

Narrative *daoqing*, the Legend of Han Xiangzi, and the Good Life in the *Han Xiangzi jiudu* *Wengong daoqing quanben*

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Abstract

The legend of Han Xiangzi's conversion of his uncle Han Yu is one of the most popular subjects of narrative *daoqing* since the emergence of the genre in the 16th century. Two narrative *daoqing* on the legend of Han Xiangzi are identified. *Han Xiangzi's Twelfefold Conversion of Han Yu: Indigo Pass* (*Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* 韓湘子十二度韓文公藍關記) is only preserved in Japan. It tells its story in an alternation of prose and seven-syllable verse. This text served as one of the sources of Yang Erzeng's novel *Han Xiangzi quanzhuan*, and therefore most likely dates from the 16th century or even earlier. The better known *Newly composed daoqing on Han Xiangzi's Ninefold Conversion of Han Yu* (*Xinbian Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing* 新編韓湘子九度文公道情) is only preserved in editions of the 19th century and later. It tells

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its story in an alternation of prose and song (among the songs the tune Shuanghai'er stands out for its prominence). The text most likely dates from the early Qing. In order to fully understand the difference in content between these two narrative *daoqing* and the early versions of the legend up to the end of the Song dynasty, it is argued, one has to understand the role of the dramatic genres of the intervening period in shaping the narrative: whereas *zaju* preferred a three-step conversion in its deliverance plays, southern drama (*xiwen* and *chuanqi*) required the presence on stage of female characters alongside the male protagonists. In the *Han Xiangzi's Ninefold Conversion of Han Yu: The Story of Rising to the Immortal Realm* (*Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong Shengxian ji* 韓湘子九渡文公昇仙記 (the only surviving Ming dynasty dramatic version of the legend, most likely preserved because of its suitability for performance in the context of rain-making rituals), Han Yu's wife and Xiangzi's bride suddenly occupy major roles. As a result, these two female characters become increasingly prominent in the *daoqing* adaptations, and especially the *Newly composed daoqing on Han Xiangzi's Ninefold Conversion of Han Yu* makes an effort to integrate these two characters into the plot: in its final four chapters two chapters are devoted to the final conversion of Han Yu and two to the final conversion of Xiangzi's bride. The final section of the paper is devoted the images of the transcendental pleasures of the life of the immortals in Xiangzi's appeals to his uncle, his aunt and his bride in his successive efforts to convert them.

Keywords: Han Xiangzi, narrative *daoqing*, *Han Xiangzi's Twelfefold Conversion of Han Yu: Indigo Pass* (*Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji*), *Newly composed daoqing on Han Xiangzi's Ninefold Conversion of Han Yu* (*Xinbian Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing*), *Han Xiangzi's Ninefold Conversion of Han Yu: The Story of Rising to the Immortal Realm* (*Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong Shengxian ji*)

Until quite recently narrative *daoqing* 道情 received little attention from Chinese and Western scholars. This situation has changed in the last few years. A growing number of articles and monographs has emerged from the PRC, and a full translation of the earliest known preserved narrative *daoqing*, the *Newly Composed, Enlarged and Expanded, with a Forest of Appreciative Commentaries: Master Zhuang Sighs over the Skeleton in Northern and Southern Lyrics and Songs* (*Xinbian zengbu pinglin: Zhuangzi tan kulou nanbei ciqu* 新編增補評林莊子嘆骷髏南北詞曲) was included by Wilt L. Idema in his *The Resurrected Skeleton: From Zhuangzi to Lu Xun* (2014).

In this article, I first review the available sources on narrative *daoqing* for the 16th and 17th centuries which show that the story of Han Xiangzi's 韓湘子 conversion of his uncle Han Yu 韓愈 at Indigo Pass (Languan 藍關) has been one of the most popular topics for the genre from its very beginning. The *Newly composed daoqing on Han Xiangzi's Ninefold Conversion of Han Yu* (*Xinbian Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing* 新編韓湘子九度文公道情), however, is only preserved in printings from the 19th century and later. Also reprinted lithographically, this text must have enjoyed considerable popularity at the time. From the early 19th century, however, we also have a single copy of a printing of the *Han Xiangzi's Twelfefold Conversion of Han Yu: Indigo Pass* (*Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* 韓湘子十二度韓文公藍關記), which can be identified as the narrative *daoqing* that served as one of the major sources of the early 17th-century novel *Han Xiangzi quanzhuan* 韓湘子全傳 and so most likely dates from the 16th century.

Before turning to a discussion of the *Xinbian Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing*, I begin with a reconsideration of the development of the legend of Xiangzi's conversion of Han Yu. While the meeting of Xiangzi and Han Yu at Indigo Pass belongs to the earliest elements of the legend, it was the theater which turned this meeting into the conversion of Han Yu, and I trace the ways in which the function and form of respectively Northern and Southern theater shaped the narrative of the legend. It was the Southern drama, I argue, that should be held responsible for the introduction of Han Yu's wife and Xiangzi's bride into the story as

major characters. In the following discussion of the *Xinbian Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing* I show how these female characters are not only more fully integrated into the plot, but also become increasingly central to the legend. In the *Xinbian Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing* the conversion of Xiangzi's bride gets equal billing with the conversion of Han Yu in the final four chapters of the text.

The final section of this paper is devoted to a discussion of the two conceptions of the good life in this text, contrasting the short substantiality of Han Yu's good life as a high official to the fugitive visions of Xiangzi's eternal good life as a transcendent immortal.

I. *Daoqing* as a genre of narrative prosimetric literature of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

Daoqing 道情 is one of the major traditions in the development of Chinese performative literature (music and song, prosimetric literature, and drama) of the late imperial period and beyond.¹

¹ Recent years have seen the publication of three monographs devoted to *daoqing* literature: Wang Dingyong 王定勇, *Jiangsu daoqing kaolun* 江蘇道情考論 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2013); Wu Yimin 武藝民, *Zhongguo daoqing yishu gailun* 中國道情藝術概論 (Taiyuan: Shanxi guji chubanshe, 1997); and Zhang Zehong 張澤洪, *Daojiao chang daoqing yu Zhongguo minjian wenhua yanjiu* 道教唱道情與中國民間文化研究 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2011); for a very critical review of Zhang Zehong (2011), see Zhang Yongfeng 張勇鳳, “Ping Zhang Zehong *Daojiao chang daoqing yu Zhongguo minjian wenhua yanjiu*” 評張澤洪道教唱道情與中國民間文化研究, *Wenyi yanjiu* (2013) no. 5: 125–33. For articles on *daoqing* see A Ying 阿英, “Daoqing” 道情, in his *Yebang ji* 夜航集 (Shanghai: Liangyou, 1935), 240–45; Che Xilun 車錫倫, “Daoqing kao” 道情考, *Xiju yanjiu* 70 (2006), 218–38; Hatano Tarō 波多野太郎, “Dōjō tanshi mokuyosho” 道情彈詞木魚書, in his *Chūgoku bungakushi kenkyū* 中國文學史研究 (Tokyo: Ofusha, 1974), 423–549; Li Jiarui, “Chang daoqing” 唱道情 (1935), reprinted in Wang Qiugui 王秋桂, ed., *Li Jiarui xiansheng tongshu wenxue lunwenji* 李嘉瑞先生通俗文學論文集 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1982), 55–60; Ono Shihei 小野四平, “Dōjō ni tsuite” 道情について, in his *Chūgoku kinsei ni okeru tampen shōsetsu no kenkyū* 中國近世における短篇小説の研究 (Tokyo: Hyōronsha, 1979), 288–309; Sawada Mizuho 澤田瑞穂, “Dōjō ni tsuite” 道情について, *Chūgoku bungaku geppō* 44 (1938), 117–23; Sawada Mizuho, “Dōjō kō ho-i” 道情考補遺, *Tenri daigaku gakuhō* 22 (1970), 1–15; Sun Fuxuan 孫福軒, (Continue on next page)

Poems carrying the two characters *daoqing* in their title can be found as early as the Tang dynasty. While *youxian shi* 遊仙詩 described mystic visits to the realms of the immortals, works entitled *daoqing* tended to sing the joys of a life a retirement, away from the madding crowd and its pursuit of fame and profit. Under the Southern Song “singing *daoqing*” had become an established performative genre in Hangzhou in the 12th and 13th centuries, and when at the same time in Northern China Quanzhen Daoism had come into its own as a proselytizing religion, its mendicant priests made ample use of poems and songs in their preaching. By the Yuan dynasty, songs of retirement had become a major topic in the *sanqu* 散曲 produced by “famous lords and men of talent,” while *zaju* 雜劇 plays of this period feature immortals disguised as beggars who sing *daoqing* songs to various tunes to the accompaniment of the “fisherman’s drum” (*yugu* 漁鼓) and clappers. Descriptions of performances of such non-narrative *daoqing* are also frequently encountered in the *The Complete Story of Han Xiangzi* (*Han Xiangzi quanzhuan* 韓湘子全傳), a hagiographic novel of the early 17th century by Yang Erzeng 楊爾曾 on the life of the immortal Han Xiangzi, focusing on his many attempts to enlighten his uncle (and adoptive father) Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824), his aunt (his adoptive

(Note 1—Continued)

“Daoqing kaoshi” 道情考釋, *Daojiao luntan* (2005) no. 2: 17–22; Yamashita Hatsuo 山下一夫, “Daoqingxi zhong Han Xiangzi gushi de fazhan yu chuanbo” 道情戲中韓湘子故事的發展與傳播, *Zhonghua xiqu* (2006) no. 2: 63–74; and Zhan Renzhong 詹仁中, “Shitan daoqing” 試談道情, *Quyiyishu luncong* 7 (1988), 52–57. See also Che Zhenhua 車振華, *Qingdai shuochang wenxue chuanguo yanjiu* 清代說唱文學創作研究 (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 2015), 189–208; Chen Ruheng 陳汝衡, *Shuoshu shihua* 說書史話 (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1958), 245–50; Wilt L. Idema, *The Resurrected Skeleton: From Zhuangzi to Lu Xun* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 27–31; Jiang Kun 姜昆 and Ni Zhongzhi 倪鐘之, *Zhongguo quyiyishu tongshi* 中國曲藝通史 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2005), 384–87; Li Jiarui 李嘉瑞, *Beiping suqu lue* 北平俗曲略 (1933, reprint Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1990), 173–75; Ren Guangwei 任光偉, “‘Shuuhai’er’ zonghengkao” 耍孩兒縱橫考, in “*Xiqu yishu’ershibinian jinian wenji Xiqu wenxue, xiqushi yanjiu juan*” 戲曲藝術二十年紀念文集 戲曲文學戲曲史研究卷 (Beijing: Zhongguo xiqu chubanshe, 2000), 395–418; and Zheng Zhenduo 鄭振鐸, *Zhongguo suwenxue shi* 中國俗文學史 (1938, reprint Shanghai: Wenxue guji xingkan she, 1959), vol. 2, 456–61.

mother), and his bride.² To most Chinese intellectuals this tradition of non-narrative *daoqing* songs is best known from the set of ten songs to the tune Shuahai'er 耍孩兒 by the 18th-century official, poet, painter and calligrapher Zheng Xie 鄭燮 (Banqiao 半橋, 1693–1765). Zheng Xie's set of poems became a model for many later poets well into the 20th century.

Some scholars are convinced that narrative *daoqing* (*shuochang daoqing* 說唱道情) go as far back as the Southern Song. They point out that the majority of the performers listed under the heading *tanchang yinyuan* 彈唱因緣 (strumming and singing [tales of] causes and consequences) by Zhou Mi 周密 in his *Wulin jushi* 武林舊事 are characterized as *dao* 道, and these scholars apparently find this designation sufficient to let them identify these performers as Daoist priests.³ But the genre of *yinyuan* (well-known from Dunhuang) would appear to have been exclusively Buddhist in content, and terms like *daoren* 道人 may not only refer to Daoists priests and laymen, but also to Buddhist monks and laymen. The attempt to identify the subject materials of these Song-dynasty narrative *daoqing* on the basis of an undated poem that is only known from a 1907 edition appears to me even less convincing.⁴

For the earliest indisputable reference to *daoqing* as a well-established genre of narrative with its own specialized performers

² *Zhongguo tongshu xiaoshuo zongmu tiyao* 中國通俗小說總目提要 (Beijing: Zhongguo wenlian chubanshe, 1990), 190–91. One of the alternative titles of this novel is *Xiangzi shi'er du Han Changli quanzhuan* 湘子十二度韓昌黎全傳. This novel is available in a fine English translation by Philip Clart (Yang Erzeng, *The Story of Han Xiangzi: The Alchemical Adventures of a Daoist Immortal* [Seattle: University of Washington Press 2006]). Chapter 10 provides a description of Han Xiangzi as a mendicant priest performing *daoqing*. Comparable descriptions of the performance of lyrical, non-narrative *daoqing* may also be encountered in other vernacular works of the Ming and Qing dynasties.

³ Wu Guangzheng 吳光正, *Baxian gushi xitong kaolun: neidandao zongjiao shenhua de jiangou ji qi liubian* 八仙故事系統考論：內丹道教神話的建構及其流變 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 2006), 356.

⁴ Wu Yimin, *Zhongguo daoqing yishu gailun*, 109–12 quotes the “Ten-fold Ferry Boat” (*Shiduchuan* 十渡船) from *Yuedao cizhang* 樂道詞章 of 1907. Judging from the stories mentioned in this poem I think the poem dates most likely from the Ming dynasty at the earliest.

we have to wait for the appearance of the *Jinpingmei* 金瓶梅. This anonymous novel, probably written in the third quarter of the 16th century, contains in chapter 64 several references to *daoqing* when two eunuchs visit Ximen Qing to offer their condolences following the death of Li Ping'er:

In the morning, Eunuch Director Hsüeh and Eunuch Director Liu sent men to deliver offertory tables of the three sacrificial animals so that they would be able to offer oblations and burn paper money on behalf of the deceased. Each of them also donated a tael of silver as their contributions towards the expenses of an all-night wake and engaged the services of two professional performers of the genre known as Tao-ch'ing, or Taoist songs, proposing to come to visit with Hsi-men Ch'ing during the day.⁵

David Roy's translation here may well be somewhat too specific when he writes about "professional performers" as the Chinese simply writes *chang daoqing de* 唱道情的 (*daoqing* singers). Once the eunuch directors have arrived, Ximen Qing first has some scenes performed of a play, but soon the guests are bored by this performance:

Before many scenes had been played, however, they grew tired of it and called in the performers of Tao-ch'ing, saying, "It would be more fun if they were to sing a Tao-ch'ing for us." Thereupon the two of them began to tap their "fisherman's drums," as they stood shoulder to shoulder, facing their audience, and sang in high-pitched voices the story entitled *Han Wen-kung hsüeh yung Lan-kuan*, or *Han Yü Is Impeded by Snow at Lan-kuan*.⁶

⁵ Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng 蘭陵笑笑生, *Jinpingmei cibua jiaozhu* 金瓶梅詞話校註, ed. by Bai Weiguo 白維國 and Bu Jian 卜鍵. 4 vols. (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1995), vol. 3, 1803. The translation is by David Tod Roy in his version of Hsiao-hsiao-sheng, *The Plum in the Golden Vase or Chin P'ing Mei* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), vol. 4, 109–11.

⁶ Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng, *Jinpingmei cibua jiaozhu*, vol. 3, 1807. (David Tod Roy's translation of Hsiao-hsiao-sheng, *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, vol. 3, 115.) This is the only description of a *daoqing* performance from this period that portrays a performance by a duo. All other descriptions describe only a single performer. For the Song dynasty, we have a description of a performance of *daoqing* songs by a chorus of thirty boys. In modern traditions of *daoqing* performance one encounters performances by single performers, by duos, and by groups. See Yamashita, "Daoqingxi zhong Han Xiangzi gushi," 69–70.

The narrative nature of this performance is made clear by its Chinese characterization as *Yitao* . . . *gushi* 一套 故事 (one story). The performance is soon interrupted, but later on the same day the two performers are also asked to perform “the story of *Li Po t’an-pei*, or *Li Po’s Addiction to the Cup*.”⁷

The popularity of the legend of Han Yu and Han Xiangzi’s encounter at the snow-bound Indigo Pass in narrative *daoqing* is also brought out in a short item in the *Jie’an laoren manbi* 戒安老人漫筆 by Li Xu 李詡 (1505–1593). This item, titled “Songs of the Buddhists and Daoists” (*Chanxuan ermen chang* 禪玄二門唱) may be rendered as follows:

The sung performances of Daoists include *daoqing*, while the sung performances of monks include *paosong* 拋頌. These narratives interspersed with ballad-verse (*cishuo* 詞說) like *The Journey to the West* and *Indigo Pass* have in fact the same structure.⁸

The 1623 preface to the *Han Xiangzi quanzhuan* describes the popularity of performances of the legend of Han Xiangzi in the following negative terms:

His story is only transmitted by the blind storytellers, who either sing in a loud voice while holding documents like officials, or recite ballads in a wild manner dressed up as Daoist priests, sighing three times for every line they chant. These stories everywhere delight the hearts of ignorant people and village matrons, and are listened to by school teachers and their pupils. Yet the style is disorderly and erroneous, and their poems are inept and awkward. If they are sung by boatmen while rowing their oars, those who listen will forget their fatigue. But if one were to ascend with them to the stage of poetic appreciation, the audience would close their eyes in embarrassment.⁹

⁷ Lanling Xiaoxiaosheng, *Jinpingmei cibua jiaozhu*, vol. 3, 1807. (David Tod Roy’s translation in Hsiao-hsiao-sheng, *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, vol. 3, 117.) This is the only reference to this story as a topic of *daoqing* narrative.

⁸ Li Xu 李詡, *Jie’an laoren manbi* 戒安老人漫筆, ed. by Wei Lianke 魏連科 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 1982), 173. The genre of *paosong* is otherwise unknown. One would expect here a reference to “precious scrolls” (*baojuan* 寶卷). The element *ci* in *cishuo* refers to ballad verse that uses a seven-syllable line or a ten-syllable line.

⁹ Yang Erzeng, *Han Xiangzi quanzhuan*, preface, p. 2. Philip Clart’s translation in Yang Erzeng, *The Story of Han Xiangzi*, xxi. “While holding documents like
(Continue on next page)

The author of the preface then continues by praising the superior qualities of the novel.

The late-Ming prosimetric ballad *Yunmen zhuan* 雲門傳 also includes a description of a performer of *daoqing* who is described as blind. When its protagonist Li Qing 李清 returns to the world of the living following a stay with the immortals and is at a loss where to go,

He suddenly dimly heard the sound of a fisherman's drum and clappers. When he walked over to have a look, it turned out that an old blind man in front of the Temple of the Eastern Marchmount was singing his *daoqing* to attract people and make some money.¹⁰

When Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574–1646) later adapted this ballad as a short story in his *Stories to Awaken the World* (*Xingshi hengyan* 醒世衡言, 1627), he developed this scene as follows:

Beating his fisherman's drum and bamboo clappers [the old man] first recited four lines of verse:

Summer heat is followed by winter, spring by autumn;
In the evening sun the river flows east below the bridge.
The general and his battle horse—where are they now?
Wild grasses and flowers fill the field with their sorrow.

After he had recited this four-line poem, he in good order developed his main story, which was the tale *Master Zhuang Laments the Skeleton* The old man would speak for a while and then sing for a while, until he had reached the point where the skeleton once again had grown skin and flesh, came back to life, and jumped up from the ground, so some people were laughing and some gaped in amazement. This was exactly the midpoint in his story, so the man stopped playing his drum and clappers in order to collect some money before he

(Note 9—*Continued*)

officials” is Clart’s translation of *zhijian* 執簡 which is more precisely translated as “while holding their tablet of office.” The word “tablet” is here most likely used as an ironic reference to the *xingmu* 醒木 or “waking block,” a rectangular piece of wood used by storytellers to strike the table for emphasis.

¹⁰ *Yunmen zhuan* 雲門傳. National Library of Peiping Rare Books Collection Microfilms, no. 2699, 56b.

would resume his tale, as is the normal rule with storytellers.¹¹

Perhaps inspired by this description by Feng Menglong, later in the century the Shandong author Ding Yaokang 丁耀亢 (1599–1669) also included a detailed description of a *daoqing* performance of the legend of Zhuangzi's meeting with a skeleton in chapter 48 of his *Jinpingmei* sequel *Xu Jinpingmei* 續金瓶梅, as seen through the eyes of one of his characters, Lame Liu:

One day when he walked by the Shangtian Monastery he saw quite a crowd—some of them seated, some of them standing. In the middle there was a Daoist with ancient features and a long beard. On his head he wore a bamboo hat, and he was dressed in a monk's robe made of patches, a yellow belt, and straw shoes. In his hands he held his fisherman's drum and clappers as he sang *daoqing*. Lame Liu made his way through the crowd and sat down with the others. When this Daoist had beaten the fisherman's drum for quite a while, he stepped forward somewhat and said, "Today I will tell the story of Zhuangzi's lament for the skeleton to beg for some rice and money to provide me with a vegetarian meal on my travels."¹²

Ding Yaokang proceeds to provide a potted version of the legend of Zhuangzi's resurrection of the skeleton which is made up of short prose passages interspersed with songs to the tune Shuahai'er.¹³ For a long time this chapter of the *Xu Jinpingmei* served in the absence of more detailed descriptions and actual texts as the basic source for our knowledge of the formal characteristics of the narrative *daoqing* of the late Ming and early Qing.¹⁴

¹¹ Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, comp., *Xingshi hengyan xinzhū quanben* 醒世恆言新注全本, ed. by Zhang Minggao 張明高 (Beijing: Beijing shiyue wenyi chubanshe, 1994), 893–94.

¹² Ding Yaokang 丁耀亢, *Xu Jinpingmei* 續金瓶梅, original woodblock edition reproduced in *Guben xiaoshuo jicheng* 古今小說集成, 43:1–4 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 1990), vol. 3, 1302.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 1302–15. For a typeset edition, see Liu Guangmin 劉光民, *Gudai shuochang bianti xipian* 古代說唱辨體析篇 (Beijing: Shoudu shifan daxue chubanshe, 1996), 136–41. An English translation may be found in Idema, *The Resurrected Skeleton*, 151–62.

¹⁴ As we shall see below, this format is quite different from the narrative *daoqing* that have been preserved as independent works. The exclusive reliance on the tune of Shuahai'er may have been a local Shandong tradition. We reencounter the format in one of Pu Songling's 蒲松齡 (1640–1715) *liqu* 俚曲.

The legends of Zhuangzi's resurrection of the skeleton and of Han Xiangzi's attempts to convert Han Yu circulated not only as *daoqing* ballads but also as plays, and in both cases the legends not only circulated orally but also in print. Scholars have long been aware of the existence of the *Newly Composed, Enlarged and Expanded, with a Forest of Appreciative Commentaries: Master Zhuang Sighs over the Skeleton in Northern and Southern Lyrics and Songs* (*Xinbian zengbu pinglin: Zhuangzi tan kulou nanbei ciqu* 新編增補評林莊子嘆骷髏南北詞曲). This work was a revised version of an earlier text by the otherwise unknown Du Hui 杜惠 from Changshu, and printed in the early 1620s. The text has been preserved in a printed copy (held at the Daitōkyū bunko Library at the Gotoh Museum, Tokyo),¹⁵ while a manuscript copy (originally in the collection of Nagasawa Kikuya) is held in the Library of the Institute of Oriental Culture (Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo) at Tokyo University. This latter version is now easily available on the Web.¹⁶ The Chinese scholar Du Yingtao 杜穎陶 also at one time held a copy of this work. This prosimetric text is made up of short prose passages alternating with songs to various tunes as well as poems, lyrics, and (in a few rare cases) passages composed in ballad verse. The core of the text is a long set of 36 songs to the tune Shuahai'er in which Master Zhuang questions the skeleton as to his status and trade while alive.¹⁷

When Ye Dejun 葉德均 in his *Song Yuan Ming jiangchang wenxue* 宋元明講唱文學 of 1957 distinguished *yuequxi jiangchang wenxue* 樂曲系講唱文學 (prosimetric literature using various song tunes) and *shizanxi jiangchang wenxue* 詩讚系講唱文學 (prosimetric literature using ballad verse) as the two basic traditions of prosimetric literature, he discussed *daoqing* under both headings but mistakenly classified the *Zhuangzi tan kulou nanbei ciqu* as

¹⁵ Tong Wancheng 全婉澄, "Ribben cang xijian Mingkan daoqing *Zhuangzi tan kulou kaoshu*" 日本藏稀見明刊道情莊子歎骷髏考述, *Quyī* (2013) no. 5: 20–21. Idema, *The Resurrected Skeleton* neglects to mention this edition.

¹⁶ <http://shanben.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/pdf/012022> (accessed September 14, 2015).

¹⁷ A full translation of this text is provided in Idema, *The Resurrected Skeleton*, 61–150.

belonging to the second tradition.¹⁸ While the use of the expression *cishuo* in the *Jie'an laoren manbi* suggests that already in the 16th century *shizhanxi daoqing* also existed, the great variety of songs and the rare use of ballad verse clearly mark *Zhuangzi tan kulou nanbei ciqu* as a *yuequxi* text. Hasty readings of Ye's discussion also have resulted in the mistaken belief that there must have existed a *shizhanxi* edition by Du Hui of a *daoqing* on Han Xiangzi. After his discussion of Du Hui's *Zhuangzi tan kulou nanbei ciqu*, Ye writes "further we have *Indigo Pass*" (*ciwai you Languan ji* 此外又有藍關記),¹⁹ which some readers have apparently understood as meaning "he also authored *Indigo Pass*." This clearly is not Ye's intended meaning, and to the best of my knowledge no prosimetric text on the life of Han Xiangzi as edited by Du Hui has been preserved in a Ming or later edition.

This of course does not exclude the possibility that narrative *daoqing* on Han Xiangzi (whether *yuequxi* texts or *shizhanxi* texts) may have existed and come down to us in Qing dynasty printings. Indeed, from the 19th century and later we not only have a considerable number of precious scrolls on Han Xiangzi, but also one text that not only identifies itself as a *daoqing* in its title but also shows strong similarities to the *Zhuangzi tan kulou nanbei ciqu* in its use of songs to various tunes in alternation with passages in prose. This text has been preserved in several editions. Wu Guangzheng lists a *Xinbian Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing* 新編韓湘子九度文公道情 in 3 scrolls (containing respectively seven, eight, and seven chapters) that was printed in Daoguang 6 (1826).²⁰ Zan Hongyu lists a Qing edition of this text entitled *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong quanzhuan (daoqing quanzhuan)* 韓湘子九度文公全傳, also in three scrolls, as well as later editions titled *Xinbian Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben* of Xianfeng 9 (1859) and of Guangxu 26 (1900).²¹ There also exist lithographic editions of

¹⁸ Ye Dejun 葉德均, *Song Yuan Ming jiangchang wenxue* 宋元明講唱文學 (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957), 23–24, 67–68.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 68.

²⁰ Wu Guangzheng, *Baxian gushi xitong kaolun*, 360.

²¹ Zan Hongyu 咎紅宇, "Qing keben *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong quanben (daoqing quanzhuan)* jianlun" 清刻本韓湘子九度文公全本(道情全傳)簡論, *Cangsang* (2009)

(Continue on next page)

this text. One of these was put out by the Zhuji shuju 鑄記書局 of Shanghai. In this undated edition the text has been divided into 4 scrolls, but has the same number of 22 chapters. In this edition the main text is preceded by 8 half-page illustrations. This text is available on the website of the Harvard-Yenching Library.²² It is the one I have used in writing this paper.

Both the *Zhuangzi tan kulou nanbei ciqu* and the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing* use the same name number (20) of different melodies, but they share only four of them (Shuahai'er, Qingjiangyin 清江引, Shanpoyang 山坡羊 and Langtaosha 浪淘沙). In both texts these four tunes are among the most widely used. Huangying'er 黃鶯兒, which is often used in the *Zhuangzi tan kulou nanbei ciqu*, is not encountered in *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing*. The latter counts Bubujiao 步步嬌 and Zhuyunfei 駐雲飛 among its most widely used tunes, but these are not encountered in *Zhuangzi tan kulou nanbei ciqu*. Che Xilun characterizes the melodies used in the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing* as *shixing xiaoqu* 時興小曲 (popular tunes), and treats the *Han Xiangzi jiudu wengong daoqing* as a work of the Ming dynasty.²³ While it is quite possible that the work does indeed date

(Note 21—Continued)

no. 1: 244–25; Bian Liangjun 卞良君, “Qingdai daoqing, baojuan zhong Han Yu xingxiang de yanbian ji qi lishi wenhua jiazhi” 清代道情寶卷中韓愈形象的演變及其歷史文化價值, *Zhongzhou xuekan* 206 (2014), 152. Che Xilun 車錫倫 and Chen Qimeng 陳企孟, in “Qingdai Yangzhou keyin de changben” 清代揚州刻印的唱本, *Yangzhou shiyuan xuebao* (1986) no. 1, 123, also mention *Jiudu Wengong daoqing* as a popular title with the publishers of vernacular literature in Qing-dynasty Yangzhou but do not provide any further details.

²² <http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/48365097> (accessed September 14, 2015). Prof. Wu kindly provided me with scans of his photocopies of the Daoguang edition, and a cursory comparison of the two editions suggests that the text of the lithographic edition is basically identical to the one in the Daoguang edition.

²³ Che Xilun, “Daoqing kao.” Another indication of an early date of composition might be that in its description of the members of the Eight Immortals, the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben* does not mention He Xiangtu 何仙姑, who was an established member of the group at least since the 16th century, but instead mentions on p. 2:6a a “Sage greybeard” (*shengweng* 聖翁), which most likely refers to Xu Shenweng 徐神翁 (Divine Greybeard Xu), who is often mentioned as one of the members of the group in Yuan and early Ming times. This single occurrence of the “Sage Greybeard” in the text may of course also be explained as the borrowing of a pre-existing song by the anonymous author who no longer knew the correct title of Xu Shenweng.

from the late Ming or early Qing, the late date of the preserved editions calls for caution, and I personally would rather date this text to the early Qing.

Ye Dejun, who does not list the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben*, mentions in his discussion of *yuequxi* narrative *daoqing* a *Shuochang shi'erdu Hanmenzi* 說唱十二度韓門子 in four *juan* as listed in the *Hakusai shomoku* 舶載書目, the Edo-period lists of Chinese books imported into Japan. This title most likely should be read as *Shuochang shi'erdu Han Xiangzi* 說唱十二度韓湘子.²⁴ Ye had not seen this text, and I have been unable to locate any information on this text beyond the information provided by Ye.²⁵ Wu Guangzheng and others have touted this text as the source of Yang Erzeng's *Han Xiangzi quanzhuan*, probably on the basis of a certain similarity of this title to a title that is mentioned at the end of that novel, the *Diba dong shenxian Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* 第八洞神仙韓湘子十二度韓文公藍關記.²⁶ This hypothesis has to be rejected as premature because we know nothing about the contents of the *Shuochang shi'erdu Han Xiangzi* (assuming this text ever existed). Among the rare Chinese materials preserved in Japan one can, however, identify a text that did indeed serve as the primary source of Yang Erzeng's novel. This is the *Han Xiangzi's Twelfefold Conversion of Han Yu: Indigo Pass* (*Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* 韓湘子十二度韓文公藍關記). This text is further important because it shows all the characteristics that would make it qualify as a *shizhanxi* narrative *daoqing*. Despite its obvious importance this text has so far, to the best of my knowledge, not been discussed in the scholarly literature on the Han Xiangzi legend.²⁷

²⁴ Ye Dejun, *Song Yuan Ming jiangchang wenxue*, 25. Ye does not list the year that this title was imported into Japan.

²⁵ Hatano, "Dōjō tanshi mokuyōsho," 450, limits himself to reproducing the information provided by Ye Dejun, as does Sawada Mizuho, in his "Kan Shōshi densetsu to sokubungaku" 韓湘子傳説と俗文學, *Chūgokugaku shi* 5 (1968), 171–72 (371–72).

²⁶ Wu Guangzhen, *Baxian gushi xitong kaolun*, 360.

²⁷ The title is listed without any further detail in Wang Dingyong 王定勇, "Baojuan yu daoqing guanxi lunlüe" 寶卷與道情關係論略, *Wenhua yichan* (2015) no. 4: 125.

A single copy of a Jiaqing period printing²⁸ of the *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* (originally owned by Nagazawa Kikuya) is preserved in the Library of the Institute of Oriental Culture of Tokyo University, which has made it available online.²⁹ This text in two *juan* is made up of an alternation of passages in prose and passages in seven-syllable verse, but also includes a considerable number of songs written to various tunes. More than twenty-five different tunes are employed, but many of them are only encountered once. Shuahai'er is conspicuous by its absence, and the tunes most often used are Bangzhuangtai 傍妝台, Qingjiangyin, Shanpoyang and Jishengcao 寄生草, while Langtaosha and Huangyinger are also repeatedly encountered. While most of these songs are explicitly identified as *daoqing* songs performed by Han Xiangzi, a few of them are narrative in content. These formal characteristics make the *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* a clear example of a *shizhanxi* narrative *daoqing*. An early date of composition of this text is suggested by the fact that Xu Shenweng 徐神翁 (Divine Greybeard Xu), who by the 16th century had lost his position among the Eight Immortals, is twice included in its list of members of this group (but once alongside his later replacement He Xiangtu).³⁰ Another hint of an early date of the composition of the text may perhaps be found in the fact that it does not mention Xiangzi's earlier existence as a crane or his karmic bond of adversity with his wife. It is tempting to speculate that Li Xu may have seen an earlier printing of this text. The *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* and Yang Erzeng's novel not only share many unique plot elements but also many textual materials. While it is unlikely that Yang Erzeng used precisely this edition of the text, it is obvious it presents us with a printing of the text he used (along with several others), and so most likely dates from the 16th century.³¹

²⁸ I do not know on what ground the Library of the Institute of Oriental Culture has arrived at this dating as the text itself carries no date.

²⁹ <http://shanben.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/pdf/view/012038> (accessed September 14, 2015).

³⁰ *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* 1:5b; 2:33a.

³¹ The *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* also provides students of early Chinese fiction with another example to observe how the novelists of the

Chen Yunqu 陳雲衢, the Hangzhou editor of the *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji*, had it followed by a text of his own composition titled *The Tale of Han Xiangzi's Conversion of Han Yu and Lament over Skeletons* (*Han Xiangzi du Wengong tan kulou zhuan* 韓湘子度文公嘆骷髏傳).³² Following his final conversion of Han Yu, Xiangzi, when looking for his uncle's servants Zhang Qian 張千 and Li Wan 李萬 whom he hopes to convert, comes across two skeletons, which he starts to interrogate as to their social identities while alive. Eventually the two skeletons turn out to be those of Zhang Qian and Li Wan, who are revived and converted. The questions are voiced by Xiangzi in songs to the tune Shuuhai'er, and the catalogue of suggested professions is divided into five groups: literate pursuits (15), agricultural jobs (4), artisanal specializations (23), trade and commerce (15), and female and lowly occupations (15). Each group ends with a set of three songs sung respectively to the tunes of Daoqing 道情, Langtaosha, and Qingjiangyin, followed by a quatrain. In this way only four different song tunes are used throughout the text.

By the late Qing the many local varieties of *daoqing* (also known as *yugu* and *qinshu* 琴書) would appear to rely predominantly on ballad verse, whether using seven-syllable lines or ten-syllable lines, which makes it difficult to distinguish these texts from other genres of *shizhanxi* prosimetric literature outside a performance context. The tale of Han Xiangzi initially was one of the main subjects in modern local genres of *daoqing* (including the shadow play and opera that developed on the basis of narrative *daoqing*), but by the end of the twentieth century the story had dropped out of the repertoire in several places.³³ As the tale of Han Xiangzi was also widely adapted in other genres of prosimetric

late Ming on occasion composed their novels on the basis of pre-existing prosimetric texts.

³² <http://shanben.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/pdf/012039> (accessed September 14, 2015).

³³ Yamashita, "Daoqingxi zhong Han Xiangzi gushi," 72–73. Sawada Mizuho, "Kan Shoshi densetsu to sokubungaku," 172–74 (372–74) discusses a nineteenth-century text in his own collection titled *Languan jiudu* 藍關九度, suggesting it might be a narrative *daoqing*. This sixteen-chapter text would appear to be exceptional in its focus on internal alchemy.

storytelling in late-imperial times, it is difficult for me to decide whether or not any of the other early prosimetric texts that have come down to us should be classified as narrative *daoqing*.³⁴

II. The legend of Han Xiangzi

Han Yu greatly impressed his contemporaries by a passionate defense of an exclusive Confucianism and a strident rejection of Buddhism and Daoism, that culminated in his call to burn their books, laicize their clerics, and turn their monasteries into houses. Han Yu, in 819, showed his willingness to stand up for his ideals when he protested against the reception of a Buddha relic inside the palace and was condemned to death by an irate emperor. (His sentence was later commuted to banishment to Chaozhou.) Both Buddhism and Daoism soon developed legends in which this implacable enemy was converted to their respective transcendent truths. The *Zutang ji* 祖堂記 (952) portrays Han Yu during his stay at Chaoyang as an eager disciple of the monk Dadian Baotong 大顛寶通 (732–824),³⁵ but the story of his meetings with this Buddhist master never became as popular as those of his encounters with his nephew Han Xiangzi, who could work horticultural miracles, predicted Han Yu's banishment from court, and met with him at snow-bound Indigo Pass. This Daoist legend developed on the basis of hints in Han Yu's own works, and an anecdote transmitted by Duan Chengshi 段成式 (d. 863) about a distant relative of Han Yu with special skills in the cultivation of peonies. By the late ninth century this person (now described as a distant relative of Han Yu on his mother's side) had already become a distinct character in his own right, portrayed by Du Guangting 杜光庭 in his *Xianzhuan shiyi* 仙傳拾遺 as an immortal. Meeting with him at Indigo Pass, Han Yu eagerly inquires of him. "Can immortality be achieved?

³⁴ Wu Guangzheng, *Baxian gushi xitong kaolun*, 362–67. On the inter-relationships of precious scrolls and narrative *daoqing* see Wang Dingyong, "Baojuan yu daoqing guanxi lunlüe," 123–31. By the late Qing *daoqing* had also become a major genre of local drama in many parts of China.

³⁵ Charles Hartman, *Han Yü and the Tang Search for Unity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 93–100.

Can the Great Way be sought?” Du also relates a report that Han Yu too achieved immortality but refuses to give it credence. Han Yu’s mysterious relative is first called Han Xiang by Liu Fu 劉斧 in his eleventh-century collection of anecdotes titled *Qingsuo gaoyi* 青鎖高議. When in the 13th century the Eight Immortals start to manifest themselves in Chinese culture, Han Xiangzi is from the very beginning a member of that group, which ensured his enduring popularity in late-imperial China.³⁶ The development of this legend has been studied repeatedly,³⁷ and I have no new pre-Ming materials to add. But whereas Wu Guangzheng has recently stressed the role of narrative *daoqing* in the development of the legend of Han Xiangzi’s conversion of Han Yu,³⁸ I would like to consider the ways in which the functions and formal requirements of the popular dramatic genres of the 12th to 15th centuries contributed to shaping this story.

Wu Guangzheng has stressed that Song-dynasty sources may greatly enhance Han Xiangzi’s status as an immortal and mention his meeting with Han Yu at Indigo Pass, but that they do not claim that Han Xiangzi converted Han Yu on that occasion or at any other time.³⁹ The earliest text to describe that event in full detail

³⁶ A summary account of Han Xiangzi as one of the Eight Immortals is provided in chapters 30 and 31 of the novel *Dongyou ji* 東遊記. This novel is, in its preserved edition, usually treated as a 16th-century work, but may well be based on earlier materials. The novel’s account of the life of Han Xiangzi is basically limited to simple accounts of three confrontations of Han Xiangzi and Han Yu: during a failed attempt of Han Yu to pray for snow; during Han Yu’s birthday celebration; and at Indigo Pass. For a French translation of *Dongyou ji* see Wu Yuntai, *Pérégrination vers l’est*, trans. by Nadine Perront (Paris: Gallimard, 1993).

³⁷ Pu Jiangqing 蒲江清, “Baxiankao” 八仙考 (1936), reprinted in *Pu Jiangqing wenlu* 蒲江清文錄, ed. by Lü Shuxiang 呂叔湘 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1958), 1–46; Wu Guangzheng, *Baxian gushi xitong kaolun*, 340–409; Clart, *The Story of Han Xiangzi*, xv–xxiii.

³⁸ Wu Guangzheng, *Baxian gushi xitong kaolun*, 356.

³⁹ Wu Guangzheng, *ibid.* 343 claims that the earliest clear references to Han Xiangzi’s conversion of Han Yu at Indigo Pass are to be found in the poetry of the Southern Song Daoist master Bai Yuchan 白玉蟾 (1194–1229), but even if his interpretation of the quoted poems is correct these poems would appear to have had little impact if any.

may well have been Ji Junxiang's 紀君祥 *Han Xiangzi's Triple Conversion of Han Yu* (*Han Xiangzi sandu Han Tuizhi* 韓湘子三度韓退之). Ji Junxiang, best known as the author of *Injustice Repays Injustice: The Orphan of the House of Zhao* (*Yuan bao yuan Zhaoshi gu'er* 冤報冤趙氏孤兒), was active as a playwright in Dadu in the second part of the 13th century. His *Triple Conversion of Han Yu* is listed identically by its full title in all known copies of the earliest catalogue of Yuan *zaju*, the *Lugui bu* 錄鬼簿, so there seems to be little reason to doubt his authorship.⁴⁰ The play may have been lost, but the strict conventions of the "conversion play" (most likely due to its ritual function as a birthday offering) allow us to make certain assumptions about its content. As a *zaju*, Ji Junxiang's work would have been a relatively short play consisting of four acts. The four sets of songs (which constitute the core of each act) would all have been assigned to a single actor or actress. In this case the actor assigned the songs most likely would have played either Han Xiangzi or Han Yu because in a conversion play the two main characters tend to be the person who is predestined to be delivered and the immortal who is charged with the task of converting this person. This immortal usually descends to earth in the disguise of a mendicant priest who stresses the ephemerality of earthly riches and glory and vaunts the joys of transcendent truth. The person who is destined to be delivered initially enjoys his current status too much to lend him an ear until a sudden reversal of fortune confronts him with imminent death, at which moment he turns to the mendicant priest he earlier scorned and begs to become his disciple. Following a period of religious exercises, the new immortal is eventually introduced to the company of the Eight Immortals and taken along by them to meet with the Queen Mother of the West.⁴¹ The rigid conventions of the deliverance play

⁴⁰ Fu Xihua 傅惜華, *Yuandai zaju quanmu* 元代雜劇全目 (Beijing: Zuojia chubanshe, 1957), 114–16; Hu Ying 虎穎 and Wang Dengbo 王登渤, *Shichuan Yuan zaju benshi kaoshuo* 失傳元雜劇本事考說 (Lanzhou: Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 2002), 169–79.

⁴¹ Wilt L. Idema, *The Dramatic Oeuvre of Chu Yu-tun (1379–1439)* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985), 63–69. In the rare Buddhist deliverance plays, the person to be delivered might also be a woman, while the deliverer would, of course, be a monk.

may well have imposed on a playwright like Ji Junxiang if not the invention at least the elaboration of Han Yu's final conversion.

Because the title of Ji Junxiang's play refers to three confrontations between Han Xiangzi and Han Yu, we may venture the hypothesis that the first act of this play covered Han Xiangzi's intervention during Han Yu's failed attempts at bringing down snow,⁴² and the second act dealt with Han Xiangzi's performance at Han Yu's birthday celebration. If the third act had focused on Han Xiangzi's meeting with Han Yu at snow-bound Indigo Pass,⁴³ then the fourth act would have shown how Han Yu, now an immortal himself, met with the Eight Immortals. Ji Junxiang is not the only Yuan playwright who is credited with a play based on the story of Han Xiangzi. All copies of the *Lugui bu* credit Ji Junxiang's contemporary and fellow townsman Zhao Mingdao 趙明道 with a play titled *Han Xiangzi Thrice Visits Peony Pavilion* (*Han Xiangzi sanfu Mudanting* 韓湘子三赴牡丹亭). Zhao Mingdao is also credited in the *Yeshiyuan shumu* 也是園書目 with a play entitled *Han Yu blocked by Snow at Indigo Pass* (*Han Tuizhi xueyong Languan ji* 韓退之雪擁藍關記).⁴⁴ If these two titles ascribed to Zhao Mingdao did indeed refer to two different plays,⁴⁵ the second play would have

⁴² I treat "praying for snow" and "praying for rain" as basically identical activities, the only difference being that one prays for snow in winter whereas one prays for rain in the other seasons. Admittedly, clear references to Han Yu's failure when praying for snow and the intervention of Han Xiangzi are first found in Ming-dynasty sources such as the *Dongyou ji* and the *chuanqi* play *Shengxian ji* 昇仙記 (to be discussed below). But it seems a safe guess to include this topos here since it later becomes a stable element whenever the story focuses on Han Xiangzi's three attempts at conversion (*sandu*). Gao Yuhou 皋於厚, "Han Xiangzi quanzhuan manyi" 韓湘子全傳漫議, *Ming Qing xiaoshuo yanjiu* (1992) no. 1, 121, mentions the episode of the rainmaking ceremony as a contribution of the *Dongyou ji* to the legend of Han Xiangzi and Han Yu. As an official, the historical Han Yu would have participated in rainmaking rituals as is clear from several texts in his collected works.

⁴³ The *Taihe zhengyin pu* 太和正音譜 contains one song from the first act of a *zaju* only identified as *Languan ji* 藍關記. This aria describes a snow-covered mountainscape and is written in the voice of Han Xiangzi. Zhao Jingshen 趙景深, *Yuanren zaju gouchen* 元人雜劇鉤沉 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1956), 138.

⁴⁴ Fu Xihua, *Yuandai zaju quanmu*, 140–41.

⁴⁵ The two titles may also well have been the *timu* 題目 and *zhengming* 正名 of a single play.

focused on the final conversion of Han Yu at Indigo Pass, while the first play may have focused on Xiangzi's skills as a divine horticulturalist. The first play may also have been the earliest version to turn Xiangzi's birthday visit into three consecutive visits, as we find in many later versions of the legend. Occasional references to plays entitled either *Han Xiangzi* or *Languan ji* probably also refer to plays on Han Xiangzi's conversion of his uncle at Indigo Pass.⁴⁶ For our following discussion it is important to note that none of these play titles give any hint that either Han Yu's wife or Xiangzi's bride played a major role in any of these *zaju* adaptations of the legend, if they appeared on stage at all.⁴⁷ This would change when the legend was adapted as *xiwen* 戲文 and *chuanqi* 傳奇.

Southern drama may have originated as early (or even earlier) as Northern drama, but quite a number of *xiwen* appear to have originated as adaptations of *zaju*, a much more prestigious genre in the Yuan and early Ming. But whereas conversion plays were a very productive subgenre of *zaju* throughout the two centuries from 1250 to 1450, adaptations of conversion plays in early Southern

⁴⁶ The early Ming playwright Lu Jinzhi 陸進之 authored a play with the full title *Chen Banjie dewu dao Penglai; Han Xiangzi yindu sheng xianhui* 陳半街得悟到蓬萊；韓湘子引度昇仙會, from which two songs have been preserved. Zhao Jingshen, *Yuanren zaju gouchen*, 128–129. The play is still mentioned in *Jinpingmei*, but its content is unknown (Zhuang Yifu 莊一拂, *Gudian xiqu cunmu huikao* 古典戲曲存目會考, 3 vols. [Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 1982], vol. 1, 396).

⁴⁷ The two short chapters on Han Xiangzi in the *Dongyou ji* also do not mention either Han Yu's wife or his nephew's wife. Han Yu's wife and his nephew's wife are mentioned in passing in the *Han Xian zhuan* 韓仙傳. This undated text is first encountered in the 120-chapter edition of the *Shuofu* 說郛, which has been preserved in a late sixteenth-century edition. This text which may date from the early Ming is written in the voice of Han Xiangzi, so most likely was produced by a spirit-writing cult devoted to Han Xiangzi. This text greatly develops the tale of Han Xiangzi's prior life on earth as a crane, and also tells the story of his conversion by Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓 in great detail, as well as the seven tests to which the young Han Xiangzi is submitted by his teacher. The text goes to great length to harmonize the details of the historical record of the Han family with the details of the legend, which suggests that the spirit writing cult that may have produced this text must have had a highly literate membership.

drama are very rare.⁴⁸ The legend of Han Xiangzi's conversion may well be the only surviving example.⁴⁹ The near-total absence of conversion plays in the repertoire of Southern drama⁵⁰ may well have to be linked to the difference in function between Southern drama and Northern drama. Whereas *zaju* were short plays that were suitable for performance as interludes at court banquets and in commercial theaters as part of a variety bill, *xiwen* were long

⁴⁸ None of the lists of *xiwen* collected by Qian Nanyang 錢南揚, *Song Yuan xiwen jiyi* 宋元戲文輯佚 (Shanghai: Shanghai gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1956), 3–8, contain titles of conversion plays. The fragments of *xiwen* that come with titles that could refer to conversion plays may not necessarily derive from full-fledged southern plays. None of the *xiwen* adaptations of plays on Lü Dongbin have been preserved (Zhuang Yifu, *Gudian xiqu cunmu huikao*, 35–36). Guo Yingde 郭英德, *Ming Qing chuanqi zonglu* 明清傳奇綜錄 (Shijiazhuang: Hebei jiaoyu chubanshe, 1997), 5–6, starts his survey of earliest *chuanqi* from the period 1465–1586 with a discussion of *Xingtian fengyue tongxuan ji* 性天風月通玄記. This play, which survives only in a 1792 manuscript, is ascribed to the Kunming author Lan Mao 蘭茂 of the middle of the 15th century. This play is a highly atypical play on deliverance because it is an extended allegory of the process of internal alchemy. Chinese scholars often interpret the popularity of the conversion play in Yuan times as an expression of the frustration of Chinese literati over their lowly position under Mongol rule, resulting in a desire to transcend daily reality (Wang Anqi 王安祈, *Mingdai chuanqi zhi juchang ji qi yishu* 明代傳奇之劇場及其藝術 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1986), 185; Shen Min 沈敏, “Yuan Ming ‘dutuoju’ yitongbian” 元明度脫劇異同辨, *Wuhan daxue xuebao* 58, no. 1 (2005), 58–63; Guo Yinghui 郭迎暉, “Ming zhonghouqi fodaotutuoju de chuanguo te dian” 明中後期佛道度脫劇的創作特點, *Xibeigongyexue* 26, no. 4 (2006), 11–13, 47; Li Yan 李豔, “Ming Qing dao jiao yu chuanqi xiqu yanjiu” 明清道教與傳奇戲曲研究, *Zhongyang xiqu xueyuan xuebao* (Xiju) 154 (2014), 83–96.

⁴⁹ One likely explanation may lie in the existence of local cults dedicated to the veneration of Han Xiangzi. Xiangzi had his own temple in various places in China. Both the *Shengxian ji* and other texts portray Xiangzi as being in command of the Four Marshals, powerful exorcist deities, which must have made Xiangzi an even more powerful exorcist deity in his own right. *Shengxian ji* might therefore perhaps better be grouped with other plays on popular deities such as Mulian 目連, Guanyin 觀音, and Guan Yu 關羽. Another explanation for the continued popularity of plays involving Han Xiangzi in the repertoire of southern plays might be their suitability for performance in the context of rainmaking rituals as I will argue below.

⁵⁰ For more deliverance plays in *chuanqi* format, we have to wait until the Wanli period and the works of Su Yuanjun 蘇元駿 (d. 1606), Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 (1550–1616) and Tu Long 屠隆 (1542–1605).

plays that appear to have been performed primarily at temple festivals and other community celebrations. While *zaju* could cover a wide variety of topics, early Southern dramas tended to be tales of family separation and reconstitution, culminating in a grand reunion scene. Whereas the performance of a *zaju* required only a single star performer and a small cast, *xiwen* required a large company because the length of the plays called for the alternation of singing voices. In *xiwen* all the actors were required to sing and a typical *xiwen* consists of up to forty substantial scenes that alternate between male and female voices, domestic and military action, pathos and broad humor. But even though the plays require a large cast, it would also appear that many such plays were composed precisely in order to provide space for all the actors and actresses in the company—to allow them to display the company's specific acting skills and costumes.

The only Southern drama on the legend of Han Xiangzi's conversion of Han Yu that has come down to us is the anonymous *Han Xiangzi's Ninefold Conversion of Han Yu: The Story of Rising to the Immortal Realm* (*Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong Shengxian ji* 韓湘子九渡文公昇仙記; hereafter *Shengxian ji*) that has been preserved in an edition by the 16th-century Nanjing publishing house Fuchuntang 富春堂. This play, which has been reprinted in *Guben xiqu congkan chujì* 古本戲曲叢刊初集, must have been circulating by the middle of the 16th century because selected scenes are encountered in the earliest drama anthologies, dating from the second part of that century.⁵¹ In its opening scene this play is repeatedly designated as *The Immortal Han's Threefold Conversion of Han Yu: Blocked by Snow at Indigo Pass* (*Han zhenren sandu Wengong: Xueyong Languan ji* 韓真人三度文公雪擁藍關記), and elsewhere in the text only the expression *sandu* (threefold conversion) is encountered, not *jiudu* (ninefold conversion). Guo Yingde suggests that the *Shengxian ji* most likely is a later version of an earlier *xiwen* entitled *Han Wengong fengxue zu Languan ji* 韓文公風雪阻藍關記, *Han Xiangzi sandu Han Wengong* 韓湘子三度韓文

⁵¹ Guo Yingde, *Ming Qing chuanqi zonglu*, 107–9.

公, and *Han Wengong xueyong Languan ji* 韓文工雪擁藍關記, from which only a few arias survive.

The *Shengxian ji* is a regular *chuanqi*. The text is divided into 36 untitled scenes, which are divided over two *juan* of roughly equal length, with the first containing scenes 1–14 and the second scenes 15–36. The first part focuses on Han Xiangzi's attempts to convert Han Yu when he was praying for rain and when celebrating his birthday, while the second part treats Han Yu's banishment and his final conversion at Indigo Pass. Following an extended opening scene (*jiamen* 家門), the first part starts with a scene in which Han Yu, his wife, and his nephew's wife, express their hope for a speedy return of Han Xiangzi. The third scene then shifts to Han Xiangzi, who has been enlightened by Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin, and has been charged by them with the deliverance of his uncle. Following short scenes in which Han Yu reports that he has been promoted in office and ordered to pray for snow, and in which Han Xiangzi is on his way to the capital, the long sixth scene dramatizes how Han Xiangzi comes to the aid of his uncle, who even after forty days of prayer has failed to produce any snow. Threatened with dismissal and worse, Han Yu promises to follow Xiangzi if the latter can cause snow to fall, but quickly reneges on his promise. This scene is followed by one in which Han Yu's wife and nephew's wife express their longing for the absent Xiangzi, and Han Yu returns home to report on his meeting with him. In scene 8 Xiangzi announces that he will visit his uncle on the occasion of his birthday in yet another attempt to convert him, and in scene 9 we learn that his aunt and wife have been warned of his impending visit in a dream. Scene 10 is a very short scene in which Han Yu inspects the preparations for the birthday banquet, and in scene 11 (wrongly numbered 12) Xiangzi visits his aunt and wife in the disguise of a mendicant priest. This is followed by a long and elaborate scene 12, in which Xiangzi visits Han Yu during his birthday celebration and tries to convince him of the illusory nature of all earthly glory and riches by a string of miracles, which all are

denied by Han Yu as the tricks of an illusionist.⁵² This string of ever more grandiose miracles culminates in Xiangzi's production of peony flowers that carry on their petals two seven-syllable lines that predict Han Yu's fate at Indigo Pass. The first part ends with two scenes, in the first of which Xiangzi's wife bemoans her lonely fate, and in the second of which Xiangzi is ordered by his teachers to make yet another attempt at converting Han Yu.

The second part opens once again with a scene in which Han Yu, his wife, and his nephew's wife bemoan the absence of Han Xiangzi, who in the next scene (which is not explicitly marked as such) appears disguised as a foreign monk. He is accompanied by his fellow immortal Lan Caihe in the same disguise, because they are on their way to present a Buddha bone to the emperor. When they have successfully done so in scene 17, Han Yu shows his indignation in scene 18, and presents his famous memorial against the reception of the Buddha bone in scene 19. This results in his death sentence that, following the intervention of his colleagues, is transmuted into immediate banishment to Chaozhou, and so scene 20 is devoted to the tearful farewell of Han Yu from his womenfolk, who are safely escorted to Changli by Xiangzi and Lan Caihe in scene 21. While on the road Han Yu laments his sudden reversal of fortune in scene 22, and encounters Han Xiangzi and Lan Caihe, both in the disguise of carefree fishermen, when he is blocked by a large stream in scene 23. Following scene 24, in which his wife and his nephew's wife have arrived in their hometown, Han Yu in scene 25 again meets with Han Xiangzi and Lan Caihe, this time in the disguise of woodcutters, when he is lost in a forest. Scene 26 features the god of storm and the god of snow who block Indigo Pass with heavy snow, and so in scene 27 Han Yu and his servants are shown battling these adverse conditions. While Han Yu and his servants struggle through the snow, they once again (in scene 28) meet with Han Xiangzi and Lan Caihe, who this time have taken on the disguise of fortune tellers. Because Han Yu has still failed to see the light despite these three encounters with Han

⁵² To the extent that these miracles are performed on stage, they are of course tricks.

Xiangzi and Lan Caihe, they now plan their final attempt at conversion in scene 29. After Han Yu's horse has died and his two servants have been carried off by tigers in scene 30, he is truly at his wit's end, and allows himself to be converted in scene 31: Han Yu will remain at Indigo Pass to devote himself to religious exercises while Xiangzi will travel in his place to Chaozhou. After scene 32 has shown Han Yu's wife and his nephew's wife anxious for news, scene 32 shows Han Xiangzi in the guise of Han Yu who frees the population of Chaozhou from the scourge of alligators. Once Han Xiangzi and Lan Caihe have invited Han Yu's wife and his nephew's daughter to travel with them to Indigo Pass, scene 35 is devoted to the final enlightenment of Han Yu, after which all members of the Han family collectively achieve immortality in the final scene.

Shengxian ji is a typical early *chuanqi* in that it provides roles for all members of a standard company. There may be no martial scenes in the play, but the heavies are allowed an opportunity to make a grand entrance in both parts. During Han Xiangzi's rain making in scene 6, not only the god of the day appears on stage, but also the Four Marshals, one of whom in this case is Guan Yu, most likely because every company had the costume for Guan Yu and an actor specializing in that role. Scene 26 shows the god of storm and the god of snow at work at Indigo Pass while scene 30 calls for the entry on stage of not one but two tigers.

These elaborate scenes of snow making (easily the most elaborate scenes of the play) may well provide the most convincing explanation for the enduring popularity of the legend of Han Xiangzi in the repertoire of Southern drama of Yuan and Ming times: the scenes must have made plays on this legend a suitable choice for performance in the context of rituals praying for rain or snow. "Plays praying for rain" (*qiyuxi* 祈雨戲) were widely performed during late-imperial China all over the country, both at a specific moment of the year (dependent on local conditions) and on the occasion of drought. The plays performed on such an occasion had to be carefully selected as they should conspicuously feature rain and snow or even floods, but should avoid offending the dragon gods. In this connection it is perhaps important to note

that in the *Shengxian ji* the heavy snowfall at Indigo Pass is not just a seasonal feature of the locality as in the early versions of the legend, but is deliberately caused by Han Xiangzi.⁵³

But while the scenes of snow making may explain the function of a play on Han Xiangzi, the insertion of the characters of his aunt and bride must be explained by the format of *xiwen* and *chuanqi*. Even though the wives of Han Yu and his nephew play only very subsidiary roles in the plot of the play (they only comment passively on the events as they unfold), the *dan* 旦 (performers of female roles) in the company are allowed ample space to display their vocal talents in scenes 2, 7, 9, 12, and 13 of the first part, and in scenes 20, 21, 24, 32, and 34 of the second part. In view of the absence of Han Yu's wife and his nephew's wife in the literature on Han Yu and Han Xiangzi up to the end of the Song as well as their

⁵³ Anning Jing, *The Water God's Temple of the Guangsheng Monastery: Cosmic Function of Art, Ritual and Theater* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 169–179 discusses two *zaju* as suitable “rain plays” because of their explicit treatment of *yunyu* 雲雨 (“rain and clouds,” i.e. sex), viz. *Huajian siyou Dongpo meng* 花間四友東坡夢 (Four flower-friends in Dongpo's dream) and *Lü Dongbin xi Bai Mudan* 呂洞賓戲白牡丹 (Lü Dongbin's affair with Bai Mudan). In the first play the famous Song poet Su Shi 蘇軾 succeeds in having his good friend the monk Foyin 佛印 seduced by four courtesans, while in the second play the immortal Lü Dongbin is defeated in the battle of sex by the courtesan Bai Mudan. In both cases powerful religious specialists, whose power derives from their ability not to spend their semen, are eventually forced to spend it. The story of Lü Dongbin's affair with Bai Mudan was also adapted in early Southern drama, but that version has not survived, perhaps because community leaders preferred the more decorous *Shengxian ji*. But in that play too we encounter the theme of the deliberate (and therefore unnatural) refusal to spend semen when Han Xiangzi refuses to consummate his marriage to Lin Ying 林英 (in Part One) and in the veneration of Buddhism (in Part Two), and in both cases this refusal to spend is followed by Han Xiangzi's conspicuous creation of snow. In the Qing dynasty adaptations of the White Snake's submersion of Golden Mountain Monastery apparently became a popular *qiyuxi* in some places. For a description of the plays performed when praying for rain in Northern China in the twentieth century see Yuan Li 苑利, *Longwang xinyang tanmi* 龍王信仰探秘 (Taipei: Yuandong tushu gongsi, 2003), 149–175. Yuan Li notes that the plays on the first day of performance often were quite racy (*hun* 葷), whereas the plays on the second day had to be more “healthy” (165). There is no mention of *qiyuxi* in Jeffrey Snyder-Reinke, *Dry Spells: State Rainmaking and Local Governance in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009).

absence (most likely) in *zaju*, I would venture the suggestion that these characters, which will play such a major role in later prosimetric adaptations of the legend of Han Xiangzi's conversion of Han Yu at Indigo Pass, were invented (or at least greatly developed) by the anonymous authors of *xiwen* and early *chuanqi* because of the need to provide roles for a company's *dan*, in order to showcase their own qualities and provide relief for the group's performers of male roles. As many Southern plays have plots that focus on the long separation of husband and wife, the anonymous playwright who adapted the legend of Han Xiangzi for this genre could draw on a well-established tradition of female lament in drafting the lyrics of lady Du and Lin Ying. Once these characters had become such prominent characters in the legend on the popular stage, later playwrights and ballad-authors (such as the anonymous author of the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben*) would try to integrate them more fully into the plot and enhance their roles.

One early example of this may well have been yet another Ming dynasty *chuanqi* on the legend of Han Xiangzi's conversion of Han Yu at Indigo Pass that is known as *Shengxian ji* 升仙記 and was ascribed to the otherwise unknown Jinke laoren 錦窠老人. This play has been lost except for one scene that has been preserved in two late Ming drama anthologies, which is enough to show that its contents must have been quite different from *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong Shengxian ji*.⁵⁴ The famous theater critic Qi Biaoqia 祁彪佳 (1599–1645) in his *Yuanshantang qupin* 遠山堂曲品 describes Jinke Laoren's *Shengxian ji* as “extremely absurd and obscene” (*huanghui teshen* 荒穢特甚).⁵⁵ Now any play that adapted the legend of Han Xiangzi's conversion of Han Yu could of course be rejected by literati as “absurd” (Qi cites as outrageous examples the fact that both the Xianzong Emperor and Han Yu designate themselves by their posthumous titles). The charge of obscenity against this play may indicate that this play provided a more detailed account of the

⁵⁴ Guo Yingde, *Ming Qing chuanqi zonglu*, 108.

⁵⁵ Qi Biaoqia 祁彪佳, *Yuanshantang Mingqupin jupin jiaolu* 遠山堂明曲品劇品校錄, edited by Huang Chang 黃裳 (Shanghai: Shanghai chubanshe, 1955), 141.

early years of Han Xiangzi and included the scene of his bride's attempts at seducing him on their wedding night when Han Xiangzi refuses to share her bed because he has already been converted to a life of religion by his immortal teachers.⁵⁶ Such scenes in which a convert shows his resolve by his ability to resist sexual temptation often were acted out on stage in graphic detail, leaving little to the imagination, and would appear to have enjoyed a great popularity with the audience at large.

Yet another Ming dynasty stage adaptation of the legend of Han Xiangzi's conversion of Han Yu at Indigo Pass was the anonymous *The Toad* (*Chan chu ji* 蟾蜍記). This *chuanqi* has been lost.⁵⁷ Qi Biaoja ridiculed it because the play peopled the stage with Han Yu's historical contemporaries, and praised it because it turned the "Memorial against the Buddha Bone" into song.⁵⁸ The *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* not only contains an abbreviated version of the actual "Memorial Against the Buddha Bone" but also likewise the names of well-known historical characters for the guests at Han Yu's birthday celebrations. If this would mean that the *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* was based on the *Chan chu ji* its structure would have been very similar to *Shengxian ji*, because the *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* devotes all of its second *juan* to Han Yu's banishment to Chaoyang and his final conversion. The first *juan* treats the rain-making ceremony and the birthday celebrations, but these are preceded by a short and simple account of Xiangzi's youth and the miracle of turning a stone lion into gold in a confrontation with his aunt. But in the *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* Xiangzi's bride already achieves enlightenment at the end of the first *juan*. Both Han Yu's wife and Xiangzi's bride make basically no appearance in the second part of the *Han*

⁵⁶ Some later versions of the legend also include the scene of delivering winter clothes (*song hanyi* 送寒衣): when Han Yu's wife has learned that Han Xiangzi and his wife have not had sexual intercourse, she orders her nephew's wife to visit him in his study during a cold winter night under the pretext of bringing him some warm winter clothes.

⁵⁷ Guo Yingde, *Ming Qing chunaqi zonglu*, 108–9.

⁵⁸ Qi Biaoja, *Yuanshantang Mingqupin jupin jiaolu*, 96.

Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji. While this provides no problems for a narrative text, it is difficult to imagine that *Chan chu ji* would not have featured any *dan* in its second part. One possibility might be of course that it was the *Chan chu ji* that borrowed from the *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji*. It is interesting to note that the *Han Xiangzi quanzhuan* in its adaptation of the *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* bowed to convention by using the more common legendary names of Han Yu's colleagues and birthday guests, while Yang Erzeng also showed the influence of drama by allowing the female characters in the story a much more prominent role in the final twelve chapters of his novel which treat Han Yu's banishment and final conversion.

Quite often the development of long vernacular narratives as represented by Dunhuang *bianwen* and Song-dynasty storytelling is seen as a precondition for the rise of theater from the thirteenth century onward. There are many reasons to doubt such an argument. Drama was already a well-established genre of entertainment during the Tang dynasty, and later playwrights were quite capable of turning short anecdotes into long and complicated plots. But the highly specific requirements of the forms and functions of the popular dramatic genres of the 12th to 15th centuries had a major impact on the content of the stories that were adapted. The stories as shaped by these requirements of the theater exerted a major influence on the shape of these same stories in the prosimetric narratives of the Qing dynasty and beyond, including narrative *daoqing*.

III. The *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben*

In the introduction to his translation of Yang Erzeng's *Han Xiangzi quanzhuan* Philip Clart declares: "This novel is the great summa of Han Xiangzi literature, and as such had an enormous influence on the Han Xiangzi literature of the following Qing literature."⁵⁹ The novel is indeed the most elaborate adaptation of the legend. It also exerted a certain influence in later centuries, but one may wonder

⁵⁹ Yang Erzeng, *The Story of Han Xiangzi*, xxii.

how many later plays and ballads actually were directly based on the novel. The novel was a highly literate venture that tried to appeal to a discerning reading audience. A much larger audience will have been reached by the many plays and ballads that existed already before its publication, continued to circulate, and were continuously revised and adapted, resulting in a bewildering variety of texts, of which only a small percentage has survived into the 21st century.⁶⁰

The legend of Han Xiangzi's conversion of Han Yu continued to enjoy great popularity during the Qing dynasty throughout the length and breadth of China. The story was not only adapted in practically every genre of traditional local theater, but also in many genres of ballad and prosimetric storytelling. The most comprehensive catalogue of these adaptations is provided by Wu Guangzheng.⁶¹ Apart from the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben* the most accessible prosimetric narratives are the various precious scrolls dedicated to this theme. Like the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben*, these precious scroll adaptations are all preserved in editions of the last century of the Qing or the early decades of the Republic. Many of these texts circulate under a variety of titles. Wu Guangzheng distinguishes seven basic precious scroll texts. Among these the 18 chapter *Han Xiang baojuan* 韓湘寶卷 (also known as *Languan baojuan* 藍關寶卷) is exceptional for its close reliance on Yang Erzeng's novel *Han Xiangzi quanzhuan*. All other precious scrolls, like the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben*, show only a limited influence of the novel at best. Among these other precious scrolls the 24 ch. *Hanzu chengxian baojuan* 韓祖成仙寶卷 (also known as *Hanzu chengxian zhuan* 韓祖成仙傳, *Xiangzi chengxian zhuan* 湘子成仙傳, *Xiangzi baojuan* 湘子寶卷, *Yuanyang baojuan* 鴛鴦寶卷, *Han Xiangzi chengxian* 韓湘子成仙, and *Han Xiang chengxian baojuan* 韓湘成仙寶卷) shows in its chapter titles a remarkable similarity to the *Han Xiangzi jiudu*

⁶⁰ Bian Liangjun 卞良君, "Daoqing, baojuan zhongde Han Yu gushi ji qi dui xiangguan difang xiqu de yingxiang" 道情寶卷中的韓愈故事及其對相關地方戲曲的影響, *Xueshu luntan* 295, no. 8 (2015), 101–6.

⁶¹ Wu Guangzheng, *Baxian gushi xitong kaolun*, 362–83.

Wengong daoqing quanben.⁶²

Each of the 22 chapters of the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben* is written in an alternation of prose and verse. Chapters may open with a four-line poem, which in the case of the second chapter is explicitly designated as a *yinzi* 引子. In the first chapter the first prose passage is followed by a song to the tune of Shuahai'er. The story is then continued in the next prose passage that again is followed by a song to the tune of Shuahai'er. This pattern is repeated for another six times, after which the author, after each prose passage, shifts to other melodies, in this case Didijin 滴滴金, Manjianghong 滿江紅, and Miandaxu 棉搭絮. The chapter's final short prose passage is concluded by a short song to a *weisheng* melody. In the second chapter the first two prose passages are each followed by a song to the tune Shuahai'er; the later prose passages are followed by songs to the tune of Yanerluo 雁兒落, Hongnabei 紅納被, Didijin, Manjianghong, Zuifugui 醉扶歸, Hunjianglong 混江龍, Didijin, and Yuhongyang 玉洪養, while the final short prose passage is concluded by a song to the tune Qingjiangyin.⁶³ In the third chapter the first two tunes employed are Zhuyunfei, after which the author repeatedly uses Shuahai'er. In many cases the verse sections are extended by repeating the same melody for songs that are not separated by intervening prose passages. Eventually the melody switches to Bubujiao, which is used repeatedly, also as the melody for the song that concludes the chapter. These few examples may suffice to present a general picture of the formal features of the genre and highlight its difference from contemporary precious scrolls that relied primarily on the seven-syllable and ten-syllable lines of ballad verse.

Many of the prose passages in the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben* consist solely of dialogue, and several chapters start like a play in that the first speaker introduces himself or

⁶² The narrative in this precious scroll is expanded by adding a chapter in which Han Xiangzi, after enlightening his uncle, visits the underworld in order to free the souls of his own father and mother so they too may attain celestial rank. In the added final chapter the whole family ascends to heaven together.

⁶³ Qingjiangyin is the final melody in the majority of chapters. It also often occurs at the end of a more or less independent scene inside a chapter

herself by a self-introduction like those used on stage. A switch of speaker is as a rule not indicated by mentioning the speaker explicitly as would be done in the stage directions of a play or in the narrative of a novel; it has rather to be deduced from the terms by which the opposite side is addressed, but as a rule this rarely allows for misunderstanding. These features strongly suggest that the anonymous author of the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben* was strongly influenced by (an) adaptation(s) of the legend as a play; these same features also must have made it very easy in turn to adapt this text for the stage. Third-person narrative in the prose passages is not absent but quite rare, while authorial commentary is almost entirely absent.

Once the playwrights of early Southern drama had prominently introduced the female characters of Han Yu's wife and Han Xiangzi's bride into the legend of Han Xiangzi's conversion of Han Yu, later adaptations endeavored to integrate them more closely into the plot. Han Xiangzi is increasingly as much involved in the conversion of his aunt and bride as in the conversion of his uncle. In these later adaptations, starting with Yang Erzeng's *Han Xiangzi quanzhuan*, the legend acquires a prologue in heaven, and Han Xiangzi is described as a celestial crane who is banished to earth for dereliction of duty. In the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben* his bride-to-be is a flowering reed in the Celestial River that refuses to allow him to alight on her, as a result of which she will be rejected by her husband throughout her lifetime on earth. The *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben* proceeds to devote its first seven chapters to Han Xiangzi's early youth and his failed marriage to Lin Ying.⁶⁴ In the first chapter "Birth and Adoption" (*Chushen guoji* 出身過繼) the celestial crane is borne on earth as the son of Han Yu's elder brother who, upon his early death, entrusts his only child to Han Yu and his wife. In the second chapter "Instructing the nephew and meeting immortals" (*Xunzhi yuxian* 訓姪遇仙) Han Xiangzi has turned seven, and when Han Yu seeks a teacher for him, he ends up by hiring Zhongli Quan 鍾離權

⁶⁴ A chapter by chapter summary of the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben* is provided as an appendix.

and Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓, with whom Han Xiangzi starts the study of immortality. In the third chapter “Engagement and Marriage” (*Yihun chengqin* 議婚成親), Han Xiangzi is engaged to Lin Ying, the daughter of one of Han Yu’s colleagues. When Han Yu learns that Han Xiangzi devotes his time to practicing *daoqing* songs he decides to move the wedding date forward, but Han Xiangzi refuses to consummate the marriage in the wedding night. A frustrated Lin Ying visits her natal home in chapter four (“Lin Ying Returns Home” [*Lin Ying huimen* 林英回門]), and Han Yu tries to talk sense into his adoptive son (“Han Yu berates his nephew” [*Han Yu ze zhi* 韓愈責姪]), but fails to do so despite a long and detailed dialogue with his ward, and in chapter 6, “Fleeing across the wall and becoming an immortal” (*Yueqiang chengxian* 越牆成仙), Han Xiangzi flees from his uncle’s home to achieve immortality on Mount Zhongshan, leaving his bride behind to lament her lonely fate (“Lin Ying bemoans her fate” [*Lin Ying zitan* 林英自嘆]).⁶⁵

Once Han Xiangzi has achieved immortality, he continues his efforts to enlighten his uncle, his aunt, and his wife. So we reencounter in chapter 8 (“Praying for snow at the southern altar” [*Nantan qi xue* 南壇祈雪]) Han Xiangzi’s confrontation with Han Yu during the rain-making ceremony, which is followed in chapter 9 by a first confrontation of Han Xiangzi with his aunt and bride (“Xiangzi sends a dream” [*Xiangzi tuo meng* 湘子託夢]). Han Xiangzi next confronts his uncle during a birthday celebration (“Presenting birthday congratulations in the great hall” [*Datang shangshou* 大堂上壽]), after which more confrontations follow with his aunt and his bride (“Lady Du bemoans her fate” [*Dushi zitan* 杜氏自嘆]) and “Xiangzi sends a letter” [*Xiangzi jishu* 湘子寄書]). Han Xiangzi demonstrates his miraculous powers to Han Yu in “The Miracle of the flower basket” (*Hualan xiansheng* 花籃顯聖), after which Han Xiangzi directs his efforts to his aunt and his bride (“Secretly converting his aunt” [*Sidu shenniang* 私度孀娘]) and “Lin Ying consults the oracle” [*Lin Ying wenbu* 林英問卜]). In chapter 16 (“Offering birthday congratulations by painting a mountain”

⁶⁵ This account of the early youth of Han Xiangzi is quite different from the tale told in the *Han Xiangzi quanzhuan*.

[Shangshou huashan 上壽畫山]) Han Xiangzi once again displays his miraculous powers at the same extended birthday celebration, after which he appears to his wife as a mendicant priest (“Xiangzi begs for food” [*Xiangzi huazhai* 湘子化齋]), only to turn a stone lion into gold in the next chapter when he meets with his aunt (“Touching a stone and turning it into gold” [*Dianshi bianjin* 點石變金]).⁶⁶ In these chapters the confrontation of Xiangzi and his uncle during the latter’s birthday celebrations has been stretched into three confrontations on consecutive days, at each of which Han Yu derides his nephew as a poor mendicant, dismissing Xiangzi’s displays of magic as so many instances of trickery. Neither of the two characters in these repeated confrontations shows any development: to the frustration of Xiangzi his uncle remains the same arrogant and irascible high official. The confrontations of uncle and nephew are interspersed with confrontations of Xiangzi and his aunt and of Xiangzi and his wife. Only the latter shows a change in her attitude: whereas initially she gives expression to her resentment against Xiangzi for leaving her, she later expresses a desire that her husband may come and fetch her so she can join him in his religious exercises in pursuit of immortality. Throughout these chapters (as well as the final four) the focus is on the total change of heart needed to abandon the world and seek transcendent truth. Whereas many precious scrolls on religious conversion may include a survey of the content of meditational exercises the convert will be expected to engage in, no such exposition of some variant of internal alchemy is encountered in this text.

Of the last four chapters, only chapters 21 (“Banished to Chaoyang” [*Zhebian Chaoyang* 摘貶朝陽]) and 24 (“Trekking through the snow and obtaining the Way” [*Zouxue dedao* 走雪得道]) are devoted to Han Yu’s banishment and enlightenment, but the intervening two chapters are dedicated to Lin Ying’s final conversion and enlightenment (“Lin Ying ingests the medicine” [*Lin Ying fuyao* 林英服藥]) and “Lin Ying cultivates the Way and Xiangzi

⁶⁶ Note that this is the earliest manifestation of Xiangzi’s newly acquired magical powers in the *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji*.

converts his wife” [*Lin Ying xiudao Xiangzi duqi* 林英修道湘子度妻]). But when on the final page Han Xiangzi takes his uncle, his aunt and his bride to heaven to meet with the Jade Emperor, Han Yu refuses to thank the Jade Emperor when he is reinstated in his former celestial position,⁶⁷ and is kicked out of heaven by Li Tieguaì 李鐵拐 to become the local god of the soil of Nanjing. The author concludes his tale as follows:

(Shuahai'er)
 Li Tieguaì could not accept his situation,
 So he raised his iron crutch
 And beat him down from the Southern Gate of Heaven.
 Xiangzi wept till his innards were broken.
 “My uncle!” he wept again and again.
 “I gave myself so much trouble on your behalf.
 I used hundreds of tricks to convert you,
 Hoping to ferry you across to high heaven,
 But your heart made of iron could not be changed.
 So now we dispatch you to the capital
 Where you will assume your position accompanied by my aunt.”

As human beings we should emulate Han Xiangzi:
 He was not occupied with his young wife Lin Ying
 And so obtained a position of divine immortal.
 As human beings we should emulate Lin Ying:
 She remained loyal to her husband for eighteen years
 And in the palace was ennobled as a divine maiden.
 As human beings we should not emulate Han Tuizhi:
 He was converted three times, on nine occasions,
 But he was banished to Nanjing as a god of the soil.
 This is a case of stupid deafness, mute dumbness,
 With which I admonish all mortal people on earth.⁶⁸

Han Yu's refusal to thank the Jade Emperor for his reinstatement in his original subordinate position in heaven probably has to be seen as a bow to his reputation as a staunch Confucian. For the

⁶⁷ In the *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji* Han Yu is only too happy to regain his celestial appointment.

⁶⁸ *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben*, 4:11a.

author of the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben* this final act of defiance as well as his stubborn resistance against repeated attempts at conversion are enough to turn him into a negative character, a foil to both Han Xiangzi and the latter's bride Lin Ying. It is the latter, both a perfect exemplar of wifely virtue and a willing convert, who is now along with her husband held up as a model for emulation. This same prominence of Lin Ying can also be observed in contemporary precious scrolls, some of which, suitably renamed *Precious Scroll of Lin Ying* (*Lin Ying baojuan* 林英寶卷), greatly reduce the materials related to Han Yu and his wife to focus exclusively on the conversion of Lin Ying. This change may well be related to the presumably predominantly female audience of precious scrolls.⁶⁹

IV. Competing Views of the Good Life

Throughout the first twenty chapters of the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben* Han Yu enjoys the good life. He has reached the respected age of seventy, apparently in good health. His wealth, status and power will make him the object of envy in the eyes of the overwhelming majority of his contemporaries. His wealth liberates him from any worries about cold or hunger, while his status and power allow him to order his underlings about. To obtain such a position and hold on to it is of course not easy: it requires a lifetime of hard work and constant care. But such a life is also limited: each of us is destined to die, after which his or her soul will have to appear before King Yama. Unlike many precious scrolls, the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben* does not contain detailed descriptions of the gruesome punishments meted out to sinners in the underworld, but the specter of King Yama is time and again called up by Xiangzi. While it is not spelled out, the acquisition of wealth and power must have been a sinful pursuit.⁷⁰ If so, one may of course well ask whether the good life is worth

⁶⁹ Yang Erzeng, *The Story of Han Xiangzi*, xxii.

⁷⁰ On one occasion Xiangzi refuses a gift from his aunt because the money must have been acquired by Han Yu through the application of torture.

pursuing after all. Doesn't it make more sense to abandon that continuous struggle of all against all, to pursue the joys of the immortals? Such joys are not easily acquired either: they require predestination, an unwavering mind, and many years of demanding religious exercises. However, these unlimited joys once acquired will be true joys because they are beyond the realm of time. Unfortunately, the good life of the immortals may only be glimpsed occasionally by us mere mortals.

When Han Xiangzi in chapter 2 has entered school and is about to set out on his studies, his two immortal teachers ask him what he wants to study:

“Do you want to study for fame and success? Or do you want to study for an eternal life?”

“Dear teachers, what does ‘fame and success’ mean?”

“Let us explain:

(Zuifugui)

When you study for fame and success,
 You apply yourself to the Five Classics.
 Once you occupy the Head of the Turtle,⁷¹
 You'll have achieved the fame you want.
 At court you will wear the black gauze cap of the first rank;
 Entering and leaving you'll ride a proud thoroughbred horse.
 In all your actions you will be surrounded by sturdy guards;
 Preceded by criers, followed by throngs, you'll be respected.
 You will be exactly like your uncle when back at home
 When at dawn and dusk he pays his respects to his ruler.”

“My dear respected teachers, what is the meaning of ‘eternal life?’”

“Let us explain it to you.

(Hunjianglong)

Now studying for an eternal life
 Is different from fame and success.
 Single-mindedly you practice self-cultivation
 And apply yourself to the Yellow Classic of the Great Way.
 Your longevity will be equal to that of Heaven, and so you will
 never age;

⁷¹ Once you have obtained first place in the metropolitan examinations.

Your white hair will turn black again, your lost teeth will be replaced:
You will be of one body with Heaven without any distinction at all.
When your exercises are finished and when the fruit is completed,
We'll together ascend Mount Zhongnan!"

"My dear respected teachers, I want to study for an eternal life without aging!"⁷²

His teachers warn him that hardships are entailed in the course of study he has chosen, but Han Xiangzi proves himself a dedicated student. When in chapter 5, Han Yu's servants Zhang Qian and Li Wan have informed their master that Han Xiangzi spends his time at school practicing *daoqing* songs and are ordered to bring him home, he first treats them to a performance of a set of Shuuhai'er songs:

(Shuuhai'er)
Alas, this human life is only empty bustle!
Alas, glory and riches cannot last forever!
So it's much better to study the way of eternal life, the unbounded joys of immortals:
This pure quietude is so much better.
Rivers and mountain will not allow me to pass away.
I'll suffer no cold, I'll suffer no heat, all free of fear;
Without any obstruction, any restriction, any disaster,
I'll sleep when I like, rise when I like, lie down when I like.
And even if the Jade Emperor then summons me,
He can't do anything about it when I do not go.

Let me study the reverence of the Way,
Let me therefore ascend Mount Zhongnan.
I will abandon the family and my home
And will not cling or covet anymore.
I will not care about success and fame, glory and riches at all;
I will abandon all status and wealth.
I will take off the purple gown and discard success and fame.
Once I have ascended the mountain,

⁷² *Han Xiangzi jiu du Wengong daoqing quanben*, 1:3a.

I will be free of worry and vexation, without any cause to sigh!
 At that time I will just roam the islands in the ocean like a cloud,
 Liberated from any kind of problem!

Let me study the reverence of the Way,
 And let me near a spring in the forest
 Have a thatched cottage—
 I will build myself two rooms.
 White gibbons on the branches will present mountain peaches.
 Only when you have a predetermined bond will
 Immortals from the Great Canopy Heaven
 Descend to the mortal dust.⁷³
 Once your exercises are completed, you'll refine the cloud cinnabar.
 Every day you'll be completely at ease and fancy free
 As you became an immortal of Great Canopy Heaven.

Look how sun and moon
 Turn from east to west!
 Alas, in this human life
 A hundred years are rare.
 The best by far is to be just like us who belong to the Gate of Mystery,
 To tie up your hair in two tufts
 And dress yourself in one gown of utter freedom—
 Hemp sandals and straw shoes,
 And around your waist a single rope that's tightly tied.
 This allows us to follow our moods and whims—
 What can compare to the good deal we've got?

Those who study the Way
 Are truly those who are lofty;
 Escaping from the red dust
 They ascend to blue heaven;
 Riding a phoenix or driving a crane they encounter the prior signs.⁷⁴
 On Penglai Island we indulge in our pleasure;
 On Langyuan and Yingzhou we roam at will.
 And we arrive at the golden portals of the ninth heaven again and again.
 When we are idle, we feast with the other immortals,
 When we are down, we pray for peaches of longevity.

⁷³ In order to instruct you in the methods of achieving immortality.

⁷⁴ Or persons who possess the ability to know the future.

We seek out famous masters
 And visit friends in the Way;
 Together practicing self-cultivation
 We go and study the Way,
 Or walking alone and seated by oneself we are without companion.
 To be thronged by escorts in front and behind—can it ever compare?
 To amass jade and to pile up gold, that too is all in vain.
 How ridiculous is that high office of the very first rank:
 When one day the Great Limit⁷⁵ will have arrived,
 The outcome is that you'll leave empty-handed!⁷⁶

In his confrontations with his uncle, his aunt and his bride throughout the text of the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben*, Han Xiangzi will continue to sing the praises of the free and untrammelled existence of the immortal. Such a transcendent existence is, of course, always implicitly or explicitly compared to the troubles and worries of a worldly existence that unavoidably will end in death. As an example I translate here a song from chapter 20, addressed by Han Xiangzi (in the disguise of a mendicant priest) to his aunt:

(Shuahai'er)
 Alas, this human life is all hurried hustle and bustle,
 But the light and shadow, I imagine, won't last long.
 What's the benefit of the struggle for fame, this fight over profit?
 At the age of ten the child only wants to play and fool around;
 At the age of twenty you conceive the desire to marry a wife,
 And all day long you rely on others to show off your power.
 At the age of thirty you are already past your prime,
 At the age of forty your hair turns grey, your teeth fall out.
 When you turn fifty or sixty, your features have changed
 And early and late you think of your money and children,
 But that damned green spring will never come back to you.
 When you reach the ages of seventy and of eighty,
 You do not even know who's still alive, and who not.
 You hurriedly buy a few planks to cover your shame,⁷⁷

⁷⁵ The Great Limit refers to the end of one's life, the hour of one's death.

⁷⁶ *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben*, 1:8a–b.

⁷⁷ The six boards of a coffin.

You hastily have some funeral gowns prepared,
And when one day your fate is finished, you're taken to some
abandoned field.

Even the Son of Heaven and royal princes cannot escape rebirth on
the six paths!

Lady Han,

Just look how we have jumped out of the red dust:

Without any concern for east or any concern for west

Just single-mindedly abandon that rest dust!

Lady Han,

You may say your house has a thousand rooms, but what is so great?

Even though the walls are of bronze, the partitions of iron,

When you sleep at night you need only seven feet of earth!

You may say that you have a million acres of finest fields,

But three meals each day are enough to still one's hunger—

What is the benefit of eating something more?

Lady Han,

Husband and wife are actually birds roosting in one wood:

When the Great Limit comes, they each fly in one direction.

When Impermanence has arrived you meet with King Yama.

Lady Han,

Why don't you turn your head and start practicing cultivation?

The Sea of Suffering will then turn into a White Lotus Pond.

I urge you, My Ladyship, to abandon the red dust right now!

(Qingjiang yin)

There is no end to the flow of the waves in the rivers,

There is no end to the struggle over fame and profit,

There is no end to buying wet field and dry fields,

There is no end to the struggle over idle emotions,

But once you have breathed your last,

Everything will belong to others.

Elderly people may long for youth

But even yellow gold will not buy it!⁷⁸

But all Xiangzi has to show in support of his fine words are
evanescent visions, and despite his emphasis on the vexations of a
life spent in the pursuit of worldly riches and glory, the very
substantiality of these worldly riches and glory apparently obviate

⁷⁸ *Han Xiangzi jidū Wengong daoqing quanben*, 4:1a–b.

the need to defend them. Han Yu is shown throughout the text as a man who is obsessed by an official career and the glory and riches it brings to those who hold high office; having achieved such a high position Han Yu is proud and arrogant, always ready to point out Xiangzi's only too visible poverty and destitution. It is only very rarely that he explicitly claims that his worldly existence is more attractive than the transcendent life that Xiangzi depicts again and again in such glorious colors. When Xiangzi visits Han Yu on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, his uncle sings:

(Langtaosha)

That Daoist priest is talking nonsense,

He is deriding us officials.

It's better to be an official than a divine immortal:

I have Zhang Qian and Li Wan who walk in front of me,

Officials high and low are arranged on both sides.

A sedan chair with eight carriers takes me to the Golden Bell Palace;

When I enter the palace gate I am surrounded by throngs of people,

And when I leave the palace I ride a jade horse with golden saddle.⁷⁹

But whereas Han Xiangzi may have single-mindedly rejected the world of the red dust, ordinary folks like his uncle and aunt equally strongly cling to their wealth and status, and to the hope that children will inherit their goods and take care of them in old age. The intensity of the conflict between uncle and nephew is increased by the fact that Han Xiangzi is the only surviving heir of the Han family, which makes his uncle adamant in his plea that Xiangzi returns home and take on his duties as heir.

In the *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji*, Han Yu feels even more often enticed to claim the superiority of his own position. He does so not only during his days of glory, but also when banished. When traveling through the snow and meeting with a fisherman (an immortal in disguise) who vaunts the joys of his existence, Han Yu still feels that his position is far better.

⁷⁹ *Han Xiangzi jiu du Wenbgong daoqing quanben*, 2:6a.

Thinking of Han Xiang he did not know where to find him;
 When he lifted his head, he suddenly saw an old fisherman.
 Han Yu thereupon addressed him in the following words:
 “Mister Fisherman, what is your surname, what your name?
 How far is the road, what distance, from here to Chaoyang?
 Please tell me this clearly so I will know and be informed!”
 When the fisherman heard this, his face displayed a faint smile;
 With a smile he said: “A fisherman, I’ve no surname or name.
 Once your name and surname are lofty, you’ll end up in danger,
 How can it beat passing one’s time in muddleheaded simplicity?
 Here on the river I do not know the year of the cycle of sixty;
 And so despite the stormiest waves I will not be frightened.
 How ridiculous are those men of the world who walk danger’s road—
 When the hour of death is approaching they still have no clue.
 Far better it would be to pass the time with me, a fisherman:
 Why need you go to Chaoyang, running after profit and fame?”
 When Han Yu heard this, he said: “I may have been banished, but
 that doesn’t mean that I can’t compare to a fisherman!”
 Han Yu thereupon addressed him in these following words:
 “What may be the advantages of your life as a fisherman?
 In spring and summer your life may still be pleasant enough,
 But in fall and in winter the cold is simply unbearable!
 If you throw out your net and raise it filled with fishes,
 Your hard work and toil night and day has not been in vain.
 But how if the net remains empty nine times of ten?
 Then you’ve spent your hard work on the river in vain!”
 When the fisherman heard this, his face showed a smile:
 “Out on the river you will know my living’s advantage.
 When I catch a fish, I buy some wine, and drink till drunk;
 Lying athwart my little craft, I sleep till the sun is setting.
 Praise and slander do not enter the ears of a fisherman;
 The emperor’s favor and fury cannot frighten his guts.
 In final analysis only a fisherman’s life is pure pleasure,
 It beats receiving a title and serving as a local governor!”⁸⁰

⁸⁰ *Han Xiangzi shi'erdu Han Wengong Languan ji*, 2:21b.

V. Conclusion

Few trades in the world's red dust better symbolize its ephemeral nature than the trade in flowers that is Han Xiangzi's business. No traditional scholar showed a stronger commitment to the substantiality of Confucianism than Han Yu. Tied together as uncle and nephew, and on top of that as adoptive father and adoptive son, Han Yu and Han Xiangzi exemplify the continuing tension in traditional Chinese culture between the desire to turn this perfectible world into a paradise of hierarchical harmony, and the desire to flee this sea of sorrow forever for a realm of transcendent bliss. The *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben* allows its two protagonists to present the arguments for their choices at great length. Through the confrontations between Han Xiangzi and his aunt and his bride these disputes are doubled and tripled, as the women are as much attached to their life of luxury as Han Yu is. Drawing upon a rich tradition of homiletic literature, the text reads at times as an exhaustive compendium of competing arguments. In chapters 8–20 the rain-making ceremony and the birthday celebrations may provide different settings for these disputes, but they provide little development of either arguments or characters. Whereas the anonymous *Shengxian ji* devotes one half of its text to the final conversion of Han Yu as initiated by his memorial against the reception of the Buddha bone, and Yang Erzeng's novel *Han Xiangzi quanzhuan* thirteen of its thirty chapters, the *Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben*, compresses that part of its plot into the last 4 chapters, of which two are devoted to the conversion of Lin Ying (admittedly the last chapter on the confrontation of Han Xiangzi and Han Yu at Indigo Pass is quite long). If the repetitive reiteration of the arguments against a life of attachment and in praise of transcendent liberation may eventually fail to hold the attention of a modern reader like the author of this article, that may not necessarily apply to traditional audiences. For them the experience of listening or reading will have been enlivened by the variety of tunes, and if some of them felt attracted by the lure of enlightenment, the decision to abandon the family and lose oneself must have been an agonizing choice.

Appendix

Han Xiangzi jiudu Wengong daoqing quanben: A Summary

Juan 1

Chapter 1 (1:1a–2a), “Chushen guoji” 出身過繼

Han Xiu 韓休 and his wife Lady Lü 呂氏 practice good deeds but have no children. Their case is reported to the Jade emperor by the city god, who orders Great White to check the registers. He notes that the white crane of Laozi has had mortal thoughts and will have to be banished to earth. The crane drinks from the Heavenly River and wants to alight on a clump 林 of reed that evades 閃 him, whereupon the crane declares he will avoid the reed for a lifetime. The crane is reborn, to Han Xiu, as Han Xiangzi, while the reed is born as Lin Ying 林英, destined to become his wife. When a few years later Han Xiu falls ill, he and his wife entrust the boy to Han Yu and his wife Lady Du 杜氏. They happily accept the charge and Han Yu expresses the hope that the boy will study for the exams and become an official.

Chapter 2 (1:2a–3b), “Xunzhi yuxian” 訓姪遇仙

When Xiangzi turns seven, Han Yu decides the time has come for him to start on his studies, and Xiangzi promises to be a good student and to study to become an official. Han Yu dispatches his servants Zhang Qian 張千 and Li Wan 李萬 to find a good teacher. As they fail to find one, Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin descend to earth and block their way. They introduce themselves by name and vaunt their transcendent scholarship, but Han Yu is impressed and has Xiangzi honor them as his teachers. Xiangzi and his teachers move to Mount Wohu 臥虎. When given the choice between the study of success and fame on the one side or an eternal life on the other, Xiangzi chooses the latter. When Zhang Qian and Li Wan report the death of his mother, he laments his fate.

Chapter 3 (1:3b–6b), “Yihun chengqin” 議婚成親

When Han Xiangzi turns twelve *sui* he is engaged to Lin Ying. When the Lin family seeks craftsmen to make her wedding furniture, Zhang Lang 張郎 and Lu Ban 魯班 descend to earth. Lu Ban depicts Weaving Maiden and Oxherd on their bed as an omen of the couple's separation. Silversmiths and tailors are brought in to make her jewelry and clothes.

When Zhang Qian and Li Wan go to Mount Wuhu to bring Han Xiangzi home for the wedding, they overhear him practicing *daoqing*. When Xiangzi arrives home, he learns it is his wedding day, and leaves to welcome the bride. When he arrives to fetch the bride, Lin Ying's mother invites her to her parting meal, at which she instructs her at length in the duties of a married wife. The elaborate wedding party takes her to the Han home. Following the wedding ceremony, Xiangzi is invisible to her as he meditates on the wedding bed. Eventually the couple exchange poems, in which Xiangzi announces his departure, to the indignation of Lin Ying.

Chapter 4 (1:6b–8a), “Lin Ying huimen” 林英回門

Two years into her marriage Lin Ying for the first time visits her mother, who notices her unhappy expression. Lin Ying, however, denies any problems between her and her mother-in-law or between her and her husband. When her mother wants to question her maids, her father returns and she leaves. Back home she chides her maids and bemoans her fate.

Chapter 5 (1:8a–10a), “Han Yu ze zhi” 韓愈責姪

When Han Yu learns from his servants that Xiangzi devotes all his time to the study of *daoqing*, he orders them to bring him home. Before they do so, they listen to a set of Shuohai'er songs. When Xiangzi arrives at home, his uncle berates him at length because he has betrayed his hopes that he would continue the family line. He threatens to give him a beating, but his wife interferes and points out that it was his fault to hire two Daoist priests as his teachers. After Xiangzi has promised he will devote

himself to the study of the Five Classics and the Four Books, Han Yu dispatches his servants to bring in the teachers, who leave a poem for Xiangzi at Mount Wohu. Han Yu dismisses Zhongli and Lü, but the two immortals leave without accepting any payment.

Chapter 6 (1:10a–11b), “Yueqiang chengxian” 越牆成仙

Xiangzi is closely guarded by Zhang Qian and Li Wan. He reads the poem his teachers left at Mount Wohu. That night he evades the servants and escapes by jumping down a steep wall. He spends the night at an abandoned temple and expresses his feelings of guilt towards his uncle and aunt and to his wife Lin Ying because he is abandoning them to pursue immortality. As he proceeds to Mount Zhongnan, Zhongli and Lan Caihe submit him to tests. First Lan Caihe turns into a weeping willow. When Xiangzi falls asleep under it, he has a dream of King Yama. Next Zhongli and Lan Caihe show themselves as an old man and a young girl: when she offers herself to Xiangzi he rejects her indignantly. Lan Caihe then reveals himself to Xiangzi, who pursues his journey to Mount Zhongshan, where he will become an immortal.

Chapter 7 (1:11b–12b), “Lin Ying zitan” 林英自嘆

In the morning the servants discover that Xiangzi has disappeared and report this to Han Yu. He is enraged but calmed down by his wife. She has Lin Ying informed, who bemoans her fate through the five watches of the night, and in the following day sees everything that is colored red turn to white.

Juan 2

Chapter 8 (2:1a–2b), “Nantan qixue” 南壇祈雪

When Emperor Xianzong has been on the throne for nine years, Chang’an is hit by a three-year drought because he lacks the Way. Han Yu, Li Hedong 李河東 and Lin Guo 林國 are ordered to pray for snow: if they cannot produce results within half a month, they will be executed. Han Yu complains bitterly, and the Jade Emperor orders Lü Dongbin to use this opportunity to enlighten

him (that he, Han Yu, is a banished celestial). Lü proposes to send Xiangzi in his place. When Xiangzi descends to earth he at first is immediately recognized as an immortal by two herding boys, but when he takes on the shape of a mendicant Daoist priest, they fail to recognize him. When Xiangzi arrives at Chang'an, he claims to have rain and snow for sale. When he arrives at the Southern Altar, he insists on entering by the central (imperial) gate, and being welcomed by the three high officials. In both cases Han Yu is enraged, but Lin Guo makes sure Xiangzi's requests are met. Xiangzi devours all the sacrificial offerings in the shape of a wolf and then produces three feet, three inches of snow. When Han Yu wants to send him off with some money, he refuses the gift; he only wants Han Yu to follow him and pursue immortality. Han Yu indignantly refuses and Xiangzi leaves.

Chapter 9 (2:2b–3b), “Xiangzi tuomeng” 湘子託夢

Having left his uncle, Xiangzi decides to appear in a dream to his aunt. His dream is announced to her by the local god of the soil. Xiangzi appears to her as a mendicant priest. Lady Du is overcome by emotion and sends for Lin Ying, who discounts the dream as a figment of her imagination and speaks bitterly about Xiangzi. When her mother-in-law protests, Lin Ying tells her that Xiangzi had never touched her throughout the three years they shared a couch. Hearing this for the first time, Lady Du is filled with sympathy. Lin Ying describes her sorry fate in a series of songs incorporating the names of traditional Chinese medicines.

Chapter 10 (2:3b–7a), “Datang shangshou” 大堂上壽

Han Yu celebrates his seventieth birthday, and his colleagues wish him an eternal life. Xiangzi descends to earth dressed as a mendicant priest in a patched worn gown. When he enters, he impresses all the guests by a *dui* 對 (a parallel couplet). When he is asked where he lives, his answers infuriate Han Yu. When Han Yu offers him a new gown, he praises the miraculous nature of his own gown, and demonstrates it by sitting and sleeping in a fire. When Han Yu offers to buy it, he demands a preposterous amount

of money. He next throws a lotus seed in the fire, and it grows into a lotus plant carrying seventy two scenes and the four famous mountains; on the lotus flowers are inscribed four lines of Han Yu's later Indigo Pass poem. Xiangzi invites Han Yu to visit this landscape, but Han Yu is held back by Lin Guo, who is afraid it is all a trick. When Han Yu calls Xiangzi a beggar, Xiangzi replies by claiming that Laozi, the Buddha, and Confucius all have been vagrants.

After Xiangzi leaves, he immediately reenters. A crane emerges from his fisherman's drum, sings, and walks six paces 六步 on top of the wall of Han Yu's compound. Xiangzi explains that Han Yu and his colleagues never will be able to proceed beyond the six ministries 六部. Xiangzi next makes a goat and a rabbit appear. The goat sings a prophetic song. When Han Yu claims to be far better off than Xiangzi, the latter replies with a listing of the Eight Immortals. When Han Yu derides his poverty and calls him a fool, Xiangzi praises the "foolishness" of Fan Li 范蠡 and Zhang Liang 張良 over the smartness of Han Xin 韓信 and Xiang Yu 項羽. Xiangzi once again predicts Han Yu's later banishment.

Chapter 11 (2:7a–8b), "Dushi zitan" 杜氏自嘆

An aging Lady Du bemoans her own childlessness and the absence of Xiangzi. Expecting that Lin Ying will know more about his whereabouts she calls for her, but Lin Ying informs her that Xiangzi never touched her even though they shared one bed for three years. Back in her room, Lin Ying voices her anxieties over Xiangzi's fate.

Chapter 12 (2:8b–10a), "Xiangzi jishu" 湘子寄書

In response to his aunt's lamentations Xiangzi visits her in the disguise of a mendicant priest, claiming that he is bringing her a letter from Xiangzi. Once he has been admitted he claims he has lost the letter and recites it from memory. Lady Du is moved, but also suspects that she's being tricked, so she asks for Xiangzi's eight characters. These turn out to be correct, and the priest's own life story turns out to be the same as that of Xiangzi. She then asks the

priest to recite “The Ten Months of Pregnancy,” followed by songs on raising sons and daughters (who both abandon their parents on marriage). When the priest continues with a song on the ten discomforts of old age, he is turned out of the house, leading Xiangzi to comment on his aunt’s lack of responsiveness.

Juan 3

Chapter 13 (3:1a–2b) “Hualan xiansheng” 花藍顯聖

Xiangzi again shows up at Han Yu’s party for his seventieth birthday. Xiangzi offers a painting of beautiful women, which is rejected by Han Yu, who brings out his own many paintings. Xiangzi calls down one immortal maiden from his painting, then more, after which these immortal maiden perform a celebratory song and return to the painting.

Xiangzi asks for some wine and bread to take to his master who has fasted for 49 years. The wine the servants pour into his gourd fail to fill it however, and Li Wan when looking inside there observes a great variety of gods. When Xiangzi pours the wine out again, it fills over sixty vats. Han Yu tastes the wine, which is of excellent quality. When servants try to fill Xiangzi’s flower basket with buns, it cannot be filled. A cook reports that it is filled with gods. When Xiangzi, at the requests of the guests, has these gods appear, the guests are so scared they hide under the tables and Han Yu promises to become Xiangzi’s disciple—but as soon as the gods have disappeared, he reneges on his promise. Xiangzi proceeds to predict Han Yu’s downfall when the Buddha bone will be presented, leading to his desperate situation at Indigo Pass, after which Han Yu has him shown the door.

Ch. 14 (3:2b–4a), “Sidu shenniang” 私杜嬖娘

Xiangzi converts himself into a performer of *daoqing* in order to convert his aunt. When she has invited him inside, he counters her argument that only men practice the Way by citing the example of Guanyin. He continues by chanting a long song on the vanity of all earthly goods. When Lady Du asks him about Xiangzi, he

informs her he lives at an extreme distance on Mount Zhongshan, and then leaves.

Chapter 15 (3:4a–5b), “Lin Ying wenbu” 林英問卜

Lin Ying misses her husband through all four seasons of the year and orders her servant girls to find a soothsayer. They fail to find one until Xiangzi takes on the shape of a fortune teller. When invited inside and asked about the date of Xiangzi’s return, all his different prognostications lead to the same conclusion: Xiangzi has become a divine immortal and will never return. A frustrated Lin Ying shows him the door. She then laments her lonely life in all four seasons.

Chapter 16 (3:5b–7b) “Shangshou huashan” 上壽畫山

Xiangzi leaves a hand-written note in the room of Lady Du, who is overcome by sadness. When Han Yu sees her, he tells her he will close all gates to catch Xiangzi when he shows up the next day at the birthday celebrations. When Xiangzi shows up at the continuation of the birthday celebrations, he sings congratulatory songs. He has brought peaches that quickly multiply in number. When Han Yu throws one of these on the ground, the dog that swallows it, is turned into a crane that soars into the sky. It descends and soars according to Xiangzi’s directions. Xiangzi next sings a *daoqing* on the vanity of all earthly glory. When Han Yu wants to have him beaten, Lin Guo suggests to have him first write a confession. When Xiangzi does so, Han Yu reads his name and is surprised that the name coincides with that of his nephew. Xiangzi brings down forty-five tables set with wine, and next fetches the four famous mountains from his basket. He then paints a mountainscape on a white-washed wall (but only after first calling down the painted *qilin* that Han Yu has asked him to preserve). Xiangzi invites Han Yu and his guests to follow him into the mountain. He turns his clappers into a bridge. When Han Yu is willing to cross it (Xiangzi has promised him that if he passes his position will be elevated), he is called back by Lin Guo, and Xiangzi is left to lament that another attempt to convert Han Yu has failed.

Chapter 17 (3:7b–9a), “Xiangzi huazhai” 湘子化齋

Lin Ying curses the matchmaker that it was only for her own profit that she had arranged her, Lin Ying’s, marriage to Xiangzi. She next sets out an incense table and prays that Xiangzi may come and fetch her so she can join him in his religious exercises. Xiangzi thereupon descends to earth in the guise of an ugly begging monk. When Lin Ying let him in she questions him about the bends of the Celestial River and about Weaving Maiden and Oxherd. When she questions him about Xiangzi, he provides a full account. When she promises him a new gown etc., the monk answers that he only wants her to jump unto his praying cushion. An enraged Lin Ying orders him beaten and strung up. Xiangzi thereupon manifests himself from a cloud in his divine glory. Lin Ying implores him to take her along, and he promises he will do so in three years if she will maintain her affection for him because he has noticed that Lin Ying’s attitude has changed from resentment to a desire for enlightenment.

Juan 4**Chapter 18 (4:1a–2a), “Dianshi bianjin” 點石變金**

When Lady Du laments the long absence of Xiangzi, he appears to her as a Daoist master, wishing to convert her. He expounds at length on the vanities of human existence. When Lady Du wants to give him some money so that he may search for Xiangzi, he refuses to accept the sinful money her husband has made through torture. He claims to be able to turn stone into gold. When all stones have been blown away, Lady Du orders her servants to bring in the two stone lions in front of the gate, and Xiangzi turns one of them into gold. Xiangzi shows his true features, but when Lady Du has Lin Ying sent for, he has disappeared.

Chapter 19 (4:2a–4a) “Zhibian Chaoyang” 摘貶朝陽

Xiangzi reports the failure of his mission to convert Han Yu to Zhongli, and together they report to the Jade Emperor. The Jade

Emperor orders Xiangzi and Lan Caihe to join a foreign embassy and present a Buddha bone to the Tang emperor. Xiangzi announces the arrival of the Buddha bone by appearing to Emperor Xianzong in a dream as a man holding a bow with two arrows (hinting at the character *fo* 佛). When Xiangzi and Lan Caihe, in the guise of foreign monks, present the Buddha bone, Han Yu claims it must be a fake, but when inspected it reveals its miraculous power. The enraged emperor condemns Han Yu to death. When taken to the execution grounds, Han Yu calls on Xiangzi for help. Xiangzi stimulates the other high officials to plead for mercy, whereupon the emperor banishes Han Yu to Chaoyang; he is not allowed to take any relatives with him and has to arrive there in forty-two days. Urged by Zhang Qian and Li Wan, Han Yu goes to his home to say adieu to his wife, but soon Xiangzi arrives in the guise of an imperial emissary ordering Han Yu to depart immediately. Husband and wife part in tears.

Chapter 20 (4:4a–5a), “Lin Ying fuyao” 林英服藥

When Lin Ying falls ill, her servants invite a physician to look at her. This man diagnoses her disease without even taking her pulse. Once Lin Ying has recovered, he leaves, and returns as Xiangzi. Lin Ying is overjoyed and has a bed prepared for him. As soon as he lies down, he passes away. When a female neighbor suggests a second marriage to her, Lin Ying immediately leaves the room.

Chapter 21 (4:5a–6b), “Lin Ying xiudao, Xiangzi duqi”

林英修道湘子度妻

Xiangzi gives his orders for the final enlightenment of Lin Ying.

Lin Ying has decided to become a nun in a garden pavilion. She gives her possessions to her maids and says goodbye to her mother-in-law. In the pavilion she cuts off her hair and hangs herself. In a conflagration orchestrated by Xiangzi, however, Lin Ying is taken away to a barren mountainside where she meets an old woman, the wife of the local god of the soil, who takes her to a thatched cottage and gives her some grains of food. In the cottage Lin Ying

finds a book copied out for her by Xiangzi. Xiangzi takes on the shape of a handsome young man. When he wants to stay with her for the night and suggests marriage, she indignantly rejects his proposals, whereupon he manifests himself as Xiangzi and proves his identity. Because Lin Ying is not destined to become an immortal, he leaves and implores Guanyin to save her, whereon Guanyin makes her one of her ladies-in-waiting (*gongnü* 宮女).

Chapter 22 (4:7a–11a), “Zouxue dedao” 走雪得道

Han Yu, accompanied by Zhang Qian and Li Wan, is, on his way to Chaoyang, approaching Indigo Pass. Their party is confronted by heavy snow. When they come across a stele, it turns out to be inscribed with the same four lines of poetry that were inscribed on the leaves of the lotus that grew in the fire. They meet with an angler, who tells them he is fishing for “frozen fish” (*hanyu* 寒魚). Next Xiangzi creates a large river: the ferryman will ferry across only a man and no horse, he will only ferry across one, and not more, so Han Yu is in a quandary how to proceed. Next both Zhang Qian and Li Wan are both carried off by tigers (back to Chang’an). As Han Yu proceeds, his horse breaks a leg. When Han Yu struggles ahead on foot, he repeatedly calls on Xiangzi for help. Eventually he finds a thatched cottage with a flower basket filled with steaming buns. While he is sitting inside he hears outside the voices of Zhang Qian and Li Wan who clamor for their lives. Han Yu bemoans his fate during the five watches of the night. When Xiangzi appears and asks him whether he is willing to devote himself to religious exercises, Han Yu answers in the affirmative.

When Xiangzi reports this to the Jade Emperor, he learns that Han Yu still has some years to serve as an official. He leaves Han Yu in a thatched cottage on Mount Zhuowei 卓韋, and travels in his place to Chaoyang (Clear Breeze and Bright Moon replace Zhang Qian and Li Wan). At Chaoyang, Xiangzi liberates the local population from the depredations of a man-eating monster fish by killing it, after which he fakes his own death. The grateful population has his meritorious deeds reported to the throne by the pseudo Zhang Qian and Li Wan, whereupon Han Yu is posthumously honored as Wengong and given a temple.

When Xiangzi takes Han Yu to heaven and reports to the Jade Emperor, Han Yu refuses to give thanks for the Jade Emperor's grace when he hears he is reappointed to his old position. Eventually he is appointed as the supreme god of the soil (*du tudi* 都土地) at Nanjing, a post Han Yu prefers because of the rich offerings he will enjoy.

說唱道情、韓湘子傳說，以及《新編韓湘子九度文公道情全本》中美好生活之觀念

伊維德

摘要

自十六世紀出現說唱道情以來，韓湘子度化叔父韓愈的傳說一直都是這一表演形式最流行的主題之一。描繪韓湘子傳說的說唱道情已知的有兩種。其中之一《韓湘子十二度韓文公藍關記》僅存於日本。這部作品採用散體片段與七言詩段交替的形式敘事，作為楊爾曾的小說《韓湘子全傳》的源材料之一，它很可能出自十六世紀甚或更早。另一種有關韓湘子的說唱道情是《新編韓湘子九度文公道情》，它比前一種更廣為人知，但僅存十九世紀以降的本子。其敘事採用散、韻交替的形式（使用的曲牌中「耍孩兒」出現得最為頻繁）。這部作品很可能出自清初。本文認為，如要真正理解這兩部說唱道情與該傳說宋末之前的早期本子在內容上的不同，我們就必須了解從晚宋以來的戲曲形式如何影響了這個傳說的敘事：雜劇形式的脫度劇通常採用「三步度化」的形式，而南劇（戲文和傳奇）則要求舞台上既有男性角色，又有女性角色。《韓湘子九度文公昇仙記》是唯一現存的以該傳說為內容的明代戲曲作品，它得以留存可能是因為該劇很適合在祈雨儀式上搬演。在這部劇中，韓愈的夫人和湘子新娶之妻林英突然變得很重要。正因為戲曲作品中這兩位女性角色獲得了重要地位，她們在道情改編中的地位也變得日益顯著，而《新編韓湘子九度文公道情》還特意為這兩個角色設計了情節：在最後四回中，有兩回聚焦於韓愈最後的度化，而另兩回則描述湘子之妻的最後度化。本文最後一

部分探究韓湘子在對叔父、孀母和妻子的持續勸化中，所描繪的仙人生活超凡樂趣的美好願景。

關鍵詞：韓湘子、說唱道情、《韓湘子十二度韓文公藍關記》、《新編韓湘子九度文公道情》、《韓湘子九渡文公昇仙記》