

Literati Culture in Ming Dynasty Drinking Games Using Cards

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Abstract

Most of the drinking games using cards were invented by literati and scholar-officials, and these were quite popular in the mid and late Ming periods. This article introduces these games, with classification, description and introduction to method of play. The cards used in these games in banquet gatherings of the literati mainly depict talented scholars, famous courtesans, beauties, historical figures, including those associated with drinking or money, and characters from poetry, drama and fiction. To fully appreciate these cards and to play, one had to be quite familiar with the textual allusions used by the literati. From the texts printed on individual cards, and those describing the background of these games, we get a glimpse of the social lives and values of literati and scholar-officials. Again, these card games were open to all who could read at least the instructions, and with the transmission of these games to those of a different class, we get an understanding of their genteel aspirations. From the culture and transmission of drinking cards in the Ming period, we see the cultured and the common joining in the appreciation of the refined.

Key words: card games, wine cards, literati culture, the cultured and the common joining in appreciation

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明代酒牌中的文人文化

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摘要

酒牌遊戲，大部分為文人、士大夫所創，至明代中、晚期，極為盛行。本文旨在介紹這類遊戲，包括分類、內容和規則。文人宴會中所用的酒牌，其圖案、文字，是以歷代才子、名妓、美女、歷史人物，以及跟飲酒和金錢有關的人事典故為主；或是以詩歌、戲曲、小說的人物為題材。若欲充分欣賞和進行這類遊戲，必須相當熟悉文人筆下所用的典故。通過這些酒牌上的文字內容和遊戲背景的描述，我們可以了解到文人、士大夫的社交生活，並進而洞悉其某一面向的價值觀。再者，一般人只要能看懂酒牌上的指令，就能進行酒令遊戲，所以這類酒牌也流行於其他階層，我們可藉以得見民衆對文人雅文化的嚮往。從明代酒牌的流傳，展現明代雅、俗各階層共同沉浸於優雅文化的實際狀況，所謂的「雅俗共賞」，在明代的酒牌文化中體現無遺。

關鍵詞：葉子戲、酒牌、文人文化、雅俗共賞

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Drinking games using cards can be traced to games using *chou* 籌 (tallies), *zhi tiezi* 紙帖子 (paper tokens/cards) or *pai* 牌 (plaques) at least from the Tang dynasty onwards, and these games proliferated in the mid and late Ming period.¹ On the whole, these drinking games followed the previous pattern of drawing a card and following the instructions on the card, but the instructions and variety of illustrations varied greatly. Scholars or officials invented many of these games, and some of these, like Wang Daokun (1525-1593)² or Pan Zhiheng (1556-1622)³ from Anhui, had a merchant background. Pan Zhiheng remarked in his *Xu yezi pu* (Sequel to a manual of leaves):

余戊子歲，從弇州公在留都右司馬邸，無日不與文酒會。酒行數巡，即令取牌，扯三張，每一人為主，眾環而敵之，或全勝，或全負，或勝負相參，負者取大斗飲之，力歎有起逃者，果醉則勿追，佯醉則止。全勝者眾不服，乃再主與眾敵，咸大噪盡歡。公間陶然，令兩豎子扶掖而入，客復與諸公子竟歡，屢會而情若新，其酒令之善，毋以踰此。

In the *wuzi* year (1588), I was with his lordship the Vice Minister of War Wang Shizhen (1526-1590) in his official residence in the auxiliary capital Nanjing. We drank and wrote poetry together every day. When a few rounds had passed, he would have cards brought out,

¹ I have introduced some of the games from the Tang to Yuan periods in an earlier article. See Andrew Lo, "The Game of Leaves: An Enquiry into the Origin of Chinese Playing Cards," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 397-400. For Tang dynasty wine games, see also Wang Kunwu, *Tangdai jiuling yishu*. For an outline history of the development of Chinese playing cards and dominoes, see Andrew Lo, "China's Passion for *Pai*: Playing Cards, Dominoes, and Mahjong," in *Asian Games: The Art of Contest*, 217-31.

² For a biography of Wang Daokun, see L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 1427-30, and Xu Shuofang, *Xu Shuofang ji*, 4:1-104.

³ For a study of the life of Pan, see Zheng Zhiliang, "Pan Zhiheng shengping kaoshu," *Wen Xian*, 190-199.

and we would play the game ‘Drawing Three Cards’.⁴ Each one would take turns being the house, and the others would gather round and play against him. There would be complete wins or losses, or a mixture of both. Those who lost would drink a large cup. Sometimes, one of the players would try to get up and escape, feeling unable to drink anymore. If he was really inebriated, we would not chase him. If he was pretending, we would stop him. If someone was the sole winner, others would feel dissatisfied, and he would have to play against everyone again. All gave shouts of delight and had a wonderful time. In a while, his lordship would be in his cups, and would tell his two pages to help him retire. The guests would then continue with his sons and play to their hearts’ delight. These sessions were frequent, but each time the game provided fresh delights. There is just no better drinking game than this.⁵

It is the aim of this article to look at the texts associated with cards used in drinking games to get a glimpse of the social lives, values and aspirations of these literati and scholar-officials.

I. Scholars, Courtesans and Beauties

The scholar Xu Chengyao (1874-1946) writes:

謝升，字少連，邑之汪村人，明末舉人。嘗客白下魏國公所，病陳壽《三國志》尊魏之謬，作《季漢書》。書成日，魏公征白下才士及名伎各百人，宴于秦淮，諸人以次為壽。宴三日，乃奉千金為潤筆，亦文人韻事也。

⁴ For the rules of this game, see Andrew Lo, “Pan Zhiheng’s ‘Xu Yezi Pu’ (Sequel to a Manual of Leaves) – Part 2,” *The Playing Card: Journal of the International Playing-Card Society*, 281.

⁵ Pan Zhiheng, *Xu ye zi pu*, in *Shuofu xu*, comp., Tao Ting, in *Shuofu sanzong*, comps., Tao Zongyi et al., 10: 1838-1842. *Shuofu sanzong* is hereafter abbreviated as *SFSZ*.

Xie Sheng (from Anhui Province) was a provincial graduate of the late Ming period. He was once a guest in the household of the Duke of Wei in Baixia (Nanjing). He criticised Chen Shou for making a mistake in elevating the position of Wei in the *Sanguozhi* (History of the Three Kingdoms), and compiled the *Ji Hanshu* (History of the late Han period). When he completed his work, the Duke of Wei invited a hundred each of talented scholars and famous courtesans to a banquet at the Qinhuai area, and these guests took turns in toasting Xie. The banquet went on for three days, and the Duke presented him with a thousand taels of silver for the work. This was an elegant matter concerning literati.⁶

1. *Jiabin xin ling* (Mind instructions for fine guests):⁷ Thirty-six cards.

This work is by Chao Yu'an (from Piling, Jiangsu), with preface dated 1526. I have been unable to find information on Chao so far. Chao mentions that when he invented this game, it was recorded in two volumes, but in 1607, when Pan Zhiheng and seven friends played it, Pan referred to cards.

In this game, there are a total of thirty-six cards. Each of the eighteen cards depicts a talented gentleman from the Han to Yuan period. For the curious, they are Sima Xiangru (179-118 B.C.), Ruan Xian (234-305), Shi Chong (249-300), Liu Ling (died after 265), Bi Zhuo (died ca. 329), Wang Xizhi (303-361), Xie An (320-385), Tao Qian (365-427), He Zhizhang (659-744), Meng Haoran (689-740), Li Bai (701-762), Bai Juyi (772-846), Han Xizai (902-970), Tao Gu (903-970), Su Shi (1037-1101), Huang Tingjian (1045-1105), Qin Guan (1049-1100), and Zhao Mengfu (1254-1322). These are all capable drinkers, but it is notable that seven are from the Wei and Jin periods. Each of a further eighteen cards depicts a famous singing girl,

⁶ Xu Chengyao, *She shi xian tan*, 167.

⁷ Chao Yu'an, *Jiabin xin ling*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1828-34.

concubine or talented woman from the past.⁸ They are the following: Lüzhū (? -300), an entertainer in the household of Shi Chong (249-300); Mochou, the legendary singer from the Liang (502-557) or Tang Dynasty (618-907);⁹ Xue'er, an entertainer in the household of Li Mi (582-619); Xue Yaoying, a beloved attendant of Yuan Zai (? -777); Qinke, a concubine of Liu Hun (715-789); Yuxiao, a concubine of Wei Gao (745-805); Xue Tao (ca. 758-ca.832, or 770-832), a poetess and courtesan; Fan Su, an entertainer in the household of Bai Juyi (772-846); Du Qiuniang (ca.831), an entertainer; Honger, an entertainer of the late ninth century; Suxiang, a talented singer from an ordinary family in the Tang period; Qin Ruolan, an entertainer in the household of Han Xizai (902? or 908-970); Jia Aiqing, a government courtesan of the eleventh century; Xiaotao, a young courtesan in the household of Chen Xiang (1017-1080); Shuxian, an immortal who was temporarily a courtesan in the Qingli period (1041-1048);¹⁰ Zhaoyun (1063-1096), a concubine of Su Shi;¹¹ Liu Qingniang, an entertainer from the Song Dynasty; and Xu Yueqing, a courtesan from the Song period.¹²

The eighteen cards for the men are in the following series:

- (1) Game Master, Great *Yang* 太陽 (two *yang* lines) (Wang Xizhi),
- (2) Game Warden, Lesser *Yin* 少陰 (one *yin* line over one *yang* line) (Tao Qian),
- (3) *Qian* 乾 (The Creative) Trigram,

⁸ Brief notes on these women are to be found in encyclopaedias of the Song and Ming periods. A convenient one is the *Jinxiu wanhua gu*, which notes sixteen of these women. See Anonymous, *Jinxiu wanhua gu*, in *Siku quanshu*, comps., Yongrong et al., 924:220-24. *Siku quanshu* is hereafter abbreviated as *SKQS*.

⁹ Luo Zhufeng, comp., *Hanyu dacidian*, 9:417.

¹⁰ See Xue Jixuan, *Langyu ji*, in *SKQS*, 1159:489-90.

¹¹ Tian Pu and Zha Hongde, eds., *Qingni lianhua ji*, 34-37.

¹² Xu Yueqing may be a misprint for Xu Yueying. See Anonymous, *Jinxiu wanhua gu*, in *SKQS*, 924:223.

- (4) *Kan* 坎 (The Abysmal) Trigram,
- (5) *Gen* 艮 (Keeping Still) Trigram,
- (6) *Zhen* 震 (The Arousing) Trigram.

The series from 3 to 6 repeats three times to give twelve more cards.

The eighteen cards for the women are in the following series:

- (1) Game Mistress, Great *Yin* 太陰 (two *yin* lines) (Xue Yaoying),
- (2) Mistress of the Endgame, Lesser Yang 少陽 (one *yang* line over one *yin* line) (Hong'er),
- (3) *Xun* 巽 (The Gentle) Trigram,
- (4) *Li* 離 (The Clinging) Trigram,
- (5) *Kun* 坤 (The Receptive) Trigram,
- (6) *Dui* 兌 (The Joyous) Trigram.

The series from 3 to 6 repeats three times to give twelve more cards.

Besides pairs of lines or trigrams from the *Book of Changes*, each card gives drinking instructions, the name of a scholar or entertainer/concubine/ talented woman, and poetic description. The pairs of lines or trigrams are there to tie the whole deck together, and otherwise do not figure actively in the method of play, which is given as follows:

嘉賓心令者，述《鹿鳴》詩「我有旨酒，宴彼嘉賓」之義，蓋宴以酒則洽，酒有令則行。令易簡則崇，崇則弗亂觴政也。令數法太極、儀、象、八卦，取義精矣。其總序一，象太極也。名士、殊姜，象兩儀也。名士則有主令、監令，殊姜則有知令、令尾，象四象也。四象生八卦，陽卦四，陰卦四，四其四，各得十六。陽則名士當之，陰則殊姜當之，合四象而總得三十六焉。一眾情，責之主令。糾其愆，責之監令。多言者罰，知令司之。有滴者罰，令尾司之。名曰心令，無庸於心焉。假名妓戲，不淫於樂，可見王菴巢君之制令，一舉而眾美集也，尚冀賓筵之達者，變而行之，則又有有餘不盡之意焉。余因喜而識之，時嘉靖丙戌歲中春穀旦，

南濠居士書。

The 'Mind Instructions for Fine Guests' discusses the meaning of the lines 'I have fine wine, giving a feast to fine guests' in the poem 'Deer bray'.¹³ Now, a party with wine will make things harmonious, and if there are drinking rules, the wine will flow. If the rules are simple, they will be respected. Respected, the wine goblet rules will not be disturbed. The numbers of the game are modelled on the Grand Ultimate, heaven and earth, the four elements metal, wood, water and fire, and the eight trigrams, and the meaning is refined. There is a preface, giving image to the Grand Ultimate. The famous scholars and beauties give image to heaven and earth. Amongst the famous scholars, there is a Game Master and a Game Warden. Amongst the beauties there is a Game Mistress and a Mistress of the Endgame. These give image to the four elements. The four elements give rise to the eight trigrams, four *yang* and four *yin*. Multiply these four times, and we get sixteen for each. The *yang* trigrams are represented by famous scholars, and the *yin* by beauties. Together with the four elements, we get thirty-six. The responsibility to unify various sentiments into one purpose is given to the Game Master. The responsibility to rectify the mistakes [of the players] is given to the Game Warden. Those who speak too much will be punished. The Game Mistress is in charge of this. Those who spill a drop will be punished. The Mistress of the Endgame is in charge of this. This is called the Mind Instructions, but the mind actually does not have to labour. Using famous courtesans, the game is not lascivious in joy. We can see that Chao Yu'an's invention of these rules gathered all these fine points in one stroke. But he still hopes that those who understand banquets will carry out the rules in a non-mechanical way. This then means that he has not written about all the possibilities of

¹³ Jin Qihua, *Shijing quanyi*, 351-2.

the game. In joy I write this. The time is a fine day in mid spring of the *bingshu* year of the Jiajing reign (1526). The Nanhao Dweller.¹⁴

The following is an example of one card.

才子十一

乾 ☰ 免飲

東坡

「菡萏池邊風滿衣，木犀亭下雨霏霏。老夫記得坡仙語，病體難禁玉帶圍。」

「因過竹院逢僧話，偷得浮生半日閒。」

Talented gentleman # 11

The Creative trigram. [Instruction]: No need to drink.

Dongpo (Su Shi).

Wind fills my gown by the lotus pond,

The rain drizzles and I stand beneath the sweet scented osmanthus pavilion.

I remember Immortal Po (Su Shi)'s words,

'My ill body cannot withstand the jade belt around my waist.'¹⁵

[Couplet]:

Visiting a temple in a bamboo grove, I come across a monk and chat to him,

Thus have I stolen half a day of leisure in this floating world.¹⁶

Note: It is interesting to note that some playing cards made in Canton in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries also have this couplet on one card. The lines are from a poem by Li She (early ninth century).¹⁷

¹⁴ Chao Yu'an, *Jiabin xin ling*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1833.

¹⁵ See Kong Fanli, ed., *Su Shi shiji*, 4:1268.

¹⁶ Chao Yu'an, *Jiabin xin ling*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1830.

¹⁷ Peng Dingqiu et al., comps., *Quan Tang shi*, 14:5429.

Pan Zhiheng notes that in 1607, he and seven friends played this game in a boat, with another boat carrying wine and food, and another one musicians.¹⁸

2. Cao Dazhang's *Liantai xian hui pin* (Grades of the immortal gathering of the lotus platform):¹⁹ Fourteen cards.

Cao Dazhang (1521-1575) is from Jintan, Jiangsu, and came second in the palace examination in 1553. The preface reads as follows:

金壇曹公，家居多逸豫，恣情美艷。隆嘉間，嘗結客秦淮，有蓮臺之會。同遊者毘陵吳伯高，玉峰梁伯龍諸先輩，俱擅才調，品藻諸姬，一時之盛，嗣後絕響。詩云：「維士與女，伊其相謔。」非惟佳人不再得，名士風流，亦僅見之，蓋相際為尤難耳。

Lord Cao from Jintan had many leisurely pursuits at home, and indulged in beautiful women. During the Longqing (1567-1572) and Jiajing (1522-1566) period, he and friends visited the Qinhuai area and held meetings of the Lotus Platform. His friends were those of a former generation like Wu Bogao from Piling and Liang Bolong (Liang Chenyu ca. 1510 – ca. 1582) from Yufeng [Kunshan], etc.,²⁰ who were all talented. Their evaluative comments on the various women created a stir in those days, and no one could follow them later. The *Book of Poetry* says, ‘The men and women play and joke together.’²¹ Not only are the beauties gone, famous and elegant men

¹⁸ Chao Yu'an, *Jiabin xin ling*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1834.

¹⁹ Cao Dazhang, *Liantai xian hui pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:2037-8.

²⁰ Liang was a dramatist. See L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 893-94.

²¹ Jin Qihua, *Shijing quanyi*, 203.

are also hard to come by. And, the meeting of beauties and elegant men is the most difficult.²²

Each card bears a brief introduction of a courtesan from the Qinhuai area in Nanjing, her portrait, and a flower or grass. Each courtesan's name is also headed by a title associated with the civil service examination. The titles are the following, and the number in brackets indicates the number of cards in each category:

xueshi 學士 (Academician) (1), *taishi* 太史 (Historian) (1), *zhuangyuan* 狀元 (Top graduate in the palace examination) (1), *bangyan* 榜眼 (Second graduate in the palace examination) (1), *tanhua* 探花 (Third graduate in the palace examination) (1), *huiyuan* 會元 (Top graduate in the metropolitan examination) (1), *huikui* 會魁 (Top graduate in one of the Five Classics in the metropolitan examination) (2), *jiyuan* 解元 (Top graduate in a provincial examination) (1), *jingkui* 經魁 (Top graduate in one of the Five Classics in a provincial examination) (3), *chucai* 儲材 (talented gentleman) (2).

Pan Zhiheng, who never passed the civil service examinations, gives the following method of play:

遵舊錄，用十四章，雕鏤人物花卉以媚觀者。令從大會上方可行，必滿十四人乃如法，少一人則去一魁葉。其法特難於考，試考。偏席各散一葉，覆之，令執學士、太史二葉者，先發覆。學士指某曰：「舉解元。」當即應，非即罰一觴。次太史舉一人，亦如之。倘及儲材，即為奪標，而解元隱勿露。凡再問而儲材不得應，五舉而得狀元乃止。三元張，宴以次行觴，隨意作樂，而榜、探不得與焉。缺一元則以次補。凡五舉而儲材無偶倖，為下第散材矣，聽三元任意施為。即學士、太史十舉而無當鼎甲及一元者，亦罰

²² Cao Dazhang, *Liantai xian hui pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:2037.

出席不預燕而聽施為。得三元而勿舉，則掄魁者奉慰一觴，而同袍之情盡矣。曾見行試官令者，抑舉子過當，故以此報之。夫士不遇主司耳，豈盡才之罪哉。儲材而舉者命也，非典試之功，故雖舉猶無當也。己酉夏日冰華主人定。

Following an old copy, use fourteen cards with figures and flowers and grasses printed on them to please the viewer. This game can only be played at a large gathering. There must be fourteen to comply with the rules. If the game is short of one person, discard one of the *huikui* or *jingkui* cards. The rules are especially difficult to reassemble, but I will try. Give one card turned down to each player. The players who hold the Academician and Historian cards first reveal their cards. The Academician points to a player, saying, "I appoint the *jieyuan*." If this is correct, the player responds. Otherwise, [the player does not, and] the Academician is penalized one cup. Then the Historian picks one player (guessing that he is the *jieyuan*), and the same applies. If the player chosen is a *chucai*, he snatches the prize (becoming a *jieyuan*), and the real *jieyuan* does not reveal his/her identity. When the Academician or Historian searches again for the second *jieyuan*, the second *chucai* cannot respond. After five guesses and the *zhuangyuan* is found, the game ends. When the identities of the *jieyuan*, *huiyuan* and *zhuangyuan* are revealed, the party proceeds, each of the three drink in turn, and enjoys himself as he pleases, but the *bangyan* and *tanhua* do not join in the drinking. If the identity of one of the three top graduates (*zhuangyuan*, *huiyuan*, *jieyuan*) is not revealed, then he is represented [in the drinking] by a player whose rank is just below him. (For example, the *bangyan* represents the *zhuangyuan*.)

If after five guesses the two *chucai* do not get a lucky break, they are said to have failed the examination and become someone of no talent, and the three top graduates can deal with them as they please. For the

two *chucai* who do not make the first three in the palace examination or come first in the provincial examination, after ten selections by the Academician and the Historian, their penalty is to leave their seats and the party, and do whatever is commanded.

When the top graduates of the three examinations have been revealed and the [two] *chucai* are still not appointed, the three top graduates in classics in the provincial examination offer them a cup of condolence, and that is the limit of their friendship as fellow students. I have seen people play the *Shiguan ling* (Game of the Examination Official) and they are too hard on the examination candidates, so I repay them [in this game] with the wine. It is a fact that a gentleman may not win favour from the Chief Examiner. How can it be all the fault of the talented scholars? To be a man of talent and to be selected is due to fate, and not due to the merit of the examiner. Thus, although a talent may have been appointed, it may still be inappropriate. Set down by the Master of the Ice flowers (Pan Zhiheng) on a summer day in the *jiyou* year (1609).²³

3. *Yandu ji pin* (A classification of courtesans of the capital), compiled by Binghua Meishi (The Historian of Plum Blossoms in Snowflakes).²⁴ Forty cards, divided into four suits according to the money suit system.

The earliest reference to playing cards of the money suit system is a thirty-eight-card deck recorded by Lu Rong (1436-1494). The *ma diao* 馬掉 card game in the late Ming used forty cards of the same money suit system,²⁵ and although cards used for drinking probably developed independently from

²³ Cao Dazhang, *Liantai xian hui pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:2037-38.

²⁴ Binghua Meishi, *Yandu ji pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:2028-36.

²⁵ *Ma diao* is a trick-taking game normally played by four people. See Andrew Lo, "The Late Ming Game of Ma Diao," *The Playing Card: Journal of the International Playing-Card Society*, 115-136.

playing cards, we can see from extant sources that the majority of cards used for drinking in the Ming period borrowed from the forty card *ma diao* deck and sometimes expanded the deck. The four suits in the *ma diao* deck as described by the card historian and drama critic Pan Zhiheng are as follows:

Tens (Ten Myriad Guan) Suit (Note: One Myriad = 10,000. A total of eleven cards, each illustrated with a character from the novel *Water Margin*.)

100 million [Ten Thousand Myriad] *guan* 貫, 10 million [Thousand Myriad], 1 million [Hundred Myriad], 90 Myriad, 80 Myriad, 70 Myriad, 60 Myriad, 50 Myriad, 40 Myriad, 30 Myriad, 20 Myriad;

Myriad Guan Suit (A total of nine cards, each illustrated with a character from *Water Margin*. One *guan* is defined as 1000 cash.)

9 Myriad, 8 Myriad, 7 Myriad, and so on to 1 Myriad;

Strings Suit (A total of nine cards, each illustrated with strings of cash. 1 string is defined as 100 cash.)

9 Strings, 8 Strings, 7 Strings, and so on to 1 String;

Cash Suit (A total of eleven cards, each illustrated with various numbers of cash coins, although the zero cash card depicts a Persian offering treasure or the *Water Margin* character Wang Ying.)

Zero Cash, Half Cash, 1 Cash, 2 Cash, 3 Cash, and so on to 9 Cash.²⁶

Method of play: Presumably, the cards are drawn and the instructions followed.

The preface to *Yandu ji pin* is by the Historian of Plum Blossoms from Xindu in Anhui, dated 1600. The author may be Mr Shen, a certain well-known figure from Zhejiang.²⁷ Each card bears the name of a courtesan from the capital, who is also given a title from the civil or military

²⁶ See Pan Zhiheng, *Yezi pu*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1835. Note that in the game of *ma diao*, the ranking order of the cards in the cash suit is reversed. For example, zero cash beats half cash, which beats 1 cash and so on.

²⁷ Binghua Meishi, *Yandu ji pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:2036.

examination. Each card also contains a line of poetry, a critical comment, a story from various texts such as Liu Yiqing's (403-444) *Shishuo xinyu* (*A New Account of Tales of the World*), and drinking instructions. The preface states:

燕趙佳人，顏美如玉，蓋自古豔之，矧帝都建鼎，於今為盛，而南人風致，又復襲染薰陶，其豔宜驚天下無疑。萬曆丁酉、庚子間，其妖冶已極，余自辛卯出都，未及寓目，後得梅史葉子，猶可想見其一二人。以此帙比金陵蓮臺仙會而謔浪過之，作此品題，固不須莊語耳。

Beauties from Yan and Zhao are beautiful like jade, and from ancient times, people have thought them stunning. Moreover, since the capital was established, times now have never been so prosperous, and the style of the southerners has swept the capital, nurturing our beauties. So it is natural that their beauty should startle the empire. During the *dingyou* (1597) to *gengzi* (1600) year of the Wanli period, the glamour had reached a height. In the *xinmao* year (1591), I left the capital and did not have a chance to see it for myself. Later I got the cards of the Plum Historian, and I can still picture one or two of them in my mind. Comparing this to the 'Immortal Gathering at the Lotus Platform' in Jinling, I find the jesting to be at a higher level. Naturally, no serious words are needed to write such appreciations.²⁸

The following are examples of two cards.

(十字)

九名，出差進士黑劉四，字越西，前門住。

李賀詩：「雄鳴一聲天下白。」評云：「不辯黑白，只辯雌雄。」

《世說》：支道林常養數匹馬，或言道人畜馬不韻。支曰：「貧道重其神駿。」
執此坐善歌者飲大杯。

²⁸ Binghua Meishi, *Yandu ji pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:2028.

(Ten Myriad suit)

Number 9, a presented scholar on an official mission, Dark Liu the Fourth, courtesy name Yuexi, lives in the Qianmen area.

Line from poem by Li He (790-816): “The cock crows once, and all under heaven is light.”²⁹

Comment: One does not distinguish between black and white, just male and female.

[Story from *Shishuo*] *xinyu*:

“[The monk] Zhi Dun always kept several horses. Someone remarked, ‘It is not elegant for a monk to raise horses.’ Zhi replied, ‘This humble monk values them for their divine swiftness.’”³⁰

The person who holds this orders a good singer to drink a large cup.³¹

(萬字)

五名，挂選舉人李，字月仙，東院人。

衛萬詩：「不捲珠簾見江水。」

評云：「定是具眼。」

《世說》：顧長康畫人或數年不點目睛，人問其故，曰：「四體妍媸，本無關於妙處，傳神寫照，正在阿堵中。」

執此坐巨目近視各隨量飲。

(Myriad suit)

Number 5, a selected provincial graduate Li, courtesy name Yuexian, Eastern Quarters.

Line from poem by Wei Wan (early eight century): “The pearl curtain is not rolled up, but she sees the river water.”³²

²⁹ See Peng Dingqiu et al., comps., *Quan Tang shi*, 12:4409. The wording is slightly different, but the image is the same.

³⁰ Following Richard Mather, trans., *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü*, 61, with some changes.

³¹ Binghua Meishi, *Yandu ji pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:2031.

³² See Peng Dingqiu et al., comps., *Quan Tang shi*, 22:8767. The poem is about a grieving

Comment: She must have good eyesight.

[Story from *Shishuo*] *xinyu*:

“Gu Kaizhi would paint a portrait and sometimes not dot the pupils of the eyes for several years. When someone asked his reason, he replied, ‘The beauty or ugliness of the four limbs basically bears no relation to the most subtle part of a painting. What conveys the spirit and portrays the likeness lies precisely in these dots.’”³³

The person who holds this orders those with large eyes and those that are short-sighted to drink to their ability.³⁴

This text gives a rare glimpse of courtesans in Beijing at the beginning of the seventeenth century, as opposed to those in Nanjing. Elegant aspects of this deck of cards can be seen in the quoting of fine lines from the *Shishuo xinyu*, but we may also note *biaobang* 標榜 behaviour in this work and the previous *Liantai xian hui pin*, where one’s fame is inflated through self-advertisement or the praise of friends of equal or higher status. Guo Shaoyu has noted rampant *biaobang* behaviour associated with the rise of various types of literary societies of the Ming period,³⁵ and these classifications of courtesans are but another manifestation.

4. *Zhuangyuan jiu chou* (Top graduate in palace examination wine tallies).

Seventy-six cards. Late Ming period (1610 or after). Method of play: presumably from drawing a card and following the instructions.

woman in the palace of Wu, and the actual line is “She does not look at the pearl curtain but the river water.”

³³ Richard Mather, trans., *Shih-shuo Hsin-yü*, 368.

³⁴ Binghua Meishi, *Yandu ji pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:2032.

³⁵ Guo Shaoyu, *Zhaoyushi gudian wenxue lunji*, 518-610. For an example of *biaobang* par excellence, see the voluminous writings that praise the merchant-scholar Cheng Dayue’s (1541-1610+) ink sticks and designs in his *Chengshi mo yuan* (Mr Cheng’s garden of ink). See Cheng Dayue, *Chengshi mo yuan*, in *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan erbian*, 6:1994.

This is a collection of illustrations of cards kept in the National Library of China, and there are two copies. It is in the form of a stitched volume (12.5 x 22.6 cm.) with seventy-six cards, each printed on one page, and the cards measure 7.8 x 15 cm. Each card illustrates the *zhuangyuan* (top palace examination candidate) of a particular year with a brief biography and drinking instructions. The first is Ding Xian of 1385 and the last is Han Jing of 1610. For officials who play this game, they can only marvel at the talent and luck of the person illustrated, but for those who have not yet passed the examinations, it is a dream.

II. Allusions to money

1. Xu Wei's (1521-1593) *Jiupai yin* (Preface to wine cards).³⁶

Xu Wei was a dramatist, painter and calligrapher from Shanyin, Zhejiang.³⁷ His deck follows the forty-card *ma diao* deck in principle, but he drops the Zero Cash card, and comes up with a consecutive series of forty-eight cards as follows:

Cash: Half, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90;

Hundred Cash: 100, 200, 300, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800, 900;

Thousand Cash: 1000, 2000, 3000, 4000, 5000, 6000, 7000, 8000, 9000;

Myriad Cash: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9;

10 Myriad Cash: 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, 100, 1000, 10000.

Xu Wei (1521-1593) writes in his preface:

博徒譜錢四十，某增十有八，與酒徒共之。其事則焦革、畢卓，其文則謔抹。子曰：「其義則某糟粕之矣。」

³⁶ Xu Wei, *Xu Wei ji*, 1068-1073.

³⁷ For his biography, see L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 609-612, and Xu Shuofang, *Xu Shuofang ji*, 3:35-196.

Gamblers made forty cards based on money, and I have added eighteen to share it with wine drinkers. The matters (on the cards) refer to those of Jiao Ge and Bi Zhuo,³⁸ and the writing is done in jest. The Master says, “As for the didactic principles, I have turned them into dregs.”³⁹

Unfortunately, the text does not tell us how the game is played, and the cards have no instructions. Each card has a historical allusion appropriate to a cash value. The following is an example.

半錢

「半輪殘月掩塵埃，依希猶有開元字。想見清光未破時，買盡人間不平事。」（毗陵女子李氏詩）

Half Cash

A crescent moon lies in the dust,
Faintly, you can still see the characters ‘*kaiyuan*’.
I imagine when the clear light had not yet been broken,
It could pay for all the unjust things in the world.
(Poem by Miss Li from Piling)⁴⁰

III. Historical figures

1. Wang Daokun's (1525-1593) *Shu qian ye pu* (Manual of counting cash cards)⁴¹: Forty-eight cards. This manual is unique in the sense that there is

³⁸ Jiao Ge was a good winemaker of the Tang period. See Ouyang Xiu and Song Qi, comps., *Xin Tang shu*, 18:5595. Bi Zhuo was a famous drinker of the Jin period. See Fang Xuanling et al., comps., *Jin shu*, 5:1381.

³⁹ Xu Wei, *Xu Wei ji*, 1069. The last line is a parody of a line in Mencius. “Confucius said, ‘I have appropriated the didactic principles therein.’ See D. C. Lau, trans., *Mencius*, 132.

⁴⁰ Xu Wei, *Xu Wei ji*, 1069. “*Kaiyuan*” is the name of reign period from 713-741. Miss Li is from the Song period, and her poem entitled ‘*Shide poqian*’ (On finding a broken cash coin) can be found in Hu Daojing, ed., *Xin jiaozheng Mengxi bi tan*, 157.

evidence, for example, in the description of the Empty Hot Water Bottle card, that this set of drinking cards can also serve as playing cards for gambling.⁴²

An anonymous writer begins the text and states:

語云：「河間姪女工數錢。」夫心無盡藏，數無窮極，工者為誰？惟不貪乃能工，故有取於廉介之士。

The saying goes, ‘The maiden from Hejian is skilled in counting cash.’⁴³ The mind can store limitless things, and there is no limit to numbers. So who would be skilled in this? Only when one is not greedy can one be skilled. Thus incorrupt gentlemen are the ones to consider.⁴⁴

The preface by Wang Daokun reads,

博者快一擲，直以贏詘相役僕。鴟夷尚矣，金谷而下，不亦泰甚乎哉。孟嘗諸豪，豪舉者半。王孫十族，始詘終贏。淵明以還，詘之詘者也。其贏過當，令名無窮。稽古而擬其倫，雜而不越。故事，率取諸《水滸傳》，竄不相蒙，變而為美人，為學士，為才色互出，為名花，其無當均也。乃今襟以行酒，則以狗酒徒云。

Gamblers enjoy a throw, and become subservient to winning or losing. It has been a fashion to be subservient to the wine container. Starting from [Shi Chong with his] Golden Valley Garden [in the Ten Thousand Myriad card],⁴⁵ did they not drink huge quantities? For

⁴¹ Wang Daokun, *Shu qian ye pu*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1819-1825.

⁴² Wang Daokun, *Shu qian ye pu*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1819.

⁴³ See Fan Ye, comp., *Hou Hanshu*, 11:3282.

⁴⁴ Wang Daokun, *Shu qian ye pu*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1819.

⁴⁵ Golden Valley Garden refers to Shi Chong's famous garden. See Luo Zhufeng, comp., *Hanyu dacidian*, 11: 1149.

strongmen like Lord Mengchang [the 10 Myriad card in the deck], half of them were valiant drinkers. For Zhuo Wangsun,⁴⁶ [the 2 Myriad card], and the ten other cards in his suit, they start low in value, but are high in the end. Starting from Tao Yuanming, [the Empty Hot Water Bottle card,] we find paupers amongst other paupers [in his suit]. His high position [in the deck] may be inappropriate, but his fame was endless. I have studied the past and found those comparable to him. It is a mixed bunch, but they do not overstep the boundaries for inclusion. As a precedent, card makers all take [characters] from *Water Margin*. These [characters] have nothing to do with cash. The card makers then changed and illustrated beauties, scholars, or a combination, or famous flowers (courtesans), which are all inappropriate. Now I gather this assorted bunch to make the wine flow, and I do it to comply with the wishes of the wine drinkers.⁴⁷

The text in *Shuofu sanzong* is corrupt, and lists complete or partial descriptions for thirty-one out of forty-eight cards. For the missing texts, we can fortunately refer to Chen Hongshou's (1598 or 1599-1652) *Bogu yezi* (Cards of ancient figures).⁴⁸ Chen borrowed from Wang Daokun's text with slight modifications (e.g., the encomium and drinking directions differ in the two texts for the 7 cash card), and added his own illustrations for each card, and we can refer to it to restore the complete Wang Daokun text of historical characters, commentary on the characters, and drinking instructions, save a few notes for certain cards. The reconstructed game expands on the forty-card *ma diao* deck, with eight new cards added.

Wan-Go Weng has calculated that twenty of the historical figures in the deck can be found in the *Shiji* (Records of the historian), thirteen from the *Hanshu* (History of the Han dynasty), four from the *Jinshu* (History of the Jin

⁴⁶ For Zhuo Wangsun, see Sima Qian, comp., *Shiji*, 9:3000.

⁴⁷ Wang Daokun, *Shu qian ye pu*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1819.

⁴⁸ See Weng Wan-Go, *Chen Zhanghou bogu pai*, 1976.

dynasty), four from the *Tangshu* (History of the Tang dynasty), and seven from other records. Seventeen are from the pre-Han, twenty-two from the Han, and nine are from the Jin to Tang periods.⁴⁹ Wang Daokun was a leading proponent of the archaist school of prose-writing, and it is natural that he chose figures predominantly from the Han and pre-Han periods. Being a champion of the merchant class,⁵⁰ it is also no wonder that seven of the figures are from the *Huozhi liezhuan* (Biography of the money-makers) in *Shiji*. I translate two cards as examples.

無量數，第四十八。

舊無此葉，令總攝四門。其人擬陶朱公，以其積而能散也。

贊曰：「七策二贏，千金三散。啟茲後人，奕世鉅萬。」

如令：「隨意飲坐客，觴三行，末則旅酬一巨觴同醉。」

Infinite Value, # 48.

Formerly, this card did not exist. Now it is at the head of all the cards in the four suits. The person chosen as comparison is Lord Zhu from Tao. This is because he can accumulate [money] and then disperse it.

Encomium: “Of the seven strategies [of Ji Ran], two were extra, [and Lord Zhu used the same five strategies to prosper]. Thrice he gave away a thousand catties of gold. He opened the way for his descendants who became millionaires.” (Note: He actually gave away these amounts twice.)

Do as instructed: Toast as you please those seated. After the third round, everyone shares a great goblet and gets drunk.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Weng Wan-Go, *Chen Zhanghou bogu pai*, 9-10.

⁵⁰ See for example, Ying-Shih Yü, “Business Culture and Chinese Traditions – Towards a Study of the Evolution of Merchant Culture in Chinese History,” in *Dynamic Hong Kong: Business and Culture*, 42, 49-51.

⁵¹ Wang Daokun, *Shu qian ye pu*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1825. Ji Ran helped the state of Yue to prosper. For the story of Lord Zhu and Ji Ran, see Sima Qian, comp., *Shiji*, 10:3256-57.

空湯瓶，第一。

賞四注。舊稱空沒文，文門所尊。今居四門之首，惟極皆得制之，而尊以下毋所屬，與無量數均等，互出則中分之。

擬其人曰陶淵明，雖取瓶罄之說，惟顏子屢空，足以當之。

贊曰：「其臥徐徐，其覺于于。瓶之罄矣，其樂只且。」

如令：「白衣人各送執者一杯，坐無白衣，取瓢自飲。」

Empty Hot Water Bottle, # 1.

Bonus: four stakes. In the past, this card was called Zero Cash, and it was the top card in the cash suit. Now it is at the head of all the cards in the four suits. However, the lowest cards from each of the four suits can subdue it. This card is independent of the four suits. It is equal to the card ‘Infinite Value’. If both are played [by two players], [the bonus] is divided.

The character compared to is Tao Yuanming. This is based on the story that his bottle was [occasionally] empty,⁵² but I think Yanzi who always had nothing deserves it.⁵³

Encomium: “He sleeps peacefully, and awake, he is at ease. The bottle is empty, but he is happy.”

Do as instructed: People who have no degrees each give the holder [of this card] a cup. If there are no such people among the guests, take the ladle and drink yourself.⁵⁴

With his sympathetic voice for the merchant class, Wang addresses the topic of money through play and manages in a light-hearted way to lessen the anxiety towards making money. In the description of the Infinite Value card he reminds us that the proper attitude towards money is to be able to disperse it after accumulating it. The dignity of the poor is also given a voice,

⁵² Fang Xuanling et al., comp., *Jinshu*, 8:2462.

⁵³ This refers to Yan Hui, a poor disciple of Confucius.

⁵⁴ Wang Daokun, *Shu qian ye pu*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1819-20.

as can be seen in the equal ranking of the Empty Hot Water Bottle card and the Infinite value card. The Unofficial Historian remarked at the end of the text:

始而屢空，終也三散。然則士貧，何足病哉。富而可求，亦從吾好爾。

The deck begins with constant emptiness, and ends with three dispersals [of fortune]. Thus one cannot fault a gentleman for being poor. If the wealth can be pursued, one can follow one's own preferences.⁵⁵

Pan Zhiheng, a member of Wang Daokun's Baiyushe (White Elm Poetry Society),⁵⁶ also noted the following:

汪伯玉司馬，富於酒德，憐才士而矜窮人，數錢之令，為蔣生文藻作也。義舉貧而賢者與富而恣者較，不啻羞稱之，惟致而能散，以無量數終焉。顛倒豪傑，揮斥宇宙，可為錢神之董狐，酒魔之巫咸，足為貧兒吐氣矣。敬器、撲滿之喻，何以尚此。

The Vice Minister of War Wang Daokun is well endowed with the virtue of wine. He is fond of talented scholars and takes pity on the poor. His rules for counting cash [cards] were written for Jiang Wenzao. His idea is to put up the poor but virtuous to stand up to the rich and brash. Not only does he put them to shame, for one has to be able to use cash once it is gathered, and so [his deck of cards] ends with the card of infinite value. He has reversed the hierarchy of great men, and dismissed the universe. Truly he can be called a Dong Hu⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Wang Daokun, *Shu qian ye pu*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1825. The last line is from *The Analects*, but taken out of context. See D. C. Lau, trans., Confucius, *The Analects*, 87.

⁵⁶ Guo Shaoyu, *Zhaoyushi gudian wenxue lunji*, 567-8.

⁵⁷ Dong Hu was a historian of the Spring and Autumn period and was famous for recording

for the god of cash and a Wu Xian⁵⁸ for the demon of wine, and he has certainly made the poor feel proud. The lesson behind the slanting vessel (which topples over when full), or the piggy bank (which is broken when full), is no match for this game.⁵⁹

2. Cao Shao's *Anyatang gonglü* (Goblet rules from the Hall of Peace and Elegance),⁶⁰ modified by Tu Benjun (?-1622).

Tu Benjun served as an official in the salt administration in Fujian in the 1590s.⁶¹ He modified Cao Shao's *Anyatang jiuling* from the Yuan period and came up with one hundred and nineteen cards.⁶² The two versions deserve a full translation and comparison, but at this point, I will just bring out some features of this Ming version. Eleven cards provide prefatory remarks and description and rules for three overseers of the game, the *mengzhu* 盟主 (Head of the Covenant) and his two assistants, the *lushi* 錄事 (Recorder) who sees that the rules of the game are followed, and the *mingfu* 明府 (Magistrate), who sees that the wine is drunk properly. The remaining hundred and eight cards are divided into five categories, *ming yin* 名飲 (famous drinking, a total of fifteen cards), *huan hou* 歡候 (happy times, a total of thirteen cards), *zui yi* 醉宜 (occasions when you should get tipsy, a total of eleven cards), *lei zuo* 累坐 (causing misery to others in the party, a total of twenty two cards), and *jiu jian* 酒鑒 (exhortations for wine drinkers, a total of forty seven cards). The following are two examples.

events truthfully. See Luo Zhufeng, comp., *Hanyu dacidian*, 9:473.

⁵⁸ Wu Xian was a legendary shaman. See Luo Zhufeng, comp., *Hanyu dacidian*, 2:972.

⁵⁹ Pan Zhiheng, *Yezi pu*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1834-35.

⁶⁰ Cao Shao, *Anyatang gonglü*, in *SFSZ*, 7:4302-17.

⁶¹ See L. Carrington Goodrich and Chaoying Fang, eds., *Dictionary of Ming Biography*, 597.

⁶² See Cao Shao, *Anyatang jiuling*, in *SFSZ*, 2:851-58.

錢	青	甫	杜
四	十	八	
	累坐	飲一斗三百青銅錢	街頭酒價貴酒徒稀醉眠相就
者滿杯	誇買古董得便宜		
	席上打盹		

Du Fu and a Bronze Cash, Card # 84.

Wine is expensive on the streets,
Wine drinkers rarely sleep in tipsiness.
We meet and drink a large measure,
For three hundred bronze cash.
Causing misery to others in the party: Someone who boasts about getting a
bargain for a purchase of an antique.
The person dozing off in the banquet drinks a full cup.⁶³

味	三	元	了
六	百	一	
	歡候	蘇黃飲不染淄塵累	印公了悟人三昧得遊戲常看
僧免飲無僧自飲	山僧送新茶		
	能飲僧巨觥奉戒		

Liaoyuan's Purity of Mind, Card #106.

The monk Foyin (Liaoyuan) was an enlightened person,
With purity of mind, he could enjoy himself.

⁶³ Cao Shao, *Anyatang gonglü*, in *SFSZ*, 7:4313.

He often watched Su Shi and Huang Tingjian drink,
But he was unsoiled by the dust of the world.
Happy times: A monk from the mountain presents one with new tea.
A monk who can drink drinks a huge cup. A monk who keeps his vows does
not have to drink. If there are no monks, the person drinks himself.⁶⁴

3. *Hanhanzhai jiupai* (Wine cards from the Studio of Wonderful Drinking): Forty-eight cards. Method of play: Presumably, the cards are drawn and the instructions followed.

Printed in a volume, the cards were found by Lu Gong in Tunxi, Anhui. In 1957, he came across a second volume and gave it to Zheng Zhenduo.⁶⁵ This volume is now in the National Library, and has also been reprinted.⁶⁶ The original volume was probably printed in the late Wanli period, and the engraver was Huang Yingshen from Xin'an, Anhui. Each card measures 15.4 x 8 cm. For each card, the values are in a top section, and below is a commentary on a historical drinker, drinking instructions, and a depiction of a scene. The card values are similar to those described in Wang Daokun's *Shu qian ye pu*, except that the Half Cash is replaced by the card called A Sprig of Flowers. The figures, commentaries on historical figures and drinking, and drinking instructions are also different. There are also no bonus points listed for the cards.

The use of historical figures associated with drinking may be traced at least to the early Song period. Zhang Yuan writes:

又有採珠局格，與釣鯿實同而名異。… … 李建中嫌金吾巡使、
龐虞使之名不雅馴，乃易以畢卓等古善飲酒人名，趙昌言為之序。

⁶⁴ Cao Shao, *Anyatang gonglü*, in *SFSZ*, 7:4316.

⁶⁵ Anonymous, *Hanhanzhai jiupai*, in *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan*, 3:581.

⁶⁶ Anonymous, *Hanhanzhai jiupai*, in *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan*, 3:579-633.

The ‘Rules for Gathering Pearls’ is actually similar to ‘Fishing for the Sea Turtle,’ although the name is different. . . . Li Jianzhong (945-1013) thought that the terms Imperial Insignia Guard and Guard of the Mountains and Lakes of the Township were not elegant, so he changed them to names of ancients who were good at drinking, such as Bi Zhuo, etc., and Zhao Changyan (945? 955-1009) wrote a preface.⁶⁷

Zhao Xibian lists the following work in his *Junzhai dushu houzhi: Zhuo wo weng ren shi shu* (Catching the person laying beside the wine jars (Bi Zhuo): events and reckonings), 1 *juan*, compiled by Li Tingzhong of the Song period.⁶⁸ Li Tingzhong may be a misprint for Li Jianzhong (945-1013). The figures are Bi Zhuo, Ji Kang, Liu Ling, Ruan Fu, Shan Jian, Ruan Ji, Yi Di, Yan Hui, Qu Yuan, Tao Qian, Kong Rong, Tao Kan, Zhang Han, Li Bai and Bai Juyi, all drinkers from the Spring and Autumn period to the Tang period, and with Wei Jin drinkers forming the majority.

I give examples of two cards from the *Hanhan zhai jiupai*.

金孔雀

戴顓春日攜雙柑斗酒，人問何之，答曰：「往聽黃鸝。」此俗耳針砭，詩腸鼓吹。

觴知音者與好禽鳥者。

Golden Peacock

On a spring day, Dai Yong (378-441) was carrying two mandarin oranges and a pot of wine. Someone asked him where he was going, and he replied, “I’m off to listen to the warbling of the oriole.” This is medicine for vulgar ears and inspiration for poetry.

⁶⁷ Zhang Yuan, *Gaojian zhuibi*, in *SFSZ*, 2:719.

⁶⁸ Zhao Xibian, *Junzhai dushu houzhi*, in *SKQS*, 674:420-421.

[Instruction]: Toast someone who understands music and someone who likes birds.⁶⁹

Note: Does the golden peacock card have any connection with the peacock tile in the late Qing game of mahjong? In the Ming period, civil officials of the third rank wore the peacock insignia.

一枝花

陸濛妻蔣氏善屬文而耽酒，後染疾，姊妹憂之，勸節飲強殮。
應聲吟曰：「平生偏好酒，勞爾勸吾殮。但得尊中滿，時光度不難。」
敬詞客三杯。

A Sprig of Flowers

Lu Meng's wife, née Jiang, was good in writing and indulged in wine. Later she became ill. Her sisters were worried about her and tried to persuade her to restrain her drinking and to try to eat. She replied by chanting the following, "All my life I've loved wine. I've troubled you to persuade me to eat. As long as the cup is full, passing time is not difficult."⁷⁰

[Instruction]: Toast a poet three times.⁷¹

IV. Drinking Cards Based on Literature

1. *Chu sao pin (Items of the Sorrow of Chu)*,⁷² compiled by Wang Daokun. Twelve tallies.

The preface by Pan Zhiheng reads:

⁶⁹ Anonymous, *Hanhanzhai jiupai*, in *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan*, 3:627. The text is basically the same as the Golden Peacock card in the *Anyatang gongliu*, but the instructions are different. Dai Yong was a famous hermit of the Song period. See Shen Yue, comp., *Songshu*, 8:2276-78. For the story, see Feng Zhi, attrib., *Yunxian zaji*, in *SKQS*, 1035:648.

⁷⁰ Lu Meng is from the Wu Yue period (893-978). See Yu Ti, *Wen qi lu*, in *SFSZ*, 8: 5412.

⁷¹ Anonymous, *Hanhanzhai jiupai*, in *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan*, 3:630.

⁷² Wang Daokun, *Chu sao pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1826-27.

《離騷》、《九歌》，前人各有繪圖，精妙入神，摹倣作葉子式，用以行酒，甚雅。太函公仕楚，託以自況，豈亦有縹緲之思乎？余從象輿索之入譜，儻亦附景差《大招》之義，將屬湘夫人，以求雲中君於壽宮，庶焱舉而來下，以慰余思也。古有命丁尋梅，實開此竇，從意所之可爾。

Someone before me has drawn illustrations for ‘Encountering Sorrow’ and the ‘Nine Songs’. They are marvellous and have captured the spirit. Imitating these on cards to play drinking games is very elegant. Lord Taihan (Wang Daokun) served in the Chu area (ca.1557-61) and used these to refer to himself. Could he also have soaring thoughts to become an immortal? I asked for them from his lordship and compiled a manual with them. This is taking the meaning of Jing Cuo’s ‘Great Summons’,⁷³ and I would call on the Lady of Xiang River to seek the Lord within the Clouds in his House of Life,⁷⁴ so that they will descend like a storm and satisfy my longings. In the past, there was the game ‘Ordering a servant to look for plum blossoms,’ and this actually started the trend, so one should follow where one’s mind leads him [in seeking out the Lady of the Xiang River].⁷⁵

Method of play:

觴政舊例，坐客各一籌，主令者悉覆而授之。得籌，各默覘云何，仍各覆之案上。得三閤者不覆，任意卜湘夫人，得則罷此籌而行彼籌，各籌以次如法行酒。如失一籌，輒飲一觴，以彼所舉之籌，各行觴如法。昔函翁居楚，舉《九歌》為籌，古以賢者比美人，義取諸此。

⁷³ For a translation of the ‘Great Summons,’ see David Hawkes, *The Songs of the South*, 233-38.

⁷⁴ David Hawkes, *The Songs of the South*, 103-4.

⁷⁵ Wang Daokun, *Chu sao pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1826.

Old drinking rules: Each guest gets from the game master one tally that is turned over. After receiving the tally, each looks at it silently, and then places it turned over on the table. The player who gets the Lord of the Three Wards [Qu Yuan] tally does not turn it over, and he guesses who the Lady of the Xiang River is. If he is correct, the drinking instruction on this Lady of the Xiang River tally is carried out, and then a new round begins, when the player [Qu Yuan] looks for a different character, and the wine drinking according to the instructions is carried out in turn for each tally. If the player [Qu Yuan] makes a mistake, he drinks a cup, and also, according to the instruction on the tally of the player that he has selected, drinking is carried out. When Venerable Han (Taihan is Wang Daokun's courtesy name) lived in the Chu area, he made tallies with characters from the 'Nine Songs'. In the past, the virtuous were compared to beauties, and he took his meaning from this.⁷⁶

There are altogether twelve tallies. Eleven are named after characters from the so-called 'Nine Songs,' (there are actually eleven songs), and one after Qu Yuan. After each tally, lines of poetry are quoted from the appropriate texts of the 'Nine Songs,' and from 'The Fisherman' for the Qu Yuan tally. Drinking instructions then follow, related to the imagery in the lines quoted. I will rely on David Hawkes and translate two tallies fully.

(1) 湘夫人

「帝子降兮北渚，目眇眇兮愁予。嫋嫋兮秋風，洞庭波兮木葉下。」
飲相目者。

The Lady of Xiang River

The Child of God, descending the northern bank,
Turns on me her eyes that are dark with longing.

⁷⁶ Wang Daokun, *Chu sao pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1826.

Gently the wind of autumn whispers;
On the waves of Lake Dongting the leaves are falling.⁷⁷
Toast the person who is looking at you.⁷⁸

(2) 三閻大夫

「舉世混濁我獨清，世人皆醉我獨醒。」
值此者免飲，坐中索湘夫人，失一人飲一杯。

Lord of the Three Wards (Qu Yuan)

Everyone in the world is muddy and I alone am clear. All men are drunk and I alone am sober.⁷⁹

The person who gets this is excused from drinking. He looks for the Lady of Xiang River among those seated. For each mistake, he drinks a cup.⁸⁰

2. Drama

There is an assorted collection of sixty-nine Ming period wine cards in the National Library of China. Twenty-two of these illustrate scenes from drama. The cards measure 9.8 x 17 cm. Each card has a value according to the money suits at the top section. A second section below gives lines from a drama, followed by drinking instructions, and the third section is a scene from the drama.

There are also twenty-six cards given the modern title *Yuan Ming xiqu yezi* (Yuan and Ming drama cards).⁸¹ These measure 8.2 x 15.8 cm., and are printed in blue ink. There are no values for the cards. The top section prints

⁷⁷ David Hawkes, *The Songs of the South*, 108.

⁷⁸ Wang Daokun, *Chu sao pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1826.

⁷⁹ David Hawkes, *The Songs of the South*, 206.

⁸⁰ Wang Daokun, *Chu sao pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1827.

⁸¹ Anonymous, *Yuan Ming xiqu yezi*, in *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan*, 4:1-36.

part of a dramatic text, and the lower section is a scene from the drama with drinking instructions. Below is a list of the National Library collection.

- (1) Sprig of Flower (*Xixiang ji* [The western wing])
- (2) Zero cash (*Jingchai ji* [The thorn hairpin])
- (3) 1 cash (*Yuzhan ji* [The jade hairpin])
- (4) 2 cash (*Baiyueting* [Moon prayer pavilion])
- (5) 4 cash (*Zichai ji* [The purple hairpin])
- (6) 6 cash (*Huansha ji* [Washing silk])
- (7) 7 cash (*Mingfeng ji* [The singing phoenix])
- (8) 9 cash [Moon prayer pavilion]
- (9) 300 cash [The western wing]
- (10) 400 cash (*Luoyang ji* [The story of Luoyang])
- (11) 700 cash (*Jinjian ji* [The brocade notepaper])
- (12) 1 Myriad *guan* (*Sanyuan ji* [The top graduate of the three examinations])
- (13) 2 Myriad *guan* (*Chai chuan ji* [The hairpin and the bracelet])
- (14) 3 Myriad *guan* (*Huanhun ji* [The revival of the spirit])
- (15) 8 Myriad *guan* (*Toubi ji* [Throwing away the brush])
- (16) 9 Myriad *guan* (*Hongfu ji* [The red flywhisk])
- (17) 20 Myriad (*Pipa ji* [The lute])
- (18) 30 Myriad (*Geyi ji* [The hemp robe])
- (19) 40 Myriad (*Sixi ji* [The four joys])
- (20) 50 Myriad (*Tanhua ji* [The epiphyllum flower])
- (21) 60 Myriad (*Yongquan ji* [The gushing spring])
- (22) 100 Myriad (*Jinyin ji* [The golden seal])

Note: A card, 70 Myriad, measuring 8.2 x 15.8 cm., is also reprinted in *Zhongguo banhuashi tulu*.⁸² The text is similar to the one printed in

⁸² Zhou Wu, *Zhongguo banhua shi tulu*, 348.

Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan,⁸³ but the positions of the drinking instructions on the two cards are different. Fu Xihua also notes cards all based on the drama *Pipa ji* (The lute).⁸⁴

3. Fiction

(1) *Xiyou ji* (*Journey to the West*) (incomplete deck)

For the collection of sixty-nine Ming period wine cards in the National Library, seven are based on scenes from the novel *Journey to the West*. The cards measure 9.8 x 17 cm. Each card has a value according to the money suits at the top. The second section is a scene from the novel, with a chapter title couplet and drinking instructions. The seven cards are 100 Cash, 200 Cash, 800 Cash, 900 Cash, 4 Myriad, 7 Myriad, and Ten Thousand Myriad. The description and instruction for the Ten Thousand Myriad card is as follows:

徑回東土，五聖成真。
合飲三盃。

Going straight back to the eastern lands, the five Sages become truly enlightened.

[Instruction] All drink from three cups.

(2) *Shuihu yezi* (*Water Margin cards*) by Chen Hongshou (1598 or 1599-1652)

There exist thirty-six line drawings by the painter and scholar Chen Hongshou from Zhuji, Zhejiang, and four by a later artist dated around 1616.⁸⁵ The thirty-six out of forty cards follow the forty-card *ma diao* deck, but unlike

⁸³ Anonymous, *Yuan Ming xiqu yezi*, in *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan*, 4:11.

⁸⁴ Anonymous, *Yuan Ming xiqu yezi*, in *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan*, 4:34.

⁸⁵ Weng Wan-Go, *Chen Hongshou: His Life & Art*, 1:173-4; 2:6-8; 3:3-10. For his biography, see vol. 1.

the *ma diao* deck where only twenty-one cards are illustrated by *Water Margin* characters, all of Chen Hongshou's cards are illustrated. These figures do not correspond to those in Lu Rong's (1436-1494) description of a thirty-eight-card deck or Pan Zhiheng's description of the *ma diao* deck, except for the highest card Song Jiang. There are drinking instructions, but no commentaries on the figures. The thirty-six cards all illustrate men.

Another well-known version of forty cards was published in Hangzhou around 1633-34.⁸⁶ Each card has a money value at the top. Below is an illustration of a character from the novel *Water Margin*, with name and commentary. Weng Wan-go has noted that the three women in the *Water Margin* band are all illustrated. 50 Myriad is Gu Dasao, 400 Cash is Hu Sanniang, and 2 Cash is Sun Erniang. Li Yimeng notes four seventeenth century editions, and interestingly enough, there are no drinking instructions for three sets, but the Zheng Zhenduo edition does have them.⁸⁷

(3) Fu Xihua also notes drinking cards based on *Sanguozhi yanyi* (*Romance of the Three Kingdoms*) and *Lidai gushi* (*Stories from various periods*).⁸⁸

V. Cards with Designs of Boys (incomplete deck)

For the collection of sixty-nine Ming period wine cards in the National Library, twenty-two are cards with values according to the money suits, and with designs of boys on them. Each card measures 9.8 x 17 cm. Each card has a value on top, and with a scene below depicting boys and giving drinking instructions. The values of the cards are:

Cash suit: Zero Cash, Sprig of Flower, 1 Cash, 2 Cash, 4 Cash, 5 Cash, 6 Cash, 9 Cash;

⁸⁶ Weng Wan-Go, *Chen Hongshou: His Life & Art*, 1:118.

⁸⁷ Li Yimeng, *Ming Chen Hongshou shuihu yezi*, postscript, 1b, 2b.

⁸⁸ Anonymous, *Yuan Ming xiqu yezi*, in *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan*, 4:34.

100 cash suit: 200, 400, 500, 600, 700, 800;

Myriad *guan* suit: 10,000, 20,000, 40,000, 50,000;

Ten Myriad *guan* suit: 20, 50, 80, 100.

Note: There is a card with the value of 8 Cash reprinted in *Zhongguo banhuashi tulu* given the modern title *Xiying jiu pai* (Playing with infants wine card).⁸⁹ This card measures 8 x 15 cm. and a Ming period date is given.

VI. Cards with Domino Designs (incomplete deck)

For the collection of sixty-nine Ming period wine cards in the National Library, eighteen cards are based on three combinations of dominoes. Each card measures 9.8 x 17 cm. The first section of each card gives a poetic line describing the three dominoes depicted in the second section, which also lists the drinking instructions. The third section is an illustration of the poetic line. An example is the card with the domino combinations 4/4, 3/4, 4/4:

「洛陽三月春如錦。」

豪富者三盃。

[Poetic line]: For the third month in Luoyang, spring is ablaze. (The fours in the domino combinations are in red, and symbolize spring that is ablaze.)

[Instruction]: The really wealthy drink three cups.

Concluding Remarks

Many of our cards were invented by men of letters and officials for amusement and in jest. As mentioned before, Xu Wei quotes an ancient writer who said, “As for the relevance, I have turned them into dregs.”⁹⁰ Scholars also found these cards to be refined amusement. Pan Zhiheng thought Chao

⁸⁹ Zhou Wu, *Zhongguo banhua shi tulu*, 349.

⁹⁰ Xu Wei, *Xu Wei ji*, 1069.

Yu'an's *Jiabin xin ling* and Wang Daokun's *Chu sao pin* to be most elegant,⁹¹ and Tu Benjun remarked at the end of his editing of the *Anyatang gonglü*,

以葉子行觴，歡場雅事也。

During happy occasions, to get wine cups moving with cards is an elegant affair.⁹²

There was however, another side to the literary and refined aspects of these cards, and that was *biaobang* behaviour, when the *wen* 文 (literary) aspect outshone the *zhi* 質 (substance). Pan Zhiheng remarked that Wang Daokun identified himself with Qu Yuan, and the glamorous courtesans must have felt good at topping the graduate lists and thus outshining the competition.

These card games were open to all who could read the instructions, often the easiest part, and enjoyed thoroughly by those who could appreciate the connections between the instructions and literary allusions. Played mostly in banquets for fun, and with a measure of group therapy thrown in, different groups of people could have their dreams fulfilled. They provided a tonic for many in Ming society who wanted to talk about money openly, (imagine money suited cards staring at one in the face), or to succeed. One could hope for sons to turn into top graduates and make lots of money, and perhaps disperse it. These top graduates could hope to please the courtesans and to request them to perform dramatic arias. Through play, poor scholars, talented courtesans, frustrated merchants, and almost everyone could get on and climb the ladder of officialdom. Merchants, poor scholars, poor officials, talented widows, and almost everyone could aspire to be Lord Tao of Chu. When Chen

⁹¹ Pan Zhiheng, *Yezi pu*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1834; Wang Daokun, *Chu sao pin*, in *SFSZ*, 10:1826.

⁹² Cao Shao, *Anyatang gonglü*, in *SFSZ*, 7:4317. We may note that not all types of cards display refined genteel values. The cards illustrating boys simply reflect values for all classes of Chinese, and do not carry lines of poetry.

Hongshou illustrated *Water Margin* characters from the margins of society, these cards struck a chord with even more players in society. His comments written on the cards, however, were elegant.

The wine cards turned everyone into performers. Following the instructions, the uncouth could show off what meagre talent they had after a few cups, and for those with true literary talent, a chance to demonstrate it. When cards illustrating refined dramatic arias (and not the mostly vernacular dialogue) appeared, the parts became merrier. Our cards become a case of *yasu gong shang* 雅俗共賞, where the refined and the common join in the appreciation of the refined, and it is this celebration of an open literary culture that is particularly refined.

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