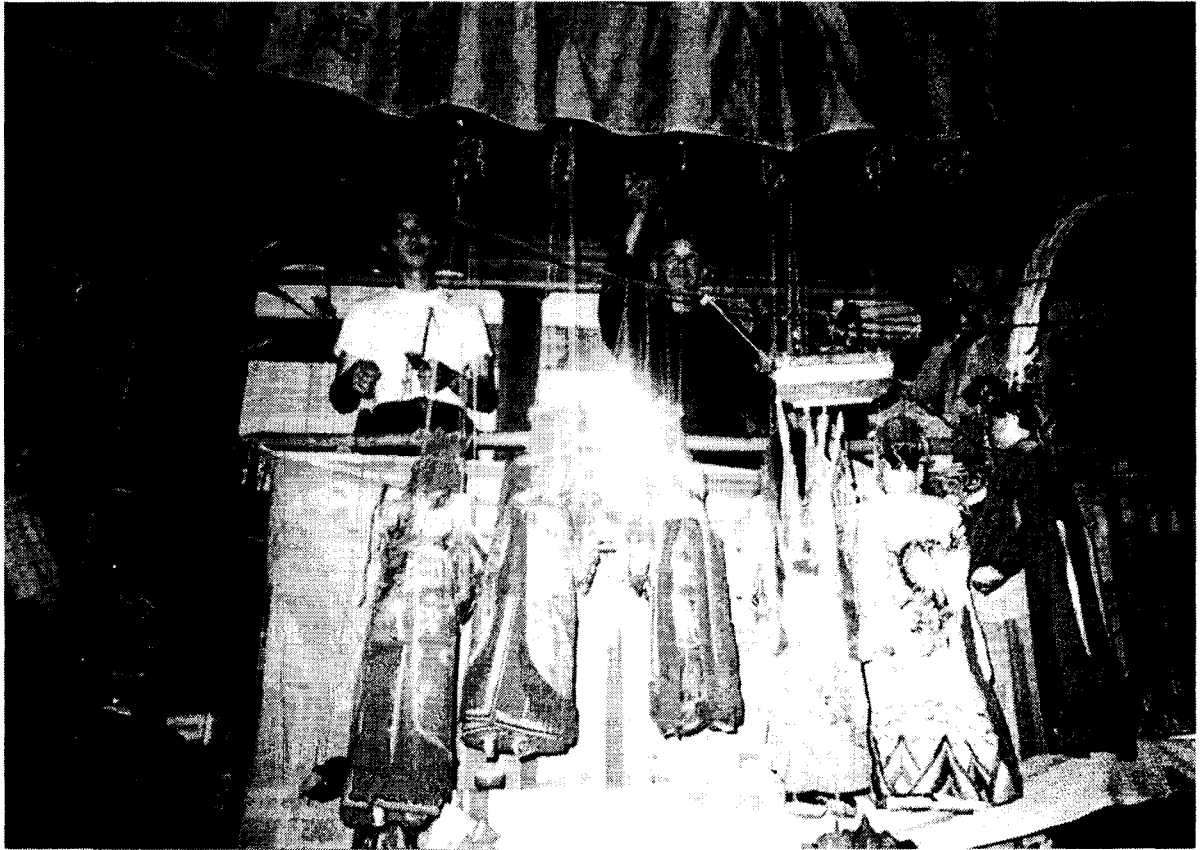


Figure 5.27. The Ritual for Crossing the Barriers that Took Place at the Main Hall of Wang Hua's House on July 26, 2003, Huang Jing Shan Village, Qingshui Township, Central Western Fujian



Figure 5.28. Wang Wenxian Performing the Ritual for Rewarding the Armies on July 26, 2003 at the Main Hall of Wang Hua's House in Huang Jing Shan of Qingshui, Central Western Fujian



Figure 5.29. The Mudrā of the Three Original Armies

Source: Wang Wenxian, *Hunxuan Tan 混玄壇* ([*The Liturgical Manual of the Altar of Chaotic Mystery*]), 12.



Figure 5.30. The Wasp Mudrā

Source: Source: Wang Wenxian, *Hunxuan Tan 混玄壇* ([*The Liturgical Manual of*] the Altar of Chaotic Mystery), 34.



Figure 5.31. The Mudrā of the Donkeys and Horses that Carry the Food

Source: Source: Wang Wenxian, *Hunxuan Tan* 混玄壇 ([*The Liturgical Manual of the Altar of Chaotic Mystery*]), 46.



Figure 5.32. Ceng Ruilun Performing the Ritual for Opening the Stage at the Hall of Lord Tian on the Deity's 2004 Birthday (August 9, 2004, Shui Zhu Yang Natural Village, Baisha Town, Southwestern Fujian)



Figure 5.33. Mary Yeung (the Author) Delivering a Short Speech in the Opening Ceremony (August 9, 2004, Shui Zhu Yang Natural Village, Baisha Town, Southwestern Fujian)



Figure 5.34. A Scene from the Performance of Dancing Lord Tian on August 9, 2004, Shui Zhu Yang, Baisha, Central Western Fujian (Over fifty villagers were watching the performance. Children who stood onstage were young marionettists)



Figure 5.35. A Scene from the Performance of Yang Liulang Reviews Soldiers in Lord Tian's 2004 Birthday Celebration (August 9, 2004, Shui Zhu Yang Village, Baisha Town, Southwestern Fujian)



Figure 5.36. A Scene from the Performance of the Eight Hundred Years of Life in Lord Tian's 2004 Birthday Celebration (August 9, 2004, Shui Zhu Yang Village, Baisha, Southwestern Fujian)

CHAPTER SIX

Concluding Remarks

The Ritual Aspect of Chinese Traditional Operas in South China

My Research Supervisor (Professor Daniel Overmyer) has urged me to keep pushing this dissertation to the very end which is what he does with his books. Conclusions to a scholarly work are always tentative. Their intent is not only to sum up one body of work but also to suggest ways in which it can be further developed. Thus, based on the three case studies (Cantonese opera, and marionette theatre in both southwestern and central western Fujian) state in previous chapters, I put forward three arguments, which are at the same time the conclusion of this thesis. Besides the three case studies mentioned above, I also discuss the situations of different kinds of regional opera in the south for the purpose of broadening the perspective of this present study and laying the foundation of my further work.

These arguments are as follows:

6.1. In south China religion and opera are closely associated with each other. Religious activities are often accompanied by opera or puppet performances.

6.2. No single form of China traditional opera can be classified in terms of “either-or” categories. The Literary-Ritual Continuum (Model) is applied to discuss the ritual elements of Chinese traditional operas (both human and puppet), as well as to analyze the common religions of professionals of these regional operas. The distribution of any given operatic genre along the continuum varies according to time and place. Moreover, as mentioned in the Introduction, this model also reveals that opera genres are *xiongdì jūzhōng* (brother opera genres) which closely related to *nanxi* (southern operas). Hence, The common beliefs and practices of professionals of regional operas (no matter literary or ritual) in south China are related to some extent. To together with performing art, these beliefs were spread throughout China by opera troupes, merchants, ethnic groups (such as Hakkas, the She people and Cantonese) and officials, especially from the Song period onwards.

6.3. These beliefs and activities of professionals of opera genres reflect the ancient culture of south China to some extent.

6.1. Religion and Opera

My first argument is that there is a close relationship between religious activities and the performances of local operas and puppet plays. Many scholars, such as Wang Ch’iu-kuei and Tanaka Issei, have already discussed this point. My thesis offers many cases or examples to support their ideas. *Nuo* rites (*Nuo* plays or *Nuo* dances) and hundred games (*Baixi*), two of the

antecedents of Chinese operas as well as puppet plays, were often staged on important occasions (including New Year's Eve, death rituals and birthdays) before and during the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618 – 907). Due to political, economic and social transformations, *nanxi* (southern operas) and other types of regional operas closely related to the southern operas, had gradually developed during the Song and Yuan periods (A.D. 960 – 1368). These operas were presented on important occasions, such as temple festivals and birthday celebrations. In Ming and Qing times (A.D. 1368 – 1911), different kinds of regional operas, such as *Kun* opera, *Yiyang* opera, *Qingyang* Mulian opera, *Gaoqiang* marionette theatre and *Daqiang* marionette theatre, which were descendants of *nanxi*, were often associated with festivals and other religious activities in local societies. Traditional Chinese people believed that operas and puppet plays functioned to offer greetings to deities, placate hungry ghosts, expel evil spirits and redeem vows to gods. This tradition continues to exist today. In Hong Kong, Cantonese opera, *Chaozhou* opera, *Hailu Feng* opera, *Quanzhou* marionette plays, and Guangdong rod puppet plays are all staged during ritual performances that last several days and nights. *Gaoqiang* marionette plays, *Daqiang* marionette plays or/and *Luantan* marionette plays are still performed on auspicious or important occasions in western Fujian (both central western and southwestern). Lord Tian's 2003 birthday celebration took place at Huang Jing Shan of Qingshui Township in central western Fujian. The marionette play *Huangjun Gushi* (the Legend of the Sovereign Empress) was performed during the celebration. The rites in this performance are a good example of how popular festivals and marionette theatre are inseparable from each other.

6.2. The Literary-Ritual Continuum (Model)

My second argument is that no single form of Chinese traditional opera can be classified in terms of “either-or” categories. In other words, there are neither entirely literary operas nor entirely ritual operas in China. It is best to think of a continuum that ranges from literary opera to ritual opera. Literary operas contain some religious elements and ritual operas include some refined or elegant elements. In addition, the distribution of any given operatic genre along the continuum varies according to time and place. Literary operas, such as Cantonese opera and *Chaozhou* opera in Hong Kong, *Puxian* opera and *Liyuan* opera in Fujian, and *Kun* opera in Jiangsu, contain sophisticated visual, aural, and dramatic elements (cf. Swatek 2002, 158 – 202). The performances of these elegant regional operas often take place at urban permanent theatres. Entertainment is the most important purpose for their performance. Troupe members of these operatic genres are usually full-time professional actors, not vernacular priests or local religious specialists. For instance, Cantonese operatic performances in Hong Kong are often staged in

permanent theatres, such as the Sunbeam Theatre 新光戲院 and the Ko Shan Theatre 高山劇場. In Guangzhou, Cantonese operatic troupes mainly perform in permanent theatres, such as the Haizhu Xiyuan 海珠戲院 (the Sea Pearl Theatre) and the Guangming Da Xiyuan 光明大戲院 (the Great Theatre of Brilliance). Similar to *Kun* opera and other literary operas, the main aim of Cantonese opera is to describe a story to the audience through the artistic means of song, speech, dance and acrobatics. According to Chan Sau Yan, there are three kinds of Cantonese opera music, *bangwang* (a combination of Bangzi and Erhuang), “*Shuochang* 說唱 (spoken and sung)” and “*Qupai* 曲牌 (tune title or tune with title).” *Nanyin* 南音 (southern song), *Muyu* 木魚 (wooden fish), *Longzhou* 龍舟 (dragon boat), as well as *Banyan* 板眼 (beat) are four types of singing narratives (*Shuochang*) used in Cantonese opera. Another type of singing narrative is “*Xiaoqu* 小曲 (little tune), “preexistent or pre-composed tunes that mostly have been borrowed from Cantonese instrumental music or which have been specially composed for new plays.” *Paizi* are relics of both *Yiyang* and *Kun* musical styles (Chan 1991: 10). Before the Republican Era, Cantonese opera roles were classified into ten types (or even more). Since the 1930s, Xue Juxian simplified and modified the ten roles into a system of six major roles, which is known as the Six Great Pillars state in Appendix Four. Except for the artistic elements mentioned above, there are many famous Cantonese opera playwrights, including Nanhai Shisan Lang 南海十三郎, Feng Zhifen 馮志芬, Tang Disheng 唐滌生, He Jianqing 何建青, Ye Shaode 葉紹德, Au Man Fung (Ou Wenfeng), Wen Zhipeng 溫誌鵬, etc. They complied many popular literary plays, such as *Yangui Ren Weigui* 燕歸人未歸 (Swallow Returns, Lover Doesn't Yet), *Dinühua* (The Flowery Princess), *Baishhe Zhuan* (The Legend of the White Snake) and *Luo Tong Saobei* 羅通掃北 (Luo Tong Sweeps the North). In Cantonese opera performances, the heavy make-up of the actors “not only highlights the normal features of the face for projection in a large theatre but has important dramatic functions. Its color and design, which depend on the role and are determined by tradition, always have symbolic significance, and contribute to the characterization of the roles...” (Yung 1989, 12) With regard to dance or stage movements, series of complex conventional movements, such as the sequence *Huakaimen* (Flowers Open the Gates) and *Chuansanjiao* (Limning the Triangle),⁵⁴⁹ are often presented in Cantonese opera performances. These stylized stage movement can be performed by one, two, or a group of actors. Moreover, actors also stage acrobatics. For instance, *Danfan* (Great Somersault), *Shigou* (Filth Hook) and

⁵⁴⁹ Please see Appendix Seven for a detailed description of these stage movements.

Zhuangzhong (Striking the Bell)⁵⁵⁰ are acrobatics presented in the Xianghua Shan Da Heshou (Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain).

This continuum has four basic principles. The first principle is that literary operas include ritual or religious elements, and operas also contain some artistic elements. Performers of various types of literary operas usually stage fixed plays (exorcistic plays and auspicious plays) before the main performances start. The Worship of the White Tiger (*Ji Baihu*) is the only exorcistic play in Cantonese opera. This play must be presented for the purification of a new stage that has never been used for Cantonese opera performances. According to Chan Sau Yan, this exorcistic play functions to placate as well as subdue the white tiger. His book, *Shengong yueju zai Xianggang* (*Ritual Performances of Cantonese Opera in Hong Kong*), also states that the beliefs about tigers are complicated in Chinese societies. On the one hand, tigers are regarded by some ethnic groups as totems. The Yi people 彝族 in Guizhou and Yunan perform *Nuo* once every three years. In this rite or play, a shaman dances while wearing a tiger mask. On the other hand, tigers are considered to be targets for exorcism. In the Great Exorcism (*Da Nuo*) of the Han dynasty, young eunuchs and boy exorcists sang a song for tiger exorcism. Chan argues that rites of stage purification, such as the Worship of the White Tiger, can be defined as *Xinuo* 戲儺 (operatic exorcism) or *Xiban Nuo* 戲班儺 (exorcism for opera troupes) (Chan 1996, 52 – 56).

Chaozhou opera is another kind of literary opera performed in Guangdong. The exorcistic play for stage purification in this tradition is known as *Jingpeng* 淨棚 (Purifying the Shed). Only one actor participates in the performance. He wears a white coat and a pair of red trousers. A brush pen is tied vertically at his forehead, and a yellow triangular talisman is kept in his mouth. To begin, incense sticks are lit, and offerings, such as paper money, raw fish and rice wine, are placed at stage front. The actor enters the backstage. Accompanied by percussion music, he reenters the stage with a cock in his hand. Holding the cock, he offers kowtows at stage front and enters the backstage, where he uses a knife to cut the crest of the cock. Then, he sprinkles its blood on the four corners of the backstage, reappears onstage again, sprinkles the blood on the stage floor, and throws the cock and the offerings off the stage. After the libation, he leaps off the stage, and burns the paper money as well as a talisman (Chan 1996, 66).

According to the *Zhongguo xiqu zhi Fujian juan* (Chinese Operatic History – Fujian), *Minxi Han* opera or *Luantan* opera is a kind of literary opera. The rite for purifying the stage is

⁵⁵⁰ Please refer to Appendix Six.

known as *Chusha* 出煞 (Expelling the Killer), which was performed for the purpose of warding off the evil elements from new constructions, including temples, stages and buildings. This tradition gradually died out after the 1950s. There was only one male player involved in the performance of this play. Holding a blade, this actor, who portrayed the character of Zhong Kui appeared onstage. After killing a rooster, he sprinkled its blood on the four sides of the stage. He then wrote incantations and chanted spells. Other troupe members who stood in front of the stage wrote the character “*huo* 火 (fire)” upside down on their foreheads. The audience entered the performing site after firecrackers were set off (Ke 1993, 580). Before he became a scholar, Ye Mingsheng was the impresario of the Shouning Luantan Jutuan 壽寧亂彈劇團 (The Shouning Luantan Company)⁵⁵¹ during the 1960s. He told me that in 1963, a new theatre was erected at the site where there had been a tomb before. Hence, no one dared to enter the theatre to watch the performances. Though religious or ritual practices were considered to be “superstitious” at that time, the local officials had no choice but to invite his company to perform the exorcistic play *Tian Gong Tatai* 田公踏台 (Lord Tian Stepping on the Stage)⁵⁵² in this theatre. The main aim of this performance was to expel evil spirits and demons from the theatre.

Moreover, in the past *Kun* opera actors staged the exorcistic play *Potai* (Breaking the Stage) for purifying the stage once every year in the first lunar month. The performance only involved one actor, who impersonated the Lingguan (Efficacious Official). Holding a stave from which dangled a string of firecrackers, this actor appeared onstage. He killed a rooster and sprinkled its blood on various areas of the stage. Firecrackers were set off before the performance ended.

Besides exorcistic plays, literary opera actors also perform auspicious plays. *Liuguo Fengxian* (the Six States Invest a Prime Minister), *Bitian Heshou* 碧天賀壽 (Birthday Greetings in the Azure Heaven), *Zhengben Heshou* 正本賀壽 (The Main Repertoire of Birthday Greetings), *Tianji Songzi* (The Celestial Maiden Offers a Son), *Xianghua Shan Da Heshou* (The Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain), *Jiaoguan* (Promotion to the Rank of an Official) and *Yuhuang Dengdian* 玉皇登殿 (The Jade Emperor Ascends the Hall) are auspicious plays in the repertoire of Cantonese opera.⁵⁵³ Both the Birthdays Greetings in the Azure Heaven

⁵⁵¹ In northeastern Fujian, *Luantan* opera is known as *Beilu Xi* 北路戲 (Opera of the North Tradition).

⁵⁵² According to Ye Mingsheng, the story of this play is very simple. Lord Tian invites Zhong Kui to catch the five ghosts (*wugui* 五鬼) of the five directions.

⁵⁵³ The scripts of all these plays are well recorded in the *Kunqu daquan yueju changyong paizi Gaoqiang and fanyin quji* 昆曲大全: 粵劇常用牌子高腔梵音曲集 (*A Complete Collection of Kun Arias: Fixed Tunes, Gaoqiang and*

and the Main Repertoire of Birthday Greetings are plays about the Eight Immortals. *Bitian Heshou* is a relic of *Yiyang* opera. The story of *Zhenben Hehsou*, which is derived from the scene *Qingshou* 慶壽 (Birthday Celebrations)⁵⁵⁴ of the Story of the Shepherd (*Muyang Ji* 牧羊記),⁵⁵⁵ a play in the repertoire of *Nanxi* (southern operas) composed in the early Ming period, is about greetings from the Eight Immortals to the Queen Mother of the West at her birthday celebration. It offers symbolic blessings of long life and good health. *Yuhuang Dengdian* (the Jade Emperor Ascends the Hall) is an auspicious play of Cantonese opera that is seldom presented today. The performance of it requires the participation of over sixty actors. Its content is that the Jade Emperor ascends the celestial hall and all the celestial deities offer their greetings to him. After realizing the chaotic situation of the mortal world, the Jade Emperor sends all the gods to the mundane world to restore order and ward off calamities.⁵⁵⁶

The auspicious plays mentioned above are not staged only by performers of Cantonese opera. Other regional operas (both literary and ritual) in south China also have similar repertoires, though the contents of these plays vary to some extent. For example, *Shangshou* (Longevity Blessings), *Tianguan* 天官 (The Celestial Official), *Jiaguan* (Promotion to the Rank of an Official) and *Zhaocai* 招財 (Bringing in Wealth) are traditional auspicious plays of *Kun* opera. According to Chan Sau Yan, *Luodi Songzi* 落地送子 (The Celestial Maiden Presents a Son on Earth), *Shixian Qingshou* 十仙慶壽 (The Birthday Greetings from the Ten Immortals), *Li Shimin* 李世民,⁵⁵⁷ and *Tuanyuan* (Reunion) are three auspicious or fixed plays of Chaozhou opera performed in Hong Kong (Chan 1996b, 67 – 82). The Reunion is also a very popular auspicious play performed in Fujian. The Performance of the Eight Immortals (*Nong Baxian* 弄八仙), *Jiaguan* (Promotion to the Rank of an Official) and the Performance of the Five Blessings (*Nong Wufu* 弄五福)⁵⁵⁸ are the popular auspicious plays of Puxian opera. Liyuan opera troupes also perform auspicious plays, such as *Tiao Jiaguan* (Dance of Promotion) and the Birthday

Buddhist Music That are Constantly Used in Cantonese opera, edited by Wong Toa 黃滔 in 1996), and the *Yueju chuantong yinyue changqiang xuanji* 粵劇傳統音樂唱腔選輯第一至九冊 (A Selected Collection Concerning Traditional Cantonese Operatic Vocal Music, 9 vols, 1961 - 1962).

⁵⁵⁴ With regard to *Kun* opera, the scene *Qingshou* is known as *Shangshou* 上壽 (Longevity Blessings). Their song texts are partially identical.

⁵⁵⁵ This story is about Su Wu who offers birthday congratulations to his mother.

⁵⁵⁶ Not much is known about the origin of this play. In the Introduction of the *Kunqu daquan yueju changyong paizi Gaoqiang and fanyin quji*, Master Wong Toa says that it should be regarded as a relic of the *Gaoqiang* tradition.

⁵⁵⁷ In the performance, the actor who impersonates Li Shimin wears a long black beard and a yellow embroidered robe. After entering the stage, he sings a few lines and then makes his exit.

⁵⁵⁸ The five characters of this play are the God of Longevity, the God of Office, the God of Auspicious, the Goddess of Happiness and the God of Wealth.

Greetings (*Heshou*) before the main performances begin. The auspicious repertoires of the Fengtian Daqiang Opera Troupe in Qingshui of central western Fujian⁵⁵⁹ are the Eight Immortals (*Baxian*), *Jiaguan Jinlu* 加官進祿 (Winning Promotion) and the Investiture of a King (*Fengwang*). In Shouning County of northeastern Fujian, marionettists (some of them are Liyuan Jiao priests) present the Eight Immortals (*Baixian*), *Jiaguan*, *Tuanyuan* (Reunion), etc. In the past, *Minxi Han* operatic troupes also performed auspicious plays, such as *Liuguo Fengxian* (the Six States Invest a Prime Minister), the Celestial Official Bestows Auspiciousness (*Tianguan Cifu* 天官賜官) and the Promotion to the Rank of an Official (*Tiao Jiaguan*). The Dance of Promotion, the Grand Display of the Eight Immortals (Da Pai Baxian 大排八仙), which involves twenty-seven characters (performers), the Medium [Display of] the Eight Immortals (Zhong Baxian 中八仙), and the Small [Display of] the Eight Immortals (Xiao Baxian 小八仙) are popular auspicious plays of *Qiong* Opera on the Hainan Island. In rural areas of Jiangxi and Anhui, many operatic troupes stage auspicious plays, including *Tiao Caishen* 跳財神 (The Dance of the God of Wealth), *Tiao Jiaguan*, *Tiao Kuixing* 跳魁星 (Dancing Kuixing) and *Tiao Magu* 跳麻姑 (Dancing Magu), which is also known as *Nü Jiaguan* (Promotion of a Woman to the Rank of an Official), on auspicious occasions. It is important to point out that in some cases, troupe members of a literary troupe would conclude their performances with a simple ritualistic play, especially when they perform in rural areas or villages in festivals. For example, in Hong Kong today, Cantonese opera actors often conclude a ritual operatic series with the short ritualistic play *Fengtai* 封台 (Sealing the Stage). The main aims of this performance are to request the blessing of the Celestial Official (Tianguan 天官), and to send off wandering ghosts and patron deities. “The play is usually performed shortly after the end of the last main operatic item of the series, and involves only one actor who wears a white mask and goes through a short sequence of stylistic movements, which lasts for about ten seconds.” (Chan 1991, 57 – 58) This male performer acts the character of the Celestial Official. In the past, actors of *Minxi Han* opera in southwestern Fujian concluded their ritual operatic series with the auspicious play *Tuanyuan* (Reunion). It is important to emphasize that unlike ritual operas, literary operas seldom have liturgical plays (*fashi xi*), a special kind of main performance in which rituals or liturgies are presented.

⁵⁵⁹ In my opinion, the Fengtian Daqiang opera should be distributed in the center of middle of the continuum of literary opera and ritual opera. Though this kind of opera is staged at rural areas, performers are not vernacular priests and they often stage literary repertoires, though their make-up and costumes are more simple in comparison with those of the sophisticated literary operas.

The most important function of ritual operas (*Nuo* theatre and marionette theatre in western Fujian) is exorcism. They were often presented in conjunction with festivals or religious activities. In other words, this type of opera would not be staged if there are no ritual practices or festivals. Instead of urban commercial theatre, performances of ritual opera usually take place at public or temporary stages in rural areas or villages. Some of these ritual operas are lineage-based operas, such as Mulian operas popular in various parts of Anhui. Troupe members are usually recruited from lineage members who learn the performing art during the slack season in farming. However, some other ritual operas in south China are performed by vernacular priests. For example, *shigong* 師公 (vernacular priests) of the Meishan Jiao 梅山教 in Liuzhou 柳州 present *Nuo* plays in death rituals, Liyuan Jiao priests in Chenhe 辰河 of Hunan perform Mulian opera in *Chenhe Gaoqiang* 辰河高腔, *tulao shi* 土老師 (vernacular priests) in Dejiang 德江 of Jiangxi perform *Nuo* plays, *duangong* 端公 (vernacular priests) in Zhenxiong County 鎮雄縣 of Yunnan stage ritual repertoires in the Celebration of the Bodhisattva (Qing Pusa 慶菩薩), vernacular priests of the Lady Sect (Furen Jiao) of the Lüshan Tradition in Changting (a Hakka county) of southwestern Fujian perform the *Tiao Haiqing* 跳海青 (Dancing Haiqing) for exorcism, and Wang Hua (a Liyuan priest) and his troupe members often stage marionette plays at Lord Tian's birthday celebration, which lasts several days and nights. The vernacular priests of different regional operas mentioned above write secret names (*hui*), chant incantations, pace mainstays, and perform hand gestures (*shouyin*). In Fujian, priests of the Lüshan Tradition stage liturgical plays, such as the Story of Delivering an Immortal (*Duxian Ji*) and the Legend of the Sovereign Empress (*Huangjun Gushi*) (Li 1993, 5; Pang 1995, 42).

As mentioned above, however, there are no absolute or entire ritual operas in China. Ritual operas also contain some artistic (visual, aural and dramatic) elements. For instance, the details of the marionette ensemble, the make-up of the marionettes and the role type system of the Hucheng Tang Gaoqiang Marionette Troupe in Baisha of southwestern Fujian as well as the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe in Huang Jing Shan of Qingshui (central western Fujian) are strong evidence to illustrate this point. There are many different methods or ways to manipulate the strings of the marionettes of different role types. As far as I know, a famous Hakka marionettist in southwestern Fujian can make a marionette to write Chinese calligraphy with a brush pen. Since these methods are very complicated, a detailed depiction concerning how to control the string dolls lies well outside the scope of the present study. The marionette plays are either sung in *Luantan* (*Han Opera*) or local variants of the *Yiyang* musical style (*Gaoqiang* and

Daqiang). The *Gaoqiang* or *Daqiang* performances are accompanied by percussion instruments. In Baisha of southwestern Fujian, *Gaoqiang* music includes more than twenty tunes, such as Huaiyin Diao 槐蔭調 (The Shade of Pagoda Tree), Shanpo Yang 山坡羊 (Sheep on a Slope) and Raoping Diao 饒平調 (Ye 2004, 283). Folk songs and religious arias, such as Qingshen Diao 請神調 (Invoking the Deities) and Heshang (Monk) Diao 和尚調, are also sung in the performances.

As far as I know, the *Wu Liangxin* 吳良心 and the *Qianlong Xia Jiangnan* 乾隆下江南 (Emperor Qianlong Goes to Jiangnan) are two good examples of traditional literary plays performed in Baisha of Shanghang. The story of the literary play *Wu Liangxin* is about Lan Yuesan 藍約三, who is a native of Lufeng Township 廬豐鄉 of Shanghang, and is appointed as the magistrate of the Anren County 安仁縣 in Yunan. One day, Wu Liangxin (a traveling businessman) rests for a while in a pavilion. However, when he leaves, he forgets to take his luggage, in which there are one hundred taels of gold. A woodcutter passes by, picks up the luggage and takes it home, where he and his wife discover that there are some gold in it. His wife suggests the he should take the gold and the luggage back to the pavilion. After returning to the pavilion, he meets Wu Liangxin, who is looking for his luggage. Wu promises to give him fifty taels of gold as rewards. He refuses to accept the gold. Since it is getting dark, he invites Wu to stay overnight at his home, where Wu is lured by the beauty of his wife. In order to seize the woodcutter's wife, Wu goes to the *yamen* of Anren County and bring a false charge against the woodcutter. Since he believes Wu, Lan Yuesan (the magistrate) put the woodcutter in prison by mistake. The woodcutter's wife commits suicide by attempting to drown herself into the river. Luckily, she is rescued by a high-ranking official. She tells all the details to this official, who goes to the *yamen* of Anren County, dismisses Lan Yuesan and releases the woodcutter. In addition, I watched the performance of a section of the literary play *Qianlong Xia Jiangnan* in the afternoon (around 4 p.m.) on April 20, 2003. This performance was staged by the Huacheng Tang Gaoqiang Marionette Troupe at the main hall of a villager's house. The story is about Shi Shuyi 詩書意. There was a long period of shortage of rainfall. The local official issued a notice which stated that whoever knew when there was rain, he or she would be rewarded. Shi Shuyi's wife discovered that her salt pit was wet, which indicated that it would soon rain heavily. She told this to Shi Shuyi (her husband). Shi then told this to the local official. There was a heavy rain soon after. Later, Emperor Qianlong lost a robe that was decorated with pearls. Shi found the robe and returned it to the emperor. The emperor rewarded Shi by appointing him as an

official. With regard to the situations of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe at Huang Jing Shan in Qingshui Township of central western Fujian, Wang Hua (the impresario) possesses the outline of some sections of literary plays, such as *Duanji Jiaozi* 斷機教子 (Breaks the Loom to Teach the Son), *Zhou Guiying Youyuan* 周貴英遊園 (Zhou Guiying Wandering in the Garden) and *Jiushi Tongju* 九世同居 (Nine Generations Living Under the Same Roof). Moreover, in the performances of the liturgical plays, such as the Legend of the Sovereign Empress, Wang Hua and his troupe members also have to demonstrate their advanced skills in manipulating the marionettes. In some cases, they need to control two puppets together with both hands.

Moreover, in Chenhe County of Hunan, Mulian opera is sung in *Chenhe Gaoqiang* by the Liyuan Jiao priests. According to Ellen R. Judd, the *Chenhe Gaoqiang* is “found along the common borders of Hunan, Sichuan, Guizhou, and Hubei, but concentrated in the small space of four counties in western Hunan.” (Judd 1996, 22) Besides *Gaoqiang*, this operatic genre also absorbed musical elements from ballads, work songs (*haozi* 號子), *Kunqiang*, *Luantan* and *Diqiang* 低腔, a type of melody that is accompanied by double-reed conical pipes (*suona* 嗩呐). Percussion instruments are used for accompaniment. In addition, *Nuo* theatre in Hunan also created impact on this regional opera. Before the late Qing Dynasty, the *Chenhe Gaoqiang* opera roles were classified into eight types. Today, they are simplified into five principal role categories. These are *sheng* 生 (male roles), *xiaosheng* 小生 (young male roles), *dan* 旦 (female roles), *jing* 淨 (painted face roles) and *chou* 丑 (comic roles). There are no female actors and all the female characters are impersonated by men. The costumes and make-up are very colorful, intricate and rich in detail. As Judd describes, “The hungry ghosts are especially terrifying, and their graphic depiction – larger than life, with nooses around their necks, bloated red tongues hanging from their mouths, and strands of paper in their disheveled hair – is a vivid reminder of the dreadful fate they represent and of the danger their desire to return to life poses to any vulnerable mortal, whom they may drive to suicide.” (Judd 1996b, 233 – 234)

Nuo plays (lineage based ritual opera) are performed in Guichi County of Anhui. Tanaka Issei observed the performance in February 1990, when two literary repertoires, Liu Wenlong Goes to Examination (*Liu Wenglong Gankao*) and *Meng Jiang Nü* (Meng Jiang Girl), were performed for entertainment. In these performances, the *Nuo* players wore masks and costumes, spoke in local dialect, performed conventional stage movements, and sang in *Gaoqiang* (a local variant of *Yiyang Qiang*) and *Nuoqiang*. Moreover, Tanaka also watched the ground plays (*dixi*) in Anshun of Guizhou during the Ghost Festival in 1990. In addition to ritual plays, several

literary repertoires about the *Story of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo yanyi* 三國演義) were also presented by *Nuo* troupes on this religious occasion. According to him, Ma Liang at Bai Mapo (*Bai Mapo Guan Yunchang Zhan Ma Liang*) was staged on the fourteenth day of the seventh month, the Story of Zhao Zilong Rescuing His Lord (*Zhao Zilong Jiuzhu*) on the fifteenth, and the War of Tongguan (*Tongguan Zhizhan*) and the Large-Scale War Between Ma Chao and Cao Cao (*Ma Chao Dazhan Cao Cao*) were the two plays performed on the sixteenth.

The second basic principle of the Literary-Ritual Continuum is that the distribution of any given operatic genre along the continuum varies according to time and place. For example, in Baisha Town of Shanghang (southwestern Fujian), the Gaoqiang marionette theatre should be classified as a kind of ritual opera before the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, due to the influence of Chinese communists movements in the late 1920s and early 1930s, many impresarios of Gaoqiang troupes, who are also vernacular priests, stopped performing the Lüshan rituals and the liturgical plays, although some of these practices have been revived since the 1980s. In my opinion, Gaoqiang marionette theatre in this Hakka area today has gradually moved along the continuum from the side of ritual opera to the center. In southeastern Fujian, Quanzhou marionette theatre was known as “*jiali* 嘉禮 (auspicious ceremonies)” in imperial times. Its performances were inseparable from religious activities. Hence, this kind of puppetry fell within the category of ritual opera. From the late nineteenth century on, the Companies of Four Beauties (*Simei Ban* 四美班) were formed. Each of these big companies included four musicians and four (or five) marionettists. These companies “would present the most extensive repertoire and could provide sophisticated performances of both ritual preludes and plays. The big companies were the elite of the marionette trade, the majority of companies in the city of Quanzhou as well as in the countryside consisted of small companies.” (Ruizendaal 2000, 343) Quanzhou marionette troupes have had more opportunities to present their repertoires in urban permanent theatre after the 1949 Revolution. In other words, this kind of puppetry has gradually moved towards the center or middle of the continuum, although Quanzhou marionette performers still present exorcistic play for stage purification⁵⁶⁰ and Mulian operatic series on

⁵⁶⁰ In order to purify the stage, members of a Quanzhou marionette troupe would stage the exorcistic play *Da Chu Su* 大出蘇 (the Complete Performance of Su) at the beginning of their performances. In this rite, the marionette of Marshall Tian is made to perform the exorcistic dance onstage. While pacing the *gangbu* (mainstay) over the stage, the puppet performs a series of arm postures that represent the five elements, gold, wood, water, fire and earth. Accompanied by the aria *Wannian Hao* 萬年好 (Ten Thousand Years' Fortune), the marionettist who manipulates Tian's puppet and other troupe members chant an incantation that comprises of three Chinese characters, *luo* 囉, *li* 哩 and *lian* 唵. Moreover, the crest of a rooster is cut and its blood is daubed on the face and joints of the Marshall Tian's puppet, various parts of the stage and the stage curtain so as to expel all the evil elements or demons. In my

Guanyin's birthday.⁵⁶¹ In addition to time, the distribution of any given operatic genre along the continuum also varies according to place. In the case of Cantonese opera, the tradition of performing the Worship of the White Tiger and the auspicious plays, except the *Liuguo Fengxiang*, gradually died out in the Mainland after the 1950s. In Hong Kong, however, this tradition still exist today.

The three principle of this continuum is that the religious traditions of performers of regional operas (no matter ritual operas or literary operas) in south China are similar, though the contents of their beliefs are different due to local variations. In his excellent work, *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors*, C. K. Yang states, "...Most occupations and trades in China, as in many other cultures, had patron gods...Patron saints and gods were found among dyers, vintners, tailors, makers of musical instruments, musicians and actors, cooks, barbers, and even professional storytellers." (Yang 1961, 71) One common characteristic is that the beliefs of actors and puppeteers of various types of operatic genre (both literary and ritual) in south China can be characterized as polytheistic. They usually worship a group of occupational deities. One of these gods is honored as the primary or main deity. Regular and occasional sacrifices are offered to them. Temples dedicated to the deities of exorcism, Nuogong (The Father of Exorcism) and Nuomu (The Mother of Exorcism), were built in Shaanxi 陝西 and Henan 河南 by the end the Tang dynasty (around the tenth century). In addition, players of hundred games (*baixi*), who were mainly local villagers in Xinghua of southeastern Fujian, honored the Ancestor of Field (Tianzu) as their patron god. Hence, presumably the tradition of the worship of theatre gods can be traced back at least to the tenth century.

With regard to performers or puppeteers of ritual operas, some *Nuo* troupe members in south China (such as Guizhou, Yunnan 雲南, Sichuan and Jiangxi) still worship Nuogong and

opinion, the exorcistic function of the Complete Performance of Su of the Quanzhou marionette theatre is the same as that of the Worship of the White Tiger of Cantonese opera (Ruizendaal 2000, 336 - 360).

⁵⁶¹ The Caoting Si 草亭寺 (Monastery of Straw Pavilion), which is situated at Sihuang Village 四黃村 of Xiamei Town 霞美鎮 in Nan'an City 南安市, Quanzhou, was built in the Ming dynasty and demolished during the Cultural Revolution. It was renovated in 1991. Before the 1950s, Mulian marionette plays were performed at the monastery in the Rite for Releasing the Dead from Sufferings (*Pudu* 普度), which took place on the twelfth of the eighth month; and on the birthday of Guanyin (the nineteenth of the ninth month). The performance often stretched over seven consecutive days and nights. The annual celebrations of Guanyin's birthdays have been resumed since 1991 (the year *xinwei* 辛未). In 2002 (the year *renwu* 壬午), her birthday celebration was accompanied by Mulian marionette performances that lasted seven days and seven nights (from the seventeenth of the ninth month to the thirtieth of the ninth month). The Jinjiang Shi Yangchun Tixian Mu'ou Jutuan 晉江市陽春提線木偶劇團 (the Marionette Company of Yangchun County in Jinjiang City), a Quanzhou marionette troupe, was invited to perform three repertoires of the Mulian operatic series, *Li Shimin You Difu* 李世民游地府 (Li Shimin Travels to the Purgatory), *Xiyou Ji* 西游記 (Record of a Journey to the West) and *Mulian Jiumu* (Mulian Rescues His Mother).

Nuomu (who are usually believed to be Fuxi 伏羲 and Nüwa 女媧) as two of their patron gods today. They pay homage to the masks that represent these deities before performances start. The hall exorcisms (*Tangnuo*) have been popular in Jiangxi since the Song dynasty. The impresario of a *Nuo* troupe in Dejiang 德江 County in the province is both a vernacular priest (*tulao shi* 土老師) and a *Nuo* actor. These ritual masters pay tribute to a number of gods, such as Nuogong, Nuomu, the Three Pure Ones, and Zhao Gongming. Due to the influence of the popular religion and Daoism, many new deities, such as Zhong Kui, Jindu Tongjia Jiangjun (the Gold-Plate Copper Armor General), Menshen (the Door God), Liuding Liujia Shen (the Six Deities of Light and the Six Deities of Darkness), Tudi (the God of Locality) and Zaojun 灶君 (the Stove God), were incorporated into the pantheon of the *Nuo* exorcists or performers from the Tang dynasty onwards. Today, *Nuo* players in Nanfeng County of the province still worship many of these deities. The vernacular priests (*shigong*) of Meishan Sect in Guangxi, who perform *nuo* plays, honor the masks of thirty-six patron deities, including the Three Primordial Ancestral Masters (Sanyuan Zushi 三元祖師, Tang 唐, Ge 葛 and Zhou 周), the Nine Officials and other twenty-four local gods (Pang 1995, 16). With regard to the situations of western Fujian, marionettists in Qingshui Township (central western part of the province) worship Master Lord Tian as the most venerable deity. Other associated patron deities include Lord Dou, Lord Guo, Master Chen Ping, the Lady of Golden Flowers, the Lady of Silver Flowers, etc. As mentioned above, *Gaoqiang* marionette theatre in Baisha Town of southwestern Fujian has gradually moved towards the center of the continuum. Marionette performers who sing in *Gaoqiang* or *Luantan* pay tribute to a number of patron gods, such as Lord Tian, Lord Dou, Lord Guo, Master Chen Ping, the Second Retainer of Irrigation Works, the Lady of Golden Flowers and the Lady of Silver Flowers. An annual celebration is held at the Hall of Tian Gong on Lord Tian's birthday (the twenty-fourth of the sixth month), when marionette plays and other sacrifices are offered to the god for entertainment. In return the god is expected to bestow auspiciousness on all the devotees and performers. Furthermore, in Shangxin 上新 Village of Shujia 舒家鄉 Township at Jiangbei 江北 County (Sichuan), Zhao Gongming and the Four Gods of Wealth, Dagan Laoye 大官老爺 (the Eldest Official Lord), Erguan Laoye 二官老爺 (the Second Official Lord), Sanguan Laoye 三官老爺 (the Third Official Lord), and Siguan Laoye 四官老爺 (the Fourth Official Lord), are worshipped by the *duangong* 端公 (vernacular priests) who perform the ritual play *Tiao Caishen* 跳財神 (The Dance of the God of Wealth).

Professionals of various types of literary opera also honor occupational gods. For example, Master Huaguang, Tiandou Ershi, Grandfather – Lord Tan and Master Zhang Wu are the five patron deities of the Cantonese opera profession. In order to request the blessings of Master Huaguang, a grand celebration is held every year on his birthday (the twenty-eighth of the ninth month), when many offerings and two auspicious plays are offered to him. The main aim of this annual rite is to entertain the god so that he would bestow good fortune upon the whole profession. In other words, reciprocity is the principle of worship. Troupe members of Chaozhou opera worship a group of patron gods, including Master Tian, Lord Guan, the Supreme Emperor of Mystery (Xuantian Shangdi), the Three Crown Princes, and Jiu Huangye 九皇爺 (the Ninth Imperial Lord). The birthday of the crown princes is on the eighth day of the fourth month. Performers of young male roles and female roles usually pay tribute to them. Lord Guan is mainly worshipped by musicians and actors of old male roles, painted face roles and comic roles since they believe that he can bestow invariable success (*changsheng* 常勝) upon them. Moreover, Chaozhou opera professionals believe that if they lose their voice, they can gain full recovery at once by touching the belly of the effigy of the Supreme Emperor of Mystery. In Quanzhou of southeastern Fujian, marionette troupe members pay tribute to a group of patron deities, the Young Lord (Xianggong Ye 相公爺) or Marshal Tian Du (Tian Du Yuanshuai 田都元帥), whose birthdays fall on the sixteenth of the first month and the sixteenth of the eighth month. In addition, Dashe 大舍 and Ershe 二舍 (Tian's two disciples); Yindiao Panguan 引調判官 (the Official who Introduces the Tune); Chuixiao Tongzi 吹簫童子 (the Lad who Plays the Flute), Laifu Sheren 來富舍人 (The Person who Gives Wealth), and Wucan Jiangjun 舞燦將軍 (The General who Dances Splendid) are adjunct deities (Huang 1986, 2 - 3).

Another common characteristic of actors of regional operas in south China (both ritual and literary) is that in normal cases, they have to observe some professional taboos. Before the 1950s, *Kun* opera troupe members were not allowed to sit on the trunk where the tablet of Laolang Shen (the main patron deity) was stored. They had to hang their hats or crowns on a fixed place, and actors of female roles and other role types would not put on makeup until the comic role performer entered the backstage and put on makeup. Actors also should not put on costumes themselves. The troupe member who took charge of the costume trunks had to assist them to put on their costumes. There are many feminine taboos for woman in Cantonese opera. In addition, they also have to observe some general occupational taboos which are imposed on both male and female Cantonese opera troupe members. In an interview with Yang Qingyi (an

instructor of Quanzhou marionette theatre) at the Ngau Chi Wan Cultural Center in Hong Kong on December 11, 2002, members of Quanzhou marionette troupes are prohibited from eating crabs, roosters and dogs since according to Tian's legend, he was fed by a crab while being left in the field, and Dashe and Ershe, his two disciples who transformed themselves into a rooster and a dog, are worshipped by the marionettists as adjunct deities. Nobody, especially woman, should sit on the drama baskets, where the string dolls and other stage properties are stored. Inside the drama basket, the marionette that represents Marshal Tian must be placed on top of all other items. (Mary Yeung's notes).⁵⁶² In Taiwan, performers of *Gezai* opera 歌仔戲 also need to observe taboos. For instance, they are not allowed to eat crabs, kick the drama baskets, play with stage properties, especially swords, blades and spears, and sit on the drama basket that is used to store hats and crowns. Inauspicious plays are prohibited from being staged in the birthday celebration of Mazu. Moreover, the performer who impersonates Zhong Kui should abstain from meat and sexual intercourse for three days (Wang 1997, 162 – 163).

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the contents or details of the traditions of professionals of ritual operas and literary operas are different to a great extent, though the basic characteristics or framework of their popular religions are similar. In order to illustrate my viewpoint, let us examine the differences between the religious beliefs and practices of Cantonese opera actors and those of marionettists in western Fujian. First, as professionals of a literary opera, Cantonese opera actors stage their performances both in rural and urban areas. They present ritual operatic series on important or auspicious occasions, such as birthdays of tutelary deities and *jiao* festivals, in temporary halls that are erected at rural areas in Hong Kong. They also perform in permanent theatres in urban areas. In recent years, the performances of the Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain and the Celestial Maid's Great Bestowing of a Son (two auspicious or fixed plays) on Master Huaguang's birthday are often staged at the Ko Shan Theatre in Kowloon (urban area). This annual celebration is organized by the Chinese Artist Association of Hong Kong, the guild of the Cantonese opera profession. Marionette troupe members in central and western Fujian perform in villages. In Baisha of southwestern Fujian, Tian Gong's birthday celebration is organized by the Committee of Dajin Village in Baisha Town (Baisha Zhen Dajin Cun Weihui) and the Research Association of the Hakka

⁵⁶² There are a few taboos related to the audience. For example, children are not allowed to watch the Complete Performance of Su (the exorcistic play of Quanzhou marionette theatre). Pregnant women must not watch marionette shows. If a family is involved in an auspicious affair, such as weddings and birthdays, all the family members should not watch marionette plays within one hundred days after the ceremony is held (Mary Yeung's notes).

Marionette Cultural Art (Kejia Mu'ou Wenhua Yishu Yanjiu Hui). In Qingshui Township of central western Fujian, each marionette troupe celebrates Lord Tian's birthday separately. Marionettists in this region do not form any occupational association. Second, both the beliefs of Cantonese opera professionals and those of marionette troupe members in western Fujian can be characterized as polytheistic. However, as mentioned above, the patron deities that they worship are different, though the origin of Tiandou Ershi (two associated gods of the Cantonese opera profession) and that of Tian Gong and Dou Gong (two adjunct deities of marionettists in western Fujian) may be related. Third, the *Daqiang*, *Siping* and *Gaoqiang* marionette troupes in the mountainous areas of Fujian are known as "tang" or "tan." The impresario of such a troupe is a vernacular priest of Liyuan Jiao, a sub-sect of the Lüshan Tradition. Although he can teach his artistic skills of marionette theatre to some disciples who have no blood ties with him, his ritual methods must be transmitted according to the principle of heredity. Since communist political movements occurred frequently, vernacular priests who are also *Gaoqiang* marionettists no longer perform the ritual practices of the Liyuan Jiao. Cantonese opera professionals are not local priests, so they do not perform quasi-Daoist rituals in their performances. Some of them who come from theatre families learn their performing skills from their senior family members or other masters. Those who are not born in these families learn their art from their masters. Fourth, marionettists in western Fujian observe fewer occupational taboos than Cantonese opera actors. One possible reason is that Cantonese opera professionals are not local priests or ritual specialists. Unlike some marionettists (vernacular priests) who are believed to possess supernatural power to ward off evil spirits and renew the vital force, they have no choice but to avoid provoking the demons and ghosts by observing taboos (a passive means). Fifth, funerals of marionette performers in the mountainous areas of Fujian are almost identical with those of the local people, though their liturgical manuals and some scripts are usually buried with them after they pass away. In the past the death rituals of Cantonese opera troupe members were very simple if they passed away while staging ritual performances in local villages. Nowadays, however, funerals of Cantonese opera actors are the same as those of ordinary people in Cantonese society. Sixth, both Cantonese opera professionals and marionette troupe members organize celebrations on their primary deities' birthday. Nevertheless, the details of the ceremonies are different. Due to the influence of the Fengtian *Daqiang* opera traditions, Wang Hua (the impresario of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe in Qingshui of central western Fujian) performed the Palm of Ten Thousand People (*Wanren Zhang*) and wrote secret names or characters (*hui*) in the Rite for Sealing the Stage (*Fengtai*) in various areas of the stage at the

beginning of Lord Tian's 2003 birthday celebration for the purpose of exorcising evil spirits. It is believed that these practices derived from the tradition of *Yiyang Qiang* operatic system. However, in order to purify the stage, Ceng Ruilun (the impresario of the Huacheng Tang Gaoqiang Marionette Troupe in Baisha of southwestern Fujian) performed the exorcistic play Tiao Tian Gong (Dancing Lord Tian) rather than the Rite for Sealing the Stage on Tian Gong's 2004 birthday. Though Cantonese opera includes elements of the *Yiyang Qiang* or *Gaoqiang* tradition, Cantonese opera performers did not write secret characters or perform any pseudo-Daoist rituals in Huaguang's 1996 birthday celebration at the Haicheng Chinese Restaurant. Moreover, since Cantonese operatic performances had been staged at this restaurant before, players did not present the Worship of the White Tiger. In order to entertain the patron deities, the troupe members and the audience, auspicious plays were performed on both Huaguang's 1996 birthday in Hong Kong and on Lord Tian's 2003 birthday in Huang Jing Shan of central western Fujian. However, the repertoires that were performed in these two regions were different due to local variations. In addition, it is important to point out that since Cantonese opera actors are not priests, they did not perform any quasi-Daoist or Buddhist rituals at Huaguang's 1996 birthday celebration or on other occasions. As a ritual specialist of Liyuan Jiao, Wang Hua repeatedly performed the Rite for the Repayment of Vows for local villagers or devotees, staged the scene/rite *Zhaojun* (Summoning the Armies) in the performance of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress, and performed the ritual *Potai* as well as the Ritual for Crossing the Barriers by manipulating the puppets, which represented the gods, at Lord Tian's 2003 birthday celebration. Moreover, Wang Wenxian, the second son of Wang Hua and a Yujia Jiao priest, also performed several liturgies, including the Announcement Ritual (*Fabiao*), the Offering Ritual (*Shanggong*) and the Ritual for Rewarding the Armies (*Zhaojun*) on behalf of his father in the ceremony, which stretched over several days and nights. In Shui Zhu Yang of Baisha in southwestern Fujian, however, Lord Tian's 2004 birthday only lasted one day. The *Gaoqiang* marionettists there did not perform any Liyuan Jiao liturgies.

The fourth basic principle is that the subcultural beliefs and practices of performers of various types of regional opera in south China are not totally separable. They are related or even derived from the same origin (*nanxi*) to some extent. The Worship of theatre gods (Lord Tian and Huaguang) and the Mulian opera was spread throughout south China by opera troupes, lineage immigrants, merchants and officials when they traveled or migrated from place to place. Local scholars in Fujian, such as Yang Rong and Lin Qingxi 林慶熙, point out that in the coastal areas (southeastern parts) of the province, Tian Gong is both a popular tutelary deity and a god of

theater. He is commonly known as Lei Haiqing 雷海青.⁵⁶³ Many large temples, such as the Temple of the Marshal (Yuanshuai Miao 元帥廟) in Fuzhou, the Temple of Auspicious Clouds (Ruiyun Miao) in Putian and the Lotus Temple (Lianshan Miao 蓮山廟) in Longyan, are dedicated to him. Local people believe that he often demonstrates his supernatural power to protect children and cure skin ulcers. Actors and puppeteers of various types of operatic genre worship him as their primary occupational god. With regard to the origins and the historical development of the worship of Tian Gong, Lin Qingxi and many other local scholars in Fujian argue that this tradition can be traced back to the worship of Tianzu (the Ancestor of the Field) in ancient China. In order to request good harvest and weather, Chinese people in north and south China worshipped Tianzu, who was also known as Tian Zun 田峻. In Zhejiang and Jiangsu, the ancient Wuyue 吳越 area, farmers paid tribute to gods of earth and cereal. They addressed them as Tiangong (Lord Tian/The Grandpa of the Field) and Tianpo 田婆 (The Grandma of the Field). Many *baixi* actors in Xinghua (Putian nowadays), who came from rural areas, worshipped Tian Gong when they staged hundred games (*baixi*) in spring and autumn rites by the end of the Tang dynasty (or possibly earlier). During the Southern Song period, many opera and marionette troupes from Xinghua and Quanzhou performed in Lin'an (present-day Hangzhou) of Zhejiang province, where *nanxi* (southern operas) was very popular. Hence, it is reasonable to believe that one of the traditions of the worship of Tian Gong as a theatre god derived from Hangzhou. Today, many written sources state that Lord Tian came from the Head of the Iron-plate Bridge at Hangzhou (Hangzhou Tieban Qiaotou 杭州鐵板橋頭), though there is no such a place known as Tieban Qiaotou in Hangzhou nowadays. Besides Hangzhou, it is also believed that the worship of Lord Tian was spread to Xinghua area from the north. Together with Pan'gu 盤古, Tian Gong first appeared to be a patron deity of the Wen lineage 溫氏. The founder (Ziyu 子玉) of the Wen lineage 溫氏 of Gaoyang Village 高陽村 took the images of Tian Gong, Pan'gu 盤古 and the General of Efficacious Teeth (Lingya Jiangjun 靈牙將軍) along with him when he migrated from Jiangxi to Fujian around the late eleventh century (A.D. 1086 – 1098). According to the genealogy of the Wens, these deities had already been worshipped by their remote ancestors at Taiyuan 太原 of Shanxi 山西. After the middle of the Ming dynasty (sixteenth century), Tian

⁵⁶³ According to local legends in southeastern Fujian, Lei Haiqing was an imperial musician during the reign period of Tang Xuanzong (A.D. 713 – 755). When the rebels led by An Lushan conquered Chang'an (Xi'an), Lei Haiqing refused to perform in front of An Lushan, so he was put to death. After suppressing the rebellion, Emperor Suzong (reign A.D. 756 – 762) bestowed on Lei the title of Tiandu Yuanshuai 田都元帥 (Marshal Tiandu).

Gong and Lei Haiqing were merged into one deity. In southeastern areas of Fujian, he has been worshipped both as a local deity and a god of theatre. Today, players of various types of opera (such as Puxian opera actors and Chaozhou opera performers), which derived from *nanxi* (southern operas), still worship Marshal Tiandu 田都元帥/Marshal Lord Tian 田公元帥/Lei Haiqing as the most venerable patron deity of their profession. For instance, a Puxian opera troupe usually possesses two Tian Gong effigies, one seated image that puts on a golden crown, and one standing image which wears a red robe and with a crab drawn around its mouth. His birthday and death anniversary fall on the sixteenth of the fourth month and the twenty-third of the eighth month.

There are three versions of Tian Gong's legend that are popular among Puxian opera actors and marionette performers. The first version is that in the past, Puxian opera players and marionettists worshipped Pangu as their main patron deity. Then, one day a storm occurred while a Puxian opera troupe was traveling in a boat, where there was a tablet of Lei Haiqing. The troupe members were in great danger. Later, the storm calmed down and all of them were safe. There was a flag flying in the sky. The Chinese character “*lei* 雷 (thunder)” was written on this flag. However, the radical “*yu* 雨 (rain)” of the word “*lei*” was covered by clouds when the troupe members look up to the sky. They only saw the character “*tian* 田 (field)” rather than the word “*lei*.” Thus, they addressed Lei Haiqing as “Marshal Lord Tian (Tian Gong Yuanshuai).” Since then, Lei Haiqing/Tian Gong Yuanshuai has replaced Pangu as the primary occupational deity of the Puxian opera troupes and marionette troupes. The second version is that the Puxian play Yuan 願 (Vows), which is presented by both opera and marionette troupes, tells the story of Lord Tian. In his article, “The God of Theater in the Ritual Traditions of Putian,” Kenneth Dean notes:

The Song Empress is ill and the Emperor promises to wear a cangue and do penance to save her. His Prime Minister intercedes, recommending that his son wear the cangue instead. His son is none other than the god of theater who was utterly bored with life in heaven and insisted on being born on earth. The god persuades the Emperor to have everyone in the Empire wear the cangue...The dramatic crescendo is reached when the god, who has been rewarded with free rein of the Imperial palace, falls after getting himself roaring drunk. In his stupor, he is found by the Imperial princess, who paints his already very red face with crab designs. When he wakes up he cannot wash off the color or designs...He is

informed that he cannot return to his original role as third son of the Jade Emperor, but instead must become the god of theater...The marionette god is then brought into the temple to pay his respects to the local gods. The play continues with the wealthy patron who ascends the stage wearing a cangue. The marionettes tease a lot of money out of him and his family before obtaining a pardon from heaven, and the removal of his cangue. Then a Daoist priest ascends the stage and leads him in worshipping the five directions. This play is full of humor, poking fun at the very god that the marionettists themselves worship...This play used to be performed...sometimes by actors rather than by marionettes... (Dean 1994, 693 – 694)

The third version of Lei Haiqing's legend is that Tian Gong was a son of a She leader whose surname was "Lei." Right after birth, Lord Tian was abandoned in the field, where he was fed by a crab. A marionettist took him home and adopted him. He was named Lei Haiqing. Since he was good at music, Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty appointed him as an imperial musician. Later, he was killed in the rebellion led by An Lushan. Later, he demonstrated his supernatural power by appearing in the sky. Since then, Puxian opera performers and Puxian marionettists honor him as their patron deity.

In addition to Puxian opera troupe members, actors of Chaozhou opera in eastern Guangdong, performers in Nan'an County 南安縣 and Liyuan opera players in southeastern Fujian, as well as marionette troupes and operatic troupes in southern Taiwan also honor Lei Haiqing/Tiandu Yuanshuai (Marshal Tian Du)/Tian Gong Yuanshuai (Marshal Lord Tian) as their main occupational god. With regard to Tian's legend, which is popular among performers in Nan'an County, the *Zongguo xqu zhi Fujian juan* states that Marshal Tian Du or Qingyuan Zushi 清源祖師 (Master Qingyuan) was the son of a She woman. She died right after she gave birth to the child, who was later adopted by an actor. This child was called Lei Haiqing. He learnt music and performance art from his adopted father (the actor). After he grew up, he became an imperial musician of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang dynasty. He has been worshipped by performers in Nan'an as the most venerable occupational deity.

It is important point out that although Lei Haiqing/Tian Gong/ Marshal Tian is worshipped as a tutelary deity. Quanzhou marionette troupe members, unlike Chaozhou opera and Liyuan opera troupe members, never regard Tian Gong as Lei Haiqing. They usually address him as Marshal Tiandu or Xianggong Ye 相公爺 (Young Lord). With regard to his

image, he is “represented as a smiling young boy with a red face and two braids, exactly like the Tian in the marionette theatre.” (Ruizendaal 1999, 261) Ruizendaal also offers the following discussion about his legends that are popular among Quanzhou marionettists:

Tian was the result of miraculous conception after his mother chewed on a kernel of rice in the fields. After his birth the infant was left in the fields and fed by crabs that would mouth-feed him. The deity was retrieved from the field by his mother named Su [or by members of the Su family, in this case not related to his mother who had another surname]. The young boy was unable to speak but proved to be intelligent as well as an excellent musician and dancer. He was presented to the emperor after finishing first at the imperial exams, and became an important musician and dancer at the Court. The emperor once dreamed of a voyage during which he heard beautiful music, not much later a book was presented to court with an indecipherable content. Tian recognized the text as musical notation and arranged a performance, and to the delight of the emperor the music was the same as he had heard during the dream. In order to celebrate this a banquet was arranged where Tian got very drunk, and fell asleep on the emperor’s bed. The empress wrote the characters “eight” and “ten” above the bed, in the hope the boy may live to become eighty. Unfortunately, Tian read the characters in reversed order and passed away at the young age of eighteen.

Two major variations to this text need be mentioned. In the first case Tian, who has no official degree, is summoned to the palace to dance before the Empress, to alleviate her agony as she is suffering from an unknown illness. In order to use the opportunity to see the Empress, Tian’s two friends change themselves into a golden rooster and a jade dog and hide in the sleeves of the deity. When Tian dances before the Empress the two fall out creating such a funny effect that the Empress has to laugh so loud she is instantly cured. After this incident the legend continues as previously, only in this case the eighteen is written on the forehead of the deity.

Another version paraphrases Tian’s title as the Chief Marshall of the Wind and Fire Department of the Nine Heaven by giving Tian a role in extinguishing a palace fire by the use of celestial winds. There are no puppeteers who are aware of the original meaning of the Wind and Fire Department.

The themes⁵⁶⁴ of the legends are, despite their differences, obvious: miraculous conception; the feeding by the crab; association with the centre of worldly and heavenly power; musical talent and death at the age of eighteen (Ruizendaal 1999, 263 – 264).

With regard to the situations of western Fujian (the mountainous areas), there are only a few temples dedicated to Tian Gong. He is mainly worshipped by marionette troupe members as their patron deity, though local people or villagers can also pay tribute to him. It is important to point out that in these mountainous areas, such as Shouning, Nanping 南平, Yong'an, Changting and Shanghang, marionettists do not regard the god as Lei Haiqing. Some of them even never know about this name. Besides the *Luantan* musical style, marionettists in this region perform in *Gaoqiang*, *Daqiang*, or *Siping Qiang* (local variants of *Yiyang Qiang*). The common occupational deities that are honored by marionette troupes in Baisha of Shanghang, Qingshui of Yong'an, and Taqian Town 塔前鎮 of Nanping⁵⁶⁵ are the Three Marshals or the Three Brothers (Lord Tian, Lord Guo and Lord Dou), the Golden Dipper (Taibai Jingxing), the Lady of Golden Flowers, the Lady of Silver Flowers, the Third Grand Uncle (Sanbo Gonggong), the Fourth Grand Aunt (Sibo Popo), the Immortals of Peace and Harmony (Hehe Erxian)⁵⁶⁶ and a number of role types, such as male roles, female roles, comic roles and painted face roles.⁵⁶⁷ Among these gods, Tian Gong, a comic character (*chou*) in marionette performances, is considered to be the most venerable one. He is believed to be a great exorcist who can ward off evil elements.⁵⁶⁸ Mulian opera actors in Qiming County (Anhui), who sing in local variants of *Yiyang Qiang*, also pay tribute to similar gods. For example, the names of Lord Tian, Lord Dou and Lord Guo, the Lady of Golden Flowers, the Immortals of Peace and Harmony, and various role types appear in the liturgical or ritual manual of invoking the Five Furies, which is possessed by a local villager of Limu Village in Qiming County (Mao 1997, 176). The names of the gods mentioned above are also recorded in Chapter Two hundred and Thirty-three of the *Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元 (*A Corpus of Daoist Ritual*) and the *Huitu sanjiao yuanliu soushen daquan (wai erzong)* (*An Illustrated Comprehensive Collection Concerning the Deities and Origins of the Three Religions*,

⁵⁶⁴ In the quote from Ruizendaal.

⁵⁶⁵ These are the areas in western Fujian where local variants of *Yiyang* operas are popular.

⁵⁶⁶ In southwestern and central western Fujian, marionettists also worship Master Chen Ping.

⁵⁶⁷ As far as I know, actors or marionettists who perform in regional operas of *Yiyang Qiang* tradition often worship role types as their patron deities.

⁵⁶⁸ The meaning of the word “*chou*” is the same as that of the character “*qi*,” which means ugly. It is believed that ugliness functions to scare away demons and ghosts.

and *Two Other Records*) (cf. Schipper 1965, 89). The worship of Tian and Dou⁵⁶⁹ originated from Jiangxi, where Erlang Shen, Tian and Dou were already worshipped by performers of *Yihuang* opera in the sixteenth century (possibly earlier). It seems likely that together with the Mulian opera, the worship of Tian and Dou spread from Zhejiang to Jiangxi in the early Ming period (around the fourteenth century). Then, this tradition was further spread to western Fujian by performers or some Hakka lineages that performed or settled in this mountainous region. For instance, when the Xiongs and Xings of Fengtai Village in Qingshui returned to Shicheng of southeastern Anhui to pay tribute to their ancestors in A.D. 1450, it is reasonable to believe that they also brought both the performing skills of the *Daqiang* opera and the beliefs about Tian, Dou and Guo back to Fengtai Village of central western Fujian. As decades and centuries passed, this tradition gradually flourished in various parts of western Fujian, such as the Hakka region in the southwestern part of the province.

As mentioned in Section 4.3. of Chapter Four, Cantonese opera actors have performed the Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain (*Xianghua Shan Da Heshou*), a *Gaoqiang*⁵⁷⁰ auspicious play of Cantonese opera, on the birthday (the twenty-eighth of the ninth month) of Master Huaguang, the most venerable deity of the Cantonese opera profession. This Cantonese auspicious play is well recorded in the *Kunqu daquan yueju changyong paizi Gaoqiang and fanyin quji* (*A Complete Collection of Kun Arias: Fixed Tunes, Gaoqiang and Buddhist Music That are Constantly Used in Cantonese Opera*, edited by Wong Toa in 1996), a book that notes all the Cantonese auspicious plays and other *paizi* (titles) of Cantonese opera; and the *Yueju chuantong yinyue changqiang xuanji* (*A Selected Collection Concerning Traditional Cantonese Operatic Vocal Music*, 9 vols, 1961 – 1962), a collection that notes the song texts and musical notations of all the auspicious plays of Cantonese opera. The Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain originated from Scene Nine of Zheng Zhizhen's massive script, Mulian Rescues His Mother: An Opera for Goodness (*Mulian Jiumu Quanshan Xiwen*, prefaced dated A.D. 1582). For example, in the scene Guanyin's Birthday (*Guanyin Shengri*, Scene Nine) of Zheng Zhizhen's version, the Goddess of Mercy transforms herself into eight different forms, a white crane, a tiger, a general, a Daoist priest, a tall person, a short person, a Guanyin who carries a fish hamper, and a Guanyin with thousand hands. In the script of the *Xianghua Shan Da Heshou*, which is recorded in the *Kunqu daquan yueju changyong paizi*

⁵⁶⁹ Some scholars of Chinese theatre believe that the term “*tiandou* 田竇” was derived from the wrong pronunciation of “*tiandu* 田都.”

⁵⁷⁰ The local variant of *Yiyang* music in Guangdong is known as *Gaoqiang* by Cantonese opera people.

Gaoqiang and fanyin quji, as well as the *Yueju chuantong yinyue changqiang xuanji*, the goddess also transforms herself into eight forms. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that these eight forms (a fisherman, a woodcutter, a farmer, a scholar, a dragon, a tiger, a general and a prime minister) are different from those described in Zheng's script mentioned above. The texts of the aria *Sanchun Jin* 三春錦 (Three Spring's Brocade) in Zheng Zhizhen's version⁵⁷¹ is almost identical with those of this song in the Cantonese opera script *Xianhua Shan Da Heshou*.

In addition, during the Ming and Qing periods, Anhui operatic troupes were already very famous for their unique acrobatics. They often demonstrated these acrobatic skills in the Mulian operatic performances. Most wealthy merchants in Huizhou possessed bond-servants or bodyguards who were good at martial arts. Many Mulian opera troupe members were recruited from bond-servants, bodyguards and poor tenants (Guo 2005, 201). As Guo Qitao states:

The bond-servant system sheds new light on the character of Mulian troupes and their performances in Huizhou. According to a popular saying from the late imperial theatrical world, "Kunshan [is good at] music and Anhui good at martial arts" of operatic performance. Mulian always featured performances of *baixi* (including acrobatics), and any Mulian troupe, perforce, had actors skilled at martial arts or acrobatics. Indeed, Mulian actors from Huizhou were famous throughout the realm for their stunts and performance agility...In the early seventeenth century, the drama aficionado Zhang Dai [張岱] noted a three-day Mulian show staged in Shaoxing [紹興] by a troupe of some thirty to forty actors. Selected from the Huizhou region, these actors were all "dexterous and strong, capable of acrobatics and martial fighting." Zhang Dai then gave a long list of the acrobatic feats that were part of the performance, including walking and jumping on an iron rope, spinning tables or vases with feet, turning somersaults, doing handstands, and leaping through fire-rings (Guo 2005, 199).

According to Guo, the stages in Guichi County 貴池縣 of Huizhou were three-tiered. The actors had to execute somersaults in order to get from one tier to another. In his article, "Yueju *Yiyang Qiang* qiantan 粵劇弋陽腔淺探 (A Preliminary Research on the *Yiyang Qiang* in Cantonese Opera)," Mo Rucheng 莫汝城 (a famous playwright and scholar of Cantonese opera) points out that various types of acrobatics in the performance of the Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain, such as turning somersaults, leaping through rings, spinning tables,

⁵⁷¹ Please see Appendix Eleven.

performing the *Shiba Luohan* 十八羅漢 (the Eighteen Arhats)⁵⁷² and throwing a trident, originated from the Mulian opera tradition, which was spread to Guangdong by the Anhui Mulian troupes before and during late Qing period.

Master Huaguang is worshipped as the most venerable patron deity by Cantonese opera people. Section 2.3. of Chapter Two notes that this tradition can be traced back to the early Qing period (possibly earlier) when the local troupes (*bendi ban*) often paid tribute to him at the Qionghua Gong 瓊花宮 (the Palace of the Beautiful Flower) in the Guild of the Beautiful Flower (Qionghua Huiguan), the professional association of the indigenous or local troupes. The Chinese characters, *Qionghua Gong* 瓊花宮 is inscribed on the large incense burner, which was removed from the archaeological site of the Qionghua Huiguan and placed at the Cantonese Operatic Museum in Foshan (Foshan Yueju Bowu Guan 佛山粵劇博物館). Moreover, the term “*qionghua* 瓊花” also appears in *Huitu sanjiao yuanliu soushen daquan (wai erzong)* (*An Illustrated Comprehensive Collection Concerning the Deities and Origins of the Three Religions, and Two Other Records*) and the novel *Nanyou ji* 南游記 (*The Journey to the South*) mentioned below.

Wutong 五通 (the Five Supernatural Powers)/Wuxian 五顯 (the Five Manifestations)/Marshal Ma (Ma Yuanshuai 馬元帥)/Huaguang has been a tutelary deity and a patron god of Mulian opera troupes in Anhui since the imperial period. Wutong 五通 cult (the Five Supernatural Powers)⁵⁷³ and the Wuxian 五顯 cult (the Five Manifestations) were widely spread to southeast China (such as Zhejiang, Suzhou and Fuzhou) by the end of the tenth century. Wutong were officially recognized as local gods of Wuyuan County 婺源縣 in Huizhou,⁵⁷⁴ and were canonized by the Song court as Wutong Hou 五通候 (Marquises of the Five Supernatural Powers) in A.D. 1109. In A.D. 1174, they obtained new titles with the character *xian* 顯 (to manifest) and were made dukes (*gong* 公). They were proclaimed kings (*wang* 王) in A.D. 1202. Thus, these five deities were known as the Five Manifestations (Wuxian) from the late twelfth century on (Hansen 1990, 133; Cedzich 1992, 168). Around the thirteenth century, temples dedicated to Wutong or Wuxian were erected throughout the mountainous areas (such as Qingliu

⁵⁷² Master Wong Toa said that in performing the *Shiba Luohan*, martial art actors form a human pyramid by piling up themselves into several layers. To begin, some players stand on the stage to form the base. On top of their shoulders, stand several other performers who form the second layer and so on. The better skills of these martial art performers are, the more levels or layers they can form (Mary Yeung's notes).

⁵⁷³ Wutong were believed to be a type of mountain demon called Shanxiao 山魃. They were one-legged goblins that often caused disasters to people. Later, the Buddhist term “*wutong*” became a label for these Shanxiao demons. Nowadays, at Fujian, some people still believe the existence of these mountain evil spirits.

⁵⁷⁴ Today, Wuyuan falls within the administration of Jiangxi 江西.

清流, Changting 長汀, Liancheng 連城, Shanghang, Shaowu 邵武) and coastal regions (such as Fuzhou) of Fujian. With regard to the association between Wuxian and Huaguang, Richard von Glahn states:

The name Huaguang (Padmaprabha) appears in the third chapter of the Lotus Sūtra as the name by which Sākyamuni's disciple Sāriputra will be known when he attains Buddhahood...The name Huaguang is also used to designate Aśvakarna, a Buddhist fire god...

The earliest association between Huaguang and the Wuxian cult, the building of Huaguang pavilions at the Wuxian temples in the thirteenth century, is iconic rather than literary...Wuxian and Huaguang are more explicitly joined in the calendar of feast days. Both share the same feast day, the twenty-eighth day of the ninth lunar month...(von Glahn 2004, 194 - 195)

In the *Haiqiong Bai Zhenren yulu* 海瓊白真人語錄 (*A Dialogic Treatise of the Perfected Bai Haiqiong*), Bai Yuchan says that Huaguang was adopted by quasi-Daoist masters, Buddhist priests and shamans into their pseudo Daoist/Buddhists rituals. Daoist hagiographic writings merged Huaguang with Marshal Ma, who is said to possess five supernatural powers, three eyes and powerful weapons (such as a triangular brick, a gold lance and a fire wheel) (von Glahn, 2004: 213). From the late Ming period onward, the Five Supernatural Powers (Wutong), the Five Manifestations (Wuxian), Marshal Ma and Huaguang had gradually become one and the same. In other words, these five deities (Wuxian or Wutong) mingled together to form one god. *Journey to the South (Nanyou ji)*,⁵⁷⁵ which was written by Yu Xiangdou 余象斗 (a native of Jianyang 建陽 in Fujian) during the sixteenth century, is the most popular and detailed novel of Huaguang.

Mulian operas, which are sung in local variants of *Yiyang Qiong*, have been popular in Anhui since the Wanli 萬曆 reign period (A.D. 1573 – 1620). Many merchants and their bond servants, as well as other local villagers in this province already worshipped Huaguang/Wuxian as their tutelary deity in the imperial times, when Mulian opera troupe members were mainly recruited from these bond servants and villagers of poor families. According to the *Anhui Mulian xi ziliao ji* 安徽目連戲資料集 (*A Collection on the Mulian Plays of Anhui*), compiled by Mao Gengru 茆耕茹 and Wang Ch'iu-kuei, the term “Wuxian Lingguan Dadi 五顯靈官大帝 (The Great Emperor among the Divine Agents of the Five Manifestations)” appears in the

⁵⁷⁵ For a brief summary of the *Journey to the South*, please refer to Appendix Ten of the present study.

liturgical or ritual manual for Inviting the Five-Fury Spirits (Wuchang 五猖),⁵⁷⁶ which is possessed by Wang Dingfa 王丁發, a Mulian opera actor of Limu Village 栗木村 in Qimen County 祁門 of Anhui (Mao 1997, 174).

As far as I know, in the Pearl River Delta of Guangdong, Huaguang is worshipped as one single deity rather than five gods. According to the 1754 edition of the *Foshan Zhongyi xiangzhi* (*The Local History of Zhongyi Township in Foshan*), two Huaguang temples were erected in the area where there were ironmongeries. According to local beliefs, he was originally the halo of light from a lamp of the Buddha, thereby he was considered to be a god of fire and worshipped as a patron deity by the ironmongers in Foshan (a center of ironmongery).⁵⁷⁷ Many merchants or businessmen from outside provinces (*waijiang*), especially Anhui and Jiangxi, congregated in the Canton Delta. These sojourning merchants, who founded native-place associations (*huiguan*) in the delta area, often invited opera troupes from their home provinces to Guangdong for performances. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that the worship of Huaguang was spread to the Cantonese cultural area either by merchants or opera troupes from Anhui or Jiangxi. Mo Ruicheng even argues that the Anhui opera troupes brought this cult and the auspicious play *Xianghua Shan Da Heshou* to Guangdong. Through the Meiguan Guyidao (Meiguan Ancient Post Road), they passed Shaoguan 韶關 and went to the Pearl River Delta. The local or indigenous troupes (*bendi ban*) and then later the Cantonese opera troupes adopted this religious practice. Master Huaguang is still honored as the most venerable deity of the Cantonese opera profession. In addition, he is also a local deity in the delta area.

Due to the influence of the Cantonese operatic traditions, actors or puppeteers of some regional opera genres in Guangdong also worship Huaguang as their main patron deity. In his book, *Puppet Theatres in Hong Kong and Their Origins* (*Xianggang di mu'ou piying xi ji yuanliu*), Tsao Pen-yeh states that Cantonese rod puppetry has been popular in various areas of the Canton Delta since the late nineteenth century, though the exact time when it originated was unknown (Tsao 1987, 83). Today, this kind of opera is still performed in Hong Kong. Cantonese rod puppeteers also worship Master Huaguang as their primary deity. The contexts of the ritualistic plays, such as the Worship of the White Tiger and the Celestial Maid Offers a Son,

⁵⁷⁶ The Five-Fury Spirits, who are worshipped as gods of wealth by the Anhui merchants, are considered to be subordinates of the four marshals, Marshal Zhao 趙元帥, Marshal Guan 關元帥, Marshal Wen 溫元帥 and Marshal Ma/Wuxian/Huaguang. They are invoked to exorcise evil elements and purify the stage before the performance of a Mulian operatic series. For a detailed discussion on Wuchang, please see Chapter Five of Guo Qitao's book, *Exorcism and Money: The Symbolic World of the Five-Fury Spirits in Late Imperial China*, pp. 101 – 156.

⁵⁷⁷ For a detailed discussion on this point, please refer to the following website:
<http://www.chinafoshan.net/history/3c/200203220014.html>

which are staged by Cantonese rod puppet troupes, are almost identical with those of the ritualistic plays presented by Cantonese opera troupes. Moreover, Tsao Pen-yeh notes, “The repertoire and music of the Cantonese rod puppet theatre are basically the same as that of Cantonese opera, the differences being that the musical ensemble is simpler and has fewer singers/actors; each singer/actor assumes a variety of roles in the play...” (Tsao 1987, 83) It seems likely that Cantonese rod puppeteers adopted the beliefs, practices, repertoires and music from Cantonese opera professionals. In addition, Hainan 海南 was still administrated by Guangdong before the late 1980s. The island became a separate province in 1988. According to the *Zhongguo xiqu zhi Hainan juan* 中國戲曲志海南卷 (*History of Chinese Opera – Hainan*), Huaguang was worshipped as an occupational deity by the *Qiong* opera troupes in Hainan before the Republican Era. Operatic performances were staged on his birthday. More research needs to be done in order to clarify the present situation.

Both Guangdong and Guangxi, which fell within the same sphere of administration in the Qing dynasty, were commonly known as “Liangguang 兩廣.” Many *bendi ban* members joined Li Wenmao’s uprising in the mid-nineteenth century. Li established the Kingdom of Great Accomplishment (Dacheng Guo) in Liuzhou of Guangxi. Some of these indigenous troupe members from Guangdong who joined the uprising stayed at Guangxi and never returned to Guangdong. They earned their living by joining the opera troupes in Guangxi. Thus, it seems likely that they spread both the performing art and the worship of Huaguang to Guangxi, where actors of some operatic genres also honor Huaguang as one of their patron deities, though the legends of this god are different due to local variations. For instance, according to the *Zhongguo xiqu zhi Guangxi juan* 中國戲曲志廣西卷 (*History of Chinese Opera – Guangxi*), Yong Opera has been performed in southeastern Guangxi since the middle of the nineteenth century. Owing to the cultural exchange with the local troupes from Guangdong, Yong opera performers in Guangxi also worship Wutong Wuxian Huaguang Dadi 五通五顯華光大帝 (The Brilliant Splendor Great Emperor of Five Supernatural Powers and Five Manifestations) as one of their occupational deities. The tablet of this god was placed at the altar in the house of the impresario of a Yong opera troupe. Incense was offered to him twice a day in the morning and the evening. His tablet was also found at the backstage of the troupe. In addition to Huaguang, Yong opera professionals also paid tribute to Qianli Yan (Thousand-li Eye), Shunfeng Er (Favorable-wind Ear), Guban Xianguan 鼓板仙官 (The Immortal Official of Drums and Woodblocks), Qingyin Tongzi 清音童子 (The Lad of Clear Voice), and Tang Chao Laolang Shi 唐朝老郎師 (The Old

Lad Master of the Tang Dynasty). Caicha opera 採茶戲 is another type of regional opera that is mainly performed in southeastern Guangxi, such as Cangwu 蒼梧, Cenxi 岑溪 and Nanning 南寧. The *Zhongguo xiqu zhi Guangxi juan* states that the Caicha opera might be derived from three sources: the artistic skills of this regional opera originated from the local folk songs, they were spread from Jiangxi through northern Guangdong to Guilin 桂林, or spread from Fujian and northern Guangdong to Qinzhou 欽州. Hence, it is reasonable to argue that beliefs about Huaguang of the Caicha opera actors⁵⁷⁸ either spread from Guangdong or Jiangxi. Besides this patron god, Liu Sanjie 劉三姐, the Thousand-li Eye, the Favorable-wind Ear and the Three Brothers (Zhang, Liu and Yu 樟、柳、榆) were also worshipped as adjunct deities by the performers. More research has to be done in order to clarify the present situation. Niuniang opera 牛娘戲, which derived from the Ritual of the Spring Ox and has been popular in southeastern Guangxi, contains musical elements of Cantonese narrative songs, such as *Nanyin* (southern songs) and *Muyu* (wooden fish).⁵⁷⁹ Cantonese opera music also includes these two types of narrative song. During the late Qing period, actors of Niuniang opera also honored Wuxian Huaguang 五顯華光 (The Five Manifestations of Brilliance and Splendor) as their main patron deity. Incense sticks were offered to him before performances started. This tradition gradually died out after the establishment of the government of the PRC. Furthermore, performers of Chagu Opera 茶姑戲 in Hexian 賀縣 of Guangxi also honored (or honor) Huaguang as their occupational god.

6.3. Ancient Southern Culture

My third argument is that the religious beliefs and practices of Cantonese opera professionals and those of marionette troupe members (especially the Liyuan Jiao priests) to some extent reflect the ancient culture of south China. For instance, the origin of the belief about Wutong can be traced back to the cult of Shanxiao. People in south China believe that they are demons that reside in the mountainous areas of southern China. In Fujian, beliefs concerning

⁵⁷⁸ With regard to the legend of Huaguang which is popular among the Caicha opera players, the Eleventh Volume of the *Guangxi difang xiqu shiliao huibian* 廣西地方戲曲史料匯編第十一輯 (*The Eleventh Volume of the Complete Collection of the Historical Sources of Local Operas in Guangxi*) notes that this god was a royal entertainer of the Tang court. Since he offended an eunuch, he escaped to the Mountain of Nine Dragons (Jiulong Shan 九龍山) of Jiangxi and lived in seclusion. He often watched the dances of the women who collected tea at the Jiulong Shan. Moved by these women, Huaguang compiled plays that were related to their work. From then on, anyone who performed Caicha opera had to worship Huaguang before they staged their performances (cf. Chan 1996b, 39).

⁵⁷⁹ Before and during the 1950s, *Nanyin* and *Muyu* were often performed in private homes for the entertainment of wealthy women and maidservants. For a detailed explanation of these two types of narrative songs, please refer to Yung, *Cantonese Opera: Performance as Creative Process*, pp. 138 – 134.

the snake are complicated. On the one hand, snakes, such as the White Serpent in the Legend of the Sovereign Empress, are considered to be symbols of evil spirits that cause troubles. On the other hand, snakes (especially boas) are also regarded as a totem of the ancient Min people, since boas would eat up all kinds of snakes, including serpents. Beliefs about the Great King Jiao Mang mentioned in Chapter Three are a good example to support this viewpoint. Moreover, the popular religion of the Liyuan Sect of the Lüshan Tradition is a loose integration of Daoist liturgies, the subcultural practices and beliefs of the She people, and the ancient shamanic cults of southern China. Egg divination and cock divination were very popular in the south during ancient times. Today, some ethnic groups, such as the Yao and Zhuang people (descendants of the Baiyue tribes) in southern part of the country, still practice these religious activities. For example, shamans of some Yao people observed the color of the yolk of the boiled eggs in order to diagnose the sickness of their patients. In Guangxi a ritual priest choose a burial site for the death by reciting auspicious words and throwing an egg on the ground. The site is suitable for burial if the egg is broken. Otherwise, it is an inauspicious site (Lü 1998, 371 – 373, 576 – 577). In the Rite for Breaking the Womb, Wang Hua (the impresario of the Wanfu Tang Marionette Troupe in Huang Jing Shan of central western Fujian) used eggs as a means for divination. The worship of goddesses in Fujian, such as Lady Ma and Lady Lin in central western Fujian and the Three Ladies, reflects the fact that female shamans were very active before the Ming dynasty. After death, they have been worshipped by local people as protective gods of women and children. More thorough studies have to be done in order to clarify the above standpoints.

As mentioned at beginning of this chapter, I put forward three arguments (6.1., 6.2. and 6.3.) which are at the same time the conclusion of this dissertation. The present study is a very informative study to examine the ritual or religious aspects of both ritual and literary operas within the social and historical contexts of south China, with special attention devoted to Cantonese opera (literary opera) and marionette theatre in western Fujian (ritual opera). The present study offers new insights by recording the three case studies mentioned in Chapters Four and Five, as well as provides English translations for Japanese and many Chinese texts, and examines the history of the close relationship between religion and opera in China. Though I experienced quite a number of adventures, I still enjoy going to the field since I can meet many people from different classes and gain a lot of life experience. In the future, I will devote special attention to study the relationship between Mulian opera and the *nuo* theatre, the relationship between Lord Tian and the God of Happiness (Xishen 喜神), as well as ritual operas in rural areas of north China.

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Appendix One

The Marionettes of the Hall of Splendid Success (Huacheng Tang 華成堂)

Mr. Ceng Ruilun 曾瑞倫, the impresario of the Huacheng Tang of Dajin Village at Baisha Township in southwestern Fujian, possesses twenty-four marionettes, which correspond to the twenty-four heavens (*ershi si zhutian* 二十四諸天). These puppets are arranged into five major role types. They are *sheng* 生 (male roles), *dan* 旦 (female roles), *jing* 淨 (painted face roles), *chou* 丑 (comic roles) and *za* 雜 (miscellaneous roles). Each marionette is composed of three parts: head, torso and limbs. The head is made of camphor wood that prevents deterioration. The torso is a bamboo or hard paper framework that covered with white cloth. The limbs are either made of cloth or wood. The right hand is “an open hand [*wenshou* 文手] with jointed fingers that can be manipulated to hold or grab objects.” The left hand is made into “the shape of a fist [*wushou* 武手], with a hole for inserting weapons or horse whips.” (Tsao 1987, 85) At present, a male marionette body is around seventy-three centimeters in length. The length of a female marionette is about seventy centimeters. After the performance, all the marionette bodies and stage instruments are stored in the *wenlong* 文籠 (civil basket) and *wulong* 武籠 (military basket) respectively. Besides the string dolls and baskets, Mr. Ceng also has many stage instruments, such as masks, weapons, chairs, tables and the Little Lord Tian (Xiao Tian Gong 小田公) that represents a baby onstage. The twenty-four marionettes are:

1. Lord Tian (Tian Gong Shen 田公身). This marionette is known as the Da Tian Gong (Great Lord Tian). It represents Lord Tian in the Ritual for Opening the Stage (*Kaitai* 開台), and Chen Haiqing 陳海青 in the performance of the *Furen Zhuan* 夫人傳 (the Legend of the Lady). The puppet, which is barefooted, belongs to the *chou* category (comic role). It wears a jacket and a pair of trousers of the lower classes. Its mouth and eyes can be moved by manipulating the appropriate strings. Before the early 1950s, a consecration would be held when a new marionette of the Great Lord Tian was made. The ritual functioned to infuse the puppet with the spiritual force of the deity. This rite no longer exists nowadays.
2. Yellow Robe (Huangpao Shen 黃袍身). In the performance, the Yellow Robe Body is an emperor with or without a beard. This marionette wears yellow ceremonial robe that is embroidered with dragons. It falls within the category of male roles (*sheng* 生).

3. Red Robe (Hongpao Shen 紅袍身). In the performance, this string doll is a high ranking official with or without a beard. It wears a red ceremonial robe and a gauze hat with square wings at side. The *Hongpao Shen*, which belongs to the *sheng* 生 category (male role), performs the role of Chen Ping 陳平 in the auspicious play *Jia Guan* 加官 (Promotion to the Rank of an Official).
4. Black Robe (Heipao Shen 黑袍身). This is a painted face character with a full black beard. It wears a black ceremonial robe and a gauze hat with long wings at side. Wearing a mask, the Black Robe represents Lord Bao (Bao Gong 包公) in the performance of the *Furen Zhuan*. In some performances, however, a treacherous court official is also represented by this puppet.
5. White Robe (Baipao Shen 白袍身). This marionette is a loyal court official with or without a beard. It also belongs to the *sheng* category. The White Robe is made up of a white ceremonial robe and an official cap.
6. Red Armour (Hongjia Shen 紅甲身). This is a painted face character with a beard. It usually represents a marshal and is dressed in a red armour.
7. White Armour (Baijia Shen 白甲身). The White Armour is a young military official in the performance. This marionette falls with the category of male roles (*sheng*). It wears a white armour that is decorated with four small pennons (worn on the back of warriors)
8. Black Armour (Heijia Shen 黑甲身). This painted face character wears a black armour and a full beard. It usually represents a marshal or foreign king in the performance.
9. Azure Armour (Lüjia Shen 綠甲身). It belongs to the *sheng* category. In the performance, this puppet is a young military official with or without beard. It is dressed in an azure armour.
10. Official (Guansheng Shen 官生身). In the performance, the Prize Candidate (*Zhuanyuan* 狀元) is represented by this marionette. It wears a red official robe.
11. Young Male (Xiaosheng Shen 小生身). This puppet is dressed in an azure ordinary costume. It is arranged to portray Wang Wenyuan 王文遠 in the performance of the *Furen Zhuan*.
12. Old Male (Laosheng Shen 老生身). This marionette wears a white beard, and a blue or an azure ordinary costume. It usually represents an immortal or a landlord. It is arranged

to portray the Most High Old Lord (Taishang Laojun 太上老君) in the performance of the *Furen Zhuan*.

13. Pampered Son (Gongzi Shen 公子身). It belongs to the *chou* category (comic role). The Pampered Son Body is dressed in a red ordinary costume. It usually performs the character of a coxcomb of a wealthy family.
14. Red Female (Hongdan Shen 紅旦身). The Red Female falls within the category of female roles. This puppet represents Chen Jingu 陳進姑 (Chen Furen 陳夫人) in the performance of the Legend of the Lady. It wears a red ceremonial robe and a shawl as a covering for the shoulders.
15. Female Robe (Paodan Shen 袍旦身). Its dressing is similar to that of the Red Female mentioned above. It usually represents an elegant woman, an empress, or a wealthy woman in the performance.
16. Young Female (Huadan Shen 花旦身). Ceng Ruilun possesses two Young Female puppets. In the performance of the *Furen Zhuan*, Lin Jiuniang 林九娘 and Li Sanniang 李三娘 are represented by these two string dolls. They are dressed in a red female garment and an azure female garment respectively. They belong to the *dan* category.
17. Old Female (Laodan Shen 老旦身). This puppet performs the character of a middle age or an old age woman. In the performance of the Legend of the Lady, it is arranged to portray Guanyin. It wears a white robe and her hairdressing is embroidered with lotus flowers.
18. Female Blue (Landan Shen 藍旦身). It belongs to the category of female comic roles (*chou*). This marionette is dressed in a blue or green robe. In some cases, it also wears a mask. In the performance of the *Furen Zhen*, it represents the White Snake Demon (Baishe Jing 白蛇精) or the Queen Mother (Wangmu Niangniang 王母娘娘).
19. Red Jacket (Hong Magua 紅馬褂). This puppet is a military official or a yamen runner in the performance. He wears a pink jacket, red skirt and blue belt. It falls within the category of male roles (*sheng*).
20. Azure Jacket (Lü Magua 綠馬褂). It is dressed in a multi-colored robe and green skirt. It also wears a red belt around the waist. The Azure Jacket performs the character of a military official or a demon. Similar to the Red Jacket, the Azure Jacket belongs to the *sheng* category.

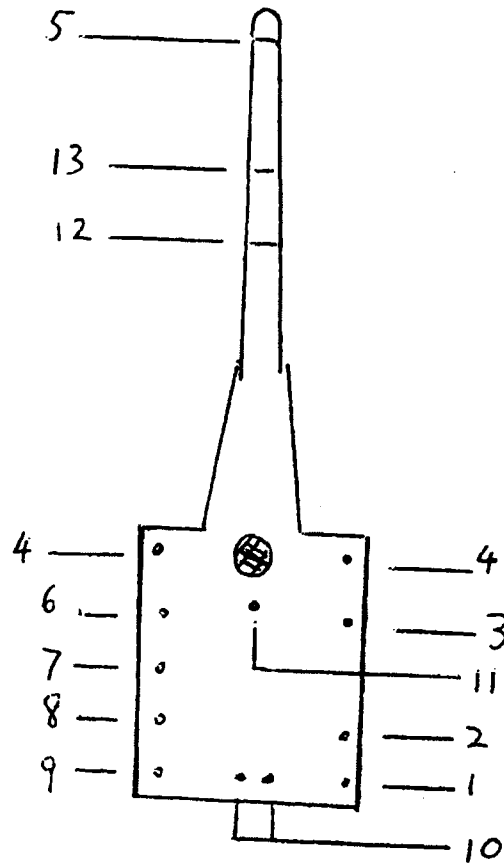
21. Three Flowers (Sanhua Shen 三花身). It belongs to the *chou* category. The Three Flowers wears a black garment and a pair of black trousers. It often represents a goblin or a poor man in the performance.
22. Rank-and-filer (Bingding Shen 兵丁身). Ceng Ruilun possesses two rank-and-filer bodies. They belong to the *za* category (miscellaneous roles). They wear multi-colored skirts, and blue or pink jackets. Poor people and rank-and-filers are represented by these marionettes. In the performance of the *Furen Zhuan*, they are arranged to portray small demons.

It is usual for a marionette to have nine to sixteen strings, which are attached to different parts of the body. These strings are tied to a control known as *zhubei* 竹杯 (bamboo board), which measures twenty-seven centimeters to twenty-nine centimeters in length. “The marionette has pins in the sides of the head above the ears and below the headgear. Life strings (*mingxian* 命線) are attached to these pins and they are directly connected to the control.” The control is a flat bamboo board with a hook to hang the marionette to the side of the stage. (cf. Ruizendaal 1999, 118). Unlike the Quanzhou marionettes that have round hooks, the puppets of the Huacheng Tang have v-shaped hooks (Ye 1995, 107 – 109).

Appendix One

The Control of Great Lord Tian (Da Tian Gong 大田公, Huacheng Tang 華成堂)

Diagram 1



The marionette of Lord Tian has a number of strings. These are hand string (1), left elbow string (2), left foot string (3), life strings (4), back string (5), right foot string (6), right elbow string (7), palm string (8) and finger string (9), belly strings (10), mouth string (11), string for drawing back the hands (12) and waist string (13).

Source: Ye 1995, 111.

Appendix Two

The Marionettes of the Hall of Ten Thousand Happiness (Wanfu Tang 萬福堂)

Mr. Wang Hua 王華 (the impresario of the Wangfu Tang of Huang Jing Shan Village at Qingshui Township in central western Fujian) owns a marionette ensemble. The standard number of puppets is usually eighteen, twenty-four, or thirty-six. However, Mr. Wang possesses more than thirty-six marionettes due to the influence of the *Luantan* plays. A string doll measures about seventy centimeters to seventy-six centimeters in length. These are divided into five role categories: *sheng*, *dan*, *jing*, *chou* and *tongzi* 童子 (child roles). Since Mr. Wang Hua purchased his marionette ensemble from Shanghang County in 1978, the structure of his puppets is similar that of Mr. Ceng Ruilun's marionettes. For example, each of Mr. Wang Hua's puppets is composed of three parts: head, torso and limbs. The head is made of camphor wood and the torso is a framework made of bamboo. The limbs are either made of paper or wood. The right hand and the left hand are also known as *wenshou* and *wushou* respectively. In addition, all the marionette and stage instruments are kept in the *wenlong* and *wulong* (civil and military baskets). Mr. Wang also possesses many stage instruments, such as banners, horse whips, chairs, tables, weapons, cups and fans. The main marionettes are:

1. The Marionette Deity of Lord Tian (Tian Gong Shen'ou 田公神偶). The puppet is about eighty-five centimeters in length. It has only eight strings and thus is far more restricted in its movements than other marionettes. Its face is red and a pair of long white feathers are stuck onto its head. It wears a headgear and red robe with long white sleeves covering the hands. This marionette is worshipped as a patron deity by the marionettists. In order to expel evil spirits or demons, it is hung at the center of the stage before the performance begins and at the time when there are intervals. The Tian Gong Shen'ou is not arranged to portray any characters onstage.
2. The Three Lords of Tian (San Tian Gong 三田公). These are the Da Tian Gong 大田公 (the Eldest Lord Tian), the Er Tian Gong 二田公 (the Second Lord Tian) and the San Tian Gong 三田公 (the Third Lord Tian). They belong to the *chou* category. The Da Tian Gong wears a pair of straw sandals. In the performance of the ritual play *Haiyou Ji* 海遊記 (Records of Sea Travels),⁵⁸⁰ Chen Haiqing is represented by this marionette. The puppet is dressed in a black ritual gown that is shorter at the front than at the back. It wears a bound crown with five sections. Under the gown, it also puts on a red skirt with

⁵⁸⁰ The *Furen Zhuan* (the Legend of the Lady) is also known as *Haiyou Ji* (Records of Sea Travels).

a red belt tied at the waist. The Er Tian Gong and San Tian Gong are barefooted and dressed in black or blue garments of the lower classes. Their mouths and eyes can be moved by manipulating the proper strings. It is important to point out that whenever a new marionette ensemble is made, the Three Lords of Tian and the Tian Gong Shen'ou mentioned above have to be consecrated so that they would be infused with the spiritual forces of the deities that they represent. In the ritual, auspicious materials, such as five cereals (*wugu* 五谷), copper bell and sea horse,⁵⁸¹ are put into a red hop-pocket. Each of these four marionettes has a red hop-pocket inside the torso.

3. Official (Guansheng Shen 官生身). Mr. Wang Hua possesses two Official puppets. They wear red ceremonial robes and represent officials in the performance. They fall within the category of male roles.
4. Yellow Robe (Huangpao Shen 黃袍身). This marionette is dressed in a yellow ceremonial robe with dragons embroidered on it. Similar to the tradition of the Huacheng Tang, the Yellow Robe is an emperor with or without a beard. It belongs to the *sheng* category.
5. Red Robe (Hongpao Shen 紅袍身). In the performance, it is a high ranking official with or without a beard. The Red Robe, which belongs to the *sheng* category, is dressed in a ceremonial robe.
6. Black Robe (Heipao Shen 黑袍身). Similar to the tradition of the Huacheng Tang, the Black Robe is a painted face character with a full black beard. It wears a black ceremonial robe and a gauze hat with long wings at side. This marionette is arranged to portray Lord Bao (Bao Gong) in the performance of the *Haiyou Ji*.
7. White Robe (Baipao Shen 白袍身). This marionette usually acts the character of a loyal official. It falls within the category of male roles. The White Robe wears a white ceremonial robe, an official cap and a white beard. It represents Xu Xun 許遜 (Xu Jiulang 許九郎) in the performance of the *Haiyou Ji*.
8. Azure Robe (Lüpaopao Shen 綠袍身). This marionette belongs to the *sheng* category. It wears an azure ceremonial robe. In the performance of the *Haiyou Ji*, the Azure Robe is arranged to portray an eunuch.

⁵⁸¹ The five cereals symbolize prosperity. The copper bell is one of the major ritual instruments of the marionettist. The sea horse represents the *shenma* 神馬 (the horse deity) that takes charge of delivering the ritual documents to the celestial deities.

9. Red Armour (Hongjia Shen 紅甲身). In the performance of the *Haiyou Ji*, this puppet represents a celestial general. Its face is red. It wears a helmet and a red armour that is decorated with four small pennons (worn on the back of warriors). In some cases, the Red Armour is also dressed in a black armour.
10. Azure Armour (Lüjia Shen 綠甲身). The Azure Armour performs the character of Zhang Shengjun 張聖君 (the Sage Lord Zhang) in the performance of the *Haiyou Ji*. Its face is also black and its long black hair flowing over the shoulders. It wears a full black beard, and an azure armour with four pennons. The azure armour is decorated with a paper snake.
11. White Armour (Baijia Shen 白甲身). Similar to the Red Armour, the White Armour Body is a celestial general in the performance of the *Haiyou Ji*. It wears a helmet and a white armour that is decorated with four small pennons (worn on the back of warriors).
12. Scholarly Hat (Jinshen 巾身). Mr. Wang Hua has three Scholarly Hat puppets. These puppets, which belong to the category of young male roles, wear ordinary male costumes.
13. Old Male (Laowai Shen 老外身). This marionette belongs to the *sheng* category. It is arranged to portray the Most High Old Lord (Taishang Laojun) and Chen Jieyi 陳界義 (Chen Jinggu and Chen Haiqing's father) respectively. It wears a white beard and a gown which is white, green, or blue in color.
14. Red Jacket (Hong Magua 紅馬褂). It is made up of a red jacket, an official cap and a red skirt. The Red Jacket usually represents a yamen runner or a military official in the performance. It belongs to the *sheng* category.
15. Azure Jacket (Lü Magua 綠馬褂). Similar to the Red Jacket, this string doll is a yamen runner or a military official in the performance. It is made up of an azure jacket, azure skirt and official cap. It also belongs to the *sheng* category.
16. Military Female (Wudan Shen 武旦身). Mr. Wang Hua possesses three Military Female marionettes. They usually wear bound armours with four small pennons on the back. In the performance of the *Haiyou Ji*, they represent Chen Jinggu, Lin Jiugu and Li Sangu respectively. They are dressed in ceremonial robes with long sleeves and shawls. Under their robes, they wear red skirts with white belts tied at their waists. Each of them also wears a bound crown with five sections.

17. Old Female (Laodan Shen 老旦身). It belongs to the *dan* category and performs the character of a middle age or an old age woman. In the performance of the *Haiyou Ji*, the Grandmother of the Pear Mountain (Lishan Laomu 梨山老母) is represented by this marionette. It is usually dressed in an azure gown.
18. Civil Female (Wendan Shen 文旦身). Mr. Wang Hua has three Civil Female marionettes. They all belong to the *dan* category. These marionettes are often arranged to portray young ladies, maids, or gay women. Their dressing is more colourful than that of the Old Female Body.
19. Lady (Guandan Shen 官旦身). This puppet is arranged to portray the wife of a high-ranking official in the performance. It often wears a crown, red ceremonial robe and shawl as a covering for the shoulders.
20. Female Comic (Choudan Shen 丑旦身). The Female Comic is usually a matchmaker or a shrew in the performance. It often wears red or green costumes. Its movement often set people laughing.
21. Child (Tongzi Shen 童子身). Mr. Wang Hua has two child puppets. The Lad is usually made up of a pair of green trousers, and a red jacket with a silk braid. The Girl wears an amaranth costume.

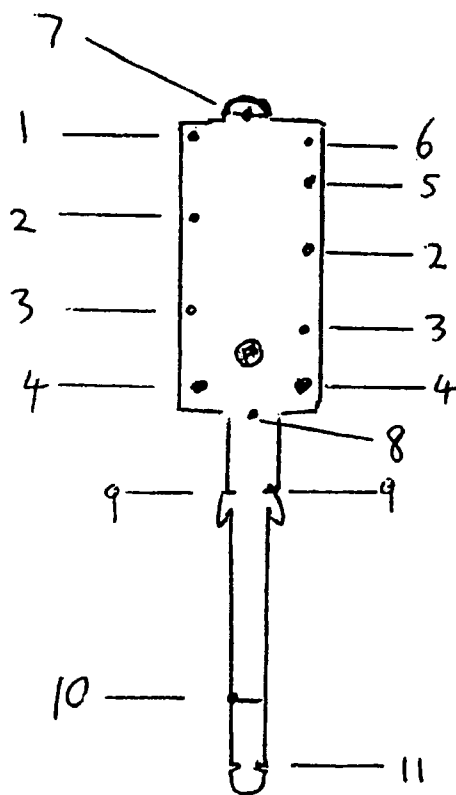
In addition to the marionettes mentioned above, Mr. Wang also possesses many puppets, such as Duck Spirit (Yajing Shen 鴨精身), Tiger (Laohu Shen 老虎身), Crab Spirit (Xiejing Shen 蟹精身), Turtle Spirit (Guijing Shen 龜精身), and Public Errand (Gongcha Shen 公差身) (Extracted from Mary Yeung's manuscripts).

A marionette of the Wanfu Tang usually has eight to sixteen strings that are attached to a control. Similar to the situations of southwestern Fujian, this control is called *zhubei* (bamboo board). Moreover, Mr. Wang Hua's string dolls also have v-shaped hooks. The *zhubei* is around twenty-nine centimeters in length.

Appendix Two

The Control of the Eldest Lord Tian (Da Tian Gong 大田公, Wanfu Tang 萬福堂)

Diagram 2



The strings are military hand string (1), elbow strings (2), foot strings (3), ear string or life strings (4), wrist string (5) and finger string (6), belly string (7), mouth string (8), strings for pulling in the hands (9), bottom string (10) and back string (11).

Source: Mary Yeung's notes.

Appendix Three

Red Boats (*Hongchuan* 紅船)

Red boats⁵⁸² were the most important form of transportation for the Cantonese operatic troupes before the late 1930s. According to the *Local History of Zhongyi Township in Foshan* (*Foshan Zhongyi Xiang zhi* 佛山忠義鄉志),⁵⁸³ red boats already existed during the early Qianlong 乾隆 era (around A.D. 1736). However, they were painted black before and during the tenth year of the Guangxu 光緒 reign (A.D. 1884). The Cantonese opera community called them “black boats (*heichuan* 黑船). Lai Bojiang 賴伯疆 argues that after the Uprising of Li Wenmao 李文茂, Cantonese opera actors painted the opera boats black so as to escape the arrest of the Qing government. After A.D. 1884, the opera boats were painted red again and were commonly known as red boats (cf. Lai 2001, 176).

Red boats were made of matting and bamboo. Their method of “propulsion was by long sweeps or by poling. Later, in the twentieth century, the red boats were towed by small launched.” (Ward 1981, 236) A small Cantonese opera troupe only rented one boat. A large troupe usually rented three boats. They were known as heaven boats (*tainting* 天艇), earth boats (*diting* 地艇) and gaily-painted sampans (*huating* 畫艇) respectively (cf. Ferguson 1988, 92). According to traditions, performers of the comic female role, the young male role, the comic male role and the whole group of musicians would live in the heaven boat. Actors of the military role, the young military role, the third supporting young male role and the third supporting military role would live in the earth boat. The gaily-painted sampan was used for carrying all the scenery.

Most troupe members spent almost a whole year on red boats. According to traditional precepts, Cantonese opera troupes disbanded annually on the first day of the sixth lunar month and then reorganized on the eighteenth of the same month (*da sanban* 大散班). They began their performances on the nineteenth. Troupe members only had a holiday for ten days (*xiao sanban* 小散班) when red boats were moored at Foshan or Canton (from the twentieth of the

⁵⁸² Before the 1940s, red boats were the most important form of transportation for the troupes in Canton Delta. These boats were made of matting and bamboo. According to Chinese beliefs, “red” is considered to be an auspicious color. Hence, these floating hostels of the Cantonese opera troupes are called red boats. Another explanation is that during the late Qing period, many Cantonese opera people involved in anti-Qing movements. The character “*hong* (red),” which is a homonym of the word “*hong*,” represented Hong Xiuquan (the leader of the Taiping movement), Hong Xiguan (an anti-Qing martial art master) and Hongmen (the Hong league that was related to Dr. Sun Yat-sen) (Ward 1981, 250).

⁵⁸³ The *Foshan Zhongyi Xiang zhi* was published in A.D. 1754 (the eighteenth year of the Qianlong reign period).

twelve month to the twenty-ninth of the same month). Moreover, the *wujun hu* 五軍虎 (the tiger of five armies)⁵⁸⁴ was responsible to rear a cock, which was known as *hua hong ji* 花紅雞 (the Flowery Red Cock). It is believed that if the cock was stout and strong, it would bring good fortune to the troupe in the coming year. Otherwise, the troupe would be fraught with grim possibilities. Moreover, when an opera troupe was newly formed on the nineteenth of the sixth month, the *wujun hu* also took charge of cutting the comb of the cock and sprinkling its blood on the signboard of the troupe.

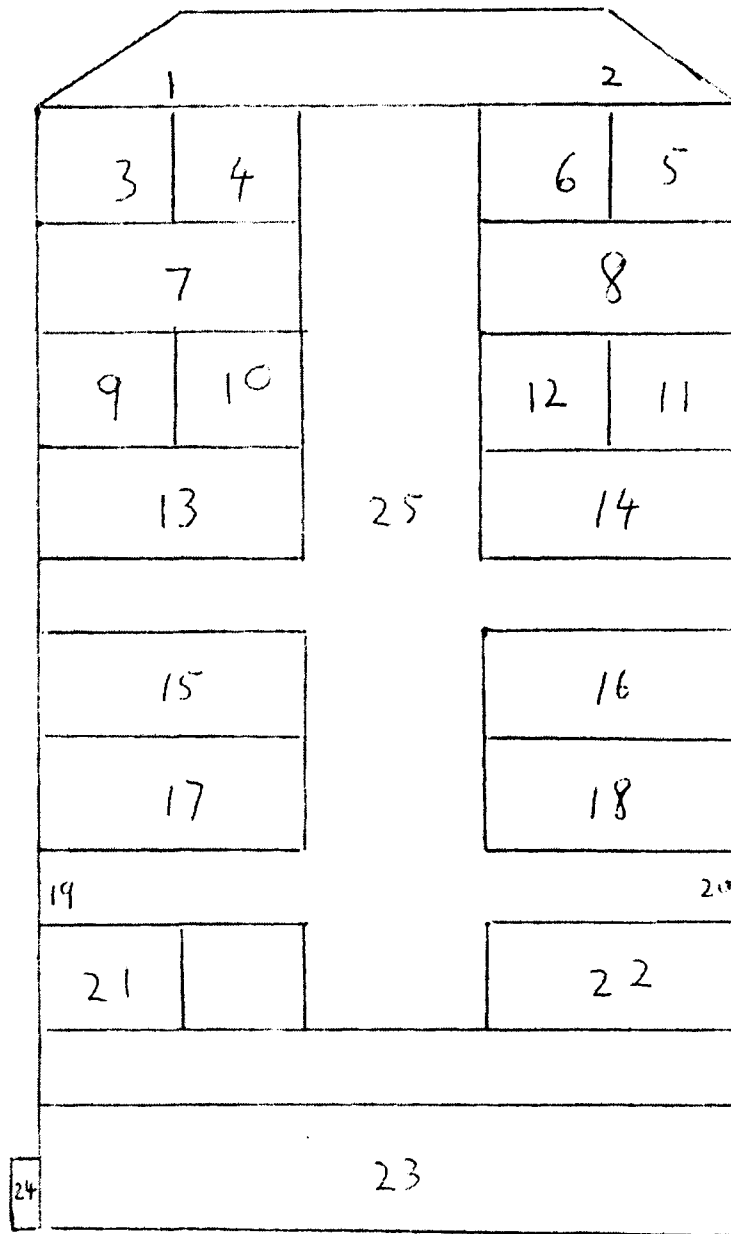
Bunks were well allocated annually by drawing lots fifteen day after the first performance. All the troupe members would first elect “four great head persons (*sida touren* 四大頭人)” who were responsible for dealing with all problems of the whole troupe. Then, names of the bunks were written on strips of paper and put in the boat’s rice bushel. Each candidate took a turn to pick out a strip of paper by using a pair of chopsticks. Owing to this lucky draw method, many senior or famous troupe members would pick bad bunks. In order to have more comfortable living places, they would usually use money to exchange for better bunks with some junior members who had drawn good places (Ward 1981, 224).

In A.D. 1937, all red boats were commandeered by the Japanese army. They were bombed during the Second World War. Since then, the custom of sailing in red boats no longer exists.

⁵⁸⁴ The *wujun hu* is the best acrobat of a Cantonese opera troupe.

Appendix Three

Diagram 3: The Layout of the Heaven Boat
Bow



Sources: Wu 1993, 12 – 20 ; cf. Ward 1981, 255.

Appendix Three

Description of the Compartments of the Heaven Boat

1. Lower Hand's Place (*Xiaoshou Wei* 下手位): one single bunk
2. Great Trunk Store (*Daxiang Tou* 大箱頭): one mobile bunk for two persons
3. The Place of Bearing Up the Cryptomeria (*Tuoshan Wei* 托杉位): one single bunk
4. Azure Dragon (*Qinglong* 青龍): one bunk for two persons
5. Shoe Basket (*Xieluo* 鞋籬): one single bunk
6. White Tiger (*Baihu* 白虎): one single bunk
7. Hoist Sails Place (*Cheli Wei* 扯捩位): one single bunk on the top and one double bunk at the bottom
8. Bedding Hold (*Shuipu Cang* 睡舖艙): one single bunk on the top and one at the bottom
9. Grasp Pinch (*Zha'nian* 揸捻): one bunk for two persons
10. Mosquito Den (*Wendou* 蚊竇): one single bunk
11. Urinating Place (*E'niao Wei* 屙尿位): one bunk for two persons
12. Rubbish Dump (*Laji Wei* 垃圾位): one single bunk
13. Cross-ways Cabin (*Shizi Cang* 十字艙): one single bunk on the top and one double bunk at the bottom
14. Cross-ways Cabin (*Shizi Cang* 十字艙): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom
15. Cross-ways Cabin (*Shizi Cang* 十字艙): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom
16. Cross-ways Cabin (*Shizi Cang* 十字艙): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom
17. Water Cabin (*Shuicang* 水艙): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom
18. Bedding Hold in Front of the Shrine (*Shenqian Shuipu* 神前睡舖): one double bunk on the top and one at the bottom
19. Entrance to the Water Cabin (*Shuicang Kou* 水艙口)
20. Shrine (*Shenwei* 神位)
21. Rice Store (*Migui* 米櫃): one single bunk on the top

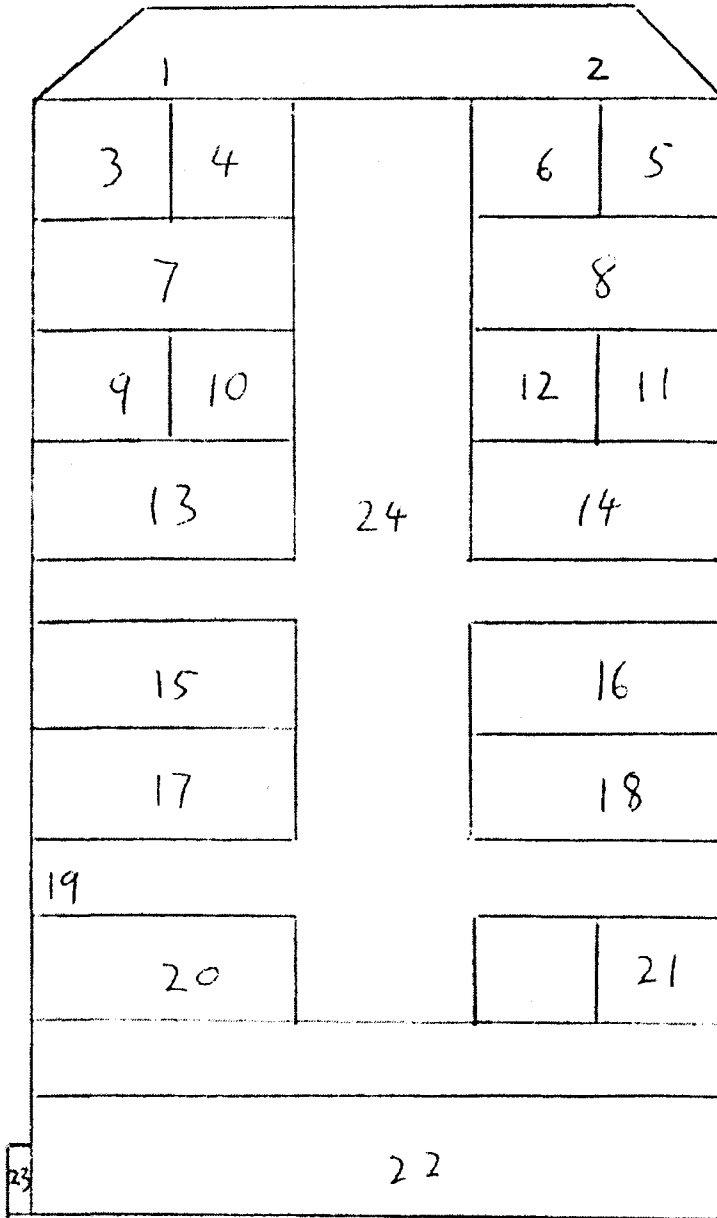
22. Prince Place (*Taizi Wei* 太子位): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom
23. Galley (*Chucang* 廚艙)
24. Toilet (*Cesuo* 廁所)
25. Catwalk (*Shajie* 沙街)

Sources: Wu 1993, 12 – 20; cf. Ward 1981, 255.

Appendix Three

Diagram 4: The Layout of the Earth Boat

Bow



Sources: Wu 1993, 12 - 20; cf. Ward, 1981: 255.

Appendix Three

Depiction of the Compartments of the Earth Boat

1. Lower Hand's Place (*Xiaoshou Wei* 下手位): one single bunk
2. Great Trunk Store (*Daxiang Tou* 大箱頭): one mobile bunk for two persons
3. The Place of Bearing Up the Cryptomeria (*Tuoshan Wei* 托杉位): one single bunk
4. Azure Dragon (*Qinglong* 青龍): one bunk for two persons
5. Shoe Basket (*Xieluo* 鞋籬): one single bunk
6. White Tiger (*baihu* 白虎): one single bunk
7. Bedding Hold (*Shuipu Cang* 睡舖艙): one single bunk on the top and one at the bottom
8. Hoist Sails Place (*Cheli Wei* 扯捩位): one single bunk on the top and one double bunk at the bottom
9. Grasp Pinch (*Zha'nian* 揸捻): one bunk for two persons
10. Rubbish Dump (*Laji Wei* 垃圾位): one single bunk
11. Urinating Place (*E'niao Wei* 屙尿位): one bunk for two persons
12. Mosquito Den (*Wendou* 蚊窩): one single bunk
13. Cross-ways Cabin (*Shizi Cang* 十字艙): one single bunk on the top and one double bunk at the bottom
14. Cross-ways Cabin (*Shizi Cang* 十字艙): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom
15. Cross-ways Cabin (*Shizi Cang* 十字艙): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom
16. Cross-ways Cabin (*Shizi Cang* 十字艙): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom
17. Bedding Hold in Front of the Shrine (*Shenqian Shuipu* 神前睡舖): one double bunk on the top and one at the bottom
18. Water Cabin (*Shuicang* 水艙): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom
19. Shrine (*Shenwei* 神位)
20. Prince Pounce (*Taizi Wei* 太子位): one double bunk on the top and one single bunk at the bottom

21. Rice Store (*Migui* 米櫃): one single bunk on the top
22. Galley (*Chucang* 廚艙)
23. Toilet (*Cesuo* 廁所)
24. Catwalk (*Shajie* 沙街)

Sources: Wu 1993, 12 - 20; cf. Ward, 1981: 255.

Appendix Four

The Six Great Pillars (*Liu Da Taizhu* 六大臺柱)

The Six Great Pillars is a role classification system of Cantonese opera. During the early Qing period, Master Zhang Wu 張五 arranged Cantonese operatic roles into ten different types. In the early 1930s, Xue Juexian, one of the greatest artists of Cantonese opera in the twentieth century, simplified and modified the ten roles into a system of six major roles which is still practiced by Cantonese opera performers up to the present. It is better known as the Six Great Pillars System. The six role types are:

1. Civil-Military (Wenwu Sheng 文武生). This refers to the principal male role. Performers of this role type usually act as scholars and marshals.
2. Principal Female Role (Zhengyin Huadan 正印花旦). Players of this role type often impersonate ladies, female generals and gay women.
3. Supporting Male Role (Xiao Sheng 小生). Performers of this role type usually act as young men of different characterizations. They can be young warriors, young scholars and young civilians.
4. Supporting Female Role (Erbang Huadan 二幫花旦). Actors of this role type often impersonate young ladies of different characterizations. They can be young female warriors, ladies or maids.
5. Military Role (Wu Sheng 武生). Performers of this role type often perform male military generals.
6. Comic Role (Chou Sheng 丑生). Actors of this role type usually perform civil or acrobatic comedians who improvise comic episodes in order to entertain the audience.

All the technical terms of the Six Great Pillars mentioned above are translated by Professor Bell Yung (Yung 1989, 20 – 21)

Appendix Five

The Story of Delivering an Immortal (*Duxian Ji* 度仙記)

Summary of the Play

The leading character of this play is Jiao Mang 蕉蟒. One day, when Guanyin was enjoying the beautiful scenery in Nanhai 南海, she saw a boa in Mt. Daji 大吉山. It was eating banana leaves. This snake, which kept a vegetarian diet, was originally an elixir of the Immortal Master of Lotus Leaf (Heye Xianshi 荷葉仙師). The immortal lost his elixir when he moved from Mt. Daji to the Grotto of Purple Clouds (Ziyun Dong 紫雲洞). Many years later, this elixir turned into a boa. Guanyin sprinkled several drops of sweet dew on the boa and transformed it into a man. She also named him Jiao Mang and bestowed upon him the four senses. However, she forgot to give him the sense of hearing. Jiang Mang went to the Grotto of Purple Clouds and acknowledged Heye Xianshi as his master. Since the Ziyun Dong was too small for both of them, Heye Xianshi told Jiang Mang to go to the Grotto of the Red Cliff (Chibi Dong 赤壁洞) in Mt. Wenbi 文筆峰 (Fuqing County) to cultivate the Way. He also gave him a fire elixir and ordered him to subdue Huang Hou 黃猴 and Bai Tu 白兔, two goblins that often did harm to the people in Fuqing area. After he arrived at Mount Wenbi, Jiao Mang transformed the fire elixir into an immortal peach and succeeded to lure the two goblins to swallow it. He then chanted a spell and they immediately had a severe pain in their bellies. The two goblins begged Jiao Mang to forgive them. They promised to abandon evil ways and became his subordinates.

Three days later, two bandits who were called Yang Tong 楊通 and Li Shi 李石 surrendered themselves to Jiao Mang and became his assistants. Li Canghai 李滄海, Heye Xianshi's fellow apprentice, went to Mount Wenbi. He also wanted to occupy the Grotto of the Red Cliff. While he and Jiao Mang were struggling for the cave, Heye Xianshi appeared and acted as an intermediary. They finally settled the dispute and lived together in the grotto peacefully.

Jiao Mang's religious name was Jiao Waiping 蕉外平. Li Canghai, who once saw the lovers' destiny book (*yinyuan bu* 姻緣簿) of the Matchmaker (Yuelao 月老), remembered that Jiao's religious name appeared in the book. There was also a poem in it that reads as follows, "Jiao Waiping who [lives] in the Grotto of Red Cliff will marry Sanniang 三娘 (*née* Liu 劉氏). In the future, [their] son will be adopted. He will game considerable fame below the hills by

demonstrating his supernatural power to rescue thousands upon thousands of people.”⁵⁸⁵ Li Canghai immediately informed Jiao Mang about this information. He also ordered Huang Hou to go to Li Sanniang’s home at Fuqing 福清 to capture her and bring her to the Grotto of Red Cliff. After being kidnapped to the Chibi Dong, Sanniang was very scared and Li Canghai tried to comfort her. He told her that due to her own fate, she had to marry Jiao Mang. She would meet her elder brother (Liu Sunli 劉孫禮) again in the future. After listening to what he said, Sanniang had no choice but agree to marry Jiao Mang. In order to rescue his younger sister, Liu Sunli abstained from meat for three years and went to Mt. Longhu 龍虎山 to learn the Daoist methods from the Celestial Master. In order to stop Liu, Li Canhai ordered Huang Hou to disguise himself into a boy servant. On the way to Mt. Longhu, Liu Sunli met this boy servant (Huang Hou) who was selling steamed buns containing dog meat. Since Liu licked his chops when he saw the meat buns, the Celestial Master thought that he was insincere and refused to teach him. Liu had no choice but to return home to abstain from meat for another three years. During this period, Jiao Guanghui 蕉廣慧 (the eldest son of Jiao Mang and Liu Sanniang) was born. Liu Sunli went to see the Celestial Master again three years later. The Celestial Master bestowed liturgical manuals on Liu and told him to study by himself. However, Huang Hou transformed himself into one of Liu’s servants and took away all the liturgical manuals. After being deceived by Huang Hou once again, Liu was very angry and became very ill. Li Canghai sent Jiao Mang to give an immortal pill to Liu’s servant. Liu did not know who offer him the drug. He took it and soon recovered from illness.

Jiao Mang and Liu Sanniang already had three sons. The second son was known as Jiao Guanghua 蕉廣化 and the third one was called Jiao Guangli 蕉廣利. Liu Sunli undertook the journey to Mt. Longhu again. He stayed on the mountain for six years and finally succeeded to learn the Daoist methods. The Celestial Master gave him three talismans and the precious sword of seven constellations (*qixing baojian* 七星寶劍). He forbade Liu to use the sword to kill his friends and relatives; and anyone who welcomed him. Following the instructions of the Celestial Master, Liu burnt the talismans on the way to the Grotto of Red Cliff. Li Canghai immediately sensed the strong smell of these burning talismans. He ordered Jiao Mang and all his family members to give a warm welcome to Liu Sunli outside the grotto.

⁵⁸⁵ 赤壁洞中蕉外平，劉氏三娘配為婚，日後山下當兒子，赫赫威靈救萬民。

[When he saw Liu], Li Canghai asked, “You keep on saying that [you have to] kill [all of us]. Can you remember that your master told you not to kill your relatives and friends?”⁵⁸⁶

“Who’s your relative?” Liu Sunli said [in an interrogatory tone].⁵⁸⁷

[Li said], “Your younger sister and brother-in-law are here. [I am] sure that [you] don’t dare kill [them].”⁵⁸⁸

[Liu then asked], “Who’s your friend?”⁵⁸⁹

“Your brother-in-law formally acknowledged me as his master. In other words, I and you are friends of the Way. You also dare not kill [me]. Your three nephews are now kneeling down and greeting you cordially. Do you dare to kill [them]?” [Li asked].⁵⁹⁰

With mixed feelings of sorrow and joy, Liu Sunli forgave Jiao Mang and the whole family reunited. Since he and his wife had no children, Liu adopted Jiao Guangli, the youngest son of Jiao Mang. Later, both Liu and his wife achieved immortality and ascended to heaven. The Jade Emperor appointed Liu as the Immortal Master who Transmits Memorials (Chuanbiao Xianshi 傳表仙師). Jiao Guangli returned to the Chibi Dong.

By the end of the Tang dynasty, Li Canghai sent Jiao Mang’s three sons to assist the court to put down the Huang Chao 黃巢 rebellion. They caught Huang Chao and tied him outside the front gate of the imperial palace. Unwilling to accept any rewards, they wrote the following poem:

There is an immortal in the Grotto of Red Cliff.

One can only see the gongs and drums but not the people.

Defeating the three brothers of Huang Chao,

we protect the country for myriad years⁵⁹¹ (Liu 2002, 150).

Mounting the clouds and riding the mist, they returned to Mt. Wenbi and continued to live in seclusion. Many years later, Fuqing County affected by drought for three years and many local people died of famine. Jiao Guangli went to see the Dragon King (Longwang 龍王) and asked him why there was no rain in Fuqing for three consecutive years. The Dragon King refused to grant rain since the Jade Emperor did not order him to do so. Without the permission of the Celestial Court, Guangli broke the water store and released the dragon that was capable of

⁵⁸⁶李滄海問：「你口口聲聲喊殺，師傅交代你親友不殺有沒有記住？」

⁵⁸⁷劉孫禮說：「與你甚麼親？」

⁵⁸⁸「你小妹、妹夫在此，肯定是不敢殺的。」

⁵⁸⁹「什麼是友？」

⁵⁹⁰「你的妹夫拜我為師，我與你即是道友，也是不敢殺的。你的三個外甥在此跪迎你，你敢殺嗎？」

⁵⁹¹赤壁洞中一神仙，只見鑼鼓不見人，征了黃巢三兄弟，護得江山萬萬年。

bestowing rain upon the people of the Fuqing district. Since he violated the laws of heaven, the Dragon King sent three memorials to the Celestial Court in order to make an accusation against him. Liu Sunli received these memorials but did not present them to the Jade Emperor. Hence, the Dragon King did not receive any reply from the Jade Emperor. He then sent her three daughters, Ao Long 敖龍, Ao Feng 敖鳳 and Ao Ji 敖姬, to the Grotto of Red Cliff to capture Jiao Guangli. However, all of them were captured by Guangli and his two elder brothers. The Dragon King was so angry that he sent shrimp soldiers and crab generals to the Chibi Dong to rescue her daughters. Huang Hou, Bai Tu and other subordinates of Jiao Guangli met the severe attack of the aquatic forces. The battle lasted seven days and nights. The Immortal of the Golden Dipper (Taibai Jinxing 太白金星) reported this dispute to the Jade Emperor and Liu Sunli presented the Dragon King's three memorials to him. The Jade Emperor remembered that since he got drunk, he forgot to order the Dragon King to grant rain to the Fuqing district. Three days in heaven were equal to three years in the mundane world. The Jade Emperor thought that Guangli had great contributions to the mortal world. Owing to his arrangement, the three daughters of the Dragon King were betrothed to Guangli and his two brothers. As a result, enemies became relatives by marriage. Moreover, due to Guangli's merits, Jiao Mang was granted the title of the Heavenly King who Protects the State and Saves the People (Huguo Jiumin Tianwang 護國救民天王). His wife, Liu Sanniang, was given the title of the Lady of the First Rank (Yipin Furen 一品夫人). The three sons and their wives (the Dragon King's three daughters) were conferred the titles of Three Sacred Men (San Shenjun 三神君) and Three Princesses (San Gongzhu 三公主) respectively. Li Canghai was also conferred the title of the Master of Great Auspiciousness (Laoxiang Shi 老祥師) (Liu 2002, 147 – 151).

Appendix Six

Great Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Flower Mountain

(*Xianghua Shan Da Heshou* 香花山大賀壽)

The script of the auspicious play *Xianghua Shan Da Heshou* is recorded in the *Kunqu daquan yueju changyong paizi Gaoqiang and fanyin quji* 崑曲大全: 粵劇常用牌子高腔梵音曲集 (*A Complete Collection of Kun Arias: Fixed Tunes, Gaoqiang and Buddhist Music That are Constantly Used in Cantonese opera*, edited by Wong Toa 黃滔 in 1996),⁵⁹² and the *Yueju chuantong yinyue changqiang xuanji* (YCYC) 粵劇傳統音樂唱腔選輯第九冊 (*A Selected Collection Concerning Traditional Cantonese Operatic Vocal Music*, Vol. 9, edited in 1962).⁵⁹³ Except for the description of the characters, the English translation below is based on Wong Toa's version.

Brief Descriptions of the Major Characters

The principal female role acts as Guanyin (heroine).

The principal painted face role acts as Han Zhongli.

The principal male role acts as Lu Dongbin.

The second supporting painted face role acts as Zhang Guolao.

The miscellaneous role acts as Cao Guojiu.

The female comic role acts as Li Tieguai.

The second supporting male role acts as Han Xiangzi.

The third supporting male role acts as Lan Caihe.

The fifth supporting female role acts as He Xiang.

The third supporting painted face role acts as the Celestial Groom.

The principal military role acts as the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea.

The principal old male role acts as the Dragon King of the Southern Sea.

⁵⁹² This book was originally owned by Liang Qiu 梁秋, a prominent musician of Cantonese opera. He kindly lent it to Master Wong Toa during the 1950s. In order to preserve this invaluable material, Master Wong made a handwritten copy of the song texts and the musical notations. In 1996, Master Wong reprinted this handwritten copy in Vancouver, Canada.

⁵⁹³ This collection totally consists of nine volumes, which record the song texts and musical notations of all the plays of Cantonese opera. Prominent Cantonese opera actors, musicians and scriptwriters (such as Feng Yuanchu 馮源初, Liang Qiu and Jiang Lin 姜林) gave oral accounts of these traditional repertoires during the early 1960s. Based on their accounts, the Zhongguo Xiju Jia Xiehui Guangdong Fenhui 中國戲劇家協會廣東分會 (the Guangdong Branch of the Chinese Playwrights' Association) and the Guangdong Sheng Wenhua Ju Xiqu Yanjiu Shi 廣東省文化局戲曲研究室 (the Traditional Operatic Research Unit of the Guangdong Cultural Bureau) published this collectanea (nine volumes) in 1961 and 1962.

The third supporting military role acts as the Dragon King of the Northern Sea.

Three female roles act as Holy Mother Wenshu, Holy Mother Weiling and Holy Mother Puxian respectively.

The principal male comic role acts as Liu Haixian.

The third supporting painted face role acts as the Dragon Subduing Celestial General.

The second supporting painted face role acts as the Tiger Taming Celestial General.

The young male role acts as Wei Tuo.

Eight minor female roles act as the eight immortal maids.

Several martial arts performers act as the small monkeys.

Source: YCYC 1961 – 1962, 1.

The English Translation

Accompanied by the *Paizi*⁵⁹⁴ *Xinshuiling* (New Water Order), Han Zhongli comes onstage; again, when the percussion pattern *Chongtou* (The Rising Prelude)⁵⁹⁵ [commences], Lu Dongbin, Zhang Guolao, Cao Guojiu, Li Tieguai, Han Xiangzu, He Xiang, and Lan Caihe come onstage. With each phrase of the *Chongtou* [pattern], one [immortal] enters. Facing forward, [they perform the sequence] *Yanmen* (Closing the Gate)⁵⁹⁶. As [the actors] form a line, snake fashion, at the front of the stage, they wait until all Eight [Immortals] have entered and then turn around [to face the audience].

Zhongli (speaks): I am Han Zhongli.

Dongbin: I am Lu Dongbin.

Guolao: I am Zhang Guolao.

Guojiu: I am Cao Guojiu.

Tieguai: I am Li Tieguai.

⁵⁹⁴ *Paizi* is also known as fixed tune since it has “relatively preexistent or pre-composed melodies” (Chan 1991, 10) in comparison with the *Banghuang*. *Paizi* originated from *Kunqu* and *Yiyang Qiang*. *Dakaimen* 大開門 (Open Wide the Gate), *Shuidiyu* 水底魚 (Fish in the Water), *Bubujiao* 步步嬌 (The Beauty Steps Forth) and *Fenglaiyi* 鳳來儀 (The Phoenix Comes) are typical examples of *Paizi*.

⁵⁹⁵ *Chongtou* is a type of percussion pattern. “In Cantonese opera, percussion music precedes the actor’s entrance and exit, accompanies the actor’s gestures and stage movements, introduces vocal and speech passages, episodes, scenes and acts.” (Chan 1991, 49) The *Chongtou* percussion pattern is “usually used when a character enters the stage with an urgent message” (Chan 1991, 126 and 360). There are various ways of playing this percussion pattern. In the play *Xianghuashan Da Heshou*, the prominent sounds of the *Chongtou* percussion pattern are: *dik* 的, *ca* 茶, *do* 多, *cing* 呈, *cing* 呈, *cing* 呈, *ca* 茶 ...*deik* 爺, *cing* 呈, *dek* 得, *cing* 呈 (Romanization of these sounds are according to Cantonese dialect) (Chan 1991, xvi - xvii; YCYC 1961 – 1962, 1)

⁵⁹⁶ See the explanation of the sequence *Yanmen* in Appendix Twelve (pp. 197 – 198) of my M.A. thesis, “The Popular Religions of Female Employees in Cantonese Opera.”

Xiangzi: I am Han Xiangzi.

Xiangu: I am He Xiangu.

Caihe: I am Lan Caihe.

Zhongli: Assembled Immortals, Greetings!

Immortals: Greetings!

Li: This is the day appointed for the Compassionate Mother (Guanyin) to obtain the Way. Let us go together to offer our congratulations.

All [immortals]: Please take the lead!

Notes: As the tune *Jiuzhuan* (Ninth Transmutation) starts up, [the eight performers], according to stage instructions⁵⁹⁷, perform the movements *Fanzhuchang* (Reversing the Pig's Bowels), turn round and stand at the front of the stage in a horizontal line. [Then], they all exit the stage at stage left rear.

Notes: First to the opening phrase of the *Paizi Zhuisi* (Pursuing Thought), and then followed by the percussion pattern *Dachongtou* (The Great Rising Prelude)⁵⁹⁸, the Celestial Groom, holding a palm-leaf fan that covers his face, comes out. [When] he moves to the front of the stage, he puts down his fan. [After] taking one look [at the audience], he enters the [backstage]. He rushes back [onstage] and performs the movements *Lashan* (Pulling the Mountain)⁵⁹⁹. [Then], he pauses for a while (*Zajia*) and says:

Sun Wukong, Sun Wukong, practiced cultivation in the Water Curtain Cave. With one somersault I ascend to the Celestial Hall; and with another (miming the movement) descend to the Crystal Palace. I am Sun Wukong (*Erchui*⁶⁰⁰). Today the Compassionate Mother acquires the Way, and I offer my congratulations to her with this immortal peach.

Notes: According to stage instructions, a crowd of small monkeys cross the stage carrying the peach and exit at stage left rear.

Notes: [To the accompaniment of] the *Dachongtou* percussion pattern, the Carp Demon enters, makes a circuit of the stage (*You Yi Wantai* or *Yuantai*), and seats himself at stage left rear. To

⁵⁹⁷ The Chinese character 介(*jie*) means stage instructions.

⁵⁹⁸ The *Dachongtou* percussion pattern comprises more prominent sounds than the *Chongtou* percussion pattern mentioned above. In the ritual opera *Xianghuashan Da Heshou*, the sounds of this percussion pattern are: *deik* 爺, *ca* 茶, *ca* 茶, *cing* 呈, *ca* 茶, *cing* 呈, *ca* 茶, *cing* 呈, *ca* 茶, *cing* 呈, *dik* 的, *lak* 力, *cing* 呈, *dek* 得, *cing* 呈, *cing* 呈, *ca* 茶.... (YCYC 1961 – 1962, 7).

⁵⁹⁹ The *Lashan* is a kind of arm movement which starts “with the left hand (palm up) below the right (palm down), then moves the left hand inward and to the right and the right hand outward and to the left, in horizontal circles” (Zung 1937, 115 - 116).

⁶⁰⁰ The *Erchui* (Two Strokes) is a kind of percussion pattern. Its prominent sounds are: *dik* 的, *lak* 力, *cing* 呈, *dek* 得, *cing* 呈, *ca* 茶, *lak* 力, *cing* 呈, *ca* 茶, *lak* 力, *cing* 呈 (YCYC 1961 – 1962, 7).

the accompaniment of the same pattern, the Shrimp Demon comes running onstage. He strikes a fish-clawing pose and also circles the stage. He then seats himself at stage right rear. To the same pattern, the Tortoise Demon comes onstage in pursuit of the shrimp and circles the stage. After [the two demons] fool around for a while, [the Tortoise Demon] seats himself at stage left rear. Then, to the same pattern, the Oyster Demon, played by the female role who wears a ghost mask, enters and comes to stage front. Opening her shell, she looks down at the ground, then enters the backstage.

Notes: The melody *Yidingjin* (One Ingot)⁶⁰¹ commences, played by the horizontal flute, and the Oyster Demon, according to stage instructions, comes back onstage. While the tune *Yidingjin* [is played], the Oyster Demon fools around [first] with the Shrimp Demon, then with the Carp [Demon], and finally with the Tortoise [Demon], after which each returns to his seat. According to stage instructions, the oyster and the shrimp sit together at stage right rear.

Notes: To the melody *Suipai* (Petty Fixed Tune)⁶⁰², four soldiers come onstage wearing small demon masks and vests on which the word “courageous” is embroidered. They hold in their hands night illuminating pearls and corals. They perform the sequence *Huakaimen* (Flowers Open the Gates)⁶⁰³ and then stand still. The Four Dragon Kings enter.

The East Dragon: I am Ao Guang, the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea.

The South Dragon: I am Ao Shun, the Dragon King of the Southern Sea.

The West Dragon: I am Ao Xiang, the Dragon King of the Western Sea.

The North Dragon: I am Ao Bian, the Dragon King of the Northern Sea.

The East Dragon: Your Highnesses—please accept my greetings.

Others: Greetings!

The East Dragon: Today is the day when the Compassionate Mother obtains the Way, let us go together to offer our congratulations.

Others: Please take the lead!

⁶⁰¹ The tune *Yidingjin* is often played when the characters are performing comic patternized episodes in a Cantonese opera play.

⁶⁰² The Cantonese opera musicians always play the melody *Suipai* when the characters are attending a banquet in the performance of an opera. In some cases, when the characters cross the stage, the musicians also play this tune in order to accompany the players' movements.

⁶⁰³ For the description of the conventional actions *Huakaimen*, please refer to Appendix Eleven (pp. 194 - 195) of my M.A. thesis (The Popular Religion of Female Employees in Cantonese Opera).

Notes: To the melody *Suipai*, the four virgins, holding salvers, come onstage and perform the sequence *Qidong* (Standing at a Grotto)⁶⁰⁴. [Then], the Three Holy Mothers, Wenshu, Weiling and Puxian, come onstage.

Wenshu: I am Holy Mother Wenshu.

Weiling: I am Holy Mother Weiling.

Puxian: I am Holy Mother Puxian.

Wenshu: Holy Mothers, greetings.

Others: Greetings!

Wenshu: Today is the day when Guanyin attains the Way, [let us] go together to offer our congratulations.

Others: Please take the lead!

Notes: They all enter [the backstage] from stage left rear.

Notes: [To the accompaniment of] the *Dachongtuo* percussion pattern, the Dragon Subduing Celestial General [enters]. He holds a Dragon-luring Pearl and a Diamond Ring (*Jingang Quan*) in his hands. His face and hair dressing are red. He wears a red livery, red snow robe with sleeve cords, red leggings and pointed flower sipping shoes. His hand covers his face, and he comes out to center stage front, lowers his hand, looks up to the sky and exits at stage left rear. He reenters and after performing a routine of movements (*Tiaojia*), he uses the pearl to lead the dragon to come out from stage right rear. They perform the sequence Flowers Open the Gates, make a circuit of the stage, [repeat the sequence] Flowers Open the Gates, approach stage left rear and stand still.

Notes: The Dragon Subduing [General] stands and only after the Big-headed Monk has come onstage striking a bell and beating a drum, does he exit.⁶⁰⁵

Notes: [To the accompaniment of] the *Dachongtuo* percussion pattern, the second painted face role, who impersonates the Tiger Taming Celestial General [enters]. He holds a Diamond Ring in his hand. His face and hair dressing are black. He wears a fighting cap, black livery and crepe belt, black leggings and pointed flower sipping shoes. Over [the black livery], he wears a black long sleeved gown belted with cords. After he has performed a routine of movements, a tiger comes onstage. They perform the sequence Flowers Open the Gates, and make a circuit of the stage. [Then, the Tiger Taming Celestial General] kneels down, mounts the tiger and strikes

⁶⁰⁴ See the explanation of the sequence *Qidong* in Appendix Sixteen (pp. 210 – 211) of my M.A. thesis.

⁶⁰⁵ Amending “goes onstage” to “enters backstage.”

its head several times. [Afterwards], he pursues the tiger around the stage and stands still at stage right rear. He makes his exit after the Big-headed Monk has struck the bell.

Notes: [To the accompaniment of] the *Dachongtou* percussion pattern, Wei Tuo comes onstage, holding a pestle and covering his face. He comes out to center stage front, looks up to the sky and exits. He reenters and after performing a routine of movements and making a speech, he mounts the *Yuhuangchang* (Jade Emperor Platform)⁶⁰⁶ at stage center and looks down.

Notes: Accompanied by the tune *Shuidiyu* (Fish in the Water), played by the conical pipe, the Happy Buddha and the Long Brow Buddha come out from the left and right rear of the stage [respectively]. According to stage instructions, the two stand on either side facing each other and perform a bow. They walk to stage center and bow to each other again. [Then] they go to the left and right rear and bow to each other [for the third time]. After they have completed their bows, they enter the backstage. The *Shuidiyu* is played again, the Lame Buddha and the Hunchbacked Buddha come out from the left and right rear of the stage [respectively]. As before, after changing positions and bowing to each other three times, they go offstage. At the third playing of the *Shuidiyu*, a monk with a big head and big belly comes onstage, eyes closed. He walks to the front of stage center, stretches, yawns and rubs his eyes. He opens the door and uses his buttocks to push [open] the [outer] gate. Having come out from the gate, according to stage instructions, he urinates at stage right rear. [When] he has finished, he reenters the monastery gate. He fetches a basin, fills it with water and washes his face. He [then] uses a shoe-brush to brush his teeth. He uses a slip of bamboo as tongue scraper. He bathes and dries his body. Having washed body, feet and face, brushed his teeth and rinsed his mouth, he sprinkles water and sweeps the floor and pours rubbish onto the front of the stage. At stage center, he puts down a glass lantern, fills it with oil and lights it. After offering incense, beating the drum and striking the bell, he makes his exit.

Notes: To the tune *Suipai* or *Xiaokaimen* (Small Opening of the Gate)⁶⁰⁷, the Jade Girl, holding a sweet dew vase, and the Gold Boy⁶⁰⁸, holding a willow branch, lead out the Goddess of Mercy.

⁶⁰⁶ This is a kind of stage property. According to Master Wong Toa, it is formed by two square shaped tables and one chair. The two tables are put onstage side by side. The chair is put on top of them. However, in the 1996 performance, the *Yuhuangchang* was formed by an elongated platform and a chair. The chair was put on top of the platform.

⁶⁰⁷ The tune *Xiaokaimen* is often played when the actors are attending a feast in the performance of a Cantonese opera show.

⁶⁰⁸ According to Chinese common beliefs, the Gold Boy, whose name is Shancai 善才, is a Buddhist bodhisattva. In order to obtain Perfection, he paid tribute to fifty-three prominent Buddhist masters. Since he had worshiped Guanyin, he becomes one of her two guardians.

[The Goddess of Mercy]: Immaculate and reverent, I cultivate myself, cultivate myself. Within the Bodhi Grotto, in the Purple Bamboo Grove, I hear the cries of the world (she ascends her throne). Thanks to the Jade Emperor, I have received an imperial appointment. I am the Universal Savior Guan Shiyin, who rescues those in difficulty and distress, and shows great compassion to those in sorrow (She performs miming gestures). Today being my birthday, all immortals and Buddhas have surely come to offer their congratulations. Gold Boy, Jade Girl (mimes) prepare to serve the sweet dew.

Gold Boy, Jade Girl: We obey!

Notes: [To the accompaniment of] *Suipai*, the Eight Immortals enter and give greetings:

The Compassionate Mother above, we offer our kowtows.

The Goddess of Mercy: Immortals, thanks for your deep obeisance. I return my respect.

Immortals (in unison): We return our respect (according to stage instructions, they return their respect).

Notes: To the percussion pattern *Erchui* (two strokes), [the Eight Immortals] form separate ranks on either side and speak in unison:

We offer our birthday greetings to the [Compassionate] Mother.

Notes: The first pair is Zhongli and Dongbin; the second pair is Guolao and Guojiu; the third pair is Tieguai and Xianzi; the four pair is Xiang and Caihe. According to stage instructions, when each pair goes to stage center to bow and kneel to the Goddess of Mercy, double-reed conical pipes strike up the tune *Liangzhou Xu* (Liangzhou Prelude) [in order to] accompany the Eight Immortals as they bow.

[The Eight Immortals sing]:

On high we protect the Changgeng Star⁶⁰⁹ that illumines far and wide.

Our shouts carry to the Sea Hall filled with tallies⁶¹⁰.

We hold goblets high

As colorful troupe members drunkenly dance.

Happily we fill the cups, as night follows day.

In this world within a jar, we completely forget about growing old.

The Red Gold Cinnabar Mother⁶¹¹ bestows smiles all around, all around.

As if we had mounted phoenixes [and flown to] the Penglai Island.

⁶⁰⁹ The term “Changgeng Star” refers to the Taibai Jinxing 太白金星 (The Golden Dipper).

⁶¹⁰ The term “*choutian haiwu* 筹添海屋” means longevity (Luo 1994 Vol. 5, 1225; Vol. 8, 1273).

⁶¹¹ The Chinese character 妃 (cha) means red.

Who can reckon the meetings of a day?

This morning, here came a jade edict bestowing a title [on her],

Our only wish is that for myriads of years it remain secure and august honored.

She who is on high be secure.

Notes: After the Eight Immortals have completed their obeisance, the Goddess of Mercy speaks:

Excellent! Please retire to the grove, where I will offer my thanks with sweet dew.

Eight Immortals: We accept with thanks! (They exit at stage left rear)

Notes: To the accompaniment of the *Paizi*, the Four Dragon Kings enter. They offer their respect [to Guanyin], saying:

Our respect, Mother!

The Goddess of Mercy: My thanks to you! (Standing opposite to the kings, [all] mime performing an obeisance)

Four Dragon Kings (in unison): Mother, please ascend [the throne]. We are going to offer our greetings.

Notes: After the Four Kings have completed their obeisance to the tune *Suipai*, they rise, form ranks on either side, and stand still.

The Goddess of Mercy: Please enter the grove, [so that I can] return thanks with sweet dew.

Four Dragon Kings (in unison): Heartfelt thanks!

Notes: All four exit together at stage left rear.

Notes: The Three Holy Mothers enter to the tune *Suipai*, and together say:

[Compassionate] Mother, please seat yourself while we perform our kowtows.

The Goddess of Mercy: Let me return thanks for the Holy Mothers' visit.

Three Holy Mothers: We offer our birthday greetings to you, the [Compassionate] Mother.

Notes: Guanyin stands up, with head lowered and hands clasped. After she receives the obeisance of the Three Holy Mothers, she stands up [again].

The Goddess of Mercy: Gold Boy, Jade Girl (They reply "we attend"), prepare sweet dew for the Holy Mothers.

Gold Boy [and] Jade Girl speaks: We obey!

Notes: To the tune *Paige* (Permutation Song)⁶¹², wine is served. Wenshu and Weiling sit at the right and left side facing the audience. Guanyin is seated stage right and Puxian is seated stage left. According to stage instructions, the four drink together.

⁶¹² The tune *Paige* is usually played when the characters are attending a feast in the performance of a Cantonese operatic show.

[Three Holy Mothers sings]:
Holding up the dragon jars⁶¹³,
We drink wildly.
Before the mats, flutes and reed organs play.
We just make a show of our martial spirits and a whole goblet of wine.
As pleasing and plangent songs circle the painted hall,
We offer congratulations to you and the [Jade] Emperor⁶¹⁴ at this birthday banquet.
Wine drips from proffered pot, fragrant everywhere.
On the morrow summon the troops,
For this evening don't miss the fine atmosphere!
Weiling: We request the Mother to make a display of her miraculous transformations; let us see you transform.

The Goddess of Mercy: Alright. Watch me transform. (Exits)

Notes: The drinking table is taken away and replaced with an elongated platform, which is three stories high. According to stage instructions, Wei Tuo sits at the center of the *Yuhuangchang*. Weiling, Wenshu and Puxian, seat themselves in order from top story to bottom.

Notes: A double-reed conical pipe plays the melody *Dababantou* (The First Great Eight Beats).

Notes: Gongs and drums start up, Guanyin immediately comes onstage holding a flywhisk. She performs the *Lashan* and the *Cheshen* (Turning the Body)⁶¹⁵. [Then], she enters the backstage to change her costume.

Notes: Gongs and drums start up, the dragon, at stage right rear, makes a bow, claws extended and resting on his breast. The Gold Boy bows at stage left rear, bows again at stage center, and for the third time at stage right rear. The dragon [performs] the same [actions] as the Gold Boy does. After the Gold Boy has finished his bows, the dragon, according to stage instructions, turns a somersault and enters the backstage.

Notes: The second transformation begins; Guanyin, to the tune *Xianhuadiao* (Immortal Blossoms), enters from stage right rear. According to stage instructions, she performs the

⁶¹³ In my opinion, the term “*longjiang* 龍江” here means dragon jars. In the past, although many Cantonese opera employees often substituted the easy or simple characters for the difficult or complex ones. Hence, the character “*jiang*” may be a substitute for the character “*gang*·缸”.

⁶¹⁴ The meaning of the character “*huang*·皇” is blurred. In my opinion, it stands for the Jade Emperor, according to the content of the text.

⁶¹⁵ *Cheshen* is a kind of conventional action. The player, who impersonates Guanyin, performs this stage movement by turning her body round.

Lashan and the *Yidanbian* (Holding on the Single Side)⁶¹⁶ in order to alter her position [onstage]. [After finishing these movements], she enters the backstage from stage left rear to change her costume.

Notes: Gongs and drums play, the tiger comes out from stage right rear and makes a bow. The Gold Boy bows [to the tiger] at stage left rear. He moves to the stage center and bows [again]. [Then], he bows at stage right rear for the [third time]. The tiger [performs] the same [actions] as the Gold Boy does. After finishing [these movements], the tiger, according to stage instructions, turns a somersault and enters the backstage.

Notes: At the tune *Dangzhou* (Rowing a Boat), according to stage instructions, Guanyin comes out at stage right rear and performs a routine of conventional movements (*Tiaojia*). She [then] enters the backstage from stage left rear to change her costume.

Notes: Gongs and drums play, the Prime Minister comes out from stage right rear and bows to the Gold Boy, who [stands] at stage left rear. He makes a bow at stage center again. He then moves to stage left rear and bows for [the third time]. [Having finished these movements], he turns a somersault and enters the backstage, [as the tiger does].

Notes: At the tune *Baxian Nao Donghai* (The Eight Immortals Make Havoc in the Eastern Sea)⁶¹⁷, Guayin, according to stage instructions, enters at stage right rear and performs the *Lashan*. After finishing [these] arm movements, she enters the backstage to change her costume.

Notes: Gongs and drums start up, the general comes out. He bows at stage right rear, stage center and stage left rear, [as the Prime Minister does]. [Then], he enters backstage. The Gold Boy bows at stage left rear, stage center and stage right rear. After finishing his actions, he turns a somersault [and exits].

Notes: At the melody *Xiu Hebao* (An Embroidered Pouch), Guanyin, according to stage instructions, comes out from stage right rear and performs a series of actions as mentioned earlier. [After finishing the movements], she makes her exit from stage left rear to change her costume.

Notes: Gongs and drums start up, the fishermaid, carrying a fish in her hand, bows at stage right rear, stage center and stage left rear, [as the general does]. The Gold Boy bows at stage left rear, stage center and stage right rear. After finishing his movements, the Gold Boy, according to stage instructions, turns a somersault and [enters the backstage].

⁶¹⁶ According to Master Wong Toa, *Yidanbian* is also known as *Zou Qiaobu* 走俏步 (Walking in Small Pretty Steps). The actress performs this stage convention simply by walking on tiptoe.

⁶¹⁷ In Cantonese opera performances, the melodies *Dangzhou* and *Baxian Nao Donghai* are played when the performers are making circuits or rowing a boat onstage.

Notes: As the melody *Xiannu Muyang* (The Immortal Maiden Shepherds Sheep) commences, Guanyin, according to stage instructions, comes out at stage right rear and performs the stage movements as mentioned earlier. [After] finishing these actions, she makes her exit from stage left rear to change her costume.

Notes: Gongs and drums play [as the woodcutter], according to stage instructions, comes out and bows at stage right rear, stage center and stage left rear, as the fishermaid does. After finishing [his actions], he makes his exit. The Gold Boy, according to stage instructions, bows contrariwise at stage left rear, stage center and stage right rear. [Then], he turns a somersault [and exits].

Notes: As the tune *Xiangshan Heshou* (Birthday Greetings at Fragrant Mountain) plays, Guanyin, according to stage instructions, comes out from stage right rear and performs the actions at mentioned before. After she has finished, she makes her exit from stage left rear.

Notes: Gongs and drums play as the farmer comes onstage. He bows at stage right rear, stage center and stage left rear, [as the woodcutter does]. [Then], he makes his exit. The Gold Boy, according to stage instructions, bows contrariwise at stage left rear, stage center and stage right rear. After finishing these [movements], he turns a somersault [and exits].

Notes: For the eighth transformation, Guanyin comes onstage at stage right rear, performs her movements as before and exits stage left rear. The melody *Jianjianhua* (Cutting Flowers) begins, and to gongs and drums the scholar comes onstage at stage right rear. He bows at stage right rear, center and left rear, as the farmer does. [Then], he makes his exit. The Gold Boy performs bow contrariwise, at stage left rear, center and right rear; he then turns a somersault [and enters the backstage].

Guanyin, attired in formal palace robe, comes onstage and speaks: I have been [performing] transformations, and know that I have not greeted you as I should.

Three Holy Mothers (in unison): Your transformations are unsurpassed in their deftness!

Notes: To the tune *Suipai*, numerous celestial grooms enter carrying a giant immortal peach.

Grooms: Our respect, Compassionate Mother.

The Goddess of Mercy: You need not stand on ceremony, let the banquet begin!

Notes: At the front of the stage, the monkeys use the bowls, chopsticks and ladles provided to serve up the feast, and perform [the action of] drinking wine. They speak after having drunk [the wine].

Notes: After the drinking is over, because there is too much time, the [minor] roles and the [martial arts actors]⁶¹⁸ can add a *Chahua* (Displaying Flowers) sequence—i.e., acrobatics such as a human pyramid of the *Shiba Luohan* (Eighteen Arhats), the *Zhuangzhong* (Striking the Bell) and the *Xiangba* (Elephant Trunk)⁶¹⁹. Female roles can [also] add a *Baihua* (Arranging Flowers) sequence in which each actress holds a flower pot and paper flowers. They perform the *Lashan* and the *Zajia*. [Then, using their flower pots and paper flowers], they display the four great [Chinese] characters: “*tian*”, “*xia*”, “*tai*”, “*ping*” (Peace Reigns Over the World).

Notes: As for the music, the [musicians] can play a little tune to accompany [the movements].

Monkey King: We especially take the immortal peach with us and come [here] to offer our greetings. To the [Compassionate] Mother above, we offer our congratulations!

Notes: After making their obeisance, the monkeys, according to stage instructions, stand up and carry the peach onstage from stage right rear.

The Goddess of Mercy: First hang up the immortal peach.

Notes: According to stage instructions, as the peach is being hung, the tune *Dakaimen* (Open Wide the Gate)⁶²⁰ is played.

The Goddess of Mercy: Summon Immortal Liu Hai to come to see me!

Immortal Liu Hai (from offstage): Coming!

Notes: [Accompanied by] the *Chongtou* percussion pattern, the two gods Peace and Harmony⁶²¹ come onstage first. According to stage instructions, they perform the sequence *Huakaimen* (Flowers Open the Gates) and make a bow to Guanyin. [Then], they stand still at the left rear and right rear of the stage respectively.

Notes: [Accompanied by] the *Dachongtou* percussion pattern, several minor roles come out and perform the sequence *Guidandan* (A Ghost Picul)⁶²². [Then], Immortal Liu Hai comes onstage. He pauses for a while (*Zajia*) and speaks:

Floating, Ya! Floating—Hither and thither I toss gold coins. Free and happy am I, Immortal Liu Hai. If there are some who obtain these [gold coins] of mine, gold and silver will fill their

⁶¹⁸ Besides somersaults, the word *Dafan* also stands for the martial arts performers.

⁶¹⁹ Please refer to Chapter Four (Section 4.2.) for the discussions of the acrobatics *Shiba Luohan*, *Zhuangzhong* and *Xiangba*.

⁶²⁰ The melody *Dakaimen* is usually played when the actors and actresses are performing the patternized episode of welcoming the guests (*YJCQ* 1984, 459).

⁶²¹ One popular legend of these two deities is that in the early Tang dynasty (around A.D. 630), there were two monks, Hanshan 韓山 and Shide 拾得. They were very good friends who always wrote poems. Devotees have worshipped them as deities since the early Qing dynasty (possibly earlier).

⁶²² Please refer to Appendix Seventeen (pp. 212 – 213) of my M.A. thesis for the explanation of the sequence *Guidandan*.

coffers for one thousand years. (*Yichui*)⁶²³ I am, (*Yichui*) Immortal Liu Hai! Guanyin has summoned me, and I must hasten forward. (*Erchui*) [Compassionate] Mother, I offer my kowtows.

The Goddess of Mercy: You need not stand on ceremony.

Immortal Liu Hai: Mother, [you] have summoned me. What is your command?

The Goddess of Mercy: Quickly, toss the gold coins.

Immortal Liu Hai: I obey!

Notes: According to stage instructions, he takes a broom and sweeps the ground, then uses a square dish as a rubbish scuttle. Peace and Harmony assist in sweeping the stage, then walk around the stage once and return to their original positions. When Immortal Liu Hai has finished sweeping, according to stage instructions, he tosses the gold coins. The percussion pattern *Paizitou* (The Fixed Tune Prelude) starts up. For opening the peach, the tune *Sanchunjin* (Three Spring's Brocade) is used, with a single flute accompaniment. [The Goddess of Mercy sings:]
I gaze at the empty orb between earth and sky.

Taking the daily afflictions of the human world,

I add one round to those who come later

And wipe out completely [the suffering of] those who came before.

I laugh that each and every person in the mortal realm has high and ambitions,

That all, on account of the struggle for profit and fame,

Endure toil and moil to the full.

Only Zhang Zifang⁶²⁴ showed spring cinnabar,

Showed spring cinnabar;

And Chijingzi⁶²⁵, with singleness of mind, learned the Way.

I laugh at how Han Xin⁶²⁶, presuming on his ten great acts of merit,

Nonetheless brought upon himself a criminal investigation.

⁶²³ *Yichui* (One Stroke) is a type of percussion pattern. There are eight different ways of playing it. One of the major functions of the percussion music is to introduce vocal and speech passages. With regard to the content of the text, the actor who impersonates Immortal Liu Hai delivers a plain speech. In this case, the percussionists would perform the *Yichui* by playing a single stroke on the small woodblock and a single stroke on the gong. The prominent sounds are: *dik* 的, *cing* 呈.

⁶²⁴ Zhang Zifang 張子房, who was also called Zhang Liang 張良, was a famous strategist who contributed to the foundation of the Western Han dynasty (202 B.C. – A.D.9). After the establishment of the Han dynasty, he left the court and became a hermit.

⁶²⁵ Chijingzi 赤精子 was an immortal during the reign period of Zhuan Xu 顓頊 (c. 2513 – 2435 B.C.). According to historical sources, Zhuan Xu was one of the legendary emperors in ancient China.

⁶²⁶ Han Xin 韓信 was a native of Huaiyin 淮陰 in the late Qin and the early Han dynasties (around 3rd century B.C.). Liu Bang 劉邦 (Han Gaozu 漢高祖), the first emperor of the Western Han dynasty (r. 306 – 195 B.C.), appointed him great marshal. Later, he was executed by Empress Nü 女后 (wife of Han Gaozu).

Looking back at a moment's happiness,
 Only those who are confused strive and seek after power, on account of wine, crave women.
 They must not; must not.
 Again, I only see how men in the mortal realm have one hundred years of happiness.
 How can they know that in the ranks of immortals?
 When leisure comes, [there are those who] regret that they had not long since penetrated the
 meditation texts, recited the Heart (or Hridaya) Sutra⁶²⁷.
 Paramita, Paramita.
 Again, all I hear is the music of immortals above the clouds,
 Gold chimes, striking in unison.
 Again, I hear the oriole's song, yemo'a,
 Liduo and Boluo,
 Juduomo,
 Chaoliluo,
 Qiaolishupo'a,
 Shupo'a,
 Po'a.
 Leaving the imperial palace,
 Leaving the imperial palace,
 They experience all manner of toil and only then attain the proper reward.
 Branches of the willow disperse sweet dew,
 Which saves all living beings and gets rid of retribution.
 Those who believe in me wander free and easy in the happy land;
 Those who don't believe, find it difficult to escape from their sins.
 Have they never heard that, in the end, good and evil are recompensed?
 It is just like bees making honey, silkworms spinning cocoons, moths beating at the flame;
 I urge mankind to repent sooner rather than later.
 It is good to Chant "[A]mi to [Fo]" several times.
 After one hundred years,
 They will be free and happy, free and happy.
 Flowers are in full bloom in the Bodhi tree.
 The tree's tips are evergreen in all the four seasons.

⁶²⁷ According Buddhist beliefs, people can exorcise evil spirits when they recite the Hridaya or Heart Sūtra.

For ten thousand years, it does not grow old.
The sun shines on all the buds, which gleam with an auspicious light,
Gust and gust of fragrant wind bestows long [life],
Bestows long life of thousands upon thousands [of years].
Vast flows the sea of blessings;
The five elders of Fragrant Mountain all arrive together.
Respectfully, they bless [the mortals] with prosperity and long life span,
Like the heaven and earth⁶²⁸ that never grow old.

Notes: While opening the peach, the *Paizi* tune is played, and gold coins are tossed from inside of the peach. After the [musicians] have finished playing the *Paizi* tune, the Goddess of Mercy speaks:

You immortals and Buddhas, take your original places.

All (in unison, as they leave the stage): Holy long life without end!

Notes: According to stage instructions, all [immortals and Buddhas] go offstage. Guanyin, the Gold Boy and the Jade Girl bring up the rear as all exit.

Sources: Wong 1996, 113 – 128.

⁶²⁸ The characters *qian* and *kun* here may stand for heaven and earth.

Appendix Six

The Chinese Text of *Xianghua Shan Da Heshou* 香花山大賀壽

第一枝：新水令

註：排子起出漢鍾離，再沖頭出呂洞賓、張果老、曹國舅、李鐵拐、韓湘子、何仙姑、藍彩和，每一句沖頭上一個，正面掩面埋⁶²⁹正面台一條蛇企定，待出齊八人後轉身。

鍾離白：吾乃漢鍾離是也。

洞賓白：吾乃呂洞賓是也。

果老白：吾乃張果老是也。

國舅白：吾乃曹國舅是也。

鐵拐白：吾乃李鐵拐是也。

湘子白：吾乃韓湘子是也。

仙姑白：吾乃何仙姑是也。

彩和白：吾乃藍彩和是也。

鍾離：眾仙請了！

眾白：請了！

離白：今日慈悲娘娘得道之期，一齊前往拜賀！

眾白：有禮，請！

註：起(九轉)排子，轉身向台口反豬腸，衣邊入齊介。

註：(追思)排字頭一句，連隨大沖頭，馬騮精拿葵扇遮面，上至台口放下扇一睇⁶³⁰復入，再沖拉山扎架白：

孫悟空、孫悟空，修練在水濂洞，一翻打上靈霄殿，再打(介)打下水晶宮，吾乃孫悟(二才)；今日慈悲娘娘得道之期，拿仙桃去恭賀。

註：眾小猴抬桃過場衣邊下介。

⁶²⁹ The Chinese character “*mai* 埋” means “*zoudao* 走到。”

⁶³⁰ The Chinese character “*tei* (*di*) 睇” means “*kan* 看。”

註：大沖頭鯉魚精上遊一完台，衣邊坐定。大沖頭蝦精追上做爪魚狀，也追一完台，雜邊坐定。大沖頭龜精追蝦上一完台，作戲弄一回後，衣邊坐定。大沖頭蚌精花旦飾，戴魁面上，到正面台口，打開蚌一睇地下，走番入場。

註：再起（一錠金）用橫蕭吹，蚌精再上介；蚌精在（一錠金）時與蝦耍戲，再同魚，三同龜玩完後，各歸原位，蚌與蝦同坐雜邊介。

註：（碎牌）四兵戴小鬼面著勇字背心，手捧夜明珠、珊瑚先出，花開門企定，四龍王上。

東龍白：吾乃東海龍王敖廣是也。

南龍白：吾乃南海龍王敖順是也。

西龍白：吾乃西海龍王敖詳是也。

北龍白：吾乃北海龍王敖邊是也。

東龍白：列位龍王請了！

眾白：請了！

東龍白：今日慈悲娘娘得道之期，齊去恭賀！

眾白：有禮，請！

註：（碎牌）四童女，捧金杯盤上企洞，文殊、威靈、普賢三聖母上。

文殊白：吾乃文殊聖母是也。

威靈白：吾乃威靈聖母是也。

普賢白：吾乃普賢聖母是也。

文殊白：聖母請了！

眾白：請了！

文殊白：今乃觀音得道之期，一齊去恭賀！

眾白：有禮，請！

註：衣邊全下。

註：大沖頭降龍神將手持龍珠，紅面，紅頭陀，金剛圈，紅坐馬，紅雪襖，接袖絮索，紅腳^搯英咀鞋，手遮面出到正面台口，放低手，一睇天復入，再跳架完，雜邊將珠引龍上，花開門，走大完台，花開門行埋衣邊企定。

註：降龍企至和尚上敲鐘擊鼓後才入場。

註：大沖頭二花面飾伏虎神將，手持黑，中軍帽卡，黑面，黑頭陀，金剛圈⁶³¹，黑坐馬，縐帶，黑腳^搯英咀鞋，外披黑海清絮索上，跳架完，虎上，花開門，走一完台，打虎跪低騎虎，在虎頭釘虱^馱完，追虎走完台，企埋雜邊企定，等大和尚敲鐘後入場。

註：大沖頭韋陀持柱鞭遮面出，到正面台口一睇天復入，再上跳架完，白後上正面之玉皇廠上望下介。

註：大笛（水底魚）開心佛衣邊上，長眉佛雜邊上，二人企兩邊對拜，行至正面對拜，又換至衣雜邊對拜，拜完入場介。再起（水底魚）跛腳佛衣邊上，佛衣邊上，陀背佛雜邊上，照前換位三次拜完入場介。三起（水底魚）出大頭大肚和尚，合埋⁶³²眼，行至台口伸懶，抹眼，開屎^屙推門，出門口在上手位（雜邊）屙尿介，屙完番入⁶³³寺門，取回面盆載水洗面，用鞋刷刷牙，用牙簡作利括，沖涼抹下身，洗完身、洗腳、洗面、刷牙、嗽口，洒水掃地，向觀眾台口倒垃圾，放下正面琉璃，斟油、點燈、裝香、打鼓，敲中完下。

註：（碎牌）或（小開門）玉女捧甘露瓶，金童捧楊枝引觀音上白：

修練修練，潔淨虔心，菩提岩下，紫竹林中，觀世音（埋位介）；感謝玉帝，敕封普天門救主，救苦救難，大慈大悲觀世音是也（介）。今天是吾乃壽誕之期，眾仙佛神，必定到來恭賀，金童玉女（介），準備甘露伺候！

金童玉女白：領命！

註：（碎牌）八仙入參見白：

慈悲娘娘在上，吾等稽首。

觀音白：眾仙隆重，吾乃謝禮。

眾仙齊白：吾等回拜（回禮介）。

註：二才分兩邊企齊白：

吾等與娘娘拜壽。

⁶³¹ In my opinion, the order of these sentences should be rearranged and written as follows: "...手持黑金剛圈，黑面，黑頭陀，中軍帽卡..."

⁶³² The term "heb mai (hemai)合埋" means "bishang 閉上."

⁶³³ The term "fan yeb (fanru)番入" means "zouru 走入."

註：第一對鍾離、洞賓，第二對果老、國舅、第三對鐵拐、湘子，第四對仙姑、彩和；一對對開正面跪拜觀音時，即起大笛（梁州序）襯八仙拜賀介。

崇高保護，
長庚星照遐；
籌添海屋呼傳，
觴高捧，
醉頽舞彩班，
俺慰酌杯轉日月，
壺裡乾恰似渾忘老，
金丹 姥耶遍笑，編笑，
恰似駕鳳乘鸞蓬萊島；
日間輻輳誰能料？
今朝玉旨來封浩；
惟願千百歲鞏固高。

註：八仙拜完後，觀音白：
好！請進後林，甘露酬謝。
八仙齊白：領謝！（衣下介）

註：四龍王食住排子上入參見白：
參見娘娘！
觀音白：吾乃謝禮！（同龍王對作一拜介）
四龍王齊白：娘娘請上，吾等拜賀。
註：（碎牌）四龍王齊拜完起身，分兩邊企定介。
觀音白：請進內林，甘露敬謝。
四龍王齊白：感謝了！
註：四人齊衣邊下介。

註：(碎牌) 三聖母齊上同白：

娘娘請上，吾等稽首。

觀音白：聖母駕臨，吾乃謝禮！

三聖母同白：吾等與娘娘祝壽。

註：觀音起身企，低頭拱手，受三聖母拜完起身企定。

觀音白：金童玉女（介，在！）準備甘露，敬奉聖母。

金童玉女白：領旨。

註：起(排歌) 擺酒正面檯坐，雜邊文殊，衣邊威靈，檯旁雜邊觀音，衣邊普賢，聖母四人共飲介。

提起龍江，

懷吞輕狂，

筵前笛奏笙簧，

適逢耀武盡一觴，

苑轉清歌入畫堂，

壽筵祝君與皇；

捧盆滴酒四下香，

明早裡把兵招，

今霄莫負好風光。

威靈白：吾等請娘娘神通變化，變過我們看看。

觀音白：好！待吾變過你來看。（入邊）

註：收酒檯改擺一字檯，分三層高，正面玉皇廠上坐韋陀，威靈、文殊、普賢分三級依上列次序坐下介。

註：大笛(大八板頭)。

註：觀音食住⁶³⁴拿玄拂上，拉山車身入場改裝。

⁶³⁴ This term means “*suizhao* 隨著。”

註：起鑼鼓，龍雜邊伸爪為禮，金童衣邊一拜，正面再一拜，雜邊三一拜，龍亦如童子一樣，童子拜完，龍大番入場介。

註：第二變起(仙花調) 觀音雜邊上，拉山屹單邊過位改裝入衣邊下介。

註：起鑼鼓，虎雜邊上一拜，金童衣邊對位一拜，換位正面一拜，雜邊一拜，虎亦照金童一樣拜完，虎大番入場介。

註：(蕩舟) 觀音雜邊出，跳架完，衣邊下改裝介。

註：起鑼鼓，宰相雜邊上，向衣邊金童一拜，再正面一拜，換位衣邊一拜，合前玩大番完。

註：起(八仙鬧東海) 觀音雜邊上，拉山造手完入衣邊改裝介。

註：起鑼鼓，武將出，照前雜、正、衣拜完下，童子照前衣、正、雜邊對拜完大大番介。

註：起(繡荷包) 觀音照前雜邊上，造手衣邊下改裝介。

註：起鑼鼓，漁女手挽魚一條，照前雜、正、衣邊拜完下，金童照前衣、正、雜邊拜完玩大番介。

註：起(仙女牧羊) 觀音雜邊出，照前造衣邊下介。

註：起鑼鼓，樵夫出，照前雜、正、衣拜完下介，金童照前衣、正、雜拜完大番介。

註：起(香山賀壽) 觀音雜邊出，照前造完衣邊下介。

註：起鑼鼓，耕田公照前雜、正、衣邊拜完下，金童照前衣、正、雜邊對拜完大番介。

註：第八變，觀音雜邊上，照前造手完衣下介；起(剪剪花) 起鑼鼓，讀書郎雜邊上，照前雜、正、衣邊拜完下，金童照前衣、正、雜對拜完玩大番介。

觀音著回大宮裝出白：吾乃變化，自知失禮了。

三聖母齊白：變化靈捷，無以上之。

註：(碎牌) 眾馬騮挑大仙桃上白：

參見慈悲娘娘。

觀音：少禮，人來賜宴！

註：眾猴子在台口用眾人碗筷飯斗開鑊作飲酒，飲完白。

註：飲完後為時間太多，腳色與大番可加「插花」，即用人疊十八羅漢、撞鐘、象拔…等力功；旦角可加「擺花」，即每人持花瓶紙花，拉山扎架，砌成「天下太平」四大字。

註：音樂可任玩吹小調來襯托之。

猴王白：吾等特取仙桃，到來恭賀；娘娘在上，吾等拜賀！

註：眾猴拜完起身入雜邊抬桃上介。

觀音白：先將仙桃掛起。

註：掛桃時用(大開門)掛完介。

觀音白：宣劉海仙來見！

劉海仙內白：來也！

註：沖頭和合二仙齊先上，花開門，向觀音一拜，分衣雜邊企定介。

註：大沖頭鬼擔擔，劉海仙上扎架白：

飄呀飄！浪蕩耍金錢，逍遙快樂劉海仙，有人若得俺這個，金銀滿庫萬千年，(一才)俺
(一才)劉海仙是也。觀音菩薩傳見，須速上前。(二才)慈悲娘娘在上，吾乃稽首。

觀音白：少禮！

劉海仙白：娘娘傳見，有何使用？

觀音白：命你快耍⁶³⁵金錢！

劉仙白：領法旨！

註：持掃把掃地，用方盆作垃圾，和合二仙陪掃一完台，企回完位⁶³⁶介，劉海掃完時耍
金錢介。

註：開起排子頭，開桃用(三春錦)，用笛仔單打襯和。

覷天地一輪空磨，

把世人終日捱磨，

後來的添上一翻，

先進的盡皆沒了；

笑世人個個心高，

都只為奪利爭名，

受盡了勞碌奔波。

⁶³⁵ The Chinese character “*shua* 耍” should be written as “*sa* 撒.”

⁶³⁶ The term “*wanwei* 完位” should be written as “*yuanwei* 原位.”

唯有那張子房現出，
現出春砂；
重有那赤精子，
一心去學道。
笑韓信倚著十大功勞，
反觸了罪究。
反視片時歡笑，
唯有那昏迷的鬥勇爭強，
為酒貪花，
不可，不可。
又只見世人有百年快樂，
怎知道仙曹，
閑來時悔何不把禪經參著、
心經念著，
波羅波羅，
又只見雲端仙樂，
金鼓齊敲，
又聽得鶯歌也麼呵，
哩多和著波羅，
咀多麼，
唎利羅，
嚩哩梳婆呵，
梳婆呵，婆呵。
離了王宮，
離了王宮，
歷盡勤勞方為正果，
楊柳枝酒甘露，
濟眾生除孽障，
信吾的樂土逍遙，

不信的冤孽難逃，
豈不聞善惡到頭終有報？
好一似蜂兒養蜜、
蠶兒成繭、
蛾兒撲火，
勸世人早早回頭，
好念幾句彌陀；
百年後，
逍遙快樂，
逍遙快樂，
菩提樹花開滿，
樹梢四季長春，
萬年不老，
日照朵朵燦祥光，
陣陣香風齊祝高，
齊祝高壽算千千，
福海滔滔；
香山五老齊來到，
恭祝榮華增壽高，
願與乾坤永不老。

註：一路開桃，一路吹排子，一路由桃心撒金錢，待排子吹完觀音白：
眾仙佛，各升原位。

全部落台齊白：聖壽無疆！

註：眾入場，觀音及金童、玉女包尾⁶³⁷下介。

Source: Wong 1996, 113 – 128.

⁶³⁷ The term “*bao mei* (*baowei*) 包尾” means “*zuihou* 最後。”

Appendix Seven

The Celestial Maiden's Great Bestowing of a Son (*Tianji Da Songzi* 天姬大送子)

The *Kunqu daquan yueju changyong paizi Gaoqiang and fanyin quj* (*A Complete Collection of Kun Arias: Fixed Tunes, Gaoqiang and Buddhist Music That are Constantly Used in Cantonese opera*, edited by Wong Toa in 1996), and the *Yueju chuantong yinyue changqiang xuanji* (YCYC) (*A Selected Collection Concerning Traditional Cantonese Operatic Vocal Music*, Vol. 9, edited in 1962) record the script of the Celestial Maiden's Great Offering of a Son. The English translation below is based on Wong Toa's version.

The Characters

The principal male role acts as Dong Rong (the Prize Candidate).

The principal female role acts as the Celestial Maiden (heroine).

Six female minor roles act as the six immortal maidens.

Four minor military roles (*Butieshi*) act as the official servants who hold long melon-shaped mallets and battle axes.

The principal comic role and four minor female roles (*Tangdan*) act as the official servants who hold the silk umbrellas.

The English Translation

The principal female role (Celestial Maiden) (sings):

Lin'er Jiang (The Unicorn Son Descends)

Spreading auspicious omens, the Unicorn Son⁶³⁸, descends, riding mists and mounting clouds;

In the market of the jade terraced imperial city,

I wait to meet him

and give to him the child, who will continue his line.

Father and son meet;

They smile at each other happily.

Notes: While singing, each of the six immortal maidens performs the sequence *Huakaimen* (Flowers Open the Gates)⁶³⁹, in which they mount a high platform⁶⁴⁰ (facing the audience) from

⁶³⁸ The term "Unicorn Son" is a figurative expression of a clever and handsome son.

⁶³⁹ For the description of the sequence *Huakaimen*, please refer to Appendix Eleven (pp. 194 – 195) of my M.A. thesis, "The Popular Religion of Female Employees in Cantonese Opera."

⁶⁴⁰ In Chinese theatrical practice, the high platform can be considered to be a symbol of clouds. Hence, mounting the platform symbolizes that the characters are deities who can mount clouds and ride mists.

either side. The principal female role comes out last; using a chair, she mounts the platform and stands among the immortal maidens. All stand with their backs to the audience. The secondary female role, holding the child, stands one side, at stage right rear behind the immortal maidens. For the first tune, the small gong is used as accompaniment.

Notes: The Prize Candidate holds a horsewhip; the four *Butieshi* (minor military roles) hold long melon-shaped mallets and battle-axes. The *Tangdan* (minor female roles) and the *Zhengchou* (principal comic role) hold silk umbrellas. As the Prize Candidate (principal male role) comes onstage he sings:

Cheng'en (Receiving Imperial Favor)

Receiving imperial favor, I have passed the examinations,
Riding on horseback and flourishing my whip, I wear a purple robe.
Decked with palace flowers,
A palace flower sticks rakishly in the brim of my hat.
To change the lintel of one's door;
Is something rare in this world.
I have realized the wish of my lifetime,
And return in glory to my home, wearing brocade.

Servants: Beg to inform Your Honor: the horse cannot advance.

Prize Candidate: I have received the imperial decree to parade through the streets; what auspicious vapor is it that blocks my horse's way?

Celestial Maiden (atop the platform): We once met in the shade of a locust tree. I have come especially to this place to bestow the Unicorn Son.

Prize Candidate: Ah—so it is the Celestial Maiden who speaks!

(Sings):

Anzhijian (All I See)

All I see is brilliant purple mists descending from the azure sky;
Quickly I dismount, and bow body down in obeisance.
So the Celestial Maiden has come here after all!
Meeting on this morning,
We slowly walk at leisure.
Since we parted, I have often wept sadly.

Celestial Maiden and Chorus:

Bubujiao (The Beauty Steps Forth)

Having received imperial grace, the Celestial Maiden left Penglai for your sake;

[Wearing] purple pendants and covered with rosy clouds;

the Immortal Phoenix bestrides the cloud gong;⁶⁴¹

Celestial music sounds plangently,

As the Celestial Maiden comes fluttering down.

Scattering the mists, she sees her son;

How much can one know the grief of separation?

Prize Candidate (sings):

Zheguiling (Breaking Off the Cassia Bough)

I recall how I lived, dejected, in a poor hut in a mean alley;

On account of my father's death, my reputation for filial virtue was high;

I am thankful that Heaven has been moved by my filial conduct,

And even more thankful to the Celestial Maiden for becoming my phoenix mate.

My body was bathed in the bounty of your love;

As a mother, you toiled [for our son].

I am thankful to the Celestial Maiden for her "Silk-weaving" love.

Within three years, my debt was fully paid;

Our hundred day affinity was too short.

That today I have received such favor,

Is all on account of my filial fame.

Meeting together in the shade of the locust tree,

Our affinity does not end!

Notes: After [the pitches] *Yi, Che, Gong, Che, Yi, Wu*⁶⁴², [the drummer] plays the percussion music *Da Xiangsi* (Great Love). The principal male role looks left and right, and the seven sisters descend from the platform in two groups, from the left and right rear of the stage. They

⁶⁴¹ "Ao 嗩" was a type of gong commonly used as a percussion instrument in the Western Han dynasty (202 B.C. – A.D. 9).

⁶⁴² These are tones of the *Gongche* 工尺 system, a notational system of Cantonese opera music. In comparison with Western solmization, *Yi*=Si, *Che*=Re, *Gong*=Mi, and *Wu*=La (cf. Yung 1989, 15).

introduce the sequence *Huakaimen* (Flowers Open the Gates), in which they go to stage center and stand still facing the audience in a horizontal line. The first and second immortal maidens walk to the edge of the stage using *Qiaobu* (Small Pretty Steps). They bow twice [to each other], then go towards the principal male role. The principal male role places one arm on each of their shoulders and determines that neither is [his wife]. They perform the movements to *Yanmen* (Closing the Gate)⁶⁴³, then turn around and [perform the movements to] *Chuansanjiao* (Limning the Triangle)⁶⁴⁴. [When they have finished the movements], the first and second maids go back to stage center. A second and third pair perform the above mentioned actions in turn. The principal female role performs the movements mentioned earlier⁶⁴⁵. When it is time for the principal female role [to meet the principal male role at the edge of the stage], they join hands three times to conclude the sequence.

Celestial Maiden (sings):

Jiangshui'er (River Water)

When I saw my husband in the profane realm, prostrate from weeping,

Precipitously, I mounted the mist and clouds.

When we parted, I said to you:

Hope for the Celestial Maiden to give birth to a Unicorn Son

And send him to you to cherish.

Notes: While the principal female role is singing, the third supporting female role brings the son⁶⁴⁶ to her; she presents the son to the principal male role.

The Prize Candidate (after receiving the child, sings):

Luoyan'er (Wild Goose Falling)

Seeing this child, I am overcome with happiness;

He will be the support of our lineage one hundred years hence.

I look at this child, lofty of mien.

But alas! He weeps and cries;

⁶⁴³ For the explanation of the sequence *Yanmen*, please refer to Appendix Twelve (pp. 196 – 197) of my M.A. thesis (The Popular Religion of Female Employees in Cantonese Opera).

⁶⁴⁴ Please see Appendix Thirteen of my M.A. thesis (pp. 199 – 200) for the description of the sequence *Chuansanjiao*.

⁶⁴⁵ The principal female role also performs the movements to *Yanmen* and *Chuansanjiao*.

⁶⁴⁶ The son is represented by a doll, a kind of stage property which is called *douguan* 斗官 (little master).

I cannot help but feel worried and upset at his sad cries.
I hope that the Celestial Maiden will listen to my plea,
Listen-- I fear that
Once you go, who will care for him?
Once you go, who will care for him?

Celestial Maiden (sings):

Xingxingling (A Lucky Order)

My love completely failed to know that brilliant gold bird⁶⁴⁷ will perpetuate her phoenix mate's
[line].

Having entrusted the child to your care,

I only fear that a new love will grow, and your old love will fade.

A new love will grow, and your old love will fade.

Notes: According to the stage instructions, [the principal female role] points to the face of the principal male role.

Prize Candidate (sings):

Fenglaiyi (The Phoenix Comes)

I hope,

I hope the Celestial Maiden will forgive my faults.

Greatly,

Greatly consider that I have erred without meaning to.

Truly, my only hope is to be happy with you again.

Who could have known that I would fail the beautiful one?

We pledged our troth to Heaven;

In my heart I was moved by your kindness,

which was as deep as the sea, as high as the mountains,

As deep as the sea, as high as the mountains.

Celestial Maiden (sings):

Cheng Changfeng (Mounting Strong Winds)

⁶⁴⁷ The term "brilliant gold bird" here stands for the Celestial Maiden.

I smile at the confusion of your words;
Do not be greedy or expect too much.
I am the golden bird of the upper realm,
Do not think to share your nest with me again,
Do not think to share your nest with me again.

Prize Candidate (sings):

Xiajiangnan (Down South of the River)

I hope the Celestial Maiden will tell our son
I hope the Celestial Maiden will tell our son—
Do not cry, do not wail.
My only hope that he grow into a man of high rank and emolument.
You should not feel more distress [on my account];
I have a lucky star that shines on me.
I will make sure that he soon strides to the azure clouds,
My only hope is that he will mount to the imperial court.

Notes: The principal female role walks from stage right rear to stage left rear, exchanging positions with the principal male role.

Prize Candidate (sings):

Yuanlinhao (Gardens and Forests Fine)

Ah!, Ah! My only wish is for his rank, life span, fame and fortune to be great.
And that the Celestial Maiden need not have borne [our son] in vain.
In this human world the good and virtuous, loyal and filial are rare.

Notes: At this point, the minor military role brings the horse for the principal male role to mount, as [musicians] stroke the percussion pattern *Baoyichui*⁶⁴⁸. The principal female role bends her

⁶⁴⁸ One of the major functions of the percussion music in Cantonese opera is to close all vocal and speech passages. There are four ways of playing the *Baoyichui* percussion pattern. According to the content of the text, *Baoyichui* is played immediately after the Prize Candidate has sung the aria *Yuanlinhao*. Hence, in this case, the percussionists would play a single stroke on one of the pairs of cymbals, one or two or three strokes on the medium woodblock, and a single stroke on the gong. Its prominent sounds are: *ca* 茶, *lak* 力, *cing* 力, *cing* 呈.

waste backward, and according to stage instructions, the principal male role uses his whip to help her up.

Celestial Maiden (sings):

Qingjiangyin (Clear River Prelude)

Having departed from the mundane Way,

I ascend straight to the Palace of the Jade Empyrean,

And wander freely over the Penglai Island.

My wish is that father and son enjoy prosperity and success to ripe old age.

Notes: At the beginning of [Clear River Prelude], the *Butieshi* and the *Tangdan* shout “Ho! Ho!” and lead the principal male role offstage, from stage right rear. The principal female role turns so that her back is facing the audience and tosses her [right] sleeve onto her right shoulder; she then goes offstage from stage left rear. As the principal female role is making her exit, each of the immortal maids walks from the center of the stage towards stage left rear. They stand still until the principal female role has turned and exited the stage. They then retreat in formation.

The Small Bestowing of a Son (*Xiao Songzi*)

After [the musicians] perform the first tune⁶⁴⁹, dialogue as follows:

[Servants]: Prize Candidate, the horse cannot advance.

Prize Candidate: Having received the imperial decree to parade through the golden streets, the Prize Candidate comes on horseback.

Celestial Maid: After we parted [in the shade] of the locust tree, I came especially to bestow the little son.

Prize Candidate: Ah! So indeed the Celestial Maid has descended from the Jade Terrace!

Notes: [The musicians] immediately play two phrases from the third tune⁶⁵⁰, proceed to the *Zhongban* pattern⁶⁵¹ of the fifth tune, and conclude with the thirteenth tune⁶⁵².

Source: Wong 1996, 31 – 41.

⁶⁴⁹ The first tune is the Unicorn Son Descends (*Lin'er Jiang*).

⁶⁵⁰ *Anzhijian* (All I See) is the third tune.

⁶⁵¹ The *Zhongban* pattern is a kind of percussion musical rhythm (about 144 rhythms per minutes) in the *Paizi* tunes.

⁶⁵² The *Zheguiling* (Breaking Off the Cassia Bough) is the fifth tune. The thirteenth tune is the *Qingjiangyin* (Clear River Prelude).

Appendix Seven

The Chinese Text of *Tianji Da Songzi* 天姬大送子

(第一枝：麟兒降、旦唱)

麟兒駕霧騰雲下，
玉墀帝都市上等，
市上等他相會，
付與孩兒繼後基；
父子相逢，
喜上眉舒。

註：各六仙姬一邊唱，一邊花開門，分兩邊上高檯(正面)，正旦出至最尾，由正面用椅作級站在六仙之中，全部背台；二花抱仔站在雜邊各仙姬之最末處。第一枝全用小鑼襯托。

註：狀元執馬鞭，四不帖式執金瓜二斧，堂旦、正丑擔羅傘，狀元一住[邊]上唱。

(第二枝：承恩、生唱)

承恩及第，
跨馬揚鞭，
著紫衣，
宮花插，
宮花斜插帽簷底，
改換門楣世上所稀，
遂卻平生志，
衣錦榮歸。

眾白：啟爺、馬不前。

小生狀元白：吾奉聖旨遊街道；何方瑞氣擋馬前？

正花高檯白：槐陰樹下曾有約，特送麟兒到此間。

小生白：呵！原來是仙姬之言！

(第三枝：俺只見、生唱)

俺只見騰騰紫霧下青霄；

忙下馬躬身拜倒，

緣⁶⁵³來是仙姬來到此！

相會在今朝，

慢自逍遙，

從別後，

常悲號。

(第四枝：步步嬌、旦唱和合唱)

成恩為你離蓬島，

紫珮雲霞罩；

仙鳳駕雲璈，

仙樂琳瑯；

仙姬飄然到，

撥霧見兒曹；

離情別緒知多少？

(第五枝：折桂令、生唱)

念鄙人守廬巷無聊；

為父仙遊孝義名高；

感上蒼念吾行孝，

多感仙姬與我配合鸞交；

身沐恩情厚；

為母劬勞；

感仙姬織絹恩情，

三年債不滿了，

⁶⁵³ The Chinese character “yuan 緣” should be written as “yuan 原.”

百日緣少。
今日蒙寵愛，
皆因孝義高；
槐陰相會緣非少！

註：食主乙尺工尺乙五起大相思鑼鼓，生兩望，七姐則由高檯分衣、雜邊落，勾花開門，埋正面檯一條蛇企定，一、二兩仙姬俏步開台口，一拜二拜俏步走埋生處，生左右一搭肩認不是，一掩門轉身穿三角，一、二姬埋正面台，如上輪回至第二、三對，正旦如前動作，至正旦時生旦合手才收起。

（第六枝：江水兒、旦唱）

見君塵埃中哭倒，
急陣駕霧登雲，
別時曾有言道：
望仙姬產下麟兒，
送與君家懷抱。

註：旦在唱此時，三花將仔送來正旦交與生。

（第七枝：落雁兒、生接仔後唱）

見此子不由人多歡笑；
是吾家百年後宗枝靠，
見此子眉清目秀，
見此子一貌飄飄。
怎奈他哭哭啼啼；
不由人煩煩惱鬧悲號。
望仙姐容哀告，
聽著，
恐怕你去後，

誰襁褓？

你去後，

誰襁褓？

（第八枝：倅倅令、旦唱）

冤家全不曉彩金續鸞交，

付與孩兒撫養著；

只恐怕新情好舊情淡，

新情好舊情淡。

註：一指生面介。

（第九枝：鳳來儀、生唱）

望仙姬，

望仙姬恕罪多，

多念鄙人無知錯過。

實只望再同歡笑，

又誰知失負美多嬌娥？

對蒼天盟告了；

心感這恩德，

深如海、重如山，

深如海、重如山。

（第十枝：乘長風、旦唱）

笑君家言語顛倒，

休得要貪心志望高；

吾本是上界金鳥，

再休想鳥同巢，

再休想鳥同巢。

(第十一枝：下江南、生唱)

望仙姬囑兒曹，
望仙姬囑兒曹，
休啼哭面悲號；
只望他長大成人爵祿高，
休得要多添煩惱；
俺自有吉星高照，
管教他青雲早步，
但願身登廊廟。

註：旦由雜邊過衣邊與生換位。

(第十二枝：園林好、生唱)

俺呵！呵！
但只願官高壽高明高利高，
也不枉，
也不枉仙姬懷抱；
賢良忠孝人間少。

註：式在此時帶馬與生上馬，包一才，旦拗腰，生用鞭兜介。

(第十三枝：清江引、旦唱)

別卻凡塵道，
直上玉霄宮，
遊遍蓬萊島；
但願父子享榮華到老。

註：當第十三枝開始時，式與堂旦叫一聲“哦呵！”引小生入場。正旦則轉身背台一揮袖搭肩由衣邊入，各仙姬當正旦過位時，由正面台向衣邊開行企定，特正旦轉身入場，全體卸入。

小送子

由第一枝吹完說白：

狀元馬不前。

生白：奉旨遊金街，狀元馬上來。

旦白：槐陰分別後，特送小嬰孩。

生白：呵！原來仙姬下瑤台。

註：即起第三枝吹兩句，再落第五枝中板，第十三枝便合。

Source: Wong 1996, 31 – 41.

Appendix Eight

The Legend of the Sovereign Empress (*Huangjun Gushi* 皇君故事) or

The Story of the White Serpent (*Baishe Ji* 白蛇記)

Chen Sigu or Chen Jinggu marionette repertoires are very popular liturgical plays (*fashi xi*) in central western and southwestern Fujian. As mentioned in Section 3.2.1 of this chapter, the cult of Lady Chen, which extends throughout Fujian, southern Zhejiang, northern Guangdong and Taiwan, dates from the Tang dynasty. The life or story of this goddess is well recorded in local histories; pious literature (*shanshu* 善書); hagiographic documents, such as Chapter Six of the *Soushen ji* 搜神記 (*Researches on Deities*), Volumes One and Two of the *Mindu bieji* 閩都別記 (*Historical Legends of the Min*), and Chapter Five of the *Min zaji* 閩雜記 (the *Miscellaneous Record of the Min Areas*); and fictions or stories, such as the *Haiyou ji* 海遊記 (*Records of Sea Travels*), the *Linshui pingyao* 臨水平妖 (*Pacification of the Demons at Linshui*), and the *Pingyao zhuan* 平妖傳 (the *Legend of Subduing Demons*) (Baptandier, 1996: 106). In addition, wall paintings in her temples also retell her life history.

Presumably the *Haiyou ji* was first published between A.D. 1590 and A.D. 1610 by Zhongzheng Tang 忠正堂 (a publishing house) in Jianyang 建陽 of Fujian. The Wenyuan Tang 文元堂 reprinted it in A.D. 1753. In 1997, Ye Mingsheng found a manuscript copy of this book (dated A.D. 1753) in Shuixi Village 水溪村, Meicheng Town 梅城鎮, Hunan. In 1998, Ye discovered the Wenyuan Tang version, “the printed edition on which the manuscript was based.” It is in two volumes (*juan* 卷) and nine chapters (*hui* 回). There is a total of forty sheets (*ye* 頁) and each page (*mian* 面) “is divided into two registers, the upper one having illustrations, the lower one the text.” (van der Loon, 2000: 4). Wu Gen Zi 無根子 is the pseudonym of the author. With regard to the summary of the *Haiyou ji*, Piet van der Loon says:

...Chen Jinggu’s brother, a practitioner of Yoga 瑜珈 [Tantric] magic, attempts to fight the dangerous white snake that annually demands a human sacrifice. Unfortunately he is captured himself, because his stepbrother is drunk and fills in the wrong date on the documents summoning gods and spirits to come to his assistance.

Chen Jinggu decides to undertake the journey to the Lüshan, where together with Li Sanniang 李三娘 and Lin Jiuniang 林九娘⁶⁵⁴ she is instructed in magical arts by the daughter of the patriarch Jiulang. Upon her return she is able to liberate her brother, but the struggle with the snake continues for a long time. At one point she even induces herself to have a premature childbirth in order not to interrupt her fight. When she finally wins, she is not allowed to kill the snake, because it had originally grown from a strand of hair of Guanyin. Chen Jinggu too, is a manifestation of Guanyin, since she was conceived when the goddess cut off a fingernail, which changed into a golden ray and penetrated her mother's womb (van der Loon 2000, 5).

The fiction *Linshui pingyao* was already very popular during the early Qing period, though the exact date of its first publication is unknown. It was reprinted by the Ruicheng 瑞成 Bookshop in Taizhong 臺中 in modern times. This legend, which comprises of seventeen chapters, tells how Chen Jinggu, as a human being, became a female deity. According to the story, both Chen Jinggu and her implacable enemy, the White Snake (Baishe 白蛇), were two manifestations of Guanyin. Chen was born in Fuzhou by the end of the Tang dynasty. She learnt the Lüshan methods and became a vernacular priestess. Together with her two sworn sisters, Lin Jiuniang and Li Sanniang, they often demonstrated their supernormal abilities by rescuing people from danger, subduing evil spirits (such as Shijia Nü 石夾女 and Danxia 丹霞), and saving the life of the queen (Jinfeng 金鳳) of the Min Kingdom. She was killed by the White Serpent and the Ghost of Zhangkeng (Zhangkeng Gui 張坑鬼) in a ritual for begging rain. As Brigitte Baptandier summarizes:

Chen Jinggu finally had to marry Liu Qi [劉杞] and became pregnant. At that moment she was required to perform a ritual for the rain to fall, to save the Min Kingdom from a severe drought. This is why she had to “abort” the fetus while acting as a shaman, taking the child out of her womb and hiding it in her mother's house. She died of a hemorrhage while dancing on the river's waters, because her double, the White Serpent [Snake], which had found its way to Chen Jinggu's house, had just swallowed her embryo, in a cannibal act to “feed its life” (*yangsheng* [養生]). She had just enough strength left to kill the serpent, while

⁶⁵⁴ Li Sanniang and Lin Jiuniang are also called Li Sangu 李三姑 and Lin Jiugu 林九姑 respectively.

riding on its head, both flying to the Gutian [古田] Linshui Temple, where they are still represented together. It is said that Chen Jinggu's body was mummified, while the serpent is kept under her seat, in a small cave that is still visible in the Gutian temple (Baptandier 1996, 110).

After her death, Wang Yanbin 王延彬 (the ruler of the Min Kingdom) canonized her as “Zhaohui Chongfu Linshui Gong Furen 昭惠崇福臨水宮夫人 (the Lady of the Near Water Temple, [who is] Bright, Kind, Venerable and Auspicious)” in order to praise her great contributions. The *Legend of Subduing Demons (Pingyao zhuan)* is in three volumes. Its context is almost the same as that of the *Linshui pingyao* mentioned above. It was first published by the Shiyin 石印 Bookshop in Shanghai during the early twentieth century. Mythologies, beliefs, liturgies and all the various kinds of literature mentioned above contributed to the emergence and development of Chen Jinggu's liturgical plays during the Ming and Qing periods. Today, Chen Jinggu marionette plays are still very popular in Fujian, where they are performed in different kinds of musical style, such as *Gaoqiang*, *Luantan*, *Siping Qiang* and *Daqiang*. Various names come to be applied to the marionette repertoire concerning the legend of the goddess. For instance, in Shouning it is called “*Nainiang Zhuan* 奶娘傳 (the Legend of the Wet Nurse),” in Pingtan 平潭 and Fuqing 福清 “*Linshui Furen Zhuan* 臨水夫人傳 (the Legend of the Near Water Lady),” in Putian and Xianyou “*Beidou Xi* 北斗戲 (the Play of the Big Dipper),” in Fuzhou “*Chen Jinggu* 陳靖姑,” and in Shanghang of southwestern Fujian “*Furen Zhuan* 夫人傳 (the Legend of the Lady),” which is sung in both *Gaoqiang* and *Luantan*.

The *Daqiang* marionette play of Chen Sigu is still very popular in Qingshui Township of central western Fujian. According to Ye Mingsheng, no *Daqiang* scripts of this liturgical play are found. Mr. Wang Hua, the impresario of the Wanfu Tang *Daqiang* Marionette Troupe, owns a manuscript copy of Lady Chen's story, which is known as *Huangjun Gushi* (the Legend of the Sovereign Empress) or *Baishe Ji* (the Story of the White Serpent). This handwritten *huaben* (script for story-telling) dates from the late nineteenth century. As the following line appears in the colophon, “*Guangxu guiwei jiunian chunyu li* 光緒癸未玖年春月立, *Zigui chaoji Huangjun Ji quanben* 子桂抄集皇君記全本 (Zigui copied the whole script of the Legend of the Sovereign Empress in the spring of the ninth year of the Guangxu reign period (the year *guiwei* 癸未, A.D. 1883).” Wang Hua and his troupe members often perform this repertoire according to the plot of the *Huangjun Gushi*. In the past, the play is sung in *Daqiang*. Today, however, it

is often sung in *Luantan*. Qingshui dialect is the dominant stage language in the performance. It is important to emphasize that this liturgical marionette play is not only an entertainment but also an important component of the liturgies of the Lüshan Tradition. According to local beliefs, Lady Chen has a special mission concerning the salvation of pregnant women and the protections of infants. Therefore, the performances of this liturgical repertoire, which usually last several days and nights, are often associated with the Ritual for Breaking the Womb (*Potai*) and the Ritual for Crossing the Barriers (*Guoguan Ke*) of the Lüshan Tradition mentioned in Section 5.3.1. of Chapter Five.

The English Translation⁶⁵⁵

It is said that during the reign period of Emperor Renzong of the Song dynasty (A.D. 1023 – 1063), when Bao Wencheng⁶⁵⁶ was the left prime minister and Guo Zheng was the right prime minister, Buddha Mother Guanyin sat [upon her throne] in Mt. Putuo and dressed [herself]. When one of her hairs fell in the midst of the sea, billows immediately dashed to the skies. The Buddha Mother employed her wisdom sight on [it and discovered that it turned into a White Serpent (Snake)]⁶⁵⁷ at once. Her⁶⁵⁸ human body was seven Chinese feet in length and her tail was twenty-four Chinese feet in length. She ate innumerable people in the world. Bones lay in a heap. [Since] there were calamities in the world, the Buddha Mother immediately ordered the Lad of the Auspicious Emperor to take a pair of gold scissors [to her]. She cut off three fingernails, which were sent to [three] charitable families (Chen, Lin [and] Li) for rebirth. In the future, they would go to Mt. Lu to learn the [ritual] methods [for the sake of subduing her].⁶⁵⁹ [Guanyin] ordered a lad to deliver one [fingernail] to Chen Jiyi's manor in Gutian County of Fuzhou for rebirth. Jiyi's eldest son was called Fatong, whose alias was Sanlang. His second

⁶⁵⁵ The notes in the Chinese text of this *huaben* are written in small Chinese characters. Since many of these characters are blurred and unclear, these notes are omitted in the English translation.

⁶⁵⁶ Bao Zheng 包拯 or Bao Wenzheng 包文拯 (A.D. 999 – 1062), one of the famous figures in Chinese history, was a native of Hefei 合肥, Anhui province. He passed the imperial examinations and became an official at the age of twenty-nine. As the Mayor of Kaifeng (Kaifeng Fuyin 開封府尹), he was “famous for his uncompromising stance against corruption among the government officials...” (Bao Qingtian – Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pao_Kung). Due to his righteousness, he has been worshipped as a tutelary deity since the imperial times. Chinese people usually address him as Bao Qingtian 包青天 (Blue-Sky Bao) or Bao Gong 包公 (Lord Bao). His stories are well recorded in many stories and scripts of local operas. Because of his dark complexion, performers of local operas who impersonate Lord Bao in their performances often paint a black-and-white crescent pattern on their foreheads. The crescent pattern symbolizes that Bao Gong can handle matters both in the mortal world and the underworld.

⁶⁵⁷ In Lord Tian's 2003 birthday celebration, Guanyin also dropped her comb into the sea. This comb immediately transformed into a Black Tiger Demon (Wuhu Jing 烏虎精).

⁶⁵⁸ In this story, the White Serpent or Snake was a female goblin.

⁶⁵⁹ The word “her” here refers to the White Serpent.

son was Haiqing [and] third son was Haideng. Later, his daughter (Chen Sigu) was born. [The goddess] also ordered a lad to deliver one [fingernail] to the manor of the Lin family in Guangze County of Shaowu Prefecture for rebirth. Later, Lin Jiugu was born. Her father [was called] Lin Zonghua and her mother's maiden name was Zhang. Another one was sent to the manor of the Li family in Quanzhou for rebirth. Later, Li Sangu was born. Her father [was called] Li Wenbao and her mother's maiden name was Chen.

In addition, the story says that Zhang Shikui, whose parents died early, was a native of Zhangjia. Bringing his boy attendant together, he soon went to the capital to take the imperial examinations. Moreover, it is said that Guo Zheng (the Prime Minister) made the chief examiner to select Zhang Shikui as the Number One Scholar. The Prime Minister's daughter was called Yueying. He betrothed his daughter to Shikui, the Number One Scholar. The Prime Minister went to the court and announced the imperial edict, which stated that Yueying was granted [the title] of the Lady of the First Rank. Shikui, who was awarded the title of the Number One Scholar, was also granted [the privilege of] riding on horseback and parading through the streets. He was also granted [the honor] of assuming office in Hongzhou. They soon set off [for Hongzhou]. Zhang Shikui brought Yueying (his wife) together. On their way, a local villager reported to him, "My Lord, there is a Great King who [resides] in Mt. Gao at my (this) district. [Hence], it is very difficult to pass this place. [Since] you are an official, you should go [there] to offer incense [to him] in order to obtain peace." The Number One Scholar did not listen to him. He shouted three times and passed [the land]. The Great King appeared and captured Yueying. The Number One Scholar had no choice but to order the *yamen* runners to go back. He himself went to Mt. Lu to learn the [ritual] methods [for the purpose of] going to [Mt. Gao] to subdue him.⁶⁶⁰ He arrived at Mt. Lu and the Immortal Master [there] was called Xu Jiulang. Jiulang inquired about his reason [for learning the ritual methods]. One by one, the Number One Scholar told [him all the details]. The Immortal Master (Jiulang) bestowed three efficacious talismans on him. The celestial soldiers would help him [when he burnt them]. Then, both of them said farewell to each other [and Zhang Shikui] went down the mountain. After he unfolded and burnt the talismans, the celestial soldiers, who descended [from heaven], set fire. [Instead of killing the Great King], Yueying was burnt to death. Descending [from heaven], the Perfect Golden Dipper saved Yueying [from the fire and restored her to life]. She met with the Number One Scholar met. The Great King ran away. Bringing his wife together, the Number One Scholar went to Mt. Lu to express his thankfulness to the Immortal Master. The Immortal

⁶⁶⁰ The word "him" refers to the Great King (Dawang 大王).

Master said, “Don’t go back! You [both] (husband and wife) stay at Mt. Lu to be officials.” Shikui was bestowed [the title of] the Great General of Five Lads. [The title] of the Lady Who Rescues [Those] in Distress was conferred upon his wife. [This is] not under discussion for [the time being].

It is said that the White Serpent could not find a settled place and hanged around. She came to Gutian County and appeared in Zhang San and Li Wang’s dreams. The White Serpent stated, “I need you both to erect a temple for the worship of the deity (the White Serpent). I name her⁶⁶¹ the Holy Mother. [If you show your reverence], she would offer tranquility to your township and peace to your native place. If you don’t belief [in her], she would ate up both of you from top to toe and from toe to top.” The two persons (Li Wang [and Zhang San]) took the lead to build a temple, which was known as the Temple of the Southern Beauty. The worship took place twice a year in spring and autumn. The three sacrifices⁶⁶² were offered as gifts [to the White Serpent], and [the local villagers] had to go [there] to worship her and [beg for] peace. There was a [male goblin], the Great King of the Black Tiger, who came to the Temple of the Southern Beauty at Gutian County and required the White Serpent to marry him. The White Serpent refused. Holding broadswords, they fought fiercely with each other. The White Serpent was captured by the Great King [of the Black Tiger] and they got married. The Great King said, “My dear, I’ve come [here] now. [Let’s] appear in Li Wang [and Zhang San]’s dreams and tell them to offer virgin boys and girls to us as sacrifices.” Li Wang and Zhang San could not do anything about it. This is not under discussion [for the time being].

Moreover, the story says that the immortal lad delivered a fingernail [of Guanyin] to the manor of the Chen family for rebirth. Chen Jianyi [and] his wife (*née* Ge) [had three sons]. Fatong was the eldest son, Haiqing was the second son [and] Haideng was the third son. Lady Ge gave birth to a daughter who was named Chen Sigu. The whole family [celebrated and] drank wine happily. No need to talk about this [any further]. Sigu was born at the hour of *yin* on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month. The immortal lad also delivered a fingernail to the manor of the Lin family for rebirth. The husband [was called] Lin Zonghua. His wife, *née* Zhang, gave birth to a daughter who was named Lin Jiugu. The immortal lad delivered a

⁶⁶¹ The word “her” stands for the White Serpent.

⁶⁶² According to traditions of central western Fujian, there are two types of *sansheng* 三牲. These are *da sansheng* 大三生 (the three great sacrifices), *zhong sansheng* 中三牲 (the three medium sacrifices) and *xiao sansheng* 小三牲 (the three small sacrifices). The three great sacrifices include pig, sheep and cow. The three medium sacrifices are cock, duck and fish. Red eggs, cocked pork and dried fish are the three small sacrifices. In normal cases, local people in central western Fujian (mountainous areas) offer the three small sacrifices to their deities.

fingernail to the manor of the Li family for rebirth as well. The husband was called Li Wenbao, whose wife (*née* Chen) gave birth to a daughter, who was named Li Sangu.

In addition, it is said that Chen Sanlang, who was [also] called Fatong, said to his father, “Within these few years, Gutian County had no peace at all [since] goblins often ate up people. I’ll tell him (Haiqing) to go together with me to Mt. Xue to learn the [ritual] methods. We’ll come back to protect [our] family members.” His father agreed and said, “You brothers must devote yourself [to learn the ritual methods].” They said farewell [to their father] and set off [for Mt. Xue] right away. They soon arrived at Mt. Xu and formally acknowledged the Ritual Lord of the Thundering Heaven as master. The Ritual Lord transmitted [the ritual methods] to them⁶⁶³ (the two brothers). They approached their master and said farewell to him. [After] returning home, they explained every detail to their father.

The story says that both Zhang San and Li Wang heard about Sanlan, who was (Chen Jiyi’s son [and a native] of Guantian County. He has [just] returned [home after] learning ritual methods [at Mt. Xue]. I⁶⁶⁴ said that they both⁶⁶⁵ went to invite him to catch the goblins. [After] arriving at the house of the Chen family, they asked Sanlang, “Are you willing to catch the demons?” “I’ve to ask Haiqing to go [there] to write the memorial first. I’ll come soon after,” answered Sanlang. [Then], Sanlang told Haiqing not to eat and drink too much. [He also informed him] that they had to break the grotto on the eighteenth day. Haiqing, [however], got drunk and wrote the date wrongly. The memorial that was burnt was dated the seventeenth [instead of the eighteenth]. The Ritual Lord [of the Thundering Heaven] knew that his disciple (Sanlang) would suffer from disaster. The White Serpent realized that Sanlang [practiced] the false [ritual] methods. [She said to herself], “I’ll transform myself into a lady and capture Sanlang to the temple. Both the Great King and the White Serpent will eat him.” The Ritual Lord came and scolded her, “How dare you! He’s my disciple!” Lowering the golden bell, I (the Ritual Lord) hid Sanlang in it and took his soul away. The two demons were unable to hoist [the golden bell]. Haiqing told Li Wang and Zhang San to beat gongs and drums. He told them to go [there] first. Later on, he arrived at the temple and saw a pair of shoes that belonged to his brother. They were put under the brim of the bell. [Haiqing] immediately shouted several times, “Brother! Brother! Brother!” “Haiqing, just turn round and run away at once!” Sanlang (who

⁶⁶³ According to the context of the script, it is more reasonable to replace the Chinese character “*er* 爾” with the Chinese character “*ta* 他.”

⁶⁶⁴ The meaning of the Chinese character “*wo* 我 (I)” is unclear. I think that since various scripts concerning the legend of Chen Jinggu originated from storytellers’ scripts, the word “I” may refer to the storyteller.

⁶⁶⁵ In my opinion, the character “*er*” here should be replaced by the character “*ta*.”

[was kept] inside the bell) replied. [Haiqing] rushed home and informed his father [the bad news]. The whole family [cried and their] eyes brim with tears.

Chen Sigu approached [her father] and explained, “My brother suffers from disaster. I’ve to go to Mt. Lu⁶⁶⁶ to learn the [ritual] methods and came back to avenge him.” “You’re just a woman. It’s such a long trip! Would it be too difficult [for you] to go [alone]?” asked her father. Sigu answered, “Just ask [my] second elder brother to go with me.” “Haiqing, you [both] (brother and sister) shouldn’t quarrel with each other on the way,” their father told Haiqing. “I dare not! I dare not!” Haiqing replied. They said farewell to [their father] and set off [for Mt. Lu] at once. They came to an inn and stayed [there] overnight. It is said that the Goblin of the Western Glow and the Clever Ghost knew that Chen Sigu and her brother passed through here. They wanted to capture them. Buddha Mother Guanyin immediately descended [from heaven]. [After] transforming herself into a woman, she informed [the demons’ plot] to Sigu. Both Sigu and her brother could not do anything about it. The Buddha Mother said, “You (brother and sister) can pass through [here] if you close your eyes.” Sigu and her brother closed their eyes at once. As a result,⁶⁶⁷ [they both] passed through [the place]. Sigu turned back to take a look. The woman [already] disappeared. Looking at the sky, [Sigu and Haiqing] expressed their thankfulness to [the goddess].

The White Serpent knew that Chen Sigu went to Mt. Lu to learn the [ritual] methods. [She said to herself], “I transform myself into Chen Sigu and went to Mt. Lu before she arrived.” The Immortal Master⁶⁶⁸ did not realize that the lady [who came] was the White Serpent. [Thus], he transmitted the [ritual] methods to her. Chen Sigu and her brother arrived at the Swallow River. They could not cross [it]. An immortal master came and sounded his dragon horn. A bridge [immediately] appeared. Sigu and her brother crossed the bridge. The immortal master led them to Mt. Mao to pay a formal visit to Lady Chenlu. Lady Chenlu said, “There’s no examination⁶⁶⁹ held at Mt. Mao (my [place]) this year. You’ve to go to Mt. Lu to learn the [ritual] methods. Your cloth-wrappers [could] be kept at Mt. Mao (my [place]). You (brother

⁶⁶⁶ The term “Lushan 廬山” here refers to “Lüshan 閩山.” Mr. Ye Mingsheng, an Associate Research Fellow at the Fujian Institute of Fine Arts, says that the pronunciation of the character “Lu 廬” is very similar to the pronunciation of the character “Lü 閩” in Fujian dialects.

⁶⁶⁷ According to the content of the story, the term “*ruguo* 如果” should be revised as “*jiieguo* 結果.”

⁶⁶⁸ The term “Xianshi 仙師 (Immortal Master)” here refers to Xu Xun 許遜 (Xu Jiulang 許九郎).

⁶⁶⁹ According local beliefs of Fujian, patriarchs and ritual lords of various schools of the vernacular priests would hold examinations in order to recruit new soldiers or generals (members).

and sister) must go⁶⁷⁰ to Mt. Lu. The White Serpent is now learning [ritual] methods over there.” Chen Sigu and her brother arrived at Mt. Lu and said loudly, “Ritual Lord, we (Sigu and her brother) come [here] to learn the [ritual] methods.” “Sigu is not allowed [to enter]. Go out!” said the runner of the Court of Mt. Lu. Haiqing answered, “[This] Sigu (my [sister]) is accompanied by Haiqing. [Thus], she is the true one.” The court runner entered and reported [what Haiqing said] to the Immortal Master. The Immortal Master looked up and [realized that the false Sigu] was in fact a serpent goblin. The Immortal Master said, “This snake demon tricked me into teaching her the [ritual] methods.” The Venerable Immortal Master[’s face] was perplexed. Haiqing swore at the Immortal Master. “No body throughout the world can subdue this White Serpent. She has [already] eaten up innumerable people.” [he said angrily]. The Immortal Master was left without argument. He said to Haiqing, “I give you a pair of golden scissors and a piece of paper money. You [go to]⁶⁷¹ Mt. Mao [again] and gave them to Lady Chenlu. She’ll have her own ideas.” The brother and sister came to Mt. Mao, where they gave the golden scissors [and the paper money] to the Lady. [In order to find out] where the White Serpent is, the lady looked up [and discovered that] [the demon] had not yet crossed the Swallow River. [She] caught the White Serpent by using the net of heaven and earth. Pacing up and down [in the trap], this White Serpent did not know how to escape. This Lady (Lady Chenlu) cut out a Ten-Thousand-*li* Tiger, which would be given to the White Serpent as an exchange for her Thousand-*li* Horse. Sigu [and Haiqing] arrived at the Swallow River. “Sister of the same name, you’re learning the [ritual] methods at Mt. Lu. When did you get off?” Haiqing asked the White Serpent. The White Serpent answered, “I’ve [already] been here for fifteenth days.” “When did you (brother and sister) set off [for Mt. Lu]?” she asked directly. “I started [the journey] this morning at the hour of *si* (from 9a.m. to 11a.m.),” replied Haiqing. The White Serpent asked, “How [can] you come here [so quickly]?” “Mine is a Ten-Thousand-*li* Tiger. Yours is [only] a Thousand-*li* Horse. [Thus], you can’t beat me,” Haiqing answered. The White Serpent asked, “Are you willing to give me your Ten-Thousand-*li* Tiger in return [for something else]?” Haiqing pretended to refuse her. [Then], Sigu said, “[Let her] bring her ritual treasures⁶⁷² here and exchange them for the [Ten-Thousand-*li* Tiger]. Haiqing again [pretended to] refuse [the offer]. He scolded Sigu, “Don’t exchange [anything] with her!” Sigu did not listen to him. She

⁶⁷⁰ According to the context of the script, the phrase “*qicheng huilai* 起程回來” should be revised as “*qicheng qianwang* 起程前往.”

⁶⁷¹ The meaning of the term “*fangxia* 放下” is not clear. According to the context of the script, I translate it as “visit.”

⁶⁷² According to the context of the story, the term “*fapa* 法怕” should be revised as “*fabao* 法寶 (ritual treasures),” which include the Thousand-*li* Horse and the liturgical manuals of the Lüshan ritual methods.

gave [the Ten-Thousand-*li* Tiger] to the White Serpent in exchange for all her ritual treasures, [including] the Thousand-*li* Horse. [Then], Sigu told [the snake demon], “Just spur on my Ten-Thousand-*li* Tiger to full speed. It can run ten thousand miles a day.” The copper horse drew up the net of heaven and earth. Spurring the Ten-Thousand-*li* Tiger, the White Serpent rode it to the water. She did not know that it was made of paper. It was useless once it got wet. The White Serpent transformed into her original form and ate innumerable people in the world.

Haiqing and her sister arrived at Mt. Lu again and shouted, “Open the door! I (Haiqing) [come here now]. Master, [let’s] had a competition in ritual methods.” The court runner heard and reported what he said] to the Immortal Master. The Immortal Master came out and said, “How dare you! How dare you compete [ritual] methods with me!” “Instead of competing with you, We come [here] to attain the ritual methods. Your court runner listened wrongly. The Immortal thought to himself, “It doesn’t matter. The pronunciations of [these two words], *dou* 鬥 (competition) and *zao* 造 (attainment), are the same.”⁶⁷³ He soon taught the [ritual] methods to Sigu. The Ritual Lord thought to himself, “This [guy] (Haiqing) possesses fire eyes [or penetrating eyesight]. I’ll pretend to be sick and turn the [ritual] methods into bloody pus, which [occur] on my back.” [In order to pretend to] suffer from violent pain, his cried for bitterness was heavenly high. Haiqing came out and saw that the master got bloody pus. “Is there any medicine for [the pus]? [he asked]. The Master answered, “I would be cure if anyone dares to eat [it].” “I dare not eat [it],” replied Haiqing. Sigu came out and saw [this]. [She said], “I dare to eat [it].” “Sister, [I] don’t dare to eat [it]. Don’t eat it! [Otherwise] you would suffer from abdominal pain.” Haiqing said [to her]. Sigu ate [it] right away. Haiqing yelled, “Dare not eat [it]! Dare not eat [it]!” Sigu ejected [the pus] from her mouth. “Sigu, you’ll suffer from disaster at the age of eighteen. As soon as you mount the clouds and ride the mist, you can fly at once!” the Immortal Master told [her]. When he saw his sister can speed across the sky, Haiqing immediately looked at the ground to see if there is some bloody pus left over. [Then], he smeared his eyes with the remnant of the bloody pus. The Immortal Master said [to him], “You can jump and your eyes can see [as deep as] three feet below the ground. Yours are fire eyes. You (Haiqing) shouldn’t turn back to glance Mt. Lu again.” Sigu promised [her master that she would remind Haiqing to follow his order]. [After] saying farewell [to the master, she and her brother] left [Mt. Lu] at once. On their way [home], [Sigu said to Haiqing], “Second brother, don’t turn back to glance Mt. Lu.” “Why?” asked Haiqing. “Your eyes are fire eyes. Don’t turn

⁶⁷³ In my opinion, the meaning of this phrase, “*dou zao zhe yiban sheng wufang* 鬥造這一般聲無妨,” is unclear.

back to glance it. Otherwise, Mt. Lu will not exist anymore when [we] come next time. Haiqing did not believe in her and said, “Sister, you go forward. I’ll catch [you later].” Haiqing [then] turned back to glance it once again and Mt. Lu really submerged. The brother and sister came to the Inn of Myriad Flowers. The innkeeper was called Liu Xiao’er. The brother and sister stayed there [overnight].

It is said that Lin Jiugu’s mother died young. [Hence], she wanted to go to Mt. Lu to learn the [ritual] methods in order to rescue her mother. Li Sangu also want to go to Mt. Lu to learn the [ritual] methods so as to save her father (Li Wenbao), who fell from a ship [into the water] when he went to Suzhou to sell cloth. Both of them met Sigu on their way. They asked her how and why [she went to Mt. Lu to learn the ritual methods]. She explained [every detail] to [them]. [The three ladies] became sworn sisters. [Liu Jiugu and Li Sangu] passed [the main entrance] of the Inn of Myriad Flowers. Chen Haiqing saw them and asked, “Where do both of you (cousins’ wives) go?” They both (Jiugu [and Sangu]) answered, “We’ve go to Mt. Lu to learn the [ritual] methods.” “Mt. Lu no longer exists now!” Haiqing told [them]. Both of them did not believe [him] and asked, “[Hai]qing, where did you [learn] your [ritual] methods?” “I learnt them at Mt. Lu,” replied [Hai]qing. “[Mt. Lu] still existed when you went there. [Why] doesn’t it exist if we go there?” Jiugu and Sangu [asked] in reply. Haiqing responded, “Just go [there] quickly if you don’t believe [me]!” [The two ladies] immediately went down Mt. Shimo. They both paced up and down. Haiqing asked, “Do you know the time? It’s going to be midnight soon.” He then made the sun go down. Cocks crowed and dogs barked. These two persons could not see [anything in the dark]. “Brother! Why do you get them into trouble? Sigu scolded him. [They] waited until dawn and asked Sigu, “How so?” “Mt. Lu really doesn’t exist anymore,” answered Sigu. Haiqing said, “[If] both of you and I are sworn sisters and brother, I [can] transmit the [ritual] methods to you.” [Three of them became sworn brother and sisters]. [Then, Haiqing] ordered Liu Xia’er to set up the Palace Precious Hall,⁶⁷⁴ [where] he taught [his sworn] sisters the [ritual] methods. “[Jiugu], whenever you [want to] invite me in the future, just beat [your] precious sword three times and I’ll come. Sister Li Sangu, [whenever] you [want to] invite me, just beat [your] horsewhip twice and I’ll come. You both come whenever I invite you by sounding [my] dragon horn three times. You sisters said good-bye at the inn and left separately. We’ve (brother and sister) to go [home too],” [he] told [his two sworn sisters]. On

⁶⁷⁴ In a liturgy of the Lüshan School, the vernacular priest usually transforms the altar or the ritual site into a sacred place known as the Palace Precious Hall (Huanggong Baodian 皇宮寶殿) or the Precious Hall (Baodian 寶殿). According to the context of this script, the term “Huanggong Baodian” here refers to the altar of the Lüshan Sect.

their way [home], Sigu and Haiqing came across a dog that was lying on the ground. There was also a woman lying dead on the ground. The dog lost a leg and the woman lost a heart. Inviting the Copper Horse to descend [from heaven], Haiqing removed the dog's heart and transplanted it to the woman's body. Since the dog had no heart, he used [some] earth to make a heart [for it]. In addition, he made a leg [for it] by using [a piece of] paper. "From now on, you've to lift up your leg whenever you pee," he told it. This dog immediately recovered [from illness] and went away. The woman [who was rescued by Haiqing] was completely blind. Her⁶⁷⁵ surname was Niu and her first name was Xu. She was unable to see [anymore]. Haiqing [said], "I teach you [how] to communicate with the spirits of the dead." He saved her and took her to the Bridge of Hundred Flowers.

Haiqing and Sigu (brother and sister) returned home, where they met their parents and told them every detail [concerning how] they learn the [ritual] methods at Mt. Lu. Their father said [to them], "You both (brother and sister) now return [home]. [However], your eldest brother is still suffering. Go to save him [at once]!" Sigu and her brother went to the Temple of the Southern High (the Temple of the Southern Beauty), where they capture the Great King of the Black Tiger. Ritual Lord Zhang came to the temple. Haiqing [tried to] break the [large] golden bell. The Ritual Lord scolded him, "How dare you! [Just] wait until I hoist the bell! You then (brother and sister) [can] rescue [your] elder brother." "Ah! I can't rescue [him]! You (the Ritual Lord) still keep [his] soul. [Please] release [his] soul! I'm going to save [my] eldest brother (Sanlang) [so that] he can meet with us⁶⁷⁶ and [we all] can return home together." The Ritual Lord said, "You (brothers and sister) are very devoted to one another. You take [your] eldest brother home so that he and [your] father can meet." [This is] not under discussion [for the time being].

Moreover, the story says that [the master] of the manor of the Wang family was called Wang Sixuan. He said farewell to his wife (*née* Zhang). He brought his boy servant together when he went to the capital to take the imperial examinations. They stayed at an inn halfway. [As mentioned above], there were two demons, the Goblin of the Western Glow and the Clever Ghost. The Goblin of the Western Glow that transformed himself into Wang Sixuan and the Clever Ghost that transformed himself into the boy servant came to the manor of the Wang family. The lady⁶⁷⁷ asked, "You've already go [to the capital] to take the imperial examinations.

⁶⁷⁵ The word "her" here refers to the "*muxia po* 目瞎婆 (the blind old lady)."

⁶⁷⁶ The word "us" here refers to his "Haiqing and Sigu."

⁶⁷⁷ The term "*xiaojie* 小姐 (the lady)" here refers to Wang Sixuan's wife.

Why do you come back?” “I won’t go [to the capital] to take this examination. I’ll go [there] to take the next examination,” The Goblin of the [Western] Glow replied. “What happened?” asked the lady. The young master⁶⁷⁸ answered, “When [I] went to the riverside, [I] saw a fish which had two heads. That’s why I didn’t go.” The lady said [to him], “It’s good that the young master didn’t go.” They both were very happy. At that night, Wang Sixuan who stayed at the inn dreamed about a tree, which [was planted near] the back door [of his house], was fallen by someone else; and a field in front of [his house] was cultivated by somebody else. He immediately [woke up] and ordered his boy servant to return home to find out what might happen. The boy servant went home at once. The lady, [however], shut the door. The boy servant stated loudly, “Mistress, open the door [please]!” “Who’re you?” asked the lady. “I’m your boy servant,” the boy servant answered. Lady Zhang [doubted what he said] and asked, “You and the young master already came back the day before yesterday. How come there’s a boy servant came [here] now?” “The young master still stays at the inn. He hasn’t come back yet. I dare to [say] that the [false] young master here is a goblin,” the boy servant responded. He [then] rushed back to the inn to explain [all the details] to [his young master]. [After he knew what happened], the young master returned home at once and fought with the two goblins. The lady came out and took a look. [She was so surprised that] the two persons looked exactly alike. The young master said to [his] boy servant, “Go [with me] to the study.” He was at his wits’ end. [He could not help but] order the boy servant to invite the Mituo Master to catch the goblins (them). The boy servant went to ask the Mituo Master, “What things do you need?” The [Mituo] Master answered, “[Just] prepare a pig’s head (which is one hundred catties in weight), [some] incense paper⁶⁷⁹ and three [copper] coins. I’ll come immediately.” He [then] came to the manor of the Wangs to subdue the goblins, who knew that he did not possess any supernormal power. [Thus], they hung him in the air. The Mituo Master’s cry for bitterness was heavenly high. Later, the boy servant came out and released him. [The Mituo Master] then returned home. The young master could not help but order the boy servant to go to the Head of the Bridge of Hundred Flowers to consult the blind woman, who summoned the spirit of the dead by using one *sheng* 升 of rice and one hundred [copper] coins. [The boy servant] then inquired about [the matter]. [Through the assistance of the spirit], the blind woman saw that two demons, the Goblin of the Western Glow and the Clever Ghost, [occupied] the manor of the Wangs. The young

⁶⁷⁸ The term “*xianggong* 相公 (young master)” here refers to the Goblin of the Western Glow who transformed himself into Wang Sixuan.

⁶⁷⁹ The term “incense paper (*xiangzhi* 香紙) here means “spirit money.”

master's wife had a big belly⁶⁸⁰ that was full of [flowing] killers or genies.⁶⁸¹ [She told the boy servant], "I can't catch [them]. You must go to the manor of the Chen family at Gutian County to invite both Chen Haiqing and Chen Sigu to capture these demons." The boy servant then returned home and said to [his] young master, "[We] must go to Gutian County in Fuzhou to invite Master Chen Haiqing to subdue them." "Boy servant, you go [there]. [Just] bring along some luggage and traveling expenses and get off at once," answered the young master. After arriving at the manor of the Chen family, [the boy servant] explained [all the details] to both Haiqing [and Sigu]. Chen Haiqing set off immediately. All of a sudden, he sounded [his] horn three times to summon the Copper Horses of the Three Heavens as soon as he arrived at the manor of the Wangs. [The copper horses] set the net of heaven and earth [in order to] encircle the manor of the Wangs. Haiqing entered and saw that the Goblin of the Western Glow was pacing up and down [in the trap]. Transforming himself into a shrimp, [the goblin] escaped to the ink stone pond, where he was caught by Haiqing. The Clever Ghost was released [and sent] to find out news everywhere. The copper horses retreated after they drew in the net of heaven and earth. The boy servant said to Master Haiqing, "My young master's wife has a big belly. Do you have any ideas?" "Let me help her to abort them. [I]ve eliminated [all of them from her womb], which is [now] completely empty. Just carry the killers to the hill and buried them over there," Haiqing replied. On his way, [however], the boy servant broke [the stuff] that contained the killers. [As a result], the genies escaped to the river. Haiqing said, "Don't be afraid, though they ran away. From now on, women have to invite me to expel the flowing killers whenever they're pregnant. [In this rite], small shrimps [that represent the flowing killers or genies] must be collected from the river and put inside a bucket, which [is then taken home and placed] under [the altar]."⁶⁸² [In order to] express his thankfulness, the young master came out and gave him (Haiqing) three taels of silver [as gifts]. Refusing to accept [the money], Haiqing immediately returned [home] and told [the details] to his younger sister.

In addition, the story says that Lin Jiugu invited [her] second brother (Haiqing) to come to rescue [her] mother. [Hai]qing arrived at [the manor of the Lin family], where he met Lin

⁶⁸⁰ The young master's wife carried innumerable flowing killers or genies within her womb.

⁶⁸¹ Ye Mingsheng said that *xia* 霞 or *liuxia* 流霞 is a kind of flowing killer or genie in the water.

⁶⁸² According to local beliefs of western Fujian, flowing killers often cause abortion. The Ritual for Sending Off the Killers (*Qianxia* 遣霞) must be performed in order to eliminate these evil killers or genies. Ye Mingsheng told me that he once observed this rite, which took place in a house several years ago. A vernacular priest of the Lüshan Sect was invited to perform the rite. Before the ritual began, some small shrimps that represented the flowing killers were collected from a local river and put inside a bucket or basin, which was taken back to the house of the host family and placed under the altar. After the ritual ended, spirit money is burnt and the bucket or basin that contained the shrimps was taken to the riverside. The small shrimps were released to the river, a symbolic action of expelling flowing killers from the pregnant woman's womb.

Jiugu ([his] younger sister) [and] asked, “Where [do you] keep your mother[’s corpse]? [Just] take me there [so that] I can take a look [at it].” [He] sounded [his] dragon horn once. [The lid] of the coffin was removed and her soul was called back at once. She returned to life and met Jiugu (her daughter). [Jiugu] explained [all the details] once [to her mother]. [Hai]qing said good-bye to her younger sister [and told her], “I’ve to go to the manor of the Li family.” Li Sangu was at home. [When Haiqing] arrived at [the main entrance of her mansion], Sangu came out to invite her second brother to enter the house, where they [both] drank together. The brother and sister (Haiqing and Sangu) soon went to Suzhou to rescue [Sangu’s] father. [Since] they did not know where [he was], [they] inquired upon [his] whereabouts. Riding a boat, Haiqing immediately sounded [his] horn to summon the [celestial] armies. The Copper Horses came. It dived into the water and took a look. Seeing that there were so many corpses, it carried [them] one by one on its back [and took them out of the water]. One after another, Haiqing brought them back to life.⁶⁸³ Sangu recited, “This was my father.” [Her father] immediately returned to life. [Sangu] took her father home after explaining [all the details] to him.⁶⁸⁴ Haiqing said good-bye [to them] and returned to Gutian County. [After he went home], he said to his father, “Today, I’ve just saved two persons, my younger sister’s⁶⁸⁵ mother and Sangu’s father. That’s why I came back today.” [His] father drank happily.

Moreover, it is said that at the manor of the Hong family, there was a younger master known as Hong Tianzhu, whose wife was called Ma Jinlian. The married couple did not have kids yet. They’ve to go to Mt. Mudan [and] begged the Monkey King to bestow [them] a son (or sons). “This is my fate. I won’t go!” His wife said angrily. They quarreled with each other. The Monkey King went down the mountain and captured Jinlian’s soul when [the married couple] was halfway to [Mt. Mudan]. [After] returning home, [Jinlian] fell sick and talked nonsense. The young master had no choice but to order [his] boy servant to invite Lady Lin Jiugu to get back her soul. [At] home, Jinlian was at once secured from evil. Lin Jiugu then invited the Copper Horses of the Three Heavens to come to catch the Monkey King, who was sent to Mt. Lu for punishment. Jiugu said farewell to [the married couple] and returned home.

At the manor of the Yang family, there was also a Crow Demon of Shiyuan Wei. [This goblin] cried out [the phrase] “fellow villagers (*xiangli ren* 鄉里人)” three times. [As a result],

⁶⁸³ Literally, the sentence “*Haiqing yiyi jiu hao* 海清一一救好” can also be translated as “Haiqing rescued [them] one by one. However, according to the contents of the script, it is more reasonable to be translated as “One after another, Haiqing brought [them] back to life.”

⁶⁸⁴ In my opinion, the term “*erjia* 二家” here refers to Sangu and her father.

⁶⁸⁵ The term “*amei* 阿妹” here refers to Lin Jiugu.

every family suffered from serious headache and bled from nose and mouth. There was a young master called Yang Shichun, who ordered [his] boy servant to go to invite Master Chen Haiqing to subdue him. The boy servant met Haiqing and [his] sister (Chen Jinggu) on the way. [The two ritual masters] arrived at the manor of the Yangs, where they met the young master, who gave an account of [the event]. Sounding [his] horn, [Hai]qing summoned the [celestial] soldiers to come to capture the Crow Demon. The demon fought with the soldiers. [He] was caught by the soldiers and sent to Mt. Lu for punishment. [Hai]qing said farewell [to Yang Shichun]. On his way home, he met a young master [whose name] was Li Chunju. Carrying the three sacrifices, Li Chunju went to pay tribute to the Great King. Haiqing stated,⁶⁸⁶ “Don’t worship [him]! Just give [the sacrifices] to me. I’ll eat them up and you’ll be safe.” “[How] dare you eat [them]!” replied Li Chunju. Haiqing said,⁶⁸⁷ “Of course I have my own method [to catch him]. Let me show you.” He immediately invited the soldiers to come to capture [the Great King], who was in fact a cock genie. [He] was sent to Mt. Lu for punishment. On his way home, Haiqing met the Black Tiger Demon. Being capture by Haiqing, he was sent to Mt. Lü for punishment.

It is said that Wang Sixuan brought his boy servant together when he went to the capital to take the imperial examinations. Guo Zheng (the Prime Minister) was the chief examiner. He went to the court to report [the examination results] to the emperor. Sixuan was bestowed the title of the Prize Candidate [and his] wife was awarded the title of the Lady of the First Rank. He was also granted [the great privilege] of taking up an official post in Hongzhou. Bringing [his] wife together, [Wang Sixuan] soon set off [for Hongzhou]. When they passed Muqiao Township, the villagers informed the lord (him) that [since] there was a Great King at the wooden bridge, he had to go [there] to offer incense [to him]. Wang Sixuan wrote a letter after he heard this. Then, he ordered someone to take it to Master Chen Haiqing [and] invited [the ritual master] to come to subdue the Great King. “I’ll come to take a look,” Haiqing said [to the messenger]. [When saw the Great King, he realized that [this goblin] was [in fact] a clever ghost. [Hence], he captured him and sent him to Mt. Lu for punishment. Wang Sixuan and [his] wife went to Hongzhou, where he assumed office. That is not under discussion [for the time being].

Furthermore, it is said that Chen Changfa brought [his] boy servant together when he went to Nanzhuang to collect rent. Cai Jinniang (his wife) who was stayed at home was eaten by the White Serpent. The boy servant returned home, where he saw the Old White Serpent

⁶⁸⁶ According to the contents of the story, the Chinese character “*da* 答” should be revised as “*shuo* 說.”

⁶⁸⁷ The Chinese character “*da*” here should be translated as “said.”

Woman. He immediately returned to Nanzhuang and told his young master that he did not know whether the mistress was still alive or not. The young master ordered the boy servant to go to invite Master Chen Haiqing to come to catch her. Haiqing came and saw that [the demon] was a white snake. They both had a competition in ritual methods (or supernormal power). Being defeated by Haiqing, [the White Serpent] ran away and thought to herself, “I’ve to go to Mt. Mao to acknowledge the Liuren Geomantic Immortal Master as my master and learn [the ritual] methods.” The master took a look [at her and] realized that [she] was in fact a snake demon. [He immediately said to her], “You’ll be captured and beheaded.” The Serpent answered, “I seek for life rather than death. It was just because [I] and Haiqing had a competition in [ritual] methods. I was defeated by him. I told [him] that I would come to Mt. Mao to learn the [ritual] methods. [However], Haiqing said that Mt. Mao’s [ritual] methods were useless at all.” “Haiqing talked big!” the Master reprimanded angrily and transmitted [the ritual] methods to the White Serpent at once. [After she left Mt. Mao], the White Serpent [met a child] halfway. [This child], who was the manifestation of Lord Zhang,⁶⁸⁸ cried his eyes out. He was searching for a mother. [Having compassion on the orphan], the White Serpent thought to herself, “I’m your mother and you’re my son.” [She then adopted him and] gave [all her] liturgical [manuals] to the son, who carried them on his back and ran away. He turned into Lord Zhang [when] he went halfway. The White Serpent [was deceived by Lord Zhang]. [She] could not help but [continue to] eat people.

It is said that Wang Er, the young master of the manor of the Wang family, had already gone to the manor of the Chen family at Gutian County. [He and] Chen Sigu, who had just returned from Mt. Lu after learning the [ritual] methods, had been engaged to each other before they were born. [She] subdued demons or goblins throughout the world. [Wang Er thought to himself], “Haiqing ([my] brother-in-law) does not allow me to send a party to escort the bride (Sigu) to my house. [Therefore], I’ve to come to the house of the Chen family, where my wife and I’ll worship the heaven and earth at our wedding.” [After] staying⁶⁸⁹ [at her wife’s house] for seventh months, [Wang Er] said good-bye [to her] and returned home. On his way, [he came to the riverside]. [Nevertheless, he] could not cross the river since a Pig Goblin was causing trouble there. Billows, which dashed to the skies, caused flood in the inn. After [he] wrote a letter, [Wang Er] told someone to deliver it [to his wife]. [He also said to this person], “Just tell

⁶⁸⁸ The term “Zhang Gong (Lord Zhang)” here refers to the Sage Lord Zhang (Zhang Shengjun) or Ritual Lord Zhang (Zhang Gong Fazhu) mentioned above.

⁶⁸⁹ I think that the term “*laidao* 來到” here should be translated as “staying” instead of “coming.”

my wife (Sigu) to come [here] to catch him.” [At the manor of the Chen family], [Hai]qing saw that his brother-in-law had sent a letter [to Sigu]. [After he read the letter, he said to Sigu], “[Your] husband told you to go [there].” “I won’t go.” “I can’t go now!” answered Sigu. “I can’t go [now] since I’m pregnant,” Sigu said [again]. “I’ve an idea. According to [my] calculation, you’re pregnant for seven months. [I can] foretell that [the baby] is a boy. Let me help you to take him out from your womb. [After] drinking the charm water, [Chen Sigu] gave birth to [a baby] at once. As expected, [the infant] was a boy, who was named Wang Jixiang. Sigu transformed this son into [a boy that possessed] copper body and iron bones. A bowl of water, which was transformed into the Shenmao Sea, was used to guard the head of the main hall⁶⁹⁰ of the house. The chaff, which was turned into wasps, was used to guard the door of the main hall. Two brooms, which were transformed into two tigers, were used to guard the main entrance. [Then], both the brother and sister went to capture the Pig Goblin. They immediately invited the [celestial] soldiers to come to catch [the genie] and sent him to Mt. Lu for punishment. The White Serpent knew that Chen Sigu had [just] given birth [to a son]. [Therefore], she went to the manor of the Chen family to look for him. [However,] she could not find him in the house. Transforming herself into the adopted mother of [Haideng (Sigu’s youngest brother)], she told Haideng to open the door. “My house is here!” Haideng said [to her]. The White Serpent stated, “You take a look at the head of the main hall. There’s a bowl of water.” She told [Hai]deng to pour away the water. [She] saw the house at once.⁶⁹¹ She then came to the main entrance and saw [two] tigers. [The White Serpent ordered Haideng], “Just take away the brooms!” “The brooms have been taken away,” [Hai]deng replied. Coming to the door of the main hall, she saw [a lot of] wasps [and said, “Just take away the chaff!”] “The chaff has been taken away,” answered [Hai]deng. Entering [the house], the White Serpent held the baby in her arms and ran away. [Though she wanted] to eat him, [she was unable to do so]. She said to [herself], “This son possesses copper body and iron bones. [I] can’t eat him.” She threw him away to the riverside. Then, she went to get [Sigu’s] postpartum discharge. Flying up to the sky, she poured the postpartum discharge [on] Chen Sigu, [who was performing rites on the sea’s waters]. [Sigu immediately] fell into the sea. Lord Zhang saw [and rescued] this son.⁶⁹² Carrying him in his arms, [Lord Zhang took the baby] to Guanyin for nurture. Moreover, the

⁶⁹⁰ The term “*tingtou* 廳頭 (the head of the main hall)” refers to the place of a main hall where the household altar is set up. In the main hall of a house, “*tingwei* 廳尾 (the tail of the main hall)” is the area near the courtyard.

⁶⁹¹ According to legends of Chen Jinggu (or Chen Sigu), human beings could see the house of the Chens. Nevertheless, goblins or demons could see nothing else but a vast sea. Since the White Serpent was a demon, she could not see the house.

⁶⁹² The term “this son” here refers to Wang Jixiang, Chen Sigu’s newborn baby.

story says that the Ritual Lord of Mt. Lu,⁶⁹³ as mentioned above, had said to Haiqing, “Your younger sister would suffer from disaster when she’s eighteen years old. Don’t be afraid! Someone will rescue her for you.” In fact it was the Duck Shaped Goblin that held up Sigu. [Shaking his] copper bells and sounding [his] dragon horn once, [the Ritual Lord of Mt. Lu] called back her soul. She was restored to life at once. [Then], she met with [her] master. “Sigu, you and your brother shouldn’t eat ducks from now on. I’ve to go now,” the master told her.

Sigu and her brother said, “Let’s go home!” [After she arrived home], Sigu could not see [her] son and did not know where he was. Haiqing asked his father, “Who had come here in the past few days?” “I don’t know,” his father answered. He then asked Haideng. “[My] adopted mother had come here,” Haideng replied. Haiqing said,⁶⁹⁴ “The White Serpent transformed herself into [your] adopted mother and came [here]!” He wanted to beat Haideng to death. “No! Haiqing!” [his] father scolded him. [Then, both Haiqing and Sigu went to search for the snake demon. On their way, they met the White Serpent and chased her. Pacing up and down, [the White Serpent’s mind was in a turmoil.] In order to escape, she hid behind the lotus throne of Buddha Mother Guanyin of the Southern Sea. Haiqing asked, “Have you seen the White Serpent?” “No, [I] haven’t,” answered the Buddha Mother. “Buddha Mother, you shouldn’t conceal the White Serpent. [You] better hand her over to us. Otherwise, I’ll sound [my] dragon horn once and Mt. Putuo of the Southern Sea will collapse,” Haiqing said to [her]. The Buddha Mother said [to him], “Try it if you [dare]!” Haiqing sounded [his] dragon horn. Cutting off a fingernail, the Buddha Mother turned it into a mountain, under which Haiqing was trapped. Sigu came to rescue her elder brother. Kneeling down in front of the Buddha Mother, she begged [the goddess] to bestow favors. “My elder brother is guilty. Please give me face!” said Sigu. The Buddha Mother released him at once. Both of them apologized to the Buddha Mother [and said], “We (brother and sister) go home now!” [After they left], the White Serpent came out. The Buddha Mother told [her], “From now on, [you’re] not allowed to eat people anymore. You’re permitted to eat one duck [whenever] there’s a boat [appears].” [The White Serpent said farewell to Guanyin and left Mt. Putuo].

The White Serpent said [to the boatman], “I came out to tell you (the boatman) that my Buddha Mother has given an order. I’m permitted to eat up one person [whenever] there’s a boat [appears].”⁶⁹⁵ The White Serpent then went away and thought to herself, “[Since I] have no

⁶⁹³ The term “Lushan Fazhu 廬山法主” refers to Xu Xun.

⁶⁹⁴ I think that the Chinese character “*da* 答 (answered)” here should be translated as “*shuo* 說 (said).”

⁶⁹⁵ The manuscript copy does not mention whether or not the boatman was eaten by the White Serpent.

place to live, [I'd] go to the capital city to eat the empress.” [After arriving at the capital], she went to the Temple of the City God, where the empress was begging for a son. The White Serpent ate up the empress. She [then] transformed herself into the empress and entered [the palace]. [After] eating a [consort], she produced a [false one by using her supernormal power]. She ate up [all the consorts] of the thirty-six palaces [and all those] of the seventy-two courts. The White Serpent was thoroughly bored. [Hence], she pretended to be sick. Emperor Renzong of the Song dynasty asked, “My dear, what kind of thing [you need] to eat [in order to] get well?” “Your Majesty, nothing else but [Chen Sigu’s heart] can cure [my illness]. [Please send someone to] the manor of the Chen family at Gutian County in Fuzhou. [Just told him] to cut out Chen Sigu’s heart [and brought it back]. I’ll get well [after] taking [it] with wine,” answered the White Serpent (or the false empress). “Why can Sigu’s heart cure [your sickness]?” asked the emperor. “[Since] she has learnt ritual methods at Mt. Lu, [her] heart is [very] efficacious,” The White Serpent [or the fraudulent empress] replied. The emperor ordered Bao Wenzheng to lead three thousand palace guards to [Chen Sigu’s home so as to] cut out [Sigu’s] heart and brought it back [to the palace].

Furthermore, [the story] says that there were two persons, A Li and A De. They both wanted to go to the Bridge of Hundred Flowers to communicate with the spirits of the dead. On their way, [they] met Chen Haiqing and explained him the details. [These two persons], who communicated with the spirits of the dead on the way, [suddenly] cried in fear. Haiqing asked, “Why are [you] so frightened?” “Bao Wenzheng (the Prime Minister) need to go to the manor of the Chen family to cut out Chen Sigu’s heart [so that the false empress (or the White Serpent) can] take it with wine. Haiqing rushed home [and] explained [all the details] to [his] younger sister. Both A Li and A De were still in trance. Wang Po came out to beat these two persons [until] they recovered. [Then], both of them returned home. [This is] not under discussion [for the time being].

It is said that Chen Sigu and her elder brother went to Mt. Putuo of the Southern Sea, where they requested the Buddha Mother Guanyin to [bestow] sweet dew upon them. They then went back and met Bao Wenzheng. Bao Wenzheng asked, “Are you Chen Sigu? Why don’t you run away?” Sigu answered, “If I run away, it would be difficult for Your Excellency to report on the termination of your mission. Prime Minister, you come later. We both go first.” Arriving at the front gate [of the palace], they invited Lin Jiugu and Li Sangu to go there⁶⁹⁶ together. [They] also invited the [celestial] soldiers to come. Surrounding the golden imperial

⁶⁹⁶ According to the context of the script, it is more reasonable to translate the character “*ci* 此” as “there.”

hall with celestial nets and earthly snares, Sigu went to see the emperor. The emperor bestowed [his] dragon bed on her [so that she could lie in it and] cut out [her] heart. Sigu sprinkled the sweet dew on [the false empress], who immediately turned into a White Serpent. The emperor cried in fear when he came to take a look at [the demon]. [He ordered] Sigu to kill [her] at once. Sigu said, “I’d kill her if [Your Majesty] absolved me from guilt.” She cut the snake four times with her broadsword. Chen Sigu told her younger sisters that [the head] of this serpent [must] be chained up. [Then, she said to the demon], “You’re not allowed to be reborn until the iron tree blooms.”⁶⁹⁷ The tail of the snake was [captured] and beaten⁶⁹⁸ by Haiqing. Holding [it] in front of his horn,⁶⁹⁹ he sounded [the ritual instrument] once and the tail was transformed into a big-head mosquito, which bit people at midnight. [Hai]qing [said], “You’re permitted to suck three pails of blood within a day. Don’t drink more than [these]!” [Sigu] resuscitated the consorts of the thirty-six palaces and seventy-two courts. [Nevertheless, since] they were mutilated, the emperor did not love them anyone. Sigu sent them to [the Bridge of Hundred Flowers] to become Nursing Ladies. They ate cocks and [drank] wine that [were offered to them as gifts].⁷⁰⁰ The emperor conferred the title of the Three Sovereign Empresses upon Sigu and her [two] younger sisters. Haiqing was granted the title of the General who Assists the State. Two golden flowers and three cups of imperial wine were granted to her.⁷⁰¹ The sisters [and Haiqing] said good-bye and returned home. Lord Zhang went [to the manor of the Chen family] to return the son to [Lady Chen]. Sigu [and her son] met and the whole family reunited.

⁶⁹⁷ Since iron trees seldom bore flowers, the White Serpent almost had no chance to be born again.

⁶⁹⁸ The exact meaning of the Chinese character “*fu* 扶” is unknown.

⁶⁹⁹ The meaning of the phrase “*fangzai jiaowei shang* 放在角尾上” is not clear.

⁷⁰⁰ It is said the Nursing Ladies are apprentices of Lady Chen. These goddesses take charge of protecting children until they are sixteen. However, they think that if a child goes against his/her parents’ destiny, they would “take the child’s soul, *hun* 魂, to reincarnate it in another woman.” (Baptandier 1994, 545) In other words, the child may die as a result. According to local customs of Fujian, families that have newly born sons would report the good news to all their relatives and friends, who would bring along cocks and wine when they visit these families so as to offer their congratulations. These gifts are first offered to the Nursing Ladies in order to please them.

⁷⁰¹ In my opinion, the Chinese character “*ta* 他” here refers to Chen Sigu.

Appendix Eight

皇君故事(白蛇記)

卻說宋仁宗皇帝，左相包文拯右相郭正時，有觀音佛母坐在普陀山梳粧，脫下一條白頭髮，落在海中去，即時海浪漂天，佛母慧眼一看，即時變成一條白蛇，七尺人身，二丈四尾，天下吃人無數，骨頭堆山，天下有難，佛母即時命吉帝童子，拿了金剪乙把，剪下三個手指甲，送與陳、林、李積善之家，投胎出世，日後往到廬山習法，前來收他，命童子一個送到福州古田縣陳吉義家莊投胎，吉義長子，名法通，號三郎，次子海清，三子海登，後來出世女子陳四姑；又命童子一個送到泉州⁷⁰²武府擇縣⁷⁰³，林家莊投胎，父林宗華，母張氏，後來出世林九姑；又一個送到徽州⁷⁰⁴李家莊投胎，父李文寶，母陳氏，後來出始⁷⁰⁵李三姑。

再說張世魁張家人氏，父母早亡過，不一日帶家童往京上科，又再說，郭正相爺取考試官取了張世魁頭名狀元，相爺女子名月英姓郭，將女子配與世魁狀元為妻，相爺上朝奏旨，封月英為一品夫人，又封世魁狀元賜爾⁷⁰⁶走馬遊街，又加封洪州上任為官，不一日起程，帶月英妻子往到半路，鄉民報知老爺，我這地方有個大王在嵩嶺，此處難過，爾為官之人，要去上香，為官方得平安，狀元不肯聽他，喝道三聲過去，那大王出來，將月英拿去，狀元無奈，命衙下回去，自己往到廬山習法，前來收他，到廬山仙師名許九郎，九郎問起情由，狀元一一說明，不一日，賜他靈符三道，自有天兵扶起，那時二家拜別下山。將符開了燒他⁷⁰⁷，天兵下來，放火燒起，將月英燒死，太白金仙下來，將月英救出與狀元相會，大王走去，狀元帶妻子要去廬山拜謝仙師，仙師答爾夫妻不要回去，在廬山作官，封世魁五郎大將，封妻為救難夫人，不題。

卻說白蛇無處安身，來來去去，來到古田縣，托了張三李旺二人全夢，那白蛇說：「爾二人我要爾架造一廟宇安奉神祇，我與取個名字，聖母娘娘，庇祐爾鄉寧靜，梓里和平；若是不信，將爾二人頭上吃下去，腳上吃起來。」李旺二人為首，架一個取名南姣廟，迺⁷⁰⁸年春秋二祭，辦三牲祭禮，要去祭賽，就平安；有個烏虎大王來到古田縣南姣廟要與白蛇成親，白蛇不肯，二家提刀相殺，白蛇被大王拿去成親，大王說：「嬌嬌，我今

⁷⁰² Shaowu Prefecture is not located at Quanzhou.

⁷⁰³ This phrase should be revised as “Shaowu Fu Guangze Xian 邵武府光澤縣.” (Wang 2002, 72)

⁷⁰⁴ According to local beliefs of Fujian, Li Sangu was born in Quanzhou 泉州.

⁷⁰⁵ In my opinion, the term “chushi 出始” should be revised as “chushi 出世.”

⁷⁰⁶ The term “cier 賜爾” can be revised as “ciyi 賜以.”

⁷⁰⁷ I think that the Chinese character “ta 他” here should be written as “ta 它.”

⁷⁰⁸ The Chinese character “hou 迺” should be revised as “mei 每.”

來了，要去李旺二人托夢，叫他[們]要辦童男童女，前來祭賽。」李旺張三二人無奈，不要理他。

再說仙童送指甲來陳家莊投胎，陳見義(陳吉義)妻葛氏，長子福通，二子海清，三子海登，葛氏即時生下一女取名陳四姑，一家欣欣飲酒，不題；四姑正月十五日寅時生的。仙童又送指甲往林家莊投胎，夫林宗華，妻張氏，生下一女，取名林九姑，仙童又送指甲去李家莊投胎，夫李文寶，妻陳氏，生一女，取名李三姑。

再說陳三郎名法通，與父說明：「這幾年古田縣不太平，妖精常時吃人，我要叫他海清去到雪山學法回來，保守家眷。」父一一從命說：「爾兄弟須要專心。」即時拜別，兄弟二人就起程；不料⁷⁰⁹往到雪山，拜雷山天法主為師，法主傳授爾兄弟二人就去，得了師父面前來，二家拜別下山回家，與父一一說明。

卻說張三李旺二人聽見本縣陳見義(陳吉義)，子三郎前去習法回來，我講爾二人去他且⁷¹⁰來收妖，二人去到陳家莊，問三郎：「收妖肯去？」三郎答：「我要叫海清先去寫表，我隨後就來。」三郎吩咐海清酒不可吃太多，要十八日破洞，海清酒醉寫差日子，寫十七日破洞，將表文燒去，法主知三郎弟子有難，白蛇知三郎是假法，[他心裡想]，我變個女子將三郎拿來到廟中，大王白蛇二人要來吃他，法主前來罵：「此妖精好大膽，是我弟子。」我法主放下金鐘，將三郎蓋住，魂魄取去，二妖吊不起，海清叫李旺張三打鑼打鼓先來，海清隨後來到廟中，看見大哥加履鞋乙雙，托在鐘邊先到⁷¹¹，叫幾聲：「大哥！大哥！」三郎在鐘內答應叫：「海清回頭就走！」走回家中去與父說明，一家兩淚汪汪。

陳四姑前來與父說明：「我哥哥有難，我就去廬山習法，回來與哥哥報仇。」父答：「爾婦人之家，一來路途遙遠，豈不難走。」四姑答：「叫二哥跟隨我去。」父吩咐：「海清一路兄妹不可相爭。」海清答：「不敢！不敢！」即時拜別起身。來到店中投宿；卻說西霞精、靈精鬼知陳四姑兄妹在此經過，要來拿他；即時觀音佛母娘娘下降，變作個女子與四姑說明，四姑兄妹二人無奈，佛母說：「爾兄妹雙目閉住，就可過去。」四姑兄妹即時閉住兩眼，如果⁷¹²過去，四姑回頭一看，不見女子，望空拜謝。

⁷⁰⁹ In my opinion, the term “*buliao* 不料 (unexpectedly)” should be deleted from the text.

⁷¹⁰ According to the local dialect of Qingshui Township of central western Fujian, the Chinese character “*qing* 請” is pronounced as “*qie*.”

⁷¹¹ I think that the meaning of the term “*xiandao* 先到” is not clear.

⁷¹² The term “*ruguo* 如果” here should be revised as “*guoran* 果然.”

那白蛇知四陳四姑去廬山學法，[他心裡想]，我要變一個陳四姑一般先去，去到廬山，廬山仙師不知是白蛇，將法傳授他，陳四姑兄妹來到燕子江，不能得過，來有一個仙師，將龍角一吹化了一條橋，四姑兄妹過了橋，仙師帶到茆山拜見陳祿夫人，陳祿夫人說：「我茆山本年未有開科，爾要往廬山學法，爾行禮⁷¹³放在我茆山，爾兄妹要去廬山，那白蛇在廬山習法。」起程回來，陳四姑兄妹往到廬山大叫：「法主，我兄妹要來學法。」廬山衙下說：「四姑免出去！」海清答：「我四姑有海清跟隨就是真的。」衙下入去報仙師，仙師抬頭一看，原來是蛇精，仙師說：「此蛇精用來一計其法傳他去。」老仙師失了打點，海清開口罵仙師[說]：「此白蛇天下無人收得，吃人無數。」那仙師無言可答問海清⁷¹⁴：「爾在茆山放下⁷¹⁵，我拿金剪乙把、紙幣乙張付與陳祿夫人，自有主意。」兄妹就來茆山，將金剪拿與夫人，夫人抬頭一看白蛇在何方去，原來未過燕子江，用了天羅地網將白蛇網的，這白蛇來來去去，不知何去，這夫人剪下一疋萬里彪，與白蛇換得千里馬，四姑來到燕子江，海清問白蛇：「全名阿妹，爾在廬山學法，何時起身⁷¹⁶？」白蛇答：「我來此到十五天。」即問：「爾兄妹何時起身？」海清答：「我是天早已時起身。」白蛇答：「我問爾為何如今到在此？」海清答：「我是萬里彪，爾是千里馬，打我不過。」白蛇答⁷¹⁷：「爾萬里彪肯換我否？」海清假說不肯，四姑說：「帶法怕都來換過。」海清又不肯，罵四姑：「不要換他！」四姑不聽，將法寶一一換來，千里馬換來，四姑吩咐：「我的萬里彪，馬上加鞭，即可日行萬里。」一時銅馬收了天羅地網，白蛇將萬里彪加鞭脫下水去，那不知此彪乃是紙作的，卻是無用；白蛇變出本像，天下吃人盛⁷¹⁸多。

海清兄妹依舊來到廬山口叫：「我海清要來與爾師阜⁷¹⁹鬥法！」衙下聽見，報上仙師，仙師出來就問：「海清好大膽！怎敢與我鬥法。」海清答：「我不是鬥法乃是造法，是爾衙下聽差了。」仙師心想鬥造這一般聲無妨。仙師不一日將法傳授與四姑，此海清生的是火眼，法主心想我變作假病，將法變作浪血⁷²⁰在背上，叫苦連天，疼痛不過，海清出來看見，師阜有浪盃⁷²¹在此，[海清問]：「可有藥醫上？」師阜答：「何人敢吃下去我就

⁷¹³ The term “*xingli* 行禮” should be revised as “*xingli* 行李.”

⁷¹⁴ The phrase “*wen Haiqing* 問海清” should be revised as “*dui Haiqing shuo* 對海清說.”

⁷¹⁵ The meaning of the sentence “*er zai Maoshan fangxia* 爾在茆山放下” is not clear. According to the contents of the story, I translate it as “you go to Mt. Mao [again]”

⁷¹⁶ I think that the term “*qishen* 起身” simply means “*dongshen* 動身.”

⁷¹⁷ The Chinese character “*da* 答” here should be translated as “asked (*wen* 問).”

⁷¹⁸ The Chinese character “*sheng* 盛” should be revised as “*shen* 甚.”

⁷¹⁹ The Chinese character “*fu* 阜” here should be revised as “*fu* 傅 or 父.”

⁷²⁰ The term “*langxie* 浪血” here refers to “*nongchuang* 膿瘡.”

⁷²¹ Similar to the term “*langxie*” mentioned above, the term “*langbei* 浪盃” also means “*nongchuang*.”

好。」海清答：「不敢吃去。」四姑出來看見[說]：「我就敢吃去。」海清答：「妹妹不敢吃，肚中痛起來。」四姑就吃。海清口叫：「不敢吃！不敢吃！」四姑吐出一嘴，仙師說：「四姑，爾十八歲有難，爾金⁷²²騰雲駕霧，即會飛了。」海清看見妹妹飛去，即時地下看見有浪血無，將浪血那末抹在眼中，仙師說：「爾會跳，爾眼中看土觀三尺，爾是火眼，吩咐爾回去之時，叫爾海清不要回頭再看廬山。」四姑答，即時拜別下去，來到半途，吩咐二兄[說]：「不要回頭看廬山。」海清問：「何事？」四姑答：「爾目火眼，不要回頭再看，下次來並無廬山。」海清不信，叫妹妹：「爾先行幾步，我隨後就來。」清乃回頭再看果[然]廬山沉了。兄妹就來到萬花店，店主名劉小二，兄妹在此安身。

卻說林九姑因母親早亡，要去廬山學法，前來救母；又李三姑因父親李文寶去蘇州賣布打落船去，要往廬山前來學法救父，二人來到半路，遇著四姑，二人問起情由，一一說上，結為姐妹，來到萬花店，店前經過，陳海清看見[他們，問道]：「爾二人表嫂⁷²³要往那裡去？」九姑二人答：「我要去廬山習法。」海清答：「如今並無廬山。」二人不信問清：「爾法在那裡來？」清答：「我在廬山[學]來。」九姑三姑答：「爾去都有，我去就無？」海清答：「爾不信快去。」下了石磨山，此二人過來過去，清問：「爾曉的什麼時節？要去半夜了。」將太陽放下；雞犬叫，此二人看不見；四姑罵：「爾何苦去害他？」等到天光，問四姑：「何如？」四姑答：「果然並無廬山。」海清說：「爾二人對我結拜兄妹，我法來傳授與爾。」叫劉小二架起皇宮寶殿，將文法傳授妹妹，吩咐[他們]：「爾日後請我之時，將寶劍打三下，我就到；李三姑阿妹，爾且(請)我將馬鞭打二鞭，我就到；我請爾二人，將龍角吹三聲，爾就到；爾姊妹在店中分別而去，我兄妹而去。」來到半路，遇著一個犬倒在地下，又有一婦人死在地下，犬少一個腳，女子少一個心，海清請銅馬下來將犬一個心破來，與女子心中安下，犬無心，將土作一個心，又將紙作一個紙腳，吩咐[牠]：「爾日後放尿之時，將腳架起來。」此犬好來即時就去；這女子雙眼瞎了，目瞎婆姓牛名許，不能開光，海清[說]：「教爾透討亡魂。」救他帶去白(百)花橋頭⁷²⁴來安處。

海清四姑兄妹就回家，與父母相會，將廬山學法一一說明，父說：「爾兄妹二人救爾大哥有難，今日回來快快去答救。」四姑兄妹就去南高廟(南蛟廟)，拿了烏虎大王就收

⁷²² The Chinese character “jin 金” here should be revised as “jin 今.”

⁷²³ The meaning of the term “biaosao 表嫂” is not clear.

⁷²⁴ According to local beliefs of central western Fujian, the term “Baihua Qiao 白花橋 (the Bridge of White Flowers)” should be revised as “Baihua Qiao 百花橋 (the Bridge of Hundred Flowers).”

的了，張公法王來到廟中，海清將獅(師)鈴⁷²⁵金鐘打破，法主罵：「好大膽！待我將鐘吊起，爾兄妹救起大哥。」清算下[說]：「阿！我救不起，魂魄在爾法主身上，將魂魄放回，我救起三郎大哥，與兄妹相會，一齊回家。」法主說：「爾兄妹果然專心，爾帶爾大哥與父相會。」不要題起。

再說王家莊[莊主]名王思選，妻張氏，不一日對妻拜別，與家童往京上科，來到半路投店，有兩個妖精，一個犀(西)霞鬼，一個靈精鬼，西霞精變作王思選一般，靈精鬼變作家童一般，來到王家莊，小姐問：「爾上科去，為何就回來？」霞精答：「今科不去，下科才去」小姐問：「有何事？」相公答：「去到河邊，看見一尾魚有兩頭，故此不去。」小姐答：「相公不要去就好。」二家欣喜，是夜王思選在店中夢見後門一枝樹，被人砍去，面前一坵田，彼人耕去，即使叫家童先往回家看明，那家童即時回家，小姐將門閉住，家童叫：「相公娘開門！」小姐答曰：「爾是何人？」家童答：「爾家童！」張氏答：「爾與相公前日回來，到如今還有家童來？」家童答：「相公子店中未回來，又有相公敢是妖怪。」家童趕到店中說明，相公即時回家，與妖怪二家相爭相打，小姐出來一看，二人一般，真相公與家童說：「去到書房。」無計可施，叫家童去且(請)彌陀師來收他，家童就去問陀師：「可用什麼東西？」師答：「豬首乙百斤，香紙三個錢，即時就來。」到王家莊收妖，被妖精看下無法，吊上半天，彌陀師叫苦連天，後來家童出了放下，就走回家中。相公無奈，叫家童去白(百)花橋去問目瞎婆透亡魂，用米乙升，錢乙百，就問瞎婆透到王家莊看見西霞精、靈精鬼二妖在此，相公娘肚中大隻，肚盡盡都是霞，[瞎婆對他說]：「我收不得，要收此妖，一定前去古田縣，陳家莊，且(請)陳海清、陳四姑二人來此收妖。」那家童就回來，對相公說：「要去福州古田縣請陳海清先生來收他。」相公答：「家童爾就去，帶些行理盤程⁷²⁶，即要起身。」往到古田縣陳家莊，對陳海清二家說明。陳海清即便起程，不料往到王家莊，即時吹角且(請)三天銅馬前來，將王家莊下了天羅地網，四邊圍住，清入去看見西霞精走來走去，變出一尾霞，走在硯池水逃，在此被海清收了，靈精鬼放他去，四處打探消息，銅馬收了天羅地網回去。家童問海清師傅：「爾兄妹⁷²⁷我相公娘肚中大隻，有何主意？」清答：「待我推下來，就推得空空盡盡；將霞背去山埋下。」那家童去到半路，將霞破去，霞走在溪下去。海清說：「走

⁷²⁵ I think that the term “*shiling* 師鈴 (master bells)” can be omitted.

⁷²⁶ The term “*xingli pancheng* 行理盤程” should be written as “*xingli panchuan* 行李盤川 or “*xingli panchan* 行李盤纏.”

⁷²⁷ The term “*xiongmei* 兄妹” should be deleted from the text.

去也不怕，日後婦人有身之時，要且(請) 試⁷²⁸流霞，在溪霞拿來放下面桶就平安。」相公出來拜謝，拿銀子三兩送他，海清不收，即時走回與兄⁷²⁹妹說明。

再說林九姑且(請) 海清二哥前來救母，清就去到，林九姑妹妹相會問：「母親放在那裡？帶我去看來。」將龍角吹一聲，棺材開了，即時收魂，就好起來，與九姑母女相會，說了一遍，清與妹辭別 [並告訴他說]：「我去李家莊。」李三姑[在] 家中，[海清] 到此，三姑出來，請二哥入去，二家且(請)酒，不一日兄妹要去蘇州救父，不知何處所在，去問何來打去，在此打船去，海清即時吹角召軍，那銅馬來到，下水去看，看見死首甚多，一一背起來，海清一一救好，三姑念：「這個是我父。」好起來二家說明，即時帶父回家。海清拜別回去古田縣，與父說明：「今日我去救二位，阿妹母親，三姑阿妹的父親，故此今日回來。」父欣喜吃酒。

再說洪家莊有個相公，名洪天注，妻名馬金蓮，夫妻二人至今並未有子息，要去牡丹山，猴王去求子息，妻罵：「是我命，我不去！」二人相爭，後來有去，並無專心，去到半路，猴王下山將金蓮魂魄取去，得病回家，胡言亂語，相公無奈，叫家童去且(請) 林九姑夫人來收魂，就家即時平安，林九姑就且(請) 三天銅馬前來，將猴王拿來解到廬山問罪，九姑辭別回家。

又有楊家莊石岩尾烏鴉精，叫三聲鄉里人，家家頭痛不過，七空流血，有個相公名楊士川，叫家童去且(請) 陳海清先生來收他，家童就去，到半路遇著海清兄妹二人，就來到楊家莊[與] 相公相會，說了一遍，清就吹角且(請) 軍兵前來了，[與] 烏鴉精二家對陣，被軍兵拿來解到廬山問罪，清辭別回家。來到半路，遇著李春居相公，背有三牲祭禮去祭大王，清答：「不要祭，拿來我吃，爾就平安。」春居答：「爾敢吃去！」清答：「自然我現手段與爾看。」即時且(請) 軍兵前來拿住，原來是個雞精，解去廬山問罪。海清回來，遇著烏虎精，又被海清收了，解去廬山問罪。

卻說王思選帶家童往京赴科，郭正相爺主考，上朝奏主，封思選今科頭名狀元，妻封為一品夫人，賜他洪州上任，不一日帶妻起程，去到木橋鄉經過，鄉民稟報老爺，木橋有有一個大王，要去上香，王思選聽得此言，寫書一封，命人去且(請) 陳海清先生來收他，清答：「我來看見。」是一個靈精鬼，就解去廬山問罪；王思選夫妻到洪州作官，不題。

⁷²⁸ The character “*shi* 試” should be revised as “*qian* 遣.”

⁷²⁹ In my opinion, the character “*xiong* 兄” here should be deleted.

再說陳長發對⁷³⁰家童去南莊收租，妻蔡金娘在家，被白蛇吃去，家童回家看見白蛇婆在此就走，走到南莊與相公說明，不知相公娘生死何如，相公叫家童去且(請) 陳海清先生前來收她，清來到，看見是一個白蛇，二家鬥法，鬥海清不過就走，心想：要去茆山，拜六壬地理仙師學法，仙師一看，原來是個蛇精，[便即時對他說]：「拿來斬了！」蛇答：「我投生，不是投死，只因前日與海清鬥法，我鬥他不過，我說要來茆山學法，清說茆山法用不得。」仙師罵：「海清誇口！」即時將法傳與白蛇，白蛇來到半路，張公變個小孩在啼哭，要尋一個母親，白蛇心想：我與爾作母親，爾與我作兒子，將法交與子背去就走了，到半路變出張公去了，白蛇無奈，又去吃人。

卻說王家莊王二相公，於先在古田縣陳家莊陳四姑指腹為婚，如今在廬山習法回來，天下收妖；[王二心裡說]：「海清大舅不肯許我迎親過門，叫我上門成親，就作得，王二來到陳家與我妻拜堂成親。」來到七個月，辭別回家，去到半路，不得過河，原來豬精在地作亂，水浪漂天，浸入店中，寫書乙封，命人送去，[並對此人說]：「叫我妻四姑來收他。」清看見妹夫來書一封，[對四姑說]：「叫爾妻去，我不去。」四姑答：「我今去不得，身懷有孕，故此去不得。」海清答：「我有主意，算來七個月，再來是男子，我與爾推下來。」將符水吃去，即時生落下來，果人⁷³¹是男子，取名王吉祥，四姑將此兒子變為銅身鐵骨，此屋廳頭用水乙碗，變作沉毛海，前堂門用糠頭，變作黃蜂把門，門頭用掃手⁷³²二把，變出二個老虎把門，兄妹二人就去拿豬精，即時且(請) 軍兵前來收了，解到廬山定罪；白蛇知陳四姑生產，就去陳家莊，看他此屋不見，變作契母，叫契子，名海登，叫海登開門，登答：「我屋在此。」白蛇說：「廳頭爾看下，有一碗水。」叫登將水空下，此屋即可看見，又來到大門，看見老虎，[白蛇吩咐登]：「將掃帚拿下！」登答：「掃手(帚) 那⁷³³下。」又來到前堂門，看見黃蜂[便說]：「將黃蜂拿下！」登答：「是糠頭那(拿) 下。」白蛇入來，將孩子抱去要吃，白蛇說：這兒子是銅身鐵骨，吃不得。丟在溪邊；再去將污水那(拿) 來，升半天灑下，陳四姑墮下水去；此兒子張公看見，抱去撫養，觀音娘娘收來。卻說廬山法主先前對海清說：「爾妹年至十八歲有難，不怕自然有人答救與爾。」原來鴨形精將四姑扶起，將銅鈴龍角乙吹，收魂起來，即時就好了，與師傅相會，師傅吩咐：「四姑，爾日後兄妹不敢吃鴨，我要回去。」

⁷³⁰ The character “*dui* 對” here should be revised as “*yu* 與.”

⁷³¹ According to the contents of the story, the term “*guoren* 果人” should be revised as “*guoran* 果然.”

⁷³² The term “*saoshou* 掃手” should be revised as “*saozhou* 掃帚.”

⁷³³ The character “*na* 那” should be written as “*na* 拿.”

四姑兄妹曰：「回家！」不見兒子，不知那裡去了，海清就問父親：「這幾日何人到此？」父答：「我不知。」又問海登，登答：「是契母到此。」清答：「是白蛇變作契母來。」將海登要打死，父罵：「海清不可！」陳海清又去遇著白蛇趕去，白蛇走來走去，走在南海觀音佛母蓮花几後逃難，海清問：「佛母有看見白蛇無？」佛母答：「並無看見。」海清答：「爾佛母不要藏白蛇，放出來就好，不放我將龍角乙吹，南海普陀山崩下。」佛母說：「爾試作與我看。」清將角吹去，佛母將指甲脫下，變作一臺山，就[將]海清掩⁷³⁴住，四姑前來救兄，跪在佛母面前，求赦開恩，四姑說：「我哥哥有罪，看我分上。」佛母即時放他起來，二人在佛母面前陪個不是[並說]：「我兄妹即時回家。」白蛇出來，佛母吩咐：「從今[往]後不許吃人，一條船許爾一個鴨吃。」[白蛇拜別觀音後離開普陀山。]

白蛇說：「我出來與爾艸公說，我佛母有令，一條船許我吃一個客。」又去，白蛇心想：無處安身，走入京城吃皇后，去到臣⁷³⁵皇廟，正宮皇后在求子息，白蛇吃去，又變個正宮皇后入去，吃一個變一個，三十六宮都吃去，七十二宮都吃去，白蛇無聊，假兵在身，宋仁宗皇帝問：「愛妃，什麼東西吃得好？」白蛇答：「萬歲，別個東西吃不好，要愛福州古田縣陳家莊，陳四姑心肝破來飲酒就好。」萬歲就問：「四姑心肝為何就好？」白蛇答：「他在廬山學法，心肝就靈。」帝命包文拯點三千御人軍⁷³⁶，去破他心肝來。

再說有一個阿李，又一個阿得，二人要去白花橋⁷³⁷頭透亡魂，來到半路，遇著陳海清，二家說起情由，在路中透亡魂，口叫驚，海清問：「驚什麼？」他答曰：「包文拯相爺要去陳家莊，去破陳四姑心肝來配酒。」海清就走到⁷³⁸回家與妹說明。阿李阿得二人未醒，王婆出來將二人打醒，二人就回家，不題。

卻說陳四姑兄妹去了南海普陀山，[向]觀音佛母求問甘露水回來，去見包文拯包文拯問：「乃是陳四姑，為何不走？」四姑答：「我若走去，爾大人不好回旨，相爺爾隨後來，我二人先去。」去到午朝門外，且(請)了林九姑又李三姑姐妹一齊同到此，在⁷³⁹且(請)軍兵前來，將金鸞殿天羅地網網住，四姑去見萬歲，萬歲賜他龍床去破心肝，四姑將甘露水灑去，即時變出一條白蛇出來，叫萬歲來看，看就驚，叫四姑要斬，四姑說：「賜

⁷³⁴ It is reasonable to argue that the character “yan 掩” should be written as “ya 壓.”

⁷³⁵ The Chinese character “chen 臣” should be revised as “cheng 城.”

⁷³⁶ The term “yuren jun 御人軍” should be revised as “yulin jun 御林軍.”

⁷³⁷ The term “baihua qiao 白花橋” should be revised as “baihua qiao 百花橋.”

⁷³⁸ The Chinese character “dao 到” can be deleted.

⁷³⁹ The character “zai 在” should be written as “zai 再.”

我無罪，我就斬了。」將乙刀斬了四匝，陳四姑吩咐妹妹，這蛇將鎖條鎖住，[對蛇精說]：「到鐵樹開花許爾出世。」蛇尾乙匝，海清那(拿)來，將尾打扶，放在角尾上乙吹，變作大頭蚊，天暗乙⁷⁴⁰半前來咬人，清[說]：「許爾一天三桶血，不許多吃去。」三十六宮七十二宮要收起來，收起來四體不全，萬歲不愛，四姑發去作妳姆婆去報雞報酒吃。萬歲封四姑姐妹為三位皇君之職，海清封為扶國將軍，賜他金花兩朵，御酒三盃，姐妹拜別回家，張公送子前去與四姑相會，一家作起團圓大會。

⁷⁴⁰ The character “yi 乙” should be revised as “ye 夜.”

Appendix Nine

[The Liturgical Text] for Crossing the Barriers and Inviting the Deities

The horn resounds through the universe. I once again invite all the venerable masters. I invite the Three Masters (Tian, Dou and Guo) [and] the Three Empresses (Chen, Lin and Li).⁷⁴¹ I also tell all the sages of the stage. Civil and military officials as well as all the golden immortals ascend their thrones onstage and inside the hall. I humbly request them to descend to [the altar]. They descend to the disciple's [altar] to eliminate disasters and to protect the children to pass through the barriers.⁷⁴²

At the gate of Lushan [or Lüshan], I respectfully invite the Three Masters of the Construction of the Bridge and the Three Boys of the Construction of the Bridge to come to this world to build the bridge. The Empresses make use of wooden handles and cloth to build the bridge. The horizontal gauze transforms into bridge railings. The vertical gauze transforms into bridge piles. The head of the bridge directly extends to the Head of the Iron-plate Bridge at Hangzhou. The end of the bridge reaches the palaces of the Nurses, where the souls [of the children] are taken from their altars.

When the construction of the bridge is almost finished, the Three Boys of the Three Masters of the Defense of the Bridge and the Three Sons of the Three Masters of the Defense of the Bridge are invited to come. I summon General Tang to command his troops to defend the head of the bridge, General Ge to command his troops to defend the end of the bridge, and General Zhou to command his troops to defend the center of the bridge. Defending my Golden Bridge, [the troops] surround it over and over. They surround it over and over again. The sons come directly to the Golden Bridge. Let's [make them] cross the barriers. Let's exorcise the killers and clear the way.

The horn resounds through the universe. The gate of the Ancestral Palace of the Head of the Iron-plate Bridge in Hangzhou is opened. At the gate of the ancestral palace, I respectfully invited [the deities]. I venerably invite Lord Tian, Lord Dou and Lord Guo to descend to [the altar]. Tian Gong Yuanshuai (Marshal – Lord Tian) himself descends to [the altar] to protect the children and to drive away all the killers of the barriers.

⁷⁴¹ The Three Empresses are the three priestesses of the *furen jiao* 夫人教 (the Sect of the Ladies) of the Lüshan tradition. They are Chen Jingu 陳靖姑 (also known as Chen Sigu 陳四姑), Liu Jiugu 林九姑 and Li Sangu 李三姑.

⁷⁴² This liturgical manual is owned by Master Wang Hua 王華, who is the impresario of the Wanfu Tang 萬福堂 (the Hall of Ten Thousand Happiness) Marionette Troupe of Huang Jing Shan 黃景山 in Qingshui Township 清水鄉, Yong'an City 永安市, Fujian. Owing to his generosity, I was able to make a copy of this ritual text.

The horn once again resounds through the universe. It echoes around the gate of the Ancestral Palace of Lushan. At the gate of the ancestral palace, I respectfully invite the Ritual Lord of Lushan to descend to [the altar]. Ritual Lord Jiulang himself descends to [the altar] to bring up the children and to drive away the killers of the barriers...

The horn once again resounds through the universe. The gate of the Ancestral Palace of the Tiger Talisman is opened. At the gate of the ancestral palace, I venerably invite [the deity]. I respectfully invite the Ritual Lord Zhang [or the Sage Lord Zhang], who is canonized as the [Master of the Blue Thunder] of the Nine Heavens, to descend to [the altar]. Lord Zhang himself descends to [the altar] to protect the children and to expel the killers of the barriers...

The horn once again resounds through the universe. The gate of the Linshui Ancestral Palace in Fuzhou is opened. At the gate of the ancestral palace, I respectfully invite [the goddess]. I respectfully invite Empress Chen Si to descend to [the altar]. Empress Chen Si herself descends to [the altar] to [protect] the children to cross the barriers and to eliminate the killers of these barriers.

The horn once again resounds through the universe. The gate of the Jiangkou Ancestral Palace in Meizhou is opened. At the gate of the ancestral palace, I venerably invite [the goddess]. I venerably invite Empress Lin Jiu to descend to [the altar]. Empress Lin Jiu herself descends to [the altar] to [protect] the children to cross the barriers and to eliminate the killers of these barriers.

The horn once again resounds through the universe. The gate of the Haikou Ancestral Palace in Quanzhou is opened. At the gate of the ancestral palace, I respectfully invite [the goddess]. I respectfully invite Empress Li San to descend to [the altar]. Empress Li San herself descends to [the altar] to protect all the children and to expel the killers of the barriers.

I venerably invite the disciples of the Lushan [sect]. I invite the Three Boys of the Three Masters of Crossing the Barriers and Expelling the Disasters and the Three Sons of the Three Masters of Crossing the Barriers and Expelling the Disasters to come. First, let's [make the children] cross the barriers. Second, let's get rid of the disasters. Third, let's drive away people⁷⁴³. Fourth, let's expel the killers. Let's destroy the killers so that all the children can pass through the barriers. Children who are born on the day *yin* in the first month are vulnerable to [the barrier] of the tiger's [head]. The general of the tiger's head comes. He wears a tiger hide hat, a tiger hide coat and tiger hide boots. Let's hold the children in our arms, let's [make them] pass through the barrier [so that they can] ward off disasters. The barrier of the year *yin*, the

⁷⁴³ The meaning of this sentence is not clear.

month *yin*, the day *yin* and the hour *yin* is crossed. The killer of the year *yin*, the month *yin*, the day *yin* and the hour *yin* is expelled. The barrier of the tiger's head [is crossed] and the killer of the tiger's head [is exorcised]. Let's take care of the sons so that they can grow up [healthily].⁷⁴⁴ Children who are born on the day *mao* in the second month are vulnerable to [the barrier] of the rabbit's [head]. The general of [the rabbit's] head comes. [He wears a rabbit hat, a rabbit coat and rabbit boots. Let's hold the children in arms, let's make them pass through the barrier so that they can ward off disasters]. The barrier of the year *mao*, the month *mao*, the day *mao* and the hour *mao* is crossed. The killer of the year *mao*, the month *mao*, the day *mao* and the hour *mao* is exorcised. The barrier of the rabbit's head [is crossed] and the killer of the rabbit's head [is exorcised]. Let's take care of the sons so that they can grow up healthily.

Children who are born on the day *chen* in the third month are vulnerable to [the barrier] of the dragon's [head]. The general of [the dragon's] head comes. He wears a dragon head cap, [a dragon coat and dragon boots. Let's hold the children in arms, let's [make them] pass through the barrier so that they can ward off disasters.] [The barrier of the year *chen*, the month *chen*, the day *chen* and the hour *chen* is crossed. The killer of the year *chen*, the month *chen*, the day *chen* and the hour *chen* is driven away]. The barrier of the dragon's head [is crossed] and the killer of the dragon's head is exorcised. Let's protect the children to go through the barrier. Let's exorcise the killer and clear the way.

Children who are born on the day *si* in the fourth month are vulnerable to [the barrier] of the snake's [head]. [The general of the snake's head comes. He wears a snakeskin hat, a snakeskin coat and snakeskin boots. Let's hold the children in arms, let's make them pass through the barrier so that they can ward off disasters]. The barrier of [the year *si*, the month *si*, the day *si* and the hour *si* is crossed]. The killer of [the year *si*, the month *si*, the day *si* and the hour *si* is driven away]. [The barrier of the snake's head is crossed and the killer of the snake's head is exorcised. Let's protect all the children to pass through the barrier. Let's expel the killer and] clear the way.

Children who are born on the day *wu* in the fifth month are vulnerable to [the barrier] of the horse's [head]. [The general of the horse's head comes. He wears a horse head cap, a horse hide coat and horse hide boots. Let's hold the children in arms, let's make them pass through the barrier so that they can ward off disasters]. The barrier of [the year *si*, the month *si*, the day *si* and the hour *si* is crossed. The killer of the year *si*, the month *si*, the day *si* and the hour *si* is vanished]. [The barrier of the horse's head is crossed and the killer of the horse's head is

⁷⁴⁴ In each month, the antagonism of the various elements of a child's destiny is represented by one animal.

exorcised]. [Let's protect all the children to cross the barrier. Let's drive away the killer and] clear the way].

Children who are born on the day *wei* in the sixth month are vulnerable to [the barrier] of the sheep's [head]. [The general of the sheep's head comes. He wears a sheepskin hat, a sheepskin coat and sheepskin boots. Let's hold the children in arms, let's make them pass through the barrier so that they can ward off disasters]. [The barrier of the year *wei*, the month *wei*, the day *wei* and the hour *wei* is crossed. The killer of the year *wei*, the month *wei*, the day *wei* and the hour *wei* is eliminated]. [The barrier of the sheep's head is crossed and the killer of the sheep's head is exorcised]. [Let's take care of the sons so that they can grow up healthily].

Children who are born on the day *shen* in the seventh month are vulnerable to [the barrier] of the monkey's [head]. [The general of the monkey's head comes. He wears a monkey head cap, a monkey pelt coat and monkey pelt boots. Let's hold the children in arms, let's make them pass through the barrier so that they can ward off disasters]. The barrier of the year *shen*, [the month *shen*, the day *shen* and the hour *shen* is crossed. The killer of the year *shen*, the month *shen*, the day *shen* and the hour *shen* is vanished]. [The barrier of the monkey's head (monkey king) is crossed and the killer of the monkey's head (monkey king) is exorcised]. [Let's take care of the sons so that they can grow up healthily].

Children who are born on the day *you* in the eighth month are vulnerable to [the barrier] of the cock's [head]. [The general of the cock's head comes. He wears a cock head cap, a cock skin coat and cock skin boots. Let's hold the children in arms, let's make them pass through the barrier so that they can ward off disasters]. The barrier of the year *you*, [the month *you*, the day *you* and the hour *you* is crossed. The killer of the year *you*, the month *you*, the day *you* and the hour *you* is eliminated]. [The barrier of the cock's head (cock flying) is crossed and the killer of the cock's head (cock flying) is exorcised]. [Let's take care of the sons so that they can grow up healthily].

Children who are born on the day *xu* in the ninth month are vulnerable to [the barrier] of the dog's [head]. [The general of the dog's head comes. He wears a dog skin hat, a dog skin coat and dog skin boots. Let's hold the children in arms, let's make them pass through the barrier so that they can ward off disasters]. The barrier of the year *xu*, [the month *xu*, the day *xu* and the hour *xu* is crossed. The killer of the year *xu*, the month *xu*, the day *xu* and the hour *xu* is eliminated]. [The barrier of the dog's head is crossed and the killer of the dog's head is exorcised]. [Let's take care of the sons so that they can grow up healthily].

Children who are born on the day *hai* in the tenth month are vulnerable to [the barrier] of the pig's [head]. [The general of the pig's head comes. He wears a pigskin hat, a pigskin coat and pigskin boots. Let's hold the children in arms, let's make them pass through the barrier so that they can ward off disasters]. The barrier of the year *hai*, [the month *hai*, the day *hai* and the hour *hai* is crossed. The killer of the year *hai*, the month *hai*, the day *hai* and the hour *hai* is driven away]. [The barrier of the pig's head is crossed and the killer of the pig's head is exorcised]. [Let's take care of the sons so that they can grow up healthily].

Children who are born on the day *zi* in the eleventh month are vulnerable to [the barrier] of the rat's [head]. The general of the rat's head comes. He wears a rat skin cap, a rat skin coat and rat skin boots. Let's hold the children in arms, let's [make them] pass through the barrier [so that they can] ward off disasters. The barrier of the year *zi*, [the month *zi*, the day *zi* and the hour *zi* is crossed. The killer of the year *zi*, the month *zi*, the day *zi* and the hour *zi* is driven away]. [The barrier of the rat's head is crossed and the killer of the rat's head is exorcised]. [Let's take care of the sons so that they can grow up healthily].

Children who are born on the day *chou* in the twelfth month are vulnerable to [the barrier] of the ox's [head]. The general of the ox's head comes. He wears an ox hide cap, an ox hide coat and ox hide boots. Let's hold the children in arms, let's [make them] pass through the barrier [so that they can] ward off disasters. The barrier of the year *chou*, the month *chou*, the day *chou* and the hour *chou* is crossed. The killer of the year *chou*, the month *chou*, the day *chou* and the hour *chou* is driven away. The barrier of the ox's head [is crossed] and the killer of the ox's head [is also exorcised]. Let's protect all [the children] to pass through the twelve barriers. Let's expel the killers and clear the way.

First, [let's make the children] pass through the barriers. Second, [let's] get rid of the disasters. Let's [make them] cross the barriers of the leap year, the leap month, the leap day and the leap hour. Let's exorcise the killers of the leap year, the leap month, the leap day and the leap hour. Let's [make them] pass through the *guan* (barrier) of the celestial beam and the terrestrial beam,⁷⁴⁵ the *guan* of the king of hells,⁷⁴⁶ the *guan* of hurried steps,⁷⁴⁷ the *guan* of the shorten life⁷⁴⁸ and the blade, the *guan* of the four seasons and the four pillars,⁷⁴⁹ the *guan* of the

⁷⁴⁵ People or children who carry this barrier should not look directly forward.

⁷⁴⁶ People or children who carry this barrier should not attend funeral rites.

⁷⁴⁷ People who carry this *guan* should avoid excavation works.

⁷⁴⁸ Children who carry this *guan* would always suffer from night terrors.

⁷⁴⁹ Children who carry this *guan* should avoid sitting on a chair. They may also have dangers during the first twelve months (four seasons) after birth.

golden cock, the *guan* of the fall in the well, the *guan* of the iron snake and iron locks,⁷⁵⁰ the *guan* of the ruthlessness and seven stars, the *guan* of the Lord of Thunder who beats the fetus, the *guan* of the general bow and the arrow, the *guan* of one knot and two modes, the *guan* of three calamities and four killers, the *guan* of five ghosts and six evils, the *guan* of seven injuries and eight disasters, the *guan* of nine knots and ten tangles, the *guan* of the pustule and the smallpox, the *guan* of...the diarrhea, the *guan* of the burning fire and the burning soup, the *guan* of fever and chill, the *guan* of the antagonism between elder and younger brothers, and between mothers and sons. All the barriers have been gone through and all the killers have been driven away. Let's take care of all the children so that they can grow up healthily.

All the barriers have been passed through and all the killers have been expelled. The Three Boys of the Three Masters of the Transference of Seal and the Three Sons of the Three Masters of the Transference of Seal are invited to come. I respectfully take out a seal of the Most High Old Lord. Let's put a seal on [each of] the children⁷⁵¹ so that all of them can live long. Let's put a seal on [each of] the ghosts so that all of them would die out. Let's put a seal on every child so that [all of them] can cross the barriers. Let's exorcise the killers and clear the way.

When the [Ritual of] the Transference of Seal is almost completed, the Three Boys of the Three Masters Who Dismantle the bridge, and the Three Sons of the Three Masters Who Dismantle the Bridge are invited to come. When the bridge is almost torn down, the Three Boys of the Three Masters Who Sends the Disasters and the Three Sons of the Three Masters Who Sends the Disasters are invited to come. Spring occurs during the first, the second and the third months. The mothers send people to drive away the disasters to the outside of the courtyard. Summer occurs during the fourth, the fifth and the sixth months. The Three Empresses order people to expel the disasters to the wife's natal family. Autumn occurs in the seventh, the eighth and the ninth month. Master Tian Gong order people to expel the disasters to Yangzhou. Winter occurs during the tenth, the eleventh and the twelfth months. The mothers send people to get rid of the disasters. Stop following up the scent! [All] the disasters are expelled to the big market of Yangzhou. Quickly! Quickly! Let's cut off [all] the roots!

⁷⁵⁰ People who carry this barrier should avoid wearing metal objects (Baptandier 1994, 542 – 543)..

⁷⁵¹ In the Ritual for Crossing the Barriers, the popular Daoist priest (marionette) put a seal on the collar of the clothes of each child.

Appendix Nine

過關稟神[科]

聲角響處應乾坤，再來告稟眾師尊，啟告田竇郭三師父，陳林李三皇君，再告合臺諸聖眾，文武官僚諸金仙各座臺將座殿，座臺座殿乞來臨，降臨弟子過[關]過厄保兒童。

承且廬山門下造橋三師造橋三子即陽間造橋，用木柄皇君造橋布來裝，橫紗化為橫橋柄，直紗化為直橋樑，橋頭直到杭州鐵板橋頭上，橋尾至到諸宮妳姆壇中取生魂。

作橋完成將已，請出防橋三師出頭來，防橋三師三童子防橋三師三童郎，吾發唐將軍領兵鎮橋頭，葛將軍領兵鎮橋尾，周將軍領兵鎮橋中，防吾金橋三重連三匝，三匝連三重；兒子直到金橋上，過除兒童關煞盡開通。

一聲龍角應乾坤，應開杭州鐵板橋頭祖殿門，祖殿門下專拜且，拜且玉封田竇郭公降來臨，田公元帥親降赴保養兒童關煞盡開通。

再聲龍角應乾坤，直到廬山祖殿門，祖殿門下專拜且廬山法主降來臨九郎法主降赴保養兒童關煞盡開通．．．

再聲龍角應乾坤，應開虎符祖殿門，祖殿門下專拜且，拜且玉封九天藍雷張公法主降來臨，張公法主親降赴保養兒童關煞盡開通．．．

再聲龍角應乾坤，應開福州臨水祖殿門，祖殿門下專拜且，拜且陳四皇君降來臨，陳四皇君親降赴，過除兒童關煞盡開通。

再聲龍角應乾坤，應開湄州江口祖殿門，祖殿門下專拜且，拜且林九皇君降來臨，林九皇君親降赴，過除兒童關煞盡開通。

再聲龍角應乾坤，應開泉州海口祖殿門，祖殿門下專拜且，拜且李三皇君降來臨，李三皇君親降赴，保養各位兒童關煞盡開通。

承且廬山門下，且出過關過厄三師三童子過關過厄三師三童郎，一過關，二過厄，三過人，四過煞，過除各位兒童關煞盡開通。正月寅生人排虎，虎頭將軍來，頭戴虎皮帽，身穿虎皮衣，腳穿虎皮靴，抱兒來過關來過厄，過除寅年寅月寅日寅時關，寅年寅月寅日寅時厄，虎頭關虎煞，保養兒子長大的成人。

二月卯生人排兔，兔頭將軍．．．過除卯年卯月卯日卯時關煞，兔頭關兔頭煞盡過了，保養兒子根基壯固得成人。⁷⁵²

⁷⁵² The details of the following lines are omitted in this liturgical manual. The contents of these lines are very similar to the description of the first month mentioned above.

三月辰生人排來便相龍，龍頭將軍出頭來頭戴龍頭帽．．．過除龍頭關龍頭煞盡過了，保養各位兒童關煞盡開通。

四月巳生人排來便相蛇．．．蛇頭關煞．．．保養．．．通。

五月午生人排來便相馬．．．馬頭關煞．．．保養．．．通。

六月未生人排來便相羊．．．羊頭關羊頭煞．．．保養．．．成人。

七月申生人排來便相猴．．．申年．．．猴頭（王）關猴頭（王煞）．．．養成人。

八月酉生人排來便相雞．．．酉年．．．雞頭（雞飛）關雞頭（雞飛）煞．．．保養．．．得[成]人。

九月戌生人排來便相犬．．．戌年．．．犬頭關煞．．．保養．．．人。

十月亥生人排來便相豬．．．亥年．．．豬頭關煞．．．保養．．．人。

十一月子生人排來便相鼠．．．子年．．．鼠頭關煞．．．人。⁷⁵³

十二月丑生人排來便相牛，牛頭將軍出頭來，頭戴牛皮帽，身穿牛皮衣，腳穿牛皮靴，親身抱兒來過關來過厄，過除丑年丑月丑時關，[關]煞都過了，保養各位十二關煞盡開通。

一過關、二過厄，過除閏年閏月閏日閏時關煞，天吊關、閻羅急腳關、短命羊雙關、四季四柱關、金雞落井關、鐵蛇鐵瑣關、無情七星關、雷公打胎關、將軍弓箭關、一結二儀關、三災四煞關、五鬼六害關、七傷八難關、九結十纏關、

子關、赤眼痢疾關、火燒湯燙關、發寒發熱關、兄弟相刑母子相剋關，一切關煞今過了，保養各位兒童根基壯固得成人。

一切關煞都過了，且出過印三師三童子過印三師三童郎，且出太上老君一口印，印人人長生，印鬼鬼滅亡；印得兒童關煞盡開通。

過印完成將已了，且出拆橋三師三童子拆橋三師三童郎，拆橋完成將已了，請出送厄三師三童子送厄三師三童郎；正月二月三月正是春，母娘差人送厄出外庭；四月五月六月正是夏，三位皇君差人送厄去外家；七月八月九月正是秋，田公師父差人送厄去揚州；十月十一月十二月正是冬，母娘差人送厄斷跟蹤，此厄送去揚州大市頭，**咿咿** **吧唧**斷根源！

Appendix Ten

A Brief Summary of the Journey to the South (*Nanyou ji* 南遊記)

It is said that Huaguang was originally the halo of light from a lamp of the Tathāgata Buddha. (Buddha of the Divine Light). One day, the Buddha transformed Huaguang into the deity Miao Jixiang 妙吉祥 (Wonderful and Auspicious). He then became a disciple of the Buddha.

Having a fiery temper, Miao Jixiang disobeyed the Buddha by killing the Duhuo Gui 獨火鬼 (the Ghost of Single Fire). Thus, he was demoted and sent to the mortal world to be the son of Maer Shan Niangniang 馬耳山娘娘 (the Lady of Horse-Ear Mountain), the widow of Maer Shan Dawang 馬耳山大王 (the Great King of Horse-Ear Mountain). He was known as Sanyan Lingguang 三眼靈光 (Three Eyes Divine Light) and was born with three eyes. He also possessed five supernatural powers, including the power to wander through heaven, the power to break through earth, the power to remain unscathed by water and fire, and the power to be invisible from the naked eye. His father, Maer Shan Dawang, was killed by “the Iron-Shod Dragon King of the Eastern Sea (Donghai Tiejī Longwang 東海鐵跡龍王) in a rivalry over their magic treasures.” (Cedzich 1992, 148) Three days after his birth, he killed the Iron-Shod Dragon King of the Eastern Sea in revenge for his father’s murder.

Later, when Sanyan Lingguang stole the golden lance of the Beiji Ziwei Dadi 北極紫微大帝 (The Great Emperor of Purple Vacuity of North Pole), he was killed by the emperor. Due to the compassion of Tianzun 天尊 (The Heavenly Honored One), he was reborn into the family of Yanxuan Tianwang 炎玄天王 (The Glorious King of Heaven). His name was Lingyao 靈耀 (the second reincarnation of Miao Jixiang). Soon afterwards, he became the disciple of the Heavenly Honored One. After obtaining his master’s gold blade, Lingyao refined it into a gold brick and treated it as his own magic treasure. He subdued many evil spirits and demons. As a result, he was appointed as Huobu Bingma Da Yuanshuai 火步兵馬大元帥 (The Great Marshal of Troops and Horses of the Ministry of Fire). Nevertheless, at the Banquet of Beautiful Flowers (Qionghua Hui 瓊花會), he clashed with the heir to the Jade Emperor’s throne. The Superior Emperor of the Mysterious Heaven (Xuantian Shangdi) defeated him. He then fled to the mortal world and subdued many demons such as Qianli Yan (Thousand-li Eye) and Shunfeng Er (Favorable-wind Ear). Owing to his contributions, he was worshipped as a deity by people in the mundane world.

The Jade Emperor sent celestial deities and armies to catch Linyao, the second reincarnation of Miao Jixiang. In order to escape capture, he was reborn into the Xiao 蕭 family. He was known as Xiancong 顯聰 (the third reincarnation of Miao Jixiang). His mother, Jizhituo 吉芝陀, was a man-eating demon who had killed the real Lady Xiao. However, Xianhua had no idea about his mother's true nature. Later, Jizhituo was put in purgatory by the dragon king. As a filial son, Xianhua descended to the underworld to search for his monstrous mother. In a fight with celestial gods, he lost his golden brick. He then obtained the golden pagoda of Yuhuan Shengmu 玉環聖母 (The Sacred Mother of Jade Bracelets) by tricks, and refined it into a gold brick. Moreover, he also took her daughter, Tieshan Gongzhu 鐵扇公主 (Iron Fan Princess), as his wife. Finally, he succeeded in rescuing the spirit of the real Lady Xiao and liberating Jizhituo, his monstrous mother. In order to redeem his mother from her cannibalism, he stole immortal peaches from the Celestial Palace. After eating the fruit, Jizhituo stopped her riotous behavior. Soon afterwards, Xianhua converted to Buddhism and the Jade Emperor appointed him as Wuxian Lingguan Dadi Huaguang Tianwang 五顯靈官大帝華光天王 (The Great Emperor of Splendor and Brightness among Divine Agents of the Five Manifestations).

Appendix Eleven

The Aria Sanchuan Jin (Three Spring's Brocade) in Zheng Zhizhen's Mulian Opera Script

The aria *Sanchun Jin* 三春錦 (Three Spring's Brocade) in Zheng Zhizhen's Mulian script is also recorded in the Cantonese opera script *Xianhua Shan Da Heshou*. The song texts of this aria of Zheng's version are as follows:

I gaze at the empty orb between earth and sky.

我覷天地似一輪空磨，

Take all the endless afflictions of the human world,

把世人終日捱磨，

And for those who come after, add one round.

那後的添上一番，

For those who have perished before, all is effaced.

先進的盡皆沒了；

Sigh! I regret that each and every person in the mortal realm has high and ambitions,

嘆世人個個心高，

That all, on account of [the struggle] for small profits and inflated reputation,

都只為奪利爭名，

Endure toil and moil to the full.

受盡了勞碌奔波。

Only Zhang Zifang,⁷⁵⁴ saw the strife of the dusty [realm],

惟有張子房見出塵囂，

and, following Chisongzi, studied the Way wholeheartedly.

從著赤松子一心學道。

I laugh at Marquis Han,⁷⁵⁵ who counted on his ten great acts of merit.

笑韓侯依著十大功勞，

As the hound is killed, he regretted why he [did not repent] before it's too late!

⁷⁵⁴ Zhang Zifang 張子房, who was also called Zhang Liang 張良, was a famous strategist who contributed to the foundation of the Western Han dynasty (202 B.C. – A.D.9). After the establishment of the Han dynasty, he left the court and became a hermit.

⁷⁵⁵ Marquis Han (Han Xin 韓信) was a native of Huaiyin 淮陰 in the late Qin and the early Han dynasties (around 3rd century B.C.). Liu Bang 劉邦 (Han Gaozu 漢高祖), the first emperor of the Western Han dynasty (r. 306 – 195 B.C.), appointed him great marshal. Later, he was executed by Empress Nü 女后 (wife of Han Gaozu).

到走狗烹時，悔何不早。

Only those who are confused

那昏迷的

strive and seek after power, are addicted to wine, [and] crave women.

斗勇爭強，戀酒貪花，

How can they know that their strength is declining and their bodies are degenerating?

豈知道力盡身衰，

They have already become the corpses of those starved in the ditches.

先做了溝渠中餓殍，

Listen! Listen!

聽著聽著，

They must not seek after power, be addicted to wine [and] crave women.

那斗勇爭強戀酒貪花的不可。

I only see how men in the mortal realm have one hundred years of happiness.

見則見世上人百年快樂，

How can [they know that] I (the immortal) have only a moment's happiness?

只當得我仙曹片時歡笑。

[There are those who] regret that they had not perused the meditation texts

閑來時把祖機⁷⁵⁶參著

[and] chanted the Heart (or Hridaya) Sūtra⁷⁵⁷ at their leisure.

心經念了

Poluo, Poluo.

波羅波羅，

All I hear is the music of immortals above the clouds,

只見雲端仙樂，

[and] gold chimes are struck in unison.

金鼓齊鼓，

Again, I hear the parrot's song, yemo'a.

又聽得鸚歌演摩呵，

⁷⁵⁶ In my opinion, the Chinese character “zu 祖” should be revised as “chan 禪.”

⁷⁵⁷ According Buddhist beliefs, people can exorcise evil spirits when they recite the Hridaya or Heart Sūtra.

Mountain bird and Boluo,

山鳥和波羅。

Juduomo,

坦哆

Chaoliluo,

摩訶。

Qiaolishupo'a,

唎羅，

Shupo'a,

修唎婆婆。

[Since] I leave the imperial palace,

離了王宮，

I experience all manner of toil and only then attain the proper reward.

歷盡勤勞方為正果，

Branches of the willow disperse sweet dew,

楊柳枝，灑甘露，

Which saves all living beings and gets rid of retribution.

濟眾生除熱惱⁷⁵⁸，

Those who believe in me wander free and easy in the happy land;

信吾的樂土逍遙，

Those who don't believe, find it difficult to escape from their sins.

不信的冤孽難躲，

Have they never heard that in the end, good and evil are recompensed?

豈不聞善惡到頭終有報？

It is just like bees making honey, silkworms spinning cocoons, moths beating at the flame;

好一似蜂兒養蜜、蠶兒成繭、蛾兒撲火，

I urge mankind to repent sooner rather than later.

勸世人早早回頭，

It is good to chant "[A]mi to [Fo]" several times.

好念幾句彌陀；

⁷⁵⁸ The term "*re'nao* 熱惱" should be revised as "*niezhang* 孽障."

After one hundred years, it will be fine [for them] to meet the king of purgatory.

百年後好見閻王。

The text of the aria *Sanchun Jin* in Zheng Zhizheng's script mentioned above is almost identical with the song texts of this aria in the Cantonese opera script *Xinghua Shan Da Heshou* in Appendix Six of this thesis (cf. Mo 1987, 21 – 22).