



# Within the Palatial Compound: Actors' Lives in the Qianlong Court<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

Court actors were among a selective group of performers hired to stage plays in the palatial compound during the Qianlong 乾隆 reign (1736–1796), the golden age of the Qing court theater. By the Qianlong emperor's commission, these court actors brought the plays and their plots to life. The prosperity of Qianlong court theater increased enormously. As a result, the standing of court actors improved when the purpose-built theaters and music bureaus in the palaces were established. These selected actors were cast as a mainstay in the Qianlong court theater. Since they were confined in the palatial compound, their lifestyle and status differed from those who lived outside. Thus, this article focuses on actors' lives in the Qianlong court. My goal is to use the extant court actors' name lists and other historical documents as a way to understand how these actors were categorized, were treated and lived their lives during the Qianlong reign. By focusing on this selected stage performers, this article also aims to analyze the prosperity of the Qianlong reign that engendered power of court theater during this era.

**Keywords:** court actors, the Qianlong emperor, the Qing dynasty

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## Introduction

**T**he Qianlong 乾隆 reign (1736–1796) has been regarded as one of the most prosperous periods in the history of China. During this sovereignty, China underwent “sudden and wrenching population growth, dramatic territorial expansion, the transition to a new kind of multi-ethnic society, a seemingly unprecedented degree of geographical and social mobility, rapid commercialization and monetization of the economy, and apparently novel development of both the urban hierarchy and urban culture” (Rowe 2002: 473). To summarize, political and military achievements, economic growth, as well as social stability during the Qianlong reign were equally striking. Under Qianlong's regime, China could conquer several hostile ethnic groups and adversary nations, including the Dzungars, the Turkic Muslims, the Tibetan minority, Taiwan, Burma, and Vietnam, in which the Qianlong emperor called the “Ten Great Campaigns” (Woodside 2002: 230–309). As a result, this political victory freed Chinese agriculture and economics from severe disruption of the earlier decades. As Alexander Woodside



has pointed out, this achievement “allowed the Qianlong court to promote the expansion of the cultivated acreage of its empire along with its military frontiers, and further allowed it to reduce land taxes, reward the clearing of empty fields, and magnify and systematize famine relief” (Woodside 2002: 231).

In addition, the Qianlong reign has also been known as the golden age of Chinese theater. It is due to the fact that the Qianlong emperor was an admirer and patron of theatrical performance. During his reign, the emperor made so many contributions to Chinese drama. For instance, he commissioned the constructions of twenty-five theaters in his palaces. Among them, twenty-one were small court theaters and four three-tiered stages (*chongtai sanceng* 崇台三层) (or the “linked performance stage” *lian xitai* 连戏台), of which three are no longer extant.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, due to his passion for Chinese drama, the Qianlong emperor himself was a playwright and on top of that a performer. It was recorded that in his youth the emperor wrote a one-act, one-character play (*Dujiao Xi* 独角戏) called the *A Beggar Picks Up Gold* (*Huazi shi jin* 花子拾金) and sang for his mother on each of her birthdays.<sup>3</sup> He also used to perform on the small theatrical stage named the Elegance Remains Always (*Fengya Cun* 风雅存)<sup>4</sup> in the Imbibed Fragrance Studio (*Shufang Zhai* 漱芳斋). Furthermore, he created his own dramatic tune called the “Tune created by the emperor” (*Yuzhi Qiang* 御制腔) by remixing the *kun* 昆 and *yiyang* 弋阳 tunes, since he could not sing both tunes due to his deep voice. During his spare time he even taught his new “imperial tune” to new court opera troupes. Moreover, he once entertained his mother on her birthday by summoning the best actor troupes in Beijing to act before the Dowager Empress and the court. Suddenly, he disappeared and, after a time, appeared on the stage with a painted face, a theatrical beard and costume. He played a solo role, the aged Laizi 徠子, one of the twenty-four examples of children’s filial love for their parents—the cardinal virtue in China (Qiu Huiying 2000: 192-194; Niu Chuanhai 1977: 24-25).

But perhaps the Qianlong emperor’s major contribution to Chinese drama would be the fact that he fully developed organizations of two significant court music bureaus—Nanfu 南府 or the “South Bureau” and Jingshan 景山 or the “Coal Hill,” which were erected during the Kangxi 康熙 emperor (1661-1722). These two music bureaus not only functioned as training and acting schools, but were also main habitations to house Qing court actors. The actors’ lives in the Qing palatial compound have always been considered mysterious and yet interesting. Thus, the purpose of this article is to give new insights on lives of court actors during the Qianlong reign. The first part will focus on the extent to which these court actors were classified. Then the extant lists of court actors’ names will be analyzed in the next part in order to show how prosperous court drama during the Qianlong reign was. Finally, I will examine court actors’ lives





in the confined arena of the Qing palace as well as discuss the way in which the emperor's treatment on eunuch actors differs from that on professional actors from the south.

### Categorization of Court Actors during the Qianlong Reign

Court actors during the Qianlong reign were divided into two major groups: eunuch actors and professional actors from the south. Eunuch actors during the Qianlong reign were categorized as members of the Eight Banners (*ba qi* 八旗) (Wang Zhizhang 1937: 4-10).<sup>5</sup> Eunuchs from Three Banners—Plain Yellow, Bordered Yellow and Plain White—held positions in Nanfu. In an archive recording eunuchs' name lists clearly stated which banners these eunuchs belonged to. For instance, the chief eunuch Li Luxi 李禄喜, who served three imperial reigns from the Jiaqing 嘉庆 (1796-1820), Daoguang 道光 (1820-1850), to Xianfeng 咸丰 (1851-1861) reigns, belonged to the Bordered Yellow Banner. Famous chief eunuch An Fu 安福 belonged to the Plain White Banner (Ding Ruqin 1999: 21).

These eunuch actors were selected from eunuchs of three bannermen who worked in Nanfu and servant eunuchs (*baoyi zidi* 包衣子弟) who worked in the Imperial Household Department (*Neiwu fu* 内务府).<sup>6</sup> They were chosen to practice drama performances and became court actors. If court music bureaus like Nanfu or Jingshan did not employ them, then they could return to work in the Imperial Household Department (Ding Ruqin 1999: 21).

The second group of court actors during the Qianlong period was the professional actors from the south. Both the Kangxi and the Qianlong emperors made several grand inspection tours to the south. During these tours both emperors had found that southern professional actors were more capable than those in the capital. As a result, since the Kangxi reign (1661-1722), more and more professional actors from the south were recruited back to Beijing, which formed opera troupes in the Qing court. Therefore, from the Qianlong to Jiaqing reigns, all of local actors brought back to court came from the south, such as Suzhou 苏州 and Yangzhou 扬州. They were selected by the Textile Ministry of Jiangnan (*Jiangnan zhizao* 江南织造) and brought back to the capital (Ding Ruqin 1999: 22, 150-165). Poet Yang Shining 杨士凝 wrote a poem collection entitled "Poetic scroll of the hibiscus boat" (*Fuhang shixie* 芙航诗蘧) during the sixty-first year of the Kangxi reign (1722), in which one poem entitled "Seizing actors" (Zhuo lingren 捉伶人) in the eleventh fascicle was composed as follows:

The Board of Works in Jiangnan managed hundred dramas,  
They searched for young actors and selected fascinating performers to  
present to the royal family.

江南营造辖百戏，搜春摘艳供天家。



Here the “Board of Works” refers to the Textile Ministry of Jiangnan. In addition to supervising court textile manufacture, this ministry was also in charge of selecting local actors and presenting them to the Qing court (Ding Ruqin, 1999: 22).

Furthermore, an excerpt in the section “Black Dragon Play” (*Qinglong xi* 青龙戏) in the *Qing jia lu* 清嘉录 [Record of Qing Monarchy], written by official Gu Lu 顾禄 recorded a process of how southern professional actors were selected:

The Laolang Temple was the name of the national theater bureau. Those who wanted to begin an acting career must be registered at the Laolang Temple. The temple was under jurisdiction of the Textile Ministry. Additional actors needed in Nanfu must be recruited from the Textile Ministry.

老郎庙，梨园总局也。凡隶乐籍者，必先署名於老郎庙。廟屬織造府所轄，以南府供奉需人，必由織造府選取故也。(Gu Lu 1974: 122)

### Extant Lists of Court Actors’ Names during the Qianlong Reign

Historian Wang Zhizhang 王芷章 has recorded a list of eunuchs’ names including their status, who had worked in Nanfu from the fifth year of the Qianlong reign (1740) until the end of the Qing dynasty in Chapter Five titled “*Zhiguan taijian nianbiao* 职官太监年表” or “Biographical table of eunuchs in duty.” However, there were merely ten high-rank eunuchs who worked in Nanfu and Jingshan during the Qianlong reign recorded in this document ((Wang Zhizhang 1937: 330-382).

Eunuch’s name	Birthplace	Position
Jin Jinzhong 靳进忠	A native of Daxing 大兴 in Zhili 直隶 District	Six-rank supervisor in the Inner School ( <i>Nei xue</i> 内学) in the fifth year of the Qianlong reign (1740)
Zhang Wenyu 张文玉	A native of Jinghai 静海 in Zhili District	Six-rank supervisor in the Inner School in the sixtieth year of the Qianlong reign (1795)
Li Luxi 李禄喜	A native of Wanping 宛平 in Zhili District	Entering Nanfu in the fifty-seventh year of the Qianlong reign (1792). Eighth-rank manager in the Inner School in the sixth year of the Jiaqing reign (1801)





Liu Antai 刘安泰	unknown	Entering Nanfu in the thirty-sixth year of the Qianlong reign (1771). Eighth-rank manager in the Shifan School ( <i>Shifan xue</i> 十翻学) in the first year of the Daoguang reign (1821)
Guo Xi 郭喜	unknown	Entering Nanfu in the fifty-fourth year of the Qianlong reign (1789). Eighth-rank manager in the Shifan School in the first year of the Daoguang reign (1821)
Yu Antai 于安泰	unknown	Entering Nanfu in the forty-sixth year of the Qianlong reign (1781). Deputy manager in the Qianliang Office in the second year of the Daoguang reign (1822)
You Jinxi 尤进喜	unknown	Entering Nanfu in the thirty-sixth year of the Qianlong reign (1771). Substituted a position of deputy manager in the Shifan School and the Zhonghe Music Bureau ( <i>Zhonghe yue</i> 中和乐) in the third year of the Daoguang reign (1823)
Xiao Jinzhong 萧进忠	unknown	Entering Nanfu in the forty-fifth year of the Qianlong reign (1780). Deputy manager in the Shifan School and the Zhonghe Music Bureau in the third year of the Daoguang reign (1823)
Liu Jinxi 刘进喜	unknown	Entering Nanfu in the forty-sixth year of the Qianlong reign (1781). Manager in the Inner School in the fourth year of the Daoguang reign (1824)
Zhang Mingde 张明德	unknown	Entering Nanfu in the fifty-sixth year of the Qianlong reign (1791). Manager in the Inner School in the fourth year of the Daoguang reign (1824)

According to the table, these ten eunuch actors were recruited to Nanfu and Jingshan since the Qianlong period. Later in the Jiaqing and Daoguang reigns, they had been promoted with high positions and had worked in three main schools of Nanfu and Jingshan—the Inner School, the Shifan School and the Zhonghe



Music Bureau. According to details in the part *Huanguan* 宦官 [Eunuchs] recorded in the section *Zhiguan zhi* 职官志 [Record of Administrative Ranks] in the *Qingshi gao* 清史稿 [Draft of the Qing History], the Inner School housed and trained eunuch actors; the Shifan School was in charge of wind musical instruments like flute, pipe, as well as drum and gong; and the Zhonghe Music Bureau was responsible for performing the zhonghe music in court ceremonies, which had been performed and lasted until the end of the Qing dynasty.<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, another table entitled the “*Nanfu Jingshan taijian xuesheng nianbiao* 南府景山太监学生年表” or “Biographical table of eunuch students in Nanfu and Jingshan,” shows a list of court actors who had been working from the Qianlong to the Jiaqing reigns (Wang Zhizhang 1937: 370–411). Judging from eunuch actors who were born in the Qianlong reign, lived and remained court actors in Nanfu and Jingshan until the eleventh year of the Jiaqing reign (1806), there were

Character type	Actor's name	Character sub-type
Male lead ( <i>sheng</i> 生)	An Fu 安福	Second male lead
	Yang Chun 杨淳 Liu Jinxi 刘进喜 Wei Delu 魏得禄	Second male lead
Female lead ( <i>dan</i> 旦)	Shen Jinxi 沈进喜	Female lead
	Shang De 尚德 Guo Qingtai 郭清泰 Cao Jinxi 曹进喜 (elder brother) Peng Lushou 彭禄寿 Yang Qingyu 杨清玉 Jin Bao 靳保 Liu Bao 刘保	Female lead Female lead Female lead Female lead Female lead Female lead Female lead Female lead
Official ( <i>jing</i> 净)	Li Xing 李兴 Yao Xi 姚喜 Ban Jinchao 班进朝 Heizi 黑子 Gu Dekui 贾得魁 Liu De 刘德 Liu Desheng 刘得升 Jin Fu 勒夫 (Zhang Xiaowen 张孝文)	Second official Extra official Second official Extra official





Gentleman ( <i>mo</i> 末)	Wang Linxiang 王麟祥	
Clown ( <i>chou</i> 丑)	Li Yu'er 李雨儿 Li Jinlu 李进禄 Sun Fuxi 孙福喜 Chai Jinzhong 柴进忠 Zhao Jixiang 赵吉祥	
Miscellaneous ( <i>za</i> 杂)	Cao Jinxi 曹进喜 (younger brother) Dong Jinxi 董进喜	
Others	Wu Shuanglu 吴双禄 Li Taiping 李太平 Dong Jincheng 东金成 Gao Jishun 高吉顺 Cao Jinzhong 曹进忠 Zhang Decheng 张得成 Yang Zhong 杨忠 Han Delu 韩得禄 Zhao Jinzhong 赵进忠 (elder brother) Zhao Jinzhong 赵进忠 (younger brother) Zhen Shixiang 甄世祥	Playing drum Playing flute Preparing props ( <i>da jiahuo</i> 打家伙) Preparing props Preparing props Playing flute Playing gong Playing drum Stage walker ( <i>zouchang</i> 走场) Stage walker Stage walker
Unidentified	Wang Jinsheng 王进升 Chen Ruilai 陈瑞来 Zhang Cheng 张成 Zhang Guoxun 张国勋 Chen Xiangrong 陈向荣	Managing theatrical caps and turbans  Managing theatrical boots

In addition to these two lists, Wang Zhizhang has also recorded that eunuchs named Jiu Ru 九如, Mei Shou 眉寿, Ma Shuangxi 马双喜, De Zhu 得住, and Niu Cai 钮彩 “all were chief managers between the Qianlong and the Jiaqing reigns” (Wang Zhizhang 1937: 411). Therefore, high-ranking eunuchs and court actors in Nanfu and Jingshan who were recorded during the Qianlong reign until the early period of the Jiaqing reign were 54 in total. Among them, 15 used to hold supervisor or manager positions. Categorized by their acting roles, there were 4 court actors acting as male leads, 8 female leads, 8 official characters, 1 gentle-





man character, 5 clowns, and 2 miscellaneous roles. Besides, there were 11 court musicians and actors whose roles dealt with stage walking as well as 5 actors whose roles were unidentified. Thus, I would argue that these name lists represent court actors whose performing techniques were exceptional and outstanding. It is evident that they were among one thousand five hundred actors who worked in Nanfu and Jingshan during the Qianlong reign which has been regarded as the golden era of court theater (Zhou Mingtai 1971: 75; Wang Zhizhang 1937: 10; Niu Chuanhai 1977: 6; Yang Changde 1985); Li Zongbai 1991: 25).

He Xishi (1990) 何希时 has also studied lives of court actors who had been working in Nanfu and Jingshan since the Qianlong until the Daoguang reigns (1736-1826). The table of the “*Qingdai lingguan zhuan* 清代伶官传” [Biographies of Qing court actors] (He Xishi 1990: 590-91) shows:

Character type	Actor's name who had been working in the Qing court since the Qianlong until the Daoguang reign (1736-1826)
Civil male lead ( <i>kun sheng</i> 昆生)	Niu Cai 钮彩, Fan Wu 潘五, Xiang Qing 祥庆, Ru Shan 如山, Shen Dekui 沈得魁, De Qing 得庆, Chen Shuangquan 陈双全, Shun'er 顺儿, Sheng'er 生儿, Liu Zhaolin 刘招林, Lu Deming 陆得明, De Fu 得福, Qi Mao 七猫, De Li 得立, Tang Taozhu 唐套住
Military male lead ( <i>wu sheng</i> 武生)	Lu Futao 陆福寿, Ru Yi 如意, Yong Shou 永寿
Second male lead	Yu Xi 玉喜, Chun Fu 春福, Wang Cheng 汪成, Hua Nan 华南, San Xi 三喜, Chun Xi 春喜, Zhang Jingyuan 张景元, Bai Fu 百福, Hai Shou 海寿, Zhu Shuangxi 朱双喜, Fu Shou 福寿, Shen Shouling 沈寿龄, De'er 得儿, Bai Qing 百庆
Female lead	Chang Shou 长寿, Yu fu 玉福, Lan Xiang 兰香, Si Xi 四喜, Er Siguan 儿四官, Yu Zan 玉簪, Song Nian 松年, Xu Rui 徐瑞, Qi Dai 七代, Ma Run'er 马润儿, Xi Qing 喜庆, Xi Rui 喜瑞, Yan Shou 延寿, Xiao Yanshou 小延寿, Hu Jinsheng 胡金生, Shen Shou 沈寿, Dong Mingyao 董明耀, Zou Guiguan 邹桂官, Song Nian 松龄, Shun Xin 顺心
Old female lead ( <i>lao dan</i> 老旦)	Ru Xi 如喜, Yuan Fu 元福, Xiang An 祥安







Official	Da Qing 大庆, Zhang Fu 张福, Yao'er 姚二, Shou Guan 寿官, Ming Feng 鸣凤, Long Shou 隆寿, De Shun 得顺, Jin Shun 金顺, Xiao Shuangxi 小双喜, Xiao Deshun 小得顺, Yong Tai 永泰
Second official	Shen Xiu 沈秀, De Sheng 得升, Shuang Bao 双保
Gentleman	Tian Lu 天禄, Niu Shunshan 钮顺善
Clown	Fan Zengfu 范增福, Fan Chuo 幡绰, Zhou Shou 周寿, Zhou Wenda 周文达, Er Gou 二狗, Yao Baisui 姚百岁

This table clearly lists actors' names and their acting roles from the Qianlong to the Daoguang reign (1736-1827). According to the list, there were 33 court actors who performed male lead roles, 23 female lead roles, 14 official roles, 2 gentleman roles, and 6 clown roles, thus 78 in total. If we combine this number with previous name lists, then there were 132 court actors who performed and worked in Nanfu and Jingshan during the Qianlong period. This amount is merely one-tenth of the total 1400 to 1500 court actors during this era.

These court actors formed several acting troupes in Nanfu and Jingshan. In the *Qianlong wushi nian chongxiu Xishen zusi miao beizhi* 干龙五十年重修喜神祖师庙碑志 [Stele Inscription of Renovation the Happiness Immortal Ancestor Monastery during the fiftieth year of the Qianlong reign (1785)], it recorded a list of court acting troupes in Nanfu and Jingshan during the Qianlong reign. There were 34 troupes in total, namely: Double Harmony Troupe (*Shuanghe ban* 双和班), Fortune Shell Troupe (*Jianke ban* 戡壳班), Protection Harmony Troupe (*Baohe ban* 保和班), Wealthy Congratulation Troupe (*Yuging ban* 裕庆班), Uprightness Jade Troupe (*Duanrui ban* 端瑞班), Excessive Congratulation Troupe (*Yuging ban* 余庆班), Gathering Congratulation Troupe (*Cuiqing ban* 萃庆班), Grand Completion Troupe (*Dacheng ban* 大成班), New Troupe of the Prince's Office (Wangfu xinban 王府新班), Harmony Completion Troupe (*Hecheng ban* 和成班), Grand Spring Troupe (*Dachun ban* 大春班), Four Harmony Troupe (*Sihe ban* 四和办), Longevity Congratulation Troupe (*Shouqing ban* 寿庆班), Accumulation Completion Troupe (*Jicheng ban* 集成班), Suitability Congratulation Troupe (*Yiqing ban* 宜庆班), Eternality Congratulation Troupe (*Yongqing ban* 永庆班), Supreme Harmony Troupe (*Taihe ban* 太和班), Gathering Fragrance Troupe (*Cuifang ban* 萃芳班), Scenery Harmony Troupe (*Jinghe ban* 景和班), New Harmony Group (*Xinhe ju* 新和聚), Harmony Gathering Troupe (*Hehe ban* 和合班), Gold Bracelet Troupe (*Jinhuan ban* 金环班), Gold Congratulation Troupe (*Jinqing ban* 金庆班), Gold Silver Troupe (*Jinyin ban* 金银班), Gold Completion Troupe (*Jincheng ban* 金成班), Preciousness Completion Troupe (*Guicheng ban* 贵成班), Supreme Completion



Troupe (*Taicheng ban* 太成班), Protection Completion Troupe (*Baocheng ban* 保成班), Jade Completion Troupe (*Yucheng ban* 玉成班), Eternality Auspice Troupe (*Yongxiang ban* 永祥班), Prosperity Harmony Troupe (*Lube ban* 禄和班), Pine-tree Longevity Troupe (*Songshou ban* 松寿班), Grand Virtue Prosperity Troupe (*Dade shengban* 大德盛班), and Congratulation Year Troupe (*Qingling ban* 庆龄班) (Zhang Cixi 1988: 912-913).

As for types of plays performed by these court actors during the Qianlong reign, the chapter “Grand Opera and Festival Opera” (*Daxi Jiexi* 大戏节戏) in the *Xiaoting Xulu* 啸亭续录 [Supplementary Notes on the Whistle Pavilion] written by Prince Zhao Lian 昭懋 (1780-1833)<sup>8</sup> was recorded in details:

In the beginning of the Qianlong reign, the Pure Emperor, being content with the peace and prosperity of his kingdom, ordered Zhang Wenmin<sup>9</sup> to write the yuanben plays for the musical department to practice and perform on festivals. Every festival must be entertained with dramatic performances. During that time allusory stories such as Poet Qu Yuan Crossing the River,<sup>10</sup> Zi'an Composing Poems<sup>11</sup> were all adapted to perform on the stage. They were called “Officially Adapted Plays for Monthly Performances.” The plays performed for the celebration in the inner court, of which theme of good luck and happiness were called “Divine Performances of the Palace.” Performances before and after imperial birthdays, in which theme about fairies and gods presenting congratulations as well as children and elderly expressing their gratitude were called “Double Nine Grand Celebration.” Moreover the story about Mu Jian Lian Buddha saving his mother was called “A Golden Ledger for the Promotion of Kindness.” It was performed on the stage at the end of the year. There appeared many devils and spirits on the stage in order to represent the meaning of exorcising of the ancient people. The story of Monk Xuan Zang of the Tang dynasty pilgriming to the west to search for Buddhist scriptures was called “The Precious Raft of the Peaceful Times.” It was performed before and after New Year's Day. All the plays were composed by Zhang Wenmin himself. His words were elegant, marvelous, and refined. He employed allusions, classics, and scriptures in his plays. Most of them were extremely magnificent. Afterwards the emperor also ordered Prince Zhuang Ke<sup>12</sup> to compose the play about the allusory story of the Three Kingdoms, which was called “The Annals of the Three Kingdoms.” Moreover, he composed the play about the state of Song and bandits on the Liang Mountain, the war between the Song and the Jin, the capture of the two emperors of Song Dynasty. It was called “A Diagram of the Stars of Loyalty and Righteousness.” His words were from the hands of a wanderer of the glory of the sun, who could only complete the composition negligently. Moreover, he copied the yuanben script of the Water Margins heroes of the Yuan and the Ming dynasties. His songs and





verses could not match those written by Zhang Wenmin in any respect. In the eighteenth year of the Jiaqing reign (1804), in order to instruct the wicked matter, the emperor issued a special order to prohibit opera performances in all of the three-tiered stages. On New Year's Day only Officially Adapted Monthly Performances replaced them.

乾龙初, 纯皇帝以海内升平, 命张文敏制诸院本进呈, 以备乐部演习, 凡各节今皆奏演。其时典故如屈子竞渡、子安题阁诸事, 无不谱入, 谓之月令承应。其於内延諸喜慶事, 奏演祥瑞端应者, 谓之法宫雅奏雅。於万寿令节前後, 奏演群仙神道添筹锡禧, 以及黄童白叟含哺鼓腹者, 谓之九九大庆。又演目健连尊者救母事, 谓之劝善金科, 於岁暮奏之, 以其鬼魅杂出, 以代古人罗被之意。演唐玄奘西域取经事, 谓之升平宝筏, 于上元前後日奏之。其曲文皆文敏亲制, 词藻奇丽, 引用内典经卷, 大为超妙。其後又命庄恪亲王谱蜀汉三国志典故, 谓之鼎峙春秋。又谱家 政和间梁山诸盗及宋、金交兵, 徽、钦北狩狩诸事, 谓之忠义流图。其词皆出自华游客之手, 惟能敷衍成章, 又抄袭元、明水游义侠、西川图诸院本, 曲文远不逮文敏多矣。嘉庆癸酉, 上以教匪事, 特命罢演诸连台, 上元日惟以月令承应代之。(Zhao Lian 1980: 377-378)

From the above passage we learn that court plays during the early Qing dynasty can be categorized into two major types. First is the so-called *Jieling Xi* 节领戏, *Yingjie Xi* 应节戏, *Jie Xi* 节戏 or “Festival Play.” This was a type of plays like *Yueling Chengying Xi* 月领成应戏 or “Officially Adapted Plays for Monthly Performances” performed on each monthly festivity, such as New Year's Eve (*Yuan dan* 元旦), Dragon Boat festival (*Duanyang* 端阳), mid-autumn (*Zhongqiu* 中秋), and winter solstice (*Dongzhi* 冬至). The second type is the so-called *Qingdian Xi* 庆典戏 or “Congratulatory Play,” which can be divided into two subtypes: *Fagong Yazou Xi* 法宫雅奏戏 or “Divine Performances of the Palace Play” and *Jiujiu Daqing Xi* 九九大庆戏 or “Double Nine Grand Celebration Play.” The former were plays requested by the emperor to be performed on each auspicious court ceremony, such as imperial engagement ceremony, imperial wedding, a ceremony of bestowing title to Empress Dowager, prince's birthday, a ceremony of purifying a baby prince on the third day after his birth (*Huangzi Xisan* 皇子洗三), a celebration on a month-old birthday of a prince (*Huangzi Miyue* 皇子弥月), a ceremony of appointing imperial concubines (*Cedui Feibin* 册对妃嫔); the latter were plays performed on imperial birthdays, also called *wanzhou jiexi* 万寿节戏, *shou xi* 寿戏, and *shou zhouzi* 寿轴子 (Ding Ruqin 1999: 40-58).

### Court Actors' Lives during the Qianlong Reign

The Qianlong emperor's treatment towards court actors in Nanfu and Jingshan differed in accordance with their classes and ranks. Eunuch actors were treated better than professional actors. The former normally held higher positions, earned more income, and gained more benefits. And skill in acting was one route of



upward mobility for the eunuch actors, as seen in the biographies of Jin Jinzhong, Li Luxi and Zhang Mingde (Rawski 2001: 178-179). In the record, Jin Jinzhong was appointed a sixth-rank supervisor in the Inner School during the fifth year of the Qianlong reign (1740). He died in the nineteenth year of the same reign (1754). Therefore, he supervised court opera troupes at least fifteen years. Li Luxi entered Nanfu since he was eleven years old. When he reached twenty, he became an eighth-rank supervisor of the Inner School. In the following year, he was appointed to the seventh rank. In the eighth year of the Jiaqing reign (1803), he was promoted to the sixth-rank supervisor. In the sixth year of the Xianfeng reign, he was again promoted to the fifth rank which received seven taels of silver as income. He supervised court opera troupes for more than fifty years. Liu Jinxi and Zhang Mingde worked in Nanfu and Jingshan for more than forty years. An Fu used to perform a small male lead role. In the fifteen year of the Daoguang reign (1835), he was appointed to the eighth-rank supervisor of the Inner School. In the sixth year of the Xianfeng reign (1856) he was promoted to the seventh rank in order to replace a former sixth-rank supervisor. He resigned from his position in the fourth year of the Tongzhi reign (1865) due to his illness. He served in the Qing court for thirty years (Ding Ruqin 1999: 83-85). From this information, one can see that these eunuch actors had a lifetime position. Once he became a eunuch, he was automatically committed to the court without denial.

In the twelfth fascicle entitled “Official Registration 2” (*Guanzhi er* 官制二) in the *Guochao gongshi* 国朝宫史 [Court History of Dynasty] compiled by E'ertai 鄂尔泰 (1680-1745)<sup>13</sup> and Zhang Tingyu 张廷玉 (d. 1729)<sup>14</sup> it recorded “Salary of Officials in Duty” (*E'shu zhizhang* 额数职掌) of eunuch officials in Nanfu and Jingshan:

#### Nanfu 南府

总管一员，七品，执行守侍。每月银五两、米五斛。公费银一两。	One supervisor, rank seven, in charge of service. Monthly income was five taels <sup>15</sup> of silver, five pecks of rice. And an official budget of one tael of silver.
首领四名，俱八品，侍监。每月银三两、米三斛。公费银七钱三分三厘。	Four managers all rank eight, oversee those in service. Monthly income was three taels of silver, three pecks of rice, and an official budget of seven <i>qian</i> three <i>fen</i> and three <i>li</i> .
委署首领，无品级，无定额。每月银三两、米三斛。公费银七钱三分三厘。	Office leader, no rank, no specific quota. Monthly income was three taels of silver, three pecks of rice and official budget of seven <i>qian</i> three <i>fen</i> and three <i>li</i> .





太监，无定额。每月银二两、米一斛。公费银六钱六分六厘。	Grand eunuch, had no specific quota. Monthly income was two taels of silver, one peck of rice and official budget is six <i>qian six fen</i> and six <i>li</i> .
其恩加月银者，亦无定额。其恩赏品级者，即按品级给银、米、公费。	Those granted a special bonus of monthly silver also had no fixed quota. Those granted an official rank were given silver, rice, and budgets according to rank. (Qing Gui and Wang Jie 1994: 32-33; cited in Ding Ruqin 1999: 11-12)

### *Jingshan* 景山

总管一员，七品，执行守侍。每月银五两、米五斛。公费银一两。	One supervisor, rank seven, was in charge of service. Monthly income was five taels of silver, five pecks of rice. And an official budget of one tael of silver.
首领二名，俱八品，侍监。每月银三两、米三斛。公费银七钱三分三厘。	Two managers, both rank eight, oversee those in service. Monthly income was three taels of silver, three pecks of rice, and an official budget of seven <i>qian three fen</i> and three <i>li</i> .
委署首领，无品级，无定额。每月银三两、米三斛。公费银七钱三分三厘。	Office leader, no rank, no specific quota. Monthly income was three taels of silver, three pecks of rice and official budget of seven <i>qian three fen</i> and three <i>li</i> .
太监，无定额。每月银二两、米一斛。公费银六钱六分六厘。	Grand eunuch had no specific quota. Monthly income was two taels of silver, one peck of rice and official budget is six <i>qian six fen</i> and six <i>li</i> .
其恩加月银者，亦无定额。其恩赏品级者，即按品级给银、米、公费。	Those granted a special bonus of monthly silver also had no fixed quota. Those granted an official rank, were given silver, rice, and budgets according to rank.

According to the *Liyuan gongsuo yongming beiji* 梨园公所永名碑记 [Stele Record of Perpetual Names of Pear Garden in Court] written in the first year of the Qianlong reign (1736), during that time Beijing established “supervising officials in Jingshan” (*Jingshan zongguan* 景山总管) which consisted of forty pro-



fessional actors from Suzhou like Zhou Wenqing 周文卿 and eleven monastery heads like Wang Hanxiang 王汉翔. They were brought back from the imperial southern tours by the Kangxi emperor. Since these professional actors were not allowed to mingle with eunuchs, Jingshan was thus originally designed and established exclusively for them. After Qianlong's imperial southern tours, there were more professional actors brought back to court. Until the fiftieth year of the Qianlong reign (1785), Jingshan already had three main schools.<sup>16</sup>

Among professional actors from the south who were housed and trained in the Outer School (*Wai xue* 外学), only a few of them had a chance to ask for leave or return to their hometowns after retirement. Most of them were confined in the palace for good. Poet Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1711-1798)<sup>17</sup> once wrote.

Singers from Wu area named Wu Wen'an and Lu Caiguan have been serving in the palace for years. This spring the two singers asked for permission to return to the south with the excuse of attending their parents' funerals. They happened to meet each other at Huqiu. They talked about the vicissitude of life and sighed that this meeting would be the last one for the rest of their lives. I also felt saddened. Melancholically I composed:

*In this spring there are two returning travelers in the park,  
Thirty years ago they often saw each other.  
Indeed how can they suppress their white hair?  
How could upright scholars of the Yuan dynasty be?  
Holding hands in the farewell departure, they promised to see each other again.  
Their tears are blown away by the Huqiu wind.  
They compare themselves as falling snow,  
Once it falls to the earth, it will be gone forever.*

吴下歌郎吴文安、陆才官，供奉大内已有年矣，今春为葬亲故，乞假南归 相遇虎丘，略说天上光景，且云此会又了一生！余亦惘惘情深，凄然成咏

宜春苑里归来客，三十年前识面多。

绝代何戡都白发，贞元朝士更如何？

握手临歧话再逢，泪痕吹下虎丘风。

自言身比天花坠，一到人间一世终。(Yuan Mei 1988: 566; cited in Chen Fang 2001: 164)

Here the poem narrates how two singers—Wu Wen'an and Lu Caiguan—were selected into the palace during the early Qianlong period. They were confined in court for thirty years. If it was not because of their parents' funerals, and asked for returning to the south, they would not have met each other. This poem clearly illustrates melancholic and miserable lives of professional actors who were recruited and later were restrained in the Qing court.







Once professional actors from the south stepped into the palace gate, they would be separated from the outside world for good. What they could do was to devote their whole lives to pass their acting knowledge on to their juniors. It was fortunate that the Qianlong emperor treated them quite well. For example, besides receiving monthly salaries, these actors also earned extra tips and gifts after each performance. After having realized that actors from the south were not familiar with old rice from the capital warehouse, the emperor commanded the Imperial Household Department that they establish a special grain depot storing white rice for these actors of the Outer School (Wang Zhizhang 1937: 27 and Wu Zhiqin 1984: 400). The emperor also granted them special graveyards for their burials (Wang Zhizhang 1937: 6 and Wu Zhiqin 1984: 400). Furthermore, those outstanding actors were eligible for Three Banners registration in the Imperial Household Department:

The Imperial decree on the fifth day of the ninth month in the fifty-sixth year of the Qianlong emperor (1792) records: Actors from Nanfu, when there are national festivals and feasts, must prepare for music and performances. Slave banners from the Imperial Household Department are my banner servants. Their monthly salaries are of regulated amount. If we put siblings and heirs of Han scholars in the capital, actors from Suzhou and eunuchs into the registration of Three Banners of the Imperial Household Department, they will undoubtedly take away a lot of money and food of the slave banners. However, if any honest and diligent actor whose service is outstanding has been found among them, we could consider to take one or two of them into the slave banner group, but the number should be limited. This explains why instances of enlisting actors into registration of banners have been quite rare since my enthronement. There has never been any actor who, due to bestowed favor, has followed and obeyed my command. For this matter, I must have self-discipline. I only fear that my successors might occasionally lose self-control or could not resist these people's beseeches and thus grant registration at will. Thereby I order all ministers of the Imperial Household Department to note that my scions must not at will convert these actors into banner slaves. If the emperor does not accept ministers' advice and still intends to do so, you ministers may present my order to stop him decisively. A Shu Fang, Military-affairs Office, General Office of the Imperial Household Department each should keep one copy of my decree for future use.

乾隆五十六年九月初五日諭：南府學藝人等，乃國家歲時宴會，備用音樂所必需。內務府包衣人等，皆朕之旗下臣仆，其俸餉皆有定額。若將京師漢人、蘇州優伶、及太監等之弟侄子孫，入於內府三旗，勢必分占包衣人等挑錢糧地步。但此項人內，如果實心繩勉，效力有年者，或將其一二人





酌人包衣尚可，第不得任意多人。是朕临御以来，将此辈人於包衣者甚少，从未有因其恩，即行率准者。此事在朕躬可自保，惟恐後世子孙，偶失检点，或因若辈乞请，率意准行，难为豫必。著交总管内务府大臣，加意存记；将来朕之子孙，不得任意多将此项人等入於包衣旗下。当谏劝弗纳，必欲将此辈入旗，可执朕此旨，毅然谏阻。著将此旨於阿书房、军机处、总管内务府衙门各录一道尊藏。(Yu Minzhong 1932: 1211-1212; cited in Qiu Huiying 2000: 185; Ding Ruqin, 1999: 22)

From this excerpt, one can see that the Qianlong emperor's purpose was to employ less Han actors from the capital and famous local actors from Suzhou. For he feared that they might mingle with Three Bannermen in the Imperial Household Department. This was to avoid the confusion of payment of eunuchs like servant eunuchs. Instead the emperor decided to focus particularly on eunuch actors from Three Banners in Nanfu. It is evident that professional actors and eunuch actors who worked in Nanfu and Jingshan during the Qianlong emperor were treated differently. Once one became a bannerman, he received salary, better benefits, and higher status.

## Conclusion

This is the overall picture of court actors' lives during the Qianlong reign. In the seventh year of his reign (1742), the Qianlong emperor commanded the establishments of the Divine Music Monastery (*Shenyue guan* 神乐关) in charge of performances in the imperial sacrificial ceremony, the Hesheng Office (Hesheng shu 和声署) and the Zhangyi Bureau (*Zhangyi si* 掌仪司) in charge of performances in court banquets (Ding Ruqin 1999: 9-14). The constructions of these three music and entertainment bureaus stemmed from the Qianlong emperor's fascination with drama. As a result, this increased the numbers of actors and musicians in the Qianlong court. It has been recorded that during that time the Hesheng Office consisted of one Manchu and one Chinese director, one Manchu and one Chinese deputy manager, a large number of attendants and musicians, totally 194 in number, while the Zhangyi Bureau consisted of one supervisor, one deputy, and 80 eunuchs (Lang Xiuhua 1989: 13, 1982: 9).

In the beginning of the Qianlong period, court drama students in Nanfu and Jingshan were more than fourteen hundred to fifteen hundred in number (Zhou Mingtai 1971: 74; Wang Zhizhang 1937: 10; Niu Chuanghai, 1977: 5; Li Zongbai 1991: 24). Quantity of court actors in both Inner School and Outer School was the highest during the Qianlong reign. Later in the first year of the Daoguang reign (1821), the emperor began to terminate the employment of actors in the Outer School. On the eighteenth day in the first month, chief supervisor of the Imperial Household Department Ying He 英和 (1771-1839) memorialized:





Send back nineteen local student actors. Let them return in the boats of the Textile Ministry of Suzhou. Beyond the rule, they will be received imperial favor. Each one of them will be received ten taels of silver. As for bannermen eunuch actors, besides sixteen eunuchs that were withdrawn earlier, sixty more will be laid off. They all will be selected to work in the Imperial Household Department. Respect this.

退出民籍学生十九名，照例交苏州织造便船带回，格外加恩，每名赏银十两。至旗籍学生，前已裁退十六名，着再裁退六十名，统一交内务府另挑差使。钦次。(Ding Ruqin 1999: 23)

Here we can see that court actors that were laid off belonged to both bannermen and professional groups. The former was withdrawn more than the latter. Local actors were sent back to the south, while the bannermen actors were sent back to work in the Imperial Household Department.

This decreasing number of court actors was also recorded by Li Luxi, who was Nanfu supervisor in the first year of the Daogang reign. He memorialized:

Right now although court drama students in the Outer Schools of both Nanfu and Jingshan approach more than three hundred in number, compared to the number of actors in the fourth year of the Jiaqing reign (1799), the former is not even half of it. If any gala performance is held, there will be no sufficient actors to perform...

今现在南府、景山外边学生等虽有三百余名，较比嘉庆四年之数不技及其半，若承应大戏等差，实不敷门...。(Zhou Mingtai 1971: 74; Wang Zhizhang 1937: 10; Niu Chuanghai 1977: 6; Li Zongbai 1991: 24)

From this passage we can see that twenty-one years after the decease of the Qianlong emperor in 1799 (then titled the “Supreme Emperor” (*taishang huang* 太上皇) after his abdication in 1796), the number of court actors from the Outer Schools in both Nanfu and Jingshan diminished approximately four hundred in total. The reason why Li Luxi compared quantity of court actors during his time with the scale of court actors employed in the fourth year of the Jiaqing reign was due to the fact that the latter still served as a standard. Although the Qianlong emperor designated his fourteenth son to be the Jiaqing emperor in 1796, the Qianlong emperor still continued to empower behind the scene in the title of the “Supreme Emperor.” (Kahn 1971: 191-199) Thus, if the scale mentioned in Luxi’s memorial is correct, then court actors from the Outer Schools in both Nanfu and Jingshan must have reached seven to eight hundred in number. Accumulate with eunuch actors from Inner Schools, all together court actors from Inner and Outer schools in both Nanfu and Jingshan must have been around



1400 to 1500 in number.

Although the Jiaqing emperor preserved these music bureaus, the scale of the opera troupes had shrunk immensely. During the early period of the Daoguang reign, Jingshan was merged and became a part of Nanfu which terminated the employment of the Outer School. In the seventh year of the Daoguang reign (1828), the name of office in charge of opera actors was changed from *fu* to *shu* 署 and was called the Shengping Office (*Shengping Shu* 升平署), whose scale was much smaller (Zhou Mingtai 1971: 75; Wang Zhizhang 1937: 10; Niu Chuanghai 1977: 6; Li Zongbai 1991: 25). Therefore, judging from the overall picture of the exclusive court opera troupes in the Qianlong period, we can conclude that the Qianlong reign was considered the heyday of the Qing court drama.





## Notes

<sup>1</sup> This paper has been funded by the National Research University Project of CHE and the Ratchadaphiseksomphot Endowment Fund (HS 1025A).

<sup>2</sup> One was a three-tiered stage built in the Longevity Peaceful Palace (*Shou'an Gong* 寿安宫); another was a three-tiered stage in the Mutual Pleasure Garden (*Tongle Yuan* 同乐园) in the Old Summer Palace; the other was the three-tiered stage the Clear Sound Pavilion (*Qingyin Ge* 清音阁) built in the Fortune Longevity Garden (*Fushou Yuan* 福寿园) in the Jehol Summer Palace. See a list of 25 theaters built during the Qianlong reign in Qiu Huiying (2000). The three-tiered stage was an innovation of Chinese architecture that reflected the heyday of court theater during the reign of Qianlong. See more discussion on Chinese three-tiered stage in Sasiporn Petcharapiruch, "Study of Three-Tiered Stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion: Synthesis between Chinese and European Theatricality and Symbolism of Chinese Emperorhip." Ph.D. Diss., (Chulalongkorn University, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> This play was composed in the seventh year of the Qianlong reign (1742). The story deals with how one bagger became rich after picking up gold by accident.

<sup>4</sup> This is a small in-court theatrical stage built in the back hall on the western side of the Imbided Fragrance Studio under the Qianlong emperor's commission. The whole stage is made from wood. Its platform is 0.5 meters in height; the entire stage is 3.9 meters in width, 3.5 meters in depth, and 2.2 meters in height. This in-court stage was designed for emperors and empresses watching short drama performances after their meals.

<sup>5</sup> The Eight Banners system was founded by Nu'er hachi 努尔哈赤, the Taizu 太祖 emperor in the 29th year of Wanli 万历 period of the Ming dynasty (1601). In the beginning there were only four banners, namely Yellow Banner (*huang qi* 黄旗), White Banner (*bai qi* 白旗), Red Banner (*hong qi* 红旗) and Blue Banner (*lan qi* 蓝旗). In 1614, they were changed into Plain Yellow Banner (*zheng qi* 正黄), Plain White Banner (*zheng bai* 正白), Plain Red Banner (*zheng hong* 正红) and Plain Blue Banner (*zheng lan* 正蓝). Later it was expanded to include Boarder Yellow Banner (*xiang huang* 镶黄), Boarder White Banner (*xiang bai* 镶白), Boarder Red Banner (*xiang hong* 镶红) and Boarder Blue Banner (*xiang lan* 镶蓝). Together they were called Eight Banners (Crossley 2002: 8).

<sup>6</sup> The Imperial Household Department was built in the early Qing dynasty. Thirteen yamens were established in the eleventh year of the Shunzhi reign (1654). In the eighteenth year (1661) they were named the Imperial Household Department. They consisted of seven bureaus and three offices. Each department took charge of different section. For instance, *Guangchu si* 广储司 was in charge of imperial properties and assets, *Qingfeng si* 庆奉司 imperial cattle, *Zhangyi si* 掌仪司 court rituals, *Shenxing si* 慎刑司 laws and regulations, *Kuaiji si* 会计司 governmental finance, *Jihua duyue si* 计划都虞司 transportation, and *Yingzao si* 营造司 architectural constructions. In addition, there were also *Shangsi yuan*



上驷院 in charge of imperial horses, *Wubei yuan* 武备院 in charge of combative weapons, and *Fengchen yuan* 奉宸院 in charge of imperial gardens. These units were called “Seven bureaus and three offices” (*qisi sanyuan* 七司三院). Besides there were also small units like Silk Warehouse (*Duan ku* 缎库) and Tea Warehouse (*Cha ku* 茶库). See more details in Shan Shiyuan (1986).

<sup>7</sup> It has been recorded that when court actors were not enough to perform, eunuch musicians from the Zhonghe Music Bureau were usually employed to substitute with characters like soldiers and attendants, which were called “*pao long tao* 跑龙套,” named after a specially designed costume called “*long tao* 龙套” or “dragon robe. In addition to these three schools, Nanfu and Jingshan also consisted of two other significant schools—the Outer School (*Wai xue* 外学), which housed and trained professional actors recruited from the south and the Tiaosuo School (*Tiaosuo xue* 跳索学) in charge of stringed musical instruments. See more discussion on organizations of Nanfu and Jingshan in (Wang Zhizhang 1986: 52-229).

<sup>8</sup> His *hao* 号 (styled name) was Jixiu zhuren 汲修主人. He was the eighth inheritor of Daisan's 代善 (1583-1648) principedom (Prince Li 礼亲王). He was a competent scholar. Prince Zhao Lian was well-known for his collection of miscellaneous notes on the history of the Qing dynasty, entitled *Xiaoting Zalu* 啸亭杂录 [Supplementary Notes on the Whistle Pavilion], 10 *juan*, with a supplement (*xulu* 续录) in 3 *juan* (Hummel 1943: 98-99).

<sup>9</sup> Zhang Wenmin or Zhang Zhao 张照 (1691-1745) was an official, painter, and dramatist. His *zi* was Detian 得天, *hao* Jingnan 经南 and Tianping 天瓶. He was a native of Jiangsu. He became an official in the Hanlin Academy in 1712. In 1740 he was appointed vice-president of the Board of Punishments. In 1741 he and Prince Yinlu were commanded to re-examine and organize a work on ceremonial music named *Lülü Zhengyi* 律吕正义. He passed away in 1745. His poem collection was entitled *Detian Jushi Ji* 得天居士集 [Collection by the Hermit Detian] in 6 fascicles. His dramas, entitled *Yueling Chenying* 月令成应, *Fagong Yazou* 法宫雅奏, *Jiujiu Daqing* 九九大庆, *Quanshan Jinke* 全善金科 and *Shengping Baofa* 升平宝筏 were often performed in the palace until the end of the Qing dynasty (Hummel 1943: 75-76).

<sup>10</sup> Qu Yuan (c. 340-278 B.C.) was the first great poet in Chinese history. He lived during the Warring States period and was a high-ranking official in the state of Chu 楚. At that time his homeland was under siege by another powerful state called Qin 秦. The King of Chu did not recognize Qu Yuan's correct stand or appreciate his suggestions for saving their country. Moreover, treacherous officials slandered him, and at last he was sent into exile. On the fifth day of the fifth lunar month, when he heard news that the capital of Chu had fallen into enemy hands, he threw himself into the Miluo River (*Miluo Jiang* 汨罗江) (in present-day Hunan 湖南 province) and drowned. Poet Qu Yuan is associated with Dragon Boat Festival or *Duanwu Jie* 端午节, occurring on the fifth day of the fifth month in the Chinese lunar calendar, the festival that commemorates the life





and especially the death of Poet Qu Yuan (Lau and Minford 2000: 43).

<sup>11</sup> It is a play about Wang Bo 王勃 (649-675 A.D.), one of the four outstanding poets during the early Tang dynasty. Wang Bo's zi is Zi'an 子安. He was a native of Jiangzhou 絳州. The play *Zi'an Composing Poems* is dedicated to him. This play is normally performed in the ninth lunar month (Lau and Minford 2000: 109).

<sup>12</sup> Prince Zhuang Ke or Prince Yinlu 胤祿 (1695-1767) was the second Manchu Prince Zhuang (*Zhuang qinwang* 庄亲王), the sixteenth son of the Kangxi emperor. In 1741 he and Zhang Zhao were commissioned to revise the music canon named *Lülü Zhengyi* and were also appointed supervisors of the Board of Music. After his death in 1767, Prince Yin Lu was canonized as Ke (Hummel 1943: 106).

<sup>13</sup> His name was Yi'an 毅庵, styled Xilin 西林. He was an official and a member of the Silin Gioro clan. He belonged to the Manchu Bordered Blue Banner. He was an author of prose writings entitled *Xilin yigao* 西林遗稿 [Extant Copy of Mr. Western Forest] in six fascicles and a poem collection entitled *Wenwei tang shiji* 文蔚堂诗集 [Poem Collection of the Literary Elegance Hall] in eight fascicles. He also wrote a lot of government publications. (Hummel 1943: 85).

<sup>14</sup> His name was Jingfeng 景峰. He was a native of Shenxi. He was an official and a poet. His poem collection was entitled *Chenghuai yuan shixuan* 澄怀园诗选 [Selective Poems of the Pure Cherishment Garden] in 12 fascicles. He also left behind a prose collection entitled *Chenghuai yuan wencun* 澄怀园文存 [Extant Prose of the Pure Cherishment Garden] in 15 fascicles. In 1746 he gathered together his miscellaneous notes, literature and other subjects, entitled *Chenghuai yuan yu* 澄怀园语 [Discourses of the Pure Cherishment Garden] in 4 fascicles. These three works were known as *Chenghuai yuan quanji* 澄怀园全集 [Complete Collection of the Pure Cherishment Garden] (Hummel 1943: 158).

<sup>15</sup> On *tael* is equivalent to 37.3 grams.

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter Ten "*Qingdai gongting xiju shezhi ji qi chuanjin minjian xiban*" [Establishment of Qing Court Drama and Its Mixture with Local Troupes] in Zhang Faying 张发营, *Zhongguo xiban shi* 中国戏班史 [History of Chinese Opera Troupes] (1991: 226) see also Wang Zhizhang (1937: 24).

<sup>17</sup> His zi was Zicai 子才, *hao* Jianzhai 简斋, Cunzhai 存齋, and Suiyuan 随園. He was a poet, literary critic, and essayist. He was a native of Hangzhou. The collection of his works, entitled *Xiao cang shan fang quanji* 小倉山房全集, in 60 *juan*, was the most well-known. It was steadily enlarged, and now includes forty works under the title *Suiyuan quanji* 随園全集 [Complete Collection of the Sui Garden]. Included are his poems in 39 fascicles, prose-essays in 35 fascicles, miscellaneous notes (*suibi* 隨筆) in 28 fascicles, letters in 10 fascicles, rhythmic prose in 8 fascicles, *ba gu* 八古 essays in 1 fascicle, discourses on literary criticism in 26 fascicles, short stories comprising 34 fascicles, an essay on cooking, *Suiyuan shidan* 随園食單 [Menu of the Sui Garden], 1 fascicle, and some twenty







collections of selected verse by his friends, relatives and acquaintances. His discourse on cooking, written in a vein of charming banter, has been translated into several languages (Hummel 1943: 294).

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