

**Sydney College of the Arts
The University of Sydney**

The “Wu Yao” Phenomenon in Ancient China

YUN GAO

**A thesis submitted to fulfil requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

August 2024

Statement of Originality

This is to certify that to the best of my knowledge, the content of this thesis is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or other purposes. I certify that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work and that all the assistance received in preparing this thesis and sources have been acknowledged.

Yun Gao

Table of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	I
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	II
ABSTRACT.....	VII
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: “LUXURY IS A SIN” AND “THRIFT IS A VIRTUE”	25
CHAPTER TWO: THE CONCEPT, APPRECIATING, MAKING AND USING OF “WU”	36
CHAPTER THREE: YAO IN THE HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS AS CATASTROPHIC SIGNS	48
CHAPTER FOUR: YAO IN CHINESE CLASSICAL NOVELS AS BEAUTIFUL TEMPTATION.....	63
CHAPTER FIVE: THE ORIGIN OF WU YAO: FU YAO FROM THE PERIOD OF THE ZHOU DYNASTY(1045 BC–256 BC) TO THE SONG DYNASTY (960–1279)	78
CHAPTER SIX: THE GLORIOUS PERIOD OF “WU YAO”: LEISURE CLASS IN THE MING DYNASTY (1368–1644)	91
THE EMPERORS AND THE CLAN MEMBERS.....	92
THE LITERATI	94
THE MERCHANTS	99
THE MERCHANTS AND THE LITERATI.....	100
URBAN WOMEN	102
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE GLORIOUS PERIOD OF “WU YAO”: EXTRAVAGANT AND UNUSUAL LIFE IN THE MING DYNASTY (1368–1644).....	106
DRESS.....	108
UTENSIL.....	110
FOOD	111
HOUSE.....	112
DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON LUXURY CONSUMPTION	114

<u>CHAPTER EIGHT: THE CRAFTSMEN DURING THE PERIOD OF WU YAO.....</u>	<u>119</u>
<u>CHAPTER NINE: THE CHANGING HIERARCHICAL SOCIETY BEHIND MING WU YAO.....</u>	<u>130</u>
THE CHALLENGES OF THE LITERATI.....	130
THE UNFAIR INCOME AND CHANGING SOCIAL ORDER.....	133
“BANG XIAN”	137
<u>CHAPTER TEN: CRIMES BEHIND THE MING WU YAO.....</u>	<u>143</u>
LOWER CLASS CRIMES	143
FEMALE CRIMES	148
OCCUPATIONAL CRIME.....	153
<u>CHAPTER ELEVEN: REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MING WU YAO.....</u>	<u>159</u>
CLASS I JIANGNAN REGION.....	159
CLASS II REGIONS.....	167
CLASS III REGIONS.....	171
REGIONAL DIFFERENCE OF WU YAO.....	175
<u>CHAPTER TWELVE: THE CONTINUATION OF SUMPTUARY LAWS IN THE QING DYNASTY</u>	<u>178</u>
SUMPTUARY LAWS IN THE QING DYNASTY	178
SUPERVISION AND PUNISHMENT	182
THE FAILURE OF SUMPTUARY LAWS.....	186
CAUSES OF FAILURE	192
SUMMARY.....	194
<u>CHAPTER THIRTEEN: SUMPTUARY LAWS IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE FROM 1200 TO 1700</u>	<u>196</u>
SUMPTUARY LAWS AND CLASS	196
PENALTY	200
SUPERVISION	203
FAILURE	206
<u>CONCLUSION</u>	<u>214</u>
<u>IMAGES</u>	<u>216</u>

BIBLIOGRAPHY	274
---------------------------	------------

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my parents and my husband for their love, encouragement and support. I am honored to be a part of your lives. A part of this belongs to you.

I would like to thank Penny Hayes for proofreading the final draft.

In particular, I must acknowledge the dedicated, animated and honest supervision of Adam Geczy, without whom I would neither have started nor finished this study. His constant support, invaluable theoretical and artistic insights, excellent and inspiring guidance have not only made this challenging process rewarding but also pushed my practice and writing further than I could have hoped.

List of illustrations

1.1 Corinthian Skyphos, terracotta, Greece, 7th–6th century BC, $3.8 \times 8.5 \times 5.9$ cm, Walters Art Museum, Washington, D.C.

1.2 Group of gilded silver objects from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina (modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. Purchased by the Metropolitan Museum in 1981 from New York dealer Robert Hecht. Given by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to the Republic of Italy (Region of Sicily) in 2006.

1.3 Silver-gilt situla from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina (modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 18.5×26.8 cm.

1.4 Silver kyathos (ladle) from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina (modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 24.7cm.

1.5 Silver-gilt bowl from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 6.2×22 cm.

1.6 Silver-gilt bowl from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 6.8×21 cm.

1.7 Silver-gilt phiale (libation bowl) from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 2.3×14.8 cm.

1.8 Pair of silver horns from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 15.5cm.

1.9 Silver-gilt bowl with lid from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 7×3.4 cm, 0.4 kg.

1.10 Silver-gilt pitcher from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 9.1×8.1 cm.

1.11 Silver-gilt hemispherical bowl from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 7.7×12.7 cm.

1.12 Silver-gilt skyphos (drinking cup) from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 8.8×18.5 cm $\times$ 13.3 cm.

1.13 Silver-gilt situla from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 19.6×26.3 cm.

1.14 Silver-gilt emblema (medallion) representing Scylla from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 2 × 10.5 cm, 0.1 kg.

1.15 Silver-gilt pyxis (box) with lid from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 2.5 × 9.8 × 9 cm.

1.16 Silver-gilt arula (small portable altar) with lid from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 11.3 cm. cm

1.17 Silver-gilt pyxis (box) with lid from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 5.5 × 8.3 cm.

2.1 Typical mortise-tenon construction, common tenon 直榫.

2.2 Black lacquer and inlaid screw inlay circle chair, Qing Dynasty, 107 × 64.5 × 48.5cm, The Palace Museum, Beijing.

2.3 Gu Hongzhong, *The night revels of Han Xizai*, 1163–1224, ink and colors on silk, 28.7 × 335.5cm, The Palace Museum, Beijing.

2.4 writing desk made of beech, Ming Dynasty, 190 × 36.5 × 78.5cm, The Palace Museum, Beijing.

2.5 white jade crouching tiger (a) Wei, Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties (220–589), 5 × 2.5 × 4cm, National Palace Museum, Beijing. (b) Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), 5.6 × 2.2 × 1.1cm, National Palace Museum, Beijing.

3.1 The belief of signs.

3.2 Lady waving fans, Tang Dynasty, 204.8 × 33.7cm, The Palace Museum, Beijing.

3.3 Chou Ying, *View the list of successful candidates*, Ming Dynasty, 34.4 × 638 cm, Taipei Palace Museum, Taipei.

4.1 Lotus shoes, Museum Cluster Jianchan, Si Chuan.

4.2 First class civilian official uniform with crane pattern of Bu Zi 补子, Qing Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.

4.3 Black gauze hat, Ming Dynasty, Shanghai History Museum, Shanghai.

4.4 Anon, *The Beauty in the Snow* 出警入蹕图, Ming Dynasty, 92.10 × 3003.6cm, Taipei Palace Museum, Taipei.

4.5 Leng Mei, *The Beauty in the Snow* 雪艳图, Qing Dynasty, 60 × 105 cm, Shanghai Museum, Shanghai.

4.6 Xuande stove 宣德炉, Qing Dynasty, 19.2 × 14 cm, The Palace Museum, Beijing.

5.1 Pottery basin with patterns of dancing people , Yang Shao 仰韶 Culture (3000 BC–5000 BC), National Museum of China, Beijing.

5.2 the Twelve Decorative Motifs, The Palace Museum, Beijing.

5.3 Hat with nine jade strings, Ming Dynasty, Shandong Museum, Shandong.

5.4 Jade Jue 玦, Yang Shao 仰韶 Culture (6200 BC–5000 BC), The Palace Museum, Beijing.

5.5 Jade Zhang 玉璋, Neolithic Period, The Palace Museum, Beijing.

5.6 Zhang Xuan. Guo Lady Spring Tour 虢国夫人游春图, Song Dynasty, Liaoning Provincial Museum, Liaoning.

5.7 Line picture the Tang tomb of Wu Hui, Tang Dynasty, Shanxi History Museum, Shanxi.

5.8 The Lady of the Tomb of Dun Huang, Tang Dynasty, Dun Huang Museum, Gansu.

5.9 The Lady of the Tomb of Ashina Zhong 阿史那忠, Tang Dynasty, Shanxi History Museum, Shanxi.

5.10 Female servants in the mural of the Tomb of the Princess of Xincheng 新城, Tang Dynasty, Shanxi History Museum, Shanxi.

5.11 Female servants in the mural of the Tomb of Li Feng 李凤, Tang Dynasty, Shanxi History Museum, Shanxi.

5.12 Female servants in the mural of the Tomb of Yong Tai 永泰, Tang Dynasty, Shanxi History Museum, Shanxi.

5.13 Female servants on the stone coffin of the tomb of Prince Zhang Huai 章怀太子, Tang Dynasty, Shanxi History Museum, Shanxi.

- 5.14.** Lady wearing wei hats 帷帽, Tang Dynasty, National Museum of China, Beijing.
- 5.15** Lady with the falling horse bun 堕马髻, Han Dynasty, Xi'an Museum, Xi'an.
- 5.16** Lady wearing the Dropping to Shoulder Hair Crown 垂肩冠 in the White Sands Tomb Murals 白沙墓, Song Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.
- 5.17** Female servants wearing One-Year Scene 一年景 crown in the Portrait of Empress Renzong 宋仁宗皇后像, Song Dynasty, Taipei Palace Museum, Tai Pei.
- 6.1** Gold hairpin, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang(1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *l.* 23.3 *cm.*
- 6.2** Gold hairpin, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *l.* 16 *cm.*
- 6.3** Gold hairpin, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan. *l(a).* 10.6 *cm*, *l(b).* 13.4 *cm.*
- 6.4** Jade ornaments, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan. *dia(a).* 4.9 *cm*, *dia(b).* 6.3 *cm.*
- 6.5** Jade ornaments, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan. *l(a).* 59*cm*, *l(b).* 68.5 *cm.*
- 6.6** Jade ornament, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *l(a).* 15.8*cm*, *l(b).* 6.6 *cm.*
- 6.7** Gold hat ornament inlaid with jewels, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411-1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *h(a).* 7.5*cm*, *h(b).* 6.3*cm.*
- 6.8** Gold hat ornament inlaid with jewels, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411-1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *h(a).* 7.5*cm*, *h(b).* 3.4*cm.*
- 6.9** Gold ingot, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *l(a).* 13*cm*, *h(b).* 14*cm.*
- 6.10** Gold bracelet, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *dia(a).* 6.2*cm*, *dia (b).* 6.5–7.5*cm.*
- 6.11** Turquoise gold earrings, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *h.* 5.5*cm.*

- 6.12** Gold belt inlaid with jewels, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan.
- 6.13** Gold bowl, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *dia(a).41cm, dia (b).15.6cm.*
- 6.14** Sword, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *l. 65cm.*
- 6.15** Gold vajra, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *l. 2.4–2.6cm.*
- 6.16** Gold ornament, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *(a)l. 14.2, dia.7.8cm, (b) dia.4cm.*
- 6.17** The colorful ink with mandarin ducks made by Fang Yulu 方于鲁, 9.6 × 1.6cm, Ming Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.
- 6.18** The tea pots made by Shi Dabin 时大彬, Ming Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.
- 7.1** Bai Jian dress 百衲裙, Ming Dynasty, Shandong Museum, Jinan.
- 7.2** Gable-and-hip Roof 歇山顶 of Nanchan Temple 南禅寺, China, Wutai.
- 7.3** Animal sculpture on the roof, The Forbidden City.
- 7.4** Guyi Garden, China, Shanghai.
- 7.5** People and sedan, Anon, *Chu Jing Ru Bi Tu* 出警入跸图, Ming Dynasty, 92.10×3003.6cm, Taipei Palace Museum, Taipei.
- 8.1** Sprinkled gold lacquer stationery box, Qing Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.
- 8.2** Official hat chair, Ming Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.
- 8.3** Screen flat-top table, Ming Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.
- 8.4** Chair in study room, Ming Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.

Abstract

The social phenomenon in which people excessively pursue novel and luxurious items in defiance of sumptuary laws and use high-level and prohibited items is known as “Wu Yao”. This study examines the development of Wu Yao phenomena from the Han Dynasty to the Ming Dynasty. It focuses on the long-suppressed material desires of common people, the control of mass consumption by the emperors, and the phenomena of the masses violating sumptuary laws. The thesis analyses the roles of different classes in luxury consumption and the changes in class structure under the commodity economy. It particularly investigates the literati group, exploring their shift in mindset from being pioneers against material desires to becoming advocates of luxury consumption. In the thesis, the vulnerability of the elite group in imperial China is explained. It summarizes the social power structure of imperial China based on rituals and cultural patterns and examines the impact of materialism on the hierarchy.

This thesis presents a comprehensive overview of traditional Chinese material culture by discussing the commodity economy, luxury consumption and artworks within the context of Wu Yao. It explores the secularization of culture and art, as well as the impact of the commodity economy in the late period of imperial China. In addition to portraying the prosperity of materialism, the study delves into the hidden crime problems during the Ming Dynasty, particularly the rise in female crimes. The research analyzes the phenomena of Wu Yao across various regions of imperial China, including local agriculture, industry, commerce, and handicrafts. It examines the level of residents’ consumption and discusses regional consumption differences in imperial China.

This thesis delves into the sumptuary laws implemented by the rulers of imperial China in response to the Wu Yao phenomenon. It compares these laws with those of other countries during the same period, analyzing the similarities and differences in legislative purpose, content, enforcement methods, and punishment measures. Additionally, it explores the underlying reasons for the ineffectiveness of sumptuary laws globally.

Introduction

Chinese literati referred to the societal phenomenon of people excessively pursuing novel goods, disregarding regulations for lavish consumption, and using high-level and prohibited items as ‘Wu Yao’. They believe that the phenomena would lead to a social crisis and bring misfortune to the country.

The origin of the term Wu Yao was linked to natural phenomena. In the Shang Dynasty(1600 BC–1046 BC), the ancestors of Chinese people were often confronted with the pressures of nature and society in their daily lives. Natural disasters such as floods, snowstorms, and droughts were huge challenges that were difficult for Chinese ancestors to predict. Fierce animals, like tigers, wolves, bears and leopards, threatened their safety. Moreover, conflicts with other tribes affected their survival. Out of the human instinct to avoid harm, Chinese ancestors made divination about the good or bad fortune of daily affairs. In the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220), people associated natural phenomena with the virtue of emperors and the rise and fall of the country. Some signs were known as auspicious omens, such as the occurrence of sweet rain 甘露, a strange growing rice crop 嘉禾 or two trees with different roots, the upper branches of which are joined together 木连理, soft winds and good weather 风调雨顺, the brightness of the stars in the sky and the appearance of colourful clouds 景星庆云, which meant a good vision of the country.¹ On the contrary, if various natural disasters occurred, such as floods and snowstorms, people called them Yao, which were thought to be warnings given to emperors from gods. Han Confucians associated the emperors’ behaviours with various strange phenomena, forming the *Wu Xing Biography* 五行传 that warned the emperors and the public. On this basis, it was compiled by Ban Gu into the *Wu Xing Zhi* 五行志.² Fu Yao is a

¹ (Ming) Yao Lü 姚旅. *Lu Shu* 露书. Fu Zhou: Fujian People’s Publishing House, 2008, 30.

² (Han)Ban Gu 班固. *Han Shu* 汉书, *Wu Xing Zhi* 五行志. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company,1962, 1352; (Song) Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修. *The New Tang History* 新唐书. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1975, 873.

very important category of Wu Yao. It is written in *Wu Xing Zhi* 五行志 that ‘If the emperor doesn’t dress appropriately, it is not respectful to the sovereign power granted by gods, the country will appear unrest and suffer from floods, which is the serious consequence of the emperor’s Fu Yao. 貌之不恭，是为不肃，厥咎狂，厥罚常雨，厥极恶，时则有服妖.’ Ancient literati, represented by Confucians, believed that a bad omen was a reminder from heaven that human behaviour did not conform to the natural laws and will of gods. Not only did emperors act in accordance with the will of the gods, but so did ordinary people. There could also be serious consequences if a person of lower social status used items that did not fit his status.

During the Tang Dynasty (618–907) and the Song Dynasty (960–1279), with the prosperity of the economy and the improvement of manufacturing technology, the phenomena of Wu Yao were becoming more and more common. In the Tang Dynasty, the government issued a ban on luxury goods to restrict the enjoyment of the lower classes, and the ruling class had a monopoly on luxury goods to maintain their status. The popularity of foreign culture in the Tang Dynasty also affected Wu Yao. Wu Yao reached its peak in the Ming Dynasty. Social consumption styles changed from simple and crude to extravagant, expressing the quantity of household goods as profligate and the quality as refined. People’s attitudes towards unusual clothes, exquisite houses and carriages, the customs of weddings or funerals and the ways of entertainment had changed. The emergence of so-called luxury was seen as a sign of economic development and rising living standards. Some people held the belief that it was not a big deal that many people had unnecessary consumption beyond practical needs to show off their wealth. The public changed their opinion about luxury goods and emphasised the economic function in society. People also affirmed the active engagement in industry and business and the pursuit of wealth. In the luxurious social atmosphere of the Ming Dynasty society, the details of the sumptuary decrees were more intricate and complex. There were strict regulations on the use of gold and other precious materials by ordinary people. They were only allowed to wear one piece of gold jewellery and could not use gold, jade, coral or amber on their hats.

Due to the diverse internal causes of Wu Yao, when the economic structure of traditional agricultural society changed, the commodity economy developed, and the surplus agricultural population increased, especially in the middle and late Ming

Dynasty. During this period, commodity production expanded, the variety of goods increased, rural market trade flourished, the urban economy prospered, and foreign trade developed. The rise in material living standards provided objective conditions for people to pursue fashionable and luxurious items. When the economic structure changed, so did the social structure. The status and prestige of artisans and merchants rose, and it was common for people, including the literati, to abandon agricultural production and pursue industry and commerce during the Ming Dynasty. The increase in the number of practitioners led to fierce competition in the industry, and artisans had to upgrade their professional skills to produce exquisite products no matter the cost. These artisans were originally regarded as pests who profited from their skills, sapped the blood and sweat of farmers and eroded the foundations of society. Although they created a glorious material civilisation, they were rarely recorded in historical books in early times. The situation changed when people began to pursue luxurious crafts. Many famous artisans were good at painting and poetry and were mostly cultured. The artworks they produced were exquisite in craftsmanship and elegant in taste, which conformed to the aesthetic of the literati and were praised by mainstream society.

It was clear that the literati could not be ignored during the development of Wu Yao. Confucianism influenced the majority of the literati. In ancient Confucian tradition, the ideal personality was based on cultivating oneself, focusing on self-discipline, advocating frugality and suppressing extravagance, and making one a righteous gentle person who could live a poor and simple life. Before the Ming Dynasty, the literati generally believed that it was correct to restrict material desires and extravagance, which was helpful in building a peaceful society. However, in the Ming Dynasty, the attitude of the literati changed. At the same time, the originally despised commerce flourished, the social economy revived, social wealth gradually accumulated, and people's material desires began to expand. The weakness of the Ming government and the impact of the commodity economy made people doubt the traditional ritual and cultural model. A second standard of value, wealth, emerged. As an example, the representative figure Lu Ji (1515–1552) put forward the idea that luxury could make wealth in his book *Jianjia Tang* 蒹葭堂杂著.³ He believed that

³ (Ming) Lu Ji 陆楫. *Ming Ren Wen Ji Yu Ming Dai Yan Jiu* 明人文集与明代研究. Taipei: The Association for Ming Studies, 2001, 134.

social production and consumption were a whole. High social demands stimulated the development of commodity production, which in turn promoted the circulation of commodities. The literati, who were in high class and played an important role in social aesthetics, changed their attitude towards Wu Yao because of bleak political prospects and low income. Some of the literati started businesses and began to learn practical skills. The literati, with extensive knowledge and unusual ways of thinking, set off the ideology of emancipation that brought about a period of unprecedented academic, technological and cultural prosperity.

In imperial China, emperors imposed sumptuary laws with the primary goal of differentiating between social classes and limiting public luxury consumption. However, despite the ban, the public continued to use high-level items in private and defied the prohibition on luxury. Attempting to manage the public's daily lives in this way was ineffective. The failure of sumptuary laws may be due to complications in the ban on luxury, its slow updates, and challenges in implementation. Was Wu Yao just a single social phenomenon that briefly existed in imperial China? From a global perspective, the pursuit of luxury goods by the public worried the government and the upper class. In other words, the upper-class law enforcers did not hate luxury. However, the increasing focus on goods from lower-class people and the abuse of luxury goods gradually blurred the social hierarchy. Judging a man's class through his dress, food and utensils was no longer possible. Like the sumptuary laws issued in the Ming Dynasty(1368–1644), Europe, Japan and other countries promulgated legal provisions restricting luxury consumption and distinguishing different use levels of items. Wu Yao and the increasing demand for non-daily necessities were typical phenomena in the transition period of various countries. Studying the establishment and implementation of sumptuary laws in imperial China and other countries, we can see the consistency of early European and other countries in distinguishing classes and restricting consumption. The failure of sumptuary laws meant that the capitalist consumption model took effect in countries including imperial China, and new consumption standards based on taste were born.

*

It is essential to examine the emergence and development process of Wu Yao, as well as the measures to deal with Wu Yao and the changing attitudes of various classes. This involves analysing historical documents, including official records,

folklore, literature, local chronicles and aesthetic appreciation manuals. It is worth discussing and focusing on the significant impact of the development of the commodity economy on the ritual and cultural model of imperial China, which extends to other countries of the same period and is not just limited to imperial China. The literature review section focuses on research results related to Wu Yao. Texts indirectly related to Wu Yao but referenced in the discussion will also be noted.

In her PhD project, *Materialism: A Study of Wu Yao in Ancient China* (2019), Fu Xiaotong describes in detail the origin of Wu Yao, the classification of Wu Yao, and social issues hidden behind material desire.⁴ However, her study focuses on the description of the Wu Yao phenomenon and the excavation of historical documents without discussing the relationship between Wu and ritual culture. Fu's thesis talks about the pursuit of luxury consumption by literati in the Ming Dynasty. It is more important to explore the reasons behind this behavior. This thesis will explore the underlying causes behind luxury consumption through a detailed study of the political environment of the Ming Dynasty, the career choice of the literati at that time, the change of social class and other factors. Its aim is to verify the instability of the hierarchy in imperial China under the background of Confucian culture.

Compared with the special studies of Wu Yao, there are relatively more studies of Fu Yao. According to scholars' different academic backgrounds, the depth of the studies, and different discussion logics, the studies can be divided into the following three types. The first type of study focuses on the classification of Fu Yao, including clothing, shoes, hats, make-up, hairstyles and accessories. Chen Baoliang's essay, *The Ethical and Fashionable Worlds of Ancient Chinese Clothing* (2013), discusses the rapid changes in society from the mid to late Ming Dynasty.⁵ Some people were interested in fashionable and unusual clothes, including the strange phenomenon that men wore women's clothing or women wore men's clothing, which led to Fu Yao. The essay by Liu Lu, *Textual Research on the Origin of "Costume Demon": On Weird Costume under the Unification of Costume in Han Dynasty* (2016), uses the word "Costume Demon" to describe people's pursuit of unusual clothes.⁶ She

⁴ Fu Xiaotong, 2019. "Materialism: A Study of Wu Yao in Ancient China." PhD dissertation, Nanjing University of the Arts.

⁵ Chen Baoliang, "The Ethical and Fashionable Worlds of Ancient Chinese Clothing", *Art & Design Research*, no.04(2013), 32–39.

⁶ Liu Lu, "Textual Research on the Origin of Costume Demon: On Weird Costume under the Unification of Costume in Han Dynasty", *The Science Education Article Collects*, no.02(2016), 168–69.

broadens the classification of Fu Yao and holds the belief that Fu Yao also includes exotic ethnic clothing. In *Fu Yao Phenomenon in Song Dynasty* (2014), Li Jinghong argues that Fu Yao in women's clothes in the Song Dynasty mainly referred to the clothing that violated social customs, the clothing that did not conform to the rituals, and the clothing worn by people because of political dissatisfaction.⁷

The second type of study explores the causes of Fu Yao. For example, *A Humble Opinion on Fu Yao in Ancient China* (1998), written by Pan Xiaoming, provides a historical discussion of Fu Yao in ancient China, arguing that there are various reasons for Fu Yao, such as the high classes' control of social wealth, which provides the material basis for the emperors, the royal family and nobility who preferred expensive and beautiful clothes.⁸ The material conditions for the production of unusual clothes were also present in the folklore. Besides, Pan Xiaoming claims that the personal reasons of the wearers were complex. People might wear unusual clothes perhaps out of curiosity, attraction to the opposite sex, or reluctance to be constrained by etiquette. The third type of study explores the meanings hidden behind Fu Yao. The essay, *A Perspective on Fu Yao in the Han Dynasty* (1995), edited by Zhao Mu, discusses the relationship between Fu Yao and the literati in the Han Dynasty, arguing that Fu Yao was not dependent on the will of the literati.⁹ Fu Yao was popular at that time and is still popular in later generations, even far abroad. However, he does not further discuss how it prevailed and its specific performance. Li Jianguo and Meng Lin's essay, *Fu Yao Before the Tang Dynasty* (2006), focuses on Fu Yao and claims that Fu Yao reflected people's pursuit of beauty, individual liberation and the public's panic and helplessness facing social unrest.¹⁰ Various scholars have different opinions, but they all agree that the central connotation of Fu Yao is arrogance. In *Dress and Ethnicity: Change Across Space and Time* (1995), Jonne Eicher and Joanne Bubolz move the focus from the colour, style and pattern of textiles and accessories themselves, their forms and meanings, to the people who wear them.¹¹

⁷ Li Jinghong, "Fu Yao Phenomenon in Song Dynasty", *Journal of Hengshui University*, no.16(2014),114–16.

⁸ Pan Xiaoming, "A Humble Opinion on Fu Yao in Ancient China", *Zhejiang Arts & Crafts*, no.01(1998):15–19.

⁹ Zhao Mu, "A Perspective on Fu Yao in the Han Dynasty", *Journal of Liaoning Educational Administration Institute*, no.03(1995):75–78.

¹⁰ Li Jianguo and Meng Lin, "Fu Yao before Tang Dynasty", *Wuhan University Journal (Philosophy & Social Science)*,no.04(2006),427–33.

¹¹ Eicher, Joanne Bubolz. *Dress and Ethnicity: Change across Time and Space*. Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited,1995,xiv–316.

The authors also examine how people use their outfits to transform, conceal, resist and accommodate identities. Eicher and Erekosima's paper shows how clothing become an active medium for the interplay of ethnicity, gender and social structures.

Currently, research on Fu Yao is focused on classifying Fu Yao and trying to understand its causes. This study aims to delve deeper into the transformation of "Fu Yao" into "Wu Yao". Additionally, exploring the origin of the term "Yao" in Chinese culture and its usage in different contexts is believed to aid in understanding the meaning and principles of using the term "Wu Yao".

Wu Yao refers to breaking sumptuary laws, living a luxurious life or using high-level items that do not fit his status. Some historians believe that these changes were related to commercial activities. When discussing capitalism in China, Wu Han explores various aspects such as handicraft factories, commercial cities, coastal commerce, inland bureaucratic landlords and the opinions of people of that time. Wu Han also analyses the development of the monetary economy and literature (1960). According to Wu Han, significant changes took place during the Zhengde to Jiajing period (1506–1566) in the Ming Dynasty.¹² Liu Zhiqin's essay titled "*A Preliminary Study on Urban Customs in the Late Ming Dynasty*" (1984) examines the impact of commercial capital on urban dress, ethics and moral values during the late Ming Dynasty. Liu Zhiqin argues that although there were some social changes during that time, they were primarily limited to urban areas with thriving commerce and consumer populations, while rural areas remained relatively unaffected by luxury.¹³ Zhang Chunshu and Luo Xuelun argue that during the late Ming Dynasty, significant economic changes led to the development of a commercial economy, resulting in social and cultural changes that created a new lifestyle (1998).¹⁴

In 1609, a literati named Zhang Tao published his journal in which he used changing seasons as a metaphor to describe the process of societal corruption in China's Ming Dynasty. The book *The Confusions of Pleasure, Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (1998) by Timothy Brook refers to Zhang Tao's views and discusses the commercial development and cultural changes in the Ming Dynasty in four stages: winter (1368–1450), spring (1450–1550), summer (1550–1644), and

¹² Wu Han. *Deng Xia Ji*. Beijing: Joint Publishing Company, 1960, 106.

¹³ Liu Zhiqin. *A Preliminary Study on Urban Customs in the Late Ming Dynasty*. Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 1984, 190–208.

¹⁴ Zhang Chunshu, Luo Xuelun. *Socio-Economic Changes and New Cultures in the Ming and Qing Era: Social Cultures and Modernity in the Era of Li Yu*. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1998.

autumn (1642–1644).¹⁵ The early Ming Dynasty was a peaceful and quiet winter. The mid-Ming Dynasty was a boisterous spring, followed by a summer of indulgence and confusion, madness and dryness, and the last season was autumn, a season of confusion. Fu Yiling's book *An Exploration of the Citizen Economy in Jiangnan in the Ming Dynasty* (2007) discusses the changes that occurred during the Ming Dynasty.¹⁶ Fu argues that the Jiajing period of the Ming Dynasty (1522–1566) marked a turning point, with changes taking place primarily in the Jiangnan regions and coastal areas. Chen Baoliang argues that the Ming Dynasty had theatrical characteristics (2005). Baoliang believes that there was a historical shift in society after the Zhengde period (1506–1521), with ordinary people enjoying more luxuries.¹⁷ According to Xu Hong, the changes in the social atmosphere of the Jiangsu and Zhejiang regions during the Ming Dynasty can be divided into three phases (2021).¹⁸ During the early period, from the Hongwu to Xuande period (1368–1435), there was a frugal and equal social atmosphere between the nobles and the ordinary people. From the Zhengtong to Zhengde period (1436–1521), the country did not undergo significant changes in the middle period. In some regions, ordinary people's lives became more luxurious due to the increasing prosperity of the commodity economy. In the late period, during the Jiajing period (1522–1566), previously luxurious regions became even more extravagant, and gradually, most areas that used to have simple customs became more luxurious than before.

According to the literature, it is commonly believed that people started admiring luxury during the Ming Dynasty. In the book *An Exploration of the Citizen Economy* (2007), Fu Yiling argues that during the late Ming Dynasty, the growth of the commodity economy in Jiangnan regions brought about changes in urban social relationships, which impacted society.¹⁹ The ordinary people were no longer content with living a simple rural life and gradually desired more luxurious lifestyles. Chang Jianhua introduces the concept of “daily consumption” (1994).²⁰ He uses the example

¹⁵ Timothy Brook. *The Confusions of Pleasure, Commerce and Culture in Ming China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

¹⁶ Fu Yiling. *An Exploration of the Citizen Economy in Jiangnan in the Ming Dynasty*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2007, 209.

¹⁷ Chen Baoliang. *General History of Chinese Customs*. Shanghai Literature & Art Publishing House, 2005, 14.

¹⁸ Xu Hong. *The Age of Enlightened Sage: A Collection of Essays on the Social History of the Ming and Qing Dynasties*. New Taipei : Linking Publishing Compant, 2021, 58–85.

¹⁹ Fu Yiling. *An Exploration of the Citizen Economy in Jiangnan in the Ming Dynasty*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2007, 317–319.

²⁰ Chang Jianhua. “On the Changes of Social Consumption Customs in the Ming Dynasty.” *Nankai Journal*, no.04(1994):53–63.

of the Waleng hats 瓦楞帽. This kind of expensive hat that used to be worn by the rich was worn by almost everyone in the Wanli period (1573–1620), and the price of the hat also dropped significantly. According to Chang, there were three main reasons for the lavish spending during the Ming Dynasty. First, the centralised power mechanism of the monarchy had a significant impact. Second, changes within the literati group also played a role. Finally, changes in the socioeconomic structure stimulated this behaviour.

Qian Xiaohong holds the belief that people's views on extravagance changed from the Ming Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty based on local chronicles and other sources. In *Extravagance and Its Evolution in the Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty* (2002), Qian introduces the concept of luxury in his opinion. According to Qian, luxury refers to the cost of an item exceeding its basic needs. He also identifies certain improper and unnecessary items and activities as luxury, as well as consumption that is not commensurate with the income of the common people. Consumers may make exaggerated comparisons, or the rituals surrounding certain matters may be cumbersome.²¹

In his essay titled *An Analysis of the Nature and Effects of Consumption in Jiangnan during Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty* (1988), Wang Jiafan explores the consumption patterns in the Jiangnan region during the late Ming and early Qing dynasties.²² He delves into various aspects of consumption, such as food, housing, clothing, furnishings, weddings, funerals, entertainment, folk beliefs, imperial examinations, officialdom, concubines and prostitution. Wang Jiafan presents many data to highlight the spending patterns of individuals who were extravagant and sought novelty items. Daily food consumption accounted for a small portion of their expenses. The high consumption of wealthy people was mainly reserved for weddings, funerals, antiques, luxurious homes, and even bribes for officials. Some even spent extravagantly on their brothel concubines. Wang Jiafan argues that because of the high proportion of political and luxury consumption, the high consumption in Jiangnan was still traditional aristocratic luxury consumption. This

²¹ Qian Xiaohong. "Extravagance and Its evolution in the Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty." *Historical Research*, no.04(2002):96–117,190–91.

²² Wang Jiafan, "An Analysis of the Nature and Effects of Consumption in Jiangnan during Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty." *Academic Quarterly of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences*, no.02(1988):157–67.

spending only leads to a false sense of economic prosperity and is not conducive to the country's development.

Some researchers have conducted studies on consumerism related to clothing, food and housing. For instance, Wu Ren-Ju's essay *Luxurious Women: The Consumer Culture of Jiangnan Women in the Ming and Qing Dynasties* provides evidence that the Ming people spent considerable money on extravagant clothing to flaunt their wealth.²³ Similarly, Lin Liyue's essay *Costumes and Customs: The Vogue and Opinion on Luxury Clothes of Ordinary People in Late Ming China* discusses how the public frequently broke the sumptuary laws (1999).²⁴ Qiu Zhonglin's research examines how the Ming people were fond of valuable furs (2009).²⁵ Regarding diet, the book *Ming People's Tea Drinking Life Culture* (1996) by Chih-ho Wu delves into the tea-drinking habits of people in the Ming Dynasty.²⁶ Wang Hongtai analyses the restaurants and teahouses during the Ming Dynasty (2000).²⁷ According to Xu Min's essay "Banquets and the Social Communications of the Learners of Jiangnan in Middle and Late Ming Dynasty" (2000), major restaurants began to pay more attention to their store environment and product packaging in the mid-Ming Dynasty.²⁸ Xu Lin argues that the literati during the late Ming Dynasty enjoyed feasting to relieve their depression and loneliness (2005).²⁹ In Wu Renshu's essay *The Consumer Culture of the Literati in the Late Ming Dynasty—An Examination of Household Furniture as a Case Study* (2005), he critically examines the furniture consumption of the literati during this time.³⁰ Chih-ho Wu (2002) and Zhou Zhenhe (2005) both noticed that people were keen on travelling in the late Ming Dynasty.³¹ Yu Baohang argues that the regulations governing officials' use of sedan chairs and

²³ Wu Renshu. *Luxurious Women: The Consumer Culture of Jiangnan Women in the Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Taipei: San Min Book, 2005.

²⁴ Lin Liyue. "Costumes and Customs: The Vogue and Opinion on Luxury Clothes of Ordinary People in Late Ming China." *New History*, no.03(1999):111–157.

²⁵ Qiu Zhonglin, "Warmth, Ostentation, and Power: A Culture History of Valuable Furs in the Ming Dynasty." *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology Academia Sinica*, no.80(2009):555–631.

²⁶ Chih-ho Wu. *Ming People's Tea Drinking Life Culture*. Taipei: Group of Ming Studies, 1996.

²⁷ Wang Hongtai, "Restaurants and Public Social Life in Ming and Qing Dynasties." *New History*, no.03(2000):1–48.

²⁸ Xu Min. *Restaurants and Public Social Life in Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Shijiazhuang: Hebei Education Publishing House, 2000.

²⁹ Xu Lin, "Banquets and the Social Communications of the Learners of Jiangnan in Middle and Late Ming Dynasty." *Social Science Front*, no.02(2005):152–156.

³⁰ Wu Renshu, "The Consumer Culture of the Literati in the Late Ming Dynasty—An Examination of Household Furniture as a Case Study." *Zhejiang Journal*, no.06(2005):93–102.

³¹ Chih-ho Wu, "Leisurely Shanshui Lifestyle of Ming Dynasty." *Chinese Studies*, no.06(2002):101–130; Zhou Zhenhe. "The Traveling Fashion in Late Ming Dynasty and Its Relationship with Geography: A Research on the Anthologies of Literators in Ming." *Journal of Fudan University*, no.01(2005):72–78.

carriages, based on their official positions, were ineffective during this period (2007).³² Fan Shuzhi discusses folk beliefs in the Jiangnan regions and the excessive consumption related to sacrificial ceremonies (2004).³³

When exploring the concept of Wu Yao in imperial China, most scholars' attention has been on the roles of emperors, literati and wealthy merchants in luxury consumption. In addition to more in-depth study of the emperor, literati, wealthy businessmen, this study will also pay more attention to the overlooked group of artisans, examining the role of artisans and the changes in their social status. Additionally, it is worthwhile to investigate how the artistic preferences of artisans, influenced by literati, have impacted Chinese material culture. Moreover, while discussions of Wu Yao often highlight the positive effects of commercial development on the nation and common people, the thesis will also examine the overlooked increase in criminal activities linked to commercial prosperity. It will specifically explore the criminal issues associated with Wu Yao during the Ming Dynasty, including the relatively uncommon crimes committed by women.

Some historians have studied social changes in specific regions, such as Jiangnan or the cities surrounding the Jiangnan area. In the book 明代江南土地制度の研究 (1988), Japanese scholar Masao Mori examines the land systems and official fields of Jiangnan and the Yangtze River Delta during the Ming Dynasty.³⁴ The book focuses on cities such as Suzhou, Songjiang, Changzhou, Zhenjiang, Jiaxing and Huzhou. In another book, *Jiangnan during the Ming Dynasty* (1999), Mamoru Kawakatsu argues that Jiangnan was in its early stages during the Song and Yuan Dynasties but matured after the Jiajing period in the Ming Dynasty.³⁵ Kawakatsu explores the relationship between commodity production in various districts and the development of Jiangnan. Kawakatsu provides evidence that the production and circulation of cotton and silk commodities were highly competitive. In 中国における地方都市の手工業 (1982), Masatoshi Tanaka examines silk production in the Jiangnan region, as well as the role

³² Yu Baohang. "Perspective and Interpretation Model of the Social Ethos Transition in the Late Ming Dynasty." *Journal of Dalian University*, no.01(2007):17–21.

³³ Fan Shizhi. "The Folk Belief and Luxury Trend in South of Yangtze Towns." *Journal of Fudan University*, no.05(2004):107–116.

³⁴ Masao Mori. 明代江南土地制度の研究. Kyoto: 図書印刷同朋舎, 1988.

³⁵ Mamoru Kawakatsu. 明清江南市鎮社会史研究-空間と社会形成の歴史学. Tokyo: 汲古叢書, 1999.

of silk merchants.³⁶ Yasushi Oki's book titled 明末江南の出版文化 (2004) provides a brief overview of the state of book publishing in Jiangnan towards the end of the Ming Dynasty.³⁷ The book discusses the increase in the number of publications, changes in the location and pattern of publication, and the reasons behind the prosperity of the publishing industry. The author points out related factors such as technological advancements, the supply of raw materials and engraving workers, and the market demand for books. Additionally, Yasushi Oki analyses mass communication and highlights famous publishers such as Chen Jiru and Feng Menglong.

Philip Huang's book *The Peasant Family and Rural Development in the Yangzi Delta, 1350–1988* (1990), studies the living conditions of farmers in eight villages in the Yangtze River Delta.³⁸ Huang argues that the commercial growth of the Yangtze River Delta during the Ming and Qing dynasties was possible due to smallholder family production and the trade in small commodities, such as cotton products and grain production. Huang shows that instead of expanding, the large-scale agricultural production units based on wage labour disappeared after the 17th century, leading to the dominance of small family farms. Wu Ren'an describes the influence of commercial capital in the Jiangnan region during the Ming Dynasty on the daily lives of its inhabitants (1987).³⁹

In his book *Research on Jiangnan Cities in the Ming and Qing Dynasties* (1999), Wang Weiping examines how the concept of valuing business and money gained popularity in Suzhou, despite the prevailing belief that pursuing a career as an official was the ideal.⁴⁰ Weiping also discusses the phenomenon of extravagant consumption and the violation of sumptuary laws. Feng Xianliang examines the lavish spending on funeral ceremonies in Jiangnan regions (2006).⁴¹ According to Zhang Chuanyong's essay *The Natural Geographical Environment and Burial Customs* (2008), the people

³⁶ Masatoshi Tanaka. 中国における地方都市の手工業：江南の製糸・絹織物業を中心に. Tokyo: 学生社, 1982.

³⁷ Yasushi Oki. 明末江南の出版文化. Tokyo: 研文出版, 2004.

³⁸ Huang, Philip C. *The Peasant Family and Rural Development in the Yangzi Delta, 1350–1988*. Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1990.

³⁹ Wu Renan. "A Preliminary Study on Social Customs in Jiangnan during the Ming Dynasty." *Social Scientist*, no.02(1987):39–46.

⁴⁰ Wang Weiping. *Research on Jiangnan Cities in the Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1999.

⁴¹ Feng Xianliang. "Grave and Free Graveyard: Life and Environmental Protection in Jiangnan in the Ming and Qing Dynasties." *Chinese Social History Review*, no.07(2006):161–184.

in the Jiangnan area selected special burial sites and special burial ways to avoid the adverse effects of the natural environment, such as dampness and insect infestation.⁴² Niu Jianqiang analyses the economy, commercial agriculture, industry and daily life of Jiangnan regions (1997).⁴³ Fu Yiling's book *An Exploration of the Citizen Economy in Jiangnan in the Ming Dynasty* (2007) investigates the wealthy households in Jiangnan, the textile industry and worker uprisings.⁴⁴ In the book *The Development of Commerce in Jiangnan during the Ming and Qing Dynasties* (1998), Fan Jinmin explores commodity production, circulation, markets and merchant groups.⁴⁵

The Jiangnan region and its surrounding areas have garnered significant attention from scholars. Liu Tongbiao and Cai Kejiao posit that folk customs in the Wenzhou region underwent significant changes during the mid to late Ming Dynasty (2007).⁴⁶ Wang Zhijuan's essay provides evidence that the extravagance of the Huizhou region was impacted by local merchants (2006).⁴⁷ Zhao Jianqun argues that the Fujian region, influenced by Jiangnan, became popular in luxury consumption (2004).⁴⁸ Jianqun points out that both the coastal and inland areas in Fujian paid attention to exquisite clothing, food and elaborate grand banquets. Wang Rigen and Zhang Zongkui analyse the influence of Confucian and maritime culture in Fujian on local folk customs (2005).⁴⁹ The current researches on consumption in imperial China primarily focus on the Jiangnan region and its surrounding areas, leaving a gap in our understanding of consumption in other regions. In order to provide a more comprehensive analysis of consumption patterns in the context of Wu Yao, this study classifies the regions into three categories. It aims to analyze the influence of geographical location, industry, commerce, handicrafts, and other factors on the daily

⁴² Zhang Chuanyong. "Customs Formed by the Soil—The Natural Geographical Environment and Burial Customs in the Jiangnan Area during the Ming and Qing Dynasties." *Chinese Social History Review*, no.09(2008):258–283.

⁴³ Niu Jianqiang. *Ming Dai Zhong Hou Qi She Hui Bian Qian Yan Jiu*. Taipei: Weijin Publishing House, 1997.

⁴⁴ Fu Yiling. *An Exploration of the Citizen Economy in Jiangnan in the Ming Dynasty*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2007.

⁴⁵ Fan Jinmin. *The Development of Commerce in Jiangnan During the Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Nanjing University Publishing House, 1998.

⁴⁶ Liu Tongbiao, Cai Kejiao. "On the Phenomenon of Wenzhou Folk Custom Deviation in Late Ming Dynasty." *Journal of Wenzhou University*, no.01(2007):36–41.

⁴⁷ Wang Zhijuan. "On the Extravagant Style in Huizhou from the Middle and Late Ming Dynasty to the Qianjia Period." *Journal of Suzhou College*, no.03(2006):31–33.

⁴⁸ Zhao Jianqun. "Regional Manifestation of Fujians' Luxurious Consumption Fashion in Ming and Qing Dynasty." *Journal of Fujian Normal University*, no.06(2004):115–120.

⁴⁹ Wang Rigen, Zhang Zongkui. "Looking at the Social Customs of Fujian in the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties from the Wensu Lu." *The Journal of Chinese Social and Economic History*, no.01(2005):74–82.

consumption habits of people in each region. The goal is to demonstrate the existence of regional differences in mass consumption in imperial China.

In Wu Yao's phenomenon, people's views on luxury changed. Wu Shenyuan(1984), Chen Xuewen(1984) and Lien-sheng Yang(1961) analyse the luxury theory of the representative figure, Lu Ji 陆楫.⁵⁰ Chen Guodong argues that Lu Ji's view of advocating luxury was that while individual families could advocate frugality to accumulate property, it may not be aligned with the economic situation of society as a whole (1994).⁵¹ Fu Yiling compares Lu Ji's idea with Bernard de Mandeville's theory. Fu Yiling not only affirms that Lu Ji's opinion of "advocating luxury and depreciating thrift" embodied the impact of the commodity economy on ideology but also argues that the development of production after the middle of the Ming Dynasty had indeed caused the intensification of social waste (2007).⁵² Instead of using their wealth for the expansion of reproduction, many industrialists and business people were pursuing luxurious lifestyles.

Japanese scholars noticed the order changes during the Ming Dynasty. Masao Mori used the concept of "order" to study society under the Ming Dynasty. In 江南デルタ市鎮研究 歴史学と地理学からの接近 (1992) and 明末の社會關係における秩序の変動について (2006), he compares the records of daily lives during the late Ming Dynasty with those of the Song and Qing dynasties.⁵³ Masao Mori notices that the local records compiled by the literati at the end of the Ming Dynasty were more concerned about the current customs and their present state of affairs than the editors of the Song and Qing dynasties. The late Ming local histories paid special attention to the sense of order reflected in the diverse aspects of daily lives, indicating that the literati were alarmed about the changes in the inherent order. Mio Kishimoto studies the customs and order changes that occurred during the 16th and 17th

⁵⁰ Wu Shenyuan. "On the Evolution of economic thought in the middle and late Ming Dynasty." *Fudan Journal*, no.03(1984):44-49; Chen Xuewen. "The Economic Thought of the Mid-Ming Dynasty that Extravagance can Lead to Wealth." *Zhejiang Academic Journal*, no.04(1984):27-29; Lien-sheng Yang. *Studies in Chinese Institutional History*. Cambridge:Harvard University Press,1961,58-74.

⁵¹ Chen Guodong. "Academic Issues Involved in the Study of Lu Ji's Anti-Luxury Debate Costumes." *New History*, no.02(1994):159-179.

⁵² Fu Yiling. *Theory of Social and Economic Changes in Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2007, 365-366.

⁵³ Masao Mori. 江南デルタ市鎮研究 歴史学と地理学からの接近. The University of Nagoya Press, 1992; Masao Mori. 明末の社會關係における秩序の変動について. Tokyo:汲古書院, 2006, 45-84.

centuries, focusing on the society in Jiangnan. She examines the issues surrounding the transition between the Ming and Qing dynasties in 1644 and how they affected common sentiments. Mio Kishimoto summarises comments about customs in local chronicles of the Ming and Qing dynasties and categorises bad customs into urban and rural (1999).⁵⁴

As an expert in the history of the Ming Dynasty, Chen Baoliang, in *Social Changes in the Ming Dynasty* (2014), places the Ming Dynasty in the context of social mobility and urbanisation, which presented a panoramic view of the living landscape of people in the Ming Dynasty.⁵⁵ He discusses commercialisation and secularisation, fashion and daily life, and the crisis of social order. In *A Study of the Relationship between the Huizhou Merchants and the Suzhou Art Market in the Late Ming Dynasty* (2005) and *The Jiangnan Art Market and Art Dealers in the Late-Ming Dynasty and Early-Qing Dynasty* (2006), edited by Zhang Changhong, the art market in the context of economic prosperity in Jiangnan, the south area in China, was very complex.⁵⁶ Another example of relevant literature is Wang Hongtai's thesis *From Consumption Space to Spaces of Consumption—Taverns and Teahouses in the Ming and Qing Cities* (2005). He points out that after the mid-Ming Dynasty, public spaces such as taverns were everywhere in the city, which was the essence of urban culture.⁵⁷

Some scholars believe that the public began to worship luxury during the Ming Dynasty due to the society being in a period of change. However, this study suggests that the public's material desires have been suppressed for a long time, from the Han Dynasty to the Ming Dynasty. It argues that the public had secretly rebelled against the traditional view that "luxury is a sin" and had tried to consume luxury in their private daily lives.

The study of Wu Yao necessarily requires an understanding of the development of ancient Chinese material culture, the level of craftsmanship and artistic style since the origin of Wu Yao. Francesca Bray examines the impact of technology on social

⁵⁴ Mio Kishimoto. 明清交替と江南社会 17 世紀中国の秩序問題. University of Tokyo Press, 1999.

⁵⁵ Chen Baoliang. *Social Changes in the Ming Dynasty*. Chongqing University Press, 2014, 21–381.

⁵⁶ Zhang Changhong, "A Study of the Relationship between the Huizhou Merchants and the Suzhou Art Market in the Late Ming Dynasty", *New Art*, no.03(2005):25–35.

⁵⁷ Wang Hongtai, "From Consumption Space to Spaces of Consumption—Taverns and Teahouses in the Ming and Qing Cities", *Studies in Chinese History by Taiwanese Scholars, Life and Culture*. Beijing: Encyclopedia of China Publishing House, 2005.

reproduction in imperial China.⁵⁸ Bray demonstrates that most women had a significant role in contributing alongside men to both domestic and public aspects of social reproduction. Chinese women were provided with many resources to become powerful social actors within the home. Bray addresses a gap in previous research on late imperial China by offering substantial information about Chinese men's symbolic and material world, which most feminist works in the China field had overlooked. Sun Ji's *Ancient Chinese Material Culture* (2014) systematically shows the development and overview of material culture in ancient China, discussing agriculture and food, tea, wine, sugar, textiles and clothing, architecture and furniture, transport, metallurgy, jade, lacquer, porcelain, stationery, printing, musical instruments, armaments, science and technology, which contributed to a deep understanding of Chinese material culture.⁵⁹ In a series of books on *The Colour of Luxury: A Study of Gold and Silver in Song, Yuan and Ming Dynasty* (2010) and *The Colour of Luxury: Gold and Silver Jewelry in Ming Dynasty* (2011), Yang Zhishui uses historical documents, images and relic to trace the roots of gold and silver jewellery and artefacts.⁶⁰ She provides an illuminating constructional analysis of the elements that made up the artwork, sketching the intentions and skills of the ancient designers and showing what life was really like in ancient times.

The role of the literati in the development of material culture cannot be ignored, and a number of scholars have conducted thematic studies. Wu Renshu's essay *The Consumer Culture of the Literati in the Late Ming Dynasty—An Examination of Household Furniture as a Case Study* (2005) was an example. In the mid to late Ming Dynasty, urbanisation and luxury became increasingly prevalent, the demand for furniture increased, and the literati class had a unique taste for furniture, which was different from that of rich people.⁶¹ Such taste became a marker of the identity of the literati. They paid increasing attention to the study room, an important symbol of their cultural dominance. Some of the literati tried to resist the trend towards the

⁵⁸ Francesca Bray. *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

⁵⁹ Sun Ji. *Ancient Chinese Material Culture*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2014, 1–393.

⁶⁰ Yang Zhishui. *The Colour of Luxury: A Study of Gold and Silver in Song, Yuan and Ming Dynasty*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2010, 9–218. *The Colour of Luxury: Gold and Silver Jewelry in Ming Dynasty*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2011, 1–236.

⁶¹ Wu Renshu, "The Consumer Culture of the Literati in the Late Ming Dynasty—An Examination of Household Furniture as a Case Study", *Zhejiang Journal*, no.06(2005):93–102.

commercialisation of furniture by inscribing it on study furniture, making furniture special and sacred. In *The Mundane Interests of the Literati in Jiangnan Region in Ming Dynasty* (2002), Cheng Nianqi examines the interest of the literati in the most economically and culturally developed regions during the Ming Dynasty.⁶² The literati were often extremely extravagant in terms of clothing, food, housing, transport and various hobbies. Some of them even went into debt. They were seeking to enjoy themselves, but they also were motivated by a mentality of showing off. Cheng Nianqi believes that the repressed mundane interest of the literati was a characteristic of Chinese culture, which was the romanticism of human self-consciousness, the sense of self-expression and the humanism of indulgent desire. The more repressed it was, the more interesting it was.

In Wu Yao's phenomenon, sumptuary laws were often used to distinguish classes in imperial China. Lin Liyue's essay *Ming Sumptuary Laws* discusses the prohibition of extravagance during the Hongwu period (1368–1398) and the following sumptuary policies. According to her essay, the prohibition on extravagance played a significant role in breaking away from the customs of the previous Yuan Dynasty during the early Ming Dynasty (1994).⁶³ The Zhengtong period (1436–1449) was a critical time for transforming social customs in the Ming Dynasty. Bans were enacted more frequently in the Chenghua and Hongzhi periods (1465–1505), indicating that the destruction of etiquette and the level of concern among court officials were increasing daily. In the Wanli period, extravagance became more popular, and the ban on extravagance was less strict compared to the Hongzhi period, which reflected the government's lack of interest in enforcing the ban. Chen Baoliang (2004), Qiu Zhonglin (1992) and Wu Qilin (2009) also discuss the various extravagance prohibition measures implemented by emperors, literati and the government in the Ming Dynasty (2004).⁶⁴ Chang Jianhua discusses the Xin'an family's efforts to maintain social order (2008).⁶⁵ He examines the family's ancestral genealogy dating

⁶² Cheng Nianqi, *The Mundane Interests of the Literati in Jiangnan Region in the Ming Dynasty*, *Historical Review*, no.03(2002):35–46, 122.

⁶³ Lin Liyue. "Ming Sumptuary laws." *Bulletin of Historical Research*, no.22 (1994):57–84.

⁶⁴ Chen Baoliang. "New terms and new life: the vitality and diversity of social life in the late Ming Dynasty." *Chinese Culture Research*, no.01 (2004):11–13; Qiu Zhonglin. "The Changing Process of Social Atmosphere in Beijing during the Ming Dynasty from the Repeated Application of Bans." *Tamkang History Review*, no.04 (1992):67–88; Wu Qilin. "Luxurious Fashion in the Regions of Emperor Chenghua and Emperor Hongzhi in the Ming Dynasty Shown in Huang Ming Tiao Fa Shi Lei Zuan." *Chinese Social History Review*, no.10(2009):261–280.

⁶⁵ Chang Jianhua. "Clan and Custom in Huizhou in the Early 16th Century." *Soochow Journal of History*, no.19(2008):1–26.

back to 1509, which indicates that the family leaders were unhappy with the excessive luxury that had crept into their family members' daily lives. Therefore, the leaders taught the clan members to lead simple lives. Chang Jiahua also mentions the relevant regulations that prohibited extravagance advocated by the Xu family of Zhejiang and the Jin family of Shanxi (2008).⁶⁶

Sumptuary laws have been discussed in Western historical scholarship as well. Adam Geczy's *Fashion and Orientalism: Dress, Textiles and Culture from the 17th to the 21st Century* (2013) argues that sumptuary laws restrict the use and importation of silk and explores hundreds of subtle ways that Western civilisation has been indebted to Eastern cultures, especially in clothing and the decorative arts.⁶⁷ In *Sumptuary Law in Italy, 1200–1500* (2002), Catherine Kovesi Killerby provides the most thorough account to date when discussing the later medieval Italian sumptuary laws. Kovesi Killerby argues that legislators attempted to restrict excessive expenditure (whether on food, clothing, gifts or ceremonies) and all sumptuary laws were concerned with various manifestations of excess and, in particular, with excess in the consumption of luxury goods.⁶⁸ In *The Social Life of Things* (1986), Arjun Appadurai argues that sumptuary laws constitute an intermediate consumption regulating device suited to societies devoted to stable status displays in exploding commodity contexts, such as India, China and Europe in the premodern period.⁶⁹

Ronald Eugene Rainey's thesis, *Sumptuary Legislation in Renaissance Florence* (1985), examines the targets of these sumptuary laws, the calendar of law enactments and representative documents pertaining to the enactment and enforcement in Renaissance Florence.⁷⁰ Donald Shively's study discusses the growth of commerce and consumption, which increased the finances of the other classes, in particular, artisans and merchants, bringing prosperity to many of the townspeople and enormous wealth to a few. Shively believes that the luxuries enjoyed by the lower class were a particular irritation portent to their superiors of the erosion of their own privileged

⁶⁶ Chang Jiahua. "Clan and Customs: A Microcosm of Social Changes in the Middle and Late Ming Dynasty Taking the Xu family in Jiangnan, Yuyao, Zhejiang as an Example." *Jilin University Journal*, no.19(2008): 1–26.

⁶⁷ Geczy, Adam. *Fashion and Orientalism: Dress, Textiles and Culture from the 17th to the 21st Century*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013, 16.

⁶⁸ Killerby, Catherine Kovesi. *Sumptuary Law in Italy, 1200–1500*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, 41.

⁶⁹ Appadurai, Arjun. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986, 25.

⁷⁰ Rainey, Ronald Eugene. "Sumptuary Legislation in Renaissance Florence, PhD thesis, University Microfilms International, 1985, 73.

status. The government issued sumptuary laws to maintain the distinctions between classes.⁷¹

Another study of sumptuary laws is Alan Hunt's *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (1996). He draws on secondary sources from European states throughout the last millennium, colonial laws in New England and laws in Japan and China. Hunt also examines the failure of sumptuary laws and rejects the idea that sumptuary law was an attempt to resist modernity.⁷²

William Sayers's article "Early Irish Attitudes toward Hair and Beards, Baldness and Tonsure" (1991) details the regulations on beards and hairstyles for different groups of people.⁷³ Seán Duffy and Robert Bartlett also discuss hair regulation.⁷⁴

Sparky Booker's essay, "Moustaches, Mantles, and Saffron Shirts: What Motivated Sumptuary Law in Medieval English Ireland" (2021), compares Irish laws with those of European countries. Booker argues that in Europe, the signalling of rank and social status was the main concern of sumptuary laws, while in Ireland, differentiation by ethnicity was the primary focus.⁷⁵ Danielle Terrazas Williams's *Finer Things: African-Descended Women, Sumptuary Laws, and Governance in Early Spanish America* (2021) explores the advent of sumptuary laws in the 16th century and examines the restrictions on African-descended women.⁷⁶ *The Right to Dress: Sumptuary Laws in a Global Perspective, c. 1200–1800* (2019), edited by Giorgio Riello and Ulinka Rublack, examines the global history of early modern sumptuary laws and compares the differing nature, functioning and socioeconomic consequences of sumptuary laws across the world.⁷⁷

⁷¹ Shively, Donald "Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan", 25 *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 154–155.

Shively, Donald H. "Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25, no. 3–4 (1964): 123–64, p133, 154–55.

⁷² Hunt, Alan. *Governance of the Consuming Passions: a History of Sumptuary Law*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, 24.

⁷³ William Sayers, "Early Irish Attitudes toward Hair and Beards, Baldness and Tonsure," *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 44 (1991): 154–89, at 157, 164–65.

⁷⁴ Seán Duffy, "The Problem of Degeneracy," in *Law and Disorder in Thirteenth-Century Ireland: The Dublin Parliament of 1297*, ed. James Lydon (Dublin, 1997), 87–106, at 88; Robert Bartlett, "Symbolic Meanings of Hair in the Middle Ages," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 4 (1994): 43–60, at 46.

⁷⁵ Booker, Sparky. "Moustaches, Mantles, and Saffron Shirts: What Motivated Sumptuary Law in Medieval English Ireland?" *Speculum* 96, no. 3 (2021): 726–70, at 748.

⁷⁶ Terrazas Williams, Danielle. "Finer Things: African-Descended Women, Sumptuary Laws, and Governance in Early Spanish America." *Journal of Women's History* 33, no. 3 (2021): 11–35, at 15.

⁷⁷ Riello, Giorgio, and Ulinka Rublack, eds. *The Right to Dress: Sumptuary Laws in a Global Perspective, c. 1200–1800*. Cambridge University Press, 2019, 170.

France J Shaw's study discusses certain types of enforcement and penalties for sumptuary laws in Scotland.⁷⁸ Kent Roberts Greenfield argues that punishing merchants became the primary strategy in Nürnberg.⁷⁹ Negley Harte argues that sometimes legislators confiscate offending items as punishment.⁸⁰

Mary Margaret Newett's article (1907) has been valuable in showing that legislators in Venice set up a special agency or appointed new officials to supervise luxury crimes like the emperors in imperial China while Bertha Haven Putnam discusses the Justices of the Peace supervising luxury crimes between 1327 and 1485 in England (1938).⁸¹ William Marvin Bowsky's *A Medieval Italian Commune: Siena Under the Nine, 1287–1355* (1981) examines specialised personnel to supervise luxury consumption. Bowsky argues that Siena, a city in Italy, set up an office, *donnaio*, responsible for sumptuary laws.⁸² John Martin Vincent summarises that the courts were responsible for sumptuary decrees in Switzerland.⁸³ In *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England* (1926), Frances Elizabeth Baldwin examines the motives, ineffective enforcement and failure of the strictly sumptuary legislation in England.⁸⁴

Towards the failure of sumptuary laws, Wilfrid Hopper's *The Tudor Sumptuary Laws* argues that personnel lack enthusiasm to perform long-term supervision tasks effectively.⁸⁵ Hilary Doda's study discusses another reason for failure: sumptuary laws were quickly outdated, such as the further detailed ban from 1514 to 1533 in England because fashion changed.⁸⁶ In Hayward Maria's *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII's England* (2009) and Kathleen Ashley's article, the popularity

⁷⁸ Shaw, Frances J. "Sumptuary legislation in Scotland." *Juridical Review* 24 (1979): 81–115, at 110.

⁷⁹ Greenfield, Kent R., *Sumptuary Law in Nürnberg: A Study in Paternal Government*, Vol. XXXVI, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Johns Hopkins Press, 1918, 122.

⁸⁰ Harte, N. B., 'State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England', in D. C. Coleman and A. H. John (eds.), *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England: Essays presented to F. J. Fisher*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976, 132–65, 143.

⁸¹ Newett, Mary Margaret, "The Sumptuary Laws of Venice in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries", in T. F. Tout and J. Tait (eds.), *Historical Essays by Members of the Owens College*, Manchester: The University Press, 1907, 253, 265; Putnam, Bertha Haven. *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries: Edward III to Richard III*. London: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne, 1938, Ivi.

⁸² Bowsky, William M. *A Medieval Italian Commune: Siena Under the Nine, 1287–1355*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981, 82.

⁸³ Vincent, John Martin. *Costume and Conduct in the Laws of Basel, Bern, and Zurich, 1370–1800*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935, 3–8.

⁸⁴ Baldwin, Frances Elizabeth., *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1926, 117–118.

⁸⁵ Hooper, Wilfrid. "The Tudor Sumptuary Laws." *The English Historical Review* XXX, no. CXIX (1915): 433–49, at 438, 443.

⁸⁶ Doda, Hilary. "'Saide Monstrous Hose': Compliance, Transgression and English Sumptuary Law to 1533." *Textile History* 45, no. 2(2014):171–91, at 186.

of violet purple silk also proved that the failure of sumptuary laws was related to fashion.⁸⁷ In *De Ornatu Mulierum: A Consilium of Antonius de Rosellis with an Introduction on Fifteenth Century Sumptuary Legislation* (1933), edited by Noel Denholm-Young and Hermann Kantorowicz, and Roper, Lyndal's article *Going to Church and Street: Weddings in Reformation Augsburg* (1985), sumptuary laws were less restrictive towards wealthy or high-class people, such as laws allowing the purchase of exemptions to preserve prohibited items.⁸⁸

The studies of sumptuary laws in Western history and imperial China seem to be artificially separated. Scholars studying China's sumptuary laws tend to focus on historical materials from various periods, largely ignoring sumptuary laws in Western history. Even when scholars attempt to compare sumptuary laws in the East and the West, they often use Japan as a case study and overlook imperial China. There is a need for a comparative study of the sumptuary laws of imperial China and Western countries in the same period. This study aims to analyse similarities and differences in the promulgation of the laws, legislative purposes, content, enforcement methods, agencies, and punishment measures. It is worthwhile to summarize the general rules of sumptuary laws. Additionally, it can be proven that rulers' attempts to restrict mass luxury consumption are futile during periods of social change.

*

The study is divided into thirteen chapters, beginning with the concept of Wu and Yao and explaining the origin, development, and glorious period of Wu Yao. The study then examines the causes hidden behind Wu Yao and analyses the deeper meaning of Wu Yao in traditional Chinese culture. This thesis also commences with a discussion of a comparative analysis of the Ming Dynasty and other countries. The upper class and governments promulgated similar enforcements and penalties to restrict consumption and distinguish classes for the same legislative purpose. The public's growing interest in daily goods and upper-class opposition to equal

⁸⁷ M. Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII's England*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, 96; K. Ashley, 'Material and symbolic gift-giving', in E. J. Burns, ed. *Medieval Fabrications: Dress, Textiles and other Cultural Imaginings*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004, 140–141.

⁸⁸ Denholm-Young, N., and H. Kantorowicz. "De Ornatu Mulierum: A Consilium of Antonius de Rosellis with an Introduction on Fifteenth Century Sumptuary Legislation." *Bibliofilia* 35, no. 8/9(1933):315–35, at 357; Roper, Lyndal. "'Going to Church and Street': Weddings in Reformation Augsburg." *Past & Present*, no. 106(1985):62–101, at 75.

consumption persisted for a long time. The phenomenon of Wu Yao is not unique to imperial China.

Chapter One examines repressed material desires and the theory of materialisation in imperial China. The overall economic and social level limited Ancient Chinese society. In traditional daily life, there was a very asymmetrical balance between material life and inner desires. The upper class and the rulers demanded that civilians should live a simple and coarse life, giving prominence to the prudent experience of spiritual cultivation and asking people to suppress their material desires, which was often not what they wanted. Material desire was inherent and hard to resist among people. Chapter Two focuses on the concept of Wu in Chinese culture. In the context of the ritual and cultural model, this study discusses the relationship between status, etiquette, social activities and public institutions, revealing the traditional notion that rituals are not separate from Wu and Wu does not violate rituals. Chapter Two also discusses the value and meanings of Wu and examines the appreciation, making, and use of Wu, including related social activities of different groups.

Chapter Three analyses the special concept of Yao in China. Yao usually represents unusual things. In the Han Dynasty, Confucians associated Yao with natural phenomena and regarded it as a warning from heaven when the emperor had engaged in misconduct. In other words, the categorisation of special natural phenomena and unusual things, such as Yao, was a means for Han Confucianism to interfere with politics and influence the emperor. Chapter Four argues that Yao in Chinese classical literature was not a direct metaphor but a beautiful temptation. To the literati, Yao meant an aesthetic of seduction. All of the human things and phenomena that caused people to indulge, intoxicate and make people jealous were Yao.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven analyse the origin, development and glorious period of Wu Yao. The origin of Wu Yao was Fu Yao, which first appeared in the Han Dynasty. Han Confucians believed that if people, including the emperor, did not wear appropriate clothes according to their status, such improper behaviour would lead to the condemnation of heaven. Fu Yao gradually took on richer forms, such as men in women's clothing, women in men's clothing, and civilians in clothing similar to that of the nobility. There were strict requirements for make-up, accessories, textiles, colour and the style of clothing. Chapter Five examines the development of

Wu Yao in the Tang and Song dynasties. In the Tang Dynasty, the government introduced a ban on lavishness to limit the public's consumption of luxury goods and the pursuit of fashion. Neo-Confucianism 理学, the most popular thought in the Song Dynasty, called on people to restrict material desire and had an impact on people's behaviours. Finally, the glorious period of Wu Yao, the Ming Dynasty, will be discussed. Social fashion changed from simple style to extravagance. It was expressed in terms of the quantity of utensils as profligate and in terms of quality as refined. Chapters Six and Seven base historical documents, pictures and artefacts to explore Wu Yao, examining unusual clothes, exquisite houses and carriages, the ways of entertainment, weddings and funeral customs and the representative status of fine artworks.

Chapter Eight analyses the artisans in Wu Yao. It discusses how some highly educated artisans with exceptional craftsmanship appeared in the community and became widely acclaimed among the literati. Chapter Nine discusses the destruction of the traditional hierarchy during the economically prosperous Ming Dynasty. The literati faced challenges in their career. The income of low-rank people was higher than that of high-class people like the literati. The significant income gap prompted some literati and officials to consider joining the lower-class merchants whom they had previously ignored. Additionally, a new urban group emerged during the Ming Dynasty. Chapter Ten discusses the crimes behind the Ming Wu Yao, focusing on the related crimes of the lower class, women and officials.

Chapter Eleven examines the regional distribution of Ming Wu Yao and divides all regions into three categories, analysing the social changes caused by the local commodity economy. The growth of the urban commodity economy and the prosperity of cities led to changes in the consumption habits of city residents. These changes resulted in extravagant and unruly behaviour among common people, which was Wu Yao. However, this extravagant consumption and transgressive behaviours often appeared in prosperous regions. Chapter Twelve explores the sumptuary laws of the Qing Dynasty. The Wu Yao phenomenon that occurred during the Ming Dynasty also occurred repeatedly during the Qing Dynasty. Chapter Thirteen compares the sumptuary laws in imperial China and other countries, such as Italy, Spain, France and Japan. The chapter argues that these countries had similar legislative purposes, content, enforcement, penalties and failures of sumptuary laws.

These conclusions clarify that Wu Yao and the political policy to deal with Wu Yao were a product of a specific period from a broader perspective.

Chapter One: “Luxury is a Sin” and “Thrift is a Virtue”

In imperial China, the traditional consumption concept was to resist luxury and advocate thrift. Orthodox thought, represented by Confucianism, believed that luxury was a sin. The pursuit of luxury among ordinary people would waste national resources, confuse hierarchical order and consume personal will. Emperors and governments promulgated sumptuary laws. In books and lectures, the literati called on people to restrain individual desires and live frugally. However, the definition of luxury and thrift seems to have always been controversial.

The idea of luxury has long been part of civilised society and was also present in imperial China. In the Western world, the concept of luxury has its roots in ancient Greece. In ancient Greek society, people were divided into different classes.⁸⁹ The upper class included the pharaohs and the nobility, who were known for enjoying luxury. The Greek elite displayed their wealth and status by wearing exquisite clothes and intricate gold and silver jewellery. Fine pottery from the 7th century serves as significant evidence of the luxurious lifestyle, which the East influenced. For example, artisans in Corinth used coloured slips to blend white, purple and yellow into a honey-coloured dilute glaze on pottery. They also used sharp points to score details into the glaze, creating richer details of the figures. This technique was derived from metalworking practices prevalent in the East (see Figure 1.1).⁹⁰ The quality of noble items can also be witnessed in the 16 pieces of gilded silver from the site of Morgantina in central Sicily, including cups, bowls, symposion paraphernalia, a medallion and two silver horns (see Figures 1.2–1.17).⁹¹ In Egypt, scented oils and incense have been used for a long time. These luxurious items are known for their unique ingredients and beautiful appearance. At the court of Ramesses II in the Delta, inhabitants wore festive garments every day, with their braids adorned with moringa oil and sweet ointment.⁹² Oil, once a basic necessity, became a luxury when scented substances were added. Anointing oil was used to honour officials. In ancient Egypt,

⁸⁹ Serena Rovai. *Luxury the Chinese Way: The Emergence of a New Competitive Scenario*. 1st ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016, 15.

⁹⁰ Neer, Richard T. *Art & Archaeology of the Greek World : A New History, C.2500–C.150 BCE*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2012, 110–111.

⁹¹ Ibid., 360.

⁹² Manniche, Lise. *Sacred Luxuries : Fragrance, Aromatherapy, and Cosmetics in Ancient Egypt*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1999, 7.

the pharaoh rewarded officials with gold necklaces, gloves and other precious gifts. In a solemn reward ceremony, the official raised his hands before the monarch, and the attendants anointed his body and clothes with fragrance.⁹³ After the Third Macedonian War (171–168 BC) ended, the young men in Rome started living luxuriously. They enjoyed elaborate meals at extravagant banquets, dressed in luxurious clothing, used expensive perfumes, and adorned their homes with ivory, silver and other luxury items. The prices of goods skyrocketed, with a jar of wine costing 100 drachmas and a jar of Pontic preserved fish costing 400 drachmas.⁹⁴ Roman citizens and nobles highly valued silk. Luxurious textiles were introduced to the West before the Crusades, and pilgrims often brought them. However, they remained rare and were mainly accessible to the wealthy. The exact date of trade with Asia and the Middle East is uncertain, but it is known to date back to the fourth century BC, primarily involving India and Persia.⁹⁵ With the opening of the Silk Road in the first century AD, China became a part of this trade network.

In ancient China, we can find similar consumer privileges closely related to class. The upper class included emperors, nobles, privileged literati, and bureaucrats who enjoyed lives of luxury, especially the emperors.⁹⁶ As the promulgators and promoters of the policy of thrift, the ruling class possessed and used the most productive means of subsistence while enjoying unsupervised power of consumption. As the country's economic base was gradually repaired, the new kings were born into wealth, lacking the experience of the lower classes and ignoring the suffering of poor people. It was common for royalty to take the lead in spending and rewarding without restraint. For instance, during the early Han Dynasty, the emperors promoted frugality. However, as the economy recovered, the emperors' lavish desires grew, and they even spent thousands of pounds of gold on their wedding ceremonies.⁹⁷ Liu Che (156 BC–87 BC), an emperor of the Han Dynasty, constructed a mausoleum for himself, which took 52 years to build. The tomb contained countless gold and silver treasures, as well as various funerary objects shaped like birds, fish, turtles, cows,

⁹³ Ibid., 8.

⁹⁴ Dillon, Matthew, and Lynda Garland. *The Ancient Romans : A Social and Political History from the Early Republic to the Death of Augustus*. London: Routledge, 2015, 245–246.

⁹⁵ Geczy, Adam. *Fashion and Orientalism: Dress, Textiles and Culture from the 17th to the 21st Century*. 1st ed. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2013, 17–18.

⁹⁶ Ibid., Serena Rovai. *Luxury the Chinese Way*, 15.

⁹⁷ (Han)Ban Gu 班固. *Han Shu* 汉书, *Wang Mang Zhuan* 王莽传, Volume 99. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1962, 4052.

horses, tigers, leopards and poultry.⁹⁸ Li Cui(833-873), Emperor Yizong of the Tang Dynasty, was often admonished by his ministers for his extravagant life. He was fond of banquets and held at least a dozen banquets a month, accompanied by 500 musicians to play live music.⁹⁹ Li Cui also provided illegal rewards, including jewellery to the musician Li Keji 李可及 and a several-foot-tall golden Qilin, a legendary hooved chimerical creature. He even insisted on giving the musician the title of General Weiwei.¹⁰⁰ Like the Egyptian aristocracy, the Song emperors were fond of fragrant items. Emperor Huizong of the Song Dynasty, Zhao Ji (1082–1135), was known for burning so much incense during his banquets that the smoke lingered for miles.¹⁰¹ When ministers died, the emperors would also offer incense to express condolences. For example, when General Zhang Jun 张俊 died, Emperor Gaozong (1107–1187) of the Song Dynasty rewarded his family with 150 taels of dipterocarp.¹⁰²

Emperors, together with the upper-class group, were exempt from sumptuary regulations, while commoners had no such privileges. The literati, who were part of the same interest group as the emperor, often condemned the people's lavish consumption. During the Spring and Autumn periods (770 BC–476 BC) and the Warring States period (475 BC–221 BC), the literati always showed anxiety out of a sense of social responsibility, attacking the public's pursuit of worldly pleasures and hoping that the public would restrain personal material desires. For example, the representatives of Taoism, Laozi and Zhuangzi, both believed that people should enjoy a frugal life. Laozi insisted, "I have three treasures and have kept them for a long time. The first is charity, the second is frugality, and the third is not to be the first in the world 我恒有三宝,持而保之:一曰慈,二曰俭,三曰不敢为天下先。”¹⁰³ Zhuangzi also approved that "if people desire to hear the music of bells and drums, to taste the delicacies and wines, and to satisfy the pleasures, this is corrupting.

⁹⁸ Ibid., (Han)Ban Gu 班固. *Han Shu* 汉书, *Wang Gong Liang Gong Bao* 王贡两龚鲍传, Volume 72, 3070–3071.

⁹⁹ (Song) Fan Zuyu 范祖禹. *Tang Jian* 唐鉴, Volume 21. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1984, 312.

¹⁰⁰ (Tang) Su Er 苏鹗. *Du Yang Za Bian* 杜阳杂编, Volume 21. Taipei: Xin Xing Book Company, 1962, 598.

¹⁰¹ (Song) Zhou Mi 周密. *Kui Xin Za Shi* 癸辛杂识. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1988, 218.

¹⁰² (Yuan) Tuo Tuo 脱脱. *Song History* 宋史. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2013, 2911.

¹⁰³ (pre-Qing) Laozi. *Tao Te Chi* 道德经. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2021, 273.

Indulging in exuberance, like climbing a mountain with a heavy load, is suffering; Being greedy for wealth and power, and mentally exhausted is sickness; Seeking and accumulating wealth, and not giving up greed is a shame; Accumulating wealth but not using it, and being greedy for more is fear. Remove these evils and there will be happiness. 今富人，耳营钟鼓管籥之声，口慊于刍豢醪醴之味，以感其意，遗忘其业，可谓乱矣。此六者天下之至害。”¹⁰⁴ Laozi believed that wealth leads to many evils. The literati believed that the main problem with extravagance was not the consumption of wealth but that it stimulated human desire, causing people to lose their moral discipline and further undermining the norms of propriety. All sectors of society, including the ruling class, must abstain from extravagance and advocate frugality in order for society to remain stable. Some Confucianists argued that it was easy for people to become addicted to Wu, and the literati held the belief that material desire would cause people to lose ambition. For instance, Mencius said, “The ears and the eyes could not think, but were blinded by Wu 耳目之官不思，而蔽于物” which meant that people thought through their minds rather than through their senses, such as the ears, eyes, mouth and nose.¹⁰⁵ People were incapable of judging Wu and would succumb to material desires, further forgetting the virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom of human nature. Therefore, the mainstream thought represented by Confucianism had long insisted on advocating thrift and suppressing extravagance, ignoring material enjoyment and attaching importance to spiritual cultivation.

The concept of luxury desires seems ambiguous. There is no consensus among literati, even within Confucian philosophy. Confucius acknowledged that it was a basic human desire to seek wealth and status and to avoid poverty and humility. He argued that humans always had desires, and the key was to control desires. Unrestrained desire led to greed, and excessive greed was considered a luxury that undermined human nature and reduced humans to the level of beasts. Mencius emphasised the importance of material interests in moral education and the enhancement of citizens’ moral standards. He suggested implementing minimum

¹⁰⁴ (pre-Qing) Zhuangzi. *Zhuangzi* 庄子. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2010, 523.

¹⁰⁵ (pre-Qing) Mengzi. *Mengzi* 孟子. Translated by Fang Yong. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2010, 229.

consumption standards. Mencius argued that a wise ruler should ensure their people have enough resources to support their parents, spouses and children. This would involve providing adequate food and clothing in prosperous times and preventing starvation during difficult times.¹⁰⁶ Xunzi suggested using the heart to guide whether to pursue desires or practice abstinence. Because desires were diverse and not always immediately satisfied, one should follow the Tao.¹⁰⁷ By controlling desires with the Tao, one can lead a good life. The pre-Qin (before 220 BC) Confucian theory of consumer behaviour valued abstinence, but this was later taken to the extreme by orthodox Confucian ethics. During the Song Dynasty (960–1279), Cheng Hao 程颢, Cheng Yi 程颐, and Zhu Xi 朱熹 made a distinction between natural principles and human desires. Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi argued that satisfying basic life needs, such as food when hungry and clothes when cold, was in line with natural principles. However, they believed that pursuing desires for delicious food, luxury, and indulgent living went beyond these natural principles.¹⁰⁸ Zhu Xi emphasised the debate between the rules of Heaven and human desires. He argued that the purpose of education was to eliminate human desires and restore natural principles.¹⁰⁹ However, Zhu Xi also admitted that people drank water when they were thirsty and ate when they were hungry, which were everyday physiological needs of human beings that must be satisfied.¹¹⁰ This fundamental desire was normal, and it was natural to satisfy the normal consumption needs of human beings.¹¹¹

What kind of consumption method was promoted in imperial China? In imperial China, Confucianism, led by Confucius, promoted hierarchical consumption. Confucius emphasised the importance of maintaining hierarchy and moral education, believing that a man's political status, economic interests and consumption were determined by identity and class. In Confucius' view, the concepts of consumption, behaviours, and methods of social members should be regulated by the hierarchy of

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., *Mengzi* 孟子, 14.

¹⁰⁷ (pre-Qin) Xunzi 荀子. Translated by Wang Xianqian. *Xun Zi's Collected Works* 荀子集解. Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2012, 368.

¹⁰⁸ (Song) Cheng Hao 程颢 and Cheng Yi 程颐. *Er Cheng Ji* 二程集. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1981, 123.

¹⁰⁹ (Song) Zhu Xi 朱熹. *Zhu Zi Yu Lei* 朱子语类. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2014, 240.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., Zhu Xi 朱熹, 241.

¹¹¹ Ibid., Zhu Xi 朱熹, 2461.

etiquette. He believed that etiquette was the rule of the country and advocated “serving the country with etiquette.” Social members formed an orderly social hierarchical network based on their blood and patriarchal relationships. They exercised a hierarchical consumption concept based on the distinction between upper and lower classes. Consumption patterns were not just a matter of personal choice but were deeply influenced by the political status and economic interests of various classes and social groups. This influence was particularly evident in the strict hierarchical differences that existed. According to the hierarchical rules of rituals, Confucius advocated that consumption should mirror the distinction between the inferior and the superior. The ruling Ji family of the Lu State used the ancient Chinese ritual dance called the eight rows of dancers. This dance was the highest specification of ritual dances and was reserved for emperors. The performers were organised into eight vertical and horizontal columns, with eight people in each column, for 64 people. According to regulations, the Ji family were only permitted to watch the performance of 16 dancers.¹¹² Confucius was very dissatisfied with Ji’s behaviour and thought it was a severe transgression of status and a violation of hierarchical order. In Confucius’ view, etiquette rather than economic conditions determined individual consumption behaviour. Confucius disapproved of some thrifty consumption behaviour, believing that omitting a sheep when offering sacrifices to the ancestral temple was frugal but did not meet etiquette requirements.¹¹³

The criteria for defining luxury were closely linked to social hierarchy, as demonstrated by the sumptuary laws of various historical periods. Emperors issued policies to control common people, focusing on consumption behaviour. In the traditional Chinese class structure, there was a clear distinction between the ruling class and the ruled class. Customs and laws granted the ruling class various legal, political and economic privileges. The quality of life which the elite enjoyed was very different from that of the common people. The differences in lifestyle were not entirely determined by economic conditions but were influenced by the sumptuary laws issued by the government. Under the management of the sumptuary laws, the satisfaction of people’s material desires and the way they consumed were supposed to be conditional on their social status. There were plenty of common people who were

¹¹² (pre-Qing) Confucius. *The Analects* 论语. Translated by Yang Bojun. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1980, 23.

¹¹³ Ibid., (pre-Qing) Confucius, 29.

rich but were not free to use money. For example, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328–1398), the first emperor of the Ming Dynasty, established a set of prohibitions on extravagance according to classes at the beginning of the empire, including houses, clothing, carriages and utensils, among others. The control and anti-control in the field of consumption launched fierce conflicts between the ruling class and the ruled class, and the number of bans showed a peak between the Chenghua 成化 and Jiajing 嘉靖 period (1465–1566).

Along with the view that luxury was a sin, orthodoxy also believed that frugality was worth being promoted. In formulating national policies, quite a few emperors advocated frugality and restricted luxury. Take the example of the pre-Qin dynasty and the Han Dynasty. After years of warfare, the economic situation was decadent in the early years of state power. Emperors such as Liu Bang 汉高祖 (256 BC–195 BC), Liu Ying 汉惠帝 (210 BC–188 BC), Liu Heng 汉文帝 (203 BC–157 BC) and Liu Che 汉景帝 (188 BC–141 BC) all took the initiative to adopt “advocating frugality against extravagance policy” as their basic economic policy-making stance. They appealed to the people to be thrifty and to adopt a “ruling the country through frugality 以俭治国” approach to make the country powerful. These policies could be summarised in two main categories: “less development 少兴作” and “less taxation 薄赋敛”, the main aim of which was “not to bother people”. In the chapter *Food and Goods* in *Han Book* 汉书·食货志, it was said that “Less taxation and save the corvee, so as to reduce the burden on the public, and then good governance can be achieved 薄赋敛，省徭役，以宽民力，然后可善治也。”¹¹⁴ The emperors’ promotion of public thrift in this period was primarily motivated by economic interests. By the middle of the reign of Emperor Yuan 汉元帝 of the Han Dynasty, frugality had a threefold economic, political and moral significance under the political model of orderly respect for inferiority and superiority. Each member of society could only

¹¹⁴ Ibid., (Han)Ban Gu 班固. *Han Shu* 汉书, *Shi Huo Zhi* 食货志, Volume 24, 1137.

consume and possess the amount and type of consumer goods to which he or she was entitled. Extravagant consumer behaviours amounted to overstepping the rank. For political purposes during this period, the emperors and the nobility used frugality to maintain the stability of the class and to prevent the civilians from overstepping their economic, intellectual and moral boundaries.

The materialistic and hedonistic behaviour of emperors inevitably led to imitation by the public. By the late Ming Dynasty, the government had difficulty controlling the unprecedentedly prosperous market and the inflated material desires of people, and it was already tired of issuing these bans on clothing consumption. Therefore, the number of bans fell. The prohibition of extravagance maintained a hierarchical social structure and helped to propagate the admiration of simplicity, which taught the public to observe the modes of propriety. However, the objects and scope of such bans were too broad and involved the private sphere, which was highly detailed and challenging to enforce thoroughly. When inflated desires undermined the strict social order, official administration became inefficient, and Wu Yao prevailed as a social development. People ceased to repress materialistic desires and began to pursue fashion, with the consequent destruction of the dictatorship itself. This process played out in almost every dynasty in China.

In the meantime, the literati promoted frugality among the public for reasons of practical interest. During the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220), there was a method for identifying and nurturing potential officials. People who were filial and thrifty would be recommended for official positions. It was mandated that every 200,000 families should nominate one candidate each year, who would then be appointed to an official position by the imperial court.¹¹⁵ In addition to being knowledgeable and talented, the elected candidates were required to be respectful and obedient to their parents and demonstrate thriftiness. The main issue with the method of “promoting people with integrity” lies in the subjective judgement of the standard. During the selection process, the candidates were often praised for being frugal, as if frugality was a desirable virtue that could get bonus points. When moral standards were a key factor in selecting officials and being thrifty was seen as a visible sign of moral nobility, it became easier to understand why there was an increase in frugal behaviour among the literati. When these educated elites took on government positions, they were in charge

¹¹⁵ (Song) Fan Ye. *Hou Han Shu* 后汉书. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1965, 1268.

of overseeing the political and economic affairs of those under their authority, as well as influencing their behaviour. The lavishness of the people under the officials' administration was viewed as a failure in their governance capabilities. Encouraging thriftiness was a prevalent method used by officials to govern their areas. During the reign of Emperor Xuan, Gong Sui 龚遂, the governor of Bohai, noticed that the people in the region were living luxuriously and neglecting farming.¹¹⁶ To address this, he implemented frugal measures and encouraged the public to focus on agricultural production. Another example was in Nanyang. The local nobles lived a luxurious life. Local official Wang Chang wore commoners' clothes and rode in a dilapidated carriage to demonstrate frugality.¹¹⁷

The emperors and upper class of China generally supported savings and thrift while opposing luxury regarding consumption and living standards. They believed that human desires, especially those of ordinary people, should never be satiated, viewing desires as a sin and seeking to control them. Savings were considered as necessary preparations for emergencies such as disease and famine, and thrift was encouraged as a virtue. Additionally, differences in living standards were considered essential indicators of class and status.¹¹⁸ However, it appears that there is a paradox in the policy of thrift. What is beneficial for each person individually may not be beneficial for everyone as a whole. In some instances, individual efforts to increase savings may result in an overall decrease in actual savings. If a country is at full employment, the more national product is consumed, the less will be available for capital formation. However, during an economic depression, people who save will reduce consumption, and the country's purchasing power declines. At the same time, other people's incomes decrease. If everyone tries to hoard savings, they cannot all succeed. When unemployment exists in a country, consumption and investment are complementary rather than competitive.¹¹⁹ When governments implement prudent economic policies during times of national prosperity, it can increase national savings. However, when a country cannot lower policy rates in response to a decrease in

¹¹⁶ Ibid., *Han Shu* 汉书, *Shi Huo Zhi* 食货志, Volume 24, 3640.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., Fan Ye. *Hou Han Shu*, 1825.

¹¹⁸ Yang, Liansheng. *Studies in Chinese Institutional History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961, 58–74.

¹¹⁹ Samuelson, Paul Anthony. *Economics: An Introductory Analysis*. 5th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948, 269–272.

global demand, such as during a liquidity trap, these prudent policies in prosperous countries can worsen recessions in countries.¹²⁰

During certain periods of imperial China, there were similar debates about the merits of excessive thrift and the promotion of consumption for prosperity. For instance, Xunzi supported thrift but disagreed with Mozi's belief in frugality, arguing that extreme frugality was not beneficial for the nation's wealth. Xunzi believed that being overly frugal could hinder production.¹²¹ Guanzi believed that constructing large burial chambers would employ people with low incomes. Decorating beautiful graves would create work for artisans and painters. The production of large coffins would enrich carpenters, and the use of more burial clothes and quilts would make female workers profitable.¹²² He thought that luxury consumption would lead to the social division of labour and commodity production. Sang Hongyang 桑弘羊 inherited and developed Guanzi's consumerism. He recognised the positive role of consumption in promoting agriculture, industry and commerce and acknowledged that luxury consumption affected the redistribution of social wealth.¹²³ In the Song Dynasty, Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989–1052) applied luxury consumption to actual famine relief and economic revitalisation.¹²⁴ During the Ming and Qing dynasties, capitalist production relations emerged, leading some progressive philosophers to recognise the limitations of thrift policies and advocate for the concept of luxury. Lu Ji (1515–1552) from the Ming Dynasty further developed the idea of encouraging consumption. At the same time, Qing philosopher Dai Zhen 戴震 (1724–1777) believed that Song Confucianism denied the value of human desire and neglected

¹²⁰ Fornaro, Luca, and Federica Romei. "The Paradox of Global Thrift." *The American Economic Review* 109, no. 11 (2019): 3745–79; Yang, Liansheng. *Studies in Chinese Institutional History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961, p58–74; Maynard Keynes, B John. "From Keynes to Roosevelt: Our Recovery Plan Assayed: The British Economist Writes an Open Letter to the President Finding Reasons, in Our Policies, for Both Hopes and Fears." *The New York Times*, December 31, 1933; Chamley, Christophe. "A Paradox of Thrift in General Equilibrium without Forward Markets." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 10, no. 6 (2012): 1215–35; Alexander, Catherine, Agustin Diz, Stephen Gudeman, Chris Hann, Deborah James, David Neves, Tomasz Rakowski, et al. *Thrift and Its Paradoxes : From Domestic to Political Economy*. Edited by Catherine Alexander and Daniel Sosna. New York: Berghahn Books, 2022.

¹²¹ (pre-Qin) Xunzi 荀子. Translated by Wang Xianqian. *Xun Zi's Collected Works 荀子集解*. Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2012, 183.

¹²² (pre-Qin) Guanzi 管子. *Guanzi 管子*, Volume 99. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2004, 688; see also in Yang, Liansheng. *Studies in Chinese Institutional History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961, 58–74.

¹²³ (Han) Huan Kuan 桓宽. *Yan Tie Lun 盐铁论*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1992, 43.

¹²⁴ (Song) Shen Kuo 沈括. *Meng Xi Bi Tan 梦溪笔谈*. Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2003, 99.

concern for upper class' lives and attention to material production. Starting from the belief in natural human nature, Tan Sitong 譚嗣同(1865–1898) proposed the idea of “respecting luxury and favouring thrift” and argued that the moral concept of excessive thrift was detrimental to the development of social productivity.¹²⁵

Luxury and thrift may not actually exist; they are merely ethical constructs used by the ruling class to uphold their class privileges. The ruling class uses a moral facade to justify its frugal policies in order to maintain autocratic rule, a structured social hierarchy, and the seizing of ordinary people's wealth. The concept of “promoting thrift and curbing extravagance” for the lower class aims to make them primarily focus on producing goods and less on consuming non-essential items. This means that non-essential consumption should be minimised. If labourers are seen as essential components of the national economy and require little attention and maintenance, the country as a whole will be more robust and efficient. However, this assumption does not seem to have considered the fact that human beings should not and cannot be arbitrarily restricted or even deprived of their pursuit and aspiration for material enjoyment, not to mention the fact that the upper class in imperial China led by the emperors did not strictly follow the prohibition of luxury and repeatedly violated sumptuary laws. In an empire where public drinking was restricted, and upper-class people were subject to constant examinations of thrift and luxury standards with very blurred boundaries, the ruling class imposed this “healthy” lifestyle on the ruled. It was easy to understand that the silent majority would make breakthroughs under all possible circumstances. Therefore, the public enjoyed material desires, pursued novel luxury goods, and violated the sumptuary law. The phenomenon of Wu Yao seems to be traceable.

¹²⁵ (Qing) Tan Sitong 譚嗣同. *Ren Xue* 仁学. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1958, 38.

Chapter Two: The Concept, Appreciating, Making and Using of “Wu”

As mentioned in Chapter One, the ruling class and the literati demonised Wu. They proposed various measures to stop the material desires of the public to maintain the literati’s status and prevent ordinary people from enjoying the same material resources. The literati needed to develop a series of aesthetic standards for Wu that were consistent with their values and ethics and required the public to agree, learn and comply with the standards. The public evaluated or selected daily utensils according to these aesthetic standards. Wu’s shape, material and function were in line with the taste of high-class people and the literati. When political intentions and moral concepts were concretised into the choice of daily utensils, common people were unconsciously educated, which was the Enlightenment Function of Wu 器物教化.

From the Shang Dynasty (1600 BC–1046 BC) to the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), the concept of Wu was extended from mysterious things in nature to the human world, covering almost everything in the universe. Wu existed in every aspect of people’s lives. The ruling class used the Enlightenment Function of Wu as a means of education, and the supervision of the public also extended to the private sphere of daily life.

“Wu” seems to be a simple and easily understood concept. However, some scholars such as Sarah Allan argue that Wu in traditional Chinese culture cannot be understood in the sense of words such as “material” and “object”. She rejects the use of the word “creature” to describe Wu in ancient China, which limits Wu to animal life. Moreover, the original meaning of “things” refers to inanimate objects. In contrast, the phrase “living things” seems to be misleading in setting up an artificial opposition between living and non-living things.¹²⁶ While these words were included in the concept of Wu, people in the Han Dynasty(202 BC–220) to the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) interpreted and experienced Wu from a broader perspective, with the

¹²⁶ Allan, Sarah. *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue*. State University of New York Press, 1997, 93–100.

human body and mind perception, free-thinking and imagination. They created many philosophical and cultural traditions related to Wu.

In the beginning, Wu appeared in the oracle bone script. Chinese people used animal bones or tortoise shells for divination and carved the time, reason and fulfilment of the divination on tortoise shells. An oracle bone divination has a long history. The oracle bone with symbols unearthed at the Jiahu site in Wuyang, Henan province, was thought to date from the early Neolithic period, 8,000 years ago. However, early oracle bone divination still retained the primitive form of ancient divination. It was not until the Shang Dynasty (1600 BC–1046 BC) that oracle bone divination was no longer limited to direct burning, and a more mature system of writing was developed. The written records on an oracle bone were known as Bu Ci 卜辭.¹²⁷ The word “Wu” had already appeared in the oracle bone divinations from the archaeological excavations in the Shang Dynasty. Wu, the Chinese word “物”, was originally written as Wu “勿”, and both words had the same pronunciation. The original meaning of Wu 勿 was probably related to colour. In the early Chinese culture, the colour of White 白 and the colour of Wu 勿 were different. White 白 in Chinese culture included all light colours, and Wu 勿 included all dark or miscellaneous colours, such as red, yellow and blue. Black was included at the end of the colour spectrum, implying the darkest colour.

Moreover, Wu 物 was a combination of the characters Wu 勿 and Cattle 牛. In *Guan Tang Ji Lin* 观堂集林, Wang Guowei argues that “the ancient Chinese people called Za Bo 雜帛 as Wu 物 because Wu 物 was originally the name of a mixed-colored cattle.” Za Bo 雜帛 referred to silk fabrics with coloured threads.¹²⁸ If we do not stick to the view that Wu was related to the mixed-coloured cattle, according to records of sacrificial activities during the Shang Dynasty, Wu usually referred to

¹²⁷ Li Zhenfeng, “A Study on the Oracle Inscriptions and the Literature and Art in Shang.” PhD dissertation, Harbin Normal University, 2012.

¹²⁸ Wang Guowei. *Guan Tang Ji Lin* 观堂集林. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1961, 287.

offerings such as cattle, sheep, fish and artefacts, wine or ceremonial vessels. People used animals as sacrificial offerings or engraved animal images on bronze vessels, using these objects as a medium for communicating with heaven, earth, gods and humans.

The word Wu in the Shang Dynasty was primarily related to natural things. Wu then gradually appeared in peoples' daily lives. Compared with the Shang Dynasty, there were more formal historical records in the Western Zhou dynasty (1046 BC–771 BC). For example, *Shang Shu* 尚书, *Yi Zhou Shu* 逸周书, and *The Book of Songs* 诗经 could be regarded as credible historical written records. *Shang Shu* was an ancient Chinese history book containing records of the oaths, talks and speeches of the ancient emperors. In the various chapters of *Shang Shu*, Wu is widely used to refer to everything in nature, society, human activity and culture. For instance, it was written in the chapter on *Lve Ao* 旅獒, “They presented local specialties to the emperor, but no matter how far away they were, their specialties were only food, clothing, and utensils and so on 无有远迩，毕献方物，惟服食器用”.¹²⁹ The Wu here in this chapter refers to the tribute offered by the vassal states to the Zhou Emperor, including clothing, food and utensils. Wang Fuzhi has a precise summary of Wu in his book *Introduction to Shang Shu* 尚书引义: “The wind, the thunder, the rain and the dew in the universe are Wu. The mountains, the hills and the marshes on the earth are Wu. The flying or diving animals and plants are Wu. Those things that work to enrich people are also Wu. The gains and losses, the good and the evil, fathers, sons and brothers, the good virtues and good words, benevolence, justice, etiquette and music, all of these are Wu.天之风霆雨露亦物也，地之山陵原隰亦物也；则其为阴阳、为刚柔者皆物也...则其为仁义礼乐者皆物也.”¹³⁰ During this period, the category of Wu was further expanded from the mysterious natural things in the Shang Dynasty to daily things in social activities.

¹²⁹ Shi Jingyan. *Shang Shu* 尚书. Lijiang Publishing Limited, 2017, 420.

¹³⁰ Wang Fuzhi. *Shang Shu Yin Yi* 尚书引义. Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1988, 241.

In the pre-Qin dynasty, including the Spring and Autumn period (770 BC–476 BC) and the Warring States period (475 BC–221 BC), there were acute social conflicts and constant wars. The public suffered from class oppression and warfare. However, it was also a time of unprecedented intellectual and cultural splendour in ancient China with the emergence of numerous philosophers. These philosophers wrote philosophical works and taught students, and the debates among different thoughts in these schools constantly took place, showing a flourishing academic scene, which was known as “The Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought 百家争鸣”. The main schools of thought were Taoism 道家, Confucianism 儒家, Legalists 法家 and Mohism 墨家. Furthermore, the previously ignored issue of Wu gained considerable importance in these schools, especially in Taoism.

In the pre-Qin dynasty, the definition of Wu was further expanded, and the concept of Wan Wu 万物 emerged. Wan 万 was the number “ten thousand”, which was an imaginary reference. Zhuangzi divided Wu into the things existing in nature and the things belonging to society. The natural things were what Zhuangzi described as Wan Wu 万物. In the chapter of *Zhi Bei You* 庄子知北游, Zhuangzi argues that “Wan Wu continues to exist through the transformation of form 万物以形相生.”¹³¹

Wan Wu included humans, ores, mountains, rivers, plants, animals and wind. The things belonging to society were what Zhuangzi called External Wu 身外之物.

External Wu refers to a man’s possessions, such as status, fame, wealth and morality.

During this period, philosophers such as Zhuangzi and Xunzi began to think about the relationship between humans and Wu and wrote their opinions in philosophical works. They believed that humans needed to master subjective initiative in their dealings with Wu, to create Wu, to use Wu and to love Wu. In the chapter of *Shan Mu* 庄子·山木, Zhuangzi argued that “One should dominate Wu and not be dominated by Wu 物物而不物于物.”¹³² Xunzi emphasised the energetic nature of

¹³¹ Ibid., Zhuangzi, 365.

¹³² Ibid., Zhuangzi, 318.

man over Wu: “It is better to collect and rule Wu than to worship the heavens and contemplate heavens. It is better to master the heaven’s movements and use it than to obey and sing the praises of heaven. It is better to adapt to the season and use it than to hope and wait for the season 大天而思之,孰与物畜而制之; 从天而颂之, 孰与制天命而用之;望时而待之,孰与应时而使之.”¹³³

Philosophers of different schools of thought agreed that the meaning of Wu was a form of beauty, of whom were Zhuangzi and Mengzi. Zhuangzi affirmed the holistic and equal relationship between Wu and human beings. The universe, human beings and Wu were part of an interdependent and interconnected organic system. He also believed that all things were equal and that there was no nobility or inferiority. The value of Wu should not be judged by Wu’s utility. In the chapter of *Autumn Water* 庄子秋水, “From the point of the Tao, there was no such Wu as nobility or inferiority 以道观之, 物无贵贱.”¹³⁴ The distinction between beauty and ugliness, correct and incorrect, good and evil, and nobility and inferiority were imposed on Wu by the subjective judgement of human beings. In addition to Taoism, Confucianism also supported the view that a gentleman should love Wu. In Menzi’s opinion, “A gentleman does not tolerate the death of animals when he sees it alive. He hears the animal scream and can not bear to eat it. This is why a gentleman always stays away from the kitchen 君子之于禽兽也,见其生,不忍见其死;闻其声,不忍食其肉。是以君子远庖厨也.”¹³⁵ Under the influence of this moral notion of a gentleman’s love of Wu, frugality became a Chinese tradition, which was one of the reasons why the literati attacked extravagance and Wu Yao.

From Bu Ci in the Shang Dynasty to pre-Qin philosophy, Wu began as a mysterious natural being and eventually developed into a philosophical concept, which gradually entered daily life and social activities. In traditional Chinese culture,

¹³³ (pre-Qing) Xunzi 荀子. Translated by Wang Xianqian, *Xun Tz’s Collected Works* 荀子集解. Shanghai:

Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2012, 310.

¹³⁴ Ibid., Zhungzi, 260.

¹³⁵ Ibid., Mengzi, 13.

Wu was not boring. On the contrary, Wu was an organism that contained everything, including mountains, rivers, soil, plants, animals, wind, fire and human beings. Moreover, Wu could grow and regenerate like plants. The development of Wu also witnessed the process of humanity's perception, understanding and transformation of nature.

After defining the concept of Wu, the question is how to appreciate, make and use it. In appreciating Wu, the elite class, especially the literati, dominated the discourse of evaluation and led the art style, the content of spiritual life, as well as aesthetic taste, value standards and fashion. The literati set the standard for Wu's making and use. For example, the literati in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912) were keen to publish appreciation manuals and aesthetic works. The literati emphasised the importance of practicality in the making of Wu and rejected superfluous decoration that undermined Wu's usefulness, seeing simplicity as the highest form of beauty. Wu, especially utensils, was given specific political ideas and moral concepts based on the ritual and cultural model 礼俗文化, and the elite implemented indoctrination of specific groups of people through Wu in order to achieve predetermined goals, which was the unique way of ideological education in ancient China—the Enlightenment Function of Wu 器物教化.

Throughout the development of Wu from the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220) to the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912), the evolution of Wu had always been accompanied by the aesthetic thought of the country, connoting the creative spirit of people continuing to integrate, create and perfect the aesthetics of Wu. As early as the pre-Qin dynasty, an official document on the craftsmanship of utensils, *Kao Gong Ji* 考工记, was published and became an essential handbook. *Kao Gong Ji* covered six industrial structures and 30 kinds of crafts of the government-owned handicraft industry at that time, setting out norms for the duties, procedures, specifications, standards, ingredients and inspection of artisans. In the meantime, *Kao Gong Ji* also put forward important ideas and basic principles for the design and creation of Wu, “The combination of the four elements, including conformity to weather, suitability to circumstance, good materials and excellent craftsmanship, was the only way to produce fine wares 天有时，地有气，材有美，工有巧。合此四者，然后可以为

良。” Thus, the dialectical relationship between human-made objects and nature directly influenced the design and creation process, which reflected a reverence for the laws of nature. Aesthetic evaluation of Wu also appeared in Chinese philosophical thought. For instance, Confucius said, “Red lacquer, white jade and precious pearls all have their own natural beauty and do not need to be artificially carved or decorated 吾闻之，丹漆不文，白玉不雕，宝珠不饰。何也？质有余者，不受饰也。”¹³⁶ He argued that when choosing materials to make Wu, artisans should respect the beauty of the material as it was. Laozi claimed that “The objects crafted by the most skilled artisans are so lifelike that they seem simple and unassuming at first glance. 大巧若拙。”¹³⁷ He proposed that the public should admire natural and simple beauty and reject the idea of artificial decoration. These philosophers significantly and profoundly impacted the aesthetic view of Wu, which set the standard for the making, using and appreciating of Wu.

For the modelling styles of artworks, the literati preferred to choose a simple style. They wanted to achieve the unity of form with fewer means and rejected elaborate decoration. Based on the ritual and cultural model, artisans were restricted to the demands of the higher class. The decoration, materials, specifications and dimensions were all clearly defined, and artisans could only use their personal artistic talents within a limited range. Although there were many restrictions, ancient Chinese artisans produced exceptional artworks. The furniture of the Ming Dynasty is a good example. The Ming furniture was of a very high standard in terms of modelling and function and was mainly made of hardwoods. The structures and elements of the Ming furniture are typical representatives of ancient Chinese wooden furniture, which used the mortise-tenon 榫卯 structure. Mortise-tenon structure was a special design technique (see Figure 2.1). Artisans created complex and elaborate mortises and tenons without using nails or wood glue between the components, making full use of materials. The construction was strong and not easily loosened.

¹³⁶ (pre-Qing) Confucius. *Jia Yu 家语*. Translated by Wang Su. Guilin: Publishing Limited, 2019, 77.

¹³⁷ Chen Guying. *Laozi Jin Zhu Jin Yi 老子今注今译*, Translated by Chen Guying. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020, 224.

Another advantage of mortise-tenon construction was both practical and aesthetic. It was easy to disassemble and assemble, facilitating the replacement of parts during restoration without harming the whole furniture. In terms of shape, the Ming furniture was predominantly straight and extremely simple, supplemented by curves, showing an overall variation of curves and straightness and a combination of rigidity and flexibility. The most iconic circle chair, for example, was a basic shape with a rounded bottom and top, the backrest and armrests consisting of a rounded line (see Figure 2.2). The curve extended from the middle of the backrest to the front on both sides, following the shape and joining the armrests in a rounded, soft and graceful curve, subtly forming a smooth circle. Not only could people lean on their elbows when sitting, but their arms were also supported, meaning that it was accessible and comfortable. During this period, the Ming furniture was decorated only at nodes and fine details that came into frequent contact with the human body, such as handrails, wire legs and latches, which were exquisitely designed. Artisans created a simple style with fine details.

In addition to modelling styles, the materials used in artworks were also carefully selected and were artificially endowed with different connotations, of which jade was their favourite. During the period of Liangzhu 良渚 Culture, a large number of fine jade wares appeared. The literati believed that jade wares could communicate with the gods, and they took refuge in the gods for unpredictable disasters or personal destinies, using jade wares as a medium of communication with heaven and earth. During the pre-Qin dynasty (770 BC–221 BC), the ruling class began to promote jade and advocated the idea that “a gentleman has the virtue of being like jade” in order to maintain social stability and consolidate its state power. Jade was considered a symbol of virtue and integrity and a source of spiritual strength. *The Origin of Chinese Characters* 说文解字 was the first dictionary in China to be arranged by radicals. In this dictionary, it was said that “Jade is a kind of beautiful stones and has five virtues. It is warm and gentle, like a benevolent man. It is wise, and from the outside you could know the inside, just like the righteous. Its voice is spreading wide and soaring, like the wise men. It would rather break than bend, like the warrior. It is sharp but not hurting others, like a noble man. 玉，石之美。有五德。润泽以温，仁之方也；理自外，可以知中，义之方也；其声舒扬，专以远闻，智之方也；不挠

而折，勇之方也；锐廉而不伎，洁之方也。”¹³⁸ People gave the jade moral or personalised sense, making it the embodiment of a gentleman of high moral character. Wearing jade became a popular fashion.

The most important function of Wu was considered to be its practicality. In the preface to the chapter on *Utensils* in Volume 7 of *Treatise on Superfluous Things* 长物志, Wen Zhenheng in the Ming Dynasty summed up the characteristics of ancient Chinese objects: “The ancient Chinese spared no effort in the production of utensils and strove for perfect functionality 古人制器尚用，不惜所费。”¹³⁹ For example, during the Five Dynasties (906–960), furniture made up of frames and panels was made with partial gaps in the ground, which allowed the furniture to breathe and resist dampness and reduced the chances of the panels shrinking and deforming. The painting, *The Night Revels of Han Xizai*, vividly represents a night part hosted by Han Xizai and depicts the furniture in the Five Dynasties (see Figure 2.3). Following the writing habits of people in ancient China, the desk was designed with a flat surface and raised ends in order to prevent the ink from running down and the press strips from turning sideways (see Figure 2.4). In *Xian Qing Ou Ji* 闲情偶记, Li Yu, a poet in the Ming Dynasty, talked about the decoration of windows and balustrades, “Transparency, delicacy and compactness are all aesthetics obtained from the processing of the material in terms of shape, which do not come first. The most important thing is to be solid and firm. 窗棂以明透为先，栏杆以玲珑为主。然此皆属第二义，其首重者在一字之坚，坚而后论工拙。”¹⁴⁰ For the design of the cabinets, he pointed out that “The most important thing was the storage function. There must be enough space for things 造橱立柜，无他智巧，总以多容善纳为贵。”¹⁴¹ The shape of the heavy object used to press the mat often adopted the image

¹³⁸ (Han) Xu Shen 许慎. *The Origin of Chinese Characters* 说文解字. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1963, 10.

¹³⁹ (Ming) Wen Zhen Heng 文震亨. *Treatise on Superfluous Things* 长物志. Beijing: Gold Wall Press, 2010, 218.

¹⁴⁰ (Ming) Li Yu 李渔, *Xian Qing Ou Ji* 闲情偶寄. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2014, 390.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., Li Yu, 376.

of lying or resting animals. The height and weight of those objects ensured that the mat was pressed down without affecting the feeling of use. In the meantime, the images of animals were designed to be in a resting state because it was similar to the body state in which humans used it (see Figure 2.5).

In *A Treatise on the Transformation of Chinese Fine Arts*, Liu Shipei argues that the progress of Chinese fine arts since the Wei Jin and Northern and Southern dynasties (220–589) was due to three factors: the spread of Buddhism, the advocacy of kings and the involvement of the literati.¹⁴² The former was an objective need for the emergence of art, and the latter two were related to the subject of artistic activity. The criteria for the material, the modelling, and the function of Wu were derived from the elite class represented by the literati. For instance, Ming furniture was generous, moderately proportioned and square, reflecting the “Golden Mean 中庸之道” advocated by Confucianism. The “Golden Mean” is a kind of idealist philosophy, which is wisdom, a state of being, and the ability to find proper balance and do things just right. In the design of the chair, the backrest was perpendicular to the sitting surface or close to 90°, which not only met the basic function of sitting but also served as a ritual measure to regulate people’s sitting posture. The literati manipulated the interpretation of elegance and vulgarity, using their taste to make everyday life artful and even publishing manuals to teach the public. They enjoyed many beautiful things, including elegant scenery, antique paintings, calligraphy, gold, stone, antiques, beauty, drama, poetry, birds and clothing. There were many manuals and a wide range of categories, such as *Zun Sheng Ba Jian* 遵生八笺 edited by Gao Lian, *The History of Bottles* 瓶史 edited by Yuan Hongdao, *The Orchid Book* 兰谱 and *The Chrysanthemum Book* 菊书 edited by Zhang Yingwen, *Treat the Garden* 园治 edited by Ji Cheng. Such manuals were both a symbol of taste and the literati’s distinction from other groups, like wealthy business people. Pierre Bourdieu analyses the distinction between taste and identity groups. In addition to the so-called social distinction, different groups had different levels of access to cultural capital. It was not only economic capital that influenced consumption patterns, but more

¹⁴² Liu Shipei. *Liu Shipei's Pre-Hinai Essays*, Zhongxi Book Company, 2012, 386.

importantly, cultural capital defined by the literati and artistic class.¹⁴³ To the literati in ancient China, the key to distinguishing elegance from vulgarity was not the wealth people possessed but unique aesthetic taste and appreciation. The literati not only rejected aesthetically those things that were extremely elaborate and extravagant in modelling and decoration but also linked Wu to the rise and fall of the state and the good and bad of the people, thus giving rise to the discussion of Wu Yao and Fu Yao.

The reason why Wu had an aesthetic, usable and edifying function was because of the ritual and cultural model 礼俗文化. The ritual and cultural model implies a series of ideologies and social institutions centred on rituals, with the blood as the link, the hierarchical distribution system as the core, and ethics and morality as the basis, involving all areas of political, economic, educational, and interpersonal lifestyles, from power distribution to the daily utensil. The greatest expression of the intensity of the repression of individuality by the ritual and cultural model was the extension of ideological control to the private sphere of life. From the pre-Qin dynasty to the Ming Dynasty, the upper class and the literati instructed the public in the making, using and appreciating of Wu, and in turn, used Wu to achieve specific edification purposes. For example, Dou 豆 was a type of food utensil used in the pre-Qin Dynasty. The king was allowed to use 26 Dou, the princes 16 Dou, the vassals 12 Dou, the upper class eight Dou and the lower class six Dou. The king and the literati strictly limited the specifications, sizes and quantities of daily utensils used by different classes, further reinforcing the idea of class distinction and warning the public not to overstep their bounds and to keep to themselves as a means of maintaining social stability. In addition, Wu's educational function was made possible by the ritual and cultural model. The ruling class managed the social order by establishing rules and regulations. After that, the ruling class used the power of folk customs to teach the public to submit themselves to the rituals. The elite class, represented by the literati, refined the ideology they promoted into constraints on the daily life of the public, closely integrating the ritual system with everyday life. While the ideology espoused by the elite was stable and rarely changed, the demands of the public were increasingly evolving. The emperors and the literati used ideology

¹⁴³ Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: a Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, 173–79, 292–94.

to regulate and restrict ordinary people, which would definitely be bound to provoke resistance from lower class people. For example, in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), Neo-Confucianism 理学 was prevalent, and the elite approved asceticism. Ironically, the public often violated sumptuary laws in the Ming Dynasty.

Chapter Three: Yao in the Historical Documents as Catastrophic Signs

As has been said, Wu Yao is composed of “Wu” and “Yao”. In historical documents, Yao was referring to some catastrophic signs, which were generally bizarre and ominous phenomena. The Han literati believed that these ominous signs were Heaven’s warnings that human behaviour did not follow its will and the order of the universe. It might lead to severe punishment for the country.

In the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220), people believed that Heaven gave warnings or praises through various unusual natural phenomena or events. This belief might be based on the Mandate of Heaven in the Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC–256 BC) and the cosmology created by the Han literati. The Mandate of Heaven is a Zhou concept. In Zhou literature, “heaven 天” had various meanings, including the sky, weather, the power to rule everything, the guidance of human beings’ fate, and the natural or moral order. Around 1045 BC–1040 BC, the Zhou leader had overthrown the Shang Dynasty. In order to convince the defeated Shang people to accept Zhou’s regulation and the justice of Zhou’s conqueror, the Zhou rulers promulgated many proclamations. They proposed a concept, the Mandate of Heaven. Zhou rulers believed that Heaven would give dominion over the human world to those Heaven recognised. As long as these rulers and their successors discharged their religious and administrative duties piously and impartially, they might continue using the power that Heaven sanctioned. However, if the rulers started to deprave or betray Heaven, and the value of the ruling family declined, Heaven might abandon them and transfer the mandate to a new successor, electing a new ruler of the human world. Zhou rulers believed that the Shang King was once a wise and benevolent ruler with blessings and recognition from Heaven. However, later, the Shang King became brutal and depraved, so Heaven ordered the Zhou rulers to overthrow the Shang King, punish the king’s error deeds, and establish a new dynasty.¹⁴⁴ According to the Mandate of Heaven, the Zhou rulers cleverly denied that the change of dynasties was the action of a powerful country overthrowing a weak one but a process of the will of Heaven.

¹⁴⁴ De Bary, Wm. Theodore, Wing-tsit Chan, Joseph. Adler, Irene. Bloom, and Richard. Lufrano. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Volume 1, *From Earliest Times to 1600*, 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, 27–28.

Based on the Mandate of Heaven, the rulers of the human world had the responsibility and moral obligation to Heaven and his people. How should rulers fulfill their duty to avoid losing the protection and recognition of Heaven? In the Han literati's opinion, all human beings, including the emperors, were supposed to follow the rules and orders in the universe. The Han literati also used Taoism to explain the universe. The Japanese also took over this same account of the creation and prefaced to their native mythology in the Nihongi.¹⁴⁵ The Han literati argued that everything was chaotic and formless before the birth of heaven and earth, which was the Great Beginning 太初. The Great Beginning produced emptiness. After that, emptiness created the universe, and the universe gave birth to matter. The clean, light matter first gathered together and rose, producing Heaven. The turbid, heavy matter gradually solidified and condensed, creating the earth. The essence of heaven and earth combined into Yin 陰 and Yang 陽, and the essence of yin and yang gave birth to the four seasons. In the course of the four seasons, the essence conceived in heaven and earth was scattered into all things in the universe. The sun came from the accumulation of fire force, and the moon came from the water force. The excess energy of the sun and moon produced stars, while the earth gained water and soil.¹⁴⁶

In Han literati's cosmology, Heaven was a natural order that operated according to unchanging principles and orders, providing the environment where all creatures survived. Rulers, as well as everyone in the country, should follow the rules of Heaven. If they violated principles, Heaven may give misfortune to the country. One of the crucial rules was the Five Phases: fire, water, earth, wood and metal. Five Phases were quantitative aspects of Qi. Qi was a fundamental concept in Chinese thought and could be interpreted as vital energy, vital force, material force, and breath of life in living creatures. As for the Five Phases, they controlled time in a fixed order and were associated with four seasons and 12 months.¹⁴⁷

During the Qin and early Han dynasties, the prevailing view was that these five phases conquered each other. Fire conquered water, water conquered earth, earth

¹⁴⁵ De Bary, Wm. Theodore, Wing-tsit Chan, Joseph. Adler, Irene. Bloom, and Richard. Lufrano. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Volume 1, *From Earliest Times to 1600*, 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, 346.

¹⁴⁶ (pre-Qin)He Ning. *Huainanzi* 淮南子. Beijing:Zhonghua Book Company,1998, 166–167; De Bary, Wm. Theodore, Wing-tsit Chan, Joseph. Adler, Irene. Bloom, and Richard. Lufrano. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Volume 1, *From Earliest Times to 1600*, 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, 346–347.

¹⁴⁷ De Bary, Wm. Theodore, Wing-tsit Chan, Joseph. Adler, Irene. Bloom, and Richard. Lufrano. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Volume 1, *From Earliest Times to 1600*, 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, 82, 347.

conquered wood, and wood conquered metal. The five phases theory prevailed until Wang Mang 王莽 replaced the Han Dynasty with his dynasty in 9 AD. During this period, the literati Liu Xiang and Liu Xin argued that the “generation” cycle of the Five Phases was supposed to replace the previous “conquest” cycle. Liu Xin and his school used the generation theory to assign a ruling phase to each dynasty and insert “intercalary reigns” of the phase water to make it consistent.¹⁴⁸ The essential Confucian thought of a generation cycle was based on the generation cycle. Heaven preferred to give birth, not punish and conquer. In the generation cycle, wood produces fire; fire produces earth. Earth produces metal, and water comes from metal. In addition to the cycle, five phases correspond to four seasons, colours, and directions. Fire belongs to summer, its colour is red, and its direction is south. Metal is related to autumn; its colour is white, and its direction is west; water is winter, its colour is black, and its direction is north. Because there were five phases, earth did not belong to any seasons and its colour, yellow, was assigned to the transition between the four seasons. Rulers believed that their dynasties needed to regulate according to a phase and reflect the colours of that phase in daily activities. For instance, Qin Shihuang, the first emperor of imperial China, believed that his dynasty was ruled by the virtue and power of water. He made black the official colour.

In summary, Heaven did not act personally, but rather organically. The task of the ruler was to maintain order and harmony in the human world. How could human beings obtain guidance to judge whether they were following the orders or will of Heaven? Han literati argued that the Heaven would respond to people through unusual phenomena, such as excessive rain, earthquakes, and other disasters and omens, leading to a transfer of the Mandate of Heaven to the founder of a new dynasty. This opinion can be named the belief of signs in the thesis.

The belief of signs 征兆信仰 could be divided into two categories (see Figure 3.1). The first was the auspicious signs, which were various strange and beautiful natural phenomena or things. The auspicious signs were considered to be proofs of the

¹⁴⁸ (Han) Ban Gu 班固. *Han Shu* 汉书, *Wu Xing Zhi* 五行志, Volume 25. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1962, 1270–1271. De Bary, Wm. Theodore, Wing-tsit Chan, Joseph. Adler, Irene. Bloom, and Richard. Lufrano. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Volume 1, *From Earliest Times to 1600*, 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, 348–350; De Bary, Wm. Theodore, Wing-tsit Chan, Joseph. Adler, Irene. Bloom, and Richard. Lufrano. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Volume 1, *From Earliest Times to 1600*, 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, 347–349.

Divine affirmation of the emperor's establishment of a state, his lordship and his birth. The other category was catastrophic signs, which included disasters that were harmful to humans, such as droughts, earthquakes, landslides, as well as many natural and social anomalies and strange phenomena, such as solar and lunar eclipses. Although some abnormal and strange phenomena did not cause harm to people, they were related to people or events in human society, and were strong warning signs of certain dangerous social events, which were equally frightening and disturbing.

The belief of signs began in the middle and late Warring States period (475 BC–221 BC) and flourished in the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220). The first systematic record of auspicious signs was the book *Song Shu Fu Rui Zhi* 宋书符瑞志 written by Shen Yue in the Southern dynasties (420–589). It could be referred from this book that the idea of auspicious signs reflected the theme of the divine right of Kings. In terms of content, it combined various myths and primitive worship concepts, such as nature worship, totem worship, animal and plant worship and Yin Yang theory 陰陽學說. The idea of auspicious signs had a strong primitive style. The first official document to record various types of catastrophic signs was the *Han Shu Wu Xing Zhi* 汉书五行志 compiled by Ban Gu in the Han Dynasty, including locusts, hail, floods, droughts and earthquakes.

An auspicious sign meant a sign of good fortunes. It was believed that good fortune was preceded by unusual signs that represented divine blessings, which were beneficial to humans. There were many historical books dedicated to auspicious signs, such as *Song Shu Fu Rui Zhi* 宋书符瑞志, *Rui Ying Tu* 瑞应图, *Nan Qi Shu Xiang Rui Zhi* 南齐书·祥瑞志, *Wei Shu Ling Zheng Zhi* 魏书·灵征志 and *Shi Ruiji* 石瑞记. In historical books, the two books that comprehensively summarised and recorded auspicious signs were *Song Shu Fu Rui Zhi* and *Rui Ying Tu*, in which auspiciousness were divided into nine categories.

The first category was animal auspicious signs, including beasts, birds, insects and fish. The auspicious signs of the beasts included Kylin 麒麟, White Ze 白泽, Cheng Ma 乘马, Tao Tu 騊駼, Gui Di 裼裼, Jiao Duan 角端, Xie Zhi 獬豸, Si 兕,

White elephant 白象, White Zhang 白麀, White Deer 白鹿, Tian Deer 天鹿, Red Bear 赤熊, Chi Pi 赤罴, White wolf 白狼, White fox 白狐, Wen fox 文狐, Nine-tailed fox 九尾狐, Qing Fox 青狐, Red Rabbit 赤兔, White Rabbit 白兔, One-horned Beast 一角兽, Three-horned Beast 三角兽, Bian Jian Beast 比肩兽, Six-legged Beast 六足兽, Zou Yu 驹虞, White Tiger 白虎, Yuan Leopard 元豹, Qu Dog 獬犬, Leopard Dog 豹犬, Long Ma 龙马, Teng Huang 腾黄, White Horse, Zhu Le 白马朱鬣, Fei Tu 飞兔, Yao Niao 驺裒 and Bo Horse 驳马. The auspicious signs of birds included Sacred Bird 神鸟, Phoenix, Luan Bird 鸾鸟, Yuan Crane 元鹤, Pair of Lovebirds 比翼鸟, Pale Bird 苍鸟, Red Bird 赤鸟, White Crow 白鸟, White Dove 白鸠, Red Sparrow 赤雀, White Magpie 白鹊, Wild Duck 野鸭, White Swallow 白燕, Three-legged Bird 三足鸟 and White Sparrow 白雀. The auspicious signs of insects or fish included Ling Tortoise 灵龟, Xuan Tortoise 玄龟, Flounder 比目鱼, Big Earthworm 大蚓, Qing Dragon 青龙, Yellow Dragon 黄龙 and King Dragon 景龙. Animal auspicious signs may be related to the totem worship of the early tribes. For instance, Liu Yuqing believes that the totem of the Hebe 河伯族 was the great fish.¹⁴⁹ Guo Moruo believes that the Yellow Emperor trained clans named six kinds of beasts to fight. From then on, six beast clans formed a tribe, of which the bear clan was the leader. The Yellow Emperor belonged to the bear clan.¹⁵⁰

The auspicious signs of plants included Ju Pi 秬秠, Alkanet 朱草、福草, Sha Pu 藟莆, Ming Jia 蓂莢, Strange Growing Grasses 嘉禾, Fu Bing 福并, Wei Sui 威绥, Qu Yi 屈轂, Yan Jia 延嘉, Zi Da 紫达, Zhi Cao 芝草, Zhi Ying 芝英、, Trees

¹⁴⁹ Liu Yuqing. *Totem Mythology and Traditional Chinese Life*. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2002, 168–71.

¹⁵⁰ Guo Moruo. *Chinese History Manuscript*. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1962, 113.

with different roots, the upper branches are joined together 木连理, Bin Lian Kuo Da 宾连阔达, Ping Lu 平露, Wu 梧, Hua Ping 华平, Ju Sou 渠搜 and Wei Xiang 威香, Auspicious Clouds 庆云霏云, Shao Clouds 梢云, Sweet Rain 甘露, Ling Rain 灵雨, Sweet Spring Water 醴泉, Wave Well 浪井 and Geng Che 根车.

The appearance of some special scenes in the sun, the moon and stars was also a good omen. For example, the sun and the moon shone at the same time 日月扬光, a bright yellow glow surrounded the sun 日有黄抱, a beautiful rainbow illuminated the sky 大虹, the sun and the moon seemed to be one shining in the sky 日月如合璧, five shining stars were joined together like beads in the night sky 五星如连珠, and lightnings surrounded the Dubhe 大电光绕北斗星. When some special stars appeared in the night sky, it also indicated that auspicious things would happen, such as the Big Dipper 斗鬲精 and the Old Man star 老人星.

Auspicious signs could be also present in dreams. For example, someone dreamed of climbing up into the sky and a red bird like a dragon was playing with him. Someone in a dream climbed the ladder to heaven. Someone dreamed of a green dragon flying around him. These dreams were all auspicious signs. There were also some auspicious signs associated with human body, such as a snake with a human head, a dragon's face, four breasts on the chest, and 72 moles on the left hip. Further, there were also some auspicious signs that foreshadowed the will of heaven. For example, an old woman dreamed of a dragon and then gave birth to the first emperor of the Han Dynasty. It could be referred from this belief that the idea of auspicious signs still reflected the theme of the divine right of Kings. It was recorded in historical documents that gold, jade, a precious tripod and immortals were also auspicious signs.

In contrast to auspicious signs, catastrophic signs, which were generally anomalous, bizarre and portentous, were known as Yao. For example, if floods, earthquakes, and solar eclipses took place, people would believe that these unusual phenomena were signs of the king's failure and the state's decline. It was recorded in *Zuo Zhuan* 左传(722 BC–468 BC), a chronological history of the pre-Qin period,

that “When nature goes against its objective laws, it brings about disaster. When Wu on earth goes against their nature, it brings about Yao. When people go against their proper morality, it brings about social unrest 天反时为灾，地反物为妖，民反德为乱.”¹⁵¹ Yao had more than an inductive relationship with the human world. It was usually human behaviour that triggered the signs and the specific catastrophes. Therefore, there was an saying that “Yao was raised by humans 妖由人兴”.¹⁵²

From the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220) to the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), several categories of Yao emerged. The first category was natural disasters, such as floods, droughts, snow, earthquakes, hurricanes, landslides, plagues of locusts, frosts and hail. The second category was astronomical phenomena, such as solar and lunar eclipses and comet appearances. The last category was what the government considered to be abnormal. The literati and high-class people would over-interpret unusual phenomenon. For example, anomalies in plants, birds and animals could be linked to political situations. It was recorded in *Wu Xing Zhi* 五行志 that there was an incident of a flock of crows fighting. A minister named Liu Xiang explained that the white crow and the black crow, who belonged to the same kind, fought and killed each other, which meant the states of Wu and Chu would be against the imperial family.¹⁵³ There was another example in *Wu Xing Zhi* 五行志. An emperor was bad-tempered and even killed his ministers at will. Every time the emperor killed one of his ministers at random, a herb that could not be frozen to death by frost appeared, which was called Herb Yao 诛不行则霜不杀草，繇臣下则杀不以时，故有草妖.¹⁵⁴ In addition to these Yao, Human Yao 人妖, Fu Yao 服妖, Ballad Yao 诗妖 and Wu Yao 物妖 were also considered catastrophic signs by the government.

In Chinese historical documents, Human Yao 人妖, in general, included three categories: abnormal body, abnormal behaviour and transgender. Abnormal body

¹⁵¹ Yang Bojun. *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu* 春秋左传注. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1990, 763.

¹⁵² Ibid., 196–197.

¹⁵³ Ibid., *Han Shu* 汉书, *Wu Xing Zhi* 五行志, 1415.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 1405.

meant unexplained additions or mutations to the body organs, such as having horns, having two heads or having strange red hair. For instance, a boy aged ten years old, who was from Xiami in Jiaodong, had a pair of horns on the head and there was hair on horns.¹⁵⁵ The horn was a sharp weapon, which meant wars and weapons. The appearance of the man with horns meant that the minister was tyrannical or about to rise up against the government, which was a catastrophic sign. Abnormal behaviour was also classified as Human Yao, such as coming back from the dead. A woman named Zhao Chun died of an illness, but she came back from the dead. She claimed to have seen her dead father in the underworld and her father told her, “you were only 27 years old and should not have died 平帝元始元年,朔方广牧女子赵春病死, 既棺殓, 积七日, 出在棺外。自言见夫死父, 曰: 年二十走, 汝不当死”.¹⁵⁶ The third type of Human Yao was the gender-confused person, of which there were different situations. The person could be hermaphrodite. Sometimes the person could have a male body, but a female mind, or the person had a female body and a male mind. They behaved and dressed in a confusing way. In ancient China, where rituals were strict, these situations were not widely accepted. It was considered to be a phenomenon of Yin and Yang reversing, and also as a phenomenon of Human Yao. Yin 阴 and Yang 阳 were important guidelines for the interpretation of catastrophic signs, with male as Yang and female as Yin. Only when Yin and Yang were in harmony could everything move in their own order, otherwise it would bring about Yao.

Ballad Yao 诗妖 referred to metaphorical, satirical ballads about politics and reality. These ballads were based on political events and aimed at whipping the ruling class, which were intended to express common people’s grievances and anger. For example, Huan Xuan usurped the throne and founded a new state, which was promptly destroyed by an army led by Liu Yu. Huan Xuan’s palace maids, his cohorts and families were given away as military rewards, which was recorded in the Ballad of Chagrin 晋安帝隆安中, 民忽作懊恼歌, 其曲中有草生可揽结, 女儿可揽抱之

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 1474.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 1473.

言。桓玄既篡居天位,义旗以三月二日扫定京都,玄之宫女及逆党之家子女伎妾,悉为军赏。东及瓠、越,北流淮、泗,皆人有所获焉。时则草可结,事则女可抱,信矣。¹⁵⁷

Fu Yao 服妖 referred to clothing that was different from conventional clothing and contrary to the prevailing aesthetic, which was associated with catastrophe in national ideology by the literati and emperors. There were many types of Fu Yao, such as exotic clothing, unusual clothing, men wearing women's clothing and women wearing men's clothing. For example, Confucianism held the belief that men should wear coats and trousers and the coat and trousers should not be sewn together, while women should wear dresses (see Figure 3.2), which was the harmony of Yin 阴 and Yang 阳. They considered the anomalies of Yin and Yang in clothing to be a catastrophic sign, such as Mei Xi 妹喜 wearing a man's crown leading to the downfall of her state and He Yan 何晏 wearing a woman's dress leading to death 妹喜带男子之冠而亡国, 何晏服女人之裙而亡身。¹⁵⁸ However, the phenomena of women wearing men's clothes and men wearing women's dresses were not uncommon in some dynasties, such as the fashion of wearing the Taoist robe 道袍 in the Ming Dynasty (see Figure 3.3). Taoist robes looked like women's dresses and were people's daily dressing style at that time.

The scope of Wu Yao 物妖 was broader than Fu Yao. Fashionable and rare artworks and goods continued to appear, and people were willing to spend a great deal of money on them, which was regarded as Wu Yao by the literati. Wu Yao involved clothing, paintings, calligraphy, food, study supplies, porcelain, tobacco, folding fans and furniture.

It is easy for the public to be fearful and curious about unusual phenomenon. How is the public convinced that unusual phenomena have special meanings? The

¹⁵⁷ Hu Xiangqin. "On the Nature of Poem-Yao in WUXINGZHI of SONGSHU." *Journal of Historiography*, no.02(2014):18-25.

¹⁵⁸ Yang Zhengtai. *A Study of Ming Dynasty Stage*. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1994, 357.

literati and emperors created the belief in the interaction between gods and humans 天人感应. Gods would hint at people through unusual things, and people would sense the hints. After that, people had to act in accordance with the will of the gods. This belief required four key elements: divine will, kingship, holy virtue and divine signs. Based on this belief, the literati and the emperor seized the power to explain unusual things that were beyond the scope of human cognition. They expected the common people to worship the kingship of the emperor because the kingship was a gift from the gods. In the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220), Dong Zhongshu (179 BC–104 BC), a famous philosopher, further refined the belief in the interaction between gods and humans. For instance, he believed that “in spring, when the wood god is in charge of things, a gentle policy is to be practiced, and favours are to be shown to the people and even to all creatures. All kinds of destructive actions are strictly forbidden, such as cutting down trees, catching fish and pounding the eggs of birds 木用事，则行柔惠，挺群禁.” In Dong’s opinion, “if it goes against the will of the gods in summer, it will be not cold in winter, or the winter cold will not stop, which will result in disasters 夏失政则冬不冻冰，五谷不藏，大寒不解.”¹⁵⁹ This means that what should be done in spring was according to the will of the gods. That people went against the will of the gods was a failure of government, which could lead to natural disasters. This belief in the interaction between gods and humankind 天人感应 had a profound influence on ordinary people, the literati and emperors.

Based on this belief, the appearance of auspicious signs before the emperor succeeded to the throne was a sign of heavenly reward, which meant that the emperor was the one chosen by the gods. Therefore, to manifest the sanctity of the emperor, the emperor would use auspicious signs to indicate that he was the Real Dragon 真龙天子, whom gods had blessed. In *Fu Rui Zhi* 宋书·符瑞志, many emperors said they were born in unusual scenes. Cao Pi 魏文帝曹丕 (187–226) was an emperor in the Three Kingdoms Period (220–280). When he was born, people saw the blue

¹⁵⁹ Zhou, GuiDian. “On the Truth of Dong Zhongshu’s Interaction between Man and Nature.” *Hebei Academic Journal*, no.3(2001):10–14.

clouds covering the sun. 有云青色,如车盖,当其上终日。望气者以为至贵之祥,非人臣之气。¹⁶⁰ Sun Quan 吴大帝孙权 (182–252) was another emperor in the Three Kingdoms Period. His mother dreamed of the sun entering her womb when she was pregnant 梦日入怀。¹⁶¹ In fact, both the auspicious signs and Yao were political culture and political means of self-glorification and self-promotion for the ruling class.

While emperors used auspicious signs to indicate the legitimacy and sanctity of the throne, the literati preferred to influence the ruling class and maintain their own position by interpreting the Yao phenomenon. Liu Wenying summed up three methods in his study of the divination of dreams: direct interpretation, indirect interpretation and reverse interpretation.¹⁶² These methods were also applicable to the literati's interpretation of the Yao phenomenon.

Direct interpretation was the simplest method of the three because signs and events could be logically corresponded directly. Xunzi 荀子 explained the Human Yao in detail in his book *The Theory of Heaven* 天论. Xunzi's book records that when people did not farm according to the seasonal terms, the government lost popular support, rice was expensive, people starved to death on the road, the government was in chaos, people were in moral confusion, men and women were promiscuous, fathers and sons were suspicious of each other, the emperor did not trust his ministers, and so on. All of the above phenomena were Human Yao. 物之已至者,人妖则可畏也: 楷耕伤稼,耘耨失岁,政险失民,田秽稼恶,余贵民饥,道路有死人,夫是之谓人妖;政令不明,举措不时,本事不理,夫是之谓人妖;礼义不修,内外无别,男女淫乱,父子相疑,上下乖离,寇难并至,夫是之谓人妖。妖是生于乱,三者错,无安国。其说甚尔,其菑甚惨。¹⁶³ Xunzi took an objective look at the unusual phenomena of nature and pointed out the dangers of bad human behaviour

¹⁶⁰ (Liang) Shen Yue 沈约. *Song Shu* 宋书. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974, 774.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 780.

¹⁶² Liu Wenying. *Dream Superstition and Dream Exploration*. Beijing: China Social Science Press, 1989, 68–94.

¹⁶³ Ibid., *Xunzi*. 306–308.

under the guise of all-natural disasters. Direct interpretation was not easy. In fact, there were few cases in which the Yao phenomenon directly corresponded to an event, but the literati used examples that had already happened when explaining the phenomenon. From the perspective of historical observers, the literati preferred to look for an event that had been verified.

Indirect interpretation was a way of transforming the sign and then interpreting it according to the transformed sign, which was the most common way of interpreting the signs. It was easy for the literati to interpret the signs from different perspectives because there were always some logical elements in their explanations for the phenomenon of Yao. For example, in 178, there was a strange incident in the palace where a hen suddenly became a cock, but the crown part remained the same. Liu Hong 汉灵帝(156–189), the emperor at the time, asked his minister Cai Yong about this strange incident. Based on the political situation of the time, Cai Yong pointed out that this incident was a warning from the gods that a woman in the palace was interfering with the government, referring to the imperial concubine He 貌之不恭则有鸡祸。宣帝黄龙元年，未央宫雌鸡化为雄不鸣无距。而上知之，是将有其事而不遂成之象也。若应之不精，政无所改，头冠或成为患兹大。¹⁶⁴ In another example, in 605, many people's dogs in the Yanmen area left homes to become wild dogs, performing like wild wolves and attacking pedestrians. This phenomenon lasted for several years. A minister named Li Chunfeng believed it was a foreshadowing of the ministers betraying the emperor 五行传曰：‘犬，守御者也！’而今去其主，臣下不附之象。形变如狼，狼色白，为主兵之应也。¹⁶⁵ Dogs were responsible for guarding the home. Li Chunfeng first transformed dogs and animals into ministers in the human world because ministers should protect their masters. A dog leaving home was like a minister leaving his emperor. In the second step of his explanation, the dog changed into a wolf meant the dog became a violent and vicious animal. In ancient Chinese culture, the white wolf was related to weapons in the belief

¹⁶⁴ (Song)Fan Ye. *Hou Han Shu* 后汉书. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1965, 3273–74.

¹⁶⁵ (Tang)Wei Zheng. *Sui Shu* 隋书. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1973, 641.

of Five Elements 五行. Therefore, a wolf was a catastrophic sign of war. However, it was Li Chunfeng's subjective interpretation that the white wolf was a bad sign. There were many meanings of white animals, such as white mice, white rabbits, white foxes, white wolves and white tigers, which were auspicious signs. In 605, the emperor was Yang Guang, who was widely regarded as a tyrannical ruler. How could auspicious signs occur under the rule of a tyrant? Therefore, Li Chunfeng believed a white wolf was a catastrophic sign.

Sometimes, unusual signs did not correspond to later events. The literati would interpret from the opposite of the signs. For instance, in 617, people found a stone engraved with the words, “The emperor will be in his position for thousand years 天子立千年”, which was regarded as an auspicious sign. Ministers congratulated the emperor, Yang Guang. However, Yang Guang was killed the following year, which contradicted the meaning of the auspicious sign. Therefore, Li Chunfeng interpreted this unusual event as a catastrophic sign and argued that “A man could not live for ten thousand years. Those who now claimed to live for thousands years may bring about potential disaster. 千年万岁者，身后之意也。今称千年者，祸在非远”.¹⁶⁶

The literati were different from ordinary diviners in their interpretation of the phenomena of Yao. The literati were more concerned with the rise and fall of the nation, while diviners usually predicted the fate of individuals. On the other hand, the diviner made predictions about what would happen in the future, and whether predictions would come true was not important in the present. However, the literati were confronted with the phenomenon of Yao, which was usually a historical event and had already taken place. The literati's task was to create a link between the unusual signs and the outcome, and the link should be confirmed. As a group of intellectual elites, the literati interpreted the phenomenon of Yao randomly according to their personal beliefs, and Yao could be interpreted as any people, things or phenomena which were direct threats to the political and ethical order. As the Yao was a warning from the gods, then the literati's opinions were endorsed by the gods and the rulers could not easily refute them. The belief of auspicious and catastrophic signs was a good weapon for the literati to control the powerful rulers effectively.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 642.

In fact, auspicious signs might have occurred during the reign of a tyrant, while catastrophic signs emerged during the reign of a good emperor. Whenever there was political chaos, emperors preferred to choose auspicious signs to decorate their thrones, such as Liu Ao 汉成帝, Liu Xin 汉哀帝 and Wang Mang 王莽. As a result, auspicious signs may appear more frequently during the reign of a tyrant. The literati were unwilling to see this happen. The view of the literati was that auspicious signs and catastrophic signs should be consistent with whether the government was a good regime. Thus, the literati prepared another explanation in advance. Since auspicious signs and catastrophic signs were born in response to politics, what were auspicious signs and what were catastrophic signs should also be judged by politics. This left a great deal of space for the literati to interpret signs. When catastrophic signs occurred, if the emperor was able to correct his mistake and restore the chaos to normal track, then the phenomenon of Yao was not bad, which meant that gods did not lose faith in the emperor and the signs were just sent to save and remind the human world. According to the literati's belief, when an auspicious sign appeared in the political chaos, the situation was even worse, which indicated that the gods had lost confidence in the emperor. So, gods would confuse people with an auspicious sign, urging the emperor to lose his rule as soon as possible. That is to say, the literati could change their words flexibly to explain whether the signs were good or bad according to the political situation and personal position. Their attitudes on the phenomenon of Yao, including Wu Yao, could also be changeable. For example, during the Ming Dynasty, the government became weak, and there was no hope for a literati's career. Thus, the literati changed their opinion on Wu Yao, stopped opposing extravagance, and agreed with the idea that luxury could make wealth. During that period, many literati joined commercial activities to improve their standard of living.

In the eyes of modern science, both auspicious signs and Yao are natural phenomena that occur in nature. For instance, the emergence of a multi-spiked crop 嘉禾 is explained scientifically using modern genetic theory. Natural climatic and geological phenomena such as snowstorms, droughts and earthquakes are commonplace and can be analysed and presented using scientific theories and methods. Therefore, the belief in auspicious and catastrophic signs that were so much preached by the imperial monarchs and the literati was illusory. They were intended

to maintain the legitimacy of their regime or give proper control over the despotic rule of the imperial monarchs.

Since there is no logical relationship between Yao and the rise and fall of nations, it is somewhat absurd for the literati and ruling class to criticise the phenomenon of Wu Yao so vociferously, arguing that the pursuit of material desires by ordinary people would lead to the downfall of the nation's fortunes.

Chapter Four: Yao in Chinese Classical Novels as Beautiful Temptation

As discussed in Chapter Three, in official documents, Yao was considered dangerous and unusual signs, which were punishments and warnings from Heaven. In addition to official texts, Yao appeared frequently in classical Chinese novels. Yao were described as magical creatures good at seducing human beings, leading people to be deprived. These novels, written mainly by the literati, encompassed the literati's dissatisfaction with life and their desire for the future, which were a projection of the inner desires of the literati. It is worth analysing these unofficial fictional texts and examining another characteristic of Yao in imperial China: seductiveness. Perhaps it was the seductive and unusual characteristic of Yao that led emperors and the literati to combine the words “Yao” and “Wu” and create the term “Wu Yao” when they criticised the luxurious, novel and attractive things and unusual phenomena. In their novels, the literati showed an ambivalent emotion of resistance and attraction to tempting Yao. Perhaps this mentality was one of the reasons why the literati could not resist the luxurious life and violated the sumptuary policies.

Yao, the Chinese word “妖”, was originally written as “𪚩” in seal script. The seal script is a style of writing Chinese characters used on bronze ritual vessels from the 11th to 3rd century BCE and functioned as the standardised system of writing from 221 to 209 BCE. In *The Origin of Chinese Characters* 说文解字, the first dictionary in China to be arranged by radicals, Yao was described as unusual and ominous phenomena 𪚩, 地反物为𪚩也.¹⁶⁷ In political texts, Yao could refer to unusual phenomena caused by human activities, persons and things that threatened the political or ethical order. For instance, as mentioned in Chapter Three, it was recorded in *Zuo Zhuan* 左传(722 BC–468 BC), a chronological history of the pre-Qin period,

¹⁶⁷ (Han)Xu Shen 许慎. *The Origin of Chinese Characters* 说文解字. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1963, 9.

that “Yao was raised by humans 妖由人兴”.¹⁶⁸ In novels, Yao refers to evil and harmful monsters in folk legends who often transform into charming women. In summary, Yao’s characteristics are abnormality and seductiveness. In different novels, there were various types of Yao.

There were three typical categories of literary works in Chinese classical novels from the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220) to the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912): the novels of gods and spirits 志怪神魔小说, literary sketches 笔记小说, and realist novels 世情小说. Novels of gods and spirits are writing related to gods, immortals, ghosts and Yao as the main narrative characters, the style of which in Western terms would be considered romantic. Some of the works had religious undertones, advocated secular morality and criticised the quotidian world. They reflected the pursuit of a new life and a yearning for a world to come. The literary sketches are not fictional literary works but are relatively free-form. Generally speaking, these works mostly reflect the author’s feelings and experiences, which include commentary on customs and folklore, political views and current affairs. It was in documents such as these that the literati were able to express their attitudes and opinions more directly and sincerely without the confinement of being the chroniclers of official historical documents. The third type, realist novels, again drawing on the understanding of the form as it developed in Europe in the 19th century, was popular in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). They drew from the daily life of common people, depicting family disputes, love stories, marriages, and social problems and evaluating the official circles, the brothel and Confucianism. These novels focused on the so-called real life of ordinary people. *A Dream in Red Mansions* 红楼梦, *The Plum in the Golden Vase* 金瓶梅 and *San Yan and Er Pai* 三言二拍 were the representative works.

Yao had different manifestations in accordance with these three types of writing. In the novels of gods and spirits, Yao was described in terms of unnatural lifeforms with magic powers and prowess at shape-shifting, who often entangled with humans. In literary sketches and realist novels, the literati refer to fashionable things as Wu Yao. The literati referred to fashionable things and phenomena that were beautiful,

¹⁶⁸ Yang Bojun. *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu* 春秋左传注. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1990, 196–197.

flamboyant, strange, coquettish, charming and exotic as Wu Yao, emphasising their novel sensual effects and irresistible seductiveness. Wu Yao usually appeared in the daily necessities of life, such as clothing, jewellery, carriages, utensils, toys and houses. In addition to Wu Yao, in the literary sketches and realist novels, Yao also referred to persons and their behaviours that did not conform to the pattern of etiquette and customs.

The origins and types of Yao in classical literature from the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220) to the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912) are relatively complex, and it may be inaccurate to categorise them according to what was evil or demonic. Yao was a different race, or creed, from that of immortals, gods, humans or ghosts. Learning magic powers or following the guidance of other gods, humans, flowers, plants, insects, fish, birds and animals could eventually become gods through cultivation and practice. However, Yao had to be approved by the Heaven Court 天庭, the supreme ruling centre in Chinese folk mythology, and given an official title, which was at the mercy of the Jade Emperor 玉皇大帝, the leader of the Heaven Court and lord of heaven and earth in Taoist mythology. Those who had not completed their cultivation or were not recognised by the Jade Emperor 玉皇大帝 would still be called Yao.

In the novels of gods and spirits, Yao was divided into male and female. Masculine Yao had a relatively fixed image, which looked like beasts with fierce faces, such as the Bull Demon King 牛魔王, the Black River Monster 黑河怪, the Golden Horned King 金角大王 or the Silver Horned King 银角大王. The frequency of the appearance of male Yao was much lower than that of female Yao. This was probably because the female Yao was more suitable for the romance between man and Yao, which was one of the themes in classical literature. In most novels of gods and spirits, the primary focus is on the emotional entanglement between male and female Yao.

Female Yao were mainly unnatural lifeforms with special powers and supernatural abilities. The origins of female Yao were various. Some of them who were born as common people cultivated themselves to become Yao, while others who were initially gods or goddesses were relegated to the human world and turned into

Yao. In any case, all of them were extremely powerful and had the abilities of immortals. For example, in *The Journey to the West* 西游记, written in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), the Scorpion Yao living in the Pipa Cave had two pincer feet and used a three-pronged fork. Her power to sting and the strength of her poison were so powerful that even the hero, Sun Wukong 孙悟空, had no prospect of overcoming her.¹⁶⁹ Another powerful female Yao from the same tale was the Spider Yao. She lived in Pansi Cave and could release countless soft, sticky strands of silk from her navel, which could stick to humans, dragonflies and bees.¹⁷⁰ The mouse Yao that lived in the bottomless hole was cunning and crafty and could be called one of the most cunning female Yao. There were a great number of hole nests in the 300-mile area around the deep hole where the mouse Yao lived.¹⁷¹ As such, in order to subdue all kinds of female Yao, human beings needed to make many efforts and pay a high cost.

The literati from the Han Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty were charged with the important task of ruling the country, and their physical and emotional needs were neglected and deliberately suppressed. Thus, the literati created female Yao to unleash their desires. They were in the mindset of hunting for beautiful women, enjoying the rare love in the human world, without any moral obligation or responsibility. As a rule, female Yao were attractive in appearance. Regardless of their original lifeform, female Yao, who assumed human form, had a beautiful appearance and graceful figure. The portrayal of the female Yao was often outside of stereotypes and social conventions of the time. The literati, as a male group, portrayed the female Yao exclusively in terms of male visual sensory experience, that is, as an object for male observation and consumption. The clothing, behaviour and appearance of the female Yao were simply a collection of male desires, which explained the uniformity of the female Yao's appearance and style in Chinese classical literature. On the species hierarchy, female Yao was inferior to humans. Once their original life forms were discovered, they would feel a sense of inferiority as an alien. For example, in the novel *Qing Feng* 青凤, Qing Feng wanted to escape

¹⁶⁹ (Ming) Wu Chengen. *Xi You Ji* 西游记. People's Literature Publishing House, 1955, 669.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 872.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 985.

the hunters and was rescued by Kong Xueli. He found Qing Feng's original lifeform was a fox, which destroyed Qing Feng's previously reserved image as a lovely young girl. Qing Feng was grateful to Kong Xueli and finally accepted his affection. In Chinese classical literature, the literati always emphasised the power, greed and seduction of female Yao, as if it were normal for humans to be bewitched.

In the novel *You Ming Lu* 幽明录, written in the Nan Dynasty(420–589), the fox Yao is not only beautiful but also smart. She supports her husband with her own money, bears their children for him and takes good care of the family.¹⁷² She was the type of woman the literati praised. Wu Chengen, the author of *Journey to the West*, described the female Yao whose original lifeform was a mouse with a golden nose and white hair 地涌夫人金鼻白毛鼠: “Her delicate white feet are like a pair of half-opened golden lotus. Her ten fingers are like bamboo shoots. Her round and pink face is like a silver basin. Her cherry red lips are so inviting 一对金莲刚半折, 十指如同春笋发, 团圆粉面若银盆, 朱唇一似樱桃滑.”¹⁷³ See Figure 4.1. In other stories, the female Yao would use their beauty to tempt humans to fall in love with them in order to do something immoral, leading to a series of disasters. To prevent disasters, the main characters needed to eradicate these evil female Yao, like the Jade Princess, the concubine of the Bull Demon King in Chapter 59 of *Journey to the West*, and the White-faced Fox, the beauty queen of the Bi Qiu Kingdom in Chapter 78 of *Journey to the West*.¹⁷⁴

Another important characteristic of the female Yao in Chinese classical literature was that they had strong desires which they exerted proudly and without shame. For instance, female Yao from the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220) to the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912) wanted their own wealth, immortal body, sexual passion and eternal youth. Female Yao lived as families in spaces isolated from the human world or in subterranean abodes. They had the same family composition as the human world, including parents, children, masters and servants. However, family members were not necessarily related by blood, which contrasted with the clans of imperial China. Growing up and living in a special space isolated from the human world, female Yao

¹⁷² (Nan) Liu Yiqing. *You Ming Lu* 幽明录. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1999, 713–14.

¹⁷³ Ibid, 990.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 725, 946.

were free from patriarchal control, ethical discipline and gender discrimination. Female Yao were wholly free from the shackles of ethics and morality. They could pursue what they wanted without being punished by their parents or clan. Female Yao were often unconventional in their behaviour, thus contravening the reserve required by rituals. The romance stories between those beautiful female Yao and men depicted the emotional entanglement between them. The female Yao often tended to take the initiative to seduce the young, handsome men. Female Yao did not ask for commitment and longevity but instead opted for a brief moment of pleasure. In *the Search for Gods* 搜神记, the typical representatives of this type of female Yao are the fox Yao in *The Mountain Yao Azi* 山魅阿紫, the female Yao in *The Lady in Hairy Clothes* 毛衣女, the water turtle Yao in *The Alligator Woman* 鼉妇, and the pig Yao in *The Golden Bell with Pig Arms* 猪臂金铃.

In contrast to the contemptuous attitude towards Yao, the literati did not spare praise for goddesses. The literati made a clear distinction between these two types of women. The Guanyin Bodhisattva, a representative of the goddesses in the *Journey to the West*, was an ideal female figure in the god world. She was pure of heart, compassionate and loving, holy and wise. She was plain, dignified and hard-working, and her position was above that of the four main characters in the book. In contrast to the mortal woman and the goddess, the female Yao was placed between the two categories of figures. Female Yao's magic power was similar to that of the goddess. Female Yao could also become immortal through cultivation and join the ranks of the goddesses. However, they were in the lower kingdoms rather than the realm of the gods, which made them similar to mortal women. In contrast to the sacred goddesses and restrained mortal women, female Yao boldly expressed and pursued their desires, and they never cared about the consequences, even if they needed to use cruel methods.

The literati spared no effort to write about the cruelty of female Yao's methods to achieve their goals, to arouse anger from readers, and then let the righteous have a happy ending by subduing female Yao. The typical representatives of this type of female Yao are the white snake Yao in *The Three Pagodas of the West Lake* 西湖三塔传 and the white cat Yao in *The Three Monsters of Luoyang* 洛阳三怪记 in the

Song Dynasty (960–1279). In *The Three Pagodas of the West Lake*, Xi Xuanzan 奚宣赞 travels around the West Lake and meets three female Yao. He saves a lost Yao named Mao Nu 卯奴 and takes her home. More than ten days later, an older woman, who is the girl's grandmother, comes to his house and invites him to her home to express her gratitude. A beautiful woman dressed in white, the mother of Mao Nu, hosts a banquet for Xuanzan, devouring a young man's heart, invites Xuanzan to eat, and then makes love to him. Half a month later, another young man arrives, and the beautiful woman wants to take Xuanzan's heart. Xi Xuanzan escapes death only when Mao Nu begs for mercy. The three female Yao are finally subdued by the uncle of Xuanzan, the master Xi and are all locked in the Three Pagodas of the West Lake.¹⁷⁵ In *The Three Monsters of Luoyang*, Pan Song meets a female Yao named the White Madonna 白圣母, who leads him into the lair of the three monsters. At the end of the story, the master Jiang kills them. Evil female Yao used men purely for sexual gratification but had no emotional entanglements with them. The beautiful woman wearing a white dress kills the previous man whenever she gets new prey. Even when Xuanzan saves the life of the woman's daughter, she shows no gratitude or compassion for her saviour. The literati often devised two kinds of endings for female Yao.

Some of the female Yao who pursued their desires were shameful and would be punished by positive Buddhist and Taoist figures. For example, the master Xi used a charm to make the beautiful woman reveal the original form of the white snake and suppressed it under the pagoda. Some of the female Yao who preserved their virginity could be saved and would be given a good life. The red Spider Yao in *Zheng Jie Shi* 郑节使立功神臂弓 lived happily with the hero and was not punished because of her chastity. The tragic endings devised by the literati for the lust-seeking female Yao served as a warning to mortal readers and as a reminder of the traditional ethics and other precepts, such as the three obediences and the four virtues 三从四德. In ancient China, the belief of the three obediences required a woman to obey her father before marriage, obey her husband during married life, and her sons in widowhood. Women

¹⁷⁵ Cheng Yizhong. *Song and Yuan Novelists' Collected Writing*. Qi Lu Press, 2000, 306.

were expected to uphold virtues: good moral character, meaningful conversations, intellectual cultivation, attention to appearance and health, and effective family management through loving, respecting, diligent, and thrifty behaviour. Through literary works, literati reinforced the importance of these virtues in educating women.

In Chinese classical literature, female Yao was harmful to the human world according to the literati's view. Female Yao was supposed to be punished and controlled. There were almost 50 main Yao in *the Journey to the West* 西游记, 33 male Yao and 17 female Yao. Thirteen of the 33 male Yao died, a death rate of nearly 40%, and 14 out of 17 female Yao died, with a mortality rate of 82%. Female Yao had a significantly higher mortality rate than male Yao. Even a female Yao who cultivated for a thousand years could also die because of the pursuit of her lustful desires, which led to her destruction. In *the Journey to the West*, the Scorpion Yao, the Spider Yao, and the Apricot Yao have a strong desire for the Tang Monk, which finally results in their losing their lives.¹⁷⁶ Her righteous father and her brother took away the Mouse Yao to the Heaven Court, and the Jade Rabbit Yao was requested to be servants by the goddess of the moon.¹⁷⁷ The Heaven Court 天庭 punished these female Yao because they indulged in lust. The White Bone Yao sought immortality, and the White-faced Fox wanted to be a queen. In the end, they died because of greed.¹⁷⁸ The magic power they had cultivated over the years enabled them to transcend mortal women and gave them the opportunity to enter the higher world of the gods.

The literati believed that Yao should be punished for contravening the rules of the human world, especially the female Yao. Instead of faithfully playing the role of male subordination and social weakness, the female Yao deviated from the traditional gender order of submission and obedience to men. They broke into the world of men and pursued individual rights and personal desires. In *the Journey to the West*, the meat of the Tang Monk not only had the edible value of immortality, but the Tang Monk himself was also a handsome young man. Therefore, female Yao's desire for the flesh of the Tang Monk was not only a desire for immortality, but also a metaphor for the desire for sexuality and the pursuit of equal rights. From the tragic ending of

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 678, 879, 782.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 1008, 1139.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 332, 960.

these female Yao, the literati did not support the pursuit of desire. Many authors affirmed the female characters who adhered to the ethics in their works and punished the female Yao who provoked the ethics.

Why did the literati want to write a story with female Yao as the main characters when they disliked Yao? It is worthwhile examining the literati's motivation for this. The novels of gods and spirits were not taken seriously by mainstream society and were not part of the list of reference books for the imperial examinations. Most of the authors had bad careers and were down-and-out literati who wrote novels for money. They would have a kind of compensation psychology in writing, expressing their dissatisfaction with the hierarchy, the official system, the imperial examination system and the concept of marriage in their own constructed fantasy world. For example, *Search for Gods* 搜神记 was written in the Southern and Northern Dynasties (220–589), a relatively open-minded era. It was fashionable to behave in a licentious and unruly manner. Loose clothing and comfortable wooden clogs were popular during this period, and Ji Kang 嵇康, a representative figure of the literati, even rebelled against ritual by exposing the upper part of his body. However, it was also a dynasty with strict hierarchies and powerful families, and it was difficult for the literati from humble backgrounds to become successful. Some of the literati were disaffected for a long time and believed they had no way to fulfil their ambitions, turning to literature in an attempt to achieve success in a fantasy world of love, money, wealth and fame. In *Search for Gods*, men from humble backgrounds could fall in love and get married to fairies or dead noble women to change their destiny and compensate for the many deficits of the real world.

Pu Songling 蒲松龄 (1640-1715), the author of *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi* 聊斋志异 in the Qing Dynasty, was another typical example of expressing dissatisfaction with the country through writing. Pu Songling had an unsuccessful career, and he became *Gong Sheng* 贡生 at the age of 71. *Gong Sheng* was one of the graders in the imperial examination system. Nevertheless, he was a masterful writer, creating a utopia in his novel *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi*. He designed the plot in which the beautiful female Yao, fairies, and elves took the initiative to chase the down-and-out literati. These women relieved the literati's sense of loneliness and isolation by giving them

treasures to help them achieve success. The fictional world depicted by Pu Songling had much in common with the terrestrial world. For example, the father of a commoner named Xi Fangping had a feud with a local wealthy man, and the rich man bribed a Hell Court official. Then, Xi's father was killed. Xi Fangping died of grief over the death of his father and went to Hell Court to sue for his suffering. With the help of Judge Erlang Shen, he finally punished the corrupt officials led by the King of the Underworld and was able to redress his grievances. It seemed that Pu Songling was describing hell, but in reality, he was complaining about the dark reality of society in that corrupt officials colluded to hurt the common people. The manifestation of self-worth, self-affirmation, and the expression of dissatisfaction with reality through a fantasy world were among the most important reasons why the literati wrote Yao's novels.

Although the literati would write novels to protest against the injustice done to them, they still identified with political and religious authority and promoted masculinity and class order when they wrote novels to compensate for their misery. They did not approve of anything that caused desire and affected the purity of the literary community, which was regarded as heresies that needed to be eradicated. The novels of gods and spirits were marginal literary works, which were different from the formal historical documents, but this kind of novel still had the function of disciplining and edifying the public. As mentioned in Chapter Three, in the first manifestations, Yao was a kind of catastrophic sign from the gods. Initially, Yao referred to unusual phenomena in the natural world. After that, Yao gradually lost its mystery, and all phenomena, things and persons that the government considered unusual and questionable for the development of the country could be called Yao. Yao was personified, which could also be reflected in the novels of gods and spirits, like the fox Yao.

From the belief of signs 征兆信仰, the fox was one of the auspicious signs. For example, the nine-tailed fox in the *Shan Hai Jing* 山海经 was a symbol of fertility worship and was an auspicious sign, which meant that people would have many offspring. While worshipping nature and animals, the people of this time became increasingly self-conscious, giving animals human aesthetic emotions and survival desires in the fantasy world. In the Southern and Northern Dynasties (220–589), the

foxes in the novels of gods and spirits were transformed into human bodies, from auspicious signs to Yao. The fox did not have the ambiguity of its mythical face and initially possessed the appearance and manner of human beings. During this period, the fox Yao transformed from animals to humans, but they lacked human character, thought and emotion. The fox Yao would continue to be a source of rich meanings until the Tang Dynasty (618–907). By the time of the Tang Dynasty literature, the fox had intelligence on par with humans as well as considerable magical powers. The fox Yao was often disguised as a beautiful woman to seduce men, with the aim of tapping into their essence for cultivation, which was a symbol of lust and evil. Such fox Yao were depicted in *Feng Shen Yan Yi* 封神演义, *the Journey to the West* 西游记,

Ren's Biography 任氏传, and *the Book of Mysteries* 玄怪录. Foxes rested during the day and went out at night. They were cunning and sensitive, untamable wild animals and could not be controlled by people. Hence, the literati believed that foxes were perverse, unpredictable and unrestrained. Sometimes, foxes are found in human areas and can do something harmful to humans, like eating poultry raised by people. The literati classified them as Yao because foxes brought misfortune to humans.

Most importantly, Confucius and the emperor argued that the public should restrain their desires. The fox, a symbol of male and female mating and lust, obviously could not stay at the sacred altar forever. In stories, the fox changed from an auspicious sign into an evil image of a demonic beast that ate human flesh, drank human blood, took human essence and deceived humans. The literati achieved the purpose of warning common people by scandalising the fox. They believed that beautiful and elusive things would arouse desire and may bring misfortune.

The literati strongly criticised all kinds of Yao, which were the symbols of various desires in their novels about gods and spirits. However, they seemed to criticise desire but showed a contradictory mentality of both longing and rejecting. The literati required a woman to be unsmiling, dignified and virtuous, and this type of woman could correspond to fairies and goddesses in the novels about gods and spirits. The literati respected such elegant women but found it difficult to establish intimate relationships with them. In contrast, the passionate female Yao was more likely to satisfy a man's inner desire for lust, giving men a sense of conquest and superiority. For example, in *Liao Zhai Zhi Yi* 聊斋志异, the fairy Chang Er and the fox Yao

Diandang both fell in love with a man named Zong Zimei. Chang Er was so dignified that Zong Zimei was in awe of her. He was happier to be close to the lovely fox Yao.

The literati's contradictory mentality towards beautiful and unusual things could be seen in the novels about gods and spirits, although it was just a kind of literary genre that had a certain gap with reality. The literati felt uncomfortable when the general public began to proclaim their desires, chasing after beautiful things and having extravagant lifestyles. In the Ming Dynasty, the literati referred to fashionable things and phenomena that were beautiful, flamboyant, strange, coquettish, charming and exotic as Wu Yao, emphasising their novel sensual effects and irresistible seductiveness. The literati were sensitive to the transformation of society and were concerned about the transition between the old and the new. Wu Yao expressed this complex emotion, which the records of literary sketches 笔记小说 and realistic novels 世情小说 could verify.

In the Ming Dynasty, official uniforms were decorated with Bu Zi 补子, which were generally embroidered with colourful threads. The bird pattern of Bu Zi was designed for civil officials, while the beast was for military officials. Different bird and beast patterns of Bu Zi could be used to distinguish the rank of the officials (see Figure 4.2). However, by the mid to late Ming Dynasty, the rapid development and prosperity of the commodity exchange strongly affected the hierarchy. In the case of clothing, people disregarded the ban on dress, which was intended to distinguish high-class people from low-class people, and continued to overstep laws and pursue extravagance and newness. In Chapter 31 of *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, there was a description of the outfit of the protagonist, Ximen Qing 西门庆.

Every day, he rode on a big white horse, wearing a black gauze hat on his head. His coat was decorated with colourful threads and the lion pattern of Bu Zi. A four-finger wide gold and aquilaria belt was tied around his waist. He wore a pair of black boots with high tops and white platforms, called Zao Xue 皂靴 (see Figures 4.3–4.4). He waved a black fan in his hand, followed by a dozen servants, strutting down the street. 每日骑着大白马，头戴乌纱，身穿五彩洒线揉头狮子补子员

领，四指大宽萌金茄楠香带，粉底皂靴，排军喝道，张打着大黑扇，前呼后拥，何止十数人跟随，在街上摇摆”。¹⁷⁹

As a fifth-ranking military official, Ximen Qing could only use the bear pattern of Bu Zi rather than the lion pattern of Bu Zi according to the Ming costume system, which was a clear violation of the dress code. Prostitutes, the underprivileged at the bottom of the social ladder, also ignored the ban on dress. In 1370, it was stipulated that the common people were not allowed to use bright yellow. Ordinary people could use thin silk and plain yarn, but gold embroidery, brocade and other high-class fabrics were forbidden. In 1505, the use of mink fur was also banned for merchants, servants, entertainers, prostitutes and subordinates. In Chapter 68 of *The Plum in the Golden Vase*, the prostitute named Aiyue 爱月儿 dressed in a red brocade coat, goose-yellow Hangjuan dress with greenish hints of golden, the toe of the shoe embroidered with a phoenix on, and a headdress named *Wo Tu Er* 卧兔儿 made from the skin of a sea otter, which made her face tender and lovely 爱月儿上着烟里火回纹锦对衿袄儿、鹅黄杭娟点翠缕金裙，大红风嘴鞋儿，灯下海獭卧兔儿，越显的粉浓浓雪白的脸儿 (see Figure 4.5).¹⁸⁰ According to the description in Chinese classical literature, at the end of the Ming Dynasty, people from all classes did not follow the rules and regulations in dressing and chose to dress according to their personal taste and disposable wealth.

At the same time, a culture of social extravagance prevailed. In the early Ming Dynasty, people in the Suzhou area pursued a simple lifestyle with few banquets and few dishes. For example, in Changshu, which is one of the cities in the Suzhou area, the guests only had two or four dishes. In Jiangyin, another city in the Suzhou area, guests could enjoy a maximum of eight dishes at the banquet.¹⁸¹ However, after the middle of the Ming Dynasty, people began to pursue exquisite banquets. The banquet

¹⁷⁹ Lan Ling Xiao Xiao Sheng 兰陵笑笑生. *The Plum in the Golden Vase*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2005, 279–80.

¹⁸⁰ Huang, Nengfu, Chen, Juanjuan. *The History of Chinese Clothing*. Beijing: China Tourism Publishing House, 1995, 290.

¹⁸¹ Wang Weiping. “Changes in Social Styles in Suzhou during the Ming and Qing Dynasties—A Study of the Transmutation of Folkways in the Wu Region II”, *History Research and Teaching*, no.04 1993:17–20.

should have more expensive food materials from land or water, and the cost was daunting.

The literati were jealous of wealthy people who possessed novelty goods and were aware of the difficulty of making money to guarantee a refined taste. For example, in *A Brief List of the Imperial Capital* 帝京景物略, after visiting the city god temple, Shen Meng helplessly lamented his inability to afford a Xuande stove 宣德炉 (see Figure 4.6):

The first time I came here, I was one of the poor literati. I followed other people and searched for the refined things. But I was shamed of my empty wallet and desperate for those gems. It was not easy for poor literati to write works. How could my works be as popular as that Xuande stove 初来穷儒再三叹，也随人口论清玩。徘徊只自愧囊空，波斯碧眼予眼红。穷儒文章不易出，哪能传世如金铜?¹⁸²

Because of the pressure of life, some of the lower-class literati became close to the common people. They began to change their views on Wu Yao and identify with commercial activities. However, most of the literati were still concerned about the pursuit of luxury and the active involvement of common people in commercial activities. For a long time, most of the emperors in ancient China had adhered to a policy of emphasising agriculture and suppressing commerce. Commercial activity could not be prohibited because it was necessary as a matter of social circulation. Nonetheless, the development of commerce brought many social problems, such as class changes, population movements and changing opinions among common people, which made it more difficult for the upper classes and the literati to manage the country and control society. The literati's status was threatened by businesspeople without social privileges who accumulated wealth through economic means.

¹⁸²(Ming) Liu Yiqing, Yu Yizheng. *A Brief View of the Imperial Capital*. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2001, 244.

The literati's criticism of Yao was a rejection of things that did not conform to Confucian standards and the political and moral order. They despised Yao, which aroused human desires due to their seductiveness, but they could not stop being drawn to novel and beautiful things. From the period of the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220) to the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), the developing process of Wu Yao, it was easy to find the literati's ambivalence towards unusual, luxurious items and hedonistic lifestyles. This mentality prevented the literati from completely suppressing their material desires. Eventually, the literati followed ordinary people to pursue pleasure.

Chapter Five: The Origin of Wu Yao: Fu Yao from the Period of the Zhou Dynasty(1045 BC–256 BC) to the Song Dynasty (960–1279)

As mentioned in Chapters One and Four, in historical documents and classical literature, the literati encouraged people to exert restraint and reticence with regard to desire, consumption and appearance. Moreover, the literati, ruling classes and the emperor himself practiced a complex system of etiquette, with rules governing people's dress of different ranks and statuses. Novelties that violated the rules would be considered Fu Yao, which was a disparaging term for clothing that did not conform to the rituals. From the Zhou Dynasty (1045 BC–256 BC) to the Song Dynasty(960–1279), historical records and surviving artefacts confirm that many people sought out unusual clothing. There were two different attitudes. The upper-class people, such as emperors and the literati, were offended and anxious about the common people's pursuit of glamorous dress. The upper-class people felt deprived of privileged access to expensive and elegant clothing. They were dedicated to using many far-fetched reasons, like the belief in signs 征兆信仰 mentioned in Chapter Three, to discourage wayward behaviour, restrict the freedom of the public and further maintain the social hierarchy. In each dynasty, the ruling class enacted different and detailed dressing restrictions, but these policies were rarely effectively enforced, as it was hard to suppress the increasing interest in clothing. Common people took action against the literati's ascetic views.

Xu Shen interprets the Chinese character *Chu* 初 in *Chinese Character*

Interpretation 说文解字 as beginning. The Chinese character 初 is based on the meaning of knife 刀 and clothes 衤. The Chinese character *Chu* means everything begins with making clothes 初，始也，从刀从衣，裁衣之始也。¹⁸³ Dressing is

¹⁸³ (Han) Xu Shen 许慎. *The Origin of Chinese Characters* 说文解字. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1963, 91.

one of the important symbols of the beginning of Chinese civilisation since the Zhou Dynasty (1045 BC–256 BC). According to the *Book of Rites* 礼记·礼运 in the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220), before people learned to cook food over fire, they ate raw fruits, plants and the flesh of birds and animals and even swallowed birds and animals' blood and hair. They had not learned how to weave silk and linen, so they chose to wear the fur of animals 未有火化，食草木之实，鸟兽之肉，饮其血，茹其毛。未有麻丝，衣其羽皮。¹⁸⁴ However, clothing in the stage of savagery and barbarism did not only have a practical function but an aesthetic one as well. For example, scholars found a pottery basin with patterns of dancing people excavated in Sun Zhai 孙家寨, Qinghai. The pattern depicts people with braided hair wearing the same long knee-length dress. The dress has a long tail decoration falling from the bottom of the back, which is very elaborate (see Figure 5.1). By the time of the Emperor of Yellow 黄帝 (5500 BC), dress was further given a social and cultural function.

The era of the Emperor of Yellow 黄 (5500 BC), Yao 尧 and Shun 舜 was an important historical period of transition from primitive society to class society. An unearthed relic, the stone spinning wheel and bone needle of Yang Shao 仰韶 Culture (5000 BC–3000 BC), shows that weaving and sewing were already typical handicrafts at that time. The improvements in living standards also witnessed a rising accumulation of wealth. As a result, classes were further divided, and notions of superiority and inferiority began to emerge. The Yellow Emperor, Yao and Shun improved the uniform system to distinguish between officials and the public 黄帝、尧、舜垂衣裳而天下治，盖取诸乾坤。¹⁸⁵ The ruling class began to use clothing to distinguish status and social rank. During the Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC–256 BC), the dress code of crown and formal clothing was formed. The idea of ritual government,

¹⁸⁴ Li Xueqin. *The Thirteen Classic Commentaries - Zhou Yi* 十三经注疏. Beijing University Press, 1999, 668.

¹⁸⁵ Chen Guying. *Zhou Yi Jin Zhu Jin Yi* 周易今注今译. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2005, 650.

which took clothing as a means and a tool to maintain social order and ritual norms and educate the public, profoundly influenced future dynasties.

From the beginning of the Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC–256 BC), courtly clothing was sumptuous and detailed. It was inscribed in bronze that the emperor in Zhou Dynasty often rewarded different grades of upper garments, like the Gun Yi 袞衣 and the Xuan Yi 玄衣, and the full set of jade accessories. There were also many official positions related to the dress system during the Zhou Dynasty, such as Si Qiu 司裘, Zhang Pi 掌皮, Nei Si Fu 内司服, Feng Ren 缝人, Ran Ren 染人, Ju Ren 屨人, Si Fu 司服, Jie Fu Shi 节服氏, Bian Shi 弁师, Huang Shi 荒氏 and Yu Ren 玉人. The dress rules of the emperor and his ministers were very strict. For example, there was a record of the Twelve Decorative Motifs 十二章纹 on the emperor's clothing in the earliest compilations of historical documents in ancient China named *Shang Shu* 尚书. The Twelve Decorative Motifs included the sun, the moon, stars, the mountain, the dragon, Hua Chong 华虫, Zong Li 宗彝, algae, Fen Mi 粉米 and Fu Fu 黼黻. Hua Chong was a colourful pheasant. Zong Yi was a kind of sacrificial vessel. Algae was a kind of water plant. Fen Mi was grainy corn. Fu Fu was an axe-shaped tool and was one of the two symmetrical bowed symbols (see Figure 5.2).

Strict clothing regulations began in the Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC–256 BC). The emperor and his ministers in the Zhou Dynasty were required to wear the appropriate clothing on occasions such as rituals, court meetings, military ceremonies, marriages and funerals. The officials' clothing differed according to their status or position. The Gong 公, the highest rank of nobility, were allowed to wear the same style hat as the emperor's, which was decorated with nine strings of jade (see Figure 5.3). However, the Gong's jade strings only had nine jade stones each, while the king's had 12. The colours of jade used in the jade string were green, white and red. The Hou 侯 and the Bo 伯 were the second and third-rank of nobility, and their hats had seven strings of jade beads, each string with seven jade beads. The Zi 子 and Nan 男 could

wear hats decorated with five strings of jade beads, each string with five jade beads. Other ministers wore six, four, three or two jade strings according to their official positions. Clothing patterns and accessories were also different according to rank. Clothing was upgraded from mere protection from the cold to a means of political rule and a symbol of status. Wearing unsuitable clothing, such as men wearing women's dress, was considered an act that broke the rituals and shook the ruling order.

After the Zhou Dynasty (1046 BC–256 BC) and into the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220), records of Fu Yao 服妖 are comparatively more plentiful. It implied social negation and discrimination against individual transgressions and had strong political meaning. When groups or individuals wore clothing that was contrary to Confucian rituals and values, the literati considered it a sign of disaster and a harbinger of the fall of the nation. Significantly, the theory of Yin and Yang and the Five Elements 阴阳五行说 prevailed in the Han Dynasty. The literati believed that the five elements, namely gold, wood, water, fire and earth, correspond to five things: appearance, speaking, sight, hearing and thought. As the scholar in the Han Dynasty, Xiao Ji, explained: “The five things match the five elements. The first is appearance, to match wood. The second is speaking, to match gold. The third is sight, to match fire and the fourth is hearing, to match water. The fifth is thought, to match earth 五事者，《尚书·洪范》云：敬用五事，盖以人事配五行也。一曰貌，以配木；二曰言，以配金；三曰视，以配火；四曰听，以配水；五曰思，以配土”。¹⁸⁶ The literati believed that everyone should be well groomed, obedient in speaking, bright in sight, keen in hearing, and enlightened in thinking. Clothing might be the most visual expression of appearance, and inappropriate clothing was considered Fu Yao.

The earliest record of the view of inappropriate clothing as Fu Yao was in the *Shang Shu Hong Fan Wu Xing Zhuan* 尚书大传·洪范五行传. It was serious for people to dress improperly because people believed it would bring punishments from Heaven, like storms, so this improper dressing was called Fu Yao 貌之不恭是谓不

¹⁸⁶ (Sui) Xiao Ji. *Wu Xing Da Yi* 五行大义 Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2001, 79–80.

肃，厥咎狂，厥罚恒雨，厥极恶，时则有服妖。¹⁸⁷ Unusual clothing defied etiquette, status and tradition. It was an act of disrespect that could be harmful to humanity as a natural disaster, which was related to the belief in the interaction between gods and humans 天人感应. As mentioned in Chapter Three, the literati believed that people had to act according to the rules they had made and that they could not break the rules. Otherwise, gods would hint at people through disasters.

From the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220) to the Song Dynasty (960–1279), the criteria for Fu Yao changed over time. The literati considered the phenomena of Fu Yao to be broadly divided into the following categories.

The first type of Fu Yao was that of individuals or groups dressed in a way that did not conform to their status or rank. Under the regulation of ritual, clothing was characterised by class and bound by the traditional hierarchy. The official book, *Wu Xing Zhi* 五行志, recorded an incident known as the Two-Colour Clothing and Metal Jue 偏衣金玦. Before Prince Shen Sheng 申生 went on his campaign, his father, who was the king of the country, gave him two-colour clothing and a gold Jue, which sparked discontent among the prince's subordinates. The two-colour clothing was a coat in two different colours on the left and right, bounded by a centre seam. Yang Bojun states, "In ancient times, military uniforms were the most valuable in only one colour and known as Jun Fu 古代戎服，尤贵一色，故谓之均服。"¹⁸⁸ Two-colour clothing was not appropriate for the prince. Metal Jue was a half-ring-shaped piece of bronze with a notch (see Figure 5.4). The shape of Jue was a notched circle 绝人以玦，反玦以环。¹⁸⁹ Jade was more precious than metal, and the literati believed that jade was a symbol of a gentleman. "Wearing jade is a gentleman's habit 佩玉者君子之常度."¹⁹⁰ A non-jade, notched metal Jue did not match the prince's status. The

¹⁸⁷ Fu Sheng. *Shang Shu Da Guan* 尚书大观. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1995, 63–64.

¹⁸⁸ Yang Bojun. *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu* 春秋左传注. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1990, 207.

¹⁸⁹ (pre-Qing) Xunzi 荀子. Translated by Wang Xianqian. *Xun Tz's Collected Works* 荀子集解. Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2012, 406.

¹⁹⁰ (Han) Ban Gu 班固. *Han Shu* 汉书, *Wu Xing Zhi* 五行志. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1962, 1365.

author of *Wu Xing Zhi*, Ban Gu, considered it inauspicious for the king to give the prince two-colour clothing and metal Jue that were not in keeping with his son's status. This brought calamity to Prince Shen Sheng and led to his suicide 左氏传愍公二年，晋献公使太子申生帅师，公衣之偏衣，佩之金玦……罕夷曰：“彪奇无常，金玦不复，君有心矣。”后四年，申生以谗自杀。近服妖也。¹⁹¹ It seemed that clothing showed the difference in status and hierarchy and was seen as an important factor in relation to fate.

In order to further distinguish between the classes, there were strict rules regarding the colour, material, pattern and decoration of clothing of the emperor, the nobility, the literati, common people and low-class people. That people violated such rules would be considered Fu Yao. The most direct example was the dress code between ministers and common people. At the beginning of the Sui Dynasty (581–618), not only the officials but even the emperor's regular dress was not significantly different from that of the public, and there were no special regulations on the colour of the emperor's clothing. In the Tang Dynasty (618–907), the emperor's usual dress was a yellow robe 黄袍衫, a soft sarong wrapping around the head called Zhe Shang Jin 折上巾, a nine-ring belt 九环带 and Liu He Boot 六合靴, a kind of high-heeled boot. Later, the yellow colour was gradually used for the emperors' clothing, and the literati and the general public were forbidden to use this colour in their clothing and accessories 渐用赤黄，遂禁士庶不得以赤黄为衣服杂饰。¹⁹² Yellow became a special colour for emperors.

In the Tang Dynasty, those of high official rank wore purple and scarlet, while those of low official rank wore cyan and green to make it easy to identify the ranks of officials. The emperors from the Sui Dynasty (581–618) learned this dress code in the Tang Dynasty (618–907). The emperors required that officials wear long black robes called Zao Pao 皂袍, the literati who did not work in government could wear white robes, and the public should wear simple style robes. Purple was only applied to

¹⁹¹ Ibid., Ban Gu, 1365.

¹⁹² (Song) Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修. *The Old Tang History* 旧唐书. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2002, 1951–1952.

formal occasion dresses. In 982, the minister, Li Chuan 李憲, requested that the emperor ban lower-ranking officials from wearing purple underneath their green official uniforms. In 989, ordinary people's wearing of purple was prohibited. In 1036, there was a ban on civil dress and other violations of the system. In 1055, the literati and the public imitated the fashion from the palace, wearing dark purple clothing, which the emperor also banned. In 1062, the government again banned the public from wearing dark purple. However, these prohibitions were not strictly observed by people. The public still wore purple, and the literati did not like it.

Minister Li Chun 李椿 said that it had always been normal for the literati to wear purple clothing, but if the whole country wore purple, there was no longer a distinction between high and low status. Furthermore, such garments were expensive to make and difficult for poor people to afford. If everyone wore such expensive clothes, you would feel humiliated if you did not wear them. So, even if people with financial difficulties wanted to be thrifty, it was not easy to do so. 自军兴以来，士大夫服紫衫以便戎事，不为过也，而四方皂吏士庶服之，不复有上下之别。且一衫之费，贫者亦难办。甲服而乙不服，人情所耻，故虽欲从俭，不可得也。¹⁹³

This system of clothing, with the ultimate goal of clarifying status and classes, served the literati and the emperors to control the behaviour of common people and prevent revolt among the lower classes.

The second type of Fu Yao was men wearing women's clothing or women wearing men's clothing. The literati considered that the status of men and women was not equal, and the perversion of clothing was an ominous sign. The belief that men were inherently superior to women can be seen in a poem in *Shi Jing* 诗经 (11th to 6th centuries BC), the earliest collection of Chinese poetry. "When we build the new palace, if we give birth to a boy, we will give him a comfortable bed to sleep in, dress him in fine clothes, and give him a Jade Zhang 玉璋 to play with (see Figure 5.5).

Listening to his loud cries, he can make a name for himself in the future. At least he would be a vassal, perhaps even wear the splendid clothes to become the emperor. If

¹⁹³ (Song) Wang Yong 王栐. *Yan Yi Yi Mou Lu* 燕翼诒谋录. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2007, 4591.

we give birth to a girl, she will lie on the ground, swaddled in clothing, playing with a clay spinning wheel. The girl will grow up to be a good housewife, not only to keep her parents from being angry, but also to be good to her husband's family. She will be praised as a good wife and mother who never causes any trouble 乃生男子，载寝之床，载衣之裳，载弄之璋。其泣喤喤，朱芾斯皇，室家君王。乃生女子，载寝之地，载衣之褐，载弄之瓦。无非无仪，唯酒食是议，无父母诒罹。” Men could use Jade Zhang, a long jade object that was held in the hands of the nobility during rituals, while women could only use textile tools. From birth, women were defined by their inferior status. In terms of everyday life, the literati believed that it was necessary to post strict division between male and female clothing. It was written in the Record of Rituals 礼记内则: “Men's clothing and women's clothing could not interchange.”¹⁹⁴ The literati considered that men wearing women's clothing was degenerate and women wearing men's clothing was transgressive. They refused to accept such behaviour. For example, some literati thought that the queen's love of wearing men's hats was one of the reasons for the downfall of the country Xia 末喜冠男子之冠，桀亡天下.”¹⁹⁵

To the literati from the period of the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220) and Jin Dynasty (266–420), women wearing men's clothing was an ominous sign that women were interfering in politics. However, mixed male and female clothing styles were common in the Han and Jin dynasties. There were many examples. In the Han Dynasty, a minister named Li Gu 李固 liked using a white, fine-textured make-up foundation named Hu Fen 胡粉, which contained heavy metals such as lead, tin, aluminium and zinc. In the Southern Dynasty (420–589), one of the literati named He Yan 何晏, often dressed like a lady and even his hands were covered in a thin layer of powder 好服妇人之服.¹⁹⁶ Most of the emperors in the Southern Dynasty wore

¹⁹⁴ (Qing) Sun Xidan. *The Collected Works of Rites* 礼记集解. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1989, 735.

¹⁹⁵ (Tang) Fang Xuanling. *Jin Book* 晋书. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974, 822.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 822.

powder on their faces so that people in the Northern Dynasty derided them as the “Powder Gentleman 傅粉郎”.¹⁹⁷ Society did not allow men to wear female clothing or make-up.

During the Tang Dynasty (618–907), many women were interested in dressing like men. For example, a painting entitled *Guo Lady Spring Tour* 虢国夫人游春图 by Zhang Xuan depicts three noblewomen dressed in men’s clothing and riding horses (see Figure 5.6). The leading figure in the painting wears men’s clothing: a robe with a round neck and narrow sleeves, a turban around his head, and leather boots on her feet. Some scholars believe that the fashion in which women dressed like men in the Tang Dynasty was a challenge to the traditional patriarchal society as a result of the awakening of female consciousness. However, this statement is contestable. As Sun Ji comments, “wearing men’s clothing and Hu style are not the main style in the Tang Dynasty. Elegant clothes and hair bun adorned with jewels are still the pursuit and aspiration of the upper class women while men’s clothing and Hu style are contrary to it.”¹⁹⁸ From the cultural relics and wall paintings excavated during the Tang Dynasty, it can be seen that the women dressed in men’s clothing were mostly servants of lower status, and it is rare to see noble women of higher status dressing like that. For example, Zhou Fang’s painting, *Women Wielding A Fan* 挥扇仕女图, depicts a woman in a man’s suit with a round neck slit and purple robe, wearing a red belt around her waist, wielding a fan. Another woman in male clothing wears a red robe and holds a bronze mirror. According to the official vestimentary systems of the Tang Dynasty, the woman in the red robe was a female official who worked in the palace, serving the emperor and his female family members.

Tang wall paintings depict many female servants wearing male clothing. The mural in the tomb of Wei, the consort of Emperor Taizong of Tang, depicts the tomb owner in a dress with her hair pulled back in a high bun and female attendants in men’s clothing on either side of her. The line picture engraved in the stone coffin of the tomb of Wu Hui Fei 武惠妃 depicts a female tomb owner in a dress, combing in

¹⁹⁷ (Ming) Shen Defu 沈德符. *Wan Li Ye Huo Bian* 万历野获编. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959, 620.

¹⁹⁸ Sun Ji. *Women in Men’s Clothing and Hu Clothing in the Tang Dynasty*. Shanghai: Donghua University Press, 2017, 13.

a mirror, with female attendants in men's clothing standing behind her (see Figure 5.7). The heroines in the Dunhuang mural also wear female dress, with female attendants in men's clothing as servants (see Figure 5.8). The images from the tombs of the Tang Dynasty show that women prefer to choose knee-length robes and narrow-mouthed hakama (mostly striped) with a leather belt around the waist. Sometimes, they wear a small bag named Pan Nang 鞞囊. They prefer walking-friendly shoes and generally do not choose intricately decorated boots (see Figure 5.9). Female servants wear men's clothing as their daily dress for convenience. Even among female servants, those who wear men's clothing do not necessarily have a higher status, or even a lower one, than those who wear women's dresses. Typically, in ancient Chinese figure painting, figures of high status are depicted as bigger in accordance with their status. In this regard, the conventions are similar to those of ancient Egypt, in which representation is strictly hierarchical. In the Tang tomb murals, the senior women are strikingly tall and wear dresses at the front of the procession. In the paintings, the little female servants in men's clothes follow the senior heroine, holding utensils in their hands, who are apparently of a lower social station (see Figures 5.10–5.14).

Women dressing like men was not a mainstream fashion and was also considered by the literati to be Fu Yao. In a letter written to his grandson in his later years, Minister Li Hua recalled, “When I was young, I went to the southern market of Luo Yang. When I wandered in the hat shop, I observed more mink hats and fewer wei hats 帷帽 (a hat decorated with a veil). Seeing such a change in dress, the old-fashioned people of the time were already lamenting that the society was getting worse. When I reached middle age and wandered around the Western market of Chang An 长安, I found that there were no wei hats and mink hats (see Figure 5.14). If there were also women wearing wei hats with netting draped around the hat, covering the neck, or another kind of hat named Mi 冪, covering the whole body, she would be considered as a strange person. In the market, I saw individuals wearing clothing typically associated with the opposite gender, which was inappropriate. This is Fu Yao. 吾小时，南市帽行，见貂帽多，帷帽少，当时旧人，已叹风俗……所谓“服妖”，可以从妇人为丈夫之象，丈夫为妇人之饰，颠之倒之，莫甚于

此.”¹⁹⁹ Apart from the literati, the emperors also did not like the idea of women dressing as men. In the *New Tang Book* 新唐书, there was a record of Princess Taiping. “She dressed as a man in a purple dress, with a jade belt around her waist, and a soap-robe scarf on her head, singing and dancing in front of the emperor and empress. The emperor and the queen laughed and said: ‘A woman cannot be a military official. Why are you dressed like this?’ It was close to Fu Yao 高宗尝内宴, 太平公主紫衫玉带、皂罗折上巾具纷砺七事, 歌舞于帝前。帝与武后笑曰女子不可为武官, 何为此装束?近服妖也.”²⁰⁰ The rulers in the Tang Dynasty did not accept women wearing men’s clothing. Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修, the Song literati who recorded the phenomena, considered it Fu Yao and thought the princess’s behaviour was unseemly and excessive. The literati considered women wearing male dress as an attack on the hierarchy of male superiority over females, and they used the term Fu Yao to express their contempt for women.

The third type of Fu Yao was clothing that was unusual or unorthodox. This type refers to clothes, accessories and make-up that contradict traditional aesthetics. In the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220), Sun Shou, the wife of Lord Liang Ji, designed a series of novel outfits and dressing styles, which became popular among the women in the capital. She designed the “sad eyebrows 愁眉”, the “crying make-up 啼妆”, the “falling horse bun 堕马髻”, the “folding waist step 折腰步” and the “caring teeth smile 龇齿笑”. The sad eyebrows referred to a style of make-up where the eyebrows were drawn in a thin and curved shape, and the tip of the eyebrow was higher than the peak. The crying make-up meant applying a thin layer of make-up, such as oil, under the eyes as if one had just cried. The falling horse bun was a kind of bun that was tilted to one side to give the appearance of falling off a horse with hair in disarray (see Figure 5.15). The phrase “folding waist step” meant a lady walking with a bend and some women believed this walking posture made them look very

¹⁹⁹ (Tang) Li Hua. *All Tang Texts* 全唐文. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2001, 3196.

²⁰⁰ (Song) Ouyang Xiu. *The New Tang Book* 新唐书. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1975, 878.

graceful. The caring teeth smile referred to someone who pretended to have a painful tooth and felt depressed. The literati criticised these styles, and manners were artificial and inconsistent with their ideal of a lady's modesty. 桓帝元嘉中,京都妇女作愁眉、啼妆、堕马髻、折腰步、龋齿笑...始自东汉大将军梁冀家所为,京都歛然,诸夏皆放效。此近服妖也。²⁰¹ The literati argued that the series of outfits and make-up created by Sun Shou was ominous and foretold the subsequent destruction of her husband, Liang Ji and his family. The sad-looking eyebrows and crying make-up were a sign of military defeat and women's response to it. The falling horse bun, the folding waist step and the caring teeth smile were a sign of the pitiful posture of women after the destruction of the family. Such styles of dressing and make-up were then classified as Fu Yao for being anti-traditional.

In the Song Dynasty (960–1279), there were many historical records of unusual clothing and Fu Yao. According to the old system of the Song Dynasty, women's hair crowns were mostly made of gauze brushed with paint and then decorated with gold, silver, pearls, emeralds, and colourful flowers. At first, there were no special styles. During the time of Emperor Zhao Zhen 赵桢 (1010–1063) of the Song Dynasty, women in the palace tried to use white rhinoceros horns to make hair crowns and combs. The hair crowns were a metre long, even reaching to the shoulders, and the combs were 30 centimetres long. The style was firstly popular in the palace but later became fashionable to the public, known as the "Palace Style Hair Crown" 内样冠, the "Dropping to Shoulder Hair Crown" 垂肩冠 and "Parallel to the Shoulder Hair Crown" 等肩冠 (see Figure 5.16). Because of its prominence and cost, the government intervened in its popularity 近年所服角冠,两翼抱面,下垂及肩,故又叫垂肩冠,议者指为服妖。²⁰² In 1125, the women of the Kaifeng were fond of using a goose-yellow belly scarf, known as the "yellow on the waist 腰上黄". The belly scarf was a silk scarf for the waist and abdomen, made for both men and women

²⁰¹ (Han) Ying Shao 应劭. *Feng Su Tong Yi Jiao Shi* 风俗通义校释. Tianjin Ren Min Chu Ban She, 1980, 441.

²⁰² Ibid., 4617, 5097–5098.

and tied around the outside of coats. This type of clothing started from the palace and soon was popular throughout the country. Women's casual clothes were not fastened with straps or buttons, which was called No Jin 不制衿. In 1127, the state of Jin 金 attacked the Northern Song government and took the two emperors, Zhao Ji 赵佶 (1082–1135) and Zhao Huan 赵桓 (1100–1161), as well as their concubines and servants: that is, more than 3,000 people. This event was known as the Jingkang Rebellion 靖康之变. The literati attributed the defeat of this war to unusual female clothing and believed the novelty dress brought disaster to the country.

Another typical example of Fu Yao was the pattern named the One-Year Scene 一年景. During the Jingkang period (1126–1127), there was a popular pattern in fabrics, clothing and jewellery, depicting scenes of the four seasons (see Figure 5.17). For example, there were some symbols of each festival, such as the flag pennant, the round lantern, the dragon boat race, the pattern of a tiger holding a mugwort branch and the snow scenery. The flowers in patterns included peach blossom, apricot blossom, chrysanthemum and plum blossom because they represented the four seasons of the year, respectively. All of these were combined in one pattern, which was called the One-Year Scene. 靖康初，京师织帛及妇人首饰衣服，皆备四时。如节物则春幡、灯毬、竞渡、艾虎、云月之类，花则桃、杏、荷花、菊花、梅花皆并为一景，谓之一年景。而靖康纪元果止一年，盖服妖也。²⁰³ However, the irony is that the Jingkang period was only one year long, so this depiction of a one-year scene was seen as a sign of inauspicious and Fu Yao.

The novel and anti-traditional clothing were regarded as a kind of disaster linked to politics and a warning from Heaven. In fact, the term Fu Yao represents a manifestation of the conservative forces represented by the literati, who cling to tradition and oppose changes. In the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), material desires from ordinary people were further satisfied as material standards increased. The scope of Fu Yao, as decided by the literati, was further expanded from clothing to all aspects of daily life, which was Wu Yao.

²⁰³ Ibid., 3470.

Chapter Six: The Glorious Period of “Wu Yao”: Leisure Class in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644)

In ancient China, Wu Yao referred to all kinds of novel items that were expensive but of low utility or to phenomena in which the use of items did not conform to traditional customs. Wu Yao existed in the extravagances of daily life, social customs, and recreational activities. Compared with the previous dynasties, the Ming Dynasty was a glorious period of Wu Yao’s phenomenon. In contrast with the previous dynasties (from the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220) to the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368)), there are more records of Wu Yao in the historical materials of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). The literati described the popular and luxury goods frequently in their book. Before detailing the superfluous customs and ways of entertainment involved in the phenomenon of Wu Yao, it is important to understand the people who influenced and participated in this fashion trend. They can be divided into two broad categories. The first was the leisure class, which, because of their material wealth, was exempt from heavy labour and enjoyed free time. The leisure class included the emperors, wealthy imperial clans, the literati, merchants, and some wealthy urban women. The other category was the handicraftsman, who produced the main consumer goods in urban areas and ensured that commodities were kept to a high standard of manufacture. It is helpful to examine the wealth flow and class transformation behind the Wu Yao phenomena by analysing these two groups of people.

According to Thorstein Veblen’s theory of the leisure class, leisure classes are by custom exempt or excluded from industrial occupation.²⁰⁴ They have the common economic characteristic of being non-industrial. Based on this criterion, emperors, wealthy imperial clans, most of the literati, merchants, and some wealthy urban women in the Ming Dynasty belonged to the leisure class. The consumption of this group is not only to meet physical needs but also to meet higher needs, such as spiritual, aesthetic, intellectual, and so on. A life in the leisure class is the direct

²⁰⁴ Thorstein Veblen. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Oxford University Press, 2007, 8–11.

evidence of money and status. Only people in the leisure class can live in a manifest that is easy and comfortable. Some of the literati turned to material enjoyment after passing the imperial examinations and gaining status. Many literati in the Ming Dynasty published appreciation works to show their superior taste. The leisure class also consumed the staff of life beyond the minimum required for subsistence and physical efficiency and engaged in conspicuous consumption.²⁰⁵ For instance, in the Ming Dynasty, the literati and the wealthy merchants wore wide, instep-length clothes and light-coloured silk shoes, which showed their leisurely attitude of not doing anything related to production.

The Emperors and the Clan Members

Sitting at the top of the hierarchy was the emperor, who enjoyed the highest level of material wealth and had a privileged life. Even an emperor known for his frugality still had a better life than most of the public. For example, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, the founding emperor of the Ming Dynasty, who used to be a farmer, was diligent in political affairs and lived a simple life. He once demanded that all the beds in the palace be made of purple wood instead of aloes and that they not be carved 云檐排比玉妃房，户户俱铺紫木床，圣后从来敦内治，不教雕镂杂沉香。²⁰⁶ The choice of simple-style furniture and inferior wood was considered frugal for the emperor. His descendants lived more luxurious lives and placed a higher premium on pleasure. One of the emperors, Zhu Houzhao 朱厚照, was a playful and sybaritic man, fond of martial arts, cockfighting, ball games and drinking. He was also disposed to lavish architectural projects for both his enjoyment and for his legacy. Another emperor named Zhu Yijun 朱翊钧 (1573–1620) was greedy for material enjoyment, and the tributes from various places were far from meeting his increasing needs. For example, Shu Fan 蜀扇 was one of the tributes in the Ming Dynasty. Much money was spent on decorating the handles of the Shu Fan in Sichuan. However, Zhu Yijun

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 52.

²⁰⁶ Chen Baoliang. *Piao Yao De Chuan Tong Ming Dai She Hui Sheng Huo Chang Juan*. Changsha: Hunan Publishing House, 1996, 234.

still believed that they were of poor quality and that there were not enough fans. He stopped paying salaries to local officials for three months and thought these officials did not fulfil his needs because they embezzled funds 四川布政司恭进上用扇柄，以粗恶不堪样数短少，各夺俸三月，仍命该省抚按究原委，通判李盘等赃罪以闻。²⁰⁷ He also built the three huge palaces and purchased expensive wood, which cost more than 300,000 taels of silver and was collected from the public.

Under the strict hierarchical system of imperial China, the emperors, the royal family, and the nobles were plainly at the pinnacle of display of sumptuous forms of dress. The preferences of the ruling class influenced the aesthetics and fashion of society and spread down the social hierarchy because ordinary people often imitated the dress style of the privileged class. The fashionable dress style mainly originated from the royal court, that is, “royal style 宫样”. The inhabitants of the capital first learned the royal style, and after that, such style would quickly spread to surrounding cities. Luoyang in the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220), Chang’an in the Tang Dynasty (618–907), Kaifeng in the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127), and Hangzhou in the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279) were all the national political centres, thus, sites of transaction for fashion. In 1516, one traveller wrote in his diary that the women in the capital all wore long sleeves and their hair in a low bun, which was quite different from the women whence he had come. However, upon his return, he was shocked to find that these fashions had been adopted while he had been away.²⁰⁸ The phenomenon of violation of sumptuary laws also started in the capital. Even servants and prostitutes could wear expensive clothing embroidered with exotic animals, which were designed for high-class people. The lower class tried their best to imitate and follow the patterns of the higher classes.

Another large group in the Ming Dynasty leisure class were the royal clan members, the family members of the descendants of Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, the founding emperors of the Ming Dynasty. After the mid-Ming Dynasty, the imperial court wanted to keep power within the central government and implemented a policy

²⁰⁷ Anon. *Ming Shen Zong Shi Lu* 明神宗实录. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1968, 580.

²⁰⁸ (Ming) Dong Gu 董穀. *Bi Li Za Cun* 碧里杂存. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985, 58.

of reducing the power of the vassal states. Most members of the royal clan lost interest in politics and turned to marrying concubines and having children, leading to an expansion of the clan's population. By 1600, there were over 100,000 members of the royal clan.²⁰⁹ This huge leisure class pursued pleasure, befriended the literati, and built clubs and gardens. Evidence of the luxurious life of the members of the Ming clan can be found in their tombs. For instance, Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441) was a royal in Chinese history. Many ceramics, jade, bronze, iron, gold and silver vessels and jewellery have been unearthed in his tomb (see Figures 6.1–6.16). In addition to ceramics, jade, and non-precious metal products such as bronze and iron, the tomb contained unprecedented quantities of gold and silver in the form of metal utensils and jewellery, with much of the latter also mounted with gems of great size and quality. Most of these are daily necessities and not made especially for interment.²¹⁰ This tomb gives us a glimpse of the lavishness of life in the disappeared palaces of the Ming appanages. Except for luxury goods, many members of the clan enjoyed painting and calligraphy and often communicated with the literati. For example, Zhu Xinzeng 朱新增, the clan general of the Hedong royal family, formed a poetry club with the literati Qian Xiuzhou 钱虚舟, Yang Dingyi 杨定一 and Li Yiren 李以仁. These wealthy, aesthetically refined clan members were important target customers for novel, expensive and sophisticated urban consumer goods.

The Literati

In addition to royal clan members and emperors, the literati, a particular social class, should not be ignored in the Wu Yao phenomena. The literati, as the elite of traditional culture, included two levels. Students and young literati named Qing Jin 青衿 belonged to this level. They passed the lowest level of the national selection examination and entered the various prefectures, states and counties that were in the lower rank. Compared to the common people, Qing Jin already had a privileged status, but their tuition fees were high, and they were relatively impoverished. The

²⁰⁹ Craig Clunas. *Screen of Kings: Royal Art and Power in Ming China*. Vol. 45175. London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2013, 8.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 139.

second level was Jin Shen 缙绅, a bureaucrat who had become a government official or a country squire who had returned to his hometown after his retirement. Most of the Jin Shen group, who owned land and many properties, were much richer than the Qing Jin group. When one of the literati became a member of Jin Shen, he would pursue material enjoyment and spiritual pursuit of art. Hoping to have a high standard of living, they invested considerable energy in their personal interests.

Compared to the emperors, the royal family, and the nobles, who had the dominant position when they were born, the status of the literati was more easily threatened by the lower classes. When luxurious consumption prevailed, money eroded the traditional hierarchy, and the social order underwent drastic changes. The literati who were originally in high positions were increasingly challenged by other classes, especially wealthy business people, which made the literati feel anxious. In order to relieve anxiety and maintain their superiority, the literati tried to use cultural taste to defeat the wealth of the rich common people. With unique consumption preferences and tastes, they developed a set of special fashion standards, consumption behaviour patterns and consumption value orientations to show their identity and status. The literati confidently attributed the luxury goods that they could not afford to tasteless things with their standard. The only things that conformed to their aesthetic orientation were truly of elegant taste. The literati emphasised their differences from other social classes. The fashion created by the literati constituted the “fashion hegemony” in imperial China, which did not rely on the authorisation of the state but had a dominant position. The literati became the fashion icon of other social classes.

Wealthy people mostly liked novel and gorgeous styles. The literati advocated simple and classical styles to distinguish them from the wealthy commoners and considered elaborate and expensive styles to be tasteless. In terms of dress, the literati believed that one should not just follow fashion, or else one would lack aesthetic judgement. Wen Zhenheng argued that the popular headscarf named Pi Yun Headscarf 披云巾, which could be cut at will, was tasteless and not as good-looking as the classic headscarf made of a whole piece of cloth, although it was inconvenient to use 唐巾去汉式不远,今所尚披云巾最俗,或自以意为之,幅巾最古,然不便于

用.²¹¹ Wang Shizhen was so proud that he refused to wear the novelty outfit with tops and pants, insisting on wearing a simple and loose Taoist robe 袴褶,戎服也,其短袖或无袖而衣中断...而士大夫宴会必衣曳撒,是以戎服为盛而雅服为轻,吾未之从也.²¹² Like Wang Shizhen, Zhang Dai was very confident in dressing. He once ridiculed some people who imitated the Suzhou style, a style in the southern area of imperial China. These people immediately followed the tendency when narrow sleeves and low hats were popular 吾浙人极无主见,苏人所尚,极力模仿,如一巾愤,忽高忽低,如一袍袖,忽大忽小...何必攀附苏人始称名士哉.

The literati had special taste and preferred high crowns, Taoist robes and shallow shoes. Taoist robes were designed for Taoist priests and monks, and they were made of white, grey or brown cloth, with wide necklines and sleeves and black lapels. The shallow shoes were also originally worn by monks. This type of shoe was made of cloth or silk of various colours for the upper, and the soles were very thin. Because of their lightness, the literati were willing to wear them at home. High hats, loose sleeves and shallow shoes were not suitable for fast walking and made it hard for people to keep their clothes tidy. The literati chose this dress style to show that they were of the leisure class and did not need to be busy with work. The literati also had unique standards for women. Wei Yong believed that women were supposed to wear a few accessories and that women should choose make-up according to their personal qualities. Women could dress beautifully in spring, choose light clothing in summer, dress elegantly in autumn and wear bright colours in winter. At the same time, women should dress appropriately when meeting guests and wear comfortable shoes when travelling 饰不可过,亦不可缺,淡妆与浓抹,惟取相宜耳,首饰不过一珠一翠一金一玉...服色亦有时宜,春服宜倩,夏服宜爽,秋服宜雅,冬服宜艳,见客宜庄服,远行宜淡服.²¹³

²¹¹ (Ming) Wenzhen Heng 文震亨. *Treatise 长物志*. Beijing: Gold Wall Press, 2010, 315.

²¹² (Ming) Zhang Dai 张岱, *Lang Hua Wen Ji 琅华文集*, Volume III. Changsha: Yue Lu Press, 1985, 142–143.

²¹³ (Ming) Wei Yong 卫泳, *Yue Rong Lu 悦容编, Bi Ji Xiao Da Guan*, Volume V. Taipei: Xinxing Publish House, 1981, 2773.

Many literati published connoisseurship literature to guide the public in various aspects of daily life, such as dressing, interior design and entertainment. The literature helped people without a good educational background and provided information on the goods and styles favoured by the literati. The best-selling of this kind of connoisseurship manual reflected the popularity of the opinion about elegant taste and tasteless fashion from the literati among the public. *Treatise* 长物志, written by Wen Zhenheng, was a classic of this kind of connoisseurship literature. Wen expressed his views of elegance and vulgarity about almost everything in daily life, such as dress and adornment, daily utensils, boats and carriages, collection of antiques, aquarium and garden design. Wen believed that the public should use narrow wooden strips to divide the rectangular field into grids for a decorative look. It was better to have two or three windows than six windows. If the roof was high enough, people were supposed to design a dormer with slices ground from clam shells or window paper. Homeowners could make a few large lattice windshields to enjoy more sunlight in winter, which was better for small rooms. It was fashionable to use high-grade paint for window frames, like red or black. Window frame should not be engraved with patterns or use other paint colours of paints, or it would be tasteless 用木为粗格, 中设细条三眼, 眼方二寸, 不可过大。窗忌用六, 或二或三或四, 随宜用之。室高, 上可用横窗一扇, 下用低槛承之, 俱钉明瓦...漆用金漆, 或朱、黑二色, 雕花彩漆, 俱不可用。²¹⁴ In addition to interior design, the literati argued that the most fashionable and elegant gardens were of natural style. Xie Zhaochao described in detail that stones could be used in gardens to imitate natural scenes, and the public should place stones at random or place stones around ponds 假山须用山石, 大小高下, 随宜布置, 不可斧凿盖石去其皮便枯槁不复润泽, 生毒苔也。太湖锦川虽不可无, 但可妆点一二耳若纯是难得奇品, 终觉粉饰太胜, 无复丘壑天然之致矣。²¹⁵

People were to prefer natural style for furniture as well as their gardens. Overly cumbersome carvings and decorations did not demonstrate great taste. Fine purple

²¹⁴ Ibid., *Treatise*, 14.

²¹⁵ (Ming) Xie Zhaochao 谢肇潮, *Wu Za Zu* 五杂俎, Volume III. Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2009, 55.

wood and rosewood were the best raw materials for making furniture and it was better to use classical style decoration 苏人以为雅者,则四方随而雅之,俗者,则随而俗之,其赏识品第本精,故物莫能违又如斋头清玩、几案、床榻,近皆以紫檀、花梨为尚,尚古朴不尚雕镂,即物有雕镂,亦皆商、周、秦、汉之式,海内僻远皆效尤之,此亦嘉、隆、万三朝为盛.²¹⁶ When it came to bed curtains, silk curtains were considered the ugliest. Some people painted landscapes or black plum blossoms on the bed curtains to follow fashion, but it was considered to look tasteless 其论帐幔,则谓纸帐与绢绢等帐,最俗 有以画绢为之,有写山水墨梅于上者,此皆欲雅反俗.²¹⁷ In connoisseurship literature, the literati taught people how to use and purchase goods correctly so that common people could obtain a fashionable and elegant living environment similar to the literati. The literati took great pains to explain what was elegant and what was tasteless to promote their aesthetic tastes. Their opinion revealed the conceit of the literati on the taste of life and their contempt for the artistic taste of the new rich. The literati maintained their social prestige and lofty status by mastering the judgement of elegance and vulgarity.

The literati of the Ming Dynasty wrote lifestyle guides with their refined tastes. These books described the interior furnishings, antiques, sculptures, opera, food, paintings and architecture that the literati loved. For example, Wen Zhenheng's *Treatise* 长物志 consists of 12 volumes, including those on study room design, flowers and trees, gardening, birds and fish, calligraphy and painting, furniture, interior decoration, costume, boats and cars, indoor geomantic omen 风水, vegetables and fruits, and fragrant tea. The author gives a very detailed guide describing the general picture of the material life of the Jinshen in the Ming Dynasty. *Ge Gu Yao Lun* 格古要论, written by Cao Zhao, focuses on the appreciation of ancient musical instruments, ancient inkstones, epigraphy, ancient paintings, inkstones, stele and phallic posters, kiln ware and lacquer ware. Zhang Yingwen's *The Secret Collection*

²¹⁶ (Ming) Wang Shixing 王士性, *Guang Zhi Yi* 广志绎, Volume II. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1981, 33.

²¹⁷ Ibid., *Treatise*, 323.

of the Qing Dynasty 清秘藏 is rich in contents, with chapters devoted to commentary on crystal agate and amber, spices, embroidery, carving and framed collections. Another literati, Gao Lian, discusses edible wild plants in his book *Zun Sheng Ba Jian* 遵生八笺. These books convey essential commercial messages and show the tastes of the leisure class, which ensures that no one was excluded from participation in the market for luxury commodities on the grounds of ignorance of how to consume appropriately.²¹⁸

The Merchants

In the Ming Dynasty, wealthy merchants were powerful and occupied an important position in urban society. The wealth of Ming merchants mainly came from two sources. Merchants earned the first source of wealth through trade with the Ming government and dignitaries. The leisure class had a huge demand for expensive luxury goods such as jewellery, spices, embroidery, and rare handicrafts. To meet the market demand, merchants engaged in related industries. The Ming government needed a great deal of agricultural products and handicraft products. Apart from the tributes and the products produced by the official handicraft industry, the rest had to be purchased from merchants. In this process, wealthy business people colluded with officials to make huge profits. For example, there were as many as 552 businessmen accused of selling substandard grain to the warehouses of Shan Hai Wei 山海卫 and Yong Ping 永平.

Another example was the gold leaf industry. In the gold leaf industry, merchants sold gold leaf to the government at three times the price. Another source was that rich merchants accumulated enormous wealth through the direct exploitation of farmers, handicraftsmen, small traders and citizens. For example, by reselling the old and new copper coins, the merchants could earn twice the interest, and many ordinary people were victims. During the Wanli 万历 period (1573–1620), rich merchants such as Duan Xiyao 段希尧 and Zhang Pu 张朴 paid significant amounts of money to the

²¹⁸ Craig Clunas. *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*. Cambridge Polity Press, 1991, 38.

government and monopolised the Ya Hang 牙行, the commercial organisation engaged in trade intermediation.²¹⁹ As a result, many agencies that made a living from this were unemployed. In Suzhou, some merchants made much money through lending and financial speculation. The descendant of weavers, Zhu Youming 朱佑明, increased his wealth hundreds of times through speculation during the famine.²²⁰

In the Ming Dynasty, merchants who earned their wealth from the upper leisure class would begin to learn the lifestyle and the consumption habits of the upper leisure class. Rich merchants could even experience a material life above that of the higher-class people. Even if they were in the poor countryside, wealthy merchants could still enjoy the prosperous life of a city. For example, the city named Jianchang 建昌 in Sichuan was a remote area. Nevertheless, it produced cedar lumber, and many merchants came here to develop their businesses and make huge profits. As a result, the noblemen in the rich areas had not yet worn the new clothes woven in Hangzhou and Suzhou, but the wood merchants of Jianchang were already wearing them. The merchants were also ahead of the aristocrats in tasting all the precious and rare food of mountains and seas.

The Merchants and the Literati

At the same time, people's pursuit of fashion and luxury goods and their enthusiasm for material enjoyment during the Ming Dynasty benefited those in business. They became a powerful and new force in society. The growing ranks of the merchants had an impact on the traditional social and economic structure and organisational order. An important feature of the disruption of the social order was that the division between the literati and merchant was not clear in practice. China in the period focused on the traditional agrarian model of natural economy. While advocating the importance of agriculture, the development of commerce was seen by the empowers as an enemy that threatened the country's governance and was strongly discouraged. The construction of a corresponding social value system accompanied the traditional policy of suppressing commerce. In the traditional hierarchical order,

²¹⁹ Han Dacheng. *Ming Cheng Shi Yan Jiu*. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1991, 295–02.

²²⁰ Linda Cooke, Johnson. *Cities of Jiangnan in Late Imperial China*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993, 81.

the rank of the literati was high while the merchants were the most inferior. However, among the literati, there were only a few who could succeed by virtue of the imperial examination. With a narrow range of career options, the benefits brought by doing business were quite attractive. Some of the poorer literati began to engage in commercial activities to make a living. The two distinct ranks, the literati and the merchants, were no longer clearly delineated.

The literati engaged in business activities mainly relying on personal and professional skills. Out of the pursuit of elegant arts such as poetry, calligraphy and painting, merchants in the Ming Dynasty were willing to pay for cultural products from the literati. For the literati, this was an additional source of income. One of the literati, Xu Wei, said that he painted plum blossoms in exchange for money to buy rice 予今换米亦梅花. According to the book *Yibaizhai Poetry Talk* 夷白斋诗话, Tang Yin, a famous literati in the Ming Dynasty, wrote a poem arguing that he was free to paint paintings and sell them. He was not greedy for money that came from the “wrong way” 闲来画幅丹青卖，不使人间造孽钱.²²¹ These talented literati, in the process of a successful exchange, used their skills to make a living or obtain rich capital, which was a disguised commercial behaviour. The Wuzhong area in the mid-Ming Dynasty was an example. Huang Sheng recorded in his book *Wu Fenglu* 吴风录 that the elegant literati in the past had put down the dignified air and were happy to participate in business 至今吴中绪绅大夫，多以货殖为急. In another province named Shanxi 山西, according to the social customs of the late Ming Dynasty, the clever young people with good ability went to do business, and only those below average went to study and participated in the imperial examinations 重利之念甚于重名。子孙才俊者多入贸易一途，其次宁为胥吏。其中材以下者使之读书应试，以故士风卑靡.

²²¹ Zheng Lihua. “Shi Shang Guan Xi Shan Bian.” *Academic Monthly*, no.06(1994):64–70.

Urban Women

Merchants, royal clan members, emperors and the literati were males in the leisure class. The role of urban women in the leisure class could be underestimated. Compared with rural women who were used to conservative consumption, urban women were more willing to spend money on superfluous things and entertainment. The urban women of the Ming Dynasty could be divided into several groups, such as the women in noble families, the women in political households, women doing manual labour, prostitutes, performers, female nuns, female Taoists, witches and female servants. Women in noble families and political households were mostly wives and daughters or relatives of men in the leisure class. By blood or marriage, these women shared the material wealth possessed by their men. Through the social status of their father, husband, and son, these women became part of the social elite group and were the main group in the luxury consumer market.²²² However, women who could afford extravagant consumption were not limited to the elite class. Performers, prostitutes, and servants, who were regarded as lowly in status, might consume luxury goods as the upper class did. For example, famous prostitutes who had wealthy clients could buy expensive jewellery. The upper class no longer enjoyed luxury goods alone, and class privileges were broken.

As Werner Sombart said, in the Middle Ages, those famous prostitutes played a role in shaping the tastes and fashions of society, permeating the whole society with a culture of profligacy and the pursuit of luxury.²²³ The phenomenon of prostitutes being regarded as fashion icons by the common people also happened in imperial China, which was determined by these women's ways of survival. Prostitutes attracted customers with their beautiful appearance, so they spent a lot on their clothing, make-up and ornaments to win the favour of customers. There were many examples of prostitutes leading fashion. From 1485 to 1505, prostitutes first wore the ponytail dress 马尾裙, an imported product from Goryeo, a dress in the shape of an open umbrella, which other civilian women later copied. Many women imitated the clothes of high-class prostitutes. One literati named Mao Xiang 冒襄 mentioned a

²²² Dorothy Ko. *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China*. California: Stanford University Press, 1994, 252.

²²³ Sombart Werner, *Luxury and Capitalism*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967, 73.

nice date with the famous prostitute Dong Xiaowan 董小宛 on a pleasure boat.

Xiaowan was wearing a tulle dress made of Western cloth provided by Maoxiang, which attracted many people on the shore. High-class prostitutes such as Dong Xiaowan were regular customers of many high-class boutiques. In such boutiques, there were sachets, expensive wine, tea, candy, snacks, musical instruments and all kinds of cloth, which were luxuries for common people, but prostitutes often came to shop. The precious and beautiful flowers sold in the flower market were rare and expensive, even for the wealthy family. Nevertheless, prostitutes always paid the florists much money and designed their new make-up with flowers. The handicrafts of prostitutes also became best-selling items: among them, the exquisite handmade products made by high-grade prostitutes in Nanjing were very famous. Prostitutes occasionally embroidered flowers with butterflies, birds and fish on fans in their spare time. They gave these fans as gifts to their girlfriends. Common people began to make replicas when they saw these exquisite handicrafts. Merchants from other regions came to buy the prostitutes' work, which cost three times more than other similar products in the market 数年前，龙眠君偶于蕉扇上戏绣折枝花朵，又故累花椒，作蝴蝶、禽鱼之类，持赠闺伴。外间，仿而为之，遂以大行。继且他省亦来购办，利市三倍。²²⁴ Prostitutes influenced the consumption of the common people.

Like the men in the leisure class, the daily consumption of urban women in the Ming Dynasty became extravagant. Urban women began to pursue gorgeous clothing. Women who belonged to the official ritual and music institution, *Jiao Fang Si* 教坊司, had a low social status, but they still wore pearl headbands and clothes embroidered with all kinds of auspicious animals when they went out 首戴珠箍，身披文绣，一切白泽麒麟飞鱼坐蟒，靡不有之。²²⁵ In addition to dress, women also participated in the luxury consumption of food. Women were attending more banquets, and dishes were refined and diversified. When these women travelled by

²²⁴ (Qing) Peng Huasheng 捧花生. *Hua Fang Yu Tan* 画舫余谭, *Xiang Yan Cong Shu*, Volume IX. Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2014, 353.

²²⁵ (Ming) Shen Defu 沈德符. *Wan Li Ye Huo Bian* 万历野获编. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959, 147–148.

boat, they often needed to take out dishes and snacks, such as boat food 船菜 in Suzhou and ye Food 野食 in Yangzhou. This demand resulted in many restaurants opening for tourists in the city. Restaurants usually had a noodle shop attached. The noodles were sold in three sizes, and the soup varied with the season.²²⁶ These restaurants were in important commercial locations in the city, which demonstrated substantial consumption. Women were also the main consumers of the popular sweets in the Ming Dynasty. Sweets were often used on social occasions and could also be gifts for other women. There were many types of sweets. For example, Ring Candy 响糖 was a kind of candy offered for funerals or festivals in the shape of figures, birds, animals and fruits. Other candy included hollow candy named Blow Candy 吹糖, long strips of candy named Tang Tong 糖通, solid candies, candy melons, sesame candy, brown candy, show candy, scallion candy and black candy.

In addition to basic daily consumption, urban women in the Ming Dynasty were willing to spend money travelling. Shen Yixiu, a famous, talented girl in the Ming Dynasty, recorded that she and her cousin Zhang Qianqian took a boat ride on the lake. They talked and drank, staying up all night. Women went out with their girlfriends to many important festivals. One of the literati, Fei Yaun Lu 费元禄, recorded the scene in the book *Zhao Cai Guan Qing Ke* 晔采馆清课. During the Lantern Festival, ladies went out to see the beautiful lanterns. Lanterns lining the street looked like a ten-mile-long rainbow. In the Qingming Festival, ladies on spring outings could be seen everywhere. In the Dragon Boat Festival, ladies gathered by the river to watch dragon boat races. During the Yu Lan Festival in July, the ladies donated money 元宵节时，士女盈填，落梅泪李，游灯往来，若十里长虹，蜿蜒环绕。清明扫墓时，士女丽粧，借为踏青之行。端午龙舟竞渡，两岸士女云集。七月望日的盂兰节时，长者布金，士女施金钱以千计。²²⁷ Religion was the

²²⁶ Wu Jenshu. *She Chi De Nv Ren Ming Qing Jiangnan Fu Nv De Xiao Fei Wen Hua*. Taipei: San Min Book, 2010, 34.

²²⁷ Wu Renshu. *Urban Pleasures: Leisure Consumption and Spatial Transformation in Jiangnan Cities during the Ming-Qing Period*. Taipei: Institute of Modern History Academia Sinica, 2014, 238.

spiritual support of urban women in the Ming Dynasty, and praying in the temples was also an important social activity for them. Many women often went to temples, listened to Buddhist scriptures and worshipped eminent monks as teachers. During the Chongzhen era (1611–1644), Empress Yi An 懿安 often made Buddhist statues and clothing related to religion. She once used plain silk as the bottom fabric and cut five-colour silk, folding fabric scraps into a Buddha statue, which was called Dui Sha Budda 堆纱佛.

Chapter Seven: The Glorious Period of “Wu Yao”: Extravagant and Unusual Life in the Ming Dynasty (1368– 1644)

In the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220), the literati and emperors believed improper dress would bring about social unrest. They named the exotic and unusual clothes Fu Yao and began to restrict common people’s daily dress. After the Han Dynasty, the high-class people expanded the content of material regulations. The necessities people use should match their personal status, and they cannot overstep their ranks. The literati regarded the behaviour of pursuing a luxurious life and improperly using things such as Wu Yao as problematic. However, things changed in the Ming Dynasty. The Ming Dynasty was the most serious dynasty in terms of extravagant consumption, which was the glorious period of Wu Yao.

It is necessary to analyse extravagant life in the Ming Dynasty, which is the core concept associated with Wu Yao. Regardless of the different periods of society, the objects of luxury are nothing but food and drink, shelter, clothing, and leisure. These four categories are not only related to the basic needs of human survival but also to material or sensual pleasures.²²⁸ Luxury is characterised by “Wu” and is related to desire. It is the pursuit of more exquisiteness in addition to meeting the basic needs and standards of people’s daily lives. The literati and emperors believed that extravagance was the privilege of the upper class. The pursuit of extravagance by the public would encourage the expansion of desire and lead to catharsis. The main way the high class controlled public desires was to limit people’s needs and daily utensils. Once common people enjoyed an exquisite, high-level lifestyle that exceeded basic needs, they were violating social hierarchy norms and would be considered Wu Yao by the literati. In the Ming Dynasty, especially after the Jiajing period (1522–1566), with the development of the commodity economy and the increase of public wealth, common people also had the opportunity to enjoy a luxurious life. The public was not stingy with money in terms of food, houses, dress, entertainment and social activities. The corresponding relationship between social status and necessities of life no longer

²²⁸ Christopher J. Berry. *The Idea of Luxury A Conceptual and Historical Investigation*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 5.

existed. The literati, rich merchants and the elite were the main groups enjoying luxury. The middle-class people, servants, village women and even prostitutes imitated the luxurious lifestyle of the high-class group. People indulged in their desires, pursuing happiness and enjoyment of life, and their consumption violated social hierarchy norms. To limit the public's extravagant consumption, the government increased the regulations on prohibiting extravagance and increased penalties. The conservative literati did not adapt to the changes in fashion and expressed concern that people arrogated the rules of hierarchy, which would lead to social instability. However, the emperors, the elite and the literati themselves often did not refuse to improve the quality of their lives. In the meantime, some of the literati believed that luxury should not be prohibited because it could increase the income of the public and was beneficial to the country.

The first emperor restricted the objects used by the public, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328–1398). In 1368, he ordered people to wear Tang-style clothing (618–907), while forbidding Yuan-style clothing because the clothing popular in the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) was considered unusual and weird. Zhu Yuanzhang concluded that the reason for the fall of the Yuan Dynasty was that the Yuan government abandoned the ritual system and put no limits on people's material desires, which not only caused extravagant folk customs but also led to the collapse of the regime 初，元世祖起自朔漠，以有天下，悉以胡俗变易中国之制，士庶咸辮发垂髻，深襜胡俗。衣服则为袴褶窄袖，及辮线腰褶。妇女衣窄袖短衣，下服裙裳，无复中国衣冠之旧。甚者易其姓氏，为胡名，习胡语。俗化既久，恬不知怪。²²⁹

Therefore, he believed that it was necessary to rebuild the order of rituals and require people to accept the daily necessities belonging to their rank 古昔帝王治天下，必定礼制以辨贵贱，明等威……近世以来风俗相承，流于僭侈，闾里之民，服食杂处，与公卿无异，而奴仆贱隶，往往肆侈于乡曲，贵贱无等，僭礼败度，此

²²⁹ (Ming) Anon. *Ming Shilu* 明实录. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1966, 525.

元之失政也！中书其以屋舍服色等，策明立禁，颁布中外，俾各有所守。²³⁰

Afterwards, the Ming government promulgated a series of regulations on daily necessities, including the basic needs of the public in daily life, such as dress, houses and carriages. These daily necessities had strict differences in colour, variety, material and shape. Etiquette for social activities, such as weddings and funerals, was also stipulated, which formed different lifestyles of different ranks. No one was allowed to enjoy things beyond their status. The rulers used laws and regulations, along with local education, expecting the public to be satisfied with their low-level life. However, the recovery of social production and the improvement of the living standards of the public led to people wanting to change their original rigid and monotonous lives, and their desires expanded. People began to pursue a luxurious life, and overstepping and luxury were complementary. Overstepping always began with the details of food, clothing, houses and entertainment, and the rise of extravagance intensified the phenomenon of overstepping.

Dress

The extravagant consumption and overstepping behaviours among common people started from dress, one of the necessities of daily life. At the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, the dress code was rigorous, and there were regulations on the design, colour, pattern and material. In 1370, the government required the common people not to wear yellow clothes, and neither men nor women were allowed to use gold embroidery, brocade embroidery, ramie silk or damask, but only silk or plain yarn. Ordinary people's boots were not allowed to be decorated with gold thread or have floral patterns. Gold, jade, pearls and other stone jewellery were also prohibited, and the public could only wear silver jewellery. In 1373, the common people were forbidden to use onyx, coral or amber. The beads of the hats ceased to be of crystal and incense wood. In 1382, the farmers could wear yarn and silk cloth, but the merchants could not. If there was a merchant in the farmer's family, he was also not allowed to wear silk clothes 洪武三年,庶人初戴四带巾,改四方平定巾,杂色盘领衣,

²³⁰ Ibid., 1076.

不许用黄。又命男女衣服,不得僭用金绣、锦绣、纁丝、绫罗、止许紬绢、素纱,其靴不得裁制花样、金线装饰。首饰、钗、镯不许用金玉、珠翠,止用银。六年,令庶人不得用金玉、玛瑙、珊瑚、琥珀。未入流品者同。庶人帽,不得用顶,帽珠止许水晶、香木。十四年令农衣紬、纱、绢、布,商贾止衣绢、布。农家有一人为商贾者,亦不得衣。²³¹ In fact, these initial regulations were difficult to implement over time.

Significant changes took place in people's dress in the mid-Ming Dynasty. People spared no expense in clothing and began to pursue luxurious and refined styles. Those who dressed plainly would be ridiculed by their friends and neighbours. For example, during the Ming Dynasty, a type of clothing made of delicate fabrics and the finest craftsmanship named Su Style 苏样 was prevalent, which was produced in the Suzhou region of the south of the Yangtze River. There were more than 120 colours of Su-style clothing. For instance, there were 19 kinds of red, like scarlet 绛红, Biancaea Sappan Red 苏木红, Water Red 水红 and Rou Red 肉红. In terms of styles, women's dress with rich styles included Mamian dress, piled gauze dress, golden dress, Bai Jian dress 百裥裙, He Huan dress 合欢裙 and Zuo dress 作裙(see Figure 7.1).²³² Evidence of extravagant spending could be found in local historical documents. For example, the changes in local dress were recorded in *Tongzhou Zhi* 通州志. From 1488 to 1521, local people were still dressed in plain clothes, and they used the local fabrics named Yang Chang Ge and Ben Ye Bu. By 1576, however, ordinary silk with patterns was no longer considered precious, and people began to buy precious and gorgeous fabrics from distant cities and make them into fashion. The length of the clothes, the skirt, the collar and the waistline all changed. The literati thought it was Wu Yao, so they went to parties dressed in plain clothes. As a result, they were not served as honoured guests and were laughed at. The old cheap fabrics

²³¹ (Qing) Zhang Tingyu 张廷玉. *Ming Shi*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974, 1649–50.

²³² Fan Jinmin. "Suzhou with its style and mode as a fashion leader in the Ming and Qing Dynasties." *Journal of Nanjing University*, no.50(2013):123–41.

were no longer produced because no one bought them 弘(治)、正(德)之间，犹有淳本务实之风。士大夫家居多素练，衣缙、布冠，即诸生以文学名者，亦白袍青履，游行市中。庶民之家，则用羊肠葛及太仓本业布，此二物价廉而质素，故人人用之，其风俗俭薄如此。今（万历四年）者里中子弟，谓罗绮不足珍，及求远方吴绸、宋锦、云缣、驼褐，价高而美丽者，以为衣，下逮裤袜，亦皆纯采，其所制，衣长、裙阔、领宽、腰细，摺倏忽变异，号为时样，此所谓服妖也。故有不衣文采而赴乡人之会，则乡人窃笑之，不置之上座。向所谓羊肠葛、本色布者，久不鬻于市，以其无人服之也。The competition for extravagance in dress stimulated the vanity of the public. People with insufficient financial resources also bought gorgeous fashion clothes that were beyond budget. A literati of the Ming Dynasty, Fan Liang 范濂, recorded that “The cotton cloth robe, once the common daily dress of the literati, was now considered poor clothing. The poor also wore lightly textured silk clothes, which was called *Lightweight Gorgeous*. Some people even repurchased old silk and satin clothes from pawnshops and refurbish them because they wanted to dress like the noble 布袍乃儒家常服, 迨年鄙为寒酸, 贫者必用细绢色衣, 谓之薄华丽...翻新改制, 以与豪华公子列坐.”²³³

Utensil

In the early Ming Dynasty, there were strict regulations on common people's utensils for food and drink. Senior officials of the first and second ranks were allowed to use gold utensils. Officials of the third to fifth ranks could use silver jugs and gold cups. Junior officials of the sixth to ninth ranks were allowed to use silver drinking utensils. Other civilians and merchants could only use wood or porcelain utensils and lacquerware. However, they were not allowed to use precious mahogany to make

²³³ (Ming) Fan Lian 范濂. *Yun Jian Ju Mu Chao* 云间据目抄. Taipei: Xin Xing Book Company, 1962, 2626.

wooden wine utensils, nor were they allowed to paint gold on wooden wine utensils, or carve dragon and phoenix patterns 洪武二十六年定,公侯、一品、二品,酒注、酒盏金,余用银。三品至五品,酒注银,酒盏金,六品至九品,酒注、酒盏银,余皆瓷、漆。木器不许用殊红及抹金、描金、雕琢龙凤文。庶民,酒注锡,酒盏银,余用瓷、漆。……建文四年申姊官民,不许僧用金酒爵。……正德十六年定,一品、二品,器皿不用玉,止许用金。商贾、技艺家器皿不许用银。余与庶民同。²³⁴

In the late Ming period, these prohibitions were ignored. In addition to clothing, people also frequently used prohibited utensils. It was common for the wealthy to use gold and jade to make food and drink utensils. For example, most of the wine vessels used by the literati living in the Songjiang area were jade and gold. They preferred to choose the jade unearthed in the Han Dynasty to make vessels. The extremely exquisite gold wine cups were made by the most famous craftsman, who imitated the old-fashioned style.²³⁵ A literati named He Liangjun 何良俊 recorded his visit to the home of a friend in the Jiaying area. The host provided each guest with a gold vessel and a large golden cup engraved with ancient beasts. Each tableware weighed 15 or 16 taels 尝访嘉兴一友人, 见其家设客, 用银水火炉金滴嚙。是日客有二十余人, 每客皆金台盘一副, 是双璃虎大金杯, 每副约有十五六两。²³⁶ His friend was not considered wealthy; he was just an ordinary person. It shows that using gold objects in violation of regulations was common.

Food

In the late Ming period, in addition to choosing more elaborate utensils, common people were not limited to local products when choosing ingredients but did everything possible to collect novel foods from remote cities. For example, the

²³⁴ Ibid., *Ming Shi*.1672.

²³⁵ (Ming) He Liangjun 何良俊, *Si You Zhai Cong Shuo* 四友斋丛说. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959, 315.

²³⁶ Ibid., 316.

Daurian ground squirrel was one of the imperial cuisines in the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368). By the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), the royal family began to eat the Daurian ground squirrel, which was considered to be a typical delicacy outside the Great Wall. After that, common people followed the higher classes and used Daurian ground squirrels as a symbol to show off. The gift culture of this squirrel became popular among officials. The public revered the squirrel not for its nutritional value or taste but to enjoy the novelty of the food and to seek a form of identity as the royal family and nobles. Tasting squirrel was, in fact, tasting power. In addition to ingredients, people were not stingy with using food in cooking, even extravagant and wasteful. One dish, called Hundred Bird Brains, used not ordinary soybeans but the brains of hundreds of birds. In the Ming Dynasty, theatres provided banquets, and the public could not only satisfy their oral, visual, and listening desires but also show off their wealth. There were hundreds of people gathering at one time. From May to July, the weather was hot. Precious seafood and other ingredients deteriorated, and people did not regret it. They would rather throw it away than feed it to the dogs.²³⁷ Even poor people also spent extravagantly when they treated guests. In a novel written by Feng Menglong 冯梦龙, a servant named Niu Cheng is a typical example. In order to celebrate the birth of his son, he borrowed money to hold a big banquet. In the end, he could not repay the debt. To get married, another poor man called Wang Xiaoshan spent more than 30 tales of gold for the wedding banquet. Because the wedding was too expensive and business was not good, his store almost closed. These kinds of events were written many times in the novels of the Ming Dynasty. It showed that there was a popular fashion in the country where people spent a great deal of money on a great banquet in order to pursue a luxurious life.

House

In the series of anti-luxury decrees of the early Ming Dynasty, there were strict regulations and restrictions on private houses. From 1402 to 1447, officials were not

²³⁷ (Qing) Qian Yong 钱泳. *Lu Yuan Cong Hua 履园丛话*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1979, 192.

allowed to build houses with the hip-and-gable roof 歇山顶, multiple eaves and arches, or painted ceilings (see Figure 7.2). The front hall of the nobles' house could have five or seven rooms, and the doors were decorated with gold lacquer or animal faces with tin rings. Their houses could be built with blackboard tiles, colourful animal sculptures for the roof, and gold or black paintings decorating colourful windows, squares and columns (see Figure 7.3). The houses of the first-rank and second-rank officials had five rooms in the front hall, and the doors were decorated with green oil and animal faces with tin rings. As for the third to fifth-rank officials, the front hall of their houses could have five rooms, with black oil and tin rings decorating the doors. The roof ridges from the first-rank to the fifth-rank were decorated with tile beasts, and the eaves and corners of the beams were decorated with green paintings. Junior officials of the sixth to seventh ranks could have three rooms, only decorated with khaki paint, dark doors and iron rings. Common people's houses should have no more than three rooms, and the use of colourful decorations was not allowed. For the houses of meritorious ministers in the capital, ten yards of open space could be left behind the residence and five yards to the left and right. It was forbidden to take up more land around the houses to build pavilions or to dig ponds as places to play and rest. Vermilion paint could be used on the beams, pillars, doors, and windows of the temple buildings but was not allowed to be used on other interior parts of the temple. The purpose of this series of regulations was to clarify the social hierarchy. The upper-class nobles could lower their standards, and the lower-class people could not overstep and imitate the residences of the upper-class people. House regulations also reflected that imperial power and ancient sages were inviolable. According to regulations, it was not permissible to carve stories about the emperors, queens, concubines, or sages or use patterns such as the sun, the moon, dragon, phoenix, Kylin, rhinoceros, and elephant on the beams, pillars, walls, and corridors of houses.²³⁸ Based on the housing regulations of the early Ming Dynasty, the common people feared punishment and did not dare to expand the size of their houses.

By the mid-Ming Dynasty, the extravagant social fashion made the imperial ban exist in name only. There were more irregularities in people's houses. The size of

²³⁸ (Ming) Shen Shixing 申时行 *Ming Hui Dian* 明会典. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1989, 395–96.

houses was further expanded, and the houses were built more and more exquisitely, far exceeding the living space limit stipulated by the government. Before the Zhengde period (1506–1521), the houses were small, and the halls were mostly in the back. People used solid, simple wood. However, in the Jiajing period (1522–1566), the literati and even ordinary people had three living rooms that cost thousands of taels of silver. Their houses often had double eaves and animal ridges like government buildings.²³⁹ Houses were no longer just places to sleep in; they also needed to have flowers and trees, pavilions and tall buildings for relaxation (see Figure 7.4). It became common practice for people to build private gardens against regulations, especially in the Jiangnan area, which had the highest concentration of private gardens at the time. According to local historical records, there were at least 100 private gardens in Suzhou 苏州 area, about 42 in the Songjiang area, and 16 famous gardens in Nanjing 南京 in the Ming Dynasty. Luxurious residences featured opulent furnishings. The public chose precious rosewood, cherry wood, ebony, acacia wood and boxwood to make furniture. Even a low-income family also equipped the study room with painting tables, an incense burner, and a trendy vase, imitating the literati's home decoration style. In less than a year or two, people would get tired of their houses. They would tear them down and rebuild them, so wealthy families often hired painters and carpenters to do the work in their homes. The noble family, officials, the literati, rich merchants and ordinary people all showed off their taste and wealth through houses.

Different Perspectives on Luxury Consumption

At the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, the emperors believed that extravagant consumption could destroy the hierarchy, so they restricted the public's consumption. If the public were extravagant and did not save money, social production would inevitably be affected, ultimately impacting state revenues. For these two reasons, the government repeatedly issued prohibitions on the illegal use of dress, houses, and utensils, as well as increased punishment to limit the public's luxury consumption.

²³⁹ (Ming) Gu Qiyuan 顾起元. *Ke Zuo Zhui Yu* 客座赘语. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1987, 170.

From 1426 to 1627, the governments promulgated at least 116 prohibitions on extravagant spending.²⁴⁰ In 1458, the emperor stipulated that those who dyed, made, and sold prohibited clothes would be executed, and their families would be sent to the frontier.²⁴¹ After the Chenghua period (1465–1487), Dong Chang 东厂 was set up, which was an investigative agency directly under the control of the emperor in the Ming Dynasty. The enforcement of the prohibition of extravagance was significantly strengthened. Dong Chang not only cracked down on the illegal trade of extravagance among the people but also actively promoted extravagance legislation, trying to block the source of luxury circulation.

High-class people limited the consumption of ordinary people by formulating detailed and cumbersome regulations and cruel legal systems. However, they did not strictly abide by these policies. For example, the government had strict restrictions on the weaving and wearing of silk, which made clear regulations in terms of materials, colours, patterns and decoration. The government stipulated corresponding punitive measures for various phenomena of unauthorised use. Nevertheless, the emperors broke the rules from time to time and rewarded their relatives and senior officials with fine silk. Following the example of the upper class, the public used silk in large quantities, which destroyed the silk-wearing regulation. Means of transportation 乘輿 was another typical example. The government had strict regulations on the use of transportation facilities for all social classes, including the types of carriages and the etiquette of people meeting on the road. However, officials pursued comfort and enjoyment, from riding donkeys to horses and then to sedan chairs. Using people to carry the sedan as a means of transportation violated the spirit of advocating thrift and despising extravagance (see Figure 7.5).

For the public's luxury consumption, some of the literati emphasised the theory of Wu Yao and attributed disasters and national changes to the results of people's pursuit of luxury life. One of the literati, Wang Shixing 王士性 (1547–1598), classified the handicraft products popular in the Jiangnan area in his book *Guang Zhi*

²⁴⁰ Lin Liyue. "Ming Dai Jin She Ling Xin Tan." *Bulletin of Historical Research*, no.22(1994):57–84.

²⁴¹ (Ming) Dai Jin 戴金. Translated by Yang Yifan. *Huang Ming Tiao Fa Shi Lei Zuan* 皇明条法事类纂. Beijing: China Science Publishing Media, 1994, 958.

Yi 广志绎.²⁴² People in the Jiangnan area liked to counterfeit antiques. Whether it was copying calligraphy and painting or making utensils, artisans could make it difficult to distinguish between the real and the fake. There were many people involved in the forgery. The production process was complicated, clear and highly efficient, which greatly disrupted the art market. Wang Shixing believed that these popular, exquisite and elegant objects corrupted morality and endangered society. People rushed to buy these products, and they did not hesitate to spend money, which caused the social atmosphere to change from thrift to extravagance and finally to violation of regulations. Another literati, Shen Defu 沈德符, had the same opinion. He put forward the concepts of “Ink Yao” and “Fan Yao” in the *Wan Li Ye Huo Bian* 万历野获编. Fang and Cheng, two businessmen, resorted to many immoral means to pursue expensive ink. Shen Defu believed that the ink could be a strong weapon for those who loved luxury.²⁴³ Regarding the folded fan, he outlined its historical origin and said that the popular folded fans in the Wuzhong area were highly sought after at that time, and the handle of a folded fan was worth three or four tales of gold. He believed that the fan was very tempting, just like a bewitching Yao, so he named it Fan Yao.²⁴⁴ For a long time, society had a strict hierarchy. Everyone had to use things according to their status. However, the development of commerce in the mid and late Ming Dynasty inspired the public’s long-suppressed consumption impulse and desire for pleasure. It became a new way of life to enjoy novelty, gorgeous and exquisite clothing and utensils. Some literati were anxious about social change, and they used the word Wu Yao to express their vigilance against the temptation of materialism and their resistance to fashion. What they were dissatisfied with were not luxury goods but people’s pursuit of objects of appreciation and addiction to material life. The literati believed that luxury goods would affect people’s values and social stability.

In response to the trend of extravagant consumption, some literati believed that luxury could make money and encourage the public to enjoy material life. Among

²⁴² (Ming) Wang Shixing. *Guang Zhi Yi*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1981, 33.

²⁴³ (Ming) Shen Defu 沈德符. *Wan Li Ye Huo Bian* 万历野获编. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959, 660–61.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 663.

them, the theory of Lu Ji 陆楫 was the most complete. He argued that social production and consumption was whole, and frugality was only beneficial to individuals and families but was harmful to the country 吾未见奢之足以贫天下也, 自一人言之, 一人俭则一人或可免于贫。自一家言之, 一家俭则一家或可免于贫。至于统论天下之势则不然. For example, the pig-raising industry, the pig-killing industry and the agriculture that provides feed were a whole. At the same time, the extravagance of the rich could increase the means of livelihood of the poor, create more employment opportunities through the stimulation of extravagance, and solve the unemployment problem. For example, rich people spent money on dresses, food, houses and carriages, which objectively increased income for farmers, cooks, business people and satin weavers who produced these products, and also the rich could share part of the benefits with them 不知所谓奢者, 不过富商大贾, 豪家巨族, 自侈其宫室、车马、饮食、衣服之奉而已。彼以梁肉奢, 则耕者、庖者分其利; 彼以纨绮奢, 则鬻者、织者分其利. The wealth gathered in the hands of the rich would also flow to the poor so that the common people could also enjoy a rich life together.²⁴⁵ Lu Ji also argued that more consumption would promote more efficient production. With the high standards of consuming demands, there should be more efficient production to provide corresponding consuming products. He took Suzhou 苏州 and Hangzhou 杭州 as examples. People in Suzhou and Hangzhou loved luxury, but the economic strength of these two areas ranked first in the country. The clothing in Suzhou and Hangzhou was exquisitely embroidered and in great demand, which promoted the development of the handicraft and silk-weaving industries. Lu Ji also mentioned that the local government's support for tourism led to the prosperity of other industries, such as boats, painted boats and sedan chairs, as well as food, cultural and entertainment activities, which also solved the problem of employment. The third opinion was that luxury and high consumption stimulated the circulation of goods. Lu Ji cited his hometown, Shanghai, as an example. At that time, Shanghai

²⁴⁵ (Ming) Lu Ji. *Ming Ren Wen Ji Yu Ming Dai Yan Jiu*. Taipei: The Association for Ming Studies, 2001, 134.

was remote but close to Suzhou and Hangzhou. Shanghai was gradually influenced by the luxurious atmosphere and became a bustling city where many merchants gathered, and the circulation of goods was rapid.

The phenomenon of Wu Yao in the Ming Dynasty proves that strict prohibitions can not stop the public's desires and establish consumption habits. Judging from the consumption behaviour of the masses in the Ming Dynasty, what the common people pursued was not only exquisite utensils and luxurious life but also a rebellion against the ritual that imprisoned their desires. The consumption privileges of the upper class were broken. The nationwide consumption revolution meant the collapse of social hierarchy. The rulers, accustomed to traditional thinking, could only see Wu Yao as a harmful social phenomenon or a dissident force. However, some literati who lived in society saw what the emperors did not want to see and put forward reasonable opinions or suggestions.

Chapter Eight: The Craftsmen during the Period of Wu Yao

The popularity of fashion had a great impact on the stable lifestyle and social form at the material level, which was originally organised and operated by political forces and traditional ethical norms. Fashionable, novel and expensive commodities were no longer exclusive to the nobility, the literati, and royal families but could also be enjoyed by common people. It was not easy to distinguish social class by checking material resources such as luxury goods owned by individuals. The orthodox literati, the elite class in the country, showed panic and anxiety about changing life. Wu was demonised, stigmatised, and labelled as “Wu Yao”. At the same time, when the literati analysed and criticised the phenomenon of Wu Yao, they pointed to its “source”, namely the artisans, believing that artisans were one of the important causes. The literati believed that the exquisite and expensive goods produced by artisans attracted the public to spend considerable amounts of money. Poor people might buy luxury commodities to follow the trend. In order to cater to the literati, who had the power in the culture market, artisans imitated the literati’s aesthetic taste, behaviour, and lifestyle. The artisans wanted to rise in recognition in the eyes of the elite class. Like literati publishing poetry collections, artisans also published professional books or textbooks to teach skills. During the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), the glorious period of Wu Yao, many artisans imitated literati. As the public valued Wu, the social status of the artisans at the source of production changed, and some of them entered the exclusive official group of the literati.

The American anthropologist Robert Redfield, in his study of rural Mexico, first introduced the concept of “Great Tradition and Little Tradition” to illustrate the existence of two different levels of cultural tradition in a complex society. The great tradition refers to the elite culture in the city, which was formed by the upper class and the literati. The little tradition refers to the public, especially the majority of farmers in the countryside, which was mainly formed through oral transmission.²⁴⁶ Robert’s analysis overemphasises the difference between the two traditions, placing them on opposing cultural levels, arguing that little traditions are in a passive position in the cultural system so that in the development of civilisation, rural areas are

²⁴⁶ Redfield, Robert. *Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Civilization*. The University of Chicago Press, 1956, 70.

inevitably replaced by cities. The concept of great and little traditions also applies to the delicate and entangled relationship between groups of artisans and the literati. In the art aesthetics of little traditions of artisans, the pursuit of harmony and balance was manifest in daily life, while in the culture of the gentry of the great tradition, the pursuit of harmony and balance was manifest in more abstract views of the universe and the operation of the state and society. The literati emphasised abstract ethical concepts, while the little tradition of artisans paid more attention to practical rituals. To occupy the market, artisans wanted to cater to the aesthetics of the literati and deliberately approached the standards of the literati in terms of cultural knowledge, personality cultivation and life pursuit. The strong cultural guidance of the literati influenced the outstanding part of the artisans group. In this process, the artisans's little tradition was influenced by the elite culture of the great tradition, but it did not disappear. On the contrary, it adopted an open attitude to merge with the great tradition in a kind of cultural creation, which was a bidirectional choice. There was no so-called devouring of the countryside by the city.

Before the public valued luxury commodities, artisans engaged in traditional handicraft production were opposed by high-class people such as the literati. For example, a well-known literati named Han Feizi 韩非子 regarded artisans as vermin who were parasitic on the agrarian society, profiting from farmers and corrupting the foundations of society.²⁴⁷ Han Feizi argued that farmers fed the country, and artisans only worked to get money. Han Feizi also believed that the work of artisans was not difficult or challenging. Wu was the work of the gods, who had already provided the basis of Wu, and artisans were only required to present it faithfully. The gods created beautiful objects that were useful for humans, and those who were skilled in their craft recorded the process. Those who learned the production methods of their predecessors could be called good artisans. All kinds of beautiful utensils made by artisans came from the gods. The value of the labour of the craftsperson was denied. In order to protect the privileges of the upper class, composed of the literati group and nobles, the emperor imposed many restrictions on other members of society, including artisans. In imperial China, artisans and merchants were of relatively low social status, but the status of artisans was slightly higher than that of merchants.

²⁴⁷ (pre-Qin) Han Feizi 韩非子. *Han Feizi* 韩非子. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2010, 722.

Once the status of the craftsmen was defined, not only were they forbidden to engage in other industries, but their descendants had also to be craftsmen. The professional skills of artisans were strictly limited to the daily utensils, beyond which the literati regarded them as evil skills. The literati believed that artisans, out of commercial interests, produced exquisite and complicated luxury products, which promoted the frantic consumption of luxury goods and caused the public to chase a high level of material life and put the country in trouble.²⁴⁸

In addition to the unrecognised labour value and the pursuit of commercial profits, artisans's participation in the production of fakes was also criticised, which, in the opinion of the literati, was harmful to the art market. The literati believed that artisans were to blame for the phenomenon of Wu Yao because artisans were involved in the production and sale of forgeries, which had a negative effect on the art market. In the Ming Dynasty, which was the glorious period of Wu Yao, economic prosperity led to a rise in consumerism, which in turn led to the availability of more luxury goods. Furthermore, the public invested more funds into the art market. The market demand for artworks increased, and the prices of commodities were raised. Tempted by the huge profits, some craftsmen counterfeited the artworks of previous or contemporary famous artists and produced fakes that looked like real ones. To forge paintings and calligraphy, the artisans would cover the original work with paper or silk and copy its lines and pictures. Artisans might directly imitate the lines, composition, and colours of famous artists. This method of forgery was more natural than other approaches. Some craftsmen created original artworks using the signatures of famous artists. In order for forgeries to be passed off as the real things, some craftsmen cut off genuine inscriptions and attached them to the counterfeit versions. Sometimes, they ground away the signature of the artist of the original work and pretended it to be a masterpiece in order to increase its value. Famous painters often gave their artworks to others as gifts. When they were older and unable to complete such hard work, artists would hire artisans to finish their work. In addition to paintings and calligraphy, some artisans were skilled at forging antiques and made a lot of money. They had superb handicraft techniques, and it was difficult for the public to distinguish what was genuine from what was not. For example, to counterfeit the appearance of ancient bronze ware, a mixture of vinegar and sand

²⁴⁸ (Ming)Zhang Han 张瀚, *Song Chuan Meng Yu* 松窗梦语. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985, 79.

powder was used to put on the new copperware. Until the surface turned brown, lacquer or green, artisans soaked the utensils in water and then smoked them with the burning straw. The next stage in the process was to make the utensils look less new. Artisans used a brush and painted some red spots. The large number of forgeries eventually occupied the art market. Collectors were afraid of buying forgeries and lost their money, so they turned to trade more cautiously. The art market became sluggish several times.

The first change was the collapse of the artisans' system in the Ming Dynasty. The artisans who were under government control began to have the freedom to create more diverse products to meet the consumer market. In the beginning stage of the Ming Dynasty, the founding emperor Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 followed the example of the former Yuan Dynasty and introduced a system of craftsman registration. This system was that the Ming government numbered the artisans and managed them uniformly, forcing them to perform unpaid labour. Artisans living in the capital were required to serve in the government for ten days a month. For artisans living outside the capital, the government required all types of artisans to serve in shifts of four years, three years, two years, or one year, depending on demand. Under this system, artisans were burdened with heavy servitude but were able to have some private time to work on their business, and they became semi-free craftsmen.

By the mid-Ming Dynasty, the semi-free service form could not actually be fulfilled. The government severely squeezed artisans, and they were much less motivated to produce, resulting in lower-quality finished products. Those who were strictly required to work under the government's regulations often had difficulty in supporting their families. Artisans began to avoid forced labour, neglected their work, and even fled. The government could not ensure that the country's 230,000 craftsmen, who were scattered throughout the provinces, arrived at the capital in the required time.²⁴⁹ In 1485, the government promulgated a new policy known as the "pay fees instead of national service 纳银代役". It was stipulated that every artisan could pay money if they did not want to go to the capital 轮班工匠有愿出银价者，每名每月

²⁴⁹ Chen Shiqi. *Mind Guan Shou Gong Ye De Yan Jiu*. Wuhan: Hubei People's Press, 1958, 86.

南匠出银九钱，免赴京。²⁵⁰ Many craftsmen were willing to pay the fee to have more free time.

The artisans who were severely criticised by the literati wanted to change their evaluation of the upper classes. In order to cater to the literati aesthetic, artisans made improvements to personal artworks. The literati, as the cultural elite, could influence the market price of handicrafts. They believed that Wu was the carrier of the spiritual world and emphasised spiritual expression beyond materials and techniques. The literati preferred a more simple and natural style. In the meantime, artisans were long bound by the government and followed strict rules. They lacked independent thought about design and only wished to demonstrate their skills in the hope of being rewarded. These intricately decorated artefacts could not meet the aesthetic standards of the literati. In order to win the favour of the literati, artisans began to produce works with exquisite craftsmanship and elegant taste, catering to their aesthetic taste. Some craftsmen learned painting and poetry from the literati, improving their cultural accomplishments. For example, Zhang Nanyuan 张南垣, a master gardener in the Ming Dynasty, learned painting from the famous literati Dong Qichang 董其昌 from when he was a child. His superb painting skills would be of great help to his career. He created a genre called Mountain Stacking 叠山 Art. He used the artistic conception of painting to design the garden, taking advantage of the natural terrain and arranging the rockery in an undulating and varied manner. Around the rockery, he planted unfading trees and bamboo. Ponds and ditches were built into natural sinuous shapes. People could walk through the garden and associate the rockery with the landscape.

Lu Zigang 陆子冈 was a jade craftsman and good at designing all kinds of hairpins, stationery utensils or small containers. His artworks imitated the style of antiques, and many literati loved Zigang's calligraphy in his artworks. Lu Zigang also carved poems or rhymes on the utensils in calligraphy that were beautiful and popular among the elite. It could also be seen that the literati influenced artisans in the *Xiu Shi Lu* 髹饰录, the only surviving monograph on the lacquerwork in imperial

²⁵⁰ (Ming) Shen Shixing 申时行. *Ming Hui Dian* 大明会典. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1989, 951.

China. The author consciously linked lacquer techniques with painting. For example, the author believed that the thickness, sparseness and shade of sprinkled gold were similar to the brush strokes used by the literati when painting clouds, stones, and landscapes (see Figure 8.1).²⁵¹ The author introduced the craftsmanship of lacquer but often imitated Confucian classics. This kind of writing style did not allow people to have a deep understanding of lacquer tools and knowledge.

From the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220) to the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), commodity economies such as textile and silk-weaving continued to develop. The knowledge and skills of production in various industries spread rapidly among the public. With the expansion of the field of commodities, the market urgently needed skilled artisans for technical exchanges. The methods of the inheritance of craftsman skills were also gradually enriched. There were two main ways for artisans to learn professional skills. One was to inherit the skills from elder members of the family. This passage of skill inheritance was based on the patriarchal hierarchy of Confucian culture, which was family-oriented and tied by blood. The patriarchal system and priority protection of the wife's first-born son's succession allowed the transmission of skills to take place first within the family. The inheritance of skills within the family was relatively selfless, and many key technologies, such as key skills and secret recipes, would all be passed on to the descendants of the family. Family background became a more important factor than talent and character, which limited some talented people who were born into the same family simply because they were the offspring of their father's concubine or not the eldest son. The inheritance rule of skills in many families stipulated that skills were to be passed on to sons but not to daughters. The families were afraid that daughters would bring skills into their husband's family after they got married. A certain skill was only passed down in a certain family. The lack of skills exchanged with other artisans was not conducive to the development of society and the craft industry in the long term.

The second type of vocational skill training was through the unrelated master and apprentice system. The apprentice learned the master's production work on site, understood the basic context of the work and could perform simple auxiliary work. Having gained a requisite skill proficiency, apprentices could start systematic work

²⁵¹ (Ming) Lu Zigang 陆子冈. Translated by Wang Shixiang. *Xiu Shi Lu Jie Shuo* 髹饰录解说. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2013, 59.

under the guidance of the master and gradually took on independent work. For difficult and high-level techniques that were not easy for apprentices to grasp, the masters often used a combination of language explanations, practical operations, and specific demonstrations to teach skills.

In the Xia Dynasty (2070 BC–1600 BC), there was training and teaching of primitive craft skills such as making stone tools, bone tools, bamboo utensils, wood tools, pottery, textiles, house construction and vehicle manufacturing. From this point onward, there was an expansion of the types and scale of training for artisans. The government gathered skilled artisans across the country into the official workshops, and those with unique skills were promoted as masters. Artisans even had special textbooks, such as the *Wood Classic* written by Yu Hao 喻皓, a famous construction craftsman in the Song Dynasty (960–1279), *Zi Ren Yi Zhi* 梓人遗制 written by Xue Jingshi 薛景石, who has been engaged in the repair of textile machinery for a long time, *Ying Zao Fa Shi* 营造法式 compiled by the famous architect Li Jie 李诫, and *Mirror History* 镜史, a monograph on optical instruments written by a mirror craftsman named Sun Yunqiu 孙云球. These textbooks were the systematic summary of ancient Chinese science and technology, reflecting the progress of ancient vocational and technical education. The artisans learned from each other, making the official workshop a vocational school for training skilled workers. The official workshop enabled the exchange and development of the families' hereditary skills, laying the foundation for future technical advancements.

During the period of Wu Yao, artisans with superb skills and the prestige that accrued to them entered the official ranks and the national management class that originally belonged to the literati. For instance, in the Ming Dynasty, it was common for artisans to enter the civil service for many reasons. The government and the emperors built cities, palaces, altars, mausoleums, and gardens on a large scale, which required a great deal of human and material resources and also needed to improve construction techniques and tools. Experienced artisans were more suitable to manage the construction of buildings than the literati, who were skilled in poetry, painting and calligraphy. Due to the need for the construction of buildings, the emperors of the

Ming Dynasty frequently promoted craftsmen to become officials. For example, in 1607, 350 artisans were promoted to the inner palace to repair the palace. In addition to the practical needs of constructing buildings, the government also needed to ease the conflicts between the artisans and the ruling class. Artisans had long been oppressed and unable to obtain equal rights. They even fled the country to escape the unpaid labour imposed by the government. In 1451, the artisans who worked for the military fled to Yunnan and joined with the local rebel soldiers and civilians. They attacked the local treasure house and regained much looted, ill-gotten wealth. These conflicts caused the emperors and governments to select artisans to enter the bureaucratic class to alleviate the contradiction. The rewards for artisans were temporary and depended on the preferences of the emperors. In fact, the artisans who were rewarded and promoted did not enjoy the same treatment as the literati.

At the same time, the artisans harmed the vested interests of the bureaucrats and the literati, which aroused their fierce opposition and crazy attacks. In historical documents, the literati questioned the legitimacy of the craftsman-official group several times. In 1487, many artisans were demoted. One of the craftsmen, Xu Gao 徐杲, who had the highest official position, was also attacked and framed by his political opponents. The literati accused Xu Gao of embezzling government funding when he supervised the construction of the embankment. The artisans were a heterogeneous group from the perspective of the literati. It was difficult for the artisans to change their social status using their professional skills.

As can be seen from the above, the career advancement of artisans was heavily hindered by the literati. The literati excluded artisans from the bureaucratic class, but the literati did not refrain from associating with the artisans. For example, the literati and artisans would cooperate in designing furniture, but this did not mean that the two groups had the same design vision. The literati focused on the aesthetic realm and cultural connotation in design, emphasising the spiritual expression beyond material and technology, which was evident in furniture designed by the literati in the Ming Dynasty. The literati emphasised a sense of order, and they liked furniture with symmetrical designs, such as Taishi chairs 太师椅, official hat chairs and screen flat-top tables (see Figure 8.2–8.3). The literati also liked hollowed-out designs, such as the decorative parts of tables and chairs, which made the furniture more delicate (see

Figure 8.4). In the meantime, the literati believed that designers should retain the natural beauty of the material without excessive crafting, just like a gentleman should keep his nature. In the use of furniture materials, the literati tried to preserve the natural texture of wood without decorating it with lacquer. The artisans paid more attention to technical research and ignored theoretical systems.

In response to such difference, the literati adopted a method of “assisting craftsmen into the literati”, attempting to incorporate the art of craftsmanship into the discourse and spiritual world of the literati. In the opinion of the literati, the artisans’s experience had its value, but it was only through the interpretation and enhancement of the literati that the value could be effectively brought out. The literati appreciated and affirmed some artisans who had creative thinking and believed that these artisans had surpassed ordinary handicraftsmen. Zhou Gaoqi 周高起 wrote the book

Yangxian Teapot Series 阳羨茗壺系 to evaluate the design and production of teapots. Zhou listed the craftsman Xu Youquan 徐友泉 as a great artist because of his ingenuity. Xu Youquan designed teapots in various styles, such as lotus flower shapes, banana leaf shapes and goose egg shapes. The colours of mud used in making teapots were also very diverse, including begonia red, cinnabar purple, Ding kiln white, cold golden yellow, light ink black, sunken incense black, water turquoise green, durian yellow and amber yellow.²⁵² In a letter to a friend, the literati named Xu Juyuan 徐巨源 discussed the artisans who made pottery, ink, jade and engraved seals alongside the literati artists, recognising their outstanding achievements and reflecting the fact that the division between literati artists and artisans was no longer obvious.

The literati also appreciated the artisans who possessed unique skills but enjoyed a simple life and believed that those artisans had the characters of the literati. For example, according to records, Shi Dabin 时大彬, who was good at making teapots, often wore clothes similar to the literati’s, and his workmanship was excellent. He liked to drink. When working, he stayed behind closed doors for several days. After selling the teapot, he drank with the farmers. He did not pursue high prices for his

²⁵² (Ming) Zhou Gaoqi 周高起. *Yang Xian Ming Hu Xi* 阳羨茗壺系. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2012, 40–42.

artworks, as long as they were enough for him to afford daily life. The literati appreciated Shi Dabin because he wore simple clothes and enjoyed drinking. He had a true temper and did not care about the profits of his artworks. Shi Dabin would destroy his unsatisfied artworks immediately and sometimes left nothing, revealing an almost strict self-requirement. This demanding and perfect attitude towards artworks was very similar to the literati's painstaking efforts before writing poems and compositions, which could easily arouse their approval.

Another example is Hao Shijiu 昊十九, a porcelain craftsman. He could make wonderful porcelain, was not greedy for money, and still lived a very frugal life. Many other artisans had superb craftsmanship but did not care about the price of their work, such as Pu Zhongqian 濮仲谦. He carved bamboo with a knife and a brush, and the bamboo pieces were only square inches. He carved the bamboo pieces with a knife several times, and the value was immediately doubled. What he liked most was intertwined bamboo because he did not need to cut it with a knife or an axe. Pu Zhongqian became famous, and if someone could get his signature and inscription on calligraphy, painting and sculpture works of art, the price of the commodity would be higher. Dozens of people had benefited from his artworks. However, Zhongqian was still poor because he did not care about money. If the nobility used power to overwhelm him and tempted him with profit, he would refuse to give his artworks to the noble.²⁵³ The literati argued that Pu Zhongqian was an artist but not a craftsman because he had the qualities of the literati. From these records, some craftsmen showed a noble literati quality, both in the way they dressed and socialised and in their attitude to money and profit. This similarity in behaviour suggested that artisans were already close to the literati in spiritual temperament, and their self-identification might be more inclined to the literati than artisans.

Artisans with exquisite craftsmanship could enhance their social reputation and be respected by the literati. One of the literati, Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道, argued that people's preferences were always changing, and even tiny objects could have an illustrious reputation. People all knew some well-known utensils, such as the bronze ware cast by Wang Ji 王吉 and Lady Jiang 姜娘子, the musical instruments made

²⁵³ (Ming) Zhang Dai 张岱. *Tao An Meng Yi* 陶庵梦忆. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2001, 20.

by Lei Wen 雷文 and Zhang Yue 张越, the porcelain unearthed from the kilns of Ge 哥窑 and Dong 董窑, and the lacquer ware made by Zhang Cheng 张成, Yang Mao 杨茂 and Peng Junbao 彭君宝. These utensils were played with and admired by the literati for many years, valuing them as much as the poetry, calligraphy and paintings. There were many famous celebrities in the era of these utensils, but the names of celebrities were all lost in the past, and the names of the artisans who made the utensils were immortal 古今好尚不同，薄技小器皆得著名。铸铜如王吉、姜娘子，琢琴如雷文、张越，窑器如哥窑、董窑，漆器如张成、杨茂、彭君宝，经历几世，士大夫宝玩欣赏，与诗画并重。当时文人墨士名公鉅卿，炫赫一时者，不知湮没多少，而诸匠之名，顾得不朽。²⁵⁴ According to their own aesthetic judgement, some enlightened literati incorporated the craftsman's skill into the literati's value system. Zhang Dai 张岱 wrote in his book and argued that any skill and art could be possible at the highest level 世人一技一艺，皆有登峰造极之理. The literati's high evaluation of artisans gave them a relatively equal social status to their values, which helped the literati to eliminate the last psychological barrier to interaction between the high-rank literati and the low-rank artisans.

The Wu Yao phenomenon represented a new form of social life and interest, and with the development of society, the previously clear boundaries between literati, merchants and artisans became increasingly blurred. It was not the materiality of "Wu" itself that gave meaning to Wu and its creator, but the literati that still held social and cultural power. Only those artisans who took the initiative to cater to the literati and imitated the literati's aesthetic tastes and lifestyles could gain positive evaluation and recognition. During the entire Wu Yao process, the artisans showed a tendency to become more and more literati.

²⁵⁴ (Ming) Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道. Translated by Qian Bochong. *Yuan Hongdao Ji Jian Jiao* 袁宏道集笺校. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2008, 730–31.

Chapter Nine: The Changing Hierarchical Society Behind

Ming Wu Yao

From the pre-Qin Dynasty(220 BC) to the Han Dynasty (202 BC–220), the literati connected Wu to the fate of their country. The literati believed that unusual phenomena were the will of Heaven, which warned emperors to pay attention to their virtue and regulation. From the Han Dynasty to the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), based on the discipline of the ritual and cultural model, the literati named novelty daily utensils “Yao”, applying the judgement of Wu Yao to maintain hierarchical order and class. The literati might not be disgusted by luxury life and exquisite products. However, as defenders of hierarchy, the literati knew that material resources never existed in isolation but were closely related to national politics, social order, and even the rise and fall of a country. What made the literati uncomfortable was not only extravagant consumption and arrogance from ordinary people but also the hidden social issues behind the phenomenon of Wu Yao. The literati expressed their concerns about the country's development by criticising material desires among ordinary people. It is worth examining the changing hierarchical society behind Ming Wu Yao and helpful to understand why the literati became anxious about a materialistic society. In this chapter, we can see how material prosperity destroyed the hierarchical order of imperial China.

The Challenges of the Literati

To quote the Japanese scholar Miyazaki Ichida, the first category of literati refers to those having official experience, including serving officials and retired gentlemen. In contrast, the second category refers to those who had not yet been appointed as officials but had passed the imperial examinations, including Ju Ren 举人, Jian Sheng 监生 and Sheng Yuan 生员. For the sake of maintaining the purity of the class, intermarriage was strictly prohibited. As mentioned before, it was difficult for ordinary people, such as craftsmen and merchants, to integrate into this class. Moreover, as the term suggests, the literati had access to all kinds of knowledge and moral norms that were out of the hands of the lower classes, irrespective of their

claims to social mobility. Regarding status, the literati were between the ruler and the ruled, with the emperors above and the ordinary people below. They served the emperors and depended on the higher classes, the imperial nobility, from whom they derived power and benefit. The literati's special position made them the imperial domination's ruling tool. As long as it did not conflict with the imperial power, the emperors took a deliberately tolerant and permissive attitude towards them, allowing them to enjoy privileges that distinguished them from ordinary people. For example, in the Ming Dynasty, the literati were allowed to keep slaves, whereas ordinary people were forbidden to do so. They also enjoyed educational privileges based on the rank and position of their family. The literati could also be exempted from some taxes, such as land tax, and the higher their rank was, the more exemptions, the fewer land taxes they had to pay. Unsurprisingly, the literati, who enjoyed all kinds of privileges, hoped to preserve the status quo to maintain their vested interests and opposed any social change threatening their well-being. However, the luxury consumption and extravagance of the low-class people impacted the literati in the Ming Dynasty. The literati recognised that wealthy merchants enhanced their status through commodity trade and other ways, which made the literati feel that their high-class priority was threatened. The changing identity of the literati was related to the development of politics, economy, and social structure at that time.

The challenge the literati faced in the Ming Dynasty was a demanding career environment. The first was the difficult imperial examinations. In the Ming and Qing dynasties, literati seeking a political career had to pass imperial examinations. The examinations had four levels: Yuan Examination 院试, Province Examination 乡试, National Examination 会试 and Palace Examination 殿试. Before taking the imperial examinations, the literati needed to pass the Tongsheng status examinations. Tongsheng 童生, which sounded like “children,” was an entry-level status. Many literati could not progress beyond this level and were mocked as “old Tongsheng”. Advancement through the Yuan Examination, Province Examination, National Examination, and Palace Examination led to changing identities as “Shengyuan 生员”, “Juren 举人”, “Gongsheng 贡生” and “Jinshi 进士”. According to the imperial examination system, obtaining the status of Juren qualified a literati to become an

official. Those who passed the Palace Examination and achieved the status of Jinshi had better career prospects than Juren.

Yu Yingshi, an American historian, argues that China's population increased several times from the beginning of the Ming Dynasty to the middle of the 19th century. The number of people taking part in the imperial examinations increased several times, while the number of candidates being admitted did not increase correspondingly. As a result, the chances of being successful in the examinations naturally became smaller and smaller.²⁵⁵ According to statistics compiled by Wen Zhengming 文徵明 (1470–1559), the proportion of the literati who succeeded in the imperial examination was about 3%.²⁵⁶ Gu Yanwu 顾炎武(1613–1682) surmised that there were approximately 500,000 students in the Ming Dynasty, and only 200 to 300 were admitted to pass the imperial examination held every three years. Even after 30 years, only 2,000 to 3,000 students were admitted. The actual admission rate was probably even lower. For instance, the Province Examination, which was held every three years to select Ju Ren, was fiercest and had the lowest acceptance rate. According to an estimate by Ichisada Miyazaki, the acceptance rate in the Ming Dynasty and the Qing Dynasty was about 1% for the examination from a Sheng Yuan 生员 (scholar preparing for imperial examinations) to a Ju Ren 举人. The chance of becoming a Jinshi 进士 (successful candidate in the highest imperial examination) was about 1 in 3,000. From the beginning to the mid-Ming period, the acceptance rate for the triennial provincial examination dropped from 5% to 4%.²⁵⁷ In 1594, the minister named Sun Piyang 孙丕扬 formulated the selection method of drawing lots to eliminate the cabinet's interference with ministry power and bribery. Such an extremely irresponsible way made many literati doubt their future careers.²⁵⁸ What was even more troubling was that apart from the relatively fair imperial examinations,

²⁵⁵ Ying-Shih Yu. *The Religious Ethic and Mercantile Spirit in Early Modern China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2021, 141.

²⁵⁶ (Ming) Wen Zhengming 文徵明. *Wen Zhengming Ji* 文徵明集, Volume 25. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1987, 583.

²⁵⁷ Ichisada Miyazaki. Translated by Conrad Schirokauer. *China's Examination Hell: The Civil Service Examinations of Imperial China*, Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 1976, 121–122.

²⁵⁸ (Qing) Zhang Tingyu 张廷玉. *Ming Shi* 明史. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974, 5900–5905.

there was another method designed for rich families, the donation system 捐纳制度.

Donate 130 taels of silver 两 to the court, and a man could be a Sheng Yuan 生员.²⁵⁹

The wealthy class was able to easily enjoy political status through this donation system, which threatened the literati class.

Did the literati, lucky to pass the imperial examinations and get official positions, realise their political aspirations? Unfortunately, they might be in one of the harshest political dynasties in Chinese history. From 1385 to 1397, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, the first Ming emperor, issued four consecutive announcements called Da Gao 大诰.

The announcements listed ten major crimes committed by the literati, and being a literati unwilling to serve the emperor was one of the crimes. The literati were forced to be officials and deprived of their freedom. Zhu Yuanzhang also concentrated all administrative power, judicial power, and personnel appointment and dismissal powers in his own hands. The duty of the literati was limited to working according to the emperors' orders, and the literati's political independence was lost. In addition to the announcements, in the four primary cases of the Ming Dynasty, the Hu Weiyong Case (1380), Lan Yu Case (1393), Guo Huan Case (1385) and the Empty Seal Case (1376 and 1382), many literati were implicated and innocently imprisoned. The literati were afraid of working for emperors but had to submit, which made them fearful and anxious. The Ming Dynasty might not be perfect for the literati to realise their ideals.

The Unfair Income and Changing Social Order

Another essential concern of the literati was that their legal salary could not afford daily life, social interaction and hobbies. The Ming official salary system was promulgated in 1392 and continued throughout the Ming Dynasty. The annual salary of a first-rank official was 1044 Shi 石 of corn (one Shi is about 120 kilograms). The lowest was the ninth-rank official, whose annual salary was 60 Shi of corn.²⁶⁰ In the

²⁵⁹ (Ming) Lu Renlong 陆人龙. *Xing Shiyan* 型世言, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1992, 1027.

²⁶⁰ (Qing) Zhang Tingyu 张廷玉. *Ming Shi* 明史. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974, 1741.

late 14th century, officials' salary was paid partly in Bao Chao 宝钞 (a type of paper money in the Ming Dynasty) and partly still in corn. By the 15th century, salaries were paid in the form of silk, cotton, pepper and sappan. There were regulations on the proportion of goods to be used in lieu of salaries. For officials above the fourth-rank, the ratio of salary paid in paper money reached or exceeded 50%, while for officials below the fourth-rank, the ratio was lower or even all paid in the form of goods. In 1434, when officials' salaries were paid in goods, they actually received 4% of what they were supposed to have received.²⁶¹ In 1432, even the clothes received in the spoils store were given to officials as their salary, and in 1472, a bean that could only be fed to horses was also used as a salary payment.²⁶² For example, the income of Quan Jiqing 权次卿, a seventh-rank official, was about 27 taels of silver every year, but the banknotes he received as his annual salary were about four Liang. In the late Ming Dynasty, per capita food consumption was about 5.5 Shi 石 per year.

There was also the need for rice, oil, salt, vinegar and tea, as well as the consumption of clothing and utensils. A man needed at least six Liang per year to survive. A seventh-rank official's salary could not cover his family members' and servants' daily consumption, not to mention that many literati liked collecting antiques.

The literati felt anxious about their low legal incomes and poor lives. What made the literati more dissatisfied was that with the prosperity of the commodity market, the industrial and commercial class, who were initially in a low position, made money and increased their income. The standard of living of some wealthy merchants was comparable to, or even better than, that of the literati class. For instance, commercial agriculture developed well in the Jiangnan region, including rice, cotton, ramie, mulberry, tea tree, bamboo, fruits and vegetables. The handicraft industry made good progress in cotton spinning, silk-weaving, winemaking, oil pressing, paper-making, printing, dressing, tool manufacturing, construction materials and shipbuilding. The commodity market developed rapidly, and many industrial and commercial towns appeared. The diversified economy enabled the Jiangnan region to maintain a high standard of living. For example, there were many particularities in the daily oils used

²⁶¹ (Ming) Shen Shixing 申时行., *et al. Ming Hui Dian* 明会典, Volume 39, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1989, 282.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 282.

by residents. Pork oil was used for cooking. Sesame oil was used occasionally. Soybean oil was used for fasting days and lighting candles, and hair oil for women when they made up was made especially for the task.²⁶³ Market traders and artisans's income and daily living standards were also close to low-rank officials. A butcher's annual income was 40 taels of silver, which was close to the salary of the seventh-rank officials. Drink stall vendors earned 20 taels of silver a year, not to mention other wealthy merchants.²⁶⁴ In contrast, if the literati only relied on legal salaries without other sources of income, including support from family, relatives, and friends, their lives would be difficult, and becoming an official would not be a great choice.

The income of ordinary people was already higher than that of many officials, not to mention wealthy business people. The rich merchants of the Ming Dynasty mainly included prominent business people, big workshop owners, and loan sharks, who only accounted for a small proportion of the total urban population. From 1573 to 1620, the number of shops in Beijing was approximately 30,809.²⁶⁵ Wealthy merchants earned much money in a society filled with material desires. From emperors and nobles to ordinary city dwellers, there was a great demand for all kinds of luxury goods, jewellery, expensive spices, embroidery and other handicrafts. In response to the demands, merchants operated related industries. For example, the vases made by famous artists Gong Chun 龚春 and Shi Dabin 时大彬 and the tin utensils made by Zhao Liangbi 赵良璧 were worth thousands of dollars. Nobility snapped them up, and merchants took the opportunity to raise prices. The merchants' jewellery industry was also one of the most profitable industries. People spent much money on jewellery to demonstrate their nobility or to please their powerful bosses. The emperor favoured a concubine, whose family name was Wan. Liang Fang, a eunuch, received favours and rewards by donating jewellery to the concubine, which many people imitated. The wealthy business people then tried their best to raise the price of gemstones. A piece of emerald weighing four or five taels and a cat-eye

²⁶³ (Ming) Anon. *Wu Cheng Xian Zhi* 乌程县志, Volume 4, Beijing: National Library China Publishing House, 2006, 302.

²⁶⁴ (Ming) Shen Bang 沈榜. *Wan Shu Za Ji* 宛署杂记, Volume 3, Volume 6. Beijing Ancient Book Publishing House, 1982, 24–26, 50–51.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., *Wan Shu Za Ji* 宛署杂记, Volume 13, 103–119.

gemstone as big as a finger were worth thousands of tael of gold.²⁶⁶ The merchants' profits were often as much as ten or even a hundred or a thousand times. The average amount spent on jewellery purchases in the Ming Dynasty was about one million taels of silver a year in 1586, 1599 and 1600. From market traders to wealthy business people, some of them laughed at the literati due to the literati's low income, wantonly trampling on the literati's dignity. The literati had to worry about their future. The economic and living disadvantages forced the literati class to look for new ways to survive.

In *Capital*, Karl Marx argues that trade always has, to a greater or lesser degree, a solvent effect on the pre-existing organisation of production, which in all their various forms are principally oriented to use-value. However, how far it leads to the dissolution of the old mode of production depends first and foremost on the solidity and inner articulation of this mode of production itself. The old hierarchical order began to disintegrate as money became more attractive to people than power. Commerce and commodity production gradually destroyed the closed and solidified natural economic structure in imperial China, breaking the policies and customs of ignoring merchants.²⁶⁷ In the Ming Dynasty, with the development of commodity trade and the demand for material desires, new social problems emerged, and class boundaries began to blur. The relationship between merchants and the literati became very close, and merchants rose to a higher status in society's value system. The traditional order of the literati, farmers, artisans and merchants transformed into a new order of the literati, merchants, farmers, and artisans. As mentioned in Chapter Eight, the communication between the literati and artisans became more frequent. The literati guided and inspired artisans, and they customised many handicrafts, which influenced the creative style of some craftsmen.

The literati also actively participated in commercial activities. The literati used to criticise people who devoted themselves to commercial trade and chasing material desires, but now they also began to take part in it. The literati chose the cultural field they were more familiar with and earned much money through cultural products. The affluence of life increased demand for cultural products as urban dwellers demanded a

²⁶⁶ (Ming) Jiang Yikui 蒋一葵. *Changan Ke Hua* 长安客话, Volume 2. Beijing Ancient Book Publishing House, 1982, 36.

²⁶⁷ Marx Karl, Ben Fowkes, Ernest Mandel. *Capital Volume 1 A Critique of Political Economy*. London: Pelican Books, 1976, 449.

higher quality of life and valued the establishment of a humanistic aesthetic. With the increasing demands for books among civilians, many junior literati set up workshops to publish books, made plans for bookshops, edited manuscripts and engaged in commercial writing. Deng Zhimu 邓志谟, Wang Shimao 王世茂, Wang Tun 王惇, Xu Yizhong 许以忠, Lu Yunlong 陆云龙, Xiong Damu 熊大木 and Yu Xiangdou 余象斗 were typical representatives. Some of the literati failed the imperial examinations repeatedly, and some were lucky enough to become junior officials. They were forced to compose or compile many novels or popular books to get paid. In addition to the junior literati, the senior literati working in the government also joined in the composition of popular literature in the middle and late Ming Dynasty, such as Tang Xianzu 汤显祖, who composed a large number of operas, and Feng Menglong 冯梦龙, who compiled *Three Words and Two Pieces* 三言二拍, *The History of Love* 情史 and many anthologies of folk songs. The bookshops competed to publish the works the literati reviewed. The participation of the literati further expanded the spread of popular literature.

“Bang Xian”

In the Ming Dynasty, behind the phenomena of Wu Yao, in addition to the destruction of the hierarchical order, another social issue was substantial unemployment. Commercialisation and urbanisation directly led to a large rural population flowing into the city, which in turn led to the gathering of unemployed people. Some unemployed people started to serve the powerful and wealthy classes and were known as Bang Xian 帮闲. Some literati who failed the imperial examination had to work for the wealthy business class or the powerful for survival and became members of Bang Xian. Among them were some special female Bang Xian. Bang Xian were generally men but also included a portion of career women. In the Ming Dynasty, ordinary people indulged in comfort, were greedy for pleasure, and pursued the release and satisfaction of material desires, which provided conditions for

the growth of the Bang Xian group. Some of Bang Xian were of bad character and may engage in illegal activity.

The origin of Bang Xian can be traced back to the Spring and Autumn period (770 BC–476 BC). The great social turmoil and frequent regime changes in countries caused princes, ministers, officials, and powerful families to cultivate talents to expand their power and realise political ambitions, even at the expense of all their property. Lord Mengchang 孟尝, Lord Xinling 信陵, Lord Pingyuan 平原 and Lord Chunshen 春申 could be regarded as representative figures among them. In the Ming Dynasty, Bang Xian 帮闲 was divided into four categories.

The first category was Qingke 清客. Qingke were generally well-educated and usually worked in a wealthy family. This group was mainly the literati, with a higher status among the Bang Xian groups. The literati were not always financially rewarded for their involvement in commercial activities, and some were forced to work for the rich people to increase their income. Rich and powerful people indulged in ease, sought pleasure, and pursued the satisfaction of lust, which provided job opportunities for these literati. The noble and wealthy merchants had nothing to do all day, and they would hire some poor literati to pass the time in their company. These literati were originally scholars, but because their official careers were not promising, they had to rely on what they had learned to provide service to rich people. A qualified Qingke needed to have good literacy and superb painting and calligraphy skills. He was expected to drink well, sing well, be good at composing poems, and play chess and card games. At that time, someone made up a rhyme to describe those literati, “A good character, second-class talent, three catties of wine, clothes for four seasons, five pieces of chess, six lines of Kunqu operas, seven words making a poem, eight cards, nine ranks, perfect character.” Their main task was to solve problems for officials, wealthy merchants, and young men from affluent families. Sometimes, these literati relied on their wit to help their hosts avoid some embarrassment. For example, there was a wealthy salt merchant without an excellent educational background, but he pretended to be an elegant man who was good at writing poetry. At a party, the merchant composed a poem describing the white catkins and red ones, making guests laugh. When the salt merchant was very embarrassed, one of the literati defended him

and argued that the poem's last line should be that the setting sun shines in the peach garden, so the catkins would be turned red by the sunset.

Qingke formed a rather large group during the Ming Dynasty, and there were even special shops offering the service of renting Qingke. According to *Dou Peng Gossip* 豆棚闲话 compiled by Ai Na 艾衲, the shops were usually equipped with study rooms, tea sets, flower pots, couch beds, stoves, and bamboo tables and so on. The shops were small and divided into two areas, with customers lining up in the waiting area, waiting to pick up Qingke. The proliferation and endless supply of these Qingke were signs of the decay of the society, proof of the society's pursuit of a comfortable life, and a derivative of the phenomenon of Wu Yao. As a kind of "rogue" literati, their daily outfit was very different from ordinary literati. In *Dou Peng Gossip*, Qingke used to wear a maned hat, but it did not look elegant. If they wore a top hat and wide robe, it did not match their identity and would attract ridicule from other high-status literati. They had to change their dress and decided to wear more miniature hats, a green and old "Paddy Field" robe (made of different fabrics, shaped like a paddy field), and a pair of straw sandals to act as gentlemen.²⁶⁸

The second category of Bang Xian was called "Pei Bai Xiang 陪白相." Pei Bai Xiang was a word in the dialect of the Wu language area, which originally meant to play like a child. The main job of these men was to accompany their employers and act as tour guides. Sometimes, they designed traps to cheat their employers and defraud money. The third Bang Xian category was "Dao She 刀镊" or "Sher 涉儿". These characters often appeared in trading situations. They generally had excellent communication and social skills and acted as agents between buyers and sellers, earning rewards. The fourth category with the lowest status, "Si Bo 厮波" or "idle person 闲的儿", had neither talent nor ability to engage in business. They could only rely on the rich and powerful, earning rewards by carrying favour with rich people. This category of Bang Xian often appeared in big hotels, parties, and banquet venues.

During the middle and late Ming Dynasty, ordinary people faced heavy taxes imposed by the emperors and the government. As a result, many farmers moved to

²⁶⁸ (Qing) Ai Na Ju Shi 艾衲居士. *Dou Peng Xian Hua* 豆棚闲话, Volume 10, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1994, 311.

cities with prosperous economies to seek employment. However, cities had limited capacity to accommodate the growing population, leading to high unemployment rates and some of the unemployed being reduced to “Bang Xian”. Meanwhile, the literati and wealthy promoted luxury, while ordinary people also pursued expensive goods and novelties. In order to maintain a high level of consumption, every family member, including homemakers, had to work to increase their income. The heavy tax burden and high costs of living forced women from lower classes and low-income families to seek work outside the home.

Additionally, upper-class women, restricted by ethics, strongly desired to explore the outside world, creating a market for female Bang Xian. This type of woman was called San Gu Liu Po 三姑六婆, including Buddhist nun 尼姑, Taoist nun 道姑, Gua Gu 卦姑, Ya Po 牙婆, Mei Po 媒婆, Shi Po 师婆, Zhai Po 虔婆, Yao Po 药婆 and Wen Po 稳婆.²⁶⁹ Buddhist nuns talked about Buddhist scriptures to noble women. They also looked for spells and prescriptions to aid in childbirth for women. Taoist nuns were female Taoist priests. Gua Gu were divination women. They required the person asking for help to inform their birthday and Chinese zodiac for divination. Ya Po referred to female agents whose job was to introduce domestic labour or buy and sell poor people to rich families as slaves. These women were usually eloquent and had a good sense of humour. If some ladies felt lonely, they would think of Ya Po and hire a Ya Po to give them company. Mei Po was a female matchmaker, which was a part-time job for some women in the Ming Dynasty. Wen Po referred to female midwives, and Shi Po were sorceresses. Zhai Po was a female brothel keeper who regulated prostitutes. Yao Po referred to female doctors who usually treated women.

In the literature of the Ming Dynasty, the portrayal of female Bang Xian was primarily negative. These women, who were often older and more experienced, were often depicted as gossipy and deceitful. Some Mei Po would even lie to make money, such as in the case of Mr Zhang, a man over 60 who wanted to marry a younger woman of equal social status. Two matchmakers, Mei Po Zhang and Li, falsely claimed that Mr Zhang was 40 years old to secure a larger commission, and the young

²⁶⁹ Yi Ruolan. *San Gu Liu Po 三姑六婆*, Shanghai : Zhongxi Book Company, 2019, 51–100.

bride only found out the truth on their wedding night.²⁷⁰ The Zhai Po also possessed exceptional eloquence. In the novel *Jin Ping Mei*, Liu Si Ma ran a brothel and relied on prostitutes to make a living. She needed to attract customers and deceive and appease the prostitutes in her brothel, so she was skilled at speaking eloquently. Nuns were expected to be pure individuals in Buddhism, but some literati believed they were accustomed to flattering the women in the backyard with sweet words. There were frequent accounts of nuns seducing honourable women. For instance, Nun Zhao was tasked by Bu Liang to devise a plan to trick and assault a woman named Wu. The group of Ya Po often facilitated illicit relationships, either by selling women or orchestrating connections between men and women. Xue Po was a prime example of this. After receiving 100 taels of silver and ten taels of gold from a man, she went to great lengths to befriend a woman named Wang, betraying Wang's trust and persuading her, a moral and upstanding woman, to engage in an affair.²⁷¹ When selling embroidery, jewellery, and other items to ladies, the Yao Po group sometimes took advantage of their proximity to engage in illegal activities. To make more money, some of these saleswomen would secretly sell abortion drugs to young women who accidentally became pregnant.

These female Bang Xian were not only the agents between ladies but sometimes even played essential roles on special occasions, such as giving or accepting bribes. Since the various actions of these women were relatively secretive and did not directly conflict with the ruling class, they lacked official institutional control, and it was not easy to manage female Bang Xian. The literati were concerned that these women could directly communicate with their daughters and wives, which was not permitted under the strict etiquette of the time. Men were not allowed to enter women's living spaces freely. As a result, the literati and other men could not supervise the actions of these female Bang Xian and formed biased opinions about them. They believed that female Bang Xian encouraged women to behave deceitfully in the inner chambers. Additionally, female Bang Xian were criticised for passing on social information to upper-class women, subtly influencing them with their words and actions. These women and young ladies were exposed to new perspectives of the

²⁷⁰ (Ming) Feng Menglong 冯梦龙. *Jing Shi Tong Yan* 警世通言, Fuzhou: Fujian People's Publishing House, 1981, 188–197.

²⁷¹ (Ming) Feng Menglong 冯梦龙. *Yu Shi Ming Yan* 喻世明言, Changsha: Yulu Press, 1989, 1–21.

outside world, inspiring them to pursue their desires and seek meaningful relationships rather than being confined to their homes. This was seen as a departure from traditional ethics and morals, posing a significant threat to women's traditional virtues and norms as defined by the male-dominated society of the time.

In the Ming society behind the phenomenon of Wu Yao, we can see that due to income inequality, the old hierarchical order gradually collapsed, the status of the original low-class people improved, and the status of some high-class literati fell. At the same time, the emergence of a large number of Bang Xian parasites on the rich and powerful was also one of the signs of the decline of Chinese society. It was evidence that the country was greedy for comfort and indulgence.

Chapter Ten: Crimes Behind the Ming Wu Yao

During the Ming Dynasty, the state and government's authority was weakened as the commodity economy developed, breaking the traditional hierarchy. Ordinary people started ignoring the sumptuary laws and did not adhere to their social status when consuming. Lower-class individuals began living luxuriously and pursuing expensive and novel items, which was known as the Wu Yao phenomenon. As social moral concepts changed and norms were chaotic, some lower-class individuals became greedy and resorted to fraudulent means to make money. Additionally, there were cases of occupational crimes among upper-class officials.

Lower Class Crimes

During the early period of the Ming Dynasty, after the war at the end of the Yuan Dynasty, the farmlands were barren. Many unruly farmers who had lost their land became lazy and often wandered around towns and villages, becoming a severe problem for social security. As mentioned in Chapter Nine, many unemployed people gathered with the expansion of cities and growing populations. They found it difficult to get legitimate jobs and could only make a living by committing crimes such as violent robbery or fraud. The rise of public interest in luxurious, new and expensive items and wealth increased people's desire for more, which led to various crimes among lower-class groups. In the *Du Pian New Book* 杜骗新书, a public case novel published at the end of the 16th and beginning of the 17th centuries, the stories were based on real cases and involved 24 types of fraud. Due to the high number of criminal cases, instructional manuals were created to help people identify fraud and avoid deception.

The first type of crime among the lower class was the trafficking of human beings and the forced prostitution of women. During the Zhengtong period (1436–1449), there were some men called “La Hu 喇唬”. They would buy some women and claim to take them in as adopted daughters, concubines or maids. Unfortunately, some individuals either pressured or lured women into selling their bodies and

engaging in extramarital affairs for financial gain. In some military or civilian households, excessive pursuit of luxury led to bankruptcy. In such dire circumstances, the male head of the family resorted to selling his wife and concubines, forcing them into prostitution, or allowing female family members to dress as prostitutes to cater to high-ranking officials and wealthy merchants.²⁷² During the Wanli period (1573–1620), unemployed men in Beijing not only committed crimes but also dared to threaten officials. A memorial submitted by Minister Zheng Rui reported a criminal gang led by Han Chaochen in the city known as the “Ten Tigers”. The gang abused vulnerable civilians, robbed their wives and daughters, and committed various crimes, including kidnapping and robbery. In one instance, the gang kidnapped a man’s concubine and maid and stole jewellery and money. They also murdered Ren’s mother, sold Ren for 50 taels of silver, and took over her house.²⁷³

In economically affluent areas, particularly Suzhou and Songjiang, a group of unemployed men skilled in carrying out acts of revenge for individuals emerged. They were known as “Hitting Hands 打手” or “Qing Hands 青手”, and their guild was called “Hitting Guild 打行”. These individuals came from a diverse group of unemployed rural labourers, temporary civilian armed groups enlisted by the Ming government to combat pirates, and local young people. The gangs followed secret organisational rules. To join a gang, one needed to participate in ceremonies such as swearing blood oaths and signing alliance letters. The gangs were divided into several teams, each with its area of operation, and operated within these areas according to specific rules.²⁷⁴ These ruthless criminal gangs used diamond hoops, iron fists, iron tiger claws, flying tiger sticks, iron rulers, iron claws and iron spikes as their tools of crime. The gang members shared techniques for inflicting non-lethal but severe injuries on their victims. They used to hit the chest, ribs, abdomen, waist and back, causing the victims to die three months to a year later. Since the victim’s date of death was delayed, the family could not sue for murder, allowing the assailants to escape

²⁷² (Ming) Dai Jin 戴金. Translated by Yang Yifan. *Huang Ming Tiao Fa Shi Lei Zuan* 皇明条法事类纂. Beijing: China Science Publishing Media, 1994, 726–729.

²⁷³ (Ming) Zheng Rui 郑锐. *Bo Zhong Jian Tai Shu Cao* 伯仲谏台疏草, *Cong Shu Ji Cheng Xin Bian* 丛书集成新编, Volume 31. Taipei: Xinwenfeng Publishing House, 1985, 371–72.

²⁷⁴ (Ming) Fan Lian 范廉. *Yun Jian Ju Mu Chao* 云间据目抄. Taipei: Xin Xing Book Company, 1962, 2631–2632.

prosecution easily. These thugs even cooperated with the high-class literati. Dong Qichang 董其昌, a well-known calligrapher and painter, had collaborated with criminal groups. Historical records indicate that he used these rogue forces to cheat and harm low-income families. In 1616, Dong Qichang, his sons and servants got into conflict with local students and villagers due to their oppressive behaviour. The angry crowd surrounded the Dong family, accusing and scolding them. In response, the Dong family hired over a hundred thugs to enter their house overnight as bodyguards and even threw rubble and faeces at the crowd. As a result of the confrontation, the furious crowd set fire to the Dong family's house.²⁷⁵

During the mid-Ming Dynasty, Song Shi 讼师, similar to modern litigators, were disliked by the government and ordinary people. They were knowledgeable about the laws of the Dynasty and skilled at drafting various pleadings and dealing with the government. With the rise of commerce, the traditional economy was impacted, and in combination with the influence of these lawyers, people became more eager to file lawsuits. These litigators were well-versed in legal procedures, writing petitions, and even encouraging parties to sue. They often distorted facts during trials, made false accusations, extorted money and earned commissions.²⁷⁶ A case was recorded in *Er Ke Pai An Jing Qi*. Servant Chen Fusheng was employed by a wealthy man named Hong Dashou. They got into an argument, and Hong physically assaulted Chen, who later died after returning home. Chen San, a relative of Chen Fusheng, learned about the incident and went to the Hong family to demand compensation, but his request was denied. Subsequently, Chen San took the matter to the government to file a complaint. After reviewing the case, the government ordered the Hong family to cover the funeral expenses.²⁷⁷ A son in the Zhejiang region assaulted his 70-year-old father, resulting in the older man losing his teeth. The father sued his son, who then spent much money to hire a lawyer. Suddenly, the lawyer bit the son's ear. When questioned in court, the lawyer argued that the father's biting of his son's ear was the cause.²⁷⁸ As a result, the son escaped punishment—some

²⁷⁵ (Ming) Anon. *Min Chao Dong Huan Shi Shi* 民抄董宦事实, *Cong Shu Ji Cheng Xin Bian* 丛书集成新编, Volume 278. Taipei: Xinwenfeng Publishing House, 1985, 73–74.

²⁷⁶ Melissa Macauley. *Social Power and Legal Culture*. Stanford University Press, 1998, 35–36.

²⁷⁷ (Ming) Ling Mengchu 凌濛初. *Er Ke Pai An Jing Qi* 二刻拍案惊奇, Volume 31. Nanjing: Phoenix Publishing House, 2010, 514–515.

²⁷⁸ (Ming) Feng Menglong 冯梦龙. *Zhi Nang Bu* 智囊补, Volume 27. Haerbin: Heilongjiang People's Publishing

unscrupulous lawyers, driven by greed, manipulated or assisted murderers in avoiding punishment for their crimes. For instance, in the Jiading region, lawyers would initially lend money to individuals, then wait for family members of the borrowers to pass away, and subsequently take legal action against the deceased individual's family for murder. To resolve the lawsuit, the individuals had no option but to surrender their property, leading to the practice being dubbed as "borrowing lives."²⁷⁹

During the Ming Dynasty, gambling became popular due to the gathering of unemployed individuals and the social trend of pursuing money. The literati, feeling disillusioned with their work, contributed to the popularity of gambling as they engaged in various recreational activities. Gambling, poetry, calligraphy and painting became necessary skills for the literati. For instance, a literati named Zhang Dai established a cockfighting club with his friends, where they placed bets using antiques, paintings, calligraphy, silk and expensive fans.²⁸⁰ Leaf cards eventually developed into the game of Mahjong, with its roots traceable to literati in Shanghai. Some people gambled to defraud others for their money. Tian Hongyu was known for his love of gambling. When his daughter was taken into the palace by the Ming emperor, Tian Hongyu began claiming to be the emperor's father-in-law. He used this position to lure people into gambling in the Jiangnan area and made a significant amount of money.²⁸¹ Often, unemployed individuals who were skilled in gambling formed gangs and worked together to commit fraud. They would manipulate the dice by filling them with lead sand to change the weight, making it easier to throw a high number when placing bets by gently twisting the dice with their fingers.

Counterfeiting and selling shoddy goods were prevalent crimes among the lower class, especially in the Suzhou market. Due to the abundance of counterfeit goods, customers had to be cautious and negotiate hard while shopping there. Counterfeit alcohol was prevalent in Songjiang, where merchants frequently sold alcohol diluted with water. Customers complained that out of 1.5 kilograms of liquor, 0.5 kilogram was actual liquor, 0.5 kilogram was water, and the remaining weight was due to the

House, 1987, 774.

²⁷⁹ (Ming) Han Jun 韩浚, *et al. Jiading Xian Zhi* 嘉定县志, Volume 2. Taipei: Cheng Wen Publishing Company, 1983, 152–153.

²⁸⁰ (Ming) Zhang Dai 张岱. *Tao An Meng Yi* 陶庵梦忆. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2001, 54, 136.

²⁸¹ (Ming) Tan Rumu 谈孺木. *Zao Lin Za Zu* 枣林杂俎. Shanghai: New Culture Publishing House, 1934, 239.

bottle.²⁸² Unscrupulous merchants stored decaying straw in a cool place and watered it with garbage, which attracted insects over time. They then extracted the juice from the insects and falsely marketed it as milk, using it to make milk cakes, which were then sold to unsuspecting customers.²⁸³ In another instance, a young student named Cao Fugu, who had been robbed, resorted to mixing yellow mud and red paint, shaping it into balls, and selling it as rat poison. Surprisingly, this business venture turned out to be quite successful.²⁸⁴

Many literati demonstrated their refined taste by collecting antique items. However, there was a widespread issue of creating and selling counterfeit antiques. For instance, a renowned calligrapher's work, Yan Zhenqing, was forged in the collection of Chen Jiru 陈继儒. Another literati, Chen Qian 陈谦, counterfeited the calligraphy of Zhao Mengfu in an attempt to become wealthy.²⁸⁵ Due to the prevalence of fake antiques, manuals for appraising cultural relics were published, such as *Yan Xian Qing Shang Jian* and *Superfluous Things*, which aimed to educate people on recognising counterfeit antiques. The circulation of fake gold and silver coins greatly impacted ordinary people. The counterfeiters were skilled, using materials like iron, copper, lead or tin covered with a layer of silver, making it hard to detect. Theft was a serious issue in wealthy areas such as Jiangnan, where numerous gangs caused significant harm to local public security by stealing.²⁸⁶ The prevalence of theft even led to the establishment of a market dedicated to selling stolen goods. Some thieves went as far as colluding with local officials or posing as police officers, using official licences to break into houses and steal.

During the Ming Dynasty, with increasing unemployment and city populations, some individuals exploited religious beliefs for deception. These individuals were known as Shen Gun 神棍. During the Chenghua period (1465–1487), Zhang Yuanji, a well-known Taoist priest with many followers, frequently deceived ordinary people

²⁸² (Ming) Wu Lüzhen 吴履震. *Wu Rong Zhi* 五茸志逸, Volume 2. Taipei: Cheng Wen Publishing Company, 1983, 70–71.

²⁸³ (Qing) Dong Han 董含. *San Gang Shi Lüe* 三冈识略, Volume 2. Shenyang: Liaoning Education Press, 2000, 47–48.

²⁸⁴ (Ming) Zhong An 钟庵. *Sheng Xiao Jian* 生销剪. Shenyang: Chunfeng Literature and Art Publishing House, 1987, 230–231.

²⁸⁵ (Ming) Zhu Guozhen 朱国祯. *Yong Chuang Xiao Pin* 涌幢小品, Volume 22. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959, 536.

²⁸⁶ (Ming) Yao Lv 姚旅. *Lu Shu* 露书. Fu Zhou: Fujian People's Publishing House, 2008, 203.

of money. He established private prisons equipped with various torture devices. If he encountered anyone who resisted, he would strangle them to death, fill a bag with sand and crush those who disobeyed him, or directly tie victims up and throw them into the abyss. In total, he killed more than 40 people.²⁸⁷ One common fraudulent technique that charlatans used involved producing different types of elixirs. For instance, some people falsely claimed they could turn herbs into elixirs or lead and iron into gold or silver. In reality, they were deceiving people and stealing their property. This type of deception was referred to as “lifting the can 提罐”. A wealthy man named Pan fell victim to an elaborate scam. A con artist rented a fancy ship and hired a prostitute to pretend to be his mistress. When Pan asked how the con artist had amassed such wealth, he claimed to have the power to turn lead into gold. Pan handed over a large sum of silver and requested to witness the magical transformation. The con artist secretly instructed the woman to seduce Pan. When the “magic” was performed, the con artist alleged that something impure in the room had offended the gods, causing the spell to fail. Feeling guilty, Pan appealed to the con artist for forgiveness, who demanded further compensation for his troubles, and ultimately, the con artist made off with thousands of taels of silver.²⁸⁸

The desire for economic development, luxury in food, clothing, housing and transportation, and the breakdown of traditional social hierarchies heightened people’s craving for wealth and diminished their ethical standards. This led some individuals, particularly those without substantial assets, to seek ways to make money without investment and to become wealthy overnight. Unemployed individuals exploit human vulnerabilities, causing disruptions to social order.

Female Crimes

After the mid-16th century, cities in imperial China and the commodity economy developed rapidly. This led to significant changes in traditional ethics and the emergence of new attitudes towards life, creating a more open social atmosphere. The growing power of merchants influenced ordinary people to pay more attention to

²⁸⁷ (Ming) Anon. *Ming Xianzong Shilu* 明宪宗实录, Volume 66. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1966, 1325–1326.

²⁸⁸ (Ming) Feng Menglong 冯梦龙. *Gu Jin Gai Tan* 古今谭概, Volume 21, Nanjing: Phoenix Publishing House, 2007, 403.

money and interests. As a result, common people began to value luxury and disregarded the hierarchy class—many unconventional methods of making money emerged during this time. Additionally, women's participation in various cultural and entertaining activities increased, expanding their social scope and bringing them closer to the outside world. For example, as mentioned in Chapter Nine, female Bang Xian not only engaged in legitimate business but also used their status to participate in criminal activities, causing considerable chaos in social order when they entered the homes of the rich and powerful.

In cases of fraud, young women were often used as bait rather than serving as the mastermind. There was a scam known as the “make a fire circle 扎火圈”. Initially, a beautiful woman would seduce a man, and then her male accomplice would accuse the man of raping an honourable woman and extort money from him. The scam was designed to lure men into a fire pit, also known as the “immortal jump 仙人跳”, indicating that the scam was so deceitful that even immortals could not avoid it. A group of men and women in Beijing who specialised in these scams were recorded. The group systematically selected a woman of exceptional beauty to act as bait, and upon completion of the scam, they distributed the money among the members.²⁸⁹ It was evident that they were part of an organised fraud group. A monk in Suzhou who was skilled in medicine also fell victim to this scam. The scammers had a prostitute pretending to be his daughter and asked the monk to treat her. Afterwards, the prostitute intentionally intoxicated the monk, and her male partner falsely accused the monk of rape.²⁹⁰ In a further example, a peasant woman owed three years of seedling rent to the landlord. She conspired with her husband, son, and daughter-in-law to use the daughter-in-law to seduce the landlord. They planned to force the landlord to write a land transfer deed and pay them 20 taels of silver.²⁹¹ In another instance, three sisters-in-law lured a horseman and swindled him out of three horses.²⁹² Sometimes, the target of fraud was not expensive jewellery, horses or land but even just a few

²⁸⁹ (Ming) Yan Yudun 严虞惇, *Yan You Er Ze Bian* 艳偶二则, Volume 5. Taipei: Xin Xing Book Company, 1962, 3211.

²⁹⁰ (Ming) Ye Quan 叶权, *Xian Bo Bian* 贤博编, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1987, 7.

²⁹¹ (Ming) Zhang Yingyu 张应俞, *Du Pian New Book* 杜骗新书, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1999, 278–284.

²⁹² Ibid., *Du Pian New Book* 杜骗新书, 284–288.

meals. A woman used her young and beautiful aunt Shi to seduce a peddler with the sole purpose of swindling him out of four catties of oil and some meat.²⁹³

There was a group that used marriage as a way to extort money from people, the practice known as “releasing white pigeons”. In Yangzhou, a man named Wei had a beautiful and intelligent daughter. He arranged for a man named Ji, a scoundrel, to marry his daughter. Wei pretended to give his daughter to a magistrate as a concubine and received 80 taels of silver in return. When the magistrate was supposed to leave, Wei’s daughter signalled for help by hanging out her white pants and escaped on the boat with her new husband, Ji. When the magistrate realised the daughter was missing, he went to the Wei family. The Wei family falsely accused the magistrate of quarrelling with his daughter, leading to her suicide. Fearing a legal dispute, the magistrate had to leave.²⁹⁴ An agent named Weng Bin initially owed the wealthy merchant Shi Shouxun paper worth more than 800 taels of silver. Then, he used his 15-year-old daughter to settle the debt by marrying her off to Shouxun as a concubine. After four years, Shouxun passed away due to old age. Weng Bin and his wife then married off their daughter to another wealthy man in Nanjing as a concubine and received an additional 100 taels of silver as a betrothal gift. Altogether, the couple obtained more than 1,000 taels of silver using their daughter.²⁹⁵ Another agent, Liao San, used his daughter to have an affair with the merchant Zhang Lu and wanted to extort 100 taels of silver from him. Zhang Lu refused, and Liao San reported the matter to the government, causing Zhang Lu to lose all his capital. As a result, Zhang had to borrow 30 taels of silver to return to his hometown.²⁹⁶

Chen Si, another agent, used a similar method to defraud a cloth merchant, Li Ying. The difference was that the tool he used to defraud money was a maid in his store.²⁹⁷ A man named Guo Yanji owed more than 20 taels due to gambling. To settle his debt, he pretended that his 33-year-old widowed mother was his wife and tried to marry her off to Cai Tianshou, a businessman looking for a concubine since he had no children.²⁹⁸ In another incident, a woman pretended to marry Fang Ba, a street vendor

²⁹³ Ibid., *Du Pian New Book* 杜骗新书, 266–272.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., *Du Pian New Book* 杜骗新书, 146–150.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., *Du Pian New Book* 杜骗新书, 71–75.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., *Du Pian New Book* 杜骗新书, 262–265.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., *Du Pian New Book* 杜骗新书, 259–261.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., *Du Pian New Book* 杜骗新书, 226–230.

reliant on her mother for support. She then schemed to instigate a fight between Fang Ba and a shop owner and falsely accused the owner, resulting in a tragic outcome.²⁹⁹

During the Ming Dynasty in Beijing, there was a well-known case involving female Bang Xian, who often acted as an agent and sometimes orchestrated fraudulent schemes. In this case, Luo Sinniang, a woman who earned a living by playing musical instruments, collaborated with Luo Xiaofeng, a renowned prostitute, and Luo Erniang, Xiaofeng's sister-in-law. They impersonated the family members of a noble consort and leased an empty house. With the help of a matchmaker named Shen, an older woman, they feigned negotiations for a marriage with a wealthy neighbour of high social standing. They deceived them into giving away antiques, jewellery and 500 taels of silver.³⁰⁰ In the *Du Pian New Book* 杜骗新书, the nun Miaozen sets up a trap to approach the lonely merchant woman Xiang. She lures her into the nunnery, makes her drunk, and makes her commit adultery with Ning Chaoxian in exchange for seven taels of silver.³⁰¹ Additionally, a merchant requested a pearl seller to convince another merchant's wife to have an affair with him, and the seller was rewarded with 1,000 taels of silver.³⁰²

During the Hongzhi period (1488–1505), the government issued a ban on trafficking persons from good families. They emphasised that if a female agent committed a crime, her husband and son would also be considered guilty.³⁰³ In Songjiang, an agent named Wu Sanniang made much money by selling prostitution tools and drugs, as well as hiring surrogate mothers. She was able to enter and exit wealthy families' homes freely. Later, she was convicted by the county magistrate and sentenced to 20 strokes of the cane and a fine of 300 taels of silver.³⁰⁴ Dong Han documented a disturbing incident: a female Bang Xian abducted some children. She gave the children anaesthesia and used a sharp knife to cut the children's faces, chests, backs, shoulders and arms, preventing their parents from recognising them. She broke

²⁹⁹ Ibid., *Du Pian New Book* 杜骗新书, 213–219.

³⁰⁰ (Ming) Yan Yudun 严虞惇. *Yan You Er Ze Bian* 艳隅二则, Volume 5. Taipei: Xin Xing Book Company, 1962, 3211–3217.

³⁰¹ Ibid., *Du Pian New Book* 杜骗新书, 288–295.

³⁰² (Ming) Song Maocheng 宋懋澄. *Jiu Yue Ji* 九禽集, Volume 2. Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 1984, 271–274.

³⁰³ (Ming) Anon. edited by Huang Zhangjian. *Compilation of Laws and Regulations of the Ming Dynasty* 明代律例汇编. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology Academia Sinica, 1994, 785.

³⁰⁴ (Ming) Fan Lian 范廉. *Yun Jian Ju Mu Chao* 云间据目抄. Taipei: Xin Xing Book Company, 1962, 2631.

the children's legs and ordered them to beg. The woman abducted a widow's three-year-old son. When the mother hurried to rescue him, the child was already dying. He embraced his mother, wept and passed away.³⁰⁵ There had been cases of female medical professionals such as Yao Po (medicine women), Wen Po (midwives), and Yi Po (female doctors), while involved in providing medical care and assisting with childbirth, accidentally or intentionally causing harm or death to individuals. For example, a doctor named Zhou was reported to have inadvertently caused the deaths of four infants while helping women during childbirth due to fear. In 1617, a woman in Nanjing gave birth to a baby with two heads and red hair. She was afraid and strangled the baby.³⁰⁶ The placenta was considered a valuable medicinal substance in some areas of the Yangtze River Basin. Unfortunately, some unscrupulous midwives took advantage of the chances to help women give birth to steal their placentas and sell them.

Some of the women from both lower and upper classes were involved in criminal cases, including instances where upper-class women committed violent acts against their husbands. For example, Wen Kang, who was the child of a maid and a man surnamed Gu, was almost killed by Gu's wife when he was still a baby. She sent him to a mill, hoping that he would be trampled to death, but the mill owner could not bear it and ended up adopting Wen Kang.³⁰⁷ During the Jiajing period, an official named Zhang Zhong favoured his concubine and abused his wife, leading to resentment from his wife. In retaliation, his wife killed Zhang Zhong and dismembered his body.³⁰⁸ These women did not merely resort to violent resistance out of jealousy but were influenced by the contradictory environment in which they lived. The Ming rulers promoted Neo-Confucianism, which led to the promotion of the concept of chastity to the highest level and the conservatism of Ming women to the extreme of society. In the Ming Dynasty, there were a significant number of chaste women, totalling 27,141 and 8,688 martyred women, which exceeded the numbers seen in other dynasties.³⁰⁹

³⁰⁵ (Qing) Dong Han 董含. *San Gang Shi Lüe* 三冈识略, Volume 10. Shenyang: Liaoning Education Press, 2000, 214.

³⁰⁶ (Ming) Gu Qiuyan 顾起元. *Ke Zuo Zhui Yu* 客座赘语, Volume 7. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1987, 233.

³⁰⁷ (Ming) Yu Shenxing 于慎行. *Gu Shan Bi Lu* 谷山笔麈, Volume 15. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1984, 172–173.

³⁰⁸ (Ming) Li Xu 李诩. *Ji An Lao Ren Man Bi* 戒庵老人漫笔, Volume 3. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1982, 125.

³⁰⁹ Dong Jiazun. "Statistics of Chaste Women Throughout the Ages". In *Collection of Essays on Chinese Women's*

The actual count may have been even higher. In their pursuit of profit, officials exploited the process of honouring chaste women to extort bribes from applicants, making it difficult for many women from impoverished areas to obtain official certification due to their inability to pay the bribes. The types of women's chastity in the Ming Dynasty were numerous and often tragic, encompassing acts of filial piety, raising orphans, disfiguring themselves and refraining from marriage, committing suicide to avoid humiliation when faced with bandits, and even sacrificing their lives for their husbands. During the Ming Dynasty, the development of a commodity economy, disorder in society and a weakening of the rulers' control led to the emergence of a phenomenon known as the worship of money and hedonism. This resulted in a shift in societal values and affected women, causing them to exhibit radical behaviours unconsciously.

Occupational Crime

In ancient China, officials were generally selected through the imperial examinations and had corresponding ranks and benefits. However, there was also a large group of staff members who worked in the government, such as staff and junior local officials. They were not selected through the imperial examination and were recruited to work for the government. They mainly carried out specific work according to the requirements of officials, such as processing paperwork and serving as prison guards. High-level officials were responsible for administration, while local officials, staff and junior local officials handled day-to-day affairs. High-rank officials held positions in state organs, had hierarchical ranks and received state salaries. On the other hand, local officials, staff and junior local officials were not part of the official system and did not receive state salaries. They had different functions, legal responsibilities and roles and were subject to different punishments for the same offences. Officials in imperial China were responsible for committing occupational crimes, which referred to illegal and criminal acts causing social harm. The occupational crimes also included failure to comply with laws and regulations in administrative activities, neglect of duty, abuse of power, and overstepping authority. Official duty crimes undermined the authority of the ruling class and hindered the

effective functioning of state organs, as well as prevention and punishment management. These crimes could be divided into two categories based on their nature and the objects of criminal infringement. The first category included economic crimes such as embezzlement and bribery. The second category included dereliction of duty and malfeasance, such as exceeding authority, abusing power and improper performance of duties.

During the Ming Dynasty, corruption and bribery among officials were widespread. Many cases of corruption and bribery among junior officials were recorded in a collection of trials by local officials. Most junior officials were locals who often accepted bribes to change testimonies or extort money from litigants during investigations. For instance, *Hu Xiang Wu Lüe* 湖湘五略 documented a case where the bailiff, Xu Yinglin, used violence, resulting in the death of the person involved.³¹⁰ Additionally, two other bailiffs, Xiao Guoguang and Wang Shikui, fearing exposure of extortion and blackmail, killed the victim.³¹¹ The prison guards, who were in charge of the prison and often relied on their judicial power, implicated the innocent and accepted bribes. Coroners who were responsible for examining corpses sometimes accepted bribes to exonerate prisoners. The suspect, Qu Yonglu, instigated his servants to beat the debtor to death. Qu Yonglu bribed the coroner to change the autopsy result to suicide by hanging. When the superior officials conducted another autopsy, they found that the autopsy results were abnormal.³¹² In addition to junior officials, high-ranking officials and nobles also took bribes and embezzled. In 1385, Guo Huan, the official of the Ministry of Revenue, used his power to collude with other officials to embezzle vast amounts of official grain and large quantities of gold and silver. The number of people involved in this case was so large that tens of thousands of officials and junior officials were sentenced to death.³¹³ When serving in Guangdong, the Marquis Zhu Liangzu accepted bribes and committed crimes. The emperor executed him and his nephew Zhu Xie.³¹⁴ Prime

³¹⁰ (Ming) Qian Chun 钱春. *Hu Xiang Wu Lüe* 湖湘五略, *Si Ku Quan Shu Cun Mu Cong Shu* 四库全书存目丛书, Volume 65. Jinan: Qilu Press, 1997, 705.

³¹¹ Ibid., *Hu Xiang Wu Lüe*, 689.

³¹² Ibid., *Hu Xiang Wu Lüe*, 688.

³¹³ (Qing) Zhang Tingyu 张廷玉. *Ming Shi* 明史. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974, 497.

³¹⁴ Ibid., *Ming Shi* 明史, 2329.

Minister Hu Weiyong, who accepted gold, silk, and expensive horses, was also executed.³¹⁵

The Great Ming Laws banned officials from accepting bribes and outlined their responsibilities, powers and the consequences for non-compliance. The laws specified that the authority to appoint and dismiss military personnel rested with the emperors. Those who appointed someone first and reported it later were subject to a punishment of being beaten with a stick 100 times and dismissed from their position. The Ming Dynasty enforced strict regulations for selecting officials, requiring all appointments to be made by the emperors. If a minister made the selection on his own, he would be beheaded.³¹⁶ If an appointed official refused to obey the order and had an invalid excuse, they would receive a 100-stick beating and be removed from their position.³¹⁷ According to the practice established during the founding period of the Ming Dynasty, all founding fathers or those who had significant achievements in serving the country could be rewarded. However, ordinary civil officials were not permitted to apply for rewards. If they violated these rules, the officials and the recipients would face execution. Officials were also not allowed to leave their posts without special circumstances, as doing so would result in them being flogged 40 times.³¹⁸ Officials who did not assume office within the legal period, made unauthorised changes to laws, failed to report on time, concealed facts or disclosed military secrets would be punished.³¹⁹ The management of official documents and seals was very strict. Officials were not allowed to abandon, change or delay the handover at will.³²⁰

Why were official crimes so common in the Ming Dynasty? As mentioned in Chapter Nine, the implementation of the salary reduction system further reduced the already low salaries of officials. Even the supreme ruler, the emperor, acknowledged this issue. Gu Yanwu believed that low salaries were the cause. Officials with insufficient income to cover family expenses resorted to accepting bribes.³²¹ Li Xian, who worked in the Ministry of Personnel, also agreed with Gu's view, stating that it was difficult for officials to refrain from bribery when they struggled to afford their

³¹⁵ Ibid., *Ming Shi* 明史, 7906.

³¹⁶ (Ming) Anon. *Ming Dynasty Law* 大明律, Shenyang: Liaoshen Publishing House, 1990, 29.

³¹⁷ (Ming) Shen Shixing 申时行. *Ming Hui Dian* 大明会典. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1989, 614.

³¹⁸ Ibid., *Ming Dynasty Law*, 32.

³¹⁹ Ibid., *Ming Dynasty Law*, 32.

³²⁰ Ibid., *Ming Dynasty Law*, 36.

³²¹ (Ming) Gu Yanwu 顾炎武. *Ri Zhi Lu* 日知录, Volume 12. Jinan: Anhui University Press, 2007, 678.

daily food and clothing. As documented in *Ming History*, during the Chenghua period (1465–1487), Luo Lun achieved first place in the imperial examination and then became a compiler at the Hanlin Academy. His salary was insufficient to cover his expenses, so he supplemented his income by selling calligraphy.³²² In the Wanli period (1573–1620), Minister Hai Rui could only afford to buy two pounds of pork for his mother's birthday due to his low salary. He even personally grew the vegetables in the backyard of the government office to make ends meet.³²³ Officials' daily expenses were excessively high, but their salaries were low. Apart from basic needs like food, clothing, housing, and transportation, there were many necessary expenses during the office period. Officials' salaries were insufficient to cover expenses such as raising children, supporting parents, socialising and transportation. The low salaries resulted in officials resorting to corruption and bribery to cover expenses. In addition, the growing commodity economy led to a more luxurious and corrupt social environment, further contributing to the prevalence of corruption.

When corruption had permeated the entire bureaucracy, it was highly challenging for an honest official to thrive. Not only did they struggle to achieve their goals, but they also risked retaliation and imprisonment. For instance, during the Jiajing period (1522–1566), honest officials like Wang Gao, Liu Chuxiu and Sun Jilu all met unfortunate fates.³²⁴ When the superior was corrupt, it was difficult for the subordinates to remain unscathed. They would be slandered and charged with crimes if they did not join in the corruption. In such a bad environment, low-level officials found it hard to survive. The subordinates had to flatter their superiors and carry favour with them to protect themselves. When the superiors demanded bribes, the subordinates dared not refuse. One person did not cause the environment in which corruption prevailed, nor was the rampant corruption and bribery caused by one person. Officials took bribes together and covered up for each other for their interests. In May 1561, the censor Zou Yinglong accused Yan Song and his son of corruption, resulting in all the subordinate officials accepting bribes.³²⁵ In official circles, recommendations also created a teacher-student relationship resembling the imperial

³²² Ibid., *Ming Shi* 明史, 7278.

³²³ Ibid., *Ming Shi* 明史, 5927.

³²⁴ (Ming) Zheng Xiao 郑晓. *Jin Yan* 今言. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1984, 171.

³²⁵ (Ming) Zhang Juzheng 张居正. *Ming Shi Zong Shi Lu* 明世宗实录. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1962, 8388.

examinations. The establishment and upkeep of this relationship often involved financial transactions. Chen Zilong mentioned that imperial censors visiting local areas often recommended the individual. In return, the recommended person would refer to themselves as students and present valuable gifts to the censor.³²⁶

During the Ming Dynasty, officials were tempted to commit crimes because the consequences of breaking the law were not severe. Although the first emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang, punished corrupt officials harshly, corruption persisted. Subsequent emperors gradually relaxed the punishment for corruption and even tolerated it. Some emperors themselves engaged in corrupt practices, exacerbating the issue of corruption. For instance, the Wanli Emperor (1563–1620) established mining supervisors and tax collectors across the empire, imposing heavy taxes and collecting various forms of money. The *Great Ming Law* was established during the Hongwu period (1368–1399). It specified that officials who accepted bribes of 80 guan 贯, an ancient Chinese currency, would be executed by hanging.³²⁷ In 1500, the *Hongzhi Criminal Law* abolished the death penalty, and instead, those found guilty of corruption and adultery were sentenced to exile, while flogging and caning remained as other penalties.³²⁸ The *Wanli Criminal Law*, revised between 1574 and 1585, further clarified that officials who took bribes and perverted the law would be exiled to nearby garrisons.³²⁹ Relatively few corrupt officials were executed solely for corruption during the middle and late Ming Dynasty. The lenient punishment was insufficient to deter corrupt officials and, to some extent, allowed their corruption to persist, making it difficult to control. Additionally, the governance of corrupt officials in the Ming Dynasty primarily targeted junior or middle-ranking officials, who were weak and powerless. The connivance of corrupt officials came largely from the highest rulers. For example, during the Hongzhi period (1470–1505), when the eunuch Li Guang was impeached for taking bribes, the emperor shielded him and did not punish him.³³⁰ In 1493, 1,400 officials were dismissed from their offices.

³²⁶ (Ming) Chen Zilong 陈子龙. *Ming Jing Shi Wen Bian* 明经世文编, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2002, 181.

³²⁷ (Ming) Liu Weiqian 刘惟谦. *Ming Law* 大明律. Beijing: Law Press, 1999, 183–184.

³²⁸ (Ming) Bai Ang 白昂. *Hongzhi Wen Xing Tiao Li Fa Shi Lei Zuan* 弘治问刑条例. Beijing: China Science Publishing Media, 1994, 220.

³²⁹ (Ming) Shi Hua 舒化. *Wanli Wen Xing Tiao Li Fa Shi Lei Zuan* 万历问刑条例. Beijing: China Science Publishing Media, 1994, 428.

³³⁰ Ibid., *Ming Shi* 明史, 7784.

However, the emperor believed that talented individuals were scarce, so he permitted more than 90 officials to continue serving.³³¹ Even the highest authorities no longer considered corruption a crime, and corruption was even more justified for corrupt officials.

Due to low legal income, society's glorification of luxury, and the erosion of moral values, officials prioritised money and personal gain. Those who committed crimes often went unpunished, while honest officials faced suppression. Many officials were unable to escape or change this toxic environment. They could only look the other way or even enable corruption, further fuelling this destructive cycle and leading to more criminal behaviour among officials.

During the Ming Dynasty, the appearance of Wu Yao indicated that society was going through a period of change. With the social hierarchy and way of life evolving, many new phenomena emerged, but so did severe social problems. The weakening of centralised rule led to political corruption and incompetent officials. There was also a decline in moral values and the breakdown of societal norms. The criminal behaviour behind the phenomenon of Wu Yao in the Ming Dynasty reflected that the moral concepts and social norms produced and formed in the traditional stable agricultural society did not fully adapt to the new social structure and, therefore, did not have the same strong influence on the public's behaviour as they once did.

³³¹ Ibid., *Ming Shi* 明史, 1723–1724.

Chapter Eleven: Regional Distribution of Ming Wu Yao

During the Ming Dynasty, the commodity economy impacted the subsistence economy. The development of the economy, the prosperity of cities and increased income impacted the public's consumption, opinions, aesthetics and daily lives. Ordinary people began to ignore the traditional ritual and cultural model and violate sumptuary laws. They pursued novelty goods and luxury consumption regardless of their status and class, and the literati called these phenomena Wu Yao. Did this revolution of luxury consumption appear in every city of imperial China, or was it exclusive to just wealthy regions? Was luxury consumption the same in every city? If there were differences, what caused them?

It is convenient to use the method by Niu Jianqiang for analysing social changes in the Ming Dynasty, dividing all regions into three categories.³³² The Jiangnan area is called the Class I region. The adjacent areas around Jiangnan and some in Huizhou, Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong are classified as Class II. Areas other than the above two regions are Class III regions. To facilitate the analysis of the process of Wu Yao, the Ming Dynasty can be divided into three periods. The early Ming Dynasty lasted from Hongwu to Xuande (1368–1434), the middle period lasted from Zhengtong to Zhengde (1435–1521), and the late Ming Dynasty lasted from Jiajing to Chongzhen (1522–1644). In the middle and late Ming Dynasty, ordinary people increased their luxury consumption, and the phenomenon of Wu Yao became serious.

Class I Jiangnan Region

In order to conduct a regional study on the phenomenon of Wu Yao better, the Class I area needs to be defined. According to the geographical location, internal economic connections, and economic level, Jiangnan region as an economic region in the Ming Dynasty should be southern Jiangsu and northern Zhejiang, including eight areas such as Suzhou, Songjiang, Changzhou, Jiangning, Zhenjiang, Hangzhou,

³³² Niu Jianqiang. *Ming Dai Zhong Hou Qi She Hui Bian Qian Yan Jiu*. Taipei: Weijin Publishing House, 1997, 47, 89, 125.

Jiaxing, Huzhou and Taicang.³³³ The Jiangnan region is the core of the lower Yangtze Delta.³³⁴

In the Southern Song Dynasty (1127–1279), the country's economic centre moved southward. The Class I region centred on Taihu Lake became the new economic centre. There are many large and small lakes scattered around Taihu Lake, of which there are 189 lakes within an area of more than 0.5 square kilometres, with a total area of 3158.98 square kilometres.³³⁵ These lakes are connected through many river ports to form a river network, which played an important role in Ming agricultural production. The Jiangnan region is located in the transition zone between the subtropical and mid-temperate zones. There is plenty of sunshine and abundant rainfall. These light, heat and water conditions, coupled with the Taihu Lake water system regulation, are suitable for various crops and conducive to agricultural production. Since the Tang and Song Dynasties, the Jiangnan region has not only become a rice production base but has also cultivated mulberry trees, cotton, tea, and other cash crops.

In the Ming Dynasty, Class I areas were the most critical cotton-producing areas. Cotton cultivation was mainly concentrated in Songjiang, Taicang, and Jiading of Suzhou Province, as well as Changshu, Kunshan, Changzhou, and Jiangyin. The cotton in this area was famous for its wide planting area, high proportion, and excellent quality. Cotton was sold locally in urban and rural areas and also sold to other cities through merchants. For example, the cotton produced in Hewang 鹤王 had bright colours and high quality and was very popular among business people. Merchants from Fujian and Guangzhou would sell Hewang cotton to their hometowns when they returned to their hometowns.³³⁶ Hewang became a well-known cotton trading market. The cultivation of cotton promoted the development of the cotton textile industry. As a raw material for textiles, cotton was made into cotton yarn and cotton cloth by farmers, which became the primary source of income. For example,

³³³ Li Bochong, "Jian Lun Jiangnan Di Qu De Jie Din", *Journal of Chinese Social and Economic History*, no.01(1991):100–105.

³³⁴ Skinner, George William. *The City in Late Imperial China*. Taipei: SMC Publishing, 1995, 9–17.

³³⁵ Chu Shaotang, "Li Shi Shi Qi Taihu Liu Yu Zhu Yao Shui Xi De Bian Qian", *The Chinese Historical Geography*, no.01(1984):43–51.

³³⁶ (Qing) Wang Zushe 王祖畬, et al. *Xuan Tong Taicang Zhenyang Xian Zhi* 宣统太仓州镇洋县志, Volume 3, Shanghai: Jiangsu Ancient Book Publishing House, 1991, 35.

residents of Jiading in the Ming Dynasty sold textiles to pay for clothing, food, daily utensils, social activities, and weddings and funerals.³³⁷

In addition to cotton, another essential cash crop in Class I areas was the mulberry tree. Farmers planted mulberry trees to raise silkworms and reel silk for sale as commodities. Mulberry trees were mainly planted in Huzhou, Jiaxing and Suzhou around Taihu Lake. Zhang Cuxiang 张履祥 (1611–1674) compared the income from planting mulberry with that from rice. In general, the income from growing mulberry trees was two to three times higher than that from rice, and sometimes, it could be four or five times more. It was no wonder that there was a saying at that time that it was better to cultivate more trees than to cultivate more land.³³⁸ The sale of mulberry leaves was also a typical commercial activity in Class I areas. Some farmers raised silkworms but did not grow mulberry trees themselves, and some farmers grew mulberry trees but still could not get enough mulberry leaves to raise their silkworms, so they all needed to buy mulberry leaves from the market. Therefore, there was the so-called “leaf market” or “green mulberry leaf shop” in the leaf-picking season after the beginning of summer. It was difficult to predict the price of mulberry leaves because the market determined it. Sericulture and silk reeling became essential means of livelihood for the residents of Class I areas. It was recorded in *Qing Jia Lu* 清嘉录 that girls in Huzhou learned how to raise silkworms before adulthood. Most silk and cotton were sold as commodities and transported to various areas through merchants.³³⁹ At that time, it was said that “silk from Huzhou was everywhere in the country.” When new silk came on the market in April, business people gathered in Class I areas to do silk business, which became a tradition.³⁴⁰

In addition to mulberry and cotton, other commercial crops were also grown in Class I areas, such as natural indigo, the basic dye for dyeing cloth, tobacco, which was introduced from Fujian, one of the Class II areas, and tea trees in some of the lower hilly areas. After the mid-Ming Dynasty, the large-scale planting of commercial

³³⁷ (Ming) Han Jun 韩浚, *et al. Jiading Xian Zhi* 嘉定县志, Volume 6, Taipei: Cheng Wen Publishing Company, 1983, 476.

³³⁸ (Qing) Zhang Cuxiang 张履祥. *Yang Yuan Xian Sheng Quan Ji* 杨园先生全集, *Bu Nong Shu* 补农书, Volume 50, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2002, 1411.

³³⁹ (Qing) Gu Lu 顾禄. *Qing Jia Lu* 清嘉录, Volume 4, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1986, 69.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, *Qing Jia Lu* 清嘉录, 70.

crops in Class I region and the improvement of agricultural products provided raw materials for the handicraft industry. The well-developed handicraft industry provided the material basis for the economic prosperity of Class I areas.

Class I region was the most important silk production area in the country. There were dozens of varieties of silk, such as satin, brocade, yarn and Luo. There were at least 120 colours of silk in the late Ming Dynasty. The silk produced in the Class I region could be divided into two categories: high-grade silk (dyed first and then manufactured) and low-grade silk (weaved first and then dyed). Suzhou damask, Nanjing Yun brocade and Hangzhou Ning silk were all best-selling products. In terms of production, in the late Ming Dynasty, there were about 10,000 looms and about 30,000 silk-weaving workshops in Suzhou, producing various types of silk worth about 380,000 taels of silver annually.³⁴¹ The production of cotton textiles developed rapidly in Class I areas. Songjiang, Suzhou, Jiading and Changshu were famous producing areas. Unlike the silk textile industry, the cotton textile industry was mainly in the rural areas and came from family workshops. The cotton cloth produced by family workshops was white raw cloth, and people needed to choose various colours of cloth when making clothes. The green and blue cloth was popular in the market, with huge sales. The cotton dyeing industry gradually emerged. The division of labour in the industry was refined, such as specialised “kicker craftsmen 踹匠”. Their job in the cotton dyeing industry was to stretch and roll the woven cotton fabric to make it smooth and to improve its quality by dyeing it into various colours of cloth to meet the needs of consumers.³⁴²

The brewing industry in Class I areas was also a developed business. Farmers only brewed wine for their own consumption, but commercial production of wine was relatively prosperous in cities and some rich countryside areas. For example, merchants sold more than 100,000 bottles of Wuxi alcohol to other areas annually. Cooking oil extraction was another important industry in Class I areas. Residents grew rapeseed and extracted oil from the seeds, and bought soya beans from other cities, and produced soybean oil. In addition to oil and alcohol, paper was another essential commodity in Class I areas. The raw material of the paper was imported

³⁴¹ Wang Weiping 王卫平. *Ming Qing Jiannan Cheng Shi Yan Jiu* 明清时期江南城市史研究, Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1999, 67–70.

³⁴² Ibid., Wang Weiping 王卫平, 71.

from other areas, and the finished product was of a higher grade. Paper processing technology was complex and demanding, mostly in workshops in towns or big cities, of which Suzhou was the centre of paper processing. Suzhou's artisans used colour powder and glue to brush paper to print patterns.³⁴³

With the rapid development of the commodity economy and the abundance of material wealth in the Class I area, residents who had accumulated wealth were no longer willing to live a simple and miserable life and began to try luxurious consumption. As a result, there were many violations of sumptuary regulations in the Class I area.

After the mid-era Ming Dynasty, dress in Class I areas changed considerably. Minister Zhang Han 张瀚 criticised the public for arbitrarily violating the rules of hierarchy, such as men and women wearing high-rank gorgeous clothes and ignoring the national dress regulations. Common people were no longer satisfied with ordinary, simple-style clothing, and they began to pursue fashionable clothing with complex craftsmanship. The public gave up old-fashioned cotton cloth and turned to brocade silk. The colours of clothing tended to be bright and vivid rather than dull. People did not like to dress similarly and began to pursue unique or novelty clothing. The public's clothing varied in length, fit, and style, including hats and shoes. The masses undermined the traditional social order and clothing hierarchies. Li Le 李乐, a literati, argued in his book *Jian Wen Za Jian* 见闻杂记 that it was not right to be obsessed with flashy clothes and dislike old-fashioned ones, even among wealthy and noble families. He believed that this behaviour was a disturbing social disorder, especially when low-income families who struggled to feed themselves also started to dress extravagantly.³⁴⁴ Ye Mengzhu 叶梦珠 also described similar dress chaos. In the beginning, silk clothing with cut designs was highly desired. Later, people preferred clothing made with various fabrics using techniques such as stacking, weaving, embroidery and painting. The embroidery was often applied to the edges, shoulder straps, and cuffs. The dragon patterns, originally exclusive to the emperors,

³⁴³ (Song) Fan Chengda 范成大, *et al. Wu Jun Zhi* 吴郡志, Volume 29, Shanghai: Jiangsu Ancient Book Publishing House, 1986, 428.

³⁴⁴ (Ming) Li Le 李乐, *Jian Wen Za Ji* 见闻杂记, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1986, 913–914.

appeared on the clothes of ordinary people.³⁴⁵ The public also liked Phoenix patterns and robes dyed in forbidden bright red, purple and yellow.

The residents of Class I areas were often wasteful or extravagant with food and drink. In the early Ming Dynasty (1368–1434), people in Class I areas were frugal in terms of their food, rarely held banquets, and had several dishes each meal. He Liangjun 何良俊 recalled in his book, “*Si You Zhai Cong Shuo Chao Chao* 四友斋丛说摘钞,” that when he was a child, a family in the Jiangnan region used to serve guests not more than five dishes, and food items such as shrimp and crabs were only added to the menu on weddings or when important guests were invited. During the middle and late Ming Dynasty, there were significant changes in the consumption habits of the residents in Class I areas. Whether the rich or the common, people frequently held banquets to enjoy exquisite meals. People competed with each other not only on the abundance of food but also on the beauty of the utensils and the variety of vegetables and fruits. People were very particular about the types, colours and shapes of bowls, dishes and plates at banquets.

In *Yue Shi Bian* 阅世编, Ye Mengzhu 叶梦珠 described the extravagant banquets in the Class I area.³⁴⁶ The banquets of middle-class families generally had a dozen dishes, and banquets with more than 30 dishes were also common. They used wooden utensils for fruits and fine plates for veggies. Delicious dim sum was served in compartmentalised boxes. In addition, Chinese opera was very popular during the Ming Dynasty, so many Chinese opera gardens or theatres appeared in these areas. These opera gardens or theatres could also serve as restaurants for people to dinner. It became a new way for the rich to show off their wealth by hosting banquets in the opera garden or house to entertain their guests, where they could listen to the Chinese opera and also enjoy delicious food. Hosting banquets to entertain guests in the opera garden became a new fashion at that time. Many literati, such as Gong Wei 龚炜 and

³⁴⁵ (Ming) Ye Mengzhu 叶梦珠. *Yue Shi Bian* 阅世编, Volume 8. Taipei: Xin Xing Book Company, 1962, 180–181.

³⁴⁶ (Ming) Ye Mengzhu 叶梦珠. *Yue Shi Bian* 阅世编, Volume 9. Taipei: Xin Xing Book Company, 1962, 193–194.

Gu Lu 顾禄, criticised the banquets in the theatre for being excessively extravagant, and the food waste was shocking.³⁴⁷

Apart from their extravagant food habits, the residents in the Class I region were also known for their opulent choices when constructing their houses. In the early Ming Dynasty, the prohibition of luxury in houses was strict. The rich lived in housing with no more than eight rooms, while the common people had houses with no more than three rooms. People of low status could not construct high-grade houses in contravention of the law, and any violators would be punished. For example, *Zhen Ze Xian Zhi* 震泽县志 records that in the Wujiang area, ordinary residents lived in houses with roofs made of thatch. Even middle-class houses used clay walls in the front and bricks and tiles in the back to comply with sumptuary laws.³⁴⁸ After 1522, people in Class I areas, such as wealthy residents in Songjiang and Hangzhou, preferred to build luxury houses that exceeded the limit of sumptuary laws, not to mention the lavish spending on private gardens. Suzhou had many famous private gardens. During the Ming and Qing dynasties, 271 gardens in Suzhou were said to occupy almost half of the city. In Jiading and Nanxiang Town, there were more than ten gardens, such as Wang Garden 汪园 and Tang Garden 唐园. Sui Garden 遂园 in Kunshan, Yan Garden 燕园 in Changshu and Sui Chu Garden 遂初园 in Haining were all well-known for a while. Private gardens came in various sizes, ranging from small and exquisite gardens that showcased nature in a limited space to extensive gardens that spanned dozens of hectares. The wealthy competed in garden decoration with costs ranging from a few hundred taels of silver to as much as ten thousand taels of gold. For example, Zhu Wenshi 朱文石, a rich man, did not hesitate to buy a special stone from Hezhe Lake with a hundred tons of rice. He named the stone Qing Jin Ping 青锦屏 and built a pavilion named after it. Some intellectuals were unhappy with the excessive use of resources in private residences and gardens. He Liangjun 何

³⁴⁷ (Qing) Gu Lu 顾禄. *Qing Jia Lu* 清嘉录, Volume 7, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1986, 122; (Qing) Gong Wei 龚炜. *Chao Lin Bi Tan Jia Lu* 巢林笔谈, Volume 5, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1981, 113.

³⁴⁸ (Qing) Wang Zushe 王祖畬, et al. *Zhen Ze Xian Zhi* 震泽县志, Volume 38, Shanghai: Jiangsu Ancient Book Publishing House, 1991, 229.

良俊 criticised the garden-building trend, arguing that the wealthy built luxurious residences to show off and occupied a large amount of land which could have been used for constructing ordinary residential buildings.³⁴⁹

The extravagant and lavish spending culture extended to various aspects of daily life. In the marriage, brides demanded various types of assets, and the total amount was alarming. Fan Shouji recorded the wedding of a wealthy family in Huzhou: “The dowry was collected in three hundred boxes and needed six hundred men to carry.” It was difficult to determine the family background of the bride and groom from the wedding ceremony. In Suzhou, it was customary to use palm fans, yellow covers and silver melons as ceremonial objects when welcoming a bride. The palm fans were inscribed with the words “Hanlin Academy”, an academic and administrative institution of higher learning. However, this practice could confuse foreign tourists, as they may mistakenly assume that only Hanlin Academy officials were getting married.³⁵⁰ Additionally, it is essential to note that it was the literati who were eligible to serve as best man. The extravagance of funerals was also very serious. The cost of a coffin made from nanmu was over a hundred taels of gold, and officials’ families often used this kind of wood as their coffins.³⁵¹ People also used high-grade transportation illegally. In the early Ming Dynasty, it was stipulated that only officials of the third-rank or above could use sedan chairs. Some officials still had to ride donkeys or horses. After 1573, sedan chairs were available to everyone, including people of low status, like actors and actresses, and they replaced horses as the primary mode of transportation.

The commodity economy resulted in increased income for the residents in Class I areas. Consequently, they started spending extravagantly on clothing, food, houses, weddings and funerals, which led to a breach of the sumptuary laws as they began using high-rank goods beyond their status.

³⁴⁹ (Ming) He Liangjun 何良俊, *He Hanlin Collection* 何翰林集, Volume 12, Taipei: National Central Library, photocopied from the edition in 1565, 1971, 433–434.

³⁵⁰ (Qing) Wang Yingkui 王应奎. *Lu Nan Sui Bi* 柳南随笔, Volume 3, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1983, 59–60.

³⁵¹ (Ming) Xie Zhaozhe 谢肇淛. *Wu Za Zu* 五杂俎, Volume 10, Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 1959, 194.

Class II Regions

During the middle and late Ming Dynasty, the Jiangnan region, which was considered a Class I area, underwent significant changes that impacted the surrounding Class II areas. Along with cities near the Jiangnan region, certain regions of Huizhou and the coastal areas of Zhejiang, Fujian, and Guangdong, despite being distant from Class I regions, were frequently involved in economic activities with the Class I area and could also be classified as the same Class II areas.

During the middle of the Ming Dynasty, Class II areas had a strong commodity economy. For instance, Wenzhou, located on the southeast coast of Zhejiang Province, had established itself as a port city with well-developed handicrafts as early as the Song Dynasty. However, during the early Ming Dynasty, the sea ban policy and harassment from Japanese invaders had a detrimental effect on Wenzhou's commodity economy. Thankfully, in the middle and late Ming Dynasty, Wenzhou's textile industry and lacquerware thrived. Merchants from Huizhou relied heavily on lacquer, which was expensive and heavy. As a result, business people sold it at double the price. Wenzhou's lacquerware became renowned throughout the country.

Huizhou was an important Class II area. Due to unfavourable agricultural conditions in the region, there was a severe shortage of land. As a result, many locals moved to Class I areas, other provinces, or even remote mountainous regions in search of better business opportunities. These business people mainly engaged in trading, taking advantage of regional price differences to purchase goods at low prices during the circulation process and sell them at higher prices. Hui merchants dealt with diverse products, including salt, tea, wood, cosmetics and beverages. Salt was a highly valued commodity in ancient China. In 1492, the Chinese government allowed merchants to purchase a licence to sell salt. Since Huizhou was located near salt-producing areas, it had a distinct advantage in operating the salt industry. Consequently, many business people profited from selling salt in this region. Later on, wealthy Huizhou merchants ventured into the pawnbroking industry. They were skilled at managing their business and usually charged relatively low interest rates, which made their shops highly competitive. Local ink-making and book-printing industries developed well and used forest resources to create high-priced luxury goods, such as Luo ink, Cheng ink and Fang ink. These precious ink treasures were

very popular among the literati and the upper class, and of course, their price was very high.

During the late Ming Dynasty, the economy of Fujian province in China began to recover. Local officials and people worked together to expand arable land and improve water conservation projects. They promoted the cultivation of drought-tolerant rice and cereals and introduced new varieties of crops, such as sweet potatoes, corn, peanuts and high-value tobacco. Fujian's residents also focused on growing commercial cash crops like sugarcane, longan, lychee, citrus and tea trees. Furthermore, the region pioneered the solar salt production method, significantly reducing costs and expanding production. The handicraft industry in Fujian also made significant progress. The sugar industry professionals invented the sugar cart to roll out the cane juice. The most popular textiles were ramie, cotton, and silk fabrics. In the paper-making and printing industry, bamboo paper production was remarkable, and Fujian became the country's main supplier of printing and paper. Fujian ceramics, such as Dehua white porcelain, were widely praised for their white colour, exquisite design and elegant shape. As agriculture, forestry and handicrafts developed, their products became more commercialised and sold to other regions. Commodity markets of Fujian spread throughout the country and overseas. These markets were closely linked to the Jiangnan market and generated significant profits.

In the areas classified as Class II, Guangdong was a typical region. In addition to growing cash crops like lychees and sugar cane, the region also benefited from the spice trade. Dongguan, a town in this area, had suitable soil for cultivating artificial incense. Most of the residents of Dongguan were engaged in incense cultivation, with the rich having thousands of trees and the poor having hundreds. The flower trade was also an important economic activity. In the late Ming Dynasty, one of the four cities in Guangdong had a so-called flower market, where the cultivated varieties of flowers were mainly jasmine. When the flowers were in full bloom, merchants would string the picked flowers into necklaces and sell them. The yarn and satin produced in the area were also very famous. The local people used silk as the raw material to spin yarn. This kind of yarn would not fade, was not easily stained by dust, and was not prone to crease after folding. The satin woven from this yarn was dense and had a bright colour.

With the gradual boom in commodity production, many affluent cities emerged in the Class II region. Residents became increasingly extravagant as they accumulated

much wealth. For instance, in the early Ming Dynasty, the people of Wenzhou valued hard work and thrift. However, in the middle of the Ming Dynasty, residents in this area began to prioritise money and took pride in wealth and luxury. The wealthy bought official positions and acted arrogantly in and out of the office. Those who passed the imperial examination and became officials but had mediocre workplace performance would be mocked.³⁵² Many people were very particular about their dress, held extravagant banquets, and compared their weddings in terms of wealth. There was much rule-breaking in the area. The sumptuary laws were widely ignored. Peasants wore the same headscarves as the literati, and butchers and peddlers wore sashes like officials.

Luxury consumption and the vain use of high-quality items were prevalent in Fujian. The trend of disregarding dress codes was common among lower-class people. Many individuals no longer adhered to the clothing regulations assigned by the government based on hierarchy. Instead, they dressed according to their personalities and wore clothing made of materials that were traditionally reserved for officials, literati and nobles. In the late Ming Dynasty, the locals in Zhangzhou Prefecture were all well-dressed, regardless of their status. Some young people made their sleeves narrower and wore their hats crookedly, thinking they were very fashionable. In some cities in Fujian, like Yanping and Jianning, people usually wore cotton clothing. They believed that dyeing the cloth could make it good attire. However, with the growth of the handicraft industry and commerce, clothing no longer reflected class. Luxurious fabrics and furs were readily available for purchase. Even lower-class individuals also began wearing the same dress as the literati and officials, such as the Tang scarf, Jin scarf, gauze hat, and light red and deep purple dress, which broke the dress rules and order. This trend of breaking the hierarchy of dressing had an impact on the order and interpersonal relations in society. For instance, some tenant farmers did not comply with the contract and refused to pay rent to landlords.

People in Fujian preferred rare and expensive food. In Jianyang, located in Fujian, residents insisted on having several kinds of meat, aquatic products and seafood in their dishes. This resulted in a requirement to kill various livestock and fishes, of which only a small part was used for cooking. Apart from food, locals

³⁵² (Ming) Jiang Zhun 姜准. *Qi Hai Suo Tan* 岐海琐谈, The Publishing House of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, 2002, 116.

enjoyed organising sacrificial ceremonies, which required setting up many tents and holding performances all night long. Those who participated in the performances wore gorgeous clothes and adorned themselves with gold and jade. In the past, people in Shaowu used to have lavish wedding banquets that lasted around five to six days. During these events, people did not seem to care about the cost of the food served and often piled their plates high with pork and beef, weighing around seven to eight kilograms.³⁵³ However, some families spent too much money on these extravagant celebrations and ended up falling into poverty.

Similarly, people did not worry about money when it came to funerals. There was a tradition called the “gold jar” in Zhangan. Families would bury their deceased loved ones, and after a few years, they would exhume the coffin to extract the white bones, clean them, and place them in a tall gold jar. This jar was called the gold jar. The jar would then be kept in a particular place to be exposed to sunshine and moonlight. After a few more years, the jar would be buried once again.³⁵⁴ All classes spent extravagantly on weddings and funerals, often going into debt and making their future lives unsustainable. Sadly, some families could not even afford to raise their children and resorted to infanticide.

During the mid-to-late Ming Dynasty, Huizhou was known for its extravagance, mainly due to the success of local merchants. These merchants had left their hometowns and ventured to do business, earning staggering amounts of wealth. As a result, many of these business people began to pursue luxury in their diet. In *Yangzhou Hua Fang Lu*, there was a historical record of a wealthy salt merchant couple who ordered their servants to prepare dozens of different dishes for each meal. These dishes were served on small tables, and during the meal, the servants brought up each small table one by one. If the couple did not express interest in the food on the table, they would shake their heads, and the servants would replace the table with a new one. Another salt merchant, Huang Juntai 黄钧太, had a unique breakfast routine. He started his day with a bowl of bird’s nest soup and two eggs, followed by ginseng soup. These were not ordinary eggs but were produced by special chickens fed high-grade medicinal herbs. Each egg was valued at one tael of silver.

³⁵³ (Qing) Chen Shengshao 陈盛韶. *Ming Hui Dian* 问俗录, Volume 5, Beijing: National Library China Publishing House, 1983, 99.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., *Ming Hui Dian* 问俗录, Volume 4, 84.

In terms of housing, the people of Huizhou demonstrated a trend towards luxury consumption. Between 1600 and 1602, Wang Tingne 汪廷讷 built a garden in his hometown that featured Changgong Lake and Hundreds Crane Tower as its highlights. The lake was named after Wang Tingna and was known for its clear, narrow and slender waters. The Hundreds Crane Tower was situated on the west side of the garden and was known for its stunning views of white cranes circling the building, especially during bright moonlit nights. The sound of the cranes could be heard for a long time, adding to the garden's beauty. In the town of Qian, wealthy families had a unique custom when it came to marriage. They first bought a piece of land in the village where their future son-in-law's family resided. They then dug a well in the place where their daughter would live after marriage as a part of the dowry. In addition to gold or silver jewellery and clothing, the dowry items included a redwood coffin. This symbolised that the bride would not have to depend on her husband for anything from birth to death.

Similar to the situation in Class I regions, people in Class II regions benefited from the commodity economy and were able to earn more money to spend on luxuries. At the same time, people's extravagant consumption violated the laws and broke the hierarchy.

Class III Regions

Unlike the relatively concentrated Class I and II areas, the distribution of Class III areas was more scattered. Class III areas were mainly located in southern regions other than Class I and II and northern regions with accessible transportation and abundant natural resources. Compared with Class I and II areas, Class III areas were characterised by a lack of natural resources and slower economic development due to remote geographical locations and relatively underdeveloped trading activities. Due to the basic living problems that the local inhabitants faced, luxury consumption was not considered a priority.

The development of Class III areas was slower than that of the drastic changes happening in Class I and II areas. Class III areas engaged in commercial trade with other areas, impacting the local economy. In Jiangxi, arable land was limited, but the

region had abundant raw materials, such as mountain goods and minerals, which could be used for handicraft production. Jiangxi was renowned for producing ceramics, paper, sugar, tobacco and cloth. Although Jiangxi was located in the mountains, it had convenient transportation along the river, facilitating commercial activities.³⁵⁵ For instance, during the Ming Dynasty, Zhangshu, a city in Jiangxi, was the centre of sales of medicinal materials. During the Ming Dynasty, merchants from Fuzhou in Jiangxi Province travelled to remote Yunnan and other ethnic minority areas, as well as Myanmar, to sell cloth and other commodities. Henan, classified as a Class III area, was known for its abundant natural products. These products not only met the needs of the local population but were also sold in the national market by merchants. Some of the popular products from this region were persimmons, pears, dates, walnuts, pepper, kapok, coal, iron and copper. In addition to Henan, certain areas in North China had low agricultural productivity due to natural limitations such as climate and soil. The average grain output in these regions was only half or one-third of that in South China. During the mid-Ming Dynasty, local officials promoted various industries such as textile, cotton planting, ceramics, mining, metallurgy, paper-making, dyes, fruits and vegetables. This led to an improvement in the lives of residents. Not only did local merchants trade, but those from Class I and II also entered Class III to purchase raw materials and promote their products, such as the Huizhou merchants. This circulation of goods and services strengthened economic exchanges between Class III and other regions, thereby expanding the domestic market. Furthermore, the literati from Class III lived in other regions after successfully passing the imperial examination, bringing their new way of life back to their hometowns.

The new economic activities increased the residents' income and improved their living conditions. The more prosperous cities and the spread of new consumption concepts from other areas gradually led to residents of Class III regions, who initially advocated frugality, indulging in luxurious consumption. In 1524, *Tai Kang Xian Zhi* 太康县志, an official document, recorded that people no longer dressed themselves according to their status but instead based on their economic conditions and personal preferences. Residents also started comparing each other's clothing. Women began

³⁵⁵ (Ming) Wang Shixing 王士性, *Guang Zhi Yi* 广志绎, Volume 4. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1981, 80.

using silk and satin to make dresses, setting their hair into higher buns and wearing looser robes.³⁵⁶ In addition to dress, people not only dressed luxuriously but also indulged in rich food. The provincial capital of Henan, Kaifeng, had a thriving catering industry. The streets were filled with restaurants, tea shops and vendors selling goods. Ordinary restaurants served the dietary needs of the citizens, while high-class garden restaurants provided extravagant food for dignitaries, wealthy business people and nobles. The restaurants served local traditional foods and cuisines from other cities in Henan and other provinces. Fine wine, tea, fresh fruits, and desserts were also available. Some restaurants were set up on luxury cruise boats, where singers entertained the guests with their beautiful singing or music and a variety of delicious dishes were served, such as fresh fish, eels, turtles, shrimps, crabs, smoked chicken, duck, goose, tofu and chicken. A new market called the Kitchen Service Market emerged in Kaifeng, catering to those who wished to hold banquets and hire famous chefs.³⁵⁷ In addition to dress and food, the affluent literati and families of Henan also pursued other luxuries. They spent large sums of money on creating exquisite courtyards and gardens adorned with many kinds of precious flowers and trees. During the Chenghua period, houses in both urban and rural areas of Henan gradually began to be built taller.

During the early Ming Dynasty, common people in Class III regions usually held the belief that the couple who got married should come from families with similar backgrounds and be in a similar financial situation. They opposed paying too much attention to the gifts or money given by the bridegroom and preferred to have frugal wedding feasts. However, as the commodity economy developed, large-scale and expensive wedding banquets became popular in Henan. According to the Yushi County Records, the wedding schedule was complex. Before getting engaged, the bridegroom had to treat his important relatives with a feast and send them to the bride's home to obtain a card with the bride's detailed birth data on it, from year, month, day, hour, heavenly trunk and earthly branch. The bride's family then held a banquet to entertain the guests. The number of pigs and sheep used in the wedding process ranged from 12 to 24, and the amount of food ranged from about 40 to 120

³⁵⁶ (Ming) Anon. *Tai Kang Xian Zhi* 太康县志, Volume 4, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, photocopied from the edition in 1524, 228.

³⁵⁷ (Ming) Anon. *Ru Meng Lu* 如梦录, Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Classics Publishing House, 1984, 28–57.

Shi (one Shi is approximately 120 kilograms).³⁵⁸ It was not uncommon for families to fall into poverty due to the excessive cost of weddings. In Henan, it was popular for affluent people to indulge in hobbies such as collecting antiques, publishing anthologies, raising birds and flowers, and buying expensive plants. Zhou Liangong 周亮工, for instance, had amassed a collection of ten thousand types of ink and organised an exhibition named the Ink Festival, which received widespread acclaim.

In the early Ming Dynasty, Shanxi was a typical region where the commodity economy developed slowly, and residents had low living standards. Some locals wore mended clothes for years and never spent money because they had no money. Even Xi'an city of Shanxi, which had a relatively high level of agricultural production, was no exception to this trend. Ordinary people strictly abided by the hierarchy and dared not use high-level items at will. During the Jiajing period (1522–1566), the residents of Shanxi changed. People in Xi'an began to indulge in luxury consumption. This trend continued into the Wanli period (1573–1620) when the luxury culture of the Class I region influenced other regions' residents' desires for fashionable clothing and high-quality food ingredients. Even Baishui, located in a mountainous area with a previously undeveloped economy, saw an increase in luxury consumption. The locals spent significant money on weddings and funerals, showcasing their newfound wealth. With the rise of luxury, the traditional social hierarchy was disrupted, causing resentment among the literati who disapproved of lower-class individuals dressing extravagantly. The emergence of the commodity economy had indeed eroded the social order. During the late Ming Dynasty, the people of Shanxi, a poor province in Class III regions, began to indulge in luxury. Both commoners and literati adopted the popular fashion of wearing headscarves and shoes despite the dressing ban imposed by the emperors. At weddings, regardless of the couple's wealth, brocade was used to decorate the bridegroom's gift given to the bride, including handkerchiefs in 40 or 50 colours. Regardless of rank, the bride was wearing a hair crown and a belt adorned with pearls.

During the middle of the Ming Dynasty, the growth of the commodity economy in Class III regions had a considerable influence on the local economy and the daily lives of people. The impact was so significant that even those who initially followed

³⁵⁸ (Ming) Anon. *Wei Shi Xian Zhi* 尉氏县志, Volume 1, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, photocopied from the edition from 1522 to 1566, 1963, 66.

the luxury ban increased their expenditure on clothing, housing, food and ceremonies. As a result, there was a transformation in the consumption patterns of the public.

Regional Difference of Wu Yao

It can be seen that the phenomenon of Wu Yao did occur nationwide in the middle and late Ming Dynasty, but the development conditions differed in various regions.

Class I regions were the first to experience the phenomenon of Wu Yao and might be considered the birthplace of the national luxury trend. Local chronicles across the country indicate that most phenomena related to Wu Yao occurred during the middle and late Ming Dynasty. In the Class I regions, luxury consumption appeared in the early Ming Dynasty. For example, Suzhou was a city known for its industrial and commercial activities. From 1426 to 1453, Kuang Zhong served as the governor of Suzhou and noted in his work report that the city had already embraced luxury customs. According to the records in Wang Qi's *Yu Pu Za Ji Zhi Yi* 寓圃杂记, the popularity of luxury in Suzhou can be traced back to the years 1436–1464 when it returned to the prosperous scene that existed before the establishment of the Ming Dynasty. The bustling scene described by Wang can be imagined from the travel notes written by Marco Polo in the 13th century. After the Chenghua period (1465–1487), the trend of luxury became even more popular and quickly spread to other parts of the country through frequent merchant trades.³⁵⁹

Meanwhile, compared with the Class I and II areas, the Wu Yao phenomenon in the Class I regions appeared at the earliest and was the most severe. Officials in Class I regions paid great attention to managing social customs and luxury consumption. During their tenure, they formulated sumptuary policies or directly implemented banning measures to rectify the locals' luxury behaviours constantly. This also reflected the serious situation of luxury consumption and arrogance in Class I regions. Suzhou was a typical example of this issue. In the late 15th and 16th centuries, Chinese officials introduced several laws that aimed to regulate the expenditure of citizens. Controlling luxury had become an essential task for local officials since

³⁵⁹ (Ming) Wang Qi 王琦, *Yu Pu Za Ji Zhi Yi* 寓圃杂记, Volume 5. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1984, 42.

Kuang Zhong served as the governor of Suzhou.³⁶⁰ In 1567, Cai Guoxi 蔡国熙 issued 20 chapters of sumptuary policies.³⁶¹ Hai Rui 海瑞, in 1568, announced 31 policies to promote frugality and prohibit luxury.³⁶²

Luxury consumption was prevalent in Class I regions and embraced by all social classes, from the wealthy aristocrats to the less affluent commoners. This widespread participation of the lower class of society was seen as a threat by the ruling class, who feared it might break through the boundaries of the ritual hierarchy. Consequently, they prohibited it in every possible way. Although some lower-class residents were frugal regarding food, they were willing to spend money on certain aspects such as clothing, housing, transportation and entertainment. Even those struggling to survive, as criticised by the literati Gong Wei, were not willing to compromise on wearing silk, satin and gold jewellery instead of cotton clothes for themselves, their wives and their daughters.³⁶³

Residents in Class II and Class III regions were less interested in luxury consumption than those in Class I regions. This might be due to the economic imbalance between the two regions. For instance, in the Class II region of Fujian, towns like Tingzhou 汀州, Yongding 永定, Shouning 寿宁, Guihua 归化 and Liancheng 连城 had poor external transportation links, less developed commodity economies, and were relatively poor. Therefore, the locals could not imitate the lifestyle of people in prosperous towns who indulged in extravagant trends. There is little mention of luxury consumption in the existing local chronicles and other materials. According to some travelogues written by literati, the living conditions of residents were relatively poor. For instance, in *Min Shu Feng Su Zhi* 闽书风俗志, He Qiaoyuan 何乔远 described the land in Liancheng as barren and the residents as

³⁶⁰ (Ming) Kuang Zhong 况钟. *Kuang Tai Shou Ji* 况太守集, Volume 12, Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing House Book Company, 1981, 113.

³⁶¹ (Qing) Feng Guifen 冯桂芬. *Suzhou Fu Zhi* 苏州府志, Volume 70, Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing House Book Company, 1991, 82.

³⁶² (Ming) Hai Rui 海瑞. *Hai Rui Ji* 海瑞集, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1962, 187–188.

³⁶³ (Qing) Gong Wei 龚炜. *Chao Lin Bi Tan Jia Lu* 巢林笔谈, Volume 5, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1981, 113.

impoverished. They worked hard and lived frugally.³⁶⁴ Feng Menglong 冯梦龙, a local official in Shouning, observed that the residents there were only able to afford cotton clothing, while silk and satin were considered rare luxuries. Most of their utensils were made of wood. Even a small fish of two to three inches was considered a delicacy when they held dinner parties. The pork, chicken, and duck served were very thin and difficult to chew. Fresh fruits were scarce, and the only treats available were steamed cakes and candies.³⁶⁵

During the Ming Dynasty, the growth of the urban commodity economy and the prosperity of cities led to changes in the consumption habits of city residents. This resulted in extravagant and unruly behaviour among some of them. However, these social changes were mostly confined to areas with prosperous commerce and concentrated consumer populations. In some remote rural areas, people continued to live frugally.

³⁶⁴ (Ming)He Qiaoyuan 何乔远. *Min Shu* 闽书, Volume 38, Fuzhou: Fujian People's Publishing House, 1994, 945–947.

³⁶⁵ (Ming)Feng Menglong 冯梦龙. *Shou Ning Dai Zhi* 寿宁待志, Fuzhou: Fujian People's Publishing House, 1983, 50.

Chapter Twelve: The Continuation of Sumptuary Laws in the Qing Dynasty

During the Ming Dynasty, the growth of the commodity economy changed how people consumed goods, influenced popular beliefs, and impacted the traditional agrarian society and hierarchical system. This change was a sign of a significant shift in imperial Chinese society. However, this transformation occurred during the cyclical rise and fall of the Chinese autocratic dynasties. The traditional system, although weakened, continued to be upheld, and it could not break away from the system of rituals and laws. When the Manchu forces overthrew the Ming Dynasty and established the last autocratic dynasty, the Qing Dynasty, the new regime aimed to use rituals and laws to reassert control over the populace. Similarly to the Ming Dynasty, the emperors in the Qing Dynasty promoted frugality and enacted laws prohibiting extravagance. However, ordinary people frequently disregarded these laws, and the Wu Yao phenomenon that occurred in the Ming Dynasty also occurred repeatedly in the Qing Dynasty.

Sumptuary laws in the Qing Dynasty

In 1644, the Qing army entered the country with strength and established a regime. After a prolonged period of war and widespread natural disasters, the emperors of the Qing Dynasty faced financial constraints. In 1651, the government needed 15,734,000 taels of silver to meet all the expenses for one year, but the various taxes only yielded 14,859,000 taels of silver, leaving a shortage of 875,000 taels.³⁶⁶ During a severe financial crisis, Emperor Shunzhi (1638–1661) made significant efforts to save money and strictly prohibited waste. He also required the princes and ministers to be frugal and not extravagant. In 1651, extravagance was a significant accusation among the 14 charges against Dorgon, a Manchu prince.³⁶⁷ After Shunzhi, Emperor Kangxi (1654–1722) ascended the throne and continued the previous

³⁶⁶ Wang Rongsheng. *Qing Dynasty History*, Volume 2. Shenyang: Liaoning People's Publishing House, 1991, 225.

³⁶⁷ (Qing) Anon. *Qing Shilu* 清实录, Volume 3. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985, 421–424.

national policy. Emperor Kangxi formulated systematic and rational political strategies, including advocating frugality and prohibiting extravagance. He believed that the first thing an emperor needed to do was to stabilise the country, distinguish between social classes, promote frugality and prohibit extravagance.³⁶⁸ Emperor Kangxi set an example by dressing modestly, and the nobles and ministers followed him, refraining from using expensive items such as gold and silver utensils.³⁶⁹ During the Ming Dynasty, the palace had around 9,000 women and 100,000 eunuchs serving, but during Emperor Kangxi's reign, this number drastically reduced to only 400 to 500 men and women. In addition, Emperor Kangxi also decreased the expenses of the Guanglu Temple from 600,000 or 700,000 taels of silver to 40,000 or 50,000 taels of silver and the Ministry of Works expenses from 1 million taels to 150,000 taels annually.³⁷⁰

Emperor Kangxi visited the southern region of the Yangtze River six times and toured the frontier on multiple occasions. In order to minimise the impact on residents, he practiced frugality while on his tours. He instructed officials in Beijing to reserve all necessary supplies and directed soldiers to avoid damaging crops or trampling on seedlings. The archives of the Qing Dynasty contain a detailed list of food supplies from his Eastern tour, noting that all food, including coarse and refined grains, chickens, sheep and vegetables, were provided by the royal farms or warehouses in the capital.³⁷¹ Emperor Kangxi not only set an example of frugality but also strictly supervised his officials and subordinates. Emperor Kangxi believed that only by promoting and practising frugality among local officials could a simple way of living be established in society. Consequently, he reformed the administration of officials on a large scale and praised those who were frugal and honest. This led to the emergence of a group of local officials who embraced simple living, such as Yu Chenglong, Peng Peng and Lu Longqi. Emperor Kangxi also repeatedly advised ordinary people. In the ninth year of his rule, he issued the "Sixteen Articles of the Sacred Edict" as a code of conduct for everyone to follow daily. One of the essential

³⁶⁸ (Qing) Anon. *Kangxi Yuzhi Wenji* 康熙帝御制文集, Volume 3. Taipei: Taiwan Student Book Co., Ltd, 1966, 88.

³⁶⁹ (Qing) Ji Yun 纪昀. *Sheng Zu Ren Huangdi Shengxun* 圣祖仁皇帝圣训, *Siku Quanshu* 四库全书, Volume 24. Beijing: National Library of China, photocopied from the edition in 1731, 12.

³⁷⁰ Naitō Konan. Translated by Xia Yingyuan. *General History of China*, Volume 2. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2004, 690–691.

³⁷¹ (Qing) Anon. *Hei Tu Dang* 黑图档, collected in Liaoning Provincial Archives.

articles stressed the importance of agriculture and sericulture in providing enough food and clothing and encouraged frugality to save money.³⁷² Whenever there were weddings, funerals, festivals, and other events involving extravagance and waste, Emperor Kangxi would frequently summon the clan leaders to oversee them.³⁷³

After taking the throne, Emperor Yongzheng (1678–1735), Kangxi's son, continued his father's policy of promoting frugality in governing the country, drawing inspiration from the simplicity of Emperor Kangxi. He instructed eunuchs to inspect the furnishings of the palace and the summer resort.³⁷⁴ The modest furnishings made Emperor Yongzheng realise that he was too extravagant. Emperor Yongzheng clearly understood the adverse effects of extravagance. In 1723, he promptly initiated measures to address this issue and instructed all governors to curb extravagance within three years. Any officials who failed to comply within that timeframe would be dismissed and barred from future employment in the government.³⁷⁵ Emperor Yongzheng took the rectification of all Manchu households as a starting point and issued a series of edicts prohibiting extravagance.

The sumptuary laws issued by the Qing emperors were similar to those of the Ming Dynasty. These laws restricted the material lifestyles of people of different ranks, including setting standards for food, clothing, housing, transportation, weddings, funerals and social interaction. The emperors continued the practice of using dress to indicate a person's identity and status, thus distinguishing social classes. An official dress code was established from 1643 to 1644. At that time, casual wear had no restrictions, which led to confusion in how people of different ranks dressed, including confusion of dress between the nobility and the commoners, with no clear distinction between the upper and lower classes. After Kangxi's reign, rulers began to emphasise the importance of the crown and dress code. In 1662, civilians were prohibited from using satin with serpent designs, Japanese satin, and sable fur.³⁷⁶ In 1672, fur hats made of fox chest and abdomen or armpit fur were prohibited for

³⁷² Ibid., *Kangxi Yuzhi Wenji* 康熙帝御制文集, 89.

³⁷³ Ibid., *Sheng Zu Ren Huangdi Shengxun* 圣祖仁皇帝圣训, 12.

³⁷⁴ (Qing) Yun Lu 允禄. *Shi Xian Zong Huangdi Shang Yu Neige* 世宗宪皇帝上谕内阁, *Siku Quanshu* 四库全书, Volume 49. Beijing: National library of China, photocopied from the edition in 1726, 19.

³⁷⁵ (Qing) Yun Lu 允禄. *Shi Xian Zong Huangdi Shang Yu Baqi* 世宗宪皇帝上谕八旗, *Siku Quanshu* 四库全书, Volume 1. Beijing: National library of China, photocopied from the edition in 1723, 9.

³⁷⁶ (Qing) Zhao Erxun 赵尔巽. *Draft History of Qing* 清史稿, Volume 103. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1977, 3062.

soldiers and civilians, and using gold for ornaments was forbidden. Members of the Yue Hu, a lower-class group engaged in singing, dancing, and playing instruments, typically relatives of criminal officials, were not allowed to wear various kinds of satin or leather clothes. Additionally, their hats could not be made of green silk or decorated with green silk edges. In 1687, during the 26th year of Emperor Kangxi's reign, officials and civilians were not allowed to use satin fabric with four-claw dragons and hidden patterns. Satin had to be woven according to the individual's rank, and hidden patterns were not allowed in colours such as Qiu Xiang, a kind of yellowish-green or olive.³⁷⁷ In 1730, specific materials for the top decoration of officials' hats were mandated based on rank. For the top decorations of their hats, first and second-rank officials used coral, third-rank officials used sapphire or blue transparent glass, fourth-rank officials used lapis lazuli or blue glass, and fifth-rank officials used crystal or white transparent glass. Sixth-rank officials used black transparent glass, while seventh to ninth-rank officials used gold tops.³⁷⁸

During the rule of Emperor Qianlong, clothing regulations became stricter. In 1738, individuals below the rank of the prince were prohibited from wearing gold-woven colourful clothes with five-claw dragons satin. They were permitted to wear these clothes only if given as a reward by the emperor, but the dragon pattern had to be altered to four claws. Mink clothes were reserved for officials ranked fifth or higher.³⁷⁹ If a servant dressed inappropriately, their master would also face consequences. In 1740, it was specified that officials below the third-rank could not wear red raincoats and rain hats. In 1768, the regulations were amended to permit officials above the third-rank to wear bright red rain hats. Officials from the fourth to sixth ranks could wear red-topped rain hats with black edging, while officials from the seventh, eighth, and ninth ranks could wear black-topped rain hats with red edging.³⁸⁰

Everyday items for civilians were also limited. Soldiers and civilians were prohibited from using yellow, purple or vermilion. Regular women could only wear one piece of gold jewellery and a pair of gold earrings, and their clothes could not be

³⁷⁷ Ibid., *Draft History of Qing* 清史稿, Volume 103, 3062; see also in (Qing) Xu Ke 徐珂. *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 13. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1984, 6185.

³⁷⁸ (Qing) Anon. Translated by Yang Yifan. *Great Qing Legal Code* 大清律例, Volume 17. Beijing: China Science Publishing Media, 1994, 241; see also in Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 13, 6134-6135.

³⁷⁹ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 13, 6136, 6177-6178.

³⁸⁰ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 13, 6136.

adorned with gold embroidery. Household curtains, whether for official or civilian use, could not feature bright yellow or dragon and phoenix patterns.³⁸¹ In 1668, a rule was established for the seating arrangements at wedding ceremonies based on the rank of the individuals. According to this rule, the wedding of a first-rank noble would have 26 tables, a first-rank official's wedding would have 16 tables, a second-rank official's wedding would have 12 tables, a third-rank official's wedding would have nine tables, a fourth-rank official's wedding would have eight tables, and a fifth-rank official's wedding would have six tables. In 1723, regulations were introduced regarding the gifts that officials could give to the bride's family. Officials above the fourth-rank were restricted to providing no more than eight feet of satin, eight pieces of gold and silver jewellery, and ten kinds of food. Officials below the fifth-rank could give two fewer items in each category, while officials below the eighth rank were allowed to provide another two fewer items. For military and civilian personnel, the number of silks and fruit boxes was limited to four each.³⁸² The Qing emperors promoted simplicity in funerals. When soldiers and civilians passed away, they were buried with five sets of clothes, one layer of coffin cover and a set of horse harnesses. The coffin cover was made of blue silk for officials below the ninth-rank and blue cotton cloth for soldiers and ordinary people.³⁸³ For sacrifices, officials from the first to third ranks were given a sheep and a pig, while officials from the fourth to seventh ranks received only a pig, and officials from the eighth rank and below did not receive a whole pig. During seasonal festivals, officials from the first to third ranks were given four kinds of fresh fruits, four kinds of vegetables, four bowls of rice and four meat dishes. Ordinary people had even fewer. Each table was limited to four types of food, fruit and vegetables during sacrifices.³⁸⁴

Supervision and Punishment

To enforce the sumptuary decree, the Qing emperors established supervisors and penalty measures. As soon as an illegal act was found, it was promptly prohibited. In 1687, Emperor Kangxi found out that some Han soldiers were gathering to drink and

³⁸¹ Ibid., *Great Qing Legal Code* 大清律例, 242.

³⁸² Ibid., *Draft History of Qing* 清史稿, Volume 89, 2644.

³⁸³ Ibid., *Draft History of Qing* 清史稿, Volume 93, 2722.

³⁸⁴ Ibid., *Draft History of Qing* 清史稿, Volume 93, 2723.

hold extravagant banquets during the mourning period for their parents. He instructed the Han army commander and deputy commander to prohibit such activities.³⁸⁵ Kangxi's son, the emperor Yongzheng, accused the officials of constantly vying for extravagance in both good and bad times, believing it would influence the lower classes to do the same.³⁸⁶ Wealthy families used to bury gold and silver with the deceased. Emperor Yongzheng felt that this practice was not only unhelpful to the deceased but could also lead to others coveting their possessions, resulting in tomb robbing.³⁸⁷ Consequently, he issued a decree to prohibit this tradition. In 1740, during the mourning period, the people of Hunan held banquets and opera performances from morning till night. Even those with limited financial resources sang all night long, and those who ever held official positions but retired to their hometowns also participated in the practice. Emperor Qianlong ordered that the officials who violated the rules be identified, given a hundred strokes, and stripped of their official titles.³⁸⁸ In the same year, some low-ranking officials misused python robes, and the decorative animal statues on the roofs of officials and commoners were also used in violation of etiquette. The emperor Qianlong ordered the punishment of these violators.³⁸⁹

In 1723, during the first year of Yongzheng's reign, he noticed that some officials were not wearing court beads according to their ranks. As a result, he established a special inspection team to address this issue. However, the inspection team began to abuse their power by extorting officials under the guise of conducting inspections. Upon uncovering this misconduct, Emperor Yongzheng ordered the punishment of the inspectors who had violated the rules.³⁹⁰ The emperors required superiors to oversee their subordinates and held those superiors responsible for any rule violations by their subordinates. In 1737, more detailed regulations were introduced. The Zongrenfu, an institution responsible for managing royal family affairs, investigated the royal family members. The Ministry of Personnel and War supervised civil and military ministers. If family members and subordinates were not

³⁸⁵ Ibid., *Qing Shilu* 清实录, Volume 5, 425.

³⁸⁶ Ibid., *Qing Shilu* 清实录, Volume 8, 949.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., *Qing Shilu* 清实录, Volume 7, 792–799.

³⁸⁸ Ibid., *Qing Shilu* 清实录, Volume 12, 894–906.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., *Qing Shilu* 清实录, Volume 10, 856.

³⁹⁰ Ibid., *Great Qing Legal Code* 大清律例, Volume 17, 239.

adequately controlled, and this led to their wrongdoing, the wrongdoers and their supervisors would be punished.³⁹¹ The law of collective responsibility was enforced to ensure management at all levels.

The Qing emperors enforced supervision among the middle and upper classes and required local officials to implement laws against extravagance among the lower classes. Many local officials took practical measures to promote frugality and limit extravagant consumption in the areas they managed. In 1684, Tang Bin, an official in charge of Suzhou, made a decree prohibiting enslaved people and entertainers from wearing satin, mink hats, or boots. He encouraged the public to report violations and sent the offenders to the government. Luxury goods that were prohibited were either confiscated or given to the informants.³⁹² Another official, Cen He, established the material living standards for the residents. At banquets, the number of dishes served should not exceed five plates, and livestock should not be slaughtered. For wedding expenses, the bride was allowed to bring a set of cotton clothes, a handkerchief, and a few dressing utensils as a dowry. He restricted women from wearing fancy clothes, believing that it would encourage them to engage in immoral behaviour.³⁹³

In relation to sacrificial activities, the rulers made a decree stating that individuals were not allowed to worship gods in private. Anyone who privately burned incense at night, lit sky lanterns, or insulted the gods would be punished with 80 strokes of the cane. If a woman violated the rules of sacrifice, the head of her family would be held accountable.³⁹⁴ In 1725, the state prohibited the celebration of festivals to welcome the gods, and participation of young men and women would implicate their parents. The individual responsible for leading the welcoming ceremony would be punished for a serious offence and be hit with a stick 100 times.³⁹⁵ During the Song Dynasty (960–1279) in Hangzhou, a place for folk art performances called “Wa She” was strictly prohibited by Emperor Kangxi (1662–1722). Entertainment venues were neglected because local officials believed this indicated a return to more simple folk customs. Theatrical performances were seen as

³⁹¹ Ibid., *Great Qing Legal Code* 大清律例, Volume 3, 80–83.

³⁹² (Qing) Ruan Kuisheng 阮葵生. *Cha Yu Ke Hua* 茶余客话, Volume 4. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1960, 23.

³⁹³ (Qing) Mao Taizheng 毛泰徵 and Qin Jingsui 秦荆燧. *Heyin Xian Zhi Ke Hua* 河阴县志, Volume 4. A Blockprint in 1691. Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Library, 2014, 197–202.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., *Great Qing Legal Code* 大清律例, Volume 16, 231.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., *Great Qing Legal Code* 大清律例, Volume 16, 232.

a threat to people's well-being. Emperor Kangxi outlawed popular plays about Confucius and other respected figures. In 1727, Emperor Yongzheng, Kangxi's son, banned the portrayal of Guan Yu, a notable military general from the Han Dynasty, in dramas.³⁹⁶ The right of the people to read erotic novels was sometimes also taken away. In 1714, it was stipulated that all erotic novels in the communities should be strictly investigated and banned, and the books destroyed. Violators who printed and sold banned books would be punished with caning or exile.³⁹⁷ During that period, men were allowed to burn incense and worship Buddha, but women were forbidden from entering temples to burn incense and meet monks. Women's worship of Buddha was considered improper, and the husbands and sons of women who broke these rules would be punished with 40 strokes. Additionally, if the temple abbot and gatekeeper did not prevent women from burning incense, they would face the same punishment as the rule breakers.³⁹⁸

The emperors introduced the sumptuary decree to maintain their privileged status and ensure that common people excessively revered the imperial power. The emperors imposed severe punishments on officials and nobles who exceeded their authority. When Emperor Shunzhi investigated Dorgon's actions, he believed that Dorgon had exceeded his authority by using the emperor's ceremonial music and attendants and that the houses Dorgon built were no different from the imperial palace.³⁹⁹ One of the significant reasons why Kangxi deposed the crown prince for the second time was that the crown prince's attire and possessions exceeded the boundaries by using the emperor's exclusive yellow colour.⁴⁰⁰ When Minister Nian Gengyao was convicted, he was criticised for exceeding his authority in 16 instances, including wearing a yellow coat and his son wearing an illegal robe. The walls of his house were painted with four-clawed dragons. The trumpeters and drummers all wore satin python robes. The violations of these high-class people in their consumption habits were considered significant offences.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., (Qing) Anon. *Qing Shilu* 清实录, Volume 7, 979–992.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., (Qing) Anon. *Qing Shilu* 清实录, Volume 3, 552.

³⁹⁸ Ibid., *Great Qing Legal Code* 大清律例, Volume 16, 229.

³⁹⁹ Ibid., (Qing) Anon. *Qing Shilu* 清实录, Volume 3, 421–424.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., *Qing Shilu* 清实录, Volume 6, 502–508.

The Failure of Sumptuary Laws

During the Qing Dynasty, the emperor and the royal family did not lead by example in terms of being frugal and prohibiting extravagance. The royal family began constructing large-scale buildings from the middle to late Qianlong period. For instance, the number of buildings in the Summer Palace rose from 16 during the Kangxi and Yongzheng periods to 38 by 1764. The Summer Palace had 36 scenes during Kangxi's reign, which expanded to 72 during the late reign of his grandson, Emperor Qianlong. While there were 28 scenes in the Old Summer Palace during the reign of Yongzheng, the number increased to 40 in the late Qianlong period.⁴⁰¹ These civil engineering projects all incurred substantial costs. Emperor Qianlong became even more fond of extravagance in his later years. In 1780, a birthday celebration team led by the sixth prince of the emperor and the military minister Heshen was established a year prior to celebrating Emperor Qianlong's 70th birthday. During the celebration, the over 300-mile road from Beijing to Chengde was lined with trees decorated with red silk. Official tribute teams from all over the country were so numerous that there was no end. The tributes included 17,963 statues of the Buddha, along with countless other offerings.⁴⁰² The "Feasts for the Elderly" held in 1785 and 1796 were large-scale events designed to honour and show respect to older people. In 1785, Emperor Qianlong presented all the participants with gifts such as antiques, mink furs, and silks. This reward alone cost more than one million taels of silver. The cost of these banquets was very high. For instance, the banquet in 1796 had over 8,000 attendees.⁴⁰³ In the spring of 1780, Emperor Qianlong made his fifth tour of Jiangsu. Officials along the way competed to please him with extravagance. When the emperor's boat arrived outside the city, a massive, brightly coloured, lovely peach-shaped structure stood on the shore from afar. Suddenly, fireworks shot up into the sky, the peach cracked, and a stage emerged with hundreds of actors performing a play to celebrate the emperor's birthday. Emperor Qianlong loved to travel and led a luxurious life, taking no less than 150 tours of various kinds.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., *Qing Dynasty History*, Volume 4, 184.

⁴⁰² Ibid., *Draft History of Qing* 清史稿, Volume 14, 515–518.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 1, 314.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 1, 341.

After Empress Dowager Cixi came to power, the annual expenses of the palace doubled. From 1870, large-scale construction projects were initiated, costing tens of millions of taels.⁴⁰⁵ In 1894, to celebrate her 60th birthday, Empress Dowager Cixi established a particular office a year in advance. The plan was to renovate the Summer Palace to use it as a venue for receiving congratulations. All roads from the Imperial Palace to the Summer Palace were refurbished, and the routes both inside and outside the city were divided into 60 sections to create scenic spots. The national treasury was depleted, and the costs of these projects even drew from the navy and railway funds. It was estimated that about 80 million taels of silver from the navy fund were used to construct the Summer Palace. The expenses for the banquet in Cixi's palace totalled 230,000 taels, while the opera performances cost 520,000 taels of silver. Additionally, 230,000 taels were spent on dragon robes and other clothing materials. Altogether, Empress Dowager Cixi spent 980,000 taels of silver on celebrations for her birthday. This amount was equivalent to a year's salary for 20,000 new troops.⁴⁰⁶

The emperors were highly extravagant, setting an example for their ministers. One of the most powerful ministers, Heshen, lived lavishly during his over 20 years in power. According to estimates based on "Heshen's property lists", he had 263 houses, over 300 small self-ringing clocks, more than 280 foreign watches, 230 jade ornaments, 32 tables of gold bowls and plates, 43 pure gold washbasins, 56 silver washbasins, over 28,000 pieces of jewellery, 100 gold ingots, 5.8 million taels of pure gold, 5.83 million taels of silver, over 680 kilograms of ginseng, 713 mink coats, 26 sable coats, more than 650 women's clothes and over 8,000 hectares of land. Heshen's total property was valued at more than 400 million taels of silver, equivalent to the Qing government's fiscal revenue for eight years.⁴⁰⁷ Even his servant, Liu Quan, had assets worth more than 200,000 taels, including valuable items such as large pearls and pearl bracelets. The minister, Qian Shouchun, possessed 82 jade ornaments and a sandalwood mountain bonsai with 120 gold statues on it, weighing a total of more than 358 taels of gold. He had 21 plates of coral, jadeite, amber,

⁴⁰⁵ Liu Kexiang. *Complete History of the Qing Dynasty*, Volume 10. Shenyang : Liaoning People's Publishing House, 1991, 87.

⁴⁰⁶ Association of Chinese Historians. *The Beiyang Army*. Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1988, 22.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 3, 1079–1081. Volume 7, 3278.

beeswax, crystal jade, court beads, 12 self-ringing clocks and 391 other antiques.⁴⁰⁸ Wang Huizu, who lived in Zhejiang during the reigns of Yongzheng, Qianlong and Jiaqing, described the changes in folk customs in his hometown during the Qianlong period. He argued that his hometown had always been known for its simplicity, but in the past 20 years, it had become increasingly sophisticated. When friends and guests gathered together, they all wore fur in winter and light, soft gauze in summer. Sheepskin clothes were no longer worth mentioning, and ramie was also rare. Among ten women, seven wore fur, feathers, and satin.⁴⁰⁹ The extravagant style extended to the army. The generals had lavish dinners together in remote forests and hills. Even in these isolated areas, they feasted on crabs, fish and other delicacies. Each banquet would cost five or six taels of silver and include as many as 30 or 40 dishes, not to mention the additional cost of compensating actors and servants.⁴¹⁰

The Qing government introduced strict sumptuary laws, supervisors, and punishment measures to deter excessive and extravagant behaviour. However, the excessive and extravagant behaviour did not disappear. Wealthy merchants continued to be the primary consumers of luxury goods. For instance, the salt merchants in Yangzhou, as the leading commercial group in the nation, held a monopoly over the entire salt industry. According to statistics from Huang Junzai, a Qing literati, the salt merchants sold the salt at three or four times the price they paid for it. This resulted in annual profits of at least 20 million taels of silver, which were then used to fuel their luxurious lifestyles.⁴¹¹ The salt merchants lived luxurious lives, demanding high quality in all their possessions and employing many servants. They were very particular about their houses and had many private gardens in Yangzhou. Salt merchants spared no expense in building these gardens. To build a beautiful garden, the Huang brothers even spent thousands of taels of gold to buy a precious gardening manual. The design and construction of these gardens were highly sophisticated. In Xu Zanhou's "Water Bamboo Garden", a pair of verses written vertically on the sides of a doorway was presented on a black lacquer background. The verses were

⁴⁰⁸ The Palace Museum. *Shiliao Xun Kan* 史料旬刊, Volume 34. Beijing : National Library of China Publishing House, 1931, 249.

⁴⁰⁹ (Qing) Qu Tuiyuan 瞿蜕园. *Chun Lu Suo Wen Lu* 钝庐所闻录. Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 1997, 54.

⁴¹⁰ (Qing) Zhao Lian 昭槁. *Xiao Ting Za Lu* 啸亭杂录. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1980, 258.

⁴¹¹ (Qing) Huang Junzai 黄钧宰. *Jin Hu Qi Mo* 金壶七墨, Volume 1. Shanghai Wenming Book Company, 1895, 4.

decorated with needle-carved words and paintings and overlaid with gold foil, creating a dynamic showcase.⁴¹² Nan Garden, named “Nine Mountain Peak Garden” by Emperor Qianlong, was adorned with numerous uniquely shaped Taihu stones. These stones were found in Taihu Lake, where waves naturally eroded them, forming various holes and unusual shapes. Despite the high transportation costs, salt merchants invested significant money to feature these stones in their gardens.⁴¹³

Salt merchants employed skilled chefs known as “home cooks 家庖” to enhance the flavour of their food. These talented chefs created inventive dishes such as Wensi tofu, stir-fried meat with shredded pears, ten flavours of pig heads, mixed sturgeon, roasted whole lamb, crab noodles and fish paste. The salt merchants sometimes got tired of the dishes cooked by the home chef. They took a large boat loaded with wine and delicious food and had a picnic on the Slender West Lake. During these picnics, they hired other chefs to cook famous dishes for them.⁴¹⁴ Yangzhou locals also paid much attention to the fashion of dress, and silk clothes adorned with round flowers were once popular. Over time, colours such as blue, black, grey, golden yellow, and cherry red became increasingly popular. On Cuihua Street, adjacent to the salt merchants’ houses, many shops were selling different kinds of jewellery. Additionally, the street hosted many dress stores and shoe and hat shops. The women’s shoes were crafted with camphor wood soles, intricately carved in various designs such as apricot leaves, lotus seeds, and lotus flowers. The women’s top clothes for sale were two feet and eight inches long with two feet wide sleeves, which were decorated with embroidery. Mink fur, fox fur and other furs were commonly used in winter. Women’s long skirts were made from multiple pieces of satin, each intricately embroidered on both sides and trimmed with gold thread. These satin skirts were referred to as phoenix tail skirts. The folds of the entire satin fabric were exquisite and compact, forming what was known as a “hundred-fold skirt”, while the 24-fold skirt was referred to as a “jade skirt”. Clothing constantly changed, with new dresses driving excessive consumption and necessitating new creations to keep up

⁴¹² (Qing) Li Dou 李斗. *Yangzhou Huafang Lu* 扬州画舫录, Volume 14. Yangzhou: Jiangsu Guangling Ancient Book Publishing House Company, 1984, 316–317.

⁴¹³ Ibid., *Yangzhou Huafang Lu* 扬州画舫录, Volume 7, 161–164.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., *Yangzhou Huafang Lu* 扬州画舫录, Volume 11, 242.

with fashion.⁴¹⁵ Even the enslaved people in the salt merchants' homes lived a comfortable life. Every day, they accompanied their masters on outings, enjoying flowers, fishing and playing musical instruments to pass the time.

Wealthy merchants enjoyed a wide range of entertainment activities in addition to their lavish lifestyles. Many of them had private drama troupes at home, known as “Neiban 内班” due to their love for drama and desire to follow the trend. Most of these opera troupes performed Kunqu Opera, offering a variety of plays and featuring famous folk actors and actresses. If talented new actors emerged in the community, the merchants would hire them to join their troupe. Notable actors of that time included Chen Yunjiu, Yang Baguan and Hao Yaoliu.⁴¹⁶ The props used by the troupes were all made at the salt merchants' expense. Supporting these actors was a significant expense. For instance, the Chuntai and Deyin troupes cost 30,000 taels of gold every year just for their master's family banquets.⁴¹⁷ In addition to watching plays, some wealthy merchants sought pleasure in extravagant and often absurd ways. For example, some wealthy individuals owned numerous horses, each costing much money. They would ride out of the city every morning and return at sunset, proudly displaying their horses to onlookers.⁴¹⁸ It was said that certain rich people instructed their servants to purchase a large amount of gold foil, transport it to the top of a mountain, and then scatter it in the wind without any intention of retrieving it. In another instance, wealthy individuals purchased all the tumbler toys in the city and threw them into a stream, causing a blockage.⁴¹⁹ Moreover, some people created wooden sculptures of naked women with mechanical attributes and placed them in banquet halls to startle guests.⁴²⁰

During the Qing Dynasty, people typically spent substantial money on significant events like weddings. The betrothal gift was a sum of money or physical items given by the groom's family to the bride's family as an engagement present. The dowry primarily consisted of furniture and gold and silver jewellery given to the

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., *Yangzhou Huafang Lu* 扬州画舫录, Volume 9, 186–187.

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., *Yangzhou Huafang Lu* 扬州画舫录, Volume 5, 103–127.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., *Yangzhou Huafang Lu* 扬州画舫录, Volume 6, 130.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., *Yangzhou Huafang Lu* 扬州画舫录, Volume 6, 142; see also in Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 7, 3270.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., *Yangzhou Huafang Lu* 扬州画舫录, Volume 6, 142.

⁴²⁰ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 7, 3271.

bride by her family. The groom's family gave gifts the bride's family many gifts, such as money, gold hairpins, silk, fruit soup and tea, and in return, the bride's family gave gifts, such as pens, inkstones, boots, hats, robe cakes and fruits. The bride's family gifted a big plate in a box carried by eight or four people with the bride's date of birth on a post. The box was decorated with knots made of gold or silver thread and contained a pair of gold or silver dolls, small gold and silver ingots, and other items.⁴²¹ The gifts mentioned above exchanged by couples could bankrupt a low-income family. This was the wedding standard for upper-middle-class families in the city. During the middle and late Qing Dynasty, despite frequent wars and economic decline in Jiangnan, betrothal gifts did not decrease. With increased trade with Shanghai, Jiading County adopted the extravagant habits of Shanghai, spending at least 500 taels of gold on wedding expenses. Luxury consumption also became popular in the Hangzhou region. Middle-class families offered a hundred taels of gold as betrothal gifts, while the minimum standard for low-income families was several dozen taels of gold.⁴²² In the Jiangnan region, it was customary for the bride's family to purchase furniture and other daily necessities and send them to the groom's house the day before the wedding. Families in Hangzhou commonly gave betrothal gifts or dowry, which included numerous items such as suitcases, boxes, cabinets (referred to as "inner room items"), as well as dressing and washing utensils (referred to as "outer room items"). The groom gave numerous betrothal gifts to the bride. In Hangzhou, the groom's family provided a golden crown, hairpins, earrings, gold and jade ornaments, bracelets, pearls and gemstones. They attached these jewellery items to two beautiful pieces of red cardboard and showed them to friends and family. Other gifts included cosmetics, silk threads, wedding eggs and dried fruits.⁴²³

The wedding reception was also a significant expense, which was necessary for the wedding. Hosting a wedding banquet was not only simple consumer behaviour but also social behaviour. Families hosting the banquet aimed to collect gifts and gift money through it. During the Qianlong period in Puyuan Town, the wedding banquets included a wide variety of dishes and paid attention to the exquisiteness of the food. Each table offered 12 plates of food; sugarcane and oranges were also placed on the

⁴²¹ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 5, 1987.

⁴²² Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 5, 2081.

⁴²³ (Qing) Fan Zushu 范祖述. *Hang Su Yi Feng* 杭俗遗风. Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House, 1989, 222–234.

table in a tower shape, and ornaments carved into flowers or cranes were placed on the top.⁴²⁴ With the expansion of international trade and improvements in transportation, a wide variety of seafood and exotic delicacies began to be featured at wedding banquets. Towards the end of the Qing Dynasty, these banquets became increasingly lavish, and ingredients like shark fins and duck meat were no longer considered rare. Additionally, barbecue emerged as a popular new dish.⁴²⁵ Wedding banquets in the Huzhou area had even incorporated Western cuisine.⁴²⁶ During the Jiaqing period, at wedding banquets in Changsha, Song tableware was replaced by palace-style tableware. However, this palace-style tableware soon became outdated and was replaced by ice trays.⁴²⁷ The cost of a wedding banquet was equivalent to the living expenses of a low-income family for an entire year. It was common for the public to use drums and ceremonial guards at weddings, and middle-class families even borrowed official ceremonial guards. In 1878, the local official of Baoshan issued a notice prohibiting sedan chair bearers from monopolising the area and extorting money from wedding and funeral families. This showed that the high cost of wedding ceremonies at that time had attracted the government's attention. In a traditional wedding, the groom and bride's families typically invited four to six matchmakers. The host of the wedding banquet gave the matchmakers a red packet with money as payment. Wealthy families often made agreements with the matchmakers in advance to avoid potential issues arising from unreasonable requests for large sums of money.⁴²⁸

Causes of Failure

The widespread extravagant and illegal behaviours exhibited by ordinary people during the Qing Dynasty could be attributed to the failure of the sumptuary laws. This failure was primarily due to the deliberate sabotage by the upper class, led by the emperors. There were, of course, other factors at work. As the Qing Dynasty progressed, the emperors and the government enforced these laws less stringently. In

⁴²⁴ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 13, 6263–6265.

⁴²⁵ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 13, 6266.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 13, 6268–6270.

⁴²⁷ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 13, 6265.

⁴²⁸ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 5, 2000.

1751, the imperial censor Sun Zongpu proposed creating more specific laws prohibiting excessive spending on weddings, funerals and food. However, the emperor Qianlong believed that customs differed from region to region and that it was unsuitable to impose consistent consumption restrictions. Additionally, the emperor believed that the wealthy's lavish spending helped address the poor's financial difficulties. In 1781, when Minister Liu Tiancheng suggested banning wasteful banquets and extravagant clothing among the people, Qianlong believed that it would be difficult to enforce and that extravagant consumption was inevitable.⁴²⁹ The ministers requested that the village be prohibited from holding festivals to welcome the gods. However, Qianlong thought it was unnecessary. Initially, the people of Jiangsu and Zhejiang were forbidden to go out to watch operas or burn incense in temples. The Tianzhu Temple in Hangzhou was dedicated to Guanyin Bodhisattva, and people went there to worship and pray during the Spring and Autumn Festivals. Emperor Qianlong believed this activity was a long-standing custom and should not be stopped.⁴³⁰ Theatre performances were the professions and places on which merchants and some citizens in Suzhou, Hangzhou, Huaiyang, and other places relied for their livelihoods and should not be banned.

The sumptuary laws had the downside of being slow to update. As living standards improved, common people had more choices in their consumption, and fashion trends changed frequently. In the Jiangsu and Zhejiang regions during the Tongzhi and Guangxu periods (1862–1874), men and women preferred loose clothing. Men wore white cloth socks and short boots with narrow uppers and soles about an inch thick. The man's hair hung loosely behind his head in braids. From the Guangxu period to the Xuantong period (1875–1911), men's clothing started to become more fitted, with longer outer robes that could cover the feet and shorter jackets above the navel. The soles of the shoes also became thinner.⁴³¹ Prostitutes in Shanghai used heavy make-up to hide facial blemishes, and many women copied this style. After women's schools became increasingly common, female students started wearing lighter make-up.⁴³² Regarding clothing colours, the exclusive use of yellow,

⁴²⁹ Ibid., *Draft History of Qing* 清史稿, Volume , 503–535.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 10, 4668.

⁴³¹ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 13, 6147.

⁴³² Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 13, 6148.

reserved for the emperor, was no longer mindlessly pursued. In Hanzhong, white became popular, and both men and women began wrapping their heads with white cloth or yellow silk.⁴³³

During the early Qing Dynasty, transportation evolved rapidly, much like clothing. Initially, officials used sedan chairs for travel, with the richness of the chair's decoration reflecting the owners' noble status. By 1900, Western-style horse-drawn carriages had become famous as a mode of transportation. During the late Qing Dynasty, new forms of transportation like cars, trams, rickshaws, trains, steamships and ships emerged alongside horse-drawn carriages.⁴³⁴ The once-prestigious sedan chairs had lost their significance. Many luxury consumer goods, such as dragon-patterned clothes and silk tribute satin, were no longer in demand and were considered outdated. Although laws specified the amount of food and the number of banquet tables for social events like weddings and funerals, people no longer adhered to the ban on luxury items while entertaining guests. Instead, they were more interested in acquiring modern consumer goods such as suits, Western food, houses, cars and motorcycles. The significance of the ban on luxury gradually declined during this period.

Summary

Based on the proposal, implementation, enforcement, and effects of the sumptuary laws in the Qing Dynasty, it appears that all sumptuary laws in imperial China had similar rules. In the early period of the empire, the emperors promoted frugality and restricted luxury due to the urgent need for national recovery after the war. As national strength recovered and the material base gradually enriched, the rulers of the late kingdom began living in luxury. Consequently, officials and ordinary people imitated the royal members' extravagant spending habits, unintentionally violating the sumptuary laws on extravagance. The sumptuary laws eventually proved ineffective due to being too cumbersome, not being updated in time, and being difficult to enforce. In an empire, the extravagant behaviour of the lower classes undoubtedly violated class norms. Violations, transgressions and disobedience to the

⁴³³ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 13, 6150.

⁴³⁴ Ibid., *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 13, 6106–6110.

emperor angered the rulers more than the extravagant behaviour. The sumptuary laws were merely a futile effort by the emperors to manage people of different classes.

Chapter Thirteen: Sumptuary Laws in Global Perspective from 1200 to 1700

In the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), emperors and other high-class people felt anxious about the uncontrolled and untimely consumption of luxury by low-class people. The emperors of the Ming Dynasty formulated some detailed sumptuary laws on luxury goods to govern the consumption behaviour of the public. Coincidentally, at about the same time as the Ming Dynasty, from 1200 to 1700, similar sumptuary laws to restrict consumption and to distinguish different ranks of people also appeared in Italy, Spain, France and Japan, among other countries. The legislative purposes, content, enforcement and penalties of sumptuary laws in these countries were similar to those in imperial China. Whether in China, Europe, or other countries, sumptuary laws were not a useless moral condemnation from high-class people to the lower class but a practical means to deal with practical problems.⁴³⁵ They constituted an intermediate means of regulating consumption, suitable for the context of the rising growth of commodities. As a product of a specific period, sumptuary laws were doomed to fail.⁴³⁶

Sumptuary Laws and Class

One of the essential features of sumptuary laws in the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), including those before the Ming Dynasty, was that it began by assuming eternal status hierarchies and then assigning specific categories of items to different ranks of people. For example, in 1393, the emperor Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 introduced the sumptuary laws on utensils to limit the consumption of the public and distinguish different ranks of people. The first and second ranks of the nobles and officials were allowed to use gold flagons and cups to drink wine, and they could also use other silver utensils. Officials of the third to fifth ranks could use silver wine

⁴³⁵ Killerby, Catherine Kovesi. *Sumptuary Law in Italy, 1200–1500*. Oxford University Press, 2002, 41.

⁴³⁶ Appadurai, Arjun. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, 1986, 25.

flagons and gold cups. The sixth to ninth ranks used silver cups and other porcelain utensils. As for the common people without titles, they should use tin flagons or silver cups, and their other utensils were made of porcelain or lacquerware, but the pattern of dragons and phoenixes was forbidden in their utensils.⁴³⁷ Other countries have similar sumptuary laws to restrict low-class people. In 1229, King Louis VIII of France issued a decree limiting the dress of nobles.⁴³⁸ A few years later, in 1234, King James of Aragon approved a sumptuary law that allowed his subjects to eat two meals of meat for breakfast and dinner and prohibited them from wearing extravagant ‘Oriental’ style clothing and jewellery.⁴³⁹ In 1283, King Philippe III turned his legislative attention to the middle-class people, forbidding their women from wearing the distinctive adornment of crowns. The wealth of the clergy was also restricted. Both Alfonso X and Philippe le Hardi issued laws in 1279, setting detailed restrictions on the wardrobes of the clergy.⁴⁴⁰ In addition to daily life, legislators of sumptuary laws also hoped that the public would not be too extravagant on occasions such as weddings and funerals. In Florence, for example, a decree enacted in 1330 detailed that guests could only have three courses to “restrain riots and ambitions of the throat.”⁴⁴¹ At a banquet in honour of a newly dubbed knight, no more than three types of food might be served, although 100 platters could be used to serve them. In 1460, residents of Perugia and in 1432, Treviso were not allowed to give lavish gifts to newborn babies.⁴⁴²

Japan also implemented sumptuary laws similar to those in imperial China. Legislators first paid attention to frugality in housing and clothing in 1261, which may reflect concerns about the solvency of vassals. The first comprehensive set of sumptuary laws about the dress and lifestyle of town dwellers was introduced in 1649.

⁴³⁷ (Ming) Shen Shixing 申时行, et al. *Ming Hui Dian* 明会典, Volume 62, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1989, 396.

⁴³⁸ Kraemer Raine, Pierre., *Le Luxe et Les Lois Somptuaries Au Moyen-Âge*, Paris: E. Sagot, 1920, 33–34

⁴³⁹ Del Giudice, G., ‘Una legge suntuaria inedita del 1290: Commento storicocritico’, *Atti dell’Accademia Pontaniana*, 16/2 (1886), 84–86; see also Killerby, Catherine Kovesi. *Sumptuary Law in Italy, 1200–1500*. Oxford University Press, 2002, 25–26.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid., Del Giudice, 136 and 162–165; see also Baudrillart, H. J., *Histoire du luxe privé et public depuis l’antiquité jusqu’à nos jours*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1878–80) iii 252; Ibid., 25–26.

⁴⁴¹ Villani, Giovanni, *Croniche storiche di Giovanni, Matteo e Filippo Villani*, ed. F. Gherardi, 7 vols, i (Milan, 1848), 10, 153; see also Rainey, Ronald Eugene. “*Sumptuary Legislation in Renaissance Florence*,” PhD thesis, University Microfilms International, 1985, 73.

⁴⁴² Fabretti, A., ‘Statuti e ordinamenti suntuari intorno al vestire degli uomini e delle donne in Perugia dall’anno 1206 al 1536 (raccolti ed annotati)’, *Memorie della reale Accademia di scienze di Torino*, ser. 2b, 38 (1888), 192; Stefani, E., *Legge suntuaria circa il vestire degli uomini e delle donne ordinata intorna all’anno 1432 dalla città di Treviso: Tratta da un testo latino a penna del secolo XI* (Venice, 1880), 27; see also Ibid., Catherine, *Sumptuary Law in Italy*, 79.

This set of decrees prohibited the public use of finer silks, or the gold lacquer and gold or silver leaf, in interior decoration, household items, and saddles. Another prohibition order in 1661 required the public to economise on the construction of houses and pleasure boats and restricted the display of decorations at weddings and funerals while strictly limiting the number of dishes.⁴⁴³ From sumptuary laws in various countries, the legislators hoped to distinguish different levels of social members and retain the superiority of material enjoyment for the high class, such as the nobility.

In 1368, the emperor Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 promulgated the first sumptuary law in the Ming Dynasty. He believed that the Hu people, various nomadic tribes in ancient northern China, greatly influenced the dress of the public.⁴⁴⁴ Similarly, some countries considered racial issues when designing sumptuary laws. For example, in Ireland, racial differences were often critical in sumptuary laws. In 1297, a new sumptuary law prohibited colonists from wearing a *cúlán*, a hairstyle with long hair in the back and short or shaven hair at the top and around the ears.⁴⁴⁵ This hairstyle was favoured by the Irish, especially Irish warriors and men of high status. English settlers who illegally wore a *cúlán* would lose their right to plead their case in the colony's central court. However, once they gave up this hairstyle, their full legal rights as English people would be restored. In addition to extraordinary hairstyles, a decree issued in 1447 also restricted Englishmen in the colonies from wearing a moustache because it would make them look the same as Irish enemies and thus cause unnecessary conflicts.⁴⁴⁶ In 1466, the Dublin City Council banned women from wearing the saffron shirt (*léine*). The saffron shirt was always associated with Irish (and also associated with Highland Scots). The high cost of saffron dye made these shirts a high-status symbol, much favoured by the Irish. For instance, Art Óg Ó Tuathail gave a saffron shirt to Gerald FitzGerald, the 11th Earl of Kildare, in the

⁴⁴³ TK: Ishii Ryōsuke, ed., *Tokugawa kinreikō* 徳川禁令考 (1959), 11 vols, 2781; see also Shively, Donald "Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan", 25 *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 154–155; Hunt, Alan. *Governance of the Consuming Passions: a History of Sumptuary Law*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, 24.

⁴⁴⁴ (Ming) Anon. *Ming Shilu*. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1966, 525.

⁴⁴⁵ William Sayers, "Early Irish Attitudes Toward Hair and Beards, Baldness and Tonsure," *Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie* 44 (1991): 154–89, at 157, 164–65; Seán Duffy, "The Problem of Degeneracy," in *Law and Disorder in Thirteenth-Century Ireland: The Dublin Parliament of 1297*, ed. James Lydon (Dublin, 1997), 87–106, at 88; and Robert Bartlett, "Symbolic Meanings of Hair in the Middle Ages," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 4 (1994): 43–60, at 46.

⁴⁴⁶ Henry F. Berry, ed., *Statutes and Ordinances, and Acts of the Parliament of Ireland: King John to Henry V, Ire., John-Hen. VI* Dublin: henceforth Stat., 1907, 88–89.

1530s.⁴⁴⁷ Robert Cowley, a prominent official, complained in 1537 that these shirts were selling for five marks, and the Irish turned to rob churches in order to wear saffron shirts on Christmas and Easter.⁴⁴⁸ The purpose of the above sumptuary laws was to ensure that appearance faithfully reflected the distinction between the English and the Irish in the colonies.

The Spanish crown also imposed lavish restrictions on African-descended women in colonies. In February 1571, Philip II issued what may have been the first sumptuary laws specifically targeting women of African descent. It reads:

No *negra*, free or slave, nor *mulata*, may wear gold, pearls, or silk. But if the *negra* or free *mulata* is married to an *español*, she may wear gold earrings with pearls, a choker, and velvet on the hem of the skirt, and they may not wear crepe mantles or those of any other fabric, except for capes that fall just below the waist, the penalty [being] the removal and forfeiture of the gold jewelry, silk dresses, and mantle that they may be wearing.⁴⁴⁹

Unlike the original decree of 1571, the 1574 law issued by Philip II added the following clause: “If married to Spaniards, they are allowed to wear mantles but not of silk.”⁴⁵⁰ The decree emphasised the rights gained by African-descended women through intermarriage with Spanish men, which opened the way for the threatened social status of Spanish men.

In the sumptuary laws promulgated during the Ming Dynasty, or all the sumptuary rules that appeared in China, legislators were particularly strict about controlling dress. For example, ordinary people were not allowed to wear high-level fabrics and jewellery made of gold, jade, pearls, and precious stones; they only wore silver jewellery. Boots should not be decorated with gold thread or patterns.⁴⁵¹ Except for the emperor and members of the royal family, other people were forbidden

⁴⁴⁷ Anon. *State Papers Published Under the Authority of His Majesty's Commission: King Henry the Eighth [from the State Paper Office, the Chapter House, Westminster, and the Cottonian Library]*, Henry VIII, London: G. Eyre and A. Strahan, 1830, no. 3, 3:139; see also Booker, Sparky. “Moustaches, Mantles, and Saffron Shirts: What Motivated Sumptuary Law in Medieval English Ireland?” *Speculum* 96, no. 3 (2021): 726–70, at 748.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid, *State Papers*, Hen. VIII, no. 2, 3:450.

⁴⁴⁹ Anon, *Recopilación De Leyes De Los Reynos De Las Indias II*, Madrid: Boletín Oficial Del Estado, 1998, 369–370; see also Terrazas Williams, Danielle. “Finer Things: African-Descended Women, Sumptuary Laws, and Governance in Early Spanish America.” *Journal of Women's History* 33, no. 3(2021):11–35, at 15.

⁴⁵⁰ Diego de Encinas, *Cedulario indiano: Reproducción facsímil de la edición única de 1596*, vol. 4, Madrid: Cultura Hispánica, 1945–1946, 388.

⁴⁵¹ (Qing) Zhang Tingyu 张廷玉 *Ming Shi* 明史. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974, 1649–1650.

to wear, produce or sell clothes with certain patterns such as dragon, lion, a flower pattern named Bao Xiang 宝相, a plant pattern named Xi Fan Lian 西番莲 or bright yellow colour.⁴⁵² This concern about dress also appeared in the minds of implementers of luxury bans in Europe and other countries. Dress regulation took two forms, the first being expenditure restriction (either on whole outfits, on the price per piece of cloth, or on individual items). The second form was to reserve particular and rare types of clothes or styles of dress for designated groups of people. For example, only nobles could wear ermine, and no female servants could wear their robes with a train. In 1258, Alfonso X of Castile required that the King may wear as many suits of clothing as he wished and no one except the King may wear a scarlet rain cloak, which was similar to the sumptuary law in the Ming Dynasty that the colour bright yellow belonged to the King.⁴⁵³ The 1294 law required the items to be allowed for the knights of the middle-income classes. A knight with three thousand livres in revenue or more, or a banneret, might have only three annual robes and would wear one of those three robes in the summer.⁴⁵⁴ In the 1294 decree, furs were also prohibited on the garments of a clergyman “if he is not a prelate, or established as a person of the priesthood or high dignity.”⁴⁵⁵ In the ecclesiastical hierarchy, the number of robes allowed to prelates was still lower than those of high nobles. All prelates could possess only two pairs of robes yearly, while barons and their wives were allowed four pairs. These French sumptuary laws continued to attempt to control the standards of dressing. The cut or style of the robes was not mentioned in the laws. Legislators focused more on details like the richness of fabric or fur linings.

Penalty

In order to ensure the implementation of sumptuary laws, the rulers of imperial China implemented punitive measures, such as flogging or exile, for those who

⁴⁵² Ibid., Shen Shixing 申时行, 386.

⁴⁵³ Por La Real Academia de la Historia, *Córtés de los Antiguos Reinos de León y de Castilla*, Madrid: Imprenta Y Estereotipia De M. Rivadeneyra, 1861–1908, vol. I, 54–63.

⁴⁵⁴ Jourdan, Decrusy., (François André) Isambert, Armet, and A. H. (Alphonse-Honoré) Taillandier. *Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises depuis l'an 420 jusqu'à la révolution de 1789*, vol 2. Paris: Chez Belin-Le-Prieur, 1822, 697–700.

⁴⁵⁵ Gabriel Le Bras, *Institutions ecclésiastiques de la Chrétienté médiévale*, vol 2., Paris: Histoire de l'Eglise depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours, 1959–64, 271–95.

violated the rules of using luxury goods. In 1380, the emperor Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, promulgated statutes that officials who violated sumptuary laws would be removed from office and sentenced to 100 lashes. Those people without official positions would be given 50 lashes, and their families would receive the same punishment. The punishment for artisans was 50 lashes. If people used the prohibited dragon and phoenix patterns, they would be punished with 100 lashes and three years of exile. The sumptuary law in February 1447 decreed that the artisans who broke the law would be beheaded, and their families would be sent to the border troops.⁴⁵⁶ Like imperial China, European countries and other countries also promulgated some enforcement and penalties to prevent the public from easily violating the prohibition on luxury goods.

The most common penalty was a fine. In 1378, 10-year-old Nicola Frediano was prosecuted for wearing a dress made of two pieces of silk with tassels tied together with black leather. She confessed and was fined 14 *lire*.⁴⁵⁷ In 1380, another girl named Monna Bice was brought to court for wearing five rings, four with pearls and one with stone, three of which violated sumptuary laws. She also admitted the charges and was fined.⁴⁵⁸ The fine was also different depending on the offender's social status. For example, the royal law of Sicily in 1290 stipulated that counts should pay 50 *lire*, *banderese* were required to pay 30 *lire*, barons and knights were supposed to pay 15 *lire*, and valets, shield bearers only needed to pay 8 *lire*.⁴⁵⁹ On 27 July 1653, at Ipswich, the wife of John Hutchings was punished for wearing a silk hood. Nevertheless, the court deemed she had been brought up above the ordinary class, so she was released. The wife of Anthony Potter avoided the fine by proving that her husband was worth more than £200.⁴⁶⁰ The sumptuary laws also imposed fines on those who produced and sold prohibited items, restricting the circulation of luxury goods from the source, which was similar to the sumptuary law of Imperial China. The decree of Bologna in 1335 mandated fines between 10 and 25 *lire* for offences to

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., Shen Shixing 申时行, 848.

⁴⁵⁷ Brucker, Gene (ed.) *The Society of Renaissance Florence: A Documentary Study*, New York: Harper & Row, 1971, 181.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 182.

⁴⁵⁹ Del Giudice, G., *Una legge suntuaria inedita del 1290: Commento storico critico*, Napoli: Tipografia della Regia Università, 1887, 8.

⁴⁶⁰ Dow, George Francis, and Mary G. Thresher, eds. *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts*. Salem, Massachusetts: Essex Institute, 1911, 303–304.

the sumptuary laws. Tailors who produced clothing made of banned fabrics would be fined 10 *lira*.⁴⁶¹ Under the 1672 law in Scotland, importers would be fined £1,000 and wearers 500 marks.⁴⁶² After this time, punishing merchants became the primary strategy. In Nürnberg, the wearer and the maker of forbidden items would be punished. Shoemakers were prohibited from making fashionable piked shoes above a certain length, and wearers might be required to reveal the name of their shoemaker.⁴⁶³

In addition to fines, sometimes legislators confiscated offending items as punishment. For instance, in 1705, the Yodoya family, one of the wealthiest merchants in Osaka, a city in Japan, committed a crime of extravagance and had all their wealth confiscated.⁴⁶⁴ In 1515, ushers at the courts of the king and queen had the power to confiscate illegal clothing in courts, and anyone outside the court was allowed to confiscate offending garments. In 1533, the legislator gave up the power of seizure, and offending clothing would be confiscated, with offenders paying a fine of 3/4d per day.⁴⁶⁵ These prohibited items were expensive, and sometimes offenders preferred to pay fines or purchase exemptions to obtain the right to use luxury goods to keep the contraband.

Another penalty was to deprive the offender or his relatives of their rights, such as denying entry into the church or removal from government positions. In the sumptuary law of 1443 in Venice, if any nobleman or member of his family were found to violate the law, he would be excluded from the *Maggior Consiglio* and all other offices for five years.⁴⁶⁶ In 1474, the Bologna Law stipulated that the husband or father of the woman wearing offended clothing would be fined 10 *lire*. At the same

⁴⁶¹ Muzzarelli, Maria Giuseppina, “‘Contra formam statutorum’: regole, controlli e provvedimenti sanzionatori in materia suntuaria. Il caso di Bologna”, in Didier Lett (ed.), *Statuts, écritures et pratiques sociales dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée occidentale à la fin du Moyen Âge (XIIe-XVe siècle). Les statuts vus de l’extérieur: les références à la norme dans les sources de la pratique*, Rome: École Française de Rome, 2018, 78–80; see also Riello, Giorgio, and Ulinka Rublack, eds. *The Right to Dress: Sumptuary Laws in a Global Perspective, c. 1200–1800*. Cambridge University Press, 2019, 170.

⁴⁶² Shaw, Frances J. “Sumptuary legislation in Scotland.” *Juridical Review* 24 (1979): 81–115, at 110; see also Hunt, Alan. *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996, 399.

⁴⁶³ Greenfield, Kent R., *Sumptuary Law in Nürnberg: A Study in Paternal Government*, Vol. XXXVI, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Johns Hopkins Press, 1918, 122.

⁴⁶⁴ Shively, Donald H. “Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25, no. 3–4 (1964): 123–64, p 133.

⁴⁶⁵ Harte, N. B., ‘State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England’, in D. C. Coleman and A. H. John (eds.), *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England: Essays presented to F. J. Fisher*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976, 132–65, 143.

⁴⁶⁶ Rainey, Ronald E. “*Sumptuary Legislation in Renaissance Florence*,” PhD thesis, University Microfilms International, 1985, 167.

time, these offenders were not allowed to go to the church, and if they tried to enter, they would be kicked out.⁴⁶⁷ From 1437 to 1438, Venice introduced a sumptuary law on women, which led to excommunication for those who violated it. Legislators believed that Venetian women always wore extremely inappropriate clothing, especially their headdresses and excessive trains.⁴⁶⁸

Legislators sometimes used corporal punishment or imprisonment in various countries' sumptuary laws, but generally not much. The punishments were restricted to people with low social status, such as prostitutes and male and female servants. In 1452, Savona introduced a new law prohibiting male and female servants from wearing gold, silver, pearl ornaments, silk clothes, or dresses with trains and soft leather shoes.⁴⁶⁹ For a servant who broke the law, his or her master could pay the fine, but if the master failed to pay, the servant would be whipped 25 times. There were also some examples of corporal punishment or imprisonment in Venice. In June 1334, the Venetian Sumptuary Law was enacted, and anyone who violated it was imprisoned until they paid the fine.⁴⁷⁰ In 1430, any shoemaker making shoes exceeding the prescribed height was fined 25 *lire* and imprisoned for three months.⁴⁷¹ In 1443, if a man wore women's clothing or other inappropriate clothing, his offending clothes would be confiscated, and the man had to pay a fine of 100 *lire* and went to prison for six months.⁴⁷²

Supervision

While promulgating sumptuary laws, the emperors in imperial China set up specialised personnel to supervise luxury consumption, such as Dong Chang 东厂, the investigative agency in the Ming Dynasty mentioned in Chapter Eight. In other countries, similar officials or a special agency existed to enforce sumptuary laws in

⁴⁶⁷ Muzzarelli, Maria Giuseppina, ““Contra formam statutorum”: regole, controlli e provvedimenti sanzionatori in materia suntuaria. Il caso di Bologna”, in Didier Lett (ed.), *Statuts, écritures et pratiques sociales dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée occidentale à la fin du Moyen Âge (XIIe–XVe siècle). Les statuts vus de l’extérieur: les références à la norme dans les sources de la pratique* (Rome: École Française de Rome, forthcoming 2018), 148–152, esp. 151; see also Ibid., Riello, *The Right to Dress*, 181.

⁴⁶⁸ Giulio Bistort. *Il magistrato alle pompe nella Repubblica di Venezia*. Bologna: Forni, 1912, 70.

⁴⁶⁹ Pandiani, Emilio. *Vita privata genovese nel Rinascimento*. Vol. 47. Società ligure di storia patria, 1915, 157; see also Ibid., Catherine, *Sumptuary Law in Italy*, 139.

⁴⁷⁰ Newett, Mary Margaret, ‘The Sumptuary ‘Laws of Venice’ in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries’, in T. F. Tout and J. Tait (eds.), *Historical Essays by Members of the Owens College*, London: Manchester, 1907, 265.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., 274.

⁴⁷² Ibid., 266.

the surveillance, arrest, and prosecution processes. The first was to expand the jurisdiction of existing officials whose jurisdiction could supervise luxury crimes. In England, the typical representative of this type of supervisor was the Justice of the Peace. The jurisdiction of the Justices of the Peace expanded rapidly in the 15th century, with considerable local autonomy. Their jurisdiction covered a wide range of summary criminal jurisdiction and later gradually extended to sumptuary jurisdiction.⁴⁷³

Like the emperors in imperial China, legislators in other countries also set up a special agency or appointed new officials to supervise luxury crimes. Siena, a city in Italy, set up an office, *donnaio*, in the 1320s responsible for sumptuary laws. However, in 1333, this office was merged with another office dealing with property damage disputes because the office *donnaio* did not function well. In 1350, due to poor enforcement of the regulations for which the department was responsible, the responsibility for regulating extravagance was assigned to *Maggior Sindaco*, the central magistracy.⁴⁷⁴ Similar attempts could also be observed in Venice and Florence. In 1330, Florence appointed an official, *ufficiale delle donne*, to enforce the sumptuary laws. In 1472, the Senate in Venice appointed three gentlemen as supervisors of sumptuary rules, *Provveditori sopra alle Pompe*. The new officials added in 1439 were responsible for prosecuting homosexual crimes and regulating prostitution, in addition to being responsible for sumptuary laws.⁴⁷⁵ In order to enforce the law more impartially, these appointed officials had to be foreigners and not members of the aristocracy, possibly because aristocrats were considered potential violators of sumptuary laws.

A simpler method was for legislators to transfer responsibilities to other local or traditional mechanisms. From 1322 to 1325, Florence required priests to announce the legal regulations on ornaments before prayer ceremonies and report all violations.⁴⁷⁶ The funeral laws of Faenza in 1410 also relied on the help of the clergy. In addition to

⁴⁷³ Putnam, Bertha Haven. *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries: Edward III to Richard III*. London: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne, 1938, Ivi; see also Hunt, Alan. *Governance of the Consuming Passions : a History of Sumptuary Law*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, 24.

⁴⁷⁴ Bowsky, William M. *A Medieval Italian Commune : Siena Under the Nine, 1287–1355*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981, 82.

⁴⁷⁵ Newett, Mary Margaret, "The Sumptuary Laws of Venice in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries", in T.F. Tout and J. Tait (eds), *Historical Essays by Members of the Owens College*, Manchester: The University Press, 1907, 253.

⁴⁷⁶ Rainey, Ronald Eugene. "Sumptuary Legislation in Renaissance Florence, Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University, 1985, 65; See also Romolo Caggese, ed., *Statuti della Repubblica Fiorentina*, Liber V, rubr. V II, on funerals and weddings, Firenze, 1910, 224.

the priests' duty to enforce sumptuary laws in places of prayer, ecclesiastical schools also introduced and reminded everyone of the content of the decrees.⁴⁷⁷ Furthermore, to ensure that spice and drug dealers (*speciari*) were aware of the regulations of sumptuary law, such as which items of weights of wax and candles were prohibited, these sumptuary decrees were included in the guild statutes. At least once every six months, members read the decree at their assembly to remind everyone of the sumptuary laws.⁴⁷⁸ In Switzerland, sumptuary law was responsible for an ecclesiastical court called the *Chor-Gericht*, which also dealt with matrimonial matters. After the Reformation, the governance of sumptuary decrees was transferred to a new court called the Reformation Chamber, which functioned until the French Revolution.⁴⁷⁹ The city council would select the court members from adult men with excellent reputations.

In addition to the above three regulatory methods, legislators encouraged the public or officials to report luxury crimes by paying rewards. The sumptuary laws of Bologna in 1289, Lucca in 1308, and Modena in 1327 all stipulated that whistleblowers could receive half of the fine.⁴⁸⁰ The Perugian law of 1342 encouraged the *podestà* and the *Capitano del Popolo* to punish offenders, promising a reward of 12 denarii for every *lira* fined.⁴⁸¹ In 1445, Perugia decreed that half of the value of the prohibited clothing containing gold thread or silver thread of cloth or brocade, velvet and silk would be rewarded to the bailiffs and informants.⁴⁸² Similar reward regulations were included in the Florentine Laws of 1299, 1322 to 1325, and the Venetian Laws of 1334.⁴⁸³ Perhaps the one that most inspired the urge to report was a decree in the law of Venice in 1465, which stated that if the informer were a slave, he or she would become free.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁷⁷ Rossini, Giuseppe, ed. *Statuta Faventiae*. Vol. 28, no. 1–6. N. Zanichelli, 1929, 348–349.

⁴⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 348–349.

⁴⁷⁹ Vincent, John Martin. *Costume and Conduct in the Laws of Basel, Bern, and Zurich, 1370–1800*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935, 3–8.

⁴⁸⁰ ‘Bologna, 1289, Statuti’, Frati, Lodovico. *La vita privata in Bologna dal secolo XIII al XVII*. Vol. 2. N. Zanichelli, 1900, 267–274; ‘Lucca, 1308, Statuti’, Tommasi, Girolamo. *Sommario della Storia di Lucca dall'anno 1004 all'anno 1700*. Vol. 10. GP Vieusseux, 1847, 90; ‘Modena, 1327, Statuti’, Muzzarelli, Maria Giuseppina (ed.), *La legislazione suntuaria. Secoli XIII–XVI. Emilia-Romagna*. Umbria: Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali. Direzione generale degli archivi, 2002, 392.

⁴⁸¹ Fabretti, A., ‘Statuti e ordinamenti suntuari intorno al vestire degli uomini e delle donne in Perugia dall’anno 1206 al 1536 (raccolti ed annotati)’, *Memorie della reale accademia di scienze di Torino*, ser. 2b, 38 (1888), 167.

⁴⁸² ‘Perugia, 18 March 1445, Costituzioni’, in Nico Ottaviani (ed.), *La legislazione suntuaria. Secoli XIII–XVI*. Umbria, 125.

⁴⁸³ ‘Florence, 1299, 1322–1325, Statuti’, Rainey, Ronald E. (Ronald Eugene). ‘*Sumptuary Legislation in Renaissance Florence*’, PhD thesis, Columbia University, 1985, 45–46, 56; ‘Venice 1336, Statuti’, *Ibid.*, Newett, ‘The Sumptuary Laws of Venice’, 265.

⁴⁸⁴ Senate Terra, Regs. V, fo. 149; see also *Ibid* Catherine, *Sumptuary Law*, 141.

In summary, from 1200 to 1700, the sumptuary law in various countries had many similarities with the luxury decrees in imperial China. Regarding legal content, legislators hoped to distinguish people of different ranks or races through sumptuary laws, and dress was an essential part of the laws. During the implementation of sumptuary law, legislators set up enforcement and penalties and ordered specialised agencies or officials to supervise people. We will also find that the reasons for the failure of sumptuary laws were also similar between imperial China and other countries.

Failure

Sumptuary laws were complex and challenging to enforce. In the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), many officials implemented sumptuary laws in their jurisdictions. In 1546, a local magistrate hoped to limit extravagant consumption due to a famine.⁴⁸⁵ In 1631, Minister Zuo Maodi 左懋第 issued a decree requiring civilians not to wear red, purple and yellow, and servants' wives were not allowed to wear gold, silver, pearls and jade jewellery.⁴⁸⁶ However, even if local officials were determined to implement sumptuary laws, their short tenure meant that it was difficult to change the public's luxury consumption habits. Whether officials posted notices prohibiting extravagant consumption or published books educating people on frugality, the effect was often limited to one term. Once there were no successors, the sumptuary measures would not continue. These local decrees, like central statutes, were not effective. In addition to officials, Jin Yiwei 锦衣卫 and Dong Chang 东厂 were assigned by the emperor to supervise illegal transactions in luxury goods. They actively promoted sumptuary law to block the source of the circulation of luxury goods. However, these supervisors also directed people with shop registration in the city to sell luxury goods according to the needs of the royal family and make a profit. Regulators such as Jin Yiwei implemented the sumptuary statutes, which not only prevented merchants from selling luxury goods from other regions into the capital but

⁴⁸⁵ (Ming) Hu Rong 胡容, *Wei Xian Zhi* 威县志, in *Tian Yi Ge Cang Ming Dai Fang Zhi Xuan Kan Xu Bian* 天一阁藏明代方志选刊续编, Volume 2, Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 1990, 4b.

⁴⁸⁶ (Qing) Shen Qingya 沈青崖, Liu Yuyi 刘於義, *Shan Xi Tong Zhi* 陕西通志, Volume 45, a photocopy in 1735, collected by Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library, University of Toronto, 1735, 36a.

also intensified the monopoly of the local shops on the luxury goods trade, resulting in a decrease in the number of local luxury goods and an increase in prices.

As in imperial China, enforcements of sumptuary law were also ineffective, and officials lacked enthusiasm for enforcement in their countries. In England, for other laws, such as vagrancy law, the state could occasionally conduct law enforcement activities in a limited area within a short period. However, it was difficult to find a similar configuration of law enforcement teams for sumptuary law. Nor did the Sheriff, Justice of the Peace, or any other officials take any enthusiastic interest in the execution of the sumptuary system. Sumptuary law has left almost no trace in any documentary record the courts and law enforcement agencies produced. If the statutes had been executed, some cases arising under sumptuary law would have been appealed to the higher courts, and some reports would have been present. The primary legal records from the period of Edward III to Henry VIII reveal that no cases of extravagant crimes were brought before the royal courts. In all the compilations and collections of cases, there is not a single case that contemporary lawyers or judges would consider worthy of attention.⁴⁸⁷ This may be because luxury crimes were usually summary offences.

Nevertheless, it was not easy to find such reports. The failure of a decree in 1562 could also prove the inefficiency of implementing sumptuary law. The Privy Council in London urged the city corporation to govern whether the public adhered to the dress statute. The mayor directed council members to pay attention to enforcing sumptuary law for those under supervision and to arrest all suspected offenders. On May 14, 1562, the instructions became more specific, and the mayor asked the aldermen to appoint four watchers to stand guard at the entrance to the city from 7 to 11 a.m. and from 1 to 7 p.m. to ensure that there was no “great and monstrous silk hose” entering the city.⁴⁸⁸ This regulation lasted for the next 15 years. However, few relevant reports have been submitted. In Florence, magistrates’ assistants patrolled the city and kept detailed reports. The records they left showed many days without a breach, but occasionally, they filed detailed reports at a rate of two or three a day.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁷ Baldwin, Frances Elizabeth., *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1926, 117–118.

⁴⁸⁸ Hooper, Wilfrid. “The Tudor Sumptuary Laws.” *The English Historical Review* XXX, no. CXIX (1915): 433–49, at 438,443.

⁴⁸⁹ Rainey, Ronald Eugene. “*Sumptuary Legislation in Renaissance Florence*,” PhD thesis, Columbia University, 1985, 320.

The responsibilities and jurisdiction of these officers had been expanded because of sumptuary law, but without corresponding financial rewards. It was hard for officials to develop enthusiasm for regulating sumptuary law. The lack of sufficient personnel to effectively perform long-term supervision tasks might be one of the reasons for the futility of sumptuary law.

Another reason for failure is that sumptuary laws were detailed and quickly outdated, which should be revised and updated occasionally. Fashion changes much faster than laws. Gu Qiyuan 顾起元, one Ming literati, recorded that the frequency of updating women's clothing in Nanjing had changed from more than ten years to two or three years. The height of hair buns, the width of sleeves, the make-up, the types of headdresses, and even shoelaces were constantly being updated.⁴⁹⁰ In 1506, the Ming government banned women from wearing clothes or curtains with gold ornaments and also forbade them from wearing jewellery and expensive bracelets.⁴⁹¹ However, apparently, the decree did not work. The minister Zhang Han (1510–1593) witnessed more and more clothing violations and recorded them in his book. Initially, only empresses and ladies from the royal family were allowed to wear jadeite crowns and clothing with dragon or phoenix patterns. The gold accessory could only be worn by the wives of officials of fourth-rank or above. However, these prohibited items became widely popular among women.⁴⁹² Laws could no longer restrict different ranks of people, and everyone was willing to try novelty and beautiful items. Servants wore official boots similar to the literati, and the literati imitated servants' clothes. Prostitutes who dressed fashionably were regarded as fashion icons by women who had good family backgrounds. Peasant women began to mind wearing cheap skirts. Expensive bright red dresses became women's daily choice, and ordinary maids could also wear them when going out. When chasing fashion became something everyone did, those who followed the sumptuary laws would be considered pedantic.

Sumptuary law also struggled to keep up with fashion in other countries. In 1483, England restricted Dukes and those above to wear golden clothes. The statute of 1510 added the new restriction that anyone below the rank of duke was not allowed to

⁴⁹⁰ (Ming) Gu Qiyuan 顾起元. *Ke Zuo Zhui Yu* 客座赘语, Volume 9, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1987, 293.

⁴⁹¹ (Qing) Zhang Tingyu 张廷玉, et al. *Ming Shi* 明史. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974, 1650.

⁴⁹² (Ming) Zhang Han 张瀚. *Song Chuan Meng Yu* 松窗梦语, Volume 7. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985, 140.

use cloth of golden “in any apparel of his body or upon his horses.” In 1514, the extravagance restrictions were further detailed, and no *Tyssue* golden cloth could be used on a man’s body, horse, or horse harness, whether it had been used alone, pieced with other fabrics, or used as a ground cloth for embroidery. By 1533, the ban had been extended to include mule shoes, silver cloth, and *tynseled satten*, a mixed fabric similar to cloth of gold or silver. Legislators had to keep updating luxury laws as fashion changed.⁴⁹³ The public was also good at creating alternative fashion products without violating decrees. In England, purple silk was exclusive to the royal family. However, from the wills of British nobles, it could be found that violet was the third most popular colour for garments. Violet was different from royal purple, produced by lower-cost dyeing, and could be used as an alternative to royal purple.⁴⁹⁴ Technically, wearing violet was not a violation. At the same time, to distinguish it from purple silk, which was prohibited by sumptuary law, violet clothing was usually made of wool. As evidenced by Kathleen Ashley’s analysis of wills from Lincoln, in the early 1530s, violet was the fourth most popular colour among the working class, after white, black and red, and appeared to have been used in exquisite items.⁴⁹⁵ The popularity of violet clothing shows that through updates in technology and materials, the public could use items that were visually similar to banned luxury goods without offending the law.⁴⁹⁶ Legislators attempting to use sumptuary laws to restrict fashion is a difficult task.

Sumptuary laws only restricted ordinary people rather than the upper class. In imperial China, emperors who enacted sumptuary laws lived lavishly. For example, from 1436 to 1449, the number of yellow candles in the palace consumed approximately 17,700,000 grams per year. As life in the palace became more and more luxurious, in 1475, yellow candles gradually increased to 70,800,000 grams per year.⁴⁹⁷ According to the sumptuary laws, the quantity, quality, variety, colour and pattern of silk, a fabric of high quality, shall be in accordance with the ranks of the recipients. However, the emperors broke the regulation of silk. Ming emperors often

⁴⁹³ Doda, Hilary. “‘Saide Monstrous Hose’: Compliance, Transgression and English Sumptuary Law to 1533.” *Textile History* 45, no. 2 (2014): 171–91, at 186.

⁴⁹⁴ M. Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII’s England*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, 96.

⁴⁹⁵ Ashley, Kathleen, ‘Material and symbolic gift-giving’, in E. J. Burns, ed. *Medieval Fabrications: Dress, Textiles and other Cultural Imaginings*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004, 140–141.

⁴⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, Hayward, *Rich Apparel*, 101.

⁴⁹⁷ Dai Jin 戴金. *Huang Ming Tiao Fa Shi Lei Zuan*. 皇明条法事类纂, Volume 49, Beijing: China Science Publishing Media, 1994, 956.

rewarded silks with high-standard decorations such as gold weaving to their favourite ministers. In the *Tianshui Bingshan Record* 天水冰山录, there were large quantities of silk fabric and clothes confiscated from the residence of Yan Song 严嵩 (1480–1567), the powerful prime minister. High-level silk woven with patterns such as pythons, dragons, unicorns and lions accounted for a large proportion.⁴⁹⁸ The emperors' luxurious lifestyle and disregard for sumptuary laws influenced officials and led them to emulate the extravagant life of the court. Gradually, the wealthy officials possessed large size and gorgeous houses surrounded by various kinds of plants and brick walls. When it came to dressing up, their families were tired of wearing jewellery made of gold and rare stones, preferring pearls, emeralds, corals, and other novelty items.⁴⁹⁹ In terms of food, officials drank fresh tea in the summer and had exquisite snacks or desserts. They decorated food with gold foil to show off their high-rank status. They decorated pure white porcelain plates with fragrant flowers such as jasmine, rose and osmanthus.⁵⁰⁰ These officials lived in their hometowns for a long time due to recuperation, retirement or a transfer for employment. Therefore, they became the upper class closest to the public, which would make it easy for ordinary people to imitate their lifestyle or luxury consumption. From the upper class to the lower class, from the emperor to officials, and then to ordinary people, the trend of luxury spread, and it was challenging to implement sumptuary laws in the country.

Sumptuary laws also tended to be more cautious towards wealthy or high-status members of society, making it difficult to restrict extravagant behaviour completely in other countries. For example, sumptuary law allowed the purchase of exemptions to preserve prohibited items. In Florence in 1281, a decree introduced the licensing for prohibited dress. By paying 50 lire, people could get the right to wear head ornaments and pearls, as well as gold and silver decorations on cloaks.⁵⁰¹ In 1363, legislators had more incentive to pursue licensing due to the financial crisis and plague.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁸ (Qing) Wu Yunjia 吴允嘉, *Tian Shui Bing Shan Lu* 天水冰山录, Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1937.

⁴⁹⁹ (Ming) Li Le 李乐, *Jian Wen Za Ji* 见闻杂记, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1986, 199.

⁵⁰⁰ (Ming) Tian Rucheng 田汝成, *Xi Hu You Lan Zhi Yu* 西湖游览志余, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1980, 359.

⁵⁰¹ Denholm-Young, N., and H. Kantorowicz. "De Ornatu Mulierum: A Consilium of Antonius de Rosellis with an Introduction on Fifteenth Century Sumptuary Legislation." *Bibliofilia* 35, no. 8/9 (1933): 315–35, at 357.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, Rainey, Sumptuary Legislation in Renaissance Florence, 195–205.

People would be allowed to wear more other prohibited items when they paid 100 florins. It was easy for wealthy or high-class people to buy exemptions. In 1438, Cristina Corner, an unmarried young woman from a Venetian noble family, petitioned Pope Eugenius IV to allow her to wear items prohibited by Giustiniani's sumptuary laws. Although this lady possessed many luxury goods, such as jewellery and clothes, she dared not wear them.⁵⁰³ She was eventually allowed to purchase exemptions to wear prohibited items for three years. In Sicily, purchase exemptions were ordinary, and rich people thought it added to the cost of an elegant lifestyle. In Augsburg, the wealthy could apply for an exemption from the luxury restriction on wedding ceremonies. The sumptuary statutes allowed exemptions, but the result was that there was no restriction on the extravagant behaviour of the upper class, and the law was useless. High-rank people were sometimes exempt from fines without purchasing exemptions. In 1335, Bologna promulgated fines from 10 to 25 *lire* for violations of the sumptuary law.⁵⁰⁴ However, the wives of knights and doctors were exempted from the fine. From 1365 to 1366, the actual fines paid were only half of the official amount. Investigations must be conducted carefully without arresting women for any reason.⁵⁰⁵ Regulators appeared cautious in their investigations, perhaps because of the high social status of many excessively dressed ladies. Despite the temptation of fines, whistleblowers might not cooperate with regulators.

Another important reason for the failure of sumptuary law was that whether in imperial China or other countries, the legislators of sumptuary laws did not intend to restrict luxury consumption or oppose luxury items. In 1475, Jin Yiwei 锦衣卫 solved a theft case. In this case, the warehouse manager and staff stole utensils with the prohibited dragon and phoenix pattern. They sold these items or collected and used them at home. According to laws, they should be judged as guilty regardless of whether they are superior or subordinate, and the words "Stealing Government Items" should be tattooed on the right arm for punishment. However, the emperor adjudged the 35 prisoners to wear heavy shackles for a month and be beaten with a hundred

⁵⁰³ Cesare Foucard, *Lo statuto inedito delle nozze vene ziane emanato nell'anno 1299*, Venice: Tipografia del commercio, 1858, 23–24; See also Roper, Lyndal. "'Going to Church and Street': Weddings in Reformation Augsburg." *Past & Present*, no. 106 (1985): 62–101, at 75.

⁵⁰⁴ 'Bologna, 1335, Statuti', in Muzzarelli, Maria Giuseppina (ed.), *La legislazione suntuaria. Secoli XIII–XVI. Emilia-Romagna*. Umbria: Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali. Direzione generale degli archivi, 2002, 78–80.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 'Bologna, 1335, Statuti', in Muzzarelli (ed.), *La legislazione suntuaria. Secoli XIII–XVI. Emilia-Romagna*, 80; and Ibid., 'Bologna, July 1365–June 1366', *Multe*, 84–101.

lashes. At the same time, prisoners had to perform labour.⁵⁰⁶ The penalties for these prisoners for embezzling prohibited items were significantly more severe than those for stealing general items. Evidently, the emperor was disgusted by prisoners' presumption of using high-level items and hated the usurpation more than the luxury. Legislators in late medieval and Renaissance Italy never aimed at a total ban on luxury. Luxury goods played both positive and negative roles in Italian life. Elaborate clothing and dazzling ceremonies could honour a city by displaying wealth, good breeding and technical expertise. For the above reasons, when foreign dignitaries visited the city, women were required to wear their best dress, while city councillors wore costly clothes on formal occasions.⁵⁰⁷ Only when the public consumed excessively luxury goods or for the wrong purposes would legislators be prepared to condemn luxury consumption. Legislators often had inconsistent attitudes towards luxury consumption during the development of sumptuary laws.

The last reason was that society changed and did not need sumptuary laws anymore. From the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries, sumptuary laws were often enacted to protect fragile economies. As Montesquieu argued, the poorer a state, the more it is ruined by its relative luxury and the more occasion it has for relative sumptuary laws. The richer a state is, the more it thrives by its relative luxury. For this reason, it must take care not to make any relative sumptuary laws.⁵⁰⁸

One of the reasons why rulers in imperial China enacted sumptuary laws was that they were concerned that the public invested too much in the luxury business and no longer engaged in agricultural production, which was harmful to national finance. However, at the end of the Ming Dynasty, some literati believed that luxury consumption also had positive effects, such as increasing job opportunities. Lu Ji 陆楫 (1515–1552) lived in the area close to Shanghai. He believed that the luxurious tourism industry provided more employment opportunities for entertainers, boatmen, fishermen and food vendors.⁵⁰⁹ In Lu Ji's opinion, the government should not ban

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., Dai Jin 戴金, Volume 22, 971–972.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., Catherine Kovesi Killerby, 161–164.

⁵⁰⁸ Montesquieu, Baron de, 'Consequences of the Different Principles of the Three Governments with Respect to Sumptuary Laws, Luxury, and the Condition of Women', in *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. T. Nugent, New York, 1949, 99.

⁵⁰⁹ (Ming) Lu Ji 陆楫. *Ming Ren Wen Ji Yu Ming Dai Yan Jiu* 明文集与明代研究. Taipei: The Association for Ming Studies, 2001, 134.

such extravagant activities. People no longer opposed luxury and commercial activities, believing luxury could make wealth.

In other countries, as capitalism emerged, the cities and countries that adopted abstinence laws as policy had changed, rendering abstinence laws anachronistic. After the 18th century, the impractical sumptuary law also expressed the change in society from precarious to more robust and resilient economies. The government began to update its view of luxury, and its criticism of luxury goods changed to using luxury goods to stimulate production and trade. During the 18th century, the spending power of the masses increased. Fashion emerged as a concept that is similar to today's fashion system. Closely linked to the burgeoning principles of personal agency and social mobility arose a new sense of competition and image. Dress codes were more manipulable, deceptive, and persuasive than the enforced sumptuary protocols of the 17th century.⁵¹⁰ To be seen became an integral part of social interaction. The gloomy austerity of Spanish fashion was replaced by the newly motley silks and chintzes of oriental flavour.⁵¹¹ In such a social environment, luxury goods were no longer the only criterion for class distinction. After all, anyone could buy them with wealth. The focus of social competition was no longer the allocation of economic capital but the use of cultural capital in the form of "taste" and "distinction." As in the Ming Dynasty of China, the literati distinguished themselves from newly wealthy merchants by selecting goods based on taste. Once the criteria of social rank shift from hierarchic consumption to fashion as cultural capital, society no longer needs to use sumptuary laws to regulate people.

There are many similarities between sumptuary laws in China and other countries. The failure of sumptuary laws seemed doomed. Laws were detailed and rarely fully and effectively enforced. With the rise of individualism's social, moral, and economic force, neither law nor government can control what people wear and use. The demise of sumptuary laws is a sign of the transition from premodernity.

⁵¹⁰ Geczy, Adam. *Fashion and Orientalism: Dress, Textiles and Culture from the 17th to the 21st Century*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013, 16.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

Conclusion

Since the Han Dynasty, people in imperial China had difficulty explaining accidental natural phenomena due to their cognitive level. They could only regard them as signs and predictions for the country's future. After that, the literati and emperors believed that some human activities would also positively or negatively impact the country, and negative impacts were considered "Yao". The book *Wu Xing Zhi* 五行志, which records disasters, links daily necessities such as clothing, carriages, utensils, horses and houses with the rise and fall of the country and social changes due to specific political purposes. In the Ming Dynasty, the connotation of Wu Yao was further enriched. All items considered novel, abnormal, and beautiful by the literati and emperors could be regarded as Wu Yao.

The lower class has long suppressed their material desires in a hierarchical society. The literati and emperors argued that restraining desires and conserving resources benefited the country. During the middle period of the Ming Dynasty, extravagant consumption became prevalent, the social structure underwent significant changes, and the Wu Yao phenomenon reached its peak. Novels, local chronicles, and literary works often described the development of the commodity economy and the rise of material culture. Craftsmen showed off their skills and enhanced their status, creating more exquisite dresses and utensils. Under the influence of fashion at that time, literati gradually changed their disdainful attitude towards luxury and exquisite objects and pursued fancy clothes. They spent considerable money in collecting antiques and required artisans to customise stationery. Some literati published appreciation manuals to promote their elegant taste and lead fashion. Merchants initially had a low status, but they made enormous wealth and transformed their social status through high-level dress and utensils. Ordinary people did not hesitate to borrow money to enjoy luxurious and exotic things, trying to imitate the fashion style and lifestyle of the upper class. In the context of the commodity economy, everyone was immersed in enjoying material culture. Human nature made them obsessed with beautiful items. On the other hand, the admonitions of traditional morality made them, especially the literati, uneasy about novels and luxury goods. Wu was the epitome of

social change, and the word “Yao” expressed the complex emotions of Confucian literati towards social changes.

Analyzing the phenomenon of Wu Yao contributes to a broader debate on imperial China’s material culture and social order. In different periods, Wu Yao shows how rulers and literati influenced mainstream aesthetics and judgment standards. The technical skills of artisans enriched material culture, while merchants helped spread it across the country. As the commodity economy rose, the boundaries between artisans, literati, and merchants blurred. The attitudes of different classes towards material culture, class structure and social order changed. This prosperous material culture also brought harm to imperial China. During the Ming Dynasty, crime increased, political corruption grew, and social norms were disrupted. These changes, particularly among the literati, demonstrate the intricacies of imperial China’s Confucian-based class system, imperial control, and exclusive aspects of the examination system.

Wu Yao also reflects how consumption habits are influenced by the economic and social environment. Luxury consumption was common in wealthy cities, while people in remote villages lived frugally. In the phenomenon of Wu Yao, sumptuary laws were a frequent attempt by rulers to restrict public consumption, distinguish between classes, and protect the rights of the upper class to enjoy material wealth. The enforcement of sumptuary laws was not unique to imperial Chinese rulers. From a global perspective, other countries, such as some early European countries, were included in the scope of the investigation. Comparative research shows that these countries promulgated sumptuary laws similar to those of the Ming Dynasty government. The legislative purpose of these laws was to distinguish classes or solve national problems. Legislators showed tacit understanding regarding establishing supervisory personnel, penalties, and enforcement with Chinese emperors. These sumptuary laws eventually failed due to the cumbersome implementation of legal provisions and the changing social environment. The ultimate failure of sumptuary laws in imperial China and other countries shows that efforts to distinguish classes and manage the public by restricting consumption are futile.

Images



Figure 1.1 Corinthian Skyphos, terracotta, Greece, 7th–6th century BC, $3.8 \times 8.5 \times 5.9$ cm, Walters Art Museum, Washington, D.C.



Figure 1.2 Group of gilded silver objects from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. Purchased by the Metropolitan Museum in 1981 from New York dealer Robert Hecht. Given by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York to the Republic of Italy (Region of Sicily) in 2006.



Figure 1.3 Silver-gilt situla from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 18.5 × 26.8 cm



Figure 1.4 Silver kyathos (ladle) from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 24.7cm.



Figure 1.5 Silver-gilt bowl from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 6.2 × 22 cm.



Figure 1.6 Silver-gilt bowl from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 6.8 × 21 cm.



Figure 1.7 Silver-gilt phiale (libation bowl) from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 2.3 × 14.8 cm.



Figure 1.8 Pair of silver horns from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 15.5cm.



Figure 1.9 Silver-gilt bowl with lid from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 7×3.4 cm, 0.4 kg.



Figure 1.10 Silver-gilt pitcher from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 9.1×8.1 cm.



Figure 1.11 Silver-gilt hemispherical bowl from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 7.7 × 12.7cm.



Figure 1.12 Silver-gilt skyphos (drinking cup) from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 8.8 × 18.5 cm × 13.3 cm.



Figure 1.13 Silver-gilt situla from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 19.6 × 26.3 cm.



Figure 1.14 Silver-gilt emblema (medallion) representing Scylla from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 2 × 10.5 cm, 0.1 kg.



Figure 1.15 Silver-gilt pyxis (box) with lid from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 2.5 × 9.8 × 9 cm.



Figure 1.16 Silver-gilt arula (small portable altar) with lid from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 11.3 cm. cm



Figure 1.17 Silver-gilt pyxis (box) with lid from the house of Eupolemos at Morgantina(modern Aidone) in Sicily. 3rd century BCE. 5.5 × 8.3 cm

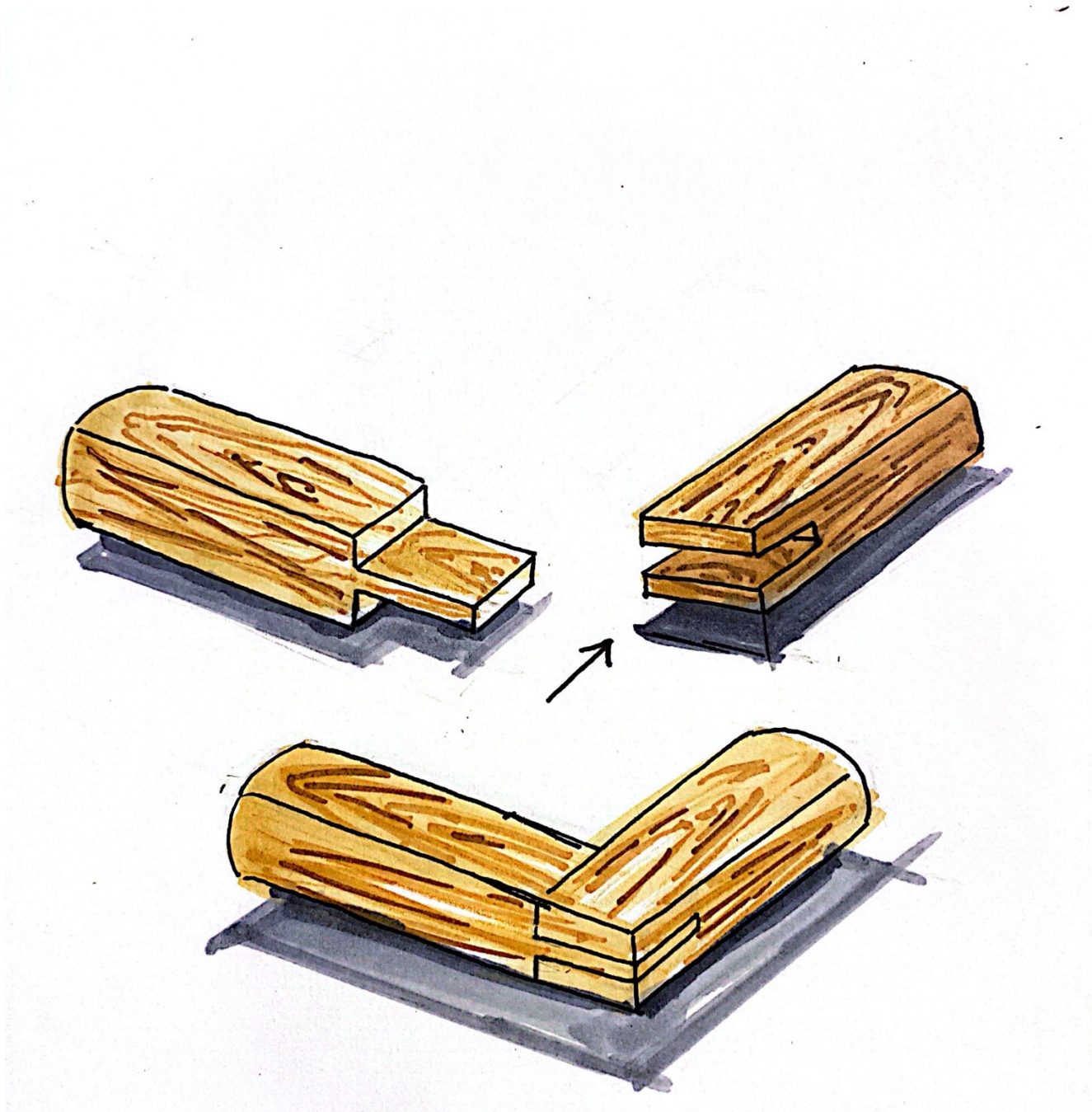


Figure 2.1 Typical mortise-tenon construction, common tenon 直榫.



Figure 2.2 Black lacquer and inlaid screw inlay circle chair, Qing Dynasty, 107 × 64.5 × 48.5cm, The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 2.3 Gu Hongzhong, *The night revels of Han Xizai*, 1163–1224, ink and colors on silk, 28.7 × 335.5cm, The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 2.4 writing desk made of beech, Ming Dynasty, 190 × 36.5 × 78.5cm, The Palace Museum, Beijing.



a



b

Figure 2.5 white jade crouching tiger (a) Wei, Jin and Northern and Southern Dynasties (220–589), $5 \times 2.5 \times 4$ cm, National Palace Museum, Beijing. (b) Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), $5.6 \times 2.2 \times 1.1$ cm, National Palace Museum, Beijing.

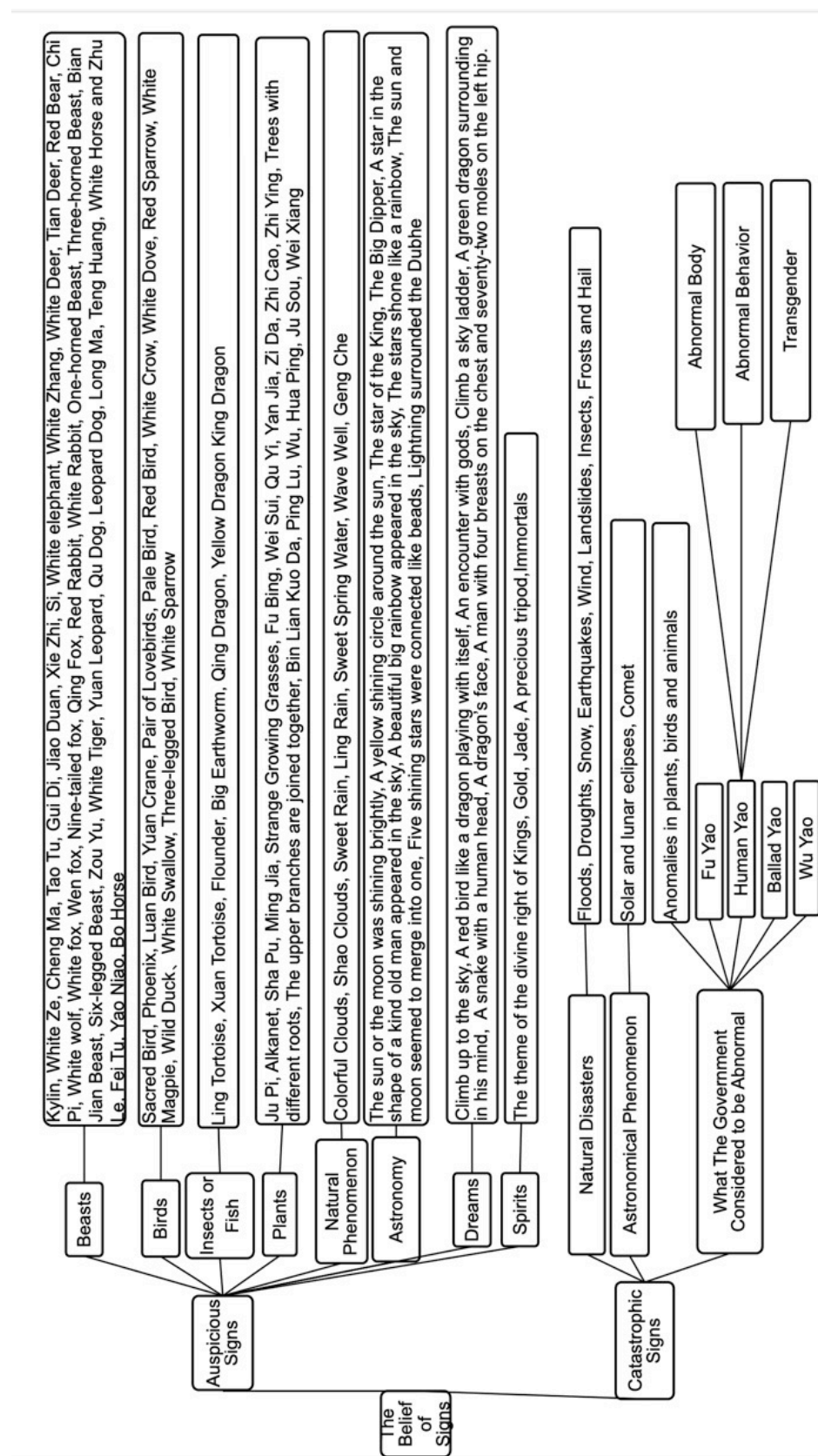


Figure 3.1 The belief of signs.



Figure 3.2 Lady waving fans, Tang Dynasty, 204.8 × 33.7cm, The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 3.3 Chou Ying, *View the list of successful candidates*, Ming Dynasty, 34.4 × 638 cm, Taipei Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 4.1 Lotus shoes, Museum Cluster Jianchan, Si Chuan.



Figure 4.2 First class civilian official uniform with crane pattern of Bu Zi 补子, Qing Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 4.3 Black gauze hat, Ming Dynasty, Shanghai History Museum, Shanghai.



Figure 4.4 Anon, *The Beauty in the Snow* 出警入跸图, Ming Dynasty, 92.10×3003.6cm, Taipei Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 4.5 Leng Mei, *The Beauty in the Snow* 雪艳图, Qing Dynasty, 60 × 105 cm, Shanghai Museum, Shanghai.



Figure 4.6 Xuande stove 宣德炉, Qing Dynasty, 19.2 × 14 cm, The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 5.1 1 Pottery basin with patterns of dancing people , Yang Shao 仰韶 Culture (3000BC-5000BC), National Museum of China, Beijing.



Figure 5.2 the Twelve Decorative Motifs, The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 5.3 Hat with nine jade strings, Ming Dynasty, Shandong Museum, Shandong.



Figure 5.4 Jade Jue 玦, Yang Shao 仰韶 Culture (6200 BC–5000 BC), The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 5.5 Jade Zhang 玉璋, Neolithic Period, The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 5.6 Zhang Xuan. Guo Lady Spring Tour 虢国夫人游春图, Song Dynasty, Liaoning Provincial Museum, Liaoning.



Figure 5.7 Line picture the Tang tomb of Wu Hui, Tang Dynasty, Shanxi History Museum, Shanxi.



Figure 5.8 The Lady of the Tomb of Dun Huang, Tang Dynasty, Dun Huang Museum, Gansu.



Figure 5.9 The Lady of the Tomb of Ashina Zhong 阿史那忠, Tang Dynasty, Shanxi History Museum, Shanxi.



Figure 5.10 Female servants in the mural of the Tomb of the Princess of Xincheng
新城, Tang Dynasty, Shanxi History Museum, Shanxi.



Figure 5.11 Female servants in the mural of the Tomb of Li Feng 李凤, Tang Dynasty, Shanxi History Museum, Shanxi.



Figure 5.12 Female servants in the mural of the Tomb of Yong Tai 永泰, Tang

Dynasty, Shanxi History Museum, Shanxi.



Figure 5.13 Female servants on the stone coffin of the tomb of Prince Zhang Huai 章怀太子, Tang Dynasty, Shanxi History Museum, Shanxi.



Figure 5.14 Lady wearing wei hats 帷帽, Tang Dynasty, National Museum of China, Beijing.



Figure 5.15 Lady with the falling horse bun 堕马髻, Han Dynasty, Xi'an Museum, Xi'an.



Figure 5.16 Lady wearing the Dropping to Shoulder Hair Crown 垂肩冠 in the White Sands Tomb Murals 白沙墓, Song Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.

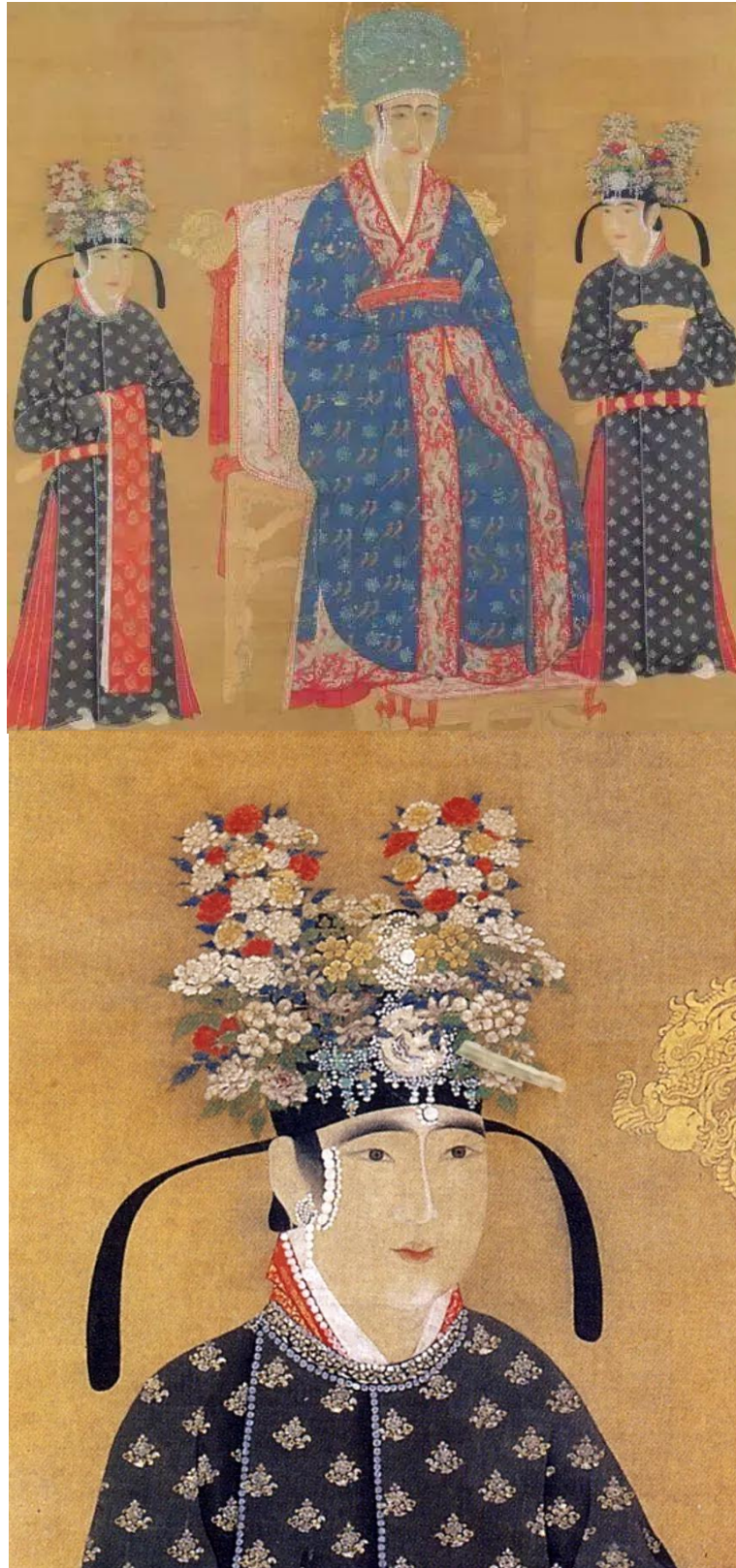


Figure 5.17 Female servants wearing One-Year Scene 一年景 crown in the Portrait of Empress Renzong 宋仁宗皇后像, Song Dynasty, Taipei Palace Museum, Tai Pei.



Figure 6.1 Gold hairpin, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang(1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *l.* 23.3 *cm.*



Figure 6.2 Gold hairpin, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *l.* 16 *cm.*



(a)

(b)

Figure 6.3 Gold hairpin, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan. *l(a)*. 10.6 cm, *l(b)*.13.4 cm.



(a)

(b)

Figure 6.4 Jade ornaments, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan. *dia(a)*. 4.9 cm, *dia(b)*.6.3 cm.



(a)

(b)

Figure 6.5 Jade ornaments, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan. *l(a).59cm, l(b).68.5 cm.*



(a)

(b)

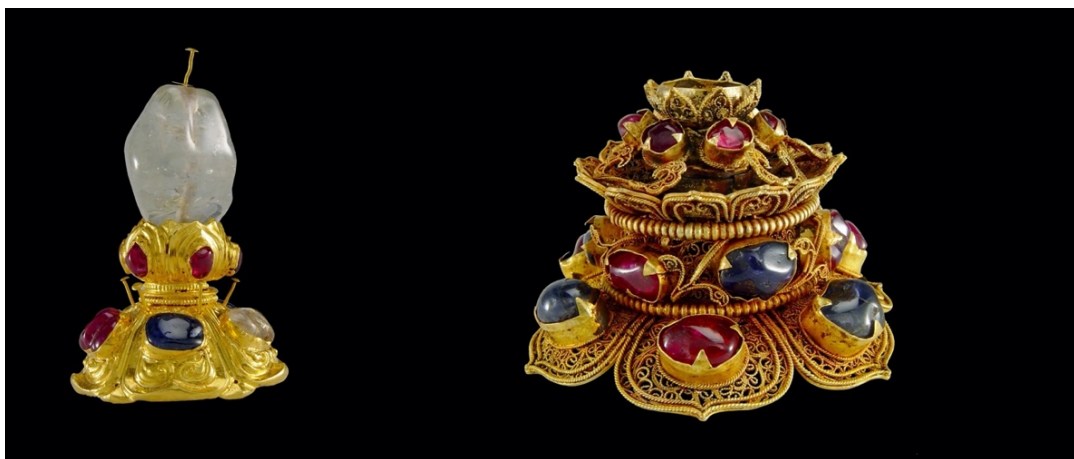
Figure 6.6 Jade ornament, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *l(a). 15.8cm, l(b).6.6 cm.*



(a)

(b)

Figure 6.7 Gold hat ornament inlaid with jewels, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *h(a)*.7.5cm, *h(b)*.6.3cm.



(a)

(b)

Figure 6.8 Gold hat ornament inlaid with jewels, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *h(a)*.7.5cm, *h(b)*.3.4cm.



(a)

(b)

Figure 6.9 Gold ingot, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *l(a).13cm, h(b).14cm.*



(a)

(b)

Figure 6.10 Gold bracelet, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *dia(a).6.2cm, dia (b).6.5–7.5cm.*



Figure 6.11 Turquoise gold earrings, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *h.5.5cm*.



Figure 6.12 Gold belt inlaid with jewels, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan.



Figure 6.13 Gold bowl, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *dia*(a).41cm, *dia* (b).15.6cm.



Figure 6.14 Sword, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *l.* 65cm.



Figure 6.15 Gold vajra, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, *l.* 2.4–2.6cm.



(a)

(b)

Figure 6.16 Gold ornament, from the tomb of the Prince Zhuang of Liang (1411–1441), Ming Dynasty, Hu Bei Museum, Wuhan, (a) *l.* 14.2, *dia.* 7.8cm, (b) *dia.* 4cm.



Figure 6.17 The colorful ink with mandarin ducks made by Fang Yulu 方于鲁, 9.6 × 1.6cm, Ming Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 6.18 The tea pots made by Shi Dabin 时大彬, Ming Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 7.1 Bai Jian dress 百裥裙, Ming Dynasty, Shandong Museum, Jinan.

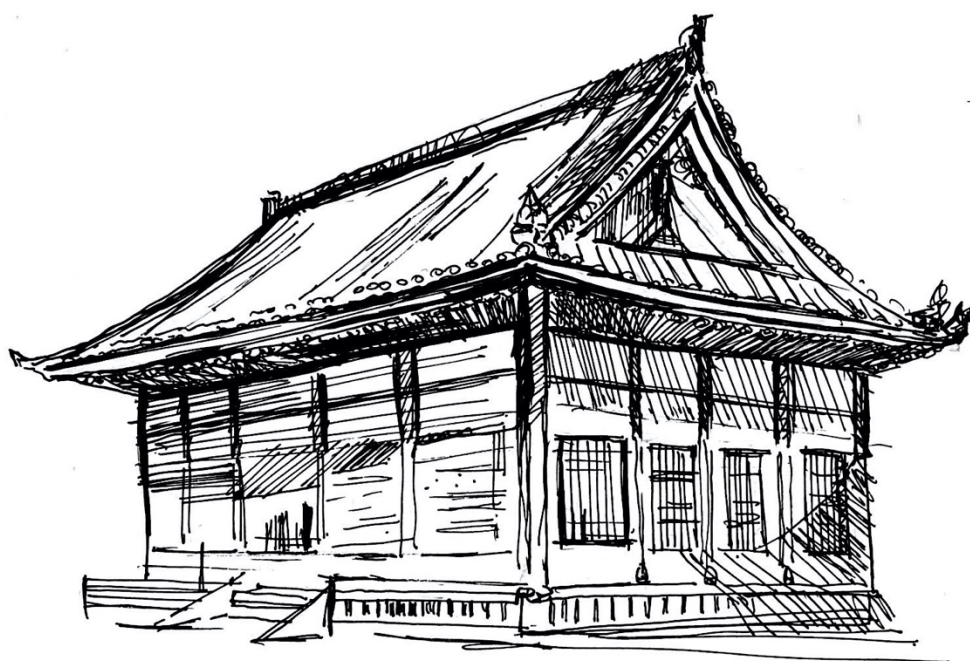


Figure 7.2 Gable-and-hip Roof 歇山顶 of Nanchan Temple 南禅寺, China, Wutai.



Figure 7.3 Animal sculpture on the roof, The Forbidden City.



Figure 7.4 Guyi Garden, China, Shanghai.



Figure 7.5 People and sedan, Anon, *Chu Jing Ru Bi Tu* 出警入跸图, Ming Dynasty, 92.10 × 3003.6cm, Taipei Palace Museum, Taipei.



Figure 8.1 Sprinkled gold lacquer stationery box, Qing Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 8.2 Official hat chair, Ming Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 8.3 Screen flat-top table, Ming Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.



Figure 8.4 Chair in study room, Ming Dynasty, The Palace Museum, Beijing.

Bibliography

- Ai Na Ju Shi 艾衲居士. *Dou Peng Xian Hua* 豆棚闲话, Volume 10, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1994.
- Alexander, Catherine, Agustin Diz, Stephen Gudeman, Chris Hann, Deborah James, David Neves, Tomasz Rakowski, et al. *Thrift and Its Paradoxes: From Domestic to Political Economy*. Edited by Catherine Alexander and Daniel Sosna. New York: Berghahn Books, 2022.
- Allan, Sarah. *The Way of Water and Sprouts of Virtue*. State University of New York Press, 1997.
- Anon. *Ming Shen Zong Shi Lu* 明神宗实录. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1968.
- Anon. *Ming Shilu* 明实录. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1966.
- Anon. *Wu Cheng Xian Zhi* 乌程县志, Volume 4, Beijing: National Library China Publishing House, 2006.
- Anon. *Tai Kang Xian Zhi* 太康县志, Volume 4, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, photocopied from the edition in 1524.
- Anon. *Ru Meng Lu* 如梦录, Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou Classics Publishing House, 1984.
- Anon. *Wei Shi Xian Zhi* 尉氏县志, Volume 1, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, photocopied from the edition from 1522 to 1566, 1963.
- Anon. Translated by Yang Yifan. *Great Qing Legal Code* 大清律例, Volume 17. Beijing: China Science Publishing Media, 1994.
- Anon. *Qing Shilu* 清实录, Volume 3. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985.
- Anon. *State Papers Published Under the Authority of His Majesty's Commission: King Henry the Eighth [from the State Paper Office, the Chapter House, Westminster, and the Cottonian Library], Henry VIII*, London: G. Eyre and A. Strahan, 1830, no. 3, 3:139.

- Anon. *Recopilación De Leyes De Los Reynos De Las Indias II*, Madrid: Boletín Oficial Del Estado, 1998.
- Anon. *Kangxi Yuzhi Wenji* 康熙帝御制文集, Volume 3. Taipei: Taiwan Student Book Co., Ltd, 1966.
- Anon. *Ming Xianzong Shilu* 明宪宗实录, Volume 66. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1966.
- Anon. edited by Huang Zhangjian. *Compilation of Laws and Regulations of the Ming Dynasty* 明代律例汇编. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology Academia Sinica, 1994.
- Anon. *Ming Dynasty Law* 大明律, Shenyang: Liaoshen Publishing House, 1990.
- Anon. *Min Chao Dong Huan Shi Shi* 民抄董宦事实, *Cong Shu Ji Cheng Xin Bian* 丛书集成新编, Volume 278. Taipei: Xinwenfeng Publishing House, 1985.
- Anon. *Hei Tu Dang* 黑图档, collected in Liaoning Provincial Archives.
- Appadurai, Arjun. *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Ashley, Kathleen, 'Material and symbolic gift-giving', in E. J. Burns, ed. *Medieval Fabrications: Dress, Textiles and other Cultural Imaginings*, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004.
- Association of Chinese Historians. *The Beiyang Army*. Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1988.
- Ban Gu 班固. *Han Shu* 汉书, *Wu Xing Zhi* 五行志. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1962.
- Baldwin, Frances Elizabeth. *Sumptuary Legislation and Personal Regulation in England*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1926.
- Baudrillart, H. J., *Histoire du luxe privé et public depuis l'antiquité jusqu'à nos jours*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1878–80) iii 252.
- Bai Ang 白昂. *Hongzhi Wen Xing Tiao Li Fa Shi Lei Zuan* 弘治问刑条例. Beijing: China Science Publishing Media, 1994.

- Booker, Sparky. "Moustaches, Mantles, and Saffron Shirts: What Motivated Sumptuary Law in Medieval English Ireland?" *Speculum* 96, no. 3 (2021): 726–70.
- Bowsky, William M. *A Medieval Italian Commune: Siena Under the Nine, 1287–1355*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984.
- Brucker, Gene (ed.) *The Society of Renaissance Florence: A Documentary Study*, New York: Harper & Row, 1971.
- Cesare Foucard, *Lo statuto inedito delle nozze vene ziane emanato nell'anno 1299*, Venice: Tipografia del commercio, 1858.
- Chang Jianhua. "On the Changes of Social Consumption Customs in the Ming Dynasty." *Nankai Journal*, no.04(1994):53–63.
- "Clan and Custom in Huizhou in the Early 16th Century." *Soochow Journal of History*, no.19(2008):1–26.
- "Clan and Customs: A Microcosm of Social Changes in the Middle and Late Ming Dynasty Taking the Xu family in Jiangnan, Yuyao, Zhejiang as an Example." *Jilin University Journal*, no.19(2008):1–26.
- Chamley, Christophe. "A Paradox of Thrift in General Equilibrium without Forward Markets." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 10, no.6(2012):1215–1235.
- Chen Baoliang, "The Ethical and Fashionable Worlds of Ancient Chinese Clothing", *Art & Design Research*, no.04(2013):32–39.
- General History of Chinese Customs*. Shanghai Literature & Art Publishing House, 2005.
- Social Changes in the Ming Dynasty*. Chongqing University Press, 2014.
- Piao Yao De Chuan Tong Ming Dai She Hui Sheng Huo Chang Juan*. Changsha: Hunan Publishing House, 1996.
- "New terms and new life: the vitality and diversity of social life in the late Ming Dynasty." *Chinese Culture Research*, no.01(2004):11–13.
- Chen Xuewen. "The Economic Thought of the Mid-Ming Dynasty that Extravagance can Lead to Wealth." *Zhejiang Academic Journal*, no.04(1984):27–29.
- Chen Guodong. "Academic Issues Involved in the Study of Lu Ji's Anti-Luxury Debate Costumes." *New History*, no.02(1994):159–179.

- Chen Guying. *Laozi Jin Zhu Jin Yi* 老子今注今译, Translated by Chen Guying.
Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2020.
- Zhou Yi Jin Zhu Jin Yi* 周易今注今译. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2005.
- Cheng Nianqi, The Mundane Interests of the Literati in Jiangnan Region in the Ming Dynasty, *Historical Review*, no.03(2002):35–46.
- Cheng Hao 程颢 and Cheng Yi 程颐. *Er Cheng Ji* 二程集. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1981.
- Cheng Yizhong. *Song and Yuan Novelists' Collected Writing*. Qi Lu Press, 2000.
- Christopher J, Berry. *The Idea of Luxury A Conceptual and Historical Investigation*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Chen Shiqi. *Mind Guan Shou Gong Ye De Yan Jiu*. Wuhan: Hubei People's Press, 1958.
- Chen Zilong 陈子龙. *Ming Jing Shi Wen Bian* 明经世文编, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2002.
- Chen Shengshao 陈盛韶. *Ming Hui Dian* 问俗录, Volume 5, Beijing: National Library China Publishing House, 1983.
- Confucius. *The Analects* 论语. Translated by Yang Bojun. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1980.
- Jia Yu* 家语. Translated by Wang Su. Guilin: Publishing Limited, 2019.
- Chih-ho Wu. *Ming People's Tea Drinking Life Culture*. Taipei: Group of Ming Studies, 1996.
- “Leisurely Shanshui Lifestyle of Ming Dynasty.” *Chinese Studies*, no.06(2002):101–130.
- Chu Shaotang, “Li Shi Shi Qi Taihu Liu Yu Zhu Yao Shui Xi De Bian Qian”, *The Chinese Historical Geography*, no.01(1984): 43–51.
- Craig Clunas. *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*. Cambridge Polity Press, 1991.
- Screen of Kings: Royal Art and Power in Ming China*. Vol. 45175. London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2013.
- Dai Jin 戴金. Translated by Yang Yifan. *Huang Ming Tiao Fa Shi Lei Zuan* 皇明条

- 法事类纂. Beijing: China Science Publishing Media, 1994.
- De Bary, Wm. Theodore, Wing-tsit Chan, Joseph. Adler, Irene. Bloom, and Richard. Lufrano. *Sources of Chinese Tradition, Volume 1, From Earliest Times to 1600*, 2nd ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Denholm-Young, N., and H. Kantorowicz. “De Ornatu Mulierum: A Consilium of Antonius de Rosellis with an Introduction on Fifteenth Century Sumptuary Legislation.” *Bibliofilia* 35, no. 8/9 (1933): 315–335.
- Del Giudice, G., *Una legge suntuaria inedita del 1290: Commento storico critico*, Napoli: Tipografia della Regia Università ,1887.
- Diego de Encinas, *Cedulario indiano: Reproducción facsímil de la edición única de 1596*, vol. 4, Madrid: Cultura Hispánica, 1945–1946.
- Dillon, Matthew, and Lynda Garland. *The Ancient Romans : A Social and Political History from the Early Republic to the Death of Augustus*. London: Routledge, 2015.
- Doda, Hilary. “‘Saide Monstrous Hose’: Compliance, Transgression and English Sumptuary Law to 1533.” *Textile History* 45, no. 2 (2014): 171–91.
- Dong Gu 董穀. *Bi Li Za Cun 碧里杂存*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985.
- Dong Han 董含. *San Gang Shi Lüe 三冈识略*, Volume 2. Shenyang: Liaoning Education Press, 2000.
- Dong Jiazun. “Statistics of Chaste Women Throughout the Ages”. In *Collection of Essays on Chinese Women’s History*, edited by Bao Jialin. Taipei: Daw Shang Publishing Co., Ltd, 1979.
- Dorothy Ko. *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China*. California: Stanford University Press, 1994.
- Dow, George Francis, and Mary G. Thresher, eds. *Records and Files of the Quarterly Courts of Essex County, Massachusetts*. Salem, Massachusetts: Essex Institute, 1911.
- Eicher, Joanne Bubolz. *Dress and Ethnicity: Change Across Time and Space*. Oxford: Berg Publishers Limited, 1995.
- Fabretti, A., ‘Statuti e ordinamenti suntuari intorno al vestire degli uomini e delle donne in Perugia dall’anno 1206 al 1536 (raccolti ed annotati)’, *Memorie della reale accademia di scienze di Torino*, ser. 2b, 38 (1888).

- Fan Chengda 范成大., *et al. Wu Jun Zhi* 吴郡志, Volume 29, Shanghai: Jiangsu Ancient Book Publishing House, 1986.
- Fan Zushu 范祖述. *Hang Su Yi Feng* 杭俗遗风. Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House, 1989.
- Fan Zuyu 范祖禹. *Tang Jian* 唐鉴, Volume 21. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1984.
- Fan Ye. *Hou Han Shu* 后汉书. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1965.
- Fan Lian 范濂. *Yun Jian Ju Mu Chao* 云间据目抄. Taipei: Xin Xing Book Company, 1962.
- Fan Jinmin. *The Development of Commerce in Jiangnan During the Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Nanjing University Publishing House, 1998.
- Fan Shizhi. "The Folk Belief and Luxury Trend in South of Yangtze Towns." *Journal of Fudan University*, no.05(2004):107–116.
- Fang Xuanling. *Jin Book* 晋书. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974.
- Fan Jinmin. "Suzhou with its style and mode as a fashion leader in the Ming and Qing Dynasties." *Journal of Nanjing University*, no.50(2013):123–141.
- Feng Xianliang. "Grave and Free Graveyard: Life and Environmental Protection in Jiangnan in the Ming and Qing Dynasties." *Chinese Social History Review*, no.07(2006):161–184.
- Feng Menglong 冯梦龙. *Jing Shi Tong Yan* 警世通言, Fuzhou: Fujian People's Publishing House, 1981.
- Yu Shi Ming Yan* 喻世明言, Changsha: Yulu Press, 1989.
- Zhi Nang Bu* 智囊补, Volume 27. Haerbin: Heilongjiang People's Publishing House, 1987.
- Gu Jin Gai Tan* 古今谭概, Volume 21, Nanjing: Phoenix Publishing House, 2007.
- Shou Ning Dai Zhi* 寿宁待志, Fuzhou: Fujian People's Publishing House, 1983.
- Feng Guifen 冯桂芬. *Suzhou Fu Zhi* 苏州府志, Volume 70, Nanjing : Jiangsu

- People's Publishing House Book Company, 1991.
- Fornaro, Luca, and Federica Romei. "The Paradox of Global Thrift." *The American Economic Review* 109, no. 11 (2019): 3745–3779.
- Francesca Bray. *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Frati, Lodovico. *La vita privata in Bologna dal secolo XIII al XVII*. Vol. 2. N. Zanichelli, 1900.
- Fu Xiaotong. 2019. "Materialism: A Study of Wu Yao in Ancient China". PhD dissertation, Nanjing University of the Arts.
- Fu Yiling. *An Exploration of the Citizen Economy in Jiangnan in the Ming Dynasty*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2007.
- Theory of Social and Economic Changes in Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2007.
- Fu Sheng. *Shang Shu Da Guan 尚书大观*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1995.
- Gabriel Le Bras, *Institutions ecclésiastiques de la Chrétienté médiévale*, vol 2., Paris: Histoire de l'Eglise depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours, 1959–1964.
- Giulio Bistort. *Il magistrato alle pompe nella Repubblica di Venezia*. Bologna: Forni, 1912.
- Geczy, Adam. *Fashion and Orientalism: Dress, Textiles and Culture from the 17th to the 21st Century*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013.
- Gong Wei 龚伟. *Chao Lin Bi Tan Jia Lu 巢林笔谈*, Volume 5, Beijing : Zhonghua Book Company, 1981.
- Greenfield, Kent R., *Sumptuary Law in Nürnberg: A Study in Paternal Government*, Vol. XXXVI, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Johns Hopkins Press, 1918.
- Gu Qiyuan 顾起元. *Ke Zuo Zhui Yu 客座赘语*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1987.
- Gu Yanwu 顾炎武. *Ri Zhi Lu 日知录*, Volume 12. Jinan: Anhui University Press, 2007.
- Gu Lu 顾禄. *Qing Jia Lu 清嘉录*, Volume 7, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1986.

- Guanzi 管子. *Guanzi 管子*, Volume 99. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2004.
- Guo Moruo. *Chinese History Manuscript*. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1962.
- Harte, N. B., 'State Control of Dress and Social Change in Pre-Industrial England', in D. C. Coleman and A. H. John (eds.), *Trade, Government and Economy in Pre-Industrial England: Essays presented to F. J. Fisher*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976.
- Han Jun 韩浚., et al. *Jiadin Xian Zhi 嘉定县志*, Volume 2. Taipei: Cheng Wen Publishing Company, 1983.
- Han Feizi 韩非子. *Han Feizi 韩非子*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2010.
- Hai Rui 海瑞. *Hai Rui Ji 海瑞集*, Beijing : Zhonghua Book Company, 1962.
- Han Dacheng. *Ming Cheng Shi Yan Jiu*. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1991.
- He Ning. *Huainanzi 淮南子*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1998.
- He Qiaoyuan 何乔远. *Min Shu 闽书*, Volume 38, Fuzhou: Fujian People's Publishing House, 1994.
- He Liangjun 何良俊. *Si You Zhai Cong Shuo 四友斋丛说*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959.
- He Hanlin Collection 何翰林集*, Volume 12, Taipei: National Central Library, photocopied from the edition in 1565, 1971.
- Henry F. Berry, ed., *Statutes and Ordinances, and Acts of the Parliament of Ireland: King John to Henry V, Ire., John-Hen. VI* Dublin: henceforth Stat., 1907, 88–89.
- Hooper, Wilfrid. "The Tudor Sumptuary Laws." *The English Historical Review* XXX, no. CXIX (1915): 433–49.
- Huang, Philip C. *The Peasant Family and Rural Development in the Yangzi Delta, 1350–1988*. Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Hunt, Alan. *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.
- Hu Rong 胡容, *Wei Xian Zhi 威县志*, in *Tian Yi Ge Cang Ming Dai Fang Zhi Xuan Kan Xu Bian 天一阁藏明代方志选刊续编*, Volume 2, Shanghai Bookstore

- Publishing House, 1990.
- Hu Xiangqin. "On the Nature of Poem-Yao in WUXINGZHI of SONGSHU." *Journal of Historiography*, no.02(2014):18–25.
- Huan Kuan 桓宽. *Yan Tie Lun 盐铁论*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1992.
- Huang, Nengfu, Chen, Juanjuan. *The History of Chinese Clothing*. Beijing: China Tourism Publishing House, 1995.
- Huang Junzai 黄钧宰. *Jin Hu Qi Mo 金壶七墨*, Volume 1. Shanghai Wenming Book Company, 1895.
- Ichisada Miyazaki. Translated by Conrad Schirokauer. *China's Examination Hell: The Civil Service Examinations of Imperial China*, Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 1976.
- Jiang Yikui 蒋一葵. *Changan Ke Hua 长安客话*, Volume 2. Beijing Ancient Book Publishing House, 1982.
- Jiang Zhun 姜准. *Qi Hai Suo Tan 岐海琐谈*, The Publishing House of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, 2002.
- Ji Yun 纪昀. *Sheng Zu Ren Huangdi Shengxun 圣祖仁皇帝圣训*, *Siku Quanshu 四库全书*, Volume 24. Beijing: National Library of China, photocopied from the edition in 1731.
- Jourdan, Decrusy., (François André) Isambert, Armet, and A. H. (Alphonse-Honoré) Taillandier. *Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises depuis l'an 420 jusqu'à la révolution de 1789*, vol 2. Paris: Chez Belin-Le-Prieur, 1822.
- Killerby, Catherine Kovesi. *Sumptuary Law in Italy, 1200–1500*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Kraemer Raine, Pierre., *Le Luxe et Les Lois Somptuaries Au Moyen-Âge*, Paris: E. Sagot, 1920.
- Kuang Zhong 况钟. *Kuang Tai Shou Ji 况太守集*, Volume 12, Nanjing : Jiangsu People's Publishing House Book Company, 1981.
- Laozi. *Tao Te Chi 道德经*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2021.
- Lan Ling Xiao Xiao Sheng 兰陵笑笑生. *The Plum in the Golden Vase*. Beijing:

- Zhonghua Book Company, 2005.
- Li Yu 李渔, *Xian Qing Ou Ji* 闲情偶寄. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2014.
- Li Le 李乐, *Jian Wen Za Ji* 见闻杂记, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1986.
- Li Jinghong, “Fu Yao Phenomenon in Song Dynasty”, *Journal of Hengshui University*, no.16(2014):114–116.
- Li Jianguo and Meng Lin, “Fu Yao before Tang Dynasty”, *Wuhan University Journal* (Philosophy & Social Science), no.04(2006):427–433.
- Li Zhenfeng, “A Study on the Oracle Inscriptions and the Literature and Art in Shang.” PhD dissertation, Harbin Normal University, 2012.
- Li Xueqin. *The Thirteen Classic Commentaries—Zhou Yi* 十三经注疏. Beijing University Press, 1999.
- Li Hua. *All Tang Texts* 全唐文. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2001.
- Li Le 李乐, *Jian Wen Za Ji* 见闻杂记, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1986.
- Li Bocong. “Jian Lun Jiangnan Di Qu De Jie Din”, *Journal of Chinese Social and Economic History*, no.01(1991):100–105.
- Li Dou 李斗. *Yangzhou Huafang Lu* 扬州画舫录, Volume 14. Yangzhou: Jiangsu Guangling Ancient Book Publishing House Company, 1984.
- Li Xu 李诩. *Ji An Lao Ren Man Bi* 戒庵老人漫笔, Volume 3. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1982.
- Lien-sheng Yang. *Studies in Chinese Institutional History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961.
- Linda Cooke, Johnson. *Cities of Jiangnan in Late Imperial China*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.
- Lin Liyue. “Costumes and Customs: The Vogue and Opinion on Luxury Clothes of Ordinary People in Late Ming China.” *New History*, no.03(1999):111–157.
- “Ming Sumptuary laws.” *Bulletin of Historical Research*, no.22 (1994):57–84.
- “Ming Dai Jin She Ling Xin Tan.” *Bulletin of Historical Research*, no.22(1994):57–84.
- Ling Mengchu 凌濛初. *Er Ke Pai An Jing Qi* 二刻拍案惊奇, Volume 31. Nanjing:

- Phoenix Publishing House, 2010.
- Liu Lu, “Textual Research on the Origin of Costume Demon: On Weird Costume under the Unification of Costume in Han Dynasty”, *The Science Education Article Collects*, no.02(2016):168–169.
- Liu Zhiqin. *A Preliminary Study on Urban Customs in the Late Ming Dynasty*. Shanghai:Fudan University Press, 1984.
- Liu Tongbiao, Cai Kejiao. “On the Phenomenon of Wenzhou Folk Custom Deviation in Late Ming Dynasty.” *Journal of Wenzhou University*, no.01(2007):36–41.
- Liu Shipai. *Liu Shipai's Pre-Hin Hai Essays*, Zhongxi Book Company, 2012.
- Liu Wenying. *Dream Superstition and Dream Exploration*. Beijing: China Social Science Press, 1989.
- Liu Yiqing. *You Ming Lu 幽明录*. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1999.
- Liu Yiqing, Yu Yizheng. *A Brief View of the Imperial Capital*. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2001.
- Liu Yuqing. *Totem Mythology and Traditional Chinese Life*. Beijing: People's Publishing House, 2002.
- Liu Weiqian 刘惟谦. *Ming Law 大明律*. Beijing: Law Press, 1999.
- Liu Kexiang. *Complete History of the Qing Dynasty*, Volume 10. Shenyang : Liaoning People's Publishing House, 1991.
- Lu Zigang 陆子冈. Translated by Wang Shixiang. *Xiu Shi Lu Jie Shuo 髹饰录解说*. Beijing: SDX Joint Publishing Company, 2013.
- Lu Renlong 陆人龙. *Xing Shiyan 型世言*, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1992.
- Lu Ji 陆楫. *Ming Ren Wen Ji Yu Ming Dai Yan Jiu 明人文集与明代研究*. Taipei: The Association for Ming Studies, 2001.
- Mamoru Kawakats. 明清江南市镇社会史研究—空間と社会形成の歴史学. Tokyo: 汲古叢書, 1999.
- Manniche, Lise. *Sacred Luxuries : Fragrance, Aromatherapy, and Cosmetics in Ancient Egypt*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1999.

- Mao Taizheng 毛泰徵 and Qin Jingsui 秦荊燧. *Heyin Xian Zhi Ke Hua* 河阴县志, Volume 4. A blockprint in 1691. Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Library, 2014.
- Marx Karl, Ben Fowkes, Ernest Mandel. *Capital Volume I A Critique of Political Economy*. London: Pelican Books, 1976.
- Masao Mori. 明代江南土地制度の研究. Kyoto: 図書印刷同朋舎, 1988.
- 江南デルタ市鎮研究 歴史学と地理学からの接近. The University of Nagoya Press, 1992.
- 明末の社會關係における秩序の変動について. Tokyo: 汲古書院, 2006.
- Masatoshi Tanaka. 中国における地方都市の手工業 : 江南の製糸・絹織物業を中心に. Tokyo: 学生社, 1982.
- Maynard Keynes, B John. “From Keynes to Roosevelt: Our Recovery Plan Assayed: The British Economist Writes an Open Letter to the President Finding Reasons, in Our Policies, for Both Hopes and Fears.” *The New York Times*, December 31, 1933.
- Melissa Macauley. *Social Power and Legal Culture*. Stanford University Press, 1998.
- Mengzi. *Mengzi* 孟子. Translated by Fang Yong. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2010.
- M. Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII's England*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009.
- Mio Kishimoto. 明清交替と江南社会 17 世紀中国の秩序問題. University of Tokyo Press, 1999.
- Muzzarelli, Maria Giuseppina, ““Contra formam statutorum”: regole, controlli e provvedimenti sanzionatori in materia suntuaria. Il caso di Bologna”, in Didier Lett (ed.), *Statuts, écritures et pratiques sociales dans les sociétés de la Méditerranée occidentale à la fin du Moyen Âge (XIIe-XVe siècle). Les statuts vus de l'extérieur: les références à la norme dans les sources de la pratique*, Rome: École Française de Rome, 2018.
- La legislazione suntuaria. Secoli XIII–XVI. Emilia-Romagna*. Umbria: Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali. Direzione generale degli archivi,

2002.

- Montesquieu, Baron de, ‘Consequences of the Different Principles of the Three Governments with Respect to Sumptuary Laws, Luxury, and the Condition of Women’, in *The Spirit of the Laws*, trans. T. Nugent, New York, 1949.
- Naitō Konan. Translated by Xia Yingyuan. *General History of China*, Volume 2. Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2004.
- Newett, Mary Margaret, “The Sumptuary Laws of Venice in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries”, in T.F. Tout and J. Tait (eds), *Historical Essays by Members of the Owens College*, Manchester: The University Press, 1907.
- Neer, Richard T. *Art & Archaeology of the Greek World: A New History, C.2500–C.150 BCE*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2012.
- Nico Ottaviani (ed.), *La legislazione suntuaria. Secoli XIII–XVI*. Umbria.
- Niu Jianqiang . *Ming Dai Zhong Hou Qi She Hui Bian Qian Yan Jiu*. Taipei: Weijin Publishing House, 1997.
- Ouyang Xiu 欧阳修. *The New Tang History 新唐书*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1975.
- The Old Tang History 旧唐书*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2002.
- Pandiani, Emilio. *Vita privata genovese nel Rinascimento*. Vol. 47. Società ligure di storia patria, 1915.
- Pan Xiaoming, “A Humble Opinion on Fu Yao in Ancient China”, *Zhejiang Arts & Crafts*, no.01 (1998):15–19.
- Peng Huasheng 捧花生. *Hua Fang Yu Tan 画舫余谭, Xiang Yan Cong Shu*, Volume IX. Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2014.
- Putnam, Bertha Haven. *Proceedings before the Justices of the Peace in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries: Edward III to Richard III*. London: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne, 1938, Ivi.
- Por La Real Academia de la Historia, *Córtés de los Antiguos Reinos de León y de Castilla*, Madrid: Imprenta Y Estereotipia De M.Rivadeneyra, 1861–1908, vol. I.
- Qian Xiaohong. “Extravagance and Its Evolution in the Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty.” *Historical Research*, no.04(2002):96–117.

- Qian Yong 钱泳. *lv Yuan Cong Hua 履园丛话*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1979.
- Qian Chun 钱春. *Hu Xiang Wu Lue 湖湘五略, Si Ku Quan Shu Cun Mu Cong Shu 四库全书存目丛书*, Volume 65. Jinan: Qilu Press, 1997.
- Qiu Zhonglin, “Warmth, Ostentation, and Power: A Culture History of Valuable Furs in the Ming Dynasty.” *Bulletin of the Institute of History and Philology Academia Sinica*, no.80(2009):555–631.
- “The Changing Process of Social Atmosphere in Beijing during the Ming Dynasty from the Repeated Application of Bans.” *Tamkang History Review*, no.04 (1992):67–88.
- Qu Tuiyuan 瞿蜕园. *Chun Lu Suo Wen Lu 钝庐所闻录*. Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 1997.
- Rainey, Ronald Eugene. “*Sumptuary Legislation in Renaissance Florence*”, PhD thesis, University Microfilms International, 1985.
- Redfield, Robert. *Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach to Civilization*. The University of Chicago Press, 1956.
- Riello, Giorgio, and Ulinka Rublack, eds. *The Right to Dress: Sumptuary Laws in a Global Perspective, c. 1200–1800*. Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Robert Bartlett, “Symbolic Meanings of Hair in the Middle Ages,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 4 (1994): 43–60.
- Romolo Caggese, ed., *Statuti della Repubblica Fiorentina*, Liber V, rubr. V II, on funerals and weddings, Firenze, 1910.
- Rossini, Giuseppe, ed. *Statuta Faventiae*. Vol. 28, no. 1–6. N. Zanichelli, 1929.
- Roper, Lyndal. “Going to Church and Street’: Weddings in Reformation Augsburg.” *Past & Present*, no. 106 (1985): 62–101.
- Ruan Kuisheng 阮葵生. *Cha Yu Ke Hua 茶余客话*, Volume 4. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1960.
- Samuelson, Paul Anthony. *Economics: An Introductory Analysis*. 5th ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1948.
- Sayers, William. “Early Irish Attitudes toward Hair and Beards, Baldness and Tonsure”, *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 44, no. 1 (1991): 154–189.

- Seán Duffy, “The Problem of Degeneracy,” in *Law and Disorder in Thirteenth-Century Ireland: The Dublin Parliament of 1297*, ed. James Lydon, Dublin, 1997.
- Serena Rovai. *Luxury the Chinese Way: The Emergence of a New Competitive Scenario*. 1st ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016.
- Shaw, Frances J. “Sumptuary legislation in Scotland.” *Juridical Review* 24 (1979): 81–115.
- Shen Yue 沈约. *Song Shu* 宋书. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974.
- Shen Kuo 沈括. *Meng Xi Bi Tan* 梦溪笔谈. Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2003.
- Shen Defu 沈德符. *Wan Li Ye Huo Bian* 万历野获编. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959.
- Shen Bang 沈榜. *Wan Shu Za Ji* 宛署杂记, Volume 3, Volume 6. Beijing Ancient Book Publishing House, 1982.
- Shen Qingya 沈青崖, Liu Yuyi 刘於義, *Shan Xi Tong Zhi* 陕西通志, Volume 45, a photocopy in 1735, collected by Cheng Yu Tung East Asian Library, University of Toronto, 1735.
- Shen Shixing 申时行. *Ming Hui Dian* 明会典. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1989.
- Shi Jingyan. *Shang Shu* 尚书. Lijiang Publishing Limited, 2017.
- Shi Hua 舒化. *Wanli Wen Xing Tiao Li Fa Shi Lei Zuan* 万历问刑条例. Beijing: China Science Publishing Media, 1994.
- Shively, Donald H. “Sumptuary Regulation and Status in Early Tokugawa Japan.” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 25, no. 3–4 (1964): 123–164.
- Skinner, George William. *The City in Late Imperial China*. Taipei: SMC Publishing, 1995.
- Stefani, E., *Legge suntuaria circa il vestire degli uomini e delle donne ordinata intorna all’anno 1432 dalla città di Treviso: Tratta da un testo latino a penna del secolo XI* (Venice, 1880).
- Song Maocheng 宋懋澄. *Jiu Yue Ji* 九禽集, Volume 2. Beijing: China Social

- Sciences Press, 1984.
- Su Er 苏鹗. *Du Yang Za Bian* 杜阳杂编, Volume 21. Taipei: Xin Xing Book Company, 1962.
- Sun Ji. *Ancient Chinese Material Culture*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2014.
- Women in Men's Clothing and Hu Clothing in the Tang Dynasty*. Shanghai: Donghua University Press, 2017.
- Sun Xidan. *The Collected Works of Rites* 礼记集解. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1989.
- Sombart Werner, *Luxury and Capitalism*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1967.
- Tan Sitong 谭嗣同. *Ren Xue* 仁学. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1958.
- Tan Rumu 谈孺木. *Zao Lin Za Zu* 枣林杂俎. Shanghai: New Culture Publishing House, 1934.
- Terrazas Williams, Danielle. "Finer Things: African-Descended Women, Sumptuary Laws, and Governance in Early Spanish America." *Journal of Women's History* 33, no. 3 (2021): 11–35.
- Thorstein Veblen. *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Oxford University Press, 2007.
- The Palace Museum. *Shiliao Xun Kan* 史料旬刊, Volume 34. Beijing National Library of China Publishing House, 1931.
- Timothy Brook. *The Confusions of Pleasure, Commerce and Culture in Ming China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Tian Rucheng 田汝成, *Xi Hu You Lan Zhi Yu* 西湖游览志余, Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1980.
- Tommasi, Girolamo. *Sommario della Storia di Lucca dall'anno 1004 all'anno 1700*. Vol. 10. GP Vieusseux, 1847.
- TK: Ishii Ryōsuke, ed., *Tokugawa kinreikō* 德川禁令考 (1959), 11 vols.
- Tuo Tuo 脱脱. *Song History* 宋史. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2013.
- Vincent, John Martin. *Costume and conduct in the laws of Basel, Bern, and Zurich, 1370–1800*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935.

- Villani, Giovanni, *Croniche storiche di Giovanni, Matteo e Filippo Villani*, ed. F. Gherardi, 7 vols, i (Milan, 1848).
- Wang Hongtai, “Restaurants and Public Social Life in Ming and Qing Dynasties.” *New History*, no.03(2000):1–48.
- “From Consumption Space to Spaces of Consumption—Taverns and Teahouses in the Ming and Qing Cities”, *Studies in Chinese History by Taiwanese Scholars, Life and Culture*. Beijing: Encyclopedia of China Publishing House, 2005.
- Wang Jiafan, “An Analysis of the Nature and Effects of Consumption in Jiangnan during Ming Dynasty and Qing Dynasty.” *Academic Quarterly of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences*, no.02(1988):157–67.
- Wang Weiping. *Research on Jiangnan Cities in the Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 1999.
- Wang Zhijuan. “On the Extravagant Style in Huizhou from the Middle and Late Ming Dynasty to the Qianjia Period.” *Journal of Suzhou College*, no.03(2006):31–33.
- Wang Rigen, Zhang Zongkui. “Looking at the Social Customs of Fujian in the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties from the Wensu Lu.” *The Journal of Chinese Social and Economic History*, no.01(2005):74–82.
- Wang Guowei. *Guan Tang Ji Lin 观堂集林*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1961.
- Wang Fuzhi. *Shang Shu Yin Yi 尚书引义*. Changsha: Yuelu Press, 1988.
- Wang Shixing 王士性, *Guang Zhi Yi 广志绎*, Volume II. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1981.
- Wang Weiping 王卫平. *Ming Qing Jiannan Cheng Shi Yan Jiu 明清时期江南城市史研究*, Beijing: People’s Publishing House, 1999.
- “Changes in Social Styles in Suzhou during the Ming and Qing Dynasties - A Study of the Transmutation of Folkways in the Wu Region II”, *History Research and Teaching*, no.04 1993:17–20.
- Wang Yong 王祿. *Yan Yi Yi Mou Lu 燕翼诒谋录*. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2007.
- Wang Zushe 王祖畬., et al. *Zhen Ze Xian Zhi 震泽县志*, Volume 38, Shanghai:

- Jiangsu Ancient Book Publishing House, 1991.
- Xuan Tong Taicang Zhenyang Xian Zhi* 宣统太仓州镇洋县志, Volume 3, Shanghai: Jiangsu Ancient Book Publishing House, 1991.
- Wang Yingkui 王应奎. *Lu Nan Sui Bi* 柳南随笔, Volume 3, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1983.
- Wang Qi 王锜, *Yu Pu Za Ji Zhi Yi* 寓圃杂记, Volume 5. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1984.
- Wang Rongsheng. *Qing Dynasty History*, Volume 2. Shenyang : Liaoning People's Publishing House, 1991.
- Wenzhen Heng 文震亨. *Treatise* 长物志. Beijing: Gold Wall Press, 2010.
- Wen Zhengming 文徵明. *Wen Zhengming Ji* 文徵明集, Volume 25. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1987.
- Wei Zheng. *Sui Shu* 隋书. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1973.
- Wei Yong 卫泳, Yue Rong Lu 悦容编, *Bi Ji Xiao Da Guan*, Volume V. Taipei: Xinxing Publish House, 1981.
- Wu Chengen. *Xi You Ji* 西游记. People's Literature Publishing House, 1955.
- Wu Han. *Deng Xia Ji*. Beijing: Joint Publishing Company, 1960.
- Wu Jenshu. *She Chi De Nv Ren Ming Qing Jiangnan Fu Nv De Xiao Fei Wen Hua*. Taipei: San Min Book, 2010.
- Wu Lüzhen 吴履震. *Wu Rong Zhi* 五茸志逸, Volume 2. Taipei: Cheng Wen Publishing Company, 1983.
- Wu Renshu. *Luxurious Women: The Consumer Culture of Jiangnan Women in the Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Taipei: San Min Book, 2005.
- “The Consumer Culture of the Literati in the Late Ming Dynasty—An Examination of Household Furniture as a Case Study.” *Zhejiang Journal*, no.06(2005):93–102.
- Urban Pleasures: Leisure Consumption and Spatial Transformation in Jiangnan Cities during the Ming–Qing Period*. Taipei: Institute of Modern History Academia Sinica, 2014.

- Wu Renan. "A Preliminary Study on Social Customs in Jiangnan during the Ming Dynasty." *Social Scientist*, no.02(1987):39–46.
- Wu Shenyuan. "On the Evolution of economic thought in the middle and late Ming Dynasty." *Fudan Journal*, no.03(1984):44–49.
- Wu Qilin. "Luxurious Fashion in the Regions of Emperor Chenghua and Emperor Hongzhi in the Ming Dynasty Shown in Huang Ming Tiao Fa Shi Lei Zuan." *Chinese Social History Review*, no.10(2009):261–280.
- Wu Yunjia 吴允嘉, *Tian Shui Bing Shan Lu* 天水冰山录, Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1937.
- Xie Zhaozhe 谢肇淛. *Wu Za Zu* 五杂俎, Volume 10, Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 1959.
- Xiao Ji. *Wu Xing Da Yi* 五行大义 Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2001.
- Xu Shen 许慎. *The Origin of Chinese Characters* 说文解字. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1963.
- Xu Hong. *The Age of Enlightened Sage: A Collection of Essays on the Social History of the Ming and Qing Dynasties*. New Taipei Linking Publishing Company, 2021.
- Xu Ke 徐珂. *Qing Bai Lei Chao* 清稗类钞, Volume 13. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1984.
- Xu Lin, "Banquets and the Social Communications of the Learners of Jiangnan in Middle and Late Ming Dynasty." *Social Science Front*, no.02(2005):152–156.
- Xu Min. *Restaurants and Public Social Life in Ming and Qing Dynasties*. Shijiazhuang: Hebei Education Publishing House, 2000.
- Xunzi 荀子. Translated by Wang Xianqian. *Xun Tz's Collected Works* 荀子集解. Shanghai: Shanghai Bookstore Publishing House, 2012.
- Yang Bojun. *Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan Zhu* 春秋左传注. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1990.
- Yang, Liansheng. *Studies in Chinese Institutional History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961.
- Yang Zhengtai. *A Study of Ming Dynasty Stage*. Shanghai Classics Publishing House,

- 1994.
- Yang Zhishui. *The Colour of Luxury: A Study of Gold and Silver in Song, Yuan and Ming Dynasty*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2010.
- The Colour of Luxury: Gold and Silver Jewelry in Ming Dynasty*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2011.
- Yao Lü 姚旅. *Lu Shu* 露书. Fu Zhou: Fujian People's Publishing House, 2008.
- Yasushi Oki. 明末江南の出版文化. Tokyo: 研文出版, 2004.
- Ye Quan 叶权. *Xian Bo Bian* 贤博编. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1987.
- Ye Mengzhu 叶梦珠. *Yue Shi Bian* 阅世编, Volume 8. Taipei: Xin Xing Book Company, 1962.
- Yi Ruolan. *San Gu Liu Po* 三姑六婆, Shanghai : Zhongxi Book Company, 2019.
- Ying Shao 应劭. *Feng Su Tong Yi Jiao Shi* 风俗通义校释. Tianjin Ren Min Chu Ban She, 1980.
- Ying-Shih Yu. *The Religious Ethic and Mercantile Spirit in Early Modern China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2021.
- Yu Baohang. "Perspective and Interpretation Model of the Social Ethos Transition in the Late Ming Dynasty." *Journal of Dalian University*, no.01(2007):17-21.
- Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道. Translated by Qian Bocheng. *Yuan Hongdao Ji Jian Jiao* 袁宏道集笺校. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2008.
- Yan Yudun 严虞惇. *Yan You Er Ze Bian* 艳囿二则, Volume 5. Taipei: Xin Xing Book Company, 1962.
- Yu Shenxing 于慎行. *Gu Shan Bi Lu* 谷山笔麈, Volume 15. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1984.
- Yun Lu 允祿. *Shi Xian Zong Huangdi Shang Yu Neige* 世宗宪皇帝上谕内阁, *Siku Quanshu* 四库全书, Volume 49. Beijing: National Library of China, photocopied from the edition in 1726.
- Shi Xian Zong Huangdi Shang Yu Baqi* 世宗宪皇帝上谕八旗, *Siku Quanshu*

- 四库全书, Volume 1. Beijing: National Library of China, photocopied from the edition in 1723.
- Zhang Chuanyong. "Customs Formed by the Soil—The Natural Geographical Environment and Burial Customs in the Jiangnan Area during the Ming and Qing Dynasties." *Chinese Social History Review*, no.09(2008):258–283.
- Zhang Changhong, "A Study of the Relationship between the Huizhou Merchants and the Suzhou Art Market in the Late Ming Dynasty", *New Art*, no.03(2005):25–35.
- Zhang Cuxiang 张履祥. *Yang Yuan Xian Sheng Quan Ji 杨园先生全集, Bu Nong Shu 补农书*, Volume 50, Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2002.
- Zhang Dai 张岱, *Lang Hua Wen Ji 琅华文集*, Volume III. Changsha: Yue Lu Press, 1985.
- Tao An Meng Yi 陶庵梦忆*. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2001, 20.
- Zhang Han 张瀚, *Song Chuan Meng Yu 松窗梦语*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1985.
- Zhang Juzheng 张居正. *Ming Shi Zong Shi Lu 明世宗实录*. Taipei: Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, 1962.
- Zhang Tingyu 张廷玉. *Ming Shi 明史*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1974.
- Zhang Yingyu 张应俞, *Du Pian New Book 杜骗新书*. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1999.
- Zhang Chunshu, Luo Xuelun. *Socio-Economic Changes and New Cultures in the Ming and Qing Era: Social Cultures and Modernity in the Era of Li Yu*. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 1998.
- Zhao Erxun 赵尔巽. *Draft History of Qing 清史稿*, Volume 103. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1977.
- Zhao Lian 昭槤. *Xiao Ting Za Lu 嘯亭杂录*. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1980.
- Zhao Jianqun. "Regional Manifestation of Fujians' Luxurious Consumption Fashion in Ming and Qing Dynasty." *Journal of Fujian Normal University*,

no.06(2004):115–120.

Zhao Mu, “A Perspective on Fu Yao in the Han Dynasty”, *Journal of Liaoning Educational Administration Institute*, no.03(1995):75–78.

Zheng Lihua. “Shi Shang Guan Xi Shan Bian.” *Academic Monthly*, no.06(1994):64–70.

Zheng Rui 郑锐. *Bo Zhong Jian Tai Shu Cao* 伯仲谏台疏草, *Cong Shu Ji Cheng Xin Bian* 丛书集成新编, Volume 31. Taipei: Xinwenfeng Publishing House, 1985.

Zheng Xiao 郑晓. *Jin Yan* 今言. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1984.

Zhuangzi. *Zhuangzi* 庄子. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2010.

Zhu Xi 朱熹. *Zhu Zi Yu Lei* 朱子语类. Shanghai Classics Publishing House, 2014.

Zhu Guozhen 朱国祯. *Yong Chuang Xiao Pin* 涌幢小品, Volume 22. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1959.

Zhong An 钟庵. *Sheng Xiao Jian* 生绡剪. Shenyang: Chunfeng Literature and Art Publishing House, 1987.

Zhou Zhenhe. “The Traveling Fashion in Late Ming Dynasty and Its Relationship with Geography: A Research on the Anthologies of Literators in Ming.” *Journal of Fudan University*, no.01(2005): 72–78.

Zhou Mi 周密. *Kui Xin Za Shi* 癸辛杂识. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1988.

Zhou Gaoqi 周高起. *Yang Xian Ming Hu Xi* 阳羨茗壺系. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 2012.

Zhou, GuiDian. “On the Truth of Dong Zhongshu’s Interaction Between Man and Nature.” *Hebei Academic Journal*, no.3(2001):10–14.