

Playful Exorcist: Theatrical Representations of Zhong Kui in Ming and Qing

Dramas

By

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT iii

LIST OF CHINESE DYNASTIES v

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS vi

DEDICATION viii

PRELUDE 1

INTRODUCTION

Literature Review: Zhong Kui, the Minghuang Emperor, and Wu Daozi 9

1. *Zhong Kui: From Nuo Parades to Theater 14*
2. *Zhong Kui's Multidimensionality in Chinese Theater 31*
3. *Textual History of Zhong Kui Literatures 39*
4. *Visual Representations of Zhong Kui 51*
5. *Chapter Summary 62*

CHAPTER ONE

Old Legends Retold: Theatrical Transformation of a Failed Examination
Candidate to a Powerful Deity

1. *The Mountains Are Calling: Mt. Zhongnan and the Making of Zhong Kui's
Daoist Identity 68*
2. *Zhong Kui, the Five Petty Demons, and the New Year 76*
3. *Annotated Translation of Qing fengnian wugui nao Zhong Kui 81*
4. *Concluding Comments on the Play 166*

CHAPTER TWO

Purging *fenghuaxueye* 風花雪月 in the Southern Dramas: Phantom Heroines Meet the Daoist Rituals

1. *Zhong Kui, Immortals, and the Daoist Transformation* 169
2. *In Search of Amazement in Daoist Liturgies* 178
3. *The Tale of the “Two Females” in the Three Plays* 182
4. *Annotated Translation of Act Four of Taiyi xian yeduan taofu ji* 191
5. *Concluding Comments on the Play* 220

CHAPTER THREE

The Exorcist and His Sister in the Qing Dynasty: A Flawed Official in the Bureaucratic System

1. *The Exorcist from the Chinese Studio of Strange Tales* 222
2. *The Playful Exorcist: Ironies and Satires* 229
3. *Lost in Transmission: One Zhong Kui Play Entry* 245
4. *Annotated Translation of the Entry on Shizi zhuan* 248
5. *Concluding Comments on the Plays* 253

CONCLUSION

Future as the Past; Past as the Future 255

APPENDIX I: "MENG ZHONG KUI" IN *TIANZHONG JI* 264

APPENDIX II: ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF *TIANXIA LE* 265

BIBLIOGRAPHY 272

ABSTRACT

Playful Exorcist: Theatrical Representations of Zhong Kui in Ming and Qing Dramas

This dissertation is a monograph on Zhong Kui 鍾馗: a deity who was recruited by the Daoist masters in late imperial China and whose divinity was defined by texts, visual representations, and practice. His divine career is narrated in literature as early as the Tang dynasty, peaked in the Ming dynasty, and continues to be reiterated through different media today. This dissertation is a study of his cult through translating and investigating a set of Ming and Qing plays involving Zhong Kui. While the exorcist appeared in the Song Dynasty New Year's *nuo* parades, it was in the Ming dynasty that Zhong Kui was incorporated into Daoist liturgies and local pantheons while still utilizing power derived from the ancient exorcistic practice named *nuo*. As a scholar official, Zhong Kui's uprightness and integrity have been regarded as desired qualities in the Chinese bureaucratic system. Additionally, this dissertation discusses Zhong Kui's minor role as a grand judge in the underworld. In the late Ming and Qing, some literati transformed Zhong Kui's propensity for violence into a political allegory to criticize injustice and express their own career frustrations. As Zhong Kui is a multidimensional deity, his divinity consists of his role as a *nuo* dancer, an exorcist, a scholar official, and a judge. However, throughout his divine life, the physical prowess of the deity, the playfulness centered on and around him remain an essential dimension of his image. These indispensable features of Zhong Kui were greatly celebrated in the Ming and Qing theater and today's Chinese local theater.

Moreover, the Zhong Kui plays in the Ming and Qing offer a means by which the deity's multidimensionality in Chinese theaters is observed. He became the embodiment of the intersection of high culture and local traditions, in which the former was dominated by the well-educated and the latter by people who were more prone to transmit the stories orally, and where literary movements collided with commercialized printing technology. The multidimensionality manifested in the plays also reveals one of the most fundamental messages attached to the cult of Zhong Kui, which is how the manifestations of people's fears and anxieties, or hopes and wishes through their unique ways of worshipping the deity are necessary to understand Chinese history. The cult of Zhong Kui exhibited through the plays is an embodiment of collective theatrical experience pieced together by all the participants in the community, local and non-local, mundane and divine, elite and uneducated, and actors and spectators. Although people's fears and anxieties, or hopes and wishes may have changed over the course of history, their reflection in the cult of Zhong Kui is essential to understand Chinese culture.

List of Chinese Dynasties

- Shang 商 16c.-ca.1045 BCE
Zhou 周 ca. 1045-256 BCE
Qin 秦 221-206 BCE
Han 漢 206 BCE-220
 Western Han 西漢 206 BCE-8 CE
 Eastern Han 東漢 25-220
Six Dynasties period 222-589
 Northern Dynasties 北朝 386-581
 Northern Zhou 北周 557-581
Southern Dynasties 420-589
 Liang 梁 502-557
 Chen 陳 557-589
Sui 隋 581-618
Tang 唐 618-907
Five Dynasties 五代 907-960
Song 宋 960-1279
 Northern Song 北宋 960-1127
 Southern Song 南宋 1127-1279
Jin 金 1115-1234
Yuan 元 1260-1368
Ming 明 1368-1644
 Wanli period 萬曆 1573-1620
 Chongzhen period 崇禎 1628-1644
Qing 清 1644-1911
 Shunzhi period 順治 1644-1661
 Kangxi period 康熙 1662-1722
 Qianlong period 乾隆 1736-1795
People's Republic of China 1949-

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I have been unfortunate in that all the great teachers I have are a bit far away from me once I obtained a visiting position at Grand Valley State University, Michigan. My colleagues and friends at the university have encouraged and supported me while I finished my dissertation. Elizabeth Gansen and David Crane are two dear colleagues and friends who would keep both my writing schedule and self-esteem in check. Meghan Cai, Veronica Clapp, and David Schultz often found ways to brighten my days with their enthusiasm and heartwarming food and espresso. My coordinator Liang Yan gave me insightful guidance and advice to help me proceed further on both this project and in my career.

I owe a great deal of personal debt to my parents, my sister, and my son. I thank my parents for constantly reminding me of the better and brighter future I would have after finish my dissertation, and I thank them for bearing with me and tolerating my emotional ups and downs while teaching full time and trying to work on my dissertation. My work and writing schedule limited the time I could spend with my son. I have missed out on so much as he is growing taller, bigger, and brighter on a daily basis. Nonetheless, every ounce of gratitude and guilt has transformed into personal strength to help me get more writing done and invest more on personal improvement. My younger sister has been my source of inspiration and encouragement. She never nagged me and always calmed me down with her simple philosophy, “Just trust yourself and you will get it done.”

Lastly, I want to thank Asia Library at the University of Michigan for awarding me the travel grant to help me finish the final round of revisions of this dissertation. Special thanks go to Ena Schlorff who made my trip to Ann Arbor pleasant and smooth and Dr. Fu Liangyu who offered timely assistance on books and databases. Thank you, Joel Wendland, for making time to read my dissertation.

DEDICATION

For my father Liu Qinghai 劉庆海 and my mother Wang Zhiying 王志英

“A piece of creative writing, like a daydream, is a continuation of, and a substitute for, what was once the play of childhood.”

--Sigmund Freud

Playful Exorcist: Theatrical Representations of Zhong Kui in Ming and Qing Dramas

Zhong Kui 鍾馗 is a deity who was recruited by the Daoist masters in late imperial China and whose divinity was defined by texts, visual representations, and practice. His divine career is narrated in literature as early as the Tang dynasty, peaked in the Ming dynasty, and still continues to be reiterated through different media today. This dissertation is a study of his cult through translating and investigating a set of Ming and Qing plays involving Zhong Kui. Deeply rooted in the Chinese ancient exorcistic practice named *nuo*, Zhong Kui's early presence is found in the Song Dynasty New Year's *nuo* parades. As an exorcist recruited by Daoist ritual specialists, Zhong Kui was incorporated into Daoist liturgies and pantheons in the Ming dynasty. As a scholar official, Zhong Kui's uprightness and integrity has been regarded as desired qualities in the Chinese bureaucratic system. In the late Ming and Qing, some literati transformed Zhong Kui's propensity for violence into a political allegory to criticize injustice and express their own career frustrations. Zhong Kui's minor role as a grand judge in the underworld, and to a certain extent, the patron deity of scholars and artists especially during the Ming dynasty are also part of his divine identity. However, throughout his divine life, the physical prowess of the deity and the playfulness centered on and around him remain an essential

dimension of his image. These indispensable features of Zhong Kui were greatly celebrated in the Ming and Qing theaters and today's Chinese local theaters.¹

Several years ago, in the early stage of writing this dissertation, I was still living in Ann Arbor, Michigan. One day out of nowhere, a friend called to ask me to go to a movie with her. "It is a movie about Zhong Kui, the exorcist you are researching and writing about," she enthusiastically said. The movie was titled *Zhong Kui: Snow Girl and Dark Crystal* (钟馗伏魔：雪妖魔灵),² which I did not end up seeing until later. However, I learned from the same friend later on that the movie topped mainland China's box office, and it also made it all the way to a college town in North America. More importantly, in the early stage of my writing the movie shed new light on the prevalence of the exorcist Zhong Kui. Is there more to the Zhong Kui cult than his fascinating hagiography, ferocious looks, and propensity for violence, as well as the efficacious results delivered by exorcism?

The first time I encountered Zhong Kui in local theater was in Northern Anhui, near my maternal grandparents' house in a small town. He was played by an old painted face and being goaded by five petty demons. Coinciding with the same season and similar circumstances described in the essay "Village Dramas" (Shexi 社戲) written by Lu Xun 魯迅 (1881-1936), my fond teenage memories are also associated with summertime laughter and cheering from the audience in the local theater. Temple fairs

¹ This paragraph is inspired by Barend J. Ter Haar's opening paragraph of the first chapter in his book: *Guan Yu: The Religious Afterlife of a Failed Hero*, p 1.

² The English title of this movie does not do a good job clarifying Zhong Kui's status as an exorcist and that his expertise is to subdue the demons. I think it is noteworthy that "exorcist," or "exorcism" does not appear in the English translation. My speculation on that is one it could be the word exorcism could mislead a Western audience and be read as something associated with Christianity; secondly, it may suggest that Zhong Kui's status as an exorcist needs no justification or clarification. In other words, it is assumed.

and happy and unhappy events often prompted local troupes to carry out theatrical performance at the most crowded spot at the local market place, at which a temporary stage would be erected for that particular purpose. I never knew which type of theatrical performance it was and only learned much later that most of them were *yuju* 豫劇. I was also quite surprised that it was not *jingju* 京劇 because of the presumption that everyone in China should appreciate and invest time in the National Drama, nor can I recall much detail of the fair and event *per se*.³

Scenes that involved high energy action and martial arts, lovers parting from each other (*fenli* 分離), or a heartbroken mother weeping over her children were among the most popular ones. However, the scenes that would catch most of my attention often involved painted faces and martial characters, engaging in fights or comical actions, which led to vigorous applause and an uproar in laughter from the audience. These are a few exemplary titles among the popular ones: *The Little Erjie Dreams* (*Xiao erjie zuomeng* 小二姐做夢), *Story of the West Chamber* (*Xixiang ji* 西廂記), *Hua Mulan* (*Hua Mulan* 花木蘭), *The Legend of the White Snake* (*Baishe zhuan* 白蛇傳), *Lady Mengjiang Brought Down the Great Wall* (*Mengjiang Nü ku changcheng* 孟姜女哭長城), *The Seven Fairy Maidens Go to the World of the Mundane* (*Qi xiannü xiafan* 七仙女下凡), *Mu Guiying Takes Command in the Army* (*Mu Guiying guashuai* 穆桂英掛帥), and, *The Five Petty Demons Goading Zhong Kui* (*Wugui naopan* 五鬼鬧判).⁴

³ *Yuju* 豫劇 is a local theater that has been popular in central Chinese provinces such as Henan 河南, Anhui 安徽, and Shandong 山東.

⁴ *Pan* here refers to Zhong Kui. In the Ming novel *Zhong Kui quan zhuan* 鍾馗全傳 (*The Legends of Zhong Kui*), Zhong Kui is depicted as a judge of Hell appointed by the King of Hell, along with the canonization received from both the Tang Emperor and the Jade Emperor.

In the local theater I experienced as a teenager, Zhong Kui was assigned to sing, dance, and speak altogether in one performance. A Chinese play by its nature consists of singing (*chang* 唱), dancing (*wu* 舞), and talking (*shuo* 說). While not every spectator is created equal to be able to comprehend and appreciate all three aspects of the performance simultaneously, the individual experience of each participant, including the actor, playwright, and spectator, composes a shared body of knowledge. In *Chinese Theater and the Actor in Performance*, Jo Riley argues, “The Chinese spectator goes to the theatre to be part of the representing of the other world. The Chinese performer embodies all times, all spaces, all members of the community, by his presence on stage.”⁵ “The other world” here refers to both the world of the dead and the shared historical past made present every time the play is performed and/or read among all participants.

I agree with Riley that Chinese theatrical experience is a holistic one that utilizes and is motivated by all participants in the community, including spirits and gods, local and distant. However, I am expanding her scope to consider drama other than *jingju* and plays written for reading purposes. Through a process of cultivation, the Chinese spectators, readers, actors, and playwrights draw inspiration from the body of Chinese culture, which consists of orally transmitted anecdotes and stories. For instance, *The Legend of the White Snake* (*Baishe zhuan* 白蛇傳) was orally transmitted by means of *pinghua* 平話, *shuoshu* 說書, *tanci* 彈詞, and *xiju* 戲劇.⁶ The sources of the legend

⁵ Jo Reiley, *Chinese Theater and the Actor in Performance*, p 316.

⁶ *Pinghua* 平話 is a story telling tradition derived from the Song dynasty. Its precedent is *jiangshi* 講史, a narrative genre focused on lengthy history and wars, the manuscript of which is called *pinghua*. *Shuoshu* 說書 is a performative art derived from the Song dynasty, and this form of art is solely focused on narrating and doesn't require any singing. *Tanci* 彈詞 is a performative art inspired by the Yuan and Ming traditions such as *cihua* 詞話. *Tanci* is generally popular in Southern China that requires both narrating and

originated from as early as the Southern Song dynasty and run the gamut from Chan Buddhist and Daoist themes and ideas.⁷

Riley also contends that the Chinese performance body represents one composite body which has been metaphorically dissected and reassembled anew, whether the body is that of Mei Lanfang 梅蘭芳 (1894-1961) in Peking opera (*jingju* 京劇), Zhong Kui in exorcistic events, or other artifacts such as masks and costumes. She also develops the idea of “a body of shared knowledge” from both the actors’ and spectators’ perspectives. I agree with Riley’s emphasis on the performative aspect of Chinese plays. I argue, however, playwriting in the Ming and Qing periods was intended to entertain an audience of readers with more leisure and privacy, which proved to be a new desired way to consume high literature among literati and the travelling merchants.⁸ I agree with her that Chinese theatrical performances not only evoke the collective literary memories accumulated by both playwrights of note and anonymous ones, but also retrieve and evoke amazement (*qi* 奇) from a cultivated spectator and reader. The spectator and the reader partake of the movement of transmitting the marvels (*chuanqi* 傳奇), a literary

singing during the performance. *Xiju* 戲劇 is the generic term for all forms of dramatic performance that consists of singing, narrating, and acting; normally, actors, scenes, stage, and audience are the four necessary elements in *xiju*.

⁷In the Song dynasty, a *huaben* titled *Xihu santan ji* 西湖三塔記 (*Accounts of the Three Pogodas along the West Lake*). In the Ming dynasty, a *huaben xiaoshuo* titled *Bai niangzi yongzhen leifeng ta* 白娘子永鎮雷鋒塔 (*Madame Bai is Forever Subdued under the Leifeng Pogoda*) composed by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍 (1574-1646). The *chuanqi* in the Qing dynasty was written by Fang Chengpei 方成培 (born in the Yongzhen Reign 雍正 [1723-1735] and the year of death unknown) and titled *Leifeng ta* 雷峰塔 (*The Leifeng Pogoda*), and finally the orally transmitted legend *Bainiang zi* 白娘子 (*Madame Bai*). *Zhongguo chuanshuo gushi dacidian* 中國傳說故事大辭典, 1992, pp 419-20.

⁸In the Ming dynasty, reading has become a private mode of partaking the high culture. One of the representatives that promoted this culture was Jin Shengtan 金聖嘆 (1608-1661) in his commentary on *Xixiang ji* 西廂記 (*Stories of the West Chambers*).

tradition started as early as the Tang dynasty that essentially pursued marvelous twists and turns in the storytelling, which overlapped with the desired dramatic quality in the Ming and Qing in the form of playwriting.⁹

As I watched the theatrical performance in my youth, I was often awestruck, especially at moments when there were high energy action and martial arts movements on the stage, even when I could not tell much of what was really transpiring. Nor could I really come to appreciate the dramatic twists and turns. Although in my young and innocent world, which was heavily influenced by the crowd's chit chat, it almost always seemed to be good people defeating evil ones. Even more so, whenever a big painted face such as Zhong Kui entered the stage and started to sing excitedly with prolonged high-pitched voice, or issued an execution order by throwing a stick on the floor, the crowd would be stirred into applauding and crying loudly. Some of them would even sing along looking pleased with their eyes closed and heads wagging, "Excellent, excellent," the crowd would collectively shout, as if the excitement was rehearsed, as if they knew when and where plot twists and turns would fall into the right places.

The drum playing and the gong striking eventually faded into the summery hue as the sun was ready to set. But sometimes the performance would go on for days and nights non-stop. For me, those were the most exciting moments of the year, surpassing even the Chinese New Year celebration and the liveliness of temple fairs, simply because as long as the performance was going, the community life demonstrated through private vending and an enthusiastic audience, kept living on. Perhaps wanting to revisit the sporadic and yet somewhat taunting memories can be rationalized in light of Riley's claims that "The

⁹ Here, I use *chuanqi* in a broad sense in the way that I focus more on the notion of "transmitting the marvels" in both Tang *chuanqi* and *chuanqi* plays in the Yuan and Ming periods.

Chinese spectator reads the performance against a contextual background filled with religious, philosophical, historical, aesthetic, social, even genetic information which change the perspective of how presence functions on the Chinese stage.”¹⁰ She further contends, “The Chinese spectator need not attend a performance to know that the correct moves were made by the correct person in the correct space.”¹¹ While this may be a bit of a stretch, it held true to a certain extent in my case. That is to say, I attended the theatrical performance without real “participation,” but with every move made by the actors, I knew right away whether it was right or wrong. I might not necessarily know it myself. However, it was always made clear whether it was right or wrong immediately by the friendly or snarky comments from the audience.

The following is the introduction of my dissertation, which consists of one literature review and five subsections. In the literature review section, I introduce the earliest Zhong Kui account and establish the quintessential elements in the making of the deity’s identity. In the first subsection, I focus on the transformation of Zhong Kui from a *nuo* performer to the exorcist in the late imperial theater. In the second subsection, I demonstrate how Zhong Kui’s multidimensionality can be observed through his embodiment of changes manifested through Chinese theater. The third subsection reviews the textual history of Zhong Kui literature beginning from the Tang dynasty, culminating in an emphasis on the Ming and Qing texts. In the fourth subsection, I introduce visual representations of Zhong Kui through a set of images from the late imperial periods to demonstrate how iconography is inseparable from the making of the

¹⁰ *Chinese Theater and the Actor in Performance*, p 316.

¹¹ *ibid*, p 316.

deity's hagiography. In the last subsection, I map the layout of the chapters and summarize the framework of my dissertation.

Introduction

Literature Review: Zhong Kui, the Minghuang Emperor, and Wu Daozi

The Unofficial History of the Tang Dynasty (*Tang yishi* 唐逸史), a lost late Tang record, provides the earliest literary account of Zhong Kui as a failed martial examination candidate.¹² This account should be regarded as an indispensable point of departure to investigate the divinity of Zhong Kui, because it dictates the literary depiction and visual representation of the deity for centuries to come. Moreover, it establishes Zhong Kui's power and authority in an exorcistic context and made his efficacy recognized through a portrait of the deity outside of a temple.¹³ Below are the translation and the original text of the account. We read:

“One day in the Kaiyuan era [713-742], Minghuang [the Tang emperor Xuanzong], fell ill with malaria after returning to the palace from a round of bow-and-arrow practice on Mt. Li. While taking a nap [during the day], he saw in a dream a small demon, wearing only a red shirt, calf-snout trousers and one shoe—the other shoe being tied at his waist—and holding a bamboo fan, in the act of stealing consort Yang Guifei's embroidered perfume-bag and the Emperor's jade flute. [Then, instead of escaping,] the demon began running around the palace grounds, frolicking in front of the Emperor. Minghuang reproached him and demanded an explanation. The demon respectfully replied: ‘Your subject's name is Xuhao.’ The Emperor responded: ‘I've never heard of you before.’ The demon

¹² Chen Yaowen 陳耀文 (*jinshi* 1550), “Meng Zhong Kui” *Tianzhongji* 天中計 fascicle 4. Chen cites this source from *Tang yishi* 唐逸史.

¹³ Although the Ming novel *Zhong Kui quan zhuan* talks about how the Minghuang emperor erects a temple in Zhong Kui's name, and there are a few establishments in mainland Chinese dedicated to the Zhong Kui cult, the literary and visual representations of the deity dominantly associate his efficacy to a portrait instead of an establishment, or a temple setting.

explained that ‘Xu’ stood for ‘stealing people’s belongings for fun’ and ‘Hao’ for ‘replacing man’s joys with sorrows.’ Hearing this, the emperor was enraged and wanted to send for his guards. But at that very moment, a much larger demon, wearing a tattered hat, blue robe, horn waist-belt, and black boots appeared and went straight after the thief. He first gouged out the demon’s eyes, then tore him to pieces and ate him. When the emperor asked him who he was, the demon eater introduced himself, ‘I am Zhong Kui, a *jinshi* from Mt. Zhongnan, who was ashamed to return home after having failed the next higher degree of examination during the Wude era [618-626], thus committed suicide by smashing my head against the palace steps. I am grateful to Emperor Gaozu [r.618- 626], who granted me an honorable burial of a court official of the green-robe rank when I died. I have vowed to rid the world of mischievous demons like Xuhao for the Emperor.’ At these words, Minghuang awoke and found himself fully recovered. Without delay he summoned the court artist Wu Daozi to paint a portrait of Zhong Kui as seen in his dream.¹⁴ Wu Daozi went to work immediately and painted Zhong Kui as if he had seen him with his own eyes. When he presented the finished portrait to the Emperor, the Emperor exclaimed, ‘You and I must have had the same dream!’ He awarded Wu one hundred *taels* of gold.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Wu Daozi’s style name is Daoxuan 道玄, which is a very typical style name that has strong Daoist connotations.

¹⁵ My translation is modified based on Joyce Tsai’s translation. For details, please refer to Tsai Chun-Yi Joyce, “Imagining the Supernatural Grotesque: Paintings of Zhong Kui and Demons in the Late Southern Song (1127-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) Dynasties,” Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 2015.

“明皇開元, 講武驪山, 翠華還宮。上不悅, 因疔疾作, 晝夢一小鬼, 衣絳, 犢鼻, 跌一足, 履一足, 腰懸一履, 搯一筠扇, 竊太真綉香囊及上玉笛, 繞殿奔, 戲上前。上叱問之。小鬼奏曰: 臣乃虛耗也。上曰: 未聞虛耗之名。小鬼奏曰: 虛者, 望空虛中, 盜人物如戲; 耗, 即耗人家喜事成憂。上怒, 欲呼武士, 俄見一大鬼, 頂破帽, 衣藍袍, 繫角帶, 鞞朝靴, 徑捉小鬼, 先剝其目, 然後擘而啖之。上問大者: 爾何人也? 奏曰: 臣終南山進士鍾馗也, 因武德中應舉不捷, 羞歸故里, 觸殿階而死。是時, 奉旨賜綠袍以葬之, 感恩發誓, 與我王除天下虛耗妖孽之事。言訖, 夢覺, 疔疾頓瘳。乃詔畫工吳道子曰: 試與朕如夢圖之。道子奉旨, 恍若有睹, 立筆成圖進呈。上視久之, 撫几曰: 是卿與朕同夢耳。賜與百金。”

The above account, besides being the earliest literary account of Zhong Kui, also establishes the following elements that are essential in the making of Zhong Kui's divine identity:

- 1) His relation with the petty demon *Xuhao*, which sometimes is represented by two or more petty demons, creates a comical effect;¹⁶
- 2) His failure as an examination candidate;
- 3) His powers were centered around violent actions and used for exorcism; the extreme level of violence displayed in the cult of Zhong Kui involves him killing and eating the demons.
- 4) He received the official canonization from the Emperor Gaozu and yet no temple was erected in his name;

¹⁶ *Xuhao* 虛耗 here refers demons that reduce human lifespans. In the second subsection of the first chapter, I have an extensive discussion about *Xuhao* in relation to the *zhaoxuhao* 照虛耗 tradition associated with the New Year's purification rituals.

- 5) Instead, the Minghuang Emperor's gratitude and recognition of Zhong Kui as an exorcist was delivered by an image of Zhong Kui created by the court artist Wu Daozi.

The above narrative was reiterated in literary, ritual, and artistic tradition ever since the Tang dynasty because not only is each individual element crucial in defining Zhong Kui but also all elements combined present a multidimensional Zhong Kui. I will discuss in great detail how the elements of this narrative are pivotal to Zhong Kui's presentation in exorcism, literature, and art in the following subsections of the introduction.

The unique elements defining Zhong Kui's divinity as presented through the narrative has drawn great scholarly attention in both the Chinese and English languages. The Chinese language studies on Zhong Kui provide valuable and comprehensive sources for both primary and secondary studies but lack a cohesive narrative. The existing Zhong Kui studies in the Chinese language can be categorized into the following:

- 1) The introduction of Zhong Kui as a generic deity with an overly general timeline, or only a loose connection to the particular traditions that are related to the exorcist. Two examples are *Zhong Kui shenhua yu xiaoshuo zhi yanjiu* 鐘馗神話與小說之研究 (*A Study of the Zhong Kui Myths and Novels*) written by Hu Wanchuan 胡萬川,¹⁷ and *Zhong Kui yanjiu* 鐘馗研究 (*The Studies of Zhong Kui*) written by Zheng Zunren 鄭尊仁.¹⁸

¹⁷ Hu Wanchuan 胡萬川, *Zhong Kui shenhua yu xiaoshuo zhi yanjiu* 鐘馗神話與小說之研究 (Taipei: Taibei wenshizhen chubanshe, 1980).

¹⁸ Zheng Zunren 鄭尊仁, *Zhong Kui yan jiu* 鍾馗研究 (Taipei: Xiuwei zixun keji 秀威資訊科技, 2004).

2) A focus on visual representations of Zhong Kui, specifically the Zhong Kui themed paintings without a strong emphasis on historical context, or the Daoist tradition that became relevant in the exorcist's Daoist identity since the Ming dynasty. An example is Liu Fangru 劉芳如, "Gugong jicang Zhong Kui xiangguan huihua zhi yanjiu" 故宮度藏鐘馗繪像之相關研究 ("Studies on Paintings of Zhong Kui in the National Palace Museum").¹⁹

3) Modern representations of Zhong Kui presented in the popular culture through different media, including theaters, movies, and local dances, assuming an innate connection between the *nuo* tradition and the Zhong Kui cult. For instance, *Zhong Kui* 鐘馗 and *Zhong Kui: Snow Girl and Dark Crystal*.²⁰

English and other non-Chinese language Zhong Kui studies, in comparison with the studies in Chinese, are more focused on specific issues, such as the Zhong Kui paintings. Examples are Sherman Lee's articles, "Yan Hui, Zhong Kui, and the New Year" and "The Lantern Night Excursion of Chung K'uei."²¹ Another one is Stephen Little's "The Demon Queller and the Art of Ch'ui Ying."²² Two Ph.D. and Master theses focus

¹⁹ Liu Fang-ju [Liu Fangru] 劉芳如, "Gugong jicang Zhong Kui xiangguan huihua zhi yanjiu" 故宮度藏鍾馗繪畫之相關研究 ("Studies on paintings of Zhong Kui in the National Palace Museum"), in *Yinsui jifu—yuancang Zhong Kui minghua tezhan* 迎歲集福—院藏鍾馗名畫特展 (Blessings for the New Year: Catalogue to the Special Exhibition of Paintings of Chung K'uei [Zhong Kui]), (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1997).

²⁰ Zhong Kui is portrayed by the female performer Wu Guiyun 吳桂雲 in the form of a local theater in Hebei 河北, namely *bangzi* 梆子. Wu is also the first female actor who ever portrayed the exorcist Zhong Kui in Chinese theaters.

²¹ Sherman E. Lee, "Yan Hui, Zhong Kui, and the New Year," *Artibus Asiae* 1.2 (1993): 212-214.
Sherman E. Lee, "The Lantern Night Excursion of Chung K'uei," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, 49.2 (February 1962): 36-42.

²² Stephen Little, "The Demon Queller and the Art of Ch'iu Ying," *Artibus Asiae* 46.1/2 (1985).

on the Zhong Kui visual representations.²³ Jo Reilly's *Chinese Theatre and the Actor in Performance* and Judith Zeitlin's *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature* note Zhong Kui's relevance in Chinese theater. Idema's and West's pioneering work "Zhong Kui at Work: A Complete Translation of the Immortal Officials of Happiness, Wealth, and Longevity Gather in Celebration" translate a Ming play and situate the deity in a Daoist network. This dissertation is inspired by Idema's and West's article because, through translating a play, it showcases how Zhong Kui works as an exorcist, which provides focused textual evidence that enables relevant discussions of history and ritual. The following subsections elaborate the six key elements displayed in the Minghung story.

1. Zhong Kui: From Nuo Parades to Theater

Nuo 傩 (exorcism) is originally a form of shamanistic practice that started as early as Xia 夏 (c. 2205-1806 BCE), and continued in Shang 商 (c. 1783-1134 BCE), and Zhou 周 (c. 1134-256 BCE) dynasties. The earliest account regarding *nuo* from *Zhouli* 周禮 (The *Rites of Zhou*, first appeared in the 2nd century BCE) describes *fangxiangshi* 方相士 (a combination of ancient exorcist and shaman) as a martial figure that appears to be half human and half beast and attributes to them the role of commander in expelling demons and spirits from households.²⁴

²³ Chun-mei Tschiersch, "Die Ikonographie des Zhong Kui," PhD diss., Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg, 1988.
Luk Yu-ping, 陸於平, "Ren Bonian's Zhong Kui Paintings," (MA thesis, University of Hong Kong, 2004).

²⁴ "*Fangxiangshi*: [their] hands are covered with the bear skin and [they] have four golden eyes. Holding a spear and raising a shield, [they are] in charge of about one hundred servants and perform the seasonal

In the eighth to ninth centuries, Zhou You's 周繇 poem entitled *Dreaming of Zhong Kui's Dance* (*Meng wu Zhong Kui* 夢舞鍾馗) portrays Zhong Kui “as a delirious shaman, as hinted from his forceful dance, unfastened collar, and toppling cap when he made an appearance in Emperor Xuanzong’s dream and cured the emperor’s illness.”²⁵ The poem demonstrates how the Zhong Kui cult can exemplify the ancient *nuo* through portraying him similar to an ancient *nuo* dancer.²⁶ The portrayal of Zhong Kui as a shaman complements the Minghuang story introduced earlier in this dissertation where he is the demonic exorcist who cures the emperor’s malarial fever by executing the petty demon.

rituals to enter the household in order to cast off the demons and spirits.” The original text reads, 方相氏：掌蒙熊皮、黃金四目、玄衣朱裳、執戈揚盾，帥百隸而時難，以索室驅疫。《周禮·夏官·方相氏》 For early accounts to the “*fangxiangshi*,” please refer to Peter Nickerson’s chapter in Stephen Bokenkamp’s *Early Daoist Scriptures*, pp 232-42. For a detailed article on the history of Chinese *nuo*, please refer to Min Tian, “Chinese Nuo and Japanese Noh: Nuo’s Role in the Origination and Formation of Noh,” *Comparative Drama*, Vol. 37, No. 3/4 (Fall/Winter 2003-04), pp. 343-360.

²⁵ Tsai, Joyce, PhD diss. *Imagining the Supernatural Grotesque: Paintings of Zhong Kui and Demons in the Late Southern Song (1127-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) Dynasties*, p 94.

The following is the original account and Tsai’s translation, “The Emperor is ill; in a dream, he communicated with the spirits. Huang Fanchuo [a famous actor in the Pear Garden during the Tang] approaches the monarch to make a suggestion; he summons Zhong Kui to dance amid flowers and grass. Fast asleep, [the Emperor] was delighted on his throne, not noticing anything different. When [he] awoke, [his] illness was completely cured. [He] cannot believe it was real. The Emperor’s perturbed soul had just gone to rest, when a strange, ambiguous form suddenly appeared. [...] His long beard flutters on his broad chest, his slanted collar completely loose. He scratches his short hair on his round head, his hat about to topple off. [...] Without waiting for the wind and string instruments to play, he walks in a trailing blue robe, with its long sleeves fluttering in the air. He waves bamboo slips in his hand as he twirls and dances. He taps his toe as if he were a tiger prepared to jump across a valley; he lifts his head as would a dragon leaping up from a deep pool. He either opens his mouth to let out a cry, or squats down to keep beat. He shakes the carved columns to the point of collapse, and jumps up the jade steps, almost breaking them. The myriad creatures are low in spirits and anxious; an accompanying demon jumps forcefully. The smoke and clouds rise suddenly; his posture after he finishes dancing is difficult to retain. Rain and hail fall rapidly; traces of his presence are gone in a snap. [...] 皇躬抱疾，佳夢通神。見幡綽兮上言丹陛，引鍾馗兮來舞華茵。寢酣方悅於宸辰，不知為異。覺後全銷於美疚，始訝非真。[...] 聖魂愴悅以方寐，怪狀朦朧而遽至。[...] 奮長髯於闊臆，斜領全開。搔短發於圓顛，危冠欲墜。[...] 不待乎調鳳管，揆鸞弦，曳藍衫而颯纒，揮竹簡以蹠躡。頓趾而虎跳幽谷，昂頭而龍躍深淵。或呀口而揚音，或蹲身而節拍。震雕栱以將落，躍瑤階而欲折。萬靈沮氣以悼惶，一鬼傍隨而奮躡。煙雲忽起，難留舞罷之姿。雨雹交馳，旋失去來之跡。 [...]”

²⁶ This poem’s portrayal of Zhong Kui is very similar to that of *fangxiangshi* in ancient exorcistic practice.

By the late Song dynasty, Zhong Kui is observed as part of the New Year's *nuo* purification procession in a depiction of the *nuo* procession in *Mengliang lu* (*Accounts of Dreaming Over a Bowl of Millet*) 夢梁錄 (1241-1274) by Wu Zimu 吳自牧 (active 1260s-70s during Emperor Duzong's reign). In this account, Zhong Kui is recruited by the exorcists who are in disguise and accompanied by the five colors, which were often interpreted as the five avenues and became relevant in the Zhong Kui cult in the Ming dynasty. We read:

“The Great Exorcism Rite (*Da Nuo* 大儺儀) is performed in the inner palace on New Year's Eve...[The exorcists] wear masks and colorfully embroidered clothes; they carry golden spears and silver dagger-axes, painted wooden swords, dragons and phoenixes in five colors, and banners in five colors. The actors from the music department are used to perform generals, the commissioners of magic tally, the infernal judges, Zhong Kui 鐘魁 (the ghost killer), the six men, the six soldiers, the divine soldiers, the Ghost Commissioners of the Five Directions, the Stove God, the Earth god, the gate gods, and other deities. Beating drums, [the procession] starts from the inner palace, parades out through the Donghua Gate, expel the evil spirits, and then turns around at the Bay of ‘Dragon Pond.’ This is called ‘bury the evil spirits’ (*maisui* 埋祟).”²⁷

Portrayals of Zhong Kui in the Ming collection *Compendium of Origin of Gods from the Three Teachings* (*Sanjiao yuanliu soushen Daquan* 三教源流搜神大全) returns

²⁷ *Mengliang lu*, pp. 181-182.

to the narrative mode exhibited in the earliest Minghuang story.²⁸ We read:²⁹

“In the Kaiyuan reign of the Emperor Minghuang, upon returning from a trip to Mt. Wuli, his majesty was contracted with illness. At night, he dreamed of a petty demon that wears crimson clothes, with a nose which resembles that of a calf, he bares one foot and wears a shoe on the other. He stole the embroidered fragrant pouch from Consort Yang and the Jade Flute from his majesty.³⁰ He was running and playing mischievously around the palace. The emperor scolded him, the demon responded, “I am the little one, Xuhao.” His Majesty asked, “What’s *Xuhao*?” The petty demon responded, “[I] take advantage amidst the emptiness, steal from the people, and sabotage the happy events in the common household.” The emperor was furious [upon hearing him]. Just as he was about to call on his martial attendants, a big ghost appeared. He was wearing a torn cap and blue long robes; he was adorned with a jade belt and wore long boots. He first gouged out the petty demon’s eyeballs, breaking them apart and eating them. The emperor asked him, “Who are you?” He responded, “I am the humble one, the exam candidate of Mt. Zhongnan, I failed the exam and was ashamed to return to my home town. I knocked myself against the stepping stone in the palace and died.

²⁸ Since the earliest Tang legend in *Tangyishi* about Zhong Kui is no longer extant and the account is retrieved in the Ming collection of *Tianzhong ji*, it is safe to assume that the five factors listed at the beginning of the introduction were more aligned with a Ming tradition to portray the deity.

²⁹ This compendium is very similar to the six dynasties *Soushenji* 搜神記 (*Records For In Searching of the Deities*). However, it is preserved in *Daozang* 道藏 (*The Daoist Canon*) and is indeed recorded as part of *Wanli xudaozang* 萬曆續道藏 (*Addendums to the Daoist Canon in the Reign of Wanli*). The majority of the gods and deities that are given a hagiography and an illustration of portrait either belong to Daoism or are derived from vernacular traditions.

³⁰ *Taizhen* is the Daoist title of the Consort Yang, Yang Guifei 楊貴妃.

Your majesty issued a decree to enfeeble the green robe to me. I am nothing but grateful to your kindness and have vowed to eradicate all the *xuhao* and demonic monsters under heaven for your majesty.” Upon the big demon finishing his words, the emperor awoke. His malarial fever was also cured immediately. He called for Wu Daozi 吳道子 (680-759) to paint an image of the big demon.”³¹

“唐明皇開元中，講武驪山還宮疾作，晝夢一小鬼，絳衣犢鼻跣一足履一足，盜太真繡香囊及上玉笛。繞殿奔戲，上叱問之，小鬼曰：臣乃虛耗也。上曰：何謂虛耗？小鬼曰：望空虛中，盜人物，耗人家喜事。上怒，欲呼武士。忽一大鬼，破帽藍袍，角帶朝靴。先剗小鬼目，後擘而啖之。上問：何人？奏曰：臣終南山進士鍾馗，應舉不捷，羞歸故里，觸殿階而死。奉旨賜綠袍葬我，感恩祭祀。與王除天下虛耗妖孽，言記夢覺，疾瘳。詔吳道子圖其像。”³²

As an exorcist, Zhong Kui’s early presence in the New Year’s purification rituals (*nuo* parade) predate the Ming dynasty and are detailed in a number of Song records. *The Eastern Capital: A Dream of Splendors Past (Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華錄, preface dated 1147) by Meng Yuanlao 孟元老 (fl.1090-1150), recounts the New Year’s Eve tradition called *da yehu* 打夜胡 (*lit.* striking the nightly ghosts) where beggars would impersonate Zhong Kui and his younger sister,³³ forming a parade of three or more

³² This account is very similar to a late Tang source of the Zhong Kui story, which is Chen Yaowen, “Meng Zhong Kui” *Tianzhongji* fascicle 4. Chen cites this source from *Tang yishi*, please refer to my appendix I.

³³ *Dayehu* 打夜胡 is a tradition derived from the army in the Tang dynasty. At first, this tradition was only practiced in the capital city and in the royal families. In the earliest reference of this tradition, Zhong Kui, Zhong Kui’s younger sister, and the Earth God are among the New Year’s Eve cleansing parade. Another way of saying it is *da yehu* 打夜胡. According to *Nuoxi yishu yuanliu* 傩戲藝術源流, “‘夜胡’二字，显即敦煌文书中的‘夜胡’，源于‘邪呼’逐除。” p 21. In the same book, the editor conveys the idea that *yehu*

accompanied with drums and gongs and parading through the streets in the capital city: Bianjing 汴京.³⁴

“[...] Since the start of the [twelfth] month, the poor would formulate parades of three or more, disguise themselves as women, gods, and demons, strike the gong and beat the drums, and beg for money at each household. This is called *da yehu*, which is a way to chase away evil spirits.”

“[...] 自入此月, 即有貧者三數人為一火, 裝婦人神鬼, 敲鑼擊鼓, 巡門乞錢, 俗呼為‘打夜胡’, 亦驅崇之道也。”³⁵

A similar account associates the New Year’s *nuo* parade with *da yehu* can be found in *Mengliang lu*.

“Every New Year’s Eve, people would parade disguised as gods, the judge from the Hell, Zhong Kui, and his younger sister. They strike the gong and beat the drum as they wander the streets, which is to be called ‘*da yehu*,’ it is also called ‘*qunuo*.’”

“每逢除日, 街市有人裝神鬼判官、鍾馗、小妹, 敲鑼打鼓遊街, 俗稱為打夜胡, 亦稱為驅儺。”

Both *Dongjing menghualu* and *Mengliang lu* capture Zhong Kui’s vigorous role in the New Year’s *nuo*. No Tang records known make an explicit connection between

could be the cry (sometimes collective) uttered during the exorcisms by the performers who are often the poor/homeless/beggars. Therefore, I think *da yehu* has become a phrase that is of the similar use of *tiao zhongkui* 跳鍾馗, where the entire phrase indicates a specific ritual that is carried out via dances, or cries/shouts.

³⁴ Bianjing is nowadays Kaifeng 開封, the capital city of Henan province 河南; Bianjing was the capital of Northern Song dynasty.

³⁵ *Dongjing menghua lu*, under the entry of “shier yue.”

Zhong Kui and the New Year's *nuo* ceremony. However, as part of the New Year's celebration, the emperor would distribute Zhong Kui calendars and paintings to his subjects. As Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842) recounts, a thank you note drafted by Tang official Zhang Yue 張說 (667-730) during the reign of Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712-756) indicates the presence of Zhong Kui, even in the form of visual presentation, was meant for chasing off the evil spirits under the grand notion of *nuo*.

“A messenger from the palace arrives to announce the imperial edict. [The emperor bestowed] a painting of Zhong Kui and a new calendar in hanging scroll format. [...] To protect against various *li* disease demons,³⁶ images of the deity [Zhong Kui] were painted to purge evil; to keep the promise of announcing the agricultural seasons, calendars were published and distributed respectfully.”

“中使至，奉宣聖旨，賜畫鍾馗一及新曆日一軸 [...] 屏祛群厲，續神像以無邪；允授人時，頒曆日而敬授。”³⁷

Another example is evident in Liu Yuxi's “Xieci Zhong Kui bing liri biao” 謝賜鐘馗并曆日表 (A Thank You Note in Response to Receiving the Zhong Kui Portrait and the New Year Calendar From His Majesty), in which Liu expresses his gratitude towards the throne for presenting his subjects the gifts of the New Year Calendars. The image of Zhong Kui appears on the calendar and is supposedly used as a Door Guardian to safeguard households and property. The editor Jiang Yikui 蔣一葵 notes here, “Both Tang and Song dynasty records indicate the emperor presents Zhong Kui's picture as the

³⁶ *li* 厲 refers to powerful and malicious energies. For instance, *ligui* 厲鬼 refers to powerful ghosts.

³⁷ Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772-842), “Zhong Kui lun,” np

New Year gift to his subjects. In one particular year Song Shenzong 宋神宗 (r.1067-1085) rewarded all of his five thousand subjects a portrait of Zhong Kui and claimed that this [Zhong Kui portrait rewarding ceremony] shall be a returning service for the next new year, too. The prime minister Wu Chongqing stepped out of the queue and laughed out loud, responding, ‘Just one Zhong Kui will do.’”³⁸

“謝賜鐘馗并曆日表：‘圖寫威神，驅除群厲。頒行律曆，敬授四時。施張有嚴（魁），既增門戶之貴；動用葉吉（曆），常為掌握之珍。（唐宋皆有賜鐘馗故事。吳冲卿為相，受賜，神宗酬賚，賜內臣五千，明年復賜，吳戲同列曰：‘一魁足矣。’諧語撩人，皆大笑）。’”

As noted above, *nuo* is a form of exorcistic rite aiming to cast off maleficent and demonic spirits. Maintaining health, affluence, and communal stability were also at the core of this ancient practice. Descriptions of *nuo* rites are no rarity in early Chinese classics. Although early accounts of folk *nuo* and the three types of *nuo* rituals are being observed from as early as the Zhou dynasty, for instance, in *Lunyu* 論語 (*The Analects*) and *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋 (*The Annals of Lü Buwei*),³⁹ New Year’s *nuo* procession as

³⁸ *Yaoshantang oujuan* 堯山堂偶隼 is a Ming collection edited by Jiang Yikui 蔣一葵. Under the same entry, Jiang refers back to the Tang legend, “Minghuang Emperor had dreams at nighttime, in which a blue robed ghost narrated, ‘I, your subject, am the exam candidate Zhong Kui of Mt. Zhongnan. The Jade Emperor has commanded me to eradicate the mischievousness caused by *xuhao*.’” Upon waking up, the throne ordered the court artist to dedicate a portrait to the ghost so that his subjects can be rewarded with the portrait. And such was carried out as a New Year convention for years to come. The original quote reads as, “明皇晝寢，夢遊藍衣鬼曰：‘臣終南進士鐘馗也。上帝命我除虛耗之孽。’帝覺，乃命工繪像，歲盡以賜群臣，後因例。” “一馗足矣” here can be read into the following three possibilities: the first is that “one Zhong Kui should suffice (the purpose of exorcism); and the second one is that one of the Zhong Kui’s foot should suffice (the purpose of exorcism); and the third layer of the pun, according to my teacher Rania Huntington, could lie between *kui* 魁 and *kui* 夔, which is a mythological one footed creature.

³⁹ Lü Buwei, *Lüshi Chunqiu: Lüshi Chunqiu Jiao Shi*, ed. Chen Qiyong, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Xuelin Chubanshe, 1984), 1: 122,422,615. And the three *nuo* rites are *guorennuo* 國人儺, *danuo* 大儺, and

evident in the Song dynasty records such as *Dongjing menghualu* is the New Year's *nuo* that is similar to *danuo*. Conventionally, *nuo* was performed by *fangxiangshi* that were customarily adorned with a mask of bearskin with four eyes of gold.⁴⁰ I should also mention that *fangxiangshi* as the main performer in the traditional *nuo* rites remained at the core of the ritual until the Tang dynasty.

In the Song dynasty, the merger of *zaju* 雜劇 (miscellaneous plays) and *nanxi* 南戲 (southern plays) provided lively stages for the *nuo* rites. *Nuoxi* 儺戲 (*Nuo* theater) was created to replace the traditional player, *fangxiangshi* and his twelve animal companies as observed in *Weishu* 魏書 (*Standard History of the Wei Dynasty*) and *Suishu* 隋書 (*Standard History of the Sui Dynasty*). Deities such as Menshen 門神 (The Door Guardians), Pangu 盤古, and Zhong Kui were the new *nuo* performers to carry out the ritual.⁴¹ Subsequently, the *nuo* traditions were discontinued in the Yuan dynasty. Despite effort and awareness in the Ming dynasty to restore this grand tradition, *nuo* rites that were once observed and celebrated statewide during different months in the year were transformed and partially dissolved into local theatrical traditions.

The Song dynasty's reform of the national civil exam created a new class of gentry and local elites who were actively involved in literature to match their social

tianziniu 天子儺. *Danuo* is the New Year *nuo* and performed on the New Year's Eve to cast off the evil energies.

⁴⁰ Please refer to note 24.

⁴¹ Meng Yuanlao, *Dongjing Meng Hua Lu*, in *Biji Xiaoshuo Dagan*, ser. 9, 5 (Taipei: Xinxing Shuju, 1975), p 3377.
Wu Zimu, *Meng Liang Lu*, in *Biji Xiaoshuo Dagan*, ser. 21, 2 (Taipei: Xinxing Shuju, 1987), p 1000.

status.⁴² In addition, more scholars and local gentry became patrons of play production and printing at the local level. In the Song and Jin dynasties, public theaters were located in a designated area called *washe* 瓦舍 and they were common entertainment outlets in major cities like Lin'an 臨安 (nowadays Hangzhou 杭州), and the theaters located in this particular area were called *goulan* 勾欄. *Goulan* started in the Northern Song dynasty and gradually disappeared in the Mid-Ming. In *The Eastern Capital: A Dream of Splendors Past*, Meng Yuanlao 孟元老 provides us with the following description that allows us to gain more insights on the entertainment district in the Song dynasty:

“[If one] heads to the east, one encounters the Xu squash soup eatery. To the south, the Sang family owned *wazi*. Close to the northern side is the central *wa*, right next to it is the inner *wa*. Within this space houses more than fifty small and large *goulan*, among which the central *wazi* had Lotus Flower and Peony tent, the inner *wazi* had Yakṣa tent and Elephant tent, which are most commodious and can accommodate thousands of spectators.”

“東去則徐家瓠羹店。街南桑家瓦子。近北則中瓦。次裏瓦。其中大小勾欄五十餘座。內中瓦子蓮花棚、牡丹棚。裏瓦子夜叉棚、象棚最大，可容數千人。”⁴³

Elements of spirituality, the grotesque, and the marvelous have always been intimately related to Chinese theater. Meng's reference to the Yakṣa (*yecha* 夜叉) tent in

⁴² Chen Jiang 陳江, *Mingdai zhonghou qi de Jiangnan shehui yu shehui shenghuo* 明代中後期的江南社會與社會生活, Ph.D diss. Huadong shifan daxue 華東師範大學, 2003.

⁴³ “Dongjiaolou jingxiang” 東角樓街巷 is in *Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華錄, volume 2, p 67.

the Northern Song capital city Kaifeng is strong evidence that the Chinese spectators had grown accustomed to seeing rituality being carried out outside the liturgical context.

The discontinuation of *nuo* in the Yuan and Ming's fruitless effort to restore the tradition provided more ritual space for the exorcist Zhong Kui to be a male lead in Chinese theater. As Min Tian in "Chinese Nuo and Japanese Noh" argues, "The Mongolian rulers abolished the traditional Nuo rites from the court, and no records were found about their practice in the official histories of the time."⁴⁴ In the Ming dynasty, "appeals and arguments were made to the court to restore the court Nuo tradition. Yet despite a short restoration, it never regained its grand scope, prestige, and power."⁴⁵ At the same time, the increasing number of mainstream playwright literati contributing to the *zaju* production had renewed this literary genre with fresh meanings in the Ming dynasty. Additionally, the term *zaju* underwent several changes in the Ming dynasty. In Chinese literary tradition, *zaju* had been labeled as representative of the northern dramas in the Jin and Yuan dynasty. Despite the fact that a Ming *zaju* would still consist of a wedge (*xiezi* 楔子), which is an interlude or inserted scene and four acts (*sizhe* 四折), it essentially took on a completely new structure.

During the Yuan dynasty, *nanxi* 南戲 (southern plays) began to incorporate the northern tones in *zaju*, which blurred the geographical distinction between the two sets of theaters. Starting from the early Ming, the number of literati that were involved in southern playwriting and theatrical production increased, the results of which was the

⁴⁴ "Chinese Nuo and Japanese Noh," p 348.

Please also refer to Ichijo Kanera, *kuji kongen guko*, with commentaries by Hayami Kusatsune, in *Shintei Zoho Kojitsu Sosho 5* (Tokyo: Meiji Tosho Shuppan, 1955), pp 300-01.

⁴⁵ "Chinese Nuo and Japanese Noh," p 348.

emergence of *chuanqi* 傳奇 within the *nanxi* tradition. *Chuanqi* plays proved to be a new theatrical form that still declared remote literary lineage with the Tang narrative convention, namely, *Tang chuanqi* 唐傳奇, due to the shared storyline and themes between the two traditions, albeit the fact that *chuanqi* had already incorporated the elements of *zaju*, or vice versa.⁴⁶ As a matter of fact, the biggest contribution of the Ming playwrights in comparison with their Yuan predecessors was *chuanqi* style storytelling following the format of *zaju*.⁴⁷ However, despite the effort of the early Ming playwrights to preserve *zaju*, *zaju* and the Northern verse remnants of the Jin-Yuan era were still greatly weakened and nearly came to an end in the Ming dynasty.⁴⁸

According to *Taihe zhengyin pu jianping* 太和正音譜箋評,⁴⁹ in *Taihe zhengyin pu* 太和正音譜 (*Manuals of Standard Tunes in Grand Harmony*, completed in 1398, the 31st year in the Hongwu 洪武 reign. Hereafter *Zhengyin pu*), Zhu quan defines *yuefu* 樂府 as include *sanqu* 散曲 and the single *qu* 曲 and *ci* 詞 in *zaju*.⁵⁰ *Zaju* refers to the production (i.e., the performance), and the play in written form was referred to as *chuanqi* 傳奇. And *Zhengyin pu* merely expanded the connotations of *zaju*, consequently,

⁴⁶ *Mingqing xiqu shi* 明清戲曲史, p 22.

Mei Sun, "The Division between 'Nanxi' and 'Chuanqi,'" *American Journal of Chinese Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (October 1998), pp 248-256.

⁴⁷ *ibid*, p 22.

⁴⁸ *ibid*, p 44.

⁴⁹ Yao Pinwen 姚品文 ed., *Taihe zhengyin pu jianping* (Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2010).

⁵⁰ *Taihe zhengyin pu* is edited by the Ming Prince of Ning 寧王, also named Zhu Quan 朱權 (1378-1448). *Sanqu* refers to plays containing only songs without any dialogues.

hereafter the *zaju* could refer to both the holistic art that included both production and texts and only the written text.⁵¹

In *Zhengyin pu*, Zhu Quan divided *zaju* into twelve categories:⁵²

- 1) Daoist transformation of the Divine Transcendents;
- 2) Living in seclusion, rejoicing in the Tao (also known as *lin-ch'üan ch'iu-ho* 林泉丘壑, forest, springs, hills, and valleys);
- 3) Folding the robe, grasping the plaque (also known as Lord and minister plays);
- 4) Loyal ministers and ardent men of faith;
- 5) Filiality and righteousness, incorruptibility and integrity;
- 6) Rebuking treachery and cursing slander;
- 7) Banished ministers and orphaned sons;
- 8) Wielding blades and plying staffs;
- 9) Windy blossoms, snowy moonlight (romantic plays);
- 10) Grief and happiness at separation and reunion;
- 11) Misty blossoms, powder, and mascara (love stories about courtesans);
- 12) Spirit-heads and ghostly faces.

⁵¹ *Taihe zhengyin pu jianping* 太和正音譜箋評, another example used to demonstrate *zaju*'s extended connotations is a Ming anthology titled *Yuanqu xuan* 元曲選 edited and printed by Zao Maoxun 臧懋循 (1550-1620, style name Jinshu 晉叔), it is a collection of one-hundred plays by authors from the Yuan and the first decades of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Here the author of *zhengyin pu* regards the pure texts as *zaju* as well. p 40. In Idema's and West's book, *Chinese Theater 1100-1450*, they also mention this book, p 3.

⁵² *The Indiana Companion*, 2nd edition, p 18. I borrowed Stephen West's translation of the twelve categories.

“一曰神仙道化。二曰隱居樂道(又曰林泉丘壑)。三曰披袍秉(也稱君臣雜劇)。四曰忠臣烈士。五曰孝義廉節。六曰叱奸罵讒。七曰逐臣孤子。八曰鉞刀趕棒(又名脫膊雜劇)。九曰風花雪月。十曰悲歡離合。十一曰煙花粉黛(也稱花旦雜劇)。十二曰神頭鬼面(即神佛雜劇)。”⁵³

As evident in the above paragraph, Zhu Quan’s justification of the literary values of *zaju* is demonstrated through his categorization of the various miscellaneous plays. Furthermore, he also places heavy emphasis on plays that dealt with immortals and Daoism, which also explains why these categories were prioritized as the first two among the twelve.⁵⁴ In addition to the immortals and Daoism, high energy action and martial arts plays and those that portrayed gods and spirits as protagonists were also classified into a specific dramatic theme in their own right, which can be seen in category eight and twelve, respectively.

Besides placing the miscellaneous plays under different themes and categories, Zhu also traced back the musical composition in *zaju*. He juxtaposed *zaju* with *yuefu*, which is a music and poetry composition style that followed the folk song convention ever since the Han dynasty and was labelled “court music.”⁵⁵ Comparably, *zaju* was considered entertainment for the common folk because the implicated vulgarity would be deemed as distasteful by men of letters before Zhu. Nonetheless, Zhu still dedicated scholarly attention into justifying *zaju* as part of the literary family: he looked into the

⁵³ *Taihe zhengyin pu jianping*, p38.

⁵⁴ The order of the twelve categories is similar to the order in *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記.

⁵⁵ The name *yuefu* is derived from the Music Bureau in the Han dynasty. In general, *yuefu* refers to poems composed for singing purpose.

twists and turns in the dramatic texts, all of which helped transition *zaju* to refined literature.

Deriving from a long and rich tradition of *nuo* and emerging under complex social circumstances gives Zhong Kui multidimensionality in the Ming and Qing theaters. Different dramatic roles he is assigned to in each play translated in this dissertation can be used to understand the diversity of the male lead Zhong Kui. He plays the male lead (*zhengmo* 正末) in *Qing fengnian wugui nao Zhong Kui* 慶豐年五鬼鬧鍾馗 (*Celebrating the Year of Abundance the Five Petty Demons Goaded Zhong Kui*. Hereafter, *Nao Zhong Kui*) and is the singer of the play, too. The style of singing would be vestige of story-telling and ballad-singing.⁵⁶ In *Taiyi xian ye duan taofu ji* 太乙仙夜斷桃符記 (*The Immortal of Primordial Unity Eradicated the Peachwood Charms*. Hereafter, *Taofu ji*), he is not assigned to a conventional dramatic role. Rather, Zhong Kui is just simply listed as Zhong Kui. He plays the role of painted face (*jing* 淨) in *Zhongmei qingsou* 鍾妹慶壽 (*Zhong Kui's Younger Sister Celebrating His Birthday*. Hereafter, *Zhongmei*). Additionally, in *jingju* 京劇 (Peking Opera) Zhong Kui is designated to a *jing* 淨 role (painted face), too. The word *jing* literally means to clean and cleanse, or clean as an adjective. Furthermore, in modern Chinese theater, from puppet theater to *jingju*, he is represented in all kinds of theatrical performances as a red-faced, black-haired, hunchback or cripple, all of which references physical abnormality

⁵⁶ Grant Guangren Shen, "Libretto Translation and Musical Arrangement in Chinese 'Chuanqi' Opera," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)*, Vol. 35 (December 2013), pp 177-207.

associated with beings that possess supernatural power and embody righteousness and impartiality.⁵⁷

The role differences in the plays translated here go side by side with the historical changes of *zaju* in the Yuan-Ming transition, which amplified the increased popularity of southern plays and the deterioration of the northern dramas. Zhong Kui's role shift from being a *zhengmo* to *jing* indicates the structure of *zaju* was refashioned. The role change is meaningful not only in terms of dramatic form, but also helps retrieve a unique transitional history in the making of Zhong Kui's portrait in Chinese theater. For instance, in *Nao Zhong Kui*, the detailed stage direction attached to the original play indicate that in the wedge, the first, and second act, Zhong Kui is wearing an informal cap and worn out long robes with facial hair. In the latter two acts of the play, however, he is described as wearing a soft cap and red long robes that are accompanied with more items to indicate his official status, such as a wooden tablet and a bamboo whip.

The dramatic role of Zhong Kui as demonstrated in the plays translated in chapter two and three are Zhong Kui in *Taofu ji* and *jing* in *Zhongmei*, respectively.⁵⁸ The *jing* role in *Zhongmei* can be understood as an indicator that Zhong Kui's role as an exorcist is comparably much more established as opposed to his role in *Taofu ji*. For instance, in both plays, the narration about the pre-Zhong Kui story before he is canonized as a deity is missing, or else it is deemed as unnecessary because Zhong Kui is already commonly

⁵⁷ Another typical painted face role in modern Chinese theaters is the Judge Bao 包拯, who is not only an embodiment of the justice and impartiality, but also in possession of the power to execute the criminals of severe offenses, returning the order and peace to the world of the living.

⁵⁸ *Zhong mei qingshou* is a *duanju* 短劇, which is regarded as a *zaju* remnant in the Qing dynasty. According to *Mingqing xiqu shi* 明清戲曲史 (*Xiqu History of the Ming and Qing Dynasties*), *duanju* is a single act *zaju*. Please refer to *Mingqing xiqu shi*, chapter 5, p 88.

accepted as a standard deity whose major duty is to exorcise and safeguard the households ever since the Mid-Ming.

The deification of Zhong Kui in the Ming and Qing theater signifies not only the transition from *nuo* parades to the theater, but also summons Zhong Kui to perform the ritualistic function on the local stage. For instance, ritual operas and popular performing arts were observed at temple fairs. In *Exorcism and Money: The Symbolic World of the Five-Fury Spirits in Late Imperial China*, Guo Qitao contends, “The Chenghuang processions led to popular temple fairs, for which ritual operas and various popular performing arts were staged to entertain the supernatural and human participants and spectators, as well as passing traders and shoppers.”⁵⁹ Although the Zhong Kui plays are not included as “ritual operas” in Guo’s discussion, they should be considered as having the same function as those operas examined by Guo because the exorcist Zhong Kui became more and more accepted with his double role in the Ming and Qing theater. In other words, as the actor Zhong Kui eradicates the demons in the play, he also extends the power bestowed by a dramatic text, ancient exorcism, and his recruitment by the Daoist masters to ritual purification.

While one purpose of diverse performances at popular temple fairs was to entertain both the local participants and the travelling merchants from afar, it also transformed the ancient *nuo* exorcism parades into the undercurrent for an array of activities that served purposes far more than exorcism itself. Interestingly enough, since the entrance to the stage in Chinese theater is called *guimen* 鬼門 (ghost door), the relation between exorcism and theatrical performances is supposed to be intimate. In a

⁵⁹ Guo Qitao, *Exorcism and Money*, pp 53-4.

way, the Zhong Kui plays themselves can be regarded as a ritual in their own right: as the stage functions as a portal between the other and the human world, the performance itself is a reenactment of the ritual as it goes through dramatic opening, climax, and closure.

2. Zhong Kui's Multidimensionality in Chinese Theater

My examination of the Ming and Qing Zhong Kui plays provides new perspectives into understanding the Zhong Kui cult in Chinese theater. Even though major elements as stated in the Minghuang story defining the divine identity of Zhong Kui see few changes over the course of Chinese history, the historical changes manifested through literary movements, religious reform, and socio-economical phenomena surrounding the cult can be better understood. The literary movements changed the writing and production body, the religious reform reinforced Zhong Kui's efficacy through his image, and finally, the socio-economical changes led to geographical shift which made Southern elements in both religious and theatrical more visible. After all, the deity's multidimensionality is originated in ancient exorcism but is driven by such changes over time.

In the plays, Zhong Kui's multidimensionality helps make his divine identity: him as an exorcist as evident in the first and second play translated and analyzed in this dissertation, titled, *Nao Zhong Kui* and *Taofu ji*. A young scholar official that was keen on Confucian teachings but failed to stand by his moral principles as evident in the entry translated, which is titled *Shizi zhuan*. As a failed exam candidate who could not obtain a post in office because his repulsive physical appearance disgusted the emperor, Zhong

Kui also transforms into a political allegory to criticize injustice and personal frustration, which is evident in the fifth play translated and analyzed, *Zhongmei*.

Historically speaking, Zhong Kui's multidimensionality was enriched as Chinese theater experienced changes caused by collisions between the traditional and newly defined art and ideology at the local and state sanctioned levels. The negotiation of space between the old and new tradition is derived from the historical background given by Idema and West. In *Chinese Theater 1100-1450*, Idema and West propose a golden age of Chinese theater, which starts in 1100 when Song Zhezong 宋哲宗 passed away and was succeeded by his younger brother, Song Huizong 宋徽宗, and ends in 1450 when the Jingtai Emperor 景泰帝, Emperor Zhengtong's 正統 brother, became the emperor of the Ming. Idema and West recount changes in the nature of the Chinese elite starting from the Song dynasty, claiming "The great aristocratic families from Northern China that had dominated politics during the T'ang gradually faded away to be replaced in the bureaucracy by a new, and much broader gentry."⁶⁰ Predominated by citizens from the Yangzi basin, the newly formed gentry also helped reshape art and ideology, which Idema and West argue to be one of the factors leading to a temporary decline of Chinese theater.⁶¹

⁶⁰ *Chinese Theater 1100-1450*, pp 7-8.

⁶¹ Although this is not directly related to the Zhong Kui plays discussed in this dissertation, it is worth mentioning that the Ming and Qing plays outgrew the performance and production centric mode and transitioned into a much broader genre that incorporated a fully rationalized narrative form that is similar to closet-drama. The newly risen gentry mentioned by Idema and West, along with more printing centers contributing to literature circulation in the Ming dynasty, gave birth to Chinese closet drama. Closet drama is defined as "drama suited primarily for reading rather than production" by Merriam Webster, as I will argue in the last section of my introduction, "Chapter summary," in light of Idem and Haft's work demonstrated in *A Guide to Chinese Literature*, Chinese closet drama entails more than the general definition given by Merriam Webster; Rather, Chinese closet drama refers to the playwriting that is no longer adhered to the conventions of *zaju*, which normally consists of a wedge and four acts with very strict structure in each parts in terms of role induction, song singing, and rhythms.

In the Ming and Qing dynasty, the cultural and economic center shifted from the northern area to the Jiangnan region, which can be demonstrated through the Zhong Kui plays translated in this dissertation that were influenced by emergence of Southern traditions. Data from local gazetteers in the Ming and Qing dynasty testify that shared beliefs and religious rituals were the ties that glued the local community together, especially in the Jiangnan region.⁶² Hamashima Atsutoshi offers more clarifications on what constitutes the Jiangnan region. He contends that “I take the ‘Jiangnan Region’ to comprise the ‘five prefectures of Jiangnan,’ that is, two prefectures in Zhejiang Province (Huzhou 湖州府 and Jiaxing 嘉興府) and three prefectures in Southern Zhili 南直隸 (Changzhou 常州府, Suzhou 蘇州府, and Songjiang 松江府).”⁶³ In light of Hamashima’s definition of the Jiangnan region, I expand Jiangnan region into southern cities such as Hangzhou 杭州, Shaoxing 紹興, and Ningbo 寧波 in this dissertation because it is geographically relevant in the Zhong Kui literature discussed.⁶⁴

For more information about Chinese closet drama, please refer to Patrice Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*, pp 27-8. And “Printing as Performance,” p 21.

⁶² Hamashima Atsutoshi, “Communal Religion in Jiangnan Delta Rural Villages in Late Imperial China,” *International Journal of Asian Studies*, 8, 2 (2011), pp 127-162. And the original quote reads, “Using Ming- and Qing-era gazetteers from the Jiangnan Delta region, I have been able to confirm that peasants from the five prefectures (*fu* 府) of Jiangnan maintained a close sense of community through shared beliefs and religious rituals.”

⁶³ *Ibid*, p 129. In the same article, Hamashima offers another popular proposal brought up by Li Bozhong 李伯重, in which he argues, “Scholars have defined the scope of ‘Jiangnan’ in various ways. Most influential recently has been the ‘Eight Prefecture Theory’ proposed by Li Bozhong 李伯重, which includes the above five prefectures of Jiangnan, the prefecture of Hangzhou 杭州府 in Zhejiang province, and two prefectures in Southern Zhili 南直隸 (Nanjing Yingtian 南京應天府 and Zhenjiang 鎮江府),” p 129.

⁶⁴ For further studies on the cities in Jiangnan region in late imperial China, please refer to William Skinner (ed.), *The City in Late Imperial China*, pp 3-31, pp 211-351, and pp 521-553.

Evidence from numerous scholarly works indicates that Zhong Kui performances were prevalent in the Jiangnan region. One example is evident in Riley's book, *Chinese Theater and the Actor in Performance*. She argues, "In Anhui's Nantong city and the region around Fenhe in Dong county, an exorcism event known as *Zhong Kui xi fu* 鍾馗戲蝠 (*Zhong Kui Dances with the Bat*) is performed annually."⁶⁵ Wang Zhaoqian 王兆乾 recounts the Zhong Kui dances and worship in Anhui from an anthropological perspective. In his book, *Zai jiamian de beihou* 在假面的背後 (*Behind the Nuo Masks*), Zhong Kui is portrayed as a judge (*panguan* 判官), or the more common role as an exorcist,⁶⁶ which proves to be more widespread in mainland China, Taiwan, and other communities that practice Chinese cultures.⁶⁷ Examination of Zhong Kui's multidimensionality in the plays helps us better understand the geographical dynamics in the making of Chinese history.

The repeated emphasis on Zhong Kui's social status as a failed examination candidate adds a social and political connotation to his multidimensionality, specifically it blurs the boundaries between standardization and local influences. For instance, in "Standardizing the Gods: The Promotion of Tian Hou ('Empress of Heaven') along the

⁶⁵ *Chinese Theater and the Actor in Performance*, pp 19-20.

⁶⁶ *Zai jiamian de beihou* 在假面的背後 (*Behind the Nuo Masks*), p 89. Similar references can be found in the same book. "Sanhu cun yangchunwang de 'Zhong Kui zhuo xiaogui'" 山湖村陽春王的'鍾馗捉小鬼,'" p 90. I don't agree with Wang on his clear distinction between the two functions of the *nuo* dances, which is performative and ritualistic, p 36.

⁶⁷ In some locales in mainland China, Zhong Kui's characteristics resemble that of a *panguan* 判官 (judge). For instance, as recorded in Jiangxi sheng wanzai xian tanfu xiang cixi cun hanzu ding xing de tiaoxiao 江西省萬載縣潭阜鄉池溪村漢族丁姓的[跳魑], in nowadays Nanfeng, Jiangxi province 江西南豐, a specific type of Zhong Kui dance is preserved, and Zhong Kui is among the twenty-three canonized titles that are under a golden armored general named the General Jinjia 金甲將軍, pp 86-7. In the same book, Zhong Kui is depicted as a *panguan* 判官, p 34.

South China Coast, 960-1960,” James Watson argues that Chinese society in the late imperial era was highly integrated. He also states “local elites shared a common cultural tradition (fostered by a standardized educational curriculum).”⁶⁸ In honoring the local family or lineage rituals, local elites in the late imperial era helped shape local production heavily. Writing and reading plays was considered participation in high culture. Local elites, defined as anyone from literate men with interests in land and commerce, rich merchants, to failed literati like Zhong Kui himself also sought to be involved not only in the local theatrical production, but also in promoting it for reasons that went beyond their cultural and economic interest.

Local elites not only shaped the communal culture intellectually, they also defined the local landscape by imposing their aesthetics on the physical body of the locale: temples. Although Zhong Kui should be regarded as a unique case because almost no temples are established to honor his name, the plays collectively present Zhong Kui as a state sanctioned deity (*guojia zhengshen* 國家正神). As Watson argues, “they were eager to cooperate with state authorities in the standardization of cults. Assisting in the construction of an approved temple was one of the many ways that an educated gentleman could ‘gentrify’ himself and his home community.”⁶⁹ While I do not completely agree with Watson that the religious and cultural superstructure follows the top-down model, I find his claim on how the local elites were actively involved in “assisting in the construction of an approved temple” in order to “gentrify” themselves and their local community useful. It is hard to imagine the local elites would be absent

⁶⁸ *ibid*, pp 270-1.

⁶⁹ *ibid*, p 270.

from major assemblies like a temple fair to maintain their voice and the Confucian orthodoxy (*zheng* 正), hence bringing in state sanctioned culture into contact with the local culture.

In addition to the public sphere, Zhong Kui can be found in theatrical performances took place in private settings and drew a variety of audiences together for specific social and ritual purposes. In late imperial China, plays performed at private households were mainly to mark family or lineage ritual celebrations. In addition to market fairs and temple fairs, *huiguan* 會館 (assembly hall of the local families and clans) were among the common platforms for theatrical performances as well.⁷⁰ In my experience, weddings, the birth of a male child, or funerals also sufficed as reasons to invite a local troupe come to perform.⁷¹ Zhong Kui performance is found in a private household in the Ming novel *Jinping mei* 金瓶梅 (*The Plum in the Golden Vase*), in the 65th *hui* where the funeral for Li Ping'er's 李瓶兒 death performs a play titled, *Wugui naopan* 五鬼鬧判 (*The Five Demons Tease the Judge*), and the judge here refers to Zhong Kui.

In addition to public performances, there was a new audience of readers of plays. The shift of economic and cultural center from the Northern China in the Jin and Yuan dynasty to the Yangzi region in the Ming dynasty was accompanied with more mobility

⁷⁰ *Huiguan* 會館 is a tradition established in the Ming dynasty. It refers to houses situated in an urban space for people from the same hometown to assemble for leisure or business purposes. For a more detailed study on *huiguan*, please refer to Du Yongtao, *The Order of Places Translocal Practices of the Huizhou Merchants in Late Imperial China* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2014).

⁷¹ For how death ritual can be interpreted outside of the theatrical context, see Evelyn S. Rawski, "A Historian's Approach to Chinese Death Ritual," in *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China* edited by James L. Watson & Evelyn S. Rawski, pp 22-3.

to travel, which was strongly evident in the newly risen mercantile class. According to Katherine Carlitz in her “Printing as Performance,” “travelling merchants seem to have been prime customers for inexpensive editions of plays that they could take on their travels. Thus, literati and merchant social life both fed the growing demand for new plays.”⁷² While the literati contributed more to the playwriting and distribution, the travelling mercantile class was the one that consumed the mass printed texts. In the Ming dynasty, more and more literati became the major force in playwriting, therefore drama is considered “the most pleasant way to absorb the high culture tradition.”⁷³ Being part of the discourse of the high culture is a means to acquire status, to seek upward social mobility.

As Katherine Carlitz argues, “The simultaneous flowering of drama and drama printing in the mid- to late Ming was in some sense the appearance of a new genre in a new medium. Xylography, of course, was already centuries old; printed books were no novelty in Ming China.”⁷⁴ The pre-existing xylography met with the high demand of cultural participation from both the playwrights and their readers. Essentially, printed plays also allowed more liberty for the readers to appreciate the joy of leisure reading even when they are travelling. Stephen West provides a similar argument about the dualistic nature of Chinese plays in the Ming. In *Text and Ideology* he contends that the transformation from a “script” to a “narrative” demonstrates rationalization during the process. He argues, “as these texts were published and as the manuscripts were fleshed

⁷² “Printing as Performance,” p 272.

⁷³ “Printing as Performance,” p 273.

⁷⁴ “Printing as Performance,” p 34.

out, they changed in nature from scripts (or at least production-based texts) to a fully rationalized narrative form.”⁷⁵

The history of *zaju* and Chinese theater seems to become a middle ground where the common folks could enjoy the same or similar entertainment as the gentry and royal family and an arena to exhibit how the high culture negotiates grounds with the so-called low and vulgar culture. What West argues in *Text and Ideology* is a perfect way to conclude this section:

“As our sources make clear, rich merchants in the period 1100-1450 were among the principal patrons of the theater and of entertainers, but they were certainly not the only ones. All walks of life in pre-modern China, in town and countryside, enjoyed theatrical entertainment. Relatively few people may have been able to afford to visit the commercial theaters or to visit a courtesan’s establishment to watch her perform, but all could watch the show on permanent or temporary stages outside the local shrine. The rise of the theater in the period 1100-1450 was not dependent on the rise of any one specific class outside the theatrical professions. It was an integral aspect of the changing society of that time—bringing pleasure to the officials and masses, to the landholder and the peasant, and to the merchants and the townfolks.”⁷⁶

West’s observation about the integral nature of Chinese theatrical experience is especially useful in combination with Zhong Kui’s multidimensionality displayed in the plays. As the local theater brings together participants from different social groups,

⁷⁵ Stephen West, *Text and Ideology*.

⁷⁶ Idema and West, *Chinese Theater 1100-1450*, p 9.

hierarchy, financial standing, and educational background, a multidimensional Zhong Kui blurs geographical, spatial, and social boundaries.

3. Textual History of Zhong Kui Literature

Scholars largely agree that the earliest origin of Zhong Kui was a wooden ritual flying mammal that exorcists living as early as the Han dynasty used to kill demons.⁷⁷ This origin represents a grand tradition of exorcism that was later merged into Daoism. *Erya* 爾雅, the oldest surviving Chinese dictionary known that is roughly dated to the 3rd century BCE, associates the phrase with a type of mushroom.⁷⁸ Whereas *Kaogong ji* 考工記 (the *Book of Diverse Crafts*) compiled towards the end of the spring and autumn periods, correlates the term Zhongkui with *Zhongkui* 終葵, which is a wooden stalk that resembles the stalk of the mushroom. In the Six Dynasties, the term “Zhong Kui” bore variations such as zhong kui 鍾馗 and zhong kui 鍾葵, and it was used as a common name with no clear indication of the gender and social rank of the person who had this name.⁷⁹ An example of the name Zhong Kui being associated with apotropaic connotations is evident in *Beishi*, in which a person who had the name “Yao Zhongkui” 堯鍾葵 also had the courtesy name “averting evil” (*bixie* 辟邪).⁸⁰

⁷⁷ *Zhong Kui yanjiu*, pp 20-1.

⁷⁸ Karlgren Bernhard, “The Early History of the Chou Li and Tso Chuan Texts,” *Bulletin of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities* 3, pp1-59.

⁷⁹ Li Yanshou 李延壽 (7th century), *Beishi* 北史, *Er shi si shi* 二十四史 (Shanghai: Hanfenlou, 1916).

⁸⁰ *Weishu* 魏書

The Tang dynasty marks Zhong Kui's first entrance as a state sanctioned deity on the stage. *Tang yishi*, a lost late Tang record, first describes Zhong Kui as a failed marshal examination candidate who wears blue robes associated with one's social status as a commoner in the era. Moreover, in the Tang legend, Zhong Kui failed the next higher degree of examination during the Wude era, but the Emperor Gaozu granted him an honorable burial of a court official of the green-robe rank at the time of his death, which grants the exorcist power to eradicate the petty demons that leads to a full recovery of the Emperor Minghuang's malarial fever.⁸¹

The account in *Tang yishi* is similar to the Zhong Kui entry in *Sanjiao yuanliu soushen daquan* discussed at the beginning of the first section, except for the missing information on the Emperor Gaozu in the Ming compendium. However, Zhong Kui's exorcistic power and his driven motivation to eradicate all demons under heaven as endowed by the Emperor Minghuang has remained central in his divine identity. The connection between the exorcist and the Emperor Minghuang has indeed become prevalent in the Tang literature.

An example of such a connection can be found in Li Yuanguai's 李元規 (flourished around 766) poem dedicated to Zhong Kui. We read:

“Hundreds of ghosts constantly disturbed the officials and the commoners,
His mighty power cured the Emperor Minghuang's fever in his dream.
Surrounded by servants front and back, Zhong Kui roams,
Overturning the demonic crowd and became their master.”

“百鬼紛紛擾士民，明皇選得夢中身。

⁸¹ For the translation of “Meng Zhong Kui” *Tianzhongji* fascicle 4. Please refer to appendix 2, “Meng Zhong Kui” 梦钟馗.

前呼後擁中山道，翻與羣妖作主人。”

By the end of the Song dynasty, Zhong Kui transforms from a blue-robcs-wearing commoner to a lower official who wears a horn-waist belt (*jiaodai* 角帶). One of the most comprehensive accounts of Zhong Kui can be found in the Song dynasty scholar Shen Kuo's 沈括 (1031-1095) *Mengxi bitan* 夢溪筆談 (*Jottings of Dream Creek*). We read:

“One day during the Kaiyuan reign [713-742], after returning to the palace from bow-and-arrow practice in Mt. Li, Minghuang, [the emperor Xuanzong] fell ill. Nearly a month, he suffered from malaria, which neither the shamans nor the royal doctors could provide a cure. One night, he dreamt of two demons, one large and the other small. [...] Exposing one of his arms and wearing a pair of leather boots, the large demon caught the small demon, gouged out its eyes, then tore him to pieces and ate it. When being asked him who he was, he introduced to the emperor, ‘I am Zhong Kui, who failed the imperial provincial exam in military affairs, had vowed to rid the world of demons for the emperor.’ At these words, Minghuang awoke to find himself recovered instantly and better health.”⁸²

“明皇開元講武驪山，歲翠華還宮，上不怪，因疢作，將逾月。巫醫殫伎，不能致良。忽一夕，夢二鬼，一大一小。[...]其大者[...]，乃捉其小者，剗其目，然後擘而啖之。上問大者曰：「爾何人也？」奏云：「臣鍾馗氏，即武舉不捷之士也。誓與陛下除天下之妖孽。」夢覺，疢若頓瘳，而體益壯”

⁸² Translation modified on Joyce Tsai's translation.

The prolific poet Lu You 陸游 (1125-1210) describes Zhong Kui in several of his poems: “Xinyou chuxi” 辛酉除夕 (“New Year’s Eve in the Year of *xinyou*”), “Xinsui” 新歲 (“A New Year”), and “Chuye” 除夜 (“New Year’s Eve”). My translation of “Xinsui” reads as follows:

“Zhong Kui who refreshes the year anew has arrived,
 Still wearing his old green winter jacket.
 The old chef is serving the noodle cake soup,
 The lame maidservants are warming up the *tusu* wine.
 Carried with the dried food the Demon of the Poor is sent away,
 Setting up the flat basket for grain to receive the Purple Maid.⁸³
 The younger ones are deceiving the blind,
 Gathered around the light of candles they are playing around.”

“改岁锤馗在，依然旧绿襦。

老庖供餽飪，跣婢暖屠苏。

载糗送穷鬼，扶箕迎紫姑。

儿童欺老瞶，明烛聚呼卢。”⁸⁴

Zhong Kui’s exorcistic powers are also recognized in Buddhist records. A few evidential entries can be traced under Monks and Chan Masters’ recorded transcripts in the *Chinese Buddhist Canon* (*Dazangjing* 大藏經). Occasionally, Zhong Kui is also used

⁸³ *Fuji* 扶乩 is a spirit writing practice, the practitioners are often possessed by the spirits and play the medium between the human and other world. During the spiritual possession, the practitioners will write down characters or symbols that need knowledge on the field to be decoded.

⁸⁴ *Quansong shi* 全宋詩 (*The Completed Collections of the Song Dynasty Poems*).

as a nominal phrase. For instance, in “Lin’anfu jingcichan si yulu” 臨安府淨慈禪寺語錄 (“Transcripts of Master’s Sayings in Jingjican Monastery of Lin’an”), we read:⁸⁵

“The Jade Emperor’s parade of insignia of power reaches the end of the purple clouds. It is the 5th day in the 5th month. Going up in the hall. The skies are grey and the earth magnificent. Who knows that Zhong Kui is originally a ghost?”

“玉皇仙仗紫雲端。重午, 上堂, 天蒼蒼地皇皇還知麼, 鍾馗元是鬼。”⁸⁶

The same source also mentions Zhong Kui’s sister and contextualizes her presence with exorcism. We read:

“Going up in the hall. The 5th day in the 5th month is the Tianzhong festival. Ten thousand malicious spirits and thousands of demonic monsters are all eradicated. Picking up abode of gods from an eye, and haul the wedge for nails from an ear. Zhong Kui and his sister dance among the three *tai*.⁸⁷ The eight armed Nuozha chews the raw metals.⁸⁸ Hurry, hurry, I command you!”

⁸⁵ *Lin’an pu* is the nowadays Hangzhou 杭州 in Zhejiang 浙江 province.

⁸⁶ “Ling’anfu jingcichan si yulu” 臨安府淨慈禪寺語錄 in *The Chinese Buddhist Canon* 大正新脩大藏經, pp 123-3.

⁸⁷ *Santai* 三台 are a stellar configuration (usually depicted on the uppermost part of talismans) that situate the god’s presence within celestial spheres.

Santai can also imply the bureaucratic system in pre-modern China, and each *tai* may denote to different official position depending on the dynasty. For instance, in the Tang dynasty, the three *tai* refers to *shangshushen* 尚書省 (also refers to as *zhongtai* 中台), *zhongshushen* 中書省 (also refers to as *xitai* 西台), and *menxiashen* 門下省 (also refers to as *dongtai* 東台).

⁸⁸ *Nezha* 哪吒, which can be written as No-cha or Na-cha, is described as the third son of Nata of one of the Four Heavenly Kings in Buddhist tradition, Vaisravana (bishamen tianwang 毘沙門天王) in *Fengshen yanyi* 封神演義.

“上堂云。五月五日天中節。萬崇千妖俱殄滅。眼裏拈卻須彌山。耳中拔出釘根楔。鍾馗小妹舞三臺。八臂那吒嚼生鐵。敕攝截急急如律令。”⁸⁹

Hundreds of years later, scholars, literati, and artists returned to the Tang legend repeatedly and expanded upon it, especially the part recounting Zhong Kui's efficacy in combating Emperor Xuanzong's malarial fever through the execution of mischievous petty demons. For example, Ming physician Li Shizhen 李時珍 (1518-1593) juxtaposed the liturgical aspect of the folklore with the nominal phrase *Zhongkui*, describing the similar subject matter from a therapeutic approach.⁹⁰ In *Bencao gangmu* 本草綱目 (*Compendium of Materia Medica*), he provides two sources where *Zhongkui* is used as a nominal phrase. The Ming scholar Wang Zhengshu 王正書 quotes Shen's entry in his book *Zhong Kui kaoshi* 鍾馗考實 (*Investigation of the Historicity of Zhong Kui*).⁹¹ The late Ming scholar Gu Yanwu's 顧炎武 (1613-1682) contribution to the etymology of Zhong Kui can be found in his *Rizhi lu* 日知錄 (*Entries of Daily Learning*), under the entry “Zhong Kui tiao” 鍾馗條.⁹²

⁸⁹ “Yuanwu fogou chanshi yulu” 圓悟佛果禪師語錄, volume 7 卷七, pp 742-1.

⁹⁰ According to Li Shizhen 李時珍, Zhongkui is a type of mushroom. In *Kaogong ji*, a specific type of bat is called zhongkui, because the mushroom resembles the shape of the bat, therefore, they have the same name. In folklore, there used to be a deity, holding a bat to strike the ghosts, which is why the deity is also named Zhong Kui. People that liked to meddle with things painted the image of Zhong Kui, giving him a background story in which he is a failed exam candidate who is fond of eating ghosts. That's where the narrative is derived from. People are not aware of the fact that that is misinformation. And the original quote reads as follows, “時珍謹按《爾雅》云：鍾馗，菌名也。《考工記》注云：終葵，椎名也。菌似椎形，椎似菌形，故得同稱。俗畫神執一椎擊鬼，故亦名鍾馗。好事者因作鍾馗，傳言是未第進士能啖鬼，遂成故事，不知其訛矣。理學彙編字學典第 654 冊第 30 頁之 2 第 152 卷《鍾馗集解》。”

⁹¹ Wang believes that the name Zhong Kui is derived from “Zhong Kui shi” 終葵氏。

⁹² To summarize the entry, Gu basically associates the name Zhong Kui, regardless its variations, with the idea of exorcisms. He also points out that 終葵, which is a homophones of 鍾馗, is a long wooden device

Moreover, in the Ming dynasty, Zhong Kui began to be portrayed as a failed examination candidate in full length literary texts such as the vernacular novel *The Legend of Zhong Kui* (唐鍾馗全傳 *Zhong Kui quan zhuan*. Hereafter, *Quan zhuan*).⁹³ This vernacular novel is the first known hagiography dedicated to Zhong Kui. It consists of four *juan* 卷 (volume) with page by page illustrations that encounter the storyline on the same page. The image in Figure 1.1 is a demonstration of the said style:

that was used by the ancient Chinese to cast of the evil spirit. Gu is skeptical about Zhong Kui being Tang dynasty person as recorded in Shen Kuo's *Mengxi bitan*.

⁹³ According to *Xiaoshuo shufang lu* 小說書坊錄: *Zhong Kui quan zhuan* 鍾馗全傳 is a shorter version of the full title: *Dianqie quanxiang anjian tang Zhong Kui quan zhuan* 鼎鍬全像按鑑唐鍾馗全傳, which appears on the first page of the main body of the novel. Scholars have established that this novel was first printed in the Wanli reign of the Ming dynasty. *Quan xiang* indicates that this novel is illustrated page by page, and the illustration matches the storyline on that page. However, the illustration does not stress the characteristics of the persona in the novel. *Quan xiang* is a popular illustration style both during and before the reign of Wanli 萬曆. By the end of the Ming dynasty, this style of illustrating the novels is replaced by another style called *xiu xiang* 繡像. This new style of illustrating novel pays more attention to the inner world the persona instead of the ups and downs of the storyline. As for *an jian* 按鑑, it reveals the taxonomy behind the whole Zhong Kui legends. According to a Chinese scholar Tu Xiuhong, *an jian* style Ming novels follow the taxonomy of *Zi zhi tong jian* 資治通鑑, or *Zi zhi tong jian gang mu* 資治通鑑綱目.



Figure 1.1

The Minghuang story is preserved in volume four of this novel and titled “Zhuohuo xiaogui” 捉獲小鬼 (“Capturing the Petty Demon”), in which the description of Zhong Kui is as follows:

“Suddenly [the emperor] saw a large demon, wearing an official cap and dressed in long blue robes; a horn-waist belt was adorned at his waist. He wore long official boots, holding a sword in his left hand and a register in his right hand. He

went directly to the petty demon, gouged out his eyes, torn him apart and ate him.”

“俄見一大鬼，頭戴紗帽，身穿藍袍，腰繫角帶，腳鞞朝靴，左手執劍，右手持簡，徑捉小鬼，先剝其目，然後擘而啖之。”

And the portrayal of Zhong Kui's image became an issue to be discussed at the emperor's morning meeting with his subjects. Moreover, a temple was erected in Zhong Kui's name in this account. We read:

“I would like to call for a palace artist to paint an image [of Zhong Kui], distributing this image among all under heaven, letting all households offer sacrifices [to him] at the time of worship.” Upon hearing [the emperor], an official stepped out of the queue and suggested, “Now there is an artist named Wu Daozi whose best talent is painting; [he acts as if he were] communicating with the spirits once he strokes his brush pen.” After hearing this, the emperor called for Wu Daozi. The emperor recounted what he saw in his dream. By the royal decree, Daozi started to paint immediately as if he had seen the emperor's dream. The emperor was pleased upon seeing the finished portrait, then he ordered the minister of the Ministry of Works, Yu Yi'neng, to oversee the erection of the temples, set up Zhong Kui's portrait in the temple. [The emperor] granted the epithet of the Grand General that Guards the Empire, Protects the People, and Subdues the Demons. After the canonization, the emperor announced it to all under heaven. Until today, [Zhong Kui's] efficacy has never grown weak, and he manifests himself everywhere.”

“朕欲詔一畫工，畫其圖像，遍傳天下，令戶戶供奉，祭祀以時。」言訖，忽有一臣出班奏曰：「今有畫工吳道子，丹青最巧，舉筆通神。」上聽罷，

遂詔吳道子入朝。上即以夢中之事與之言焉。道子奉旨，立筆成圖，恍若有睹。上見之甚悅，遂命工部尚書余以能，督造殿宇，將鍾進士圖像，供奉於其內，敕封為護國佑民降妖大元帥。封畢，復詔頒天下。至今威靈不昧，顯著萬方。”

In his monograph *The Legend of Miaoshan*, Glen Dudbridge juxtaposes *The Legends of Zhong Kui* with the other thirteen vernacular novels published in the Ming dynasty, in which he argues, “This book stands squarely within a class of popular fiction issued by a group of Jianyang publishers during the course of the Wanli reign (1573-1619). This can be shown by comparison with a group of fourteen specimens chosen from a much larger range of similar publications for their close formal resemblance to the Guanyin work.”⁹⁴ Despite the fact that the *Legends of Zhong Kui* is by far the most comprehensive hagiography of the deity, Dudbridge’s mentioning of it as one among the fourteen vernacular novels published during the course of the Wanli reign brings a new light into understanding the popularity of both the deity and vernacular fiction as literary means to transmit legends.

Similar to the Tang and Song dynasties, traces of exorcist Zhong Kui are found in various literary genres during the Ming. A couplet from one of Wu Cheng’en’s 吳承恩

⁹⁴ Referred as “this book” in the following quote, *Quanxiang Guanyin chushen nanyouji zhuan* 全像觀音出身南遊記傳 is regarded as one of the fourteen novels in the series by Glen Dudbridge, of which *quan zhuan* is numbered the first one in the group. “This book stands squarely within a class of popular fiction issued by a group of Jianyang publishers during the course of the Wanli reign (1573-1619). This can be shown by comparison with a group of fourteen specimens chosen from a much larger range of similar publications for their close formal resemblance to the Guanyin work. Identified by short titles, they are: 1. *Zhong Kui quan zhuan* 鍾馗全傳 2. *Chengyun zhuan* 承運傳 3. *Niulang Zhiniu zhuan* 牛郎織女傳 4. *Xuan di chu shen zhuan* 玄帝出身傳 5. *Huangguang tianwang zhuan* 華光天王傳 6. *Damo chu shen zhuan deng zhuan* 達摩出身傳燈傳 7. *Shang dong ba xian zhuan* 上洞八仙傳 8. *Tang sanzang xi you shi e zhuan* 唐三藏西遊釋厄傳 9. *Niansi zun de dao luohan zhuan* 廿四尊得道羅漢傳 10. *Huang ming zhu si gong’an zhuan* 皇明諸司公案傳 11. *Ming jing gong’an zhuan* 明鏡公案傳 12. *Xiang qing gong’an* 詳情公案 13. *Xian fa xiang she hai you ji zhuan* 顯法降蛇海遊記傳 14. *Sanzang chu shen zhuan* 三藏出身傳,” *The Legend of Miaoshan*, pp 59-60.

(ca. 1500-1582) verses reflect on Zhong Kui's scholarly background in the making of his divine identity. In his "Erlang soushantu ge" 二郎搜山圖歌 ("A Song of Erlang Searching the Mountains") we read:

"The exam candidate of Mt. Zhongnan, the old Zhong Kui,
Devouring the petty demons *xu* and *hao* at the royal palace, which is futile."

“中南進士老鍾馗，空向宮闈啗虛耗。”

Two vernacular novels from the Qing dynasty contribute to the Zhong Kui narratives, of which one is titled *Tang Zhong Kui Pinggui zhuan* 唐鍾馗平鬼傳 (The Legends of the Tang Zhong Kui Pacifying the Demons) and consists of eight *juan* and sixteen *hui*.⁹⁵ The other one is titled *Zhangui zhuan* 斬鬼傳 (*Eradication of the Demons*), which consists of ten *hui* and delivers the stories in a strong satirical tone.⁹⁶

Vernacular novels in the late imperial period focused on demons and deities were employed by contemporary literary critics such as Lu Xun and Sun Kaidi. Even though such an employment was used for the purpose of westernizing pre-modern Chinese novels, it provides possibilities to rethink the value of these novels outside of a literary context.⁹⁷ In *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue* 中國小說史略 (*A Brief History of Chinese*

⁹⁵ The novel *Ping gui zhuan* 平鬼傳 is known as a Qing dynasty novel. The remaining bits and pieces hint that this novel is attributed to a person called Yunzhong daoren 雲中道人. According to Sun Kaidi 孫楷第 (1898-1989), this novel consists of eight volumes, and in total, there are sixteen *hui*. To quote the original words of his: “唐鍾馗平鬼傳八卷十六回 存 清乾隆乙巳廣州刊本...題《東山云中道人編》。與通行本《第九才子書》不同。未知與明本關係如何。” Sun Kaidi 孫楷第, *Zhong guo tong su xiao shuo shu mu* 中國通俗小說書目 (*Catalogue of the Chinese Vernacular Novels*) (Beijing 北京: Renming wenxue chubanshe 人民文學出版社, 1982), Volume 7, Mingqing xiaoshuo bu yi 明清小說部乙, p 196.

⁹⁶ *Zhangui zhuan* 斬鬼傳 (*The Legends Regarding Demon Killing*).

⁹⁷ For a detailed study on the Chinese novels in the Ming and Qing, please refer to Mark Meulenbeld, *Demonic Warfare: Daoism, Territorial Networks, and the History of a Ming Novel*, chapter 1.

Fiction), Lu Xun claims that the Qing novel *Pinggui zhuan* belongs with the tradition of “shenmo xiaoshuo” 神魔小說 (deities and demons fiction), a literary tradition that elevates the status of the Daoist priests and immortals. This tradition reached its peak in the Xuanhe 宣和 reign of the Song dynasty and was weakened in the early Ming, but it experienced a revival in the Mid-Ming. Moreover, Lu Xun concludes that the Ming novel as represented by *Pinggui zhuan* is by no means hypocrisy forged by the Daoists. Instead, they are derived from the local stories circulated on the streets and in the back alleys. While the quality and content may seem to be sketchy, their popularity had reached a general audience, and they even attracted the mainstream literati to join the development.⁹⁸ Sun Kaidi notes in his *Zhong guo tong su xiao shuo shu mu* that the aforementioned novel consists of eight volumes.

As these novels transform Zhong Kui’s identity, a great number of plays in the Ming and Qing dynasties were also produced and printed when Chinese theater took a historic turn in the Ming and Qing eras.⁹⁹ The plays translated and analyzed in this dissertation are a few examples among them. However, both the novels and plays continue to draw inspiration from the initial Tang legend. Additionally, in the Ming dynasty Zhong Kui was canonized; the texts from this period portray Zhong Kui as a divinity surrounded by a cluster of popular gods such as the City God, the Earth God, and the New Year’s Gods. Zhong Kui’s identity has found a new dimension. He is recruited

⁹⁸ *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilue*, Ming zhi shenmo xiaoshuo (shang) 明之神魔小說 (上)

⁹⁹ In my appendix II, I include a translation of a play entry originally composed by Zhang Xinqi 張心其 (fl. around the end of the Shunzhi reign 順治 [1644-1661]). The original manuscript of the play is no longer extant. However, *Quhai zongmu tiyao* 曲海總目提要 preserves an entry that summarizes the original play. This play and the commentaries adhered to it provide valuable information to understand Zhong Kui’s multidimensionality not only in Chinese theater, but also through describing various literary and visual representations of the deity ever since the Tang dynasty.

by the Daoist ritual masters, woven into a larger network of Daoism by both Daoist and non-Daoist writers.

4. Visual Presentations of Zhong Kui¹⁰⁰

As the Minghuang story mentioned at the beginning of this introduction indicates, visual representations of Zhong Kui are essential because his iconography is inseparable from the making of the deity's hagiography. More importantly, the visual representation of the deity not only defines and enhances his power as a deity, but also captures and emphasizes the playfulness substantialized especially through the dynamics among him and the petty demon(s). The petty demons, however, can be regarded as an overlap between his entourage and his defeated foes. For example, while it is commonly known that Zhong Kui's power to subdue the demons is derived from his ferocious appearance and propensity for violence, we can only rely heavily on visual representations to comprehend fully this power.

Besides providing textual authority for the Zhong Kui literature, the Tang legend also establishes an iconographical tradition on the image of the deity. In the legend, the description with regard to Wu Daozi 吳道子 painting an official portrait of Zhong Kui for the emperor is also translated into the artworks of Chinese artists and deemed as the quasi authoritative voice in the iconography. Wu Daozi set up the trend for portraying Zhong Kui in certain ways that artists of different dynasties, various schools, and diverse social backgrounds would imitate up to the present. We read the account in the following:

¹⁰⁰ This section in my introduction is inspired by Chun-yi Joyce Tsai's dissertation on *Imagining the Supernatural Grotesque: Paintings of Zhong Kui and Demons in the Late Southern Song (1127-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) Dynasties*. She went to the museums to take pictures of the Zhong Kui scrolls and generously shared those images with me. Photo credit of Figure 1.5, Figure 1.6, Figure 1.8, and Figure 1.9: Chun-yi Joyce Tsai.

“Without delay he summoned the court artist Wu Daozi to paint a portrait of Zhong Kui as seen in his dream. Wu Daozi went to work immediately and painted Zhong Kui as if he had seen him with his own eyes. When he presented the finished portrait to the Emperor, the Emperor exclaimed, ‘You and I must have had the same dream!’ He awarded Wu one hundred *taels* of gold.”

All plays translated in this dissertation share two common general trends: first of all, between Zhong Kui and the petty demons, which are often referred to as *xuhao*, the contrasts are often presented in such a way that Zhong Kui’s superiority in body size, traits, behaviors, and body language is stressed. In other words, the demon queller is comparably bigger, more ferocious, and dominant. Secondly, the plays collectively depict Zhong Kui with repulsive facial features. More specific details attributed to his iconography vary from one play to another. For example, *Nao Zhong Kui* describes the cap Zhong Kui wears as *tangjin* 唐巾.¹⁰¹ In *Taofu ji*, Zhong Kui describes himself: “My face is green and hair red, and I am in possession of great abilities. One of my eyes is wide open and the other one remains closed.” “面青髮赤有大才。一目藏睛一目開。”

I argue that the vivid and meticulous description of Zhong Kui’s attire and physical appearance serves multiple purposes. First of all, the attire indicates Zhong Kui’s social status: a soft cap, long blue robe, and black official boots all give away his rank as an official before the self-introductory statement later. Secondly, his soft cap is rumpled and sized considerably bigger than the petty demons, which implies that he is out of ordinary as both an official and demon. Last but not least, the eye gouging and

¹⁰¹ It is a casual soft cap the Tang emperors would wear. Later on, dancers or men with ranks wore this cap. In the Ming dynasty, scholars and men in office would wear this cap, too. This hat has two soft tails that go to the back of the head.

devouring parts denotes his ferocious nature as a demon queller. The rich and intriguing information embedded in such descriptions inspired Chinese artists of well-known and anonymous, which intimately connected the iconography with the textual tradition on the exorcist.

This section addresses the popularity of Zhong Kui in Chinese visual arts with a focus on a few selective paintings preserving the ferocious nature of the demon queller. It is rather intriguing that even in the most docile editions reiterated by the artists where Zhong Kui was portrayed as a scholar, or a scholar official, striking features such as the bulging eyes, the disheveled hair and facial hair, and his physical body size are still quite pronounced. These features might be seen as the middle ground that different schools, lineages, and classes of artists are able to agree upon. It would be rather arbitrary to claim this middle ground discerns the same textual authority attached to the Tang Minghuang and Zhong Kui legend. However, it seems plausible that both the textual and visual representations of Zhong Kui reminisce on the remaining bits and pieces of the ancient *nuo* tradition. Even though Zhong Kui is officially recognized as the deity of scholars in the Ming dynasty, and the weaponry like a sword which had accompanied Zhong Kui in paintings is replaced by a brush pen, its function preserves the harmonious order of the cosmos, which is at the core of the New Year's cleansing rituals.¹⁰²

The following two images depict Zhong Kui as a scholar official:

¹⁰² Check Patricia Buckley Ebrey on Zhong Kui.



Anonymous (ca. 18th century), “Chung K’uei [Zhong Kui] Kicking a Ball” (“Zhong Kui cuju tu” 鍾馗蹴鞠圖). Album leaf, ink on silk, 18.4 x 19.7 cm. National Palace Museum, Taipei (Source: Liu, *Yinsui jifu*, fig. 15a)



Figure 1.3

Puru 溥儒 (1896- 1963), “Chung K’uei [Zhong Kui] in Red Ink” (“Zhubi Zhong Kui” 朱筆鍾馗). Hanging scroll, ink and color on paper, 86.2 x 42 cm. (Source: Liu, *Yinsui jifu*, fig. 24)

Figures 1.2 and 1.3, acknowledging the possibly several hundred years' time gap between them, Zhong Kui is portrayed as a scholar official: the soft cap, the official robe and boots as described in the Tang legend give away his social status almost instantaneously. Although in the first painting, Zhong Kui is depicted to have a rather lively persona, the higher authority and hierarchical status he possessed are expressed through: 1: the contrast of the body size among him and the two petty demons, 2: similar but not exactly identical official attire among the three. Zhong Kui's attire is neatly worn and the two petty demons are wearing it in a sloppy and anti-authority fashion. In the second painting, the contrast in terms of size, official attire, and body gesture strikes the viewer nearly the same as the first one. However, the petty demon depicted in this painting seems to be more demonic and not nearly as cultured as the two in the first painting by comparison.

In both paintings, some of the key facial features of Zhong Kui are virtually identical: long and disheveled facial hair, the bulging eyes, and a high nose.



Figure 1.4

Gong Kai 龔開 (1221-1305), “Zhong Kui Goes on An Excursion” (“Zhongshan chuyou tu” 中山出遊圖). Handscroll, ink on paper, 32.8cm*169.5cm. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (F 1938.4) (Source: Nataka and Fu, *Ō-Bei shūzō*, plate 8)



Figure 1.5

Part of Gong Kai 龔開 (1221-1305), “Zhong Kui Goes on an Excursion” (“Zhongshan chuyou tu” 中山出遊圖).



Figure 1.6

Attributed to Yan Geng 顏庚 (fl. Around Southern Song, or Yuan dynasty), *Zhong Kui Giving His Sister Away in Marriage* 鍾馗嫁妹圖. Handscroll, ink on silk, 24.4 x 253.4 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art (1990.134). (Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Figure 1.7

Part of Yan Geng 顏庚 (fl. Around Southern Song, or Yuan dynasty), *Zhong Kui Giving His Sister Away in Marriage* 鍾馗嫁妹圖

In the above two scrolls (see Figures 1.4 and 1.6), although in different mode of transportation, the first one in a sedan chair and the second one on horseback, the core Zhong Kui elements as aforementioned with regard to the cap, the long robe, and the official boots are present in both. Additionally, the first scroll depicts an excursion and the second one demonstrates the rituals related to weddings. There is a prevalence of less human looking petty demons (Figure 1.4), and the various acrobatics that they perform (Figure 1.6).

The higher authority of Zhong Kui and his sister are also demonstrated through the mode of transportation in both scrolls. Both the sedan chair and horse would physically elevate the height of Zhong Kui and his sister. More importantly, riding in a sedan chair or on the horseback in the Song and Yuan periods indicates one's social

superiority.¹⁰³ Among all four plays studied in this dissertation, two of them accompany Zhong Kui's presence with his sister, especially in *Zhongmei*, skeletons and petty demons nearly crowd the stage and function as the background of the play. For instance, the play opens with Zhong Kui's younger sister singing about making a skeleton string using the petty demons and making hair pins out of their long ribs, which strikes a similar, if not the same ambience as elicited in fig 1.4. Here, Zhong Kui's facial structure is monstrous looking, and similarly in fig 1.6, the broken umbrella signals his fallen social status.

Moreover, these imperfections can be understood as the indicator of Zhong Kui's existence as an otherworldly being. In the last chapter "Ghosts and Theatricality" of *The Phantom Heroine*, Zeitlin points out that *hunpa* 魂帕 (spirit kerchief) is used as stage apparatuses and techniques in the Ming dynasty *chuanqi* plays to indicate the female ghost roles in constituting theatricality.¹⁰⁴ I argue that the broken umbrella and canopy in portraits of Zhong Kui have similar functions to the spirit kerchief in the making of theatricality, both transform the actual items into techniques to define the dramatic roles. Like Zeitlin's historical reconstruction of the stage apparatuses and techniques crafted through the detailed stage directions in the seventeenth century *chuanqi* plays, the ruined and broken objects such as torn robes are also included as costumes and ornaments descriptions in *Taofu ji*.

¹⁰³ According to Shiu-lan Huang and Wei-chao Chang, Sedan chairs, *jiaozi* 轎子 in Chinese, has become a common vehicle to replace horses and donkeys in the Northern Song dynasty. While riding in a sedan chair may be regarded as degrading humans to the level of animals such as horses and donkeys because sedan chairs are powered by men in the Northern Song dynasty. Nonetheless, towards the end of the Song dynasty, it became a common means for transportation in which even prostitutes and actors and entertainers would ride. The Song court had to issue a ban on commoners riding on sedan chairs. By the Southern Song dynasty, all officials and even emperor's attendants started to use sedan chair as mode of transportation. For more details on this subject, please refer to Huang, Shiu-lan & Chang, Wei-chao ed., *Along the River During the Qingming Festival*, pp 219-221.

¹⁰⁴ Zeitlin, *The Phantom Heroine*, pp 163-170.

Despite the theme difference, another noteworthy characteristic these two scrolls share is that Zhong Kui and his sister are situated in a setting that resembles the ritual procession as described in *Dongjing menghua lu*, the New Year *nuo* parade in the capital city of the Northern Song dynasty, a tradition that is also known as *dayehu*.¹⁰⁵ As such, *chuyou* 出遊 (excursion) in figure 1.4 should be understood as the term reserved for gods taken on a tour in a procession. As for figure 1.6, weddings in pre-modern times are ritual occasions, too. Therefore, both scrolls have strong ritual connotations. As noted in section 1, this New Year procession often recruits Zhong Kui, his sister, the earth god, and the local homeless, poor, and beggars. As they parade through streets and households at night on New Year's Eve, they dance and shout loudly to expel the evil energy.



Figure 1.8

Yan Hui 顏輝 (fl. Around end of the Song and Beginning of the Yuan), “Zhong Kui Goes on an Excursion on New Year's Eve” (“Zhong Kui yuanye chuyou tu” 鍾馗元夜出遊). Handscroll, ink and slight color on silk, 24.8 x 240.3 cm. The Cleveland Museum of Art (61.206) (Source: The Cleveland Museum of Art)

¹⁰⁵ Please refer to my note 33 regarding *dayehu*.



Figure 1.9

Part of Yan Hui 顏輝 (fl. Around end of the Song and Beginning of the Yuan), “Zhong Kui Goes on an Excursion on New Year’s Eve” (“Zhong Kui yuanye chuyou” 鍾馗元夜出遊).

Figure 1.8 shares similar traits with the previous two. The official attire endorses Zhong Kui’s official rank of some sort; the broken umbrella reinforces that Zhong Kui is a fallen official. The mode of transportation is also different from the previous two. Instead of riding in a sedan chair, or on horseback, Zhong Kui is being physically carried by three petty demons, which is an expression of his superiority over the petty demons. All these dynamics among Zhong Kui and the petty demons create comical effects that build into the deity’s multidimensionality.

The third scroll (fig 1.8) clearly denotes the time of event depicted: *yuanye* 元夜 (New Year’s Eve). Titled as “Zhong Kui yuanye chuyou,” the scenery where the demons

are performing acrobatics recalls similarities as displayed in the second scroll (fig. 1.6) where Zhong Kui is giving his sister away in marriage. That similarity stresses the idea that this scroll is reminiscing on the ancient *nuo* parade by reconstructing the New Year's procession.

In conclusion, both the Gong Kai and Yan Hui paintings depict the exorcist Zhong Kui goes on an excursion as a deity, and the Yan Geng painting reenacts a traditional wedding scene, all three of which are ritually connoted and are collectively inspired by the early Zhong Kui iconography manifested through the textual evidence in the Tang discussed in the subsection 4. Moreover, they also incorporate the determining features such as official cap, bulging eyes, disheveled facial hair, and long robe to define the exorcist's official status. Individually, however, apparent differences in how details are articulated in each painting are suggestive of dynamic historical, aesthetic, and personal preferences in the artistic realm. For instance, these dynamics can be observed through the distinct representations of Zhong Kui's cap. To be more specific, while the caps Zhong Kui wears in the various paintings discussed in this section differ, they all appear to be a *tangjin*, which is a cap that originated in the Tang dynasty and proved to be prevalent among scholar officials in the Tang and Ming dynasties. Detailed analysis of specific meanings of these unique characteristics goes beyond the scope of this study. However, I want to emphasize the importance studying the plays with these visual images in mind.¹⁰⁶

5. Chapter Summaries

¹⁰⁶ *ibid*, p 180.

This dissertation aims to translate and analyze a set of the Ming and Qing Zhong Kui plays to showcase the exorcist at work. As Idema and West bring up in the article, “Zhong Kui at Work: A Complete Translation of The Immortal Officials of Happiness, Wealth, and Longevity Gather in Celebration,” the particular play they translated and studied in that article is one of the very first works that demonstrates how Zhong Kui works as an exorcist. In the light of Idema and West’s pioneering work on late imperial Zhong Kui plays, additional relevant plays selected from the Ming and Qing periods in this dissertation intend to exhibit how Zhong Kui works as an exorcist in various contexts. These plays also make it clear who works together with Zhong Kui and how the dynamic among Zhong Kui and his fellow deities maps a local pantheon.¹⁰⁷

In the Ming and Qing dynasties, theatrical presentation had become one of the common means to showcase the prevalence of the exorcist Zhong Kui. Besides catching the attention of the audience with high energy martial arts action and inviting plots that draw inspirations from pre-existing Zhong Kui legends prior to these two dynasties, dramatic portraits of Zhong Kui also embody a unique means of exorcism that provides efficacious relief transforming the repertoires not only literally but also physically. To be more specific, while the literal relief provides healing or a cure for the victims that are haunted by ghosts and spirits in the plays at a textual level, the theatrical performance

¹⁰⁷ Brokaw Cynthia J. and Chow Kai-wing (ed.), *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2005), pp 275-6. In the Ming and Qing plays, Zhong Kui is situated in a Daoist network where he is specifically ranked under the New Year’s deities (*nianshen* 年神), which is evident in the first play, *Nao Zhong Kui*. The New Year’s deities which including *fushen*, *lushen*, and *shoushen* clearly represent the triad of *fulushou* 福祿壽 which are atop many temples in China.

itself eliminates and purifies the wicked energies every time the exorcist Zhong Kui answers a call to service on the stage.¹⁰⁸

The plays translated and analyzed in this dissertation represent distinctive phases in which Chinese theater thrived and transformed. In this dissertation, I will provide my own translation and annotation of the four Ming and Qing plays in the following order:¹⁰⁹

The first chapter focuses on the play titled *Celebrating the Year of Abundance the Five Petty Demons Teasing Zhong Kui*. It is composed by the Royal Academy in the Ming dynasty.¹¹⁰ Records indicate that during the reign of the Emperor Hui 明惠帝 (1399-1402) in the Ming dynasty, this play was performed in the Ming Palace. More historic records from the Qing dynasty testify that this title served as a recurring performance for the New Year in the Ming palace.

Besides providing an annotated translation of the play, the first chapter will also introduce how certain dramatic features demonstrated in the play aid in the making of Zhong Kui as a powerful exorcist. I will elaborate in this chapter on the recurring use of

¹⁰⁸ *A Guide to Chinese Literature*, Wilt Idema and Lloyd Haft, (The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor 1997), p 191.

¹⁰⁹ In *Changing Gods in Medieval China, 1127-1276*, Valerie Hansen brings out the rise of regional cults in the Song dynasty, where she argues that “by the end of the Song, temples to the Five Manifestations, Zitong, the Heavenly Consort, and King Zhang were found throughout south China. “While Zhong Kui was not one of the regional god she discusses in the book, one of the plays discussed in the dissertation does concern the five fortune deities correlated with the five directions: East, South, West, North, and central, which are often regarded as of the similar lineage with the Five Manifestations. A very unique phenomenon about Zhong Kui is that no mass temples were erected in his honor. *A Guide to Chinese literature*, pp 18-9.

¹¹⁰ Royal academy, *jiaofang* 教坊. It is a music department established since the Wude reign in the Tang dynasty in the royal palace. This department was in charge of music education, theatrical performance, and singing and dancing. The official ranking belongs to the Ministry of Ceremonies (*taichang* 太常). In the second year of the Kaiyuan reign, another *jiaofang* was added on the side of Penglai gong 蓬萊宮. In the capital city, there were left and right *jiaofang*. In the Ming dynasty, *jiaofang* was situated under the Ministry of Rites (*libu* 禮部) and was in charge of music, dance, and entertainment. *Jiaofang* was eliminated during the Yongzheng reign 雍正 (1723-1735) in the Qing dynasty. Wang Peilun (ed.), *Xiqu cidian* 戲曲辭典 (Zhonghua shuju, 1969), p 388.

the location Mt. Zhongnan as Zhong's geographical identity related to his Daoist and literary lineage. Secondly, this chapter also brings up the relation among Zhong Kui, the five petty demons, and the Chinese New Year. I will review texts and scholarly studies that construct a bigger Daoist narrative by incorporating and expanding on the interconnections among local gods such as Zhong Kui himself and the five petty demons.

The second chapter focuses on act 4 of a play titled *The Immortal of Primordial Unity Eradicated the Peachwood Charms at Night*. The playwright remains anonymous, and it survived the selection in *Guben yuanming zaju* (mid-thirteenth century) 孤本元明雜劇. Labelled as *shenxian daohua ju* 神仙道化劇, this plays confronts absurd romantic encounters among human beings and spirits with extensive display of Daoist exorcistic practice. Though Zhong Kui only makes his dramatic appearance in act 4, this act is heavily packed with Daoist liturgical practices and showcases how Zhong Kui works in among Daoist deities.

In addition to the annotated translation, this chapter will also provide a literary context where the composition of *chuanqi* thrived in a golden age, from 1570-1630s.¹¹¹ By situating this play along with a few other play titles that share similar motifs of Daoist liturgies can be intertwined with romance among female ghost(s) and a male protagonist, this chapter will showcase Zhong Kui at work and look into how Daoist elements coming into prominence in the *chuanqi* style theater.

The main focus of the third chapter is political satires centered around the Zhong Kui plays. This chapter consists of translations of one entry retrieved by *Quhai zongmu tiyao* to recuperate a play title that is no longer extant: *Shizi zhuan* 獅子賺 (*Coaxing of*

¹¹¹ "Printing as Performance," p 273.

the Lion Head) and a play titled *Zhong Kui's Younger Sister Celebrating His Birthday* (*Zhongmei qingshou* 鐘妹慶壽) written by Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640-1715) and is included in *Liaozhai tongsu xiqu xuanzhu* 聊齋通俗戲曲選注 and survived with Liu Jieping's annotations. Baizishan qiao 百子山樵, which is the pen name of the Ming playwright Ruan Dacheng 阮大鍼 (1587-1646) composed *Shizi zhuan*. The motifs in the play primarily depict fantasies, hence, they are very similar to *Panyuan* 飯元 (*Story of Becoming Buddhist*),¹¹² *Tanhua* 曇花 (*Story of the Night Blooming Cereus*),¹¹³ and *Shuangxiu* 雙修 (*Story of Double Cultivation*),¹¹⁴ which can all be categorized as *chuanqi* 傳奇,¹¹⁵ which is included in *Quhai zongmu tiyao*.¹¹⁶

The examination and systematic study in this dissertation follows the chronological order of how the plays and events took place in history. However, I do not intend to argue in favor of a progressive and linear history in the making of the Zhong Kui character, and how Chinese theater came into being. Instead, I place Zhong Kui at the center of the nuclear radius, examining the literary movements, socio-economic

¹¹² It is a Buddhist play title.

¹¹³ It is a Mid-Ming dynasty Buddhist play composed by Tu Long 屠隆 (1543-1605).

¹¹⁴ It is also a Buddhist play title.

¹¹⁵ *Guiyuan*, *yunhua*, and *shuangxiu* refers to *Guiyuan jing* 歸元鏡, *Yunhua ji* 曇花記, and *Shuangxiu ji* 雙修記, respectively. All three are Buddhist play titles. *Guiyuan jing* is a Buddhist play title preserved in *Dazangjing bubian* 大藏經補編, volume 18. *Shuangxiu ji* is a response to *Tanhua ji*, the purpose of which is to criticize the latter for juxtaposing immortals with Buddhas so that Buddhism as a pure land stays more focused in the play.

¹¹⁶ The two plays also do not hesitate to express character flaws of Zhong Kui, either. His furious personality, his brutality towards the wicked demons, as well as his impulsive nature can all be used to better understand the Chinese bureaucracy reflected in the late imperial plays.

changes including changes in the religious landscape and the rise of a new social class in the Ming and Qing dynasties.

Chapter One

Old Legends Retold: Theatrical Transformation of a Failed Examination Candidate to a Powerful Deity

1. *The Mountains Are Calling: Mt. Zhongnan and the Making of Zhong Kui's Daoist Identity*

In this chapter, I will translate and analyze a play titled *Celebrating the Year of Abundance the Five Petty Demons Goaded Zhong Kui*. This play is composed by the Royal Academy in the Ming dynasty. Official records from both the Ming and Qing dynasties indicate that during the reign of the Emperor Hui in the Ming dynasty, this play was performed in the Ming Palace on New Year's Day.¹¹⁷ I will focus on two major issues derived from the play. First, I will examine the geographical significance of Mt. Zhongnan as related to a Daoist lineage and the dramatic recurrences of this location in the play. Secondly, I situate Zhong Kui in a Daoist network which demonstrates how he behaves as an exorcist and how he interacts with other Daoist deities, specifically, his relation with the five petty demons.

According to *Mingdai zaju quanmu* 明代雜劇全目 (*The Complete Catalogue of the Ming Dynasty Zaju*), *Nao Zhong Kui* was composed and put into production by the Ming *jiaofang*.¹¹⁸ The playwright's name remains unknown. In *Yeshiyuan shumu* 也是園書目 (*The Book Catalogue from Yeshe Garden*), this play titled is categorized under *zaju*

¹¹⁷ *Zhong Kui yanjiu*, p 160. & "Printing as Performance," p 284.

¹¹⁸ Please refer to note 109 on *jiaofang*.

that were composed and produced by *jiaofang*.¹¹⁹ The *zhengming* 正名 of this play is also found in *Yeshiyuan shumu*.¹²⁰ Both Yao Xie's 姚燮 (1805-1864) *Jinyue kaozheng* 今樂考證 (*Investigation of Dramatic Music*) and Wang Guowei's 王國維 (1877-1927) *Qulu* 曲錄 (*Records of Plays*) preserve this play title. Two transmitted manuscripts of this play are available. One is preserved in the National Library of China (Beijing tushuguan 北京圖書館). This manuscript was dated to the 43rd year of the Wanli Reign (1615), and it was copied and edited by Maiwang guan 脈望館.¹²¹ The cover of the manuscript states, "this play is composed and produced by *jiaofang* [in the Wanli Reign]."¹²² The *timu* 題目 is titled, *He xinzheng xishang sanyang yan* 賀新正喜賞三陽宴 (*Congratulate the New Year Happily Awarding the Three-yang Banquet*), and the *zhengming* is titled, *Qing fengnian wugui nao Zhong Kui* 慶豐年五鬼鬧鐘馗 (*Celebrating the Year of Abundance the Five Petty Demons Goadng Zhong Kui*). The other manuscript is revised and reprinted based on the Maiwang guan edition, which is preserved in the 30th volume of *Guben yuanming zaju* 孤本元明雜劇. Another simplified title of the play in this

¹¹⁹ *Yeshiyuan shumu* was written by Qian Zeng 錢曾 (1629-1701).

¹²⁰ *Zhengming* is also known as *timu zhengming* 題目正名 and appears at the end of a Yuan *zaju*. The so-called *zhengming* should consist of one couplet or two couplets to crystalize the entire play, from which three characters are normally chosen to be the play title. For instance, Ma Zhiyuan's 馬致遠 (1250-1321) *Hangong qiu* 漢宮秋, the *zhengming* is titled, *Po youmeng guyan hangong qiu* 破幽夢孤雁漢宮秋.

¹²¹ Maiwang guan is Zhao Mingxian's 趙明賢 private study for book restoration. He was born in the 14th year of the Jiajing Reign 嘉靖 (1521-1567) and died in the 24th year of the Wanli Reign. He passed *jinshi* in the 5th year of Longqing 隆慶 (1567-1572).

¹²² *Benchao jiaofang bianyan* 本朝教坊編演.

collection is, *Nao Zhong Kui* 鬧鐘馗.¹²³ In *Gudian xiqu cunmu huikao* 古典戲曲存目彙考, it states that this play, “wei suisong jixiang zhi xi, yishu neiting gongfeng ju 為歲首吉祥之戲, 亦屬內廷供奉劇。” (regarded as an auspicious play for the New Year’s, it is also a play for palace entertainment.)¹²⁴

Nao Zhong Kui strictly follows the structure of a *zaju*, which consists of one wedge and four acts. Traditionally, *zaju* opens the first scene in the wedge with the male lead (*mo* 末).¹²⁵ The first role that appears in act one of *Nao Zhong Kui* is the old male (*chongmo* 沖末). Upon coming to the stage, he immediately provides a brief biographical introduction to Zhong Kui, who plays the role of *zhengmo* 正末. In this brief introduction, Zhong Kui is said to be a native of the Ganhe village in Mt. Zhongnan (*wo zhe Zhongnan shan Ganhe zhen you yiren, naishi Zhong Kui*. 我這終南山甘河鎮有一人。乃是鍾馗。) in the Henan Prefecture (Henan fu 河南府).¹²⁶

In *Nao Zhong Kui*, the phrase Zhongnan 終南 as associated with Zhong Kui’s geographical origin occurs 14 times, among which 13 references directly refer back to Mt. Zhongnan 終南山. In every scene, nearly every dramatic role in the play comes to the stage and opens with the line that reinforces Zhong Kui’s strong relation with Mt. Zhongnan. Zhongnan, whether written as 中南, 終南, or 鐘南 is one of the recurring

¹²³ Fu Xihua 傅惜華 (ed.), *Mingdai zaju quanmu* (Beijing, Zuoja chubanshe 作家出版社, 1958), p 242.

¹²⁴ Zhuang Yifu 莊一拂 (ed.), *Gudian xiqu cunmu huikao* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), p 651.

¹²⁵ *Mo* is a dramatic role that opens the performance. One thing worth noting is that *mo* and *dan* 旦 are the lead roles in the Yuan plays (*yuangu* 元曲), whereas in *chuanqi* 傳奇, *sheng* 生 and *dan* 旦 are the lead roles. *Xiqu cidian*, pp 120-121.

¹²⁶ Henan fu 河南府, the Henan Prefecture which covers the nowadays Luoyang 洛陽 area.

names and locations in the Zhong Kui plays and other forms of Zhong Kui literature. In comparison, the name Ganhe 甘河 (in the play: Ganhe zhen 甘河鎮) only occurs once at the beginning of the play. Nonetheless, both Ganhe and Zhongnan are here to define Zhong Kui's lineage as a man of a certain clan and an exorcist in the Daoist tradition.

However, when Zhongnan is written as 鐘南, Zhong 鐘 should be associated with Zhong Kui's family name. Tracing back to the earlier Tang and Song sources on Zhong Kui, his birthplace and hometown are consistently Mt. Zhongnan. To name a few examples, in Shen Kuo's *Mengxi bitan*, Zhong Kui's official status is described as the examination candidate Zhong Kui of Mt. Zhongnan (*zhongnan jinshi* 中南進士). The Ming collection *Tianzhong ji*, in attempting to recount the lost earliest narrative of Zhong Kui from the Tang dynasty ascribes Zhong Kui's origin to Mt. Zhongnan. The original quote reads, "the subject I am an exam candidate of Mt. Zhongnan (*chen zhongnanshan jinshi Zhong Kui ye* 臣終南山進士鍾馗也)."

Mt. Zhongnan is not a unique example to denote Zhong Kui's geographical origin. Locales, whether mundane or mystical, have long been utilized as a literary device and code for the making of the hagiographies and biographies for Daoist patron deities. For instance, in Sima Qian's 司馬遷 (145-90 BCE) *Records of the Grand Historian* (*Shiji* 史記), he entertains various possibilities of the geographical origin of Laozi 老子 (ca. 500-400 BCE) by deliberately incorporating different historical sources that provide contradictory information denoting Laozi's birthplace. In the collective biographies, Laozi's birthplace is intentionally mystified among three possibilities in the following, *chuku xian li xiang quren li* 楚苦縣厲鄉曲仁里, *Lao Laizi yi churen ye* 老萊子亦楚人也,

and Laozi's grandson is named Zong, and he is the general of Wei and received the enfeoffment from Duangan (*Laozi zhi zi ming zong, zong wei weijiang, fengyu Duan'gan* 老子之子名宗, 宗为魏将, 封于段干).¹²⁷ While a mystified biography such as Laozi's given by Sima Qian aims to locate him between the mystical and the historical, the underlying messages conveyed through a fixed birthing location in the Zhong Kui hagiography is likely to provide more affirmation on a physical locale rather than mystifying his geographical origin.

Both in the play and a contemporary context, Zhongnan is mostly associated with Mt. Zhongnan 終南山, a locale that takes multiple variations in name and is regarded as one of the birthplaces of Daoism. The name of the mountain varies, too. For example, one name variation is *taiyi* 太乙. In other words, while Mt. Zhongnan can be used interchangeably with Mt. Taiyi, the latter aligns with the Daoist tradition more explicitly and is more suggestive of the Daoist lineage implied in a specific context. As a matter of fact, in the second play translated and analyzed in chapter two of the current dissertation, Taiyi Xian 太乙仙 (The Immortal of Primordial Unity) is not only stressed in the play title, he is also the immortal that orchestrates exorcisms and provides a cure for the male protagonist's ailment caused by spiritual possession.

In "Ritual Innovations and Taoism under Tang Xuanzong," Victor Xiong mentions Mt. Zhongnan in relation to the palace artist Wu Daozi. Xiong describes a wall in the Xuanyuan temple—Taiqing palace, which was located in Chang'an, the capital city in the Tang dynasty. The wall was adorned with a portrait of Laozi created by Wu Daozi and a statue of Laozi masoned with white stone from a mountain identified as Mt.

¹²⁷ Laozi Hanfei liezhuan 老子韓非列傳. Additionally, it is also highly interesting to see that Laozi's biography is juxtaposed with those of Zhuangzi's and Hanfeizi's under the same entry.

Zhongnan.¹²⁸ It is not a coincidence that in the earliest Tang Zhong Kui legend, two major authoritative figures justify Zhong Kui's status as a state sanctioned deity: Emperor Xuanzong and Wu Daozi. In comparison with these two figures, Mt. Zhongnan's significance in defining Zhong Kui's legitimacy is a little less momentous and secondary. In the same article, Xiong names Tang Xuanzong one of the few emperors who was closely identified with ritual scholarship.¹²⁹ In the earliest literary reference to the Zhong Kui legend as recorded in *Tianzhong ji*, Emperor Xuanzong and Wu Daozi appear in the text as higher authoritative figures that shape both Zhong Kui literature and art for centuries to come.

The social and religious connotations of Mt. Zhongnan in the play can be interpreted in the following ways: first, it can be regarded as a by-product and end result of Emperor Xuanzong's advocacy of ritual and religious reform in the Tang dynasty, through which issues such as institutional and local deities, orthodoxy and heterodoxy, as well as the urban and rural in rituals and liturgical practices are addressed. Secondly, while Mt. Zhongnan seems to be utilized as a landmark to enhance the legitimacy of the religious reform promoted by the state, its reoccurrences attached to the demon queller Zhong Kui in the literature has become habitual and authoritative. Ultimately, after the earliest Zhong Kui legend in the Tang dynasty, literature, in all genres, has been adamantly following the determination of Zhong Kui's birthplace. On the one hand, it is safe to assume that Emperor Xuanzong's religious reform enhanced the ideas of *zheng* 正

¹²⁸ Statue of Laozi dressed in dragon-design royal regalia (*gunmian* 袞冕), masoned with white stone from the Taibai Mountains (太白山), "Ritual Innovations and Taoism under Tang Xuanzong," *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, Vol. 82, Fasc. 4/5 (1996), pp 258-316.

Besides enforcing policies to further ritual and religious reform, Emperor Xuanzong is also highly regarded in Chinese theaters and is deemed the founding father of Pear Garden (*liyuan* 梨園), a term with specific theatrical implications that either refers to theatrical school or troupe.

(orthodoxy) and *xie* 邪 (heterodoxy) in the Chinese religious system, which mainstream literati and scholar officials were fond of emulating and endorsing on discourses as such to demonstrate their power to create mainstream narratives. On the other hand, in Zhong Kui's status as an orthodox deity is also heavily emphasized in the last act of *Nao Zhong Kui*.

Finally, along with Emperor Xuanzong, Wu Daozi was the court artist that aided Xuanzong with the religious reform by establishing iconography for religious figures. Zhong Kui was one of the religious figures that merited an official portrait in midst of the reform. Referring back to the earliest Zhong Kui legend, the illustrative undertone of the narrative becomes more apparent. The description from the legend reads as follows, “a much larger demon, wearing a tattered hat, blue robe, horn waist-belt, and black boots appeared and went straight after the thief.” The legend ends with how the Emperor was impressed with the artist's otherworldly artistic skills in retrieving the exact resemblance of the demon queller. Essentially, the visual details of Zhong Kui as described in the legend have become part of the authority that not only inspired how the demon queller is articulated in words, but also influenced how artists for dynasties to come portrayed him, as discussed previously in the introduction to the current dissertation.

Zhong Kui's strong relation with Mt. Zhongnan is not limited to the religious context. Quite the contrary, classical poems both in and outside China utilize this momentum frequently. For instance, in “The Demon-Quelling Style in Medieval Japanese Poetic and Dramatic Theory,” Paul S. Atkins refers to the earliest Zhong Kui folklore studied in the current dissertation, in which Zhong Kui is described as a native of Mt. Zhongnan who failed an examination for bureaucratic office and thereupon

committed suicide by smashing his head against the steps of the imperial palace. Emperor Xuanzong's malarial fever and his dream encounter with Zhong Kui also serve as part of the Zhong Kui narrative quoted by Atkins.¹³⁰

The literary sentiments conveyed through Chinese literature prior to the Tang dynasty indicate that Mt. Zhongnan has been regarded as a pure land for literati to claim reclusion and eventually obtain officialdom. To a certain extent, a reclusion in Mt. Zhongnan offers shortcuts on the road to officialdom, or else for one to climb up the social ladder.¹³¹ Evidence can be found in "Topos and Entelechy in the Ethos of Reclusion in China," which quotes a story concerning Lu Cangyong 盧藏用 (died at 713 at over sixty). He is referred to as a "gentleman in reclusion who followed after the emperor's carriage," gaining a position in the central administration after a brief period "in reclusion," following his failure to do so through the examination system.¹³² The same trajectory to officialdom is also demonstrated in the earliest Tang Zhong Kui legend and the later Zhong Kui literatures. Zhong Kui's failure in the national civil examination is interwoven with his strong association with Mt. Zhongnan, which paves the way for the official recognition from the state and grants his status as a standard deity (*guojia zhengshen* 國家正神).

Using locale to trace back or define the lineage of the demon queller is evident in other places, too. While the reference to Mt. Zhongnan in the play defines Zhong Kui's

¹³⁰ Atkins Paul, "The Demon-Quelling Style in Medieval Japanese Poetic and Dramatic Theory," *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Autumn, 2003), pp 317-346.

¹³¹ *ibid.*

¹³² Alan Berkowitz, "Topos and Entelechy in the Ethos of Reclusion in China," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 114, No. 4 (Oct. - Dec., 1994), pp 632-638.

lineage in the Daoist context and transforms him from a powerful ghost to a state recognized deity, other locales such as the Ganhe village (*ganhe zhen* 甘河鎮) is chosen under the same principle as Mt. Zhongnan. A concrete example within the Daoist tradition can be found in *Zhongnan shan zuting xianzhen neizhuan* 終南山祖庭仙真內傳, Song Bo 宋渤 (1341-1370) composed as an epitaph for Li Daoqian 李道謙 (1219-1296) in 1304 where he cites among his compilations the *Zuting neizhuan* in three *juan*.¹³³ These locales such as Mt. Zhongnan and Ganhe village by no means provide final destination into understanding Zhong Kui's Daoist lineage. However, they do situate the deity in a larger geographical context where the connection between him and Daoism became more explicit.

2. *Zhong Kui, the Five Petty Demons, and the New Year*

The major theme of the play, as indicated in the title, is *The Five Petty Demons Goaded Zhong Kui* (*Wugui naopan* 五鬼鬧判) on the New Year's.¹³⁴ In "Ugliness, Ghost King, and Temple: Deity-making in 'Celebrating an Abundant Harvest the Five

¹³³ The account to which he refers would appear to be the *Zhongnan shan Chongyang zushi xianji* 終南山重陽祖師仙跡記 authored by Liu Zuqian 劉祖謙 in 1232 (Chen Yuan 1988, pp 460-461). A copy of the text is attached to a preface attributed by Wang Daoming 王道明 indicates that Wang served as Superintendent of the Yuxian Abbey 遇仙宮 at Ganhe Garrison 甘河鎮 (Shaanxi). It apparently dates prior to the time Wang succeeded Li as National Supervisor of Daoist Affairs, a post he held, according to one inscription, in 1300 (Chen Yuan 1988, pp 703-705). In his preface, Wang contrasts Li's praiseworthy hagiography with what he considered to be an offensive account in the stele inscription of a Hanlin academician named Liu.

¹³⁴ It is hard find a suitable English counterpart for the word *nao* 鬧 here because the five petty demons not only test Zhong Kui's ability and authority as a demon queller in the play, they are eventually subdued and submitted under his wings. In this particular context, *nao* is both playful and adventurous.

Ghosts Tease Zhong Kui,”¹³⁵ Lau Grace points out that “five ghosts tease Zhong Kui” as a theme was evidentially prevalent prior to 1602, the thirtieth year in the Wanli Reign in the Ming dynasty 萬曆三十年. Evidence can be traced in the Ming novel *Jinping mei* 金瓶梅 (*The Plum in the Golden Vase*), in the 65th *hui* where the funeral for Li Ping’er’s 李瓶兒 death performs a play titled, *Wugui naopan* 五鬼鬧判 (*The Five Demons Tease the Judge*).¹³⁶

It is worthwhile to have a discussion about the clusters of demons and deities centered around the demon queller in *Nao Zhong Kui*. The demon cluster consists of *dahao* and *xiaohao*, the demons of the five directions (*wufang gui* 五方鬼) who are assigned to five colors (the green, the yellow, the red, the white, and the black), and the General of the Five Avenues (*Wudao jiangjun* 五道將軍). The terms *dahao* and *xiaohao* are derived from the dynamic between Zhong Kui and the petty demon, Xuhao, in the earliest Tang Zhong Kui legend. One possible reading to help comprehend the religious and therapeutic connotations of it is to trace back to the origin of the term *nuegui* 瘧鬼, who is said to be one of Zhuanxu’s 顓頊 sons, and the word *nue* literally means malarial.¹³⁷ Additionally, *zhaoxuhao* 照虛耗 as part of the New Year cleansing rituals

¹³⁵ Lau Grace, “Ugliness, Ghost King, and Temple: Deity-making in ‘Celebrating an Abundant Harvest the Five Ghosts Tease Zhong Kui,’” *Renwen zhongguo xuebao* 人文中國學報, 20, pp 253-89.

¹³⁶ The novel was composed approximately between 1568 (the second year in the Longqing Reign 隆慶) and 1602 (the thirtieth year in the Wanli Reign 萬曆三十年).

¹³⁷ Wang Chong 王充 (27-97), *Lunheng* 論衡, *jiechu* 解除, it reads, In the antiquity Zhuanxu was said to have three sons, all of whom died prematurely. One resides by the river and became the ghost of malarial fever; one dwells in the mountains and became the mountain demon; and the third one lives in the common households and is in charge of making people sick. Therefore, at the end of each year when people are free from agricultural activities, they take steps to cast off ghosts and spirits that cause ailments. Another purpose is to bid farewell to the old ones, receiving the new ones, and safeguard the households. The

evident in *Mengliang lu* and *Dongjing menghua lu*. The essence of such a tradition is on the 24th day of the 12th lunar month to light and place a lamp under the bed in the middle of the night, in order to illuminate *xuhao* and eventually drive them out of the household.¹³⁸ In *Fengshen yanyi* 封神演義 (*Investiture of the Gods*), there are also two astral demons named the Big Astral Demon (*dahao xing* 大耗星) and the Small Astral Demon (*xiaohao xing* 小耗星).¹³⁹ These two astral demons are guilty of dispersing common house wealth.

The General of Five Avenues is also known as Wudao Dashen 五道大神. The General of Five Avenues is the subordinate of the God of Mt. Tai (Taishan 泰山). *Wudao* 五道 here takes on Buddhist connotations, which are *tiandao* 天道 (devaloka, heavenly path), *rendao* 人道 (manuṣya, human path), *eguidao* 餓鬼道 (preta, hungry ghost path), *chusheng dao* 畜生道 (tiryagyonī, animal path), and *nili dao* 泥犁道 (naraka, muddy path).¹⁴⁰

The New Year's deities in the play run the gamut of the Heavenly Fortune Deity, the Earthly Fortune Deity, and the Spring Fortune Deity which are accompanied by the Honors and Longevity Deity, the True Emperor of the Upper, Middle, and the lower

original texts reads as follows You can just put your translation in quotation marks followed by the original text: 論衡，解除：昔顓頊氏有子三人，生而皆亡，一居江水為虐鬼，一居若水為魍魎，一居歐隅之間，主疫病人。故歲終事畢，驅逐疫鬼，因以送陳、迎新、內吉也。

¹³⁸ *Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華錄, volume 10, shier yue 十二月. The original quote reads, “夜於牀底點燈，謂之「照虛耗」” Later on in the same passage, it states that as the New Year approaches, printed images such as the Door Guardians, Zhong Kui, peachwood tablets, peachwood talismans, paper cut fortune gods, and deer that turns their back are available at the local markets. One can simply purchase these images and put them on the wall and door in their household. The original quote reads, “近歲節，市井皆印賣門神、鍾馗、桃板、桃符，及財門鈍驢、回頭鹿馬之行帖子。”

¹³⁹ *Fengshen yanyi*, the 18th *hui* and the 99th *hui*.

¹⁴⁰ *Wudao* could be one scenario where the Daoists borrowed terms from the Buddhist traditions.

Yang, and the Sheep Prince. Additionally, the commonly known guardian deities that safeguard people and property in common households such as the Earth God, the Stove God, the Well God, and the Door Guardians also participate in the banquet insofar as to enhance the festivity and auspiciousness. In the Daoist literature, the collective presences of these deities oftentimes indicate a trial of transgression or injustice that needs law enforcement. In this play, however, the presence of all the New Year deities and the domestic guardians deliver the message of the arrival of spring by creating a lively stirring ambience: *re'nao* 熱鬧.

My annotated translation of *Nao Zhong Kui* follows. Attached to the original play is an extensive stage direction, namely, *Nao Zhong Kui chuanbang* 鬧鍾魁穿幫, which according to Katherine Carlitz is an indicator that the play was composed more for the performers and for the Ming Palace.¹⁴¹ The inclusion of the detailed clothing and ornament directions as part of the play seems to be a tendency that occurs much later in the Ming dynasty. As Zeitlin points out in *The Phantom Heroine*, “Throughout the seventeenth century we find an increasing tendency to include ever more detailed and complex stage directions in imprints of southern drama.”¹⁴² The detailed clothes and ornament description in *Nao Zhong Kui* can be tied into the following two possibilities. One is that the play was made for the royal family thus accounting for the elaborate and costly production. Two is that it may be dramatic evidence that demonstrates the increasing visibility of southern characteristics in drama.

¹⁴¹ “Printing as Performance,” p 284.

¹⁴² Zeitlin, *The Phantom Heroine*, pp 141-2.

While this play recounts a New Year's Eve Palace exorcistic scene, it also reveals a few crucial messages that can help us better understand how the theatrical performances, especially the ones customized for the Chinese New Year, can be seen as a transfiguration in the grand exorcism tradition that is both deeply rooted in and derived from "the Yellow River plain, the birthplace of Chinese civilization."¹⁴³ To be clear, I am not suggesting the early Ming theater is the successor of the ancient *nuo*, nor is the relationship between the theatrical performance and ancient *nuo* a linear model of history. Rather, this dissertation hopes to provide a nuclear radius model where the exorcism is placed absolutely at core; how history, literature, rituals, and socio-economic change intersects with exorcism help us comprehend the various related issues in a holistic way. Secondly, despite the fact that the purpose of the lively performance on the stage is to entertain the gods and spirits mostly, the quintessential function of the performances should not be overshadowed by the lively stirring atmosphere that please both the divine and the mundane audience. To put it in another way, the changing of the season and year generates the imbalance between the *yin* and *yang* energy, the mischief of the ghosts and spirits as well as the polluted *qi* ought to be cleansed through proper religious conduct and means, if not through the explicit *nuo* parade itself. *Nao Zhong Kui* pleases the royal family with its spectacles and cluster of demons and deities, and most of all, the demon queller Zhong Kui brings the excitement produced by exorcism that pleases the royal family visually and purifies the imbalanced *yin* and *yang* energy caused by the transitioning between the old and the new year ritualistically.

¹⁴³ Guo Qitao, *Exorcism and Money*, p 21.

3. Annotated Translation of *Qing fengnian wugui nao Zhong Kui*

My annotated translation in the following consists of one wedge, act one and two, and act three and four. The wedge provides background information on the young scholar Zhong Kui before he went to the capital city to partake in the final imperial level civil exam. Act one and two focus on corruption of the exam administer that caused Zhong Kui to fail to come out first in the exam, and to kill himself eventually. In the last two acts, Zhong Kui transforms from a young scholar to a state sanctioned deity, the scenes in turn celebrate his new epithet and divine power in a larger network of the Daoist deities.

題目 賀新正喜賞三陽宴

正名 慶豐年五鬼鬧鍾馗

Title: *Greeting the New Year's Day and Enjoying the Banquet of the Three Yang*¹⁴⁴

Closing Title: *Celebrating the Year of Abundance the Five Petty Demons Goading*¹⁴⁵

Zhong Kui

Dramatis personae in order of appearance

<i>Role type</i>	<i>Name, family role, or social role</i>
Extra	Li Bi (Li Tingyu) The County Magistrate

¹⁴⁴ *Yang* 陽 is the homophone of *yang* 羊. In the last act of the play, the appearances of the Sheep Prince are of the same idea of the word play. The transitioning between the old and the new year causes the imbalance of yin and yang energy, which is why multiple yang is required to balance out the energies. And the number three is only a rough number that indicates the multitude. Chinese are still fond of using the idiom *sanyang kaitai* 三陽開泰 (the yang spirits on the upsurge in Spring) as means to express surge of good luck during the Spring Festival.

¹⁴⁵ There are multiple common ways to translate *nao* 鬧, “dance” and “instigate” are among two examples, which I think is not quite fitting in the context. The five petty demons are on the one hand mischievous, but on the other hand, they are eventually subdued by Zhong Kui and become obedient to him.

Zhang Qian	Zhang Qian, <i>yamen</i> clerk
Secondary male	the head of the village, Liu
Male lead	Zhong Kui
General	the General of the Five Avenues
Painted Face #1 & 2	the Golden Eye Judge; the Sleeping Demon
Petty Demon #1 & 2	<i>Dahao; xiaohao</i>
Demons of the Five Directions	the Green, Yellow, Red, White, and Black demons
Official #1	the Palace Attendant
Official #2	Zhang Boxun
Official #3	Yang Guozhong
Clown #1 & 2	<i>changfeng; fasha</i> ¹⁴⁶
Secondary male	the Heavenly Fortune Deity; the Earthly Fortune Deity
Demon soldiers	Demon soldiers
Deity	the Spring Fortune Deity; the Fortune Deity, and the Honors Deity; the Longevity Deity
Painted face	the Earth God, the Stove God, the Well God; the Kitchen God, and the Door Guardians
Secondary male	the Upper, Middle, and Lower <i>yang</i> Emperor
Goat Princes	Goat Princes

¹⁴⁶ These two terms are written as 常風 and 發傻, two of the contenders to compete with Zhong Kui in the civil exam. *Feng* in *changfeng* can be a homophone of the Chinese character 瘋, which means crazy, insane, mad etc.; and *changfeng* together can mean ever crazy. *Fasha* here refers to a simpleton who may not realize their own ignorance. These two roles are meant to be comical, which adds on to the lively ambience of this *zaju*. Moreover, their existence also complements and reveals the comical effects of Zhong Kui in Chinese theatre.

楔子 WEDGE

[冲末扮知縣領張千上][云]稅斂科差民悅服。五穀田蠶遍地圖。君王有德人民樂。積善之家災害無。小官姓李名璧字廷玉。本貫河南府人也。幼習儒業。廣看詩書。螢窗辛苦受驅馳。一舉成名傳天下。謝聖恩可憐。加小官在此終南縣為理。我這終南山甘河鎮有一人。乃是鍾馗。此人滿腹詩書。前者中過鄉貢進士。為因楊國忠當權。兩次不能中殿試。今有上司文書來到。但有舉人。着上京赴選。此事不敢隱諱。小官令本部社長請鍾秀才去了。張千望着。這早晚敢待來也。

(EXTRA, *costumed as* COUNTY MAGISTRATE *enters, leading* YAMEN CLERK ZHANG QIAN¹⁴⁷)

COUNTY MAGISTRATE

The people happily submit to multifarious taxation.¹⁴⁸ The map is filled with the five crops and agricultural activities. The Emperor has virtues [therefore] his people are leading happy lives. Households that accumulate merit are free from calamities. [I am the] Minor official surnamed Li, my given name is Bi and courtesy name is Tingyu. My native district is Henan. [I] studied the Confucian classics in my youth and am widely read in the histories and poetry.¹⁴⁹ [I] borrowed the light of the lightning bugs to study by

¹⁴⁷ Zhang Qian 張千 is a very common name that can be seen in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing drama plays. This name serves as a universal name for family servant. Here however, I follow Stephen West and Idema's way of translating it: the *yamen* clerk.

¹⁴⁸ *Kechai* 科差 here refers to a specific taxation in the Yuan dynasty which mainly included three items: *siliao* 絲料 (silk), *baoyin* 包銀 (silver), and *fengchao* 奉鈔 (part of the silver contribution). Peasants were largely responsible for this specific taxation, along with medical practitioners and hunters.

¹⁴⁹ Another way to understand *shishu* is it refers to *shijing* 詩經 (*the Books of Odes*) and *shujing* 書經 (*the Book of History*).

the window [like Che Kuang in the Jin dynasty] [and] overcame hardships. My name was instantly known [by the world] after I passed the civil examinations. I am grateful to his Majesty [for] appointing me to a position in the county of Zhongnan. In a village named Ganhe of the Zhongnan County. There is someone called Zhong Kui, and he is full of knowledge. In the past, [he] had passed the examination at the provincial level. However, because Yang Guozhong was in power, [Zhong] could not pass the final imperial examination.¹⁵⁰ Now [we] have an official dispatch, issued by our superiors, urging all examination candidates to go to the capital city and take part in the final imperial examination. No one dares to hide this announcement [from Zhong]. [I] asked the head of the village to inform Zhong Kui about this. Please keep an eye out for him, Zhang Qian. He will be here sooner or later.¹⁵¹

[淨扮社長上][云] 我做社長忒清幹。一方之地人稱讚。但若閑了無處去。則在家裡嚙冷飯。老漢是這終南山甘河鎮的社長。如今上司文書前來。催促中過鄉貢舉進士。都着上京赴選。這裡有一人。乃是鍾馗。此人一生梗直。因兩次不中。今歲要不去。有知縣大人言語。着他上京。我恰纔請了此人。他便來也。我先見大人去。可早來到也。張千報復去。道有劉社長來也。

(SECONDARY MALE *enters*)

VILLAGE HEAD

¹⁵⁰ Yang Guozhong 楊國忠 was a powerful official in the reign of Xuanzong in the Tang dynasty. He was also said to be remotely related to the beloved concubine of Xuanzong, Yang Guifei 楊貴妃.

¹⁵¹ Shezhang 社長 is an official post set in the Yuan dynasty, every fifty households count as one *she*, and the leader of the *she* is often the local landlord, or someone who has a good reputation among the locals.

As the head of the village I am pretty honest. The local residents [highly] praise [my achievements]. At times when I have nothing better to do, I would just stay in and eat the cold leftovers. [I] am the village head of Ganhe village of Mt. Zhongnan. We have received an official dispatch from our superiors, urging all the candidates who have passed the provincial examinations to participate in the final imperial examination. Here is one candidate whose name is Zhong Kui. This man was known for his honesty all his life. However, because he failed the imperial examinations twice, if he does not go this year [there may not be another chance]. The county magistrate has asked Zhong to go to the capital city. I happened to have just invited him over. He shall be here shortly. I will go pay respect to the magistrate first. Please inform the magistrate now, Zhang Qian, tell him that the head of village, Liu, has arrived.

[張千云]理會的。報的大人得知。有社長來了也。

ZHANG QIAN

Understood. [I will go] inform the magistrate now, and [I will tell him that] you are here.

[知縣云]劉社長。你請的鍾秀才如何。

MAGISTRATE

Village Head Liu, what's going on with that candidate Zhong that you have invited?

[社長云]他聽的大人呼喚。後面便至也。

VILLAGE HEAD

He attends to your summons and will arrive shortly.

[知縣云] 張千望著。若來時。報復我知道。

MAGISTRATE

Keep an eye out, Zhang Qian, and report back to me upon his arrival.

[正末上][云]小生終南山甘河鎮人氏。姓鍾名馮字君實。幼習儒業。苦志攻書。平生正直。不信邪鬼。前歲中了科甲。後因楊國忠掌卷子。兩次不中。今有知縣大人。苦逼着小生求官去。非吾中心之事。今日又着社長來請。須索走一遭去。可早來到也。張千報復去。道有小生來了也。

(THE MALE LEAD, ZHONG KUI *enters*)

ZHONG KUI

[I am] a young student and a native of the Ganhe village in Mt. Zhongnan.¹⁵² [I am] surnamed Zhong and Kui is my given name, my courtesy name is Junshi. I have been studying Confucian classics ever since my childhood. With great determination have I studied, and [I am] an honest person who does not believe in wicked ghosts. In previous years, I passed the civil examinations. But later because Yang Guozhong was in charge of the examination papers, twice I have failed the final round of the examination. The Magistrate strongly urged me to pursue an official post, though it is not something that would please my heart. With the invitation from the head of the village, I must go to the capital city at once. Here I am already. Zhang Qian, please go ahead and inform [the magistrate], letting him know that I arrived.

¹⁵² Sometimes also called the Taiyi Mountains 太乙山, or Zhounan Mountains 周南山. They are located in nowadays Shaanxi province, south of Xi'an. However, "Zhongnan shan Ganhe zhen" is a recurring place that has been mentioned in multiple Yuan drama plays, one of the example is *Man Danyang sandu Ren fengzi* 馬丹陽三度任風子 where the character from this place appears to be a butcher.

[張千云] 報的大人得知。有鍾秀才來了也。

ZHANG QIAN

Reporting so that you know, sir, the candidate Zhong is here.

[知縣云] 道有請。

MAGISTRATE

Send him in.

[張千云] 有請。

ZHANG QIAN

[The magistrate is] asking for your presence.

[正末見科][云]大人。小生來了也。

(ZHONG KUI *making a formal greeting with* MAGISTRATE)¹⁵³

ZHONG KUI

Magistrate. The humble scholar I am here.

¹⁵³ *Jianke* 見科 refers to the physical actions in the play that may be an reoccurring activity. For more detailed studies on *ke*, please refer to Xu Wei, “Nanci Xulu,” in *Zhongguo gudian xiqu lunzhu jicheng* 中國古典戲曲論著集成 (*Collections of classical works on works on Chinese xiqu*), ed. Zhongguo xiqu yuanjiuyuan 中國戲曲研究院, 10 vols. (Beijing: Zhongguo xiqu chubanshe 1959), 3:246.

And Wang Guowei, *Songyuan xiqu kao* 宋元戲曲考 (*A Study of Xiqu in the Song and Yuan Dynasties*) in *Wang Guowei xiqu lunwen ji* 王國維戲曲論文集 (*Collections of Wang Guowei’s Writing on Xiqu*), 3-148 (Beijing: Zhongguo xiqu chubanshe, 1957), p 101.

[知縣云]先生。你學成滿腹詩書。兩次不能中用。今歲上朝。必然及第。有上司文書來催。先生可收拾行程罷。

MAGISTRATE

Mister Zhong. You have accomplished studying [the classics] and are now full of ideas from the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of History*. Twice you have failed the final round of the civil examination. [If] you go see the emperor this year, you must be able to pass. We have received the official dispatch from the superiors to request urgently, Mister [Zhong], [you] should start packing for the trip.

[正末云]大人。小生見選法不明。今春待不去。相公之命。不敢不去。

ZHONG KUI

Magistrate. [Earlier I] thought the selecting procedure was not transparent, that's why I was not planning on going this spring. [Now that] the prime minister ordered [me to pursue this], I would not dare to not go.¹⁵⁴

[社長云] 你無正經。我若似你念的些百家姓呵。我也跑一遭去。你快收拾琴劍書箱去罷。

VILLAGE HEAD

¹⁵⁴ *Xianggong* 相公 can be used as the formal way to address a prime minister. However, it can also be used to address a young master of a noble house, or a handsome young man in vernacular literature. I think the *xianggong* Zhong Kui refers to here is the person who issued the official dispatch, which could very well be the prime minister.

You are not making sense. If I were to be able to recognize as much from *The Hundred Chinese Clan Names* as you, I would be happy to try it out myself.¹⁵⁵ Now you should start packing your zither, sword, and books for your trip.

[正末云] 大人。小生謹依大人遵命。辭別了大人。回家中收拾行程去也。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

Magistrate, I obey your instruction. I take my leave, [Now I am] going home to get ready for my trip. (*Singing*):

[賞花時] 憑着我膽量忠直誰可及。今日要一舉成名天下知。

[*shanghua shi*]

Relying on my heart that is most upright and second to none, soon [my name] will be known by the world after [I] succeed in the final examination.

[知縣云] 你今日去。必然為官也。

MAGISTRATE

If you go today, [you] are guaranteed an official post.

[正末云] 小生此一去。未知如何也。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

¹⁵⁵ *Baijia xing* 百家姓 (the *Hundred Family Names*) is a book composed in the Northern Song dynasty and a collection of the family names of the Han people. The use of *baiji xing* here can be understood in the following two ways: first, knowing the words from this book is an indicator of one's literary knowledge overall; and secondly, it can be understood as an extension of *baijia yan* 百家言, which means the philosophies of the different schools. It could also be a joke about the Shezhang's level of knowledge: *Baijia xing* is a primer, not a sophisticated classic.

Departing for my trip like this, I am not certain of [the consequences]. (*Singing*):

離鄉故。受驅馳。但的那一官半職。穩情取揚名天下步雲梯。[下]

**Leaving my hometown and being forced to toil, to acquire that official post,
or have a job. I certainly am going to spread my name in the world and climb
to the highest literary honor. (*Exits*)**

[社長云] 他去了也。今日這一遭去。不知如何也。

VILLAGE HEAD

There he went. Departing for his trip like this, [no one] knows what shall happen next.

[知縣云] 他今日此一去。必然為官也。俺收拾酒餚。到十里長亭。與此人餞行。走一遭去。今日與本縣商量。論此人文藝高強。穩情取攀蟾折桂。那期間天下名揚。[同下]

MAGISTRATE

Now that he has departed today, he shall be appointed to an official post. I am preparing some food and wine and heading off to the ten mile pavilion to send him off. I will go at once. After I talked with others in the county today, [I came to realize that] he is a man with superior literary quality. It is a guarantee that he will win the laurel in civil examinations.¹⁵⁶ Soon after, his name will be known by [all the people] under heaven.

(Exits with the head of the village)

¹⁵⁶ *Pan chan zhe gui* 攀蟾折桂, the *chan* here is alluding to the Moon, or the Palace of the Moon. The folklore narrates the story of Chang'e who lives on the Moon, a place where a large number of laurel trees can be found. So, the allusion here is that one comes out first in the exam by reaching the Moon and breaks a laurel twig.

頭折 ACT 1

[五道將軍引鬼力上] [云] 巍巍猛力鎮空蒼。勇烈威風惟我強。吾神乃五道將軍是也。為吾神神通廣大。變化多般。閒來山前驅虎豹。悶後曠野顯威靈。在此為神正直。平生節操堅剛。方今聖人在位。八方無事。四海安然。時逢歲稔之年。理當千邦慶賀。正旦之節。萬國來朝。端的是勝舜日堯年也。吾手下有一判一鬼。是金睛判。睡魔鬼。這兩箇早晚支應吾神。端的能哉。早間着鬼力呼喚去了。吾神遊山去。他兩箇這早晚敢待來也。

(GENERAL OF THE FIVE AVENUES *enters, leading the demon soldiers*)

GENERAL OF THE FIVE AVENUES

Majestically [my] great power surpasses the skies. Being the bravest and boldest, I am second to none. I am the god [that's called] the General of Five Avenues.¹⁵⁷ A deity like me is [in possession of] superior magical powers, and I [am able to] transform myself into various entities. In my leisure time, I ward off tigers and leopards in the mountains; to relax [myself I] show off my magical powers in the wilderness. Dwelling here as a deity [I am] respectable. The integrity of my principles has always been strong and firm. Presently, a sage is on the throne. No wars at the borders and [people are enjoying] peace within the four seas. It is the year of abundance, it would only seem proper for the thousand nations to come and join the celebration [of harvest]. On New Year's Day, ten thousand allied countries came to pay tribute [to the emperor]. Now are [the times] that are better than those of Yao and Shun's. Under my charge there is one judge and one

¹⁵⁷ Wudao jiangjun 五道將軍 the Generals of the Five Avenues.

demon. [The judge] is called golden eye judge¹⁵⁸ and [the demon] sleeping monster.¹⁵⁹ These two are at my service from day to night, and they are very competent. Earlier on I sent the demon soldiers to call for them. I am going to wander in the mountains now. The two of them will be here sooner or later.

[二淨判官睡魔鬼上] [判官云] 我做判官實聰明。幾箇弟兄是魔精。但若閒了無甚事。海子河裡打冰凌。自家是這五道將軍手下金睛判官是也。這個是我姪兒睡魔鬼。我們兩箇。有兩箇弟兄。是大耗小耗之鬼。他手下有五方之鬼。俺五道上聖若不在。他常時來看我。他兩箇正在後面打鵲兒耍子。有上聖呼喚俺。睡魔鬼。嚙行動些。

(PAINTED FACE: JUDGE *and* SLEEPING DEMON *enter*)

JUDGE

¹⁵⁸ *Jinjing pan* 金睛判, along with *shui mogui* 睡魔鬼 are two dramatic roles that are not required to do any singing or speaking. These two roles are possibly derived from the tradition in *yazaju* where petty demons and Zhong Kui are only to dance with one another and gesture on the stage to perform exorcism. For instance, in *Dongjing menghua lu*, volume 7, there are two references concerning *jinjing* 金睛 (golden eye). In the first reference, *jinjing* is categorized under *yinggui* 硬鬼 (hard ghosts), and the original quote reads, “suddenly there are sounds of firecrackers, the music troupe is playing ‘Bai xinyue man,’ there are also the so-called ‘hard demons’ that are face painted in green and blue, wearing golden eyed masks and are adorned with leopard skin, splendid belts, and such...they are only posing as if they are looking or listening to something; and then there is another sound of firecrackers, a long beard man wearing mask that wears long green robes, he looks a lot like Zhong Kui. A little one is at his side, striking the gong and dances with Zhong Kui, this is called dance with the judge.”: “又一声爆仗, 乐部动《拜新月慢》曲, 有面涂青绿, 戴面具金睛, 饰以豹皮锦绣看带之类, 谓之「硬鬼」。或执刀斧, 或执杵棒之类, 作脚步蘸立, 为驱捉视听之状。又爆仗一声, 有假面长髯, 展裹绿袍靴筒, 如锤馗像者, 傍一人以小锣相招和舞步, 谓之「舞判」。” In the same context, Meng Yuanlao talked about *yazaju* 哑杂剧 (silent *zaju*), in which he mentions the petty demons that are boney as skeletons, wearing apron and belts; they are moving in a fast pace and in a comical fashion, this is called *yazaju*. The original quote reads, “继有二三瘦瘠、以粉涂身, 金睛白面, 如髑髅状, 系锦绣围肚看带, 手执软仗, 各作魁谐趋踮, 举止若排戏, 谓之「哑杂剧」。” In *Zhongkui yanjiu*, the author Zheng Zunren quotes Zheng Zhenduo 郑振鐸 (1898-1958) who claims that the so called *cuan* 爨 (the short performance embedded in some Song *zaju* and Jin *yuanben* 院本); Zheng Zunren then makes the assumption that the dramatic role of Zhong Kui appears in the description in *Dongjing menghua lu* doesn't require singing or speaking, please refer to *Zhongkui yanjiu*, pp159-160.

¹⁵⁹ *Shui mogui* 睡魔鬼, there are two possible ways to interpret *shui mogui*, the first way is that the demons himself is a sleepy head; the second way is that this demon casts spells to put people into sleep. I think both are possible interpretations. However, since the scene where *shui mogui* first encounters Zhong Kui is while Zhong is asleep, the second interpretation seems more fitting to the context of this play.

As a judge, I am really clever. I have a number of brothers that are demonic spirits. When I am free and have nothing better to do, [I will] play icicles on the rivers and seas. I myself am the golden eye judge, a subordinate of the General of the Five Avenues. This one is my nephew, the sleeping demon.¹⁶⁰ The two of us have two brothers; they are called *dahao* and *xiaohao* demon, respectively.¹⁶¹ The sleeping demon is in charge of the demons of the Five Directions.¹⁶² At the times when the General of Five Avenues is absent, the sleeping demon often comes over to visit. *Dahao* and *xiaohao* are shooting sparrows in the back yard. The General is calling for my presence now. Sleeping demon, come quickly with me.

[睡魔鬼云] 我說今日則怕上聖那裡要去。不知怎麼大開着廟門。可早來到也。俺自過去。[做見科][云] 上聖。俺來了。有何事也。

SLEEPING DEMON

¹⁶⁰ Zhi'r 姪兒 does not actually mean nephew by blood. It is commonly used in the Yuan drama play to refer to a younger subordinate.

¹⁶¹ *Xiaohao* and *Dahao* are both astral deities. Records from paintings and writings indicate that they both are relevant in the context of death, or funeral. For instance, in “Summoning the Gods: Paintings of Three Officials of Heaven, Earth and Water and Their Association with Daoist Ritual Performance in the Southern Song Period (1127-1279),” Shih-Shan Susan Huang brings out one piece of art from the Ming dynasty (please refer to figure 2.1 at the end of this chapter for this) that portrays *dahao* and *xiaohao* as part of the water land rituals, *Artibus Asiae* Vol. 61, No. 1 (2001), pp 5-52.

In *Xieji bianfangshu*, there is also an entry dedicated to *dahao*. Please refer to 协纪辨方书·义例一·大耗.

¹⁶² *Wufang gui* 五方鬼 is a very complex topic in Chinese religious studies. In the *Illusion of Standardizing the Gods: The Cult of the Five Emperors in Late Imperial China*, Michael Szonyi put together a study regarding *wudi* 五帝 (the five emperors) and *wutong* 五通 (the five manifestations), which he argues can be traced back to *wuguizhu* 五鬼主 (the Five Demon Masters); and their names are Liu Yuanda, Zhang Yuanbo, Zhao Gongming, Zhong Shili, and Shi Wenye, each is responsible for the transmission of a different disease. He also notes that in *Shenxiao* and *Qingwei* sects, the *wudi shizhe* 五帝使者 (the Five Emperors' Commissioners) are linked to *wuchang* 五猖 (the Five Fierce Gods) and *Wufang Wulu Dashen* 五方五路大神 (the Great Deities of the Five Routes and Cardinal Directions). Please refer to *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 56, No. 1 (Feb., 1997), pp 113-135.

Where has the general gone to play? I was wondering where the General may end up going today. How come the temple door is wide open? Am I here already? I will go and ask [the General] now. (*Acting out seeing someone*), General, Here I am. What was it [that you wished to speak to me about]?

[五道云] 你兩箇看守廟宇。我遊山去也。你兩箇小心在意者。今日箇離廟遊山。着鬼判看守塵凡。逢正旦年年吉慶。賀新春人馬平安。[下]

GENERAL

The two of you are to safeguard the temple, [while] I am off to wander in the mountains. You should be very vigilant [during my absence]. Today I am leaving my temple to go travelling in the mountains. I have asked the ghost judge to safeguard the mundane world. It happens to be New Year's Day and the year has been auspicious. [I] wish [everyone] a happy new year and may soldiers and horses find peace. (*Exits*)

[判官云] 看了今日上聖不在。則怕我們弟兄來看我。閒笑一會耍子。且睡一覺。

JUDGE

[I] have seen that the General is not here today. I am afraid that our fellow brothers will come visit me [soon]. Pleasant chatter is followed by playing [together]. [I] need to take a nap now.

[睡魔鬼云] 你也說的是。俺這裡睡一覺。看有甚麼人來。[睡科]

SLEEPING DEMON

Agreed. I am going to take a nap now. Let's see who will come. (*Falling asleep*)

[正末上] [云]小生鍾馗是也。今日離了終南山甘河鎮。上朝進取功名去。時值初春。

看了路上景致。好是悽慘人也。[唱]

(ZHONG KUI *enters*)

ZHONG KUI

[I am] the young scholar Zhong Kui. Today I have left the Ganhe village of Mt. Zhongnan to move forward in pursuing an official post in the capital city. Now is the early spring. After having seen the scenery along the way, how saddened my heart becomes. (*Singing*):

[仙呂點絳脣]看了這雲霧天晴。晚風無定。逢東景。萬里霜輕。一派添孤另。

[xianlu dianjiangchun] Upon seeing the clouds dispersed and the sky become clear, the evening breeze is instantly changing [its direction]. Encountering the sunlight of the east, and [the land of] ten thousand *li* is coated with light frost, which multiplies the loneliness [I am feeling right now].

[混江龍]新春時令。看冬殘一去又新正。喜遇着豐年稔歲。五穀收成。萬里月光團更皎。

[hun jiang long] At the time of the New Year, catching sight of the end of the year going away and yet another new year [approaching]. Joyfully [we are] met with a year of harvest and abundance. The five crops were ripening and

collected. The moon shines ten thousand *li* [with its face being] plump and light glistening white.¹⁶³

[云]來到這半路途中。尋不着宿處。可怎生迷踪失路。天晚了也。兀的不是一箇神堂廟宇。我索要進去看一看。[做看廟科] [云]原來是五道將軍廟。可怎生這等冷靜也。

[唱]

Now that I came halfway to my journey. [I] couldn't find a place to lodge. How did I lose my bearings? It is getting late now. There seems to be a temple [over there]. Let me go in and take a look. (*Acting out checking out the temple*), it turns out to be a temple of the General of the Five Avenues. How come it is so quiet and deserted [in here]? (*singing*):

[油葫蘆] 我見鼠走空桑寒氣升。香爐中灰燼冷。你看那泥神半倒亂凋零。我與你撮土焚香者。[唱]

[*you hulu*] I saw rats running inside the hollow mulberry tree and the cold air rising. The ashes in the incense burner have turned cold. [Alas], look, half of the clay statues have fallen down.

Let me take a pinch of soil as incense [for you]. (*Singing*):

我這裡急慌忙便把尊神敬。則願的年年米麥多餘剩。[帶云]

¹⁶³ *Li* 里, unit of length, one *li* is approximately 500 meters.

Hastily I am paying my respects to the gods, only to wish there is surplus of crops every year.

我在這廟中歇息。到天明了時。慢慢的去。[唱]

I am going to get rested in this temple and slowly go on my journey after the day breaks.

(singing):

我將角帶那衣袂整。則他這譙樓更鼓應難聽。又無甚喝號與提鈴。[云] 願神明金鞭指路者。[唱]

I am tidying up my belts and sleeves, but the morning drums from the watchtower are hard to hear. There is neither man shouting nor bell ringing.

[I pray to] the gods for pointing [me] to the [right direction] with their golden whips.

(Singing):

[天下樂] 我這裡禱告神祇顯聖靈。好着我耽也波驚。恰便似睡未醒。不由我心中恍惚意未寧。[帶云]

[tianxia le] I am here praying to the gods for an efficacious outcome that can prevent me from feeling frightened [due to] this delay. Just like I am still asleep and haven't woken up yet. [I] couldn't help that my heart is disturbed, my mind not settled. *(speaking):*

我在這供卓傍邊歇息者。[唱]

I will just rest here by the sacrificial table. (*Singing*):

和衣兒磚上眠。怎熬的到五更。我這裡便安排虛夢境。[睡科]

Sleeping on the bricks without undressing [myself], how can I pull through the night till the fifth watch of the night? I may as well set [my proper place] in the empty dream world. (*Falling asleep*)

[大耗小耗領青黃赤白黑五方鬼上] [大耗云]我是鬼王大耗。平生會打胡哨。撞見天上神祇。望着河裡便跳。自家大耗鬼王是也。這箇是我兄弟小耗鬼。這五箇是青黃赤白黑五方鬼。我眾弟兄好生神通廣大。若還閒了。便打觔陡。我們眾弟兄。專管耗散人家的財物。因此叫大耗小耗。今日無事。喜遇豐年。天道晚了。我望一望五道將軍去。來到這廟中。一箇秀才。在此睡着了。如今着鬼力且偷了他這唐巾者。[鬼力偷唐巾科]
[云]我們偷了他這唐巾者。

(DAHAO and XIAOHAO enter, leading GREEN, YELLOW, RED, WHITE and BLACK DEMON)

DAHAO

I am the head of the demons, *dahao*. I am known for my ability to whistle. [If I] bump into celestial divinities, [I] will jump into a river. I myself am the head of the demons. This one is my fellow *xiaohao*. These five are the green, yellow, red, white, and black demons, respectively.¹⁶⁴ All my fellow brothers are in possession of extraordinary

¹⁶⁴ Five colors correspond with the five directions, and to a certain extent, the five internal organs.

magical powers. When they are free, they enjoy turning somersaults.¹⁶⁵ All my fellow brothers are in charge of dissipating people's belongings, which is why they are called *dahao* and *xiaohao* [in the first place]. Today we are free from duty, and merrily we are met with a year of abundance. Now it is getting late, I will go and check up on the General of the Five Avenues. [I] arrived at the temple and saw an examination candidate. He fell asleep here. I can ask my demon fellows to steal away his cap. (*The demons acting out stealing the cap*) we took away his cap!¹⁶⁶

[正末省科] [云]一覺好睡也。[唱]

(ZHONG KUI *acting out waking up*)

ZHONG KUI

I had quite a nap. (*Singing*):

[金盞兒] 我恰纔夢迷中猛然驚。颼颼風透羅衫冷。

[jin zhan er] I feel like I am suddenly startled to wake myself up from my dreams. The wind that is making the swooshing sound is penetrating [my] clothing and [I am feeling] rather chilly.

[帶云] 這早晚夜深時候。怎生不見了我這唐巾。罷罷。天明了尋。

How can I lose my cap right in the middle of the night? Forget about it, forget about it. I will look for it when the daylight breaks in.

¹⁶⁵ *Jindou* 筋陡, modern version *jindou* 筋斗.

¹⁶⁶ *Tangjin* here refers to the soft cap men wore in casual settings.

[唱] 怎看那高山月小一天星。我欲安然圖一覺。急早趕途程。非是咱心不慌。
往日得性公平。

How is it the mountains are high, the Moon so small, and the sky is filled with stars. I just want to have a good night sleep so that I can be on my way sooner. It is not that I am not frightened; in the past I have always behaved well.

[云] 好困人也呵。

How sleepy I am!

[睡魔鬼云] 疾。再睡去。[正末又睡科]

SLEEPING DEMON

Quickly, go back to sleep! (ZHONG KUI *falling back to sleep*)

[大耗云] 那箇去偷將他穿得衣服來。

DAHAO

Which one [of you] is going to steal his clothing?

[青鬼云] 我偷去。[做偷襪衫科]

GREEN DEMON

Allow me. (*Acting out stealing the ragged shirt*)

[正末驚醒科] [唱]

(ZHONG KUI *suddenly woke up*) (*Singing*)

[寄生草] 我這裡慌那體。不由我喫驚。則見那月光穿透窗前影。寒沙滿目人寂靜。我這裡起身便把門挨定。

[jisheng cao] I am in such a flurry. I can't help but be startled. The moonlight is penetrating my shadow in front of the windows. A sight of cold sand fills my eyes and the world is drawn into total silence. I will get up and lean on the door now.

[青鬼慌科] [云] 不好了。怎麼他醒了。

(GREEN DEMON *acting out being startled*)

GREEN DEMON

Bother! How did he wake up?

[正末云] 你看這些鬼怪。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

Would you look at these demons! (*Singing*):

他那裡施逞法力顯高強。我與你向前問一箇誰名姓。[做拔劍攔住眾鬼科]

He is manifesting his magic powers and showing off superior eminence. How about I go ahead and ask who you are? (*Acting out drawing his sword to ward off the demons*)

[青鬼云] 老官兒。你不要惱。還你唐巾呵偏帶罷。

GREEN DEMON

Old man, don't you get annoyed [by us]? Here are your cap and belt.

[大耗云] 這箇人十分利害。天明將來了。我們去廟後頭趁他去來。我們眾鬼十分慌。

今日這裡弄輕狂。跑到後面趁他去。變做蛤蟆戲清汪。[眾鬼下]

DAHAO

This person is very powerful. It is going to be morning soon. How about we go [hide] from him at the back of the temple? We are in a flurry now. We are being rather frivolous today. We will flee and hide in the back, taking the form of a toad and jumping into waves. (*Demons Exit*)

[正末云] 你看這廟中許多的鬼怪。他見我秉性忠直。不敢近我。都回去了。我戴上唐巾。繫上偏帶。兀的天明了也。我索趕途程去也。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

Would you see this many demons in this temple? They have seen what an upright man I am and would not venture to get closer to me. They are all gone now. Let me put on my cap and tie my belt. How come early dawn is here [already]? I might as well be on my way soon. (*Singing*):

[尾聲] 你看那林外曉鴉啼。瑞藹迷山逕。峰嶺畔猿啼數聲。月落潮來紅蓼汀。望天涯慌奔前程。我這裡出門離了神靈。有一日浪暖桃花金榜登。我將這三台掌領。顯咱名姓。我又索便盼程途迤邐望前行。[下]

[Ending] Look, crows are cawing up above the woods. The mountain paths are vanished into the auspicious mist. Apes are moaning along the mountain peaks. The moon set and tides have risen up; the sand bar of water pepper is turning red. Looking at the distant shores [I am] rushing on my further journey. I am going out the door and bidding farewell to the gods. One day [as] the waves are becoming warm and the peach flowers blossoming, my name [will] take a position on the announced list [of successful candidates of examinations], I will [then] take charge of the three posts.¹⁶⁷ My name will be known by the world. I notice my paths along the mountains are sprawling out in all directions. (*Exits*)

第二折 ACT 2

[殿頭官領張千上][云]冉冉祥光罩碧霄。曉星墜落慶雲高。扶桑捧出紅光現。萬國衣冠賀聖朝。小官乃殿頭官是也。方今大唐聖人在位。黎民樂業。五穀豐登。萬邦來朝貢。齊賀太平年。今日早朝。奉命差小官在試院中。與大學士楊國忠尚書張伯循。着他二人為考試官。大開舉場。選天下能文的秀士。都來應舉。端的是聖主過堯舜。金榜傳宣顯姓名。請他二位大人去了。敢待來也。

¹⁶⁷ *Santai* 三台. *Santai* can be interpreted into various different items here because it is a somehow ambiguous term. However, I think this term may be better translated into three different high positions in the court: *shangshu* 尚書, *yushi* 御史, and *yezhe* 謁者 that correspond with *zhongtai* 中台, *xiantai* 憲台, and *waitai* 外台.

(PALACE ATTENDANT¹⁶⁸ *enters, leading* ZHANG QIAN)

ZHANG QIAN

Auspicious lights that cover the clear skies are soaring up slowly. Morning stars are setting and the propitious clouds are high above. Red lights appear and glow from the mystical place. Ten thousand nations are dressed up to salute the emperor. [I am] the minor official, a palace attendant. Now that a sage has taken the throne of the Tang dynasty, the people are leading happy lives, and the five crops are in abundance. Ten thousand states are coming to pay their tribute; together they are celebrating a peaceful year. At today's morning assembly, the emperor has ordered me to go to the examination hall and collaborate with the grand councilor Yang Guozhong and Prime Minister Zhang Boxun.¹⁶⁹ The two of them are appointed as the examination administrators. The examination hall is wide open to select the literarily gifted candidates to take part in the final round of the exam. The Emperor really is a sage king who has exceeded Yao and Shun. The list of successful candidates has been released and the names are in. [I have sent for] the grand councilor and the prime minister. They shall be here soon.

[張伯循上] [云] 文章勝似一囊錦。節操堅剛有正聲。每朝思想忠君意。逐日暢懷報國心。小官學士張伯循是也。能通書義。廣覽詩經。今日早朝。奉聖人的命。今年新春之日。差殿頭官大人。與小官在府中。大開選場。能有文學的秀才應舉。說着話來到也。張千報復去。道有小官來了也。

¹⁶⁸ *Diantou guan* 殿頭官, is the palace attendant that is designated to announce or deliver the decrees on behalf of his Majesty.

¹⁶⁹ There is some historical truth in these two names, which is indicated in footnote 150.

(ZHANG BOXUN *enters*)

ZHANG BOXUN

[Decent] composition is better than as a sack of brocade. [If] the integrity of principle is pliable and strong [then the composition] possesses virtuous sound. With daily concerns over how to be a loyal subject [to the emperor], and how to dedicate myself to the state's cause, [I am] the minor official Zhang Boxun. I am capable of comprehending the true meanings of the four books¹⁷⁰ and have been exposed to numerous poems and classics. At today's mourning court, [I] have received order from the emperor. On New Year's Day, the palace attendant is appointed [to the position] to collaborate with me to hold the final examination in [my] official residence. Candidates that are literary and learned are [welcome] to participate [in the exam]. I arrived just now as I am speaking. Please inform the palace attendant, Zhang Qian, telling him that I have arrived.

[張千云] 理會的。有學士大人來了也。

ZHANG QIAN

Understood. The grand councilor has come.

[殿頭官云] 道有請。

PALACE ATTENDANT

Tell him [I] require his presence.

[張千云] 有請。

¹⁷⁰ Four books, *shu* 四書.

ZHANG QIAN

This way, please.

[張伯循見科] [云] 大人。小官來了也。

ZHANG BOXUN *making official greetings with ATTENDANT*)

Attendant, [I] am here.

[殿頭官云] 學士來了也。且少待。等楊國忠來時商量。這早晚敢待來也。

PALACE ATTENDANT

The grand councilor, you are here. Please wait momentarily. We will have a discussion upon the arrival of Yang Guozhong. He will be here shortly.

[淨楊國忠上] [云] 小官做事忒聰明。但用茶飯我為尊。平生則好喫香菜。冷了芫荽吃葱蔥。小官推官楊國忠是也。論我做官。所事都好。並無文才。強嘴到好。聽的考試。望家就跑。今日奉命。時遇新春。大開舉場。着眾大人在試院中。考有文學的秀才。都來應舉。須索走一遭。不索報復。我自過去。眾大人每。小官來了也。有甚麼話。說了罷。

(YANG GUOZHONG *enters*)

YANG GUOZHONG

[I] am quite clever in dealing with business. I focus on food and drinks and take really good care of myself. I have always liked to eat coriander. [If] the cilantro is cold then I go

for a shallot.¹⁷¹ [I am] the judge Yang Guozhong. Speaking of my way of holding an official post, everything has been working out quite smoothly thus far. [I am] not in possession of any literary talent, but I have a sharp mouth. Upon hearing the word “exam,” I will be running home right away. Today I have received an official order [from the emperor] to hold the final round of the exam on New Year’s Day. All the related officials are asked to be present at the exam hall, testing candidates with high literary qualities. I must make this trip [to the hall]. There is no need to inform the palace attendant. I will just go and see him myself. Attendants, [I am] here. What was it that you wished to speak with me about?

[殿頭官云] 且一壁有者。等眾大人每來。另有計議。

PALACE ATTENDANT

Someone else is coming, too. Let us wait until everyone is here. We have matters to discuss about.

[二淨上] [常風云] 我做秀才實高強。逐朝賴學壘磚牆。九年不識一箇字。開春就是狀元郎。自家常風的便是。這箇是我姪兒發傻。論我文章。其實不高。聽的考試。轉了驢腰。我說發傻。今日試院中攞了卷子。不知怎麼說。我們去相府裡去。必然耍子。我兩箇跑一遭去。也是好處。

(PAINTED FACES *enter*)

¹⁷¹ While the use of *yuansui* and *hancong* sound more like ironies to a modern audience, they should be regarded as common vegetables in the Yuan dynasty. On the one hand, they are used to demonstrate that *zaju* as a literary genre really attempts to be truthful to Yuan people’s lives, which reflects the varieties of vegetables available during the Yuan dynasty; on the other hand, cilantro and shallot are herbs that are not supposed to be main ingredients, which in the context of this play can provoke some comical effects.

CHANGFENG

As an exam candidate I am really clever. I skipped class every day to stack up brick walls. I managed not to study one single character over nine years, and yet I am the top candidate in the spring. I am *Changfeng*, and this is my nephew *Fasha*. Speaking of my composition ability, it is not strong at all. Upon hearing the word “exam,” I turn my donkey back. *Fasha*, today at the exam hall I hurriedly finished writing at the last moment, I don’t know what came [of it]. Let’s go to the Zhang residence. It must be fun. It is good that the two of us can make this trip.

[二淨見科] [常風云] 眾老大兒每。俺兩箇來。有甚麼事。

(PAINTED FACES *acting out making greetings with everyone*)

CHANGFENG

Greetings. The two of us have come. What was it [that you wished to speak to us about]?

[殿頭官云]你且一壁有者。眾秀才每。還少誰未曾來哩。

PALACE ATTENDANT

You stand by. Among the candidates, anyone who hasn’t come yet?

[張千云]止少終南山一箇秀才鍾馗不曾來哩。

ZHANG QIAN

We are only missing the candidate Zhong Kui of Mt. Zhongnan who hasn’t come yet.

[張伯循云]大人。這箇鍾馗。文才冠世。廣覽詩書。端的有經綸濟世之才。補完天地之手也。

ZHANG BOXUN

Attendant, speaking of this Zhong Kui, his poetic gift is second to none and he has been widely reading in numerous poems and books. He is without a doubt full of ideas to rule the country and to govern the people. He is the one who can repair heaven and earth.

[殿頭官云] 既然這等。看了此人。端實能哉也。張千門首望着。若來時。報復我知道。

PALACE ATTENDANT

Is that so? It seems that this person is indeed good and able. Please stand by the door and keep an eye out for him, Zhang Qian. Report back to me as soon as he arrives.

[正末上] [云] 小生鍾馗是也。離了本鄉。上朝進去功名去。昨日在半途中。一箇廟宇裡宿歇。見幾箇鬼怪。被我趕的去了。今日必索到相府中去。想俺這為秀才的。非同容易也呵。[唱]

(ZHONG KUI *enters*)

ZHONG KUI

I am the young scholar Zhong Kui. I left my hometown and came here [to the capital city] to pursue an official post at the court. On my way here yesterday, I spent a night at a local temple and encountered several demons. They were driven away by me. Today I must go to the Zhang residence. The thoughts of me being a candidate, not easy! (*Singing*):

[中呂粉蝶兒] 每日家經典溫習。指望待受皇恩身登鰲背。脫白襴蔭子封妻。
顯榮華居府爵。不枉了人生一世。詩句頻題。我盼一箇禹門及第。

[zhonglv fendie'er] I recite the classics every day at home, hoping to receive the favor from the emperor and to come out first in the civil exam. Holding a high position at court and living in an official residence, [I can then] get rid of my plain robes and provide protection and a rank for my sons and wife. My life then is no longer in vain. Practicing composition frequently, I hope that I can pass the final round of the exam.

[云] 憑着小生滿腹文章。必受皇家富貴也。[唱]

Relying on the numerous ideas I have for composition, [I] for sure will receive honors from the royal family. *(Singing)*:

[醉春風] 搏一箇金榜把名揚。圖一箇恩榮無賽比。我則待天長地久輔皇朝。
端的是美。美。相府風清。鴛鴦瓦瓷。更和這篆煙風細。

[zui chunfeng] Fighting to make it to the final list and to have my name known, aiming to receive the incompatible honor [from the emperor]. I am waiting to assist the emperor for eternity. How superb would that be? How superb! The wind gently blows in the Zhang residence, mandarin duck patterned roof tiles accompany the fine smoke of the incense that is curling up in the air.

[云] 來到了也。張千報復去。道有新春舉子。特來應舉。

Here I am. Please inform official Zhang, Zhang Qian, telling him that a spring candidate is seeking to take part in the exam.

[張千云] 理會的。有新春舉子。特來應舉。

ZHANG QIAN

Understood. A spring candidate is coming for the exam.

[張伯循云] 道有請。

ZHANG BOXUN

Tell him to come forward.

[張千云] 有請。

ZHANG QIAN

This way, please.

[正末見科] [云]眾位相公。小生特來應舉也。

(ZHONG KUI *acting out greeting everyone*)

ZHONG KUI

Gentlemen, [I am] the humble young scholar to take the exam.

[常風云] 我說你來怎麼。這狀元已定是我做了。你一邊去。

CHANGFENG

Why are you even here? The top candidate position is mine. Walk away.

[正末云] 你看這厮，好是無禮也。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

Would you look at this fellow, how disrespectful he is? (*Singing*):

[迎仙客] 我這言就裏。說真實。是非我大人前大人前可便誇大嘴。

[*ying xianke*] **Let me summarize for you. To be honest, it is not that I am talking myself up in front of the official Zhang.**

[張伯循云] 鍾馗，你有何治國安民之法。

ZHANG BOXUN

Zhong Kui, what means have you to rule the country and bring peace to the people?

[正末唱] 者麼是理居安民社稷。我將那經典溫習。盼一箇崢嶸日。

(*Singing*) **That will have something to do with [how to] bring peace to the people and the state. I would go over the classics anew, in the hope of a glorious future.**

[張伯循云] 住住住。你眾人不必爭競。我如今出箇題目。或詩或詞。做一首來。我便知您的學問也。

ZHANG BOXUN

Hold on. There is no need for the two of you to fight. How about I assign you a topic, composing a *shi* or *ci* poetry as you like. Then I should be able to tell your knowledge.

[常風云] 你則管出將題來。我作詩與你看。

CHANGFENG

Just go ahead and assign the topic already. I will make a *shi* poem for you to see.

[正末云] 大人。你則管出題來。非是小生賣口。我自有箇主意。

ZHONG KUI

Official Zhang, you just give the topic. I am not trying to sell myself here, but I know what I am doing.

[張伯循云] 兀那鍾馗。你見廳前這棵臘梅花麼。或詩詞做一首來。

ZHANG BOXUN

That's settled then. Zhong Kui, did you see the winter-sweet tree in front of the house? Make it a *shi* or *ci* poem as you like.

[正末云] 這箇有何當緊。將紙墨筆硯來。

ZHONG KUI

How difficult can that be? Could someone please hand me over paper, ink, a brush pen and an ink slab?

[張千云] 兀的不是。

ZHANG QIAN

Understood.

[正末寫科] [唱]

(ZHONG KUI *acting out writing, singing*)

[石榴花] 我這裡染霜毫親試目前題。抵多少獨自可便對丹墀。趁着這廳前香徹未殘梅。尋思了一會。不索猜疑。[云] 詩就了也。

[shiliu hua] I am wetting my brush pen to finish the subject in front of me. How much effort [I] need to put in order to partake in the imperial examination? Taking advantage of the winter-sweet tree in front of the hall that is still fragrant and has not withered yet. I am pondering for a moment. No need for hesitation.

ZHONG KUI

I am done.

[張伯循云] 端的好寫染也。將來我試看者。是一首詩。詩曰。玉蕊冰花占早春。調羹鼎內味偏淳。蒼蒼志節臨丹檻。耿耿孤高氣味新。自有一股清意味。不將顏色媚他人。古來高志留青眼。不似桃花園內根。好高才也。

ZHANG BOXUN

It is indeed excellent calligraphy. Let me just take a closer look [at it]. It is a *shi* poem. It reads, “Jade like flower pistils are enclosed with frosty petals occupy the early spring, [seasoning the soup in the cauldron] using a spoon or a pan to appreciate the simplicity of the taste. Dark green are the branches, facing over the red wooden railing. Bright and

shining they stand up, with fragrance so revitalizing. [They] possess untainted qualities and never use their color to seduce others. Throughout history ambitious men look on [them] with great enjoyment, and [they are] nothing like the peach blossoms that can only be cultivated in a garden.¹⁷²

Such exceptional talent!

[正末唱] 他道我詩才堪折蟾宮桂。走龍蛇字體堪宜。論文學博得皇家貴。因此上情願棄寒微。

(Singing) He complimented my talents of poetry composition, reassuring that [I could] win the laurel in the civil exam. [My] swift curling style of calligraphy is indeed proper, and my literary expertise is decent enough to win the honor from the royal family. Therefore, I'm willing to abandon my humble circumstances.

[常風云] 你休說嘴。我這一首詩出來。就諛死了你。我念與你們聽。一樹梅花真箇香。我們秀才有文章。他若結了一丈樹。一准都是條兒糖。

CHANGFENG

Don't you brag about yourself. Wait until you see my composition. [I] guarantee that you will be shocked to death. I will read it to you. A winter-sweet tree that is indeed fragrant, us candidates are full of ideas for composition. If the tree reached as high as one *zhang*, then it surely would be covered by hanging icicles that look like candy sticks.¹⁷³

¹⁷² The purity of the winter sweet blossoms can be an analogy of Zhong Kui's moral stance.

¹⁷³ *Zhang* 丈, unit of length, one *zhang* equals ten *chi* 尺, and one *chi* is approximately 0.333 meter.

[楊國忠云] 好高才。雖是那秀才的文章好。這狀元一准是你的了。

YANG GUOZHONG

Such a great poem! Although candidate Zhong's work is quite impressive, you will surely be the top candidate [who comes out of the exam].

[正末云] 兀的不氣殺我也。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

How can I not be infuriated now? (*Singing*):

[鬪鶻鶻] 你看他則管理歪談。不由我心頭怒起。你正是小輩兒曹。你會看甚麼看甚麼聖籍。

[dou anchun] Seeing him managing this situation with his crooked talk, I cannot help but feel furious from the bottom of my heart. You are from a younger generation, have you even read the classics [written by] the sages?

[楊國忠云] 怎麼他倒不如你作的詩。老大見。這箇秀才成不的。要他做甚麼。趕將除去罷。

YANG GUOZHONG

How is it that his poem is not as good as yours? Listen to him, everyone. This candidate cannot be used. What good will he bring us? Just get rid of him already.

[正末唱] 他那裡騙口張舌。說箇甚的。又不敢言就裏。止望待金榜題名。便是我前程的這萬里。

(Singing) **Looking at him deceiving and talking like that, what else can I say? I do not dare to utter the truth; only wishing to have my name appear on the announced list so that my career path can go afar.**

[張伯循云] 楊國忠。這今春頭名。誰人可做。

ZHANG BOXUN

Yang Guozhong, [in your opinion] who can be the top spring candidate [among all of them]?

[二淨遞砌末與楊國忠] [楊國忠云] 老大兒。你差了。這常風發傻好文章。這箇鍾馗。怎麼來的。[正末唱]

(PAINTED FACES acting out passing something to YANG GUOZHONG)

YANG GUOZHONG

My old brother, now that you asked, [I think] *Changfeng* and *Fasha* are excellent at composition. As for Zhong Kui, what's wrong with him? *(Zhong Kui Singing)*

[十二月] 我這裡低頭歎息。空將那經典溫習。則落箇羞歸鄉里。不由我兩淚雙垂。道着我低情下意。又不曾看了真實。

[Shi'er yue] **I am bending my head down and [can only] sigh. [All that time devoted to] studying the classics has proved futile. The results [that await me] are returning to my hometown with humiliation. Beyond my control, two**

**lines of tears pour down [my cheeks]. I am reluctant [to go back], and
couldn't foresee this ahead of time.**

[張伯循云] 你不要多言。且回去。明日再定奪。

ZHANG BOXUN

You've said enough. Just go back for now. Everything will be decided tomorrow.

[正末云] 大人。小生的文章。倒不如他。兀的不氣殺我也。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

Prime minister, how was my poem less worthy than his? How can I not be furious now?

(Singing)

[堯民歌] 呀。好着我心中怨氣吐虹蜺。你正是坐而不覺立而饑。何年得志趁
風雷。禹門一躍拜丹墀。誰也波知。今朝空自回。我可便奪得身榮貴。

**[yaomin ge] Alas! I have a chest full of hatred that makes rainbows.¹⁷⁴ You
are so well off that you have no idea how I have suffered. In the year [that I]
have obtained an official post all of a sudden, entering the hall of honor and
paying [my] respects to the emperor [through the crimson steps leading up to
the palace]. Who would have foreseen everything? I am going back without
having accomplished much today; will I get appointed and receive honor
from the emperor?**

¹⁷⁴ *Nihong* 虹蜺 can be written as 霓虹, refers to the rainbows. In modern Chinese, *qituo nihong* 氣吐霓虹 refers to someone that possesses breadth of spirit. Here it is used to refer to Zhong Kui's frustration.

[張伯循云] 您眾舉子且回去。我明日奏知聖人。自有主意。

ZHANG BOXUN

Please go back now, everyone. I will write a memorial to the emperor tomorrow, upon which things will be decided.

[正末云] 既然這等。罷罷罷。我且回店中去來。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

Now that you put it this way. Never mind, never mind. I will just go back to the inn.

(Singing)

[尾聲] 當初笑吟吟離故鄉。今日箇悶懨懨回店里。則不如山間林下心無愧。

搏一箇萬古清名著後人喜。[下]

[Ending] I left my hometown with a smile [on my face]. Today I am going back to my inn feeling depressed. [I] might be better off in the mountains or forests without feeling so ashamed. That way people of later generations can [at least] appreciate my integrity. (Exits)

[張伯循云] 大人。今春聖人寬恩。大開舉場。考試天下秀才。今日小官在此。有文學的秀才每。中了這幾箇。小官不敢定奪頭名。俺且回聖人的話。走一遭去。小官至府第之中。考秀才書策詩經。今日箇舉子登榜。到來朝天下傳名。[下]

ZHANG BOXUN

Grand councilor, this spring the emperor extended the honor and held an imperial exam, and all candidates throughout the country were tested. Today, I am informing you that

among the highly qualified candidates, several of them really distinguished themselves [among their peers]. I do not dare to finalize the top candidate. I am just speaking on behalf of his Majesty here. I will make the trip to the Yang residence. That day at my residence, we were administering the final imperial exam to test all candidates on their ability of policy-making and poetry compositions. Today the top candidate will be released on the list, whose name will be known by the world tomorrow. (*Exits*)

[楊國忠云] 大人回奏去了。我今日來到這府第中。別人都不會偏手。那兩箇秀才常風發傻。文章不濟。與了我這兩箇大銀子。都有了他兩箇的名字了。我拿着這銀子到家裡。買肉鮓喫耍子。走一遭去。我並無冠世文才。考秀才我也前來。大腦袋常風發傻。買爛肉大家都嚙。[下]

YANG GUOZHONG

Official Zhang has gone to his Majesty [to finalize the top candidate]. I am stepping into this residence again now. No one else [but me] has an unfair advantage. Those two candidates named *Changfeng* and *Fasha*; their composition demonstrated no literary merit. However, they bribed me with these two huge pieces of silver.¹⁷⁵ Therefore, their names were among the finalists. I will take the silver and go home to buy some meat and salted fish. I am heading off now. I do not possess fine literary qualities that are second to none in the world, and yet I came to administer the exams for the candidates. The bigheaded *Changfeng* and *Fasha*, who bought soft meat for everyone to munch. (*Exits*)

¹⁷⁵ *Liang ge da yinzi* 兩個大銀子 may just be a rough number after all here. Although two silvers may not seem to be a huge number, but using silver to depict how silver as a currency reflects the communal, socio-economical, or to a certain extent, moral value of the Yuan, and later on the Ming is a rather popular notion, especially in the drama plays. Another example is the *Mulian* drama plays composed by the Ming literati Zheng Zhizhen 鄭之珍 (1518-1595), in which several scenes are dedicated to how forging and swindling silver result in harsh punishments from the thunder gods.

[常風云] 眾大人每都去了。我說發傻。俺兩箇文章不濟事。那個楊國忠要了俺兩箇大銀子。到明日張掛皇榜。俺兩箇必定做官也。俺且回去來。俺兩箇計量千般。無才學肚腹不寬。我平生一世腦袋。拜神天則要為官。[同下]

CHANGFENG

All the officials have gone back now. *Fasha*, the two of us are not good at composing poetry at all. However, that Yang Guozhong took in our silver, and we are guaranteed an official post upon the announcement of the final list tomorrow. Let's head back home now. Thinking back and forth for thousands of times, [I] have no capacity for knowledge whatsoever. My fate will have to rely on praying to gods for an official post. (*Exits with Fasha*)

第三折 ACT 3

[殿頭官領張千上] [云] 自從貢院為考試。恩臨金榜姓名標。小官殿頭官是也。為因今春放選場。奉命着小官同眾大人在試院眾考有文學的秀才。止考中一人。姓鍾名馮。此人文才廣覽。詩句驚人。有談天論地秀氣。此人中第一名進士。小官奏知聖人。封他為天下頭名狀元。賜他靴笏襴袍。等眾大人來全。與他加官賜賞。張千門首望着。眾大人每來時。報某知道。

(PALACE ATTENDANT *enters, leading ZHANG QIAN*)

PALACE ATTENDANT

Ever since the conclusion of the final exam, the emperor has been extending his favor to the nominated candidates. I am the humble palace attendant. I was entrusted to collaborate with the other officials to administer this spring's imperial exam, testing

candidates with high literary qualities. However, only one [among all candidates] has made it to the final list. His name is Zhong Kui. This person [possesses] great literary talents and has been exposed to extensive books, and his poems are astounding. He has the refined superiority to be well versed on anything under the sun. This person came out first in the imperial exam, and I issued a memorial to the emperor. Zhong Kui is awarded top candidate of the national examination and official attire was bestowed on him. I will just wait until all are here to pronounce his official title and gratuities. Please keep a look out for him, Zhang Qian, report back to me upon the arrival of all officials.

[張千云] 理會的。

ZHANG QIAN

Understood.

[張伯循上] [云] 秀才中舉登甲第。方顯書生有大才。小官張伯循是也。自從試院中大開舉場。天下秀才都不中。止有一人是鍾馗。此人文章高強。他回到店中。不知怎生一氣而亡。今日眾大人在相府中着人來請。須索走一遭去。張千報復去。道有小官來了也。

(ZHANG BOXUN *enters*)

ZHANG BOXUN

An exam candidate that passed the exam at the provincial level and [later on] the imperial level has only then to manifest his great talents. I am the humble official Zhang Boxun. Ever since [we] held the exam in the exam hall, none [but one of] the candidates have passed. One person [did stand out] and his name is Zhong Kui. This person is greatly

talented in poetry composition. The day after he returned to the inn, who would have foreseen that he would die of acute wrath? Today all the officials are gathered in the palace attendant's residence and they have requested my presence now. I must make this trip. Zhang Qian, please inform the attendant that I am here.

[張千云] 理會的。有張大人來了也。

ZHANG QIAN

Understood. Official Zhang has arrived.

[殿頭官云] 道有請。

PALACE ATTENDANT

Tell him to come in.

[張千云] 有請。

ZHANG QIAN

This way, please.

[見科][云]大人。小官來了也。

(ZHANG BOXUN *acting out greeting the attendant*)

ZHANG BOXUN

Attendant, I am here.

[殿頭官云] 大人來了也。自試院中秀才每不中。止有一人是鍾馗。此人文章冠世。謝聖恩可憐。封他為天下頭名狀元。又賜他與官笏襪袍。如今請他來受此物。望闕謝恩來。

PALACE ATTENDANT

There you are, official Zhang. None of the candidates have passed the imperial exam, none but one whose name was Zhong Kui. This person has the composition ability that is second to none in the world. Thanks to the generosity of his Majesty, Zhong came out the top candidate in the national exam and was awarded official attire, too. Now we need to invite him over to accept honors and to pay respects [while] facing the palace.

[張伯循云] 大人不知。有秀才鍾馗。不知怎生回到店中。一氣而亡了。

ZHANG BOXUN

Haven't you already heard about it? The candidate Zhong Kui died of wrath soon after he returned to his inn.

[殿頭官云] 嗨。可惜了也。卻正是文高壽短。如今賜他的物件。歸於何處。可也容易。將此敕賜之物。大人領張千。將着此物到店肆中。用火焚化。着他地府中用度。顯的國家重用賢臣也。

PALACE ATTENDANT

Alas, what a shame. This is just like [the saying], [when a person's] literary qualities are high, his lifespan is [comparably] short. Now what do we do with the official attire bestowed to him? But it is easy. Official Zhang, please take Zhang Qian with you. Take the items that were awarded by the emperor to the inn [that Zhong Kui stayed in prior to

his death] and burn them. That way he could still redeem them in the underworld, which also testifies that he was greatly valued by the state [during his life].

[張伯循云] 大人說的是。張千。將着靴笏襪袍。店肆中焚燒去來。[張千拿砌末科]

ZHANG BOXUN

I agree with you. Zhang Qian, please bring the official boots, the wooden tablet and robes.

Let's go to the inn and burn them. (ZHANG QIAN *acting out fetching something*)

[張伯循云] 大人。俺焚燒這靴笏襪袍。走一遭去也。唐聖主敕賜恩榮。有鍾馗一氣亡魂。焚燒了襪袍靴笏。方顯的國重賢臣。[同張千下]

ZHANG BOXUN

Attendant, I am going to make the trip and burn the official items. The emperor issued a memorial decree and expanded his favor [for Zhong Kui], and yet he died of wrath. Now we are going to burn these items to validate that the state values worthy officials. (*Exits with Zhang Qian*)

[殿頭官云] 他每焚燒靴笏襪袍去了也。我這心中不樂。覺一陣昏沈上來。且盹睡一覺。

[睡科]

PALACE ATTENDANT

They are off to burn the official attire [that Zhong Kui] received. I am feeling a wave of fatigue overcoming me. I will just go take a nap. (*Falling asleep*)

[大耗小耗同五方鬼上] [大耗云] 不懼神明不怕天。平生勇烈壽千年。自從三皇分五帝。逐日山前變百般。自家大耗鬼是也。這箇是小耗鬼。這五箇是青黃赤白黑五方鬼。俺平生妖孽。變化千般。俺無有神堂住坐。今知頭官大人在相府中。俺今到那裡。假傳着玉帝敕令。着他與俺蓋神堂廟宇。可不好。可早來到也。俺都過去來。[做見科]

(DAHAO and XIAOHAO enter, leading DEMONS OF THE FIVE DIRECTIONS)

DAHAO

[I am] neither intimidated by the deities nor heaven. [I am] known for my bravery and courage and have lived for a thousand years. Ever since the times of the three emperors and the five legendary emperors, [I] have been able to transform into different entities at the mountains every day.¹⁷⁶ I am the *dahao* demon, this one is the *xiaohao* demon. These five are green, yellow, red, white, and black demons, respectively. I have been mischievous all my life and am an adept at transforming [myself] into various forms. I do not own a temple that [I could] reside in. Today I have learned that the palace attendant is home. I am going to pay him a visit and deliver a false memorial decree on behalf of the Jade Emperor, ordering him to erect a temple in my honor. Doesn't that sound magnificent? I am already here. Let me go over there. (*Acting out greeting everyone*)

[小耗云] 兀的他不睡着了也。大人。俺眾神祇奉玉帝敕令。着你與俺蓋一座廟宇居住哩。

XIAOHAO

¹⁷⁶ They refer to *sanhuang* 三皇 (fuxi 伏羲, shengnong 神農, and nuwa 女媧) and *wudi* 五帝 who are regarded as the founding fathers and mothers of the Chinese civilization in antiquity.

Isn't he is asleep here now? Your Excellency, we are here by the Jade Emperor's memorial decree, ordering you to erect a temple for us to reside in.

[殿頭官云] 您是何方聖者。神麼靈神。因何至此。

PALACE ATTENDANT

Who are you? And what kind of deity are you? Why are you here?

[大耗云] 你問我們怎麼。快箇手下的人來。

DAHAO

Why are there so many questions? Come on up quickly, someone.

[正末扮判官上] [云] 小聖終南山進士鍾馗是也。因我平生直正。膽力剛強。來到京師。應舉不用。一氣死歸冥路。上帝不負吾之德。加為判官之職。管領天下邪魔鬼怪。不期大人賜與靴笏襪袍。小聖如今以夢中致謝大人。走一遭去。[唱]

(ZHONG KUI costumed as a judge enters)

ZHONG KUI

I am the petty deity Zhong Kui from Mt. Zhongnan. Because I have been upright, courageous, and firm all my lifetime, I came to the capital city to take the exam and was not selected, for which reason I died in rage. The Jade Emperor is grateful for my virtues and awarded me the position of grand judge. [I am] in charge of all demonic forces under heaven. It came to me as a surprise that the official attire was awarded [to me] from the

palace attendant.¹⁷⁷ I will now go express my thanks to him in my dream. Off I go now.

(Singing):

[正宮端正好] 則他臘梅殘。春風蕩。賀昇平盛世時光。你看那豐年稔歲同歡暢。更和那瑞藹從天降。

[Zhenggong duan Zhenghao] Already, the winter-sweet trees are withered; and the spring breeze is [gently] cleansing [the remaining bits and pieces of the winter]. [We are] celebrating the times that are peaceful and propitious. Look, a year of abundance is joyfully met with the harvesting of the crops. There are even auspicious mists coming down from the skies.

[滾繡球] 我平生性最剛。把妖邪見影藏。甫能的去登金榜。不能穀榮顯恩光。雖不曾官居八府中。也落箇英雄立廟堂。則聽的閒人來往。氣丕丕走到廳傍。我則見柳含春意搖擺。更和那花壓欄杆未吐香。別是箇風光。

[gun xiuqiu] All of my lifetime my character has been most strong. The demons [would go] hide once they see my shadow. I was just able to come out first in the national exam, but I could not carry on the favor given by the emperor. Although I had never obtained a high official post, I ended up having a temple erected in my honor. I heard people walking back and forth, feeling out of breath I am now walking to the hall. I am seeing the willow trees swinging [in the breeze] to express meaning of spring, and the flowers pressing upon the wooden railings are yet to open. Such scenery to behold.

¹⁷⁷ In this context, the official attire refers to the long green robe, official boots, and a wooden tablet.

[云] 來到着廳前。甚麼人在此喧譁。我試看者。

I've come to the front of the main hall. Who is making such noises here? Let me go take a look.

[大耗云] 老大兒。你若與我立箇廟宇。塑了我們這些形像。便着你無事了。若不與我立廟呵。就着你了不的。

DAHAO

Old man. If you erected a temple and made statues of us all, then you are not going to get into any trouble; if not, just wait and see.

[殿頭官云] 你這箇人。都是那裡的。且少待。等我手下人來時。慢慢的商量。

PALACE ATTENDANT

Would you look at this guy? Where are you from? Just hold on for a second and wait for my subordinates to arrive. We will all talk things through slowly.

[正末云] 好是奇怪也。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

How strange. (*Singing*)

[倘秀才]我這裡便無語。聽沈半晌。猛聽的喧聒聒鬧嚷。我與你破步撩衣登畫堂。[走科][唱]我心下自度量。我與你覷當。[見眾鬼科][云] 謁。兀那小鬼頭。怎敢來戲弄大人。

[shang xiucal] I am saying nothing and listen attentively for a moment. I suddenly heard such a clamor. Let me lift up my robes and race to enter the study. *(Acting out walking, sings)*: I am thinking about it. Let me just take a look.

(Acting out seeing the demons)

Psst, just a bunch of petty demons. How dare you tease the attendant like this?

[大耗云] 好也。一箇判官走將來了。你管我們怎樣。我來問老大兒討酒喫來。干你甚麼事。

DAHAO

This is just great. A judge is approaching. Don't you interfere with us. We are just here to ask [the attendant] for some wine. This has nothing to do with you.

[正末云] 這些鬼怪。好是無禮也。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

You ghosts and demons, how rude you are! *(Singing)*:

[叨叨令] 他口聲聲將我相欺謗。氣撲撲言語皆虛誑。絮叨叨則管裡無攔當。濕津津汗滴在羅衫上。[做拽衣服科] [唱] 我與你打他也波哥。打他也波哥。不由我惡狠狠氣吐三千丈。

[Daodao ling] He is slandering me repeatedly. Fiercely their talks are all so deceiving. Babbling endlessly like no one can stop them. My sweat is

dripping and wetting my clothing. (Acting out pulling the clothing, sings) Let me beat you up, let me beat you up. I am losing control of myself and furiously exhaling out my anger.

[殿頭官云] 好好好。一箇判官來了。你便與我降了这些鬼怪呵。我自有箇主意。

PALACE ATTENDANT

Good, good! A judge is here. Just go and subdue these demons for me. I have an idea.

[大耗云] 怎麼。你要打我們。雙拳不敵四手。您則一箇人。我們七八箇人。打不過你。我不信。

DAHAO

What? You want to beat us up. Two fists cannot beat four hands, you are on your own, and there are seven, eight of us. We can't beat you up? I just don't believe that.

[正末云] 這鬼怪好是無禮也。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

These demons are lacking proper manners. (*Singing*):

[脫布衫] 兀的不惱損我這柔腸。不由我氣夯破胸膛。又不篩鑼播鼓。何須的領兵驅將。[眾打播科]

[*tuo bushan*] How is this not infuriating my heart? In spite of myself being so furious that it is actually hurting my chest. It is not like that we have to strike

a gong or drum, what is the point of leading troops and commanding the generals. (*The demons acting out taking on a challenge*)

[大耗云] 好也。你動手。眾兄弟一齊上手。打他耍子。[正末唱]

Dahao

Excellent. You are making a move. Let's go and get him. Let's beat him up. (*male lead singing*)

[小梁州] 我着你目下登時一命亡。我可也不索商量。這箇是大人居住府廳堂。
不是我心鹿壯。他那裡手腳亂張狂。

ZHONG KUI

[*xiao liangzhou*] I take all of you once and for all. There is no room for further discussion. This place is the abode of the palace attendant. It is not me who is feeling flustered right now, do you see how unruly they are right now?

[大耗云] 這箇老官兒。好雙溜手兒。我們成不的了。眾弟兄。跪下降了。[眾跪科]

DAHAO

This old man has such smooth hands. I don't think we can accomplish [what we expected] today. Fellow brothers, just kneel down at him and surrender. (*The demons acting out kneeling down*)

[大耗云] 老大叔。你是那箇。說與我們。我們都與你做姪兒。也不辱沒了你。[正末唱]

DAHAO

Old uncle, just tell us who you really are. We will follow your lead and be your nephews.

This will also be no shame to you.

(Zhong Kui *Singing*)

[么篇] 我奉着玉帝敕令從天降。管着您山精魍魎。你既然懇護持心投向。我
和你同歸洞去。便着你箇箇壽綿長。

**[Ending] I am descending from heaven to deliver a memorial decree from the
Jade Emperor,¹⁷⁸ ordering me to take control of you mountain demons and
spirits of wilds.¹⁷⁹ Now that you are willing to submit to me sincerely, I will
just return to my dwelling place with all of you. I can make each one of you
live for eternity.**

[大耗云] 罷罷罷。我們都降了。你眾鬼王先去。出山後頭等你。我先去也。我們眾鬼
十分喜。走到廳前要油嘴。不匡撞着判官來。放心都去河裡浮會水。[眾鬼下]

DAHAO

Done, done, done. We are surrendering. You demons just go ahead, and I shall proceed
and wait for you at the back of the mountains. I am taking off now. We demons are very
happy. We came to the attendant residence to swindle but bumped into the judge by

¹⁷⁸ It seems that this play uses Yudi 玉帝 and Shangdi 上帝 interchangeably (later on, *feng shangdi chiling* 奉上帝敕令 on page 134). In addition to being a sign of a Daoist hierarchy, this also indicates Yudi and Shangdi are the same.

¹⁷⁹ *Shanjing wangliang* 山精魍魎, 魍魎 shadowy phantom. *Huainanzi* 淮南子 refers *wangliang* 罔兩 to evil people and things, please refer to *Huainanzi* 淮南子, “lanminxun” 覽冥訓.

accident. Now we can all feel relieved and take pleasure in floating in the rivers. (*The demons exit*)

[殿頭官云] 嗨。兀的不殺我也。兀那判官。是何方神聖。說與我。我奏知聖人。與你立廟陞堂也。

PALACE ATTENDANT

Whew. I was really scared, what god are you, judge? Just tell me and I will inform his holiness to erect a temple in your honor.

[正末云] 大人。小聖是終南山不第秀才鍾馗。奉上帝敕令。着我管領天下邪魔鬼怪。今親來拜謝大人恩命來。

ZHONG KUI

Attendant, I am the petty deity, the failed exam candidate Zhong Kui from Mt. Zhongnan.¹⁸⁰ I am here by his Majesty's decree and was entrusted to take charge of the demonic forces under heaven. I am here to thank you for your favor.

[殿頭官云] 原來如此。你回去。我來日奏知聖人。與你立廟陞堂。普天下人民。都來供養你。

PALACE ATTENDANT

¹⁸⁰ *Xiaosheng* can be translated into either the minor deity, or the minor sage; considering that Zhong Kui was a young scholar who was an adept in Confucian classics before his canonization.

This is what it is all about. You just go back for now. I will make a memorial to the throne and erect a temple in your honor. People from all under heaven will make offerings to you.

[正末云] 謝了大人。小聖回去也。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

Thank you so much, attendant. I am going back now. (*Singing*):

[尾聲] 吾皇有德山河壯。萬載乾坤日月光。慶新正降吉祥。太平年讚今上。
則願的萬歲君王。將俺這庶民掌。[下]

[Ending] My emperor has great virtues therefore the mountains and rivers [of the land] stand strong. The state of ten thousand years shines with the radiance of the Sun and the Moon. Celebrating the New Year that brings about good fortune; in the year of great peace [we praise] our emperor, only to wish the emperor lives for eternity and takes control of common people like me. (Exits)

[殿頭官做醒科] [云] 一覺好睡也。嗨。恰纔一夢中。夢見許多鬼怪。不知怎麼。都來看小官與他立廟。偶然一箇判官走將來。趕着眾鬼。我問其緣故。自稱是終南山不第秀才鍾馗。將眾鬼都降伏了。我如今奏知了聖人。着普天下人民。盡都畫他形像。與他立廟陞堂。我索見聖人。走一遭去。一夢中猛見邪精。端的是容貌猙獰。終南山鍾馗直正。便與他立廟加封。[下]

(PALACE ATTENDANT *acting out waking up*)

PALACE ATTENDANT

What a nap. Alas, I seemed to have encountered a great many demons in my dreams. I wonder what that was about. They all came forward and asked for a temple [for them to dwell in]. Suddenly came this judge, and he cast away all the demons. I asked him who he was. He called himself Zhong Kui, a failed exam candidate of Mt. Zhongnan. He subdued all the demons. Now I shall make a memorial decree to his Majesty, arranging for all people under heaven to paint the image of Zhong Kui and erect a temple in his honor. I need to go see his Majesty. I am going now. I suddenly encountered the wicked demons in my dream who are indeed ferocious in appearance. Zhong Kui of Mt. Zhongnan stood out upright so that the erecting of a temple for him and the canonizing of him [are in order]. (*Exits*)

第四折 ACT 4

[外扮天福神地福神領鬼力上] [天福神云]時值新年景物華。千邦慶賀萬方誇。年年喜遇皇都宴。錦繡乾坤總一家。吾神乃天福神是也。這位是地福神。俺生居天界。長在三清。每回朝聖。見虛皇啓籙參真臨寶殿。掌管天界賜福之因。今時逢正旦之節。又遇太平之年。為因終南山進士鍾馗。平生正直。命歸天界。奉玉帝敕令。着他在俺年神位下。為職掌都判管之職。在此三陽閣下慶賀。地福神君。看了這鍾馗。委實少有也。

(SECONDARY MALES, *costumed as* HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY *and* EARTHLY FORTUNE DEITY *enter, leading* DEMON SERVANTS¹⁸¹)

¹⁸¹ Tianfu shen 天福神, Difu shen 地福神 are two of the New Year deities in Daoism.

HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY

It happens to be the New Year and the sceneries are exquisite. Thousands of allies are coming to pay their tribute [to the emperor] and people from ten thousand places are praising [his majesty]. Every year we are happily met with the banquet in the imperial city. The beautiful land is reunited as one. I am the heavenly fortune deity. This is the earthly fortune deity. I dwell in the heavens and am thriving in the lands of three purities.¹⁸² Each time I pay my respects to the Jade Emperor, [I am able to] see his Majesty opening the Register and manifest him in the palace, taking charge of the heavenly beings and spreading his blessings. It happens to be New Year's Day, and [we are also met] with a year of great peace. There was an exam candidate of Mt. Zhongnan named Zhong Kui, who was upright all his lifetime. [After he died], his soul went back to heaven. I am here by the decree of his Majesty, ranking Zhong Kui under me, the New Year's deity's supervision.¹⁸³ His official position is the grand judge, and we are congratulating him here in the temple of three *yang*.¹⁸⁴ The earthly fortune deity, [if you] have seen Zhong Kui, you must have known that he is one of a kind.

[地福神云] 尊神。今聖人治世。海晏河清。萬民樂業。雨順風調。年年俺諸位之神。在此三陽閣下慶賀。今上帝命又敕封鍾馗為都領天下判官。今等眾神祇來慶賀。鬼力望着。等眾神祇來時。報復我知道。

EARTHLY FORTUNE DEITY

¹⁸² *Sanqing* 三清, the three pure ones. Three highest authorities in the Daoist tradition.

¹⁸³ *Nianshen* 年神 is one of the popular Daoist deity who is in charge of all the house deities.

¹⁸⁴ The *three-yang* temple here could be a metaphor for the utmost *yang* energy desired in a new year instead of a real temple.

Your Excellency. Now that we have a sage that took the throne, the seas are peaceful and the rivers are clear. Ten thousand of people are leading happy lives. The rain and the wind are good for the crops. Every year, us deities [are gathered] and celebrate the New Year in the three-yang temple. Now that Zhong Kui is also canonized by the Jade Emperor and received the epithet of the grand judge, all deities are coming to offer congratulations. Demon servant, keep an eye out. Report back to me upon the arrival of the deities.

[鬼力云] 得令。

DEMON SERVANT

Understood.

[春福神壽神祿神上] [春福神云] 景物融合萬象生。陽回一氣遇新正。新年慶賀排筵宴。喜遇豐年五福臻。吾神乃行年五福神春神是也。這兩位是壽神祿神。俺生居紫府。長在雲霄。騰騰萬物一時生。耿耿三陽隨令長。肅清四海總昇平。宇宙混元皆盛世。今有上帝之命。終南山進士正直無私。加封為天下執掌判官。今居俺年神位下。時遇正旦。俺在此三陽閣下。慶賀太平之年。二位尊神。俺行動些。

(SPRING FORTUNE DEITY, LONGEVITY DEITY, and HONOR DEITY *enter*)

SPRING FORTUNE DEITY¹⁸⁵

The myriad things and the natural scenery are merged as one and are refreshed again. The springtime has come back and met with the New Year's Day. In the spirit of New Year

¹⁸⁵ *Chunfu shen*, *shoushen*, and *lushen* are all popular Daoist deities that are often seen in the Chinese New Year.

celebration [we arranged] a banquet, happily we are met with [yet another] year of abundance and the Five Fortunes Deity have [all] arrived. I am the spring deity. These two are longevity and honor deities. I have always lived in the purple palace and thrived in the empyreans. Suddenly the ten thousand creatures are starting to be vigorous, and gloriously the three *yang* spirits are enhanced as the season is changing. To rid the country [of bandits] within the four seas and maintain the peace, there have always been the prosperous eras since the primordial chaos of the cosmos. Today we are here by the Jade Emperor's decree. The exam candidate Zhong Kui of Mt. Zhongnan is upright and impartial. [Therefore], he is appointed to the Grand Judge to administer all [demons] under heaven. He will be a subordinate to me. As it happens to be the New Year's Day, I came to the three-*yang* temple to join the celebration of the year of great peace. Two esteemed deities, I will get going now.

[壽神云] 尊神。吾居壽府。掌管群英。願吾皇聖壽綿綿。祝萬歲皇圖永固。俺年年慶讚。喜遇豐登。須索往三陽閣下去來。

LONGEVITY DEITY

Your highness. I dwell in the temple of longevity and take charge of many heroes. I only wish his Majesty longevity and his land forever strong. I congratulate and praise [him for that] every year. Happily we are met with a year of abundance. Now I must go to the three *yang* temple.

[祿神云] 尊神。看了華夷一統。錦繡山河。君王聖德賽唐堯。臣宰賢能過伊呂。今逢正旦之節。理當慶賀。可早來到也。鬼力報復去。道有俺三位神祇來了也。

HONOR GOD

Your Highness, having seen the Han and the foreign tribes reunited as one, the mountains and rivers are like rich brocade. The emperor possesses divine character that exceeds the emperors Tang and Yao, and the subjects are so able and good that they surpass Yi Lu.¹⁸⁶ It happens to be the New Year's Day; it is only right and proper that we hold a celebration. I am already here? Demon servant, please inform his Highness, telling him that the three of us have arrived.

[鬼力云] 得令。報知上聖。今有春福神壽神祿神來了也。

DEMON SERVANT

It shall be done. Your Highness, [I am] here to report that the spring fortune deity, the longevity deity, and the honor deity are here.

[天福神云] 道有請。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE GOD

Tell them to come in.

[鬼力云] 得令。有請。[三神見科]

DEMON SERVANT

As you wish. This way please. (The three deities *acting out greeting one another*)

[壽神云] 二位上聖。俺三神來了也。

¹⁸⁶ Refers to Yi Yin 伊尹 and Lü Shang 呂尚, the former was a wise minister in the Shang and the latter provided consultation for the King Wu of Zhou 周武王 (1046-1043 BCE).

LONGEVITY DEITY

Your Highness, the three of us are here.

[五道神金睛判睡魔鬼上] [五道神云] 管領五道年神位。喜遇三陽慶賀春。小聖乃五道將軍是也。這兩箇是我手下判官鬼力。小聖那一日遊山去了。有秀士鍾馗。在吾神廟中睡。這兩箇不知道理。將他觸犯。今此人正直為神也。在此三陽閣下慶賀。你兩箇跟我見上聖去來。

(GENERAL OF THE FIVE AVENUES *enters, leading* GOLDEN EYED JUDGE and SLEEPING DEMON)

GENERAL

[Residing] as a New Year deity and taking charge of the five avenues, joyfully we are gathered here in the three-yang temple to celebrate a new spring. I am the petty deity, the General of the Five Avenues. These two are my subordinates, the demon servant judges. I was off wandering in the mountains the other day, and an exam candidate named Zhong Kui took lodging in my temple. The two demon judges were not aware of [who Zhong Kui was] and offended him. Now that Zhong is canonized as a deity because of his upright quality, we are celebrating [the canonization] in the temple. The two of us came forward and we will go see his Highness now.

[判官云] 上聖。你那一日不在了。我兩箇不曾敢怎的。都是這箇夾腦風來。

JUDGE

Your highness. On the day that you were absent [from the temple], the two of us didn't dare to do anything. This mischievous demon should take the blame.

[睡魔鬼云] 你也不要說。他今日為了都判官也。隨上聖整治罷。

SLEEPING DEMON

No need to argue about this now. Now that he has become the grand judge, we'll see what his highness has to say about this.

[五道神云] 可早來到也。鬼力報復去。道有五道神來見。

GENERAL

Am I here already? Demon servant, go ahead and inform his Highness, telling him that the general of the five avenues is here to see him.

[鬼力云] 得令。五道神來了也。

DEMON SERVANT

As you wish. The general of the five avenues is here.

[天福神云] 道有請。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE GOD

Tell him to come in.

[鬼力云] 得令。有請。

DEMON SERVANT

As you wish, this way please.

[五道神同二淨見科][云]上聖。吾乃五道之神。今日來赴三陽宴來。

(GENERAL and PAINTED FACES *acting out greeting one another*)

Your Highness, I am the General of the Five Avenues; I am here to join the banquet in the three-*yang* temple.

[天福神云]你一壁少待。等六神來時。請三陽真君云。這早晚敢待來也。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE GOD

You stand by. We will wait for the six deities to come and invite over the true lords of the three *yang*. They will be here sooner or later.

[淨扮土地竈井廚門六神上][土地云]住居宅舍保安康。積善之家降吉祥。年逢

稔歲三陽晏。萬物咸臻壽錄長。小聖乃各坊住居土地之神。這五位神祇。是井廚竈門神戶尉之神。今逢太平之年。聖人治世。五福來臨。三陽開泰。今有進士鍾馗。奉上帝命。加封為天下都領判官。捉絕魍魎鬼怪。年年在此三陽閣下慶賀。司令竈君。俺見上聖去來。

(PAINTED FACES, *costumed as* EARTH GOD, STOVE GOD, WELL GOD, KITCHEN GOD, AND DOOR GUARDIAN *enter*)¹⁸⁷

EARTH GOD

[We] take residence in people's houses to safeguard peace and health, and the houses that accumulate merits will be blessed with happy omens. The year is met with the harvest season and a banquet in the three *yang* temple [is in order]. Ten thousand creatures are

¹⁸⁷ *Tudi, zao, jing, chu, menshen* these are house gods in Daoist tradition associated with the Chinese New Year.

gathered and awakened to thrive for eternity. I am the petty god, the Earth god that takes residence in common households. These five gods are the Well God, the Kitchen God, the Stove God, and the Door Guardians. It happens to be the year of great peace, and a sage King took the throne and rules the world. The five fortune gods have descended, and the three spirits are on the upsurge in spring. There is this exam candidate named Zhong Kui who on the decree of the Jade Emperor received the epithet of the Grand Judge and [is designated] to eradicate all the demons and spirits in the wilderness. Every year [we] celebrate the spring in the three *yang* temple. Kitchen God and Stove God, I am going to see his Highness right now.

[竈神云] 住居土地。吾神職掌火部司命之神。凡遇每月二十四日。小聖奏與天曹。知道人家善惡緣因。今逢正旦。禮當慶賀。俺行動些。

STOVE GOD

[I] reside on the land. I am in charge of the fire ministry and the Kitchen God. On the twenty-fourth day of each month, [I], a petty god, will report back to the celestial officials so that they know the good deeds and wrong doings of common household. It happens to be New Year's Day; it is only right and proper to hold a celebration. I will get going now.

[門神云] 俺門神戶尉職掌左右門庭。年年喜遇正旦。歲歲慶賀新正。今日太平之年。俺見三陽真君去來。

DOOR GUARDIAN

I am the Door Guardian that takes charge of the left and right door. Every year [we encounter] the joyful occasion of the New Year's Day and [we] celebrate it. It is the year of the great peace; I will go see the true lords of the three *yang* now.

[戶神云] 可早來到也。鬼力報復去。道俺六神來了也。

DOOR GUARDIAN

Am I here already? Please inform his highness, demon servant, telling him the six of us are here.

[鬼力云] 得令。有六神來了也。

DEMON SERVANT

As you wish. The six gods are here.

[天福神云] 道有請。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY

Tell them to come in.

[鬼力云] 得令。有請。

DEMON SERVANT

As you wish, this way please.

[六神見科] [土地云] 上聖。俺家宅六神來了也。

(The six gods acting out greeting one another)

EARTH GOD

Your highness, us six house gods are here.¹⁸⁸

[天福神云]你六神來了。今日三陽閣下排宴。三陽真君敢待來也。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY

The six of you are here. Today we are holding a banquet in the three *yang* temple. Are the true lords of the three *yang*¹⁸⁹ going to be here soon?

[外扮三陽真君領三箇綿羊太子上] [上陽真君云] 一氣鴻峻宇宙聖。春風萬物動非輕。

上中下領三陽節。管押乾坤大地清。吾神乃上陽真君是也。這二位是中陽下陽真君。

今逢聖人治世。八方皆垂拱。宇宙盡清寧。忻逢正旦節。天下賀昇平。為俺三陽真君。

年年在此三陽閣下慶賀。五福神聖並眾神祇。都來吾閣下排宴。喜遇太平豐稔之年。

俺行動些。見眾神祇去來。

(SECONDARY MALE, *costumed as* TRUE LORDS OF THE THREE YANG, *leading* THREE SHEEP PRINCES *enter*)¹⁹⁰

LORD OF THE UPPER YANG

The sage king of the cosmos possesses the inborn quality that is grand and magnificent.

[When] the spring breeze blows the ten thousand creatures are moving rapidly. The upper, middle, and lower lord of the *yang* takes the lead in the festival of the three *yang*, taking

¹⁸⁸ *Jiazhai liushen* 家宅六神 here again refers to the house gods belong to the Daoist tradition that would safeguard the people, animals, and property in common households.

¹⁸⁹ *Sanyang zhenjun* 三陽真君 is a Daoist lord that embodies the Yang energy.

¹⁹⁰ *Mianyang taizi* 綿羊太子, the Sheep Prince. Yang 羊 here is used as a homophone of Yang 陽, which is the most desired energy at the transition of the old and new year.

control of the world and [consequently] the land is in purity. I am the upper lord of the *yang*. These two are middle and lower lords. Now that we encountered the times that are ruled by the sage king, the eight directions are all ruled in peace, and the cosmos is thus pure and tranquil. Happily we are met with the New Year's Day, [people] of the world are all celebrating the great peace. The three of us celebrate the occasion every year in the temple of the three *yang*, accompanied by the five fortune gods and all other deities. We are gathered to join the banquet in the temple. It is the year of peace and abundance; I will get going now to see the deities.

[中陽真君云] 俺這三陽神聖。萬物靈通新春喜。爆竹聲催殘梅去。萬神慶賀。俺這三陽閣下排宴。須索走一遭去。

MIDDLE LORD

Here are the three of us. The myriad of things are revitalized and the New Year has brought happiness [upon us]. The sound of firecrackers is urging the withered winter - sweet trees to go away. Ten thousand deities are gathered here to celebrate [the occasion]. I am here to join the banquet in the temple of the three *yang*. Now I must be on my way.

[下陽真君云] 可早來到也。俺過去見眾神祇去來。鬼力報復。道有俺三陽真君來了也。

LOWER LORD

Am I here already? I am going to go and meet up with the myriad deities now. Demon servant, just go ahead and inform his Highness, telling him that the three of us are here.

[鬼力云] 得令。有三陽真君來了也。

DEMON SERVANT

As you wish. The true lords of the three *yang* are here.

[天福神云] 三陽真君來了也。且少待。今日上帝之命。加封鍾馗為天下都判官領袖。在俺年神位下職掌。等他來時。排三陽宴。這早晚敢待來也。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY

The true lords of the three *yang* are here. Just wait for a bit. Today we are here on the Jade Emperor's decree [in order to] canonize Zhong Kui as the Grand Judge under heaven, and he is ranked under the supervision of the New Year gods. Let's just wait for him, and we will start the banquet upon his arrival. He should be here sooner or later.

[正末領大耗小耗青黃赤白黑五鬼] [云] 小聖乃鍾馗是也。因為不第。蒙上帝賜襴袍靴笏。以夢中去謝。收伏了大耗小耗之鬼。今謝聖恩。加封為天下都判官領袖。與小聖立廟陞堂。時值正旦之節。一切神祇。都在三陽閣下排宴慶賀。須索走一遭去。

(ZHONG KUI *enters, leading* DAHAO *and* XIAOHAO DEMON, *as well as the* GREEN, YELLOW, RED, WHITE *and* BLACK DEMONS)

ZHONG KUI

I am the petty deity Zhong Kui. Even though I failed [the final round of] the exam, the throne awarded me official attire. I paid my respects in his dream and made the *dahao* and *xiaohao* demon my subordinates. I am very grateful for his Majesty's favor. I received the epithet of the Grand Judge under Heaven. A temple is also erected in my honor. It is New Year's Day; all deities are gathered to have a banquet in the temple of the three *yang*. I must go there now.

[大耗云] 上聖。我們夢中討些祭物。不知上聖走將來。別的來也不怕他。

DAHAO

Your highness. We were just trying to demand some sacrificial items in the dream, and we were not aware that it was the Grand Judge who was coming [that took lodging in the temple]. If it were someone else, we wouldn't be afraid.

[正末云] 兀那鬼怪。你則行災生禍。豈知俺為神直正。降福消災也呵。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

Would you look at the demons? All they are doing is bringing calamities [to the people]. How would they know that I, as a deity, was so upright, and [entitled] to reduce the calamities and bring happiness upon the people? (*singing*):

[雙調新水令] 在生時直正顯英豪。到今日死為神道。胸藏萬卷書。法令按蕭曹。見如今雨順風調。都則為明聖主有仁道。

[shuangdiao xinshui ling] In my lifetime I was upright and stood out as heroic. Now I became a deity after I passed away. I am full of the ideas from the ten thousand books [that I have been exposed to], and I obey the law enforced by the heavenly court. Now both the rain and the wind are good [for agricultural activities], all because we have an enlightened emperor who is acting the benevolent way.

[云] 可早來到也。鬼力報復去。道有吾神來了也。

I am already here. Please tell his Highness that I am here.

[鬼力云] 得令。有上聖來了也。

DEMON SERVANT

As you wish. One of the deities is here.

[天福神云] 道有請。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY

Tell him to come in.

[鬼力云] 有請。

DEMON SERVANT

This way, please.

[正末同眾鬼見科] [云] 尊神。小聖乃終南山不第秀士鍾馗。今蒙上命加封。特來朝見五福三陽來也。

(ZHONG KUI and *all the demons acting out greeting the god*)

ZHONG KUI

Your highness. I am the minor deity, the failed exam candidate of Mt. Zhongnan. Today relying on his Majesty's favor [I am] canonized, I am here to pay my tribute to the five fortune deities and the three *yang* emperors.

[天福神云] 鍾馗。為你在生之時。不肯信邪。平生直正。今聖朝與你加封立廟。當日你在五道廟中。怎生不怕鬼怪。你說一遍。俺試聽者。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY

Zhong Kui, because you wouldn't believe in heterodoxy in your lifetime and were known for your upright qualities, his Majesty awarded you an epithet and temple in your honor. That day [when you were] in the general's temple, how come you were not intimidated by the demons? Could you recount [what happened]? I will listen to your story.

[正末云] 眾位尊神三陽真君。今日已登天界。聽小聖說一遍者。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

Your highness and all, now that I have ascended to heaven after my death, just listen to what I have to say. (*singing*):

[雁兒落] 我當日在生時性燥暴。凡行事依公道。指望待步蟾宮折桂枝。誰想在貢院中遭剝落。

[yan'er luo] In my lifetime, I was blunt and enraged, I did everything according to the way of justice. I expected that I would come out first in the national exam, never had I imagined being eliminated in the exam hall.

[地福神云] 你在生時。怎生不懼一切神鬼。

EARTHLY FORTUNE DEITY

How were you not intimidated by the ghosts and spirits in your lifetime?

[正末云] 眾神祇不知小聖的心也。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

Ghost and spirits do not understand my heart. (*singing*):

[得勝令] 我又不曾犯法違條。行事不虛囂。為甚麼全不把神靈怕。有忠心輔聖朝。

[*desheng ling*] I didn't violate any laws, nor did I break any rules, and my behavior has always been proper. Why do I absolutely not fear the ghosts and spirits? [I] had a loyal heart to aid the emperor.

[上陽真君云] 你今日管押天下妖精。加你為都判官領袖。則要你行事的當。年年正旦。掃除鬼怪者。

UPPER LORD

Now that you are in charge of suppressing the demons in the world and have received the epithet of the grand judge, you should act accordingly and eradicate the demonic ones on each New Year's Day.

[正末唱] 更誰敢輕薄。有這些鬼力從吾調。若錯了分毫。我將他來定不饒。

ZHONG KUI (*Singing*)

Who dares to transgress against me [now]? Besides, I also have the demon soldiers under my command. Even if the demons are just committing minor misconduct, I will never forgive them [for that].

[中陽真君云] 鍾馗。你正直賢能。掃除妖祟。大耗小耗歸伏你。今日既為神聖了。你有什么神通廣大。施逞與眾神祇看者。

MIDDLE LORD

Zhong Kui. You are known for your uprightness and intellectual abilities. Eradicating the demonic ones, *dahao* and *xiaohao* will be obedient to you now. Since you are now a canonized deity, how about you show us your magical powers?

[正末云] 尊神在此。小聖有何神通。敢在此三陽閣下施展。鬼力向前。您顯神通者。

[眾鬼調百戲科了][唱]

ZHONG KUI

Your highness. What power do I have that I would dare to show off in front of you [and the other deities that are present] in the three *yang* temple. My demon servant, you come up and show your magical power [instead]. (*All the demons are acting out various acrobatics*):

[落梅風] 是非我神通大。法力高。眾神祇聽咱言道。我有一莊驅邪怪的無價寶。助國家萬年榮耀。

[*luo mei feng*] Whether or not I possess great magical powers, you just listen to what I have to say. I have a priceless treasure that I use for warding off the demonic ones, giving support to the state [in order for it] to stay glorious for ten thousand years.

[天福神云]你有什么手策施展。俺看者。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY

What skills do you have? Just show them already!

[正末云]得令。五鬼過來。您朝上跪者。尊神。這五箇鬼見一箇頭上。有三個神爆仗。頭一箇爆仗響處。保聖壽無疆。第二箇爆仗響處。萬民無難。第三箇爆仗響處。保五穀收成也。

ZHONG KUI

As you wish. Come up here, the five petty demons. Just kneel down [to the deities here]. Your highness, [I will pick one petty demon among the five of them] and put three firecrackers on his head. Once the first firecracker goes off, [we will wish] his Majesty longevity for eternity. Once the second firecracker goes off, [we will pray for] a calamity free life for the people. Once the third firecracker goes off, [we will wish] the five crops to have a harvest.

[青鬼云]好便利。則是難為五鬼也。[五鬼跪科]

GREEN DEMON

How convenient [it is for him], and this can't be easy for the five demons. (*The five demons acting out kneeling down*).

[天福神云]好好好。此言皆有准。你這大耗小耗。你怎不言語。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY

Wonderful, wonderful. I approve of that. *Dahao* and *xiaohao*, how come the two of you are so quiet [at the moment]?

[大耗云] 我不敢惹他了。隨他怎的罷。

DAHAO

I don't dare to mess with him. Just let him do what he desires to.

[正末云] 吾神自有處治。豈有虛言。今三陽真君在此。非同小可也。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

I have [proper] means to handle [them]. How could I say empty words? No empty talk is allowed [here], especially since the three true lords are here today. I shouldn't take it lightly. (*singing*):

[川撥棹] 鬼力每用心着。將黎民災禍消。霎時間亂下風雹。爆仗聲高。

[chuan bo zhuo] All the demon servants are trying their best now, helping the commoners to ward off the calamities. Just in a short time, it [looks as if] the hail is striking, and the sound of the firecrackers is so loud.

[青鬼云] 我死也。這爆仗一聲響定了不的。

GREEN DEMON

This is the end of my life. I can't bear the sound of firecrackers.

[正末唱] 用心兒筵前放了。我着你一齊的都謊倒。[放爆仗科] [五鬼謊倒科]

ZHONG KUI

Just light the firecrackers in front of the banquet. I will make all of you faint with fear!
(Acting out lighting the firecrackers) (The five demons are fainting)

[地福神云] 好好好。誰匡你有如此手策。三陽真君。你不現此祥瑞慶賀三陽到幾時。

EARTHLY FORTUNE DEITY

Wonderful, wonderful. Who helped you to come to this idea, [Zhong Kui]? The three true lords, how much longer must you wait to manifest yourselves and merge into this auspicious celebration of the spring?

[上陽真君云] 有有有。今聖人治世。時值正旦之辰。聖德巍巍。臣心耿耿。四海共樂。

[樂器攪撥科] [三陽鬧科]

THREE TRUE LORDS

Indeed, your highness. Now that a sage emperor has taken the throne, and today happens to be New Year's Day. The virtues of his Majesty are dignified, and his subjects are deeply concerned at heart. The four seas are joined happily. *(The musical instruments play chaotically) (The three true emperors are fighting with one another)*

[綿羊太子解鬧云] 吾神獻松竹梅三株。以為貢奉。

(GOAT PRINCE, trying to break up the fighting among the three)

GOAT PRINCE

I present you three trees: the pine, the bamboo, and the winter-sweet.

[下陽真君云] 二位神祇有了也。吾神所獻榆槐梨三株。乃一年之春花。是四時之氣也。

LOWER YANG

Two deities, behold, I present you the elm, the locust, and the pear tree. These three trees are [a representation] of the spring blossoms, and they are regarded as the air of vitality of the four seasons.

[天福神云] 好好好。您三陽真君現一年之祥瑞。委實少有也。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY

Wonderful, just wonderful. The three of you present the auspicious items of the entire year; this is such a rare scene to behold.

[正末云] 眾神祇看了這年年豐稔。歲歲昇平。端的亙古及今。未曾得見也。

ZHONG KUI

We have seen many years of abundance and great peace. It is indeed such a rare scene to behold, from the earliest times to the present.

[三陽云] 鍾馗。你說一遍。俺試聽者。[正末唱]

THREE EMPERORS

Zhong Kui, just say what you have to say, and I am all ears. (ZHONG KUI *singing*),

[七弟兄] 一齊的跪着。拜告助皇朝。見三陽令節般般妙。端的是一人有福眾歌謠。

[*qi dixiong*] We are all kneeling down to pay our respects for his Majesty's favor. Seeing the fine three *yang* festival is such a wonderful feeling, and

**admittedly when his Majesty is fortunate everyone else sings happily
[together].**

[天福神云] 擺上酒果者。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY

Please serve the fruits and wine now.

[鬼力云] 酒果有了也。

DEMON SERVANT

They are here.

[正末唱] 大開筵當把皇恩報。

ZHONG KUI

Holding a big banquet like this, we are here to return the favor to his Majesty.

[梅花酒] 呀。韻悠悠的樂動着。

[*meihua jiu*] Ah. The instruments are playing rhythmic music.

[地福神云] 將酒來。吾神與天神行一盃者。[把盞科] [云]飲一盃。

EARTHLY FORTUNE DEITY

Get me some wine here. Let me toast the Heavenly Fortune Deity once. (*Acting out holding the wine cup, speaks*) Bottoms up.

[天福神飲科] [地福神云]再將酒來。這盃酒眾位神祇休怪。鍾馗滿飲此盃。

(HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY *acting out drinking*)

EARTHLY FORTUNE DEITY

Pour some more wine. Please excuse me, everyone else, but [I think] Zhong Kui should finish this cup of wine.

[正末云]還從別位神祇來。[唱]

ZHONG KUI

After other deities, please. (*singing*):

金盞內香醪。見上聖擎着。諛的我身搖。

The golden goblets are filled with fragrant wine. Looking at your highness holding a cup like that, I am so flattered that I am trembling.

[天福神云] 則為你正直無私。聖人與你立廟陞堂。該飲此盃。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY

Because you are such an upright and impartial person, his Majesty has ordered to erect a temple in your honor. It is only proper and right that you finish this cup of wine.

[正末唱] 則為我心正直。又不曾見功勞。受用這好盞造。

ZHONG KUI

I am indeed an upright person, but I haven't achieved anything yet [after receiving the epithet], how dare I enjoy this drink?

[天福神云] 今日三陽開泰。萬民樂業。五穀豐登。皆因是當今聖人孝敬。仁慈太重。感的蒼天如此也。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY

Today is the very first day of spring. Ten thousand people are leading happy lives and the five crops are in abundance, which are all due to his Majesty's love and respect. His Majesty's kindness is so vast that the heavens are touched [by it].

[正末唱] 因聖主賽唐堯。感萬國盡來朝。

(ZHONG KUI sings): Because his Majesty exceeds the Emperor Yao, the ten thousand allied nations are coming to pay their tribute.

[喜江南] 呀。俺可便拚今朝。沈醉樂醕醕。保華夷萬載永堅牢。見如今仁文義武好官僚。保助着聖朝。願當今聖主壽年高。

[Xi jiangnan] Alas. I will immerse myself into this moment. I am feeling tipsy with joy. Pray for the [bond] of the Han Chinese and foreign tribes will be stable for generations to come. Now that I have seen that the civilian officials are benevolent and the military officials chivalrous, and they are all doing well administering and safeguarding his Majesty's throne. I wish his Majesty longevity.

[天福神云] 您眾神祇聽者。大唐朝宇宙清寧。無土馬絕滅煙塵。普天下風調雨順。遍四海五穀豐登。豐稔歲穀生雙穗。軍士喜無事相爭。聖有德賢臣輔佐。臣孝感報國於

忠。時遇着正旦節屆。慶豐年天下昇平。擺列着珍饈美味。開玳宴御酒重斟。千邦獻
 千般異寶。萬國進萬物奇珍。中福神驅兵領袖。三陽開威鎮天庭。鍾馗為神聖都統。
 掌領着萬隊妖兵。今日箇加官賜賞。一齊的望闕謝恩。

HEAVENLY FORTUNE DEITY

Listen up, everyone. The cosmos of the Tang dynasty is quiet and tranquil. There are no wars. The wind and the rain have been good for agricultural activities all over the country. Within the four seas the five crops are in abundance. In the year of abundance, [we see] two ears of grain grow in one crop. The military officials are happy because there are no wars. His Majesty is assisted by worthy subjects that are good and able. I can only return the favor to [his Majesty] and the country with my loyalty. Today is New Year's Day, and we are celebrating a year of abundance and great peace. Delicious foods have been set [on the table], let's enjoy this banquet and have plenty to drink. Thousands of allied states and ten thousand countries send items that are rare and precious. The middle emperor is leading the troops and the three true emperors are manifesting their power that impresses the heavenly court. [Zhong Kui] is to be the Grand Judge of the world and lead the numerous demon soldiers. Now that he is canonized and received the epithet, let us pay respects to his Majesty all together while looking in the direction of the palace.

鬧鍾馗穿關 (CLOTHING AND ORNAMENT DESCRIPTION)¹⁹¹

楔子

¹⁹¹ The font sizes appear in the original.

知縣 一字巾 補子圓領 帶 三髭髯

張千 攢頂 圓領 頂帕 褙膊

社長 方巾 青布直身 繅兒 柱拐

正末鍾馗 唐巾¹⁹² 襤衫 偏帶 三髭髯

Wedge

the county Magistrate soft cap; round shaped collar; belts; beards on the temples and chin

Zhang Qian corn shaped cap; rounded shaped collar; a cloth scarf; rectangular cloth pocket

the head of the village soft cap; green colored official long robe; ornamental belt tied on one side of clothing; holding a walking cane

Zhong Kui soft and informal cap; worn out long robes; belt; facial beard

頭折

五道將軍 鳳翅盔 膝襴拽撒 袍 頂帕 直纏 褙膊 帶 三髭髯

判官 韶巾 綠襴 偏帶 笏

睡魔鬼 鬼頭 錦袄 項帕 法墨 直纏 褙膊

正末鍾馗 同前

大耗。小耗 同前睡魔鬼

青黃赤白黑五方鬼 五色鬼頭 錦袄 項帕 法墨 直纏 褙膊

First act

¹⁹² *Tangjin* is the informal cap worn by the Tang emperors. Later on, it became a something that scholar officials worn, too. In the Ming dynasty, the *jinshi jin* 進士巾 is also called *tangjin*. Please refer to Zhao Yan Wei 趙彥衛, *Yunlu manchao* 《雲麓漫鈔》 In *Zhongguo gudai yiguan cidian* 中國古代衣冠辭典, ed. By Lu Hanming 鹿翰明編輯 (台北縣新店市: 長春樹, 民 79), p 72.

the General of the Five Avenues Helmet; long robes worn underneath the formal robes; formal gown; soft cap; robes ;
rectangular cloth pocket; belts; the facial beard

the Judge soft cap; green colored worn out long robes; belts; a wooden tablet

the sleeping demon Demon patterned head; silk winter coat; a cloth scarf; seal; robes ; rectangular cloth pocket

the male lead Zhong Kui same as before

Dahao and Xiaohao same as the Sleeping Demons

The Green, Yellow, Red, White, and Black Demons five colored demon headwear, winter jacket, neck scarf,
seal, inner coat, sash

第二折

殿頭官 兔兒角幞頭 補子 圓領 帶 三髻髻

張千 同前

張伯循 同前知縣

楊國忠 紗帽 補子 圓領 帶

常風。發傻 儒巾 襤衫 纛兒

正末鍾馗 同前

Second act

the palace attendant soft casual cap; accessory ; round shaped collar; belt; facial beard

Zhang Qian same as before Zhang Boxun same as the county magistrate

Yang Guozhong cone-shaped official cap; embroidery; round-shaped collar; belt

Changfeng and Fasha soft scholar cap; worn out robes; belt that is tied on the sides of clothing

Zhong Kui same as before

第三折

殿頭官。張千。張伯循。大耗。小耗。五方鬼。俱同前

正末鍾馗 韶巾 紅襴 偏帶 紅髮 笠子 笏 竹節鞭

Third act

the palace attendant, Zhang Qian, Zhang Boxun, dahao, xiaohao, and demons of the five

directions same as before

Zhong Kui soft cap; red long robes; belts; red hair; bamboo hat; wooden tablet; a bamboo shaped whip

第四折

天福神。地福神 展角幘頭¹⁹³ 紅襴¹⁹⁴ 偏帶 三髭髯¹⁹⁵ 笏¹⁹⁶

鬼力 同前睡魔鬼

春福神。壽錄神 同前天福神

五道將軍。判官。睡魔鬼 同前

¹⁹³ It is a soft material scarf that the people in pre-modern China used to wrap their head with. There are four corners/belts, two of which are tied together and hang down on the back of the head—however since the soft cap referred in the text is very specific, the two belts of this type of cap are straight and horizontal, pointing to the two-opposite direction, and the other two are twisted together in the front so that it stays on the head. Page 137, *hydc*, volume 9; Song Junhua 宋俊华, *Zhongguo gudai xiju fushi yanjiu* 中国古代戏剧服饰研究, page 7.

¹⁹⁴ *Lan* 襴 refer to *san* 衫, it is the short sleeve light coat (*ji duanxiu danyi* 即短袖單衣). An example can be found in Wang Shifu's 王實甫 *Xixiang ji* 西廂記, we read, “烏紗小帽耀人明, 白襴淨, 角帶傲黃鞵。”

¹⁹⁵ 簡稱“三”, 又稱三絡。It is different with the full facial beard. It is divided into three parts to indicate the three parts of beard that grow on the temples and on the chin. This type of beard is often seen among the cultured and literate LEAD MALE. Emperors, high officials, scholar officials, and hermits often use this. However, according to the age of the character, the color of this type of beard also varies from black, grey, and white. Xu Hairong (ed.), *Zhongguo fushi daquan* 中国服饰大全 (华夏出版社, 1999), p 270.

¹⁹⁶ In the pre-modern time, an emperor's subjects often hold a *hu* when they go pay their respect to the emperor. It is a long and narrow tablet that can be made of jade, wood, or ivory. Later on, only officials with a ranking can hold such item. P 1115, *hydc*, volume 8.

土地 方巾¹⁹⁷ 邊襴直身 繅兒¹⁹⁸ 柱拐

竈神 冠上衫袍 方心曲頭 火裙¹⁹⁹ 錦綬牌子 玳瑁 褡膊 帶 黑髮 三髭髯 執圭

井神 枕頭冠 上衫袍 方心曲領 火裙 錦綬牌子 玳瑁 褡膊 帶 黑髮 三髭髯 執圭

廚神 同竈神

門神。戶神 鳳翅盔 膝襴拽撒 袍 頂 金靠 直纏 褡膊 帶 三髭髯 斧

上陽真君 如意蓮花冠 鶴 牌子 玳瑁 三髭髯 執圭

中陽真君 如意冠 鶴 牌子 玳瑁 三髭髯 執圭

下陽真君 同前中陽真君

綿羊太子 狐帽 膝襴拽撒 比甲 鬧粧茄帶 梅枝鶻籠

三羊 羊衣

正末鍾馗。大耗。小耗。五方鬼 同前

Fourth act

the Heavenly Fortune Deity, the Earthly Fortune Deity soft cap; red colored short sleeve clothing; belts ;

facial beard; wooden tablet

the demon soldiers same as the sleeping demon before

the Spring Fortune Deity, the Honors and Longevity Deity same as the Heavenly Fortune Deity before

the General, the Golden Eyed Judge, and the Sleeping Demon same as before

the Earth God soft cap; robes; silk thread used as ornament on clothing; holding a cane

the Stove God upper gown; soft cap; fire patterned apron; silk tablet; bell (jewelry); rectangular cloth pocket; belt; dark colored

wig; facial beard; holding a piece of jade

¹⁹⁷ It is a soft cap worn by the Ming literati and retired scholars, p 1552, *hydcd*, volume 6.

¹⁹⁸ The trimming or broidery made of silk thread that can be used as clothing ornament.

¹⁹⁹ Fire patterned apron.

the Well God pillow shaped cap; short overcoat ; square shaped collar; fire pattered apron; silk adornment; bell (jewelry); rectangular cloth pocket; belt; dark colored wig; facial beard; holding a piece of jade

the Kitchen God same as the Stove God

the Door Guardian iron helmet; coat ; upper gown; gold ornament ; inner robe ; rectangular cloth pocket; belt; facial beard; axe

the Upper yang Lord *ruyi* and locus flower patterned cap; tablet ; bell (jewelry); facial beard; holding a piece jade the

Middle yang Lord *ruyi* pattered cap; crane patterned robe; adornment; bell (jewelry); facial beard; holding a piece of jade

the lower yang Lord same as the Middle yang lord

Goat Prince fox fur cap; coat ; vest; ornament; ornameent

Three Goats Goat outfit

Zhong Kui, dahao, xiaohao, and the demons of the five directions same as before

4. Concluding Comments on the Play

In conclusion, *Nao Zhong Kui* presents two realms of bureaucracy by juxtaposing a historical reality with a celestial one. Being a New Year's play composed for purposes of royal entertainment, the references to the historical figures and events hold the following significances. First of all, Zhong Kui's failure as an exam candidate is caused by Yang Guozhong's corruption by committing bribery. As the elder brother of the well-known Consort Yang, who was the Emperor Minghuang's most beloved concubines, his moral flaws and official misconduct in the play functions as an admonition to the emperor, reminding him to govern the state with constant reflection on historical events and avoid the employment of morally corrupt subjects. Yang's corruption not only adds a new layer to Zhong Kui's multidimensionality, but also prepares him to transform into a political allegory made specifically to criticize political injustice inflicted on the literati.

The fact that Zhong Kui's literary talents are praised by the literati suggest a shared identification generated through their literary talents and accomplishments. That identification and tendency to critique is more focused in chapter 3 in this dissertation.

Meanwhile, while Zhong Kui transitions from the young scholar (*xiaosheng* 小生) to a petty deity (*xiaosheng* 小聖) in the second part of the play, the dramatic tone also shifts from depicting the selection process in civil exams to visualize a Daoist pantheon, within which the newly canonized deity Zhong Kui is properly situated in a larger network of Daoist New Year deities. To entertain the emperor and his royal family, the deities in the play consciously praise the emperor's benevolence which enables the great harmony for both his people and the celestial world. The underlying ideology lies at the emperor's role to act in accordance with the changes in the natural world to accumulate merit for his land and people (*tianren ganying* 天人感應). Zhong Kui's role has become most essential towards the end of the play because he is assigned to eradicate all mischievous demons and spirits that would stand in the way of the great peace between heaven and earth.

Lastly, the elaborate display of the Daoist New Year's deities and the joyful and playful scene where all deities come to drink and have a good time are all tied into the fact that this is a play composed for the emperor and his family to enjoy on Chinese New Year's Day. The ambience has to be bustling, and the production has to be fancy. One detail in the last scene is where Zhong Kui deliberately places the firecrackers on the five colored demons' head. As we are familiar with the presence of firecrackers in the Chinese New Year celebratory rituals, the loud noises are indeed bidding farewell to the

old year and welcoming the arrival of the spring, and that the wicked energies are cast off by the exorcist Zhong Kui as the five demons faint on the stage.

Chapter Two

Purging *fenghuaxueye* 風花雪月 in the Southern Dramas: Phantom Heroines

Meet the Daoist Rituals

1. *Zhong Kui, Immortals, and the Daoist Transformation*

My goal in the previous chapter was to define Zhong Kui's hagiography in the *zaju Qing Fengnian Wugui Nao Zhong Kui* by situating him in a Daoist discourse.²⁰⁰ More specifically, in the first chapter, I focus on how the repetitious occurrence of Mt. Zhongnan in the play aided in defining Zhong Kui's Daoist lineage and was built into his hagiography. In addition to an extensive discussion on how Mt. Zhongnan was utilized as both a dramatic device in the play and a geographical reference point to proclaim a Daoist authority, chapter one also situates Zhong Kui in a grander network of Daoist deities. In the play translated in this chapter, his hierarchical position within this network is revealed not only through how he enacts his feats, but also through a trial in which a deity who fails to safeguard the household they are called to protect is convicted and punished. Zhong Kui's role in the trial and execution of the demons appears towards the end of the last act in the play.

In this chapter, I will translate and analyze a play titled, *Taiyi xian yeduan taofu ji* (*The Immortal of Taiyi Cut off Two Pieces of Peachwood Charms at Night*). According to *Mingdai zaju quanmu*, the playwright of *Taofu ji* remains unknown, and no historical records can be used to testify to the authorship of the play. In *Yeshiyuan shumu*, Qian Zeng categorized this play under deity and immortal (*shenxian* 神仙) themed *zaju* plays

²⁰⁰ In the first chapter, Zhong Kui's Daoist identity has to be justified with repetitious occurrence of the pre-story before the deity was canonized.

composed by anonymous playwrights. This play is preserved in both *Jinyue kaozheng* and *Qulu*. Two transmitted manuscripts of this play can be found in the following collections. The first one is located in the National Library of China and dated to the 44th year of the Wanli reign (1616). It is the edition copied and edited in Maiwang guan preserved by Yu Xiaogu 于小穀.²⁰¹ The playwright is not mentioned here. The *timu* of the play is *Men Dongniang xinshun cheng hunpei Lao xianggong jingsan yuanyang hui* 門東娘心順成婚配 老相公驚散鴛鴦會 (*Men Dongniang Goes with What Her Heart Desires to Tie the Marriage Bond, the Old Master Frightened and Broke Up the Lovers' Meeting*), and the *zhengming* is *Hen Zhong Kui nazhu er yaojing Taiyi xian yeduan taofuji* 狠鍾馗拿住二妖精 太乙仙夜斷桃符記 (*The Merciless Zhong Kui Captured the Two Demons; the Immortal of Taiyi Cut Off Two Pieces of Peachwood Charms at Night*). The second edition can be found in the 29th volume of *Guben yuanming zaju*, it also simplifies the title as, *Taofu ji* 桃符記 (*The Account of Taofu*). However, this edition was revised and printed based on the Maiwang guan manuscript.²⁰² In *Gudian xiqu cunmu huikao*, additional information such as “shizhi wuji, yishu yiren shoubi 事至無稽, 亦屬藝人手筆” (the matters [described in the play] are non-sense talk, and it is written by a performer.)²⁰³ Although the book presents a modern scholarly view on *Taofu ji*, it nevertheless points out a crucial message: those who performed in the play also produced it.

²⁰¹ According to Zheng Zhenduo in his *Jiezhong deshu ji* 劫中得書記 (*Books Obtained during the Wars*), xiaogu was Yu Wei 于緯 who was the son of Shenxing 慎行. He was the prefecture magistrate of Guangdong Leizhou 廣東雷州. He was a play manuscript collector.

²⁰² *Mingdai zaju quanmu*, p 252.

²⁰³ *Gudian xiqu cunmu huikao*, p 549.

To summarize the plot: when visiting the family grave, a young master named Yan Ying 閻英 saved and fell in love with a young lady from the Men household 門家. Little did he know that the young lady Men is actually a spirit of the peachwood charm who is in the disguise of a beautiful young woman. However, ever since the day he met her, Yan longed for her day and night nonstop, eventually causing him to fall into illness. One night, the young lady Men surprised Yan with an unexpected visit, and soon after that, Men's younger sister was also involved and fell into the abyss of a love triangle among the three of them. The play ends with extensive and descriptive Daoist liturgy orchestrated by the Daoist immortal Taiyi in act 4, in the effort to eradicate the Men sisters who are actually the pair of peachwood charms spirits.

In the play, Zhong Kui makes his appearance only in the last act and is accompanied by a cluster of Daoist house gods. This act is packed with large chunks of Daoist liturgical texts, a trial among the Daoist house deities, and vivid depiction of the actual exorcistic procedures, which shifts the dramatic ambience from romantic entanglement to one that is strictly ritualistic. I argue that the fluid nature of Chinese theater, especially the local theaters, allows a great deal of flexibility when it comes to the consistency of plot development in the entire play, and the flexibility makes act 4 culturally acceptable among the Chinese audience.²⁰⁴

Additionally, that Zhong Kui appears as an exorcist does not necessarily contradict the romantic entanglement. Instead, the liturgies conducted by the Daoist master and Zhong Kui himself are the means to return the harmony and balance of the *yin* and *yang* energy manifested through the female and male protagonists in the play. In

²⁰⁴ Stephen West, "Drama" in *The Indiana Companion*, pp 13-27.

other words, in *Taofu ji*, the sexual misconduct among the two female ghosts, Men Dongniang and Men Xi'niang and the mortal man, Yan Ying, led to the imbalance of *yin* and *yang* embodied by the mortal man, the male lead in the play. The shift to the focus on this imbalance transformed this play from an interpersonal dispute to one of reestablishing the order of the cosmos. Nevertheless, this act also provides new perspectives to understand the dichotomy between the final solution (*li* 禮) to all the problems and the origin of all dispositions (*qing* 情). The transformation from romantic entanglement to re-arranging cosmic order implores Zhong Kui and his Daoist entourage to conduct exorcism and eventually solves the problem not only medically and therapeutically, but also cosmologically.

Nor is *Taofu ji* unique case to explore the relation between romance and ritualistic relief. In this chapter, in addition to *Taofu ji*, I will bring in two additional plays to compare. The first one is composed in the Yuan dynasty and titled *Zhang Tianshi duan fenghua xueye* 張天師斷風花雪夜 (*The Heavenly Master Zhang Cuts off the Romance*), which is also known as *Zhang Tianshi mingduan chen gouyue* 張天師明斷辰鉤月 (Hereafter, *Zhang Tianshi*).²⁰⁵ As a matter of fact, *Taofu ji* is said to be a Ming adaptation of *Zhang Tianshi*. The third play is titled *Sa Zhenren yeduan Bi Taohua* 薩真人夜斷碧桃花 (*The Perfected Daoist Sa Cut off the Spirit of Bi Taohua at Night*, hereafter,

²⁰⁵ Zhang Tianshi 張天師 Zhang Heavenly Master, hereditary patriarchs of a Daoist ordination system. Vincent Goossaert and David Ownby, "Mapping Charisma in Chinese Religion: Introduction and Glossary," *The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (November 2008), pp 3-11.

Fenghua xueye 風花雪夜 here refers to the romance between lovers. The original purpose of this term is to refer to natural sceneries and landscape in classic Chinese poetry. Later, this term is used to explain poetic composition that only focuses on natural sceneries and landscape without anything substantial. This play was written by Zhu Youdun in the early Ming.

Sazhenren).²⁰⁶ Since *Zhang Tianshi* and *Taofu ji* share similar plots, I will spare the effort of introducing the dramatic development of the former.

Sazhenren depicts how the young scholar Zhang Daonan 張道南 erroneously walked into the female protagonist, Xu Bitao's 許碧桃 backyard and unexpectedly met her. Even though the two were arranged to marry each other, Xu's father was still furious about the daughter's private meeting with her fiancé with no parental figure present. The father's harsh scolding led to Bitao's questioning of her self-esteem and worth. After all, a young woman's reputation is maintained only by proper conduct and the correct adherence to the moral codes to which they are subject. Thus, meeting a young man without her parents' presence is a violation of womanly propriety. Bitao fell ill and eventually died of frustration. Years later after Zhang came out first in the civil exam, he returned and took lodging in the residency where he and Bitao once met. Because he couldn't contain his longing for her, Zhang started to play the zither under the moonlight. The female revenant Bitao was lured and touched by the beautiful zither playing. The two of them were reunited and tied the marriage bond. *Sazhenren* ends on a happy note when the Daoist Sa predicts Bitao had yet another twenty years of lifespan and returned her spirit into her newly dead younger sister's body. Zhang and Bitao held an official wedding ceremony and lived happily ever after.

The seemingly unfounded combination of romance and Daoist liturgical texts among the three plays compared fits yet another sub-category in Chinese theater, namely, *Shenxian daohua ju* 神仙道化劇. A literal translation of the category is Immortals and

²⁰⁶ Sa zhenren 薩真人, also known as Sa Shoujian 薩守堅 and was a Song dynasty Daoist. He was a major Patriarch of Daoist rituals during the Ming, and had a huge temple in the Inner City since the Ming Emperor Yongle 永樂 (reign 1402-1424).

This play was printed by Hanfen lou 涵芬樓 based on manuscript dated to the Wanli reign.

the Daoist transformation. Like almost all other kinds of Chinese plays, one of the most pronounced characteristics of *shenxian daohua ju* is that the dramatic scenes most likely take place in a bustling (*re'nao*) environment, which is one of the most distinct features of Chinese local theaters in general. Moreover, despite the fact that scholars seem to have different definitions of the said category, they are mostly able to agree on the fact that this type of play contains two layers of meanings: one being *shenxian* 神仙 (immortals) and the second being *daohua* 道化 (Daoist conversion).²⁰⁷

Shenxian daohua ju, as a specific dramatic category, originated in the Yuan dynasty and remained one of the most popular genres celebrated by both the playwrights and literati of later times. For example, five of the thirteen completed *zaju* written by the most well-known Yuan dramatist Ma Zhiyu fit into this specific genre. However, as a category of Chinese plays, it did not come to light until the Ming dynasty. The Ming prince Zhu Quan brought it up in his book, *Taihe zhengyin pu*, that the Yuan dynasty *zaju* can be systematized into twelve categories, and *Shenxian daohua* was among the first category in the twelve.²⁰⁸

During the Yuan-Ming transition, as Northern dramas such as *zaju* became weakened and yielded to Southern plays like *chuanqi*, the theatricality of Chinese plays was also enriched and re-defined by the *zeitgeist* of Southern Chinese communities, one among which was the textual evidence preserved in plays pertaining to the rise of the

²⁰⁷ Japanese scholar Aoki Masaru 青木正兒 has extensive scholarship on this subject matter, please refer to *Genjin zatsugeki* 元人雜劇 by Aoki Masaru.

In a way, this minor detail may signal this play is better categorized under “shenmo” (神魔 Gods and Demons) as Lu Xun proposed in his *A Brief History of Chinese Fiction*, despite the fact that they are two different genres sharing a surprisingly amount of similarities.

²⁰⁸ Please refer to my notes 52, 53, and 54.

Daoist Qingwei 清微 school that utilized thunder rites (*leifa* 雷法) for exorcistic practices.²⁰⁹ Even though the exorcist Zhong Kui is not explicitly assumed to be adept in thunder rites in literature, numerous local practices and visual arts in the Yuan-Ming transition subconsciously responded to the rise of the thunder rites by either entrusting Zhong Kui to the role of a thunder deity, or constantly situating him in the discourse of the thunder deities to signify his relevance in the said networks.

Similar to what has been previously established, the nature of southern plays also called on Zhong Kui's role as an exorcist for both literary and pragmatic purposes. I agree with Guo Qitao's argument in *Exorcism and Money: The Symbolic World of the Five-Fury Spirits in Late Imperial China* about the theatrical performances at temple fairs. He asserts that the emergence of Zhong Kui as an exorcist on the stage in the Yuan-Ming periods coincided with the movement to popularize the ancient *nuo* practice. This movement toward secularization aimed to adjust to the updated purposes of local theatrical performance: the performance ought to be not only entertaining to both its human and divine audiences, but also practical and profitable.

In both *zaju* and *chuanqi* style plays, as the exorcist Zhong Kui carries out exorcism on the stage and on the page, a ritual cleansing is performed simultaneously to offset the imbalance between the *yin* and *yang* energy caused by changing of the season, or even illness caused by spiritual possession. Especially in the *chuanqi* plays, the exorcist's mighty powers are combined with Daoist liturgies and thus have been extended into providing a medical cure, or a therapeutic relief to ailment caused by spiritual

²⁰⁹ *Qingwei*, a Daoist school that recognizes the Celestial Venerable of the Primordial Beginning or the Primeval Lord of Heaven as their highest authority. For further details, please refer to Mark Meulenbeld, "Civilized Demons: Ming Thunder Gods from Ritual to Literature," PhD diss. Princeton University, 2007.

possession.²¹⁰ This is essentially why Zhong Kui is not only relevant in the *chuanqi* style plays, but also offers a unique way to showcase the negotiation among Daoism, local religious practice, literary movements, and Chinese theater.

The group of Daoist New Year's deities in *Nao Zhong Kui* builds a Daoist pantheon and establishes Zhong Kui's hierarchy in the Daoist network. The same group of deities in *Taofu ji*, however, is assembled due to a trial to showcase the Daoist laws, just as much as it is meant to stress Zhong Kui's uprightness against corruption in the celestial realm. Besides the didactic element, the trial that Zhong Kui and the other gods put on in the same act is so implemented that it further aids the bustling ambience, which is placed at the core of both the Yuan *zaju* and Ming adaptations of it. To be more specific, the Daoist master and the *daotong* 道童 (Daoist pupil) appear first and set up the ritualistic background for the trial among the guardian gods, which includes the Earth God, the Stove God, the Well God, the Door Guardians, and Zhong Kui. The last act of the play sees each deity immediately upon entering the stage announcing that they are state sanctioned gods (*guojia zhengshen*). Under the same principle, Zhong Kui's religious status as an exorcist is instantaneously granted without requiring any pre-stories to make him one. In this play Zhong Kui sums up his backstory as follows:

“I am among the canonized deities and receive the incense from thousands of common people. My face is green and hair red, and I am in possession of great

²¹⁰ Even though the female ghosts, also known as the female protagonist who falls in love with mortal men against the rules of moral conduct are portrayed as fine looking and charming female companions that would be deemed as the ideal partner to marry, they still bring illness to the mortal man with whom they fall in love; sometimes to the extent that those men would be brought to near death experience due to the severity of the illness. Therefore, I argue that those women are not portrayed as mischievous and coy as female fox spirits, their intercourse with the men should still be considered as spiritual possession, or a transgression of some sort until proper rituals are performed to bring back the balance between the *yin* (the female ghosts are considered ultra *yin*) and *yang* (the mortal men are considered *yang*) energies. However, male ghosts can cause illness, too.

abilities. One of my eyes is wide open and the other one remains closed; I cast off the evil spirits, leading them to the correct way, as well as eradicating the *xu* and *hao* spirits. I once entered the Tang Emperor's dreamland [and cured his disease].”

“我是國家正神。受萬民之香火。面青髮赤有大才。一目藏睛一目開。驅邪改正除虛耗。會入唐王夢裏來。”

It is also noteworthy that the blame of letting two mischievous demons into the house does not fall onto one single domestic god. Rather, it is deemed as a collective oversight among the aforementioned deities, especially Zhong Kui. However, just like a trial in court, the deities that are called up to give a testimony offer comprehensive descriptions of their allotted duty in the house by implying a hierarchical order within the circle of house gods. On the other hand, the vivid description could also be the propaganda to promote the Daoist deities, and most of all, teaching of the Daoism through rituals.

Finally, while all three plays are categorized under *shenxian daohua ju*, the nuances of the Yuan plays and their Ming successors are demonstrated through two major points. Firstly, compared to the Yuan plays, Ming plays give no pre-context to the immortals and Daoist liturgical practices. As a result, either they appear to be rather abrupt, or the liturgies attached to them read too procedurally insofar as they provide potentials to cause textual discontinuity within the play. Take *Taofu ji* as an example, the wedge and the first three acts are all completely centered around a romantic entanglement among the young scholar Yan Ying and two young women that happen to be the identical twins of the Men family: Dongniang and Xiniang. The Daoist Master: Immortal of Primordial Yin and Yang, Zhong Kui, and the group of house gods only make their

appearances towards the end of the play, act four. Secondly, Ming plays are thought to enhance the marvel and amazement. For instance, in *Taofu ji*, the romantic encounter brings about the love story among the two females and one man.

2. *The Tale of the “Two Females” in the Three Plays*

Act four of *Taofu ji* provides three variants of the door guardian that took place in different times of history, some of which were possibly overlapped with one another. To be more specific, the peachwood charms used to guard the doors was popularly practiced before the Tang dynasty. Menshen 門神 who appears in act four is a demonstration of a local pantheon that consists of the Daoist house gods intersects with *nuo* represented by Zhong Kui and the peachwood charms for averting evil energies. The ritual duo of peachwood charms are represented by Men Dongniang and Men Xiniang. Here, the family name Men is a word play on the grand tradition of having two peachwood charms hung left and right which are considered directions of *dong* 東 and *xi* 西 respectively in Chinese culture.²¹¹ The earliest Minghuang story and the account provided by Tang official Liu Yuxi narrating the Tang emperor distributing the image of Zhong Kui indicate that in the Tang not only Zhong Kui’s iconography started to take shape, but also his portrait was used for safe guarding the household. Hence, the peachwood charms in the play blamed Zhong Kui for his misconduct on letting them into the house. Zhong Kui and the two peachwood charms form a ritual triangle that provide a structural model to study parallel triangles in other plays where the two females motif is prominent. The

²¹¹ Peachwood charms were hung on the left and right side of the doors as ritual items to ward off evil energies before and in the Tang dynasty. Every New Year, the old peachwood charms would be replaced with the new ones.

parallel triangles provide an unique ritual space to investigate the dynamics among Daoist liturgies and the ghost female body in Chinese theaters, and Zhong Kui possesses the multidimensionality to be centered between the two.

In this section, I will focus on the two females motif in the three plays compared. Much like Zeitlin has argued in her book, *The Phantom Heroine: Ghosts and Gender in Seventeenth-Century Chinese Literature*, the ghost body in Chinese theaters is still female, however, here it is carried out by two female ghosts instead of one female protagonist such as *Mudan ting* 牡丹亭 (*The Peony Pavilion*). More specifically, in *Taofu ji*, the motif is executed by the identical twin sisters of the Men household, and the plot involves the young man Yan Ying falling in love with Dongniang first and later confuses her with her identical sister, Xi'niang. These two females are played by the role of *zhengdan* 正旦 (female lead) and *xiaodan* 小旦 (secondary female), respectively. He ends up developing a romantic relation with both of them. In *Sazhenren*, the female revenant Bitao's romantic relation is saved by her younger sister Yulan 玉蘭 (Chinese Magnolia, *Lit.* the Jade orchid). Yulan's physical body is used as a vessel to carry out the romantic relationship between her older sister and the male protagonist, but also entrusts new meanings to the ghost body in depicting femininity in Chinese theater.

Starting from seventeenth century literature, we see more and more phantom heroines as female protagonists. In her book, Judith Zeitlin identifies a number of important discourses on how female ghosts define and are defined by Chinese theater and other relevant cultural practices such as medical and therapeutic ones. She focuses specifically on the term *qing* 情 (dispositions) manifested through female ghosts in

Chinese literature.²¹² She contends, “the prominence of the female revenant and the frequent fantasy of her resurrection or rebirth is one of the most striking features of seventeenth-century Chinese literature.”²¹³ Zeitlin uses Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 (1550-1616) and his female revenant Du Li’niang 杜麗娘 to retrieve a tradition where the young woman that dies of *qing* can only be salvaged by a mortal man. She writes “In the long tradition of literary ghost stories that Tang Xianzu drew upon and which he in turn influenced, the woman who dies of desire only to be resurrected by a living man is a common scenario.”²¹⁴

Taofu ji is no exception to the tradition Zeitlin refers to in her book. However, the play pushes the tradition further by using two females to complete what formerly could be done through one female. Dongniang encounters the male protagonist Yan Ying as she is about to commit suicide under a peach tree. The incident that led to her suicidal action was derived from *qing*: she suffers from humiliation and indignity inflicted on her by her family when she couldn’t successfully find a proper man to marry. I argue that this is one aspect of *qing* demonstrated in the play. Additionally, this play portrays *qing* in a complex dramatic space that not only cultivates the romantic encounter of the female and male protagonist but also in turn terminates the relationship.

In a certain way, the double female motif I propose here is a hybrid of “the ghost enters a fresh and unburied corpse and returns to life” (*jieshi huanhun* 借屍還魂) and the popular novels with a handsome scholar and a pretty girl (*caizi jiaren* 才子佳人). The

²¹² *Qing* is one of the richest terminologies in the Chinese language that is hard to find a proper English counterpart translation simply because it has so many different connotations depending on the context.

²¹³ *The Phantom Heroine*, p 1.

²¹⁴ *ibid*, p 2.

plot reads similarly to the early Ming classical tale entitled *The Golden Hairpin* (*Jinfengchai ji* 金鳳釵記), or *West Garden* (*Xiyuan ji* 西園記) where the plot also starts with the day before the Qingming festival. This festival is also known as the Chinese ghost festival when families go to the suburbs or the countryside to visit the graves of the deceased family members. If the festival itself is considered utmost *yin*, being in the graveyard definitely adds more *yin* energy. In the plays, a link between a grave visitation and the Qingming festival seem to be the initial cause for the male protagonist's illness.

In addition to the double female presences, a floral motif is pronounced in the three plays discussed in this chapter, too. I argue that the floral motif is used to complement the female ghost body in Chinese theater, both of which can be substantialized as femininity, or the *yin* element in the *yin* and *yang* binary. Although more commonly accepted as an artistic motif in Chinese visual art, the floral motif has never been a stranger in Chinese literature, especially in poetry.

Various plants are blended into the festivities depicted in the plays. In *Taofu ji*, the background festival is Hanshi yibaiwu 寒食一百五 after Chinese New Year, a special occasion calls for a visitation to the family grave, which is the time of the year for peach trees to blossom.²¹⁵ In *Zhang tianshi*, the female protagonist is described as *guihua xianzi* 桂花仙子 (the Laurel Immortal) that descends to the mundane world and committed the worldly sin of growing affectionate dispositions for a mortal man named Chen Shiying 陳世英. The background festival in this play is the Mid-Autumn Festival (*Zhongqiu jie* 中秋節), another traditional Chinese festival celebrates the bumper harvest through Moon admiring and other activities. Even more intriguing is the last act of the play where

²¹⁵ This festival is not to be confused with the Qingming festival.

a trial is conducted among *hehua* 荷花 (Lotus flowers), *juhua* 菊花 (Chrysanthemums), *meihua* 梅花 (winter sweets), *taohua* 桃花 (peach blossoms), and *guihua* 桂花 (laurel blossoms). The trial is administered by Zhang Tianshi and Zhifu and strikes great similarity with the trial depicted in the last act of *Taofu ji* where a Daoist master and Zhifu conduct a trial among the house gods to punish the misdeeds of the house god for failing to prevent the wicked energy to enter the household.

3. *In Search of Amazement in Daoist Liturgies*

I will start this section with a close investigation into the play title: *Taiyi xian yeduan taofuji*. It is obvious that *Taofu ji* denotes the Daoist participation in the play. However, what's even more intriguing is the action verb *duan* 斷, a word literally that means to cut off, to break up, or to separate. Firstly, I regard the word *duan* representing a recurring *topos* among the three plays. Secondly, this word is essential in this series of plays because it connects two very different aspects in the play: a romantic entanglement and the Daoist rituals. Then terms such as Zhang Tianshi, Sa Zhenren, and Taiyi Xian are clear indications of Daoist interventions against the spiritual possessions or transgressions in the plays, which are often the reasons why the male protagonist falls into an incurable illness. In *Sazhenren*, the word *duan* in the title takes on a different meaning: to determine or to diagnose. While this connotation is not directly related to the idea of cutting off something physically through liturgical practice, it plays around with the concept that Daoist practice can aide a medical procedure such as providing a diagnosis and, furthermore, a cure for the illness caused by sexual misconduct. Lastly, the proposed *topos* also signify that the play poses a radical departure from the traditional *zaju* titles.

To be more specific, the last act of *Taofu ji* is where the idea of *duan* manifests itself through concrete Daoist liturgies that also physically cut off the romantic entanglement among the young master Yan and the Men sisters. The word *duan* can almost be understood in a way that it not only uses the liturgies to eradicate spiritual possession (*lit. duan* as in *qieduan* 切斷, or *zhanduan* 斬斷), but also hints at their prevalence in diagnostic procedures that suggests another function of the practice: therapeutic (*duan* as in *zhenduan* 診斷). In other words, the Daoist liturgies are essential because it provides a cure to the male protagonist's illness but also puts an end to the love relation among Yan Ying and the twin sisters of Men. That is to say, the Daoist liturgies depicted extensively in the last act acknowledges the fact that female ghosts are associated with illness and that medical discourses are relevant. However, they also manipulate and reformulate *qing* so that the end results are almost predictable due to a procedural build-up towards the ending.

In the Ming vernacular novel *Jin ping mei*, for instance, explicit descriptions about how play titles such as *Wugui naopan*, *Zhong Kui xi xiaogui* 鐘馗戲小鬼 (*Zhong Kui Teases the Petty Demon*), and *Dongbin feijian zhan huanglong* 洞賓飛劍斬黃龍 (*Lü Dongbin Swings His Sword to Eradicate the Yellow Dragon*) were solicited at funeral services in correlation with yet another tradition called *diaobaixi* 吊百戲.²¹⁶ In *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳 (*Water Margin*), although no specific titles are brought up, the mentioning of *zaju* and *diaobaixi* coincides with the solemn ceremony held by the emperor to offer

²¹⁶ 65th hui, *Jin ping mei*.

amnesty and enlistment to rebels led by Song Jiang 宋江.²¹⁷ The theatrical performance intends to recreate the bustling ambience of the ceremony as well as providing a ritual cleansing that ensures a smooth ceremony by eliminating the wicked energy and spirits.

Immortals and Daoist transformation themed plays might have been utilized by the Daoist writers for didactic reasons. However, in the Ming dynasty, the pursuit of amazement or marvels by the playwrights gave this genre a make-over, the results of which were the plays that focused on immortals and Daoist transformation maintained the energetic ambience in the dramatic scenes, however, since their main concern was to create moments of amazement that would leave the audience feeling unexpectedly surprised, little or no preparation at all was given to make the transition go smoothly. As Xu Xianglin 许祥麟 asserts, quoting a common saying in the period, “Especially during the late Ming and early Qing, playwrights followed the trend ‘if it’s not amazing, it can’t be passed on’ (*feiqi buchuan* 非奇不傳). The figure of the ghost and the ghost story perfectly fit this idea of the amazing, and so the apparition of a ghost in southern drama became all the rage in theater circles at the time.” Xu’s description of southern dramas matches the effect of the Daoist procedures in the three plays.

During the late Ming and early Qing, *qi* was prized as an aesthetic category, as Zeitlin argues in “Ghosts and Theatricality.” *Qi* was translated into many realms, including poetry, painting, calligraphy, and personality, but when applied to drama it had a specifically theatrical application. As Guo Yingde 郭英德 makes clear, what many seventeenth-century drama critics meant by “amazing” or “novel” had less to do with the content of a play than with the mode of constructing a plot. In other words, what make a

²¹⁷ 82nd *hui*, *Shuihu zhuan*.

play “amazing” or “marvelous” are not ghosts or supernatural elements *per se*, though these may contribute to the effect, but the twists and turns that provoke surprise and wonder in the audience.”²¹⁸

In the previous section of the chapter, I argue that in relation to the festivals explored through the various floral motifs in the plays, the flowers ultimately symbolize the element of *yin* in the *yin* and *yang* binary that is prevalent in Chinese culture. The *yin* energy reiterated through various flowers and trees, along with the female ghosts, build the female body in Chinese theater. As the flowers mentioned earlier are associated with femininity, they represent the phantom heroine of the play at the same time. The existence of the floral motif can in turn be regarded as enriching the ghost body that Zeitlin is talking about in her book. As ghosts cross the boundary of the human and other world, the female body as represented through female ghosts and floral motif also redefine the physical boundary among humans and things.

Lastly, I want to go back to Zhong Kui’s multidimensionality in Chinese theater. According to Katherine Carlitz, in her “Printing as Performance,” lengthy *chuanqi* plays rely on marvels as strategy to fulfill the play’s dual duties for both “print” and “performance.”²¹⁹ While it remains unclear whether *Taofu ji* was put into production or not, the vivid description of Daoist rituals in the last act can be intended for reading or for performance, conveying the excitement of the procedures in their full capacity.

Because of the limited space, I cannot fully translate the other two plays. The following tables compare the Daoist elements and liturgical texts among the three play titles:

²¹⁸ Judith Zeitlin, pp 131-4.

²¹⁹ “Printing as Performance,” p 292.

Table 2.1: The Daoist Masters and their Lineages

Play Title/Act #	Daoist Master/Lineage	Assistant
<i>Taofu ji</i> , act 4	Taiyi xian 太乙仙: “今還信州去。路打洛陽府過。” “I am returning to Xinzhou today and passing through Luoyang Prefecture.”	<i>daotong</i> 道童
<i>Zhangtianshi</i> , act 3	Zhang Daoxuan 張道玄: “祖傳道法, 戒籙精嚴” “The laws of Daoism passed on [to me] by ancestors, the register for recording names of the celestial gods is precise and strict.” “豈不知張真人法律精嚴? 早仗劍都驅在五雷壇內。” “Don’t you realize that Zhang zhenren knows the laws precisely? Earlier on [he] already took up the sword and subdued [the spirits] in the Altar of Five Thunders .”	<i>daotong</i> 道童
<i>Sazhenren</i> , act 3	Sazhenren 薩真人: “行五雷正法, 好生靈應” “practices the Five Thunder Rites of orthodoxy, [and he is proved to be] quite efficacious.”	<i>daotong</i> 道童

The above table (table 2.1) indicates that the character who administers the exorcism in the three plays are an immortal, a Daoist master (*daoren* 道人), and a Perfected Man (*zhenren* 真人), respectively. And their assistants at the altar are all the

same: a Daoist pupil (*daotong* 道童). While all three of them belong to the Daoist tradition, the immortal Taiyi Xian has not been given any specific textual evidence to indicate his strong association with the thunder rites as demonstrated in the third play, *Sazhenren*.

Table 2.2: The Daoist Deities (selective)

Play Title/Act #	Daoist Deities	The Five Direction Deities
<i>Taofu ji</i>	<p>1. 雷公電母。風伯雨師</p> <p>The Father of Thunder and the Mother of Lightning</p> <p>2. 鄧辛張陶四大元帥。 龐劉苟畢四大元帥。 神霄雷符馬元帥。 金輪如意趙元帥。 神霄無拘溫元帥。 馘魔上將關元帥。</p> <p>The four grand marshals of Deng, Xin, Zhang, and Tao</p> <p>the four grand marshals of Pang, Liu, Gou, and Bi</p> <p>the Marshal Ma of the divine empyrean that is in charge of the thunder talismans</p> <p>the Marshal Zhao that holds a golden dragon scepter</p> <p>the Marshal Wen of the Divine Empyrean that is carefree</p> <p>the Marshal Guan that subdues the demonic</p> <p>3. 太上老君</p>	<p>東方青帝青神 南方赤帝赤神 西方金帝金神 北方黑帝黑神 中央黃帝黃神</p> <p>The Green Emperor and the Green God in the East</p> <p>The Red Emperor and the Red God in the South</p> <p>The Gold Emperor and the Gold God in the West</p> <p>The Black Emperor and the Black God in the North</p> <p>The Yellow Emperor and the Yellow God in the Centre</p>

	The Elderly Lord of the Great Supreme	
<i>Zhangtianshi</i>	<p>雷公電母，風伯雨師。</p> <p>1. The Father of Thunders and The Mother of Lightning, the Duke of Wind and the Master of Rain</p> <p>2. 日宮月宮神位， 南斗北斗星君。 五福十神， 四司五帝 當境土地龍神， 諸處城隍社廟</p> <p>The Divine Tablets of the Sun and the Moon, the Lord of the Southern and Northern Star. The Five Fortune Deities and the Ten Immortals, the Four Commanders and the Five Emperors the Local Earth God and Dragon God the City God and the God of Grains</p> <p>3. 太上老君</p> <p>The Elderly Lord of the Great Supreme</p>	<p>東方青帝、青神 南方赤帝、赤神 西方白帝、白神 北方黑帝、黑神 中方金帝、金神</p> <p>The Green Emperor、 the Green God in the East The Red Emperor 、 the Red God in the South The Gold Emperor、 the Gold God in the West The Black Emperor、 the Black God in the North The Yellow Emperor、 the Yellow God in the Centre</p>
<i>Sazhenren</i>	<p>1. 三天使者，五老神兵 The Envoys of the Three Skies, the Divine Soldiers of the Five Old Men</p> <p>2. 太上老君</p> <p>The Elderly Lord of the Great Supreme</p> <p>3. 馬、趙、溫、關天將十甲</p> <p>The Heavenly General Ma, Zhao, Wen, and Guan and ten soldiers</p>	N.A.

The above table 2.2 indicates that while the liturgical text installed in the three plays all resemble the actual liturgies recorded in the Daoist canon, they vary to a certain degree as the particular groups of Daoist deities are selected to fit the religious and dramatic context and Zhong Kui's role in the play better. Moreover, the mythological gods such as the Great Lord Lao and the Emperors of the Five Avenues are joined with the newly incorporated martial deities such as the twelve Generals mentioned in *Taofu ji*.

In both *Taofu ji* and *Sazhenren*, the four generals Ma, Zhao, Wen, and Guan (Ma, Zhao, Wen, and Guan si yuanshuai 馬、趙、溫、關四元帥) coincide with the rise of *qingwei* 清微 school in Southern China in the Yuan and Ming dynasties, as they are all related to the thunder rites. How Daoist masters recruit the thunder gods and summon the thunder rites can be observed in vernacular fiction, too. The Ming fiction *Sanbao taijian xiyangji tongsu yanyi* 三寶太監西洋記通俗演義 (*The Record of the Eunuch Sanbao's Journeys in the Western Seas*) also gives a description of how Zhang Tianshi invites the four generals.²²⁰ In *Jinpingmei cihua* 金瓶梅詞話, 39th *hui*,²²¹ a detailed description is given to demonstrate the procedural steps the Daoist masters have to take in order to invite the gods.

Table 2.3: The Liturgical Procedures

Play Title/Act #	Liturgical Procedure	Trial among the Deities
<i>Taofu ji</i>	[先生云]道童布壇	土地 The Earth God

²²⁰ Chapter 20.

²²¹“Ximengqing yuhuangmiao daqiao wu yueniang ting niseng shuojing” 西门庆玉皇庙打醮吴月娘听尼僧说经

	<p>[The Master] Please set up the altar now, my child</p> <p>[先生云]將香來</p> <p>[The Master] please bring the incenses</p> <p>[先生點香云] 這香一炷。發鼓三通。十方肅靜。萬神仰聽...吾奉太上老君急急如律令。</p> <p>This bundle of incense, along with three strikes of the drums; the ten directions are falling into tranquility, and the ten thousand deities are waiting to be received... I hereby comply with the laws of the Grand Supreme Elderly Lord.</p> <p>[擊領牌云] [Striking the tablet]</p> <p>[舉筆云] [Holding the brush pen]</p> <p>[書符云] [Writing talismans]</p> <p>[仗劍云] [Swinging the sword]</p> <p>[呪水云] [Chanting to the water]</p> <p>[仗劍噴水云] ...吾奉太上老君急急如律令敕。直符安在。</p> <p>[Swinging the sword and chanting to the water] I am here by the decree of the Grand Supreme Elderly Lord, quickly, quickly, obey my summoning as laws. Is Zhifu here?</p>	<p>灶神 The Stove God</p> <p>井神 The Well God</p> <p>門神 The Door Guardian</p> <p>鐘馗 Zhong Kui</p>
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<p><i>Zhangtianshi</i></p>	<p>(天師請神科，雲) (Heavenly Master invites the Gods)</p> <p>(擊權杖科，雲) (Striking the cane)</p> <p>(咒水科，雲) (Chanting to the water)</p> <p>(執劍科，詩云) (Holding the sword)</p> <p>(詩云) ...吾奉太上老君，急急如律令，攝！</p> <p>(poem)...I am here by the decree of the Grand Supreme Elderly Lord, quickly, quickly, obey my summoning as laws, execute!</p>	<p>桂花仙子 Laurel Fairy</p> <p>荷花 Lotus Flower Fairy</p> <p>菊花 Chrysanthemum Fairy</p> <p>梅花 Plum Blossom Fairy</p> <p>桃花 Peach Blossom Fairy</p> <p>風十八姨 The Wind Goddess</p> <p>雪天王 The Snow King</p>
<p><i>Sazhenren</i> (Not the complete translation)</p>	<p>(真人云)貧道登壇之後: altar</p> <p>(真人云)道童將道服劍來: sword</p> <p>(真人云)道香一柱，法鼓三冬...: incense and drums</p> <p>(做拿筆科，雲): brushpen</p> <p>(做書符科，雲): talismans</p> <p>(做擊劍科，雲): sword</p> <p>(做咒水科，雲): chanting</p> <p>(做仗劍步罡科，雲)謹請當日功曹，直符使者...吾奉太上老君急急如律令。攝: the Great Lord Lao</p>	<p>碧桃 Bitao</p> <p>生死判官 The Judge that is in charge of Life and Death</p> <p>掌姻緣案的判官 The Judge that is in charge of Marriage and Romance</p>

4. Annotated Translation of Act Four of Taofu ji

太乙仙夜斷桃符記

*The Immortal of Primordial Unity Eradicated the Peachwood Charms at Night*²²²*Dramatis personae* in order of appearance

<i>Role type</i>	<i>Name, family role, or social role</i>
Male Lead	Yan Yi, the Prefect Magistrate
Yan Yi's Wife	Yan Yi's Wife
Male Lead	Yang Ying, the Royal Attendant
Liu'er	Liu'er, the House Servant
Female Lead	Men Dongniang
Zhang Qian	Zhang Qian
Matchmaker	Li Sanpo
Secondary Female	Men Xi'niang
Secondary Male	The Daoist Master
<i>Daotong</i>	The Young Daoist
<i>Zhifu</i>	Zhifu
<i>Tudi</i>	The Earth God
<i>Zaosheng</i>	The Stove God
<i>Jingshen</i>	The Well God
<i>Menshen</i>	The Door Guardian
Zhong Kui	Zhong Kui

²²² *Fu* 符: talismans, refers to magical formulas written in paper and intended to be burned. It is one of the most important skills of a Daoist priest to be able to write powerful talismans. For more information on this subject matter, please refer Kristofer Schipper's *The Daoist Body*, pp 90-1.

第四折

ACT 4

[孤同先生道童上][先生云]設壇焚香誓神將。登時都殄捉將來。今日晚間。貧道在宅上結壇。將家堂土地眾神。都驅至壇所。追問端的。[孤云]多謝師父。老夫重重相報。[先生云]相公請穩便。[孤下]

(YAN YI, THE MASTER, and THE YOUNG DAOIST *enter*)

THE MASTER

To set up an altar and burn the incense to pledge the divine generals, we will capture and eradicate them all at once. Later tonight, I am going to set up an altar in the Yan residence. I plan to invite all the house deities, The Earth God and the related, and get to the bottom of it.

YAN YI

Thank you so much, master. I will reward you generously.

THE MASTER

Consider it done and make yourself comfortable.

(*Yan Yi exits*)

[先生云]道童布壇。[做設卓科][先生云]將香來。[童云]香在此。[先生點香云]這香一炷。發鼓三通。十方肅靜。萬神仰聽。恭聞道香德香無為香。無為清淨自然香。朝三界。香三境。真香滿瓊樓玉境。徧周天大羅法界。今以虔誠。普同供養。請上界元始天尊。三清四帝。五師六神。侍香金童。傳言玉女。南斗六星。北斗七星。

東斗五星。西斗四星。十二宮辰。二十八宿星君。雷公電母。風伯雨師。雷霆大將。主行利兵。鄧辛張陶四大元帥。龐劉苟畢四大元帥。神霄雷符馬元帥。金輪如意趙元帥。神霄無拘溫元帥。馘魔上將關元帥。本壇攝令城隍土地等神。叩齒焚香。恭聞聖力非遙。遠望流光下注。先煩普濟。願立慈悲。劍斬鬼魔之首。月照長空之體。謹請三天烈刀五岳神兵。衝符佩劍在雲間。跨鶴乘鸞於月下。排列道眾。唱演法音。今為府尹閻義之子閻英。染病服藥雖瘳，香燭花果列壇前。髮遣神兵於目下。又請天仙兵馬地仙元統軍江湖河海兵馬九江各一萬旗頭。來赴法壇。簇壇三陣。開天關。閉地戶。留人門。塞鬼路。穿鬼心。破鬼肚。吾奉太上老君急急如律令。

THE MASTER

Please set up the altar now, my young disciple. (*Acting out setting up the sacrifice table*)

THE MASTER

Please bring the incense.

YOUNG DAOIST

Here is the incense.

(*The master acting out lighting the incense*)

MASTER

This bundle of incense, along with three strikes of the drums; the ten directions are falling into tranquility, and the ten thousand deities are listening attentively. I hear the Dao

incense, the De incense, and the *wuwei* incense,²²³ being effortless and tranquil emitting a natural aroma. I am paying my homage to the three worlds, and burning the incense for the three realms. The perfect fragrance has filled the luxurious towers and jade realm. Dharma-realm of the Great Ritual Offerings to the All-Embracing Heaven.²²⁴ Today, I am sincerely making offerings to the Most Honored Among Devas of the Primordial in the upper realm: The three pure ones and the four emperors; The five masters and the six deities; along with the gold child that serves the incense and the fairy envoys; The six constellations in the Southern Dipper, and the Great Dipper in the North, Five constellations in the East, the Western Dipper in the West.²²⁵ The twelve constellations, the twenty-eight Daoist constellation deities. The Father of Thunder and the Mother of Lightning, the Duke of Wind and the Master of Rain, the Grand General of the Thunderbolts that is in charge of the powerful soldiers. The four grand marshals of Deng, Xin, Zhang, and Tao; and the four grand marshals of Pang, Liu, Gou, and Bi; the Marshal Ma of the divine empyrean who is in charge of the thunder talismans, the Marshal Zhao that holds a golden dragon scepter,²²⁶ the Marshal Wen of the Divine Empyrean that is

²²³ While these are not the ordinary incenses, there are varieties of incenses in Daoist liturgical settings.

²²⁴ *Fajie* 法界 the realm of human experience; the universe as governed by the law of cause and effect. (Skt. *dharmadhātu*) [Charles Muller; source(s): Ui, Nakamura, JEBD]; *zhoutian daluo* 周天大羅 here refers to comprehensive Daoist liturgies.

²²⁵ According to *Zhongguo shenhua renwu cidian* 中國神話人物辭典: Nandou 南斗 here refers to Nandou xing 南斗星君 who is one of the Daoist constellation deity. Nandou belongs to be the twenty eight constellations (*ershiba xiu* 二十八宿), and more specifically, the *douxu* 斗宿, pp 462-3.

²²⁶ Zhao Yuanshuai here refers to Zhao Gongming 趙公明 (also known as Zhao Xuantan 趙玄壇) who is commonly worshipped as the God of Wealth. In the Ming novel *Fengshen yanyi* 封神演義 (*Investiture of the Gods*), Zhao Gongming is given the title of Jinlong ruyi zhengyi longhu xuantan zhenjun 金龍如意正乙龍虎玄壇真君 (the Dark Altar True Lord of Dragons and Tigers of Taiyi that Holds a Golden Dragon Scepter) by Jiang Ziya 姜子牙. Therefore, this play associates the idea of *jinlun ruyi* with Zhao Gongming, and the difference between *jinlong* and *jinlun* could be caused by mistransliteration, or variants in Zhao Gongming's title in different texts.

carefree; the Marshal Guan that subdues the demonic.²²⁷ At this altar, we are receiving the City God, the Earth God, and all other house gods. [I] am clicking my teeth and burning the incense. I have heard the divine power of the deities is not so far away, gazing from afar I see the flowing lights are pouring down; please aid the world first, and show your empathy. [I am] using a sword to cut off the demon heads. The moon is shining in the skies. I request the powerful swords and divine soldiers of the five mountains. [I] dash against talismans and wear a sword in the clouds, riding on cranes and the phoenix under the Moon. [I] assemble the Daoist mass and sing and perform the sound of the Daoist teaching. Today the magistrate Yan Yi's son has been sick, even though he took medicine and was cured. Incense, candles, flowers, and fruits are offered in front of the altar. [I] dispatch the heavenly soldiers before my eyes, and also invited heavenly immortals and military affairs, the earthly immortals that are in charge of the military, military affairs of the rivers, lakes, and seas, the ten thousand flag officers from the nine rivers, all arrived at the altar. Congregated at the altar they are divided into three troops. The Heavenly gate is opened, the earthly door is closed, and the door to the human world remains open. The ghostly road is hindered, the ghostly heart penetrated, and the ghostly abdomen broken. I hereby comply with the laws of the Grand Supreme Elderly Lord.

[擊領牌云]一擊天清。二擊地寧。三擊五雷。即現真形。[舉筆云]天圓地方。六合九章。神筆到處。萬鬼潛藏。[書符云]天上麒麟子。頓斷黃金鎖。偷走下天來。人

²²⁷ Marshal Guan here refers to Guan Yu 關羽 who was canonized in the year of 1605 during the thirty third year of Wanli Reign as Sanjie fumo dadi 三界伏魔大帝 (the Great Emperor that Subdues the Demonic of the Three Realms), which is one among numerous titles Guan Yu received that all have something to do with the idea of *fumo* 伏魔 (subdue the demons).

間收住我。紫微殿前丹霞繞。白玉碯前劍佩齊。十二童子傳詔罷。星冠雲冕一齊回。

[仗劍云]老君賜吾驅邪劍。離火鍛成金百鍊。出匣森森雪霜寒。入手輝輝星斗現。

[呪水云]吾將此水非凡水。九龍吐出淨天地。太液池中千萬年。吾今將來淨妖氣。

*(Striking the tablet)*²²⁸

MASTER

[Under] the first strike the heaven becomes pure, [under the] second strike the earth becomes tranquil, [under the] third strike the five thunders are elicited, and the original form is revealed thereafter.

[*holding the brush pen*] the heaven is round and earth square, six directions and nine islands, wherever the divine brush pens arrive, the myriad ghosts are hidden.

(Acting out writing the talisman)

The bright young boy in the sky above; he broke the gold locket and descended into the human world secretly, a world that accommodated me.²²⁹ The palace of Purple Subtlety is encircled with the red clouds.²³⁰ Swords are gathered in front of the jade palace pillars. The twelve young boys are delivering imperial decrees; high officials are reporting back.²³¹

(Acting out wielding the sword)

²²⁸ This long paragraph and the one follows resemble many liturgical texts in *Daofa huiyuan* 道法會元.

²²⁹ The young boy is derived from the tradition of the mystical creature, *qilin* 麒麟.

²³⁰ The name of a star in the north portion of the big dipper. [紫宮]. [李白, 宮中行樂詞] [source(s): Shogakkan]

²³¹ *Xingguan yunmian* 星冠雲冕 (star headwear and cloud hat)

The Elderly Emperor has bestowed upon me the sword to drive out the evil spirits, which was forged out of fire and metal.²³² Once it is drawn out of the chest, it feels even colder than snow and frost. Once held in hand, it shines as if the stars and constellations are present.

(Acting out making incantations with water)

This water is not just any water, it is the saliva of the nine dragons that is used to purify heaven and earth. It is stored in the pool of grand liquids for thousands of years. And today I am using it to eradicate the demonic forces.

[仗劍噴水云]一噴如霜。二噴如雪。三噴之後。百邪消滅。太乙靈陽。紫氣星君。諸神洞府。齊下雲軒。吾今謹請東方青帝青神。銜符佩劍。入吾水中。謹請南方赤帝赤神。銜符佩劍。入吾水中。謹請西方金帝金神。銜符佩劍。入吾水中。謹請北方黑帝黑神。銜符佩劍。入吾水中。謹請中央黃帝黃神。銜符佩劍。入吾水中。謹請年直月直日直時直當直功曹。執符神將。攪海大聖。翻江大聖。驅邪大聖。撒波大聖。吾今用爾壇前。仗劍等候。休錯吾一時一刻。吾奉太上老君急急如律令敕。直符安在。

(Acting out swinging the sword and spirting water out of his mouth)

MASTER

The first incantation is like frost, and the second snow. After the third incantation, the hundred noxious forces are subdued. The divine *yang* of Taiyi, the astral lord of purple pneuma, and abodes of the various gods are all descending down to the cloud pavilion. I

²³² Laojun 老君 here refers to Taishang laojun 太上老君

hereby invite the green emperor and god that dwell in the west, to carry the talismans and wear the sword, enter the water [I use]. I hereby invite the red emperor and the red god that dwell in the south, to carry the talismans and wear the sword, enter the water [I use]. I hereby invite the dark emperor and the dark god that dwell in the north, to carry the talismans and wear the sword, enter the water. I hereby invite the yellow emperor and the yellow god that dwell in the center, to carry the talismans and wear the sword, enter the water. I hereby invite the official that was on duty in such and such month, on such and such day, during such and such hours. The divine general who is in charge of talismans, the grand deity that stirs the oceans, the grand deity that stirs the rivers, the grand deity that drives off the evil spirits, the grand deity that stirs the waves. Today I am receiving all the deities here in front of the altar, standing up holding their sword. Let's not miss the perfect timing to conduct the rituals. I am here by the decree of Great Lord Lao, quickly, quickly, obey my summoning as laws. Where is Zhifu?

[直符上][云]中和正直列英才。玉帝親臨聖敕差。休道空中無神道。霹靂雷聲那裡來。小聖乃直符使者是也。正在五雷部下聽令。上仙呼喚。不知有甚事。須索走一遭去。可早來到也。上仙呼喚小聖。有何法旨。[先生云]有勞當日神將。直日功曹。去那蘭堂之下。畫閣之前。勾將土地來者。[直符云]得令。土地安在。上仙呼喚。
[土地上][云]髮垂銀線鬢如霜。不離畫閣與蘭堂。招財童子傍邊立。利市仙翁在兩廂。小聖土地是也。上仙呼喚。須索走一遭。可早來到也。[直符云]跟我過去。上仙。勾得土地來也。[土地云]上仙喚吾神。有何法旨。[先生云]土地你知罪麼。[土地云]小聖不知罪。[先生云]你縱容邪魔外祟。纏攪良家弟子。勾至壇前。有何理說。

[土地云]小聖是國家正神。受萬民香火。蒼顏皓首老形容。怎管凡夫小後生。[先生云]既在宅中為土地。故教鬼害不安寧。你不知情。有誰知情。[土地云]竈神知情。

(ZHIFU *enters*)

ZHIFU

Moderate and upright the able ones are arranged. The envoy of the Jade Emperor is personally attending [this event]. Do not say there is no way of divinity in the air, where are the thunderclaps and thunders from then? I am the minor deity, the Zhifu envoy, and I am taking orders from the division of the five thunder gods. The Great Transcendent is calling on me now, and I am not sure how can I be of service? Now I have to pay him a visit. Am I here already [as I speak]? Your excellency, what is it that you wish to speak to me about?

THE MASTER

May I trouble you, the deity who was on duty that day, to go to the orchid hall and the drawing tower, get a hold of the earth god.²³³

ZHIFU

Understood. Where are you, the earth god, his excellency is calling on you.

(THE EARTH GOD *enters*)

EARTH GOD

²³³ *Shuge* 畫閣: drawing tower and *lantang* 蘭堂: orchard hall

My hair is hanging down as silver strings and my temples are silver grey. Never have I been away from the drawing tower and the orchid hall. Young boys that invite wealth and fortune are standing on both sides. The immortal that ensures profit at the market resides on the east and west chambers. I am the minor deity, the earth god, now that his excellency is calling on me, I must make this trip. I am here already as I speak.

ZHIFU

Follow me please. Your excellency, the earth god has arrived.

THE EARTH GOD

Your excellency, what is it that you wish to speak with me about?

THE MASTER

Earth god, do you plead guilty or not?

THE EARTH GOD

The minor deity I am not aware of the guilt.

THE MASTER

You permitted the wicked forces and ghosts of strangers to disturb the young scholars from good households. Now that you are invited to the altar, what do you have to argue for yourself?

THE EARTH GOD

The minor deity I am among the canonized deities, receiving incense from thousands of common households. Now that I am aged, that my face is wrinkled, and my hair turned grey, I have not paid much attention to the young scholars in the human world.

THE MASTER

Since you are the Earth God that dwells in the residence, you might as well give the wicked ones and ghosts a hard time. If you have not paid attention to the said matter, who else was there [that] we can call on?

THE EARTH GOD

The Stove God was there.

[先生云]一壁有者。有勞當日神將。直日功曹。去那東廚之內。焱火之中。勾將竈神來者。[直符云]得令。竈神安在。上仙呼喚。[竈神上][云]烈焱瑩瑩映斗牛。平生火性急難收。吾神所管東廚淨。不知喚我甚因由。小聖竈神是也。上仙呼喚。須索走一遭。可早來到也。[直符云]跟我過去。上仙。勾將竈神來也。[竈神云]上仙呼喚吾神。有何法旨。[先生云]竈神你知罪麼。[竈神云]小聖不知罪。[先生云]你縱容邪魔外祟。纏攪良家弟子。勾至壇前。有何理說。[竈神云]我是國家正神。受萬民香火。善火廚中為司令。福水鍋頭作竈神。[先生云]你不除自己死名字。猶誇削火不燒身。你不知情。有誰知情。

THE MASTER

Guards, May I trouble the deities who were on duty that day to pay a visit to the kitchen [in the east], and find the Stove God that dwells in the fire?

ZHIFU

Understood. Is the Stove God there? His excellency is calling on you.

(THE Stove God *enters*)

STOVE GOD

The hot fire is as resplendent as yellow cow. I have been known for my hot temper that is hard to contain. The east kitchen that I am in charge of is clean, and for what reason did his excellency request my presence? The minor deity I am the Stove God, now that his excellency is calling on me, I must pay him a visit. I am here already as I speak.

ZHIFU

Just follow me please. Your excellency, the Stove God has arrived.

THE STOVE GOD

Your excellency, what is it that you wish to speak with me about?

THE MASTER

Stove God, do you plead guilty or not?

THE STOVE GOD

I am but a minor deity, and I am not aware of my guilt.

THE MASTER

You permitted the wicked forces and ghosts of strangers to disturb the young scholars at the common households. Now that you are invited in front of the altar, what do you have to say for yourself?

THE STOVE GOD

I am among the canonized deities and receive the incense from thousands of commoners. Among the true fires I am the commander in the kitchen, in the blessed water and in the pot, I am the Stove God.

THE MASTER

Claiming that you are not guilty is just like saying the fire doesn't burn. If you are not aware of the said matter, who else was there?

[竈神云]井神知情。[先生云]一壁有者。有勞當日神將。直日功曹。去那磨磚砌就。班石穿口。勾將井神來者。[直符云]得令。井神安在。上仙呼喚。

THE STOVE GOD

The Well God was there, too.

THE MASTER

Those of you who are standing by. Guards, may I trouble the deities who were on duty that day to get a hold of the Well God from the bricked wall and stone mouth of the well.

ZHIFU

Understood. Is the Well God there? His excellency is calling on you now.

[井神上][云]百綠園中受苦辛。澆成萬物永長新。若知小聖陰陽處。救苦扶貧是井神。小聖井神是也。上仙呼喚。須索走一遭去。可早來到也。[直符云]跟我過來。上仙。勾的井神來也。[井神云]上仙呼喚小聖。有何法旨。

(THE WELL GOD *enters*)

WELL GOD

I have been going through the hardships in the garden so that hundreds of plants are flourishing, providing irrigation for the ten thousand creatures and aid to their constant growth. If you know where I come from, I am the one that is devoted to save the poor and aid the unfortunate. I am the minor deity, the Well God, now that his excellency is calling on me, I must pay him a visit. I am here already as I speak.

ZHIFU

Please follow me. Your excellency, the Well God has arrived.

THE WELL GOD

Your excellency has been looking for me. What is it that you wish to speak with me about?

[先生云]井神你知罪麼。[井神云]小聖不知罪。[先生云]你縱容邪魔外祟。纏攬良家弟子。勾至壇前。有何理說。

THE MASTER

Well God, Do you plead guilty or not?

THE WELL GOD

I am not aware of the guilt.

THE MASTER

You permitted the wicked forces and ghosts of strangers to disturb the young scholars of the common households. Now that you are in front of the altar, what do you have to argue for yourself?

[井神云]我是國家正神。受萬民之香火。造酒烹茶多有功。日增萬擔濟眾生。[先生云]你休誇上井甘泉盛。是水都歸大海中。你不知情。有誰知情。[井神云]門神知情。

THE WELL GOD

I am among the canonized deities and receive the incense from ten thousand people. My merit is accumulated in wine brewery and tea making. With ten thousand buckets of water on a daily basis, I succor all the living.

THE MASTER

Don't you brag that your well holds only sweet water. All water is destined to return to the ocean. If you are not aware of the said issue, who else was there?

THE WELL GOD

The Door Guardian was there, too.

[先生云]一壁有者。有勞當日神將。直日功曹。去那碧瓦簷下。紅油柱邊。勾那門神來者。[直符云]得令。門神安在。上仙呼喚。[門神上][云]直符傳喚兩三番。着我心中左右難。平生正直無私曲。也與邪魔一例看。小聖門神是也。上仙呼喚。須索走一遭去。可早來到也。

THE MASTER

Guards, may I trouble the deities who were on duty that day to get a hold of the Door Guardian that dwells under the blue eaves and by the red pillars.

ZHIFU

Understood. Is the Door Guardian there? His excellency is looking for you now.

(The Door Guardian enters)

DOOR GUARDIAN

Zhifu had summoned me several times. I am caught in such a dilemma. However, I have been known for my integrity and impartiality, now I am being seen as the same as demons. I am the minor deity, the Door Guardian. His excellency is calling on me now. I must pay him a visit. I am here already as I speak.

[直符云]跟我過去。上仙。勾的門神來也。[門神云]上仙呼喚小聖。有何法旨。

ZHIFU

Just follow me now. Your excellency, the Door Guardian has arrived.

THE DOOR GUARDIAN

Your excellency was looking for me, what is it that you wish to speak with me about?

[先生云]門神你知罪麼。

THE MASTER

Do you plead guilty or not, Door Guardian?

[門神云]小聖不知罪。

THE DOOR GUARDIAN

I am but a minor deity, and I am not aware of my guilt.

[先生云]你縱容邪魔外祟。纏攪良家子弟。勾至壇前。有何理說。

THE MASTER

You permitted the wicked forces and ghosts of strangers to disturb the young scholars of the common households. Now that you are in front of the altar, what do you have to argue against that?

[門神云]我是國家正神。受萬民之香火。我時年每歲作門神。驚散邪魔外道魂。

THE DOOR GUARDIAN

I am among the canonized deities and receive the incense from thousands of common people. Long I have been the Door Guardian every year, and I have scared away the demons and the ghosts of heterodoxy.

[先生云]則你那機關枉作千年調。方知口時禍之門。你不知情。有誰知情。

THE MASTER

You have done it for a thousand years for nothing; only then did we know that [main] entrance of the house is an invitation to calamities. If you are not aware of the said issue, who else was there?

[門神云] 鍾馗知情。

THE DOOR GUARDIAN

Zhong Kui was also there.

[先生云]一壁有者。有勞當日神將。直日功曹。去那後閣之前。前堂左右。勾那鍾馗來者。

THE MASTER

Guards, may I trouble the deities that were on duty that day to get a hold of Zhong Kui who resides in front of the back tower,²³⁴ left or right side of front hall.²³⁵

²³⁴ *Houge* 後閣 back hall

²³⁵ *Qiantang* 前堂 front hall

[直符云]得令。鍾馗安在。上仙呼喚。

ZHIFU

Understood. Is Zhong Kui there? His excellency is looking for you now.

[鍾馗上][云]上仙呼喚眾神祇。不知有甚是和非。我判斷陰司行公正。則我是心直口快老鍾馗。小聖鍾馗是也。上仙呼喚。須索走一遭。可早來到也。

(Zhong Kui enters)

ZHONG KUI

His excellency has called on all the house gods today. I wonder what was going on. As a judge in hell, I am impartial. I am that old Zhong Kui who says what is on his mind without much deliberation. I am the minor deity, Zhong Kui, now that his excellency is looking for me, I must pay him a visit. I am here already as I speak.

[直符云]跟我過去。上仙。勾的鍾馗來也。

ZHIFU

Just follow me. Your excellency, Zhong Kui has arrived.

[先生云]同邪魔外祟。胡迷良家子弟。勾至壇前。有何理說。

THE MASTER

You permitted the wicked forces and ghosts of strangers to confuse the young scholars from common households. Now that you are in front of altar, what do you have to argue against that?

[鍾馗云]我是國家正神。受萬民之香火。面青髮赤有大才。一目藏睛一目開。驅邪改正除虛耗。會入唐王夢裏來。

ZHONG KUI

I am among the canonized deities and receive the incense from thousands of common people. My face is green and hair red, and I am in possession of great abilities. One of my eyes is wide open and the other one remains closed; I cast off the evil spirits, leading them to the correct way, as well as eradicating the *xu* and *hao* spirits. I once entered Emperor the Tang Emperor's dreamland [and cured his disease].

[先生云]你既能除人家鬼魅。這件事都在你箇鍾馗身上。則問你遙那兩箇鬼頭。

THE MASTER

If you are so able as an exorcist, you shall be held responsible for the entire matter. You should be the one to capture those two demons.

[鍾馗云]上仙息怒。小聖不拘那裡。拿來便了也。

ZHONG KUI

Please don't be angry [with me], your excellency. I will go at once and capture those two.

[直符鍾馗拿二旦上][云]小鬼頭走動些。

(Zhifu and Zhong Kui acting out arresting the two females, enter)

ZHIFU

Hurry up, little ghosts!

[二旦云]可怎了也呵。[唱]

TWO FEMALES

Why is it happening [to us]? (*Singing*)

[雙調新水令]成精作怪二桃符。今日箇敖惱的上仙發怒。昨夜箇照出俺醜相貌。顯出俺惡身軀。早知道呪水畫符。他便有潘安俊。我也並不去。

[*shuangdiao xin shui ling*] [We are two] peachwood charms that became monsters. Today the Daoist immortal was quite angry at our misbehaviors. Last night, we returned to our ugly original forms [by the power of the talismans], and our loathsome form was manifested. Had I known power has been bestowed in the water and talismans, we would not go to the young scholar at all, even if he possessed the ultimate handsomeness [in the world].

[直符同鍾馗押二旦見科][云]上仙。拿將兩箇鬼頭來也。

(*zhifu and Zhong Kui acting out capturing the two demons*)

ZHIFU

Your excellency, we are here with the two petty demons.

[先生云]着眾神與他對證。

THE MASTER

Call on all the house gods to testify against them.

[竈神云]小鬼頭。你怎生帶累吾神。[二旦唱]

THE STOVE GOD

You, the little ones, how dare you to have implicated me in this matter?

TWO FEMALES (*singing*)

[喬牌兒]哎。你箇竈神靈休忿怒。

[qiao pai'er] Alas, Stove God, don't you be furious with us now.

[土地云]怎生也有老夫。

THE EARTH GOD

How come I am involved [in this matter] as well?

[二旦唱]老土地莫無慮。

TWO FEMALES (*singing*)

Rest assured, earth god.

[井神門神云]干俺兩個甚事。

THE WELL GOD and THE DOOR GUARDIAN

What do the two of us have to do with this?

[二旦唱]井門神將俺相催促。

TWO FEMALES (*singing*) Well God, Door Guardian, please do not rush us.

[鍾馗云]怎生也連累小聖。

ZHONG KUI

How come I am being dragged into this?

[二旦唱]告鍾馗肯覷付。

TWO FEMALES (*singing*)

We blame Zhong Kui for stealing a glance [at us].

[鍾馗云]我怎生覷你。

ZHONG KUI

When did I ever look at you!

[二旦唱]誰着你長閉長開不當住。從今後無門路。着俺便怎地說。難分訴。

由你便左右關防。則是俺兩塊桃符。

TWO FEMALES (*singing*)

It is all because of you, you opened and closed your eye constantly and didn't stop us. From today on, the two of us would have nowhere to go. What can we say now? It is hard to argue. You safeguard the left and right side? We are just two pieces of peachwood charms after all.

[先生云]將着兩個妖精押發。先受十八層地獄之苦。後罰在陰山背後。永遠不得人身。

THE MASTER

Send away the two demons under guard, let the two of them experience the sufferings of the eighteen layers of hell, and then lock them in behind the Yin mountains and they are forever prohibited to transform back to human form.²³⁶

[二旦云]怎了也呵。[唱]

TWO FEMALES

Alas. (*singing*)

[沽美酒]將俺這鬼魂兒歸地府。一靈兒入酆都。萬苦千辛何日足。忍不住嚎啕痛哭。撲簌簌淚如珠。

[*gu mei jiu*] [Now] the two of us are returning to hell, and our souls also enter in the dark world. When will the unfolding hardships end, and we cannot help but break down to cry. Tears rolling down like beads.

[太平令]怕的是明晃晃刀山劍樹。愁的是磣可可鋸解身軀。行善的朗朗天堂有路。作惡的昏慘慘寒冰地獄。上仙的法度。着鬼卒將俺來送去。眼見的萬萬劫人身難做。

[*tai ping ling*] what we are afraid of are the dazzlingly clear sword mountains and trees; what really terrifies us is to be amputated by a saw, kckc. People that are committed to good deeds have a bright future in heaven, whereas

²³⁶ *Yinshan* 陰山, the yin mountains. *Yinshan* is a very commonly seen locale in Daoist liturgical setting. It is often seen together with the five directions, too.

people that are committed to the wrong doings are destined to meet with the cold hell. Because of the correct teaching of the master he called on the demon soldiers to send us away. A predictable future unfolds itself, the two of us will have to face eons of time and by no means are we able to transform into human form again.

[先生云]眾神靈壇前侍立。聽貧道分明子細。門東娘殢雨尤云。纏攬定良家子弟。門西娘暗約偷期。將俺這眾神瞞昧。二妖精罰往酆都。眾神靈箇還本位。

THE MASTER

All house gods are congregated in front of the altar; just listen to what I have to say. Men Dongniang committed adultery, disturbing the young innocent scholar. Men Xiniang was having an affair with him. The two of them were deceiving all house gods. Both are committed to hell. All house gods are to return to their post.

[二旦云]今日科怎了也。[唱]

TWO FEMALES

How did it all come down to this? (*Singing*)

[尾聲]哭啼啼罰入酆都去。苦淹淹直上陰司路。則為俺敗壞風俗。若到那萬萬丈陰山跳不出。

(ENDING) Weeping and sniffing we are punished to enter the dark world. Pitifully are we heading on the road to hell. Just because we violated the

moral codes, we will not be able to escape the Yin Mountains that are thousands of *zhang* high.

[眾神押二旦先下]

[孤上][云]多謝師父勦除妖魅。救了小兒一命。請師父受齋了去。 (*The deities are escorting the two females out, exit*)

(*Yan Yi enters*)

YAN YI

I am so grateful for you, master. You drove away the demons and saved my son's life. May I invite you to a vegetarian meal now?

[先生云]不必齋了。貧道救此告別。[下][孤云]

THE MASTER

That will not be necessary. I should be on my way now. (*Exit*)

YAN YI

[下闕] (*The rest of the play is missing*)

題目 門東娘心順成婚配 老相公驚散鴛鴦會

正名 狠鍾馗拿住二妖精 太乙仙夜斷桃符記

Closing Title²³⁷

Men Dongnian is Pleased to Unite Marriage [with the Young Master Yan]; the Magistrate Disrupts the Love Affair [of the Men Sisters and His Son]

Closing Title

The Merciless Zhong Kui Captures the Two Demons; the Divinity of Taiyi Cut off Two Pieces of Peachwood Charms at Night.

Figure 2.1

²³⁷ *Timu zhengming* 題目正名 appears after the closing remarks of a *zaju*, using 2 or 4 lines to describe the play, which is often read by *fumo* 副末, the secondary male.



Anonymous, Ming Dynasty (1368- 1644), c. 1460. Spirits that Come to Condole the Bereaved Family, hanging scroll from the Baoning si temple, Shanxi Province. Collection of the Shanxi Provincial Museum, Taiyuan. After *Baoning si mingdai shuilu hua* (Beijing, 1985), fig. 132.

5. Concluding Comments on the Play

In *Taofu ji*, the peach tree blossoms symbolize both elements of romance and ritual. The play starts with the young woman Men Dongniang attempting to hang herself on a peach tree because she failed to fulfill her womanly duty to find a suitable man to marry, which opens the romantic plot. It ends with the Daoist master using elaborate Daoist liturgies to subdue two peachwood charms under the Yin Mountains and ordering them never to conduct mischief or transform into humans again. As a symbol of fertility, peach tree blossoms are associated with romantic encounters. As ritual items, peachwood charms were once deployed as the door guardians to be put on both sides of the main entrance of a house.

In the final scene in which the two peachwood charms are sentenced by the Daoist master, they accuse Zhong Kui of being the primary reason for their transgression. They claim, “It is all because of you, you opened and closed your eye constantly and didn’t stop us. From today on, the two of us would have nowhere to go. What can we say now? It is hard to argue [with you]. You safeguard the left and right side? We are just two pieces of peachwood charms after all.” Throughout the history, the relationship among Zhong Kui and the door guardians has always been murky. In other words, as a deity to safeguard households, Zhong Kui is either treated as a parallel to the door guardians: Shen Tu 神荼 and Yu Lei 鬱壘, or else worshipped as one himself.²³⁸ What’s worth noting here is that, Zhong Kui is depicted as having his one eye open and the other closed. While this is not portrayed as part of his iconography in the Tang legend, it indicates

²³⁸ The earliest account of the door guardians Shen Tu and Yu Lu can be found in *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (circa. 3rd century BCE). As a matter of fact, Zhong Kui’s image is often put on the door to replace Shen Tu and Yu Lu. This practice is still seen in the present Chinese communities.

other unknown sources have been affecting the making of Zhong Kui's visual representation as a commonly accepted deity with exorcistic powers to protect.

Lastly, returning of ritual items to the human world such as peachwood charms indicates corruption, which might be better understood if paired up with more attention given on Zhong Kui's carelessness originated from his blunt nature and propensity for violence. Compared with the first play where he is an upright scholar and canonized because of his superior literary abilities and uprightness, in this play, his status is superseded by the strong religious figure and moral guide, Taiyi Xian. This dynamic may also signify historically that virtue and morality are no longer the exclusive domain of the scholar officials, but rather the Daoist masters.

Chapter Three

The Exorcist and His Sister in the Ming and Qing Dynasty: A Flawed Official in the Bureaucratic System

1. *The Exorcist from the Chinese Studio of Strange Tales*

In the previous chapters, I defined Zhong Kui's Daoist identity in a larger network of Daoist deities and narratives, and demonstrated how the exorcist as an established deity and the Daoist liturgies associated with him are blended in with the search for amazement that was commonly found among the Ming plays. In this chapter, I will first focus on a play titled *Zhongmei qingshou* 鐘妹慶壽 (*Zhong Kui's Younger Sister Celebrating His Birthday*) (and hereafter *Zhongmei*) written by the Qing playwright, Pu Songling 蒲松齡 (1640-1715). The overall tone of the play is drastically different from the plays translated in the previous chapters, which is demonstrated through both the length and the satirical ambience of the play. The second play focused is an entry preserved in *Quhai zongmu tiyao*, and the playwright of the original play is Ruan Dacheng.

According to *Mingdai zaju quanmu*, this play was not preserved in any catalogues of plays. It is mentioned in Zhang Yuan's 張元 (1672—1751) *Liuquan Pu xiansheng mubiao* 柳泉蒲先生墓表 (*The Memorial Tablet on Pu Songling's Grave*).²³⁹ On the back side of the grave stone where it catalogued Pu Songling's work, it included “three plays,”

²³⁹ Zhang Yuan was a Qing dynasty poet and native of Zichuan 淄川 (nowadays Zibo 淄博). His family was close friends with Pu Songling. He composed the memorial tablet on Pu Songling's grave stone. Pu's poetic name is Liuquan jushi 柳泉居士, which is why the memorial tablet refers him as Liuquan. Please refer to Qian, Zhonglian (ed.), *Zhongguo wenxue da cidian* 中國文學大辭典 (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe 中國辭書出版社, 1997), p 1154.

the second of which was titled *Zhong mei qingshou* 鐘妹慶壽 (*Zhong Kui's Younger Sister Celebrates His Birthday*).²⁴⁰ The only transmitted edition of this play is the one preserved in *Liaozhai shiwen ji* 聊齋詩文集 (*Anothology of Poems Written in Liaozhai*), which was copied and dated to the Kangxi reign 康熙 (1661-1722). The title of the play in the anthology is, *Zhong mei qingshou* 鐘妹慶壽.²⁴¹

In *Zhongmei*, Zhong Kui is paired with his sister. More importantly, as an exorcist he is highly anthropomorphized insofar as the exorcisms or ritual executions of the petty demons, which would normally be deemed as purely upright or a manifestation of his prowess previously, have become a personal addiction. Even the deity himself recognizes this shortcoming and states that “it has become a forced habit of mine that I must eat some demons to truly enjoy each meal.”²⁴² Even the petty demons in the play call him a “gluttonous master” and claim that Zhong Kui is “scary, and his face does not look very gentle, either.”²⁴³

Despite this manifest flaw, in Pu's play *Zhongmei*, Zhong Kui remains one of the most powerful exorcists, because the core features and the hagiography that define his Daoist identity are still aligned with the pre-established convention in the Zhong Kui legends. For instance, Zhong Kui describes himself as a failed examination candidate, and the reason repeats itself as in the previous accounts: his physical appearance was too

²⁴⁰ The original quote reads, “xi sanchu 戲三齣.”

²⁴¹ *Mingdai zaju quanmu*, p 69.

²⁴² The original sentence reads, “Yinci yangcheng le yige gui piwei, dunfan fei gui bu mei.” “因此養成了一個鬼脾胃，頓飯非鬼不美。”

²⁴³ The original sentence reads, “Nage chanye kepa, pang'er buda shangliang.” “那個饞爺可怕，龐兒不大善良。” This petty demons is carried out by the dramatic role of *chou* 醜 who is the big demon in the play.

repulsive for the Emperor, who refused to appoint him as an official. However, Zhong Kui's status as a powerful exorcist yields to the comical effects brought out by the playfulness of the exorcist himself and satire centered around his official responsibility: killing and eating demons. Moreover, Zhong Kui's exorcistic powers are greatly channeled into a political allegory, which surrenders to two possible meanings. The first denotes the corruption in the court that caused Zhong Kui's failure in the final round of civil examination; and the second points to Zhong Kui's moral flaw of being gluttonous for eating all petty demons there are available.

If portraying Zhong Kui as a gluttonous and flawed official makes him a more personalized deity allegorically within the play, the personalized perspective can be attested by external factors, too. I argue that Zhong Kui's failure as a civil examination candidate, his loyalty to the emperor, his striving to fulfill his responsibilities, as well as his moral stance against wickedness should be understood as personal reconciliations that mirror how the playwright internalizes the same bittersweet journey as the exorcist through a powerful weapon of his own: writing. The playwright Pu Songling is best known for his literary skills to tell stories of human affairs through the lens of ghosts and spirits. His most well-known collection, *Liaozhai zhiyi* 聊齋誌異 (*Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio*) consists of nearly five hundred tales of ghosts, foxes, demons, and immortals. Therefore, the choice of composing a play on Zhong Kui, one of the most powerful exorcists in Chinese history, would need very little or no justification. In addition, besides his abilities to tell ghosts stories and accounts of anomalies with numbers of satires and ironies, Pu's reputation as one of the most well-respected and prolific writers in Chinese literature may also partially be motivated by his own failure as

a civil examination candidate. Zhong Kui and Pu Songling's personal failure in establishing their political careers cultivates a common ground for the two of them, despite the fact that a comparison between the playwright and his protagonist crosses the boundaries of history and literature, transgressing the world of the mundane and spiritual.²⁴⁴

The literary predecessor of the play *Zhongmei* is attributed to *Xiaozan* (*Laughs of Praise*) composed by the Ming scholar official, Zhao Nanxing, and the entry is titled, "Zhong Kui" (鐘馗).²⁴⁵ My translation of the entry reads in the following:

"Zhong Kui is particularly fond of devouring demons. His sister is dedicated to giving him a birthday celebration. On the invitation card, she writes: 'a goblet of wine along with two demons are sent to my elder brother to chop fine [to eat]. If my elder brother criticizes it as too little, the [demon] that carries the carrying pole makes three.' After Zhong Kui has read the invitation, he orders servants to send the three demons to the chef to cook. The demons being carried on the carrying pole looks at the demon who carries him, saying, 'We are destined to be eaten [by Zhong Kui]. Why are you insisting on carrying the burden?'"

"*Zan* comments, the demon that carries the carrying pole has not heard about Zhong Kui's gluttony yet, and he voluntarily walks into the cauldron. Demons

²⁴⁴ See Allan Barr's article, "Pu Songling and the Qing Examination System," *Late Imperial China* (1986 vol. 7. No.1), pp 87-111.

²⁴⁵ Zhao, Nanxing 趙南星 (1550-1627) ed., *Xiaozan* 笑贊. In *Zhongguo xiaohua* (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 73-9-7), p 211.

such as this one belong to the same category as Wenzhong or Han Xin,²⁴⁶ if they were to like Shaobo or Zifang, they should be wise demons.”²⁴⁷

“鍾馗專好吃鬼。其妹與他做生日，寫禮帖云：「酒一尊，鬼兩個，送與哥哥做點剝，哥哥著嫌禮物少，連挑擔的是三個。」鍾馗看畢，命人將三個鬼俱送庖人烹之。擔上鬼看挑擔者曰：「我們死是本等，你如何挑這個擔子。」

贊曰：挑擔者不聞鍾馗之所好耶，而自投鼎俎。此文種韓信之流也，若少伯子房，可謂智鬼矣。”

In Zhao's account, especially in the comments on the book, it is quite obvious that more sympathy is given to the demon who carries the gifts and ends up being Zhong Kui's fine meal. Better yet, Zhao's attitude towards this demon can be captured through a phrase “*aiqi buxing, nuqi buzheng*” (哀其不幸, 怒其不爭, feeling sympathetic because of their misfortune and frustrated with their incompetence [at the same time]) coined by contemporary writer Lu Xun. Zhong Kui, on the other hand, is portrayed as a flawed official in the bureaucratic system whose uprightness and prowess as a powerful exorcist have greatly reduced to a mere reflection of his moral shortcomings: gluttony and even mercilessness.

²⁴⁶ Wen Zhong (died in 472 BCE). Wen was from the Kingdom of Chu 楚國. He was a well-known strategist that helped the king of the Kingdom of Yue 越國, and he later on was granted the privilege of suicide by the King of Yue.

Han Xin (230-196 BCE) was one of the three heroic generals that established the Western Han dynasty. He was executed by the Emperor on the verdict of attempting rebellion. After he helped the emperor establish the Western Han, the emperor became intimidated by Han's bravery and power at the court. The charges of attempting rebellion were fabricated as an excuse to eliminate Han's military power.

²⁴⁷ Shaobo here refers to the Tang poet Wang Changling 王昌齡 (698-757) who was sent to exile by the Emperor three times in his livelihood.

Zifang here refers to Zhang Liang (250-185 BCE). He was also one of the three heroic generals that helped Liu Bang 劉邦 establish the Western Han dynasty. Unlike Han Xin, he was trusted by the emperor and enfeoffed by the royal family for generations.

Vulgar literature officially lost its reputation for “not being able to enter the hall of elegance (*nandeng daya zhitang* 難登大雅之堂)” towards the end of the Ming dynasty. Ever since the late Ming, especially in the Qing dynasty, literati and scholar officials fondly pursued and elaborated the “vulgarity” in various genres of writing, ranging from novels, plays, jottings (*biji* 筆記), miscellaneous records, folk songs, lyrics, *tanci* 彈詞, *baojuan* 寶卷, to numerous folk literatures.²⁴⁸ Along with the accessibility mass printing provided for a general readership, jokes and laughs rose to prominence and gained enormous popularity due to the fact that they were not only easy to circulate but also were easier to read.

Zhao Nanxing so prefaced his collection of jokes:

“Stories recorded in this book and the things I have encountered do not lack elements of humor. The jokes transmitted in the world are only their shadows. Occasionally one is reminded of the existence of such funny accounts so that they will laugh. This indeed will cast off the boredom when one lives alone. However, jokes can be used to convey principles and to communicate worldly matters. People who were erudite and wrote would be able to comprehend the true meanings behind those jokes, which is why they can be used in writing and are by no means shallow. [I casually] record seventy-two joke entries and comment on each one of them. Therefore, this book is titled *Xiaoazan*.”

“書傳之所紀，目前之所見，不乏可笑者，世所傳笑談乃其影子耳。時或憶及，為之解頤，此孤居無悶之一助也。然亦可以談名理，可以通世故，染翰舒文者

²⁴⁸ *Tanci baojuan*

能知其解, 其為機鋒之助良非淺鮮。漫錄七十二則, 各為之贊, 名《笑贊》
雲。”

Zhongmei is a *duanju* (short play), which is the Qing reminiscence of *zaju*. In comparison with the strict *zaju* format, *Zhongmei* employs two singers instead of the one singer convention. In the current play, the singing parts are carried out by both Zhong Kui and his sister. One can certainly say the new development of having two singers instead of one is to bring more diversity on the stage, hence, provide more entertainment. However, in the case of Zhong Kui and his younger sister, the double singer phenomena reveals more practical significance: first of all, having a younger sister makes him more of a personalized deity. The fact that the sister also has quite a temper and is full of wit and even mischief reflects his own personality. Secondly, the Zhong Kui and younger sister duet conveys more ritualist meanings that are in tune with the ancient *nuo* tradition.

Zhong Kui's sister is named Zhongmei, or Xiaomei 小妹 in the previous records of Buddhist and Daoists prior to the Qing dynasty. As a matter of fact, both *Dongjing menghua lu* and *Mengliang lu* mention Zhong Kui and his sister as participating in *nuo* parades.²⁴⁹ Accompanying the exorcist Zhong Kui, the younger sister's presence can be understood as a ritualist duality, or the *yin* aspect, assuming her big brother represents the *yang* aspect. Another point worth mentioning is that the dynamics of the ritualistic duo of Zhong Kui and his sister resembles that of a *nuogong* 儺公 and *nuomu* 儺母 in the *nuo* theater.²⁵⁰ Inspired by the *nuogong* and *nuomu* ritual duo in exorcism, Zhong Kui and his

²⁴⁹ Please refer to note in introduction.

²⁵⁰ The convention of *nuogong* and *nuomu* can be dated into antiquity and are closely related to ancient exorcism. *Nuogong* is also called Dongshan shengong 東山聖公 (the Sage Father of East Mountain), and *nuomu* is called Nanshan shengmu 南山聖母 (the Sage Mother of South Mountain). They are two major

sister represent the male and female aspect implied in the ancient tradition: the two are sister and brother to each other. However, the further connotations of the duo hint at a unity that goes beyond the kinship: husband and wife. The *nuo* theatrical performance invokes comedic elements that are coated with eroticism and vulgarity with the acknowledgment of the twisted relation between the male and the female. After all, *nuo* theater is highly regional and local communities of men and women are the audience to entertain.

2. *The Playful Exorcist: Ironies and Satires*

Annotated Translation of Zhong Kui's Younger Sister Celebrating His Birthday

鐘妹慶壽

*Zhong Kui's Younger Sister Celebrating His Birthday*²⁵¹

Dramatis personae in order of appearance

<i>Role type</i>	<i>Name, family role, or social role</i>
Female lead	Zhong Mei, Zhong Kui's younger sister

deities worshipped at local *nuo* exorcism altars. The worship of *nuogong* and *nuomu* is popular in China, especially in southern China (the legends about *nuogong* and *nuomu* are dated further into the past in Hunan province). All local legends suggest that *nuogong* and *nuomu* were brother and sister and married eventually. Hence, later *nuo* practitioners offer sacrifices to the wooden statues of these two: *nuomu*'s face is pale and *nuogong*'s face is red, indicating they feel shameful. For more details, please refer to Li Jianping (ed.), *Zhongguo shenhua renwu cidian* 中國神話人物辭典 (Xi'an: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 1998), pp 641-2.

²⁵¹ Is one of the drama play included in *Liaozhai tongsu xiqu zhuxuan* 聊齋通俗戲曲選注, the original author is Pu Songling 蒲松齡, and Liu Jieping made the selection and annotations to the plays.

Clown #1	The big demon
Painted Face	Zhong Kui
The Demon Attendants	The Demon Attendants at Zhong Kui's
The Petty Demon	The Petty Demon

旦扮鐘妹上

「北新水令」昏沉沉月淡黃天，獵艷都得着資一件。眶深腮骨瘦，頂縮領毛
蜷。鬼首如拳，又怕上不的骷髏串。

(Female Lead, costumed as ZHONG KUI's sister, enters)

SISTER

[Bei xin shui ling] Cloudy [is the weather], the moonlight is dim and the sky grey. Hunting in the underworld, [I] obtained a scrumptious demon;²⁵² his eye sockets are deep and cheekbones thin, his head is [slightly] hid and the hair all curled up. His head is the size of a fist, [I am] afraid that he will not be fit [enough] for the skeleton string.

(詩) 血染紅裙冷黛修，自燒燐火煮骷髏；留將肋下長條骨，刻作花釵更插頭。

[Poem] [My] red stomacher is soaked in blood and [when the blood becomes] cold [I use it] to paint my eyebrows. The skeletons are boiling on ghost fire. [I shall] keep the long ribs [that are under the armpit], carving and making hairpins [out of them] to garnish [my hair].

²⁵² *fengdu*, the Chinese nether world.

白：自家非他，鐘妹是也。今日是鐘馗哥哥壽日，本欲獵取百頭肥鬼以作祝壽之資，誰想哥哥口福不濟，半日冥搜，止捉得小鬼一頭，如此寥寥，成何體統？作想介有了，前日獵得一鬼，名曰傻蟲，身體偉大，臀腿豐肥，絕好一個食料，賺他往送賀儀，就便充作一品，有何不可？此策甚善，待俺修書則個。作寫書介「酒一瓶，鬼一個，送來與兄作慶賀。兄若嫌鬼少，挑擔的算兩個。」喚云：傻鬼何在？

SISTER

I am not someone else but Zhong Kui's younger sister. Today is my big brother's birthday. In the beginning, I was going to hunt for a hundred stout ghosts to congratulate him, but who would have thought that my brother's chances of having good food were not excellent. Having searched for a half a day in the dark world I only captured a petty ghost. [Sending over] only a few [ghosts], how can this be dignified? (*Acting out thinking it over*) Right, I captured yet another ghost a few days ago, and he is named Silly Worm. He is huge and his legs are plump. Without a doubt, he would make a great meal [for my brother]. [I will] trick him to deliver gifts for [my brother's] birthday, and he can be one more. What would be wrong with that? The idea is indeed outstanding. I will have to write the letter now. (*Acting out writing*) "A bottle of wine and one ghost are to be delivered over in order to celebrate [your birthday]. If you regard it as insufficient, the one carrying the gift makes three." (*Calling on someone*) "Where is my silly ghost?"

大鬼上云：為因身體壯，留俺走西東；一日主人惱，化為一大恭。娘子喚小鬼有何吩咐？

(THE BIG GHOST enters)

THE BIG GHOST

Because I am strapping, [my master] kept me and has been sending me off for various errands. Some day if she is irritated [with me], I shall become an excrement [of someone's].²⁵³ What was it that you wished to speak to me about, my lady?

旦云：叫你非為別事，為因你服役勞苦，賞你一美差，可好麼？

SISTER

It is not something else, only because you have been working hard. I have a nice errand for you [to run]; what do you say?

丑云：是那裏？

THE CLOWN

Where is it?

旦云：是你大老爺處。

SISTER

It is over at the master's.

丑搖頭作驚介 小鬼不去。

(THE CLOWN Acting out shaking his head)

THE CLOWN

²⁵³ *Dagong*, according to the note provided by the text, is the human bowels.

I, the little one, am not going.

且云：為何不去？

SISTER

Why not?

丑云：那個饞爺可怕，龐兒不大善良。小鬼生得胖光光，怕他涎流嘴上；帶背連肩抓住，不須鼎鑊油湯，只消「大餅卷如梁」，肉穴登時薰葬！

THE CLOWN

That gluttonous master is scary, and his face does not look very gentle, either.²⁵⁴ [I am so plump, [I am afraid] that his mouth will be watering [at the first sight of me]; if he captures me whole, back and shoulders, he will not even need a pot with oil and hot water [to cook me]. He will swallow me whole and eat me up like shallots wrapped in a wheat roll, [after] burying me hastily in the flesh grave of his mouth.²⁵⁵

且笑云：那有此理，自古道「官不打送禮之人。」管情此去，酒飯之外，還有銀錢。書已在此，疾忙收拾擔兒前去，休得遲悞。

(THE FEMALE LEAD *smiles*)

SISTER

²⁵⁴ *Pang'er* here refers to Zhong Kui's face.

²⁵⁵ What *dabing juan ru liang* conveys is very similar to *bing juan le cong* 餅捲了蔥—wrap shallots in a wheaten roll, and swallow it rather quickly. Please refer to Jia fuxi 賈鼻西, *Xipi sanke guci* 木皮散客鼓詞, story telling with drum accompaniment about *jiao yige sao cao de Liu Yu bing juan le cong* 教一箇掃槽的劉裕餅捲了蔥.

That certainly cannot be true. The old saying goes, even the officials would not beat the people that deliver gifts.²⁵⁶ Not to worry about it, just go. In addition to the wine and feast, you will also receive some money. The letter of invitation is here already. Just hurry up to get the carrying pole ready, and no delay.

丑云：如此小鬼便去。

THE CLOWN

If it is indeed like [what you said], then I will go.

旦云：只因妹子無長物。借重蒼頭作賀儀。並下

SISTER

It is only because I have no surplus, that I am enlisting the services of my slave as the congratulation gifts. (*Exit together.*)

淨扮鐘馗上

[南步步嬌] 鞅掌歸來, 燥腸生煙, 舊鬼曬巴乾, 茶點小試三千斤。

(**THE PAINTED FACE**, *costumed as ZHONG KUI*, *enters*)

ZHONG KUI

²⁵⁶ It is a saying, meaning that common courtesy should be applied even on undesirable occasions. In the context, even though officials should not take bribes, or gifts from common people, out of common courtesy, they should still try to be polite to the people who delivered the bribe or gifts.

[Nan bu bu jiao] Having finished various affairs in the office, my intestines are parched as if they are fumigated with smoke.²⁵⁷ The old ghosts have been sun dried, and [I will] eat three thousand *jin* of them along with tea.

(詩) 揮髯一笑百神驚, 小鬼啾啾大鬼鳴; 掃盡羣魔千里霧, 放他日月照陰城。

[poem] Stroking through my beard and laughing, the hundred divinities are startled, the petty demons are crying the bigger ones sobbing; sweeping out clusters of demons and the fog that is stretching for a thousand *li*, returning the sun and the moon to shine on the dark city.

白: 自家鐘馗便是。才能吐鳳, 氣可吞牛。詔試金鑾, 羣驚海內無雙士; 又名玉筍, 曾折蟾宮第一枝。不料朝廷不選文章, 銓司只擇像貌, 若宋朝之美, 必然用他定豬; 如子羽之賢, 誰肯叫你附鳳? 可惜俺肝腸似錦, 已能魁多士之中; 只為著面目不揚, 復丟落九霄之外。俺那時心中冤抑, 遂乃撞死金階, 滿腔憤氣, 真乃好恨人也。一自歸陰之後, 上帝憐俺文章道義, 擢為九幽三草都判官。俺想世間貧賤愁苦, 都是幾個邪鬼作祟, 若遇魑魅魍魎, 定要吞他下肚, 因此養成了一個鬼脾胃, 頓飯非鬼不美。前此吞却虛、耗二鬼, 遂使硃圖墨影, 流布人間, 這也不在話下。今日是區區初度之辰, 生平清介, 不愛煩囂, 俺已標白在門, 不受諸神慶賀, 只有妹子嫡親骨肉, 倘有饋遺, 理不容却。叫左右, 倘你大姑娘處有差人來, 即忙傳報。眾應介

²⁵⁷ *Yangzhang*, meaning swamped with various affairs in the office; Also see the *Book of Odes*, *huo xichi yan yang*, *huo wangshi yangzhng* 或栖迟偃仰, 或王事鞅掌, and the commentary on the particular term *yangzhang* ranging from being disgraceful (Mao), walking hurriedly (Zheng), and being swamped by the affairs in the office and not being able to spare time to take care of one's own demeanor (Kong).

ZHONG KUI

I am Zhong Kui. My great composition abilities enable phoenix's breath, and my physical strength can swallow a cow whole. Having taken the imperial level exam by his majesty's decree, the world was impressed [by my writing] and [I was] regarded second to none within the four seas. I am also named Yusun, and I once came out first in the national civil exam.²⁵⁸ However, I never expected the court did not care much about composition *per se*, the exam administrator only chose the candidates that were physically appealing. If the candidates shall resemble Mr. Song, we might just as well use them as breeding swine.²⁵⁹ If they were as able as Ziyu, relying on Confucius for one's own fame would seem to be unnecessary.²⁶⁰ It is a shame that even though I am full of composition ideas that I was not chosen to be the head among the scholar officials. Just for the reason that my face is ugly, they have abandoned me and tossed me outside the nine empyreans. I felt depressed and unjustified, so I knocked my head against the palace stairs and committed suicide. I had a chest full of anger because of how frustrated I was. After I died, the God of northern heavens sympathized with my literary abilities and righteousness, appointing me as a grand judge of the nine hells and the three worlds. When I reflect on the poverty and the misery in the world caused by the mischievous

²⁵⁸ *Yusun* is one of the courtesy names of Zhong Kui in the popular narratives of the late imperial periods, meaning jade baby bamboo shoots. In the novel, Zhong Kui's courtesy name is *Zhengnan* 正南 (*Tang Zhong Kui quan zhuan*).

²⁵⁹ *Yong ta ding zhu* 用他定豬 is originally from *Zuo zhuan* 左傳, depicting the story the duke of Wei 衛; Song Chao 宋朝 was the prince of Song 宋, who was known for personal appearance and a licentious reputation; he was the secretive lover of Nanzi 南子, the wife of the duke of Wei.

²⁶⁰ Ziyu 子羽 was one of the disciples of Kongzi. According to *Shiji* 史記, Ziyu wanted to attend Kongzi by his side but was rejected because of his personal appearance; later on, Ziyu started to travel to establish his own teaching and attracted great attention; Kongzi admitted his misjudgment of this person. Please refer to *Shiji*, "Zhongni dizi liezhuan" 史記.仲尼弟子列傳.

demons, if I ever came across the various demons, I will be sure to swallow them whole.²⁶¹ Consequently, it has become a habit of mine that I must eat some demons to truly enjoy each meal. Just the other day, I ate the *xu* and *hao* demons.²⁶² Then I used the red pigment and black ink to make an announcement [about my failure as an exam candidate] to the world. Let's talk no more about that. Today is my birthday; I have been leading a calm life and am not fond of being disturbed [by others]. I have had a post up on the door, announcing that I will not be receiving greetings from the various gods [this year], except from my own younger sister who is going to present a gift. How can I turn her down? Attendants, keep an eye out for the messengers sent by my sister and let me know upon their arrival. (*The attendants acting out responding*)

[北折桂令]滿庭中竹樹蕭然, 又何須門內笙歌, 座上管絃? 俺不受庭參, 不受嘉饌, 不設華筵。他僚友輩俗情盡免, 只姊妹佳意難捐。便就是酒海如船, 鬼肘如椽, 只得是一般全收不寫領謝紅箋。

[Bei zhe gui ling] The bamboos and trees in the yard are rather bare. What is the point of having music and songs indoors? What is the point of having music or strings and wind? I do not intend to receive any subordinates, delicious food, nor will I hold a fancy banquet. Escaping the unnecessary

²⁶¹ *Chimei* 魑魅 refers to demons that take residence in the remote wilderness; *wangliang* 魍魎 refers to mountain demons. Although the context uses this term in a general sense, the specific connotation of each ghost should be marked and given more attention.

²⁶² *Xu* and *hao* demon 虛、耗二鬼 astral demons. In the Ming novel, *xu* and *hao* are in a way associated with Zhong Kui as well, although very little is known about them, they are mischievous and believed to have the special capacity to harm people's wealth and fortune. In the earliest Tang legend, Xuhao is depicted as one petty demon that is associated with shortening people's lifespan and dispersing their wealth.

formalities among colleagues, only my sister's good wishes are hard to turn down. Even if she offers so much wine that a boat can merely carry it and ghosts with elbows as thick as the house beams, I can only receive them all without a thank you letter.

丑擔酒鬼上

(山歌) 為奴只喜擔磨肩, 重擔子去時輕擔子還。酒食啗得個膨膨乍, 還賞了二十個大黃邊。

來此已是大老爺家, 遠遠望見門首有個漢子, 不免上前煩他通報則個。作相見介小鬼是姑奶奶差來上壽得, 有書在此, 即煩通報。作傳進酒鬼稟白介, 淨看書大笑介 (THE CLOWN, *carrying the wine and ghosts, enter*)

(*Shan ge*) As a slave I am only entrusted to errands that require a carrying pole on my shoulders, [but fortunately] I begin with a full load on the carrying pole but I'll be returning with a lighter one. [In addition to] the wine and food, crunch, crunch,²⁶³ I also received twenty copper coins.²⁶⁴

Now we are arriving at the master's residence, and I can see a male servant at the door from a long way. I will have to bother him to notify the master.

²⁶³ *Qian de ge pengpeng zha* 啗得個膨膨乍, the original language used in this sentence is very vivid and lively as it describes both the action: eating, and the sound that action elicits, *pengpeng zha*. additionally, *qian* is derived from a southern dialect.

²⁶⁴ *Aahuang bian* 大黃邊 refers to the copper currency circulated during that time, in other words, in the Qing dynasty.

(Acting out greeting each other) I am the petty demon sent by the lady to congratulate the master's birthday. I present you the letter [written by my lady]. May I bother you to notify the master? *(The servant acts out delivering the message to Zhong Kui; the painted face acts out laughing upon reading the letter)*

『南江兒水』妹子真能算，持家計萬全，送賀儀省一個傭工漢。那會見開封烹了傳書犬，一刀斷却回頭雁？生受他竭蹶自投，不費拘牽。

[nan jiang shui er] My sister is indeed clever running the household. She's full of good strategies. She asked one demon to send over the birthday gift and thus saved employed labor. It is not proper to slaughter and eat the dog after one had opened the letter he delivered. Nor is it proper to cut off the head of a returning wild goose.²⁶⁵ Thanks to him, who walked hurriedly into the trap [set by my younger sister], and [I am gaining more ghosts] with minimal effort.

白：左右的！既蒙姑娘費心，一併全收；連挑擔的俱送至廚下，叫庖人作速烹治，為老爺下酒。眾應，捉鬼介

Attendants! Now that we are favored with my sister's gifts, we ought to accept them all; Send all the demons to the kitchen, along with the one [demon] that carries the carrying

²⁶⁵ *Kaifeng peng le chuan shu quan, yidao duanque huitou yan* 開封烹了傳書犬，一刀斷却回頭雁 this saying entails similar meaning with the saying in the previous context, even the honest officials are polite to people who deliver gifts.

pole, ordering the chef to quickly fry them in hot oil so that I can take it to go with wine.

(The attendants acting out responding, acting out capturing the demons)

丑慌云: 若賜酒食, 但說一聲兒, 小鬼自去, 何消如此惡讓?

(THE CLOWN was in a fluster)

If I am rewarded wine and food, just tell me so and I shall go fetch them myself. There is no need to be so vicious.

眾呵云: 姑奶奶寫在禮單上, 送與老爺下酒, 誰要與你飲食?

(THE ATTENDANTS scolding him)

The lady's congratulation letter states that you are included as a gift for my master to take when he drinks. Who is going to offer you food and wine?

丑驚云: 果然如此, 是好苦也!

(THE CLOWN is startled)

This is indeed what I had expected, how unfortunate I am!

擔上小鬼叫: 『大鬼哥, 大鬼哥! 我被你挑來, 理固應該; 誰叫你挑這條擔兒來?』 眾捉大小鬼

並下

THE PETTY DEMON on the carrying pole)

Big ghost brother, big ghost brother. I was carried by you all the way here. It only makes sense that I am meant to be the birthday gift. You have no one else but yourself to blame

for running this errand. (*The attendants acting out capturing both the petty and the big demon, exit*)

『北雁兒落帶得勝令』本待要略教他趙璧完，怕辜負了賢主人心一片。固然是同胞意，難作謙，却早知五臟神心情願。小鬼生堪嚥，大鬼切為齷；不必十分爛，但須五味全。烹煎，惟有吾家的庖人善。腥羶，若是個黑心鬼，把與那狗子餐。

[Bei'yan er luo dai de shengling] I was supposed to keep him whole, the demon that carried the carrying pole, but I am afraid I will fail my sister's kindness by doing so. Although I knew I wasn't supposed to turn my sister down, my five internal organs and heart were already pleased by such an [additional] offer. The little demon can be swallowed raw, and the big demon should be sliced into fine pieces; the meat doesn't have to be thoroughly cooked as long as the flavor is satisfying. Stirring or frying, only my house chef knows exactly how to cook; smelling lamby or fishy, if the ghost turns out to be a black hearted one; [in that case, we will] feed the dog the meat.

眾云：稟老爺，酒到。淨飲介

THE ATTENDANTS

Master, the wine is ready to serve. (*The painted face acting out drinking*)

『南僥僥令』醍醐澆頂骨，玉露灑心田，入腦鑽鼻餘香穿，又只見捲晴絲畫檐前。

[Nan jiaojiao ling] [It feels like] rich liquor is being poured over my head, and pearly dew sprayed into my heart. The great smell [from the kitchen] is

entering my head and piercing through my nose. I also see clear weather like
a painting on silk under eaves.

眾云: 稟老爺, 鬼肉已到。

THE ATTENDANTS

Master, the ghost meat is cooked and ready to serve.

淨云: 妙哉, 妙哉。作食介

THE PAINTED FACE

Excellent, excellent. (*Acting out eating*)

『北收江南』呀 死老魅禍害有幾千年, 煮到今硬打老爺顴, 狼牙嚼夠千千萬,
仍呷酒連連, 纔能格格下喉咽。叫鬼使作夜叉舞, 為老爺行酒。鬼舞介

[*Bei shou jiangnan*] Alas, that old stinky demon had been mischievous for
several thousand years, and the chef has been cooking his meat for a long
time and it is still tough on my cheekbones. My strong teeth have to chew it
thousands of times, along with the wine. Just now is he able to swallow the
demon meat. Order the ghost messengers to dance the *yecha* dance and
accompany him to play a wine drinking game.²⁶⁶ (*The demons acting out
dancing*)

²⁶⁶ *Yecha* 夜叉, Yaksa in Sanskrit. In the Buddhist tradition, *yecha* is believed to be a malevolent spirit that eats humans, flying in the air and moving swiftly. In Hindu mythology, Yaksa is half divine and half mischievous spirits.

淨云：妙哉，妙哉。

THE PAINTED FACE

Excellent, excellent.

『南園林好』酒成碗大肉連肩，夜叉舞巨影僂僂，醉濛濛風雲乍變，說甚麼西王母宴桃園！呵呵！醉舞一快事，待俺與爾登同耍一會，有何不可。眾作五鬼鬧判介

[*Nan yuanlin hao*] The bowls are filled with wine and meat came in great size, the shadows of the dancing demons are immortal like. [I am] in an alcoholic haze and it feels like the soaring wind and clouds have suddenly changed their form. Why bother to go to the queen mother of the west's banquet at the peach garden?²⁶⁷ Ah, drunken dances are the most joyful thing [in life]. I will just join you on the stage and play for a while. Why not? (*The attendants acting out dancing with the grand judge*)

『北沽美酒帶太平令』展闊袖，聳雙肩，靈壁圖，真活現。角帶鬆鬆黑幘偏，似鶴飛半天。頸伸縮，影翩躚。冷習習迴風舞霰，白茫茫天移地轉；意沈沈身搖體顛，首涿涿神疲力倦。

For a detailed study of Yaksa, please refer to Gail Hinich Sutherland, *The Disguises of the Demon: The Development of the Yaksa in Hinduism and Buddhism*, SUNY Series in Hindu Studies (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991).

²⁶⁷ *Xiwang my yan taoyuan* 西王母宴桃園, *Xiwang mu*, the Queen Mother of the West, is one of the most pronounced female divinity in Daoism. Common belief depicts her holding a banquet in her peach garden in honor of her own birthday, and various deities and gods are included at the birthday reception.

[Bei gu meijiu dai taiping ling] Spread the wide sleeves and raise my shoulders straight up. The painting of Lingbi is so lively.²⁶⁸ My belt became loose and my black turban is slanted; I feel like a crane that is flying towards the skies. The neck stretches up and down, and the body is dancing gracefully. A cold breeze is curled up by the wind and the sleets are dancing, heaven moves and earth rotates; [the world] is at an expanse of white. My mind is drunk and my body is shaky, my head feels heavy and I have exhausted both my spirit and strength.

俺呵 歌闌舞殘, 頽然醉焉! 眾扶介

I say, the songs have subsided and the dances are ending. I am exhausted and drunk. (*The attendants acting out assisting him to walk*)

『清江引』醉來倒執朝天板, 扶入黃昏院, 縱蒙降節臨, 詔下靈霄殿, 但道俺入醉鄉尚未轉。 同下場

[Qingjiang yin] In my drunken state I am holding the wooden tablet upside down; I have been assisted to enter my residence. Even if we were to be besieged by the enemies and I received a decree from the emperor, I would still have to say that I have entered the drunken land and am yet to return to the mundane world. (*Exit together*)

²⁶⁸ Lingbi 靈璧 is nowadays a city in Northern Anhui. Lingbi is regarded as the birthing place of Zhong Kui portrait, and Zhong Kui paintings and mass produced Zhong Kui images are one of the three local specialties. It is said that the people from Lingbi started to paint Zhong Kui's image ever since the Tang dynasty, which aligns with the earliest Zhong Kui legend where Zhong Kui is depicted as one of the bigger demons who captures the petty demons and cures the Emperor Minghuang's illness.

3. *Lost in Transmission: A Zhong Kui Play Entry*

In this section, I focus on a play that is no longer extant. It is titled *Shizi zhuan* 獅子賺 (hereafter, *Shizi*) composed by the late Ming playwright Ruan Dacheng. According to *Quhai zongmu tiyao*,²⁶⁹ the main purpose of the play is to awaken people in the world, and the overall development of the plot indeed feels sententious. Unlike the portrayal of Zhong Kui as an exorcist who is authoritative, impartial, and upright in the previous chapters translated in this dissertation, while still acknowledging Zhong Kui's connection with the Tang emperor and that he used to be assigned to the position of the grand judge in hell by the King of Hell, *Shizi*'s portrayal of Zhong Kui is overwhelmingly negative.²⁷⁰ Moreover, Zhong Kui is portrayed as having a younger sister in this play, too. The younger sister, who is manipulated by Zhong Kui as part of a scheme to advance his own career and accumulate materialistic possessions, serves to enhance the negativity reflected through his lack of integrity and degenerated moral principles.

The play begins with Zhong Kui's demotion from the official position of the Head of Temple Attendant (*zongchi dian* 總持殿) to the Deputy Envoy of the Naihe Bridge (*naihe qiaoliang hoiuque dashi* 奈何橋樑候缺大使), which implied his misconduct in the bureaucratic world. After his disgrace, he held a banquet in his house and manipulated his younger sister into seducing his friend Lama Miao during the feast. Without any moral struggle or even the slightest hesitation, the sister took her shoe as a

²⁶⁹ *Quhai zongmu tiyao* was composed by Dong Kang 董康 in the late Qing dynasty. It is a compilation of the Yuan, Ming, and Qing play titles.

²⁷⁰ Several ideas that I have in this section are inspired by *Zhong Kui yanjiu*.

drinking vessel to seduce Miao and had sexual intercourse with him shortly after.²⁷¹ As an unmarried young woman, the sister violated the most serious moral code subject to women in pre-modern Chinese society: rules of propriety where even talking to a strange man without one's parents or guardians present was considered highly inappropriate, let alone the pre-marital sex. Even worse is that Zhong Kui was the ultimate source of his sister's moral corruption. Later on, Zhong Kui also gathered friends of his own and committed bribery, which again reveals his moral flaw as an official.

In addition to the emphasis given to portray Zhong Kui's moral flaws, *Shizi* is situated within a Buddhist context. As I pointed out earlier, the major purpose of this play is to deliver a moralistic lesson. *Shizi* is used as an analogy, or a stimulus (*yin 引*) to evoke the religious message embedded in the play. It also says so in *Quhai zongmu tiyao* that the play ends with a destruction of the lion head and everything returning to manifest their original forms.²⁷² In the play, even though Zhong Kui and his sister are pivotal in the dramatic development, they are by no means the male and female protagonists in the story. As a matter of fact, no dramatic character in *Shizi* is supposed to be in the lead position. The Buddhist background and the lion head allusion indicate that every character in the play is centered around the most essential message the playwright intended to convey: nothing and no one is what they appear to be. Instead, one needs to break free from the superfluous chain of social normality to return to the original forms.

²⁷¹ In ancient China, the shoes of young women who are yet to marry carry very strong moral and sexual connotations. Therefore, a young woman's taking off her shoe can be regarded as an invitation to flirtation and, to a certain extent, the physical intimacy. Moreover, pre-marital sex was a severe violation of moral codes. In this play, not only Zhong Kui's sister goes against moral codes being subjected to her as an unmarried young woman, but also she was led into the violation by her own elder brother.

²⁷² *Quhai zongmu tiyao*, p 541.

The breakdown of norms in this play is strictly modeled on the Buddhist idea through the lion head analogy.

Scholars have speculated on reasons why *Shizi* is no longer extant, and no convincing conclusion has been offered. In *Zhong Kui yanjiu*, Zheng argues that the fundamental reasons why this play has been lost in transmission was because it portrays Zhong Kui and his sister with too much negativity. The play's portrayal of Zhong Kui is so negative, in fact, that it neglects, even erases, the almighty powers invested in Zhong Kui, which typically lead to a ritual or therapeutic relief that eases the fears and anxieties manifested individually or even collectively in local Chinese communities.²⁷³ While I agree with Zheng that a deconstruction of reality through the allusion of the lion head in the play mirrors the playwright's deconstructing of Zhong Kui, and, to a certain extent, even his sister's traditional characteristics, the anti-narrative primarily serves the purpose of harmonizing Buddhist teachings through the play.

I argue that the immorality of a divine figure should not be overlooked because it reflects how Zhong Kui is evaluated in a specific way. These specifics, regardless of how they conflict with the mainstream portrait of Zhong Kui, are indispensable components to the composite character of Zhong Kui. In the end, I speculate the reasons this play has been lost in transmission could be that the original play was too lengthy, that it was hard to adapt into theatrical performances. It is also possible that, since the Ming bookstores started to function as advocates of popular literature, few requests were made for it to local bookstores. Finally, the fall of the Ming empire did lead to a huge loss of published works.

²⁷³ *Zhong Kui yanjiu*, pp 163-4.

4. Annotated Translation of the Entry on *Shizi zhuan*

Shizi zhuan 獅子賺²⁷⁴

Kanben says that *Shizi zhuan* was composed by Baizishan Qiao without stating the real name [of the playwright];²⁷⁵ however, it was actually written by Ruan Dacheng towards the end of the Ming dynasty. The motifs in the play primarily depict fantasies; hence, it is very similar to *guiyuan*、*yunhua*, and *shuangxiu*, which can all be categorized as *chuanqi*.²⁷⁶

The reason why it is titled *Shizi zhuan* is because in the Buddhist *sutras*, the Buddha is believed to be capable of imitating a lion's roar.²⁷⁷ *Uruvilvā sutra* has an entry dedicated to the Buddha who possesses lion's eyes, and his throne of Buddha is called lion's seat.²⁷⁸ According to the Buddhist *sutras*, the people that are strong enough to carry

²⁷⁴ An epithet for Śākyamuni Buddha, who is king among humans in the same way that the lion is the king of beasts. In Chinese Buddhist texts, the word lion (*shizi* 獅子) is often written as *shizi* 師子, which is a perfect homonym but means 'teacher.' Due to that verbal association, abbots and other eminent monks who preached the Dharma to large audiences came to be called 'lions.' (Skt. *siṃha*, *mṛga-pati*, *mṛgēndra*) Both *Zhizhuan* and *Taixia le* are selected from *Quhai zongmu tiyao* compiled in the Qing dynasty. As for *zhuan* 賺, it could mean to deceive.

The original Chinese is not included in this chapter because the play gist translated is a retrieved version of the play. To me, this translation is more of a scholarly study of the play. Hence, I treat this entry in a different way how I treat original plays.

²⁷⁵ Baizishan qiao 百子山樵 is the pen name of the Ming playwright, Ruan Dacheng. It is said that Ruan was very fond of Mt. Baizi in nowadays Anqing 安慶, Anhui province 安徽; hence, he gave himself the said pen name.

²⁷⁶ *guiyuan*, *yunhua*, and *shuangxiu* refers to *Guiyuan jing* 歸元鏡, *Yunhua ji* 雲花記, and *Shuangxiu ji* 雙修記, respectively. Please refer to my note 115.

²⁷⁷ *Shizi hou* 獅子吼 lion's roar, A metaphor for the Buddha's teaching. When the lion roars, all the inferior creatures in the wild appropriately submit. In the same way, when the Buddha speaks, false teachers naturally feel the difference and become silent (Skt. *siṃha-nāda*). (如來不思議祕密大乘經 T 312.11.727a6)

²⁷⁸ 優樓頻羅經, 優樓頻螺 means papaya tree. *Uruvilvā*, papaya tree; name of the forest near Gayā where Śākyamuni practiced austere asceticism before his enlightenment. Also 優樓頻蠶 (or 優樓毘蠶); 烏盧頻螺 (or 烏盧頻羅); 漚樓頻螺, 優樓頻螺迦葉 and other forms; *Uruvilvā Kāśyapa*; "one of the principal

on the doctrines are depicted as using an image of lion to conduct teaching. Furthermore, this play utilizes the lion as its starting point. Eventually the play ends with the remark where the lion is broken and returned to its original status. This so-called speech, without substantial meaning, is why the play is primarily called *zhuan*.

In the play, it states, the King of *Denglun* is in charge of the underworld and his powers are dominant over the three realms.²⁷⁹ It is said that ever since the primordial times, the *yin* and *yang* are reconciled, and days and nights are divided. Humans are engaged in criminal activities, while ghosts and spirits interfere with public affairs. Humans become ghosts after they die. After experiencing the different layers of hell, ghosts are eligible to be reincarnated into human form again, at which point they begin to experience the suffering and pain that is previously only comprehended by humans. The King of *Denglun* is kind and impartial.²⁸⁰ His teachings are flexible and he doesn't treat things differently. He makes the three so-called *denglun* rules. The lion head monk is entrusted to preach to the residents of the dark world, including the officials, military personnel, and men and women who are all subject to the rules. [The rules] are to make them repent for their wrongdoings in their previous lives, enforcing them to act properly according to their own social status. If anyone had ever trespassed, they will be punished by the laws and sent to the human world to carry on the guilt.

disciples of Śākyamuni, so called because he practiced asceticism in the Uruvilvā forest,' or 'because he had on his breast a mark resembling the fruit of the' papaya. He 'is to reappear as Buddha Samantaprabhāsa. " (Eitel)

Shizi zuo 獅子座, Lion's throne—the [lecture] seat of the Buddha (Skt. *siṃhāsana*). In India, this was a term for the throne of royalty, thus it was applied to the Buddha. [發心修行章 HBJ 1.841b16]

²⁷⁹ The King of *Denglun* is in charge of both the human and the other world and is able to transgress the three realms.

²⁸⁰ Wheel-turning monarch, universal monarch/emperor. See 轉輪聖王 (Skt. *cakra-vartin*; Tib. 'khor los sgyur ba).

A martial exam candidate named Zhong Kui of the Tang dynasty once ruled the dark world, commanding the eighty-four thousand demons. He was found guilty in the case of Judge Bao settling the lawsuit of Pen'er. Thereafter, he was degraded from the Head of Temple Attendants to the Deputy Envoy of the Naihe Bridge.²⁸¹ Without his official duties he began to become isolated. He was a good friend of the Temple Attendant in Chief Lama Miao. [One day] he arranges an elegant feast and invites Miao to partake in drinks. In addition to the feast, he also presents an antique to Miao. Miao also takes a local demon and a frivolous deity, and dedicates the two of them as gifts for Zhong Kui. Just as they are having a splendid time drinking, Zhong requests his younger sister to come out to assist with the drinking. Miao has sexual intercourse with her. [While in office] Chen Zhongzi from Yuling has deliberately sabotaged upright officials, and thus he becomes a hungry ghost after his death. He comes to the feast to beg for some food but is beaten by the demon officials. After the feast, Miao accidentally leaves his brush pen and register on the floor at the Zhong residence, and subsequently Zhongzi discovers them.

Miao returns home and encounters the lion head monk as he is leading a monkey on a leash. The lion head monk is promulgating the monkey head *sutra* at the Naihe Bridge. The monkey is acting out the scenarios [in the *sutra*] and manifesting the cause and effect to the demon masses. When Miao arrives there, he commands the monkey to carry on all the acts [from the beginning] once more. The monkey proceeds to put on clothing and a cap, disguising himself as a judge who goes to an elegant feast. The monkey reenacts Miao's activities, ranging from his arrival [at the Zhong residence], his

²⁸¹ *Naihe* 奈何 means “somehow,” like *ruhe* 如何、*mo naihe* 莫奈何 and *wu naihe* 無奈何 mean “nothing can be done.” *Naihe qiao* 奈何橋 is often used as a nominal phrase in both Buddhist context and even in modern Mandarin every day speech.

sexual encounter with Zhong's younger sister, to his assault on Chen Zhongzi. Upon observing this, Miao becomes infuriated and intends to assault the monkey. However, the monkey suddenly transforms into a tiger, and the crowd is startled and disassembles.

When Miao arrives home he appears to be ill, thus his wife requests a doctor named Sai Wuchang 賽無常 to give Miao a prognosis of his ailment. However, the lion head monk summons Zhong's sister's soul in order for her to meet up with Miao. Just as the two of them are affectionate with each other, several office servants unexpectedly appears and arrests Miao. [Thereafter], his symptoms progressively worsen to the extent that he can no longer get out of bed. Zhong Kui intends to bribe Miao's friends and subsequently learns what has happened to Miao. Later on, Miao's wife brings an indictment to the King of *Denglun* against Zhong's sister because she discovers that Zhong's sister has given her shoes to Miao as a gift. She wants Zhong Kui to pay his life for [what had happened to her husband]. Chen Zhongzi also submits a complaint to appeal to the King of *Denglun*, stating how he had been beaten up by Miao. According to the laws, the King of *Denglun* punishes Miao, Zhong Kui, and his sister by sending them to the human world. By then, the King of *Denglun* is contemplating compiling a record of *Denglun*. He also oversees the need to [find a candidate] to fill the position of the grand judge. He orders his attendant to write an official letter to Mi Heng 米衡 and Su Shi 蘇軾. By the invitation, Heng goes to the heavenly court to issue an official letter, and Shi makes the opening remarks for the ceremony. Chen Zhongzi is successfully appointed as the grand judge to substitute for Miao. This story may serve as an admonishment to prevent the honest officials from being wrongly accused.

Shen Kuo from the Song dynasty says in his appendix for the *Mengxi bitan*: The Tang emperor Minghuang was suffering from malarial fever for over a month, and shaman doctors were not able to cure him. One night he dreamed of two demons, one big and the other small. The small one stole the jade flute hung on the Consort Yang's perfume satchel and was running around the palace afterwards.²⁸² The big one, however, was wearing a soft cap, blue robes with one of his arms exposed, and he was barefoot. He gouged out the small demon's eyes and ate them. He went forward to Minghuang afterwards, saying, "I am called Zhong Kui and I am the failed martial exam candidate. I vow to eradicate all the mischievous demonic forces under heaven for your majesty." After Minghuang woke up from the dream, his malarial fever was gone. He proceeded to order the court artist Wu Daozi to portray an image of Zhong Kui. After he received the decree, Wu fell into a trance. So, he completed the portrait and presented it to the emperor. Upon staring at the portrait for quite a while, the emperor slapped the desk and said, "Did you and I happen to have the same dream? How could the portrait be so similar if we did not?" Thereafter, painters grew fond of portraying the image of Zhong Kui. Among the commoners, Zhong's image is widely used to pacify the demons in the house. There is also a painting depicting Zhong Kui giving away his younger sister at her wedding.

In this play it says that Zhong Kui's younger sister took off her shoes and used them as drinking vessels to serve wine to the demon judges. This is rather absurd. However, Yang Weizhen who lived towards the end of the Yuan dynasty was fond of

²⁸² Great realities: the two aspects of material force — *yin* and *yang* 陰陽, which give form to the universe. [source(s): Gakken]

A name for Yang Guifei 楊貴妃, consort to the Tang emperor Xuanzong 玄宗. [source(s): Gakken]

using prostitutes' shoes as vessels to hold drinks, and he called them shoe vessels. The scene in the play is therefore not completely contrived.

5. Concluding Comments on the Plays

This chapter translates two plays that collectively portray Zhong Kui as a much more personalized deity. The personalization is realized by multiple additions in the play, among which his younger sister is the most prominent one. I argue that the personalization, although serves the purpose of creating a satirical and comical undertone for both plays, is tied into different religious traditions for each play. *Zhongmei*'s heavy emphasis on eating demons without showing their mischief is a revisitation of Zhong Kui's *nuo* origin, more specifically, the shamanistic function because one of the most striking features of the ancient *nuo* tradition is "demon eats demon" (*gui chi gui* 鬼吃鬼). In light of this, the demon eating, along with drunkenness, singing, and dancing can all be regarded as if Zhong Kui was in a trance. Whereas in *Shizi*, the satire is directed at each character in the play. The lion head is a metaphor that alludes to the fact that all living beings live in a delusional state. Hence, when the Buddha's teaching reveals its truth through breaking the lion head, *karma* is settled and things are returned to their original form. In the play, Zhong Kui, his sister, and Miao are sent to the human world as the final testimonial of this Buddhist truth.

Another common theme the two plays share is that the excessiveness in Zhong Kui's behavior is greatly amplified. In *Zhongmei*, he is portrayed as a complete drunk who is not only greedy, but also ignores his responsibility to be loyal to the emperor. In *Shizi*, how much he is willing to compromise his moral principle is beyond imaginable.

However, as extreme as these behaviors may appear to be, they are still originated in Zhong Kui's divine identity, his bluntness and propensity for violence provide room for accommodation to these moral flaws.

Conclusion

Future as the Past—Past as the Future

In this dissertation, I have shown that since the late Tang dynasty, Zhong Kui's divine identity has been defined with several crucial elements: his failure as an examination candidate; the comical dynamic between the deity and his entourage, Xuhao; his official recognition given by the Minghuang Emperor; and the court artist Wu Daozi's role in establishing a Zhong Kui iconography, which also introduced a mode of worshipping and manifestation of efficacy realized through an image that is uniquely Zhong Kui.

Inspired by Idema's and West's translation and analysis of the Ming Zhong Kui play composed by the Ming prince Zhu Youdun 朱有敦 (1365-1439), in this dissertation I translated and provided an analytical framework for a set of Ming and Qing plays centered around Zhong Kui.²⁸³ The annotated translations are an important part of this dissertation because they enable me to work closely with the primary texts, paying attention to the context and playful dramatic language. More importantly, the translated work done in this dissertation builds on Idema's and West's work and serves as a meaningful start to continue translating more Zhong Kui plays from the Ming and Qing dynasties for my future research.

The investigation of the exorcist Zhong Kui through a set of translated plays has the following benefits: 1) contextualization of the Zhong Kui cult in the Ming and Qing theater enables the intimacy between Chinese theater and rituals to speak for itself. 2) It narrows down the timeline in which the cult of Zhong Kui is generally being discussed,

²⁸³ For the full reference, please refer to “scholarly articles” #6 in my bibliography.

which makes it clear that the Ming and Qing dynasties are most essential to engage the exorcist's recruitment by and close relation with the Daoist masters. 3) The plays' dualistic nature as performances and literary texts in their own right harmonize with the earliest Zhong Kui legend. This harmony is demonstrated over multiple factors: the recognition of Zhong Kui as a standard deity is a literary account empowered by the Minghuang emperor, his portrait established by the court artist Wu Daozi yields his power and efficacy to a visual representation on paper instead of in a temple, and finally the performance of Zhong Kui on the stage purifies not only the evil energies presented in the play, but also that of the Cosmos as the performance is in progress.

Moreover, this dissertation links the Ming and Qing plays to a larger literary body of Zhong Kui as depicted in the literature from the Tang dynasty onwards. I have argued that such an embodiment is significant and meaningful because the literary "body" of Zhong Kui is complementary to the ritualistic one. A ritualistic representation requires a certain narrative in order to make sense to a lay audience, and for "recreating" the ritualistic experience every time the story is retold. Furthermore, the manifestation of Zhong Kui's ritualistic body is a significant part of the cult. For instance, when his ritualistic body is recruited by local practitioners in the *Tiao Zhong Kui* dances, a mediation between this world and the other world, as well as the living and the dead, is simultaneously created.

As I am ready to conclude this Ph.D. dissertation, I once again find myself contemplating my future research on Zhong Kui, as an exorcist, an actor on the stage and on the screen, and as a forever living fossil in everyday Chinese life. As I began work on this dissertation, my personal memories of encountering Zhong Kui in local Chinese

theater began calling me to go back to where it all started. Unfortunately, the desire to go back to revisit my home province in order to re-encounter Zhong Kui at whatever occasions that may still remain has been partially tested. Several years ago, my teacher, Mark Meulenbeld, an experienced ethnographer, shared with me his knowledge of research methods based on his experience in Taiwan and Hunan, China. With enthusiasm, I decided to go back to my home province Anhui to conduct fieldwork in northern parts of the province.²⁸⁴ Soon after I obtained my ABD status, I returned to China for a summer to do some preliminary fieldwork related to the cult of Zhong Kui.

My imagination about how one should conduct field work in mainland China quickly came into conflict with a new reality, however. As China marched into a new era of communism and modernity, how one particular religious cult manifested as the social history of people's fears and desires, worries and anxieties, and how they dealt with them has also changed dramatically.²⁸⁵ The communist party's advocacy of atheism and its effort in enlisting local religious practice by offering them amnesty to become a spectacle or non-materialistic cultural heritage has transformed the fear and anxieties into a new realm in which everything is commodified. Local *nuo* practices, including Zhong Kui are no exceptions, either.

If in pre-modern China, the fears and anxiety answered by the Zhong Kui cult were related to household safety, physical well-being, and to a certain extent, the stability

²⁸⁴ I have already gained the field research experience at University of Wisconsin-Madison. For a cultural anthropology course I took with Neil Whitehead, the final project was to conduct a series of interviews with a Hmong family from the state of Wisconsin. Through the interviews and direct observations, I researched how this Hmong family lived in the dilemma of Western medical and Hmong shamanistic practices, reconciled their former cultural identity with a "modern" one, and finally adapted to the so-called American life. The experimental project turned out to be a success and received the highest score in class.

²⁸⁵ The idea of the local religious cult should be considered social history that shows people's fears and desires, worries and anxieties, and how they dealt with them is inspired by Barend J. Ter Haar's newly published book, *Guan Yu The Religious Afterlife of a Failed Hero*, pp 18-9.

of the local communities, then the modernity manifested in current Chinese society has definitely expanded and renewed the meanings of those fears and anxieties. On the one hand, even though he is still regarded as the backbone of a collective Chinese mentality, the Zhong Kui worship that survived the scarred and yet ever changing Chinese history of the past 100 years has greatly diminished into a minor factor in everyday Chinese life. In other words, the safety of the household and the general physical well-being have found a more effective aid in modern technology and western medication. On the other hand, in between being labeled as superstitious and the desire to maintain a collective memory shared by thousands of years of history, Chinese people, or at least some of them, still go to temple fairs and religious assemblies to participate in the local communal tradition. However, the fairs and assemblies no longer function as the social glue to hold everyone together. Instead, the individual and communal activities, including the religious ones, are greatly disseminated into commodification and the ultimate goal of getting ahead in life.

As I was determined to visit Guichi 貴池, a city near Mt. Jiuhua 九華山 that is known for the well preserved *nuo* dances of various kinds, my family stopped me. The reason was that everything in that city is highly commercialized and design to attract tourists. They also insisted that it was not safe for a young woman such as myself to travel to a strange city. “There is too much evil such as human trafficking and criminal activities related to a profit driven modern culture in nowadays China, sometimes even at the cost of human lives,” they warned me. So, I didn’t go.

My failed attempt to conduct fieldwork in Northern Anhui had yielded to a field trip to meet scholars that study Zhong Kui, which was suggested by my family as an

alternative. In that summer, I made multiple trips to my old university, Anhui University 安徽大學. Through my conversations and discussions with the *nuo* and *Huangmeixi* 黃梅戲 (Huangmei tone) experts in the Center of Hui Studies (Huixue zhongxin 徽學中心) in Anhui University, I came across an expert on the *nuo* dances in Anhui province, Wang Zhaoqian 王兆乾 (1928-2006). In his book, *Jiamian de beihou*, I learned that despite the Chinese government's effort of enlisting the local religious practice as amnesty, *nuo* dances and the cult of Zhong Kui have managed to find their way for preservation.

In his book, Wang argues that in addition to Northern Anhui, *nuo* dances and practices are performed in other parts of China under different names. *Tiaoqiao* 跳魍 (the qiao dance) is a form of *nuo* dance directly related to Zhong Kui. Other names range from *nuo* 儺 (exorcism), *ping'anhui* 平安會 (the Assembly of Peace), *qingtan* 慶壇 (the Altar for Celebrations), *tongzihui* 童子會 (the Assembly of Young Boys), *guansuoxi* 關索戲 (the guansuo play), *dixi* 地戲 (the di play), *luoguzaxi* 鑼鼓雜戲 (the miscellaneous plays accompanied by drums and gongs), *tiaoqiaoshen* 跳儺神 (dance of the *Nuo* deities), *yangxi* 陽戲 (the yang play), *tiaobaman* 跳八蠻 (the baman dance), *xianghuxi* 香火戲 (the incense play), *tiaowuchang* 跳五猖 (the five furies dance) and so on.²⁸⁶

In his book, Wang dedicates a great deal of attention to the Zhong Kui *nuo* dance and plays. In the following description from the book, we not only can see that Zhong Kui and the term judge are used almost interchangeably in local *nuo* contexts, but also the detailed features of Zhong Kui described in mainland *nuo* parade and theater by Wang is

²⁸⁶ *Zai jiamian de beihou*, p3

aligned with how he is portrayed in Taiwan.²⁸⁷ Wang argues, “‘Zhong Kui Catches the Petty Demons’ is also known as ‘Zhong Kui Dances.’ There is another type of dance that belongs to the same category, namely, ‘The Judge Captures the Petty Demons,’ which is also known as ‘Dance of the Judge,’ or ‘the Judge Dance’. Additionally, in the village of Shanhu there exists the tradition of a *nuo* dance titled ‘Zhong Kui Captures the Petty Demons.’ “In Maotan Township, village of Shanhu, the *nuo* deities of Tang, Wang, and Xiang take turns to perform in every village, and they always perform the *nuo* dance ‘Zhong Kui Captures the Petty Demons’ at nighttime. There are nuanced differences between the Tang and Wang *nuo* tradition. For instance, the old house Tang (including the new house Tang) perform in the following way: there are two dancers, one of which is Zhong Kui who wears a blueish dark mask; his back is hunched and he has a chest that resembles a chicken breast. He is holding a precious sword and adorned with ‘colorful money.’ ”²⁸⁸

What I think is most interesting about the pictures taken by my classmate Michael Naparstek (included below) and the description given in Wang’s book regarding the deity Zhong Kui in the old and new house Tang are the similarities displayed in a transregional way. Both contexts depict Zhong Kui as an exorcist wearing a blueish dark mask, having a chest that resembles that of a chicken, and foremost is adorned with a string of “colorful money.” Judging from the photographs taken in Taipei, the colorful money is actually Chinese donuts that resemble the shape of the ancient *tongqian* 銅錢 (copper

²⁸⁷ Special thanks to my cohort at University of Wisconsin-Madison, Michael Naparstek for having taken the photos during his field trip in Taiwan and sharing them with me when he learned I was going to write a dissertation on Zhong Kui.

²⁸⁸ *Jiamian*, p 89-90

coins).²⁸⁹ The coins are round with a square hollow in the center. It is hard to tell from the photographs whether the Taipei Zhong Kui has a hunched back or not, but the second image definitely hints at an abnormally shaped upper body, the overly wide shoulders are one among other indicators.

The differences are that the Taiwan Zhong Kui is not in physical possession of a rare sword as described by Wang in his book. However, the colorful banner in an exorcistic context is used as a weapon for execution, especially the liturgical practices related to the thunder cult. For instance, in the Ming play “Mulian jiumu” 目連救母 (Mulian Rescues His Mother), the thunder cult is utilized in both a ritualist and a moral sense in that a moral judgment on a misconduct is followed by a ritual killing immediately. In the play, specifically in the scenes titled “Leigong dianmu” 雷公電母 (The Father of the Thunders and the Mother of Lightning), the execution directed towards the failure of moral conduct such as unfilial piety, commercial fraudulence, and adultery would be stricken to death by the thunder gods. The punishments can be traced through the colorful banners stuck in the body of the guilty party. In the play, this act is carried out by a dramatic role, namely, *sheling* 社令.

²⁸⁹ The colorful money, *caiqian* is made by edible items such as Chinese donuts for several practical reasons, one among which is that the food that has gone through the ritual cleansing ceremony is supposed to be blessed with good fortune and positive energy by the guardian deity. Therefore, people who end up eating the food will be blessed with such fortune and energy. In various regions in China, temples food will be likely given to the vulnerable members so that they have better chances of surviving and fulfilling their natural lifespan allotted by heaven’s mandate.



Photo Credit: Michael Naparstek

I want to end my dissertation on some thought provoking arguments raised by Wang. According to him, the activities related to *nuo* performances carries on ritualistic

meanings, too. Therefore, one way to label them is to categorize them as “ritualistic performance.” However, Wang argues the performative mind of the *nuo* dancers and actors is dramatically different from those that provide theatrical performance exclusively for the purpose of entertainment. Because for the local *nuo* dancers and actors, the belief they hold dear is that after the ceremony of inviting the gods to descend and be present for the performance, the masks worn by the actors are spiritually possessed by the gods themselves, which makes the dances and theatrical performance a reenactment, or a narration of the manifestation of the deities or ancestors from antiquity. We must take into account that the so-called narration is not a plot or storyline from a play or fiction. Rather, it simply refers to “human conduct and affairs of the past.”²⁹⁰

I disagree with a radical division between the ritualistic and entertaining aspects demonstrated in *nuo* dances and theater, but Wang’s work presents more possibilities and recalls the need for me to go back to Anhui and do more fieldwork related to the Zhong Kui cult. In this dissertation, I demonstrate how one sect of the Zhong Kui cult through a dramatic display inspires us to reflect on emotions—fear and anxiety, hope and wishes, and acceptance and resentment—of emperors, literati, scholar officials, merchants, peasants, and to some extent, even the failures including Zhong Kui himself. This potential invites me to see how those emotions may have changed and remained unchanged through the Zhong Kui dance, rituals, and his involvement with the Daoist practitioners in current China. As Zhong Kui is a deity that everyone in China can worship, the inclusiveness of his efficacy also dictates his relevance in the future.

²⁹⁰ *Jiamian*, p 36

Appendix 1

Meng Zhong Kui 夢鍾馗

One day in the Kaiyuan era [713-742], Minghuang [the Tang emperor Xuanzong], fell ill with malaria after returning to the palace from a round of bow-and-arrow practice on Mt. Li. While taking a nap [during the day], he dreamt of a small demon, wearing only a red shirt, calf-snout trousers and one shoe—the other being tied at his waist—and holding a bamboo fan. Stealing Taizhen's [consort Yang Guifei's] embroidered perfume-bag and the Emperor's jade flute. [Then, instead of escaping,] the demon began running around the palace grounds, frolicking in front of the Emperor. Minghuang reproached him and demanded an explanation. The demon respectfully replied: "Your servant's name is Xuhao." The Emperor responded: "I've never heard of you before." The demon explained that "Xu" stood for "stealing people's belongings for fun" and "Hao" for "replacing man's joys with sorrows." Hearing this, the emperor was enraged and wanted to call for his guards. But at that very moment, a much larger demon, wearing a tattered hat, blue robe, horn waist-belt, and black boots appeared and went straight after the thief. He first gouged out the demon's eyes, then tore him to pieces and ate him. When the emperor asked him who he was, the demon eater introduced himself: "I am Zhong Kui, a *jinshi* from Mt. Zhongnan, who was ashamed to return home after having failed the next higher degree of examination during the Wude era [618-626], thus committed suicide by smashing my head against the palace steps. Grateful to Emperor Gaozu [r.618- 626], who granted me an honorable burial of a court official of the green-robe rank when I died, I have vowed to rid the world of mischievous demons like Xu Hao for the monarch." At these words, Minghuang awoke and found himself fully recovered. Without delay he

summoned the painter Wu Daozi to paint a portrait of Zhong Kui as seen in his dream. Wu Daozi went to work immediately and painted Zhong Kui as if he had seen him with his own eyes. When he presented the finished portrait to the Emperor, the Emperor exclaimed, “You and I must have had the same dream!” He awarded Wu one hundred *taels* of gold.²⁹¹

明皇開元,講武驪山,翠華還宮。上不悅,因疔疾作,晝夢一小鬼,衣絳,犢鼻,跌一足,履一足,腰懸一履,搯一筠扇,竊太真綉香囊及上玉笛,繞殿奔,戲上前。上叱問之。小鬼奏曰:臣乃虛耗也。上曰:未聞虛耗之名。小鬼奏曰:虛者,望空虛中,盜人物如戲;耗,即耗人家喜事成憂。上怒,欲呼武士,俄見一大鬼,頂破帽,衣藍袍,繫角帶,鞞朝靴,徑捉小鬼,先剝其目,然後擘而啖之。上問大者:爾何人也?奏曰:臣終南山進士鍾馗也,因武德中應舉不捷,羞歸故里,觸殿階而死。是時,奉旨賜綠袍以葬之,感恩發誓,與我王除天下虛耗妖孽之事。言訖,夢覺,疔疾頓瘳。乃詔畫工吳道子曰:試與朕如夢圖之。道子奉旨,恍若有睹,立筆成圖進呈。上視久之,撫几曰:是卿與朕同夢耳。賜與百金。

Appendix II

According to *Gudian ximu cunmu* 古典戲目存目彙考 (*A Collection of Classical Chinese Plays and Play Titles*), another play composed by the Qing playwright Zhang Xinqi 張心其 (fl. around the end of the Shunzhi reign 順治 [1644-1661]) named *Tianxia le* is also centered around stories of Zhong Kui and his sister. As a matter of fact, this

²⁹¹ Translation revised based on Joyce Tsai's dissertation, *Imagining the Supernatural Grotesque: Paintings of Zhong Kui and Demons in the Late Southern Song (1127-1279) and Yuan (1271-1368) Dynasties*, p 95.

play is said to serve as one of the dramatic inspirations for the title, *Zhong Kui jiamei*. Unfortunately, the completed version of *Tianxia le* is no longer extant.

*Annotated Translation of the Entry on Tianxia le*²⁹²

Happiness of All under Heaven 天下樂

Tianxia le was composed by Zhang Xinqi and the central dramatic theme revolves around the five fortune deities. It is said that these five people are able to gather wealth and provide monetary relief for the poor. They devoted their lives to good deeds and prayed for the timely rain in order to usher in a year of abundance. The state decided to canonize the five of them and awarded them with a large amount of gold. Later on, the Jade Emperor also gave them the epithets of the Generals of Five Avenues under the Ministry of Treasury, placing them in charge of wealth and high honors in the human world; thus commanding the five directions: east, west, south, north and central. All five directions are abundant and rich. It is only natural that the world is at great peace and people have been enjoying quiet lives for ten thousand generations, which is also why the play is titled *tianxia le* in the first place.

The five avenue deities are commonly referred to as the head avenues, also known as fortune deities. The origin of the fortune deities is unknown. However, they have been obsequiously worshipped in the recent generations, especially in Zhejiang area.²⁹³ Du Ping whose courtesy name is Junqing, is a Qiantang resident from Zhejiang Province. His

²⁹² “Tianxia le” is composed by Zhang Dafu 張大復 (1554-1630) and the central dramatic theme revolves around the five fortune deities. Unfortunately, both titles are lost in transmission, *Quhai zongmu tiyao* provides brief descriptions that enables us to retrieve the gist of the plays. The last play title is included in *Liaozhai tongsu xiqu xuanzhu* 聊齋通俗戲曲選注 and survived Liu Jieping’s selection and annotations.

²⁹³ Early Chinese thought often associates the five directions, which is central, East, West, South, and North with the five Emperors, and the Emperors could vary from 黃帝、顓頊、帝嚳、堯、舜 to 少昊、顓頊、帝嚳、堯、舜.

family has been prosperous businessmen for generations. He lost both of his parents at a young age and is yet to be married. He is business partners with Li Si from Nanjing, Ren An from Xishan, Sun Li from Dantu, and Wu Yanzheng from Nanjing. The five of them share a similar worldview and get along well. More importantly, they voluntarily distribute their wealth amongst the poor. Ping is giving relief to the poor in the Zhejiang area, and he goes down south to the Yanghuai area. He is distributing eight hundred thousand pieces of gold; the other four of them are allotted to the other four directions. One is heading towards Guizhou, the second to Qiyan, the third to Hunan, and the last to Guangdong. Thereafter, the Wu and Yue are divided, and five golden lights are frequently seen rising from the skies.

By then the examination candidate Zhong Kui from Mt. Zhongnan is living with his sister Mei'er. He had heard that Emperor Gaozu would be holding the final round of examination. Zhong Kui intends to go to the capital city to take the exam, but he is too poor. Ping happens to be at the Changming monastery distributing money, silk, and rice to the poor. Zhong Kui knows of Ping by his reputation and goes to visit him at the monastery. Thereafter, Ping invites Zhong Kui to his house and kindheartedly offers him sufficient money for the trip to the capital city, along with a rare sword. Zhong Kui's personality is upright and straightforward. [One day] he enters the monastery while he is drunk where the monks are holding a *daochang* for Du. They invite a master to make offerings to the deceased. Zhong Kui is shocked upon seeing the ritual and thinks demons are present. He scolds and beats the monks and tells Ping, "calamities and fortune are all up to heaven's mandate, why are you sacrificing in ghosts' names. If, however, the ghosts can do harm to the people, then they are considered harmful forces. They should be

eradicated and eaten [by me].” The hungry ghosts report to Guanyin about Zhong Kui’s transgression. His holiness has always known Zhong Kui is trustworthy and canonizes him. However, his holiness is infuriated with Zhong because he verbally offended the monks. He commands the five poor ghosts to shorten Zhong’s lifespan. The five ghosts begin to plot against Zhong Kui. As Zhong Kui is on his way to the capital city, he contracts malarial fever. However, after he overcomes the fever, he continues on his journey to Chang’an and arrives at *Qiong* valley at night. As he is surrounded by the five poor ghosts, they change his physical appearance. He begins to grow red hair, a bizarre shaped beard, and his face turns dark. They also stuffs soil into his mouth and leave him.

Zhong Kui arrives at the capital city to take the exam. He comes out first on the list of candidates for the third degree. However, as he is taking the final round of the exam, he is dismissed because of his hideous appearance. Thereafter, he commits suicide and his soul creates an uproar in the dark world. After being reported to the Jade Emperor, the emperor empathizes with Zhong Kui because of his honesty and impartiality, as well as his composition ability, which is recklessly undervalued by the exam administrators. The emperor bestows upon him the epithet of the General to Ward off the Evil Spirits and Eradicate the Mischievous Demons. Moreover, he commands a demon troupe of three thousand soldiers. Zhong Kui controls the malicious demons and wicked forces. When Zhong Kui goes on his trip to the capital city, Ping generously rewards his family and assigns the attending maid to the younger sister as her servant. Zhong Kui is genuinely enthused by that gesture. Later on, Ping comes in the capital city for business purposes, and Zhong Kui gives Ping his consent to marry his sister. Zhong Kui dies and is canonized, however, before wedding off his sister.

The Tang emperor has absolute control over the court; hence, the tribes from the eight directions travel ten thousand *li* to pay their tribute to him. The crowd witness five auspicious clouds, and their shining glories cover the entire land. It hasn't rained for three months, so the emperor issues an imperial decree summoning the Heavenly Master Yuan. Yuan says, the five auspicious clouds should correspond with five human beings in the world. Ping and his four business partners are then invited to the court. Ping brings up the injustice in the case of Zhong Kui and requests to erect a temple to honor Zhong Kui and canonize him as a deity. If, within three days, the rain becomes plentiful, Zhong Kui shall be awarded the top candidate in the final round of the exam. Ping and the others pray for rain. The rain indeed comes in three days. Ping is given charge of the five avenues under heaven. Zhong Kui receives the epithet as promised before. He leads the demon army accompanied by various musical instruments, as well as, lights and chariots, falling from the skies. He weds off his sister to Ping. The five of them receive their canonization from the Jade Emperor, and their epithets are the generals of the five avenues. The Jade Emperor asks the Buddha Prabhūtaratna to bestow five embroidered gold thread python robes and cloud-patterned robes to the five generals,²⁹⁴ along with five gold helmets that are meant to ward off the evil spirits. Ping's servants Zhaocai and Lishi also receive epithets.

According to common belief, the generals of the five avenues help people prosper and benefit business. Nevertheless, standard histories do not preserve the accounts of their origins. Regardless, worshiping the generals of the five avenues has long been a part

²⁹⁴ 多寶天尊, 多寶, meaning Prabhūtaratna

of local culture. Zhong Kui's image is commonly located on the back door of the house; yet, no one knows where that tradition originated. His image resembles what's described in the *Shanhaijing* and *Fengsu tong* where Shen Tu and Yu Lei's images are used to subdue the evil spirits. That's why the two of them earn a specific name: *taofu*.

Zhong Kui is an exam candidate of the Tang dynasty. He appears in the Emperor's dream, requesting to cast off the evil spirits and eradicate the ghosts for him, which, coincidentally, is the major narrative shared among the different writers throughout the course of history. Nonetheless, Zhong Kui should be regarded as a martial exam candidate.

The Song artist Sun Zhizheng painted Zhong Kui in a snowy scene. In the painting, Zhong Kui is depicted wearing a torn-up turban and short robes, along with a demon that is tied up on a carrying pole. They are striding in the snow. Li Jian says, "One can only imagine that Zhong Kui is represented as such because he failed at the martial exams and was depressed. Furthermore, Zhong Kui was also infuriated by the fact that both the demons and ghosts were disturbing the people. Therefore, he decides to fight and capture them, demonstrating his physical prowess."

It is also noted that during the time of Emperor Shu,²⁹⁵ it was a tradition to present the image of Zhong Kui during the Chinese New Year. In Zhao Zhongyi's version, Zhong Kui uses his index finger to gouge out the eyes of the demons, whereas Pu Shixun depicts Zhong Kui using his thumb to carve out demon eyes. During the time of Emperor Shu, paintings of Zhong Kui are heterogeneous: certain paintings are of refined quality whereas others are exigent. Huang Quan regards Shixun's work exceptional. Emperor

²⁹⁵ Wudai shiguo 五代十國 Refers to the specific historical periods in Chinese history from 897 to 979.

Shu says, Shixun places an emphasis on Zhong Kui's thumb, conversely, Zhong Yi places significance on Zhong Kui's index finger. Both Huang Quan and Shixun's depictions are of equal quality, hence, both are generously rewarded with gold and silk. The convention of Zhong Kui capturing the demons and ghosts had been widely spread in the Tang dynasty. However, after the Song and Yuan dynasty, the image of Zhong Kui giving away his younger sister at her wedding becomes the prominent theme among artists.

Cheng Tan and Mi Yuanzhang are active around the same historical period, in fact, both frequently paint images of Zhong Kui's younger sister. Tang Hou discredits the work and labels them vulgar,²⁹⁶ yet, he has no knowledge of the tradition's origin. Zhong Kui holds a sword in his hand; sometimes the sword is treated as an adornment on his waist. On the sword, a *Zhongkui* head is carved.²⁹⁷ It is noted in the commentaries of the *Zhouli*, "people used to say whoever created the idea of Zhong Kui might have been inspired by the *Zhongkui* head, which cannot be testified against in any case." Another note indicates that Wen Tingjun had an ugly appearance; therefore, the Tang people referred to him as Wen Zhong Kui. Hence, this story explicates the causation of Zhong Kui's hideous appearance; an explanation that rejects the conventional causation, which claims the demons transformed Zhong Kui.

²⁹⁶ 湯屋 *Tanghou*

²⁹⁷ A Zhongkui head is a face mask worn by the shamans in the Han dynasty when they practiced.

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