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THE THREE-TIERED STAGE PLEASANT SOUND PAVILION:
A TEXT OF SINO-EUROPEAN SYNTHESIS AND
CHINESE EMPERORSHIP

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จุดประสงค์ของวิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ คือต้องการศึกษาโรงอุปรากรสามชั้นที่เหลืออยู่เพียงแห่งเดียวของจีนชื่อ ช่างอิน
เก้อ (แก่งเสี้ยนเสนาะ) เพื่อให้เข้าใจถึงสถาปัตยกรรมทั้งภายนอกและภายในของโรงอุปรากรหลวงอันมีเอกลักษณ์ของจีน
ความผสมผสานระหว่างความเป็นจีนและความเป็นยุโรป บทละครหลวงดัดแปลงห้าฉบับ รวมถึงอัจฉริยะของการแสดงอุปรา
กรหลวงในสมัยจักรพรรดิเฉียนหลง ทั้งนี้เพื่อให้เข้าใจถึงความหมายเชิงสัญลักษณ์แห่งความเป็นจักรพรรดิของจีน รวมถึงภาพ
แทนของโรงอุปรากรสามชั้นผ่านมุมมองของจักรพรรดิเฉียนหลงและมุมมองของผู้ชมอื่นๆ อีกทั้งให้เข้าใจอำนาจของการแสดง
อุปรากรหลวงในสมัยนี้ด้วย

โรงอุปรากรสามชั้น หรือ เหลียนซีโต ถือเป็นวัตรกรรมทางสถาปัตยกรรมโรงละครสมัยจักรพรรดิเฉียนหลง ซึ่งเป็นยุค
ทองของการแสดงอุปรากรในสมัยราชวงศ์ชิง จักรพรรดิเฉียนหลงทรงมีพระราชโองการให้มีการก่อสร้างโรงอุปรากรสามชั้นถึง
สี่แห่ง ในจำนวนนี้สามแห่งได้ถูกทำลาย แห่งเดียวที่ยังคงอยู่จนถึงปัจจุบัน คือโรงอุปรากรสามชั้นชื่อ ช่างอินเก้อ หรือ แก่งเสี้ยน
เสนาะแห่งนี้ซึ่งตั้งอยู่ในพระราชวังต้องห้าม โรงอุปรากรสามชั้นแห่งนี้สะท้อนถึงอัจฉริยะของการแสดงอุปรากรในพระราชวัง
สมัยราชวงศ์ชิง เป็นการผสมผสานของศาสตร์และศิลป์แขนงต่างๆ ประกอบด้วยความผสมผสานระหว่างความเป็นจีนและ
ความเป็นยุโรป สถาปัตยกรรมภายนอกอันวิจิตรพิสดาร การตกแต่งภายในที่ละเอียดอ่อนงดงาม และอุปกรณ์ประกอบการ
แสดงที่สร้างสรรค์ นอกจากนี้ บทละครหลวงห้าฉบับที่ได้รับการดัดแปลงให้เหมาะกับการแสดงอุปรากรแบบต่อเนื่องหลายวันที่
เต็มไปด้วยความแปลกใหม่ตระการตามากมาย ทั้งนี้ โรงอุปรากรสามชั้นช่างอินเก้อยังเป็นสัญลักษณ์แห่งความเป็นจักรพรรดิ
ของจีน โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งเป็นสัญลักษณ์แห่งความเป็นจักรพรรดิแห่งจักรวาลของจักรพรรดิเฉียนหลง ซึ่งสะท้อนให้เห็นถึงการ
ที่จักรพรรดิทรงใช้โรงอุปรากรเป็นเครื่องมือในการสร้างอุดมคติของความเป็นจักรพรรดิจีนแบบใหม่ สำหรับในมุมมองของผู้
เข้าชมการแสดงอุปรากรหลวงทั้งชาวจีนและชาวต่างชาตินั้น โรงอุปรากรสามชั้นถือเป็นภาพแทนของสถานที่สร้างความบันเทิง
ที่สะท้อนให้เห็นถึงความเจริญรุ่งเรืองในสมัยเฉียนหลง ทั้งนี้ โรงอุปรากรสามชั้นแห่งนี้ถูกประกอบสร้างจากการผสมผสาน
ระหว่างอำนาจของการแสดงอุปรากรหลวงในสมัยราชวงศ์ชิงและการแสดงอำนาจของจักรพรรดิเฉียนหลงด้วย

สาขาวิชา...วรรณคดีและวรรณคดีเปรียบเทียบลายมือชื่อนิสิต.....

ปีการศึกษา 2550.....

ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา.....

ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาร่วม.....

Sapn

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KEY WORD: THREE-TIERED STAGE / QIANLONG / SINO-EUROPEAN SYNTHESIS / REPRESENTATION

SASIPORN PETCHARAPIRUCH: THE THREE-TIERED STAGE PLEASANT SOUND PAVILION: A TEXT OF SINO-EUROPEAN SYNTHESIS AND CHINESE EMPERORSHIP. THESIS ADVISOR: ASST. PROF. TRISILPA BOONKHACHORN, Ph.D., THESIS COADVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. PRAPIN MANOMAIVIBOOL, Ph. D., 452 pp.

My goal is to use the only extant three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion (Changyin Ge 暢音閣) as a way to understand exterior architecture and interior design of traditional Chinese court theater, Sino-European synthesis, five adapted court plays, gala performances, its ingenuity in the Qianlong reign (1736–1796). By focusing on this three-tiered stage, this study also aims to analyze the symbolism of the Qianlong’s emperorship, the representation of the three-tiered stage from Qianlong’s and other court audiences’ perspectives, and the power of court theater during this era.

The “three-tiered stage” or *chongtai sanceng* 崇臺三層 was an innovation of Chinese theatrical architecture during the Qianlong reign, a heyday of court theater in the Qing dynasty. The Qianlong emperor commissioned the construction of four such gigantic theaters, of which three are no longer extant. The only one still in existence is the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion in the Forbidden City. This three-tiered stage reflects an ingenuity of the Qing court theater. It consists of Sino-European synthesis of an unusually-majestic exterior architecture, intricately-designed interior decoration, and creative theatrical properties. In addition, five court plays were adapted for awe-inspiring multi-day performances filled with artistic and visual innovations. Moreover the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion is a symbol of Chinese emperorship. It symbolizes the Qianlong emperor as Universal King. This reflects how the emperor employed the theater as a means to construct a new ideology of Chinese emperorship. From Chinese and foreign audiences’ perspectives, the three-tiered stage is represented as an entertainment venue that reflected prosperity during the Qianlong reign. Thus this massive theater synthesizes the power of Qing court theatricality and the theatricality of Qianlong’s sovereign power.

Field of study ..Literature and Comparative Literature...Student’s signature.....

Academic year....2007..... Advisor’s signature.....

Co-advisor’s signature.....

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SPBF: Shengping Baofa 昇平寶筏 or The Precious Raft of the Peaceful Times

SPBFTG: Shengping Baofa Tigang 昇平寶筏提綱 or The Promptbook of the Precious Raft of Peaceful Times

DZCQ: Dingzhi Chunqiu 鼎峙春秋 or The Annals of the Three Kingdoms

ZYXT: Zhongyi Xuantu 忠義璇圖 or A Diagram of the Stars of Loyalty and Righteousness

ZDXS: Zhaodai Xiaoshao 昭代簫韶 or The Flute Music of the Prosperous Era

QSJK: Quanshan Jinke 勸善金科 or A Golden Ledger for the Promotion of Kindness

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Problem

In the outer perimeter of the northeastern quadrant of the Forbidden City (now known as “the Old Palace,” Gu Gong 故宮) is a palatial compound named the “Palace of Living Out My Years in Peace” (Ningshou Gong 寧壽宮),¹ a place where the Qianlong emperor 乾龍 (1736-1796) intended to celebrate his sixtieth birthday and to which he would be able to retire after abdication (See Map 1 and Map 2). Within the ample grounds of this palace, constructed around 1770, is situated a majestic three-storied stage named the Pleasant Sound Pavilion (Changyin Ge 暢音閣). Commissioned by the Qianlong emperor, construction was begun on this three-tiered stage in the thirty-sixth year of his reign (1771) and finished in the forty-first year (1776). It was renovated later in 1802 and again in 1891 (Zhu, 1983: 28) (Pics. 1 a.-1 b.).

Due to his passion for Chinese drama, the Qianlong emperor commissioned the construction of a large number of theaters in his palaces. Even during his southern tours, many theatrical stages were built under his command. As a result, twenty-five theaters were constructed during the Qianlong reign: five of them in the Forbidden City, three in the Old Summer Palace (Yuanming Yuan 圓明園), one in the in the Pure Stream Garden

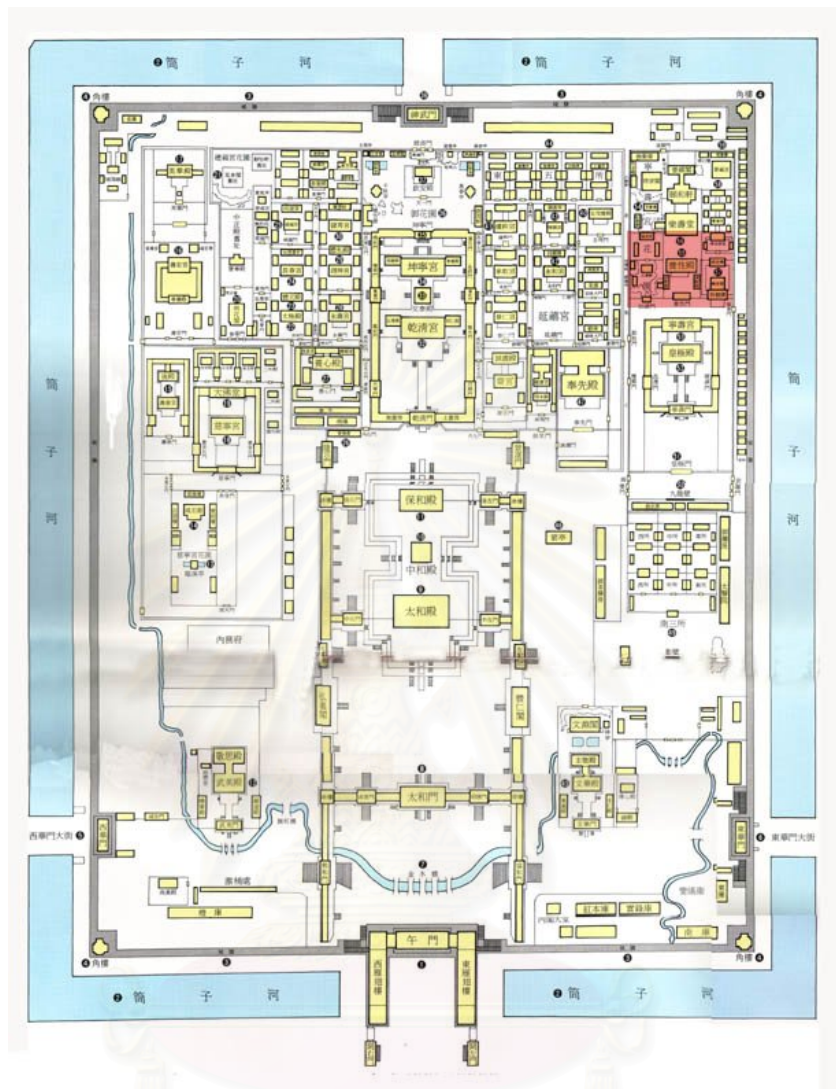
¹ This imperial compound was a scaled down replica of the Forbidden City. Following reconstruction in 1772, it was renamed the “Hall of Imperial Supremacy” (Huangji Dian 黃極殿), although the rear hall continued to be known as *Ningshou Gong*. Despite his original intentions, it has been said that the Qianlong emperor did not come to live here after all (Wang, 1997: 135).

(Qingyi Yuan 清漪園),² two in the Western Garden in Beijing (Xi Yuan 西苑), one in the Imperial Palace of Prosperous Capital (Shengjing Gu Gong 盛京故宮), three in the Jehol Summer Palace (Rehe Xinggong 熱河行宮) and ten stages were built in his imperial travel lodges (*Xinggong* 行宮) in the Jiangnan 江南 region. Of these twenty-five theaters, twenty-one of them are small court theaters and four three-tiered stages, of which three are no longer extant. (Qiu, 2000: 125)³ Evidently, the only three-tiered stage constructed under the Qianlong emperor's commission still existing until the present day is the Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater.



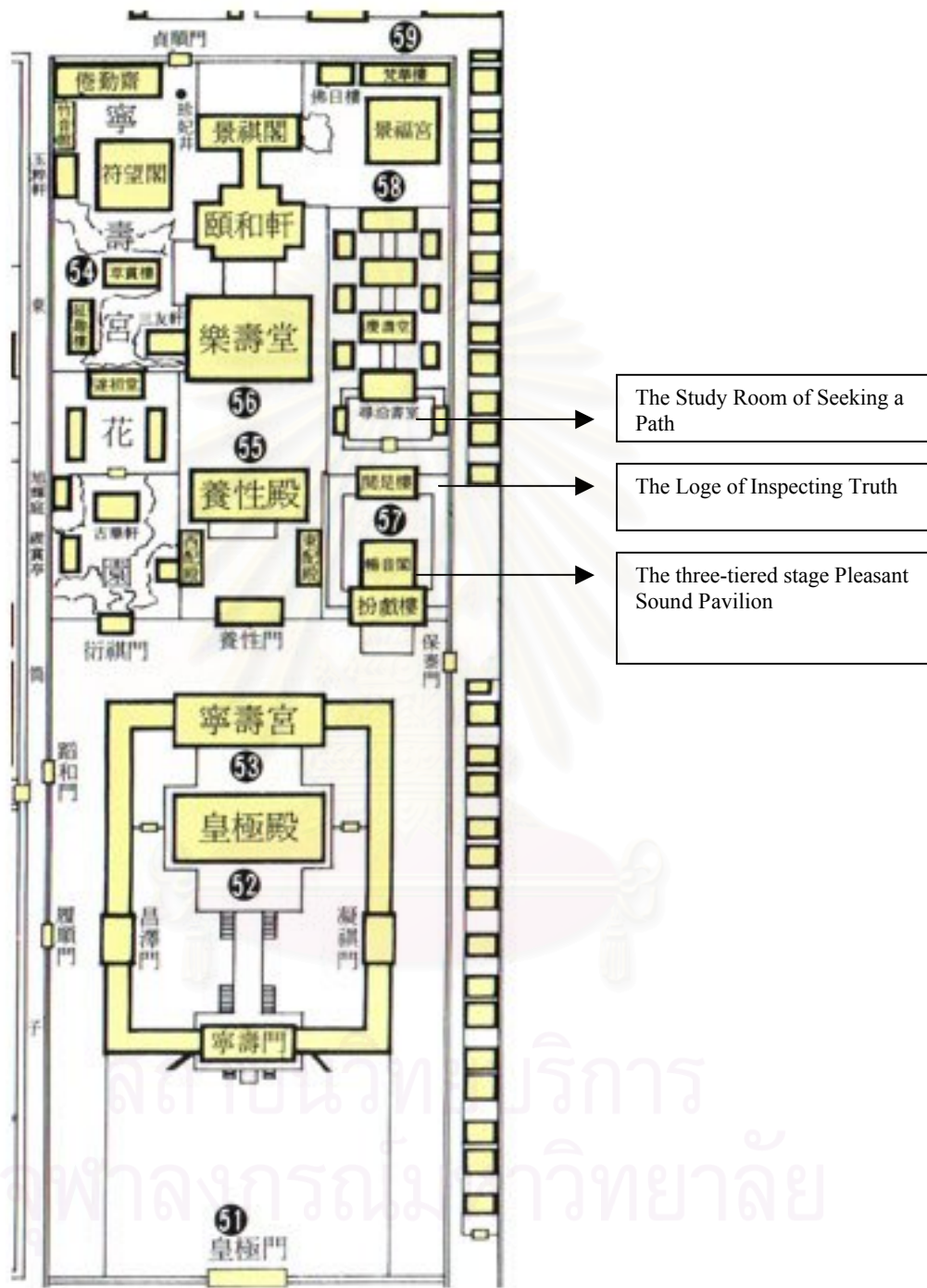
² This Garden is now known as the Summer Palace (Yihe Yuan 頤和園).

³ One was a three-tiered stage built in the Longevity Peaceful Palace (Shou'an Gong 壽安宮); another was a three-tiered stage in the Mutual Pleasure Garden (Tongle Yuan 同樂園) in the Old Summer Palace; the other was the three-tiered stage the Clear Sound Pavilion (Qingyin Ge 清音閣) built in the Fortune Longevity Garden (Fushou Yuan 福壽園) in the Jehol Summer Palace. See a list of 25 theaters built during the Qianlong reign in Appendix A.

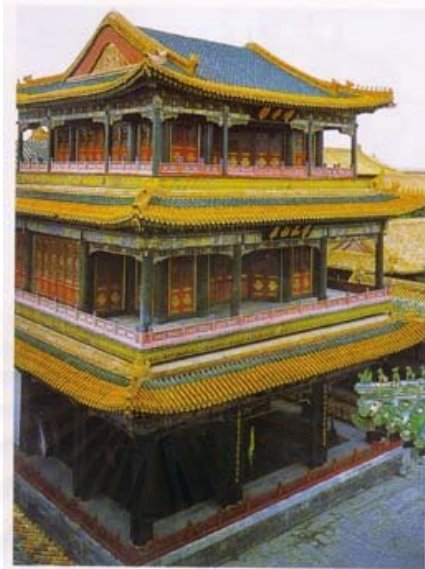


Map 1. The layout of the Forbidden City. Photo from Yu Zhuoyun, *Zijin Cheng Gongdian*, cover page. The red highlighted area shows the palatial compound named “Palace of Living Out My Years in Peace,” which is located in the outer perimeter of northeastern quadrant of the Forbidden City.

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Map 2. The close-up view of the palatial compound named “Palace of Living Out My Years in Peace.”



Pic. 1 a. The three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion (Changyin Ge) is in a palatial compound named “the Peaceful Longevity Palace” (Ningshou Gong) in the outer northeastern part in the Forbidden City. Photo from Lang Xiuhua, *Zhongguo Gudai Diwang Yu Liyuan Shihua*, cover page.



Pic. 1 b. Front view of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Photo taken at the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.

In terms of architecture, the platform of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion is 1.20 meters high. The height of the whole theater is 20.71 meters. The entire surface covers 685.94 square meters. This grand theater consists of three main floors. The ground floor named “Longevity Stage” (*Shou tai* 壽臺) is three *bays* (*jian* 間)⁴ in width and three *bays* in depth, equivalent to nine platforms of ordinary theatrical stages. The second and third floors are proportionally smaller: the second floor named “Prosperity Stage” (*Lu tai* 祿臺) is one-third of the size of the ground floor, and the third floor named “Fortune Stage” (*Fu tai* 富臺), one-fourth. Its balcony-like platforms were open on all but the south side so the emperor would always sit facing south—the direction from which came all good influences.⁵ The Loge of Inspecting Truth (Yueshi Lou 閱是樓), the audience hall of this gigantic theater, is situated in the south side (the opposite side) of the theater (Pics. 2 a.- 2 b.). Equivalent to the “royal box,” this building was also constructed during the Qianlong period. It faces south and stands opposite the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. The Loge is two stories high, five *bays* wide,⁶ and three *bays* deep. This hall was the audience hall for the emperors, empresses, and court officials to watch opera performances. The Loge is

⁴ One *bay* (*jian* 間) is equivalent to approximately 6 meters. Thus 3 *bays* equal to 18 meters.

⁵ The southern phase (*nanmianzhe* 南面者) had been associated with kingship in China even before the Han period. The *Record of Rites* (*Li Ji* 禮記) relates it to the ruler’s resonance with the *yang* 陽 principle, whose source lay in the south. In Chinese philosophy, the south is symbolic of the Fire Element and it is *yang* in nature. Thus, the emperor being the symbol of supreme *yang* is associated with the south. In other words, the emperor acted as a concentrator of *yang* energy that, in turn, radiated upon his kingdom. Wherever the king stood and faced became an ever-shifting boundary between *yin* and *yang*. (Wang, 2000: 28).

⁶ 5 *bays* are equivalent to 30 meters.

7
flanked by 13-bay corridors on both eastern and western sides.⁷ This was the area from which ministers and high officials watched plays. These corridors form viewing galleries which connect it to the rear area of the theatrical pavilion, which were used as a dressing room for the actors of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion, in total forming a courtyard-like architectural setting.



Pic. 2 a. Front view of the Loge of Inspecting Truth (Yueshi Lou). Photo taken at the Loge of Inspecting Truth by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.

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⁷ This corridor is approximately 79 meters in length.



Pic. 2 b. Side view of the Loge of Inspecting Truth. Photo from Lang Xiuhua, *Zhongguo Gudai Diwang yu Liyuan Shihua*, cover page.

Behind the Loge of Inspecting Truth is located an imperial chamber named the “Study Room of Seeking a Path” (Xunyan Shuwu 尋沿書屋) (Pic. 3). According to Mr. Zhao Yang 趙楊, an expert in Chinese court theater history in Imperial History Department of Palace Museum, this chamber was built under the Qianlong emperor’s commission. It was used as a temporary bedroom for the emperor, after having tired with watching grand plays in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion (Diagram 1) (Zhao Yang, interview, November 11, 2004).

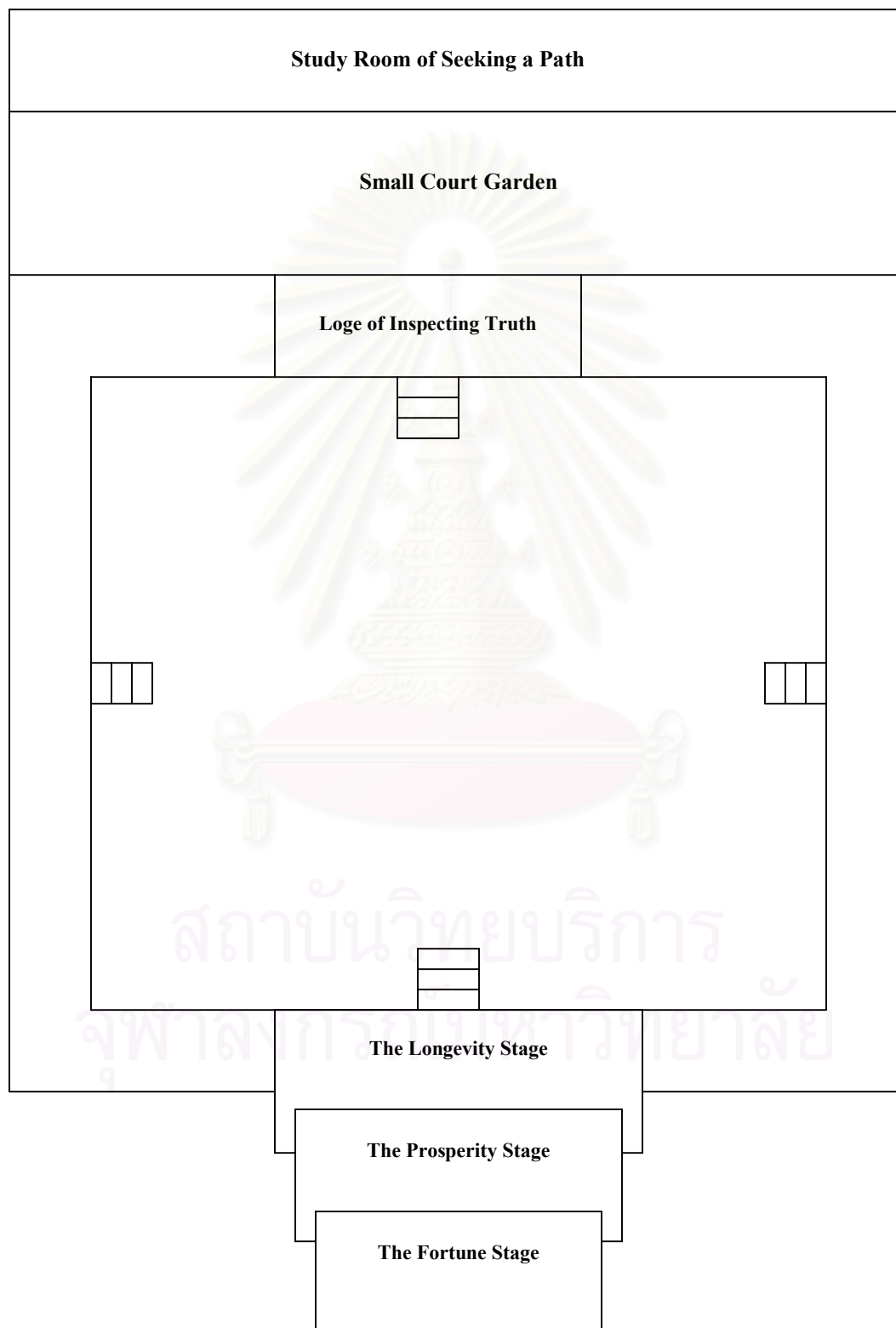
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Pic. 3. Front view of the Study Room of Seeking a Path (Xunyan Shuwu). Photo taken at the Study Room of Seeking a Path by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.

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Diagram 1. Layout of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion, the Loge of Inspecting Truth, and Study Room of Seeking a Path



The prosperity of the Qianlong period is reflected in the emergence of the three-tiered stage, and the Pleasant Sound Pavilion is an innovative example of this architectural form. This massive three-tiered stage is interesting in terms of its ingenuity, the history of theater, culture, and architecture, and the physical fact of its construction raises several questions. How, for instance, does its interior design and exterior architecture reflect traditional Chinese architecture? To what extent can the architecture and structure of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion be analyzed as a form particular to court drama? To what extent does this innovative theater assimilate European concepts of theatricality and architecture? What sorts of plays were performed in this grand theater? How did the actors perform on this three-tiered stage? Was there any theatrical prop facilitating the dynamism of actors when they move up and down, in and out, between each platform? How did the audience react when they were seated in the audience hall? How does it reflect the influence of the Qianlong emperor himself on Chinese drama? Was there literary work during the Qing dynasty mentioning Chinese three-tiered stage? If so, how was it represented? How can this massive theater be interpreted symbolically? To what extent does Chinese three-tiered stage help shape the concept of Chinese kingship? Ultimately, how can we “read” Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion in terms of the Qianlong emperor’s identity? And how does it acknowledge the zenith of the Qing court drama during the Qianlong period?

I would argue that Chinese three-tiered stage embodies three significant elements: traditional Chinese architecture which lies behind a concept of “monumentality,” European influence on scientific techniques in theatricality, and the Qianlong emperor’s personal passion for Chinese drama and European art. The three-tiered stage Pleasant

Sound Pavilion was designed in the spirit of traditional palace architecture. Like other Chinese palatial buildings, it symbolizes the supreme glory of the emperor, which in this case was the Qianlong emperor. It is evident that every element of its exterior structure and interior design--podium, balustrades, columns, ceilings, bracketing systems, and roof shape, tiles, and decorations—reflects traditional Chinese architectural standards. However, this theater is exceptional in the breadth and unity of its conception, as well as in the variety of design within this uniformity. Besides, as an imperial object, this innovative theater is a result of the natural architectural development of multi-tiered buildings, which stems from a purely Chinese concept of “monumentality,” denoting religious, ethical, or political obligations that perpetuated cultural memory and provide continuity to society (Chen, 2001: 65). According to Wang Guixiang, such tall structures were an architectural instantiation of Chinese people’s desire to assimilate themselves to a natural environment, and a concrete object that situated humans between heaven and earth, representing a desire to reach into the mysteries of the heaven while staying, literally, grounded. In Wang’s view architecture was the concrete parallel of early Chinese philosophy that attempted to place humans between heaven, earth, and within a constantly evolving natural environment. (1985: 3). In addition to this religious aspect, such a high-rise structure as the Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater also expresses a political power and prestige of the Chinese empire. As Wu Hung has pointed out, the desire expressed in the construction of these tall buildings was that of the Chinese ruler’s ambition for “political dominance over the whole nation, even foreign countries—seizing lands from other states, ruling the entire population, and becoming master of the world.” (1995: 102).

Not only does the exterior structure and interior design of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion reflect traditional Chinese architectural concepts, but closer inspection would also reveal European touches. I would argue that the European synthesis within Chinese three-tiered stage was influenced by western Jesuits who went to China during the sixteenth century. They played an important role as transmitters for cultural and intellectual exchange between the West and China. And two most well-known of the Jesuits active in the Qianlong court were Italian artist Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766), who arrived in China in 1715 at the age of twenty-seven, and Father Michel Benoist (1715-1774), who had been in China since 1744. The former was famous for his artistic skills, while the latter specialized in mathematics, astronomy, cartography, physics, hydraulics, navigation, ship building and lithography (Khan, 1971: 1134-136). These two figures greatly influenced the Qianlong emperor's interest in European art and science.

This leads to the third factor that brought Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion into existence. That is to say, the Qianlong emperor's passion for European art and Chinese drama formed an integral part in the construction of this theater. Throughout his reign, the Qianlong emperor was so fascinated with Castiglione's artistic skills that he commanded the artist to depict a variety of portraits and natural paintings. After several discussions on physics and mathematics with Father Benoit, the Qianlong emperor was impressed with European-style clocks. As a result, he commissioned the construction of Clock Department in the Old Summer Palace Yuanming Garden to make Chinese clocks with European touch (Khan, 1995: 89-90, 124-125). With regard to Chinese drama, not only did the Qianlong emperor commission the construction of

twenty-five theaters, as I have mentioned earlier, but he also played diverse roles as actor, drama patron, music composer, dramatist and acting coach himself. Therefore, due to his passion for Chinese drama and his interest in European art and scientific techniques, Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion was brought to life.

There are some theatrical evidences that attest to European influence on Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Firstly, a machine room built in the backstage of the Fortune Stage was designed after a machine room of European theaters during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Secondly, the hydraulic technique operated by five handspike-windlasses installed in the machine room on the Fortune Stage, according to Joseph Needham, was influenced by European windlass invented by Weimer (1430) and Besson (1578) (1965: 218). Thirdly, a special effect like the sprinkling water as artificial rain employed in Chinese three-tiered stage derived from a concept of European water fountain that the Qianlong emperor had long been fascinated with. Finally, some theatrical props invented and designed exclusively for gala performances in Chinese three-tiered stage were imitation of those used in European stage performances. For instance, a function of Chinese *yunban* 雲板 or “cloud sack” was similar to a machine called “Paradiso” invented by well-known Italian architect Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446) around 1400. Besides, its design was like that of a prop called “Cloud cotton wool” invented by Italian architect Il Cecco. Furthermore, a stage prop called “sea turtle” (*ao yu* 鰲魚) employed in Chinese three-tiered stage might be an imitation of a “sea monster” prop invented by Italian architect Giutti in the fifteen century (Carrick, 1931: 9-16, 34-36). Therefore, these scientific techniques and innovative theatrical props brought a new

dimension and dynamism to gala performances in Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion.

The innovative architecture of Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion raises another significant question. How did actors and stage props perform and function in such a massive theater? The answer can be found in the stage directions included in five major court plays rewritten exclusively for Chinese three-tiered stage: *Shengping Baofa* 昇平寶筏 [The Precious Raft of the Peaceful Times], *Quanshan Jinke* 勸善金科 [A Golden Ledger for the Promotion of Kindness], *Dingzhi Chunqiu* 鼎峙春秋 [The Annals of the Three Kingdoms], *Zhongyi Xuantu* 忠義璇圖 [A Diagram of the Stars of Loyalty and Righteousness] and *Zhaodai Xiaoshao* 昭代簫韶 [The Flute Music of the Prosperous Era]. I would argue that the complexity of the theatrical structures called for a new way of Chinese drama performance. To be sure, the dynamism of actors and the kinetic movement of stage props created a spectacular performance, just like a magic box of tricks.

The Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater has been regarded as an imperial object of the past for 236 years. One might wonder how people of the Qing dynasty appreciated its marvel and ingenuity. This leads to the notion of representation. Chinese three-tiered stage was recorded, perceived, interpreted and represented in six memoirs, one poem and one court painting that were composed and depicted during the Qing dynasty. The authors came from different backgrounds. Some were court officials who served the Qing court; some were members from the royal family; others were foreign envoys and artists who were sent to pay tributes to Chinese emperor, particularly during the imperial

birthday period. Based on the accounts in these documents, Chinese three-tiered stage carries senses of innovation, majesty, grandiosity and monumentality in Chinese perspectives, whereas it embodies senses of ingenuity and exoticness in foreigners' points of view.

In addition to the representational issue, the innovation of Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion can be perceived through its architectural symbolism. The theater reflects traditional Chinese philosophical concepts of cosmology, geomancy (*fengshui* 風水), *yin-yang* 陰陽 and Five Elements (*Wuxing* 五行). Ultimately, this innovative theater accentuates a symbolism of Chinese kingship or “Wang 王.” That is to say, the structure of the three-tiered stage resonates the character *wang*, in which three horizontal lines represent Heaven, Human, and Earth. Thus, the Fortune Stage signifies Heaven; the Prosperity Stage Human; and the Longevity Stage Earth. Furthermore, the significance of Chinese kingship emerges from the spatial relationship between the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion and the audience hall Loge of Inspecting the Truth in the north side. In this case, the three-tiered stage represents Heaven, the Qianlong emperor Humanity, and the officials and court ladies Earth. From this, the functions of the grand theater (filled with the heavenly gods and spirits), and the imperial loge (the imperial body and personae were at its center surrounded by officials and court ladies) highlight the idea of “cosmicizing” the palace’s design, of making it a model and a symbol of an ordered universe. Thus, the culmination of the relationship among Sino-European synthesis of architecture and theatricality, adapted court plays, imitative stage props, representation and symbolism of Chinese three-tiered

stage helps shape a new ideology of Chinese emperorship, which in this case is exemplified by the Qianlong emperor.

1.2 Objectives of Study

1. To study the architecture and theatricality of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion.
2. To analyze the representation and symbolic meanings of the theater and court plays.
3. To explore the significance of the theater in relation to the Qianlong emperorship.

1.3 Theoretical Perspective

1.3.1 “Reading” Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion as “Text”

My dissertation deals with a study of Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion in different contexts: traditional Chinese architecture and theatricality, synthesis between Chinese and European theatrical concepts, its representation in literary and non-literary works, and its symbolic meanings in relation to Chinese emperorship. For I believe that Chinese three-tiered stage is like the lens through which court theater during the Qing dynasty and a notion of Chinese emperorship of the Qianlong emperor are brought into focus. The Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater acts as a mediation of social

practices, in this case Qing court theater. Thus it shapes and reflects the heyday of Qing court theater during the Qianlong reign and the emperor's multiple identities. To analyze these contexts, I will "read" this innovative theater as the "Text."

According to French critic Roland Barthes, anything can be read as text. The "Text," as Barthes has defined, is regarded as "a methodological field...a process of demonstration, speaks according to certain rules (or against certain rules)...It is held in language, only exists in the movement of discourse...*The Text is experienced only in an activity of production*. The Text does not stop at (good) Literature; it cannot be contained in a hierarchy, even in a simple division of genres." (1977: 156-157). Like the "Text" Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion can be approached in terms of sign. For "Its field is that of the signifier and the signifier must not be conceived of as 'the first stage of meaning,' its material vestibule, but, in complete opposition to this, as its deferred action." (1977: 158). Therefore, the infinity of Chinese three-tiered stage as a signifier refers to what Barthes noted, "an idea of a playing." For this theatrical signifier is interpreted in accordance with "a serial movement of disconnections, overlappings, variations." (1977: 158). And like the "Text" the logic regulating Chinese three-tiered stage is "metonymic; the activity of associations, contiguities, carryings-over coincides with a liberation of symbolic energy." (1977: 158). Thus, Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion can be regarded as the "Text." For it is fundamentally symbolic. It is "conceived, perceived and received in its integrally symbolic nature." (1977: 159).

This leads to the notion of "plurality" of Chinese three-tiered stage. Like the "Text" this massive court theater carries multiple, plural meanings. Its plurality depends on what Barthes called "the stereographic plurality of its weave of signifiers." (1977:

159). That is to say, what Chinese three-tiered stage is perceived is multiple and irreducible, that generates from a disassociated, heterogeneous assortment of elements and perspectives: its interior design, exterior architecture, court plays, gala performances, court actors, stage props, and ultimately the sovereign power of the Qianlong emperor as a commissioner and as the Emperor of the Qing empire. Like Barthes's "Text" all of these elements of the innovative theater "are half identifiable; they came from codes which are known but their combination is unique... So the Text: it can be it only in its difference... and nevertheless woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages, antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony." (1977: 160). Thus, Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion can be analyzed and interpreted as the "Text" in that it requires the principal propositions—method, signs and plurality—to decode its polysemic meanings.

So to what extent can this innovative theater be "read" as the "Text"? As Barthes has argued, "The Text (if only by its frequent 'unreadability') decants the work (the work permitting) from its consumption and gathers it up as play, activity, production, practice." (1977: 162). This means that, like the "Text," Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion "requires that one try to abolish (or at the very least to diminish) the distance between writing (in this case, its production) and reading,... by joining them in a single signifying practice." (1977: 162). Thus Chinese three-tiered stage requires the reader's practical collaboration. That is to say, it can be "read" with what Barthes has called *jouissance* or "a pleasure without separation." (1977: 163). Therefore, the discourse on Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion equals to that of the "Text" because "itself be nothing other than text, research, textual activity, since the Text (and Chinese

three-tiered stage) is that social space which leaves no language safe, outside, nor any subject of the enunciation in position as judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder.” (1977: 164).

1.3.2 New Historicism

Theoretically, I will analyze and “read” the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion in a realm of New Historicism. That is to say, this innovative theater will be called into question a discourse on Qing court theater and the notion of Chinese emperorship of the Qianlong emperor with its own problems, principles and activities, so that I can integrate the literary text into the social and political contexts during the Qianlong sovereignty. In my thesis, I will apply the underlying principles of what New Historicists Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt have called the “Culture as text,” to investigate these aspects. (2000: 5).

Greenblatt has explained that there are several reasons that make the idea of a culture distant in time or space as a text so attractive. Firstly, it requires “the core hermeneutical presumption” that one can discover meanings of distant culture by deciphering traces that were left behind. According to Gallagher and Greenblatt, “Explication and paraphrase are not enough; we seek something more, something that the authors we study would not have had sufficient distance upon themselves and their own era to grasp.” (2000: 8). Secondly, the notion of “Culture as text” broadens the range of objects for reading and interpretation. In this case, according to Greenblatt, works of art become significant objects of attention. For they comprise with “an array of other texts

and images.” (2000: 9). Thus in the sphere of New Historicism, any culture can be “read” as text that consists of the juxtaposition between literary and non-literary texts. In addition, the notion of “Culture as text” is at least “potentially in play both at the level of representation and at the level of event. Indeed, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain a clear, unambiguous boundary between what is representation and what is event.” (2000: 15). In this sense, “then it is increasingly difficult to invoke ‘history’ as censor. That is, for new historicism, history cannot easily exercise that stabilizing and silencing function it possessed in analyses that sought to declare the limits of the sayable and thinkable.” (2000: 16). However, although certain material objects in a distinct culture, in this case the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion, were filled with mystery, skepticism and beyond conception or articulation, New Historicist theories can invoke the extensiveness of the textual archive and non-textual material, and with that extensiveness an aesthetic appreciation of this innovative theater.

Hence, this approach to Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion is aimed to accomplish, as Catherine Belsey has noted, “to use the text (in this case the three-tiered stage) as a basis for the reconstruction of an ideology.” (1980: 144). The recovery of the fundamental ideology which originates Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater, and which the theater in turn helps to disseminate throughout Chinese culture during the Qing dynasty. My initial effort is to assimilate the literary text to the history of Qing court theater in the poststructuralist doctrine of textuality, which states that the text is bound to its surrounding context. And there is continuous connection between text and some extra elements. Furthermore, in New Historicist practices, I will attempt to relocate the literary text among the non-literary one and combine them in order to reconstruct and

rehistoricize discursive practices of Qing court theater during the Qianlong reign in general and Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion in particular. Thus this innovative theater is a “representation” of Chinese culture and a “representation” of the Qianlong emperor from which it emerges. It acts as an active agent of the ideology of Qing court theatrical culture. Like Barthes’s “Text,” not only was Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion produced by Chinese culture, but it also reproduced Chinese ideology. To apply the New Historicist methodology to the study of this massive theater, the ultimate purpose, as Jean E. Howard has noted, “is to grasp the terms of the discourse which made it possible [for contemporaries] to see the ‘facts’ [of their own time] in a particular way—indeed, made it possible to see certain phenomena *as* facts at all.” (1986: 15).

It is unfortunate that many historical documents housed in the Old Summer Palace Yuanming Garden, which touched upon the issue of Qing court theater during the Qianlong reign, were destroyed and lost during the Opium War. As a result, merely few archives on this subject are extant. To rehistoricize Qing court theater by analyzing Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion in terms of its architecture, production and elements constituting its existence, I will rely myself on bits and pieces of these rare literary texts. For instance, *Qing Shengping Shu Zhilue* 清升平署志略 [Summary Accounts of the Shengping Office of the Qing Dynasty] written by a historian of Qing court drama Wang Zhizhang 王芷章 and an article entitled “Changyin Ge 暢音閣” [The Pleasant Sound Pavilion Theater] written by Zhu Jiajin 朱家潛, an expert in court theater in the Forbidden City. To decode multiple symbolic meanings of this three-tiered

stage and to explore its representation in social and political contexts, literary texts for the study include court plays, poems, and memoirs written by Qing court dramatists, Qing officials and foreign envoys who were invited to celebrate Qianlong emperor's birthday ceremony. In New Historicist practices, literary text is imposed an "equal weight" to non-literary material. Thus, to reconstruct the Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater, I will also employ some non-literary materials that help my analysis. Such materials include contemporary pictures of this innovative theater and court paintings of the theater and of the Qianlong emperor. My attempt is to juxtapose such literary and non-literary texts and combine what Johann Gottfried von Herder has called "the mutual embeddedness of art and history as a mutually intelligible network of signs" (1993: 151) in order to reconstruct court theater during the Qianlong reign and to comprehend what Gallagher and Greenblatt called "a multiplicity of historically embedded cultural performances." (2000: 7).

1.3.3 Two Theories of Representation

One of the most significant notions of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater is its representation. My thesis focuses on how this three-tiered stage was represented in both literary and non-literary works, in both linguistic and visual forms and both through the eyes of Qing court officials and through those of foreign envoys and artists. Representation in this sense means, as Stuart Hall has defined, "using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people. ... Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and

exchanged between members of a culture.” (1997: 15). Thus representation is a production of meaning by means of language. By “language” I mean both linguistic language (i.e. written and spoken words) and what Hall has called “visual language” (i.e. pictures, images and signs). That is “It (Representation) does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things.” (1997: 15). Therefore, my aim is to interpret how Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion was represented and decode what it was encoded.

However, Hall has argued that such a represented meaning is not “straightforward or transparent.” For “it is slippery customer, changing and shifting with context, usage and historical circumstances. It is therefore never finally fixed.” (1997: 9). As Hall argued “It is participants in a culture who give meaning to people, objects and events. Things ‘in themselves’ rarely if ever have any one, single, fixed and unchanging meaning.” (1997: 3). Thus in the case of Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion, it is the Qianlong emperor, court actors, court officials, playwrights, and other audiences, who recorded their experiences and appreciation with this innovative theater in their memoirs, gave multiple and dynamic meanings to it.

The notion of representation is embedded in my analysis of Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion in a constructionist approach. Two main models are: the semiotic approach, originated by well-known Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and French critic Roland Barthes, and the discursive approach, influenced by French philosopher Michel Foucault.

The Semiotic Approach

Jonathan Culler has argued that, for Saussure, the operation of meaning relies on language. “Language is a system of signs. Sounds, images, written words, paintings, photographs, etc. function as signs within language only when they serve to express or communicate ideas.... [To] communicate ideas, they must be part of a system of conventions...” (1976: 19). Saussure analyzed that sign consists of two major elements: the signifier (the language in both linguistic and visual forms) and the signified (the idea or meaning which the signifier was associated) (1976: 19). He argued further that the relation between the signifier and the signified that construct the sign is slippery, unfixed and historically shifting. “This, then, leads to a process of interpretation.” (1976: 29).

I will apply Saussure’s signifier/ signified theory to analyze the extent in which the Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater is interpreted. In the first level, representation of the three-tiered stage in such forms as anecdote, memoir, poetry, archive, court play, court painting and picture are treated as Saussurean “signifiers” in order to determine what the “signifieds,” i.e. ideas and concepts, associated with them are. In the second level, this innovative theater itself also functions as the “signifier,” a medium that helps shape four different levels of the “signified”: Sino-Euro architecture, Sino-European theatricality, traditional Chinese drama performance and symbolic meanings in association with Qianlong emperor. For I believe that the theater is a sign that embodies the selection and combination between ingenious aspects of traditional Chinese and European architecture and theatricality. As a result, it engenders a unique feature of Chinese stage performance and a new way to understand what a concept of Chinese emperorship really means through the body of the Qianlong emperor.

However, I realize that Saussurean theory of signifier-signified is inadequate to analyze different aspects of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater. For this model merely focuses on how language actually works. Consequently, the relation between signifier/signified and elements beyond language is difficult to be determined (Hall, 1997: 34-35). Therefore, besides Saussurean model, I will also apply Roland Barthes's semiotic approach in my thesis. As I have pointed out earlier, Barthes argued that any activity or object can be treated as a sign, as a language through which meaning is communicated, and as the "Text" to be "read." To Barthes, the combination of signifier and signified as a sign in Saussurean model can be extended to broader cultural meanings. His theory consists of denotation (simple, descriptive level) and connotation (more complex, broader cultural level). To him, the connotative level is more significant. For it deals with "fragments of an ideology.... These signifieds have a very close communication with culture, knowledge, history and it is through them, so to speak, that the environmental world [of the culture] invades the system [of representation]." (1967: 91-92). And when the connotations are widely accepted, they function as what Chris Barker called "conceptual maps of meaning" to culture. This is what Barthes has termed "Myth." (2003: 92).

To apply Barthes's model, the Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater is treated as a primary signification or "denotative meaning," which generates a secondary signification or "connotative meaning." That is to say, this three-tiered stage can be "read" as a cross-cultural imperial object weaving together traditional Chinese and western concepts of architecture and theatricality. In a deeper level, this cross-cultural theater acts as a sign/signifier that embodies sovereign power of the Qianlong emperor (signified). Ultimately,

this innovative theater functions as a sign assimilating a variety of innovative aspects of architecture, theatricality and cultural representation of the Qing dynasty, as shown in Diagram 2.

Diagram 2: Signification of Myth of Chinese Three-Tiered Stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion⁸

1. Signifier: Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion	2. Signified: Sino-European synthesis between Chinese and European architecture and theatricality
3. Sign I. Signifier: Chinese cross-cultural court theater	II. Signified: Qianlong's sovereign power
III. Sign: Chinese three-tiered stage as Qianlong's self-representation and fear of anti-dynastic spirit	

The discursive approach

However, both Saussure's and Barthes' theories do not touch upon the concept of discourse, the issue of power and the notion of subject which, I believe, can help explain the significance of emergence of Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion. To clarify these aspects, Foucault's theory on discourse, power and subject will be applied. For Foucault, "Discourse (is) as a system of representation." (Hall, 1997: 44). By "discourse," Foucault meant "a group of statements which provide a language for talking about—a way of representing the knowledge about—a particular topic at a particular

⁸ I adopt Barthes' s spatialized metaphor of "Myth" in this diagram (Lavers trans, 2000: 115).

historical moment. ... Discourse is about the production of knowledge through language. But ...since all social practices entail *meaning*, and meanings shape and influence what we do—our conduct—all practices have a discursive aspect.” (Hall, 1997: 44). Besides, discourse, to Foucault, comprises with more than one statement, one text and one action, which interact with one another and “provide ways of talking about a particular topic with repeated motifs, practices and forms of knowledge across a range of sites of activity.” (Barker, 2003: 102). Such a phenomenon is called “discursive formation.” (Barker, 2003: 101-102; Hall, 1997: 44-47). The Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater was constructed with the discursive formation. That is to say, it is an array of Sino-European ideas and images on Qing court theater, as well as theatrical practices conducted by the Qianlong emperor and Qing court officials. This provides a form of knowledge conduct associated with the heyday of Qing court theater.

Foucault argued that knowledge, which stems from discursive formation, is a “form of power.” Thus, “There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same tie, power relations.” (1977: 27). However, as Hall has pointed out that Foucault’s power does not “radiate in a single direction—from top to bottom... it circulates. It is never monopolized by one centre... Power relations permeate all levels of social existence and are therefore to be found operating at every site of social life.” (Hall, 1997: 49-50) Foucault explained the disciplinary power by using a metaphor of the Panopticon.⁹ He argued that the cells became “small theaters, in which each actor is alone,

⁹ The Panopticon is a kind of ideal penitentiary designed by British philosopher Jeremy Bentham in the eighteenth century. To Bentham, the Panopticon provides the perfect surveillance system. For it is

perfectly individualized and constantly visible.” (Barker, 2003: 103; Bozovic ed., 1997: 29-95). Similar to the Panopticon, this all-pervading power also exists in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. That is to say, power circulates and radiates in all directions among relating agents of this theater. In contrast with the Panopticon, real actors who performed in the three-tiered stage were not individualized. They interacted with one another. Furthermore, they interacted with the Qianlong emperor who acted as an audience in the imperial loge. In this sense, power is productive. That is to say, not only does power produce objects, knowledge and discourse, but it also brings subjects into being. Thus, it is power that produces Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion, a form of knowledge and discourse on Qing court theater. And it is power that brings the Qianlong emperor, court actors, court plays, stage props, Sino-European architecture and theatricality, and ultimately the Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater into beings.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

1. The Pleasant Sound Pavilion is a synthesis of traditional Chinese and European concepts of architecture and theatricality.
2. The representations of the theater written by Chinese court officials, foreign envoys and artists can be read symbolically as reconstruction of the social and political contexts of the Qianlong reign.
3. The theater, together with the court plays and gala performances, reflect the notion of Chinese cosmology and the ideology of Qianlong emperorship.

built in a circular-shaped hall in which prisoners are controlled in the cells by a large guard tower in the middle. (Bozovic ed., 1997: 29-95).

1.5 Contributions of the Study

1. To provide new insights into Chinese court theater during the Qianlong reign.
2. To understand the historical and symbolic significance of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion.
3. To open up new approaches to the study of Chinese art and architecture and their relation to Chinese history.

1.6 Methodology

1. Critical survey and review of extant researches on the history of court theater during the Qianlong reign and on the Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater.
2. Critical survey of the relevant archival materials: court plays, court paintings, pictures of Qing court theater and the biography of the Qianlong emperor.
3. Critical analysis of Chinese emperorship inscribed in the symbolism of the architecture and theatricality of the theater, court plays, gala performances and writings on the theater by Chinese and foreign observers. The analysis will be conducted through the theoretical frameworks derived from New Historicism, semiotics and the discourse theory.
4. Data conclusion and dissertation writing.

1.7 Preliminary Fieldwork

Although the topic of the Qing court theater has been thoroughly studied and researched by Chinese scholars, only a few have touched upon the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Wang Zhizhang 王芷章 (1937), for instance, summarized the history of Qing court theater in his *Qing Shengping Shu Zhilue* 清升平署志略 [Summary Accounts of the Shengping Office of the Qing Dynasty]. He also included a list of court plays that were composed and performed at grand and small court theaters during the Qing dynasty. But his work only provides information on post-Qianlong reign. Zhu Jiajin 朱家溍 (1983, 1999), an expert in court theater in the Forbidden City, is the first scholar who gave us the first glimpse of Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion in his article “*Changyin Ge* 暢音閣” [The Pleasant Sound Pavilion Theater]. However, his works merely include a brief history, a basic floor plan and a vertical layout of the theater. Chuan Xi 傅惜 (1932: 24-25) also provided the same information of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion in his article “*Ningshou Gong Changyin Ge xiaoji* 寧壽宮暢音閣小記” [Sketch of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion in the Palace of Living Out My Years in Peace]. In addition, Zhao Yang’s 趙楊 book (2001) entitled *Qingdai Gongting Yanxi* 清代宮廷演戲 [Drama Performance in the Qing Court] deals with a brief introduction and the history of court theaters, court plays and stage props currently preserved at the Palace Museum in the Forbidden City. Rather than historical and architectural aspects, Gong Dehe 龔德和 in his “*Qingdai Gongting Xiqu de Wutai Meishu* 清代宮廷戲曲的舞臺美術” [Theatrical

Aesthetics of the Qing Court Drama] (1981: 36-47) and Yu Jian 俞健 in his “*Qinggong da xitai yu wutai jishu* 清宮大戲臺與舞臺技術” [Grand Theater of the Qing Court and Its Theatrical Technique] (2003: 440-458) shifted their focus to a performative aspect of the court theater during the Qing dynasty. However, their studies merely provide information about court playwrights, court plays composed exclusively for the gala performances on Chinese three-tiered stage and some examples of stage directions.

Moreover, there are some other Chinese scholars whose works focus on court theater during the Qing dynasty in general and the Pleasant Sound Pavilion in particular. For instance, Wu Changhe 吳昶和’s (1991) *Qing Qianlong Jian Jutan Ji Juxue Yanjiu* 清乾隆間劇壇暨劇學研究 [Research on Theatricality during the Qianlong Reign of the Qing Dynasty]; Qiu Huiying 邱慧瑩’s (2000) *Qianlong Shiqi Xiqu Huodong Yanjiu* 乾隆時期戲曲活動研究 [Research on Drama Activities during the Qianlong Reign]; Liao Ben 廖奔’s (1997) *Zhongguo Gudai Juchang Shi* 中國古代劇場史 [History of Ancient Chinese Theater]; Deng Wenpei 鄧文佩’s (1997) *Qingdai Diwang Yu Xiqu Yanjiu* 清代帝王與戲曲研究 [Study of Relationship between Qing Emperors and Drama]; Ding Ruqin 丁汝芹’s (1999) *Qingdai Neiting Yanxi Shihua* 清代內廷演戲史話 [Historical Discourses of Drama Performance in the Qing Court]; Su Yi 蘇移’s (1999) *Zhongguo Jingju Shi* 中國京劇史 [History of Beijing Opera]; Chen Fang 陳芳’s (2001) *Qianlong Shiqi Beijing Jutan Yanjiu* 乾龍時期北京劇壇研究 [Study of Theatrical Hall in Beijing during the Qianlong Period]; and Lang Xiuhua 郎秀華’s (2001) *Zhongguo Gudai Diwang Yu Liyuan Shihua* 中國古代帝王與梨園史話 [Historical Discourses of Ancient

Chinese Emperors and Beijing Opera]. Some articles also focus on the Qing court theater. For examples, Jia Junying's 賈俊英 and Xu Qixian's 徐啟憲 (1982) “*Gu Gong xitai he huangjia xiju shenghuo* 故宮戲臺和皇家戲劇生活” [Court Theaters in the Forbidden City and Lives towards Drama of the Royal Family] in *Wenwu Tiandi* 文物天地 [Imperial Object of the Heaven and Earth] and Liao Ben's (1996) “*Qinggong juchang kao* 清宮劇場考” [Study of the Qing Court Theater] in *Gu Gong Bowu Yuan Yuankan* 故宮博物館院刊 [Journal of the Palace Museum].

In English scholarship, only Colin Mackerras's *The Rise of the Peking Opera 1770-1870: Social Aspects of the Theater in Manchu China* (1972) and his *The Chinese Theater in Modern Times: From 1840 to the Present Day* (1975), and Wilt Idema's “Performances on a Three-tiered Stage Court Theatre During the Qing Era,” (2000: 201–219) mention the emergence of the three-tiered stage in the Qing period. However, for the most part these works merely include the description of the basic floor plan, a vertical layout, and court plays. None of them provides an in-depth study of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater or touches upon issues of significant factors engendering the three-tiered stage, dynamic performances, its representation, its architectural symbolism and its relation to Chinese emperorship.

During my research trip to the Forbidden City in November 2004 and in several meetings with Mr. Zhao Yang, I became aware of the innovative aspects of the Qing court theater and of the implications of the Qianlong emperor's influences on Chinese drama during his era. Since the dominant research paradigm of the Qing court theater virtually ignores the relationship between traditional Chinese architecture and the

ideology of Chinese kingship, I have used the insights gained in field work to begin the necessary job of opening up new channels for investigating Chinese three-tiered stage, not only to understand the history of Chinese court theater in general, but also to appreciate the marvel of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion in particular. My primary contribution is to study the theater as an imperial object which not only reflects the history of Qing court theater, but also echoes lifestyle, sovereign power and the complex identities of the Qianlong emperor. Moreover, this grand theater is viewed and analyzed symbolically. In other words, it combines the domains of synthesis between Sino-European architecture and theatricality, the ideology of Chinese emperorship, and imperial personal interest. My purpose is to employ these aspects to foreground the prosperous epoch of the Qing court drama during the Qianlong reign.

1.8 Preliminary Outline

This dissertation consists of six chapters. Each chapter channels a specific aspect of Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Chapter One is an introductory chapter. This chapter focuses on the research problem, objectives of the study, theoretical perspectives, research hypotheses, contributions of the study, methodology, preliminary fieldwork and preliminary outline. I will begin my analysis by focusing on Chinese elements which lie behind the architectural structure of this massive theater in Chapter Two. I will discuss the way in which it was constructed during the Qianlong reign. The Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater will be analyzed from several perspectives. First is its history, its floor plan and the physical layout of this gigantic theater; then its exterior

structure and its stage design that conform to traditional Chinese architecture. In the third part, I will decode the architectural symbolism of the three-tiered stage by applying philosophies of geomancy (*fengshui*), *yin-yang* cosmology, and the Five Elements (*Wuxing*) to the cosmology of construction and design of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion.

Chapter Three highlights the factors that helped engender the emergence and the development of Chinese three-tiered stage during the Qianlong era. Four main aspects will be analyzed: Chinese concept of monumentality, European influence on Chinese three-tiered stage resulting from Jesuits' missions in China during the sixteenth century; synthesis between Chinese and European theatrical art and architecture; and the Qianlong emperor's passion for European art and Chinese drama. Chapter Four will focus on the gala performances on Chinese three-tiered stage. I will first discuss five major court plays composed exclusively for gala performances on this grand theater. Then the kinetic movement of theatrical props employed in such performances and the dynamism of actors in gala performances will be explained in details. In this chapter, diagrams will be drawn in order to clearly visualize how the actors and props were employed in the gala performances.

To understand the overall meaning and significance of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion to the Qing court theater, the representation of this grand theater and its symbolism will be studied in Chapter Five. This chapter will be divided into two main parts. The first part focuses on the representation of the three-tiered stage through the eyes of Qianlong. In this part, I will decode the symbolism of Chinese emperorship of the Qianlong sovereign by focusing on stories of five major court plays, the Pleasant

Sound Pavilion theater itself, as well as the spatial relationship between the theater and the Loge of Inspecting Truth. Then I will analyze the ways in which the three-tiered stage and five court plays reflected Qianlong's self-representation. To make this point more interesting, I will apply Foucault's theory on power to the analysis in order to show how "power" functions in the three-tiered stage. The second part of this chapter deals with the representation of the three-tiered stage in the audiences' eyes. I will discuss the ways in which the theater was represented and reminisced in memoirs, poetry, and paintings composed by Chinese scholars, foreign envoys and artists during the Qing dynasty. Finally, I will make a conclusion and a few suggestions in Chapter Six.



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CHAPTER II

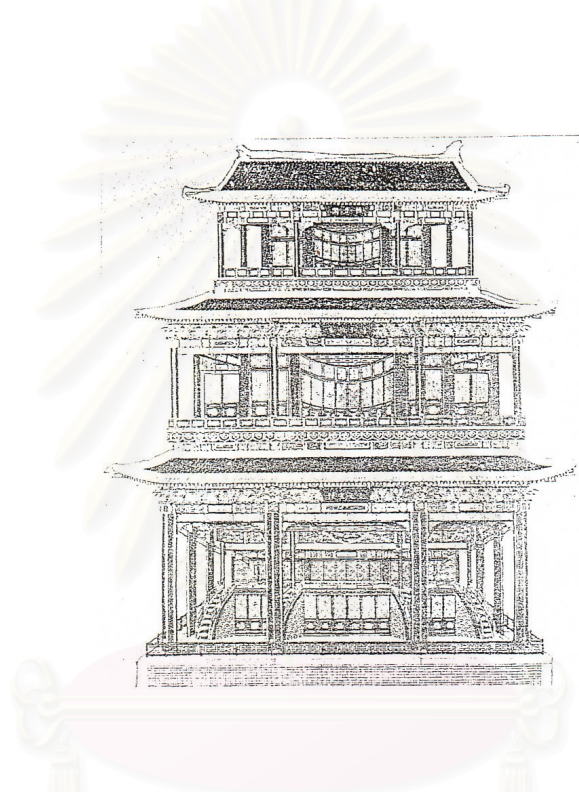
ARCHITECTURAL STRUCTURE OF CHINESE THREE-TIERED STAGE PLEASANT SOUND PAVILION

The popularity of Qing court theater reached its zenith during the Qianlong era (1736–96). One architectural innovation that characterized this period was the creation of the “three-tiered stage” (*chongtai sanceng* 崇臺三層) or the “linked performance stage” (*lianxitai* 連戲臺). The Qianlong emperor commissioned the construction of four such gigantic theaters, of which three are no longer extant. The only one still in existence is the Pleasant Sound Pavilion in the Forbidden City. In this chapter, I will first discuss the historical background of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion and its placement within the Forbidden City. Then I will focus on the architecture of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion as a theater and will analyze the layout of each of its three floors. Secondly, I will analyze its exterior structure and interior design to highlight its significant architectural characteristics: its podium, balustrades, columns, beams, ceilings, bracketing systems, and roof shape, tiles, and decorations. I will discuss to what extent these qualities conform to or diverge from traditional Chinese architecture standards.

2.1 History and Layout of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion

As I have mentioned in Chapter One, in its time, the Pleasant Sound Pavilion was a recreational building and a venue for the court theatrical performances. Constructed in a palatial compound named “Palace for Living Out My Years in Peace” (Ningshou Gong) located in the outer perimeter of the northeastern quadrant in the Forbidden City (See Map 1), it was a site where the Qianlong emperor intended to

celebrate his sixtieth birthday and to which he wanted to retire after his abdication (See Map 2). Commissioned by the emperor, construction of the pavilion began in the thirty-sixth year of his reign and finished in the forty-first year (1771–76). It was renovated later in 1802 and again in 1891. (Pics. 1 a.-1 e.) (Lang, 2001: 91; Li, 1998: 18; Liao, 1997: 138; Yu, 2003: 445; Zhao, 2001: 22; Zhu, 1999: 550).



Pic. 1 c. Front view of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Photo from Liao Ben, *Zhongguo Gudai Juchang Shi*, p. 45, plate 114.

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Pic. 1 d. Front view of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Photo from Qiu Huiying, *Qianlong Shiqi Xiqu Huodong Yanjiu*, p. 263, plate 4.



Pic. 1 e. The close-up view of the frontal beam of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Photo from Yu Zhuoyun, *Zijin Cheng Gongdian*, p. 165, plate 182.

The Loge of Inspecting Truth (Yueshi Lou), an audience hall of this gigantic theater, is situated in the south side (the opposite side) of the theater (Pics. 2 a.- 2 d). Equivalent to the “royal box,” this building was also constructed during the Qianlong period. It faces north and stands opposite the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. The Loge is two-stories high, five *bays* (*jian*) or 31 meters wide, and three *bays* or 17 meters deep. This area comprises the audience hall for the emperors, empresses, and court officials to watch opera performances. The Loge is franked with 13-*bay* corridors on both the eastern and western sides, and was the designated space for ministers and high

officials to watch the play. These corridors form viewing galleries which connect it to the rear area of the theatrical pavilion, which used to function as a dressing room of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion, forming a courtyard-like architecture (Lang, 2001: 91; Li, 1998: 18; Liao, 1997: 138; Yu, 2003: 445; Zhao, 2001: 22; Zhu, 1999: 550). This building was renovated during the seventh year of the Jiaqing period (1802) and later was a favorite place for Empress Dowager Cixi to attend operas. She would sit on a couch surrounded on three sides by screens inside the main central doors. To watch the performance, she could open either the doors or the latticed shutters on each side. Glass panels meant that viewing was also possible through the closed doors (Zhu, 1999: 551). Behind the Loge of Inspecting Truth is located an imperial chamber named the “Study Room of Seeking a Path” (Xunyan Shuwu) (Figs. 3 a.-3 b.). According to Mr. Zhao Yang (personal interview, November 11, 2004), this chamber was also built under the Qianlong emperor’s commission. It was used as a temporary bedroom for the emperor, if he grew tired from watching grand plays in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion (Diagram 1).



Pic. 2 c. Close-up picture of the Loge of Inspecting Truth (Yueshi Lou). Photo taken at the Loge of Inspecting Truth by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.



Pic. 2 d. Front view of the Loge of Inspecting Truth as viewed from the upper levels of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion Theater. Photo from Yu Zhuoyun, *Zijin Cheng Gongdian*, p. 168, plate 187.

As I have mentioned in Chapter One, this grand theater consists of three floors. The first (ground) floor is called the “Longevity Stage” (*Shou tai*); the second (center) floor is called the “Prosperity Stage” (*Lu tai*); and the third (top) floor is called the “Fortune Stage” (*Fu tai*). In fact, there is an additional platform hidden in stage, built into two layers at the back part of the Longevity Stage. It is called the “Tower of Immortals” (*Xian lou* 仙樓) or the “Clear Pavilion of the Longevity Stage” (*Shoutai Mingge* 壽臺明閣) (Pics. 4 a.-4 b.). This platform is a mezzanine floor-like balcony overhanging the interior space of the spacious hall, similar to a lobby in modern buildings. It is 3.5 meters in height, and 2.0 meters in width, and also functions as a performing stage. The front façade of the “Immortal Tower” consists of four large wooden staircases connected to the Longevity Stage. The Slope of these wooden staircases is very steep. The side of the stairs is bowlike shape, on which are depicted movable paintings of five-colored clouds. These staircases are called the

chaduo 碴垛, *daduo* 搭垛, *taduo* 踏垛, or *hongni* 虹霓 (Pics. 5 a.-5 b.).

Apparently, this three-tiered stage actually consists of four performing platforms (Liao, 1997: 142; Yu, 2003: 445; Zhu, 1999: 550).



Pic. 4 a. Front view of the Immortal Tower. Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.



Pic. 4 b. The interior stage design of the Immortal Tower. Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.



Pic. 5 a. Two *chaduo* 磗垛 and an entrance door (*shangchangmen* 上場門) located on the left side of the Longevity Stage. Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.



Pic. 5 b. Two *chaduo* and an exit door (*xiachangmen* 下場門) located on the right side of the Longevity Stage. Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.

With respect to the interior architecture of this three-tiered stage, the Longevity Stage covers the largest area (Pic. 6). It has twelve pillars, and the whole floor is three *bays* or 17 meters in width and three *bays* or 18.52 meters in depth, or the equivalent to nine platforms of ordinary theatrical stages (Lang, 2001: 92; Li,

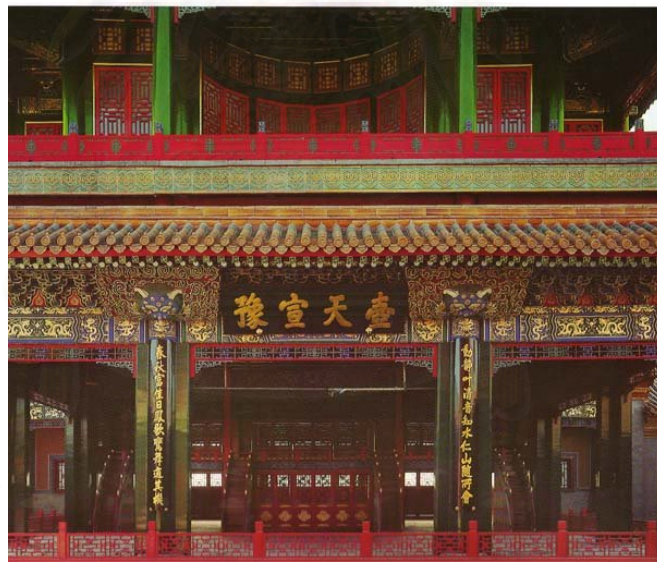
1998: 19; Liao, 1997: 139; Yu, 2003: 445; Zhu, 1999: 551).¹⁰ The Longevity Stage consists of two main areas: the front stage and the back stage. The former functions as a performing area. And has equipped on the floor one of the most interesting theatrical props called the “*dijing* 地井” or “pit.” Five *dijing* were installed on the floor: the largest one in the middle and four smaller ones in each corner (Pic. 7). These *dijing* are normally covered and only opened when they are used. I will discuss the functioning of the *dijing* in Chapter Three. An entrance door (*shangchangmen* 上場門) (Pic. 5 a.) and an exit door (*xiachangmen* 下場門) (Pic. 5 b.) were also built on the front stage of the Longevity Stage. The former is on the left side of the stage, while the latter on the right side. They are located in between two *chaduo*. Both of them were made from wood, and decorated with a polychrome-style painting in a cloud motif. This cloud pattern symbolizes the heavenly nature of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion.

The rear part of the Longevity Stage is a two-storied building measuring five by three *bays*. The roof is attached to the eaves of the Fortune Stage, providing a spacious backstage area which also functions as a large dressing room. (*banxilou* 扮戲樓) (Pics. 8 a.-8 b.). This area is divided into three different areas, named “Refine,” (*Ya* 雅) “Womanly virtue,” (*Shu* 淑) and “Miscellany” (*Za* 雜). The “Refine” was an area for displaying play scripts and musical instruments; the “Womanly virtue” was for storing costumes, make-up, and also served as a waiting area for actors performing female characters (female impersonators); and the “Miscellany” was similarly for storing costumes and make-up, but served as a waiting area for actors performing male characters (male impersonators). In the dressing room there are also two large

¹⁰ One platform is equivalent to 32 square meters.

staircases on both sides, which are connected to the Prosperity Stage. According to Yu Jian, the backstage also functioned as an area where musicians played music during the opera performances during the Qianlong reign (2003: 446).

The front area of the Longevity Stage, the Immortal Tower, and the backstage are separated by six movable, lattice-worked screen doors (*gezimen* 格子門) (Pic. 9). In the rear part of the Immortal Tower, there is a small area called the “peach stage” (*tao tai* 桃臺), which is as high as the Immortal Tower. The middle floor of the “peach stage” is equipped with quite a few “movable covered boards” (*huodong gaiban* 活動蓋板), which are connected to underground staircases (Diagram 3) (Yu, 2003: 446).



Pic. 6. Front view of the ground floor, called the Longevity Stage, of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Photo from Yu Zhuoyun, *Zijin Cheng Gongdian*, p. 165, plate 182.



Pic. 7. Large *dijing* in the middle of the floor of the Longevity Stage. Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.



Pic. 8 a. The backstage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion with displayed theatrical props and costumes. Photo from Zhao Yang, *Qingdai Gongting Yanxi*, p. 26.

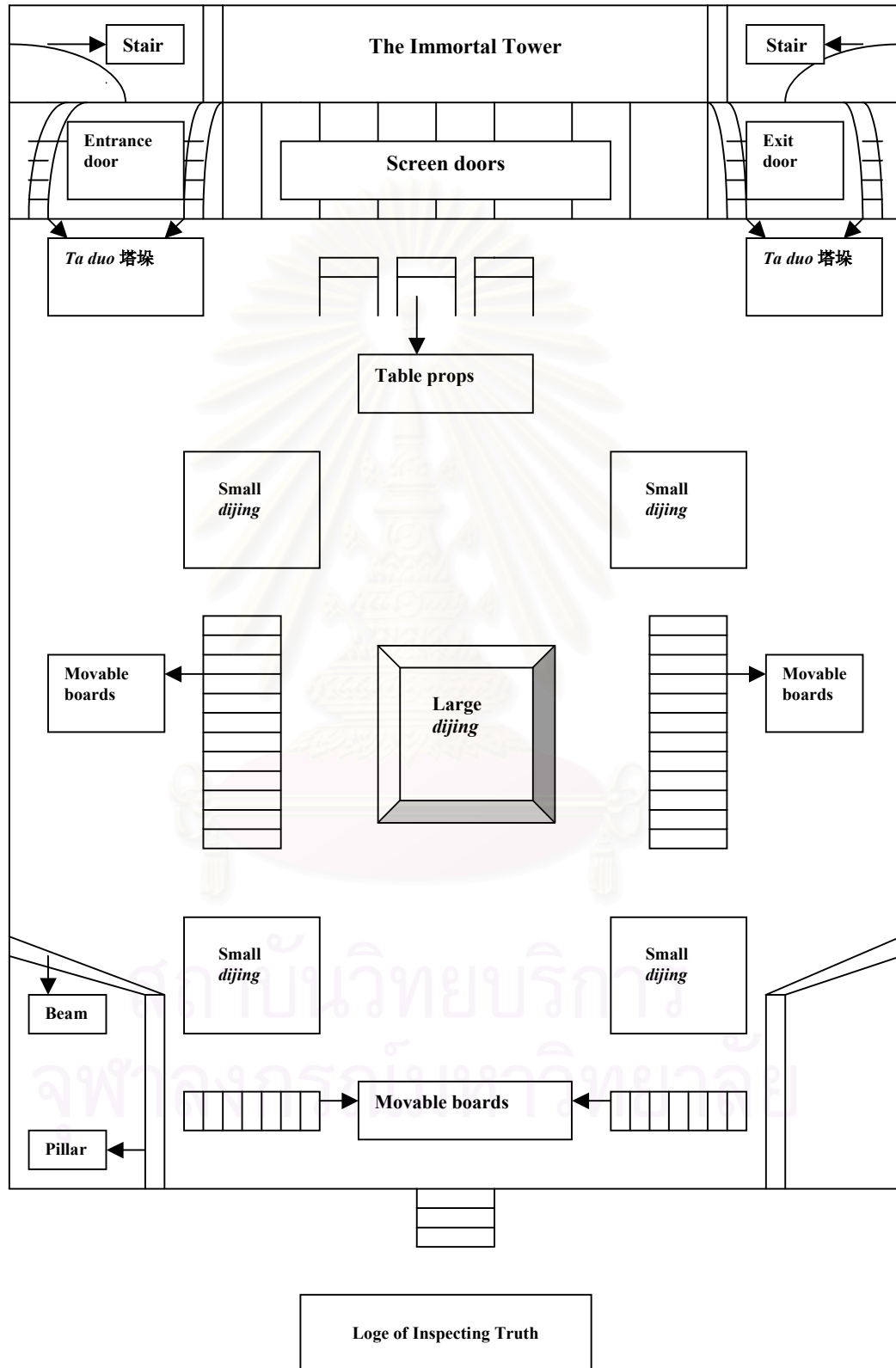


Pic. 8 b. Part of the backstage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Photo taken inside the backstage of the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.



Pic. 9. Screen doors (*gezimen* 格子門) between the front stage and the backstage of the Longevity Stage, connected to the Immortal Tower. Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.

Diagram 3. Layout of the Longevity Stage



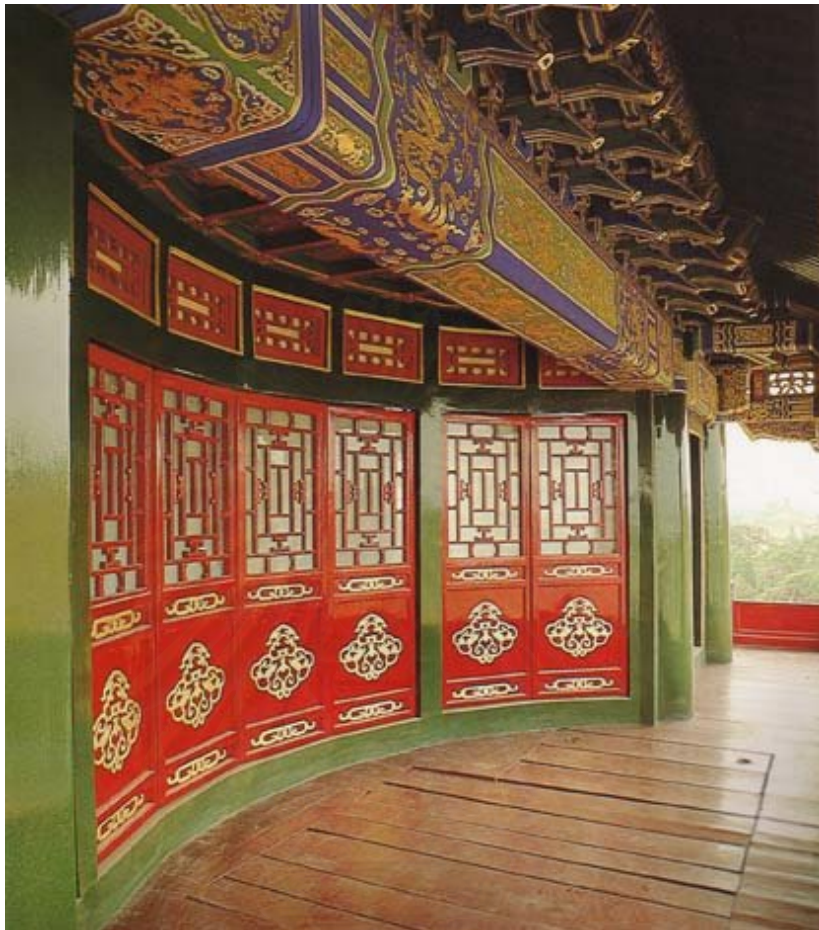
There are two interesting points of stage design on the Longevity Stage. Firstly, the top of the front two poles of this stage is equipped with a crossbeam. Judging from its position, this beam probably functions as a pole for hanging a stage curtain or screen (Pic. 10). Secondly, there are also two round-shaped iron rings, one on the left and right poles on the Longevity Stage. According to Mr. Zhao Yang (personal interview, November 11, 2004) these rings were used for hanging lanterns during the drama performances.



Pic. 10. A beam supposedly used for hanging a stage curtain. Photo taken outside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.

The open space or performing area of the Prosperity Stage covers only one-third of the entire floor, or a much smaller proportion than the Longevity Stage (Pic. 11). There are eight screen doors forming a crescent shape in the middle of the performing area, with the main performing area on the front, left, and right sides. Two screens on the left function as an entrance door, while two on the right serve as exit doors. In addition, sixteen screen doors were also built on the east and west sides, and twenty more on the south side of the stage.

It is interesting to note that most of the performing areas are equipped with “movable covered boards.” By using any of these boards, actors could enter a “hidden layer” (*jiaceng* 夾層), through which they could descend to the Longevity Stage. Thus to ascend from the *cha duo* of the Immortal Tower to the Prosperity Stage, actors had to transit through the “hidden layer” in order to reach the Prosperity Stage. According to Yu Jian, this “hidden layer” was an extremely useful adaptation, for it allowed actors free movement between the Immortal Tower and the Prosperity Stage (2003: 446). The backstage of the Prosperity Stage is much larger than the front part. The floor of the backstage is equipped with five significant theatrical props called the “*tianjing* 天井” or “trapdoor.” The largest one is built in the middle (Pics. 12 a-12 b), while four small ones are in each corner of the floor (Pics. 13 a- 13 b). Among these five *tianjing*, the front two and the center ones are connected to the Longevity Stage (with the ceiling of this stage having three *tianjing*), whereas the rear two are connected to the Immortal Tower. I will discuss its functions in greater detail in Chapter Four. There are also two large wooden staircases which are connected to the Longevity Stage and the Fortune Stage (Diagram 4).



Pic. 11. The performing area of the second floor, called the Prosperity Stage, of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Photo from Wang Zhuoyun, *Zijin Cheng Gongdian*, p. 166, plate 185.

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Pic. 12 a. A large *tianjing* 天井 on the middle of the ceiling of the Longevity Stage. Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.



Pic. 12 b. Close-up view of a large *tianjing* on the middle of the ceiling of the Longevity Stage. Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.

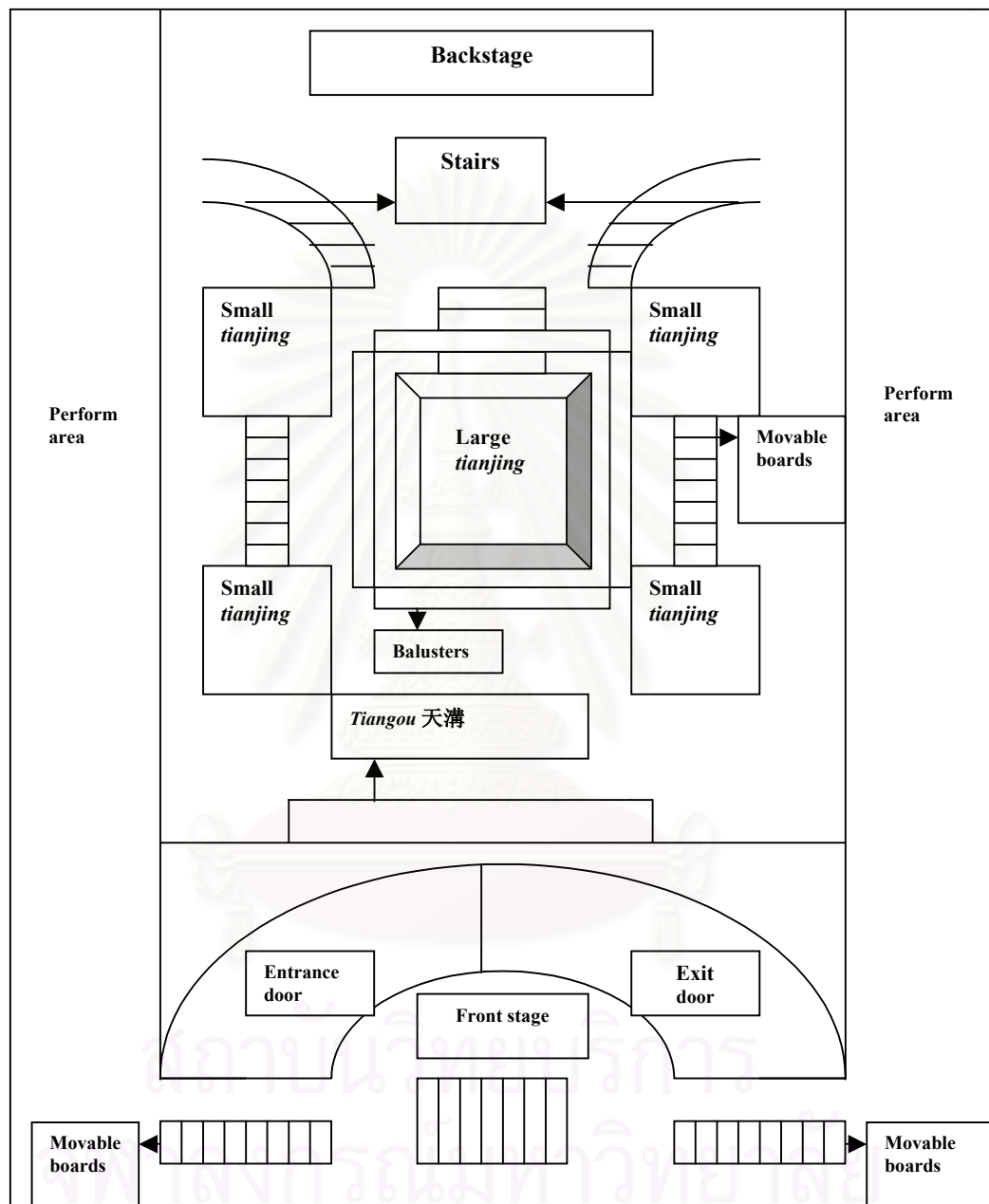


Pic. 13 a. Close-up view of one of the small *tianjing* on the ceiling of the Longevity Stage. Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.



Pic. 13 b. Close-up view of one of the small *tianjing* on the ceiling of the Longevity Stage. Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.

Diagram 4. Layout of the Prosperity Stage



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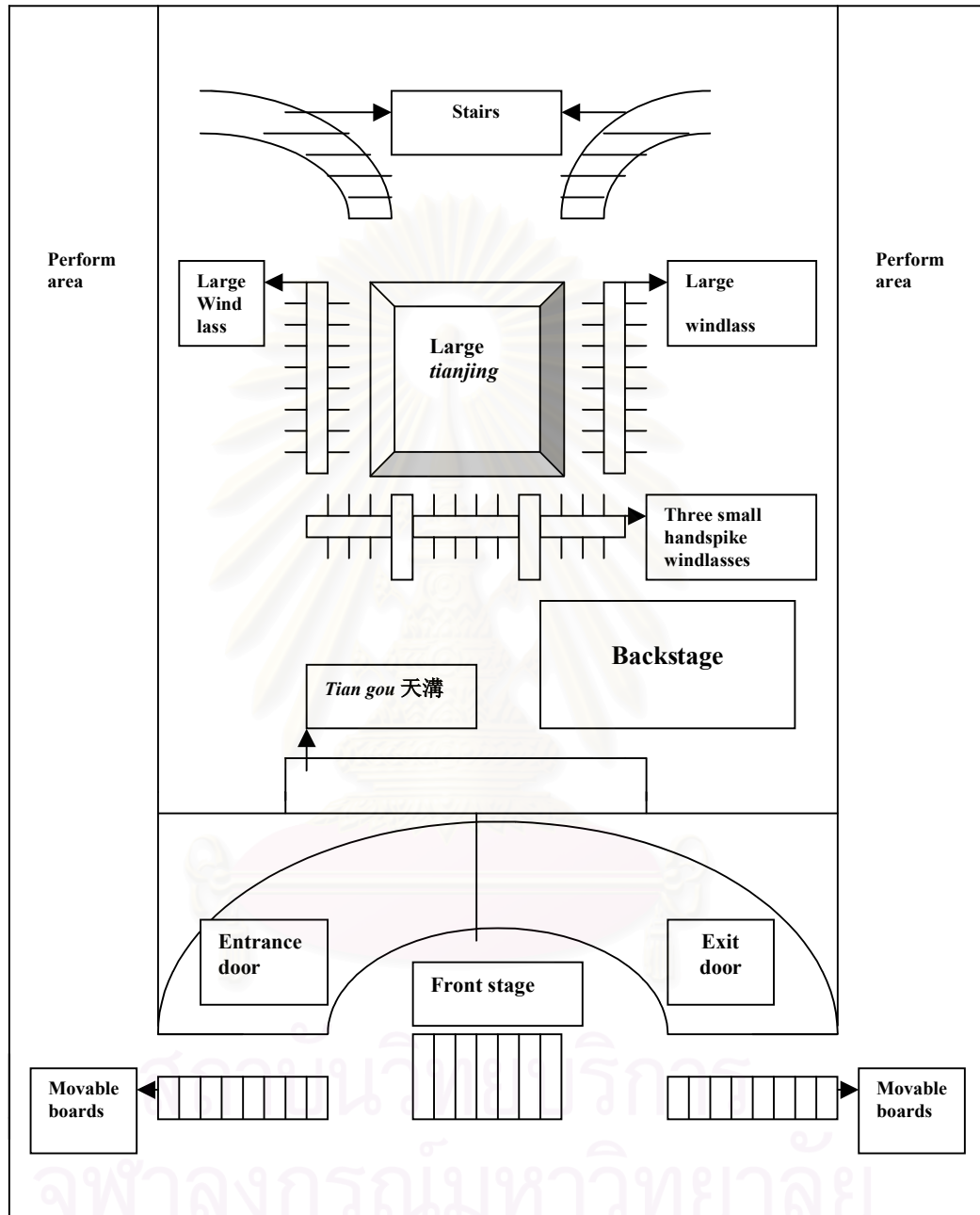
Compared to the other main platforms, the open space of the Fortune Stage is the smallest. It covers merely one-fourth of the entire floor, due to the limitation imposed by the audience watching from the Loge of Inspecting Truth. Like the Prosperity Stage, the front and backstage of the Fortune Stage are also equipped with screen doors that could be opened out onto the performance. Since the scale of the Fortune Stage is smaller than the Prosperity Stage, the screen doors built on the former are therefore fewer in number. There are only four screen doors which form a similar crescent shape in the middle of the performing area. The screens on the left and right function as an entrance door and an exit door, respectively. On the east and west sides of the stage were built twelve screen doors; and on the south side sixteen more. Furthermore, the performing area of the Fortune Stage is also equipped with “movable covered boards.” When these boards were uncovered, actors could descend to “bridges” or “tunnels” (*tianqiao* 天橋), which were built in all three sides (north, eastern and western) of the stage. This “bridge” is connected to the backstage, and its purpose is like that of the “hidden layer” on the Prosperity Stage, providing a pathway for actors (Yu, 2003: 446). Likewise, the backstage of the Fortune Stage is much larger than the front area. It consists of one large *tianjing* in the middle of the floor, two large staircases, and five handspike windlasses (*lülü* 轆轤). The two large windlasses are on the left and right sides of the *tianjing*, while the three small ones are located behind the front stage (Pic. 14). This machine primarily consists of series of winches (*jiaoche* 絞車), railings (*langan* 欄杆), wheels (*hualun* 滑輪) and ropes. Six of 1.6-meter-high poles were built to support these windlasses. Furthermore, five support beams were installed on top of these poles, forming an enclosure. Wheels or

pulleys were fastened to the ropes which were tied to the support beams. Every 35 centimeters of these windlasses are installed with a handspike. The big windlass has eighteen handles, with nine on each side. To use the windlass, eighteen people are required to revolve it, and, according to Yu Jian, this lifting apparatus could hold more than 500 kilograms or seven to eight actors. As Yu Jian has pointed out, the backstage of the Fortune Stage was mainly used as a “preparation floor” (*shebeiceng* 設備層 or *caozuoceng* 操作層) (2003: 447). Therefore, in order to enable the audiences to enjoy the performances, the actors could only perform within the small open spaces near the balustrades of the Prosperity Stage and the Fortune Stage (Diagram 5) (Li, 1998: 19; Liao, 1997: 147-148; Yu, 2003: 443-444).



Pic. 14. Five handspike windlasses for the lifting apparatus located in the backstage of the Fortune Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Photo from Yu Zhuoyun, *Zijin Cheng Gongdian*, p. 166, plate 184.

Diagram 5. Layout of the Fortune Stage



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In addition to these four platforms, the Pleasant Sound Pavilion also contains a functioning underground area. I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to go down to the underground, courtesy of Mr. Zhao Yang and his staff, though I was not allowed to take any pictures. In order to descend to this area, the “moveable covered boards” on the Longevity Stage have to be opened (Pics. 15 a.-15 c.). There are eight-stepped wooden staircases leading to the underground area, which is extremely dark and damp underneath. The entire floor has been covered with dust for hundred years, despite the built-in ventilations on two sides of the walls. The underground area is as large as the front stage and the backstage of the Longevity Stage, though only one meter in height. In the middle there is a water well whose top part is equipped with two small pulleys. I will discuss the function of this water well in Chapter Three and Chapter Four. Two rows of handspike windlasses were built on the left and right sides of the well. In some areas of the underground area, there are also “movable covered boards” under which small wells were installed. Moreover, many small stairs (*muti* 木梯) were piled up in the front right corner. According to Mr. Zhao Yang (personal interview, November 11, 2004), these stairs were used for lifting up actors from the underground to the Longevity Stage during the performances. In the rear part of the underground was also built a “pathway” (*tongdao* 通道), which is connected to the backstage of the Longevity Stage (Diagram 6).



Pic. 15 a. The pathway to the underground area covered with the “movable covered boards” on the Longevity Stage. Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.



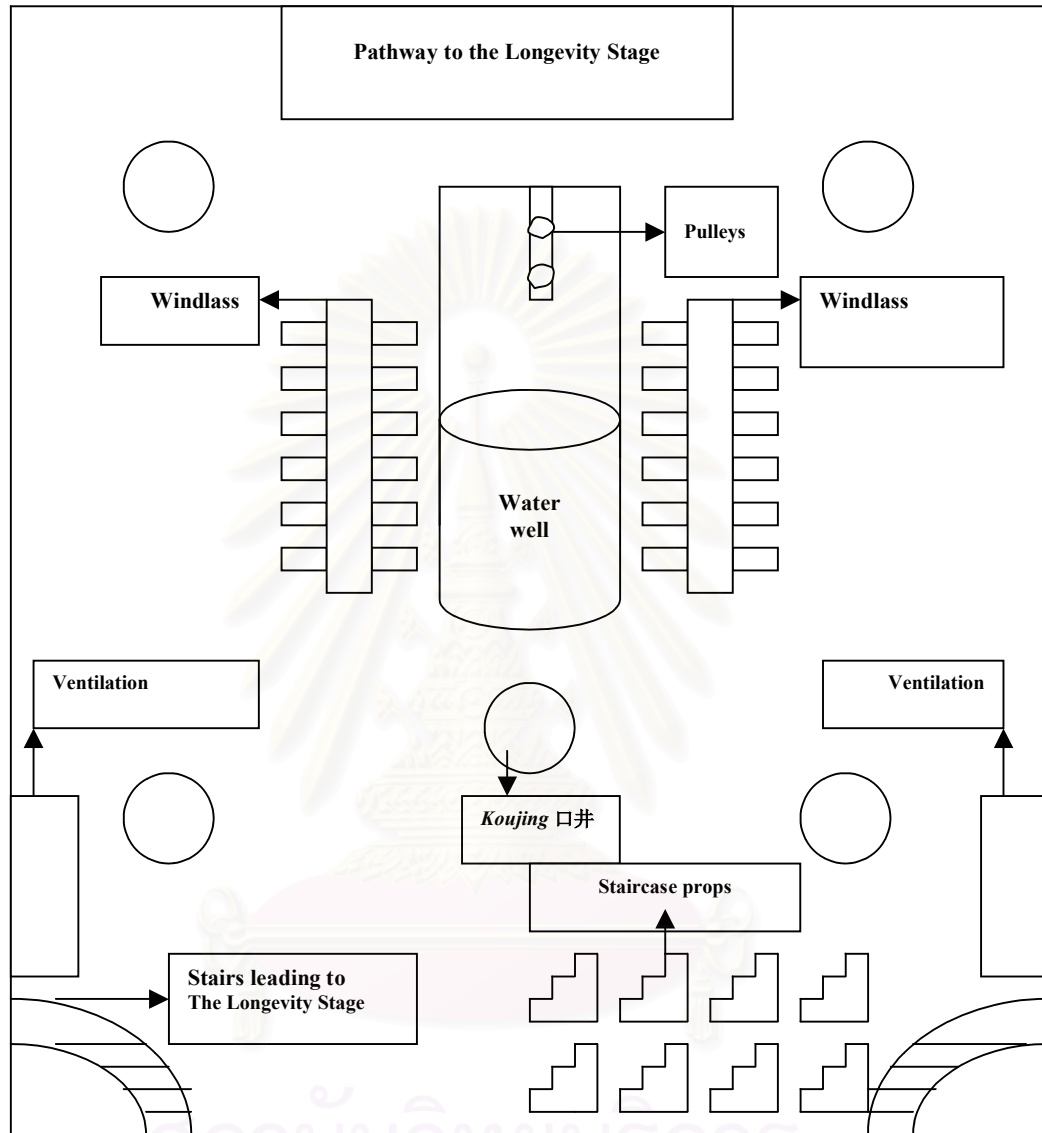
Pic. 15 b. The pathway to the underground covered with the “movable covered boards” on the Longevity Stage. Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.



Pic. 15 c. The pathway to the underground covered with the “movable covered boards” on the Longevity Stage. Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.

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Diagram 6. Layout of the Underground



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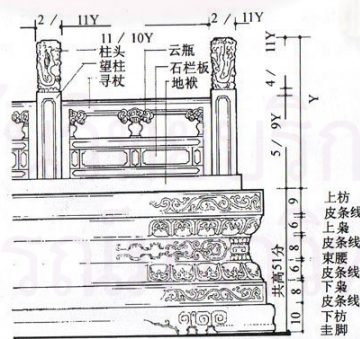
Loge of Inspecting Truth

2.2 Exterior Structure and Interior Design of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion

The three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion was designed in the spirit of traditional palace architecture. As in earlier Chinese palatial buildings, it symbolized the supreme glory of the emperor, which in this case was the Qianlong emperor. However, this theater is exceptional in the breadth and unity of its conception, as well as in the variety of design within this uniformity. In this section I will discuss the way in which the exterior structure and interior design of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion interact, as well as the extent to which each of its architectural elements conform to traditional Chinese architecture.

Like any traditional Chinese building, the Pleasant Sound Pavilion was built on a raised podium (*taiji* 臺基), the integral center of the overall design of the building. According to Sun Dazhang, the purpose of the raised podium is twofold: firstly, to effectively waterproof the structure against dampness since most Chinese buildings are built of timber; and secondly, to conform to imperial aesthetics. The podium can give a sense of importance to the building, and its height must be in proportion to the rest of the building elements (Sun, 2002: 414; Wang, 2000: 120). The masonry used for the podium of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion follows the shape of the building. The foundation and podium of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion are modeled on the traditional method of building (Sun, 2002: 414; Wang, 2000: 120). As Sun Dazhang has noted, the more important the building, the higher the podium. The height of the podium of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion is relatively high.

It is approximately 1.2 meters in height and is proportional to the height of the columns.¹¹ Hence the high podium signifies an important function of this grand theater. However, the podium of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion is different from podiums of other Chinese palatial buildings in terms of its design. Looking at Pictures 1 c. and 1 d., we can see that the podium of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion is very simple, constructed of only a few tiers of bricks. However, when compared to podiums of other palatial buildings, like the one shown in Pic. 16, we can see that the decoration on the podium shown in this picture is much more intricate. This podium is carved with gorgeous designs in different layers called “*Shangfang Pitiao Xian* 上枋皮條綫” or “upper lath register;” “*Shangxiao Pitiao Xian* 上梟皮條綫” or “upper owl register;” “*Shuyao Pitiao Xian* 束腰皮條綫” or “band waist register;” “*Xiaxiao Pitiao Xian* 下梟皮條綫” or “lower owl register;” and “*Xiafang Guijiao* 下枋桂腳” or “lower lath upstand”, respectively. Furthermore, the podiums for the imperial palaces of the Ming and Qing dynasties were raised at least nine steps high, with the buildings for officials raised three or five steps (Sun, 2002: 414; Wang, 2000: 120).



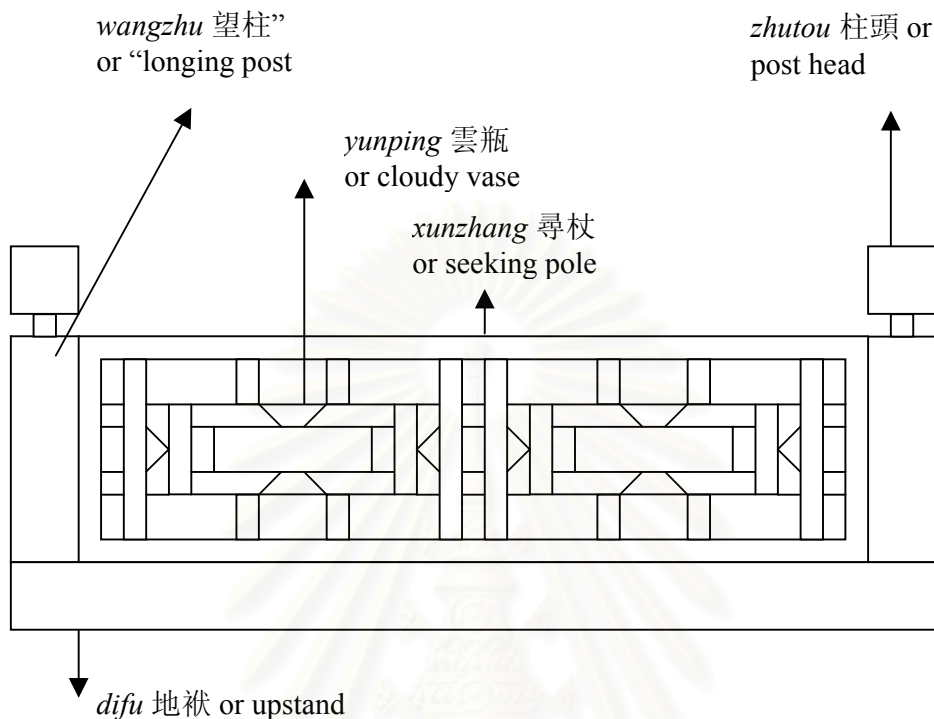
Pic. 16. An illustration shows different tiers with ornate decoration of a raised podium built in the imperial palaces. Picture from Sun Dazhang, *Zhongguo Gudai Jianzhu Shi: Qingdai Jianzhu*, Vol. 5, p. 414.

¹¹ Information from a measurement I made at the podium of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion on November 11, 2004.

However, the raised podium of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion was built without any steps. I would argue that the simplicity of the podium of this grand theater is due to its harmony and balance to the upper balustrades (*langan* 欄杆). As Sun Dazhang has pointed out, when a podium is sufficiently high as to require balustrades, the design has to be executed with care so that they are in harmony and complement each other. The balustrades should be designed to enhance not just the podium, but also the entire building. Its proportion and detailing have to be worked out with reference to the overall design and the type and usage of building (Sun, 2002: 415; Wang, 2000: 121).

In the case of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion, all three main platforms are decorated with intricately designed balustrades that harmonize the simplicity of the podium and accentuate the beauty of the grand theater. A balustrade of the Longevity Stage consists of upstands or posts called “*wangzhu* 望柱” or “longing post;” post tops called “*zhutou* 柱頭” or “post head;” and infill panels or balusters composed of “*xunzhang* 尋杖” or “seeking pole” and “*yunping* 雲瓶” or “cloudy vase”. The upstands rest on the *difu* 地袱, a stone piece with grooves to house the upstands and balusters (See Diagram 7). The balustrades on all three stages share the same design.

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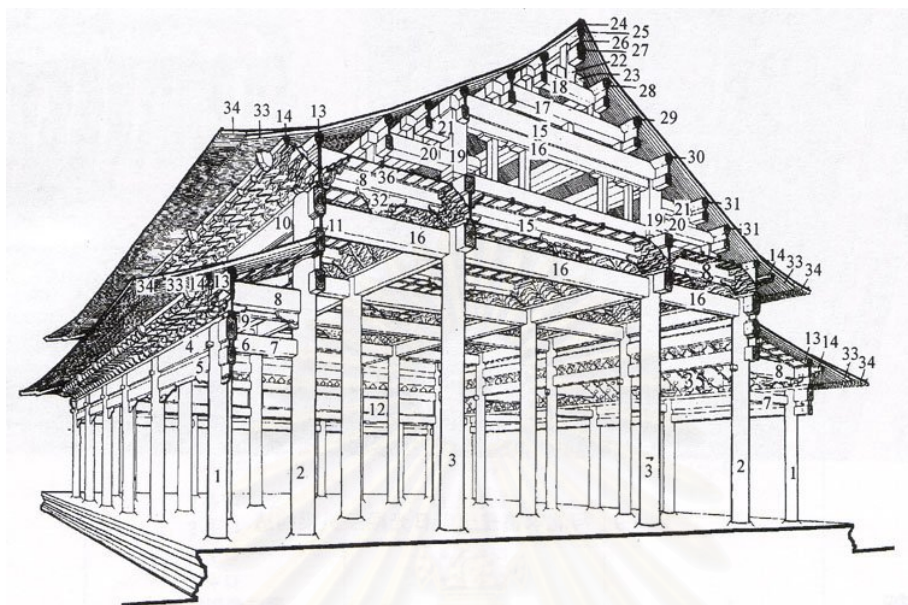
Diagram 7: Balustrades of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion

However, the balustrades in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion are different from those in other buildings in terms of materials. The former are made from wood carved, while the latter are made from stones carved with an intricate design. The upstands of the former are capped with simple design, while the latter's are usually capped with carved ornaments such as upturned lotus buds, mythical animals or other auspicious objects as shown in Pic. 16 (Sun, 2002: 415; Wang, 2000: 122).

A column or a pillar (*zhu* 柱) is another important structural element of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion that conforms to traditional Chinese architecture. As described earlier, there are twelve pillars built on the Longevity Stage, which are all constructed of hardwood. During the Qing dynasty there were five types of column commonly used. The first one is called the “*yanzhu* 簷柱” or “peristyle column.” This is a column built to connect the side eaves of a building. The second type is called the

“*jinzhu* 金柱” or “hypostyle column.” It is a frontal column which was normally built in pairs in the front part of a building. The third type is called “*chongyan jinzhu* 重簷金柱” or “peripheral column under upper eaves.” This type of column is built to support the upper beam of a building, which is usually constructed between the *yanzhu* and the *jinzhu*. The fourth type is called the “*tongzhu* 童柱” or “short post.” It is a vertical small column built between upper beams adjacent to a roof. The fifth type is called the “*zhongzhu* 中柱” or “king post.” This is a small post built to support a purlin beam, a ridge purlin, and a ridge tie-beam (Pic. 17) (Sun, 2002: 404-407; Wang, 2000: 85-87). According to Prof. Liu Ronggao 劉榕高, an expert in traditional Chinese architecture in the Forbidden City, four types of column—the *yanzhu*, the *jinzhu*, the *tongzhu* and the *zhongzhu*—were installed in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. The two frontal columns of the grand theater are the *jinzhu* type, while ones on the left and right sides are the *yanzhu* kind. The *tongzhu* and the *zhongzhu* columns were built to support upper beams, eaves, and purlins to the roof of the Fortune Stage. In the backstage of the Prosperity Stage, the *jinzhu* columns were also built (Liu Ronggao, interview, November 11, 2004).

The section of the columns may be square, round or polygonal (from five to eight sides), rectangular or composite in section (Sun, 2002: 404; Wang, 2000: 86). In the case of the columns in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion, they are all square in shape. Like any other columns in Chinese buildings, the columns in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion were also well-seasoned before they were used for construction as insufficient seasoning would increase the likelihood of splitting (Liu Ronggao, interview, November 11, 2004).



Pic. 17. Architectural Structure of the Qing Palace. Picture from Sun Dazhang, *Zhongguo Gudai Jianzhu Shi: Qingdai Jianzhu*, Vol. 5, p. 403.

1. Peristyle column 2. Peripteral column under upper eaves 3. Hypostyle column
4. Upper lintel 5. Lower lintel 6. Web plate between lintels 7. Tie-beam under peach-point beam
8. Peach-point beam 9. Plate carrying bracket sets 10. Lintel under upper eaves 11. Lintel carrying lower-eave rafters 12. Running-horse panel
13. Eaves purlin 14. Purlin under projecting eaves 15. Seven-purlin beam
16. Tie-beam under the main beam 17. Five-purlin beam 18. Three-purlin beam
19. Short post 20. Double-panel beam 21. Single-panel beam 22. King post
23. King post-fixing-piece 24. Ridge supporter 25. Ridge purlin
26. Web plate to ridge purlin 27. Ridge tie-beam 28. Upper principal purlin
29. Intermediate principal purlin 30. Lower principal purlin 31. Principal purlin
32. Intervallic bracket set 33. Eaves rafter 34. Flying rafter 35. Bracket set with end stretched beneath principal purlin 36. Coffered ceiling

The *dougong* 斗拱 or the bracketing system¹² of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion is another architectural feature that conforms to traditional Chinese architecture.

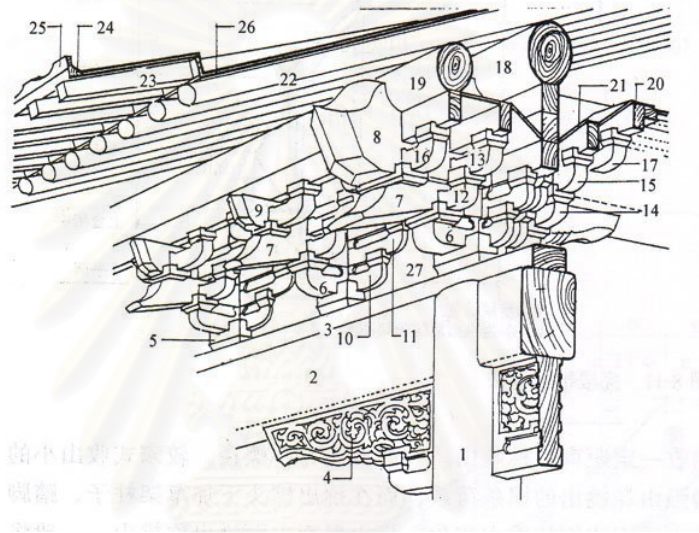
According to Sun Dazhang and He Junshou, the *dougong* is constructed to give support to the large cantilevered verge and eave overhangs. They consist of many interlocking parts of timber to form a bracket. A set of brackets consists of four basic members. They are the arm-shaped members extending out from the façade of the building called “*qiao* 翹” (curl or whorl), the bow-shaped members supported by *qiao* and parallel to the building façade called “*gong* 栱” (post or pillar), the blocks placed beneath or between *qiao* and *gong* called “*dou* 斗” (main block) or “*sheng* 升” (secondary block), and the slanting members like birds’ beaks in place of *qiao* called “*ang* 昂” or “cantilever arm.”¹³ (Sun, 2002: 410; He, 1983: 58). The *qiao* may be used in successive tiers, each extending out a certain distance, called a “*tiao* 挑” or a “jump.” Bracket sets may be classified into a variety of kinds according to the number of “jumps” and the size of their component members (Pic. 18).¹⁴ Sun Dazhang has

¹² Joseph Needham has explained the origin of the bracketing system: “...it goes back in essence, as archaeological discoveries have shown, to the Shang 尚 dynasty (the 2nd millennium). In ancient times only the cross-beams were used, but as time went on it was found that this placed excessive tension at the junction between columns and beams, failures tending to occur there. The improvement was therefore introduced of inserting a number of corbel brackets between the top of the column and the cross-beam. The *dou* was so called because it was a block of wood resembling a capacity-measure in shape, and the *gong* or bow-piece was the double elbow-shaped arm supporting one of these on each side. Corbel brackets successively longer were then piled on top of one another at the capital of the column, so as to form what were essentially corbelled arches of wood supporting the cross-beams. The *dougong* branched forth not in one direction only but in both, i.e. as well parallel as transverse to the long axis of the building, thus supporting both longitudinal and crosswise beams.” (1956: 138)

¹³ Joseph Needham has explained its origin that: “In ancient times Chinese building technique had made considerable use of double slanting joists meeting at a point. But these inverted V-braces had at first little constructional importance; they were used mainly as an ornamental device between the longitudinal tie-beams, diversifying the appearance of the building as seen from the front. There was one employment, however, in which these inverted V-braces made a significant contribution to structural stability, for sometimes they were used between the uppermost cross-beam and the ridge-pole instead of a king-post. One can now see how easily the idea of the *ang* or “cantilever principal rafters” could have arisen; they were nothing but an extension of the principle of the *cha shou* 叉手 or “forked hand” struts to solve the problem of the widely overhanging eaves.” (1956: 202)

¹⁴ The Chinese manual, *Yingzao Fashi* 營造法師 [Regulations of Construction], published in 1103 AD records the *dougong* or bracketing system and its units of measurement. Basically there are four standard measurements, namely *fen* 分 (about 1 centimeter), *cai* 材 (fifteen *fen*), *qi* 契 (six *fen*),

also pointed out that the functions of the *dougong* are twofold: to give support to the large overhangs of verge and eaves giving ample sun shading and weather protection to the building, and to integrate the structural elements such as the beams and columns with decorative elements (2002: 410). As a module, its composition provided meaningful rhythm.



Pic. 18. An illustration shows the bracketing system of the Qing palace. Picture from Sun Dazhang, *Zhongguo Gudai Jianzhu shi: Qingdai Jianzhu*, Vol. 5, p. 408.

and *tiao* 挑 (about thirty *fen*). The proportion of every part of the *dougong* is measured in multiples of *fen*. The diameter of the column that supports the *dougong* varies from the column base. The *dougong* spread out in four directions carrying smaller brackets that may support others which spread out, thus, the whole bracketing system can be from one *cai* plus one *qi*, to three *cai* (Sun, 2002: 410; He 1983: 58-62).



Pic. 19 a. The bracketing system in the east side of the three-tiered stage the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Photo taken by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.

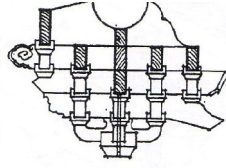


Pic. 19 b. The close-up view of the bracketing system in the east side of the three-tiered stage the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Photo taken by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.



Pic. 19 c. The close-up view of the cantilevered arms (*ang* 昂) in the east side of the three-tiered stage the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Photo taken by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.

However, looking at the *dougong* system of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion shown in Pics. 19 a.-19 c., we can see that the bracketing system is less complicated and less delicate. This type of the bracketing system is called the “*dan qiao dan ang* 單翹單昂” or “single-curl single-cantilever arm” system (Pic. 20). As for the types of cantilever arm employed in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion, the “*wu cai dan ang* 五材單昂” or “five *cai* single cantilever arm” type was built on the Longevity Stage, the “*san cai dan ang* 三材單昂” or “three *cai* single cantilever arm” type on the Prosperity Stage and the “*wu cai dan ang*” on the Fortune Stage. The difference of each type lies in the width of the cantilever arm. For three *cai* is equivalent to 0.50 *doukou* 斗口 and five *cai* to 0.40 *doukou*. (Liu Ronggao, interview, November 11, 2004; Sun, 2002: 411).



Pic. 20. An illustration shows the bracketing system called the “*dan qiao dan ang* 單翹單昂” or “single-curl single-cantilever arm” system employed in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion Theater. Picture from Sun Dazhang, *Zhongguo Gudai Jianzhu shi: Qingdai Jianzhu*, Vol. 5, p. 410.

Sun Dazhang has argued that during the Qing dynasty the practice of heavy structural bracketing was reduced. This change was basically one of aesthetic choice. The emphasis has simply been placed on the roof in a new way, which in this case is the triple-eaved gabled-and-hipped roof. This new form of roof now seems rather to float above the structure than to be carried and flung out by the structure. Its change in decorative status began after the fifteenth century, decidedly changing the visual effect of the building. The organic structure, through each interlocking support and cantilever, provided every bay of traditional Chinese buildings during the Song to the Ming dynasties with distinct individuality. Over each bay it assigned a section of the gently curving eaves that was different from the next. The dynamic equilibrium achieved through the heftier proportions of the diameter of the column, in its height, and in the carefully calculated inclination of the two end columns toward the center created a firm and strong sense of stability (Sun, 2002: 410-411). Therefore we notice a different attitude in the architecture of the Qing dynasty, exemplified in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Looking at Pics. 19 a.-19 c., there is a monotonous progression across the building from one end to another, strengthening the eave line between uplifting ends over identical bays. The columns, tall and straight, make up a feature of indifferent verticals suggesting a small direction of movement or relationship to the whole.

Apart from podium, balustrades, columns, and bracketing system, the roof type of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion also conforms to traditional Chinese roof forms. Its roof form is called the “triple-eaved gabled-and-hipped roof” (*juanpeng xieshan sanceng yan* 卷棚歇山三層簷).¹⁵ According to Sun Dazhang, the most important building is usually covered by a multi-tiered, hipped roof which is used mainly for religious or imperial palatial structures. The more important the building the more tiers of roof it has (Sun, 2002: 402; Wang, 2000: 75). Thus the number of multiple roofs of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion reinforces the significance of its functional architecture. The exaggerated upturn of the corners of the eaves also accentuates the aesthetic refinement of the elevational treatment of the grand theater.

Roof decoration and design of traditional Chinese architecture are not confined to the sculptural elements displayed on the roof ridges and corners. The roof form, tile design and ornaments are also integral to its effect. As for roof tiles, there are basically two main types of tiles: “flat” and “cylindrical.” The former are slightly curved and somewhat wider than the latter. They are laid overlapping one another vertically down the roof slope to form rows. They are classified into three types: *banwa* 板瓦, used as under-layer tiles, *zhiyao banwa* 直腰板瓦, used as under layer-tiles near the roof ridge, and *dishui* 滴水 used as edge tiles. The cylindrical tiles, which are, in fact, semi-cylindrical, are laid end to end overlapping the two sides of each row of flat tiles forming ridges. They are divided into two types: *tiangoutou* 天

¹⁵ Generally there are four types of traditional roof: the gabled (*yingshan* 硬山), the hipped (*xuanshan* 懸山), the half-hipped/half-gabled (*xieshan* 歇山) and the pyramidal (*cuanjian* 攢尖). These four roof forms may vary to form two or three tier roofs with the combination of two or more basic roof forms. The half-hipped/half-gabled roof is also used for important buildings. The basic roof forms were created during the Han dynasty. By the Qing dynasty these were developed to create many variations of roof. The pyramidal was built in various forms of geometry such as round, square, pentagonal, hexagonal and octagonal. Round roofs were used for religious buildings, square for pavilions and octagonal for pagodas (Sun, 2002: 402; Wang, 2000: 75).

溝頭, used for channeling water and *goutou* 溝頭, used as edge tiles (Sun, 2002: 412; Wang, 2000: 78).

The roof tiles of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion are of both flat and cylindrical types. They were placed in different parts of the roof. These roof tiles are called “glazed tiles” (*liuliwa* 琉璃瓦). The colors of tiles range from yellow to green. Here yellow and green tiles are placed on the roofs of all three floors of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Two-thirds of the eave section of the roofs on the Longevity Stage and the Prosperity Stage are covered with yellow glazed tiles, while one-third of the rear part is contrasted with green glazed tiles. However, the eaves of the hipped roof on the Fortune Stage are covered with yellow glazed tiles, while the top part is decorated with green glazed tiles. According to Prof. Liu Ronggao, this is called the “*lü liuliwa huang jianbian* 綠琉璃瓦黃剪邊” or “green glazed tiles with yellow border.” Interestingly, colors of roof tiles of the Loge of Inspecting Truth on the opposite side are in a reverse order. The hipped roof of this audience hall is primarily covered with yellow glazed tiles and green glazed tiles on its eave and ridge. This is called the “*huang liuliwa lü jianbian* 黃琉璃瓦綠剪邊” or “yellow glazed tiles with green border” (Liu Ronggao, interview, November 11, 2004).

What is the philosophy behind this distinction? The distinction lies in a symbolic meaning of color scheme in Chinese philosophy. Prof. Liu Ronggao (personal interview, November 11, 2004) has explained that both prior to and during the Qing dynasty, yellow was used exclusively for the royal families. Therefore the majority of yellow glazed tiles employed on the hipped roof of the Loge of Inspecting the Truth connote this meaning. For the Loge was used as a “royal box” where the emperor was seated in the center to watch drama performances. Thus yellow glazed

tiles on its roof signify that this audience hall was an imperial residence. In China it was taboo to have something in common with emperors. Thus the triple-eaved gabled-and-hipped roof on the Pleasant Sound Pavilion had to be built with green glazed tiles. However, the yellow tiles on the eaves and ridges denote that this grand theater was exclusively for imperial use.

Ornamentation of the roof in traditional Chinese architecture invariably was required to satisfy practical as well as aesthetic needs. Seamless integration of these two often conflicting requirements was necessary to achieve the highest standards. Roof decoration of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion was followed generally according to this principle, and decoration was applied where it was structurally needed. Like roof decoration of any traditional Chinese buildings, the Pleasant Sound Pavilion also has *wenshou* 吻獸, “kissing animals” or “roof ornaments” on the roof ridges or corner ribs (Sun, 2002: 412; Wang, 2000: 80).

There are various types of decorations. The ones on the main ridge finials are called *Zhengwen* 正吻 (Pic. 21). That on the roof corner rib is named *Chuishou* 垂獸 or “drooping animal” situated on a *Shouzuo* 獸座 or “animal seat” (Pic. 22). A series of mythological figures placed in front of the *Chuishou* are called *Zoushou* 走獸 or “parading animals.” The more important a building is the more roof animal ornaments it has. Thus to highlight the important aspect of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion, there are five, seven, and nine “kissing animals” on the roof ridges of the Longevity Stage, the Prosperity Stage, and the Fortune Stage, respectively. Five of these roof ornaments on the Longevity Stage range from outer to inner parts: *Xianren* 仙人 (a hen with an immortal astride) (Pic. 23), *Long* 龍 (dragon) (Pic. 24), *Feng* 鳳 (phoenix) (Pic. 25), *Shi* 獅 (lion) (Pic. 26), and *Chuishou* (a bushy-tailed dragon) (Pic. 22). Two of the

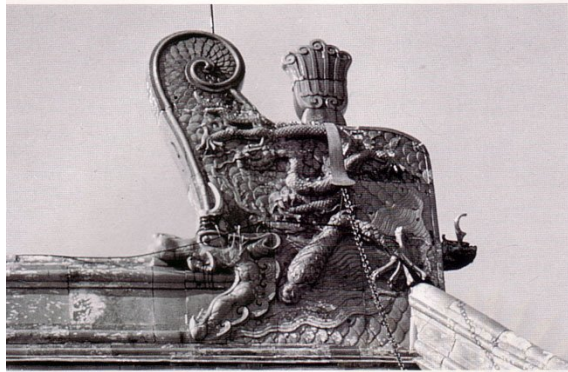
roof ornaments added on the roof ridge of the Prosperity Stage are *Haima* 海馬 (sea horse) (Pic. 27) and *Tianma* 天馬 (winged or celestial horse) (Pic. 28). The extra two on the roof ridge of the Fortune Stage are *Yayu* 押魚 (Pic. 29) and *Suanni* 狻猊 (scaled lion) (Pic. 30). The order of mythological figurines decorated on the roofs of the three platforms is shown below (from outer to inner).

The Longevity Stage: an immortal riding a hen, dragon, phoenix, lion, and a bushy-tailed dragon

The Prosperity Stage: an immortal riding a hen, dragon, phoenix, lion, sea horse, celestial horse, and a bushy-tailed dragon

The Fortune Stage: an immortal riding a hen, dragon, phoenix, lion, sea horse, celestial horse, *yayu*, scaled lion, and a bushy-tailed dragon

These figurines of roof ridges serve a structural function as well as an ornamental purpose. Sun Dazhang has argued that since the upper sloping ridges were built at a sharp angle, they presented a weak link at a vital point in the construction and could easily slide free. To solve this problem, during the construction iron bars were inserted at the lower end of each ridge to strengthen the structural member. Ornamental animals were then stuck onto the ridges to hide the protruding ends of the bars. The silhouettes of these rising and falling figures also serve to break the sense of monotony of the roof. He has also pointed out that all are composite animals embodying propitious and protective qualities and should occur only as an odd numbered set (Sun, 2002: 412; Wang, 2000: 80).



Pic. 21. *Zhengwen* 正吻 or “main kissing animals”



Shouzuo 獸座 or “animal’s seat”

Pic. 22. *Chuishou* 垂獸 or “drooping animal” situated on a *Shouzuo* 獸座 or “animal’s seat”



Pic. 23. *Xianren* 仙人 or “immortal”



Pic. 24. *Long* 龍 or “dragon”



Pic. 25. *Feng* 鳳 or “phoenix”



Pic. 26. *Shi* 獅 or “lion”



Pic. 27. *Haima* 海馬 or “sea horse”



Pic. 28. *Tianma* 天馬 or
“winged or celestial horse”



Pic. 29. *Yayu* 押魚 or “celestial fish”



Pic. 30. *Suanni* 狻猊
or “scaled lion”

Another structural element in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion that conforms to traditional Chinese architecture is its highly-decorative ceiling. There are basically two types of ceiling built in traditional Chinese buildings. The first type is called *Tianhua* 天花 or “celestial flower.” It is a false ceiling created by battens with finishing battens or boardings. The second is called *Zaojing* 藻井 or “caisson” (literally “decorative well”). It is applied on a coffered ceiling of a palace to give lend meaning to the interior space. The caissons are usually constructed in several tiers which range from square to circular (Wang, 2000: 84). The Pleasant Sound Pavilion was built with both kinds of ceiling. The ceilings of all three stages are the *Tianhua* type (Fig. 31). These coffered ceilings are decorated with a repeated pattern of five circular crimson bats surrounding the Chinese character “*Shou* 壽” or “longevity” with four flying cranes mouthing peaches at each corner. Here five bats represent the five blessings: health, long life, prosperity, love of virtue, and a tranquil, natural death.¹⁶ The crane also is a symbol of longevity. This kind of decoration is called “five bats carrying longevity” (*Wufu Pengshou* 五蝠捧壽) (Wang, 2000: 113).

¹⁶ The Chinese word for bat is “*fu* 蝠” is a homophone with the word “*fu* 福” which means fortune (Wang, 2000: 112).



Pic. 31. The *tianhua* 天花 ceiling with a decoration pattern called “five bats carrying longevity” (*Wufu Pengshou* 五蝠捧壽). Photo taken inside the Longevity Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.

Furthermore, an indentation in a square shape in the center of the ceiling of the Longevity Stage, which forms the *Tianjing*, is the *Zaojing* type (Pic. 12 b.). This square caisson on a coffered ceiling is constructed by intersecting laths at 90 degrees. The panels set in between the laths are painted with a floating cloud motif around a square caisson with a decoration of paired dragons rotating around a signet. This kind of decoration is called “golden dragon with a signet” (*Jinlong Hexi* 金龍和璽), which was a new decorative design in the Qing dynasty (Wang, 2003: 113). In China, the dragon is a symbol of the Emperor, the Son of Heaven. In this case it also alludes to the Dragons in the Heaven. In the Loge of Inspecting Truth sat the Dragon of the Earth, or the emperor. The three dragons echoed each other and constituted a sacred atmosphere.

Another interior architectural feature in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion that conforms to traditional Chinese decoration is the use of screen doors. The upper part of a screen door (*gexin* 格心) consists of a “lattice window” of ornate open timber

work, the inside of which may be covered with paper. The lower portion (*qunban* 裙板 or “skirt-board”) is composed of a solid panel or panels which usually bear carved decoration or applied ornamental features (Sun, 2002: 478; Wang, 2000: 130). Screen doors are used to separate the interior and exterior spaces of the building. All screen doors on the three stages were used to separate the front stage and backstage. These screen doors are carved with exquisite craftsmanship. These partition doors are of the same color and pattern. They are painted in red color with lantern pattern carved openwork lattice on the upper portions and with carved and gilt ornament decorating on the lower panels.

Not only is the interior decoration of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion designed exquisitely, but its exterior decoration is also eye-catching. One of the most interesting exterior decorations of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion is an inscription of Chinese characters on wooden boards and pillars. There are three horizontal wooden boards hanging from frontal eaves on each stage. Each board is decorated with a Chinese character inscription whose meaning can be interpreted when read downwards. Another one on the Fortune Stage reads “the Pleasant Sound Pavilion” (*Changyin Ge* 暢音閣); the other on the Prosperity Stage reads “Leading harmony and cheering peace” (*Daohe Yitai* 導和怡泰); and the one on the Longevity Stage reads “Heaven proclaims happiness” (*Hutian Xuanyu* 壺天宣豫). Of such inscriptions, the most eye-catching one is a pair of paralleled sentences (*duilian* 對聯) inscribed on the front two pillars of the Longevity Stage. It reads as follows:

動靜叶清音知水仁山隨所會

春秋富佳日鳳歌鸞舞適其機

Motion and quietude harmonize pure sound; wise water and benevolent mountain follow what they meet.

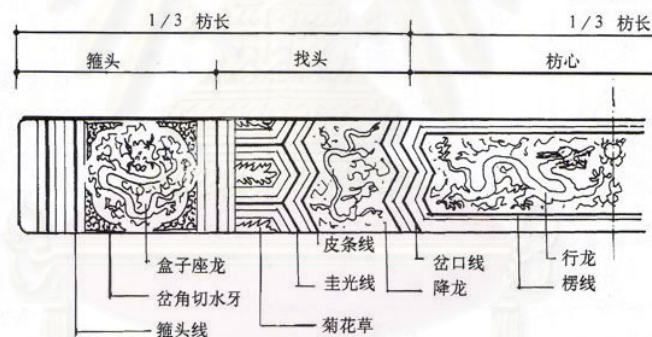
Spring and autumn are full of auspicious days; phoenix song and luan dance suit their occasion.

Thus we can see that every structural element of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion—podium, balustrade, column, beam, bracketing system, roof form, roof tiles, roof decoration, ceiling, screen doors, inscribed and gilt wooden boards—is consistent with traditional Chinese architectural style. However, one unique and innovative feature of traditional Chinese palace-style architecture applied to this grand theater lies in its use of multicolored oil painting decoration (*caihua youshi* 彩畫油飾). Sun Dazhang has pointed out that its greatest achievement was the fact that the theater successfully combined the dual role of preservation of the valuable timber components with that of enriching an already impressive structure.¹⁷ (Bian, 1983: 31-35; Sun, 2002: 452-460)

Two styles of multicolored oil painting were employed in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. The first style is the so-called “*Hexi* 和壘” style (Pic. 32). This decorative style was employed in the most important buildings in the palace. Designs are divided into three main sections: *fangxin* 枋心 (“heart or center of the beam”), *zhaotou* 找頭 (“girdle or intervening part”) and *gutou* 箍頭 (“encircle or hooped ends”). The *gutou* occur at the two outermost sections of the composition on the beam, comprised of circular motifs within a board band encircling the beam. The *zhaotou*

¹⁷ Initially, a monochrome coating had been used simply to protect the wooden structure from the extremes in Chinese climate and wood-boring insects. Paints were composed of plant and mineral pigments. But with the passage of time, a renewed focus on ancient Chinese civilization and the development of colored paints, the designs themselves became part of the regulations to which palace construction was subject. By the Ming and Qing periods these decorations had become an integral part of architectural planning (Bian, 1983: 31-35; Sun, 2002: 452-460).

consists of motifs encircling the beam in a band with lotus panels on one side and zigzag shapes on the other. Side by side, these two degenerate into straight-edged parallel, zigzagging lines. The central and longest part of the decoration, *fangxin*, runs along the length of the middle section of the beam, and consists of long panels, terminating at both ends in the zigzag shapes mentioned above. Occupying the most prominent position, these registers abound with dragons and phoenixes in varied and lively postures. Any spaces between these three main areas are interspersed with floral or other motifs which, combined with the gilding and mainly blue color, produce a vivid and impressive effect. The regulations prescribed that if blue was used for the upper structural timbers in one bay, then the colors should be reversed for the next bay, and so on.¹⁸



Pic. 32. An illustration shows each section of the *Hexi* 和璽 style of multi-colored oil painting decoration employed in the Qing palace like the Pleasant Sound Pavilion Theater. Picture from Sun Dazhang, *Zhongguo Gudai Jianzhu shi: Qingdai Jianzhu*, Vol. 5, p. 453.

¹⁸ Another multi-colored oil painting style is the so-called *Xuanzi* 旋子 style. It was immediately subordinate to the *he xi* style of decoration and was mainly employed in secondary buildings. Although similar in spirit, the main difference between both styles is the *zhaotou* section which in the case of the *xuanzi* style is called *huaxin* or “flower heart” or “center.” Two or three petals of each main motif are surrounded by curls which join with its neighbor to form long meanders, thus giving rise to the term *xuan*, which means “curl.” Compared with the *he xi* style, the overall impression of this *Xuanzi* decoration is one of simplicity underlined by the alternate use of green and blue bands of less complicated design. The central panels on the beam are sometimes left without the addition of fussy motifs and enriched by use of gilding, also especially evident at the center of flowers (Bian, 1983: 31-35; Sun, 2002: 452-460).

Looking at Fig 1 f., Fig. 11 and Fig. 18 a., we can see that the front beams on both the Longevity Stage and the Prosperity Stage were painted with polychrome *hexi* style. Gilt scrollwork is employed to fill the *gutou* panels in the two outermost sections, both of which are painted with a motif called “*Hezi Zuolong* 盒子座龍” or “curling gilt dragon in the roundel.” The four corners around the central dragon roundel are decorated with a pattern called “*Chajiao Qieshui Ya* 岔角切水牙” or “forked and serrate corner.” The sets of panels are joined together from parallel zigzag bands with a chrysanthemum painting and a dragon motif called “*Jianglong* 降龍” or “descending dragon” in the *zhaotou* section, which symbolizes the emperor. The *fangxin* in the central register is also decorated with a pair of gilt dragons called “*Xinglong* 行龍” or “walking dragon” (Bian, 1983: 32-33; Sun, 2002: 453-454).

Another multicolored oil painting style employed in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion is the so-called “*Suzhou* 蘇州” style. This decorative style finds its individuality in the *fangxin*, or central section, although not completely divorced from the overall structure of the *he xi* style. Falling into two board categories, the *fangxin* is either bounded by a long panel or, more uniquely, large semi-circular panels painted at the center of one, two or even three tie beams laid one on top of the other. A border folding line is obtained by shading to give a three-dimensional effect. The *zhaotou* sections often bear panels in fan, gourd or other shapes. These apart, the truly unique character of Suzhou-style decoration lies in the repertoire of subjects and motifs as well as the lyrical style in which they are executed.¹⁹

¹⁹ Sun Dazhang has explained that the majority of the Suzhou-style colored paintings date to the middle of the Qing period and later, such as those found in the Qianlong garden and other imperial gardens. During the later years of the Qing dynasty, the structural members of the east and west palaces of the inner court were also covered with this kind of colored decoration (Bian, 1983: 33-34; Sun, 2002: 455-456).



Pic. 33 a. The Suzhou 蘇州 style of multicolored oil painting on the upper beam of the inner eave in the Longevity Stage. Photo taken by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.



Pic. 33 b. The Suzhou style of multicolored oil painting on the corner girder of the inner eave in the Longevity Stage. Photo taken by Sasiporn Petcharapiruch on November 11, 2004.

The Suzhou-style of multicolored oil painting decoration is applied to corner girders and beams of the inner eaves in the Longevity Stage and the Prosperity Stage. Looking at Pics 33 a.- 33 b. we can see that in contrast to the *Hexi* style paintings on the exterior beams of the Longevity Stage and the Prosperity Stage, the main characteristic of these girders and beams is of a painterly style, reproducing favorite

themes of traditional brush and ink landscape painting. Here the curled neck ruff pattern, which is called “*Yanyun Baofu* 煙雲包袱” or “cloud wrapper” meticulously painted in different tones from dark to light, borders the central *fangxin* panel, which is painted in a cloud motif (Bian, 1983: 33; Sun, 2002: 455). Symbolically the Longevity Stage is represented as a human realm with the Heaven above. The *gutou* and *zhaotou* registers on both sides are decorated with naturalistic sprays of lotus flowers. These polychrome decorative styles all use blue and green as the predominant colors, enriching this already magnificent aspect of the theatrical stage the Pleasant Sound Pavilion.

In conclusion, Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion has its unique features that conform to traditional Chinese architecture standards. As I have analyzed, the three-tiered stage was architecturally theatricalized with several elements. It consisted of one underground and four performative platforms, namely the Longevity Stage, the Immortal Tower, the Prosperity Stage, and the Fortune Stage. These four platforms were innovatively equipped with theatrical mechanism, such as *tianjing*, *dijing*, *chaduo*, entrance doors, exit doors, movable covered boards, bridges, and handspike windlasses, all of which allow the mobility and dynamism of actors in gala performances. In spite of its uniqueness and ingenuity, the Pleasant Sound Pavilion was designed in the spirit of traditional palace architecture. Every element of its exterior structure and interior design—podium, balustrades, columns, ceilings, bracketing systems, and roof shape, tiles, and decorations—reflects traditional Chinese architectural standards. Therefore, this three-tiered stage is exceptional in the breadth and unity of its conception, as well as in the variety of design within this uniformity. Nonetheless, not only did this massive court theater embody Chinese architectural and theatrical concepts, but it also “borrowed” European ideas of

theatricality, particularly those in Renaissance and Baroque periods, which will be discussed in Chapter Three.

2.3 Architectural Symbols of Chinese Three-Tiered Stage

From the beginning of civilization, man has continually sought to reform and improve his environment according to the needs of basic physical existence. As culture was raised to higher levels, man was no longer satisfied with simple physical existence. Hence symbols, as employed in language, art and music, were used to express the deeper meanings of daily life. With the Chinese, art is a kind of symbolism. Architecture's specific symbolic language was developed to represent the character, spirit, feelings and ideas of both the builder and beholder.

Architectural symbolism creates a dialogue between man and architecture. Through this dialogue man experiences, understands and uses architecture. Symbolism is an intrinsic part of ancient Chinese culture. Through the perception of symbolic meanings in architecture, man began to understand and participate in deeper cultural activities. Traditional Chinese architecture in essence symbolizes many levels of meaning: axial symmetrical planning expressed ethics and ritual; orientation and geomancy or *fengshui* depicted deeper religious meaning; the form of an individual structure characterized the Chinese spirit. In short, the Chinese worldview has been embodied in the symbolism of both architecture and site planning.

The art of *fengshui* has been deeply rooted in Chinese culture. It also involves the understanding of the meaning of *yin* and *yang* (the theory of negative and positive forces), the Five Elements, the application of Chinese symbolism on buildings, the knowledge of the theory of magnetism and the understanding of the workings of

ecology, as well as the understanding of the technical skill required to treat the interior and exterior of a building (Huang and Yang, 1996: 12; Wang, 2001: 138). Yang Rubin and Huang Junjie have argued that in the interpretation of traditional Chinese architecture, this concept of *yin* and *yang* is expressed as dualism in architecture. Masculine qualities are *yang* and feminine qualities are *yin*; accordingly, built-up areas, sun-lit roofs, protruding structures and front elevations are *yang*, while void areas, shadowed eaves, set-back structures and rear elevations are *yin*. But when there is too much of *yang* in anything it will turn into *yin* and vice versa. For example, when a built-up area is too large it will be *yin* and when a roof eave tilts up too high it will transform into *yang*. Anything that is too *yin* or too *yang* is imbalanced and, therefore, is undesirable²⁰ (Huang and Yang, 1996: 13-14; Wang, 2001: 138-139).

In addition to the principles of *yin* and *yang*, ancient Chinese architecture also followed the theories of the Five Elements. According to Wang Zhenfu, the phrase *wu xing* appeared as early as in the *Shang Shu* 尚書 or the *Book of Shang*. The *Zhou Shu* 周書 or the *Book of Zhou*, covering the years 557-581 B.C., explained the nature of the Five Elements and listed them in order—water, fire, wood, metal/gold, and earth. The Five Elements represent the five different kinds of matter with which people constantly come in contact. However, it is the essence of the elements, rather than the elements themselves which, in combination, cause each other, as well as all other things to occur; in the wrong combination they can be mutually destructive. Combinations of the elements can cause great happiness or distress to human life. For

²⁰ They have also explained that when there is balance in an environment there is *qi* or rejuvenating energy. Thus, it is of vital importance that buildings should be correctly sited, appropriately related to surrounding buildings and balanced in construction materials and design elements. This is the reason for the symmetrical layout of buildings in classical architecture (Huang and Yang, 1996: 13-14; Wang Zhenfu, 2001: 138-139).

example, north, south, east, west and center; green, yellow, red white, and black; and the five stages of human's life as shown in Table 1 (Wang, 2001:139-140).

Table 1: The interrelationships of the Five Elements, directions, stage in human's life, color scheme and the *yin-yang* application

<u>Elements</u>	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal/gold	Water
<u>Direction</u>	East	South	Center	West	North
<u>Stage in life</u>	Birth	Growth	Synthesis	Gathering	Hiding
<u>Color</u>	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black
<u>Nature</u>	<i>Yin</i>	<i>Yang</i>	<i>Yang</i>	<i>Yang</i>	<i>Yin</i>

Source: Evelyn Lip, *Feng Shui: Environments of Power: A Study of Chinese Architecture*, p. 35.

Like any other building in the Forbidden City, the Pleasant Sound Pavilion was constructed based on the precepts of *fengshui*, the art of placement with reference to a sense of balance, the theory of *yin* and *yang*, and the Five Elements. All of the structural elements of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion that I have discussed in Chapter Two clearly reflect these theories that underlie the roots of Chinese planning and architecture. Perhaps one of the architectural elements of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion that clearly evinces these theories is its color scheme.

As Sun Dazhang and Wang Zhenfu have noted, traditional Chinese buildings were not designed with the sole consideration of building form, but also were based on the symbolism of colors. The application of paint on timber serves the purpose of protecting the timber and gives symbolic significance to the building elements. The

use of colors in Chinese building is a unique art and the significance of these colors must be understood in this cultural framework (Sun, 2002: 64; Wang, 2000: 88).

The five main colors normally applied to traditional Chinese architecture are red, yellow, green, white and black. Each color relates to one of the Five Elements and has its own significance and symbolizes value for the Chinese as shown Table 1. Red, a bright, auspicious color associated with warmth and the Fire Element, represents good fortune and happiness. Yellow occupies the center position in the Five elements, the same as the position of the earth. It signifies the royal color used by the emperors and symbolizes power and authority. It also has an association with the Earth Element which symbolizes growth. Green, related to the Wood Element, symbolizes growth and is used to represent longevity and, because of its soothing effect, also to represent harmony. White is for mourning and love. It is associated with the Gold Element, while Black, linked to the Water Element, denotes darkness. In addition, color schemes of Chinese architecture are based on traditional values of Chinese colors and the interplay of *yin* (cool) and *yang* (warm) colors (Sun, 2002: 65-66; Wang, 2000: 90-91).

These five colors have a bearing on the color scheme used in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Balustrades on all three platforms, partial sections of beams and eaves, all staircases and screen doors, as well as handspike windlasses on the Prosperity Stage and the Fortune Stage are all bright red. This red color signifies the good fortune, prosperity and vitality of the grand theater. Since red is associated with the fire element, it also reinforces the precise location of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion, on the south side of the Loge of Inspecting the Truth. Yellow is applied to glazed tiles that cover the roof of the grand theater, to the gilt decorations on beams, eaves, brackets, and ceilings, as well as gold characters inscribed on the front two pillars of

the Longevity Stage and on the three horizontal wooden boards mounted on frontal eaves on each platform. This symbolizes wealth and the honor of the emperor. It also represents that the grand theater was exclusively for imperial use.

The structure of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion differs from its counterparts in the Forbidden City in that its peripheral columns are painted green (while columns in other palatial halls are painted red). Green is also a color of glazed tiles of the top hipped roof of this grand theater, and is also applied to partial sections of polychrome paintings on beams, eaves, brackets, and ceilings in the theater. Since green is the color of sprouting leaves, it symbolizes the tenderness of spring, growth and liveliness of drama performances in the theater. Green also corresponds to the east, which signifies the direction of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion in the northeastern section of the Forbidden City. Besides these three colors, black is also applied on the two frontal columns of the Longevity Stage and on three horizontal wooden boards mounted on frontal eaves on each platform. White is painted on the cloud patterns decorated on the ceilings of the Longevity Stage and on those corner girders and beams of the inner eaves of this platform, as well as on an entrance door and an exit door.

The theory of *yin* and *yang* applied in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion can also be seen in Chinese numerology. According to Huang Junjie and Yang Rubin, the ancient Chinese philosophical approach to numerology is found in the *Yi Jing*. The word *yi* 易 represents the changeability of the state of all things and the interaction and relation of the negative and positive qualities of things in nature (1996: 137-138). Confucius used the ancient numerals (Eight Trigrams) of negative (*yin*) and positive (*yang*) signs to form the sixty-four hexagrams for making reference to the Chinese system of cosmology. By squaring the number eight, the Sixty-Four Hexagrams were formed. The number with one dot was considered an odd and *yang* number, while the number

with two dots was an even and *yin* number. Thus 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9 are yang and 2, 4, 6, and 8 are *yin* numbers. The number 9 is the supreme *yang*, and accordingly associated with the supreme ruler, the emperor (Huang and Yang, 1996: 139). This numerology was applied on all buildings in the Forbidden City, including the Pleasant Sound Pavilion as shown Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2: Architectural Elements in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion that Correspond to *Yang* Numbers

<i>Yang</i> numbers	Elements in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion
1	One <i>tianjing</i> on the Fortune Stage, one big well in the underground
3	Three hipped roofs, three main platforms (excluding the Immortal Tower), units of three bays in width and three bays in depth of the Longevity Stage,
5	Five <i>tianjing</i> on the Prosperity Stage, five <i>dijing</i> in the Longevity Stage, five floors (including the Immortal Tower and the underground), number of figurine decorations on the roof ridge of the Longevity Stage
7	Number of figurine decorations on the roof ridge of the Prosperity Stage
9	Number of figurine decorations on the roof ridge of the Fortune Stage, units of nine bays of the theater, number of steps of wooden staircases linked the Longevity Stage and the Immortal Tower

Here the numerical 9 signifies the highest order of the *yang* quality. Thus it was associated with the emperor and was applied to units of construction and to the bays of this grand theater.

Table 3: Architectural Elements in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion that Correspond to *Yin* Numbers

<i>Yin</i> numbers	Elements in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion
2	Number of entrance door and exit door on each platform, two wooden staircases linked the Prosperity Stage and the Fortune Stage
4	Four wooden staircases between the Longevity Stage and the Immortal Tower, four platforms (including the Immortal Tower)
6	Number of lion heads mounted on pillars on three sides of the theater, number of six entrance doors and exit doors in total, six lattice-work screen doors on the Longevity Stage
8	Eight lattice-work screen doors on the front stage of the Fortune Stage
10	Ten lattice-work screen doors on the front stage of the Fortune Stage
12	Twelve pillars in the Longevity Stage which signify twelve lunar months, twelve lattice-work screen doors on the Prosperity Stage

As Wang Zhenfu has noted, every element in traditional Chinese architecture needs to be balanced with reference to its nature (*yin* and *yang*) (2001: 142). Therefore, each structural element in the Pleasant Sound Pavilion is classified either as *yin* or *yang* according to the classical Chinese palatial building framework. And since this three-tiered stage was built as an imperial private or residential quarter, it was regarded *yin*. Its front façade is *yang* while the rear *yin*. The roof top is *yang* and the roof waves *yin*. The sunlit court is *yang* and the shaded corridors *yin*. The red columns are *yang* and the green ceilings *yin*. Structural elements with odd numbers are *yang* and those with even numbers *yin*. Within the grand theater compound the side facing the sun (*yang*) is finished with *yang* colored materials and the side facing the north (*yin*) is paved with *yin* colored materials. The main roof tiles of the Pleasant

Sound Pavilion are green (*yin*) and those of the Loge of Inspecting Truth on the opposite side are yellow (*yang*).

The three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion also embraces the notion of Chinese cosmology. Like any buildings of Chinese palace complex, the three-tiered stage is composed of three major parts: a platform (in this case three main platforms), the roof, and the pillars that supported it. The structure has been traditionally thought to symbolize the now-familiar triad of Heaven (roof), Earth (platform), Humanity (pillar). Its system of framing separates the elements of support and enclosure (Zito, 1997: 140-141).

The roofs are duplex, that is, they are arranged in three stages. They show some differences in their proportions as well as in the treatment of the gables. They are curving saddle roofs with high ridges and far projecting eaves. As for the twelve pillars on the Longevity Stage, they are made of single enormous tree trunks. Symbolically, they represent twelve lunar months (Wang, 2001: 144). These pillars support the roof with a cluster of cantilevered brackets that radiate, in principle, in the four cardinal directions. When viewed from a distance, this three-tiered stage seems to be all high building and a marvelously carved sloping roof, two structural immensities held apart, and thus together, by the dwarfed pillars between, as though the burden of connecting Heaven and Earth were almost too much to bear.

Thus it is evident that the symbol used, the spatial effects created and the architectural theme as well as the structural composition of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion was intentionally designed, especially since the building was built as an emperor's recreational hall. Insofar as the emperor was seen as the Son of the Heaven and possessing divine power, his place of entertainment must be of the grandest scale and finished with the most ornate of decorations. The subtle balance and

interdependence between the constituent parts of a composition are the defining characteristics of traditional Chinese architecture, clearly exemplified by the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion.



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CHAPTER III

SYNTHESIS BETWEEN CHINESE AND EUROPEAN ARCHITECTURAL AND THEATRICAL ARTS OF THE THREE-TIERED STAGE PLEASANT SOUND PAVILION

How was a three-tiered stage like the Pleasant Sound Pavilion brought to life? I would argue that the three-tiered stage was both a product of the confluence of economic prosperity and technological advance during the Qianlong reign, as well as the result of Qianlong emperor's personal desire. It was a synthesis of highly developed traditional Chinese architectural forms and innovations of European theater, aided by advances in science brought to China by Jesuit missionaries in the Qing period. However, most importantly it stemmed from the Qianlong emperor's personal passion for Chinese theater and European art.

3.1 Traditional Chinese Concept of Monumentality

Many Chinese scholars have argued that the marvel of the three-tiered stage stemmed from the prosperous economic conditions during the Qianlong period (Qiu, 2000: 185). Others have pointed out that the innovative three-tiered stage is a result of the natural architectural development of multi-tiered buildings, which stems from a purely Chinese concept of "monumentality" (Chen, 2001: 65). Wu Hung has defined this notion of "monumentality" as that which "sustains such functions of a monument; a physical monument can survive even after it has lost its commemorative and

instructive significance” (1995: 4). Chinese concept of “monumentality” thus denotes religious, ethical, or political obligations that perpetuate cultural memory and provide continuity to society. As Wu Hung has stated,

“. . . a monument, no matter what shape or material, serves to preserve memory, to structure history, to immortalize a figure, event, or institution, to consolidate a community or a public, to define a center for political gatherings or ritual communication, to relate the living to the dead, and to connect the present with the future. This transformation in meaning is reflected and expressed by the development of monuments—physical entities that embody and realize historical monumentality.”(1995: 4)

What I would like to highlight here is one aspect of “monumentality” in ancient Chinese architecture—its grandiosity.

To be sure, the grandiosity of ancient Chinese buildings can be traced back to the earliest times. Wang Guixiang has suggested reasons why ancient Chinese people had been yearning for multi-storied buildings. He argued that such buildings have been a unique architectural form of China since ancient times. Wang claims that the ancient Chinese believed that heaven above was full of mystery. In addition, they believed that the depths of the sky symbolized the limitlessness of nature that they sincerely worshipped. Thus, such tall structures were an architectural instantiation of their desire to assimilate themselves to a natural environment, and a concrete object that situated humans between heaven and earth, representing a desire to reach into the mysteries of the heavens while staying, literally, grounded. In Wang’s view architecture was the concrete parallel of early Chinese philosophy that attempted to place humans between heaven, earth, and within a constantly evolving natural environment (1985: 3).

Chinese architecture had been a highly developed, codified building system since earliest times. There had been many high-rise structures that ancient Chinese people developed, indicating Chinese concept of “monumentality.” One has only to think, for instance, of the high platforms (*tai* 台) that were constructed since the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties, the gate-tower (*que* 闕) that stood at the entrance to metropolises and such multi-storied wooden construction as “Towering pavilion” (*louge* 樓閣), “Multi-tiered house” (*chongwu* 重屋) and “Returning stream” (*fuliu* 復溜) of the Han dynasty, or pagoda of the Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties that stemmed from synthesis between ancient Chinese architecture and central Asian architectural forms (Wang, 1985: 3-6). As Wu Hung has pointed out that the desire expressed in the construction of these tall buildings was that of the Chinese ruler’s ambition for “political dominance over the whole nation, even foreign countries—seizing lands from other states, ruling the entire population, and becoming master of the world.” (1995: 102).

Multi-tiered architecture reached a new apex in the Qing, especially during the Qianlong reign. Sun Dazhang has argued that the Qing dynasty was the most vigorous period in Chinese architecture. There were, moreover, distinct innovations in style and expression. There was a greater monumentality, a greater use of brick and solid masonry, a greater simplicity and verticality in overall shape, and a greater symmetry and formality. Compared to the multi-tiered architecture of previous dynasties, those built in the Qing, particularly in the Qianlong reign were more developed; this included the three-tiered stage the Pleasant Sound Pavilion (2002: 120).

Due to the number of construction and renovation projects initiated during his reign, Qianlong’s rule has often been regarded as the golden age of Chinese

architecture: 28 temples, 17 imperial gardens and lodgings, and 25 theaters were built during the sixty years of the Qianlong reign (Fang, 1984: 47-54). Among them there are at least seven famous multi-tiered buildings. For instance, the Pavilion of the Rain of Flowers (Yuhua Ge 雨花閣)²¹ (Pic. 34), the Pavilion of Great Conveyance of the Universal Tranquility Monastery in Chengde (Chengde Puning Si Dacheng Ge 承德普寧寺大乘閣)²² (Pic. 35), the Pavilion of Buddhist Fragrance in the Summer Palace Yihe Garden (Yihe Yuan Foxiang Ge 頤和園佛香閣)²³ (Pic. 36), the Pavilion of Myriad Fortunes in the Eternal Harmony Palace (Yonghe Gong Wangshou Ge 雍和宮萬福閣)²⁴ (Pic. 37), the Universal Salvation Hall in Peaceful Eternity Monastery (Anyuan Miao Pudu Dian 安遠廟普渡殿)²⁵ (Pic. 38), the Eminently Towering Grace Hall in the Sumeru Fortune Longevity Monastery (Xumi Fushou zhi Miao Miaogao Zhuangyan Dian 須彌福壽之廟妙高莊嚴殿)²⁶ (Pic. 39), and most important of all, the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion in the Forbidden City.

²¹ It is a building built specially within the Forbidden City for the practice of Lamaism. It has three storeys, the ground floor being surrounded by a covered verandah, the column-heads of which are decorated with animal masks with additional coiled dragons on those of the upper two storeys. The upper pavilion roof has four curving ridges, each bearing a gilt bronze dragon, and is surmounted by an elongated golden roof pommel at the apex (Sun, 2002: 429).

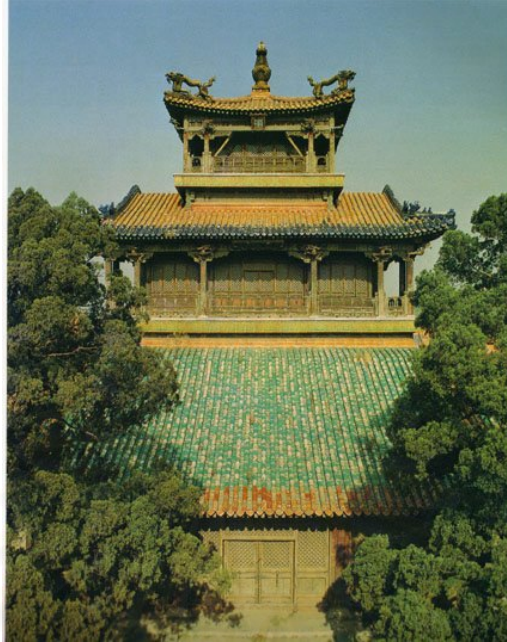
²² This building was built in the twentieth year of the Qianlong reign (1755). It is seven bays in width and five bays in depth, three storeys in height, totally 39.16 meters (Sun, 2002: 429).

²³ This building was built in the twenty-fifth year of the Qianlong reign (1760). It has three stories. It is 36.48 meters in height. It was destroyed by Britain troops in 1846. Thus it was renovated during the seventeenth year of the Guangxu reign (1891) (Sun, 2002: 429).

²⁴ This building was built in the ninth year of the Qianlong reign (1744). It is seven bays in width. It has two stories, totally 25 meters in height (Sun, 2002: 429).

²⁵ This building was built in the twenty-ninth year of the Qianlong reign (1764). It is seven bays in width and seven bays in height. It has three stories, totally 26.50 meters in height (Sun, 2002: 429-430).

²⁶ This building was built in the forty-fifth year of the Qianlong reign (1780). It has five stories (Sun, 2002: 430).



Pic. 34. The Pavilion of the Rain of Flowers in the Forbidden City. Photo from Yu Zhouhua, *Zijin Cheng Gongdian*, p. 145.

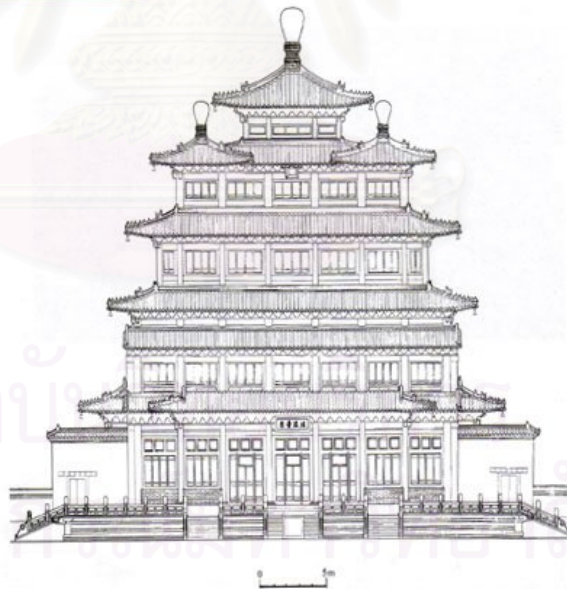


图 7-72 河北承德普宁寺大乘阁南立面图

Pic. 35. The Pavilion of Great Conveyance of the Universal Tranquility Monastery in Chengde. Picture from Sun Dazhang, *Zhongguo Gudai Jianzhu Shi*, p. 429.

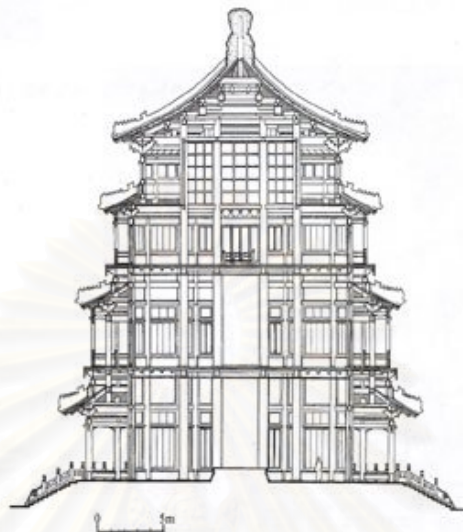


图 8-50 北京颐和园佛香阁纵剖面图
(北京颐和园管理处提供资料)

Fig. 36. The Pavilion of Buddhist Fragrance of the Summer Palace Yihe Garden. Picture from Sun Dazhang, *Zhongguo Gudai Jianzhu Shi*, p. 429.

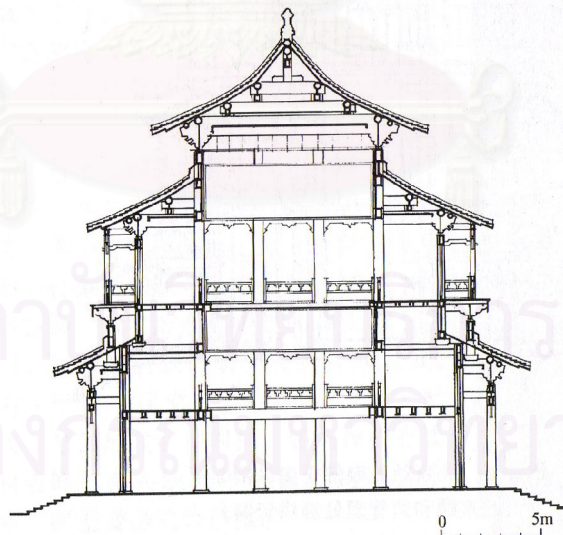


Fig. 37. The Pavilion of Myriad Fortunes in the Eternal Harmony Palace. Picture from Sun Dazhang, *Zhongguo Gudai Jianzhu Shi*, p. 429.

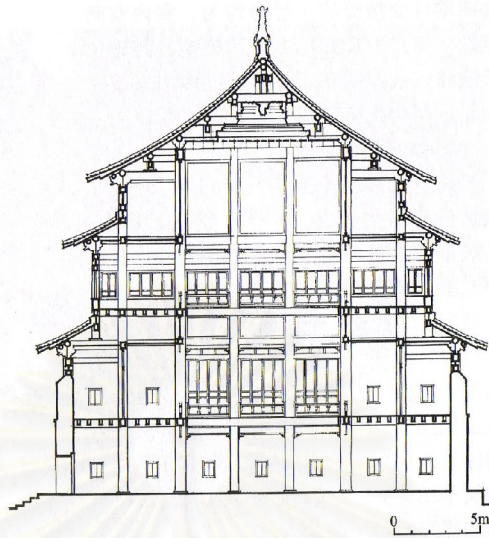


图 8-53 河北承德安远庙普渡殿纵剖面图

Fig. 38. The Universal Salvation Hall in the Peaceful Eternity Monastery. Picture from Sun Dazhang, *Zhongguo Gudai Jianzhu Shi*, p. 430.

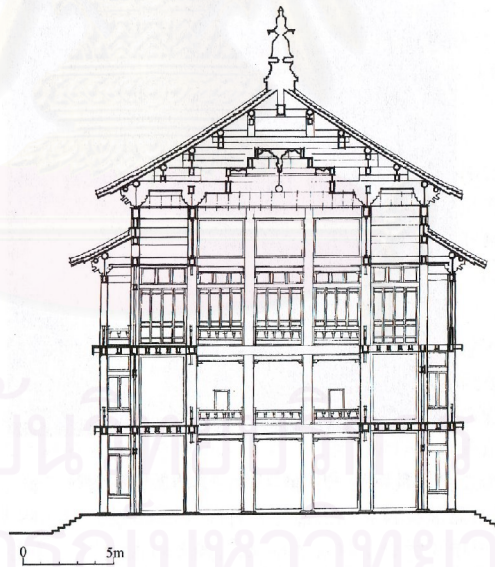


图 8-55 河北承德须弥福寿庙妙高庄严殿剖面图

Fig. 39. The Eminently Towering Grace Hall in the Sumeru Fortune Longevity Monastery. Picture from Sun Dazhang, *Zhongguo Gudai Jianzhu Shi*, p. 430.

This monumentality had an effect on the visual presentation of the grand theater as well. Zhao Yang has argued that the Pleasant Sound Pavilion with its three-tiered stage was one of the most massive and towering buildings in the Forbidden City (2001: 32). This three-tiered stage reflects the social as well as aesthetic emphasis of Chinese architecture, in that its monumentality fully expresses the power and prestige of the government and the monarch, the Qianlong emperor. Consequently, as a venue for court entertainment the Pleasant Sound Pavilion became a potent symbol of political power, and as such contributed to a new conception and symbolic presentation of authority, through the form of “monumental architecture.” To be sure, the desire for powerful architectural symbols differentiated such buildings as this theater from ordinary Chinese architecture; they had to be “unique” not only in material but also in scales of size and proportion.

3.2 European Influence on Chinese Three-Tiered Stage

3.2.1. The Advent of Jesuits and the Impact of Their Missions in China

It is generally agreed that the Jesuits began to travel to China in order to promote the mutually respectful relationship between China and Europe in the sixteenth century (Latourette, 1884; Oh and Ronan, 1988; Reichwein, 1987). To be sure, one of the most well-known missions was done by Matteo Ricci (1552-1610)²⁷, who arrived in Macao in 1582 when the 200-year-old Ming dynasty had been

²⁷ Matteo Ricci, known in Chinese as Li Madou, was born on 6 October 1552 in Macerata, Italy. He entered China in 1583. From 1552 to 1583, twenty-five Jesuits had gone to China but were permitted to stay only a short period of time. In 1577, he arrived in Macao as the Jesuit Visitor and initiated a new policy of evangelization, the policy of cultural accommodation. By 1597, when Ricci became head of the China mission, he had established a reputation among Chinese intellectuals as a scholar of considerable depth (Oh and Ronan, 1988: 3-18).

temporarily rejuvenated from the decline. By the early Qing dynasty, the Jesuits enjoyed a rapid growth in which the stronghold was in the lower part of the Yangzi Valley and in Beijing. One account places the number of Christians in 1627 at 13,000, who resided in Jiangxi, Zhejiang, Jiangnan, Shandong, Shanxi, Shenxi and Zhili. Another places the number in 1617 at 13,000 and states that this had increased to 150,000 in 1650 and to 254,980 in 1664. In addition, another account records that there were missions in all the provinces except Yunnan and Guizhou and that by 1663 there were 109,900 Christians by the end of Ming dynasty (Latourette, 1884: 107-108). By 1695 there were in China 75 priests, of whom 38 were Jesuits (32 European and 6 Chinese), 9 Spanish Dominicans, 5 Spanish Augustinians, 7 representatives of the Société Des Missions Etrangères of France, 12 Spanish Franciscans, and 4 Italian Franciscans. Another account states that in 1701 there were in China 59 Jesuits, 29 Franciscans, 8 Dominicans, 15 secular priests, and 6 Augustinians, a total of 117 (Latourette, 1884: 128-129).

However, the prosperity which had attended the work of the missionaries in China during the last years of the Ming and the first years of the Qing dynasty was to be interrupted. In the twenty years after Ricci's death, the Jesuit mission started to lose its esteemed position among Chinese literati. This was due to the fact that the mission became more overtly religious in nature. Chinese scholars and merchants who supported Jesuit practices began suspicious and found Christian ideas irreconcilable with Chinese ways of living and thinking, i.e. Confucian philosophy. Consequently, the Qing court issued several persecution edicts, such as the Nanjing persecutions of 1616-1620 in which many European Jesuits were forced to leave Peking. There were also persecutions under the Qianlong emperor in 1773-1784, ordering Chinese Christians to renounce their faith and specifically forbidding bannermen, both

Chinese and Manchu, to adopt the foreign religion (Latourette, 1884: 150-162).

Therefore, in the early Qing period the Christian mission activities were much reduced. They were also prohibited by Rome from pursuing an indigenized Christianity. As a result, the missions were marginalized and the congregation fell dramatically in number. These Jesuits were retained at court merely as imperial servants. Ironically, it was precisely in this period that the European artistic activity of the China mission reached its height (Latourette, 1884: 95-101). It is evident that such Qing emperors as Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong greatly expanded their patronage of Jesuit art. But this was on its own terms, which never had anything to do with religion.

Numerous Jesuit artists and European technicians spent nearly all of their time working for the Qing emperors as trustworthy imperial servants. Kangxi was the first emperor who recruited Jesuits as craft ateliers under official supervision in his *Zaoban Suo* 造班所 or Construction Bureau. He also welcomed Jesuit scientific advisors into his astronomical bureau. Besides, Kangxi, Yongzheng and Qianlong invited any Jesuits with European artistic talents to produce novelties ranging from fountains and palace pavilions to enameled metalwork, ceramic ornament, and clocks. (Latourette, 1884: 103-106). These European specialists included the Jesuits Father Luigi Buglio (1606-1682), Brother Charles de Belleville (1656-after 1700), Father Joachim Bouvet (1660-1732), Father d' Entrecolles (d. 1741), Brother Cristoforo Fiori (in China 1694-1705), Brother Giovanni Gherardini (in Beijing 1698-1707), Father Denis Attiret (1702-1768), Brother Gilles Thibault (1703-1766), Father Ignatius Sichelbart (1708-1780), Father Michel Benoist (1715-1774), Father Pierre-Martial Cibot (1727-1781), Father De Ventavon (1733-1787), Father Giuseppe Panzi (1734-1811), Father Metteo Ripa (1682-1745), the Augustinian Giovanni Damascèno Sallusti (d. 1781), and the

most famous Jesuit artist Brother Giovanni Castiglione (1688-1766), whose artistic talent will be discussed in details in the next section (Beurdeley, 1985: 194-197).

In conclusion, an impact which European Jesuits brought upon Chinese culture since the sixteenth century can be divided into two aspects. First is what Harrie Vanderstappen has called “the basic dichotomy between the spiritual message the missionaries were intent on bringing and the framework in which it was presented.” The framework, he writes, included the “gifts, the technical skill, and, certainly in the eyes of the Chinese, the strange, exotic, and in many ways, admirable mental and practical ability of the missionaries.” As Vanderstappen has pointed out that the missionaries used their art, “to illustrate Christian doctrine,” and whatever artistic worth these illustrations had, was superseded in Chinese eyes “by the strange and new technical qualities they saw.” This seems borne out by the emphasis in Chinese reactions to European artistic methods like the use of perspective and modeling in light and dark combined with lifelikeness, and by the fascination they developed for cartography, topography, and maps, and finally the measurements of distance and time in astronomy, clock work, time pieces, and configurations of the calendar (1988: 103-126).

On the other hand, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the Qing court had little interest in employing missionaries other than to arouse further its own fascination with technical matters, to embellish court life, and to enhance the physical surroundings of the palace and its inhabitants. However, there were a number of incidents which show that the emperors had a personal respect and affection for the missionaries. Certain titles given to them attest to that. For instance, Giuseppe Castiglione was bestowed Chinese name Lang Shining 朗世寧, Father Michel

Benoist Jiang Youren 蔣友仁, Father Jean-Denis Attiret Wang Zhicheng 王致誠, Father Ignatius Dai Jinxian 戴進賢, and Father Ferdinand Verbiest Nan Huairan 南懷仁 (Beurdeley, 1985: 198). But when it came to decisions of consequence in public policy, any influence the missionaries had was easily ignored or exercised quietly outside the bureaucracy. In all, it would appear that the impact of European artistic traditions on China was mainly limited to technical matters, such as topography, refinements in portraiture, and works of decorative art. The novelty, however, faded away when imperial and other court-connected patronage waned and ceased to exist at the end of the Qianlong reign.

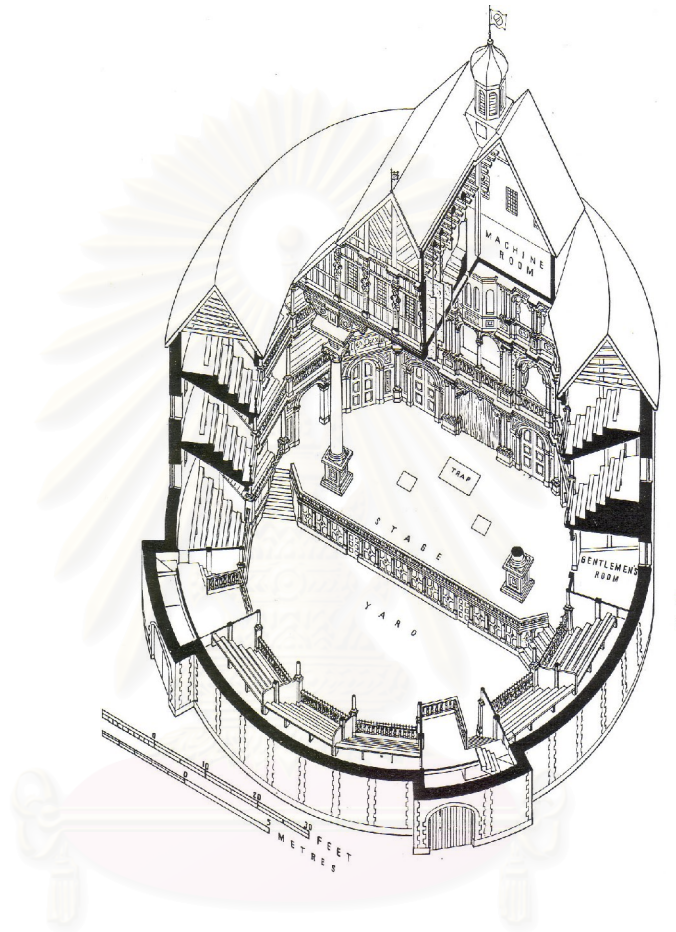
3.2.2. Synthesis between Chinese and European Theatrical Art and Architecture

Nonetheless, the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion would have not come to its present shape if the Qianlong emperor had not combined the architecture of European theater with the monumentality of Chinese architecture. Among the major features of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion are the five handspike windlasses or “lifting machines” installed backstage on the Fortune Stage. I would argue that an adaptation of the machine room was derived from the shape of European theaters during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Like their Chinese counterparts, Renaissance and Baroque European theaters were known their grandiose size. The Renaissance and Baroque theaters achieved a radically different shape, as the stage became framed by a permanent proscenium arch, visually separating the stage from

the audience. The Renaissance and Baroque styles of theatrical decoration that were to become common across most of Europe had begun in Italy and the Italian style and technique would become the standard that nearly all other countries would emulate as secular theatrical performance spread in Europe. Theatrical performances in European countries like Italy and England during the Renaissance and Baroque were primarily a continuation of medieval traditions. They included a rich spectacle of tournaments, street pageants, and miracle plays and the tradition remained vital until nearly the sixteenth century. Other spectacular productions, celebrating royal weddings, coronations, royal entries, and other significant moments of the monarch's reign, also were common, just as in the Qianlong period of China (Mulryne and Shewring, 1991: 8-9).

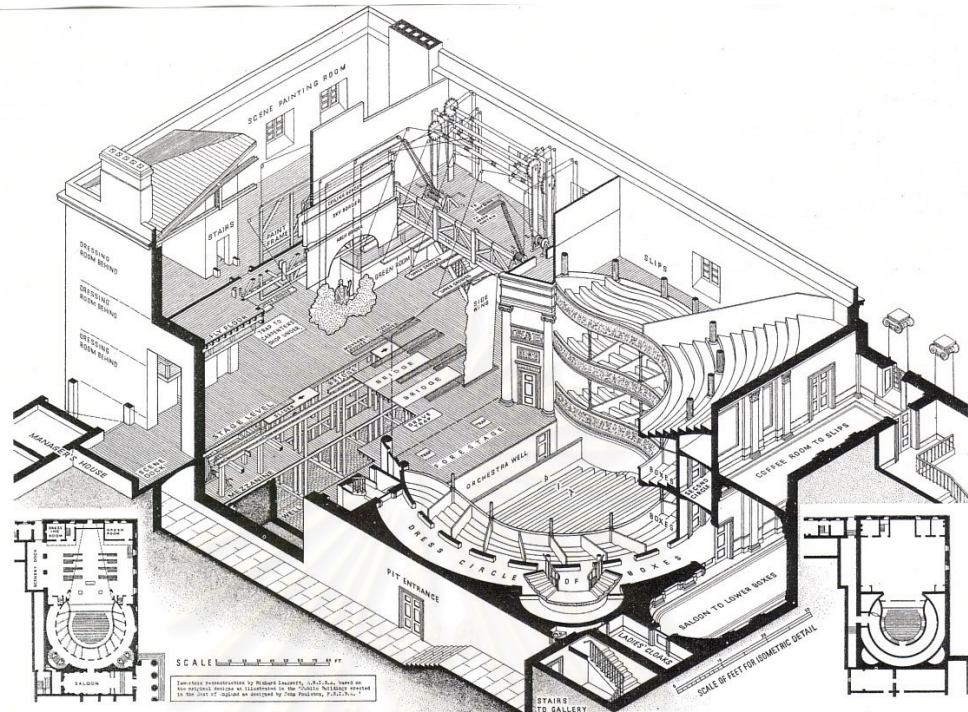
Due to highly developed stage props like perspective scenery, large theaters were necessary to hold a plethora of background scenery. Such grand theaters were complex. They were composed of several functional rooms such as the scene room, the dressing room, a painter's room, multi-tiered galleries, several stairways, bridges, saloons, and machine rooms in upper and lower floors. Picture 40 and Picture 41 illustrate the reconstructions of interior architectures of the Second Globe Theater built in 1614 and the Theater Royale built in 1711 respectively. Each figure shows a machine room providing space for a grid from which might hang a variety of painted cloths or scenes, mainly in the form of clouds which could accompany the descending throne (Mulryne and Shewring, 1991: 88). As Mulryne and Shewring have pointed out, it has been assumed that theatrical props and sceneries would descend through slots contrived in the heavens painted on the underside of the machine room floor, the openings being filled by hinged flaps when not in use. The use in this manner of the area of the machine room directly above the stage would still leave considerable space

behind for the storage of scenes and properties, which could easily be lowered to stage level when their use was required (1991: 88).



Pic. 40. The reconstruction of the Second Globe Theater. Picture from J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring eds., *Theater of the English and Italian Renaissance*, p. 88.

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย



Pic. 41. The reconstruction of the Theater Royale. Picture from J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring eds., *Theater of the English and Italian Renaissance*, p. 89.

Given the absolute lack of such mechanical devices in the traditional Chinese theater, it seems obvious that Qianlong adapted this from contemporary European theater. Like the machine room in the Renaissance and Baroque western theaters, the machine room built on the Fortune Stage controlled the design of the stage in plan and section. For not only did it function as a place for storing stage machinery, but it also necessitated a triple number of the theater. It thus formed an integral part of the structure of the grand theater. Such a machine room accommodated and facilitated the complexity of court performances. Without it, many of the spectacular scenes of the long court plays would have been impossible.

Some scholars have argued that the performing areas of the Prosperity Stage and the Fortune Stage are very limited and that they create obstacles for both performers and audiences. They also argue that the lavishness of the Pleasant Sound

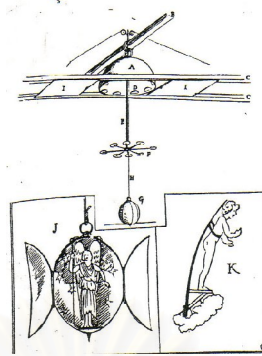
Pavilion represents merely the profligacy of the Qianlong emperor (Qiu, 2000: 128). I would argue that this critique only targets superficial functions of the Prosperity Stage and the Fortune Stage without focusing on interior construction and significant functions of both platforms. When the three-tiered stage the Mutual Pleasure Garden (Tongle yuan 同樂園) in the Summer Palace Yuanming Garden was under renovation in the eighteenth year of the Daoguang 道光 reign (1839), it was originally planned to be rebuilt with only two platforms. However, in the end it was rebuilt as an original three-tiered stage (Yu, 2003: 452). From this context, we can understand that if the three-tiered stage was rebuilt as a “two-tiered” one, not only would it affect exterior and interior constructions of the theater, but also the movement of actors and props and hence the entire drama performance would be disturbed. For the questions of where to put the “lifting machine” and where and how actors and props could move in and out, up and down would be major issues. Therefore, I would argue that the three-tiered stage was created innovatively not as a random pattern; rather it was constructed with an eye toward significant employment of the “lifting machine” to facilitate and accommodate the movement of actors and props for grand performances.

The machine room is a powerful answer to the question why the Pleasant Sound Pavilion was designed with three main stories. It is evident that each floor of the three-tiered stage has its particular function. Judging from the interior construction, the Fortune Stage, on the backstage of which the “lifting machine” was built, was regarded as a “preparation platform.” The backstage of the Prosperity Stage functioned as a “pathway platform” where actors, props, and lifting machine moved in and out, up and down to upper and lower floors. Therefore, the usage of the “lifting machine” bespeaks the importance of such complicated structure of the three-tiered

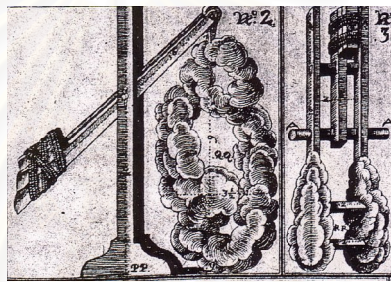
stage. Without the Fortune Stage, the “lifting machine” would not function; without the Prosperity Stage, actors and props would not move between levels to perform.

There are clear similarities between the machine rooms of European theater and the “lifting machine” in Chinese three-tiered stage. Edward Carrick has explained that stage machines of the European theater during the Renaissance and Baroque periods were used to move the hands and eyes of the great figures of gods (Carrick, 1931: 9). These machines were brought to great perfection by the requirements of the Renaissance and Baroque drama performances. As a result, the best architects of the time were called upon to design the costumes and invent the machines, or “*ingeni*” as they were called, by which angels and cherubs could rise and descend to and from a material heaven portrayed on stage. The first such machine, known as “Paradiso,” was designed by a well-known Italian architect Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446) around 1400 (Pic. 42). Other Italian architects like Il Cecco invented engines on a grander scale that powered many angels and gods, all moving together, which required a tremendous number of ropes and pulleys and cloud cotton wool to hide them (Pic. 43). Aristotle da San Gallo invented prism scenery (Pic. 44)²⁸; Baldassare Peruzzi invented perspective scenes; and Inigo Jones, an English architect, painter, stage and costume designer brought Italian technique of perspective scenery to the English theater (Carrick, 1931: 9-16).

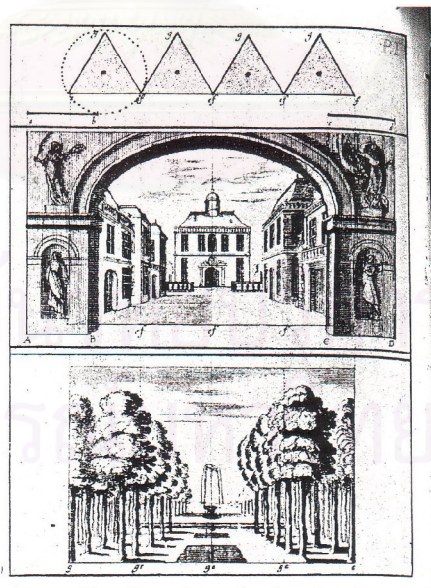
²⁸ These prisms as wings, together with perspective backcloths were used a great deal during the early part of the sixteenth century and appeared again at different times in the seventeenth century in the smaller towns of Italy, Germany, and France (Carrick, 1931: 11).



Pic. 42. A machine called “Paradiso” invented by Filippo Brunelleschi. Picture from Edward Carrick, “Theater Machines in Italy, 1400-1800” in *Architecture Review*, August, 1931, p. 10.



Pic. 43. A stage machine consisting of pulleys, ropes, which were hidden by cloud cotton wool, invented by Il Cecco. Picture from Edward Carrick, “Theater Machines in Italy, 1400-1800” in *Architecture Review*, August, 1931, p. 10.



Pic. 44. A prism stage scenery invented by Aristotle da San Gallo. Picture from Edward Carrick, “Theater Machines in Italy, 1400-1800” in *Architecture Review*, August, 1931, p. 11.

The application of mechanical technology accounts to a large extent for the innovation of the Chinese three-tiered stage. Five handspike windlasses were installed backstage on the Fortune Stage of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Two large windlasses were located on the left and right sides of the *tianjing*, while the three small ones were located behind the front stage. These machines primarily consist of a series of winches, railings, wheels, and ropes. These windlasses and pulleys were quite traditional and, according to Joseph Needham, were a usual feature of hydraulic technology in China from very early times. Picture 45 shows a famous relief from the Wu Liang tombs (147 A.D.) depicting the attempted recovery of the Zhou cauldrons from the river, using two crane pulleys (1965: 95).



Pic. 45. A relief from the Wu Liang tombs of the Han dynasty depicting the simple hydraulic technique. Picture from Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. 4, p. 96.

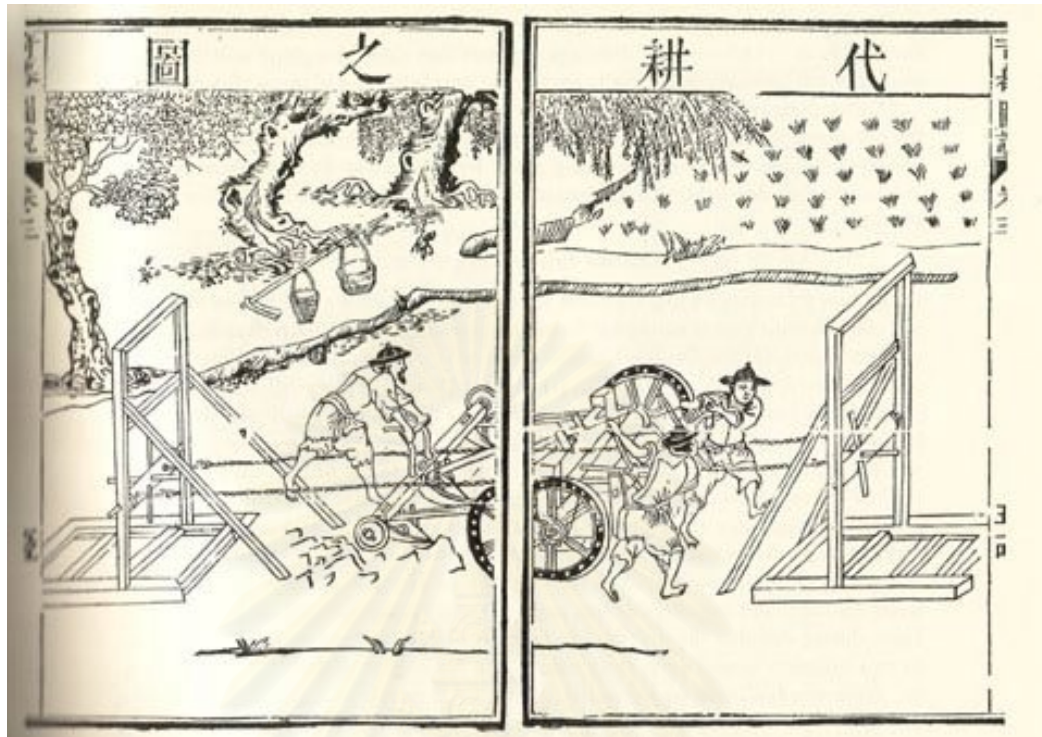
Needham has also noted that pulleys were also employed in court entertainments. For example, in the *Rulin Gongyi* 儒林公議 [Public-Spirited Sayings of Confucian Scholars], there is a record that a group of two hundred and twenty female dancers was hauled up a sloping way from a lake in boats in 915 A.D (cited in Needham, 1965: 96). Also in the *Tang Yu Lin* 唐語林 [Miscellanea of the Tang Dynasty] written in 1107 by Wang Dang 王讜 (1101-1110) of the Song dynasty, it records:

On the fifth day of the eighth month of the twenty-fourth year of the Kaiyuan reign-period, the (Tang) emperor commanded a rope-walking performance at the imperial tower. First a long rope was stretched out so that both ends were at ground level, winding gear was buried there to keep it taut, and there were columns near by from which it was suspended as tight as a lute string. Performing girls then mounted upon it barefoot and paraded to and fro. Looking up, they appeared like flying immortals. Some of them met midway, but just leant sideways a little and passed without difficulty, others wore shoes yet bowed and extended their bodies with ease; some had painted stilts six-feet long, others climbed upon heads and shoulders until there were three or four layers of them, after which they turned somersaults down on to the rope. All moved about, never falling, in accordance with the strict time of drums. It was indeed a wonderful sight. (Wang, 1975: 124; Needham, 1965: 97-98)

Here we can see that a simple mechanical technique like pulleys had been used in China from the earliest times, including a rudimentary use in staging entertainments.

However, the application of pulleys, handspike windlass, rope and wheel used to convert rotary motion by tripping and for applying the tractive power of men,

according to Needham, might be derived from western technology, particularly from the Jesuits who came to China during the fifteenth century. There were three significant engineering books produced in the early years of the seventeenth century: the *Taixi Shuifa* 台西水法 [Hydraulic Machinery of the West] written in 1612 by Sabatino de Ursis and Xu Guangji 徐光吉, the *Qiji Tushuo* 奇機圖說 [Diagrams and Explanations of Wonderful Machines] written in 1627 by Johann Schreck and Wang Zheng 王正, and the *Shuji Tushuo* 數機圖說 [Diagrams and Explanations of a Number of Machines] written by Wang Zheng (1965: 221). What is interesting is in the section on *Tai geng* 台耕 or “mechanical ploughing” in the *Qiji Tushuo* is an illustration of a mechanical plough showing handspike windlasses in use for drawing the plough back and forth across the field (Pic. 46). According to Needham, such a mechanical technique was imitated from European windlass invented by Weimer (1430) and Besson (1578) (1965: 218). This early handspike windlass provided an easy model to emulate when creating machinery for three-tiered stages like the Pleasant Sound Pavilion.



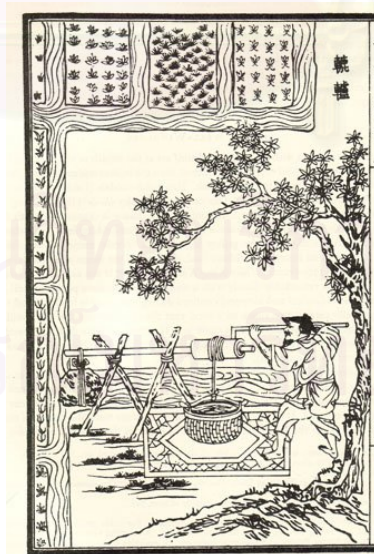
Pic. 46. A mechanical ploughing showing handspike windlasses in use for drawing the plough back and forth across the field, probably influenced by western technology. Picture from Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. 4., p. 218.

Another interesting technology that was adapted in Chinese three-tiered stage is water-raising machinery. As I mentioned earlier, one large water well was installed in the underground of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. Needham pointed out that such fundamental type of water-raising machine had existed in Chinese since early ages (1965: 335). Rotary motion came in with the pulley or drum set at the mouth of the well. To use it, at first the rope was simply hauled over it and gathered, then the bucket was counterweighted and finally the drum was turned by a crank. Figure 45 illustrating the Han tomb models shows the first of these stages. A draw-well jar model of the Han dynasty with its pulley is also shown in Picture 47. Here we can see the Han pottery jar representing a well-head with a pulley and a bucket. Picture 48 from the *Tiangong Kaiwu* 天工開物 [Exploitation of the Works of Nature] written in

1637 by Song Yingxing 宋應星 shows an interesting drawing of a bucket and a crank transmitting rotary motion to draw water from the well (1965: 335-338).



Pic. 47. The Han pottery jar representing a well-head with a pulley and a bucket. Picture from Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. 4., p. 336.

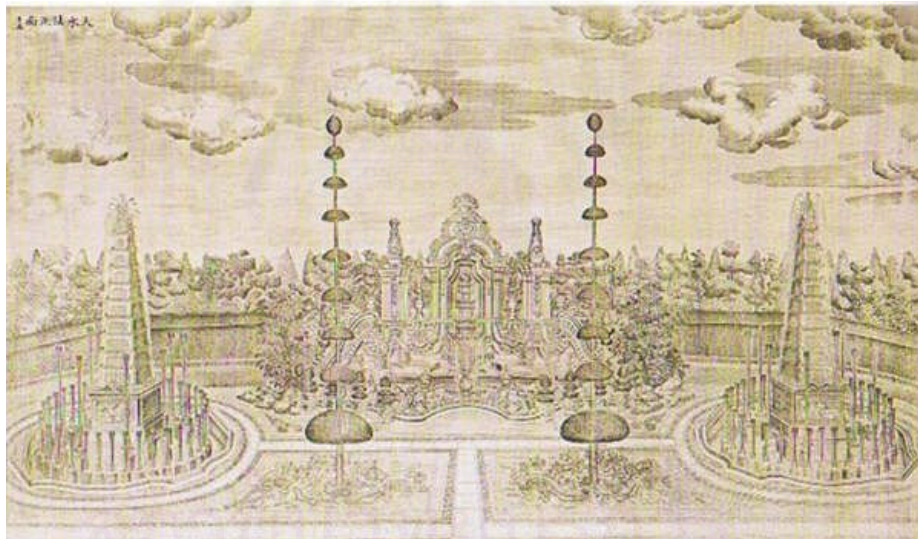


Pic. 48. A drawing of a bucket and a crank transmitting rotary motion to draw water from the well. Picture from Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Vol. 4., p. 337.

Although the actual water-raising technique is originally Chinese, I believe that a concept of sprinkling water onto the stage must have been adopted from the water fountain of western technology. To be sure, the Qianlong emperor has been known for his fondness of such technology as the water fountain. As Jin Yufeng has pointed out, the Qianlong emperor's interest in constructing European-style palatial garden in the Yuanming Garden was first inspired by his fascination with exotic European fountains that appeared in pictures presumably presented by one of the Jesuits. Fountains are an ancient western pleasure that became exceedingly popular in seventeenth-century France and Italy. According to Jin Yufeng, it is possible that the Italian and French Jesuits at the Qianlong court tried to impress the emperor with great western fountains. The Qianlong emperor asked Giuseppe Castiglione, an Italian Jesuit artist who arrived in China in 1715 at the age of the twenty-seven, to draw pictures of Italian and French palaces and fountains to be built in the Yuanming Garden (Chinese First Historical Archives, 1991; Jin, 1984: 21-24; T'Serstevens, 1989: 1-16; Wong, 1999;). Castiglione submitted designs to the emperor a "fascinating kind of Baroque fountain, reminiscent of the style of Borromini" (Beurdeley, 1972: 45). Thanks to the assistance of Father Michel Benoist who had been in China since 1744 and his knowledge of mathematics and hydraulics, Father Benoist and Castiglione were able to present a model fountain to the Qing emperor. The Qianlong emperor quickly authorized the Jesuits to begin a water fountain project in the Yuanming Garden (Beurdeley, 1972: 66-67).

There were numerous water fountains built during the Qianlong reign in the Yuanming Garden. A large fountain in the main façade of the Calm Sea Hall (Haiyan Tang 海宴堂) spouted in the central pool, surrounded by twelve bronze animal heads, namely rat, bull, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog, and

boar. These twelve animal heads with human bodies, six on each side of the pool, symbolized the twelve-year cycle of birth and represented every two-hour period in which the Chinese divide their day and night. Hence, each animal figure spouted a stream of water to the pool one after the other every two hours. Another awe-inspiring water fountain was called the Great Fountain (*Dashuifa* 大水法) (Pic. 49), located further east of the Calm Sea Hall. It was composed of pyramids, formal pools, fountain statues, and rock and shell ornamentation. The fountain in the main pool was in the shape of eleven animal figures: one deer and ten dogs. When streams of water spouted from all eleven animals at the same time, they created the impression that the deer was being chased by the dogs (Jin, 1984: 23; T'Serstevens, 1989: 5).



Pic. 49. A copperplate engraving on paper of “the Great Fountain” (*Dashuifa*). A photo from Evelyn S. Rawski and Jessica Rawson, *China: The Three Emperors 1662-1795*, p. 196.

The idea of sprinkling water as artificial rain became one of the special theatrical effects of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion. The well which was located under the stage functioned as the source of sprinkled water during the drama performance. To create sprinkled water a pipe, which was fastened to a rope, was lifted up above

the stage by revolving pulleys from whence it could spurt on to the Longevity Stage. The well also had a significant function to help produce sound effects during court drama performances. Yu Jian has noted that water spurting equipment could be installed in the *dijing*, where it would be used to imitate and create the sound of water as a special effect (2003: 448). For instance, in the fourth act of the first volume of the *Shengping Baofa* 升平寶筏 or *The Precious Raft of the Peaceful Times*,²⁹ entitled “Stone monkeys take possession of the waterfall” (*Shi hou'er qiangzhan shuilian* 石猴兒強佔水簾), it is the *dijing* that mainly creates the stage scenery by functioning as a “waterfall cave” (*shuilian dong* 水簾洞). The stage direction notes that to be able to create authentic scenery, “at least four buckets of water (from the well) have to be prepared for this act.” (*Cichu yubei si shuitong caigou* 此出預備四水桶才夠。) (*SPBF*, 1964: 10 a.-14 a.). There are some similarities between application and function of stage machinery in the European theater during the Renaissance and Baroque periods and Chinese three-tiered stage. That is to say, such stage machineries allow the mobility of actors and props, as well as create spectacular scenes. Here is an example of a performance in European theater during the fifteenth century.

Then Mary appeared, under a portico supported by eight pillars and began to repeat some verses from the Prophets, and while she spoke, the sky opened, revealing a figure of God the Father, surrounded by a choir of angels. No support could be seen either for His feet or for those of the angels, and six other seraphs hovered in the air, suspended by chains. In the center of the

²⁹ This play is an adaptation play of the story *The Journey to the West* (*Xi You Ji* 西游記) which is a fantasy novel based on the real-life pilgrimage of a famous Chinese monk, Xuan Zang 玄奘 (596-664) to India to bring back the sacred Buddhist scriptures during the Tang dynasty. It is one of major court plays rewritten and adapted to be performed on the three-tiered stage in the Qing dynasty. See more discussion in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

group was the Archangel Gabriel, to whom God the Father addressed His word, and after receiving his orders, Gabriel descended with admirable artifice and stood, half-way in the air, at the same height as the organ. Then, all of a sudden, an infinite number of lights broke out at the foot of the angel choir, and hid them in a blaze of glory...At that moment the Angel Gabriel alighted on the ground, and the iron chain which he held was not seen, so that he seemed to float down on a cloud... (Campbell, 1873: 60)

This is a description of the appearance of the angels in the scene. Campbell has further explained: “the angels held by iron girdles and kept upright by weights of lead properly adjusted for balance, of cotton-wool clouds, of the ten circles of the ten heavens revolving wonderfully, of the effects produced by bronze lamps revolved mystifying”(1873: 61).

Carrick has also explained the function of a machine called “Paradiso” invented by Brunelleschi:

The whole machine was supported by a strong beam of pine well bound with iron, which was across the timbers of the roof. In this beam was fixed a ring which held the basin in suspense and balance, which, looked into from the ground, resembled a veritable heaven. Round the inside edge were certain wooden brackets just large enough for one to stand on. On each of the brackets was placed a child of about twelve, so girt about that they could not fall even if they wanted to. These children, twelve in all, being arranged on pedestals and clad like angels with gilt wings and caps of gold lace, took one another’s hands when the time came, and extending their arms they appeared to be dancing, especially as the basin was always turning and moving...From the center of the basin issued an immense iron bar, at the end of which were eight branches like

the spokes of a cartwheel... These eight angels, by means of a crane, descended from the top of the basin to beneath the plane of the beams bearing the roof, a distance of eight braccia, so that they could be seen and did not interfere with the view of the angels surrounding the inside of the basin...It thus appeared a veritable Paradise. (1931: 9)

Similar scenes also took place in a grand performance of Chinese three-tiered stage. For instance, in the first act of the first volume of the *Dingzhi Chunqiu* 鼎峙春秋 or *The Annals of the Three Kingdoms*³⁰ entitled “From the five-colored clouds a letter descends in order to manifest an auspicious omen,” (*Wuse yun jiang shucheng rui* 五色雲降書呈瑞) clearly demonstrates an orderly arrangement of actors in the three-tiered stage.

A group of actors costumed as spirit officials enter from the Fortune Stage, the Prosperity Stage, and the Longevity Stage. They act out dancing. And then they exit.

A group of actors costumed as Eighteen Indian Arhats and Cloud Envoys enter the Longevity Stage. Dragons descend from the cloud sack.³¹ Tigers enter from the dijing. All characters act out dancing together.

On the Longevity Stage, in front of the Immortal Tower hangs a large screen, on which portraits of Western Ocean Bodhisattva of Foreign Mien, Gaté and Heavenly Kings are depicted.

³⁰ It is an adaptation play of the story of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi* 三國演義). It is one of major court plays rewritten and adapted to be performed on the three-tiered stage in the Qing dynasty. See more discussion in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

³¹ A cloud sack (*yundou* 雲兜) is a kind of theatrical props specially designed to assist the mobility of actors in the three-tiered stage. See more discussion in Chapter Four.

A group of actors costumed as Eight Heavenly Dragons enter from the Fortune Stage.

A group of actors costumed as bodhisattvas, Sakyamuni, enter from the Prosperity Stage.

Several actors costumed as Bhiksunis, Four Great Bodhisattavas, and young acolytes enter from the Immortal Tower.

A group of actors costumed as Heavenly Kings enter from the Longevity Stage.

衆扮靈官從福台、祿台、壽台上，跳舞科，下。

衆扮十八天竺羅漢、雲使上壽台，龍從雲兜下，虎從地井上，合舞科。

壽台場上仙樓前挂大西洋番像佛菩薩、揭帝、天王等畫像帳幔一分。

衆扮八部天龍從福台上。

衆扮菩薩、阿難迦叶、佛從祿台上。

衆扮比丘尼、四大菩薩、童子從仙樓上。

衆扮天王從壽台上。(DZQC, 1964: 3 a.- 4 b.)

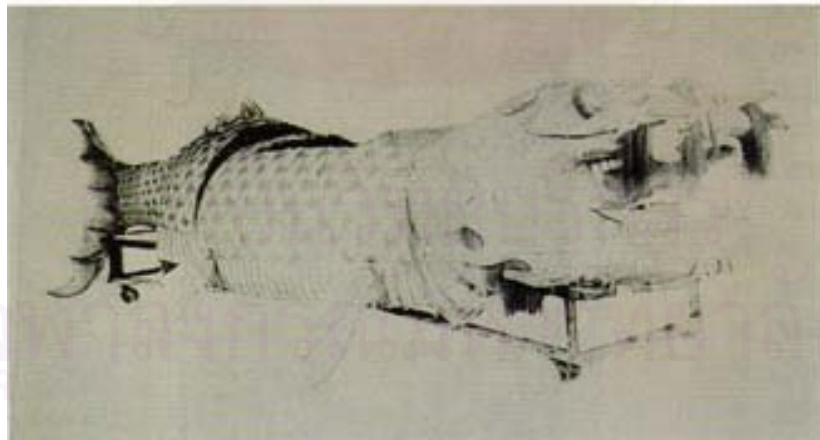
Thus we can see that such celestial scenes filled with deities, angels, and gods in both European theaters and Chinese three-tiered stage alike create a material representation of heaven for their audiences. With its complicated machinery above and below the stages, the Pleasant Sound Pavilion was able to enrich the visuality of drama with innumerable scenic exhibitions. Like its Western counterpart, with its mezzanine floor, traps, pits, hidden bridges, and other complicated mechanisms, the three-tiered stage was not merely a place for acting but an enormous box of tricks.

Not only was European idea of water fountain imitated to create special effects on the Chinese three-tiered stage, but other European theatrical props were also adapted to enhance performance strategy in this grand theater. One of most interesting

Chinese props that might be imitated from western theatrical props is a prop called “sea turtle” (*ao yu* 鰲魚) (Pic. 50). In the grand play entitled the *Luohan Duhai* 羅漢渡海 [Arhats Crossing the Ocean], a sizable theatrical prop in a shape of a sea turtle plays a significant role. This prop could contain more than ten people and had a mechanical pipe installed inside that sucked water the water well and spurted it out of the sea turtle’s mouth. Cao Xinquan 曹心泉 recorded in his *Qian Qing Neiting Yanxi Huiyi Lu* 前清内廷演戲回憶錄 [Memoir of Court Performance in the Early Qing Period]:³²

(3) “*Arhats Crossing the Ocean.*” This play employs one theatrical prop shaped like a huge sea turtle whose inside can contain several ten people. By using a mechanical pipe to sucks up water from the well it can spurt out water from the sea turtle’s mouth.

三，《羅漢渡海》，有大切末制成之鰲魚，內可藏數十人，以機筒從井里吸水，由鰲魚口中噴出。(cited in Yu, 2003: 451)



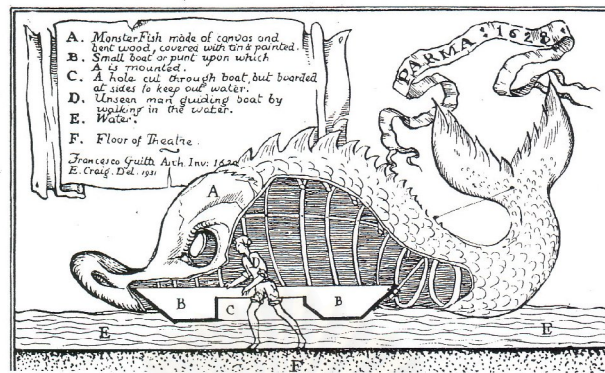
Pic. 50. A prop called “sea turtle” employed in Chinese three-tiered stage. Photo from Zhao Yang, *Qingdai Gongting Yanxi*, p. 16.

³² Cao Xinquan was a dramatist and musician during the Qing period. He once was a drama teacher in the Qing court. He was the father of the famous crown actor of the Peking Opera named Cao Ergeng 曹二庚 (Hummel, 1964: 99-100).

It is highly probable that this theatrical prop was designed in imitation of a western theatrical prop called the “sea monster” (Pic. 51). This sea monster prop was invented by an Italian architect named Giutti in the fifteenth century (Carrick, 1931: 14). In this figure we can see that the sea monster consists of monster fish made of canvas and wood, covered with tin and painted; a small boat upon which the sea monster was mounted; a hole cut through the boat to sprinkle water; and a man who controlled the movement of the sea monster. Edward Carrick has explained that to use this sea-monster prop,

The water was pumped up into great iron tanks below the stage the day before the performance. And at a signal let out into the auditorium to the height of about two feet, the lower part of the theater having been previously covered with sheets of lead. When the monsters made their appearance, covered in glittering scales, they seemed to be floating on the water. To show how they were worked, beneath the theater a great walled and buttressed reservoir had been built, and at another signal some Venetian sailors, who were in charge, knocked away a few poles which stopped up some sluice holes, and the water ran into it. The sea on the stage was composed of a number of “waves” that stretched right across the stage and went far back, diminishing in perspective. These waves were made of wood and were exactly the same as the spiral columns so much used in the later Renaissance churches which, being laid on their sides and slowly turned, gave a most beautiful effect. (Carrick, 1931: 14).

One can certainly conjecture that the sea turtle employed in Chinese three-tiered stage was probably an imitation of the sea monster prop of European theater.



Pic. 51. A prop called “sea monster” invented by an Italian architect named Giutti in the fifteenth century. Picture from Edward Carrick’s “Theater Machines in Italy, 1400-1800” in *Architecture Review*, August, 1931, p. 14.

A final adaptation from European theater used to enhance performance on Chinese three-tiered stage was realistically painted scenery. Conventionally a lack of realism has been a characteristic of Chinese theater and it has had a profound effect on the artistic aims of Chinese drama. The fact that Chinese actors often deliberately try to destroy the realistic illusion which some dialogue creates shows that realism is not merely alien to the aims of Chinese theater but is indeed opposed to them. In the more mimetic western theater during the Renaissance and Baroque periods, scenery and stage property contributed towards dramatic illusion; but in Chinese theater such mimetic scenery has serious disadvantages. Scenery limits the practicable number of scenes in a drama and breaks the continuous flow of the action because of time required to change it. Realistic scenery and props would ruin Chinese style of acting. In general, elaborate property limits scope of action and, in the extreme case of a stage full of furniture, the actors can hardly move. Chinese stage is at the other extreme, for it normally has only two or three pieces of property and sometimes none at all. In traditional Chinese theater, audiences do not demand realistic scenery and properties because the stylized nature of the acting makes them incongruous with the

other elements of Chinese drama (Hsu, 1985: 365-653). However, this tradition was broken in the complex three-tiered stages of the Qing dynasty.

Yu Jian has argued that Chinese three-tiered stage required both “soft stage scenery” (*ruanjing* 軟景) and “hard stage scenery” (*yingjing* 硬景), on which the “realistic” paintings were portrayed. This was an influence from European art. Zhang Cixi 張次溪 has recorded in his *Yandu Mingling Zhuan* 燕都名伶傳 [Biographies of Famous Actors of the Beijing Capital] that during the ninth year of the Guangxu reign (1883) one of the court prop technicians named Zhang Qi 張七 used to “build many props by making reference to western methods. Every single mountain, every river, every bush or tree must be an exact likeness.” (*zhi qiemo duocan xifa, sui yishan yishui, yica yimu, biqiu bizhen* 制切末多參西法，雖一山一水，一草一木，必求逼真。) (cited in Yu, 2003: 452).

Such painted scenery is clearly inspired by western models. Sometimes screen curtains, decorated with cloud patterns, called the “Auspicious Cloud Curtain” (*Xiangyun Zhang* 祥雲帳) or “Misty Cloud Curtain” (*Yanyun Zhang* 煙雲帳), were used to conceal changes in props or scenery, or the positioning of a large number of players. For example, in the twenty-fourth act of the eighth volume of the *Quanshan Jinke* 勸善金科 or *A Golden Ledger for the Promotion of Kindness*,³³ entitled “The sword trees of hell high and lofty, and many images appear” (*Jianshu junceng sen you xiang* 劍樹峻嶒森有象), has the following stage direction, “Arrange a level platform and a dragon-skinned chair on stage.” (*Changshang she pingtai, hupi yi* 場上設平

³³ It is an adaptation play deal with the story of Mulian 目連, a disciple of the Buddha, who descends to hell to save his mother. It is one of major court plays rewritten and adapted to be performed on the three-tiered stage in the Qing dynasty. See more discussion in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

台、虎皮椅). When the Yama King (*Yan Jun* 閻君) descends the throne to sentence the ghosts, the stage directions read, “Backstage arrange a ‘Misty Cloud Curtain,’ and secretly arrange the Knife Path Through the Mountains.”³⁴ (*Houchang she Yanyun Zhangman, yinshe daoshan ke* 後場設煙雲帳幔，隱設刀山科。). After the Yama King finishes his investigation, he moves the platform and the tiger-skinned chair to the right side of the stage. After the Yama King shouts “Immediately manifest the Sword Mountain” (*Su xian daoshan zhe* 速現刀山者), “flames emerge on the stage, followed by removing the ‘Misty Cloud Curtain,’ now the Sword Mountain emerges.” (*Changshang chu huocai, suiche Yanyun Zhangman, xianchu daoshan ke* 場上出火彩，隨撤煙雲帳幔，現出刀山科。). The following scene takes place amid this Buddhist hell: The demon troops carrying prongs and chasing several ghosts “go up to mountain path of knives.” (*Shang Daoshan* 上刀山). This is accompanied by the stage direction, “At the rear of the mountain paths of knives, bring forth various kinds of knife path props.” (*Daoshan hou chu zhongzhong daoshan qiemo ke* 刀山後出種種刀山切末科。.) (*QSJK*, 1964: 67 a.- 78 a.)

In the twenty-first act of the ninth volume of the *Quanshan Jinke*, entitled “Marveling at the Purport of Chan in the Purple Bamboo Forest”³⁵ (*Zizhu lin miao chanzong feng* 紫竹林妙闡宗風), the stage direction reads:

³⁴ The term *daoshan jianshu* 刀山劍樹 or “mountains of knives and trees of swords” refers to one of severe punishments in Buddhist hell, where the paths through the mountains are filled with knives and the leaves of the trees are full of swords. Later this term denotes the meaning of difficult penetration.

³⁵ In Chinese Buddhism, the Purple Bamboo Forest is believed to be one of the retreats of Guanyin Bodhisattva. It is written in Buddhist scriptures that Guanyin often strolls in the Purple Bamboo Forest. The forest was named after a kind of bamboo whose stem is always in an auspicious color purple.

Set up an “Auspicious Cloud Curtain” on stage; secretly set up the Mountain Forest of Purple Bamboo. Shancai and Dragon Girl each act out waiting in service on the mountain cliffs.

場上設祥雲帳幔，隱設紫竹山林。善才、龍女，各在山岩侍立科。

Whereas Guanyin Bodhisattva, “acts out falling down to the mountain cave, followed by removing the ‘Auspicious Cloud Curtain.’” (*Zai shandong dieshi ke* 在山洞跌失科。). The following scene happens when Guanyin Bodhisattva enters the stage. After she exits,

Set up an “Auspicious Cloud Curtain” on stage; secretly set up the Mountain Forest of Purple Bamboo. Guanyin Bodhisattava Shancai and Dragon Girl each secretly exit.

場上設祥雲帳幔，隱設紫竹山林。觀音菩薩、善才、龍女，暗下。(QSJK, 1964: 38 a.- 42 b.)

According to Yu Jian, an employment of “realistic” (*xiezhen* 寫真) props in Chinese three-tiered stage was influenced by European theatrical technique (2003: 452). For example, The twenty-first act of the sixth volume of the *Dingzhi Chunqiu*, entitled “Zhuge Liang’s scheme expands in the city of Jingzhou” (*Jingzhou cheng Zhuge mou chang* 荊州城諸葛謀張), tells the story of Zhou Yu 周瑜 dispatching his troops to cross the river to Jingzhou. The stage direction reads:

A group of actors costumed as ‘Water Clouds’ enter through the central trap.

They act out shaking. A group enters, as if about to embark on a boat.

衆扮水雲中地井上，擺科；衆將乘船科，上。(DZCQ, 1964: 39 a.- 41 b.)

Some scenes in this play do not employ “Water Clouds.” Rather they use “curtain with water patterns” (*Shuiwen Man* 水紋幔) to hang in front of the lower part of the

stage to block the balustrade areas. Only then does a “line of boats” (*Chuan Hang* 船行) appear on the stage, presumably above the water line of the curtain (Yu, 2003: 452).

Moreover, there were transformative mechanical props mentioned to be employed in the three-tiered stage. For example, in the fifth act of the fifth volume of the *Shengping Baofa*, entitled “A cherished daughter encountered demons, and was alarmed for five nights” (*Ai'nü zaomo jing wuye* 愛女遭魔驚五夜) when the Guanyin Bodhisattva obtains Red Boy (*Hong Haizi* 紅孩子 or *Hong Hai'er* 紅孩兒), the “Dipper sword” (*Tiangang Dao* 天罡刀) transforms into a lotus seat. But as soon as Red Baby sits on the lotus seat, it changes back to the “Dipper sword” (SPBF, 1964: 15 a.)

In the Qianlong reign, it even went far beyond to the point of employing live animals as stage props. For instances, there are documents recording the usage of real horses and real camels in the *Shengping Baofa*, live tigers and live elephants in the *Mulian Chuanqi* (Yu, 2003: 451).

Other “realistic” props were uncountable, mostly made from paper. There were also props made from iron and wood (Pic. 52 and Pic. 53). Some of them were sizable and were built by the Engineering Department and the Carpentry Department (Yu, 2003: 452). Some of the stage props were built in an imitation of several kinds of torturing devices used in the nefarious scenes in the grand plays like *Quanshan Jinke*, *Zhongyi Xuantu*, *Zhaodai Xiaoshao*, and *Dingzhi Chunqiu*. Such props were sword mountains and thorn trees (*Daozhan Jianshu* 刀山劍樹), copper snakes and iron dogs

(*Tongshe Tiequan* 銅蛇鐵犬), and sawed grinder and cauldron (*Jumo Dinghu* 鋸磨鼎鑊).³⁶



Pic. 52. Picture of a sword prop called “Spirit-official pestle” (*Lingguan Chu* 靈官杵). Photo from Zhao Yang, *Qingdai Gongting Yanxi*, p. 27.



Pic. 53. Picture of theatrical props—spear (*Qiang* 槍), sword (*Dao* 刀), striking sword (*Pu Dao* 樸刀), flogs (*Bian* 鞭), and woof-teeth cudgels (*Langya Bang* 狼牙棒) (from left to right). Photo from Zhao Yang, *Qingdai Gongting Yanxi*, p. 24.

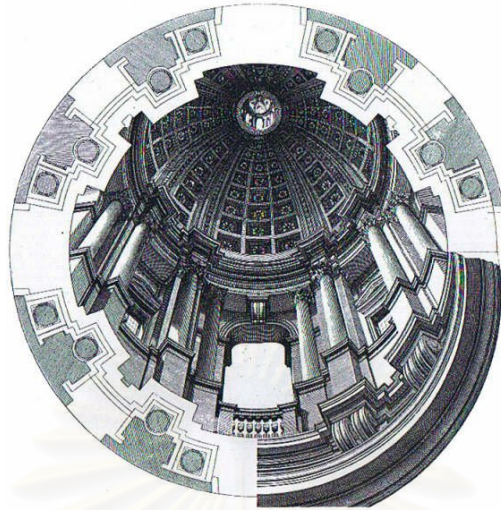
³⁶ The stage directions in these four plays clearly state the usage of such torturing devices. Usually they were employed to penalize wicked characters at the end of the plays. See more discussion in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

To be sure, a book entitled the *Visual Learning* (*Shi Xue* 視學), a collaborative work between Castiglione and the Chinese mathematician Nian Xiyao 年希堯 (?- 1738),³⁷ affirmed western influence on Chinese theatrical art during the Qianlong reign. It was an adaptation of Andrea Pozzo's *Perspectiva Pictorum et Architectorum* (1693) in 1729 (Beurdeley, 1972: 37).³⁸ The *Visual Learning* was complete with diagrams on perspective architecture, for the benefit of imperial architects. This literary work was acculturative, including diagrams of European-style columns, Chinese animals, European stage scenery, and Chinese opera stage (Nian, 1735: 27-99).

It is evident that several elements of European art and architecture were adapted and incorporated into Chinese artistic tradition. For instance, Pozzo described the Ninety-First Figure, entitled “The Cupola of the Ninetieth Figure, with its Lights and Shades” (Pic. 54) that “The Cupola in this Plate will in all likelihood be of longer Duration, than that which I painted on a very large Table, for the flat Ceiling of the Church of S. Ignatius of the Roman College, anno 1685. For if that suffer by any Accident, with the Help of this its Place may be supply'd by a better...”

³⁷ His *zi* was *Yungong* 允恭. He was a native of Guangning 廣寧. He was born in a family of the Yellow Banner. During the Yongzheng reign, he was appointed to be Governor of Guangdong, and then a director of the imperial kilns at Jingdezhen. Nian was considered one of the most gifted artist at the early Qing court (Hummel, 1943: 230).

³⁸ This adaptation appeared in 1729 and was reissued in 1735 (Beurdeley, 1972: 37).



Pic. 54. The Ninety-First Figure, entitled “The Cupola of the Ninetieth Figure, with its Lights and Shades.” Picture from Andrea Pozzo, *Perspectiva Pictorum et Architectorum* [Perspective in Architecture and Painting], John James trans., p. 196.

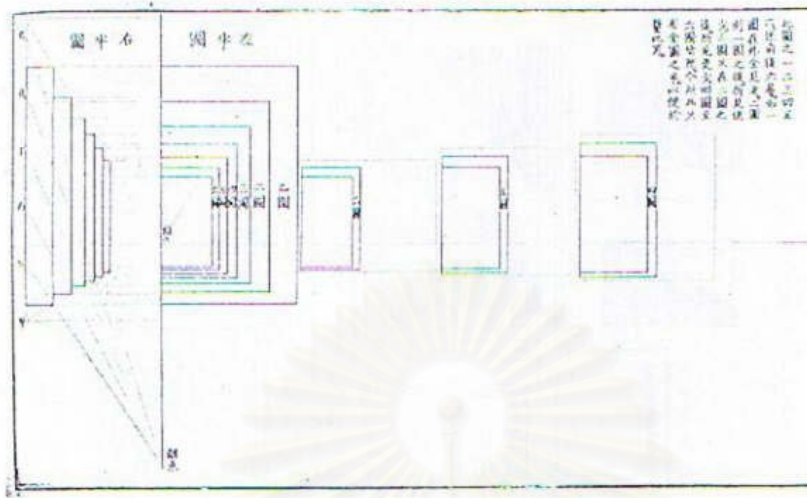
Apparently, this picture was also included in the *Visual Learning* (Pic. 55).

Here Nian Xiyao explained the meaning of the drawing.

This drawing indeed is depicted to complete two previous styles. If depicting a ceiling by applying this method, when one looks up and sees it, square and round styles (of columns) become a perfect harmony.

此幅乃畫成前二式之圖也。若按是法繪蓬頂，仰而視之，方圓合宜。

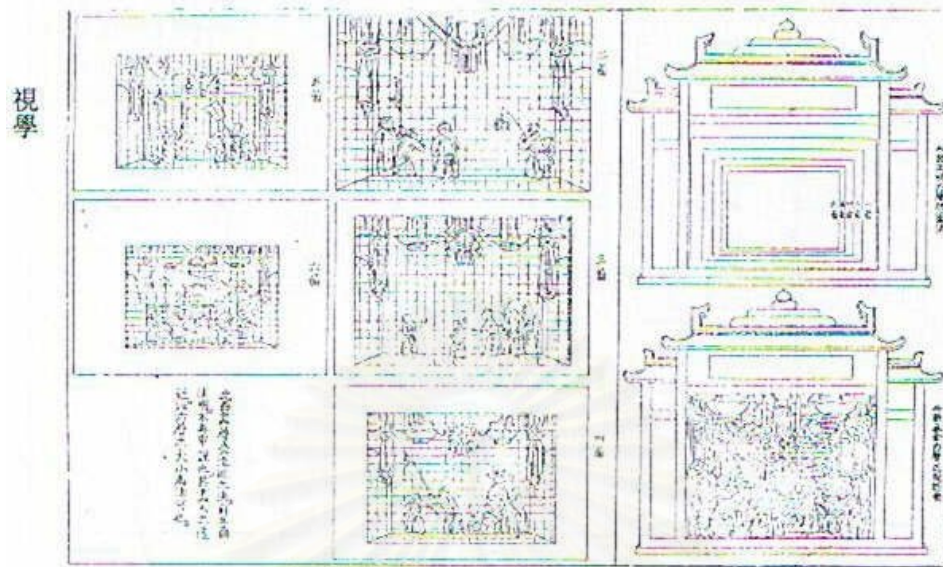
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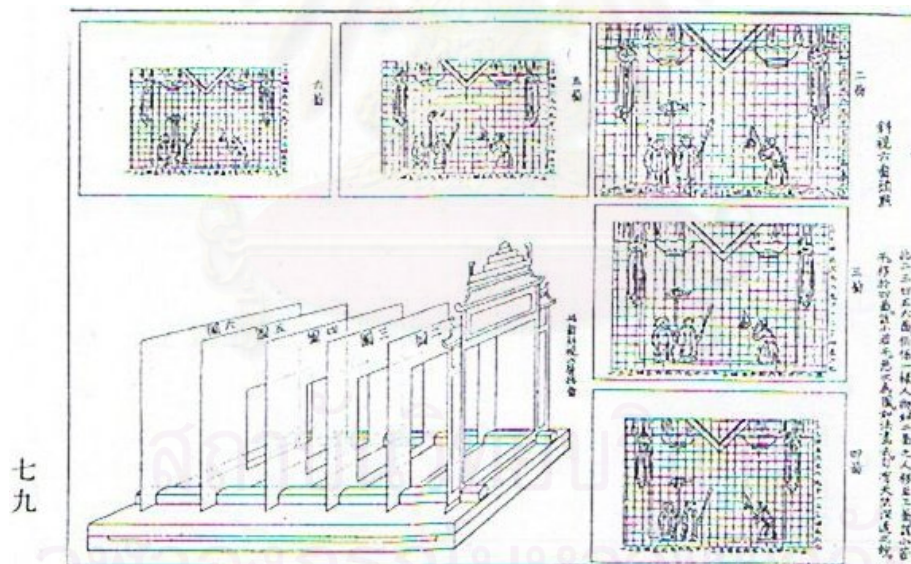
Pic. 56 a. Picture of Perspective. Picture from Nian Xiyao, *Shi Xue* [Visual Learning] in *Xuxiu Siku Quanshu* [Supplementary of Complete Collection of the Four Treasures], p. 78.



Pic. 56 b. Picture of Perspective. Picture from Nian Xiyao, *Shi Xue* [Visual Learning] in *Xuxiu Siku Quanshu* [Supplementary of Complete Collection of the Four Treasures], p. 78.



Pic. 57. Picture of Theatrical Perspective. Picture from Nian Xiyao, *Shi Xue* [Visual Learning] in *Xuxiu Siku Quanshu* [Supplementary of Complete Collection of the Four Treasures], p. 79.



Pic. 58. Picture of Theatrical Perspective. Picture from Nian Xiyao, *Shi Xue* [Visual Learning] in *Xuxiu Siku Quanshu* [Supplementary of Complete Collection of the Four Treasures], p. 79.

Nian Xiyao explained the meanings of these four illustrations as followed. In Pictures 56 a. and b.:

Pictures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 illustrate six layers connecting from front to back. For instance, Picture 1 is in the far front; one can see it in full. Picture 2 is behind Picture 1; what one can see becomes less. Picture 3 is even behind Picture 2; what one can see becomes a lot less. The application from Picture 4 to Picture 6 is like this. Now what is drawn in this figure is merely in half. This is done in order to make a measurement and comparison.

此圖之一二三四五六係前後六層。如一圖在外全見者，二圖則一圖之後，所見便少。三圖又在二圖之後，所見更少。四圖至六圖皆然。今所畫只有全圖之半，以便於量比耳。

In Picture 57:

This picture illustrates a method of depicting layers and perspective. Five previous pictures clearly show this point; therefore no need to clarify. To draw perspective of a human figure, one should employ a method of different sizes of these six layers.

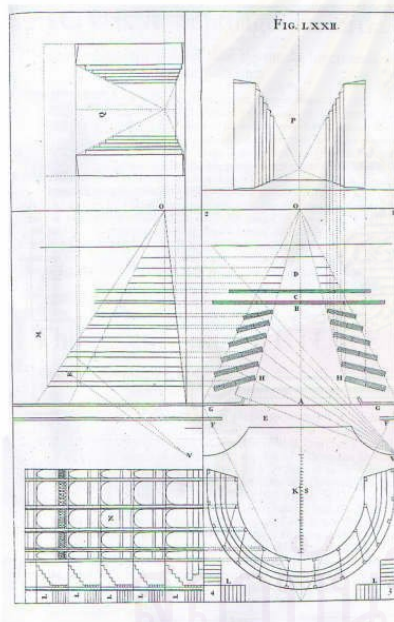
此圖畫層疊遠近之法。前五圖注明，不再申謹也。其畫人之遠近，以六層之大小為法可也。

And in Picture 58:

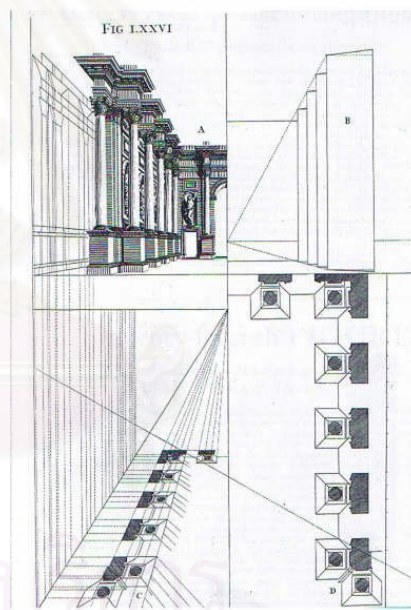
Pictures 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 also illustrate how to connect human figures together. For instance, when a human figure in Picture 2 moves to Picture 3, it should be quite smaller; when it moves to Picture 4, it should be quite smaller. All together become a picture. If one depicts be applying this method, then the painting will embody a marvel of natural perspective.

此二三四五六圖，俱係一樣人物。如二圖之人移至三圖，該小若干；移於四圖，該小若干。悉次爲圖。如法畫去，自有天然深遠之妙。

Apparently, all four illustrations share the same notion. That is to say, they focus on the function of the “perspective scene,” which creates the reality of the scene, both in the pictorial art and on the theatrical stage. It is evident that Nian has copied these drawings from Pozzo’s *Perspectiva Pictorum et Architectorum*. For instance, the seventy-second figure, entitled “Of Scenes for the Stage” (Pic. 59) and the seventy-sixth figure, entitled “The Manner of Delineating the Designs of Scenes” (Pic. 60).



Pic. 59. Picture from Andrea Pozzo,
Perspectiva Pictorum et Architectorum
[Perspective in Architecture and Painting],
John James trans., p. 159



Pic. 60. Picture from Andrea Pozzo, John
Perspectiva Pictorum et Architectorum
[Perspective in Architecture and Painting],
James trans., p. 167.

Like the aforementioned illustrations included in the *Visual Learning*, the two figures shown in *Perspectiva Pictorum et Architectorum* are also accompanied with descriptions explaining the meanings.

In the seventy-second figure, entitled “Of Scenes for the Stage,” the description reads:

...In this Figure I have given you an Abridgement of those things, which shall hereafter be more enlarg'd on. The Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, denote the Area of a Hall an hundred and twenty Roman Palms in Length, and Fixty in Breath; as is manifest from the Scale of thirty Palms mark'd S. Half this Space is taken up by the Stage, the other half by the Spectators. O is the Point in which the visual Lines concenter. D is the Place of those things that are to appear most remote...VV are the Lines by which is espy'd what Vacancy there is either between the Scenes and their Ceilings, between the Scenes themselves, or between their respective Ceilings; tho in some Scenes the Place of these last is supply'd by painting therein the Air with Clouds.

In a similar fashion the description of the seventy-sixth figure, entitled “The Manner of Delineating the Designs of Scenes” states:

In this Plate you have another Design of Scenes erected on the Floor; the naked Scenes are B; the painted ones A; with the additional Projectures of Cornices and other Ornaments. The Draught of the Scenes A is produc'd from the Plan C, after the usual Manner; in which you may observe the Ground-line to be lower than its true place, for the greater Distinction of the Parallels. The Geometrical Plan is D.

In comparison, the similarities between the illustrations and the messages included in the *Visual Learning* and those in the *Perspectiva Pictorum et Architectorum* clearly affirmed that Chinese artists during the Qing dynasty realized the potential of European art and architecture and thus assimilated them into the indigenous tradition. From these illustrations, we can see that the usage of European “perspective scene” adopted by Chinese to show the depth of the subject already existed in the early Qing period. This, of course, was employed in stage design in Chinese theater, especially the three-tiered stage, during the Qing dynasty.

In addition to aforementioned props, “realistic” props like boats, mountains, rocks, trees, forests, bridges, pavilions, cities, and towers were also employed in grand performances in the three-tiered stage (Yu, 2003: 452). Thus through these examples we can see that complicated theatrical scenery and props, which were designed in European fashion, were considered as a necessity in Chinese three-tiered stage, rather than an embellishment. Their designs were probably representational, but they were recognizable substitutes for the real thing and were used in situations in which no scenery would have been used in traditional theater. Such traditional scenes would have been represented through kinetic movement of the actors or described through dialogues and stage directions. I would argue that the interest in realistic scenery and properties in Chinese three-tiered stage was not in the illusion of mimesis, but in the skill by which the representation approximated a real scene. What the audience appreciated was not the limitation imposed by reality but how imagination could provoke a sense of likeness.

3.3 The Qianlong Emperor's Passion for Chinese Drama and European

Architecture and Art

In my opinion, however, the most significant factor that brought the Chinese three-tiered stage to its height was the Qianlong emperor's passion for and patronage of Chinese drama. It was recorded that in his youth the Qianlong emperor wrote a one-act, one-character play (*Dujiao Xi* 獨角戲) called the *A Beggar Picks Up Gold* (*Huazi Shi Jin* 花子拾金) and sang for his mother on each of her birthdays.³⁹ He also used to perform on the small theatrical stage named the Elegance Remains Always (*Fengya Cun* 風雅存)⁴⁰ in the Imbided Fragrance Studio (*Shufang Zhai* 漱芳齋). Furthermore, it was recorded that he used to sing a few dramatic songs in the Retiring from Hard Work Studio (*Juanqin Zhai* 倦勤齋) in the Palace of Living Out My Years in Peace (Niu, 1977: 24). He even created his own dramatic tune called the "Tune created by the emperor" (*Yuzhi Qiang* 禦製腔) by remixing the *kun* 崑 and *iyang* 弋陽 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 a new court opera troupe of Nanfu 南府 or South Bureau. 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

³⁹ This play was composed in the seventh year of the Qianlong reign (1742). The story deals with how one beggar became rich after picking up gold by accident (Qiu, 2000: 194).

⁴⁰ 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 (Wang, 1997: 156).

子, in one of the twenty-four examples of children's filial love for their parents—the cardinal virtue in China.⁴¹ Now the Qianlong emperor imitated Laizi by creeping up on all fours to the front of the stage. In front of his mother's seat, he rose up and began to play a toy drum, struck by two balls attached to either side of the drum. He made comic faces, danced, and leapt about. The Empress Dowager was delighted and sent the most lovely lady of her court on to the stage with a present of sweets crying, "A reward for the aged Laizi." The Emperor kowtowed and thanked her for the great honor (Qiu, 2000: 195).

Furthermore, Qianlong's personal interest in European architecture and art formed an integral part in the construction of massive three-tiered stage. As I have discussed earlier, the Qianlong emperor was the great patron of European art. Of all the Jesuits gathered in China, Giuseppe Castiglione was the most gifted. Thanks to his exceptional talents, he acquired real celebrity at the court of Qianlong. In his more than fifty years of experience at the court from 1715 until his death in 1766, Castiglione was involved in many projects; from the development of various crafts to architectural designs, from painting portraits of emperors and concubines to painting dogs, horses and large-scale imperial hunts and outings. Another project for which Castiglione and other Jesuits like Denis Attiret, Ignatius Sickelbart, and the Augustinian Damascene Salusti were well-known was the engraving they designed to illustrate sixteen scenes of the Chinese war campaigns and the conquest of Chinese Turkestan, painted on the walls of the memorial hall on the western shore of Central Lake in Beijing (Beurdeley, 1972: 65-140). Apart from painting, Castiglione also

⁴¹ Laizi, at the age of eighty, behaved towards his parents as if he were still a little child in order to make them forget their great age (Walters, 1992: 99).

worked on architectural projects for the emperors. Although never trained as an architect, he collaborated in 1729 with the Chinese mathematician Nian Xiyao on an adaptation of Andrea Pozzo's *Perspectiva Pictorum et Architectorum* (1693) called *Visual Learning*, as I have mentioned earlier. And I do believe that the Qianlong emperor must have seen this document, and as a result, initiated his idea of building the three-tiered stage. I also believe that Castiglione was in charge of its construction, thanks to his knowledge of architecture.

In addition to European paintings, the Qianlong emperor was also fond of ingenious European mechanical gadgets presented by foreign envoys and Jesuits. Such items are clocks (Pics. 61, 62, 63) and equatorial armillary spheres (Pic. 64) (Bronson and Ho, 2004; Guoli Gu Gong Bowuyuan, 1991; Rawski and Rawson, 2006). However, there was another gift these Jesuits presented to the emperor which, I believe, might have triggered his idea of building the three-tiered stage. It is “a miniature theatre measuring three feet in height, with three stages on each side, decorated with trompe-l’oeil vistas. At the back rise the statuette of a young Chinese woman carrying an inscription welcoming the sovereign and wishing him ten thousand years of life. Every hour the statuette bobbed up followed by little figures, automata in the form of musicians who intoned celestial music.” (Beurdeley, 1972: 50).⁴² Cecile and Michel have pointed out that Castiglione and Attiret probably presented this toy to the Qianlong emperor, for they realized how worthy the design of this toy was to his taste (1972: 50).

⁴² This description was extracted from *Lettres édifiantes et curieuses écrites des missions étrangères. Mémoires de la Chine. Nouvelle édition*, vol. 23, p. 142 f. (Amiot, 1752) (Noël-Etienne Sens et Auguste Gaude: Toulouse, 1810) (Beurdeley, 1972: 50). I have tried to find a picture of such toy. But so far I could not find it.



Pic. 61. The Spring-operated clock in the shape of a pavilion with Chinese and European design produced during the Qianlong reign. It was designed by Timothy Williamson (fl. 1769-1788). Photo from Zhang Hongxing, *The Qianlong Emperor: Treasures from the Forbidden City*, p. 118.



Pic. 62. The clock in the shape of crane carrying a pavilion on its back designed by James Cox (d. 1791). Photo from Evelyn S. Rawski and Jessica Rawson eds., *China: The Three Emperors 1662-1795*, p. 199.

จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย



Pic. 63. The four-sided bronze and yellow enamel clock in the Qianlong reign. Photo from Rawski and Rawson, *China: The Three Emperors 1662-1795*, p. 199.



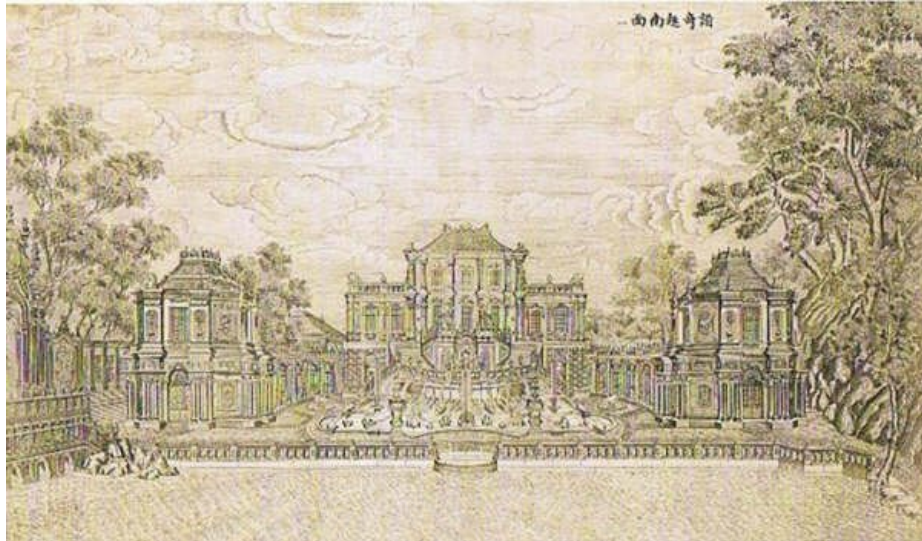
Pic. 64. An equatorial armillary sphere with Chinese and European design produced during the Qianlong dynasty. Photo from Zhang Hongxing, *The Qianlong Emperor: Treasures from the Forbidden City*, p. 129.

In addition to his fascination with European art and mechanical gadgets, I would argue that the emergence of Chinese three-tiered stage also stemmed from the Qianlong emperor's interest in European architecture. This seems to be a general interest, which can be seen also in his use of European architecture and art in the Yuanming Garden. As I have discussed earlier, a lot of palaces in this imperial

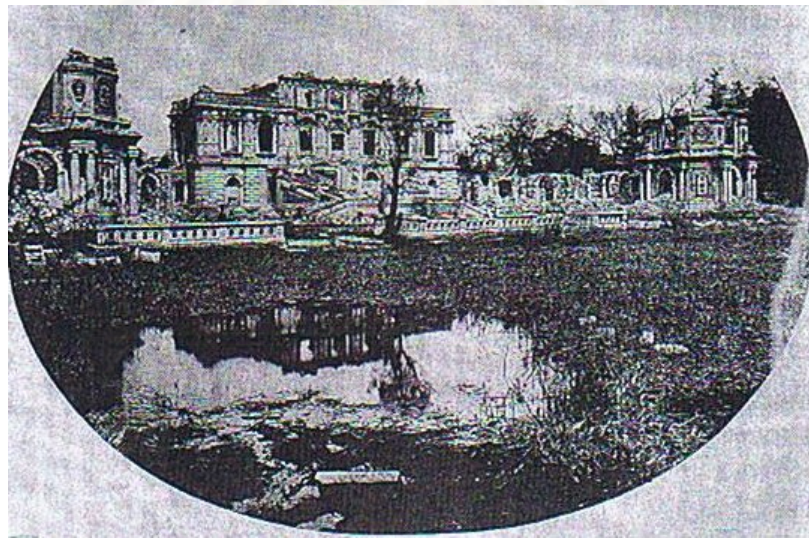
summer residence were constructed with European touch. This architectural project was also organized and managed by Giuseppe Castiglione and Father Michel Benoist. The section of European palaces and gardens, known as European-style Buildings (Xiyang Lou 西洋樓), or what Wong Young-tsu (1999: 59) has called “Chinese Versailles,” spreads across the northern end of the Eternal Spring Garden (Changchun Yuan 長春園).⁴³ This European palatial compound included the Symmetric and Amazing Pleasure (Xieqi Qu 諧奇趣) (Pics. 65 a.-c.), the Maze (Mi Gong 迷宮) (Pic. 66), the Calm Sea Hall (Haiyan Tang 海宴堂) (Pic. 67), the Peacock Cage (Yangque Long 養鵲籠) (Pic. 68), the Entrance of the Flower Garden (Huayuan Men 花園門), the Square Outlook or the Belvedere (Fangwai Guan 方外觀) (Pics. 69 a.- b.), the Great Fountain (*Dashuifa*) (Pics. 70 a.-b.), and the Great View of the Distant Seas (Yuanying Guan 遠瀛觀) (Pics. 71 a.-b.).

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⁴³ The great expansion of the Yuanming Garden began in 1749. It included 1,059 acres of land to the east called the Eternal Spring Garden, named after Qianlong’s boyhood residence, the Eternal Spring Fairy Hall (Changchun Xian’guan 長春仙館). According to Jin Yufeng, this European section, with many of its buildings based on Baroque models, was constructed on a 65-acre strip of land, 750 meters long and 70 meters wide. European materials, such as huge columns, marble balustrades, and glass windows were used extensively. But the Qianlong emperor also employed Chinese elements to this European architecture, as seen in the red-tinted brick walls, colorful glazed tiles, Chinese-style ornamentation and decoration, Taihu rocks, and bamboo pavilions (Jin, 1984: 21-24; Wong, 1999: 59).



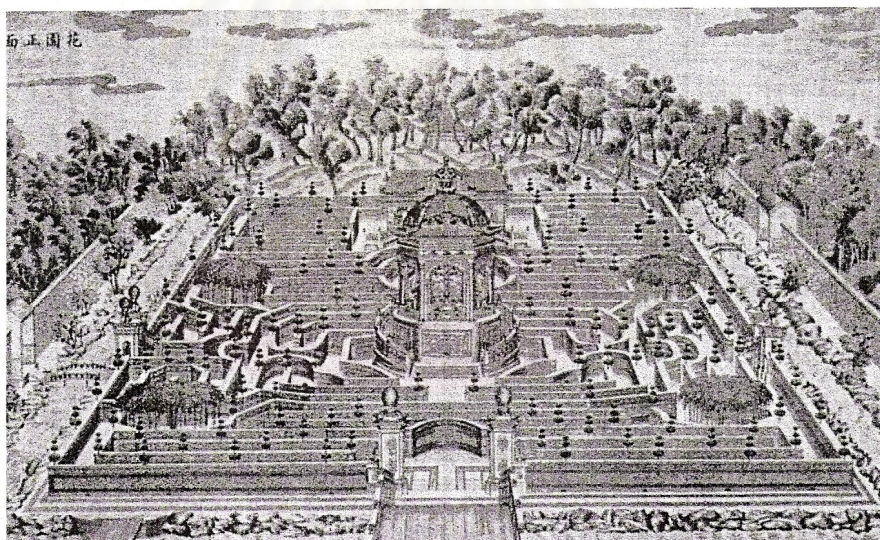
Pic. 65 a. A copperplate engraving on paper of the Symmetric and Amazing Pleasure (Xieqi Qu). Photo from Rawski and Rawson, *China: The Three Emperors 1662-1795*, p. 196.



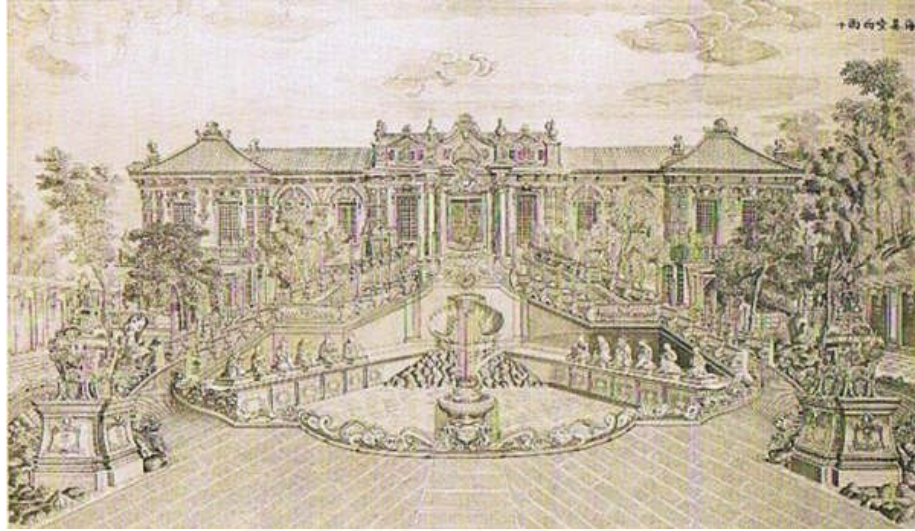
Pic. 65 b. Picture of the south façade of the Symmetric and Amazing Pleasure (Xieqi Qu). Photo from Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens's "A Pluridisciplinary Research on Castiglione and the Emperor Ch'ien-lung's European Palaces" in *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, Vol. 24, No. 5: November-December 1989, p. 8.



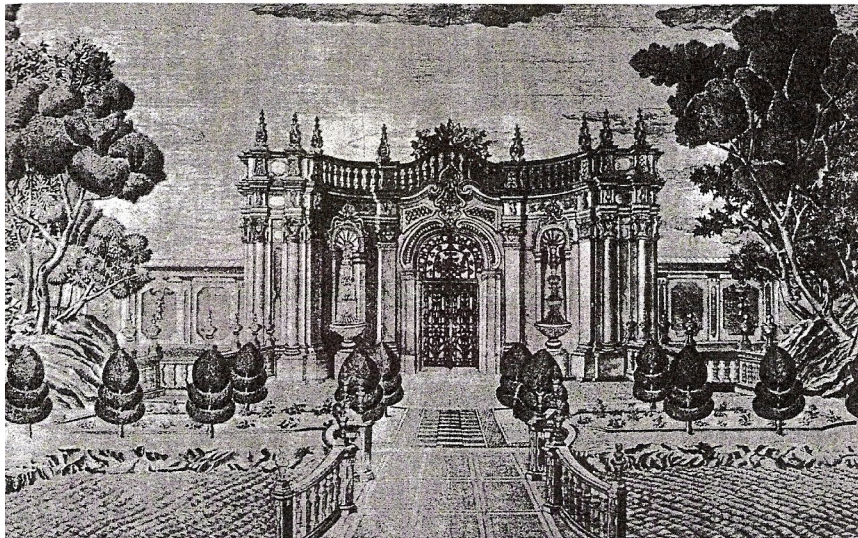
Pic. 65 c. Picture of the east pavilion of the south façade of the Symmetric and Amazing Pleasure (Xieqi Qu). Photo from Michèle Pirazzoli-t-Serstevens's "A Pluridisciplinary Research on Castiglione and the Emperor Ch'ien-lung's European Palaces" in *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, Vol. 24, No. 5: November-December 1989, p. 10.



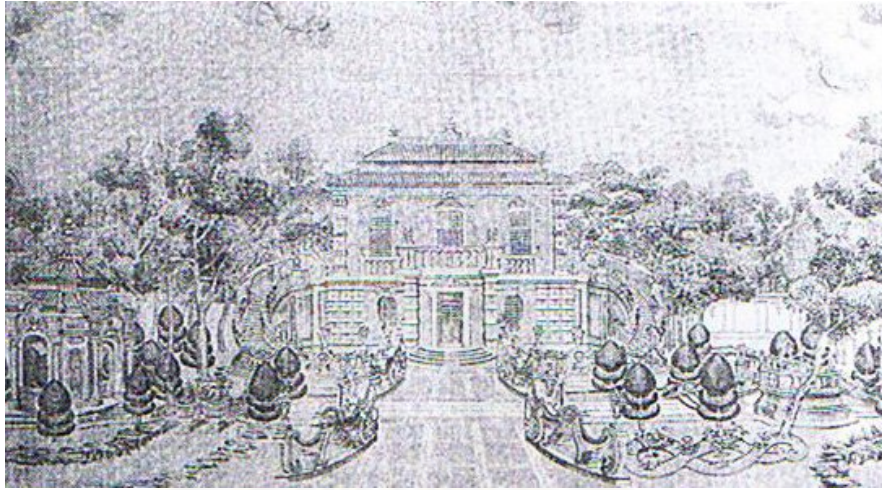
Pic. 66. A copperplate engraving on paper of the Maze (Mi Gong). Photo from Wong Young-tse, *A Paradise Lost: The Imperial Garden Yuanming Yuan*, p. 62.



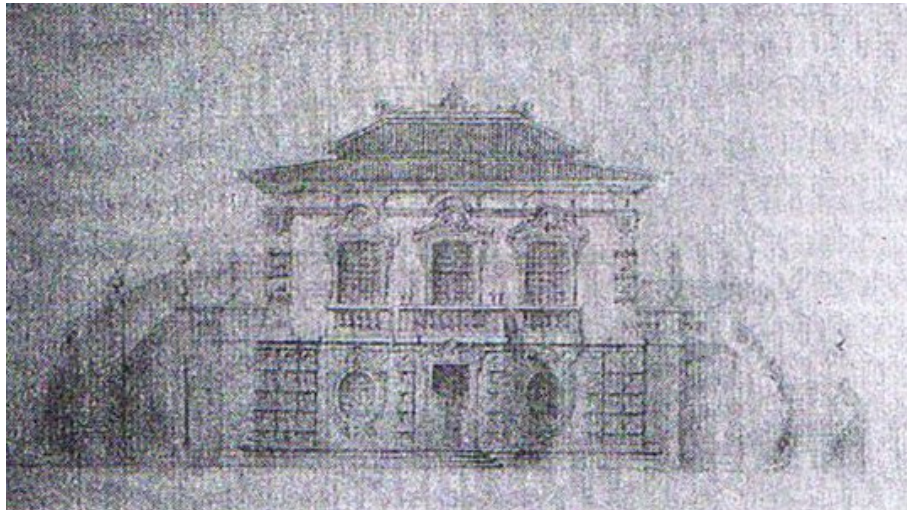
Pic. 67. A copperplate engraving on paper of the Calm Sea Hall (Haiyan Tang). Photo from Rawski and Rawson, *China: The Three Emperors 1662-1795*, p. 197.



Pic. 68. A copperplate engraving on paper of the Peacock Cage (Yangque Long). Photo from Wong Young-tse, *A Paradise Lost: The Imperial Garden Yuanming Yuan*, p. 165.



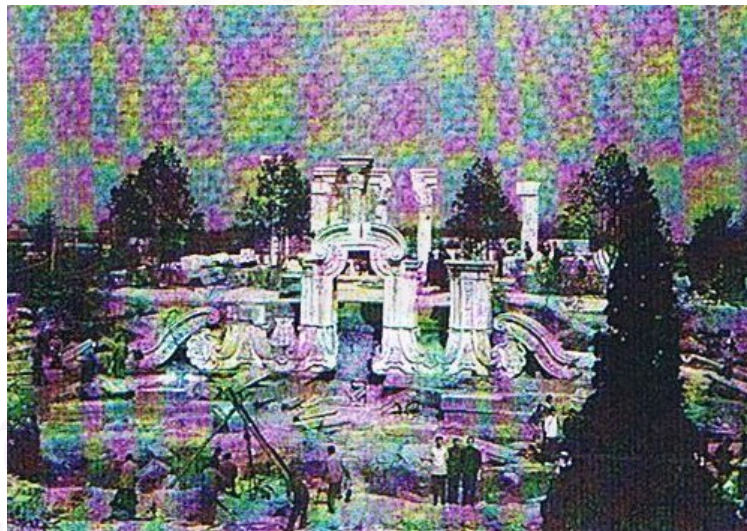
Pic. 69 a. A copperplate engraving on paper of the Square Outlook or the Belvedere (Fangwai Guan). Photo from Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens's "A Pluridisciplinary Research on Castiglione and the Emperor Ch'ien-lung's European Palaces" in *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, Vol. 24, No. 5: November-December 1989, p. 11.



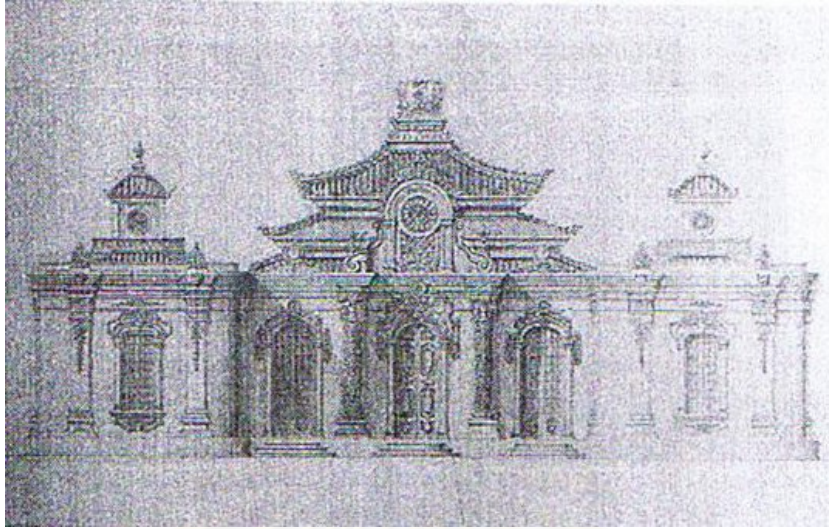
Pic. 69 b. Picture of the Square Outlook or the Belvedere (Fangwai Guan). Photo from Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens's "A Pluridisciplinary Research on Castiglione and the Emperor Ch'ien-lung's European Palaces" in *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, Vol. 24, No. 5: November-December 1989, p. 12.



Pic. 70 a. Picture of the Great Fountain (*Dashuifa*) of nowadays. Photo from Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens's "A Pluridisciplinary Research on Castiglione and the Emperor Ch'ien-lung's European Palaces" in *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, Vol. 24, No. 5: November-December 1989, p. 14.



Pic. 70 b. Picture of the Great Fountain (*Dashuifa*) of nowadays. Photo from Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens's "A Pluridisciplinary Research on Castiglione and the Emperor Ch'ien-lung's European Palaces" in *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, Vol. 24, No. 5: November-December 1989, p. 14.



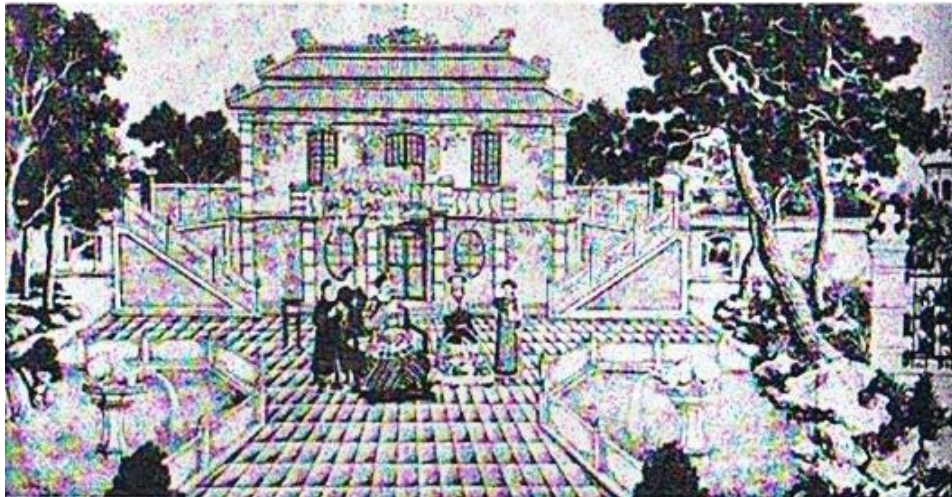
Pic. 71 a. A copperplate engraving on paper of the Great View of the Distant Seas (Yuanying Guan). Photo from Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens's "A Pluridisciplinary Research on Castiglione and the Emperor Ch'ien-lung's European Palaces" in *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, Vol. 24, No. 5: November-December 1989, p. 15.



Pic. 71 b. Picture of the Great View of the Distant Seas (Yuanying Guan) of nowadays. Photo from Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens's "A Pluridisciplinary Research on Castiglione and the Emperor Ch'ien-lung's European Palaces" in *National Palace Museum Bulletin*, Vol. 24, No. 5: November-December 1989, p. 15.

Unfortunately, the Yuanming Garden was completely destroyed in 1860 by joint British and French armies. However, we can get an impression of this complex of European buildings, gardens, and fountains from surviving engravings and from some meager descriptions, as I have shown earlier. From these engravings, one gets an impression of how the Qianlong emperor combined Chinese decorative ornaments into European-style structures. Another surviving painting which clearly proves this

point is the painting called “The Garden of Extended Spring” (Pic. 72). Here the Qianlong emperor was portrayed seating on a terrace in front of a belvedere accompanied by the inscription “Garden of Harmonious Amusement” (Xianqu Yuan 閑闌園). He was accompanied by servants and the concubine identified as Xiang Fei 香妃 (Oh and Ronan, 1988:117-119). Beyond doubt, the Qianlong emperor can be regarded as the first Chinese ruler to accommodate any substantial European architecture in Chinese imperial palace.



Pic. 72: “The Garden of Extended Spring” painted by Giuseppe Castiglione in 1761. Picture from Charles E. Ronan, S.J. and Bonnie B.C. Oh, *East Meets West: The Jesuits in China, 1582-1773*, p. 118.

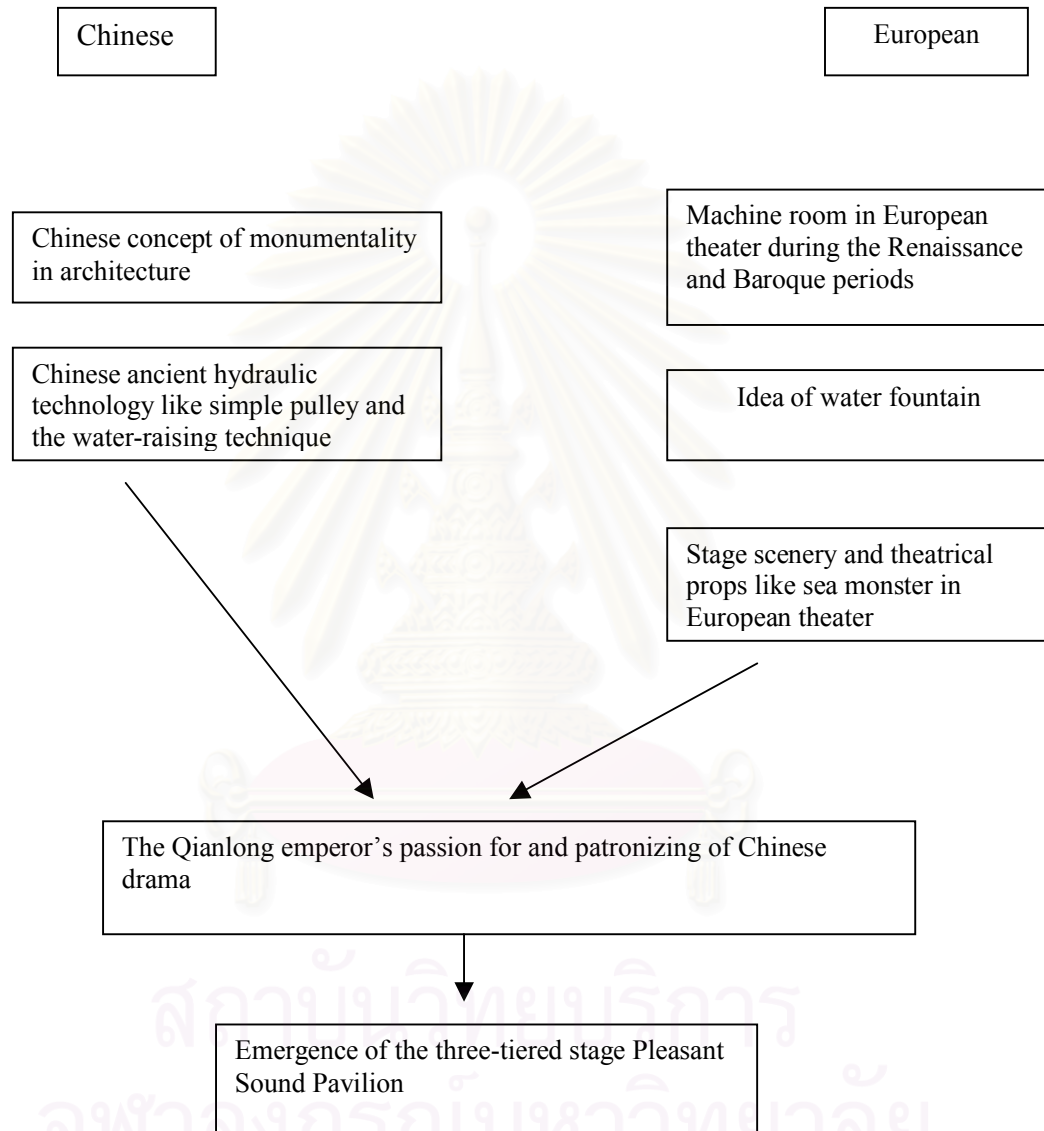
In conclusion, the three-tiered stage as represented by the Pavilion of Pleasant Sound was a synthesis of traditional Chinese concepts of monumentality and European architecture, art, and technology. Clearly, Chinese architects, painters, designers, managers, effects specialists, even the Qianlong emperor himself adapted their knowledge to the three-tiered stage, thanks to the contributions of Jesuit missionaries who worked in the Qing court since the sixteenth century. The overall design of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion creatively intermarried

Chinese views of entertainment and life, artistic craftsmanship, aesthetic taste, with European architectural and theatrical techniques. In some ways, it can be seen that the Pleasant Sound Pavilion, both as a traditional monument and as a representation of global synthesis, provides a fitting symbol for the paramount status of the Qianlong emperor who governed over a vast, multi-ethnic empire (Diagram 8).



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**Diagram 8: Synthesis between Chinese and European Factors of Emergence
of Chinese Three-tiered Stage**



CHAPTER IV

**PRODUCTION PART OF CHINESE THREE-TIERED STAGE:
COURT GRAND PLAYS, STAGE PROPS,
AND GALA PERFORMANCE**

In Chapter Two I have analyzed the exterior architecture and interior designs of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion. In Chapter Three I have shown how Chinese and European theatricalities were synthesized and as a result brought Chinese three-tiered stage into life. Chapter Four will focus on the production part of the three-tiered stage. Five main aspects will be discussed. To understand how its production works, I will first discuss five major court plays rewritten and adapted for gala performances exclusively for the three-tiered stage. In the second part, I will analyze theatrical props employed in the three-tiered stage. In this part, I will examine the functions of these theatrical props by using stage directions of these five major court plays as guidance. I will show how these stage props can be associated with the dynamics of the theater and the dynamism of actors who performed in this three-tiered stage. The third part will deal with the complication of gala performances of actors in the three-tiered stage. In this part, I will use stage directions recorded in grand court plays to discuss how actors performed on each platform of such a gigantic and complicated theater.

4.1 Five Court Plays Rewritten for the Performances in the Three-Tiered

Stage during the Qing Dynasty

In the chapter “Grand Opera and Festival Opera” (*Daxi Jiexi* 大戲節戲) in the *Xiaoting Xulu* 嘯亭續錄 [Supplementary Notes on the Whistle Pavilion] written by Prince Zhao Lian 昭權 (1780-1833)⁴⁴, it records several types of court plays written during the Qianlong reign:

In the beginning of the Qianlong reign, the Pure Emperor, being content with the peace and prosperity of his kingdom, ordered Zhang Wenmin⁴⁵ 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,⁴⁶ Zi'an Composing

⁴⁴ His hao 號 (styled name) was Jixiu zhuren 汲修主人. He was the eighth inheritor of Daisan's 代善 (1583-1648) principedom (Prince Li 禮親王). 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* 嘯亭雜錄 [Supplementary Notes on the Whistle Pavilion], 10 *juan*, with a supplement (*xulu* 續錄) in 3 *juan* (Hummel, 1964: 98-99).

⁴⁵ Zhang Wenmin or Zhang Zhao 張照 (1691-1745) was an official, painter, and dramatist. His *zi* was Detian 得天, *hao* Jingnan 經南 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* 律呂正義. 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 Chengying* 月令成應, *Fagong Yazou* 法宮雅奏, *Jiujiu Daqing* 九九大慶, *Quanshan Jinke* 全善金科 and *Shengping Baofa* 升平寶筏 were often performed in the palace until the end of the Qing dynasty (Hummel, 1964: 75-76).

⁴⁶ 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* 汨羅江) (in present-day Hunan 湖南 province) and drowned. Poet Qu Yuan is associated with Dragon Boat Festival or *Duanwu Jie* 端五節, 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).

*Poems*⁴⁷ 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 Ke⁴⁸ 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

⁴⁷ 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: 89).

⁴⁸ Prince Zhuang Ke or Prince Yinlu 胤錄 (1695-1767) was the second Manchu Prince Zhuang (*Zhuang qinwang* 莊親王), 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, 1964: 106).

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.

乾龍初，純皇帝以海內昇平，命張文敏制諸院本進呈，以備樂部演習，凡各節今皆奏演。其時典故如屈子競渡、子安題閣諸事，無不譜入，謂之月令承應。其於內延諸喜慶事，奏演祥徵瑞應者，謂之法宮雅奏雅。於萬壽令節前後，奏演群仙神道添籌錫禧，以及黃童白叟含哺鼓腹者，謂之九九大慶。又演目健連尊者救母事，謂之勸善金科，於歲暮奏之，以其鬼魅雜出，以代古人羅襪之意。演唐玄奘西域取經事，謂之升平寶筏，於上元前後日奏之。其曲文皆文敏親製，詞藻奇麗，引用內典經卷，大為超妙。其後又命庄恪親王譜蜀漢三國志典故，謂之鼎峙春秋。又譜家政和間梁山諸盜及宋、金交兵，徽、欽北狩諸事，謂之忠義漩圖。其詞皆出日華游客之手，惟能敷衍成章，又抄襲元、明水游義俠、西川圖諾院本，曲文遠不逮文敏多矣。嘉慶癸酉，上以教匪事，特命罷演諸連臺，上元日惟以月令承應代之。(Zhao, 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* 節領戲, *Yingjie Xi* 應節戲, *Jie Xi* 節戲 or “Festival Play.” This was a type of plays like *Yueling Chengying Xi* 月領成應戲 or “Officially Adapted Plays for Monthly Performances” performed on each monthly festivity, such as New Year’s Eve (*Yuandan* 元旦), Dragon Boat festival (*Duanyang* 端陽), mid-autumn (*Zhongqiu* 中秋), and winter solstice (*Dongzhi* 冬至). The second type is the so-called *Qingdian Xi* 慶典戲 or “Congratulatory Play,” which can be divided into two subtypes: *Fagong Yazou Xi* 法宮雅奏戲 or “Divine Performances of the Palace Play” and *Jiujiu Daqing Xi* 九九大慶戲 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* 皇子彌月), a ceremony of appointing imperial concubines (*Cedui Feibin* 冊對妃嬪); the latter were plays performed on imperial birthdays, also called *wanzhou jiexi* 萬壽節戲, *shou xi* 壽戲, and *shou zhouzi* 壽軸子 (Ding, 1999: 40-58).

However, if we classify the aforementioned plays in terms of size of play scripts and their performances, they can be classified into three major kinds. First is the so-called *Yan Xi* 宴戲 or “Banquet Play.” It was a small short play performed in court banquets. The second type is the so-called *Kaichang Xi* 開場戲 or “Prelude Play.” It was a short introductory play on auspicious themes, normally followed by

the grand plays. The third type was the so-called *Lianben Daxi* 連本大戲 or “Continuous Grand Play,” *Liantai Daxi* 連臺大戲 or “Grand Play for Connected Theater” (Zhu, 1999: 547-548). It is this type of court play that I shall discuss in details in this chapter.

Generally what was called “Grand Play” refers to the play adapted and rewritten by court dramatists during the Qianlong reign. Every grand play was divided into ten volumes; each volume contains twenty-four acts, thus two hundred and forty acts in total. A performance of a grand play could last more than ten days. According to the passage in the “Grand Play and Festival Play” quoted earlier, we can see that during the Qianlong reign, there were at least four grand plays mentioned. There are *A Golden Ledger for the Promotion of Kindness (Quanshan Jinke)*, *The Precious Raft of the Peaceful Times (Shengping Baofa)*, *The Annals of the Three Kingdoms (Dingzhi Chunqiu)*, and *A Diagram of the Stars of Loyalty and Righteousness (Zhongyi Xuantu)*. These grand plays were adapted to be performed in the three-tiered stage like the Pleasant Sound Pavilion.

In order to appreciate the function of the massive, three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion and to understand how theatrical props functioned in this theater, it is necessary to understand first what kind of plays performed in this grand theater. According to Zhu Jiajin (1999), there were five grand plays adapted to be performed in the three-tiered stage during the Qing dynasty (Lang, 2001: 91; Liao, 1997: 141; Wang, 1937: 81; Yu, 2003: 455; Zhao, 2001: 23).

4.1.1. The *Shengping Baofa* or *The Precious Raft of the Peaceful Times*

First court grand play adapted for multi-day performance on the three-tiered stage during the early Qing dynasty is the *Shengping Baofa* or *The Precious Raft of the Peaceful Times* (hereafter *SPBF*). As a rule, this court grand play is arranged in ten volumes, each consists of twenty-four acts, thus two hundred and forty acts in total. These ten volumes are compiled in two fascicles. According to Wang Zhizhang the grand play *Shengping Baofa* was performed before and after Chinese New Year. It was adapted by Zhang Zhao, one of the most renowned court playwrights during the early Qing period (1937: 120).

The *SPBF* is an adaptation play of the story *Journey to the West* (*Xi You Ji* 西游記), which is a fantasy novel based on the real-life pilgrimage of a famous Chinese monk, Xuan Zang 玄奘 (596-664)⁴⁹ to India to bring back the sacred Buddhist scriptures during the Tang dynasty. The story describes how the Monkey Spirit Sun Wukong 孫悟空 and other disciples escorted the monk on his sacred mission, helping him overcome 81 perilous situations during the trip. What the play conveys is that one must undergo a long and difficult process of enlightenment or awakening in the course of cultivating the mind and improving the character and engaging in introspection and perceiving the true nature of being. The underlying theme of the story is the integration of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, and how man's self-worth can be elevated.

⁴⁹ See the list of characters in five court plays mentioned in Chapter Four and Chapter Five in Appendix B.

This grand play was also based on several plays and novels of previous dynasties. For instance, the play entitled the *Tang Sanzang Xitian Qujing* 唐三藏西天取經 or *Monk Sanzang of the Tang Dynasty Fetching Sutra in the West Heaven*, attributed to Wu Changling 吳昌齡 of the Yuan dynasty; the play entitled the *Xi You Ji* 西游記 or *Record of Journey to the West*, attributed to the Ming playwright Yang Ne 楊訥; the southern play entitled the *Jiangyou Pei* 江游配 or *Match of the Stream Journey* written by an anonymous playwright during the late Song and early Yuan dynasties; and the southern play entitled the *Tang Seng Xi You Ji* 唐僧西游記 or *Record of Journey to the West of Monk Tang* attributed to Chen Longguang 陳龍光 of the early Ming dynasty; the *chuanqi* play the *Xi You Ji* by Xia Junzheng 夏均正 of the early Ming dynasty; the novel of the Song dynasty entitled *Da Tang Sanzang Qujing Shihua* 大唐三藏西天取經詩話 or *Vernacular Story of Monk Sanzang of the Great Tang Dynasty Fetching Sutra*; the Ming novels entitled the *Xiyou ji* by the late Ming writer and official Wu Cheng'en 吳承恩 (1500-1582); the Ming novel entitled the *Xu Xi You Ji* 續西游記 or the *Supplementary to Record of Journey to the West* by an anonymous writer, and the Ming novel called the *Xi You Bu* 西游補 or *Auxiliary to the Journey to the West* by Dong Ruoyu 董若雨 (Qi and Qian, 2000: 7-8).

According to Wang Zhizhang, the court theater annals show a complete performance of the play *SPBF* at the end of the Qing dynasty. For instances, from the 17th day to 25th day in the ninth month of the twenty-fourth year of the Jiaqing reign (1820), from the 15th day in the first month to the 5th day in the fifth month of the nineteenth year of the Daoguang reign (1840), from the 15th day in the sixth month to the 15th day in the eleventh month of the twentieth year of the Daoguang reign (1841),

from the 16th day in the first month to the 1st day in the third month of the twenty-first year of the Daoguang reign (1842), and from the 15th day in the second month of the twenty-sixth year (1847) to the 1st day in the sixth month of the twenty-seventh year of the Daoguang reign (1848) (1937: 75-77).

4.1.2. The *Quanshan Jinke* or *A Golden Ledger for the Promotion of Kindness*

The second court grand play is the *Quanshan Jinke* or *A Golden Ledger for the Promotion of Kindness* (hereafter *QSJK*). Like the *SPBF*, this grand play was also adapted by Zhang Zhao. Likewise, the *QSJK* is arranged in ten volumes with two hundred and forty acts in total. This play deals with the story of Mu Lian 目連, a disciple of the Buddha, who descended to hell to rescue his mother, who was punished for her evil life. Buddha told Mu Lian that he could save his mother by making offerings of food and other things on the fifteenth of the seventh month. In the play there are a lot of ghost and demon characters, representing expelling inauspiciousness. Thus this play is suitable for a ghost festival. And in later centuries the day became an important festival in China at the end of the year, just like what Prince Zhao Lian recorded: “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.” (Mackerass, 1972: 254-256; Wang, 1937: 81).

The *QSJK* weaves together several attractive mother and son texts and combines them in a single dramatic play. Such texts are *Fumu Ennan Baojing* 父母恩難報經 or *The Sutra on the Difficulty of Repaying the Kindness of Parents*, *Guanla*

Jing 灌臘經 or *The Sutra on Bathing a Buddha Image and Making Offerings*,
Fosheng Dao Li Tian Weimu Shuofa 佛生道李天爲母說法 or *The Buddha Goes to
 Heaven to Teach Dharma to His Mother*, *Xiao Zi Jing* 孝子經 or *The Sutra on the
 Filial Son*, *Bao'en Fengpen Jing* 報恩奉盆經 or *The Sutra on Repaying the Kindness
 by Making Offerings*, *Yulanpen Jing* 盂蘭盆經 or *The Ghost Festival Sutra*, *Jingtu
 Yulanpen Jing* 淨土盂蘭盆經 or *The Pure Land Ghost Festival Sutra*, *Mu Lian
 Yuanqi* 目連緣起 or *The Story of Mu Lian* and the play entitled *Mulian Jiumu
 Quanshan Ji* 目連救母勸善集 or *The Promotion of Kindness of the Story of Mulian
 Saving His Mother*, attributed to the Ming dynasty dramatist Zheng Zhizhen 鄭之珍.
 (Cole, 1998: 4-10; Li, 1992: 12-18)

Like the court play *SPBF*, a complete performance of the play *QSJK* was also recorded. For instance, from the 11th day to the 20th day in the twelfth month of twenty-fourth year of the Jiaqing reign (1820). However, after the Daoguang period (1821), the Qing court ceased the whole performance of this play and only individual scenes were performed (Wang, 1937: 80-81).

4.1.3. The *Dingzhi Chunqiu* or *The Annals of the Three Kingdoms*

The third grand play rewritten for performance in the three-tired stage is the *Dingzhi Chunqiu* or *The Annals of the Three Kingdoms* (hereafter *DZCQ*). Like the *SPBF* and the *QSJK*, this grand play consists of ten volumes, each volume twenty-four acts, totally two hundred twenty-four acts. This adaptation play was a collaborative work of three court playwrights; Prince Yin Lu (1695-1767) who was

the sixteenth son of Kangxi emperor,⁵⁰ Zhou Xiangyu 周祥鈺⁵¹ and Zou Jinsheng 鄒金生.⁵² The play deals with the story of *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Sanguo Yanyi* 三國演義), which is the novel based on a historical narrative. The story begins in 169 B.C. and ends in 280 B.C., telling of the battles and complicated connections among the Three Kingdoms--Wei 魏 in the north, Shu 蜀 in the southwest and Wu 吳 in the southeast. Cao Cao 曹操 stood for the north power. He held the Han's emperor and founded the Wei Kingdom. In the south, Liu Bei 劉備 founded the Shu Kingdom because of his Imperial Uncle title and reputation; while Sun Quan 孫權, head of Wu Kingdom empowering in the southeast. There were also many politicians and warriors helping the three persons. In order to consolidate China, Cao Cao made several battles. On the other hand, the other two men wanted to enlarge their force and power to be king of the unified China. Through many battles, the Western Jin Kingdom defeated the Three Kingdoms and completed this period. Originally, this novel was written by Luo Guanzhong 羅貫中 of the late Yuan and early Ming dynasties, but several editions of it appeared in later times (Guan, 2001: 3-6; Mackerass, 258-260).

The plot of this grand court play starts with suppression of Yellow Turban Rebellion (*Huangjin Qiyi* 黃巾起義) and ends with eradication of the Shu and Han states. The first half of the play primarily focuses on a warrior like Lü Bu 呂布 and a beauty like Diao Chan 貂蟬, while the second half highlights Liu Bei 劉備, Guan Yu

⁵⁰ See footnote 48 in this chapter.

⁵¹ His *zi* was Nanzhen 南珍. He was a native of Changshu 常熟 in Jiangsu 江蘇 (Hummel, 1964: 101).

⁵² His biography is unknown.

關羽, Zhang Fei 張飛 and Zhuge Liang 諸葛亮. The plot of this grand play ends at the seventieth chapter of the novel, and primarily focuses on the thirty-sixth to fifty-seventh chapters. Unrelated plots of the Shu and Han states are excluded from the grand play. However, there are some additions. For instance, the third act of the first volume of the *DZCQ* entitled “Secret movements of young men in the Mulberry Tree Village” (*Lousang cun dizi qianzong* 樓桑村帝子潛蹤) focuses on Liu Bei’s and his wife’s discussion about battle scheme. The fifth act of the first volume entitled “Scholar Han’s journey to make a sacrifice and renovation at his ancestral tomb” (*Han xiucui shixing jisao* 韓秀才時行祭掃) and the sixth act of the same volume entitled “Madame Guan looks at spring and autumn at night” deal with how Guan Yu gets rid of usurp (*Guan fuzi yekan chunqiu* 關夫子夜看春秋) (Wu, 1991: 150).

Like the first two court plays, the *DZCQ* was also performed in full at the end of the Qing court. For example, a complete performance occurred from the 9th day to the 22nd day in the first month of the twenty-fourth year of the Jiaqing reign (1820), from the 10th day in the third month to the 15th day in the tenth month of the twenty-first year of the Daoguang reign (1842); and from the 15th day in the second month of the twenty-second year of the Daoguang reign (1843) to the 15th day in the third month of the twenty-third year of the same reign (1844). All of the performances of this play took place in the Mutual Pleasure Garden (Tongle Yuan 同樂園) (Wang, 1937: 80-81).

4.1.4. The *Zhongyi Xuantu* or *A Diagram of the Stars of Loyalty and Righteousness*

The fourth grand play rewritten in the early Qing dynasty is the *Zhongyi Xuantu* or *A Diagram of the Stars of Loyalty and Righteousness* (hereafter *ZYXT*). Like the *DZCQ*, this play was also adapted by Prince Yin Lu, Zhou Xiangyu and Zou Jinsheng. Like other grand plays, the *ZYXT* consists of two hundred and twenty-four acts in ten volumes. This grand play is an adaptation of the Ming novel entitled *Shuihu Zhuan* 水滸傳 or *Outlaws of the Marsh*, attributed to Shi Nai'an 施耐庵; the Ming *chuanqi* plays like *Shuihu Ji* 水滸記 or *Story of Outlaws of the March* by Xu Zichang; *Yixia Ji* 義俠記 or *Story of Righteous Warriors* by Shen Jing 沈鏡, *Hunang Tan* 虎囊彈 or *Tiger-Skinned Bag* by Qiu Yuan 邱園, and *Toujia Ji* 偷甲記 or *Story of Stolen Armor* (another title was *Yanling Jia* 雁翎甲 or *Goose's Feather Armor*) by Monk Qiutang 秋堂和尚 (Xie, 1981: 330-357).

The story describes how 108 daring heroes headed by Song Jiang 宋江, 36 Heavenly spirits, and 72 Earthly demons were forced to make their way individually to the Liang Mountain in Shandong province. They formed a rebel band and struggled against corrupt and treacherous officials of the Song court. After they accepted an amnesty and pledged loyalty to the emperor, they were again made victims by the gullible emperor and his treacherous ministers. The novel reveals the corrupt and cruel officialdom and portrays a group of 108 heroes who had done righteous deeds in the name of Heaven (Hua and Wei, 2000: 3-4).

The Qianlong emperor's commission of this play is particularly intriguing since the plot presented the conflict between the Song dynasty and their rival states to

the north, the Liao and the Jin. Since the Qing dynasty envisioned its claim to imperial legitimacy as descending from the Jin, literary depictions of the Song and Jin conflict had always been viewed with suspect by the Qing court. Apparently, within the confines of the court, under the auspices of imperial guidance and patronage, dramatic performance in public of this story was sanctioned. Therefore, the adaptation of this grand play has a different ending. To legitimize the court performance of this play, the Qianlong emperor commissioned the new ending, which highlights the story with scenes in heaven and hell where each character was rewarded and punished with karmic retribution. Surprisingly, Song Jiang and other 108 rebels of the Liang Mountain were portrayed as treacherous villains who were penalized in Hades at the end of the play. This aspect will be analyzed in detail in Chapter Five.⁵³

4.1.5. *The Zhaodai Xiaoshao or The Flute Music of the Prosperous Era*

The fifth grand play is the *Zhaodai Xiaoshao* or *The Flute Music of the Prosperous Era* (hereafter *ZDXS*). It was adapted by the court playwright Wang Tingzhang 王廷章 (1701-1767).⁵⁴ Like other four grand plays, this play consists of two hundred twenty-four acts compiled in ten volumes. It is an adaptation of the play *Yangjia Jiang* 楊家將 or the *Generals of the Yang Family*. This play deals with the exploits of the generals the Yang family who lived and fought in China during the Song dynasty (960-1279). The patriarch of the Yang family of generals was Yang Jiye 楊繼業. His wife She Saihua 佘賽花, daughters and maidservants were also skilled

⁵³ See the decree that prohibited publication, distribution and performance of the novel *Shuihu Zhuan*, issued in the eighteenth year of the Qianlong reign (1754) in Chapter Five.

⁵⁴ His biography is unknown.

warriors and served in campaigns against the Liao (Khitan). When the men were eradicated on various military assignments, their wives, mothers, sisters, even maidservants took their places in the battlefields. Eventually, Yang Jiye and his family were defeated by the Liao army.

However, due to the fact that the plot deals with the conflict between the Song and the Liao, regarded as the legitimate ancestor of the Manchu, like the *Outlaws of the Marsh*, the public performance of the *Generals of the Yang Family* was also sanctioned during the Qianlong reign. Therefore, the ending of the adapted grand play was altered. After Yang Jiye and his eight sons were attacked by the Liao, the women of the Yang family helped restore the fame by defeating the Liao. However, although the Liao troops led by Empress Xiao 蕭太后 are portrayed as enemy of the Song, their loyalty and heroic deeds were exalted in the end. Moreover, throughout the play there are a lot of supernatural characters added to color the whole plot.

Stories about the generals of the Yang family have been popular among Chinese people since the Song dynasty. According to the *Zuiweng tanlu* 醉翁談錄 or *Record of Sayings by a Drunken Man* written by the late Song writer Luo Hua 羅璉,⁵⁵ there are in existence a number of versions and editions of popular novels with stories about the Yang family. For example, the plays entitled *Yang Linggong* 楊令公 or *General Yang* and *Wulang Weiseng* 五郎為僧 or *The Fifth Yang Becomes a Monk* during the Southern Song dynasty; several *zaju* of the Yuan dynasty like Zhu Kai 's 朱凱 *Haotian Ta Menglang Daogu* 昊天塔孟良盜骨 or *At the Heavenly Pagoda*

⁵⁵ Luo Hua was a native of Ji'an 吉安 in Jiangxi province 江西. His biography is unknown. However, he was considered to be an author of his famous work *Zuiweng Tanlu* 醉翁談錄 [Record of Sayings by a Drunken Man]. This work was long lost and later was discovered in Japan. The first publication was done in Japan in 1941. The *Zuiweng Tanlu* contains 10 volumes, each consisting of two fascicles. This work focuses on materials about literatures like novels and dramas since ancient china, particularly on the Song dynasty (Lau and Minford, 2000: 103).

Meng Liang Steals Bones; Xie Jinwu Zhachai Qing Fengfu 謝金吾詐拆清風府 or *Xie Jinwu Maliciously Demolished the Clear Wind Bureau* by an anonymous writer, and *Yang Liulang Tiaobing Po Tianzhen* 楊六郎調兵破天陣 or *Yang the Sixth Moves the Troops and Destroys the Heavenly Army* by an anonymous writer. Furthermore there is a famous late Ming novel entitled *Yang Jia Jiang Yanyi* 楊家將演義 or *Romance of Generals of the Yang Family* by the Ming author Xiong Damu 熊大木,⁵⁶ which contains fifty chapters (Liu, 1967: 17-18).

Like four other aforementioned court plays, complete performances of the play *ZYXT* complete in the Mutual Pleasure Garden of the Old Summer Palace were also recorded during the Qing dynasty. For example, from the 15th day in the first month of the seventeenth year of the Daoguang reign (1838) to the first day in the ninth month of the eighteenth year of the same reign (1839), from the 15th day in the first month of the twenty-fourth year of the Daoguang reign (1845) to the first day in the ninth month of the twenty-fifth year of the Daoguang reign (1846), from the 15th day in the second month of the eighth year of the Xianfeng reign (1859) to the first day in the ninth month of the ninth year of the same reign (1860), and from the 15th day in the sixth month of the twenty-fourth year of the Guangxu reign (1899) to the 15th day in the fifth month of the twenty-sixth year of the same reign (1900). (Wang, 1937: 82-83)

In addition to these five major grand plays, Liao Ben and Liu Yanjun (2003: 366-368) have also mentioned the *Honoring Deities on the Heavenly Placard*

⁵⁶ Xiong Muda was a writer during the Jiaqing 嘉靖 reign of the Ming dynasty. He was a supervisor of library of Jianyang 建陽 in Fujian 福建 province. His other work is *Da Song Zhongxing Tongsu Yanyi* 大宋中興通俗演義 [Popular Romance of Glory of the Great Song Dynasty] (also known as *Da Song Yanyi Yingxiong Zhuan* 大宋演義英烈傳 [Biographies of Heroes in the Romance of the Great Song]) (Hummel, 1964: 75).

(*Fengshen Tianbang* 封神天榜) which is an adaptation of the *Investiture of the Gods* (*Fengshen Yanyi* 封神演義). It is primarily a fantasy story built on the framework of a historical romance.⁵⁷ Wang Zhizhang (1937: 81-88) has also pointed out that many historical plays whose stories deal with battles or wars of each dynasty used to be performed as grand plays in the three-tiered stage. For instance, *Biography of the Warring States* (*Zhanguo Zhuan* 戰國傳), *Biography of Chu and Han* (*Chu Han Zhuan* 楚漢傳), *Biography of the Eastern Han* (*Dong Han Zhuan* 東漢傳), *Biography of the Tang Dynasty* (*Tang Zhuan* 唐傳), *Biography of the Western Tang* (*Xi Tang Zhuan* 西唐傳), *Biography of the Tang Dynasty in Decline* (*Can Tang Zhuan* 殘唐傳), *Biography of the Five Dynasties* (*Wudai Zhuan* 五代傳), *Biography of the Southern Tang* (*Nan Tang Zhuan* 南唐傳), *Going to the Southern Tang* (*Xia Nan Tang* 下南唐), *Peace and Fortune* (*Taiping Fu* 太平福), *Biography of Flying Dragon* (*Feilong Zhuan* 飛龍傳), *Biography of the Song Dynasty* (*Song Zhuan* 宋傳), *Going to the East of the River* (*Xia Hedong* 下河東), *Clearing Insurgency on*

⁵⁷ This novel is usually attributed to Xu Zhonglin 許仲琳 (d. 1566). The narrative elaborates on the historical campaign of King Wu of the Zhou dynasty against King Zhou's moral dissipation, particularly his indulgence in the beauty of Danji 妲己, his brutal treatment of loyal ministers and subjects, and his unsuccessful attempts to subdue the Zhou state in a series of military expeditions. These events are followed by the gathering of the forces of Zhou with those of other states and the siege of the Shang capital under the command of Jiang Ziya 姜子牙. The story ends with King Zhou taking his own life as the besieging armies close in on the royal palace. These human conflicts and especially the military encounters, are often conducted with the participation of the Taoist immortals, Buddhist gods and their disciples, who take sides in the dynastic struggle and do battle with magic weapons and fanciful displays of wizardry. In fact, the wars waged in the human world are conceived of as a part of the plan that is to lead to the "investiture of the gods," an event foreseen and agreed upon by the chiefs of the Taoist deities, who are divided into two sects called Chanjiao 闡教 and Jiejiao 截教. Thus Jiang Ziya, as the "protagonist" of the novel, is sent by the head of the Chanjiao to conduct the campaign to overthrow the Shang, acting in accord with the divine course of events, or *tianshu* 天數, while the "antagonist" Shen Gongbao 申公豹, out of spite for Jiang, instigates the Jiejiao demiurges and their followers to oppose the campaign, in defiance of the divine plan. Yet ultimately Shen's interference is seen to fit the working of the plan in that it is precisely for the spirits of the warriors slain in the battles that the "investiture" is instituted (Liu, 1962: 34-40).

Border (Xiaojing Bian 蕭靖邊), Battle of Iron Flags (Tieqi Zhen 鐵旗陣), Eminence of Loyalty and Uprightness (Zhongyi Lie 忠義烈), Biography of Pacification of the South (Ping Nan Zhuan 平南傳), and Biography of the Ming Dynasty (Ming Zhuan 明傳).

Apart from these historical plays, Cao Xinquan also mentioned five more court plays which used to be performed in the three-tiered stage in his *Qian Qing Neiting Yanxi Huiyi Lu* or *Memoir of Court Performance in the Early Qing Period*. They were the *Splendid of the Precious Pagoda (Baota Zhuangyan 寶塔莊嚴)*, the *Golden Lotus Springing from the Earth (Diyong Jinlian 地湧金蓮)*, the *Arhats Crossing the Ocean (Luohan Duhai 羅漢渡海)*, the *Meditation Way to Expel Wickedness (Chandao Chuxie 闡道除邪)*, and the *Three Transformations of the Fortune, Prosperity, and Longevity Deities (Sanbian Fu Lu Shou 三變福祿壽)*.

Among theaters in the palace, there are three largest ones. The most gigantic one is a theater in the Jehol Palace; the second largest one is the theater in the Tranquility Pleasure Palace; and the third largest one is the Nourishing Pleasure Hall in the Summer Palace the Nourishing Mutuality Park. Court eunuchs have called these three theaters “Big Master,” “Second Master,” and “Third Master.” As for the architecture of these three theaters, each consists of three floors. The bottom floor has five dijing, which were very beautiful. There are several plays which are not allowed to be performed unless in these three theaters. For example, (1) “Splendid of the Precious Pagoda.” In this play there is one act in which five seats in the majestic pagoda emerge from the dijing by revolving iron wheels. (2) “Golden Lotus Springing from the Earth.” In this play there is one act in which five big golden lotuses revolving

out of the dijing. When they emerge on the stage, they opened up their petals in which five statues of bodhisattvas are seated. (3) “Arhats Crossing the Ocean.”⁵⁸ This play employs one theatrical prop shaped like a huge sea turtle whose inside can contain several ten people and a mechanical pipe which sucks up water from the well and sprinkles water from the sea turtle’s mouth. (4) “The Meditation Way to Expel Wickedness,” a festive play performed on the Dragon Boat Festival, also (has a props) sprinkles water from the dijing to the stage. (5) “Three Transformations of the Fortune, Prosperity and Longevity Deities.” This play is performed separately on three floors. The top floor is for the Fortune Deity; the second floor is for the Prosperity Deity; the third floor is for the Longevity Deity. Once they change their positions, the Prosperity Deity resides on the top floor; the Longevity Deity resides on the middle floor; and the Fortune Deity resides on the bottom floor. As for five plays aforementioned, their stage scenery is majestic. Unless in these three theaters, it (stage scenery) is not allowed to be applied and arranged. Other court theaters are rather small. They cannot be used for performances of these grand plays.

宮中戲台，最大者三處，以熱河行宮戲台為最大，其次為寧壽宮，其次為頤和園中之頤樂殿。內監稱此三戲台為大爺、二爺、三爺。此三台之建築，皆分三層，下有五口井，極為壯麗，有數本戲，非在此三戲台不能演戲奏者：一，《寶塔莊嚴》，內有一幕，從井中以鐵輪絞起寶塔五

⁵⁸ In this play, an arhat receives an order from Sakyamuni to travel to the “Divine Land” (Shenzhou 神州) of China to congratulate the sage ruler on his birthday. The dragon king, his daughter and his generals and the bodhisattvas Guanyin and Weituo all appear in this drama. Choreographically, it was very complex, and had to be performed on a three-tiered stage. It was performed throughout the Qing until the end of the dynasty (Idema, 2000: 201-219).

座。二，《地湧金蓮》，內有一幕，從井中絞起大金蓮花五朵，至台上放開花瓣，內坐大佛五尊。三，《羅漢渡海》，有大切末制成之鰲魚，內可藏數十人，以機筒從井里吸水，由鰲魚口中噴出。四，《闡道除邪》，此端午應節戲也，亦從井向台上中吸水。五，《三變福祿壽》，此戲在台上分三層演奏。最初第一層為福，二層為祿，三層為壽。一變而祿居上層，壽居中層，福居下層。再變而壽居上層，福居中層，祿居下層。以上五劇，布景偉大，非此三台，不敷布置。他處戲台較小，不能演此大戲也。(Zou, 1933: 20-21; Yu, 2003: 451)

4.2 Theatrical Props and Dynamism in the Three-Tiered Stage Pleasant Sound

Pavilion

4.2.1 Theatrical Props Employed in the Three-Tiered Stage

In addition to its gigantic size, the Pleasant Sound Pavilion is also unique in terms of its stage designs and several interesting theatrical props. First is the *tianjing* or the “trap door.” It is a hidden door inset in the floor of the stage allowing performers and props to appear and vanish. The door also offers a way to move equipment onstage from the dressing room at the backstage immediately beneath it. Thus it is a stage prop that functions as a “pathway” which connects each of the platforms together. Yu Jian has pointed out that there are two kinds of the *tianjing* that were used in the three-tiered stage; one was employed with a “lifting machine” (*shengjiang jiqi*); and the other functioned as a pathway for actors (2003: 446). As I have shown in Chapter Two, on the floors of the Fortune Stage and of the Prosperity

Stage are equipped with the *tianjing*, which were normally covered with the “movable covered boards” and yet opened when used. On the floor of the Prosperity Stage, there are five *tianjing*: the largest one in the center and four small ones in four corners. Among these five *tianjing*, the front two and the center ones are connected to the Longevity Stage (thus on the ceiling of this stage have three *tianjing*), whereas the rear two are connected to the Immortal Tower. On the Fortune Stage, there is only one *tianjing* in the middle of the floor. The middle *tianjing* of the Prosperity Stage is directly connected to that of the Fortune Stage. If we look up to the ceiling in the middle of the Longevity Stage, we will find that this *tianjing* is indented into the ceiling, which forms a concave shape. This is what I have analyzed in Chapter Two as one type of traditional Chinese ceilings called *zaojing* (Fig. 12 b.). According to Yu Jian, the large middle *tianjing* of the Prosperity Stage and that of the Fortune Stage are a kind used with the “lifting machine”; whereas other small *tianjing* function as a pathway for actors (2003: 446). Liao Ben has also pointed out that in generally the *tianjing* of the Longevity Stage and of the Prosperity Stage were utilized more than that of the Fortune Stage. In order to prevent any accidents, the *tianjing* were normally covered with wooden boards (1997: 142).

The employment of the *tianjing* is normally recorded in several court plays. For instance, in the twenty-fourth act of the second volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “At present emerging a demon’s heart that reflects the wisdom lantern” (*Xianchu xinmo zhao huideng* 現出心魔照慧燈) tells the story of Old Goddess of Mountain Li (*Li Shan Laomu* 黎山老母) and Golden Light Goddess (*Jinguang Shengmu* 金光聖母) offering the nine-ranked lotus lanterns to Guanyin Bodhisattva on her birthday. The stage direction reads: “From inside the *tianjing* descend nine layers of five-colored

lotus lanterns.” (*tianjing nei chuixia jiuceng wuse lianhua deng ke* 天井内垂下九層五色蓮花燈科) (*SPBF*, 1964: 56 a.-59 b.). Here the *tianjing* in this episode functions as a pathway allowing the props to come down to the lower stage. It is clear that the lotus lanterns were tied with ropes hanging down from the *tianjing*. This represents the miraculous element of the performance and at the same time sheds light on the theater.

The second act of the third volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “When cinnabar disappears in the Qian River, the empty cauldron is burnt.” (*Qianjiang zoudan kongding shao* 鉛江走丹空鼎燒) tells the story of the Mountain Bear of the Black Wind Grotto (*Heifeng Shanxiong* 黑風山熊) preparing the cinnabar or the elixir of life. The stage direction reads:

From inside the tianjing hangs down a rope, tying theatrical props like dragon, tiger, old woman Huang, baby, and beautiful lady leaping out of a censor and dancing. They enter the stage by using the tianjing.

天井内下綫，作系龍虎黃婆嬰兒姪女切末越爐而出跳舞，從天井内上。(SPBF, 1964: 5 a.-8 a.).

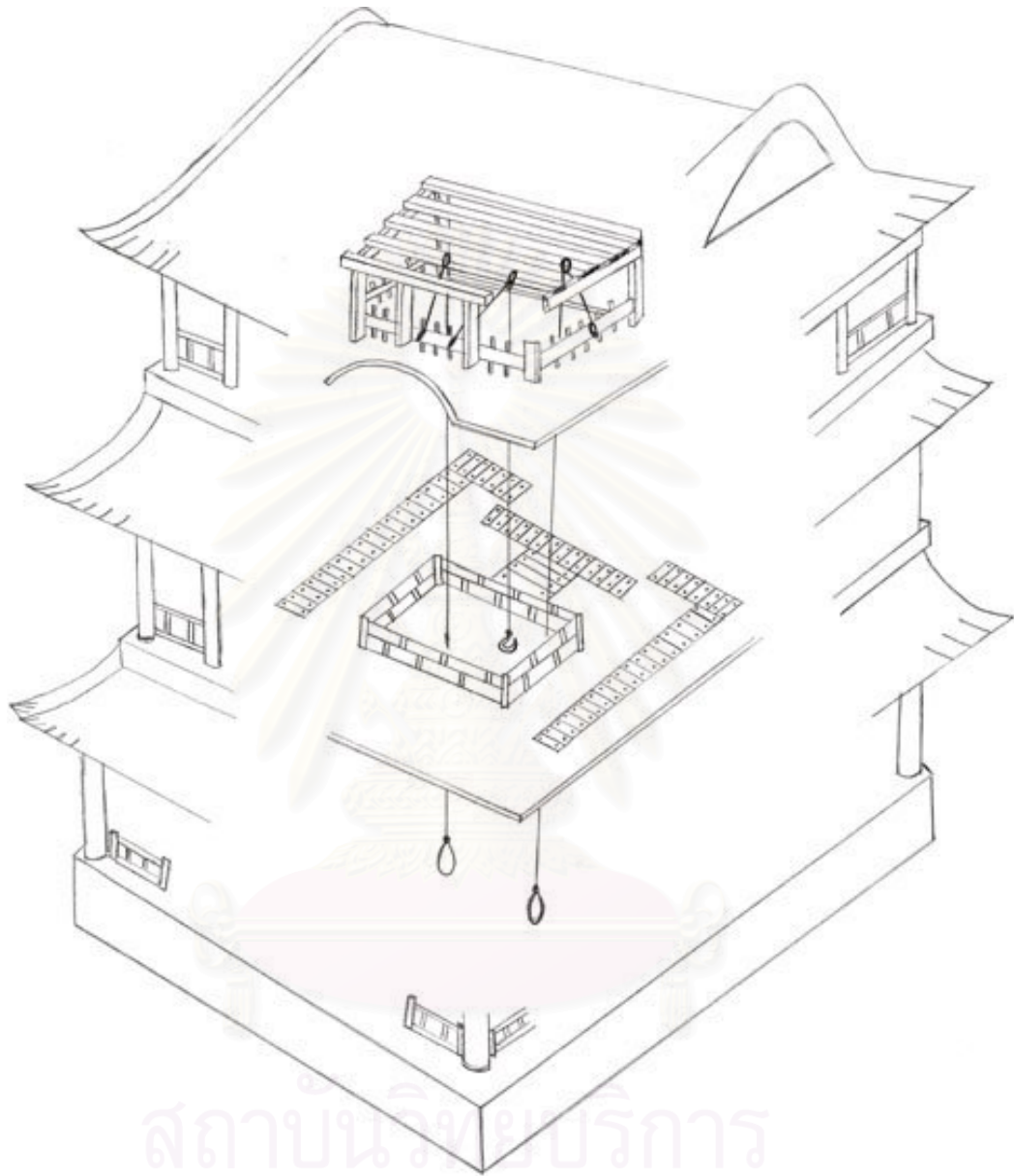
Here we can see that it is not applicable to use human beings to represent souls of the elixir of life which are jumping out of the censor. Therefore these stage props are employed by being tied to the rope hanging down from the *tianjing*. Like the previous example, the function of the *tianjing* in this act is like a pathway for the props.

The *tianjing* in the three-tiered stage is not only designed as the pathway for raising and lowering stage props onto the stage, but it also functions as an entrance and exit channel for actors. In this case, it was usually employed with the “lifting machine.” As shown in Diagram 5 in Chapter Two, the backstage of the Fortune

Stage is equipped with five handspike windlasses; two large ones of the left and right sides of the *tianjing*; and three small ones behind the front stage. This machine mainly consists of winches (*jiaoche*), railings (*langan*), wheels (*hualun*) and ropes. The big winch consists of eighteen handles, nine on each side. To use the windlass, eighteen people are employed to revolve it. This “lifting machine” was used to raise the theatrical props installed in the three-tiered stage to assist actors to move up and down, in and out among these four platforms. They were “cloud sack” (*yundou*) “cloud chair” (*yunyi*), “cloud spoon” (*yunshao*), and “cloud board” (*yunban*). Apparently these props played a significant role in the grand theater. According to Liao Ben, the “cloud board” and “cloud sack” were normally installed temporarily before the performance began (1997: 143). According to Yu Jian, this lifting machine can hold more than 500 kilograms or seven to eight actors in one cloud sack, as I show in a reconstructed picture of this lifting machine (Pic. 73) (2003: 446).



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Pic. 73: Reconstructed picture of the three-tiered stage. Details of the lifting machines, winches, railings, wheels, ropes, and cloud sacks. Made by the author.

The section of the *Archives on the Gracious Reward Diary (Enshang Riji Dang 恩賞日記檔)* in the *Archives of the Office of the Peaceful Times (Shengping Shu Dang'an 升平署檔案)* there was a record of General Official Li Jin 李謹 memorialized on the second day in the seventh month during the fifth year of the Tongzhi reign (1866):

*On the chenzheng day, when I arrived at the Palace of Living out My Years in Peace, I saw some actors installing the 'cloud boards' and 'cloud sacks.' Some actors were installing the 'water case' and 'water cloud,' while other workers were installing 'Ten Thousand Longevity Mountain.'*⁵⁹

辰正至寧壽宮，盞頭作安雲板雲兜，隨演武備院匠役四十二名，盞頭作安水匣水雲，工程處安萬壽山。(Liao, 1997: 147)

From this passage, it is clear that “cloud board,” “cloud sack,” “water case,” “water cloud,” and “Ten Thousand Longevity Mountain” were theatrical props supposed to be installed before the gala performance began.

The actual shape of this prop and the “cloud sack” are recorded in Wang Zhizhang’s *Shengping Shu Zhilue*:

A cloud sack is made of a piece of iron plate surrounded by wooden boards. All four edges are tied with some coarse thick ropes. A piece of brocade with a cloud painting forms a sack, which is meant to be hung down. Other kinds of props such as cloud spoon, cloud board, and cloud chair are also like this. An upper tip of each rope is tied up together into one knot, which is then bound

⁵⁹ Ten Thousand Longevity Mountain is a kind of stage props. It is also a name of mountain located in the Summer Palace Yihe Yuan. Originally it was named the Archway Mountain (*Weng Shan 甕山*). Later its name was changed to the Ten Thousand Longevity Mountain during the Qianlong reign. This mountain is 100 meters in height. Its south side faces the famous Kunming Lake (*Kunming Hu 昆明湖*) (Liao, 1997: 147).

with a long thick rope fastened with copper pivots nailed to a wooden board on the upper rack, slanting to join with a windlass. To move the windlass, one needs to revolve it several times. And only then does the cloud sack move down to the stage. On the long rope is inscribed a marker. When it (the rope) is released to the marked point, the cloud sack will exactly appear onto the stage. When using it during the rehearsal, thus it is called “rehearsal props.”

雲兜者，用鐵板一塊，周以木板，四角穿以板粗絨繩，用綢布畫雲形為兜，垂於下。他如雲勺，雲板，雲椅子等，亦與此略同。絨繩上端合為一，與粗長繩接，長繩上繞與木貫井架上所釘之銅軸，而斜引至轆挺上，作無數之回匝，用人搬動轆，即可將雲兜下降至台上，長繩上刻有記號，放至所記之點，而雲兜適已至台。作此項演習時，即謂之排演切末。⁶⁰(1937: 262)

The employment of “cloud sack,” “cloud chair,” “cloud spoon,” and “cloud board” is explicitly mentioned in the court plays. For instance, the twenty-third act of the third volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “Seeking for a method and meeting God of Eastern Realm amid the sky” (*Qiufang kongyu Donghua Lao* 求方空遇東華老) deals with how Sun Wukong tried to find a formula that could revive a manfruit tree (*renshenguo* 人參果) which belonged to the Great Immortal Zhen Yuan (*Zhen Yuan*

⁶⁰ According to Wang Zhizhang, the courtyard rack, the thick long rope, and the windlass are sizable. Therefore it is necessary to constantly repair and renew these props. The lists of repaired and renewed props written by Li Jin also records: “five pieces of wooden racks, twenty-four strings of big ropes, and fifteen strings of small and big ropes.” (*muguan jingjia wufen, sui da xiasheng ershi si gen, daxiao xiasheng shiwu gen* 木貫井架五分，隨大絨繩二十四根，大小絨繩十五根。) (Liao, 1997: 143; Wang 1937: 262).

Daxian 鎮元大仙). In a previous scene the Great Immortal Zhen Yuan gave two manfruits to Monk Xuan Zang as a token of their friendship. However, Monk Xuan Zang did not eat any because he was scared of the babylike shape of the fruit. And since the manfruit contained a magical power to prolong one's life, Sun Wukong surreptitiously ate some. He also chopped down the manfruit tree. As a result, the Great Immortal Zhen Yuan was infuriated with the incident. He then captured Monk Xuanzang. In order to rescue his master, Sun Wukong had to seek for a method that could revive the tree. In this act, Sun Wukong had a chance to meet God of Eastern Realm (*Donghua Dijun* 東華帝君). In the beginning of the act, Sun Wukong met with Three Constellation Deities (*San Xing* 三星) first. When they entered the stage, the stage direction reads:

Miscellaneous characters costumed as Three Constellation Deities, each wearing Three Constellation caps and Three Constellation clothes, act out descending from the Fortune Stage by riding cloud sacks. They sing together...

雜扮三星各帶三星帽穿三星衣從福臺乘雲兜下科, 全唱...

Then

Sun Wukong enters the Prosperity Stage through an entrance door.

悟空從祿臺上場門上.

After Three Constellation Deities reprimanded Sun Wukong of destroying the manfruit tree, they exit the stage and “still ascend by riding the cloud sacks.” (*rengcong yundou shengshang* 仍從雲兜升上). At this moment,

Sun Wukong acts out looking from afar with delight, saying “Distantly I see God of Eastern Realm coming. He definitely has a magic power. I think I should approach and ask him.”

悟空作望喜科, 白: “遠遠望見東華帝君來也. 他必定有甚奇方. 我且上前問他便了.”

God of Eastern Realm then made his appearance by “riding a cloud sack and descending onto the stage from the *tianjing* in the front.” (*cong qian tianjing yundou xia* 從前天井雲兜下). However, the God of Eastern Realm could not help Sun Wukong revive the manfruit tree. But the God suggested that Sun Wukong ask for Guanyin Bodhisattva’s help. Towards the end of the act, Four Immortals and Eight Immortals who were Guanyin Bodhisattva’s entourage entered the stage. The usage of the cloud sack is stated:

Miscellaneous actors costumed as Four Immortals ride cloud sacks and descend onto the stage from the center tianjing. Eight Immortals ride cloud sacks and descend onto the stage from the tianjing of the four corners.

雜扮四仙乘雲兜從中天井下, 八仙從四隅天井雲兜下。(SPBF, 1964: 64 a.- 68 a.)

Eventually, Guanyin Bodhisattva revived the manfruit tree with the spring of sweet dew. We can see that the cloud sack was employed in this act. They were first used to lift up Three Constellation Deities. This represents three immortals ascending to the Heaven. Later the cloud sacks were also used to carry the God of Eastern Realm, Four Immortals, Eight Immortals down to the stage. This creates a spectacular scene in which 13 deities coming to the earth. This time the employment of the *tianjing* is clearly stated as the pathway of these immortal characters.

The third act of the first volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “Golden Cicada transforms and travels to China” (*Jinchanzi huaxing Zhendan* 金蟬子化行震旦) tells the story of Golden Cicada, one of Buddhist disciples, receiving the decree of Buddha to be reincarnated in the human world as Monk Xuan Zang. In the beginning of the act when Golden Cicada made his first appearance, the stage direction reads:

Miscellaneous actors costumed as Buddhist novices wearing monk caps, monk robes with silk sashes, and strings of rosary, lead a male lead costumed as Golden Cicada...enter the Prosperity Stage through an entrance door..

雜扮眾沙彌各戴僧帽穿僧衣繫絲條帶數珠引生扮金蟬子...從祿臺上場門上.

After he finished his self-introduction, more characters entered the stage. The stage direction goes:

Miscellaneous characters costumed as Eight Gateds,...Miscellaneous characters costumed as Hui An, ...A minor female lead costumed as Dragon Maiden...lead a female lead costumed as Guanyin Bodhisattva...(they) enter the stage by riding cloud sacks to descend from the Fortune Stage down to the Prosperity Stage.

雜扮八揭諦...雜扮惠岸...小旦扮龍女,...引旦扮觀音菩薩...乘雲兜從福臺下至祿臺.

At the end of the act, after Golden Cicada received the decree of Buddha proclaimed by Guanyin Bodhisattva, we are told:

Golden Cicada rides a cloud sack and descends to the Longevity Stage during the music. Miscellaneous characters costumed as Gods of Protecting Law enter the Longevity Stage and act out welcoming him.

金蟬子乘雲兜曲內下至壽臺。眾扮護法神從壽臺上作接引科。(SPBF, 1964: 7 a.-9 b.)

The *Shengping Baofa Tigang* 昇平寶筏提綱 or *the Promptbook of the Precious Raft of Peaceful Times*⁶¹ (hereafter *SPBFTG*) also records:

Use three small cloud sacks of the Prosperity Stage and one cloud sack of the Longevity Stage.

用祿台小雲兜三個，壽台雲兜一個 (SPBFTG, 1964: 2 b.)

In this act the cloud sacks were employed twice; first to carry Guanyin and her entourage and later Golden Cicada. This creates a scene in which Golden Cicada was going to be reincarnated in the humanly realm as Monk Xuan Zang, when Guanyin and other deities like Eight Gatés, Hui An, Dragon Maiden, and Gods of Protecting Law descended to welcome and give him blessings.

The nineteenth act of the first volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “Surrendering wild apes and honoring to Buddha” (*Jiangfu yeyuan zhenfeng fo* 降伏野猿震奉佛), tells the story of Rulai Bodhisattva suppressing Sun Wukong. In this scene Sun Wukong acted violently on the Prosperity Stage, representing how he caused the chaos in the Heavenly Palace. In the beginning of the act when each character made his appearance, the stage direction reads:

Miscellaneous characters costumed as Gatés... Miscellaneous characters costumed as Ananda...lead a minor male lead costumed as Rulai Bodhisattva...(They) enter the Immortal Tower through an entrance door.

⁶¹ The *Shengping Baofa Tigang* or *the Promptbook of the Precious Raft of Peaceful Times* is the copy of a production script that contains the information necessary to create the production of this play. It is a compilation of all characters, lists of properties and details of certain acting movements in each act. The script is succinct and yet informative. Of all five grand plays, only the promptbook of the *Shengping Baofa* has survived until the present time. The rest four are no longer extant.

雜扮揭諦…雜扮阿難迦葉…引淨扮如來佛…從仙樓門上。

After Rulai Bodhisattva introduced himself, then

From the tianjing of the Immortal Tower descends a cloud board. Gatés and others lead Rulai Bodhisattva and ride a cloud board to ascend the Prosperity Stage.

仙樓天井下雲板，揭諦等引如來佛乘雲板曲內升至祿臺科。(SPBF, 1964: 33 a.-35 a.)

The scene ends when Rulai Bodhisattva used his hands to stop Sun Wukong from somersaulting. This time a heavenly guard entered the Fortune Stage, proclaimed the decree of Jade Emperor, and invited Rulai Bodhisattva to attend the Heavenly Assembly. Here we can see that the applications of the *tianjing* and the cloud board are clearly recorded. In this episode, the cloud board was set to lower to the Immortal Tower in order to lift up Rulai Bodhisattava and his entourage to the Prosperity Stage, representing the Heavenly realm. In order to carry a large number of actors, the large cloud board was employed, as stated in the promptbook:

Rulai Bodhisattva enters the Immortal Tower. A large cloud board descends from tianjing. Rulai Bodhisattva reaches the Prosperity Stage and exits through an exit door.

佛上仙樓，天井下大雲板，佛上至祿臺出佛門。(SPBF, 1964: 12 b.)

In the twenty-fourth act of the sixth volume of the ZDXS, entitled “When the Heavenly Mind dissipates, True Immortal descends to assist” (*Tianxin xiaoqie jiang zhenxian* 天心消擊降真仙) is an episode when the Taoist Zhong Li (*Zhongli Daoren* 鍾離道人) comes to help Yang Zongxian 楊宗顯 destroy the Heavenly Army of the

Liao. When Taoist Zhong Li made an appearance in the beginning of the act, the stage direction reads:

Miscellaneous characters costumed as Cloud Envoys...enter the stage by using both doors and act out dancing. Miscellaneous characters costumed as Immortal Lads...A small male lead costumed as Taoist Zhong Li... They all ride a large cloud board to descend amid the sky⁶² from the tianjing of the Immortal Tower. All together they sing the tune 'Sequence of painting eyebrows.'

雜扮眾雲使...從兩場門上作跳舞科。雜扮仙童...淨扮鍾離道人...全乘大雲板從天井下至半空。眾唱 [畫眉序] ...

Later when Taoist Zhong Li saw Yang Zongxian coming, he said:

Yang Zongxian obviously comes from there. I must wait for him until he passes the garrisons. Cloud Envoys, please prepare the clouds. Cloud Envoys act out responding.

那邊楊宗顯來也。不免等他同往軍營去便了。眾雲使，按落雲頭者。雲使應科。

After Cloud Envoys received the command, then:

The large cloud board descends onto the Longevity Stage. Taoist Zhong Li acts out descending from the cloud board. Immortal Lads still ride the cloud boards and enter the stage through the tianjing. Cloud Envoys act out circling on the stage and exit through the exit door....Miscellaneous characters

⁶² I believe tha the phrase “half of the sky” (*bankong* 半空) could mean the Immortal Tower.

costumed as military officials...lead a small male lead costumed as Yang Zongxian...enter the stage through the entrance door.

大雲板下至壽臺，鍾離道人作下雲板科。仙童仍乘大雲板從天井上。雲使遶場從下場門下。雜扮將官…引小生扮楊宗顯…從上場門上。(ZDXS, 1964: 93 a.- 99 a.)

In this scene the large cloud board was employed twice. First it was used to signify the big cloud vehicle carrying Taoist Zhong Li, Immortal Lads and Cloud Envoys to descend to the Immortal Tower, representing the middle of the sky. Then the same cloud board was used again when these immortals descended the Longevity Stage, representing the Earth, in order to help Yang Zongxian.

This act ends with loyal warriors of the Song court like seven bandits of Red Plum Mountain (*Hongtao Shan* 紅桃山)--Meng Liang 孟良, Lü Biao 呂彪, Zou Shen 鄒伸, Wang Sheng 王昇, Wang Yi 王義, Lin Rong 林榮, and Song Mao 宋茂; two bandits of Taihang Mountain (*Taihang Shan* 太行山)--Zhang Gai 張蓋 and She Ziguang 余子光; three bandits of Coiling Dragon Mountain (*Panlong Shan* 盤龍山)--Liu Jinlong 劉金龍, Lang Qian 郎千 and Lang Wan 郎萬; and other bandits Xu Zhong 徐仲, Guan Chong 關沖 and Li Hu 李虎-- had audience with Taoist Zhong Li, Prince De Zhao 德昭, Yang Zongxiao 楊宗孝, Yang Zongbao 楊宗保 and Yang Jing 楊景 in order to scheme an attack plan with the Liao.

Another example is the tenth act of the second volume of the ZDXS, entitled “Begging to the Heaven, starting on a journey to attack by himself” *Shentian tao yujia qinzheng* 申天討禦駕親征). This is an episode when Yang Xi 楊希 was killed by Pan Renmei 潘仁美. The stage direction reads:

From the middle tianjing descend three cloud sacks. Yang Sha, Golden Lad and Jade Maiden, each rides a cloud sack and enters the Longevity Stage from the tianjing.

中天井下三雲兜，楊殺、金童、玉女各乘雲兜從天井上壽台。(ZDXS, 1964: 5 a.- 7a.)

Moreover, the fifteenth act of the second volume of the ZDXS, entitled “General Shen envies a merit and allows a heavy strike” (*Shenshuai jigong zong qiangqiao* 深帥嫉功縱強敲) is a scene when Yang Jiye knocked himself at the Li Ling Tombstone (*Liling Bei* 李陵碑).⁶³ At this moment Golden Lad and Jade Maiden led spirits of Yang Tai 楊泰, Yang Zheng 楊徵, Yang Gao 楊高, and Yang Xi 楊希 and came out to commemorate. The stage direction reads: “Together they ride a large cloud board and descend to the Longevity Stage from the *tianjing*.” (*tongcheng da yunban cong tianjing xiazhi shoutai* 同乘大雲板從天井下至壽台。). Here these characters came to welcome Yang Jiye to “return to the Heaven” (*gui tian* 歸天). Then Yang Jiye, together with them, “ride the large cloud board together and act as ascending to the sky by using the *tianjing*.” (*tong shang da yunban qizhi bankong ke, cong tianjing shang* 同上大雲板起至半空科，從天井上。) (ZDXS, 1964: 11 a.- 18 b.).

In addition to the *tianjing*, cloud sack, cloud board, and cloud chair, another significant theatrical prop employed in the three-tiered stage is the *dijing* or “pit.” As I have shown in Chapter Two, on the floor of the Longevity Stage was installed five *dijing*: a big one in the middle and four small ones in each corner. These *dijing* were

⁶³ Li Ling tombstone is a spot where Yang Jiye committed suicide by smashing his head against the tombstone after he lost the battle with the Liao army.

normally covered and opened when they were used. In the promptbook of the twenty-fourth act of the first volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “The Precious Earth prosperously hosts and grants the Fortune Meeting” (*Baodi hong kaixi fuhui* 寶地宏開錫福會) records:

Buddha enters the Prosperity Stage, sings, and returns to his seat. Then the middle dijing is uncovered. The wooden boards covering the other four dijing are also taken out. An alms bowl is lifted up. Musicians start playing music from the backstage. Inside the dijing, a string with a ‘Fortune’ character attached is drawn out of the alms bowl. Heavenly maidens dance. Finish. Begin playing music again. Receive the ‘Fortune’ character. Put the alms bowl back. Cover the dijing with the wooden boards.

祿臺佛上, 唱, 歸座, 隨開中間大地井, 四角五個地井, 板各一塊, 板拿下來, 揭諦安鉢…內起鼓, 地井內拉綫出鉢內福字, 舞天女, 完, 又起鼓, 收字, 搭去鉢, 蓋板. (*SPBF*, 1964: 15 b.- 16 a.)

From this passage, we learn that the *dijing* functions as a pathway for the props. It was used to create a spectacular scene, in which the prop like the alms bowl with the “Fortune” character played an important role. The passage also clearly states how the *dijing* was used. That is to say, wooden boards had to be lifted up prior to the employment and put back after finishing. These wooden boards are long longitudinal flaps two feet wide. These could be easily opened to allow scenery to be passed through from below for transformation scenes and the like.

Like the *tianjing*, the *dijing* also functions as the entrance and exit pathway for performances and theatrical props. Moreover, it was designed as a hidden space to store props and a space where performers could hide themselves during the

performances. The nineteenth act of the third volume of the *ZDXS*, entitled “Four wicked ones are eradicated and followed by two traitors” (*Si'e suichu ji erning* 四惡雖除繼二佞) is the scene when Nine Guardian Ghosts (*Jiuchaigui* 九差鬼) came to the earth to fetch wicked and corrupt ministers like Fu Dingchen 傅鼎臣, Pan Renmei 潘仁美, Wang Shen 王侁, Mi Xin 米信, Tian Zhongjin 田重進, and Liu Junqi 劉君其 to receive their karmic retribution in Hades. The beginning of the scene deals with how Fu Dingchen was haunted by Nine Guardian Ghosts on the execution ground. After they beat him, Fu acted out being frantic and confessed his wrongdoings. At this moment, the stage direction reads:

Nine Guardian Ghosts act out beating Fu Dingchen...Fu Dingchen acts out pulling Wang Qiang's and Xie Tingfang's clothes and says: “Everyone, Fu Dingchen is a disloyal minister who has kept secret from my master. (His) dark mind is very poisonous. He wickedly schemes to harm the loyal and the good. Consequently, his evil deeds need to be reported in details.”

九差鬼作打倒傅鼎臣科...傅鼎臣作扯王強, 謝庭芳衣科白: “列位, 傅鼎臣爲臣不忠, 蒙蔽明君, 黑心很毒, 謀害忠良, 故彰述報。”

Later Fu was possessed by the ghost and then reprimanded Wang Qiang, Pan Renmei and Xie Tingfang of wrongfully accusing Yang Jing. At this moment, he

Acts out falling down. Miscellaneous characters costumed as Fu Dingchen's double body with disheveled hair and wearing a Taoist robe, enters the stage by emerging from the dijing. Nine Guardian Ghosts act out capturing Fu Dingchen wearing a ghostly cape. They exit the stage through an exit door.

作倒地科. 雜扮傅鼎臣替身散髮穿道袍從地井暗上伏地. 九差鬼作捉傅鼎臣搭魂帕從下場門下.

Suddenly, Fu died with blood gushing out of his seven organs. This act ends with a scene in which Nine Guardian Ghosts snatched the souls of four wicked ministers—Wang Shen, Mi Xin, Liu Junqi and Tian Chongjin—after being beheaded on the public execution ground. The stage direction clearly notes the usage of *dijing*:

All crowds act out striving to beat Wang Shen. The executioner blocked them. Wang Shen hides himself in the dijing and exits the stage. A prop of Wang Shen's double body emerges from the dijing. Yang Jing acts out holding a sword and beheading him on the ground. The executioner acts out presenting the head and says: "Present the head." Wang Shen wears a ghostly cape and enters the stage through the dijing. Two Guardian Ghosts cuff him and exit the stage through an exit door.

眾百姓爭打王侁科。刽子手攬擋。王侁從地井隱下。地井出王侁替身切末。楊景持刀當場斬科。刽子手作獻首級科白：“獻首級。”王侁作搭魂帕從地井上。二差鬼作鎖擊從下場門下。

After Wang Shen was executed, the executioner brought Mi Xin to the ground. The same stage direction reads:

All crowds act out striving to beat Mi Xin. The executioner blocked them. Mi Xin hides himself in the dijing and exits the stage. A prop of Mi Xin's double body emerges from the dijing. Yang Jing acts out holding a sword and beheading him on the ground. The executioner acts out presenting the head and says: "Present the head." Mi Xin wears a ghostly cape and enters the stage through the dijing. Two Guardian Ghosts cuff him and exit the stage through an exit door.

眾百姓爭打米信科。刽子手攬擋。米信從地井隱下。地井出米信替身切末。楊景持刀當場斬科。刽子手作獻首級科白：“獻首級。”米信作搭魂帕從地井上。二差鬼作鎖擊從下場門下。(ZDXS, 1964: 42 a.- 51 a.)

After Mi Xin was executed, Liu Junqi and Tian Chongjing were also led by the executioner to face their final judgement. Likewise the same stage direction is applied to both of them. In this act we can clearly see two functions of *dijing*. First it was a hidden space that altered Fu Dingchen's human form. By emerging from the *dijing*, Fu suddenly transformed to be a soul waiting to be judged in the Hades. Apparently, the *dijing* in this case creates an interval space between the human and nefarious realms. The same function was applied in scenes in which Wang Shen, Mi Xin, Liu Junqi, and Tian Chongjing were executed. By concealing themselves in the *dijing*, they were transformed to be evil souls. At this moment, the props in the shape of these characters appeared on the stage through the *dijing*. Here the *dijing* has another function; i.e. the channel for allowing the props to appear on the stage. Besides, it is also the pathway for these characters to emerge from the Hades after becoming ghosts at the end of the scene.

The eighth act of the first volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “Extorting an army preparation and returning to the dragon cave” (*Zhuqiu wubei fan longku* 誅求武備翻龍窟) tells the story of Sun Wukong going to the Dragon Palace to search for weapons and receive a gold-gilded staff. The promptbook of the *SPBF* records:

Dragon King commands 'Go to the Treasure Room.' When Dragon King and Sun Wukong move around the stage, open the wooden boards that cover two front dijing. After Wukong finishes examining a large knife and a crescent-shaped halberd, begin playing music from the backstage. Then a flame emits

from the dijing, from which a large golden staff emerges. Wukong repeatedly exclaims 'Ai ya.' The backstage begins playing music again. Keep the large staff. The flame emits one more time. A small staff emerges. Take away both staves. Cover the dijing with wooden boards.

龍王白‘到寶藏庫去’，龍王悟空繞場時，隨開前地井板二。悟空看完大刀叉戟，內起鼓，地井內出彩火一把，出大金棒。悟空白‘俺呀’重句，內起鼓，收大棒，出彩火一把，出小棒，蓋板。(SPBFTG, 1964: 5 b.- 6 a.)

Here the promptbook clearly states the function as the pathway for allowing theatrical props to emerge onto the stage. The *dijing* was employed twice in this act. It was used to create a special effect in which flames emit and props like the large golden staff and the small staff emerged onto the stage.

The *dijing* can also function as a path, in which actors enter and exit the stage. The twenty-first act of the first volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “Plundering human’s beauty and bravery and managing the great Heaven” (*Lüeren sedan bao tianda* 掠人色膽包天大) tells the story of two bandits pushing Chen Guangrui 陳光蕊 off the river. The promptbook of the *SPBF* reads:

Two actors costumed as bandits act out pushing Chen Guangrui off the river. Sea soldiers costumed in turbans, sea soldiers’ masks, military robes, and carrying armors, enter the stage from the dijing and act out saving Chen Guangrui’s life, then exit by using the same dijing... When Chen Guangrui drinks wine and sings, open the dijing on the left corner, Chen Guangrui exits (jumps down). Do not re-cover the dijing, for it will be used in the next act.

二強盜應科，作推陳光蕊下水科，雜扮水卒臉穿箭袖卒褂從地井上，
作救陳光蕊，仍從地井下。。。。陳光蕊喝醉唱時，隨開左台口地井，
陳光蕊下院子，蓋板不蓋也，使得下出用。(SPBFTG, 1964: 14 a.)

In the twenty-second act of the same volume, entitled “Deserting a son, her virtuous name as if clear water” (*Piezi zhenming si shuiqing* 撇子貞名似水清), which tells the story of Yin Shi (Née Yin) 殷氏 throwing her son into the river, the same *dijing* was re-used. The promptbook states:

Miscellaneous actors costumed as sea soldiers wearing turbans, sea soldiers' masks, military robes, and wearing armors, leading miscellaneous actors costumed as Dragon King wearing Dragon King crown, dragon robe with a belt, enter the stage from the dijing.

雜扮水卒戴馬夫巾水卒臉穿箭袖卒褂，引雜扮龍王戴龍王冠穿蟒束帶從地井內上。

When Yin Shi acted out throwing a case, which was supposed to contain her own son, into the river, we are told:

Sea soldiers, Dragon King, and Gods of Protecting Law act out receiving the case, and then exit from the same dijing.

水卒、龍王、護法神、作接匣，仍從地井下。

Later when Yin Shi acted out jumping into the river,

The same sea soldiers come out of the dijing, lead a female lead costumed as Dragon Lady wearing a phoenix crown, mang robe with a belt, to enter the stage. Dragon Lady acts out saving Yin Shi's life, and then exits from the same dijing.

前水卒從地井內，引旦扮龍婆戴鳳冠穿蟒束帶暗上，作救殷氏，仍從地井內下。(SPBFTG, 1964: 14 b.)

It is clear from the stage directions that the *dijing* was not re-covered, for it would be used in the following acts.

Likewise in the twenty-third act of the same volume, entitled “An Immortal of the Golden Mountain Monastery rescues an infant”⁶⁴ (*Jinshan laojiu xueshu'er* 金山撈救血書兒), the same *dijing* was used as a way in which actors entered and exit the stage. This act deals with the story of the Crimson Immortal (*Danxia Chanshi* 丹霞禪師) of the Gold Mountain Monastery (*Jinshan Si* 金山寺) saving an infant in the river. The promptbook of the *SPBF* records:

Law Enlightenment Monk enters. Open the left dijing. Sea soldiers come out. A stage runner comes out of the Water-Cloud⁶⁵ and closes the dijing with wooden boards.

法明上，隨開左台口地井，出水卒，走場人出水雲，下蓋板。(SPBFTG, 1964: 15 a.)

Therefore, from the twenty-first to the twenty-third acts the same *dijing* was repeatedly utilized. It was used as the entrance and exit pathway for Chen Guangrui in the twenty-first act; sea soldiers, Dragon King, Gods of Protecting Law in the twenty-second act and Law Enlightenment Monk and sea soldiers in the twenty-third act. Only when the stage runner came out to close it was the *dijing*'s usage finalized.

⁶⁴ An infant here refers to Monk Xuan Zang.

⁶⁵ Here the “Water-Cloud” refers to a curtain with cloud patterns.

The fourteenth act of the fifth volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “Law Protector⁶⁶ encounters demons and sinks into a deep channel” (*Falü zaomo duo shenqian* 法律遭魔墮深塹) is a scene when Monk Xuan Zang crossed the Heavenly River to search for Buddhist scripture. He encountered fish spirits who had frozen the surface of the River. These fish spirits tricked Monk Xuan Zang to cross the icy river. As soon as Monk Xuan Zang stepped on the river, the ice started breaking. Eventually Monk Xuan Zang fell into the river. According to the stage direction, actors costumed as Monk Xuan Zang, Sun Wukong, Zhu Bajie, and Monk Sha together enter the Longevity Stage. Monk Xuan Zang sang the tune “Beautiful bottle gourd” (*Sheng hulu* 勝葫蘆):

When golden birds return and glow; the rosy sunset arises,

Warm air vapors up; after rainfall the sky is high and the scenery is clear.

金鳥返照晚霞升

玉後天高景色明。

Then along with an echoing sound from the cracks of the river surface, Mong Xuan Zang continued to sing:

Suddenly I hear a sound of ice cracking and breaking,

The current of the river echoes so loud; this immediately makes me alarmed.

猛聽得冰裂聲崩

水響潺湲，使我頓心驚。

Afterwards Monk Xuan Zang exit the stage by using the *dijing*. Zhu Bajie and Monk Sha spoke: “This is not good. Our master fell into the river. What should we do?” (*buhao le, shuai fu diaoxia shui qu, zenme chu* 不好了，師父掉下水準去，怎麼

⁶⁶ Here the Law Protector refers to Monk Xuan Zang.

處?). At this point actors costumed as fish spirits, dressing in fish spirits helmets and armors, carried lotus hammers “enter the Longevity Stage from the *dijing*” (*cong dijing shang shoutai* 從地井上壽台。). And then they acted out fighting with Sun Wukong, Zhu Bajie, and Monk Sha (*SPBF*, 1964: 24 a.- 30 a.). Here it is clear that the Longevity Stage is staged as the Heavenly River until the end of this act. Therefore, that when Monk Xuan Zang exit through the *dijing* means that he fell into the river. And that when Fish Spirits entered the stage from the *dijing* means that they came out of the river.

Underneath the *dijing* was installed the water sprinkling equipment, which was used to enhance the performance technique by creating scenes with water-special effect. For instance, in the fourth act of the first volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “Stone monkeys usurp the waterfall” (*Shi hou'er qiangzhan shuilian* 石猴兒強佔水廉), it is the *dijing* that mainly created the stage scenery by functioning as a “Waterfall Cave” (*Shuilian Dong* 水廉洞). The promptbook of the *SPBF* notes: “To be able to create authentic scenery, four buckets of water have to be prepared for this act.” (*cichu yubei si shuitong caigou* 此出預備四水桶才夠。) (*SPBFTG*, 1964: 3 a.). How to create the “Waterfall Cave” is not recorded in the book. But I believe that the water must have been pumped from the well installed in the underground of the theater. As I have described in Chapter Two, this water well is a stage prop functioning as a source of sprinkled water during the drama performance. To create sprinkled water, a mechanical pipe which was fastened to a rope, was lifted up by revolving pulleys. Water could be sprinkled on the Longevity Stage. It could also be sprinkled to the courtyard. Besides, the waterways were also equipped to circulate water. The well also has a significant function to produce sound effects during drama performances.

Moreover, there were several interesting theatrical props employed in the three-tiered stage. As explained in Chapter Three, such props were built under the influence of European Jesuits who came to China and worked in the Qing court as imperial servants during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. To summarize, there were transformative mechanical props, a variety of paper props, iron and wooden props, screen curtains with cloud patterns, and even live animals. Their purpose was to create an appearance which was a fitting and appropriate accompaniment to the action being performed on the stage. In other words it was used to create illusions and special effects that enhanced the reality of the performance. This created a truly dramatic effect which amazed and delighted the royal audience. To create the liveliness and marvel of the gala performances, these props had to be employed with *chaduo*, *tianjing*, *dijing*, “cloud sack,” “cloud spoon,” “cloud board,” “cloud chair,” and the lifting machine, which play a significant role in assisting the mobility of the actors. By using these theatrical props, actors could move up and down, in and out among these four platforms, which represent the interaction between heavenly spirit characters and demon characters, which will form a main topic of the next section.

4.2.2 Dynamism of Actors in Gala Performances of on the Three Tiered Stage

One might wonder why the court plays provided such complicated and yet detailed stage directions. The answer lies in the complexity of the performance and the structure of the three-tiered stage. Traditionally, when a character enters the stage, the play script only states “such and such character enters (*mou mou shang* 某某上).” However, due to the complexity of the performance, which mostly deal with such

characters as the Heavenly gods and deities, Bodhisattvas, and demons, whose positions and actions on the stage are different, it is necessary to be clarified in the stage directions. The introduction (*fanli* 凡例) section of the *QSJK* clearly states:

The theatrical stage of the ancient times only had an entrance door and an exit door. Actors entered the stage by way of the entrance door and exit by way of the exit door. However, there were some actors supposed to enter the stage by way of the entrance door but entered by way of the exit door instead. Moreover, there were some actors who both entered and exit the stage by way of the entrance door. And there were also some actors who both entered and exit the stage by way of the exit door. Now all the mistakes have been distinguished and clarified. If actors play such characters as the Heavenly gods and spirits, they are not allowed to enter or exit the stage by way of the same door as actors who play the role of ordinary people. If there is Heaven, then there must be Hell; if there is a main path, then there must be a side door. Indeed the distinction between human and demons must be analyzed and clarified in each act.

從來演劇惟有上下二場門，大概從上場門上，下場門下。然有應從上場門上者，亦有應從下場門上者，且有應從上場門上，而仍應從上場門下者，有從下場門上，仍應從下場門下者。今悉為分別注明。若夫上帝神祇、釋迦仙子，不便與塵凡同門出入，且有天堂必有地獄，有正路必有旁門，人鬼之辨亦應分析。並注明每出中。(QSJK, 1964: 2 a.- 2 b.)

Likewise, in the introduction section of the *ZDXS* it clearly records:

In the play characters are classified into Heavenly gods and spirits, immortals, human beings, and demons. The entrance and exit doors should be built

separately on the Fortune Stage, the Prosperity Stage, the Longevity Stage, the Immortal Tower, as well as in the tianjing and the dijing. Now that the different characters should enter and exit each of these stages by way of different doors must be distinguished and clarified.

劇中有上帝、神祇、仙佛及人民、鬼魅，其出入上下應分福台、祿台、壽台及仙樓、天井、地井，或當從某台某門出入者，今悉看斟酌分別注明。(ZDXS, 1964: 2 a.)

From the above passages, I would argue that the gala performances during the Qing dynasty were adapted in accordance with the architectural structure of the grand theater. In order to avoid the confusion of numerous actors that might have happened during the performances, and due to the complexity of the theatrical structure, the stage directions of these court plays had to be explained in details.

However, the most important issue to be analyzed in this section is the dynamism of actors in gala performances on the three-tiered stage. One might wonder how actors performed in such a complicated theater. To what extent were they staged in this grand theater? Did they occupy and perform on four platforms simultaneously or separately? To answer these questions, we have to rely on stage directions written in the major court plays that I have mentioned earlier.

I would argue that the movements of actors, their entrances (*shangchang* 上場) and their exits (*xiachang* 下場) are not so complicated as the architecture of the three-tiered stage. To avoid the confusion of the performances, the stage directions of major court plays clearly state the structures and patterns of actor' entrances and exits. To be sure, these actors would enter and exit the stage one group after another and one stage after another. For instance, the first act of the first volume of the *DZCQ*,

entitled “From the five-colored clouds a letter descends in order to manifest an auspicious omen,” (*Wuse yun jiang shucheng rui* 五色雲降書呈瑞) clearly demonstrates an orderly arrangement of actors in the three-tiered stage.

1. *A group of actors costumed as spirit officials enter from the Fortune Stage, the Prosperity Stage, and the Longevity Stage. They act out dancing. And then they exit.*

2. *A group of actors costumed as Eighteen Indian Arhats and Cloud Envoys enter the Longevity Stage. Dragons descend from the cloud sack. Tigers enter from the dijing. All characters act out dancing together.*

3. *On the Longevity Stage, in front of the Immortal Tower hangs a large screen, on which portraits of Western Ocean Bodhisattva of Foreign Mien, Gaté and Heavenly Kings are depicted.*

4. *A group of actors costumed as Eight Heavenly Dragons enter from the Fortune Stage.*

5. *A group of actors costumed as bodhisattvas, Sakyamuni, enter from the Prosperity Stage.*

6. *Several actors costumed as Bhiksunis, Four Great Bhodisattavas, and young acolytes enter from the Immortal Tower.*

7. *A group of actors costumed as Heavenly Kings enter from the Longevity Stage.*

衆扮靈官從福台、祿台、壽台上，跳舞科，下。

衆扮十八天竺羅漢、雲使上壽台，龍從雲兜下，虎從地井上，合舞科。

壽台場上仙樓前挂大西洋番像佛菩薩、揭帝、天王等畫像帳幔一分。

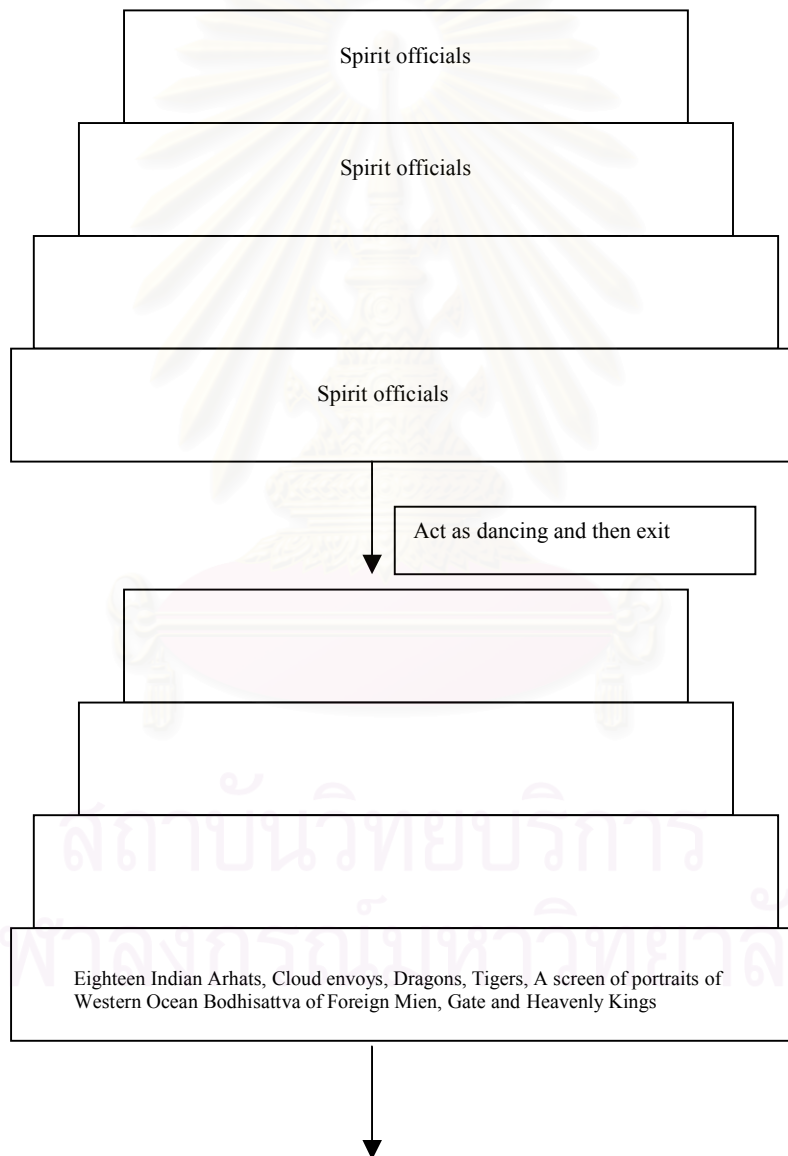
衆扮八部天龍從福台上。

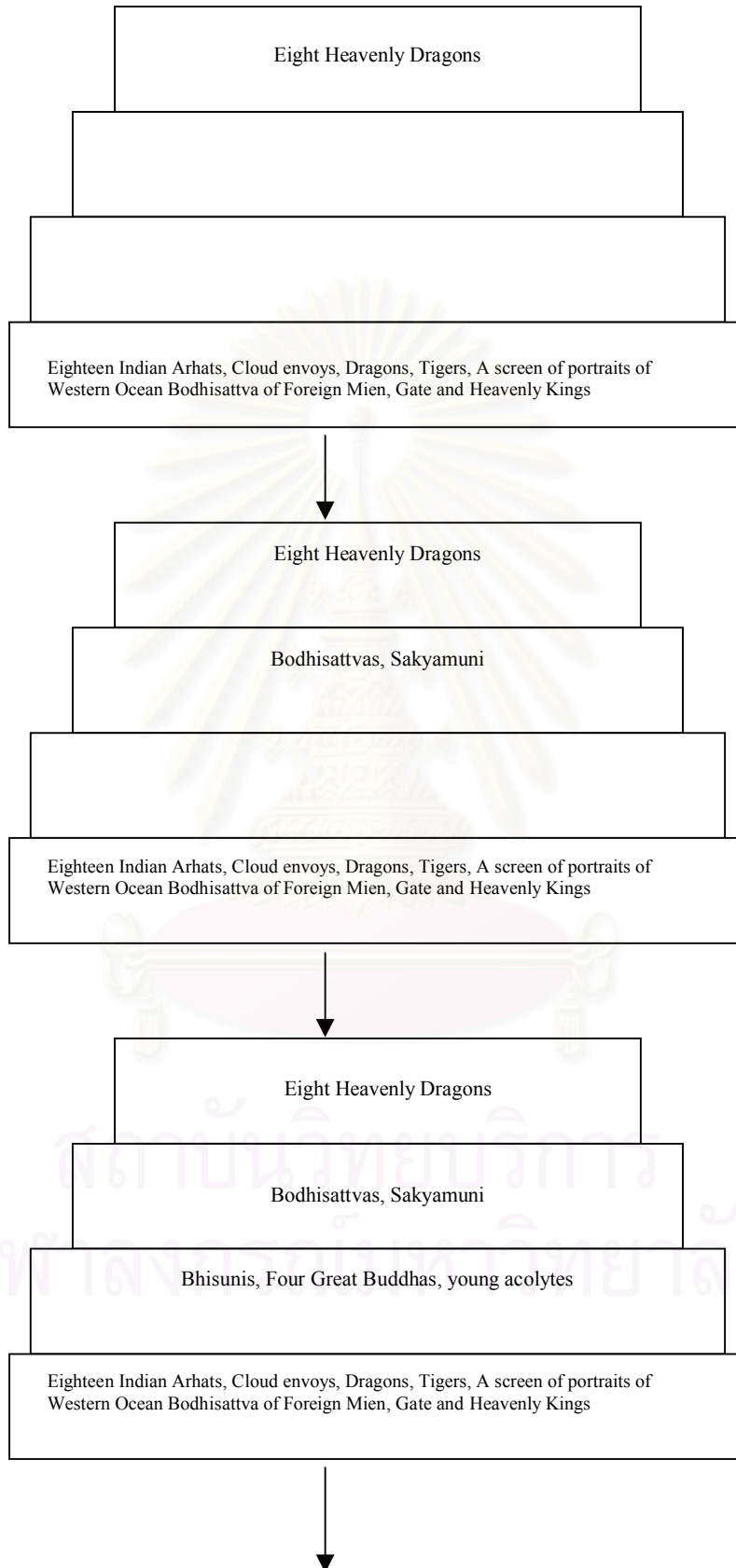
衆扮菩薩、阿難迦叶、佛從祿台上。

衆扮比丘尼、四大菩薩、童子從仙樓上。

衆扮天王從壽台上。(DZCQ, 1964: 3 a.- 4 b.)

**Diagram 9: Dynamism of Actors in the First Act of the First Volume of the
*DZCQ***





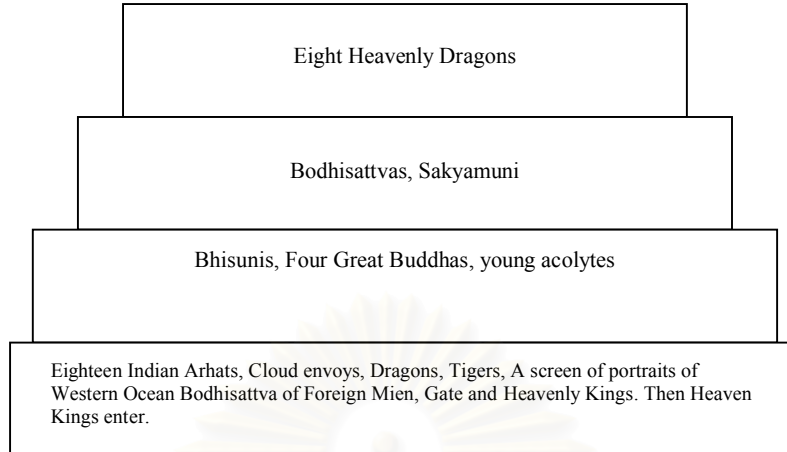


Diagram 9⁶⁷ clearly illustrates a complete usage of the entire space of the three-tiered stage. We can see that actors occupy all four platforms of the grand theater. It creates a lifelike illustration of the Western Ocean Bodhisattva of Foreign Mien where the Sakyamuni and bodhisattva characters on the Prosperity Stage formed a center in the theater. Here that “Dragons enter by taking the cloud sack. Tigers enter from the *dijing*.” means actors costumed in dragon robes rode on the cloud sack and descended to the Longevity Stage through the *tianjing*. At the same time actors costumed in tiger robes entered the Longevity Stage by using the *dijing*. They then performed a “mutual dance” (*hewu* 合舞) with Arhat characters.

The stage direction of the second act of the first volume of the *ZDXS*, entitled “The Imperial Thrones of Three Heavenly Realms Guard the Morning Constellation.” (*Sanxiao dizuo gong xingchen* 三霄帝座拱星辰) also shows an orderly entrance of actors:

⁶⁷ The diagrams created in this section consist of four platforms: the bottom floor represents the Longevity Stage, the second floor the Immortal Tower, the third floor the Prosperity Stage and the top floor the Fortune Stage.

1. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as twenty-eight Constellation Spirits enter the Longevity Stage by way of both doors, i.e. entrance and exit doors.*
2. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as Six Civil Attendants and Six Military Attendants enter the Immortal Tower by way of both doors.*
3. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as Nine Brightness Constellations and Heavenly gods enter the Prosperity Stage by way of both doors.*
4. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as soldiers of the Yellow Turban and enter the Fortune Stage by way of both doors, and act out arranging themselves on both sides.*
5. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as a bevy of eight Constellation Officials, four court ladies, four court officials, Golden Lad and Jade Maiden lead the Purple Great God to enter the Prosperity Stage. The Purple Great God acts out enthroning. Miscellaneous actors costumed as three officers of the North, four Mountain and River Spirits, four envoys, four guardian deities enter the Longevity Stage and act as attending the ritual.*

雜扮二十八宿從壽台兩場門上。

雜扮六丁六甲從仙樓兩場門上。

雜扮九曜、元神從祿台兩場門上。

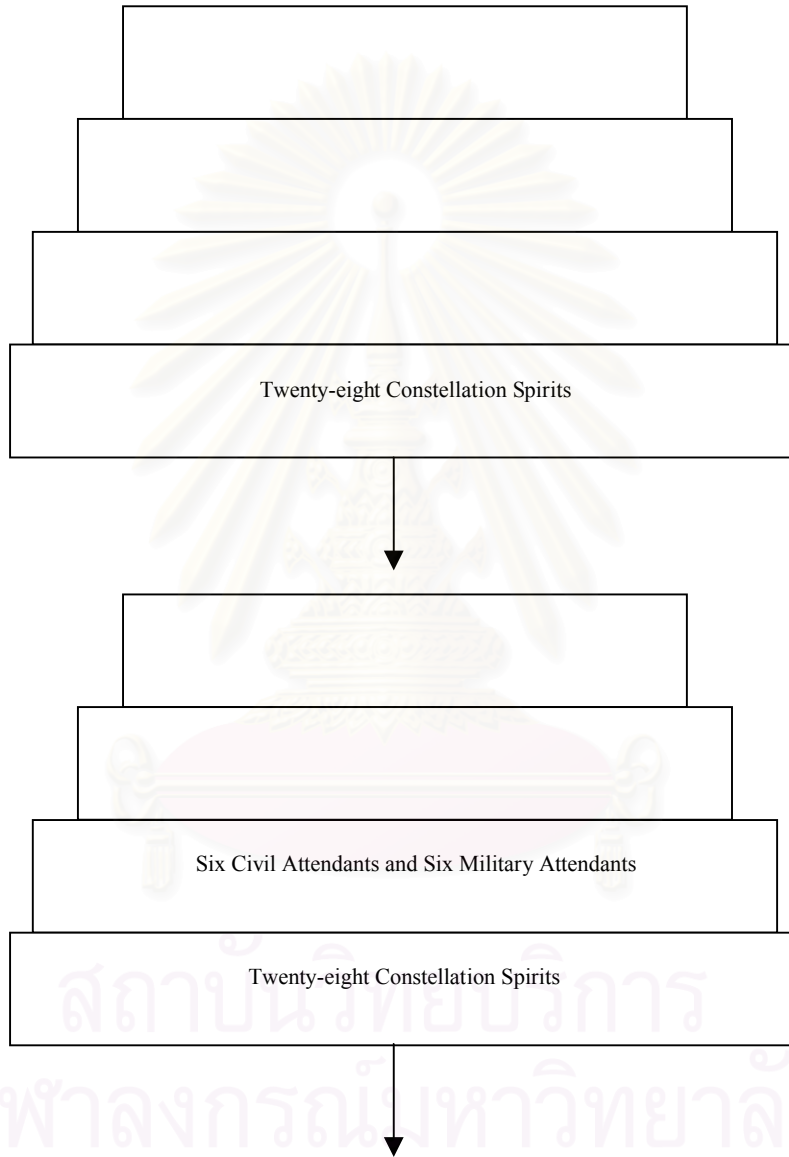
雜扮黃巾力士從福台兩場門上，列侍兩旁科。

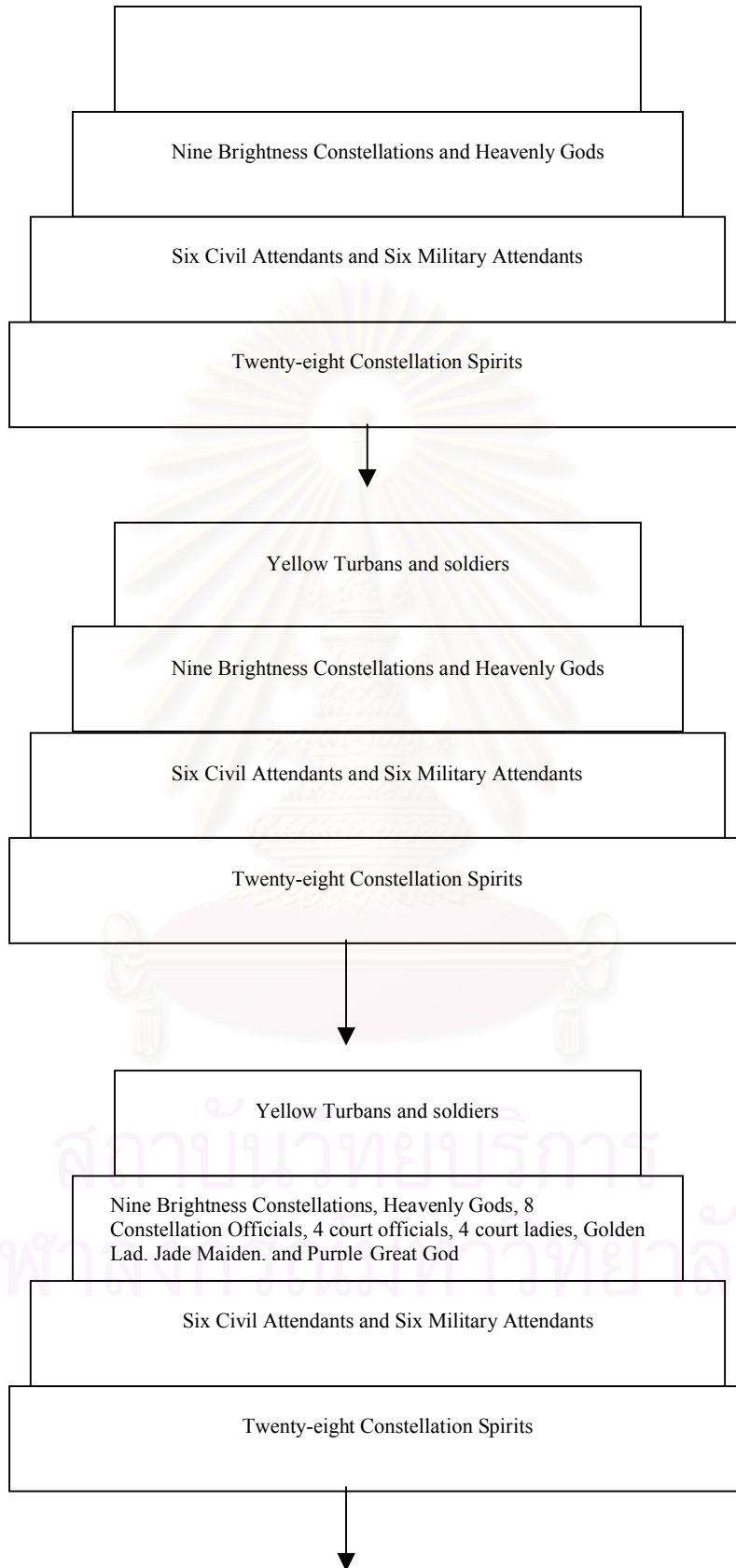
雜扮八星官、四宮娥、四宮官、金童玉女，引紫微大帝從祿台上，入座科。

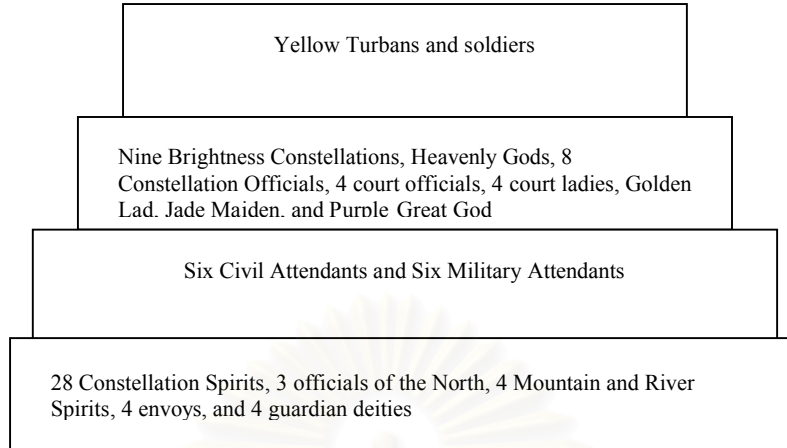
雜扮北陰三司、四山川神、四採訪使、四城隍，從壽台上，行朝參禮

科。(ZDXS, 1964: 8 a.- 9 a.)

**Diagram 10: Dynamism of Actors in the Second Act of the First volume of
the *ZDXS***





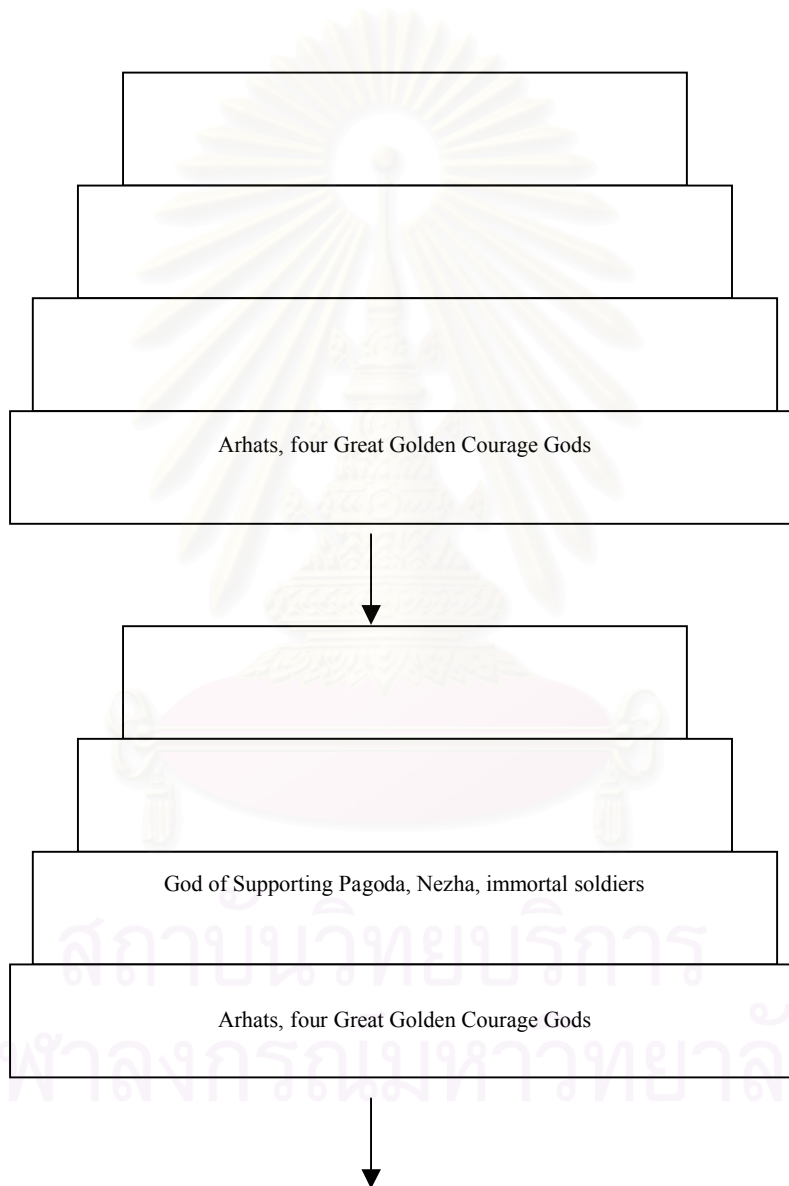


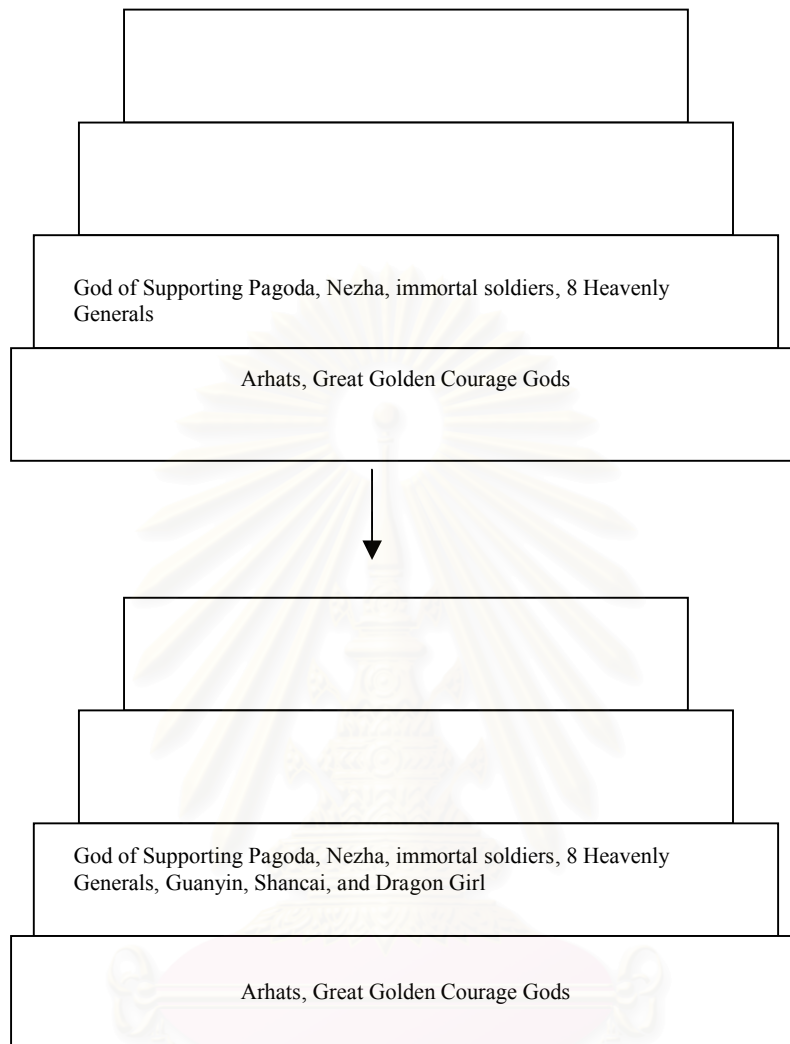
The twenty-fourth act of the eighth volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “Iron Fan Princess liberates demon troops” (*Tieshan gongzhu fang mobing* 鐵扇公主放魔兵) is an episode when the Heavenly soldiers and Heavenly generals assisted Sun Wukong to capture the Bull Demon King (*Niumo Wang* 牛魔王). At this moment in the theater, four groups of characters descended from the *tianjing*. First group was composed of several actors costumed as Arhats and four Great Golden Courage Gods (*Si Da Jin Gang* 四大金剛) “from the left and right *tianjing* descend to the Immortal Tower and reach the Longevity Stage.” (*cong zuoyou tianjing xia xianlou zhi shoutai* 從左右天井下仙樓至壽台). The second group consisted of actors costumed as God of Supporting Pagoda (*Tuota Tianwang* 托塔天王), Nezha (*Nazha* 哪吒) and a group of immortal soldiers “from the left and right *tianjing* descend to enter the Immortal Tower.” (*cong zuoyou tianjing xia zhi xianlou shang* 從左右天井下至仙樓上). The third group was composed of actors costumed as eight Heavenly generals “from four *tianjing*, each ride a cloud sack to descend.” (*cong si tianjing, ge cheng yundou xia* 從四天井, 各乘雲兜下). The last group comprised with actors costumed as Guanyin, Shancai, and Dragon Girl “each rides a cloud sack and descends from the *tianjing*.”

(*ge cheng yundou cong tianjing neixia* 各乘雲兜從天井內下). (*SPBF*, 1964: 70

a.- 75 a.)

Diagram 11: Dynamism of Actors in the Twenty-Fourth Act of the Eighth Volume of the *SPBF*





The twelfth act of the first volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “Arriving in the imperial city to submit an impeachment” (*Yijiang que jiaojin tanzhang* 詒絳闕交進彈章) tells a story of Sun Wukong descending under the ocean to request for troops and weapons from the Dragon King. The Dragon King then ascended to the Heaven to report a situation and to ask for the Heavenly troops to attack his enemy. To perform this scene in the three-tiered stage:

1. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as sixteen Heavenly generals enter the Longevity Stage by using an entrance door of the Immortal Tower. They act out separating to attend.*

2. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as four Heavenly ministers wearing court caps, mang robes, belts and carry tablets. Miscellaneous actors costumed as four ministers of the Constellation; miscellaneous actors costumed as four Luminous Appearance Consorts, four court officials, Golden Lad and Jade Maiden enter the Fortune Stage.*

3. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as A Thousand-Eyed God, Obedient Ear God, four masters who are Lord Ma, Lord Zhao, Lord Wen, and Lord Guan; miscellaneous actors costumed as twelve civil and military attendants enter the Prosperity Stage.*

雜扮十六天將，從仙樓門上壽台，分侍科。

雜扮四天官戴朝冠穿蟒束帶執笏。雜扮四星官，雜扮四昭容、四宮官、金童、玉女從福台上。

雜扮千里眼、順風耳，雜扮馬、趙、溫、關，雜扮十二丁甲神從祿台上。

Here the Longevity Stage was occupied by sixteen Heavenly generals battling with the Monkey King. The Fortune Stage was filled with actors costumed as four Heavenly ministers, four ministers of the Constellation, four Zhao Rong, four court officials, as well as Golden Lad and Jade Maiden. At this moment they sang and danced together. Then on the Prosperity Stage there were actors costumed as A Thousand-Eyed character, Obedient Ear character, four leaders consisting of Lord Ma, Lord Zhao, Lord Wen, and Lord Guan, Six Civil Attendants and Six Military

Attendants. Later some characters occupied the Immortal Tower, while the others positioned themselves and acted out on the stage. Up until this moment all characters on every platform together sing the tune “Dotting the red lips” (*Dian jiangchun* 點絳脣) at the same time.

The moonlight becomes pale, the stars are distant.

The dews are splendid, as though they were flowing.

The Heavenly Gate is extensive,

They worship and dance with exaltation,

Mysteriously they sound with a slight degree.

月淡星疏，露華如注。

天門溥，拜舞嵩呼。

隱隱鳴稍度。

Afterwards, the stage direction reads:

4. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as the Dragon Kings wearing Dragon King caps, mang robes, belts and carrying tablets.*

5. *A crown actor costumed as Lord of the Imperial City wearing a gemmed crown, mang robes, belts and carrying a tablet.*

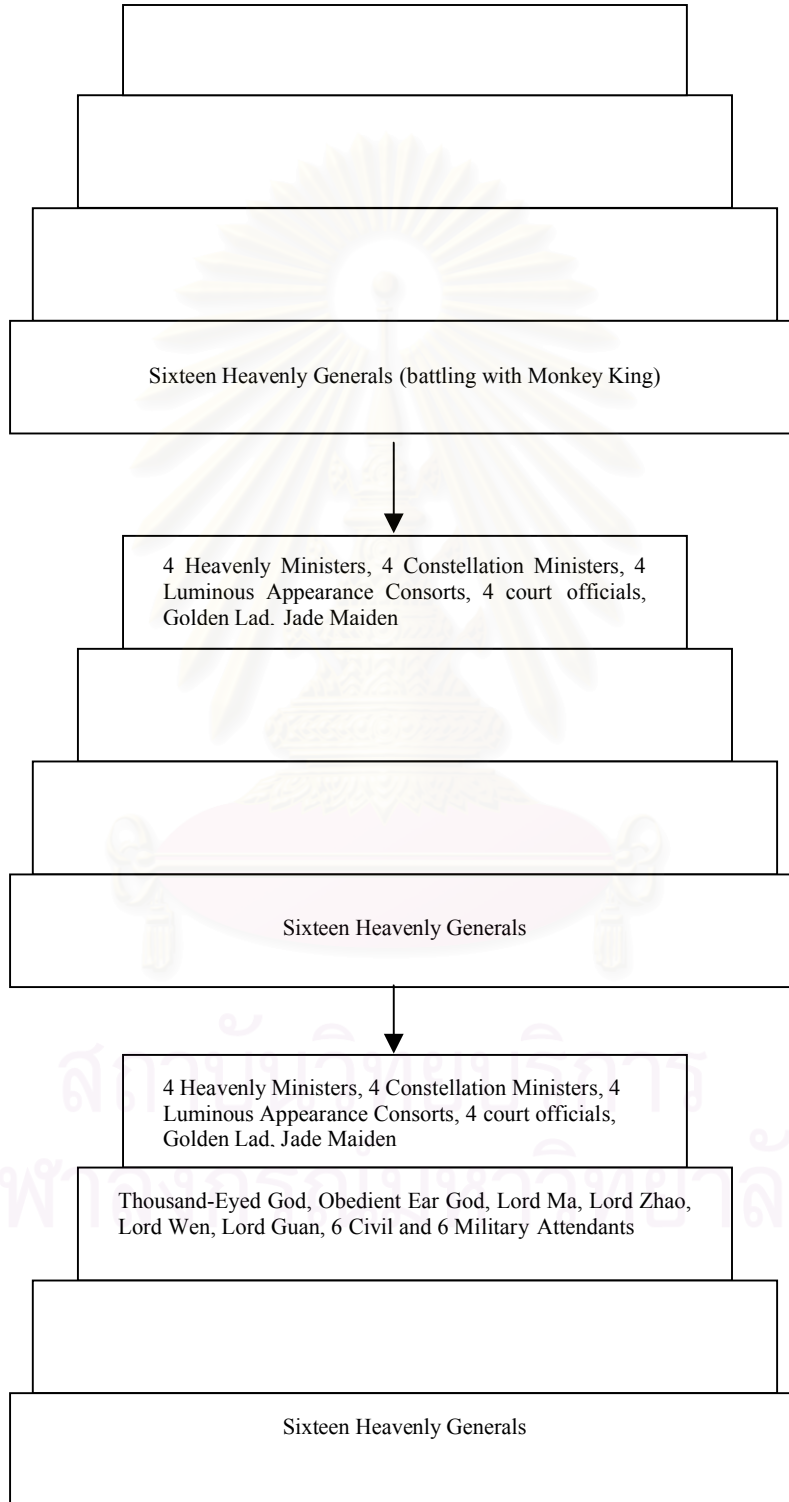
6. *Together they all enter the Longevity Stage and sing the tune “One more form.”*

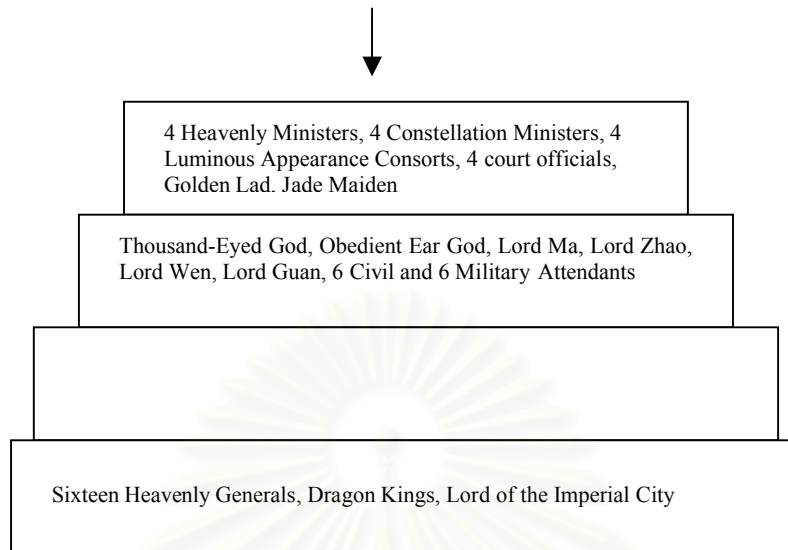
雜扮龍王戴龍王冠穿蟒束帶執笏。

淨扮闕君戴冕旒穿蟒束帶執笏。

全從壽台門上，唱《又一體》。(SPBF, 1964: 48 a.- 48 b.)

Diagram 12: Dynamism of Actors in the Twelfth Act of the First volume of the *SPBF*





In the twenty-fourth act of the tenth volume of the *ZDXS*, entitled “Great Military Eminence of Dragon and Tiger, Wind and Cloud” (*Longhu fengyun da wuzhao* 龍虎風雲大武昭) is a scene when the Jade Emperor (*Yuhuang Dadi* 玉皇大帝) and other deities descended from the Heaven to commemorate the peaceful time. The stage direction reads:

1. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as Three-Headed, Six-Limbed character, Four-Headed, Eight-Limbed character, A Thousand-Eyed God, Obedient Ear God, Nine Brightness Constellations enter the Fortune Stage.*
2. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as Heavenly Master, Immortal Officials, Left and Right Attendants, court ladies, court officials, Golden Lad, Jade Maiden lead the Great Jade Emperor and enter the Prosperity Stage. He then acts as ascending to the throne.*
3. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as twenty-eight Constellation Spirits enter the Immortal Tower.*

4. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as envoys, the Dipper of the Third Rank, the King of the North Mountain Peak, and Lord Zitong lead Purple Great God enter the Longevity Stage and act out attending the ritual.*

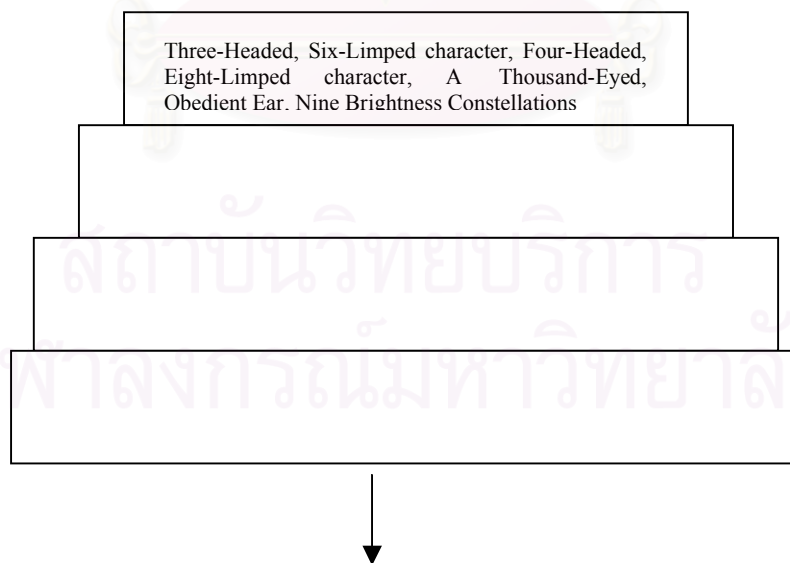
雜扮三頭六臂、四頭八臂、千里眼、順風耳、九曜，從福台上。

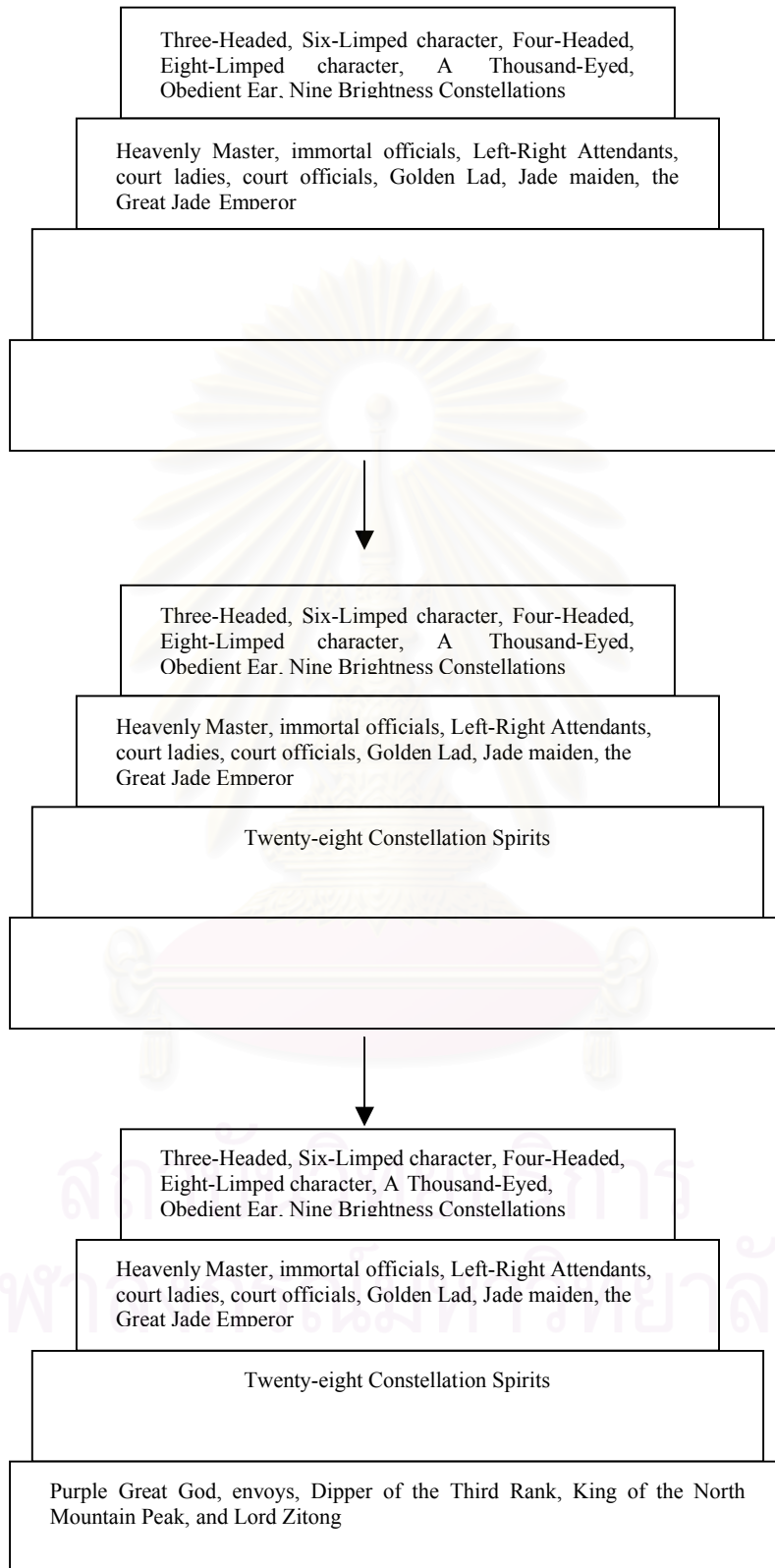
雜扮天師、仙官、左輔右弼、宮娥、宮官、金童、玉女、靈官，引玉皇大帝從錄台上，升座科。

雜扮二十八宿從仙樓上。

採訪使、三台北斗、北岳大帝、梓潼帝君，引紫微大帝從壽臺上，行朝參禮科。(ZDXS, 1964: 69 a.- 70 a.)

Diagram 13: Dynamism of Actors in the Twenty-Fourth Act of the Tenth Volume of the ZDXS





The twenty-fourth act of the tenth volume of the *DZCQ*, entitled “Three religions⁶⁸ together sing to eulogize the peaceful time” (*Sanjiao tongsheng song taiping* 三教同聲頌太平) also consist of different groups of characters occupying each platform one after the other. This act tells how deities from three religions namely Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism made their appearances to celebrate the peaceful time and to pay respect to the Qianlong emperor at the end of the play.

1. *On the Longevity Stage miscellaneous actors costumed as twenty-eight Constellation Spirits enter and act as dancing. Then they exit.*

2. *On the Longevity Stage there are miscellaneous actors costumed as eighteen Chief Dipper Stars.*

3. *On the Prosperity Stage there are miscellaneous actors costumed as eighteen Indian Arhats.*

4. *On the Fortune Stage miscellaneous actors costumed as eighteen Heavenly spirits enter the stage. Together they all sing the tune “Three revolving of falling wild geese.”*

壽台雜扮二十八宿上，跳舞科，下。

壽台雜扮十八魁星。

祿台雜扮十八羅漢。

福台雜扮十八仙真上。全唱《三轉雁兒落》(*DZCQ*, 1964: 40 a.)

After they finished singing:

5. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as twenty-eight Constellation Spirits enter the Immortal Tower.*

⁶⁸ Three religions here refer to Taoism (*Dao* 道), Buddhism (*Fo* 佛) and Confucianism (*Ru* 儒). Each religion concentrates on different aspects of life. That is to say Taoism focuses on independence and nature; Buddhism on nirvana; and Confucianism on worldly matters (Walters, 1992: 59-60).

6. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as Red-Robed Wenchang, immortal officials, the Heavenly Deaf, and the Earthly Mute, lead a male lead Wen Chang King to enter the Immortal Tower.*

7. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as attendants, bodhisattvas, Sakyamuni, lead a crown costumed as Tathagata to enter the Prosperity Stage.*

8. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as young acolytes, the Longevity Immortal, Yin Xi and Xu Jia, lead an extra character costumed as Lord Laozi to enter the Fortune Stage. Then they all sing the tune “Wild geese falling into the peach blossoms.”*

雜扮二十八宿上仙樓。

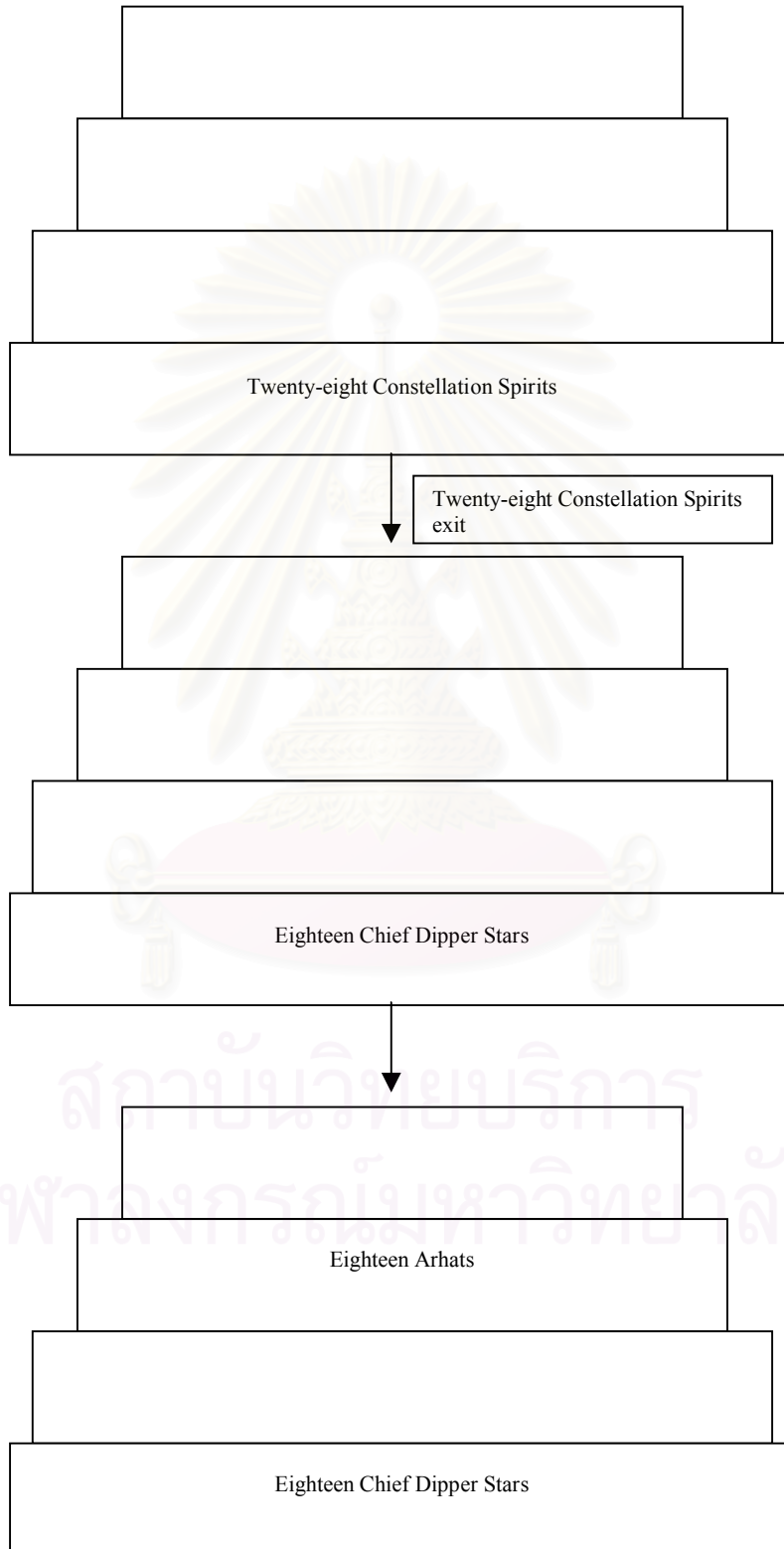
雜扮朱衣文昌、仙官、天聾、地啞，引生扮文昌帝君，仙樓上。

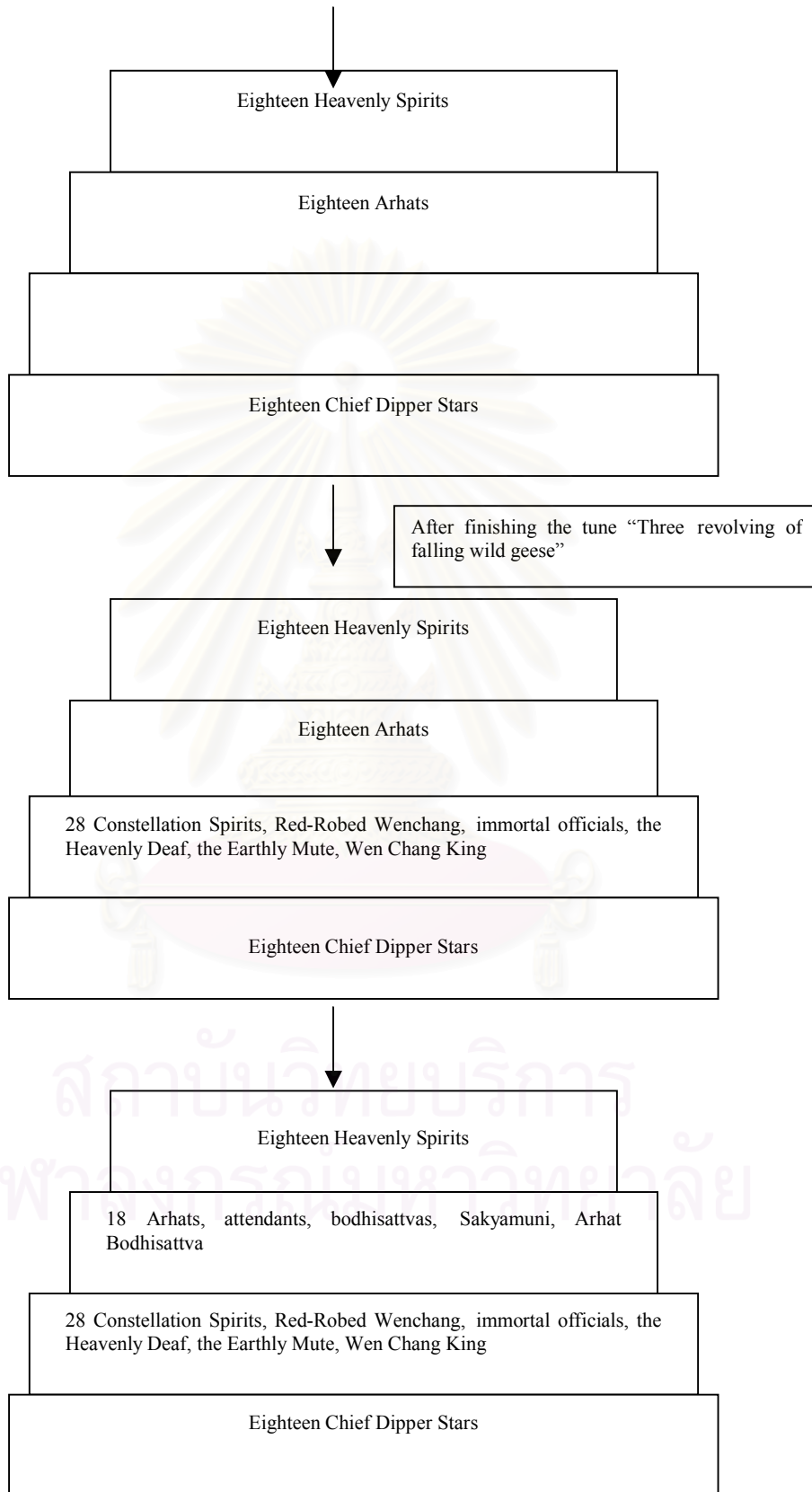
雜扮侍者、菩薩、阿難迦葉，引淨扮如來佛祿台上。

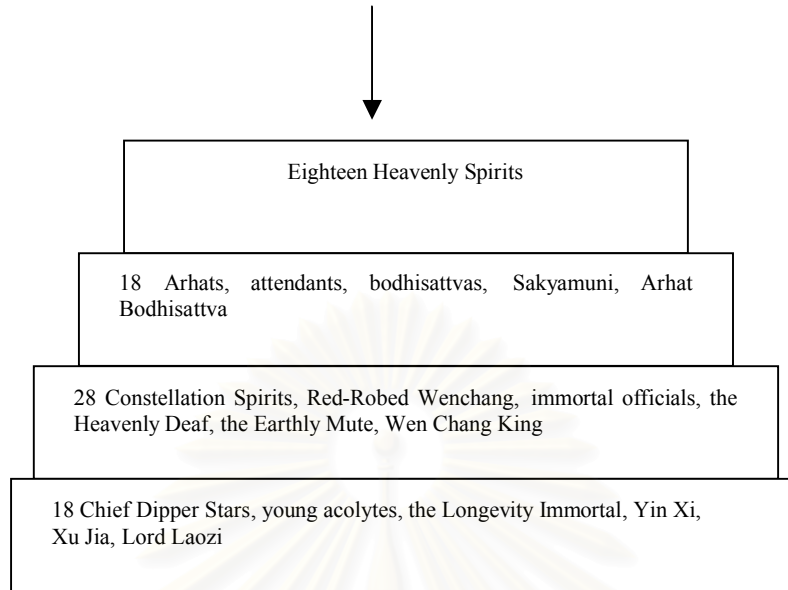
雜扮仙童、壽仙、尹喜、徐甲，引外扮老君福台上。衆同唱《雁落梅花》。(DZCQ, 1964: 41 a.)

Diagram 14: Dynamism of Actors in the Twenty-Fourth Act of the Tenth

Volume of the *DZCQ*







The same pattern was also applied in the twenty-fourth act of the tenth volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “Commemorating the peaceful time with the Heavenly flowers gathering fortune” (*Qing shengping tianhua jifu* 慶昇平天花集福). This is an episode when all gods, goddesses, immortal spirits, and other significant characters such as Monk Xuan Zang and Sun Wukong came out to commemorate the peaceful time. The performance of this act was spectacular. For it was filled with flowers sprinkled by heavenly maiden characters while riding the cloud sacks down to the stage. In the meantime, each group of characters entered the stage one after the other to sing and dance. Indeed, the grand theater was filled with the blessings and delightful ambience.

1. *Four Great Golden Courages enter the Prosperity Stage and dance. After they finish dancing, they still exit from the Prosperity Stage.*
2. *A group of Indian Arhats enter the Prosperity Stage and the Longevity Stage. Together they sing the tune “Three revolving of falling wild geese.”*

3. *Miscellaneous actors costumed as Dragon King named Sha Jieluo, Nonhumanlike Yaksa, Old lady Qianda, A Xiuluo, Jia Louluo, Jin Naluo, Mo Houluo jia, Wei Tuo enter the Fortune Stage.*

4. *Four Great Golden Courages, eight attendants, three bodhisattvas, Sakyamuni, Tathagata enter the Prosperity Stage from an entrance door. Tathagata ascends to his seat.*

5. *A group of Indian Arhats enter the Longevity Stage from an entrance door of the Immortal Tower. They act out worshipping Buddha by bowing their heads. They all sing the tune "Wild geese falling into peach blossoms."*

6. *A female lead costumed as Guanyin bodhisattva carrying a book enters the Prosperity Stage from an entrance door. She speaks.*

7. *Monk Xuan Zang, Wukong, Wuneng, and Wujing, together enter the Prosperity Stage from an entrance door. Monk Xuan Zang speaks.*

8. *A group of heavenly maidens scattering celestial flowers ride five cloud sacks and from the tianjing descend to the stage. Five cloud sacks act out rising. Tathagata sings the tune "Drunken peace." A group of actors costumed Yellow-Robed Monster, Golden-Horned Great King, Silver-Horned Great King, Springing-from-the-Earth Lady enter the Longevity Stage from an entrance door. They act out participating in worship. During the songs, they exit the Longevity Stage from an exit door. A group of Indian Arhats sing the tune "Celestial flowers falling."*

9. *A group of heavenly maidens scattering celestial flowers ride five cloud sacks and from the tianjing descend to the stage. Tathagata sings the tune "Drunken peace." Female leads costumed as four dragon maidens carrying vessels and offering precious things, Dragon King of Four Seas, Dragon King*

of the Nie River, a group of loyal civil and military ministers, Chen Guangrui, Yin Shi enter the Longevity Stage from an entrance door. They act out participating in worship. During the songs, they exit the Longevity Stage from an exit door. A group of Indian Arhats sing the tune “Celestial flowers falling.”

10. A group of heavenly maidens scattering celestial flowers ride five cloud sacks and from the tianjing descend to the stage. Tathagata sings the tune “Drunken peace.” A group of actors costumed as Heavenly Dragons of Eight Departments and celestial maidens enter the stage and act out worshipping.

11. A group of actors costumed as Flood Dragon Demon, Arrogant Worm Demon, alligator, Nine-tailed fox, and other six demons enter the Longevity Stage from an entrance door. They act out participating in worship. During the songs, they exit the Longevity Stage from an exit door. A group of Indian Arhats sing the tune “Celestial flowers falling.”

12. A group of heavenly maidens scattering celestial flowers ride five cloud sacks and from the tianjing descend to the stage. Tathagata sings the tune “Drunken peace.” From the Immortal Tower Indian Arhats descend to the Longevity Stage. Tathagata speaks.

13. Every (character) exits the Fortune Stage, the Prosperity Stage, and the Longevity Stage (one after another).

四金剛從祿台上，跳舞，畢，仍從祿台下。

衆羅漢從祿台壽台上，合唱《三轉雁兒落》。

雜扮沙竭羅龍王、夜叉人非人、乾達婆、阿修羅、迦樓羅、緊那羅、摩睺羅迦、韋馱，從福台上。

四金剛、八侍者、三菩薩、阿難迦葉、如來佛，從祿台門上，升座科。

衆羅漢從仙樓門壽台上，作朝佛稽首科。全唱《雁落梅花》。

旦扮觀音菩薩持簿，從祿台門上白。

唐僧、悟空、悟能、悟淨，全從祿台門上，唐僧白。

衆散花天女從天井內乘五雲兜下，五雲兜起科。如來佛唱《醉太平》。

衆扮黃袍郎、金角大王、銀角大王、地湧夫人，從壽台上場門上，參拜科。在曲內從壽台下場門下。衆羅漢唱《天花落》。

衆散花天女從天井內乘五雲兜下。如來佛唱《醉太平》。

旦扮四龍女捧盤獻寶、四海龍王、涅槃龍王、衆文武忠臣、陳光蕊、殷氏，從壽台上場門上，參拜科。在曲內從壽台下場門下。衆羅漢唱《天花落》。

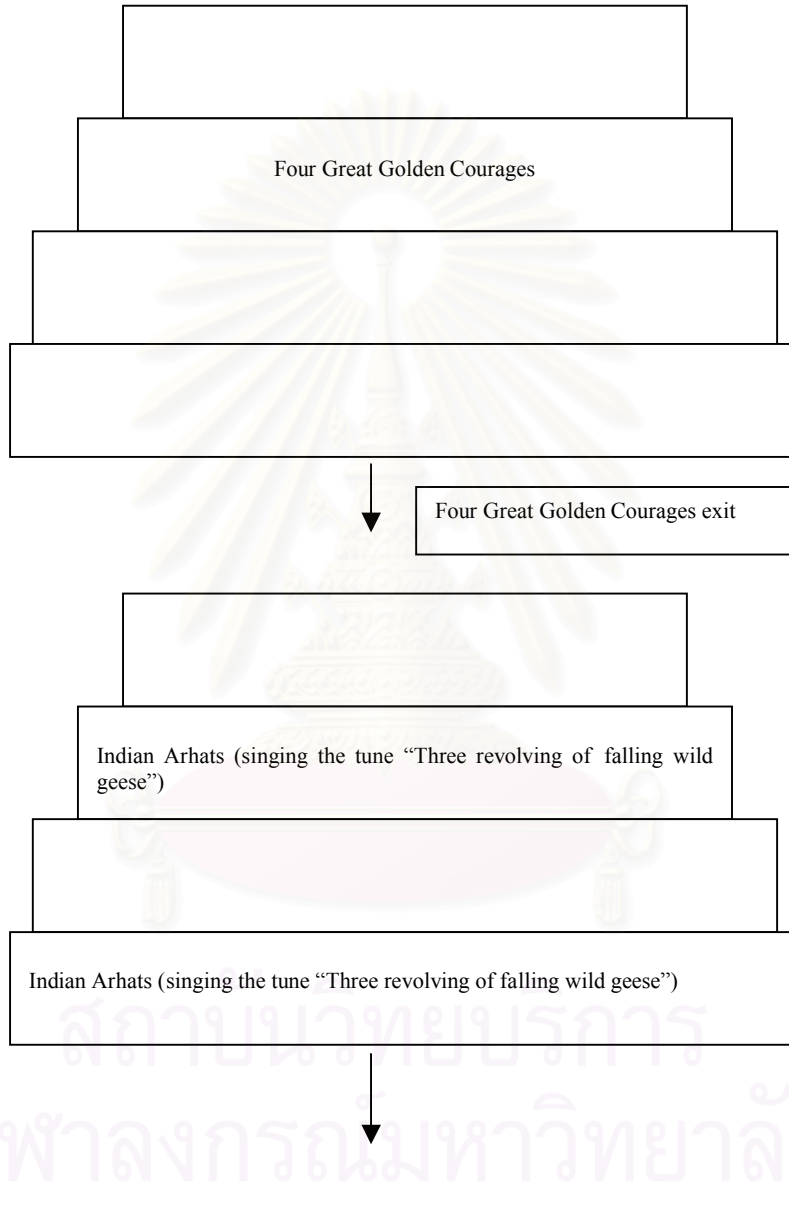
衆散花天女從天井內乘五雲兜下。如來佛唱《醉太平》。衆扮八部天龍、天女上拜介。衆扮蛟魔、驕蟲、鱷魚、九尾狐、六魔，從壽台上場門上，參拜科。在曲內從壽台下場門下。衆羅漢唱《天花落》。

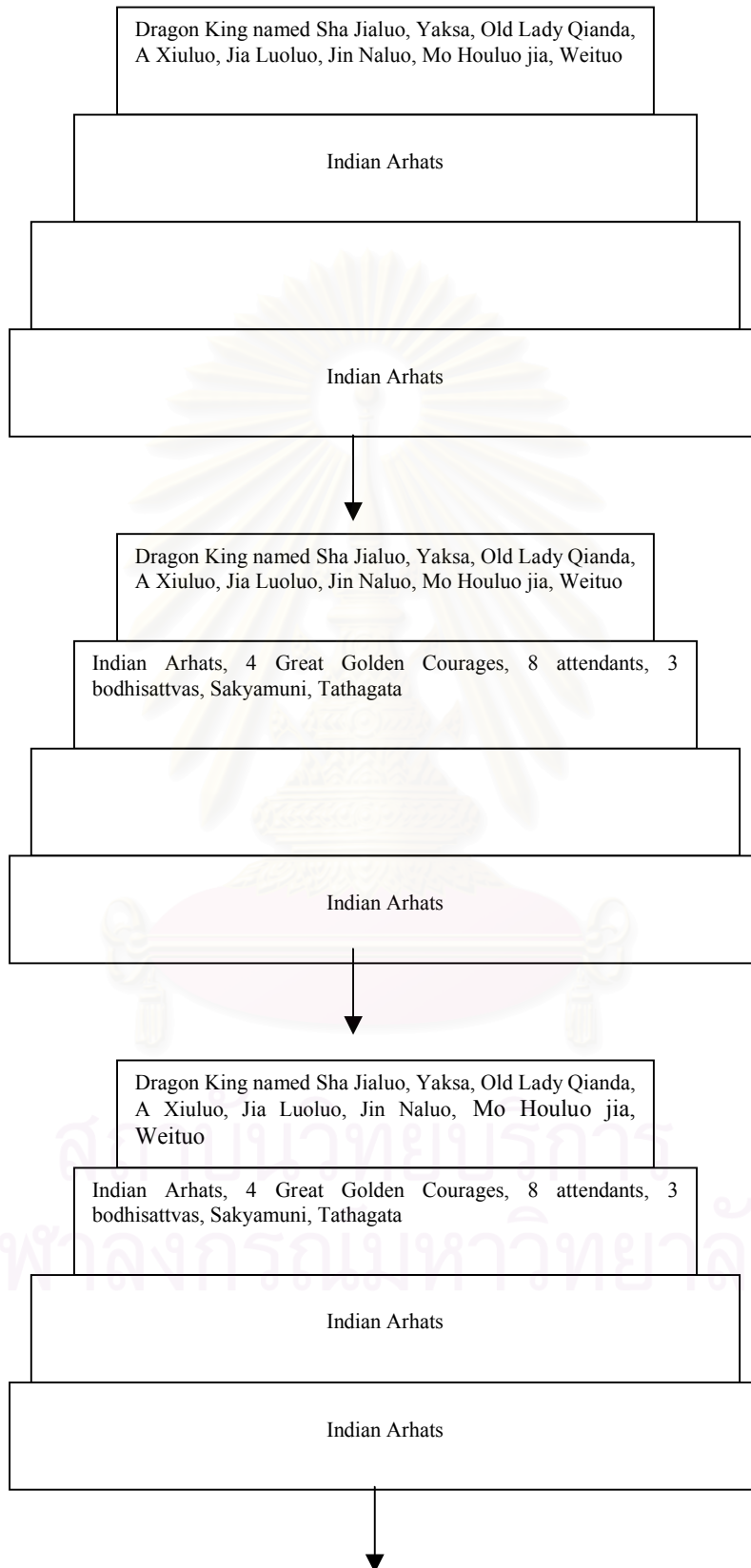
衆散花天女從天井內乘五雲兜下。如來佛唱《醉太平》。仙樓上羅漢至壽台，如來佛白。

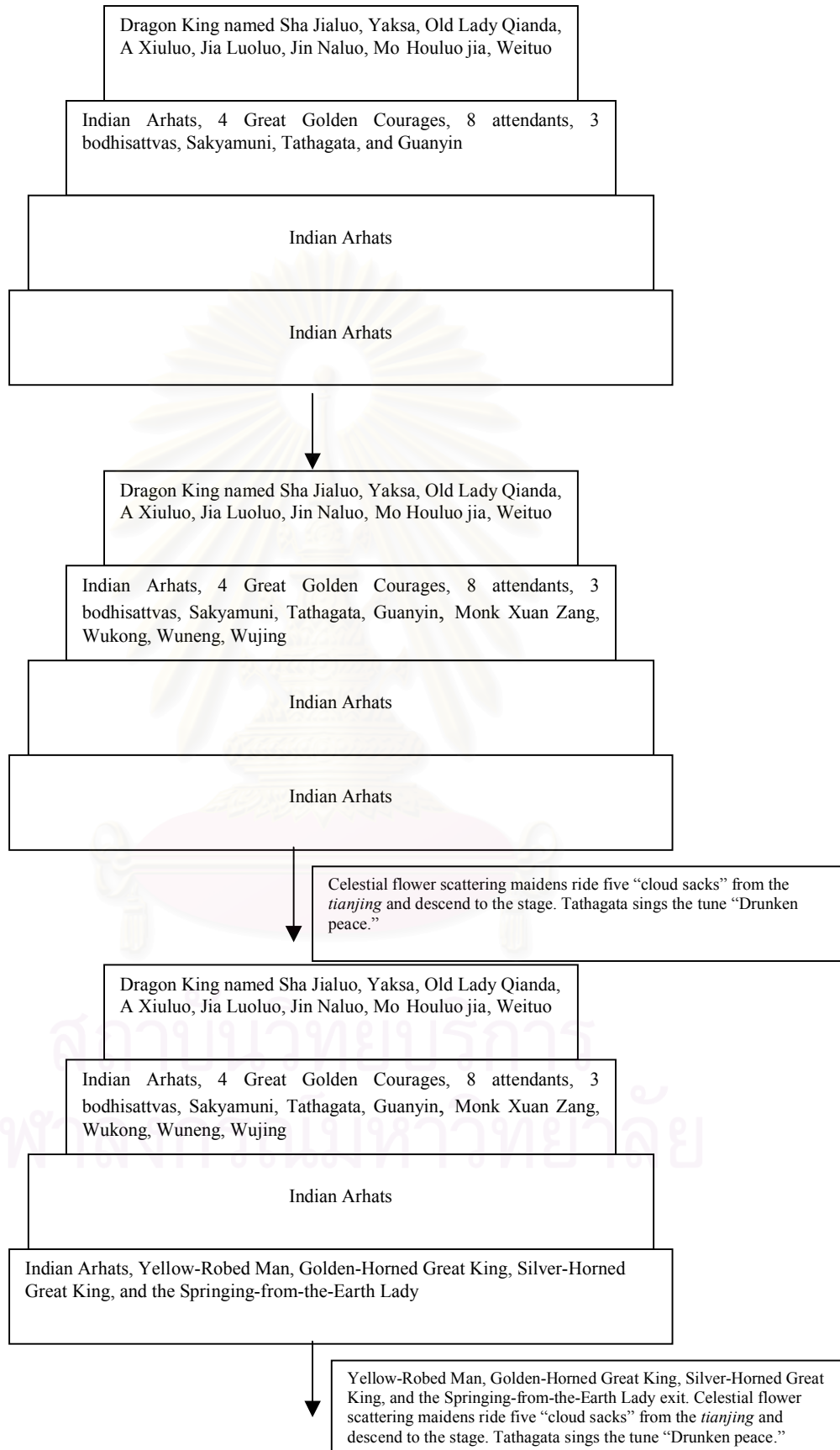
各從福祿壽台下。(SPBF, 1964: 46 a.- 55 a.)

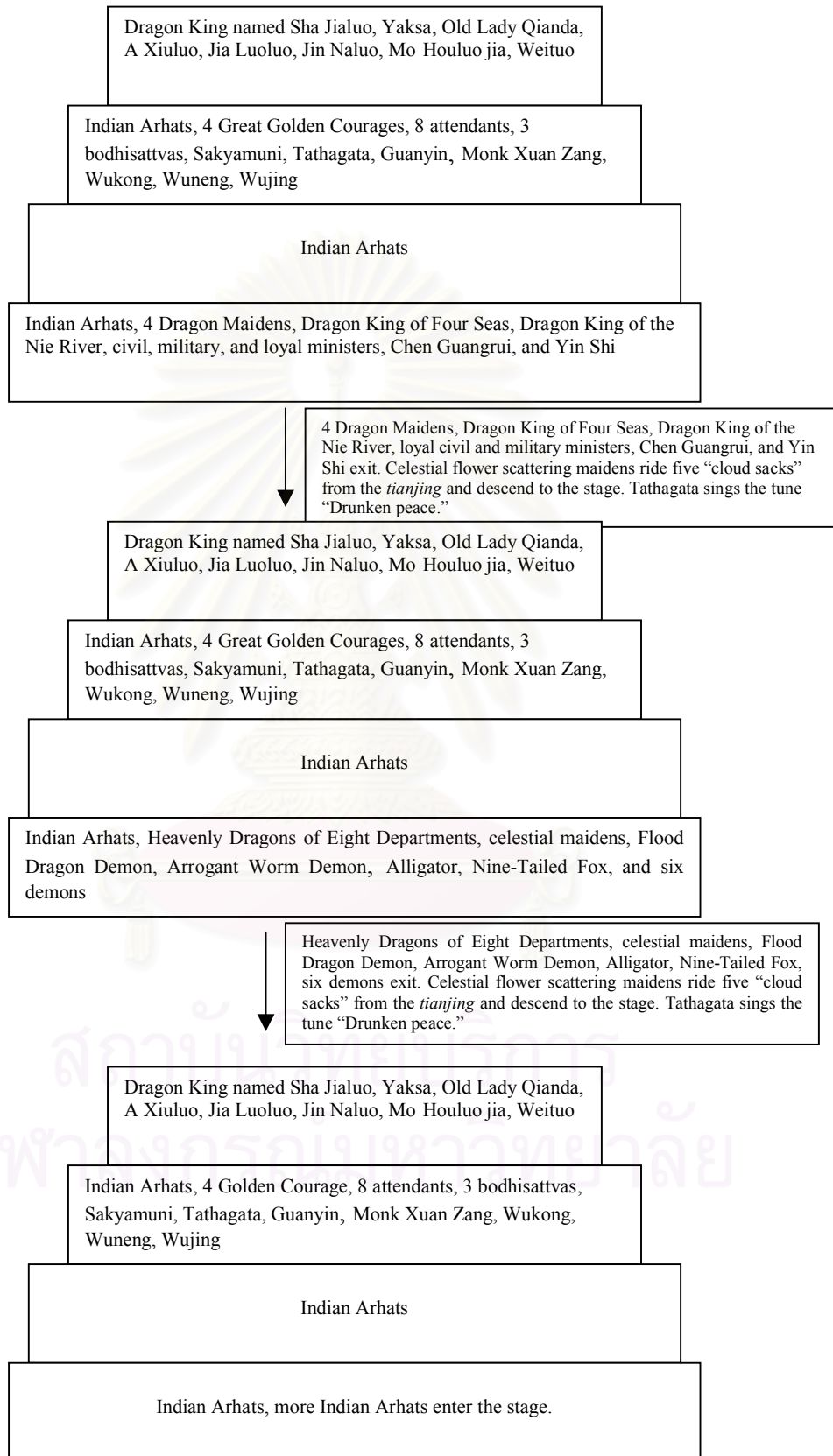
Diagram 15: Dynamism of Actors in the Twenty-Fourth Act of the Tenth

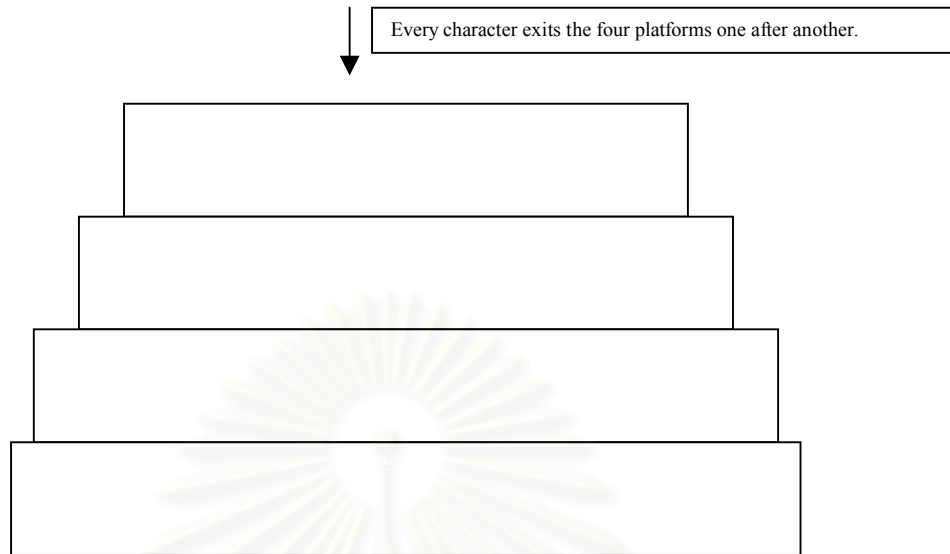
Volume of the *SPBF*











Here we can see that from the beginning until the end of this act, thirteen small scenes appeared on the stage with different groups of characters in order. The above seven diagrams clearly show the dynamism of actors. Actors could go up and down, in and out between each stage. In order to avoid the confusion, each group of characters was arranged to enter and exit the stage in order.

Apparently, there was fluidity among four platforms. The notion of blurred boundary can be explained with the concept of hierarchy in the three-tiered stage. Some Chinese scholars have argued that “the top platform (the Fortune Stage) represents a realm of gods and immortals; the middle platform (the Prosperity Stage) a human realm; and the bottom (the Longevity Stage) a hell.” (*shangceng shi shenxian jingjie, zhongceng shi renjian, xiaceng shi diyu* 上層是神仙境界，中層是人間，下層是地獄。) (Zhang, 1995: 24). Others have believed that “the top platform (the Fortune Stage) represents a realm of Buddha and other gods; the middle platform (the Prosperity Stage) a realm of ordinary immortals; the bottom (the Longevity Stage) a human realm; and the underground a hell.” (*zuishang yiceng shi*

xianfo, zhongceng shi yiban shendao, xiaceng shi renjian, taidi xiace wei diyu 最

上一層是仙佛，中層是一般神道，下層是人間，台底下則是地獄。)(Zhou, 1979: 154). I disagree with these ideas. Judging from examples of court plays that I have shown earlier, it is not necessary that such characters as immortals, bodhisattvas, or gods only occupied on the Fortune Stage or the Prosperity Stage. In some scenes they even took a whole space of the Immortal Tower or the Longevity Stage. For instance, an opening scene in the twenty-fourth act of the tenth volume of the *DZCQ*:

On the Longevity Stage miscellaneous actors costumed as twenty-eight Constellation Spirits enter and act out dancing. Then they exit.

On the Longevity Stage miscellaneous actors costumed as eighteen Chief Dipper Stars.

On the Prosperity Stage miscellaneous actors costumed as eighteen Indian Arhats.

On the Fortune Stage miscellaneous actors costumed as eighteen Heavenly spirits enter the stage. Together they all sing the tune “Three revolving of falling wild geese.”

壽台雜扮二十八宿上，跳舞科，下。

壽台雜扮十八魁星。

祿台雜扮十八羅漢。

福台雜扮八仙真上。全唱《三轉雁兒落》(*DZCQ*, 1964: 40 a.)

Here we can see that immortal characters like Constellation Spirits, Chief Dipper Stars, Indian Arhats, and Heavenly spirits occupied both the Fortune Stage, the Prosperity Stage, even the bottom platform, the Longevity Stage.

In some scenes, all four platforms represent merely a realm of immortals and gods. For instance, the fifteenth act of the first volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “Lustfully Stealing Ripe Flat Peaches in the Garden” (*Yuan shu pantao zi qietou* 園熟蟠桃恣竊偷). This is an episode when Sun Wukong surreptitiously ate flat peaches in the Flat Peach Garden, where the banquet of the Flat Peach Festival⁶⁹ was held. After he got drunk, he walked to a residence of Lord Laozi (*Taishang Laojun* 太上老君) and stealthily ate golden cinnabars until he was full. Finally he rushed out to the Southern Heaven Gate (*Nantian Men* 南天門) and sneaked back to the Flower and Fruit Mountain (*Huaguo Shan* 花果山). In terms of the performance, the Longevity Stage first functions as the Flat Peach Garden. The stage direction reads: “Act out arranging several peach trees on the Longevity Stage” (*Shoutai she taoshu shuke ke* 壽台設桃樹數顆科。). The Immortal Tower is staged as the Jasper Pond where the Flat Peach Festival was being held: “Act out arranging tables and chairs for the Flat Peach Banquet on the Immortal Tower” (*Xianlou shang she pantao yanxi shuoyi ke* 仙樓上設蟠桃宴席桌椅科。). Later the Prosperity Stage functions as the palace of Lord Laozi. The stage direction reads: “Act out arranging tables filled with immortal cinnabars on the Prosperity Stage.” (*lutai shang she xiandan zhuo ke* 祿台上設仙丹桌科。). Afterwards the Fortune Stage functions as a secret pathway which Sun Wukong used for sneaking in and out. The stage direction reads:

⁶⁹ This festival was held on the third day of the third lunar month in the honor of the goddess *Xiwang Mu* (Walters, 1992: 76-77).

Sun Wukong carrying a bag (full of things he stole) entered the Fortune Stage. He sang to the song suite of the tune “Yellow Clock,” named “Four Gates”: “I hurriedly and quietly hastened out without nobody knowing.”

悟空負包從福台上，唱黃鍾調合套《四門子》：“急奔馳悄沒個人知道。”

Eventually, the Longevity Stage is staged as the Peaceful Heaven Gate of the Heavenly Palace where Sun Wukong exited.

From an exit door of the Prosperity Stage (Sun Wukong) exits (or descends to the Immortal Tower). Arrange the Peaceful Heaven Gate on the Longevity Stage. Sun Wukong carrying the bag acts out descending from the Prosperity to the Immortal Tower, and sings...

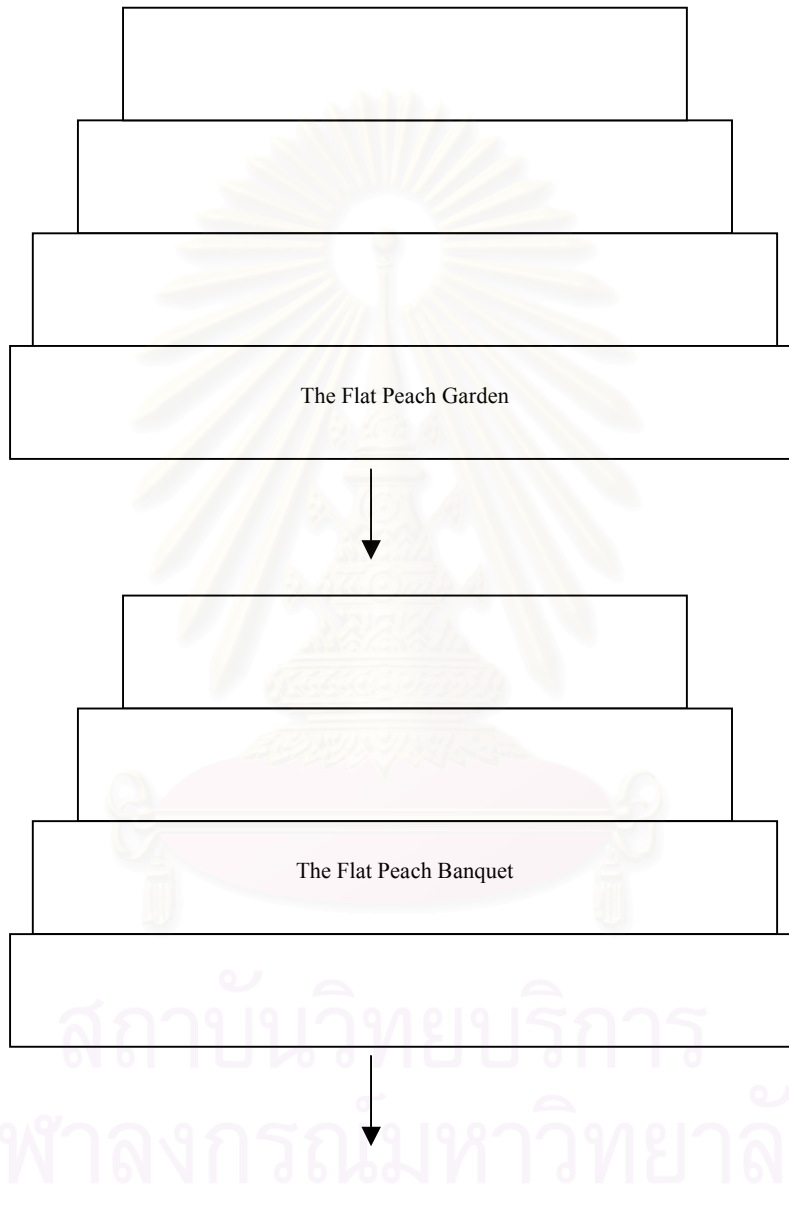
從祿台門下，壽台上設昇天門，悟空負包從祿台下至仙樓科。

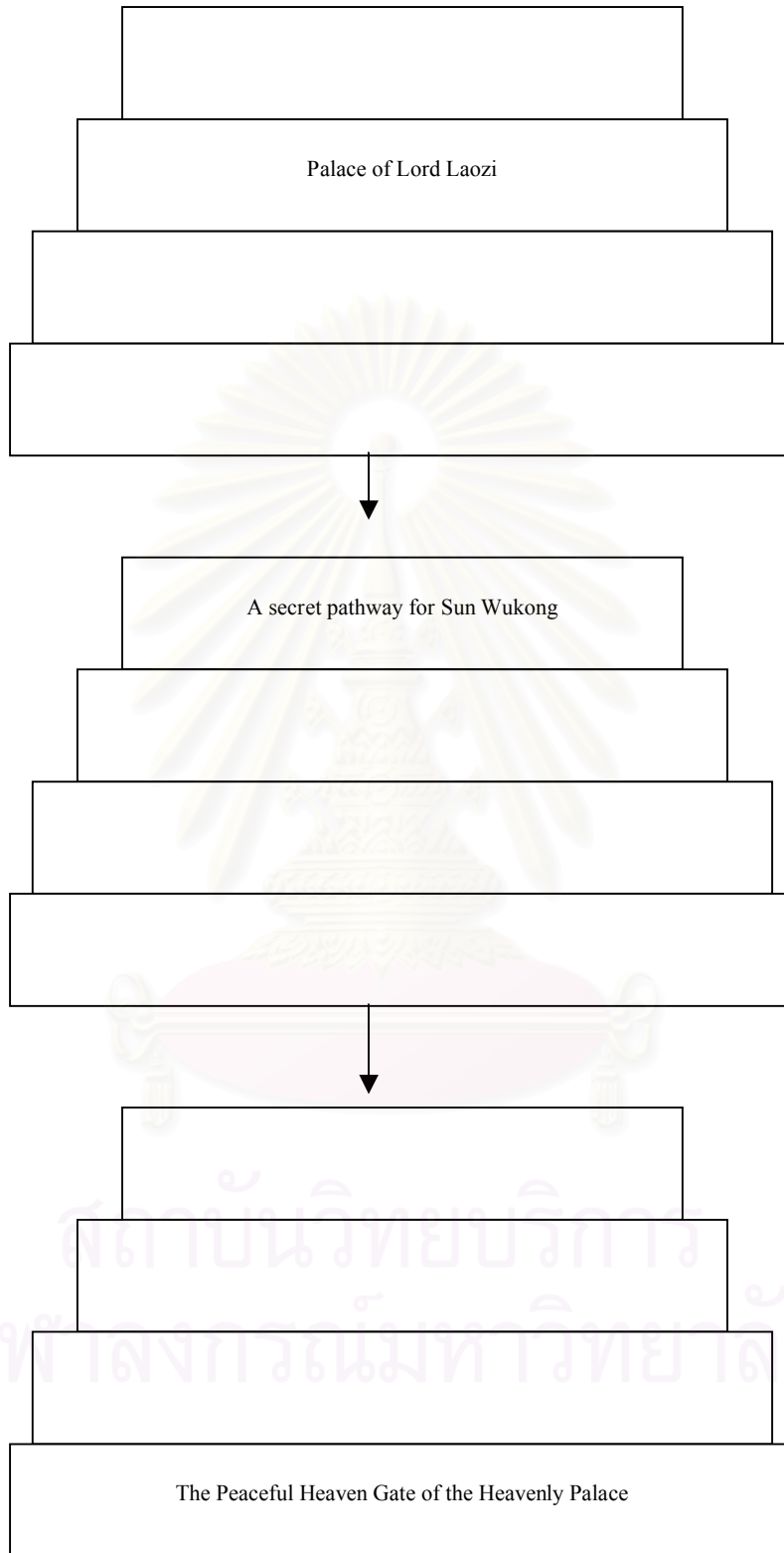
And when Sun Wukong misled a guard of the Heavenly Palace, “Sun Wukong acts out hastening out to the Peaceful Heaven Gate and exits by using the entrance door of the Longevity Stage. (*Wukong zuo jichu shangtian ment, cong shoutai shangchang men xia* 悟空作急出昇天門，從壽台上場門下) (SPBF, 1964: 9 a.- 18 b.). Here we can see that all four platforms represent different settings in the Heaven.

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Diagram 16: Function of Four Platforms in the Fifteenth Act of the First

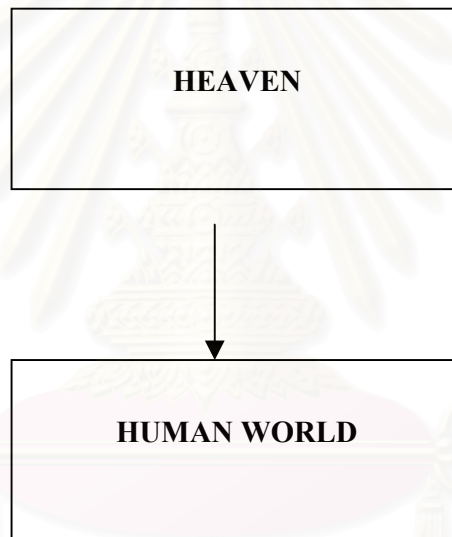
Volume of the *SPBF*





However, we can apply Saussure's signifier/ signified theory to gala performances in Chinese three-tiered stage. That is to say, a group of heavenly gods, a group of human characters, and a group of demons and ghosts are signifiers of the signified heavenly, human and earthly realms respectively. To see how the fluidity of these three groups of characters performed in three-tiered stage, five dynamic patterns can be drawn. First is the downward pattern from the Heaven to the human world.

Diagram 17: Downward Pattern from Heaven to Human World



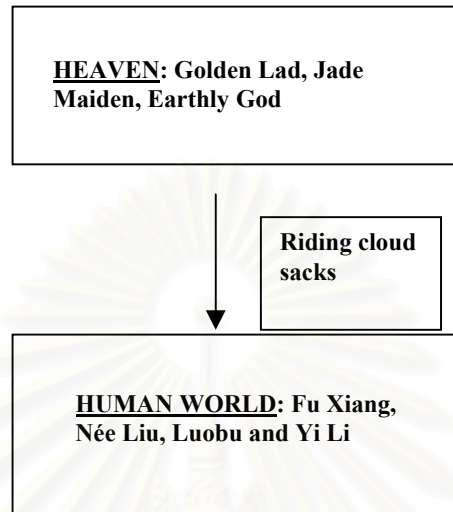
For instance, the ninth act of the second volume of the *QSK*, entitled “Fu Xiang orders his wife with sorrowful reiteration” (*Ku dingning Fu Xiang zhuqi* 苦叮嚀傅相囑妻). This is an episode when Fu Xiang entrusted his wife Née Liu and his son Luobu, before he passed away. When he collapsed on the ground, the stage direction reads:

The backstage plays music. Miscellaneous characters costumed as Golden Lad and Jade Maiden enter the stage by riding a cloud sack descending from

the tianjing. All together they sing “Benevolent man, the time has come. Please prepare for ascending to the Heaven.” Golden Lad and Jade Maiden still rise up to the tianjing. Fu Xiang acts out fainting and falling down. Née Liu, Luobu and Yi Li act out holding him and crying.... Née Liu and Luobu exit the stage by using an exit door. ... The backstage plays music. Golden Lad and Jade Maiden enter the stage separately by using both doors. A clown character costumed as Earthly God enters the stage by using an entrance door. From the tianjing a cloud sack descends. Golden Lad and Jade Maiden carry Fu Xiang to ride the cloud sack. Each rides the cloud sack and rises up to the tianjing. Earthly God acts out seeing them off and exits the stage.

內奏樂. 雜扮金童... 雜扮玉女...從天井雲兜下, 全白“善人, 時辰已屆, 早辦起程.” 金童玉女仍從天井上. 傅相作昏跌科. 劉氏羅卜益利扶喚科. ... 劉氏羅卜眾全從下場門下. ... 內奏樂, 金童玉女從兩場門分上. 丑扮土地...從上場門上. 天井內下雲兜. 金童玉女扶傅相上雲兜, 隨各上雲兜從天井上. 土地作送科仍從上場門下. (QSJK, 1964: 41 a.- 47 b.)

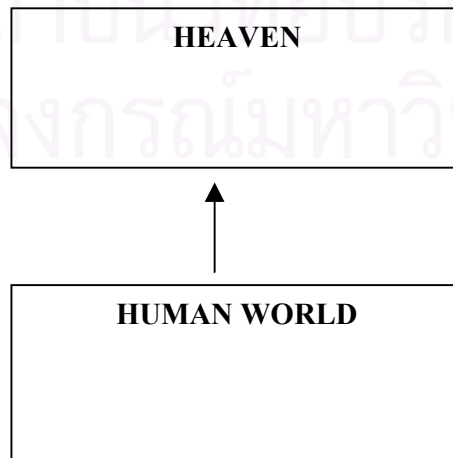
**Diagram 18: Downward Pattern in the Ninth Act of the Second Volume of
the *QSK***



From the diagram above we can see that characters like Golden Lad, Jade Maiden, Earthly God are signifiers of the heavenly realm, whereas Fu Xiang, Née Liu, Luobu and Yi Li signify the human world. The fluidity takes place when these deities “ride cloud sacks” to descend the world below in order to welcome Fu Xing’s soul.

The second fluid pattern is the upward direction from the human world to the Heaven.

Diagram 19: Upward Pattern from Human World to Heaven.



For instance, the twentieth act of the tenth volume of the *QSK*, entitled “Attending the banquet, they go to Western Pond” (*Panxian guohui fu xichi* 盤獻果會赴西池). This is an episode when all deities —Eight Immortal Lads (*Ba Xiantong* 八仙童), Eight Immortals (*Ba Xian* 八仙), Shancai, Dragon Maiden, Guanyin Bodhisattva, Fortune Constellation God (*Fu Xing* 福星), Prosperity Constellation God (*Lu Xing* 祿星), Longevity Constellation God (*Shou Xing* 壽星)—came to gather to celebrate the peaceful time. Later Fu Xiang, Mu Lian, Née Liu entered the stage. Mu Lian then said:

Today we, together with all heavenly immortals, will go to attend the banquet. Now to get there we have to cross that mountain which is not that far from here. You both are so fortunate to have an immortal destiny and can travel together.

今日我與列位上仙同赴大會，此去度索山不遠，爾等幸遇仙緣，可同前往。 (*QSK*, 1964: 35 a.- 42 b.). They all were on their way to meet the Goddess of the West to celebrate her birthday in the Peach Festival (*Pantao hui* 蟠桃會). Then they met Golden Goddess of Western Pond (*Xichi Jinmu* 西池金母), which took place in the twenty-first act, entitled “Travelling to oceans and islands, they accidentally meet the presented pearls (tributary countries)” (*You haidao qiayu xianzhu* 遊海島恰遇獻珠). What is interesting in this act is how the cloud chairs were employed. The stage direction reads:

Then Fu Xiang, Mu Lian, Née Liu act out standing on chairs (cloud chairs). Eight barbarian kings, all minor barbarian entourages act out circling around

the stage...Fu Xiang and others each act out descending from cloud chairs.

Fu Xiang and others say: “Marvelous, marvelous. We just traveled past various oceans and islands and want to go to Western Paradise to kowtow and thank for Buddha’s gratitude. We pass this place, accidentally see barbarian kings of foreign countries travel from afar to receive virtue. They do not mind ten thousand miles but want to visit the heavenly court. This is indeed a peaceful time.” They all exit the stage through an exit door.

傅相, 目連, 劉氏 全立椅上科. 八蠻王, 眾小番, 全遶場科....傅相等各下雲椅隨撤椅科. 傅相等白: “妙哉妙哉, 我等適纔遊過海島, 欲往西天叩謝佛恩, 在此經過, 恰見外國蠻王遠沾德化, 不辭萬里共詣天朝, 從約朝貢, 果好昇平盛世也.” 全從下場門下. (QSJK, 1964: 43 a.- 48 b.)

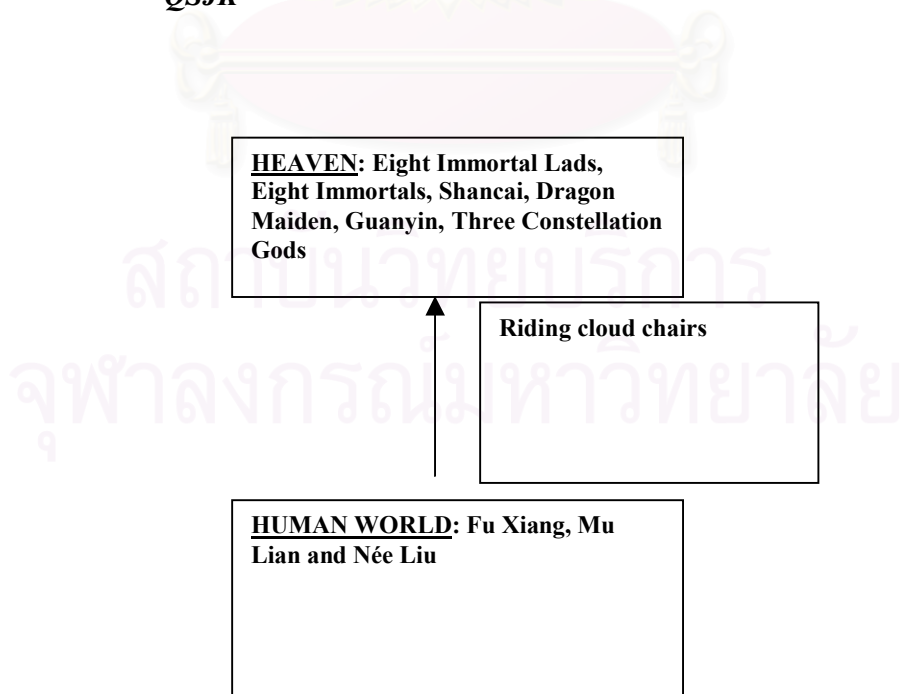
Diagram 20: Upward Pattern in the Twentieth Act of the Tenth Volume of the

QSJK

HEAVEN: Eight Immortal Lads, Eight Immortals, Shancai, Dragon Maiden, Guanyin, Three Constellation Gods

Riding cloud chairs

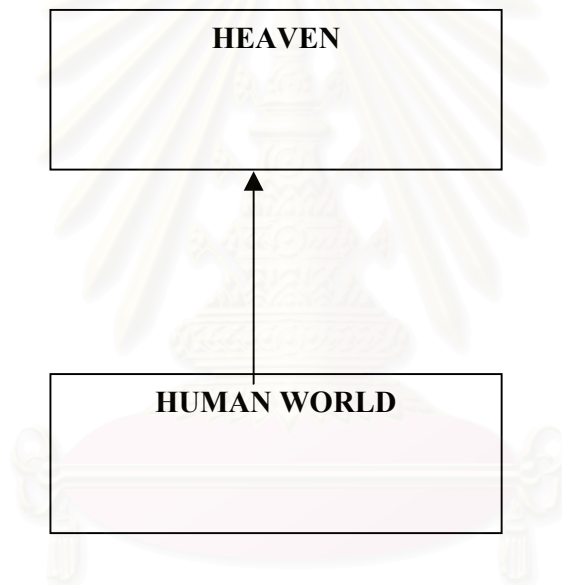
HUMAN WORLD: Fu Xiang, Mu Lian and Née Liu



Here we can see that Fu Xiang, Mu Lian and Née Liu represent the human world that moved upward to the heavenly realm by riding “cloud chairs,” which apparently signify the immortals’ cloud rides. The boundary between the two realms is blurred in this scene.

The third pattern is the upward direction from the earthly to the human realms.

Diagram 21: Upward Pattern from Earth to Human World



For instance, the fourth act in the first volume of the *ZYXT*, entitled “Hong Xin releases demons and startles River God” (*Hong Xin fangmo jing Pixi* 洪信放魔驚鼉). This is an episode that begins the story. It deals with how Marshal Hong Xin 洪信 was sent by the emperor to fetch Zhang the Divine Teacher, who resided in Dragon and Tiger Mountain. During the tour in the temple, Marshal Hong saw “Suppressing Demons Hall” (*Fumo Dian* 伏魔殿). The abbot told him that it was a place where Divine Teacher imprisoned 108 demons. With curiosity, Marshal Hong threatened and forced the abbot to open the hall. The abbot feared Marshal Hong’s influence and

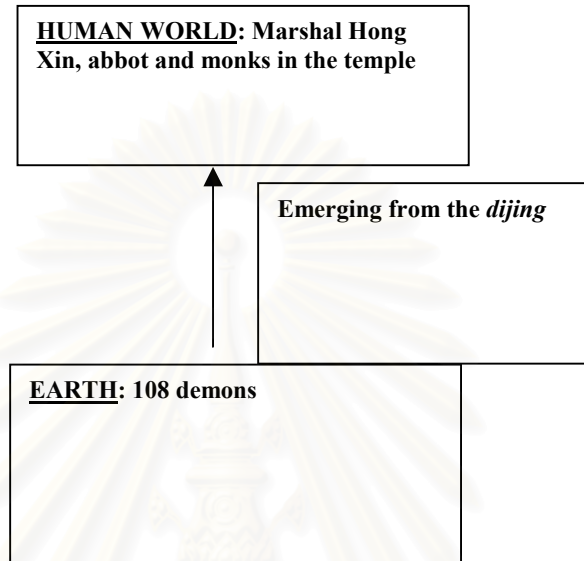
had no choice but to order blacksmith priests to remove the seals and break the lock. What Hong saw was a tablet with dragon and phoenix scripts, mystic signs and symbols and four words: “Open when Xin comes” (*yu Xin er kai* 遇信而開). With delight, Hong immediately forced the priests to push over the tablet and pry the stone tortoise out of the ground. At this moment, the stage direction describes:

From the dijing emerge shaking echo and fireballs. All act out being startled, escaping and falling down. Characters costumed as demons act out circling around the stage. Hong Xin sings: “Split lightning down here, ten thousand lines of red light shine in all directions. Fleeing souls are stumbling. I am extremely startled...I can’t believe that there are indeed demons which are violent like this.”

地井內震響介, 放火彩介. 眾作驚避奔跌介. 扮眾妖魔各色粧扮亂跪上邊場下. 洪信唱: “劈下雷來, 萬道紅光, 亂迸開奔, 走魂何在顛蹶, 身驚壞喳...不道果有妖魔, 卻又這般利害.” (ZYXT, 1964: 16 a.- 20 b.)

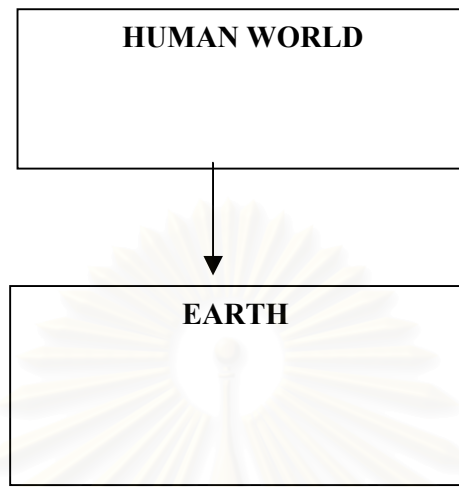
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**Diagram 22: Upward Pattern in the Fourth Act in the First Volume of the
*ZYXT***



Here 108 demons signify the earthly realm which now clash with the human world signified by Marshal Hong Xin, abbot and monks in the temple. The two realms merged, as soon as 108 demons emerged from the *dijing*. In this case the *dijing* functions like a threshold that bars between two spaces and at the same time allows the fluidity between them.

The fourth fluid pattern is the downward direction from the human world to the earthly realm.

Diagram 23: Downward Pattern from Human World to Earth

For instance, the thirteenth act of the eighth volume of the *QSK*, entitled “Serious investigation in the Retribution Mirror” (*Zhong kanwen yejing gaoxian* 重勘問業鏡高縣). This is the scene focusing on the beginnings of Née Liu’s journal to Hades to receive her karmic retribution and of Mu Lian’s descent to rescue her. When Née Liu’s soul wandered in the first Hades which was called “Hades of Retribution Mirror” (*Yejing diyu* 業鏡地獄), the stage direction reads:

Miscellaneous characters costumed as Ox Head Horse Face, eight minor ghosts, eight army ghosts, eight judge ghosts, eight attendant ghosts, two judges, Golden Lad, Jade Maiden, lead a miscellaneous character costumed as Yama King of the First Hades to enter the stage. Five guardian ghosts take a female lead costumed as Née Liu’s soul...

雜扮牛頭馬面...八小鬼...八鬼卒...八動刑鬼...八侍從鬼...二判官...金童...玉女...引雜扮第一殿閻君...從豐都門上...五長解鬼...帶旦扮劉氏魂...

Yama King of the first Hades then said: “*Take her to reflect at the Platform of Retribution Mirror and see it clearly.*” (*dai ta dao Yejing Tai qu yizhao, bianjian fenming* 帶他到業鏡臺去一照, 便見分明.). At the moment, we are told:

Then a judge acts out taking Née Liu’s soul to the front of the Platform of Retribution Mirror, forcing her to kneel down and reflect. On the mirror appears a reflection of Née Liu when planned to burn and harm monks and Taoists...All army ghosts act out beating Née Liu’s soul... Five guardian ghosts take Née Liu’s soul to exit the stage.

一判官帶劉氏魂至業鏡臺前跪照科, 鏡中現出劉氏設計燒害僧道景像科. ...眾鬼卒作打劉氏魂科. ...長解都鬼帶劉氏魂作出門從左旁門下.

(*QSJK*, 1964: 1 a.- 6 a.)

The scene ends when Mu Lian arrived at the first Hades to look for his mother. The ghost replied to him that she was already sent to the second Hades.

Diagram 24: Downward Pattern in the Thirteenth Act of the Eighth Volume of the *QSJK*

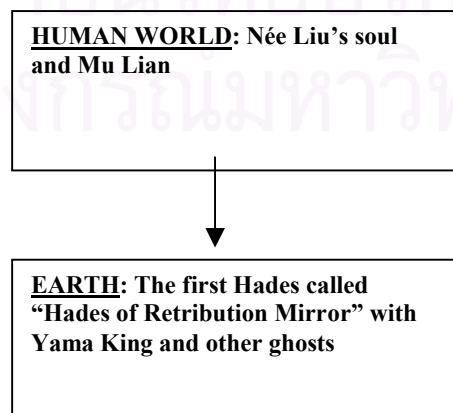
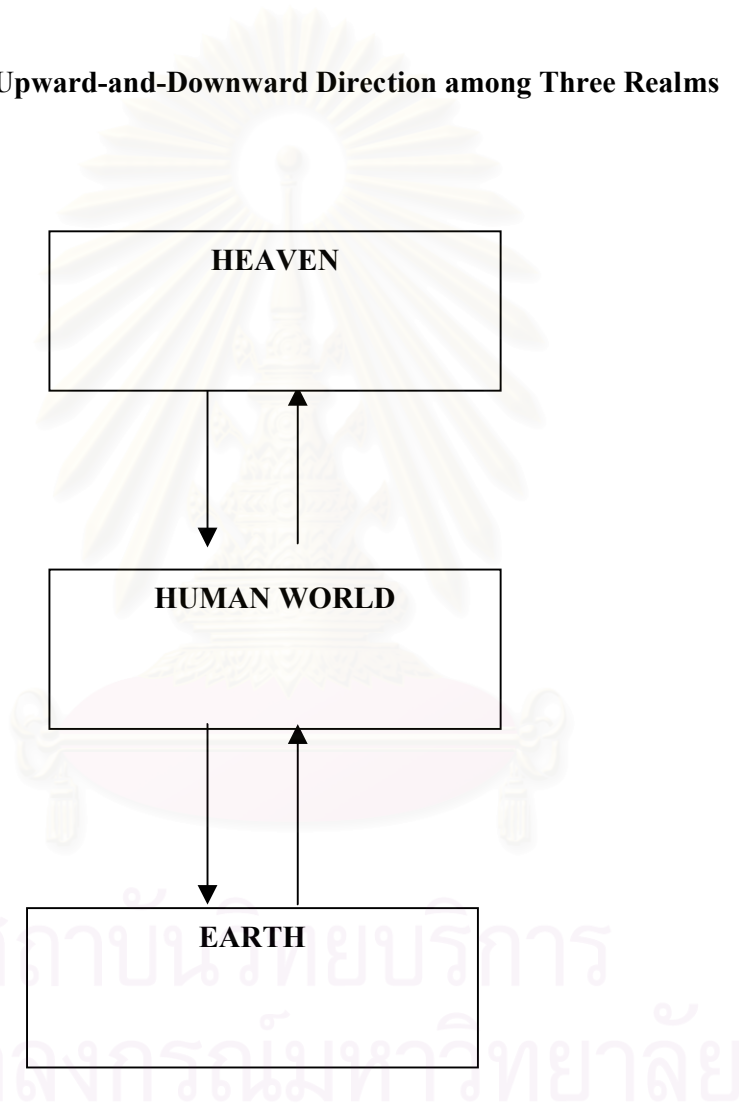


Diagram 24 clearly shows how the human world signified by Née Liu and Mu Lian clashes with the earthly realm, or in this scene the first nefarious realm called “Hades of Retribution Mirror.”

The fifth fluid pattern is the upward-and-downward direction among three realms.

Diagram 25: Upward-and-Downward Direction among Three Realms



For instance, the eighteenth act of the fifth volume of the *QSK*, entitled “Becoming a sinful mother, Née Liu points to the sky and swears to the sun” (*Zuo niemu zhitian shiri* 作孽母指天誓日). This is a scene when ghosts and demons came to fetch Née Liu’s soul. The stage direction reads:

Miscellaneous characters costumed as five guardian ghosts...all enter the stage and dance...A female lead costumed as Née Liu wearing a blouse enter the stage through an entrance door. A miscellaneous character costumed as Née Liu's soul letting hair down, wearing a ghostly cape and a blouse enter the stage and circling. She acts out ridiculing Née Liu. Then Née Liu's soul exits the stage through an exit door. ...All guardian ghosts enter the stage and act out kicking Née Liu to the ground. Four guardian ghosts enter the stage through both doors and act out circling around the stage. Née Liu acts out struggling to get up.

雜扮五差鬼...全從右旁門跳舞上...旦扮劉氏穿衫從上場門上。雜扮劉氏遊魂披髮搭魂帕穿衫隨上邊場對劉氏挪揄科。劉氏作驚避科，遊魂從下場門下。...都差鬼從上場門上作踢劉氏倒地科，四差鬼從兩場門分上邊場立科，劉氏作掙起科。

At this moment Luobu entered the stage. Then the stage direction goes:

A clown character costumed as Earthly God secretly enters the stage and acts out pointing to the ground. From the dijing emerge sunflowers⁷⁰ Née Liu acts out weeping and says: “Sunflowers, sunflowers, you have hearts reflecting the sun. Indeed your supernatural echo is among all flowers. If I renege on a promise I gave to my son, I can't conceal from you.”... All guardian ghosts act out digging out sunflowers and emerge bones. Earthly God still secretly exits through the entrance door. Née Liu acts out being startled and scared.

⁷⁰ *Kuihua* 葵花 or “sunflower” always leans towards to sun, thus a metaphor of longing affection.

丑扮土地...從上場門暗上作指地, 地井出葵花科. 劉氏滾白: “對葵花, 葵花, 你有向日之心, 實爲花中靈應. 我若背子開渾, 滿不過你了.”...眾差鬼作掘倒葵花現出骨殖科. 土地仍從上場門暗下. 劉氏作驚懼科.

When Luobu saw leftover bones in the garden, he asked his mother who ate meat. Née Liu swore that she did not do it. She told Luobu:

If I, Née Liu, renege on a promise I gave to my son, then so be it. Let me die with blood gushing from seven openings and receive karmic retribution in the Netherworld.

我劉氏若背子開葷, 也罷. 七孔皆流鮮血死, 重重地獄受災愆.

Then Luobu and Yi Li knelt down and warned her. At the point, we are told:

Five guardian ghosts act out cuffing Née Liu and circling the stage. Miscellaneous characters costumed as Golden Lad and Jade Maiden lead an old male lead character costumed as Fu Xiang enter the stage through an exit door. Née Liu acts out seeing Fu Xiang and kneeling down to implore him...Golden Lad and Jade Maiden lead Fu Xiang to exit the stage. Then Née Liu's wandering soul secretly enters the stage from the pit. Five guardian ghosts act out secretly cuffing Née Liu's wandering soul and circling around the stage. They all exit the stage through the exit door. Née Liu acts out fainting and falling down to the ground with blood gushing out of seven openings. Luobu and Yi Li act out being startled and carrying her.

五差鬼作鎖劉氏遶場科...雜扮金童...雜扮玉女...引外扮傅相...從下場門上. 劉氏作見傅相跪求科. ...金童玉女引傅相從下場門下. 劉氏遊魂從地井暗上, 五差鬼暗鎖科遶場全從下場門下. 劉氏作七孔出血昏迷倒地科. 羅卜益利作驚扶科.

When Née Liu realized that she had done wrong, then

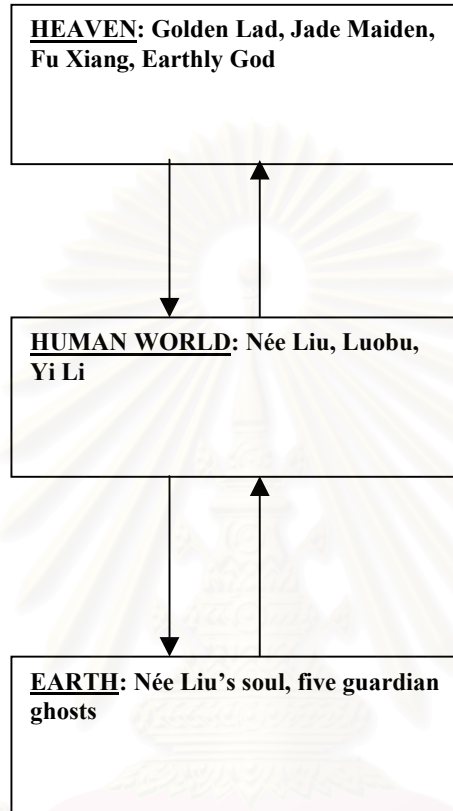
Five guardian ghosts act out secretly cuffing Née Liu's wandering soul and circling around the stage. They all exit the stage through the exit door. Née Liu acts out being startled, scared. She weeps and says: 'This is bad, my son. You see, this foul wind blows and revolves whirly. Evil ghosts circle around in a group. Their hands hold metal prongs and iron chains. They want to capture your mother alive and take me to the Hades. Son, I have to depart from you and your old man. My bones and flesh separate from you forever.'

五差鬼復帶劉氏遊魂全從上場門上遶場從左旁門下. 劉氏作驚懼科滾白:
“不好了兒, 你看這陰風陣陣旋, 惡鬼團團轉, 手拿剛叉與鐵鏈, 要把你娘親, 活捉到閻羅殿, 兒, 和你須叟別骨肉輕散拆.” (QSJK, 1964: 45 a.- 49 a.)

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Diagram 26: Upward-Downward Pattern in the Eighteenth Act of the Fifth

Volume of the *QSJK*



Here we can see how the three realms collide with one another. First the pattern moves upward from the earthly realm to the human world when five guardian ghosts came to capture Née Liu's soul. Then the upward direction is applied when the Earthly God, Fu Xiang, Golden Lad and Jade Maiden signifying the heaven appeared in the human world represented by Née Liu, Luobu and Yi Li. Finally, the pattern moves downward from the human world to the earthly realm when Née Liu's human form was transformed to be a soul in Hades.

In conclusion, all four stage floors of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion theater were not just surfaces on which to perform. Indeed each floor was an integral part of the machinery consisting of *tianjing*, *dijing*, cloud sack, cloud board, cloud chair, and

lifting machine. This type of machinery enabled the mobility of actors and props which create such marvelous scenes. To be sure, these four platforms allowed the maximum range of gala performances and mechanical enhancements, for use before and during the performances. Think no more of a stage floor as platform with entrances to the side or back of the stage. In the three-tiered stage actors may appear or disappear through different sections of each stage floor, props may be lifted up or vanished underneath the platform.

Imagine when all types of characters—gods, humans, and demons—were raised up or lowered to each stage by the lifting machine and thus occupied the entire theater. Such scene was fantastically impressive. Thus, such a gala performance in this grand theater is like a marionette puppet show. Here actors and props were like puppets suspended and controlled by a number of strings. The three-tiered stage was like a puppet house or more than that a massive magic box of tricks that created visual and audible surprises.

No matter how Chinese three-tiered stage was compared, or whatever type of show was performed, actors were still the driving force of the gala performance. Spectacles were the icing on the show's cake. However, among these spectacles there was one who was the exceptional kind of "icing." He was the Qianlong emperor, the ultimate spectacle of the gala performance. Indeed, he was "the most colorful icing" on the show's cake. Without him, the three-tiered stage became meaningless. Thus how he "colored" this grand theater will be the main topic of Chapter Five.

CHAPTER V
REPRESENTATION OF THE THREE-TIERED STAGE,
FIVE GRAND PLAYS AND THEIR RELATION TO
CHINESE EMPERORSHIP OF THE
QIANLONG SOVEREIGNTY

So far I have discussed four aspects of Chinese three-tiered stage: its architectural structure and interior design, its Sino-European synthesis, and the gala performances. This chapter will focus on representation and symbolism of the three-tiered stage and its relation to the concept of Chinese emperorship. This chapter will be divided into two main parts. First is a representational aspect of the grand theater and court plays from Qianlong's perspective. In this part I will analyze the extent to which the Qianlong emperor intended to convey via the theatrical architecture and underlying messages in the court plays. Four main points will be discussed. First is the symbol of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion. This symbolism is based on the same foundations from which Chinese civilization itself has risen. An outstanding and peculiar characteristic of this civilization and one in which it differs from all those extant, lies in its conception of leadership—emperorship. Secondly, the three-tiered stage was not simply designed as an entertainment venue, but also represented an enclosed space for “performing” didactic messages embedded in the court plays. How this grand theater and five court plays reflect Qianlong's self-image will be discussed in the third part. This is also related to the

emperor's sovereign power. Thus in the fourth part Foucault's theory on power will be applied to analyze how Qianlong's power can be perceived through the three-tiered stage.

How this grand theater and gala performances were perceived by other audiences will form the main argument in the second part. In this part, I will analyze how the three-tiered stage was recorded, perceived, interpreted and represented during the Qing dynasty. To achieve this goal, I will employ six memoirs, one poem, and one court painting, that were composed and depicted during the Qing dynasty, to see how the authors perceived the three-tiered stage and its gala performances. These authors came from different backgrounds. Some were court officials who served the Qing court, some were members from the royal family, others were foreign envoys and artists who were sent to pay tribute to Chinese emperor, particularly during the imperial birthday period.

5.1 Representation from the Qianlong Emperor's Perspective

The theory of representation applied in this section refers to the the concept of “the use of one thing to stand or substitute for another through some signifying medium. A representation of an event is not the event itself but rather a statement about or rendition of that event.” (Murfin and Ray, 2003: 407). It has been adopted by new historicists who use the meaning in regard to “the symbolic construction of a given society in a specific era” (Murfin and Ray, 2003: 407). This definition can also take on a political stance. The focus can shift towards political representation in which one person or group ‘stands in for’ someone or something, in this case, the Qing court. Such a form

of representation is pivotal in the functioning of the three-tiered stage during the Qianlong reign. Therefore, in this part I will analyze the architecture of the three-tiered stage and five adapted court plays to see how they were “represented” from Qianlong’s perspective, and how they “represented” his sovereignty. To do so, I hope to analyze the particular roles played by the Qianlong emperor in designing a space and a large-scale production to take place therein.

5.1.1 Symbol of Chinese Emperorship of the Qianlong Sovereign in Relation to Chinese Three-Tiered Stage

Not only does the architectural structure of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion reflect Chinese cosmological conception, but it also accentuates a symbolism of Chinese emperorship or “Wang 王.” First I would like to analyze how the concept of Chinese emperorship can be interpreted. Etymologically, the Chinese character *wang*, translated as “king, ruler, or emperor,” is found frequently on ancient oracle bones. Julia Chang (1997: 35) has explained that “The graph is sometimes supposed to represent a fire in the earth, other times an axe, but in any case designates without doubt the political ruler and his royal ancestors. The definitive character of this word is written with three horizontal lines, joined in the middle by a vertical line.” According to analyses by the philosopher Xu Shen 許慎,⁷¹ “the three horizontal lines represent the heavenly order, the human order, and the earthly order, joined together by the vertical line representing the

institution of kingship, which mediates among the three orders. Besides, the ancient rulers often referred to themselves as the “one man” or the “solitary one.” This highlights loneliness in the exercise of power and responsibility. It also serves to reinforce the notion of the king as collective man, as mediator between Heaven and Earth.” (Chang, 1997: 36). Therefore, Chinese emperor was the supreme mediator between Heaven and Earth. He was indeed the “one man,” the “cosmic man,” who represented all human beings on earth in the presence of a superior Heaven. Its title suggests exaltation, imperialism and has moral advantages.

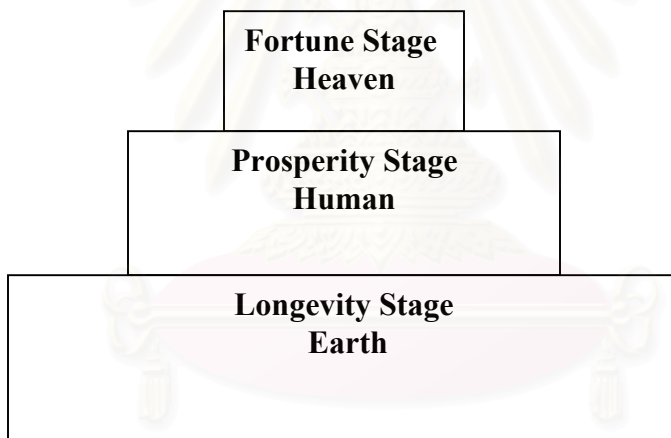
Etymologically, as for the emperor, the man, who as the character *wang* clearly shows, embodied in his person the “San Cai 三才,” or “the Three Powers”—Heaven, Humanity, and Earth. (Ayscough, 1921: 57) It also suggests that the emperor, as the Son of the Heaven (*tian zi* 天子), was the Sun whose light shone on low and high alike, and was a reminder to him to follow the immutable ways. Philosophically, this was justified by the doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命), according to which the ruler possessed the mandate to rule, given to his dynastic founder, which was, however, maintained only by good government. And the etymological title was more than just symbolic. It signified a specific notion represented by the celestial realm. (Chang, 1997: 36-38). Chinese emperorship was also signified by the “centrality” (*zhong* 中) of the emperor. For when the emperor made the triad with Heaven and Earth, he “centered,” providing meaningful connection between these two constantly related forces. (Zito,

⁷¹ Xu Shen 許慎 was the author of *Shuowen Jiezi* 說文解字 [Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters], which was the first etymological Chinese character dictionary (Bloom and De Bary, 1999: 220).

1997: 30-36). Thus, in the cosmic triad of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity, the emperor then persistently claimed his status as the one man who connected the cosmos.

The architectural structure of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion accentuates the symbolism of Chinese emperorship. In Diagram 26, we can see that the structure of the three-tiered stage resonates the character *wang*, in which three horizontal lines represent Heaven, Human, and Earth. That is to say, in Saussurean theory, the Fortune Stage is a signifier of Heaven; the Prosperity Stage Human; and the Longevity Stage Earth.

Diagram 27: Layout of the Three-Tiered Stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion



Moreover, this Chinese three-tiered cosmology symbolically reflects in the structural continuity and harmony between the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion and the audience hall Loge of Inspecting the Truth. The painting in Picture 74 entitled “Painting of the Qianlong Emperor Watching Plays” (*Qianlong Guanju Tu* 乾隆觀劇圖) clearly illustrates this argument.



Pic. 74. “The Painting of the Qianlong Emperor Watching Plays” Painting commissioned by the Qing court during the fifty-fourth year of the Qianlong reign (1789). The scene depicts performances at the Clear Sound Pavilion stage in the Jehol Palace. Photo from Ding Ruqin, *Qingdai Neiting Yanxi Shihua*, p. 57.

This painting depicts a celebratory performance before the Qianlong Emperor at the three-tiered stage Clear Sound Pavilion in the Jehol Palace, whose massive scale of production was recorded by Zhao Yi 趙翼⁷² in his memoir, which I will discuss in the next section. From the bird’s eye view of this painting we can see a side view of the three-tiered stage Clear Sound Pavilion. In this grand theater, we clearly see a bevy of actors occupying all three stages. They all faced north towards the Qianlong emperor to congratulate and commemorate him. It is clear that a group of actors occupied the entire

⁷² His *zi* was Yunsong 雲松, *hao* Oubei 甌北. He was a historian and poet of the Qianlong reign. His well-known works include *Nian'er Shi Zhaji* 廿二史劄記 [Twenty-two Dynastic Histories], *Oubei Quanji* 甌北全集 [Complete Work of Northern Bowl], *Gaiyu Congkao* 陔餘叢考 [Literary Collection of Terrace Excess], *Oubei Ji* 甌北集 [Collection of Northern Bowl], *Oubei Shijua* 甌北詩話 [Poetry and Discourse of Northern Bowl], *Fangweng Nianpu* 放翁年譜 [Chronological Biography of Old Man Fang], *Yanpu Zaji* 檐曝雜記 [Miscellaneous Record of the Eave of the Sun], *Oubei Shichao* 甌北詩鈔 [Document on Poetry of Northern Bowl], and *Huangchao Wugong Jisheng* 皇朝武功紀盛 [Achievement Record of Military Campaigns of the Monarchical Empire] (Hummel, 1964: 75-76).

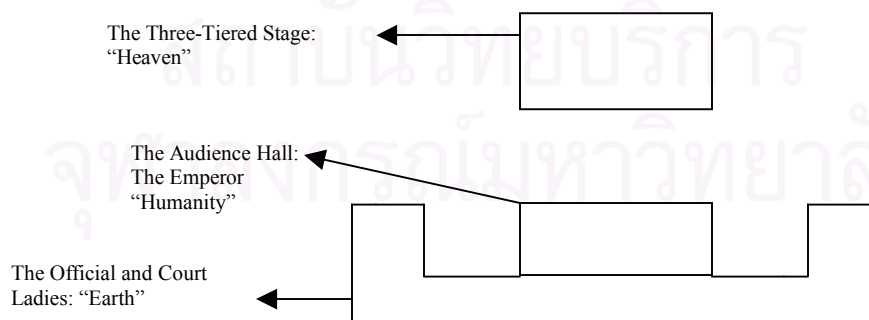
floor of the Longevity Stage, while those on the Prosperity Stage and on the Fortune Stage filled up merely the front part of the stages. As I have described in Chapter Two that the majority of space of the Prosperity Stage and the Fortune Stage function as backstage, where a lot of mechanical gadgets and stage props were housed. Therefore, this painting confirms this point. Moving to the left side, we see a large number of court officials paying respect in front of the imperial loge. They formed several rows. Some of them were standing to attend the ceremony, while those in the middle row were kneeling down and kowtowing to the emperor. Some were also sitting in the corridor of the loge. To the far left of the painting is positioned the emperor who was seated on the throne in the middle of the imperial loge, facing south towards the three-tiered stage. I believe that this scene took place in the finale of the gala performances, in which all court officials, court ladies, and actors came out to pay respect to the emperor, as recorded in memoirs written by foreign envoys that will be discussed in the next section.

Symbolically, this painting signifies a concept of Chinese cosmology and a notion of Chinese emperorship. The sense of structural continuity and harmony between the three-tiered stage and the imperial loge enhances the overall impression of symmetry, balance, and order. Symbolically, the position of the emperor, in this case the Qianlong emperor, as well as the arrangement of the officials and court ladies in the imperial loge also intensifies the notion of the cosmic triad. As I have discussed in Chapter Two, in the south side (the opposite side) of the three-tiered stage is located the imperial loge. This tower has two floors. The first (ground) floor is an area where the emperor, empresses, and concubines were seated while watching the performances. It is evident that the emperor positioned himself at the center. On the second (top) floor there is also a terrace

(*yang tai* 陽台) for watching the performance. The east, west, and north parts of the theater compound are encircled by a two-storeyed building, where the palace ladies and officials were seated along the corridors of both sides to watch the performances.

To represent Chinese cosmology, the Qianlong emperor acted as the link between the Heaven and the Earth, here represented by the officials and the court ladies. As I have shown in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, such characters as the heavenly gods and deities mostly dominated the entire area of the grand theater. In this case, in Saussurean theory, the three-tiered stage signifies Heaven, the Qianlong emperor Humanity, and the officials and court ladies Earth. From this, the functions of the grand theater (filled with the heavenly gods and spirits), and the imperial loge (the imperial body and personae were at its center surrounded by officials and court ladies) highlight the idea of “cosmicizing” the palace’s design, of making it a model and a symbol of an ordered universe (See Diagram 27).

Diagram 28: Relationship between the Three-Tiered Stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion and the Loge of Inspecting Truth



In addition to Chinese cosmology, the notion of Chinese emperors, which signifies centrality and universalism, is also highlighted in this painting. It is evident that

this celebratory ceremony is depicted in an enclosed space where the Qianlong emperor empowered the scene. For the Qianlong emperor is interestingly portrayed in a larger size compared to other characters in the painting, which accentuates his grandiose sovereignty. Here the emperor is clearly portrayed in the center of the imperial loge surrounded by a large group of officials and court ladies. The centering position of the Qianlong emperor and his imperial personae creates a sense of hierarchy and empowerment. The emperorship and the centrality of his monarchy is also signified by ceremonially garbed body. In this ceremony, the Qianlong emperor's body was singled out among the officials, court ladies, and actors. Moreover, his persona transited boundaries between upper and lower, and openly showed him as the perfect mediator, the one Man who encompassed and included the very distinctions that made up his imperium.

The emperor's formal hosting of occasions like this case produces "encompassed hierarchies," a term I borrowed from Angela Zito's writing on court ritual (1999: 29). Zito has noted that this hierarchy means a whole status that "contains its parts while exceeding them in importance as their sum total and organizing ground." (1999: 29). This theorization of hierarchy as a whole containing many unequally valued but equally necessary parts featured the Qianlong emperor. In this ceremony, the Qianlong emperor acted as *zhuren* 主人 or "host." In this case, on the one hand he presided over the creation of a whole made of many distinctive parts. Without him as its center the hierarchy could not come into being. On the other hand those court officials and court ladies who enjoyed the theatrical performances with the Qianlong emperor literally took part in this whole. In this ceremony, the Qianlong emperor literally embodied the hierarchy and cast himself as the most important facilitator for bringing it into being. The

Qianlong emperor, as an imperial host, mediated or centered the ceremony around himself, positioning other people and things so as to include them in a whole that embodied simultaneously his own power and authority. Interesting, this mode of social engagement included other people like court officials, court ladies, and actors in its own concept of emperorship.

Therefore the culmination of the relationship among the court plays, the three-tiered stage and the Qianlong emperor is represented in this painting. Not only does it attest the emperor's everlasting fascination with three religions, especially in this case Tibetan Buddhism, but it is also a symbol of a universal ruler.

Not only does the architecture of the three-tiered stage symbolize Chinese emperorship, but characterization in court plays also reflect the notion of Chinese cosmic triad. It is obvious that all five grand plays consist of three main groups of characters: Buddhist deities and Taoist immortals representing Heaven; good and wicked human characters representing Humanity; and demons representing Earth. This characterization highlights the concept of Chinese cosmology, as shown in five tables below.

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Heaven, Thunder Goddess, Lightning God, Rain God, Wind Goddess, heavenly maidens and heavenly lads

HUMANITY:

Good characters: Fu Xiang 傅相, Fu Luobu 傅羅卜 (Mulian 目蓮), Nun Zhenjing 貞靜, filial sons Chen Rongzu 陳榮祖 and Zhu Zigui 朱紫貴, loyal ministers and generals Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿, Lu Zhi 陸贄, Xia Xiushi 暇秀實, Fan Kexiao 范克孝, Dai Xiuyan 戴休顏, Yan Guoqing 顏果卿, Cao Xianzhong 草獻忠, Han Youhuan 韓遊環, Luo Yuanguang 駱元光, Li Sheng 李晟, Li Houde 李厚德, Hun Xian 渾咸, Dong Zhibai 董知白, Zheng Shangyi 鄭尚義, Zheng Gengfu 鄭賡夫, Li Gao 李皋, Li Bi 李泌, Han Min 韓旻, Zhang Yanshang 張延賞, Yang Cheng 楊成; merchant Huang Yangui 黃彥貴, virtuous women Chen Guiying 陳桂英 and Hua Suyue 華素月

Wicked characters: Née Liu 劉氏 and her brother Liu Gu 劉賈; evil ministers and soldiers Li Xilie 李希烈, Zhu Ci 朱泚, Yao Lingyan 姚令言, Zheng Ben 鄭賁, Yi Guanzhong 伊官鍾, Tian Xijian 田希監, Mo Kejiao 莫可交; corrupt judge Cang Ba 藏霸; greedy merchant Zhang Jie 張捷; petty men and thieves Duan Yiren 段以仁 and Zhang Yanyou 張焉有; unfilial son Zhang San 張三; and wicked women Née Wang 王氏, Née Shen 沈氏 and concubine Li Cui'e 李翠娥

EARTH: all ghosts in ten netherworlds, animal spirits that obstructed Mulian during his journey to rescue his mother, and post-mortem souls of all wicked characters

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Table 5: Characterization in the *Shengping Baofa*:

<p><u>HEAVEN:</u> Guanyin Bodhisattva, Rulai, Sakyamuni, Jade Emperor of the Heaven, Luohan, ten Yama Kings, Great Emperor of Northern Hades, Nazha, Iron Fan Princess, Golden lad and Jade maiden, Shancai and Dragon maiden, 28 Constellation Gods, Earthly God, Kitchen God, City God, Goddess of Western Heaven, Thunder Goddess, Lightening God, Rain God, Wind Goddess, heavenly maidens and heavenly lads</p>
<p><u>HUMANITY:</u></p> <p><u>Good characters:</u> Monk Tang Xuan Zang 唐玄奘, Sun Wukong 孫悟空, Sun Wuneng 孫悟能 (Monk Sha 沙和尚), Sun Wujing 孫悟空 (Zhu Bajie 豬八戒)</p>
<p><u>EARTH:</u> all demons both in the underworld and on the earth that attacked Tang Xuan Zang and his entourage</p>

Table 6: Characterization in the *Zhongyi Xuantu*:

<p><u>HEAVEN:</u> Guanyin Bodhisattva, Rulai, Sakyamuni, Jade Emperor of the Heaven, Luohan, ten Yama Kings, Great Emperor of Northern Hades, Nazha, Iron Fan Princess, Golden lad and Jade maiden, Shancai and Dragon maiden, 28 Constellation Gods, Earthly God, Kitchen God, City God, Goddess of Western Heaven, Thunder Goddess, Lightening God, Rain God, Wind Goddess, heavenly maidens and heavenly lads</p>
<p><u>HUMANITY:</u></p> <p><u>Good characters:</u> Marshal Su Yuanjing 宿元景, loyal generals He Guan 何灌, He Ji 何薊, Han Zong 韓綜, Lei Yanxing 雷彥興, Bai Shizhong 白時中, Li Bangyan 李邦彥, Li Gang 李綱, Zhang Shuye 張叔夜, Zhang Bofen 張伯奮, Zhang Zhongxiong 張仲熊, Li Ruoshui 李若水, Fu Cha 傅察, Liu He 劉合; the Jin emperor and loyal generals Gan Libu 幹離不 and Nian Mohe 粘莫和</p> <p><u>Wicked characters:</u> 108 bandits led by Song Jiang 宋江; wicked ministers and officials Gao Qiu 高俅, Wang Jin 王進, Zhu Mian 朱覲, He Tao 何濤, Cai Jing 蔡京, Gao Lian 高廉, Tong Guan 童貫, and Yang Jian 楊戩; and lustful, greedy man Zhou Tong 周通</p>
<p><u>EARTH:</u> 108 demons suppressed in the monastery and post-mortem souls of all wicked characters</p>

Table 7: Characterization in the *Zhaodai Xiaoshao*:

<p>HEAVEN: Guanyin Bodhisattva, Rulai, Sakyamuni, Jade Emperor of the Heaven, Luohan, ten Yama Kings, Goddess of the Black Mountain, Supreme God of Nine Suns, Great Emperor of Purple Star, Northern God of Three Heavenly Bureaus, Great Emperor of Northern Hades, Nazha, Golden Lad and Jade Maiden, Shancai and Dragon Maiden, 28 Constellation Gods, Mountain and River Gods, Earthly God, City God, Thunder Goddess, Lightening God, Rain God, Wind Goddess, heavenly maidens and heavenly lads</p>
<p>HUMANITY:</p> <p>Good characters: Taizong Emperor of the Song dynasty, Prince De Zhao 德昭, Yang Jiye 楊繼業 and his family; loyal ministers and generals He Huaipu 賀懷浦, Liu Tingrang 劉廷讓, Hu Yanzan 呼延贊, Hu Yanbi 呼延畢, Li Jingyuan 李敬源; seven bandits of Red Plum Mountain (<i>Hongtaoshan</i> 紅桃山), Mengli Liang 孟良, Lü Biao 呂彪, Zou Shen 鄒伸, Wang Sheng 王昇, Wang Yi 王義, Lin Rong 林榮, and Song Mao 宋茂; Taoist priests Ren 任道安 and Zhongli 鍾離道人; two bandits of Taihang Mountain (<i>Taihang shan</i> 太行山) Zhang Gai 張蓋 and She Ziguang 佘子光; three bandits of Coiling Dragon Mountain (<i>Panlong shan</i> 盤龍山) Liu Jinlong 劉金龍, Lang Qian 郎千 and Lang Wan 郎萬; other bandits Xu Zhong 徐仲, Guan Chong 關沖 and Li Hu 李虎; the Liao army led by Empress Xiao 蕭皇后, loyal generals Yelü Xiuge 耶律休格, Yelü Boguoji 耶律博國濟, Yelü Xuegu 耶律學古, Yelü Sha 耶律沙, Yelü Sezhen 耶律色珍, Xiao Dalan 蕭達蘭, Xiao Chuolite 蕭綽里特, Xiao Teli 蕭特里, Xiao Tianzuo 蕭天佐, Han Derang 韓德讓, Han Yanshou 韓延壽, and Liu Jiwen 劉繼文</p> <p>Wicked characters: evil minister Pan Renmei 潘仁美, his son Pan Hu 潘虎 and his wife Née Zhang 張氏; corrupt ministers and officials Wang Shen 王侁, Wang Qiang 王強, Mi Xin 米信, Tian Zhongjin 田重進, Liu Junqi 劉君其, Xie Tingfang 謝庭芳, Fu Dingchen 傅鼎臣, Huang Yu 黃玉, and Han Lian 韓連; Taoist priests Yan Dongbin 嚴洞賓, White Cloud Immortal (<i>Baiyun Xianzi</i> 白雲仙子), Xihua (<i>Xihua Daoren</i> 溪化道人), and Nine-Headed Chan Master (<i>Jiutou Chanshi</i> 九頭禪師)</p>
<p>EARTH: post-mortem souls of all corrupt officials, demons and animal spirits that Yan Dongbin summoned to fight with Song army, such as Crab Spirit (<i>Xiejing</i> 蟹精), Prawn Spirit (<i>Xiajing</i> 蝦精), Turtle Spirit (<i>Guijing</i> 龜精), Shell Spirit (<i>Luojing</i> 螺精), Loach Spirit (<i>Qiujing</i> 鯽精), Black Fish Spirit (<i>Heiyujing</i> 黑魚精), and Golden Fish Spirit (<i>Jinyujing</i> 金魚精)</p>

Table 8: Characterization in the *Dingzhi Chunqiu*:

<u>HEAVEN:</u> Sakyamuni, Jade Emperor of the Heaven, ten Yama Kings
<u>HUMANITY:</u>
<u>Good characters:</u> Liu Bei 劉備, Lord Guan 關公, Zhang Fei 張飛 and his subjects
<u>Wicked characters:</u> Cao Cao 曹操 and his subjects
<u>EARTH:</u> ghost armies and demons in nefarious realms

Not only does the characterization in five court plays symbolize Chinese cosmology and hence reinforce the notion of Chinese emperorship, but it also reflects the transformation of this notion. The question to ask is “To what extent did the meaning of Chinese emperorship, that of Qianlong in particular, transform after the emergence of the three-tiered stage?” I would argue that the concept of Chinese emperorship was dramatically changed. In addition to being Son of Heaven who embodied the “Three Powers,” and who was bestowed the Mandate of Heaven, and consequently possessed an absolute authority to rule the empire, he was a mediator between Heaven and Earth. However, as indicated by the fluidity or blurred boundaries among three stages, the new ideology of Chinese emperorship was shaped. In other words, he was not just the “one man,” “cosmic man,” who represented all human beings on earth in the presence of a superior Heaven. But he was also regarded as the “Universal King.”

The notion of Chinese emperorship had been transmitted since ancient times until the demise of the Qing dynasty. Despite their Manchurian origin, the Qing emperors also assumed and followed the notions of emperorship and imperialism. Pamela Crossley has argued that “In the eighteenth century, the burden of the emperorship to impersonate its

diverse peoples was a primary theme in the representations— historical, literary, ideological, architectural, and personal—of universal rule. Increasingly abstract court expression of undelimited rulership required circumscription of its interior domains, so that criteria of identity were necessarily embedded in this ideology.” (1999: 2). This golden age was represented during the Qianlong reign, the culmination of sinicization, or simply grandest of the Qing rulers.

Crossley has also pointed out that it is evident that by the Qianlong period the emperorship had embodied a notion that claimed the capacity and authority to rule the “universe” (*tianxia* 天下). Despite his Manchurian identity, the Qianlong emperor became a legitimate king who ruled both the Chinese empire and universe, accentuated by his reign name “Qianlong,” which means “supported by Heaven” or “Heaven’s support.” He was a “universal emperor,” or in Buddhist term, “cakravartin.” For the Qianlong emperor “As an individual, the universal man had aspired to all art and science, and the universal ruler had patronized all, and the universal emperor had expressed all.” (1999: 36-38).

This “cakravartin” (*Falun Wang* 法輪王 or *Zhuanlun Shengwang* 轉輪聖王) is the Sanskrit term referring to an ideal universal king: literally, “a monarch whose chariot wheels turn freely.” (Crossley, 1999: 39). Implicit in the notion is a sense of the universality of his rule. That is to say, it extends to creatures everywhere. Tibetan Buddhist literature speaks the religion’s founder in similar terms, presumably because religious truth transcends regional limitations and applies to all people. While the term refers to an ideal, the most appropriate person to become a universal monarch is presumably someone who is an actual king, who could extend his rule through martial and diplomatic skills. Besides, since Tibetan Buddhism believes especially in the power

of its religious message, it also maintains that the founder, Sakyamuni, although born in a royal family, chose not to assume political leadership, but rather to guide all people through the power of his teachings and virtues. Therefore, the term “cakravartin” here implied a universal ruler who would unify Tibet, Mongolia and China into a single Buddhist empire (Chang, 1997: 224-225; Crossley, 1999: 234-238).

The Qing emperors’ support of Tibetan Buddhism had both political and personal benefits, since it guaranteed solidarity with the dynasty’s Mongolian and Tibetan allies. It also assured longevity and prosperity, and promised rapid growth of the empire. As Hevia has argued, while all the Qing emperors understood the political advantages of supporting the Tibetan Buddhist establishment, some, particularly Qianlong, were more personally involved in Tibetan Buddhist practices. This included, for example, the construction of monasteries and temples at sites such as Jehol, the launching of military campaigns that during Qianlong’s reign helped to extend the dominion of the dGe-lugs-pa sect of Tibet, and the participation of emperors in Tantric initiation rites (Hevia, 1995: 38-42). Thus the involvement of Qing emperor with Tibetan Buddhism is that the emperors could have achieved the sort of political manipulations of Buddhist populations with which they were often charged simply patronizing Buddhism from a distance.

Therefore, the fact that all deity, human and demon characters appeared on the stage and acted out kowtowing to the emperor at the end of each play clearly demonstrates how the emperor empowered all the heavenly, human and earthly realms. For instance, the twenty-fourth act of the tenth volume of the *QSK*, entitled “Promoting goodness and receiving a golden ledger” (*Quanshan leiyong fengjinke* 勸善類永奉金科), was staged in the Heaven (*Lingxiao Men* 靈霄門). Characters attending in the ceremony were Lord Ma, Lord Zhao, Lord Wen, Lord Liu, Three-Headed and Six-Limbed God,

Four-headed and Eight-Limbed God, Thousand-Mile Eyed God, Smooth-Wind Eared God, Twenty-Eight Constellations, four heavenly officials, four court officials, sixteen court ladies, Golden Lad, Jade Maiden, the Jade Emperor of the Heaven, immortal officials, Nine Suns. Then four heavenly messengers, the Great Emperor of the Purple Star, Northern Star of Three Realms, the Great Emperor of the Eastern Hades came to pay respect to the Jade Emperor of the Heaven. Later the Great Emperor of the Purple Star brought all good people to have an audience with Jade Emperor. At the end of the scene, all characters commemorated, saying:

May His Majesty live for ten thousand years and comparable to the Heaven.

萬年聖壽與天齊

And they sang:

Patterns of silk and jade complete Golden Cauldron, fragrant cassia records its light which stirs the handle of the Dipper. To venerate goodness and express good fortune, their harmony displays and reflects. I salute to the Lofty Qing and Supreme Qing...Alas, to strengthen the imperial scheme, it is endless for celebration.

綿玉律調元金鼎，芬桂籍光搖斗柄，崇善行祥和敷映，俺呵，端拱在上清，大清。呀，鞏皇圖無疆葉慶。(QSJK, 1964: 66 a.- 66 b.)

Here two groups of characters—gods and humans—appeared on the stage in order to congratulate the emperor of the real world. This confirms the fact that the imperial

persona not only mediated between the Heaven and the Earth, but also extended beyond the real world of the Qing and the illusory world of the theater.

Another example is the twenty-fourth act of the tenth volume of the *DZCQ*, entitled “Three religions share their sounds to bless the peaceful era” (*Sanjiao tongsheng song taiping* 三教同聲頌太平) when all deity characters appeared on the stage to kowtow to the emperor and to celebrate the peaceful time. The stage direction reads:

On the stage miscellaneous characters costumed as twenty-eight Constellations enter, dance one round and exit the stage. On the Longevity Stage miscellaneous characters costumed as eighteen Chief Dipper Stars, on the Prosperity Stage miscellaneous characters costumed as eighteen Luohans, on the Fortune Stage miscellaneous characters costumed as eighteen Taoist immortals, they all enter each stage.

壽臺眾扮二十八宿上跳舞一回下，壽臺雜扮十八魁星。祿臺雜扮十八羅漢。福臺雜扮十八仙真上。

Then

Twenty-eight Constellations enter the Immortal Tower. On the Immortal Tower miscellaneous characters costumed as, immortal officials attending Red-Robed Wenchang, Heavenly Deaf, Earthly Mute lead a male lead costumed as Lord Wenchang to enter the Immortal Stage. Miscellaneous characters costumed as bodhisattva attendants and Ananda lead a minor male lead costumed as Rulai to

enter the Prosperity Stage. Miscellaneous characters costumed as immortal lads, longevity immortals, Yi Xi , Xu Jia lead an extra costumed as Lord Laozi enter the Fortune Stage.

仙樓上二十八宿, 仙樓雜扮朱衣文昌仙官, 天聾, 地啞, 引生扮文昌帝君仙樓上. 雜扮侍者菩薩, 阿南迦業, 引淨扮如來佛祿臺上. 雜扮仙童, 壽仙, 尹喜, 徐甲, 引外扮老君福臺上.

Lord Wenchang then ordered that heavenly maidens sing and celebrate. At this moment the stage direction reads:

Then miscellaneous characters costumed as twenty-four immortals of the Jade Hall, each carries Everlasting-Spring Flowers, enters and says: “Dance in accordance with the decree.” They then sing the tune “Celestial flowers falling down.”...On the stage miscellaneous characters costumed as male and female unicorns, phoenixes enter the stage, dance one round and exit.

眾扮二十四玉堂仙子, 各執長春花上, 白“令法旨舞”唱: 天花樂...臺下雜扮眾麒麟鳳凰上舞一回下.

This act ends with the scene:

Then Immortals of the Jade Hall, Green-Lotus Messengers, Yellow-Flower Lads enter the stage together and act out dancing, and sing the tune “Celestial flowers falling down.”

玉堂仙子, 青蓮侍者, 黃花童子, 同上, 舞科, 唱: 天花樂. (QSJK, 1964: 42

b.-48 a.)

The play *ZYXT* also ends the gala performance with such a marvelous scene. In the twenty-third act of the tenth volume, entitled “At Tushita Palace⁷³ immortals gather for a banquet” (*Doushuai Gong qunxian huiyan* 兜率宮群仙會宴), gods like the Emperor of Eastern Paradise, Longevity God, Lord of Unfathom, and Golden-Light Lord, entered the Immortal Tower to chant about the peaceful country and to summarize the denouement of the play.

(The reason why we come to gather) is due to the chaos of Song and Jin. They split into north and south. Now the battle already came to an end. Good fortune and harmony arises. Please respectfully receive the imperial decree, stating: “As for deceased ministers of the Song court, I particularly order that Taoist immortals and Buddhist gods lead them to ascend the Heaven and attend the immortal banquet of Nine Heavens.”

只爲宋金遘難南北兩分, 如今兵革已消, 祥和載啓, 欽奉上帝敕旨, “宋朝死郎之臣, 特令真人羅公遠引他上遊天宮更錫九天仙宴命。”

Then all Taoist lords praised the loyalty of all ministers in the play, saying:

⁷³ *Doushuai Tian* 兜率天 is the dwelling of Lord Laozi in the heaven. *Doushuai Tuo* 兜率陀 or Tushita is the heaven in which bodhisattvas dwell before coming down to the earth (Walters, 1992: 99).

Discarding their lives to obtain righteousness and making their virtue known to the human world. Strong men and solitary loyalty express fragrant souls in the Heaven. So esteemed indeed.

舍生取義, 播芳烈於人間, 勁郎孤忠表香魂於天上可敬可羨。

At the end of the play, the stage direction reads:

The backstage plays music and prepares the banquet. Each character acts out ascending the throne. Characters costumed as sixteen heavenly maidens carrying flat peaches and characters costumed as sixteen heavenly lads carrying Long-Spring and Forever-Longevity flowers, enter the stage by using both doors. They act out dancing together and sing the tune “Pomegranate flower,”

內作樂作排宴各陞座科, 扮十六仙女持蟠桃, 扮十六仙童持長春久壽, 從兩場門上, 合舞科唱: 石榴花. (ZYXT, 1964: 112 a.-114 a.)

Therefore, we can see that the boundaries between the real world and the illusory world are blurred at the end of these court plays. That all god characters summarized the finale of the plays accentuates the illusory world of the theater. But only when all characters came out to pay respect to the emperor and celebrate the joyful moment with celestial flowers does the real world of the Qing empire merge. And this completes the notion of Universal King of the Qianlong emperor.

To apply Barthes’s theory, the symbols of the peaceful era of the Qing included in court plays also connote the notion of Chinese emperor as the Universal King. The

twenty-fourth act of the tenth volume of each play is filled with such symbols. For instance, in the *QSK* the deities sang together:

Nine Heavens with purple air embody clearness and tranquility. Dwelling on red clouds, an imperial robe is shining and reflecting. Sitting on the hibiscus in the crimson chariot. I look at pine and willow trees, while the Jade Tower is clear. Peace and fortune, brilliance and prosper. I am delighted that silver mist is fragrant and calm amid the sky.

九霄紫氣孕清寧，駐紅雲袞龍輝映，坐芙蓉丹闕，看楊柳玉樓晴。泰運光亨，喜銀霧香中靜。

Jades are ununiformed and their auspicious light scatters. It winds around clear and empty realms. Generative forces (of Heaven and Earth by means of which all things are constantly reproduced) spread out the capital of white jade. Ten thousand images are amid the Heaven (Taoist expression—heaven in a pot), and officials with authority.

碧瓦參差祥光迸，繚繞清虛境，氤氳白玉京，萬象壺中，聿司其柄。

You see, fog, wind and leaves are celebrating. The sun is pleasant. The whole sky is within the boundaries of the national territory. It is filled with sounds of celebrating fortune. Realms above and below are full of lucky air. This kind of ambiance is pleasant indeed. He sang: “The entire Heaven and Earth are filled with goodness. I see green and jasper fields.”

“你看熏風葉奏，化日舒暢，普天率土，無非慶幸之聲，下際上蟠，皆是慈祥之氣。這等風光，真覺可愛也。”唱：“遍乾坤善氣充盈，則見綠醉瓊田。” (*QSJK*, 1964: 62 a.- 66 a.)

Here the peaceful time of the Qing is connoted by different symbols, such as “Nine Heavens with purple air,” “silver mist,” and “jade.” They all symbolize human virtues, which in this case those of the emperor who brought peace and harmony to the Qing empire.

The symbols of peaceful times are also included in the last act of the *DZCQ*. In this scene, the stage direction reads: “on the stage miscellaneous characters costumed as male and female unicorns, phoenixes enter the stage, dance one round and exit.” (*DZCQ*, 1964: 40 a.- 48 a.). Here male unicorn (*Qi* 麒), female unicorn (*Lin* 麟), male phoenix (*Feng* 鳳) and female phoenix (*Huang* 凰) are employed to represent the peaceful time of the Qing. For the unicorns are mythical Chinese creature that appear in conjunction with the arrival of a sage. It is a good omen that brings *rui* 瑞 or “serenity” and “properity” to the empire (Walters, 1992: 167). Likewise, the phoenixes are a symbol of high virtue and grace. They represent the union of *yin* and *yang*, which always appear in peaceful and prosperous times (Walters, 1992: 137).

The twenty-second act of the tenth volume of the *QSJK*, entitled “Passing fields and villages, still thinking of destroying the bonds” (*Guo tianjia shangsi fenjuan* 過田家尙思焚券) deals with how priests and villagers came out to celebrate the peaceful time. Six groups of characters appeared on the stage. First is a group of three Taoist priests

strolling in Wangshe Town (*Wangshe Cheng* 王舍城) or literally “King’s Residence Town.” In the joyful ambience, they sang:

This year is the clear and peaceful time of the Qing dynasty. Late at night no door is closed. Along the road no one picks up things that drop (no bandit)...” Then they exit the stage.

“歲稔是清昇平世, 深夜門無閉, 途中不拾遺。”...全從下場門下。

Then the second group came. The stage direction reads:

Miscellaneous characters costumed as villagers, the elderly, the young, farmers of the front village enter the stage through an entrance door and sing: “Many of us carry the lotus and spades on shoulder for spring ploughing. Rain is enough to make every family happy. Moreover, lands are fertile, full of arable lands in the west. Rice accumulates and all techniques unite.”

雜扮前村眾老少農民...全從上場門上, 唱: “荷鍤如雲春耕矣, 雨足家喜, 還欣沃土肥, 有事西疇, 添粳咸藝。”

Later the third group joined:

Miscellaneous characters costumed as villagers, the elderly, the young, farmers of the rear village enter the stage through an entrance door and sing: “Warm air blends in together, spring is bright and shiny. Officials are pure. They can

distinguish right from wrong. Rain, dew, mulberry tree, and hemp, people are so happy.”

雜扮後村眾老少農民...全從上場門上, 唱: “暖氣融合春明媚, 官清無是非, 雨露桑麻, 百姓歡喜.”

Therefore, considering the songs these three groups of characters sang, one can see that the peaceful era of China was signified by such phrases as “Late at night no door is closed. Along the road no one picks up things that drop (no bandit)”; “Rain is enough to make every family happy. Moreover, lands are fertile, full of arable lands in the west.”; and “*Warm air blends in together, spring is bright and shiny. Officials are pure. They can distinguish right from wrong. Rain, dew, mulberry tree, and hemp, people are so happy.*”

The lovely scene was highlighted again when the fourth group of woodcutter characters appeared on the stage. They carried an immortal fragrant iris (*lingzhi* 靈芝), which to them, was a strange plant. When they met three Taoist priests, they showed it to him. With surprise, three Taoist priests said:

Wow! This is a five-colored immortal fragrant iris. We have to report and memorialize to the Heavenly King and employ it to celebrate the fortune and peace of the time.

呀, 這是五色靈芝, 當報知當道, 奏達天聽, 以賀昇平祥瑞.

Here the immortal fragrant iris symbolizes longevity and prosperous time.

The fifth group of two hunter characters then joined. Suddenly, they found strange birds. At this moment, the stage direction reads: “From the tianjing descends a couple of male and female phoenixes acting out flying and dancing” (*Tianjing neixia fenghuang yidui feiwu ke* 天井內下鳳凰一對飛舞科). Three Taoist priests then explained to them:

At this moment the male and female phoenixes come to celebrate... They are indeed immortal birds. They come out to signify the peaceful time. They are brought about by His Majesty's lofty and profound virtue.

此時鳳凰來儀...鳳凰乃神鳥, 出則爲太平之瑞皆聖德高深所致。

As I have explained earlier, a couple of male and female phoenixes here signify peaceful and prosperous times of China. Eventually this act ends with the sixth group of Fu Xiang, Mu Lian and Née Liu celebrating this cheerful moment. The stage direction reads:

All together they sang: “What a joyful gathering. We are delighted for this court and come to this place. We will receive a prosperous year and take pleasure in splendor and glory. People in every village are fortunate. Now is the Qing dynasty. We are happy that suffering and sadness already passed.” They then exit the stage through an exit door.

全唱: “欣相會, 喜今朝來故里, 享豐年樂歲恬熙, 享豐年樂歲恬熙, 遍鄉閭人人福綏, 到今日際清時, 憶當年轉痛悲。”全從下場門下。(QSJK, 1964: 55 a.-60 a.)

It is interesting that these three characters specifically referred to the “Qing dynasty” (*Qingshi* 清時). That they are portrayed as characters during the Tang period and yet celebrate the prosperity of the Qing dynasty reinforces the extent to which the boundaries between the illusory and the real worlds are blurred. And it is the Qianlong emperor who acted as a mediator between the Heaven and the Earth, and ultimately as the Universal King who encompassed both the theatrical and the Qing spheres.

In addition to these symbols, the employment of the word *qing* 清 in the last act of each play denotes the notion of Universal King. Etymologically, the word *qing* means “pure” or “pellucid.” Declared as the Later Jin dynasty (*Hou Jin* 後金) in 1616, the Manchu dynasty changed its name to Qing, signifying the “Pure” dynasty (Peterson, 2002: 3). Therefore the constant usage of the pun *qing* in the last act of each court play reinforces how the Qing emperor, which in this case Qianlong, became the Universal King who not only ruled the real world of the Qing empire, but also empowered the illusory world of the theater. For instance, in the *QSK* the stage direction reads:

The Jade Emperor of the Heaven said: “Music of clearness and tranquility, golden court and jade imperial helmet. Imperial virtue is equivalent to sovereign power (of the Qianlong emperor), a good omen responds to the clearness of the river and banquet of the sea. Everywhere music is increased and tax collection is stopped. Dwelling in the imperial heaven, we coagulate auspicious and fortunate signs. In Heaven and Earth, long spring is not aged. During the peaceful times the light is abundant.”

玉皇大帝白：清平樂，金庭玉冕，帝德同乾健，瑞應河清兼海宴，更樂休徵
 普遍，深居昊闕靈霄，盤凝瑞靄祥標，天地長春不老，升恆日月光饒。

The two highlighted phrases can be interpreted in two different and yet relating meanings. That is to say, the phrase “Music of clearness and tranquility” can also mean “Music of the peaceful Qing dynasty,” and the phrase “a good omen responds to the clearness of the river and banquet of the sea” can be translated as “a good omen responds to the Qing.”

Moreover, the notion of the Qianlong emperor as Universal King is highlighted when all god characters specifically chanted to celebrate the Qing empire:

May His Majesty live for ten thousand years and comparable to the Heaven...I salute to the Lofty Qing and Supreme Qing...Alas, to strengthen the imperial scheme, it is endless for celebration.

萬年聖壽與天齊...俺呵，端拱在上清，大清...呀，鞏皇圖無疆葉慶。

Then

The backstage plays music. Jade Emperor of the Heaven acts out descending the throne. All characters sing: “Variegated banners and misty wheels, ornaments and robes are plentiful. The music penetrates to the Heaven with elegant and blessing sounds. The Heaven and the world are celebrating for His Majesty and the Qing empire.”

內奏樂，玉皇大帝下座科。眾全唱：“霓旌霧轂簪裾聲，億萬載天上人間祝
聖清。” (QSJK, 1964: 62 a.- 68 a.).

The pun *qing* was also employed in the play *SPBF* to denote the Universal King notion, when the Rulai bodhisattva sang:

...to eulogize the Great Qing dynasty to stay endless for myriad years.

讚一聲大清朝無疆萬載。

Rulai then said:

*At present this is a great occasion that Your Majesty, together with our three religions: Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, become one unity. **Heaven and Earth are clear and bright.** People's good fortune indeed relies on one's transformation. We all should eulogize the Precious Raft of the Peaceful Time, celebrate this good fortune and tranquility, wish for good fortune for the country and people, and repay the gratitude to Your Majesty.*

蒙當今皇上興吾法門，儒釋道三教，彙成一家，乾坤清朗，人民之福，實賴一人之化也，大眾可齊頌昇平寶筏，永祥太平經，祝國裕民，答謝皇恩。

Here that Rulai bodhisattva character specifically addressed to the emperor and equated as well as unified him with three religions; namely Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism emphasized the notion of the Qianlong emperor as the Universal King who transcended beyond the heavenly realm. The play ends when all characters sang:

*“We wish to strengthen an imperial scheme and the make an imperial Way prosperous forever. May we sing and ask the Heaven to protect **Great Qing nation** for myriad years. May Luohans applaud and sing a song all together for this dynasty. Li li, celestial flowers falling down.” Then each character exits the Fortune Stage, the Prosperity Stage and the Longevity Stage.*

“俺則願鞏固也那皇圖。遐昌也那帝道。大清國萬年唱歌天保。阿羅漢歲歲今朝，齊拍手共唱一曲，哩哩天花落。”各從福祿壽臺下。(SPBF, 1964: 46 a.- 55 a.)

Likewise, the play *DZCQ* ends with the commemoration of the Great Qing dynasty. After all deity characters alluded to earlier peaceful dynasties, they chanted:

*May good fortune endlessly fall upon **the Great Qing dynasty**. May good fortune endlessly fall upon **the Great Qing dynasty**.*

大清朝無量福, 大清朝無量福.

Lord Wenchang then sang:

The peaceful Qing empire is the shinningly bright Fairyland. We celebrate the Yao era (the golden age of Chinese history). Rain and dews are abundant everywhere. Sounds directly penetrate through the Heaven. We hold our natural disposition. Everyone possesses one’s virtue. Every house plays lofty lute and elegant zither. Brightly and splendidly the music fills up spring and autumn. Male and female unicorns reside in the marsh.

清平的世宙，郎蕩的神州，慶堯天，雨露遍遐聚，聲教直通天盡頭，秉彝好，
懿德人人有，風琴雅瑟家家奏，熙熙皞皞樂春秋，麒麟在藪。

Then the heavenly maidens chanted while sprinkling flowers onto the stage:

...*This is indeed **the clear and cool nation, the clear and clean place,**...*

...這便是清涼國，清淨場...

We can see that the highlighted phrase can be interpreted in two meanings. It not simply means “the clear and cool nation, the clear and clean place,” but can also be translated as “the cool Qing nation, the pure Qing realm.”

The pun *qing* is constantly employed in the play. Later all deity character sang:

“...*clear wind, clear moon, clear mind, and clear space,...*”

“...清風也，清月也，清心也，清敞者...” (DZCQ, 1964: 40 a.- 45 b.)

Likewise, the above can also be interpreted as “the wind of the Qing, the moon of the Qing, the mind of the Qing, the space of the Qing...”

The usage of the pun *qing* can also be found in the play *ZDXS*. This notion is highlighted when heavenly messengers, Purple Great God, Northern Dipper of Three Realms, and Great God of Northern Hades entered the Longevity Stage and sang:

*We celebrate **the peaceful time of the Qing dynasty** whose virtue is filled with fragrance. We celebrate **the peaceful time of the Qing dynasty** whose virtue is*

*filled with fragrance. Good omen and good fortune are brought upon myriad people. They play peaceful music together. ...Fortune, prosperity and longevity join together to the utmost. ...Peace among people of four realms is pleasant. Pureness and modesty of hundred officials are reported. Myriad law-abiding people can control themselves. All of us have never witnessed and experienced such a situation. In **the Qing era** all seasons are grand and the earth is spring-like.*

賀清平德治馨，賀清平德治馨，兆年豐福萬民，共樂昇平賴一人...福祿壽瑞駢臻。... 四民的安業喜忻，百官的清廉報本。萬姓的循規守分，臣等目無見耳無聞，清時節大地春。

From the above examples, one can see how the words like “Great Qing Nation” (*Da Qingguo* 大清國), “Great Qing Dynasty” (*Da Qingchao* 大清朝), “the peaceful Qing” (*Qing ping* 清平), and “The Qing era” (*Qing shi* 清時) are frequently included in the adapted court plays. Not only does this usage of punning have a rhetoric function in the plays, but it also reinforces the notion of blurred boundaries between the illusory world of the three-tiered stage and the real world of the Qing empire. This application surely strengthens the idea that the Qianlong emperor not only acted as a mediator between Heaven and Earth, but also empowered all three realms as the Universal King.

5.1.2 The Three-Tiered Stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion as a Moral Space

From Qianlong's perspective, the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion functioned as an enclosed space for "performing" didactic messages embedded in five court plays. It was his own entertainment venue where he intended to instruct his subjects with both Confucian philosophy and Buddhist morality. Before I make further arguments in this part, I would like to give an overview of significant philosophies of both religions.

Confucianism is a complex system of moral, social, political, philosophical, and religious thought which focuses primarily on non-religious secular ethics, secular morality, as well as the cultivation of the civilized individual which in turn would contribute to the establishment of civilized society or country and ultimate world peace. One theme central to Confucianism is that of relationships, and the different duties arising from the different status one held in relation to others. Individuals are held to simultaneously stand in different degrees of relationship with different people. This precept is called "Five Relationships" (*Wulun* 五倫), focusing on father's kindness and son's filiality; elder brother's gentility and younger brother's humility; husband's righteousness and wife's obedience; the elder's humane consideration and the younger's deference; as well as the ruler's benevolence and the subject's loyalty.

Thus Confucianism promoted the filial piety, or filial devotion (*xiao* 孝) (Etymologically, the graph of *xiao* is that a son supporting an elderly) is considered among the greatest of virtues and must be shown towards both the living and the dead, i.e. ancestors. The term "filial", meaning "of a child," denotes the respect and obedience that a child, originally a son, should show to his parents, especially to his father. Moreover, the concept of Confucian filial piety is the fusion of familial and political realms.

Therefore, the familial concept of *xiao* or filiality can be extended to the political notion of loyalty (*zhong* 忠). Here the loyalty is the equivalent of filial piety on a different plane, between ruler and subject. (Lau, 1979: 2-28).

In addition to Confucianism, Buddhist virtue is also an underlying theme in five court plays that Qianlong intended to instruct his subjects. There are two significant concepts emphasized in the plays. First is the notion of causality or karma. This is the concept of “action” or “deed,” that all living creatures are responsible for their karma — their actions and the effects of their actions — and for their release from entanglement. Karma is thus used as an ethical principle. Buddhists believe that the actions of beings determine their own future, and because of this all actions have a consequence. Thus the philosophy Buddhism promotes is that “The wicked earns deceptive wages but one who sows righteousness gets a sure reward.” or “What goes around comes around.”

The second Buddhist philosophy reinforced in five court plays is the filial piety. From the outset, Buddhism shifted the meaning of Confucian filial piety, which was the essential morality of traditional China. The traditional version of filial piety, as found in Confucian canon, took the father-son discourse as the primary relationship in the family. While a son owed a debt of care and respect to both parents, his identity and his primary allegiances were to be formed around his father. However, Buddhism challenged this discourse by redefining filial piety, so that it reflected the importance of the mother-son relationship.

Chinese three-tiered stage functions as an entertainment venue for “performing” both Confucian and Buddhist didacticism that the Qianlong emperor wanted to instruct his court officials. Under his commission, all five grand plays were adapted to proclaim these virtues. The beginning act of each play clearly states an objective of moral instruction. For example, the preface of the play *ZDXS* states:

The original version of the Flute Music of Prosperous Era was originated in the Northern Song dynasty. Among the popular fiction, official history and its abridged adaptation, only Yang Jiye and his family completed the loyalty. Later generations admired Yang Jiye’s loyalty and bravery. Thus, we eulogize his later generations and extend this knowledge. As for Pan Renmei’s wickedness, none can be compared. Therefore, he made an appointment with Yang Jiye, and stopped sending troops to the relief at the gorge. Wang Shen strived to excel. But he could not interdict. Moreover, he retreated his troops. Consequently, this caused Yang Jiye’s death on the ground. Indeed the wicked had to return to where they belong. Moreover, it is like dragging Prince De Zhao to assist the troops and nation, to exhaust the loyalty and honesty to the utmost in order to protect virtuous and good people. Do not make an excuse of being weary and worn out. This is used to proclaim their virtues which can be used to exterminate treacherous and wicked people, and to reward the loyal and praise the filial. Now to rely on the story of the Northern Song as a base of the pillar, we slightly add the official history as an outline to compose a new play, and borrow it to influence humans’ good hearts, make the sageliness to extend to the good

causality of those who express loyalty and benevolence. As for the wicked, have them penalized in the dark and massacred in the public in order to correct the wickedness of the evil. We ask the audience to take heed to this warning.

昭代簫韶, 其源出自北宋傳之演義書考通鑑. 正史其中唯楊業陳家谷盡忠一節為實事耳. 其餘皆後人慕楊業之忠勇. 故譽其後昆而敷演成傳. 即潘美之惡, 亦不如是之甚. 祇因既與楊業約駐兵谷口聲援王侁爭功離次不能禁制, 及引全軍後退. 乃坐致楊業於死地, 是以眾惡皆歸焉. 又如牽引德昭匡襄軍國竭盡忠誠庇讀賢良. 不辭勞瘁. 概為表彰其賢能用以誅佞屏奸褒忠獎孝耳. 今依北宋傳為註腳, 略增正史為綱領創成新劇. 借此感發入心善者使之人聖超. 凡彰忠良之善, 果惡者使之冥誅顯?懲奸佞之惡報, 令觀者知有警戒. (ZDXS, 1964: 1 a.-

1 b.)

From the above excerpt, we can clearly see that the objective of this play is to promote Confucian filiality and loyalty by “borrow it to influence humans’ good hearts, make the sageliness to extend to the good causality of those who express loyalty and benevolence.” Furthermore, to advocate the concept of Buddhist karma, “reward the loyal and praise the filial” and “As for the wicked, have them penalized in the dark and massacred in the public in order to correct the wickedness of the evil. We ask the audience to take heed to this warning.”

In the fifth act of the *ZYXT*, entitled “Returning to the correct play, *fu* and *mo* characters open up religion,” (*Gui zhengchuan fumo kaizong* 歸正傳副末開宗) it states clearly:

Now the sage king (Qianlong) considers it (this play) as a master and regards it as a teacher who teaches all living beings and molds and fashions myriad things. He orders us that we sing and praise the literary metaphors of the peaceful times, maintain the determination of public morality. Fictitious stories purporting to be history can still help to distinguish between good and evil. False masks (pretense) and puppets indeed disturb loyalty and filiality. Today we take this chuanqi play, in the beginning we rely on the former text, in the back add the official history. True loyalty and genuine filiality is responsible for living Earth and living Heaven. False righteousness and fake benevolence is hard to deceive ignorant men and women. These people know how to respect their masters and parents, to fear the law and be afraid of punishment. This notion is explained everywhere. I wish to make the law, benevolence, custom, deportment, good tradition, forever become the fortune of the peaceful times, eternally go to the realm of benevolence and longevity.

當今聖天子作之君，作之師，教育群生甄陶萬類。今我們就歌詠太平之文寓維持風化之意，稗官野史亦有助於彰瘴，假面傀儡實惑發乎忠孝。今日個把這本傳奇前按舊文後增正史真忠真孝，任他生土生天，假義假仁，難騙愚夫愚婦，是人知尊君親上畏法懼刑到，處盡講讓刑仁風行俗美，長享昇平之福，永登仁壽之鄉。(ZYXT, 1964: 21 a.-23 b.)

The author clearly states the Qianlong emperor's intention to adapt this play. To the emperor, "True loyalty and genuine filiality is responsible for living Earth and living Heaven" and "False righteousness and fake benevolence is hard to deceive ignorant men

and women.” Therefore, he “wish to make the law, benevolence, custom, deportment, good tradition, forever become the fortune of the peaceful times, eternally go to the realm of benevolence and longevity.”

In the second act of the *DZCQ*, entitled “Index to the Romance of Three Cauldrons” (*Sanfen ding yanyi tigang* 三分定演義提綱), the author explained the objective of the play:

The original story of this play is of the end of the Han dynasty. In the beginning Xiandi emperor (189-220 A.D.) became weak. His power was transferred to eunuchs whose authority secretly threatened the kingdom. Yellow-Turban bandits had a great prairie-fire power...Son of Heaven could not protect his empire. His empress, consorts and court officials all suffered from his cruelty. Fortunately, amid the mountain there was a sworn brotherhood among Liu Bei, Lord Guan and Zhang Fei, who swore to live and die together. They fought with Sun Quan and Cao Cao. Although they had suffered from hundred battles, their reputation scattered to all four sides. Their patriotism and merit was energetically established. ...At present the sage king (Qianlong emperor) has kind thoughts to ignorant people. His Majesty wants to give a warning. Thus he borrows puppets on the stage to stir up the deaf and open up the born deaf by transmitting ancient sounds and standard of removing the evil, as well as promoting the pure and recording it widely and extensively. He does not use distortion to transmit distortion. Songs are truly transmitted. How can it be that the wrong is made to express the wrong. Be good to those who are good and be evil to those who are

evil. Keep upright officials of three eras. Right is right. Wrong is wrong. This is to settle the unpleasant case that has lasted for hundred eras.

這本傳奇源編的是漢末故事。當初獻帝懦弱，權勢不移，宦官有蔽日之威。黃巾有燎原之勢，...天子不保其后妃，朝士盡遭其荼毒，猶幸中山有後與關張共誓死生，...當今聖主軫念，愚欲申懲勸，借場中傀儡為振聾啟聵之方傳古往音容，樹激濁揚清之準，廣羅紀載，弗使以訛傳訛，曲證源流。詎肯將錯就錯，善其善，惡其惡，存三代直道之公，是則是，非則非，定百世不利之案，音流簫管傳口角以如身上躍瑜繪刑神而酷肖。今逢大賚共樂。(DZCQ, 1964: 5 a.- 7 a.)

Thus we can see that Confucian notions of loyalty and righteousness are promoted in this play.

The first act of the *QSJK*, entitled “Music of the peaceful time opens up religions and illuminates righteousness” (*Yue chuntai kaizong mingyi* 樂春臺開宗明義) also states the objective of the play.

The original version of this play deals with the goodness of the Fu family. There are those who chant Buddhist sutras and preserve Buddhist precepts, and those who descend the underworld and suffer in the realm of Knife Mountain and Sword Tree. The good characters are not enough to display people’s good hearts. The wicked ones are not enough to keep people’s evil hearts in place. Now His Majesty sympathizes with his people, and as a result, borrows puppets to show punishment and reward... His Majesty ordered that we revise the old text and add into the new one, from the unpolished enter the elegant. He also promotes karmic reward and retribution, as well as exercises his power to exterminate the

arrogant and the licentious. For he fears that the wicked might be so plentiful and thus harm the precepts. When the world is peaceful, people receive a great reward. With music and feast, they will be happy. Stringed and winded musical instruments connect to the Heaven. It is like happy matters of all four sides. This makes ignorant men and women in this world, after watching this play, they would realize the loyalty to masters and kings, the filiality to parents, the respect to the elderly, exterminating the greed and the licentious, beholding it in their minds and keeping it in their determination. Above use it as Heavenly mirror, below employ it as respect to the Earth. Among the brightness there are laws and regulations connecting to one another. Among the darkness there are ghosts and demons following one another. When they emerge, they are silent. And only then do Heaven and Earth all know. Heaven cannot be teased. Only uprightness has to be kept. In the afternoon the sun begins to decline. When the moon reaches to its fullness, it begins to wane. Karmic reward and retribution are not obscure to the very least particle. We can see that in this world there are unclear matters. Heaven has no case that is not reported. Heaven borrows this to entice people and to present benevolent minds. Only when making those who are wicked, licentious and greedy suffer in a stage of icy cold, like snow entering hot stove can people be awoken. Then they will obtain luckiness and good fortune. Audience, do not regard this merely as a beautiful dance and new sounds that you used to hear and see.

這本傳奇源編的不過傳門一家良善,念佛持齋,冥府輪迴,刀山劍樹,善者未足啓發人之善心,惡者不足懲創人之惡志.當今萬歲,憫赤子之癡述,借傀儡爲刑

賞, ...刪舊補新, 從俚入雅.善報惡報, 神栽培傾覆之權, 去驕去淫, 凜惡盈損滿之戒. 世際昇平, 時逢大賚, 笙歌廣幕, 洽萬姓之歡心, 絃管鉤天, 同四方之樂事, 使天下的愚婦, 看了這本傳奇. 人人曉得心中君王, 孝父母, 敬尊長, 去貪淫, 戒之在心, 守之在志. 上臨之以天鑑, 下察之以地祇, 明有刑法相繫, 暗有鬼神相隨, 出處語默, 天地皆知, 天不可欺, 爲正可守, 日中則昃, 月盈則虧, 善報惡報, 不昧毫釐, 可見世有不明之事, 天無不報之條, 借此引人, 獻出良心, 把那奸邪淫貪的念頭, 一場水冷, 如雪入洪爐, 人能警醒, 自獲嘉祥, 臺下的不要把來當艷舞新聲, 尋常觀聽過了. (QSJK, 1964: 1 a.- 3 a.)

Thus, the Qianlong emperor employed this play as a means to promote both the notions of loyalty and filialty. Because to do so, his subjects “would realize the loyalty to masters and kings, the filiality to parents, the respect to the elderly, exterminating the greed and the licentious, beholding it in their minds and keeping it in their determination.”

Not only is the morality clearly stated in the beginning act of each play, but it is also portrayed by means of characterization. All five court plays consist of the same categories of characters that conform to Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist patterns. They are designed in a binary opposition: filial vs. unfilial sons and daughters; loyal and righteous court officials vs. betraying, unpatriotic officials, and cruel bandits. Eventually their fates were finalized by deities who rewarded the good and punished the wicked. As stated in the preface of the *ZDXS*, the play’s underlying theme is the loyalty to the Qing emperor. This theme is portrayed to all characters in the Yang family. The loyalty of the Yang family is accentuated throughout the play. In the fourth act of the first volume, the Yang family was introduced. We learn that Yang Jiye and his wife named Née She had

seven sons, two daughters, and three grandsons. We also learn Yang Jiye's loyalty by the way he taught his family. He instructed his children, saying:

Be loyal to your master and father. Be arduous to assist your country.

忠於君父, 勤勞國輔.

Née She then instructed her children, saying:

Your father instructs all of you to follow his determination of Great Relationship and Great Righteousness. You all are indeed filial sons and daughters of the Yang family.

你爹爹訓爾等皆大倫大義能繼父之志, 便是楊門孝子.

All of them then sang:

Exert the loyalty to the utmost to repay our country.

盡忠報國平生幕. (ZDXS, 1964: 16 a.- 19 b.).

Before Yang Jiye bid farewell to his family, he entrusted his wife to take good care of their children and not to let them fight with the Pan family. Unfortunately, it was Yang Xi who sneaked out and killed Pan Renmei's son named Pan Bao (Vol. 1 Act 7). Revengeful Pan Renmei then accused the Yang family of committing a crime. Prince De Zhao had no choice but demoted Yang Jiye and Yang Xi and banished him to the border for three years.

Loyalty of Yang family is also illustrated via their prowess and chivalric acts. For instance, in the eighth act of the second volume, Yang Jiye was so brave to proceed his army to the "Valley of Tiger's Mouth and Teeth" (*Hukou Wenya Yu* 虎口文牙峪), even though he knew how dangerous and risky it might be. He, Yang Xi and Yang Jing said:

It is not pitiful that three of us fathers and sons would die. But it is pitiful that thousand soldiers and ten thousand horses have to die with no reason.

我父子三人一死何足惜, 只可憐千軍萬馬皆死於非命. (ZDXS, 1964: 55 b.)

In the fifteenth act of the second volume, after Yang Jiye escaped from the valley, Liao armies led by Xiao Dalan, Xiao Tianzuo, Xiao Tianyou, Yelü Boguoji, Han Derang shot arrows to Yang Jiye and his troops. After he learned that Empress Xiao wanted to capture him alive, he was willing to die. He sang:

My heart is like iron, my body is like metal. My loyal liver, my righteous gall, and my ardent stomach of determination penetrate to the lofty clouds.

心如鐵, 身似鋼, 忠肝義膽烈志腸, 正氣透雲高.

He then told his troops to flee for fear that they might get killed by the Liao. He said:

Now I am seriously hurt. I exhausted my energy. You all have parents, wives and children. You should quickly escape and go back to repay the Son of Heaven. Dying in the battlefield with me is no use.

我今身被重傷, 勢孤力盡, 汝等上有父母, 下有妻兒, 早早逃回還報天子. 與我同死沙場無益於事了列位.

But all soldiers were willing to die with him, saying:

We are pleased to die here with you. For we have no other intention.

情願同死一處, 決無異志. (ZDXS, 1964: 11 a.- 19 a.)

Yang Jiye then committed suicide by knocking his head at the Li Ling Tombstone. Even Empress Xiao, a leader of the Liao, praised his virtue after being informed of his death.

In the nineteenth act of the second volume, she praised him:

Not only was Jiye loyal and upright, but he was also determined and courageous. If you officials can learn from his determination, it will be fortunate for the Liao nation.

繼業忠正智勇，若卿等皆能學繼業之志量，豈非遼邦之福乎。(ZDXS, 1964: 42 a.- 46 b.)

Yang Gui also exerted his loyalty. In the first act of the second volume, after he was captured to the Liao court, he was unwilling to kneel down in front of Empress Xiao. He said:

I only kneel down to the Son of Heaven and to my parents. How can I be willing to kneel down to you? My head can be decapitated but my knee will not bend for you.

俺上跪天子，下跪父母豈肯跪你？吾首能斷吾膝不屈。

He then sang:

Don't talk about surrendering. I receive gratitude from His Majesty. I will die to repay him. So early I risk my life by stretching out my neck and exhausting my energy to become a loyal soul concealing laughter.

休言降順，受君恩，死節當相報。早拚個延勁餐力，做一個忠魂含笑。(ZDXS, 1964: 1 a.- 5 b.)

However, Yelü Sha, one of the Liao Commanders-in-Chief, told Empress Xiao to bestow a title for Yang Gui and keep him in a garrison. In order to take revenge later, Yang Gui accepted the proposal.

Yang Xi is another character whose loyalty is portrayed vividly. In the tenth act of the second volume, before he died after he was shot by Pan Renmei, he sorrowfully said:

Father, Mother, it is not that your son is disloyal or unfilial. Alas! My fate, I cannot pacify the Liao and repay my country.

爹爹, 母親, 非孩兒不忠不孝, 數也, 命也, 不能平遼報國矣. (ZDXS, 1964: 75

b.)

He Huaipu is another character who exerted his loyalty and righteousness to the Song court. In the thirteenth act of the second volume, after learning that Pan Renmei refused to send troops to help Yang Jiye, he decided to go help Jiye by himself. And before he died, he lamented:

Heaven, He Huaipu exercises loyalty and righteousness. For I want to assist father and sons of the Yang family out of the valley and plan to exterminate the evil and to repay my master's gratitude. Unfortunately, Liao soldiers are so strong. I exhaust my energy and cannot help Jiye pacify the Liao and repay the country.

蒼天嗚蒼天, 賀懷浦一腔忠義之心, 欲救令公父子, 共圖掃蕩邊烽, 報主重恩, 爭奈遼兵勢眾, 老臣筋力已盡, 不能與繼業平遼報國也.

He then dismounted his horse, knelt down and sang:

His Majesty, I am so old that my energy is hard to rely on. My loyal heart is now exhausted. I would die with righteousness in order to repay gratitude to my country.

聖上, 臣老邁, 力難由, 忠心盡, 死節義, 國恩酬. (ZDXS, 1964: 1 a.- 7 a.)

From the twentieth to the twenty-third acts of the third volume we see loyalty and braveness of women in the Yang family, such as Née She, Eighth Sister, Ninth Sister, and

Du Yu'e, who wanted to take revenge for Yang Jiye by killing Pan Renmei. Even loyalty of bandits like Meng Liang is also depicted in the play. In the fourteenth act of the fifth volume, after Meng Liang sensed Yang Jiye's loyalty and generosity, he decided to help the Song court fight with the Liao Tartars. Meng Liang, together with 21 other bandits. They all put his loyalty into words:

Adamant is hero's determination. Loyalty and sincerity can assist the country and exterminate wicked thieves.

列列英雄志, 忠誠輔國家盡遭奸佞. (ZDXS, 1964: 9 b,)

After the bandits learned that Liao soldiers invaded the capital and caused the emperor and Prince De Zhao to retreat, they helped fight for the country (Vol. 5 Act 20).

Different characters in the play *ZYXT* also express the notion of loyalty and righteousness. As mentioned in Chapter Four and as stated in the fifth act of the first volume, characterization of Song Jiang and 108 heroes in the original novel the *Outlaws of the Marsh* were completely altered in this court play. They were transformed to be evil-doers in this adapted play, in which they could not exonerate their wrong-doings in the end. Therefore, instead of promoting the loyalty and righteousness via Song Jiang and 108 heroes in the original version, this adapted court play shifts to focus on these two virtues embodied in other Chinese ministers. Hence the concept of “Real Loyalty and Authentic Righteousness” (*Zhenzhong Zhenyi* 真忠真義) is portrayed through the “loyal ministers and righteous officials” characters (*Zhongchen Yishi* 忠臣義士). For instance, in the seventeenth act of the tenth volume, when Li Ruoshui, a Commander-in-Chief of

the Song court, was captured by the Jin when he was on his way to Qingzhou, Li was willing to die than surrender to the enemy. He audaciously said:

Heaven does not have two suns. Man does not serve two kings. How can I, Li Ruoshui, serve two masters?

天無二日, 民無二王. 我李若水寧有二主哉.

He refused to eat and implore Gan Libu and Nian Mohe, two Commanders-in-Chief of the Jin, to release the emperor and to let him remain as the emperor of the Song court. Li then taught them what duty, virtue, benevolence of the Commander-in-Chief really meant. When Gan Libu and Nian Mohe refused to release the emperor and executed Li Ruoshui, the Jin soldiers praised his loyalty, saying:

Good loyal minister, good loyal minister. His words will last forever.

好忠臣, 好忠臣, 話猶未了. (ZYXT, 1964: 84 a.- 88 b.)

Minor characters like father Zhang Shuye, together with his eldest son Zhang Bofen and second son Zhang Zhongxiong are also depicted as brave and loyal subjects of the Song court. They courageously battled with the Jin in order to protect the emperor when he fled to Qingzhou (Vol. 10 Act 15). When they were captured by the Jin army, Zhang Shuye refused to surrender by starving himself. Later in the nineteenth act of the tenth volume, while escorting the emperor and his entourage, Zhang Shuye fell from his horse. He said:

I, Zhang Shuye, am willing to die than surrender.

我張叔夜萬死莫辭。

He then collapsed and died. Even the Jin generals complemented his loyalty, saying: “This is indeed a true man with an ardent spirit” (*hao yige liexing hanzi* 好一個烈性漢子) and “good loyal minister.” (*hao zhongcheng* 好忠臣) (ZYXT, 1964: 93 a.-97 b.).

Other loyal generals such as He Guan, He Ji, Han Zong and Lei Yanxing also chivalrously fought the Jin troops led by Gan Libu (Vol. 10 Act 11). The emperor of the Song court lamented on losing country to the Jin and was about to flee because the Jin army approached the capital. Three loyal generals Bai Shizhong, Li Bangyan and Li Gang volunteered to fight with the Jin until they died (Vol. 10 Act 12).

In the play *QSK*, main characters who embody the notion of loyalty, righteousness and filial devotion are Fu Xiang and his son Fu Luobu. This adapted play emphasizes Confucian concepts from the beginning. For it starts with a happy patriarchal family in which the father was the leader of the family in the third act. In this act Fu Luobu made a self-introduction. We learn that his father, Fu Xiang was a righteous official (*yi guan* 義官) and his mother Née Liu was a chaste woman (*shu nü* 淑女). His family was rich and full of pages and maids. This is an episode dealing with how Luobu ordered his page boy Yi Li to set up the table to celebrate New Year’s Eve. The play was arranged in the Confucian philosophy in which family value was important. At the end of this act, Luobu blessed his parents for their longevity.

Fu Xiang's Buddhist virtue is also constantly highlighted throughout the play.

In the sixth act of the first volume, we can see that Fu Xiang was a pious Buddhist layman. He said to his wife:

My wife, I believe that when people were born and sent to the world, they pretty much rely themselves on the supernatural illumination of Heaven and Earth, as well as the sun, the moon and all constellations. Our family is not lack of wealth. We should help out poor people. On the first day and fifth day of every month we make a wish, we should burn incense and pray, wishing that the heaven will always produce good people, wishing that those people will always do good deeds. I desire that our later generations will not renege on my wish.

安人,我想人生寄世,多賴天地神明,日月星辰.吾家不惜資財,周濟貧民,每逢懇望,焚香拜禱,願天常生好人,願人常行好事,欲使後來子孫不移我志.

Three of them swore and prayed to gods that they would always preserve precepts and do good deeds, saying “We swear that we we will forever preserve Buddhist precepts.” (*lishi chizhai yong buyi* 立誓持齋永不移). Luobu then sang: “Luobu will follow parents’ wishes and take goodness and filiality as my behavior.” (*Luobu sui qinzhi, shanxiao dangwei* 羅卜隨親志,善孝當爲). They then sang together:

Husband and wife, father and son are in the famous garden. They swore and pray in response to the Heaven. His Majesty has the way to make the country happy and peaceful. People in all nine provinces and four seas would transform. He would rule over the mountain and river for myriad years.

負起夫妻在名園, 立誓投詞答上天, 皇王有道樂安然, 九州四海民於變, 一
統山河萬萬年.

Luobu then finished this act by emphasizing on filial piety:

Among hundred behaviors of human beings, the filial piety is the priority. Filial piety and goodness mutually interacts.

人生百行孝爲先, 孝善兼修始克全. (QSJK, 1964: 26 a.- 30 a.)

Therefore, we can see that from the beginning of the play, Luobu is an emblem of both Confucian and Buddhist filiality.

In the thirteenth act of the first volume, we witness how Fu Xiang expressed his magnanimity by helping Chen Rongzu's wife Née Zhang, who were about to jump into the well to commit suicide due to the fact that the evil Zhang San forced her to marry him. Fu Xiang then helped her by paying what she and her late husband owed to Zhang San and bought back her son Chang Shou. At the end of this act, mother and son reunited. We can see that Fu Xiang here played a role of Buddha who helped the poor woman and assist Chang Shou to have a chance to become a filial son.

We also witness Fu Xiang's generosity in the sixth act of the second volume when he ordered his servant Yi Li that he donate money and distribute food to poor people in his neighborhood. His kindness was confirmed when all villagers praised him and prayed for his fortune:

Mr. Fu Xiang magnanimously practices benevolence and morality. He had rice and grain stored in his warehouse, which is opened for 5 days. He has helped our lives. Today is scheduled for the warehouse opening. We should gather and go there. You all, we receive Mr. Fu Xiang's such great gratitude that we can't repay.

All of us should pray for him and ask Buddha to bring him good fortune and longevity.

傅長者, 廣行仁德將歷年積下的糧米, 五日開倉一放, 救了我們多少人的性命. 今日又是放米之期. 我等奏齊前去. 眾位, 我們受了傅長者如此大恩, 不能報答. 大家替他念佛保佑福壽綿長便了. (QSJK, 1964: 26 a.-31 b.)

Like his father, Luobu is also depicted as a filial son and a generous man. Indeed he embodied both Confucian and Buddhist virtues. For instance, in the fifteenth act of the second volume, Luobu helped Zhang Youda, who was poor, hungry and sick, by giving him money and food. In the twenty-second act of the second volume, he gave his money to the cunning Duan Yiren and the wicked Zhang Yanyou 張焉有. In the fourteenth act of the fourth volume, on his way to return home after the long three years, he encountered with a runaway courtesan Sai Furong, who was chased by her madame and servant Liu'er in order to capture her back to the brothel. When she told Luobu that somebody wanted to buy her for 100 taels of silver, Luobu then gave her money instead and freed her. Madame and Liu'er were so impressed with his magnanimity that they swore to preserve morality forever. Luobu also showed his concern to his mother, even when was about to die. In the sixteenth act of the fourth volume, after Luobu was captured by Zhang Youda and was about to be decapitated, he entrusted Yi Li to return home and take care of his mother. He lamented:

A son's duty is to exert his filial heart to the utmost and to respect his mother's order.

爲供子職, 盡孝心, 遵慈命. (QSJK, 1964: 25 a.-25 b.)

Zhang then recognized him as his “grateful man” (*en ren* 恩人). They then became sworn brothers. Moreover, in the twenty-second act of the fourth volume, he gave his money to filial son Zhu Zigui to buy a coffin for his late father and had him marry a runaway prostitute Hua Yuesu.

To be sure, Luobu is considered as a Buddhist paragon of filiality. This is portrayed through how he was worried about his mother who stayed at home alone, while he went away in the fifth act of the third volume. From this act onward, his filial devotion to his mother is intensified. In the fifteen act of the sixth volume, we learn how Luobu missed his mother. He then drew her face and worshipped it day and night. He melancholically sang:

I can only draw your face and clothes. Nurturing children, being pregnant for 10 months, lactate for 3 years. But now I can draw no more. Mother, I can't draw out your hardship of nurturing children. It was suffering and painstaking. I can't draw out the nature of your kindness and magnanimity. Your heart is warm and good. And I can't draw out your entire life.

我只畫得你面貌與衣裳。養育孩兒，懷胎十月，乳哺三年。而今畫在那裏了。娘，畫不出你養子勤勞，艱辛形狀；畫不出你性天慈厚，心地溫良；畫不出你一生來。(QSJK, 1964: 11 b.)

His filiality is highlighted when he mentioned paragons of Confucian filial sons like Meng Zong 孟宗, Cai Shun 蔡順, Min Sun 閔損 and Bo Yu 伯俞 (QSJK, 1964: 12 a.). Luobu also cited the underlying concepts of loyalty and filiality in the eighth act of the seventh volume, when he said:

Loyalty is a part of a minister, while filial piety is a priority of a son.

忠爲臣之分, 孝乃子之先. (QSJK, 1964: 30 b.)

Luobu started his journey to the Underworld in the fifth act of the sixth volume. From this act onward, Luobu's Buddhist filiality is accentuated when he went to fetch the Buddhist scripture and then descended to rescue his mother in ten nefarious realms.

As Alan Cole has pointed out, the Buddhist version of filial piety introduces a new complex of sin, guilt, and indebtedness into the family. That is to say, a range of kindnesses (*en* 恩) received in infancy, including the kindness of giving birth (*huai en* 懷恩) and the kindness of breast-feeding (*ru bu zhi en* 乳哺之恩) is explicitly delineated. (1998: 3-18). In this adapted play, a son like Luobu was threatened with the possibility that his loving and caring mother was actually a sinner who would languish in the underworld. Thus this Buddhist mother-son discourse initially intensified Luobu's anxiety about repaying his mother. He then realized that she was suffering miserably in the Hades for her sinful conducts. As Cole has argued, "This meant that the mother had been kidnapped and that the son was asked to face the guilt of renegeing on the relationship that had given him his very being." (1997: 25). Therefore, Luobu had to "repaying her kindness" (*bao en* 報恩) with his pilgrimage to fetch the sutra at the Western Paradise and his descent to rescue her in the Underworld. Thus from the sixth volume onward, the play focuses on the sinfulness of the mother Née Liu, dramatizing her nefarious deeds and lingering over the sadistic details of her post-mortem punishments.

Besides these main characters, the play also consists of a lot of minor good characters. For instance, filial son Chen Rongzu who had to sell his son to wicked rice merchant Zhang Jie in order to help his ill aged mother (Vol. 1 Act 9) and filial son Zhu Zigui, who was forced by poverty to sell himself to buy a coffin and hold a funeral for his deceased father (Vol. 4 Act 22). Loyal ministers and generals such as Li Sheng (Vol. 1 Act 16), Yan Zhenqing (Vol. 4 Act 7), Lu Zhi (Vol. 1 Act 17), Xia Xiushi (Vol. 1 Act 17), Fan Kexiao (Vol. 1 Act 24), Dai Xiuyan (Vol. 6, Acts 21-24), Yan Guoqing, Cao Xianzhong (Vol. 7 Act 10), Han Youhuan, Luo Yuanguang, Li Sheng, Li Houde, Hun Xian, Dong Zhibai, Zheng Shangyi, Zheng Gengfu, Li Gao, Li Bi, Han Min, Zhang Yanshang, Yang Cheng; merchant Huang Yangui, virtuous women Chen Guiying and Hua Suyue; Nun Zhenjing, Buddhist Monk Mingben and Taoist priest Zhenyuan.

Buddhist didacticism is emphasized at the end of five court plays in a form of reward and punishment. In general, Buddhist sense of sin (*zui* 罪) can be categorized into four kinds: the sin of the mother, and of women in general; the sin of the son who fails in his filial duties; the sin of not supporting the Buddhists; and the sin of being disloyal to the master (Cole, 1997: 201). All sins brought with them terrifying punishments. The reason sin terrified Chinese audiences was because, “in Buddhist worldview, death did not bring nothingness or the gradual dispersion of the souls but retribution in a rebirth that reflected one’s balance of sins and merits. The potential for terror increased as standards of Buddhist morality expanded the category of evil conduct to include even pedestrian acts such as slaughtering farm animals, acts which deemed serious enough to warrant hellish punishments that could last eons.” (Cole, 1997: 8). Thus Buddhist

discussions of sin threatened everyone with a large number of unpleasant fates. Hence, all five adapted court plays share the same pattern in the ending scenes. That is to say, Buddhist notion of sin was employed as a means to judge all characters' conducts. Ones who committed good deeds would be rewarded, whereas those who committed bad deeds would be severely punished and tortured in Hades.

In the play *ZDXS*, the loyal characters such as Yang Jiye, Yang Tai, Yang Xi and He Huaipu were rewarded by ascending to the Heaven (Vol. 2 Act 15). Yang Jing was promoted by the Taizong Emperor of the Song. Women from the Yang family continued to serve the Song court. Courageous bandits were also promoted.

On the contrary, Pan Renmei, who wickedly planned to eradicate the Yang family (Vol. 1 Act 7) and purposely refused to send troops to help Yang when he was surrounded in the valley (Vol. 2 Act 2), was eventually executed along with his son, Pan Hu, and his wife, Née Fu, at the execution ground (Vol. 3 Act 23), and suffered in the Hades with Wang Jian, Mi Xin, Tian Zhongjin, Liu Junqi, Fu Dingchen, Huang Yu, and Han Lian (Vol. 4 Acts 15-20). As for the wicked Wang Qiang, we see his cruelty after Pan's death. In order to take revenge on the Song court, he disguised himself as a poor scholar to enter the court and spy on military activities. He betrayed the Song nation by surrendering to Empress Xiao (Vol. 2 Act 19). Later after he gained his position in the Song court, he and Xie Tingfang were angry with women of the Yang family and planned to destroy their residence named "Wang Bo Tower" (*Wang Bo Lou* 王波樓) (Vol. 4 Acts 21-23). He summoned wicked Taoist priest Yan Dongbin to help fight with the Song

armies (Vol. 6-Vol. 10). Eventually, Wang Qiang and Xie Tingfang were penalized in the Hades (Vol. 10 Act 16).

In contrast with the original novel the *Outlaws of the Marsh*, the play *ZYXT*, highlights a different denouement of Song Jiang and 108 bandits. In the eighth act of the tenth volume, we witness that eight minor ghosts, eight military ghosts, ten nefarious judges, Golden Lad, Jade Maiden and ten Yama Kings gathered to justify Song Jiang's and other bandits' actions. Ten Yama Kings said:

We act in accordance with the Jade Emperor of Heaven's edict. It states that Song Jiang and 108 people originally were a group of demons coming to the earth to harm the living beings. It is indeed a case of 'False Practice of Loyalty and Righteousness to Deceive the World and Wrong the Masses.' He particularly sends Great Emperor of the Eastern Hades to consult with us, all ten Yama Kings, to examine their guilt and wickedness and have them recorded. By means of it we use to instruct the ignorant to warn the world.

我們只爲朝謁玉帝欽奉, 玉旨說宋江等一百八人, 原爲群魔降世戕害生靈. 乃反假托忠義惑世誣民. 特著東岳大帝, 會同我們十殿審理, 要檢其罪惡分別定擬, 以警愚蒙以昭勸戒. (QSJK, 1964: 37 a)

In the tenth act of the tenth volume, ten Yama Kings and the Great Emperor of the Eastern Hades tried the case of Song Jiang and his schemer named Wu Yong. The Great Emperor of the Eastern Hades accused them of “False Practice of Loyalty and Righteousness to Deceive the World and Wrong the Masses.” (*jiatuo zhongyi houshi wumin* 假托忠義惑世誣民). Therefore they had to be punished in order to “encourage

human's heart and uphold the instruction in the world" (*yi jili renxin fuchi shijiao* 以激勵人心扶持世教). He reprimanded them, saying "I only hate that their mouths speak of loyalty and righteousness as priority. But their minds deceive people." (*zhihen ta zui tou'er, zhongyi weixian; xin wo'er, qiwang nanyan* 只恨他嘴頭兒, 忠義為先; 心窩兒, 欺罔難言). However, Song Jiang and Wu Yong effortlessly defended themselves. The Great Emperor of the Eastern Hades then took an example when Song Jiang used to plan to capture loyal official Qin Ming, destroy his station, kill his soldiers, harm his wife and finally forced him to become a bandit. Thus their karmic retribution was "Descending to each Hades and afterwards will not be able to be reborn forever." (*shou chongchong diyu ranhou shuiru nili bude chaosheng* 受重重地獄然後水入泥犁不得超生). At the end of the act, Great Emperor of the Eastern Hades judged all wicked characters' karmic retribution. Therefore, Song Jiang and 108 bandits were tried in seven following cases (ZYXT, 1964: 36 a.-39 a.).

First case: Song Jiang and Wu Yong had to be tortured in every Hades.

Second case: Guan Sheng, Hua Rong, Huyan Zhuo, Dong Ping, Suo Zhao, Wei Dingguo, Zhang Qing, Huang Xin, Han Tao and others. Their crime was "Discarding Officialdom to Follow Banditry." (*Qiguan Congzei* 棄官從賊). They were punished in the fourth Hades called "the Knife Mountain Hell." (*Daoshan Diyu* 刀山地獄) (Vol. 10 Act 8)

Third case: Zhao Gai, Gongsun Sheng, Liu Tang, Three Ruan brothers, Bai Sheng and others. Their crime was "Beating and Plundering People's Lives" (*Dajie Shengmin*

打劫生民). They were punished in the second Hades called “the Pounding Mill Hell.”

(*Duimo Diyu* 確磨地獄) (Vol. 10 Act 9)

Fourth case: Lu Zhishen, Wu Song, Yang Zhi, Shi En, Cao Zheng, Shi Jin, Zhu Wu, Chen Da, Yang Chun, Wang Ying, Yan Shun, Fan Rui, Xiong Chong, Li Gun, and others. Their crime was “Initiating the Assembly by Whistling and Taking Refuge in the Mountain Forest In Order To Oppose” (*Qi Xiaojun Shanlin Fuyu Juming* 起嘯聚山林負隅拒命). They were punished in the eighth Hades called “the Fire Carriage Hell” (*Huochediyu* 火車地獄) (Vol. 10 Act 12)

Fifth case: Zhang Heng, Li Jun, Tong Wei, Tong Meng, Zhang Shun and others. They were punished in the third Hades called “the Blood Lake and Iron Bed Hell.” (*Xuehu Tiechuang Diyu* 血湖鐵床地獄) (Vol. 10 Act 16)

Sixth case: Lu Junyi, Qin Ming, Xu Ning, Li Kui, Lin Chong, Yan Qing, Dai Zhong, Li Ying, Lei Heng, Yue He and others. Their crime was “Support and Enter Accomplices to Harm Living Beings and Immortals” (*Futong Ruhuo Shanghai Shengling* 扶同入夥傷害生靈). They were punished with 100 strokes of iron whip (*Tiebian* 鐵鞭). (Vol. 10 Act 19)

Seventh case: Gao Qiu, Yang Jian, Liang Shicheng, Tong Guan, Cai Jing, Wang Fu and others. Their crime was “Deceive the Emperor and Wrong the Country” (*Qijun Wuguo* 欺君誤國). They were punished in the sixth Hades called “A’ Bi Hell.” (Vol. 10 Act 20)

Therefore, we can see that the bandit identity of Song Jiang and 108 bandits cannot be exonerated, although they claimed that they were righteous and loyal to their country. The act of rebellion is judged in the end.

As for the reward, thirteen loyal ministers and generals of the Song court, such as He Guan, He Ji, Han Zong, Lei Yanxing, Bai Shizhong, Li Bangyan, Li Gang, Zhang Shuye, Zhang Bofen, Zhang Zhongxiong, Li Ruoshui, Fu Cha, Liu He, ascended to the Heaven and had a banquet with all deities. They were called “loyal souls,” (*zhonghun* 忠魂), “loyal ministers” (*zhongchen* 忠臣) who possessed “loyal and sincere” (*zhongzhen* 忠貞) and “real loyalty authentic righteousness.” (*zhengzhong zhenyi* 真忠真義) (Vol. 10 Act 23). Moreover, the Jin emperor rewarded Gan Libu and Nian Mohe for their victory over the Song by promoting Gan to be King of Wei State (*Wei Wang* 魏王) and Nian to be King of Zhou and Song States (*Zhou Song Wang* 周宋王). (Vol. 10 Act 21)

In the play *DZCQ*, Cao Cao’s and other wicked characters’ post-mortem retribution is highlighted in the end. Unlike the original version, Cao Cao and other wicked characters in this adapted grand play were penalized in the Hades. From the twenty-first act of the eighth volume to the twenty-first act of the tenth volume, these episodes deal with how karmic retribution imposed upon them. They all suffered and were tortured in all ten nefarious realms: the first hell (Vol. 9 Act 3), the second hell (Vol. 9 Act 5), the third hell (Vol. 9 Act 21), the fourth hell (Vol. 9 Act 24), the fifth hell (Vol. 10 Act 2), the sixth hell (Vol. 10 Act 3), the seventh hell (Vol. 10 Act 7), the eighth hell (Vol. 10 Act 14), the ninth hell (Vol. 10 Act 20), and the tenth hell (Vol. 10 Act 21). In

the end they were reborn as animals: Dong Zhuo, Cao Cao and Li Jue became turtles; Guo Si goat; Li Ru fox; Gu Xu fox; Zhang Ji pig; Fan Chou bear; Guo Jia monkey; Cheng Yu fox; Zhang Liao earthworm; Xun Huo leopard; Xun You tiger; Hua Xin and Chi Lu rabbits (Vol. 10 Act 21).

In the play *QSK*, rewards were bestowed upon good characters. For instance, Fu Xiang was promoted to be “Great Master of Promoting Goodness” (*Quanshan Taishi* 勸善太師) (Vol. 6 Act 2). Luobu, who was bestowed a new name Mu Jian Lian by Buddha (Vol. 8 Act 7), was appointed to be Bodhisattava titled *Shijia Wenfo Zhishou Pusa* 釋迦文佛指授菩薩 in the end (Vol. 10 Act 2). Servant Yi Li, due to his loyalty to his master, was appointed “Great Guardian of Heaven Gate” (*Xianguan Zhangmen Dashi* 仙官掌門大師) (Vol. 10 Act 2). Chen Rongzu was reborn as a governor (Vol. 8 Act 13). Dong Zhibai was reborn as an official with three sons and two daughters (Vol. 8 Act 21). All loyal ministers were rewarded by the emperor (Vol. 7 Act 10 and Vol. 9 Act 1). Buddhist monk Mingben, Taoist priest Zhenyuan and Nun Zhenjing ascended to the Heaven and then were reborn as rich people in their next lives (Vol. 9 Act 2).

Buddhist karmic retribution is also depicted in the play *QSK*. Née Liu’s journey to the Hades starts from the twenty-fourth act of the fifth volume, in which the Earthly God (*Tudi shen* 土地神) ordered five guardian ghosts (*wu Chaigui* 五差鬼) to nail Née Liu’s soul with iron nails for fear that she might escape. Then he commanded 20 military ghosts that they escort her to the Netherworld. Née Liu suffered and was tortured in different nefarious realms: the Slippery Oil Mountain (*Huayou Shan* 滑油山) (Vol. 6 Act

20), Terrace of Looking to Hometown (*Wangxiang Tai* 望鄉臺) (Vol. 7 Act 2), Endurance River Bridge (*Naihe Qiao* 奈河橋) full of copper snakes and iron dogs (*tongshe tiequan* 銅蛇鐵犬) (Vol. 7 Act 15), Ghost Pass (*Gui Guan* 鬼關) (Vol. 7 Act 19), Solitary Vexation Channel (*Guxi Geng* 孤恚埂) (Vol. 8 Act 8), the first Hades realm called “Karma Mirror Hell” (*Yejing Diyu* 業鏡地獄) (Vol. 8 Act 13), the second Hades realm called “Pounding Mill Hell” (Vol. 8 Act 21), the third Hades realm called “Blood Lake and Iron Bed Hell” (Vol. 8 Act 23), the fourth Hades realm called “Knife Mountain Hell” (Vol. 8 Act 24), the fifth Hades realm called “Oily Pot Hell” (*Youguo Diyu* 油鍋地獄) (Vol. 9 Act 3), the sixth Hades realm called “A Bi Hell” (*A’Bi Diyu* 阿鼻地獄) (Vol. 9 Act 8), the seventh Hades realm called “Cutting off Tongue Hell” (*Guashe Diyu* 刮舌地獄) (Vol. 9 Act 11), the eighth Hades realm called “Freezing Ice Hell” (*Hanbing Diyu* 寒冰地獄) (Vol. 9 Act 14), the ninth Hades realm called “Poisonous Snake Hell” (*Dushe Diyu* 毒蛇地獄) (Vol. 9 Act 17), and the tenth Hades realm called “Peeling off Skin Hell” (*GuapiDiyu* 剮皮地獄) (Vol. 9 Act 19). In this realm the tenth Yama King gave her the final retribution, in which she was reborn as a dog in the human world. However, due to Fu Xiang’s piety in Buddhism and Mu Lian’s filiality, eventually Née Liu was rewarded by the Jade Emperor of the Heaven. He had her revived and reunited with her family (Vol. 10 Act 8). Moreover, he appointed her to be the “Goddess of Promoting Goodness” (*Quanshan Furen* 勸善夫人).

Other wicked characters also could not escape their karmic retribution. The evil Liu Gu was penalized in the fifth Hades (Vol. 9 Act 3) and then was reborn as a camel in

the human world (Vol. 9, Act 19). Maid Golden Girl was penalized in the first Hades (Vol. 8 Act 8) and then was reborn as a mother pig in the human world (Vol. 9, Act 19). Zhang Jie suffered in the first Hades (Vol. 8 Act 13), while Li Xilie, Zhu Ci, and Tian Xijian were tortured in the fourth Hades (Vol. 8 Act 24) and Yao Lingyan in the fifth Hades (Vol. 9 Act 3).

5.1.3 Chinese Three-Tiered Stage and Court Plays in Relation to Qianlong's Self-Representation

Most scholars agree that the Qianlong emperor was a man with many faces and identities. As Harold L. Khan has put it, “The emperor was in fact his own best mythmaker.” (1971:9). His self-images were often portrayed through the pictorial art. Throughout his sixty years of reign, the Qianlong emperor sponsored and allowed court artists to paint his portraits in both real and fictive identities. The capacities that the self-obsessive emperor embodied in such portraits included him as literatus, as banquet host, as filial son, as devoted father, as hunter, as warrior, as painter, even as bodhisattva (Wu, 1996: 221-236; Zito, 1997: 17-43). However, not only did the Qianlong emperor use to construct his multiple images, but he also employed the three-tiered stage as a means to represent his identity in many different ways. The question to ask is “How did Chinese three-tiered stage and five court plays reflect Qianlong's self-image?” I would argue that, by reading against and into the theatrical architecture and messages conveyed in five adapted court plays, three self-representations of the emperor can be intensified.

5.1.3.1 The Qianlong Emperor as Buddha

The Qianlong emperor was a great patron of Buddhism. He left extensive material evidence of his regular engagement with Buddhism. He wrote prefaces for Buddhist books, and dedicatory inscriptions and eulogies for temples and monasteries. Within his sixty years of reign, he commissioned more than ten thousand statues of Buddhist deities. He also extensively studied Tibetan Buddhism. The imperial sponsorship of Buddhist books during his reign was on a grand scale. Many of them were published in the imperial printing establishment. For instance, the complete translation into Mongolian of the Tibetan supplementary canon and its publication in 226 volumes; and an anthology of all *dharani* and *mantra* in Sanskrit from the Tibetan canon, carefully transcribed in 80 volumes of Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese, and Manchu scripts. Furthermore, he ordered the preparation of a Manchu language Buddhist canon (*Manju hergen-I ubaliyambuha amba g'anjur bithe*) in 1790 for the benefit of his Manchu subjects. (Crossley, 1999: 310-340; Farquhar, 1978: 6-7; Khan, 1971: 205-207; Peterson, 2002: 282-293).

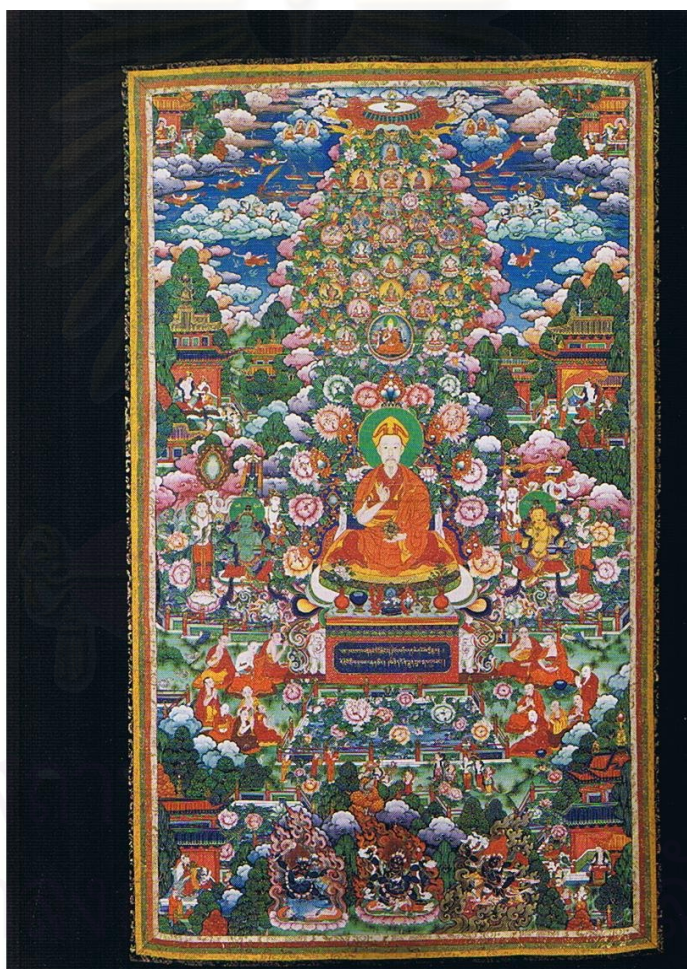
Picture 75 illustrates how the Qianlong emperor perceived himself as a bodhisattva. In this painting, he is depicted as a Tibetan bodhisattva Manjusri.⁷⁴ Over his shoulder to the right is a book and to the left is the sword of wisdom which cuts through ignorance. His right hand is in the teaching mudra. These implements and gestures are associated with Manjusri, as is the landscape in the background, the five peaks of Wutai Mountain in Shanxi. Qianlong wears the pandita's hat and in his left hand carries the

⁷⁴ Manjusri (*Wenshu Shili* 文殊師利) is one of the most important bodhisattvas in Buddhism, the personification of the Buddha's intellect, and, along with two other bodhisattvas, Avalokitesvara and Samantabhadra, forms a trinity, the Protectors of the Three Classes of Beings. (Walters, 1992: 23).

wheel of Buddhist teaching that marks him as a dharmaraja—a great ruler who turns the wheel of Buddhist teachings, and the inscription reinforces this ideal:

To the human lord (Qianlong) who is the sharp (minded) Manjusri manifesting as the great owner (of the world) and Dharmaraja. May he live long who is firmly seated on the vajra throne and may wishes (of beings) be spontaneously fulfilled in this good era.

(Crossley, 1999: 234; Farquhar, 1978: 6-7; Khan, 1971: 205).



Pic. 75: Painting of “the Qianlong Emperor as Bodhisattva.” Picture from Rawski and Rawson, *China: Three Emperors: 1662-1795*, p. 142.

Therefore the fact that the Qianlong emperor commissioned Buddhist plays like the *SPBF* and the *QSJK*, as well as promoted Buddhist philosophies in these plays, can confirm his self-image as Buddha who embodied and constituted this religious morality. His imperial functions properly demanded a kind of universe of roles, whether religious, cultural, or political. Richard Vinograd has appraised him “emphasized elements of self-deception, posturing, and grandiose sham in the Qianlong emperor’s roles, qualities that set a tone for the culture of the age.” (1992: 71). In comparison with Picture 74, the actors on the three-tiered stage were the ones who gave the performances to the emperor. But in Figure 75, it is the Qianlong emperor who “performed” a role of an incarnated Buddhist deity and ultimately a role of universal ruler of China. As Crossley has argued, “The Qianlong emperor's universalist ideology was distinctly centered upon himself, as the sole point where all specifics articulated. He was a grand impersonator, controlling cultures by incarnating them, commanding their moral centers through the conduct of their rituals. The Qing empire was universal because the Qianlong emperorship was culturally null, and through his actions (including the commissioning of literature, architecture, painting, portraiture, and drama) he brought reality and meaning to all cultures. He was by these virtues a sage-king, and he was the unique “Son of Heaven,” the sole intercessor between human cultures and their deities” (1999:221).

5.1.3.2 Qianlong as Buddhist filial son:

Besides perceiving himself as Buddha, the Qianlong emperor also regarded himself as Buddhist filial son. As recorded in Chinese history, the emperor was so dedicated to his mother, Empress Xiaosheng 孝聖 or Empress Dowager Xian (*Xian Huanghou* 憲皇后). He spent long years of faithful devotion to her. As Khan has pointed out, “It was his own proud claim that almost everywhere he went she went too. She accompanied him on four of his six famous southern tours, three of his five official visits to Wutai Mountain, three of the five pilgrimages to the Confucian temple in Shandong, the last at the age of eighty-four, and one of his four excursions in the “central” or metropolitan provinces” (1971: 88). To express his filiality to his mother, Qianlong gave her more than nine thousand statues of Buddhist deities on her seventieth birthday (Farquhar, 1978: 10). He also commissioned a grand scale of drama performances in public for several days on her eightieth birthday (Chen, 2001: 195). Moreover, numerous routine imperial attentions were paid to the empress dowager. This included “daily visits to inquire after her health, personal attention to her illnesses, inclusion of her in ritual ceremonies, formal dinners and entertainments and pleasure trips.” (Khan, 1971: 88-89). Therefore, these conducts confirmed that Qianlong was a Buddhist filial son, who dedicated his whole life to his beloved mother. A congratulatory ode to his mother written on her birthday reinforces the emperor’s filial piety.

Elysian dawn light glimmers on the golden palace door,

Propitious clouds amassed achieve a multi-colored brilliance.

The goblet is raised to the empress by the ladies in her court,

The regalia are run out.

Within the four seas all exalt her majesty.

At the feast food fit for the Gods is reverently borne in,

In figured silks her sons present clothing for a Faerie Queen.

Bathed in her favor and care, I greet her Day,

And in succeeding years shall dance the dance of praise.

Proclaiming the verdant radiance of her maternal grace. (Khan, trans, 1971: 90-91)

As Khan has explained, this poem alluded to “beneficent perfection associated with long-lived maternity and the civilizing influence of the throne.” (1971: 91).

Hence, the Buddhist filiality in mother-son discourse embedded in the story of Mu Lian clearly appealed to Qianlong. As a result, he commissioned an adaptation of the play *QSK*. By focusing on Mu Lian’s ordeal, Qianlong surely perceived himself as this Buddhist paragon of filial devotion. But how did this notion provoke a filial son like him? I would argue that, as a son, the Qianlong emperor would have found the dramatization of loving and rescuing one’s mother to possess powerful attractions. First, it advocated love between mother and son and provided a medium through which mother-son feelings could be expressed and celebrated. Second, the story that dramatized Buddhist filial piety put a son like him in the role of hero and saint like Mu Lian. Third, the denouement of this mother-son drama was of completion, reunion. Fourth, the fact that one’s mother begging him for rescue from the underworld implied the empowerment of her son which, I believe, is the most significant reason why he commissioned the adaptation of this play.

5.1.3.3 The Qianlong Emperor as Manchu Great Warrior King

In addition to Buddha and Buddhist filial son, the Qianlong emperor always cast himself as Manchu Great Warrior King. Picture 76, entitled “The Qianlong Emperor in Ceremonial Armour” illustrates this self-representation.



Pic. 76: Painting entitled “The Qianlong Emperor in Ceremonial Armour” Picture from Rawski and Rawson, *China: Three Emperors: 1662-1795*, p. 166)

This portrait is impressive. It makes use of European techniques and shows a European interest in rulers on horseback. Due to his Manchu identity, the Qianlong emperor had a strong interest in military matters (Crossley, 1997: 296-311). In this

portrait he wears a robe covered with armour, a helmet and sword, and a bow and arrow which hang from the waist, which represents the skillful horsemanship and archery of the Manchu. Hence, the adapted court plays preserved the significance of his Manchuness and demonstrated Manchurian prowess.

The portrayal of the Jin and Liao characters in the plays *ZYXT* and *ZDXS*, though antagonists, is not negative. They are depicted as heroic, loyal and chivalrous warriors. To be sure, the profanity which deluded the Manchu and defying words to the emperor were eliminated. It is stated clearly in the fifth act of the first act in the *ZYXT*.

All of you listen to my explanation. Because on the stage, loyalty is fullness of all matters. Righteousness is the greatest virtue of oneself. Ancient people could recognize these two words. They kept them until they died and exercised them with both civil and military abilities at court. Good ministers, who proclaimed power for the nation, were poor and lived in the uncivilized city... Now Song Jiang and 108 people maintain their beastlike, plunder and commit all crimes. ... to use it as a vehicle for deluding the world and oppress the masses. How can there be a principle that Constellation Spirits descend to the world to become bandits? This fact is what the sage king must eradicate. This cannot be pardoned and endured during the Qing period. Thus we employ the false history of the Song dynasty in order to reprimand a den of thieves of the Water Margins. In the beginning we write about wicked party who killed people. We employ traces of historical people and wish to proclaim loyalty and righteousness as well as to shout at ignorant people....This is indeed essence of A Diagram of the Stars of Loyalty and Righteousness.

你們聽我說破。因由在向場頭體，認夫忠者事上之盛，節義者處己之大。經人能識此兩字，守之終身則達，而在朝經文緯武，為國家宣力之良臣，即窮而在野市，… 今宋江等一百八人秉豺狼虎豹之姿。行奪矯之事。… 以為惑世誣民之具。豈有星精下降相率為盜之理。此實為聖世所必誅。清時所不赦施耐假宋史為事。據斥水滸為窩巢，極寫首惡黨惡之奸募盡殺人，歷人之跡，亦欲宣明忠義喝破愚氓… 這纔是忠義璇圖真結脈。(ZYXT, 1964: 21 a.- 23 b.)

This is the reason why Song Jiang and 108 bandits in the adapted play received their karmic retribution in the Hades. For they “maintain their beastlike, plunder and commit all crimes. ... to use it as a vehicle for deluding the world and oppress the masses.” In the original novel, the main conflict is between Chinese and the Liao Tartar, which lost the battle in the end. However, the court play altered the plot. It focuses on the battle between the Song and the Jin. Moreover, the Jin characters were portrayed strong and capable.

As I have mentioned in Chapter Four, the Qianlong emperor's commission of this adapted play is interesting. For the plot touches upon the conflict between the Song court and the Liao as well as the Song court and the Jin. Since the Qing dynasty envisioned its claim to imperial legitimacy as descending from the Jin, literary depictions of the Song and Jin conflict had always been viewed with suspect by the Qing court. Apparently, within the confines of the court, under Qianlong's scrutiny and patronage, dramatic presentation of this story was sanctioned. This not simply reflected Qianlong's fear of anti-dynastic spirit, but also echoed his trepidation with anti-Manchu conduct. Thus he began the censorship of prohibited books in the beginning of his reign. Among them, books or plays that were anti-dynastic or rebellious were censored. Also those insulted

previous dynasties which were ancestral to the Qing, namely the Jin and the Liao, were prohibited (Goodrich, 1966: 44-48).

In the eighteenth year of the Qianlong reign (1754), the emperor issued a decree prohibiting publication, distribution and performance of the novel *Outlaws of the Marsh*.

Ministry of Personnel respectfully reported of practicing evil matters. ...

Another memorial records: A banditry story should be rebuked. Reading the Outlaws of the Marsh printed by workshop, it regards wicked people as heroes, treachery as marvelous skill. They jump onto the beam (i.e. broke the law) and escaped from the net of justice. Punishment was carried out worthlessly. That wicked, frivolous and dissipated Jin Shengtian who used to face capital punishment was praised in vain. Moreover, actors in the Pear Garden performed this story. In a market place worthless people watched this performance. At once they admired these heroes and started imitating their determinations. They lured the crowd to regard a violent action as a good thing. But the Outlaws of the Marsh was a book that teaches and lures people to violate the law. According to an investigation in the fifty-third year of the Kangxi reign (1715), the memorial records the prohibition of selling novels filled with dissolute words in any market place. I request a strict prohibition by burning the book of the Outlaws of the Marsh and forbidding its performance. Wild talks of people were unacceptable. But a ruthless custom returned to pure words. A regulation has been settled due to the investigation. Book sellers in the city were allowed to sell only books about moral science and politics, as well as beneficial books and documents. The petty and dissolute words should be strictly prohibited. Violators will be severely

examined. The book that teaches and lures people to violate the law like this is strictly prohibited. Now this imperial censor memorialized to the emperor regarding to the strict prohibition of the Outlaws of the Marsh and investigation of petty and dissolute words. The original law issued the same prohibition. Thus such memorial should be presented. The imperial decree ordered every provincial governor to study politics and commanded local officers to strictly prohibit all copies of the Outlaws of the Marsh. Moreover, do not cause any disturbance. The issue on the twenty-third day of the third month in the nineteenth year of the Qianlong reign (1755): on the twenty-sixth day of this month, the memorial was presented. Respect this. On the twenty-seventh day of the fourth month in the nineteenth year of the Qianlong reign, I received the memorial from the Jiangsu province.

吏部為敬陳習弊等事，……又奏稱：一、盜言宣中飭也。閱坊刻水滸傳，以凶猛局好漢，以悖迷為奇能，跳梁漏網，懲創蔑如。乃惡薄輕狂曾經正法之金聖嘆，妄加贊美；梨園子弟，更演為戲劇。市井無賴見之，輒慕好漢之名，啟效尤之志，爰以聚黨逞凶為美事，則水滸實為教誘犯法之書也。查康熙五十三年，奉禁坊肆賣淫調小說。臣請申嚴禁止，將水滸傳毀其書板，禁其扮演，庶亂言不接，而悍俗還淳等語。查定例，坊間書賈，上許刊行理學政治，有裨文業諸書，其餘瑣語淫詞，通行嚴禁，違者重突。是教誘犯法之書，例禁森嚴。今該御史奏請將水滸中嚴禁止等語，查瑣語淫詞，原系例禁，應如所奏請，敕下直省督撫學政，行令地方官，將水滸一書，一體嚴禁；亦毋得事外滋擾。

等因，乾隆十九年三月二十三日題，本月二十六日，奉旨及議，欽此。

乾隆十九年四月二十七日江省准咨。(Dingli Huibian, cited in Wang, 1981: 195)

Likewise, the profanity to the Liao was deleted in the court play *ZDXS*. Moreover, the loyalty of Liao soldiers was also exalted throughout the play. For instance, we can see that in this adaptation, the Liao Tartars are portrayed as brave and loyal, unlike the original version. For example, we see the loyalty of Yelü Furen, Empress Xiao's daughter, when she was shot to death (Vol. 9 Act 22), Han Derang's and Shi Gai's loyalty and bravery when they fought with Yang Jing. Even Prince De Zhao praised their virtues (Vol. 10 Acts 16-17). Nevertheless, the political entity embodied in the invasions of the enemies that was dramatized in the adapted play like the *ZYXT* and *ZDXS* also reflects the Qianlong emperor's desire to suppress rebellions and thus to unify the empire. Of course, Qianlong did not "utter" these words, rather, he had them put in it a form of "performance."

5.1.4 Foucault's Theory on Power in Relation to Qianlong's Sovereign Power

In this section, I will apply Foucault's theory of power to the analysis of Qianlong's sovereign power to construct the three-tiered stage and to commission five didactic court plays. According to Foucault, sovereign power and its legitimacy cannot be discarded, "At bottom, despite the differences in epochs and objectives, the representation of power has remained under the spell of monarchy. In political thought and analysis, we still have not cut off the head of the king" (1978: 88). To him, sovereign

power functions when one violates law and can only act to punish or restrain the violation. Thus he suggested that “power in this instance was essentially a right of seizure: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself.” (1978: 136). Sovereign power in this sense “prohibits, confiscates, or destroys that sovereign judgment pronounces illegitimate” (Gutting, 2005: 103). Therefore, Qianlong’s sovereign power was exercised to control what the emperor perceived illegitimate, i.e. anti-dynastic spirit and threat from foreign countries. However, Foucault argued that no actual sovereignty could realize this conception in practice. He claimed that although many of the political forms and practices of sovereign power remained in place, they were gradually taken over and ultimately sustained on the basis of power relations that functioned at a different location and scale. Increasingly, the sovereign apparatus, which in this case is the Chinese three-tiered stage, became both dependent upon and productive of disciplinary and regulatory power. Foucault has defined “disciplinary power” as the reforms in the penal system which represents the institutionalization of a new form of power or way of organizing social relations (1977: 24).

The body is...directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, train it, torture it.... This political investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relations, with its economic use; it is largely as a force of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination; but, on the other hand, its constitution as labour power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of

subjection...the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and a subjected body. (1977: 25-26).

This “disciplinary power” was as fundamental to the politics of the Qing empire. This new regime of power centered around the production of what Foucault has termed “docile bodies,” which in this case court officials, court ladies, tributary countries, in such a way as to provide “a submissive, productive and trained source” of the Qing empire. Peace in the Qing empire was only possible because these “docile bodies” were already implicated in a network of power relations which both disciplined their unruly forces and increased their capacity for controlled productivity (1977: 93).

In five grand plays dominant episodes of punishment in Hades were principal site where methods for the “political investment” of the body were developed and refined. Order was ensured in these regimes through the control of space in strategies such as physical pain in the human world, torture in hell, and the public massacre on the execution ground. Here disciplinary techniques were developed both in the human realm and in the underworld. Thus the three-tiered stage functions as an enclosed space where torture scenes were dramatized and where the “disciplinary power” was exercised. As I have discussed earlier, wicked characters in five court plays were deemed to be punished in the Hades. For instance, the twenty-third act of the fifth volume of the *QSK*, entitled “Dark Hades path starts from now on” (*Heihei mingtu congci shi* 黑黑冥途從此始) talks about how Luobu fetched Po Tong Doctor (*Po Tong Yi* 頗通醫) to cure his mother. The stage direction reads:

Miscellaneous characters costumed as five guardian ghosts enter the stage through both doors, acts out secretly standing... Five guardian ghosts act out beating Po Tong Doctor. Po Tong Doctor acts out fainting and exits the stage through an entrance door. All guardian ghosts say: "First capture maid Golden Girl's soul and cuff her in the Earthly Monastery." Five guardian ghosts act out capturing Golden Girl's soul alive. Golden Girl suddenly acts out falling down to the ground and losing her breath. A miscellaneous character costumed as Golden Girl's double body wearing a blouse and holding a kerchief acts out secretly entering the stage. Five guardian ghosts act out cuffing Golden Girl. They all exit the stage... Five guardian ghosts act out fanning the wind. Née Liu acts out shivering, singing: "Clear and cold like ice." Five guardian ghosts act out blowing the fire. Née Liu acts out being hot, singing: "Hot and heat like flame. It pierces my body like a sword." All guardian ghosts act out beating the table. Née Liu acts out seeing and being startled, singing: "Deep and dark are all ghosts." Five guardian ghosts act waving hands to call Née Liu. Née Liu acts out knocking her head in response, singing: "Hurriedly and hastily they force me to die. They chase me until today I repent my guilt." Five guardian ghosts act out cuffing Née Liu and circling the stage and exit the stage. A miscellaneous character costumed as Née Liu's double body...acts out secretly entering the stage and hiding under the table.

雜扮五差鬼...從兩場門分上, 暗立科. ...五差鬼作打頗通醫, 頗通醫隨意發譚作出門科, 仍從上場門下. 都差鬼白: "先將金女魂魄拿到土地廟鎖禁者." 五差

鬼作活捉金女, 金女作忽倒地氣絕科. 雜扮金女替身穿衫背心繫汗巾暗上科. 五差鬼鎖金女, 全從左旁門下. ...五差鬼作搨風科, 劉氏作冷科唱: “清冷冷寒似冰.” 五差鬼作吹火科, 劉氏作熱科唱: “熱焰焰如蒸炎, 渣遍體似刀錐.” 都差鬼作拍桌, 劉氏作驚看科唱: “黑沉沉都是鬼.” 五差鬼作點手喚劉氏, 劉氏作點頭應科唱: “急煎煎催娘逝, 渣追悔是當日.” 五差鬼鎖劉氏遶場, 全從左旁門下. 雜扮劉氏替身...暗上伏桌上科.

In this scene, the notion of torture as the “disciplinary power” becomes a dominant theme. Here five guardian ghosts acted as agents who exercised this power first by “capture maid Golden Girl’s soul and cuff her in the Earthly Monastery;” then they acted out “fanning the wind, blowing the fire, beating the table, and waving hand to call Née Liu,” and finally killing her and capturing her to the Netherworld. This torture scene ends with an orgy episode when “Suddenly fresh blood gushes out of my (here refers to Née Liu’s) seven openings.” (*dunran jian qikong xianxue zaolin* 頓然見七孔鮮血澆淋) (QSJK, 1964: 47 a.- 52 b.).

The twenty-third act of the eighth volume of the play *DZCQ*, entitled “Capturing in the human world in accordance with three laws” (*Buxing Yangshi sanzhangfa* 補行陽世三章法) is an episode when Cao Cao died and guardian ghosts came to fetch his soul. When Cao Cao was bedridden, the stage direction states:

Miscellaneous characters costumed as nine guardian ghosts holding prongs and chains. An extra character costumed as Fu Wan, a minor character costumed as

Dong Cheng, an extra character costumed as Ma Teng enter the stage. Fu Wan says: “Wicked bandit, you have an evil heart and obnoxious nature. Where are you going to escape now? Guardian ghosts, split Cao Cao’s skull and brain to warn people and ministers who have wicked schemes to rebel.” Nine guardian ghosts act out responding. They act out capturing Cao Cao and splitting his skull and brain. Cao Cao prostrates on the ground...Cao Cao acts out fainting. Fu Wan says: “Guardian ghosts, capture Cao Cao alive and take him to the Netherworld.” Nine guardian ghosts act out responding. From the dijing emerge three new souls, local ghosts, big-headed ghosts, abnormal ghosts. Nine guardian ghosts act out cuffing. Three corpses are placed down on the ground. Fu Wan and others exit the stage. All court ladies and eunuchs say: “This is indeed heavenly principles manifestly display and do not fail to show karmic retribution.”

眾扮九都鬼持叉帶鎖扭，外扮伏完，末扮董承，外扮馬騰全上。伏完白：“奸賊，你黑心兇性，如今那裡去了。”差鬼可將曹操腦髓劈出警人臣圖謀逆者。”九都鬼應科，捉曹操出桌劈腦科，曹操伏地...曹操作發昏狀科。伏完白：“眾差鬼將曹操活捉到豐都去。”九都鬼應科。地井內上三生魂，地方鬼，大頭鬼，無常鬼，九都鬼鎖科。三屍放地上，伏完等下。眾宮女，內監白：“這等看起來果然是天理昭彰報應不爽。”

This act also shows that torture scene was dramatized vividly in the three-tiered stage. The “disciplinary power” was exercised at the moment when guardian ghosts “act out capturing Cao Cao and splitting his skull and brain.” Therefore, these two examples

clearly illustrate how the Chinese three-tiered stage functioned as Foucault's "disciplinary space" where the "disciplinary power" was exercised.

Disciplinary space tends to be divided into as many sections as there are bodies or elements to be distributed...Its aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering, and using (1977: 143).

In the Chinese three-tiered stage, one can see the prevailing relationships between Qianlong's "disciplinary power," visible and audible aspects of the theater. Therefore Qianlong commissioned the construction of the three-tiered stage as a surveillance space in order to enhance "visibility" and "audibility" within the Qing court. It became a new architecture of power. Thus actors on the stage and Qianlong's subjects in the audience hall became more audible as well as visible in a form of "confession."

[The confession] plays a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships, and love relations, in the most ordinary affairs of everyday life, and in the most solemn rites: one confesses one's crimes, one's sins, one's thoughts and desires, one's illnesses and troubles; one goes about telling, with the greatest precision, whatever is most difficult to tell...One confesses—or is forced to confess (1978: 59).

By dramatizing the villains' deeds and the horrors of hell, Qianlong intended to employ the idea of punishment to arouse fear in the hearts of the spectators and involve

them emotionally in the dramatic action. This is why confession and punishment scenes were depicted graphically and dramatically in five adapted grand plays. The villains confessed their crimes with vividly audible and visible forms. For instance, Née Liu in the *QSK* confessed her sins to Yama Kings and received her karmic retribution (Act 23 Vol. 5- Act 19 Vol. 9); Song Jiang and 108 bandits in the *ZYXT* were tried and severely punished in hell (Acts 8–24 Vol. 10); Pan Renmei, Mi Xin, and Wang Qiang in the *ZDXS* were executed on the execution ground (Acts 15-20 Vol. 4). Thus Foucault's techniques of power and knowledge help explain how Qianlong exercised this disciplinary power as a means of controlling the threatening social elements during the Qianlong reign. As a result, the emperor employed such techniques to enhance the productivity of those subjected to him. As Foucault explained, these techniques were also initially cultivated within isolated institutions. And this is the reason why Qianlong commissioned the construction of the three-tiered stage within an enclosed and isolated space where domestic and overseas audiences were “forced” or “invited” to witness multi-day performances.

I would argue that Foucault's reconceptualization of power as a dynamic force has had a significant impact on many different fields of study, including the analysis of the Qianlong emperor's sovereign power in relation to the three-tiered stage and five grand plays. A notion of discourse as determined by and also constitutive of the power relations that permeate the social realm can be applied here. According to Foucault, such power contains an essentially dynamic force which permeates all levels of society and thus engenders a multiplicity of relations:

Power must be analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. (1980: 98)

Diagram 29: All-Pervading Power in Chinese Three-Tiered Stage Pleasant Sound

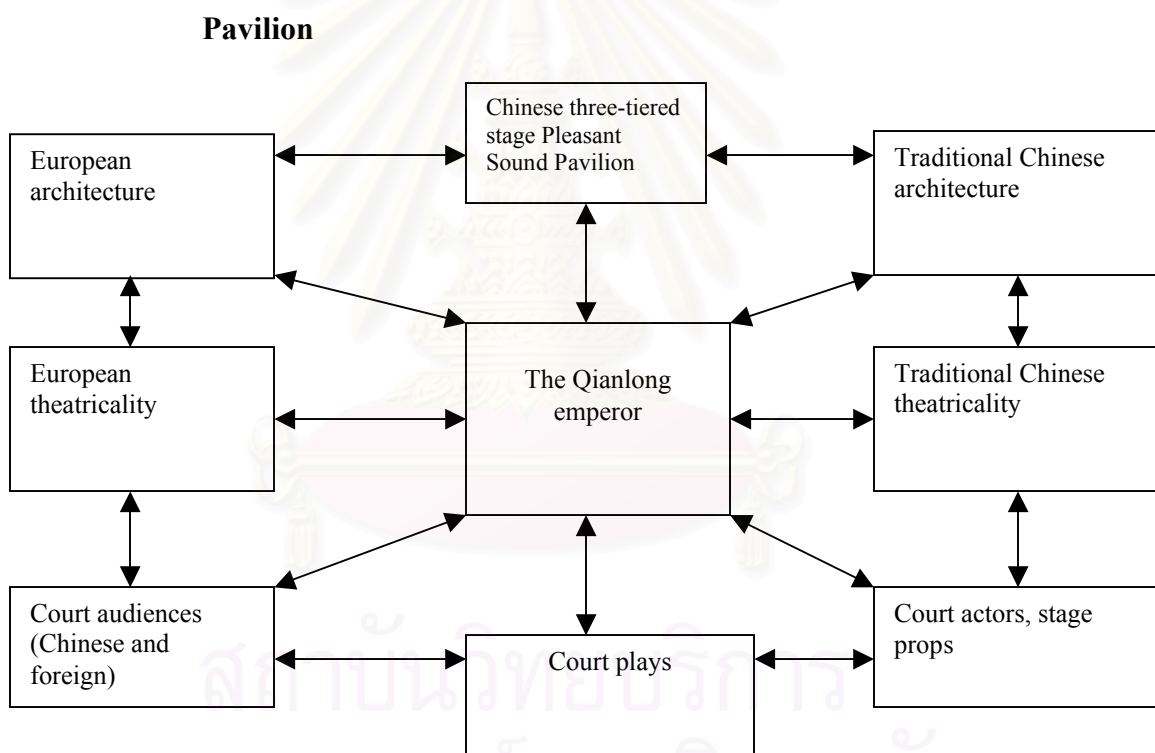


Diagram 29 shows how the constructive meaning of Qianlong's sovereign power was transferred from centering in the monarchy to circulating among the major factors informing Chinese three-tiered stage. Without these factors, his absolute power could not be exercised effectively. It was the elements, such as traditional Chinese architecture,

traditional Chinese theatricality, court actors, court plays, stage props, court audiences, European architecture and European theatricality that engendered Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion. And it was these factors that construct Qianlong's sovereign power. Hence, the principle of exteriority here means that discourse on Chinese three-tiered stage and Qianlong's power cannot be analyzed in terms of a hidden nucleus of meaning, but in terms of their external condition of existence; that is the power relations in which they are embedded.

To summarize, it is true that the Qianlong emperor possessed an absolute sovereign power. But if we combine it with the three-tiered stage and court plays, we will find that the power operated within this system was in an ultimate form. Here Qianlong's sovereign power was exercised over territory and, consequently, over the subjects that inhabited it. In the world of the Chinese three-tiered stage, power was exercised over a complex of agents, i.e. court actors, court audiences and the Qianlong emperor. Thus the aim of this form of entertainment was the most efficient and productive. In this sense, the three-tiered stage resembled Foucault's "discipline," in that it was meant to maximize the utility and productive output of the "docile bodies."

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

5.2 Representation from Audiences' Perspectives

In the previous section, I have discussed how the three-tiered stage and five court plays were represented from Qianlong's perspective and how they represented the emperor. In this section, I will shift my focus to the representation perceived by several audiences in the Qing period. The concept of "representation" applied in this part implies the ability of texts to draw upon features of the world and present them to the viewer, not simply as reflections, but more so, as constructions (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2005). What is important here is that we apprehend reality only through representations of reality, through texts, discourses, images:

There is no such thing as unmediated access to reality. But because one can see reality only through representation it does not follow that one does not see reality at all...Reality is always more extensive and complicated than any system of representation can possibly comprehend, and we always sense that this is so—representation never 'gets' reality, which is why human history has produced so many different and changing ways of trying to get it. (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2005: 3).

Hence, what the audiences recorded from their experiences of witnessing the three-tiered stage and its gala performances during the Qing period present "versions of reality" influenced by the Qing court and their peoples' thoughts and actions (O'Shaughnessy and Stadler, 2005). As a result, the "representation" displayed by these audiences had the capacity to help shape the discourse of the Qing court theater and mould the Qing

society's attitudes, values, perceptions and behaviours. These audiences can be divided into two groups: Chinese and foreigners. Of course, both groups perceived the three-tiered stage differently.

5.2.1. Three-Tiered Stage in the Eyes of Chinese

Cao Xinquan has mentioned three grand theaters in his *Qian Qing Neiting Yanxi Huiyi Lu* or *Memoir of Court Performance in the Early Qing Period*.

Among theaters in the palace, there are three largest ones. The largest one is a theater in the Jehol Palace; the second largest one is the theater in the Palace of Living My Year in Peace; and the third largest one was the Nourishing Pleasure Hall in the Summer Palace the Nourishing Mutuality Park. Court eunuchs have called these three theaters "Big Master," "Second Master," and "Third Master." As for the architecture of these three theaters, each consists of three floors. The bottom floor has five dijing. Its architecture is very beautiful. There are several plays which are not allowed to be performed unless in these three theaters.

Here Cao has listed the three largest court theaters during the Qing era: the Clear Sound Pavilion in the Jehol Summer Palace, the Pleasant Sound Pavilion in the compound of the Palace of Living My Year in Peace, and the Nourishing Pleasure Hall in the Summer Palace the Nourishing Mutuality Park respectively. He also noted that these three-tiered stages were called "Big Master," "Second Master," and "Third Master" by eunuchs during the Qing dynasty. In this respect, we can see that these three grand theaters were personified as "masters" of eunuchs. For the term "Master (ye 爺)" denotes

a sense of antiquity, venerableness, superiority, reminiscence, and admiration. He then described the architecture of these grand theaters, in which each consisted of three main floors and the bottom floor were built five *dijing*. Here what Cao emphasized in his memoir is an introduction to the three three-tiered stages during the Qing era, their massive sizes, their interior architecture, as well as how they were nick-named during that time.

Besides Cao Xinquan, the three-tiered stage was also a eulogy. The poem reads:

*The three-floored building, a hundred winding stone steps; above is the blue sky;
below is boundless.*

*On the upper stage there are standing and sitting actors; whereas on the lower
stage hundreds of performances are being performed for the Emperor.*

*Amid the coiling up sky and the boundary of the earth, it is not enough to name all
of them. His Majesty specially bestows a gala performance named the “Ascendant
Peace.”*

*Its music always concerns the affairs of people. And yet it is not merely for the
birthday celebration but also for helping the world.*

*Today the myriad nations ascend the Spring Platform,⁷⁵ come quickly to see the
“Precious Raft” descending from the Heaven.*

三層樓，百盤砌，上干清雲下無際。

上有立部伎、坐部伎，其下回黃陳百戲。

⁷⁵ *Chun tai* refers to the peaceful and prosperous time.

蟠天際地不足名，特賜大樂名升平。

考聲動復關民事，不特壽人兼濟世。

萬方一日登春台，快看寶筏從天來。(Hong, 1935: 75; Zhao, 1990: 123)

This poem is composed by Hong Liangji 洪亮吉 (1746-1809), one of the greatest poets during the Qing dynasty. It highlights a commemoration of the imperial birthday during the Qianlong reign which was the heyday of court theater. Like Cao Xinquan's memoir, Hong's poem gives us a glimpse of the grand court theater during the Qing dynasty. The poem begins with an introduction of "the three-floored building," which refers to "the three-tiered stage," an innovation of Chinese court theater during the Qing era. Then "A hundred winding stone steps; above is the blue sky; below is boundless" describes interior décor of the three-tiered stage. Here "A hundred winding stone steps" refer to the staircases built on the Longevity Stage called the *cha duo*, *da duo*, *ta duo*, or *hong ni*. These are staircases that link the Longevity Stage to the mezzanine platform called the Immortal Tower, as I have described in Chapter Two. The side of the stairs is in a bowl-like shape, on which movable painting of five-colored clouds are depicted. "Above is the blue sky" refers to the colorful decoration in a form of blue sky on the ceiling, representing the heaven. And "On the upper stage there are standing and sitting actors; whereas on the lower stage hundreds of performances are being performed for the Emperor." describes an active gala performance consisting of a bevy of actors performing on the three platforms. It also emphasizes a capacity of the grand theater that was able to contain hundreds of actors all in one time. Moreover, Hong's poem specifies a court play that was performed on this imperial birthday. The court play mentioned here entitled

Shengping Baofa or *The Precious Raft of Peaceful Times* was one of the rewritten plays commissioned by the Qianlong emperor, exclusively performed on the three-tiered stage during the fiftieth year of the Qianlong reign (1785), as I have analyzed in Chapter Three and Chapter Four. Thus, Hong's poem highlights the massiveness of the three-tiered stage, its elaborate and magnificent interior design, a specification of the aforementioned court play, as well as an active performance of hundreds of actors. To apply Barthes's theory, such poetic language connotes a sense of grandiosity and exuberance of the three-tiered stage during the Qing era. It also reinforces the notion of blurred boundaries between the illusory world of theater and the real world of the Qing empire when the term *qing yun* is used here. Literally, this phrase means "pure cloud or blue sky." But it can also be interpreted as "the Qing dynasty." And when the poem emphasizes the objective of the play: "Its music always concerns the affairs of people. And yet it is not merely for the birthday celebration but also for helping the world."; and "Today the myriad nations ascend the Spring Platform," it highlights the notion of Chinese cosmology in which the imperial persona mediated among three realms. Furthermore, these phrases emphasize the concept of Qianlong as Universal King, who extended his power beyond his empire.

Beside Cao Xinquan and Hong Liangji, another court official during the Qianlong reign who also admired the three-tiered stage is Zhao Yi. In the "Grand Play" (*Da Xi* 大戲) section in the *Miscellaneous Record of the Eave of the Sun*. Zhao Yi observed that he once traveled to Jehol Palace as part of the imperial entourage for the autumnal hunt. He recorded:

The opera troupe of the South Bureau has the most actors. Their robes, ornaments, armors, as well as costumes and props have never been seen before. I used to see them at the imperial lodging in the Jehol Palace. Last autumn I traveled to the Jehol palace where various Mongolian princes all came for an audience with His Majesty. His Majesty's birthday fell two days before the Mid-Autumn Festival, and so beginning on the sixth of the month and lasting until the fifteenth, multi-scene operas were performed. The plays performed were all selections about gods and demons from the novels Journey to the West and Investiture of the Gods. They excerpted the most fantastic parts of stories that did not run the risk of broaching taboo subjects, which they could embellish upon more out of thin air and further make use of hosts of actors so as to create a bizarre and variegated spectacle. The stage was nine zhang wide and had three levels. Some of the demons depicted on stage descended from on high, others popped out from below, and still others even appeared mounting on camels and riding horses from behind the audience seats on either side of the stage, so much so that even the courtyard in front of the stage eventually was filled. At times, when all the gods and ghosts gathered on the stage, you could literally see thousands of masks, and yet there was not one duplication. An entrance by a god would be preceded by the entrance of a bevy of twelve or thirteen-year old boys, which would be followed by a group of fifteen or sixteen-year olds and then by a group of seventeen or eighteen-year olds, and each group included several dozen people. The actors in each group were all of exactly the same height, without the slightest variation. Moreover, there were sixty actors costumed as Longevity

Constellations, in accordance with sixty other gods. Furthermore, the Eight Immortals came out to present felicitations, followed by numerous Taoist lads. On the day that the monk Tang Xuan Zang reached the Leiyin Monastery, when the Rulai Buddha mounted the throne, Gatés and Arhats rose to listen to his preaching. From top to bottom were arrayed seated on nine levels, and yet there was still plenty of room left on the stage.

南府戲班，子弟最多，袍笏甲冑及諸裝具，皆世所未有，予嘗於熱河行宮見之。上秋獮至熱河，蒙古諸王皆覲。中秋前二日爲萬壽聖節，是以月之六日即演大戲，至十五日止。所演戲，率用《西游記》、《封神傳》等小說中神仙鬼怪之類，取其荒幻不經，無所觸忌，且可憑空點綴，排引多人，離奇變詭作大觀也。戲台闊九筵，凡三層。所扮妖魅，有自上而下者，自下突出者，甚至兩廂樓亦作化人居，而跨駝舞馬，則庭中亦滿焉。有時神鬼畢集，面具千百，無一相肖者。神仙將出，先有道童十二三歲者作隊出場，繼有十五六歲，十七八歲者，每隊各數十人，長短一律，無分寸參差，舉此則其他可知也。又按六十甲子扮壽星六十人，後增至一百二十人。又有八仙來慶賀，攜帶道童不計其數。至唐玄奘僧雷音寺取經之日，如來上殿，迦叶、羅漢、辟支聲聞，高下分九層，列坐幾千人，而台仍綽有予地。(Liao, 1997: 147; Zhao, 1973: 33-35)

In this memoir Zhao Yi has narrated his experience of watching court plays on the occasion of Qianlong's birthday in the three-tiered stage named the Clear Sound Pavilion located in the Jehol Palace. Here he has noted that the opera troupe of the South Bureau housed the most actors during the Qing period. He also admired a variety of rare

costumes and stage props housed in the bureau. One significant point that we learn from Zhao's memoir is a Chinese convention of court ritual during the imperial birthday, in which princes and nobles from afar had to come to the Qing court to commemorate the emperor. Here we learn that, as a tradition, the imperial birthday celebration usually lasted for quite a while, in this case ten days from the sixth to the fifteenth days of the month. And during this long period, multi-scenes of gala performances were performed. In this case, Zhao Yi specifically mentioned two court plays performed on this occasion: *the Journey to the West* and *the Investiture of Gods*, which consisted of all kinds of characters like gods and demons, which created spectacular scenes. Unlike Cao Xinquan's record and Hong Langji's poem, Zhao's memoir elaborately described the dynamic feature of the gala performances, in which some actors descended from the top, while the others emerged from the bottom. Judging from Zhao Yi's passage, we can see that such court plays required myriad actors to create a sense of completion, marvel, and grandiosity. For "At times, when all the gods and ghosts gathered on the stage, you could literally see thousands of masks, and yet there was not one duplication." They also made use of live animals to create such a magnificent scene. For at one point "others even appeared mounting on camels and riding horses from behind the audience seats on either side of the stage, so much so that even the courtyard in front of the stage eventually was filled." To emphasize the convention of Qing court theater, Zhao Yi noted that court actors who played roles like god attendants ranged from twelve to eighteen years of age. And they had to be of the same height which gives us a sense of orderliness. Hence, unlike Cao Xinquan and Hong Liangji that emphasized the architecture and the interior decoration of the three-tiered stage, Zhao Yi focused on a spectacular scene of gala

performances as well as dynamism of court actors instead. However, these three Chinese authors shared the same significant view. That is to say, they all praised the enormousness and grandiosity of the three-tiered stage. According to Zhao Yi's experience, such theater must have had a capacity of housing more than 200 actors all at one time and "and yet there was still plenty of room left on the stage."

Thus from Chinese perspective, not simply did the three-tiered stage represent the glorification and prosperity of the Qing empire, but it also conveyed a sense of antiquity, venerableness, superiority, reminiscence, and admiration. By calling the grand theater as "Master," one can see how this personification reflected Confucian concepts of loyalty and filiality which have long been rooted in Chinese philosophy.

5.2.2. Three-Tiered Stage in the Eyes of Foreigners

Not only was the three-tiered stage recorded through Chinese perspectives, but it was also depicted through the eyes of foreigners. A member from the royal Manchu family like Princess Der Ling,⁷⁶ the first lady in waiting to the Empress Dowager, also witnessed the gala performances in the three-tiered stage and, as a result, recorded her experience in her memoir. Despite her Manchu identity, her point of view towards the

⁷⁶ Princess Der Ling 德齡公主 (1886-1944) was a Manchu princess, the daughter of Yu Geng 裕庚, who was a member of the Manchu White Banner, and even appointed ambassador to France in 1899. He was known for his progressive, reformist views. He died in 1905. His daughters therefore received western education. Upon return from France, Princess Der Ling became First lady-in-waiting to Empress Dowager Cixi. She stayed at court until March 1905. In 1907 she married Thaddeus C. White. She wrote down her unique experience in court in her memoirs "Two Years in the Forbidden City," which were published in 1911. It gives historical insights into life at court and her service to the Dowager Empress, essentially a world that has disappeared.

grand theater is regarded as foreign. For she spent most of her lifetime outside her motherland China (Der Ling, 1924: 2-4). In her recollection of watching court plays in the grand theater, Princess Der Ling wrote:

From this courtyard we entered a sort of passageway which ran along the sides of a big hill and led directly to the theatre, where we soon arrived. This theatre is quite unlike anything that you can imagine. It is built around the four sides of an open courtyard, each side being separate and distinct. The building has three stories. It is entirely open on the front and has two stages, one above the other. The top storey is used for holding the drops and for store rooms. The stage on the first floor is of the ordinary kind; but that on the second floor is built to represent a temple and used when playing religious plays, of which Her Majesty was very fond. (1924: 26-27)

Like Cao Xinquan, Hong Liangji and Zhao Yi, Princess Der Ling also began her memoir by introducing the architecture of the three-tiered stage. Here she emphasized the function of each platform. She then described further:

On the two sides were long, low buildings with large verandas running their entire length, where the Princes and Ministers sat when invited by Her Majesty to witness the play. Directly opposite this stage was a spacious building, containing three large rooms, which was used exclusively by Her Majesty. The floor was raised about ten feet above the ground, which brought it on a level with the stage. Large glass windows ran along in front, so made that they could be removed in

the summer and replaced with pale blue gauze screens. Two of these rooms were used as sitting rooms and the third, the one on the right, she used as a bedroom, and it had a long couch running across the front, on which she used to sit or lie according to her mood. This day she invited us to go to this room with her. Later I was told that she would very often come to this room, look at the play for a while and then take her siesta. She could certainly sleep soundly, for the din and noise did not disturb her in the least. If any of my readers have ever been to a Chinese theatre, they can well imagine how difficult it would be to woo the God of Sleep in such a pandemonium. (1924: 27-28)

Here unlike former three authors, Princess Der Ling provided us a description of the imperial loge, consisting of long verandas on both sides, in which princes and court officials seated, and three large rooms in the middle where the emperor, or in this case the Empress Dowager seated while watching court plays. Princess Der Ling then described:

As soon as we were in this bedroom the play commenced. It was a religious play called "The Empress of Heaven's Party or Feast to all the Buddhist Priests to eat her famous peaches and drink her best wine." This party or feast is given on the third day of the third moon of each year. The first act opens with a Buddhist Priest, dressed in a yellow coat robe with a red scarf draped over his left shoulder, descending in a cloud from Heaven to invite all the priests to this party. I was very much surprised to see this actor apparently suspended in the air and actually floating on this cloud, which was made of cotton. The clever way in which they moved the scenery, etc., was most interesting, and before the play was finished I

concluded that any theatre manager could well take lessons from these people; and it was all done without the slightest bit of machinery.

As this Buddhist Priest was descending, a large pagoda began to slowly rise from the center of the stage in which was a buddha singing and holding an incense burner in front of him. Then four other smaller pagodas slowly rose from the four corners of the stage, each containing a buddha the same as the first. When the first Buddhist Priest had descended, the five buddhas came out of the pagodas, which immediately disappeared, and walked about the stage, still singing. Gradually from the wing came numbers of buddhas singing until the stage was full, and they all formed into a ring. Then I saw a large lotus flower, made of pink silk, and two large green leaves appearing from the bottom of the stage, and as it rose the petals and leaves gradually opened and I saw a beautiful lady buddha (Goddess of Mercy) dressed all in white silk, with a white hood on her head, standing in the center of this flower. As the leaves opened I saw a girl and a boy in the center of them. When the petals of the lotus flower were wide open this lady buddha began to gradually ascend herself, and as she ascended, the petals closed until she seemed to be standing on a lotus bud. The girl standing in the leaf on the Goddess' right side held a bottle made of jade and a willow branch. The legend of this is that if the Goddess dips the willow branch into the jade bottle and spreads it over a dead person it will bring the person to life. The boy and the girl are the two attendants of the buddha.

Finally the three came down from the flower and leaves and joined the rest of the buddhas. Then the Empress of Heaven came, a good old lady with snow-white hair, dressed from head to foot in Imperial yellow, followed by many attendants, and ascended the throne, which was in the center of the stage, and said: "We will go to the banquet hall." This ended the first scene. (1924: 28-30)

Here the religious play named “The Empress of Heaven's Party or Feast to all the Buddhist Priests to eat her famous peaches and drink her best wine.” was introduced and its first act was described in details. The play mentioned in this excerpt is also called “Flat Peach Festival” (*Pantao Hui* 蟠桃會). It is a play usually performed on the festival on the third day of the third lunar month in the honor of the Queen Mother of the West. It is an episode in the story *the Journey to the West* when Sun Wukong went to the Heaven during this festival and stirred a chaos there. And in this case, I believe this play is the fifteenth act of the first volume of the *SPBF*, entitled “Lustfully Stealing Ripe Flat Peaches in the Garden” (*Yuan shu pantao zi qietou* 園熟蟠桃恣竊偷).⁷⁷ Interestingly, like what Zhao Yi described in his memoir, Princess Der Ling also witnessed an innovation and ingenuity of stage props, such as suspending clouds made from cottons, pagodas emerging from the bottom, and the large lotus emerging from the bottom with appearances of Goddess of Mercy and two attendants, identifying as Shancai and Dragon Girl, as soon as its petals and leaves opened. Besides, Princess Der Ling was also impressed with the dynamism of main actors like Buddhist Priest, Goddess of Mercy, Shancai, Dragon Girl, and Empress of Heaven (or Queen Mother of the West), as well as

⁷⁷ See more discussion on this particular play in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

their performances with skillful acrobats and choreography. She then described the second act:

The second scene opened with tables set for the feast to be given by the Empress of Heaven. These tables were loaded down with peaches and wine and four attendants guarding them. Suddenly a bee came buzzing near and scattered a powder under the nostrils of the attendants, which made them sleepy. When they had fallen asleep, this bee transformed itself into a big monkey and this monkey ate all the peaches and drank all the wine. As soon as he had finished he disappeared.

A blast of trumpets announced the coming of the Empress of Heaven and she soon arrived accompanied by all the Buddhist Priests and their attendants. When the Empress of Heaven saw all the peaches and wine had disappeared, she woke the attendants and asked them why they were asleep and where the peaches and wine had gone. They said that they did not know, that they were waiting for her to come and fell asleep. Then one of the guests suggested that she should find out what had become of the feast, and attendants were sent out to the guard to find out from the soldiers if anyone had gone out of the gate recently. Before the messenger had time to return, the Guard of Heaven came and informed the Empress that a big monkey, who was very drunk and carrying a big stick, had just gone out of the gate. When she was told this, she ordered the soldiers of heaven and several buddhas to go and find him at his place. It seems that this monkey had originally been made from a piece of stone and lived in a large hole in a

mountain on the earth. He was endowed with supernatural powers and could walk on the clouds. He was allowed to come to heaven and the Empress of Heaven gave him a position looking after the Imperial orchards.

When they got to his place on the earth, they found that he had taken some of the peaches with him and he, with other monkeys, was having a feast. The soldiers challenged him to come out and fight. He immediately accepted this challenge, but the soldiers could do nothing with him. He pulled the hair out of his coat and transformed each hair into a little monkey and each monkey had an iron rod in its hand. He himself had a special iron rod, which had been given to him by the King of Sea Dragons. This rod he could make any size he wanted from a needle to a crowbar.

Among the buddhas who had gone with the soldiers was one named Erh Lang Yeh, who was the most powerful of them all and had three eyes. This buddha had a dog which was very powerful and he told the dog to bite this monkey, which he did, and the monkey fell down and they caught him and brought him up to heaven. When they got there the Empress of Heaven ordered that he should be handed to Lao Chun, an old taoist god, and that he should burn him in his incense burner. The incense burner was very large, and when they took the monkey to him he placed him inside this burner and watched him very carefully to see that he did not get out. After he had watched for a long time he thought the monkey must be dead and went out for a few minutes. The monkey, however, was not dead and as soon as Lao Chun went out, he escaped and stole some golden pills which Lao

Chun kept in a gourd and went back to his hole in the mountains. These pills were very powerful and if one of them were eaten it would give eternal life, and the monkey knew this. The monkey ate one and it tasted good and he gave the little monkeys some. When Lao Chun came back and found both the monkey and the pills gone he went and informed the Empress of Heaven. This ended the second scene. (1924: 30-32)

Here Princess Der Ling elaborately narrated the second act, which was a climax of the play when Sun Wukong created a havoc in the Heaven. A lot of main characters were also introduced, such as Sun Wukong, Buddhist priests, Heavenly guests, Heavenly guards, Heavenly soldiers, Er Lang God, a Heavenly dog, and Taoist Immortal Lord Laozi. Judging from the narration, like the first act, some main characters involved in a fighting action in this scene, which leaves us imagine the dynamism of these actors. Princess Der Ling then described the third act:

The third scene opened with the buddhas and soldiers at the monkey's place in the mountains and they again asked him to come out and fight. The monkey said: "What! Coming again?" and laughed at them. They started to fight again, but he was so strong they could not get the best of him. Even the dog who had bit him before was powerless this time, and they finally gave it up and returned to heaven and told the Empress of Heaven that they could not capture him the second time, as he was too strong. Then the Empress of Heaven called a little god about fifteen years old by the name of Neur Cha, who had supernatural powers, and told him to go down to earth to the monkey's place and see if he could finish him. This god

was made of lotus flowers and leaves, that is, his bones were made of flowers and his flesh made of leaves and he could transform himself into anything that he wished. When Neur Cha got to the monkey's place and the monkey saw him, he said: "What! A little boy like you comes to fight me? Well, if you think you can beat me, come on," and the boy transformed himself into an immense man with three heads and six arms. When the monkey saw this, he transformed himself also into the same thing. When the little god saw that this would not do, he transformed himself into a very big man and started to take the monkey, but the monkey transformed himself into a very large sword and cut this man into two pieces. The little god again transformed himself into fire to burn the monkey, but the monkey transformed himself into water and put the fire out. Again the little god transformed himself, this time into a very fierce lion, but the monkey transformed himself into a big net to catch the lion. So this little god, seeing that he could not get the best of the monkey, gave it up and went back to heaven, and told the Empress of Heaven that the monkey was too strong for him. The Empress of Heaven was in despair, so she sent for Ju Li, an old ancestor of the buddhas, who was the all-powerful one of them all; and Kuan Yin, Goddess of Mercy, and sent them down to the monkey's place to see if they could capture him. When they arrived at the hole in the mountain the monkey came out and looked at Ju Li, but did not say a word, as he knew who this god was. This god pointed a finger at him and he knelt down and submitted. Ju Li said: "Come with me," and took the monkey and put him under another mountain and told him he would have to stay there until he promised he would be good. Ju Li said: "You stay here until one day

I lift this mountain up for you to come out to go with a Buddhist Priest to the West side of heaven and demand the prayer books that are kept there. You will have to suffer a great deal on the way and face many dangers, but if you come back with this Buddhist Priest and the prayer books, by that time your savage temper will be gone and you will be put in a nice place in heaven and enjoy life forever afterwards.” (1924: 32-35)

Here the denouement of the play was narrated in details in the third act. Princess Der Ling elaborately described fighting scenes between Sun Wukong and Ne Zha. Again we can imagine a lot of spectacular scenes of transformations of these two characters, such as a gigantic three-headed and six-limbed man, a large sword, fire, water, a fierce lion, and a big net. Then Princess Der Ling concluded:

This finished the play, which was very interesting, and I enjoyed it from beginning to end. It was acted very cleverly and quite realistic, and I was very much surprised to know that the eunuchs could act so well. Her Majesty told us that the scenery was all painted by the eunuchs and that she had taught them about all they knew. Unlike most theatres in China, it had a curtain which was closed between the acts, also wing slides and drop scenes. Her Majesty had never seen a foreign theatre and I could not understand where she got all her ideas from. She was very fond of reading religious books and fairy tales, and wrote them into plays and staged them herself, and was extremely proud of her achievement. (1924: 35)

Like Cao Xinquan, Hong Liangji, and Zhao Yi, Princess Der Ling also admired magnificence of the gala performances in the three-tiered stage, which she said: “It was acted very cleverly and quite realistic.” However, she implied in her memoir that Chinese three-tiered stage looked similar to foreign theaters. For she was suspicious of how and where the Empress Dowager “got all her ideas from.” Thus, this particular point confirms that some foreign theatrical features must have been assimilated into Chinese three-tiered stages built during the Qianlong reign, as I have discussed in Chapter Three. And apparently Empress Dowager modeled her three-tiered stage after the one which was built during the Qianlong emperor.

Not only was an innovation and ingenuity of the three-tiered stage treasured by Chinese princess and court officials during the Qing dynasty, it was also admired by foreign artists and envoys who were sent to China with different missions. Katherine Carl, an American female artist, went to the Qing court during the Xuanton reign and wrote an account of her experience as a guest of the Empress Dowager at a theater party in honor of the emperor’s birthday.⁷⁸ She recorded in her memoir:

Preparations were now beginning at the Palace for the celebration of His Majesty the Emperor’s Birthday. This is not celebrated on the anniversary of the day he was born, but two days earlier... There were to be magnificent theatrical performances, splendid fireworks and decorations, and all sorts of pageants. The

⁷⁸ Katherine Augusta Carl, an American painter, was born in New Orleans, Louisiana and trained in Paris under J.P. Laurenze and Gustave Courtois. She received an Honorable Mention in the Paris Salon of 1890 and in the Paris Exhibition of 1900. She was the artist who painted the portrait of Empress Dowager of China. She was the only Westerner ever to live as a member of the Chinese court. After painting the portrait of the Empress Dowager in 1904, which was exhibited at the St. Louis Exposition, she continued her career in Europe and in America. She died in 1938. (Carl, 1905: 3-4)

Imperial company of actors had already begun rehearsing special poems and plays, written to celebrate the occasion. Eunuchs were constantly bringing Her Majesty specimens of the work of the decorators and painters who were carrying out her designs as to special scenes and tableaux, or coming to ask for further instructions. The literati, who were preparing the original poems, sent in their manuscripts, that she might judge of their merits and make suggestions. She herself overlooked every detail, and seemed most interested and anxious to have everything successful.

The festivities began four days before the Birthday with gala performances at the Theater. Each day the decorations of the buildings, the courts, and gardens increased in beauty. In the principal courts, magnificent bronzes, all sorts of antique instruments of music, used only on these great occasions, were brought out as decorations; for music forms part of every ceremonial, official, and religious in China. Among the curious instruments were splendid bronze frames, with several superposed octaves of triangular musical-stones suspended there from; elaborately carved supports for different-toned bells; huge "triangles"; immense bronze "tam-tam," curiously and beautifully wrought; big drums on splendid bronze stands; wonderfully chased bells; and many other quaint instruments, used only for official and state processions in honor of Their Celestial Majesties. (1905: 57-59)

Carl began her memoir by describing the preparation and decoration of court buildings, gardens and other celebratory locations. She also noted a rehearsal of theatrical

performances during two days prior to the Xuantong emperor's birthday. According to Carl, this imperial birthday began its celebration four days before the actual birthday. Interestingly, through a foreigner's eyes, she mentioned all sorts of spectacular antique musical instruments employed in the gala performances like bronzes, bells, and drums. She described further:

Finally, there was the first gala performance at the Theater. Her Majesty occupied her loge nearly all day, overlooking every detail, sending now and then to the stage one of her eunuchs to transmit her Imperial commands as to the speaking of certain lines or the using of certain postures. On the day of this gala performance she invited all the Ladies of the Palace to lunch, for the first time since I had been there, in the court of the Theater. Her Majesty lunched in the Imperial Loge, and then ordered our repast to be served in the court, where tables were laid and served with all the pomp and ceremony that characterized the meals at the Palace. Even this "al-fresco" entertainment was ceremonious. (Carl, 1905: 59-60)

Like Princess Der Ling, Carl also described the imperial loge, a seating area of the Empress Dowager. Interestingly, in this occasion, the empress lunched with court ladies in the loge while watching the performances. Carl described further:

After our first lunch in the court of the Theater, when the theatrical performance of the day was finished and the actors had left, I approached the stage of the Theater and began examining, with interest, its construction and appointments. The Palace Theater is raised about twelve feet from the ground, and its main floor is on a level with the Imperial loge. The building consists of three stories and a

cellar. The latter is used for the few pieces of scenery of the scenic plays, and is where the simple devices used for moving it are manipulated. Like the Greek theater, the stage is open on three sides; and the actors come out and speak their parts, their entrance being to the left and the exit to the right of the stage. (Carl, 1905: 61)

Here, like other four authors, Carl also explained her experience of examining the architecture of the three-tiered stage. According to her observation, the platform of the grand theater was raised about twelve feet from the ground which is equivalent to the height of the imperial loge. She verified that this grand theater consisted of three main floors and an extra floor which she has called “cellar.” The “cellar” by itself means basement. However, in my opinion, the “cellar” in her sense should refer to the Immortal Tower, where most of stage props like scenery were hung from. This mezzanine floor is easily to be noticed. Moreover, she did not mention that she went down to the basement of the grand theater. Interestingly, she compared this Chinese three-tiered stage with Greek theater, whose three sides are open. The whole stage is for actors’ performances, where its entrance is on the left and its exit door on the right. Like the argument made by Princess Der Ling, this statement strongly attests the similarity between Chinese three-tiered stage and European theater. Carl further described:

Her Majesty was within her loge while I was examining the construction of the Theater; but she evidently noticed my movements, for the eunuchs soon threw open the great plate doors and she descended the steps of the Imperial loge and came across the court to where I was standing. She asked me if I would like to go on the stage and look over the building and examine things thoroughly. She added,

“You probably may never have such a chance to see a good Chinese theater again.” She, herself, went up the steps leading from the court to the stage, and told me to follow her.

The stage is about twenty-five feet square, is roofed over, and projects into the court, its three sides being open. The fourth side has doors and curtains for the entrance and exit of the actors. There are no actresses in China. The men perform the parts of women, and represent them with such success that I was much surprised when I learned there were no actresses. At the back of the stage sit the musicians, who accompany all the theatrical performances in China. (1905: 62)

Here Carl elaborately described the gigantic size of the theater, which was, according to her observation, twenty-five square feet. She also mentioned the backstage where the musicians were housed.

Her Majesty, herself, led the way across the stage and we went behind the scenes. Here, I examined closely a number of “Floats” that were to be used, in the procession in honor of the Emperor, on the day of the Birthday. These floats had all been designed by the Empress Dowager. After we had looked at these, she suggested that I had better see the upper floors. These latter are not in general use in Chinese theaters. The theaters, even at the other Palaces, have but one stage. The steps which lead to the second stage, and thence to the third stage, are behind the scenes. The two upper stages are used for spectacular plays and tableaux, when certain of the players group themselves in pyramidal form on these superposed stages and speak their lines there from. The upper stages have

also trap-doors and pulleys for use in the spectacular plays. Her Majesty went up, herself, to show me these stages. She mounted the steep and difficult steps with as much ease and lightness as I did, and I had on comfortable European shoes, while she wears the six-inch-high Manchu sole in the middle of her foot, and must really walk as if on stilts. (1905: 62-63)

Like Princess Der Ling, Carl also mentioned the “float” which was one of the most important stage props employed in gala performances in the three-tiered stage. In my opinion, what she termed “float” should refer to “cloud sack” or “cloud board.” She then elaborately described the structure of the second and third floors of the grand theater, namely the Prosperity Stage and the Fortune Stage respectively. As I have shown in Diagrams 3 and 4 provided in Chapter Two, the stairways that lead to the two upper floors were located in the backstage, just like what she explained. These two floors were used for special court plays. And as I have described in Chapter Two and Chapter Four, some trap doors and mechanical gadgets like pulleys were built on these two floors.

After the ceremony of formal congratulations was over, Her Majesty, the Emperor, and Empress, followed by the Ladies and attendants, went in state to the Theater, with the same ceremonial and pomp with which they had gone into the Hall of Ceremonies. The Empress Dowager, who was always the most gorgeously attired person at Court, was, on His Majesty's Birthday, dressed with an extreme simplicity that amounted almost to plainness, and she wore no jewels. This plainness of attire was not an accident, but had been arranged with her usual forethought. She wished the Emperor and Empress to be the central figures of this

day's festivities, and did not wish to vie with the Empress even in her attire.

(1905: 79)

Here Carl described the beginning of ceremony on the Xuantong emperor's birthday. She then recorded:

The Princes and Nobles, who had come to the Palace for the official congratulations, were invited to the theatrical performance. They occupied the boxes that ran at right angles to the Imperial loge, which I have already described as forming the other two sides of the court of the Theater. A huge screen of painted silk, twelve feet high, was stretched from the last of the boxes occupied by the Princes to the stage—allowing the latter to be perfectly seen by the occupants of the boxes, but cutting off their view of the Imperial loge, whence Their Majesties, the Empress, and Ladies viewed the play. These invited guests are thus neither seen by the Imperial party, nor can they see the latter. (Carl, 1905: 79-80)

Like Zhao Yi, Carl also noted the convention of Chinese court rituals, in which princes and nobles from afar came to the court to commemorate the emperor's birthday. She described how all the invited guests were positioned in the imperial loge. According to her observation, the princes and nobles were seated on one side of the loge, where the emperor, Empress Dowager, and the court ladies were seated on the other side. And interestingly, there was a silk screen in the twelve-feet high separating these two spaces. This statement emphasized one of Chinese theatrical traditions, in which female audience were separated and not allowed to be seen by male audience. Carl further explained:

When Their Majesties and the Empress were seated in their loge, the principal actors came to the front of the stage, knelt, and “kow-towed” to the Imperial box. Then the play began. There was first a noisy burst of weird music, then the chief actor recited a laudatory, congratulatory poem in honor of the Birthday of the Emperor, wishing His Majesty “ten thousand years” of happiness and all the blessings possible. The poem was intoned like a chant by the actor, dressed in the gorgeous historic costume of an Imperial Herald of the time of Kublai Kahn. This poem was most impressive. One of the verses ran thus:

“The vast merits of His Imperial Majesty’s August Ancestors have been handed down to Him from generation to generation.

To the wisdom of His whole Dynasty we owe it, that we have lived in happiness.

Ever ready to comply with the lofty teaching of our Rulers, leading us unto Good...”

The poem went on to recite His Majesty’s merits as a son, his respect for his August Mother, and his filial piety, and ended with a wish that Great China might flourish and prosper—grow strong outwardly and inwardly, through the blessings of his reign and his desire for Progress. (Carl, 1905: 80)

Here Carl described the beginning prior to the gala performance, in which actors came out to pay respect to the emperor by kneeling down and kowtowing. It was then followed by the prelude of the play, in which the main actor recited a laudatory and congratulatory poem in honor of the emperor’s birthday. She then described:

After this poem had been intoned by the chief actor, with the whole company of players grouped around on the lower, as well as on the two superposed stages, all in splendid historic costumes, there was another noisy clash weird music and the play itself began. The Chinese theater, which goes on from morning to night with a series of plays, generally begins with a short one, a curtain-raiser of a quarter to half an hour's length. Today it began at once, after the poem was intoned, with a great historic drama. The exploits and high deeds of former Emperors were shown, and the actors were magnificently costumed in superb historic gowns which had been handed down from antiquity and were absolutely authentic. (1905: 80-81)

Here Carl explained how magnificent the gala performance was. Actors were all gorgeously costumed. They all arranged themselves on all three floors. In her point of view, the performance was so lively and filled with all kinds of unrecognized music. She then described:

At four o'clock there was a grand "finale." The three superimposed stages were occupied by all the gorgeously attired actors, and another Hymn of praise to the Emperor was intoned. He was extolled as the Son of Heaven and representative on earth of Buddha, and other extravagant wishes for "ten thousand years" of happiness were made. When this Hymn was finished, the floats, which we had seen the day before behind the scenes, came out in procession. These floats represented mythical animals, Buddhas, fairies, personifications of the higher attributes. There were gigantic fruits which opened, disclosing figures representing eternal beauty, perfect happiness and serene old age. Prominent

among the gigantic fruits was the peach, the emblem of Longevity. Last of all, in this curious procession, came the Imperial Dragon, of huge proportions. Its contortions, as it struggled for the Flaming Pearl, emblematic of the unattainable, were most curious. All these figures made their obeisances to Their Majesties and the Empress. They were accompanied by splendidly clothed warriors, heralds, princes, and many gorgeously attired attendants, bearing banners and escutcheons. After the procession had made the tour in the middle of the stage, made an obeisance to His Majesty, then raised it with a might roar and spouted forth—a copious shower of fresh spring water, which sprinkled the whole flower-filled court! The Empress and Princesses were all in the secret and knew what was coming, but they kept it from me, and much enjoyed my start of surprise as some of the spray fell upon me, as I had advanced to the very edge of the verandah in order to miss nothing. (1905: 84-85)

Here Carl described the grand finale of the performance, in which all gorgeously-costumed actors occupied all three platforms and sang the hymn to congratulate the emperor. It was then followed by the “floats” in different forms like mythical animals, buddhas, and fairies. Some innovative stage props like mechanical gigantic fruits were also employed in this finale. Like how Earl Macartney mentioned in his memoir, the gala performance that Carl witnessed was finalized by an entrance of sizable stage props called “imperial dragon,” which, in my opinion, should refer to one of the stage props called “sea monster” that I have shown earlier. I would argue that the finale play described in Carl’s memoir is the court play *Arhats Crossing the Sea*, which usually finalized the celebration of imperial birthday during the Qing dynasty. (Idema, 2000: 210;

Ye, 2005: 99). Here to end this gala performance, sprinkling water was spouted through the “imperial dragon’s” mouth, creating a surprisingly impressive scene in this foreigner’s eyes. Carl then concluded:

When all was finished, the screen was again removed and the great glass doors of the Imperial loge thrown open, so that Her Majesty and the Emperor could be seen. The visiting Princes and Nobles came forward from their places and knelt in a body, though still observing the laws of precedence as to their ranks. They knelt three times, and bowed their heads to the ground nine times to thank Their Majesties for the entertainment they had received. To receive these prostrations from the Princes, the Emperor and Empress Dowager assumed their Buddhalike poses and acknowledged the genuflexions by a formal inclination of their heads. When the Princes had retired, the actors, clothed in their usual garments, came to the front of the stage and knelt and “kow-towed,” but Their Majesties did not return this salutation. (1905: 85)

Here Carl explained the culmination of this imperial birthday ceremony, in which all the invited princes, nobles, and actors came out to pay respect to the emperor and Empress Dowager by kneeling down three times and kowtowing nine times. Thus, like four aforementioned authors, Carl also highlighted exterior architecture, interior design, innovative stage props, gorgeous costumes, and skillful actors. She also delineated court ritual of the imperial birthday from the beginning to the end. That is to say, she elaborately described from the prelude, the laudatory poem with its meaning, to the mid performance, until the finale with the eulogy hymn and salutations by princes, nobles, and actors.

In the case of the foreign envoys, they were sent to China to pay tribute to Chinese emperors, especially during imperial birthdays. In this case, court drama not only served entertainment and ritual purposes, but it was also employed extensively for a political purpose. Ever since the Qianlong reign, drama became an intrinsic part of court ritual. Ye Xiaoqing (2005: 89) has classified imperial rites into five main categories: auspicious rites (*Jili* 吉禮), felicitous rites (*Jiali* 嘉禮), martial rites (*Junli* 軍禮), inauspicious rites (*Xiongli* 凶禮), and protocol rites (*Binli* 賓禮).⁷⁹ It is the latter case that will be highlighted in this part. According to Ye (2005: 89-90), the protocol rites referred to “the special dramas performed in the presence of foreign visitors. The audience was often entertained with colorful and lavish performances on the theme of foreign delegations paying tribute to the might of the Chinese emperor.” In her paper, Ye concentrates on what she has called the “tributary drama,” particularly the drama commissioned and performed on the occasion of Earl Macartney’s⁸⁰ emissary mission to the Qianlong emperor in 1793, the first diplomatic contact between Great Britain and China. (Bickers, 1993; Cranmer-Byng, 1962; Hevia, 1995; Peyrefitte, 1989; Singer, 1992)

⁷⁹ According to Ye Xiaoqing, “Auspicious rites were state sacrifices offered in the suburban altars and the ancestral temple, in which emperors offered sacrifices to Heaven, Earth, ancestors and the pantheon of deities. In the latter case, the audience was often entertained with colorful and lavish performances on the theme of foreign delegations paying tribute to the might of the Chinese emperor. Felicitous rites included celebrations of festivals, birthdays, marriages, and the confirmation of imperial titles. Felicitous rites included celebrations of festivals, birthdays, marriages, and the confirmation of imperial titles. Martial rites included dramas celebrating military victories or hunting excursions. Inauspicious rites dealt with funerals and disasters, did not involve the performance of ritual drama.” (2005: 89-90).

⁸⁰ George Macartney or the first Earl Macartney (1737-1806) was an English statesman, colonial administrator and diplomat. After being created Earl Macartney, he was appointed the first envoy of Britain to China. He arrived in Beijing in 1793 with a large British delegation. He met the Qianlong emperor, despite his famous refusal to kowtow, but failed in negotiating the British requests. The embassy returned to Britain in 1794 (Hevia, 1995: 20-25).

During this diplomatic mission, Earl Macartney recorded a great number of his traveling experiences in China in his memoir. Among them, he has noted his experience of watching court plays in the three-tiered stage named the Clear Sound Pavilion in the Jehol Palace. He recorded:

Wednesday, September 18, 1793. We went this morning to Court, in consequence of an invitation from the Emperor, to see the Chinese comedy and other divisions given on the occasion of his birthday. The comedy began at eight o'clock a.m. and last till noon. He was seated on a throne opposite the stage, which projects a good deal into the pit; the boxes are on each side without seats or divisions. The women are placed above, behind the lattices, so that they can enjoy the amusements of the theater without being observed. Soon after we came in the Emperor sent for me and Sir George Staunton to attend him, and told us with great condescension of manner, that we should not be surprised to see a man of his age at the theater, for that he seldom came thither, except upon a very particular occasion like the present; for that, considering the extent of his dominions and the number of his subjects, he could spare but little time for such amusements. I endeavored in the turn of my answer to lead him towards the subject of my Embassy, but he seemed not disposed to enter into it farther than by delivering me a little box of old Japan, in the bottom of which were some pieces of agate and other stones much valued by the Chinese and Tartars, and at the top a small book, written and painted by his own hand, which he desired me to present to the King, my master, as a token of his friendship, saying that the old box had

been eight hundred years in his family. He at the same time gave me a book for myself, also written and painted by him, together with several purses for areca nut. He likewise gave me a purse of the same sort to Sir George Staunton, and sent some small pieces of silk and porcelain, but seemingly of no great value, were distributed among the Tartar Princes and chief courtiers, who appeared to receive them with every possible demonstration of humility and gratitude.

The theatrical entertainments consisted of great variety, both tragical and comical; several distinct pieces were acted in succession, though without any apparent connection with one another. Some of them were historical, and others of pure fancy, partly in recitative, partly in singing, and partly in plain speaking, without any accompaniment of instrumental music, but abounding in love-scenes, battles, murders, and all the usual incidents of the drama.

Last of all was the grand pantomime, which, from the approbation it met with, is, I presume, considered as a first-rate effort of invention and ingenuity. It seemed to me, as far as I could comprehend it, to represent the marriage of the Ocean and the Earth. The latter exhibited her various riches and productions, dragons and elephants and tigers and eagles and ostriches; oaks and pines, and other trees of different kinds. The Ocean was not behindhand, but poured forth on the stage the wealth of his dominions under the figures of whales and dolphins, porpoises and leviathans, and other sea-monsters, besides ships, rocks, shells,

sponges and corals, all performed by concealed actors who were quite perfect in their parts, and performed their characters to admiration.

These two marine and land regiments, after separately parading in a circular procession for a considerable time, at last joined together, and forming one body, came to the front of the stage, when, after a few evolutions, they opened to the right and left to give room for the whale, who seemed to be the commanding officer, to waddle forward, and who, taking his station exactly opposite to the Emperor's box, spouted of his mouth into the pit several tons of water, which quickly disappeared through the perforations of the floor. This ejaculation was received with the highest applause, and two or three of the great men at my elbow desired me to take particular notice of it, repeating at the same time 'Hoha, hung hoha' (Charming, delightful!). (Cranmer-Byng, 1962: 137-138)

According to Ye, Earl Macartney's description suits a few of the standard Chinese ritual dramas, for it deals with the typical theme of envoys and immortals crossing the sea to pay tribute to the Chinese emperor. (2005, 99) However, the play mentioned in his memoir has been questioned and studied among scholars. Idema has suggested that this play might have been one of the routine court dramas performed during the emperor's birthday celebration entitled *Arhats Crossing the Sea* (*Luohan Duhai* 羅漢渡海).⁸¹

However, by discovering an authentic manuscript, Ye has argued that this particular play

⁸¹ See my discussion of this play in Chapter Three. In this play, an arhat receives an order from Sakyamuni to travel to the "divine land" (*Shenzhou* 神州) of China to congratulate the sage ruler on his birthday. The dragon king, his daughter and his generals and the bodhisattvas Guanyin and Weituo all appear in this drama. It was performed throughout the Qing until the end of the dynasty (Idema, 2000: 210).

in question is not *Arhats Crossing the Sea*, but it is the play entitled *Ascendant Peace in the Four Seas* (*Sihai Shengping* 四海生平), the court play exclusively commissioned by the Qianlong emperor for Earl Macartney's visit.⁸² Whether or not the play in question is *Ascendant Peace in the Four Seas* or *Arhats Crossing the Sea* will not be discussed here. Instead, what is so significant about Earl Macartney's memoir is how we can visualize and comprehend gala performances in the three-tiered stage at the Qing court through this foreign envoy's eyes. A lot of interesting issues can be raised here. First we learn that Earl Macartney and other envoys were invited to watch court plays on an occasion of the Qianlong emperor's eightieth birthday. Second, the convention of seating positions of the Qianlong emperor, court officials, and court ladies were highlighted here. For the Qianlong emperor, "He was seated on a throne opposite the stage, which projects a good deal into the pit; the boxes are on each side without seats or divisions." And traditionally, "The women are placed above, behind the lattices, so that they can enjoy the amusements of the theater without being observed." Besides, like Zhao Yi's memoir, we also learn that the performances Macartney witnessed were in accordance with the convention of Chinese court rituals. From his memoir we are told that the drama performances lasted nearly four hours; that is "The comedy began at eight o'clock a.m. and last till noon." According to Ye, the duration of court ritual drama usually lasted 30 to 40 minutes. She has argued that the particular play that Macartney mentioned was approximately 40 minutes long. Therefore, we can presume that "eight dramas were performed that day, and that this was the second to last drama performed." (2005: 102).

⁸² Ye has pointed out that the story of the play *Ascendant Peace in the Four Seas* is similar to *Arhats Crossing the Sea*, except that the male character was not an arhat, but Lord Wenchang 文昌 or God of Literature. (2005: 100-111). See a summary of the play in Appendix C.

For she further points out that “The convention was that the last two items on the program were the most important in the performance.” (2005: 102). This argument is verified by Macartney’s account that “The theatrical entertainments consisted of great variety, both tragical and comical; several distinct pieces were acted in succession, though without any apparent connection with one another.” Despite his inexperienced interpretation of the play, Macartney’s memoir clearly illustrates how magnificent court performances in the three-tiered stage during the Qianlong era were. At one point, he praised that Chinese court play was “considered as a first-rate effort of invention and ingenuity.” Thus, like aforementioned Chinese princess and court officials, a foreigner like Earl Macartney was also impressed with the splendor and grandiosity of Chinese three-tiered stage and the ingenuity of court performances, in which a bevy of talented actors and variegated innovative stage props, such as figures of dragons, elephants, tigers, eagles, ostriches, oaks and pines, whales, dolphins, porpoises, leviathans, sea-monsters, ships, rocks, shells, sponges and corals, were innovatively employed.

However, the political entity embedded in the Guest Ritual that Macartney attended is very significant. For this ritual was related to the tribute system in Chinese history. According to Fairbank, “Tribute had prestige value in the government of China, where prestige was an all-important tool of government.” (1942: 135). This system was quite important when one considers that Chinese emperor claimed the Mandate of Heaven to rule all humankind. As Fairbank puts it, “if the rest of mankind did not acknowledge his rule, how long could he expect China to do so?” (1942: 135). Therefore, the tribute system presented in the Guest Ritual was the useful practice to guarantee that Chinese court would remain their power. In other words, the submission of foreign rulers

to Chinese emperor functioned to legitimize Chinese ruling court. On the other hand, these foreign rulers gladly participated because they desired the valuable imperial objects bestowed by Chinese emperor, as well as the opportunity to trade in this exotic land. In this sense, what sustained the tribute system in Chinese history, as Fairbank later elaborated, was that it had become an “ingenious vehicle” for trade (1953: 32).

However, this tribute system was not successfully completed by Earl Macartney. For his emissary mission failed miserably. The reason lies behind the fact that he disrespected the Qianlong emperor by refusing to kowtow in front of him. Furthermore, Macartney’s goal was to expand British influence in the China market, preferably by gaining trade concessions and a special site to conduct its commerce. However, China imposed by force the very demands that Macartney had made in 1793. Accordingly, the Qianlong emperor and the Qing court rejected the British demands. This was because the acceptance to the demands might have infringed on Chinese sovereignty, which might have led to much faster expansion of the opium trade. (Fairbank, 1953: 31; Hevia, 1995: 241).

Therefore, the gala performance in the three-tiered stage that Macartney witnessed was just a façade. Superficially, it functioned to entertain this foreign ambassador. On a deeper level, however, this gala performance was employed by the Qianlong emperor to proclaim both his sovereign power and the legitimate ruling power of China over the West. To do so, Qianlong could ensure his image of Universal King. Ironically, this extravaganza; i.e. gala performance, had come to an end when the British invaded and destroyed China during the Opium War in 1840, the climax of a trade dispute between China and Britain.

In proclaiming sovereign power among the many foreign rulers who might wish to form a relationship with the Qing emperor, the court utilized its various capitals to provide discrete zones of ritual activity for encounters with other kingdoms on the east and south like Korea, the Liuqiu islands, Annam, Siam, Burma, and Laos. Korea appeared to be the one exception to this general rule. That is to say, the Qing court regarded Korea as the loyal domain. This was because they sent embassies to China annually. As Hevia has explained “Between 1637 and 1881 Korea sent a total of 435 special embassies to the Qing court. These embassies gave thanks for imperial grace, especially on the emperor’s birthday; offered condolences; delivered memorials; requested the imperial calendar; and offered congratulations.” (Hevia, 1995: 50).

Pak Chi-won or Chinese name Pu Zhiyuan 朴趾源 (1737-1805) was a Korean envoy who was sent to China on an occasion of the Qianlong emperor’s seventieth birthday during the forty-fifth year of the Qianlong reign (1780).⁸³ Like Earl Macartney, this Korean envoy also witnessed the gala performance on the three-tiered stage named the Clear Sound Pavilion in the Jehol Palace. He recorded his experience of visitation in the thirteen fascicle entitled “Collection of Swallow Grotto” (*Yan Yan Ji* 燕岩集) compiled in his memoir entitled “Diary of the Jehol Palace” (*Rehe Riji* 熱河日記).⁸⁴ He narrated:

⁸³ Pak Chi-won or Chinese name Pu Zhiyuan was a Korean philosopher, poet and novelist in the last Choson era. His *zi* was Zhong mei 仲美 and *hao* was Yan yan 燕岩. He was born in the noble family on the fifth day in the third month of the year 1737 in Seoul. He became a court official since he was 16 years old. In the sixth month of the year 1780 Pak and other Korean envoys were sent to Beijing and Chengde to pay a tribute on an occasion of the Qianlong emperor’s seventieth birthday. He wrote the classics in the late eighteenth century after he visited China as a member of Choson’s envoy to the Qing Dynasty. (Liao, 1996:42).

The thirteenth day of the eighth month was the birthday celebration of the (Qianlong) emperor. Drama performances were prepared three days before and three days after. At dawn from three to five, thousands of officials awaited the arrival of the Emperor. From 5 to 7 o'clock in the morning they entered the opera troupe to watch the plays. In the afternoon between 1 and 3 o'clock when the play stopped they leave. All drama scripts were composed and presented by court officials. Poetry and rhapsody functioned as lyrics; they were performed in the plays. Moreover, some (officials) set up stage on the east side of the leisure palace. The theatre building was of double eaves. Its height was equivalent to five zhang of banners; its width can hold more than ten thousand people. There was no hindrance between set up and removal of stage set. Trees on left and right sides of the stage and artificial mountains were as high as the theater. Moreover, emerald trees and jasper forest covered and joined together on top. Their split colors became flowers and their connected pearls became fruits. In every play that was prepared, without doubt, actors who presented performances were several hundreds in number. They were all costumed in silk and brocade. They changed their costumes based on the play. And they were all clothed in gowns and caps of Han Chinese officials. When it approached the performance time, brocade curtains would be set up around the stage. It was quiet without any human's noise. There was only the echo of boots. Not for long the curtain was

⁸⁴ "Diary of the Jehol Palace" (*Rehe Riji*) is one of Pak Chi-won's masterpieces. He wrote this work after he visited China as a member of Choson's envoy to the Qing dynasty. The book is acclaimed as one of the best travel journals in Korean literature history. It records detailed account of Pak's traveling and emissary experience to China in 1780. The diary deals with a lot of issues, such as politics, economics, philosophy, culture, history, astronomy, and geology of China. In this work, he also composed forty Chinese poems narrating beautiful scenery in China (Pak, 1996).

removed. Then in the middle of the theater, mountains peaked up, oceans submerged, pine trees arose, and the sun soared up. The so-called “Eulogy Song of Nine Similitudes” was like this. The yu note⁸⁵ in all songs was with doubled clearness. And its musical tunes were all lofty and shining. It was as though it emerged from the Heaven. There was no mixture between clear and turbid sounds. All were sounds produced from flutes, bells, chimes, lutes and zithers, but only without the sound of drum. These were coordinated with layers of lamps. Thereupon, the mountains moved and the oceans revolved. Not a single thing was non-uniform, not a single matter turned upside down. Ever since the Yellow Emperor, Yao, and Shun, all of the clothes and caps are comparable to this. The subject of the play was performed accordingly.

八月十三日，乃皇帝萬壽節，前三日後三日，皆社戲，千官五更赴厥候駕，卯正入班聽戲，未正罷出。戲本皆朝臣獻頌，詩賦若詞而演而為戲也。另立戲臺于行宮動，樓閣皆重檐，高可建五丈旗，廣可容數萬人，設撤之際不相冒碍，臺左右木，假山，高與閣齊，而琼树瑶林，蒙络其上，剪彩為花，綴珠為果，每設一本，程戲之人無慮數百，皆服锦绣之衣。逐本易衣，而皆漢官袍帽。其設戲之時，翬施锦步障于戲臺閣上，寂無人聲，只有靴响。少焉掇帳，則已閣中山峙海涵，松矫日翥，所謂《九如歌頌》者，既是也，歌聲皆羽調倍清，而樂律皆高亮，如出天上，無清浊相濟之音，皆笙簾笛鍾磬琴瑟之聲，而獨無鼓響，間以疊鐙，頃刻之間山移海轉，無一物參差，無一事顛

⁸⁵ Yu 羽 is the fifth note or *la* in the Chinese musical scale .

倒，自黃帝堯舜莫不像其衣冠，隨題演之。(Chen, 2001: 118-119; Liao, 1997: 42; Pak, 1996: 237)

There are several points that can be raised from Pak Chi-won's account. First, like Macartney's memoir, Pak also mentioned the convention of ritual drama in the Qing court, in which its establishment and preparation had to be executed early in the morning a few days prior to the imperial birthday, in this case since 5 a.m. Moreover, he praised the massiveness of the three-tiered stage, because in his point of view "The building was of double eaves. Its height was equivalent to five *zhang* of banners; its width can hold more than ten thousand people." Furthermore, magnificent interior design of the grand theater is also highlighted here. Besides, he also itemized variegated stage props employed in this court play, such as mountains, seas, trees and the sun. In addition, Pak admired various gorgeous costumes in silk and brocade worn by actors, creating such a spectacular scene. According to Zhao Shanlin (1994), a lot of characters performed in this particular play can be identified. For example, the Chinese mythical sage rulers like the Yellow Emperor (*Huangdi* 黃帝),⁸⁶ Yao 堯 and Shun 舜,⁸⁷ civil officials, martial officials, black-haired people (*Li Zhe* 黎庶),⁸⁸ young boys, fishermen, literati, immortals,

⁸⁶ The Yellow Emperor is a legendary Chinese sovereign who is said to be the ancestor of all Han Chinese. (Walters, 1992: 82-83)

⁸⁷ Yao, Shun and Yu 禹 are three semi-mythical Chinese rulers. Often extolled as the morally perfect sage-king, their benevolence and diligence serve as a model to future Chinese monarchs and emperors. (Walters, 1992: 184-185)

⁸⁸ Here "black-haired people" refer to Chinese people.

Arhats, Jade Maiden, God of Kitchen (*Zao Shen* 灶神),⁸⁹ unicorn, phoenix, and fairy crane (*Xian He* 仙鶴). Pak also identified that the play that he witnessed was called “Eulogy Song of Nine Similitudes,” which was one of the court plays routinely performed on the imperial birthday.⁹⁰ According to Fu Xihua, this court play was composed by Yin Jiaquan 尹嘉铨,⁹¹ who later befriended Pak Chi-won. (1981: 88)

Like Earl Macartney, Pak was received in the Guest Ritual by the Qianlong emperor. By means of the gala performance on the three-tiered stage, the emperor could proclaim his legitimate power over the Eastern Kingdom of Korea. Therefore, the relationships formed in the Guest Ritual by which hierarchy was included within imperial Chinese sovereignty had such characteristics: the power of the superior, which in this case the Qing court, lay in its capacity to generate conditions necessary for the inclusion of inferiors, in this case Britain and Korea. In the meantime, the power of the inferior lay in its capacity to bring to completion what the superior set in motion. Thus Manchu-Chinese pattern of imperial sovereignty took this form.

⁸⁹ God of Kitchen was regarded as the guardian of Chinese family. He was identified as the inventor of fire, which was necessary for cooking and was also the censor of household morals. (Walters, 1992: 161-162)

⁹⁰ Here “Nine Similitudes” (*Jiu Ru* 九如) is a felicitous wish, referring to a passage in the *Classic of Poetry* (*Shi Jing* 詩經):

May you be as the mountains and the hills, as the greater and the lesser heights, as the streams which flow in all directions, having the constancy of the moon, like the rising sun, with the longevity of the southern mountain and the green luxuriance of the fir and the cypress.

如山如阜，如冈如陵。如川之方至，以莫不增。如月之恒，如日之升。如南山之寿，不骞不崩。如松柏之茂，无不尔或承。(Fu, 1981: 88).

⁹¹ Yin Jinquan 尹嘉铨 was a court writer during the Qianlong reign. His *zi* was Hengshan 亨山. He was a native of Boye 博野. Yin Jinquan was known for his filial piety. The Qianlong emperor once composed a eulogized poem on his filial piety. (Hummel, 1964: 248).

Therefore, Chinese three-tiered stage embodied an aesthetic and yet exotic sense in the eyes of foreign envoys and artists. From their perspectives, this grand theater not simply confirmed the prosperity of the Qing empire, but also represented how exotic and innovative Chinese court theater could be. Judging from how Princess Der Ling, Katherine Carl, British ambassador Earl Macartney and Korean envoy Pak Chiwon described the architecture of the three-tiered stage and the gala performances they witnessed, one can feel a sense of “exoticism,” a theory that was formulated in the nineteenth century of postcolonialism.

Exoticism as a postcolonial concept can be interpreted as the process by which the exotic was domesticated while continuing to render foreign people, objects and places strange. Graham Huggan explains, “If exoticism has arrived in the ‘center,’ it still derives from the cultural margins or, perhaps more accurately, from a commodified discourse of cultural marginality.” (2001: 20). He also asserts, “Exoticism posits the lure of difference while protecting its practitioners from close involvement” (2001: 22). Therefore, the theory of exoticism formulates the essence of the encounter between different cultures. This philosophical inquiry addresses the way in which Western thought, through the concept of the subject, theorizes the relation to the otherness in general (Huggan, 2001: 28).

Thus what Princess Der Ling, Carl, Earl Macartney and Pak narrated in their memoirs was filled with wordings and language that conveyed their curiosity and yet exaltation to Chinese three-tiered stage. For instance, Princess Der Ling commented: “This Theater is quite unlike anything you can imagine.” and “Unlike most theaters in China...Her Majesty had never seen foreign theater and I could not understand where she

got all her ideas from.” Carl expressed her curiosity, saying: “Among the curious instruments were splendid frames...curiously and beautifully wrought...”and “there was another noisy clash weird music and the play itself began.” Earl Macartney also narrated what he witnessed without full understanding: “Last of all was grand pantomime, which, from the approbation it met with, is, I presume, considered as a first-rate effort of invention and ingenuity. It seemed to me, as far as I could comprehend it...” Finally Pak was impressed, saying: “And its musical tunes were all lofty and shining. It was as though it emerged from the Heaven...” To these foreign audiences, Chinese three-tiered stage and gala performances were innovative and exotic. This sense of exoticism, as Huggan explains, carries implications of cultural difference, which in this case between China and Britain, as well as China and Korea.

According to Andrea Michel, traditional exoticism has depicted only one side of the encounter, which is the experience of the Western subject that, in search of the thrill of exoticism. This Western subject only recounted and represented its own vision. As a rule, exoticist writing neglected to portray its own impact on the culture that was the object of its gaze (1996: 8). It is clear that what Princess Der Ling, Carl, Earl Macartney and Pak recorded in their exoticist writings while attending the Guest Ritual in the Qing court of China, represented an exploration of the clash of the two fundamental tendencies of aesthetics as conceived in the West (Britain), and this case Korea as well, “as sensory encounter with the physical world (i.e.experience), on the one hand, and as imaginative, poetic construction of the world (i.e.imagination) on the other.” (Michel, 1996: 9). These foreign authors undertook their journey into the land of the real world of China in order to be accepted by the Qing court and to find out, in Michel’s words, “if the power of the

imagination can hold its own when confronted with brute reality or if, on the contrary, the knowledge furnished by the imagination has to be discarded.” (1996, 10).

In their memoirs, these exoticist writers, Earl Macartney and Pak Chiwon in particular, became interested in the philosophical implications of cultural difference and the desire for the “Other,” which in this case was China. However, this Self-Other binary opposition (Britain, Korea vs. China) in the notion of exoticism shifted its turn. In this case the Other, or China, “desired” to empower the Selves, or Britain and Korea, by means of the tribute system, as I have discussed earlier. The Other “desired” to be superior to the Selves and “desired” to be the most powerful agency in the universe. Here the power in the original concept of exoticism shifted its turn to be possessed by the Other. But eventually, the theory of exoticism remained its traditional pattern. That is to say, the exoticism led to its destructive effects brought about in the clash of different cultures on the Other. In the end the Other was empowered by the Self, when Britain (Self) invaded and destroyed China (Other) during the Opium War. This, of course, closed the final chapter of prosperous Chinese empire.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper delineates the architectural structure as well as the gala performances of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion, a theatrical innovation during the Qing dynasty. My arguments are based on the theory of New Historicism. That is to say, I have reconstructed the value of history of the Qing court theater in various literary sources. To apply this theory, I believe that the emergence of three-tiered stage, five adapted court plays, and gala performances both influenced and were influenced by historical reality during the Qianlong reign. In the meantime, the world of Chinese three-tiered stage referred and was referred to by things outside itself. Therefore, I have related court theatrical tradition during the Qianlong reign to forms of political organization that developed during the same period. I do agree with new historicists such as Clifford Geertz and Stephen Greenblatt that literature is not distinct from the history that is relevant to it. Hence, I have used what Geertz calls “thick description” to blur distinctions, not only between Qing court history and the other social sciences, but also between background and foreground, political and poetical events (1973: 3-30). In this paper, I have erased the line dividing historical and literary materials, showing not only that the emergence of the three-tiered stage was both a political act and a historical event, but also that the notion of Chinese emperorship of the Qianlong emperor was carried out with the same fashion for staging and symbols lavished on five adapted court plays.

The whole picture of Chinese three-tiered stage consists of four significant jigsaw puzzles, each constituted a specific characteristics of this grand theater. By using these

four jigsaw pieces, I have attempted to reconstruct a “complete and perfect” picture of this ancient Chinese three-tiered stage. The first jigsaw puzzle that I have combined in this paper is the one portraying the exterior architecture and interior design of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion. I have analyzed how these architectural characteristics conformed to traditional Chinese architecture. By examining different elements of this grand theater—podium, balustrades, columns, ceilings, bracketing systems, and roof shape, tiles, and polychrome decorations, one can see the façade of the three-tiered stage that embodied and reflected purely Chinese architectural standards. To be sure, these elements connoted traditional Chinese philosophies, such as *Fengshui*, *Yin-Yang*, Five Elements, and Chinese cosmology. Like any buildings of Chinese palatial compound, the three-tiered stage is composed of three major parts: a platform (in this case three main platforms), the roof, and the pillars that supported it. The structure has been traditionally thought to symbolize the now-familiar triad of Heaven (roof), Earth (platform), Humanity (pillar).

However, this Chinese façade of the grand theater concealed European aesthetics. On a deeper level, the three-tiered stage embodied European concepts of architecture and theatricality. Thus, the Sino-European synthesis embedded in the structure of the three-tiered stage signified how the clash between East and West or specifically between China and Europe during the sixteenth century. In other words, Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion is a living proof of cross-cultural theatrical exchanges between China and Europe. This trans-cultural theater rendered a complex paradigm of exchange and rich intersection of East and West in performance art and stage plays. It provided a lively glimpse of creative hybridization of cross-cultural adaptation at work, as East

meets West on the world's stages. And this is the second jigsaw that I put together to reconstruct a "perfect" picture of the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion

Two significant factors engendered such synthesis to the Qing court theater. One is the influence from Jesuit missionaries who went to China and served the Qing court as imperial servants. Despite the failure in christianizing Chinese people, these Jesuits remained at the Qing court. Some became the emperor's favorites. The most well-known characters whose artistic skills fascinated the Qianlong emperor included Milano Jesuit artist Giuseppe Castiglione and French mathematician Father Michel Benoist. Although there is no extant material stating who were the architects designing and building Chinese three-tiered stage, I strongly believe that it was constructed under the influence of these two Jesuits. For there is a lot of evidence proving that Castiglione and Father Benoist had engaged in several architectural projects in a grand scale. The most famous one was the European palatial compound in the Yuanming Garden. To be sure, Castiglione's artistic skills and Father Benoist's mathematic and scientific knowledge helped create this Sino-European theater. The other factor that triggered the emergence of the three-tiered stage is the Qianlong emperor's passion with drama and European art. Within his sixty years of reign, he had commissioned 25 theaters in different palaces. He himself was also a dramatist and an actor. In addition, he was so fascinated with European pictorial art and European mechanisms. Extensive historical works showed how he commissioned both Chinese and European court artists to produce toys, gadgets, clocks, ceramics, self-portraits, and other types of paintings with the intermarriage of Sino-European aesthetics.

In Chapter Three I have shown some similarities between European and Chinese theatrical props and stagecraft in order to prove my hypothesis that the Qianlong emperor

must have adopted the idea from Europe during Renaissance and Baroque periods.

For instance, the complex interior structures of the Second Globe Theater and the Theater Royale. Both English theaters were equipped with machines allowing the dynamism of actors and props during performance. Other theatrical props—“Paradiso” invented by Filippo Brunelleschi, “Cloud Float” invented by Il Cecco, the prism stage scenery invented by Aristotle da San Gallo, water-sprinkling machine and “Sea-Monster” invented by Giutti—employed in Renaissance and Baroque theaters must have been models for Chinese theatrical props used in the three-tiered stage. For example, the “sea turtle” prop employed the court play named “Arhats Crossing the River,” the references of props like “cloud sack,” “cloud board,” and “cloud chair” recorded in the court plays.

The third jigsaw puzzle that I have put together in order to reconstruct the emergence of Chinese three-tiered stage is the production part. Five major court plays—*Shengping Baofa*, *Quanshan Jinke*, *Dingzhi Chunqiu*, *Zhongyi Xuantu* and *Zhaodai Xiaoshao*—rewritten under the Qianlong emperor’s commission exclusively for the performances in the three-tiered stage allow us to perceive the dynamism of the actors. The dynamism produced by this “primitive” hydraulics linked every scene into a continuous play. Furthermore, it connected each isolated platform into one whole grand theater. In the performance in its phase of movement, the hierarchy among three groups of characters—god, human, and demon—was organized through the polarity of upper and lower as they moved up and down through the stage design called *tianjing* and *dijing* of the three-tiered stage. I have argued that arrangement of space and movement within elements like stage directions, songs, dialogues, and the deployment of theatrical props all produced certain positions for the actors, especially showing how the manipulation of

high/low and inner/outer produced the notion of the cosmic triad. Like any other traditional Chinese buildings in the imperial palatial compounds, the structure of the three-tiered stage displayed Chinese cosmology: Heaven (upper), Humanity (center), and Earth (lower). However, such hierarchical pattern did not always exist in the gala performance in this theatrical world. As I have analyzed in Chapter Four, god characters could occupy any platform besides the Fortune Stage. Likewise, human characters could perform on all three stages. Such blurred boundaries showed how fluid the characteristics of theatricality in the three-tiered stage could be.

The fourth jigsaw puzzle that I put together is the notion of representation embedded in the three-tiered stage and gala performances, both from Qianlong's perspective and other audiences' points of view. The concept of representation I have applied in Chapter Five takes on a political stance. This political representation implies that Chinese three-tiered stage and five adapted court plays stand in for Qianlong's sovereign power. Such a form of representation is pivotal in the functioning of the Qing empire, particularly during the Qianlong reign, a heyday of court theater. In this context both semiotic and political representations rely on many agencies—the Qianlong emperor, court actors, court officials, court ladies, ambassadors from foreign countries invited to attend the Guest Ritual.

From Qianlong's perspective, the three-tiered stage represented the notion of Chinese emperorship. To be sure, the architecture of this grand theater signified Chinese cosmic triad. That is to say, the Fortune Stage symbolically represented Heaven, the Prosperity Stage Humanity and the Longevity Stage Earth. The number three here also corresponded to the notion of "Three Powers" (*San Cai*): Heaven, Humanity and Earth,

which acting in perfect union produce those greatest of blessings—Peace and Bountifulness. In the world of the three-tiered stage the Qianlong emperor acted as a mediator between Heaven above and Earth below. The spatial relationship between the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion and the imperial loge on the opposite side named the Loge of Inspecting Truth also accentuated the notion of Chinese emperorship. In this context the three-tiered stage represented Heaven where all deity characters resided, whereas the imperial loge where the Qianlong emperor seated in the center functioned as Humanity, and both western and eastern corridors where court officials, court ladies and foreign envoys positioned themselves signified Earth. Here the imperial act of “centering” oppositions, i.e. in the imperial loge, that had been materialized as inner/outer and upper/lower involved identification with the superior. The layout dramatized an ancient Chinese hierarchy of powers. The Son of Heaven (*Tianzi*) facing south in the imperial loge dominated his subjects, i.e. court officials, court ladies and foreign envoys, below him.

In Picture 74, the visualization of the Qianlong emperor watching performance in the three-tiered stage also accentuated correlative thought included correspondence between man and cosmos, between heaven and the imperium. Therefore the three-tiered stage was symbolically created to show most splendidly the unit of the realm as a perceptible reality. While the three-tiered stage constituted the cosmic cycle, it also became proof of the Qianlong emperor’s fitness to rule as the man who could intensify the “real” and show the unity of Heaven and Earth.

Furthermore, the representation of the three-tiered stage brought the concept of Chinese emperorship to another level. It signified the notion of “Universal King” of the

Qianlong emperor. The emperor's grand plan to reign as Universal King was successful when Qing territories stretched from their Manchurian homeland through China, Mongolia, Central Asian Xinjiang and Tibet. Throughout this lengthy campaign, Qianlong saw the value of controlling conquered territories by way of the tribute system. Universal kingship after all, embraced the cosmos, and that posture demanded superhuman scale in architecture, and the manifold roles required of the Qianlong emperor. Thus the Pleasant Sound Pavilion upon the highest of three white marble terraces, these correspond to the Three Powers—Heaven, Earth and Humanity, which acting in perfect union produce those “pleasant sounds” (*chang yin*) of blessings—Peace (*ning*) and Longevity (*shou*).

The Qianlong emperor employed the three-tiered stage and five adapted court plays as a vehicle to create his multiple images, an indirect way of governing his subjects. He viewed of himself as Chinese sage king, Mongol and Manchu khan, Buddhist *cakravartin* and the Tibetan Buddhist bodhisattva incarnation. In adopting these multiple identities, the emperor was different things to different audiences. As Crossley has analyzed, “To the Mongols he presented himself as khan, or the universal “king of Kings”; to Tibetans and Tibetan Buddhist Mongols he was a *cakravartin* bodhisattva; to the Han Chinese he was a sage-emperor who performed the crucial sacrifices; to Manchus he was an avatar of a lineage linking the Qing to the Jin dynasty, and promoter of Manchu shamanic traditions.” (1999: 235).

In order to construct his multiple identities, the Qianlong emperor commissioned the grand project of the three-tiered stage. The theater then became an entertainment venue that creates a space for “performing” Confucian morality such as loyalty to one's

master and filiality to one's father, as well as Buddhist philosophy like the Law of Karma and filial devotion to one's mother. To do so, the Qianlong emperor created a three-tiered space for instructing his subjects. By using this theatrical channel, the emperor became Grand Instructor of the Qing empire. Confucian and Buddhist didactic messages were conveyed through different modes, such as characterization, plots, and poetic language. On the other hand, five adapted court plays represented various identities of the Qianlong emperor. That is to say, the play *SPBF*, an adaptation of the *Journey to the West* represented Qianlong in a role of Buddha, whereas the play *QSJK* dealing with the story of Mu Lian represented him as paragon of Buddhist filial son. The plays with a theme of war like the *DZCQ*, an adaptation of the *Three Kingdoms*, the *ZYXT*, an adaptation of the *Outlaws of the Marsh*, and the *ZDXS* an adaptation of the *Generals of the Yang Family*, represented the emperor as Chinese sage king who promoted Confucian philosophy of loyalty. They also created his persona as Manchu warrior king who expressed his military skills and prowess.

The Qianlong emperor's power to create the three-tiered stage, and by means of it produced five instructive court plays, was structured with Foucault's theory on power. His underlying concept of all-pervading and productive power can be applied to the sphere of Chinese three-tiered stage. Like Foucault's notion of power, the power relations in the world of three-tiered stage also permeated all levels of agencies involved. This idea of the ubiquity of power relations is shown in Diagram 28. Here the pattern of power circulated and mutually affected among different elements which helped shape Chinese

three-tiered stage. Such agencies were the Qianlong emperor, Sino-European architecture and theatricality, court actors, court plays, and theatrical props.

Qing disciplinary society operated fundamentally through analogous strategies of normalization. The Qianlong emperor fit in the concept of Foucault's "judge of normality," in that he "assessed" and "diagnosed" each individual subject according to a normalizing set of assumptions, or what Foucault calls the "carceral network of power-knowledge." (1980: 24-25). These subjects were controlled through Qianlong's power. This power was effective because it is relatively visible. In the world of Chinese three-tiered stage, the individual subjects were regulated through a network of Confucian and Buddhist philosophies. It is this notion of "disciplinary" power as a normalizing and productive force that functioned within the sphere of Chinese three-tiered stage.

In Chapter Five I focus on the ideological function of Chinese three-tiered stage because regulating and controlling access to theatrical power were crucial political issues in the Qianlong period. The plays produced for the three-tiered stage reflected a heightened self-consciousness of Qianlong about what it meant to instruct court officials, to manipulate audiences, and to negotiate between the lived world and discursive representations of it. Theatrical power was not simply used to create good subjects for Qianlong, but to subject the emperor to the fashioning powers of the "playwright." I cast him as the "playwright" for I believe he was the ultimate "author" of these court plays. Power relations were reversed or challenged even as they were apparently affirmed. The role of the three-tiered stage in the Qianlong court was more complex than simply affirming sovereign power or entertainment. I have defined Chinese three-tiered stage as

a vehicle for ideological contestation and social change and have suggested that in the Qing period theatrical power was real power with a political goal. To be sure, the emergence of Chinese three-tiered stage confirmed the Qianlong emperor's intention to use dramatic mechanism to improve political conditions in his empire. To do so, he positioned himself as the singular political authority that bound together the disparate parts of the Qing imperium and linked them to the cosmos.

The three-tiered stage and gala performances were represented differently in audiences' perspectives. To Chinese court officials like Cao Xinquan, Zhao Yi, and Hong Liangji, the grand theater was perceived as a living proof of glorification, civilization and prosperity of the Qing empire. In Saussurean term, the three-tiered stage was a signifier of Qianlong sovereign power. What these Chinese authors narrated in their memoirs and poems consisted of the marvelous exterior architecture and interior design of the three-tiered stage, as well as the spectacular scenes of gala performances on stage. These descriptions clearly illustrated the notion of ingenuity in Chinese court theater during the Qianlong reign. On one hand, in the eyes of Chinese people, this grand theater acted as a "political monument" that "warned" and "reminded," as suggested in its Latin root *monère*, the primacy of Qianlong's sovereign power. It was designed to convey historical and political information of the Qing dynasty and to reinforce the primacy of Qianlong's sovereign power. On the other hand, from Chinese perspective, the grand theater was also functioned as an "entertain monument" that reinforced the aesthetics of the Qianlong court.

However, from foreigners' perspective, Chinese three-tiered stage was perceived in a different way. To foreigners like American female artist Katherine Carl, British Ambassador Earl Macartney, Korean envoy Pak Chi-won, and even Western-Manchu Princess Der Ling, the three-tiered stage and gala performances were a product of ingenuity. The narration in their memoirs comprised with language that exalted and praised the innovativeness and elegance of Qing court theater. From their curious eyes, this entertainment venue was new and exotic. This idea of exoticism brought Chinese three-tiered stage to another level, a "political" one. That is to say, the Self-Other relationship in the theory of exoticism had a reverse order. In other words, the Selves (Britain and Korea) became the Other (China) and vice versa. This is true when one considers how the hierarchy these foreign countries embodied was played out when they were "invited" by in the Qing court to attend the Guest Ritual in China. As I have discussed in Chapter Five, a central precept in the Qing imagining of empire was the notion that the world was made up of multitude of rulers over whom Manchu emperors sought to position themselves as Supreme Rulers or Universal Kings. (Crossley: 1999; Hevia, 1995). The asymmetrical and interdependent relationship between China's superiority and foreign countries' inferiority was signified as such in the Guest Ritual. As Hevia has explained:

The Guest Ritual process begins with the actions of the supreme lord as generator. In his fashioning of the relationship between the heaven, earth and humanity, he takes and holds a pivotal role in the ordering of the universe. His capacity to do this is the exemplary power (de 德) that suffuses the world; it results from the emperor's performance of the ritual cycle. The lesser lord then

requests permission to enter the imperial domain. His request to come to court is understood by the imperium as a desire on his part to continue the process of his own and his domain's transformation in and through actions that will acknowledge the generative capacity of the emperor. In the end, he will give thanks (xie 謝) for imperial grace (en 恩) that has been extended to encompass him. He will bring to culmination a portion of the process set in motion by the emperor's actions in fashioning a cosmo-moral order. (Hevia, 1995: 126-127).

Therefore, by welcoming foreign countries to attend the Guest Ritual, the Qianlong emperor intended to bring these “lesser kingdoms” into his “centering” domain. To do so, he could acclaim himself as Universal King. By inviting these imperial alien guests to watch gala performances in the three-tiered stage, Qianlong was able to “perform” his legitimate sovereign power over other nations. And by accepting the imperial invitation, these “lesser kingdoms” directly confirmed their inferiority to the superiority of China. By incorporating the three-tiered stage into the ritual sphere, the grand theater politically showed the glory of the Qianlong reign to the world. In a way, it functioned to persuade the foreign empires, such as Mongolia, Tibet, Korea and Britain, that the Great Qing Nation (*Da Qingguo* 大清國) was truly a universal empire. Thus in the context of exoticism, the Selves, who traveled and recorded their “imaginative” experience to display the “real” picture of the exotic land of the Other, were transformed to be objects of desire of this Other.

The concept of exoticism is more complex in the case of Earl Macartney's emissary mission to China. His purpose was not simply to promote trade and diplomacy,

but also to assess China's status as a rational order and to collect data on matters of interest to scientific as well as political colleagues. However, as Hevia has argued "Macartney's inability to break through the intellectual and bureaucratic barriers of the tribute system explains why his embassy failed to open China to wider intercourse with the West and why relations between China and the West were filled with conflict in the nineteenth century." (1995: 12). At one point, Macartney could sense Qianlong's nonchalance. In his memoir, Macartney noted "I endeavored in the turn of my answer to lead him towards the subject of my Embassy, but he seemed not disposed to enter into it farther than by delivering me a little box of old Japan..." (Cranmer-Byng, 1962: 137). In the context of exoticism, China became the Self who desired to conquer the Other, which in this case Britain. But this desire was not fulfilled. For eventually Britain invaded and completely destroyed China during the Opium War. In this sense, Britain acted as the Self whose object of desire was the Other, China. What this Self left behind is a disgraceful scar to the Other.

Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion can be regarded as what Roland Barthes termed "Myth." For it is "a system of communication" in which the Qianlong emperor attempted to relay messages to his domestic and overseas subjects during his reign as well as audiences from different time and space like us.

...myth is a system of communication, that it is a message. This allows one to perceive that myth cannot possibly be an object, a concept, or an idea; it is a mode of signification, a form....It can be seen that to purport to discriminate among mythical objects according to their substance would be entirely illusory: since myth is a type of speech, everything can be a myth provided it is conveyed

by a discourse. Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it utters this message: there are formal limits to myth, there are no 'substantial' ones (Lavers trans, 2000: 109).

Thus the Chinese three-tiered stage functions as a sign that communicates connotative meaning and prolongs the dominant values of the Qianlong court. The tri-dimensional pattern can be drawn in the myth of the three-tiered stage, as shown in Diagram 2.

The signifier (1) of the denotation sign system is the image of the Chinese three-tiered stage. The content of the signified (2) includes the synthesis between traditional Chinese and European architecture and theatricality that engendered this cross-cultural theater. The corresponding denotative sign (3) is this Sino-European court theater. It is a sign rich in ingenuity. And this sign forms the signifier (I) of a secondary connotation system. The Sino-European theater is paired with the mythic content of a signified (II) that demonstrates to the world Qianlong's sovereign power. But as the symbol of the three-tiered stage is constructed to support the myth of Qianlong's emperorship, the sign loses its historical and innovative ground. As a mere signifier of the connotation system, the three-tiered stage is no longer regarded as an imperial entertainment venue. It ceases to stand for the hybridization of Qing court theater. Now in the service of the mythic semiotic system, the three-tiered stage becomes a political and cultural "text" that "narrates" Qianlong's monarchy. According to Barthes, that does not mean that the meaning of the original denotation is lost.

But it is essential point in all this is that the form does not suppress the meaning, it only impoverishes it, it puts it at a distance, it holds it at one's disposal. One believes that the meaning is going to die, but it is a death with reprieve; the meaning loses its value, but keeps its life, from which the form of the myth will draw its nourishment (Lavers trans, 2000: 118).

In the connotation system, the image of the Chinese three-tiered stage is now paired with the signified content of Qianlong's absolute power. But since the signifier can conceal a historical or cultural past, the mythic sign III of which it is a part carries what Em Griffin (2000: 332) termed "the crust of falsity." That is to say, on a superficial level there is no connection between the cross-cultural aspect of the theater and Qianlong's own self. And since mythic communication is "unable to imagine anything alien, novel, or other," the sign transfers a second thought about Qianlong's self-representation (Griffin, 2000: 332). The transformed subject is now a sign that conceals Qianlong's trepidation of anti-dynastic spirit. This is the reason why he commissioned the construction of the three-tiered stage in order to exercise his absolute power and to "communicate" to his audiences from the past—both domestic (Chinese court officials) and overseas audiences (foreign envoys)—and those of the present times (us).

Therefore, the mythic sign of the three-tiered stage reinforces the dominant values of Qing court culture. It seems at first glance to be no more than an entertainment venue of the Qianlong court. However, it is the site of controversial myth making. The three-tiered stage signifies a make-believe conceptualization of Qianlong's Universal King. The existence of the three-tiered stage provides "false" image for audiences both during the Qing period and in the current time that live in a skeptical world. As Em Griffin

(2000: 332-333) pointed out, “According to Barthes, ideological signs enlist support for the status quo by transferring history into nature pretending that current conditions are the natural order of things.” Therefore, every element constituted the Chinese three-tiered stage—Qianlong, synthesis between Chinese and European architecture and theatricality, court plays and court audiences—that are “personal, conditional, cultural and temporal” now disappears. What has been left behind is the sign that makes the world seem “inevitable and eternal” (Griffin, 2000: 333).

All the elements—adaptation of grand plays with deletion of anti-dynastic, anti-monarchical notions, and addition of filial, loyal and righteous characters—taken from different times and places, functioned as a reminder that Qianlong monarchy’s control and censorship of the stage was above all a matter of time and place. It is certainly the case that the Qianlong reign sought to sanction the theater to handle matters of politics or religion, while at the same time allowing it in practice to do so with some frequency at court. And it is also true that this behavior created the space to read Qianlong court theater as powerful.

The mythic sign of Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion was a space where power of theatricality and theatricality of power interacted. That is to say, it was a space where Qianlong intended to exercise the theatricality of his sovereign power by using the power of theatricality to control his subjects and construct his emperorship. What he realized was how theater was capable of moving audiences powerfully, to acquiesce and rebellion. Qianlong took action to repress and control theater in the wake of popular insurrections or threats from foreign powers. Yet the three-tiered stage became an arena in which the moral messages in the grand plays could create a space for the

voicing of political issues during the Qianlong reign; and, because the Chinese three-tiered stage was so exclusively accessible to court officials and foreign envoys, it was the form that spoke to the exclusive constituency of Qianlong's subjects. The theater then sought to thrill both Chinese and foreign audiences through the power of theatricality in that they would see the picture as the sum of its constructed parts rather than overwhelmed by it as illusion.

Fulke Greville explained the notion of power in his *Mustapha*, "Power can neither see, work, nor devise without the people's hands, hearts, wit, and eyes" (cited in Mullaney, 1988: 94). As Steven Mullaney (1988: 94) clarified, "It is an astute anatomy, born as it is of the recognition that power is never merely a coercive or repressive force, that it must not be limited to acting upon its subjects but must instead, to be effective, act through them as well, inducing them to participate and even to become the primary actors in the ongoing drama of their own subjection." This is the power of theatricality that Qianlong saw in the three-tiered stage. As a result, he created the theatricality of his absolute power that was not limited to exercising upon his subjects, but effectively exercised through them. The "final scene" that Qianlong intended to "conclude" was how his subjects involved in and "even to become the primary actors in the ongoing drama of their own subjection."

I would argue that the power of the three-tiered stage was to blur boundaries between reality and illusion. Diana Devlin (1989: 203) argued that, like western theater, Chinese theater created:

1. *the reality of here and now where the audience and actors are united;*
2. *the illusionary reality, the fiction that is built up by the arts of theater;*

3. the reality beyond, the truth that the play or the whole event is about.

Qianlong then attempted to construct the reality of his empire by using the illusion of the theater in order to convey to his Chinese and foreign audiences. And ultimately he wanted to conquer both real and illusory worlds. He also regarded the three-tiered stage as a kind of laboratory. In this theater, the emperor had the opportunity to examine aspects of reality, including political ideology, moral messages, and other aspects of life of the Qing empire, and thereby add to his emperorship. From this approach, the magical aspects of theater distract his subjects from its truth, as Devlin pointed out “we are not to be taken out of ourselves in the theater, but must keep our wits about us throughout, so as to evaluate the human events and modify our own behavior accordingly. This attitude to theater leads to just as much of a split between approval and disapproval. Theater may be educational in the broadest sense, offering warnings and recommendations for how to conduct our lives. Only if we agree with the lesson will we approve of the play. Plays are often evaluated according to the lesson they teach. This evaluation may apply not only to individual plays, but to a whole group or society” (1989: 203-204).

The Chinese three-tiered stage displayed the Qianlong emperor in the eyes of his realm as the prime exemplar of loyalty, filiality, righteousness, and thus a model for Universal King. This court theater cast Qianlong as the whole of his imperial and social parts. The massive theater was important because it was designed to unite the entire realm. By providing a specially-designed enclosed space where certain agents could call upon the power of real and illusory worlds, gala performances formed a mode of political discourse. It supplied an array of actions that ultimately targeted at the sovereign and disciplinary power to govern the Qianlong empire. Thus, the three-tiered stage

accomplished the symbolic construction of the Qianlong emperor and the cosmos, as historian Harold Kahn (1985: 291) described Qianlong as a cultural patron and producer:

The emperor on the throne was both part of the high culture he patronized and above it. He had license to be both greater and different...The Qianlong emperor created a legacy of taste for unshakable imperial pomp, massive projects and occasional displays of what can only be called elephantine delicacy. It was practically an imperial requirement to awe—to sponsor that which was monumental, solemn and ceremonial, literally to be bigger than life...Universal Kingship after all, embraced the cosmos, and that posture demanded suprahuman scale in architecture, ritual and the manifold roles required of the emperor.

Stephen Orgel (1975: 8) argued that “Dramas at court were not entertainments in the simple and dismissive sense we usually apply to the term. They were expressions of the age’s most profound assumptions about the monarchy. They included strong elements of ritual and communion, often explicitly religious; and to participate in such a production involved far more than simply watching a play.” Therefore, when the Qianlong emperor brought his actors to court, the nature of the audience changed the function of the performance. Now there were two audiences and two spectacles. The primary audience was the Qianlong emperor, while the second one was court audiences; and the primary performance was directed explicitly at Qianlong, while the second one was performed on the three-tiered stage. When Qianlong was present, he became the center of the theatrical experience in another way, and the hierarchy of royal audiences became more apparent. In this theatrical compound, there was only one focal point, one perfect theater from which the illusion achieved its fullest effect. It was where the

Qianlong emperor sat, and the audiences around him at once became a living emblem of the structure of the Qing court. Thus, the central experience of drama at court, then, involved not simply the action/ power of the grand play, but the interaction between the grand play and Qianlong, and the structured organization of the other spectators around him. The emperor must not merely see the gala performance, he must be seen to see it.

In the world of Chinese three-tiered stage, the spectators acted as “auditory” and “visible” agents. What these audiences came to see was the Qianlong emperor; but their experience of the drama was—as the terms *auditory* and *audience* suggest—to hear it (*ting xi* 聽戲 or literally “listen to play”). Chinese theater was assumed to be a verbal and visual medium. And acting was a form of oratory; Chinese actor did not merely imitate action, he persuaded the audience through speech and gesture of the meaning of the action. Obviously much more than this was in fact being experienced in Chinese theater—for example acrobatics, violence, symbolism—for which the visual sense was essential. And this was how stage sceneries, realistic props, and lifting machines had come into play. They intensified the visual spectacular in the three-tiered stage. In this sense, the theater became an entity, as Orgel (1975: 35-36) argued, “the stage was not the setting for a drama, but was itself the action. And its transformations were those of the human mind, the imagination expressing itself through perspective, mechanics, the imitation of nature, creating a model of the universe and bringing it under the rational control. Such a theater has little to do with plays; it is, indeed, in certain ways antidramatic. But it proved peculiarly appropriate to the special audience who commanded its creation.” This is the context within which the Qing court audiences saw the gala performance, with its scenic illusions and spectacular machines: as models of the

universe, as science, and as assertions of power. The innovative stagecraft—the usage of trapdoors, pits, visual and audible special effects, lifting machines, realistic props and stage settings—illusively created the cosmic sphere, and thus was the supreme expression of the Qing emperorship, in this case the Qianlong emperor.

As Salvatore Di Maria (2002: 154) pointed out, “the political instrumentation of drama was usually confined to the extratextual activities that marked the performance,” which in the case of the three-tiered stage were multi-day performances, decorum, selection of guests, seating arrangements, and other relevant activities in the Guest Ritual. This event provided amusement for Chinese and foreign audiences and the opportunity to celebrate Qianlong’s power and prosperity of his empire. According to the Guest Ritual, the emperor would make his grand entrance accompanied by important guests. He would then take his seat on a raised platform at the center of the audience hall, holding the attention and the admiration of the spectators, who were seated around the imperial loge according to their rank. It was easy for them to watch the play and behold, at the same time, as shown in Figure 74 (Zito, 1997). It helps to picture the gala performance as having two stages: a virtual stage (the imperial loge) occupied by the Qianlong emperor of the real world, and the actual three-tiered stage dominated by the threatening world of the representation. Shifting their attention from the three-tiered stage to the imperial loge, spectators would inevitably witness Qianlong’s reaction to the gala performances, which would influence their own response. In this sense the audiences watched both the grand play and Qianlong at the play. Their response was not just to the drama, but to the relationship between the three-tiered stage and its primary audience, their emperor.

Grand plays were performed for the selective group of invited spectators, who were members of the ruling class. The invitation to attend such gala performances was for them an honor and a formal recognition of their noble status. In turn, their presence was a “performance” of loyalty that confirmed Qianlong in his prestige. In this process, they all became participants in the exercise of Qianlong’s sovereign power. The Guest Ritual, then, provided the opportunity for subjects and the emperor to convene in the celebration of the traditions that authorized their social and political status. Through the display of power, Qianlong intended to “communicate” to his audiences that the elegance, the enjoyment, and the honor bestowed upon them was all his doing, and that their privilege was inevitably entitled to the political fortunes of his imperium.

Unquestionably, the Chinese three-tiered stage was an effective instrument of political power that Qianlong used to affirm his legitimacy and influence. Its rhetorical purpose was intrinsic to the splendor characterizing the gala performance. As an ultimate “playwright,” Qianlong regarded his adapted plays as literary accomplishments and a means of propaganda celebrating the existing political order. He was primarily interested in artistic achievement, while dramatizing significant cultural realities of his era, particularly the conceptualization of his emperorship.

Five grand plays performed in the three-tiered stage dramatized possible worlds in which the role of the Qianlong emperor was central to the development of the plays and the political philosophy informing it. The intermarriage between religion and the secular theater emphasizes Qianlong’s political power. The function of theater as a demonstration of political power is especially apparent when one considers the cultural and political context in which dramatic plays were written and performed. In the case of the three-

tiered stage, we have learned the control that Qianlong, as both a sponsor and censor, exercised over the written texts and their production. What he wanted to instruct his subjects consisted of Confucian loyalty to one's emperor, Confucian filiality to one's father, Buddhist filial devotion to one's mother, acquiesce of tributary nations to the Qing empire, and ultimately the conclusive aspects of his self-representation. These elements were included in five adapted grand plays under his commission.

To us as an audience from different time and space, Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion is a concrete "monument" of the long-lost Qing empire. It described a theatrical architecture that resulted from the way Qianlong communicated with his subjects through its construction and thus used it as an expression of his sovereign power as Universal King. It plays a symbolic role in the politico-cultural site of China. It thus symbolizes the glorification of the Qing empire on the one hand, and represents "sinocentrism" of the Qianlong court on the other. The layout of Chinese three-tiered stage was a carefully constructed microcosm of the Qing empire. Situated as it was in Manchu homeland, and established after the Qing had expanded its boundaries, the statements made by this three-tiered stage was especially focused on the cultural identity of the Manchus vis-à-vis their neighbors and subjects, the Han Chinese, Mongols, Tibetans, and Uyghurs. Hence, this grand theater was a place where the Manchu, Mongolian, Han Chinese, Tibetan, and also European spheres overlapped.

The last gala performance at the three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion took place to celebrate the imperial wedding of the last emperor Puyi in 1922—thirty-three plays presented from the third to fifth days of the twelfth lunar month (Wang, 1937: 99).

According to Zhu Jiajin, this was the first time in many years that the grand theater had been the scene of such a brilliant gathering. It was the last time, too, that all the guests arrived in full court dress as if the days of the Manchu empire had not ended a decade before. (1999: 54). The enchantment of the Pleasant Sound Pavilion has long since vanished. Its interior design and scenery have faded. Its orchestra is the whining sound of cold drafts sweeping across the dusty, deserted stages. What has been left behind is simply its renovated theatrical architecture with five signs addressing to us, as I have explained in Chapter Two. Reading from the Fortune Stage downward to the Longevity Stage, first three signs read “the Pleasant Sound Pavilion,” “Leading harmony and cheering peace,” “Heaven proclaims happiness,” together with the other two paralleled sentences, stating:

Motion and quietude harmonize pure sound; wise water and benevolent mountain follow what they meet.

Spring and autumn are full of auspicious days; phoenix song and luan dance suit their occasion.

Thus Chinese three-tiered stage Pleasant Sound Pavilion was like a small world of the Qing empire, whereas the world of the Qing empire was like a gigantic three-tiered stage, in which Qianlong was the ultimate performer, as the saying goes: “The stage is a small world while the world is a big stage.”

Suggestions for Further Research

This study merely touches upon the surface of the rich, vast field of Chinese court theater during the Qianlong reign. Indeed certain issues that have only been researched and analyzed in this study could very well provide the basis of several studies in their own right.

I would like to encourage other researchers to explore the aspects of the Qing court theater—particularly in regard its historical and literary features. For instance, they could take upon one of the following research endeavors:

- A survey of the Qing court theater
- An analysis of the Qing court theater and its influence upon the public theater during that era
- A comparison between original novels and adapted versions of five grand plays

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สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย



APPENDICES

สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

APPENDIX A

LIST OF TWENTY-FIVE COURT THEATERS UNDER COMMISSION OF THE QIANLONG EMPEROR

Source: Qiu Huiying 丘慧瑩. *Qianlong shiqi xiqu huodong yanjiu* 乾隆時期戲曲活動研究 [Study of dramatic activities during the Qianlong reign]. Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 2000.

1. Inner Court

1.1 Three-tiered Stage in the Longevity Peaceful Palace (Shou'an Gong 壽安宮) (built in the Qianlong period, no longer extant)

1.2 The Pleasant Sound Pavilion Stage (Changyin Ge) in the courtyard of the Palace of Living Out My Years in Peace (Ningshou Gong) (built in the Qianlong period, still existing)

1.3 Stage in the courtyard in the Imbided Fragrance Studio (Shufang Zhai 漱芳齋) in the Double Splendor Palace (Chonghua Gong 重華宮) (built in the Qianlong period and still existing)

1.4 In-court stage named the Wind Elegance Existence (Fengya Cun 風雅存) in the Imbided Fragrance Studio (built in the Qianlong period and still existing)

1.5 In-court stage named the Retiring from Hard Work Studio (Juanqin Zhai 倦勤齋) in the Peaceful Longevity Palace (built in the Qianlong period and still existing)

2. Old Summer Palace (Yuanming Yuan 圓明園)
 - 2.1 Three-tiered Stage in the Mutual Pleasure Garden (Tongle Yuan 同樂園) (built in the Qianlong period, no longer extant)
 - 2.2 Yichun Garden Stage 綺春園 (no longer extant)
 - 2.3 Stage near the Blossom Spring Hall (Fuchun Tang 敷春堂) (no longer extant)
3. In-court stage named the Listening to Oriole Hall (Tingli Guan 聽鸚館) in the Summer Palace (Yihe Yuan 頤和園) (originally was in the Qingqi Garden 清漪園 in the Qianlong period, still existing)
4. Western Garden in Beijing (Xi Yuan 西苑)
 - 4.1 In-court stage in the Bright Orchid Harmony Garden (Qing Lanhua Yun Yuan 晴欄花韻園) at the eastern side of the Ripples Hall in the North Sea (Beihai Yilan Tang 北海漪瀾堂) (with a stele written by the Qianlong emperor)
 - 4.2 In-pond stage named the Pure Harmony Studio (Chunyi Zhai Shuichi 純一齋水池) in the middle of the South Sea (Nan Hai 南海). It is also called “Water Seat” (*Shui Zuo* 水座) (with a stele written by the Kangxi emperor)
5. Stage in front of the Augustness Hall (Jiayin Tang 嘉蔭堂) of the Shengjing Imperial Palace 盛京故宮 (built in the Qianlong period, still existing)
6. The Jehol Summer Palace (Rehe Xingong 熱河行宮)
 - 6.1 Three-tiered Stage the Clear Sound Pavilion (Qingyin Ge 清音閣) in the Fortune Longevity Garden (Fushou Yuan 福壽園) (built in the Qianlong period, no longer extant)

6.2 The Smoky Wave Transmitting Pleasance Stage (*Yanpo Zhishuang Xitai*

煙波致爽戲臺)

6.3 Stage named One-layered Cloud (*Yipian Yun* 一片雲) in the Wishful Island

(*Ruyi Zhou* 如意洲) (partly existing)

7. The Cloud Mountain Tranquility Verandah Stage (*Yunshan Liaolang* 雲山寥廓) in the

Zhang Sanying imperial traveling lodge (*Zhang Sanying Xinggong* 張三營行宮)

8. The Tranquil Residence in Mountain Lodge Stage (*Jingzu Shanzhuang* 靜居山庄) in

the Panshan imperial traveling lodge (*Panshan Xinggong* 盤山行宮)

9. Stage in the Heavenly Tranquility Temple imperial traveling lodge (*Tianning Si*

Xinggong 天寧寺行宮) (built in the twenty-first year of the Qianlong reign (1757))

10. Stage in the Lofty Autumn Temple imperial traveling lodge (*Gaomin Si Xinggong* 高

昱寺行宮)

11. Stage in the Double Tranquility Temple imperial traveling lodge (*Chongning Si*

Xinggong 重寧寺行宮) (built in the forty-eighth year of the Qianlong reign (1784))

12. Stage in Suzhou Official Residence imperial traveling lodge (*Suzhou Fu Xinggong* 蘇

州府行宮)

13. Stage in Longtan imperial traveling lodge (*Longtan Xinggong* 龍潭行宮)

14. Stage in Jiangning imperial traveling lodge (*Jiangning Xinggong* 江寧行宮)

15. Stage in Hangzhou imperial traveling lodge (*Hangzhou Xinggong* 杭州行宮)

16. Stage in West Lake imperial traveling lodge (*Xihu Xinggong* 西湖行宮) (built in the

twenty-first year of the Qianlong reign (1757))

APPENDIX B

LIST OF CHARACTERS IN FIVE COURT PLAYS IN AN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Source: Walters, D. *Chinese mythology: An encyclopedia of myth and legend*. London: Diamond Books, 1992.

The Shengping Baofa or The Precious Raft of the Peaceful Times:

1. *A Xiuluo* 阿修羅 is one of the gods of Heavenly Dragons of Eight Departments (*Tianlong Babu* 天龍八部). He is a mighty god who is good at fighting.
2. *Bai Longma* 白龍馬 or White Dragon Horse is one of the four heroic animal disciples, who protect and accompany Monk Xuan Zang. The White Dragon was punished by the Jade Emperor. Because he ate Monk Xuan Zang's white horse, so he was subdued by Sun Wukong and was changed into the White Dragon Horse for the monk to ride on the way.
3. *Baodi* 寶地 or the Precious Earth is a name of the Buddhist god who resides and protects the earth.
4. Chen Guangrui 陳光蕊, a man of Donghai 東海, is a top scholar and a father of Monk Xuan Zang. In one episode he and his wife Yin Shi (Née Yin) 殷氏 were attacked by two bandits (one is Liu Hong 劉洪) on the way to serve his new official position. Fortunately Chen was rescued by Dragon King and later stayed in his Crystal Palace (*Shuijing Gong* 水晶宮). But Yin Shi, who was pregnant at the time, was abducted by these bandits and

undeniably remarried to Liu Hong. As soon as she delivered her baby boy, he was deserted into the river. Fortunately, Crimson Immortal (*Danxia Chanshi* 丹霞禪師) of the Golden Mountain Monastery (*Jinshan Si* 金山寺) saved and adopted this child, who later became Monk Xuan Zang. Eighteen years after Crimson Immortal revealed the truth to Monk Xuan Zang. He then went to Hongzhou 洪州 to search for his mother. Eventually, Chen Guangrui, Yin Shi and Monk Xuan Zang reunited. Liu Hong was accused of an attempt murder of Chen Guangrui and was sentenced to death.

5. *Diyong Furen* 地湧夫人 or Springing-from-the-Earth Lady is one of the demonesses in the Female Nation (*Nüren Guo* 女人國). She is also known as the White Mouse Spirit (*Baishu Jing* 白鼠精) or Half Guanyin Bodhisattva (*Banjie Guanyin* 半截觀音). She resided in the Bottomless Grotto (*Wudi Dong* 無底洞). Because she stealthily ate fragrant flowers and precious candles which belonged to Tathagata, she was captured by Heavenly King Li and was punished by being banished to a lower realm. She then acknowledged the Heavenly King Li as godfather. Conjuring up a host of demons to create trouble in the Bottomless Grotto, she forced Monk Xuan Zang to marry her but was later captured by Sun Wukong and Nezha.

6. *Heifeng Shanxiong* 黑風山熊 or Mountain Bear of the Black Wind Grotto is one of the important demon characters in this play. He was originally a black bear that lived in the Black Wind Grotto. After having cultivated for several years, he became a demon good at transformations and fighting. During Monk Xuan Zang's pilgrimage, the bear stole a precious Buddhist cassock (*jiasha* 袈裟) that Tathagata gave to Monk Xuan Zang. Sun Wukong then fought with the bear for several times. Unfortunately, he could not take it

back. Sun Wukong then asked for Guanyin Bodhisattva's help. She then pretended to give the bear an immortal cinnabar, which revealed the bear's true identity. Monk Xuan Zang then asked for his cassock back from him. Eventually, the bear became a god guarding the Luoja Mountain (*Luoja Shan* 落伽山).

7. *Hufa Shen* 護法神 or *Gods of Protecting Law*. In Buddhism there are eight Gods of Protecting Law who reside in eight directions of the Buddhist realm.

8. *Huangpao Lang* 黃袍郎 or *Huangpao Guai* 黃袍怪 or Yellow-Robed Monster was once God of the Grand Wood Wolf Constellation (*Kuimu Lang* 奎木狼) in the Twenty-Eight Constellations (*Ershiba Su* 二十八宿). Secretly descending to the human world, he became a demon king of the Wave Moon Cave (*Poyue Dong* 潑月洞) in the Wanzi Mountain (*Wanzi Shan* 碗子山) harming local people. He is always described with a yellow face. In a famous episode when Monk Xuanzang dismissed Sun Wukong for having struck the White Bone Demon (*Baigu Jing* 白骨精) three times, the subordinates of the Yellow-Robed Monster captured Monk Xuan Zang. Wukong went up to the Heaven and found out that the monster was transformed from the star of Kui (*Kui Xing* 奎星) that descended onto the earth, Wukong eventually captured the monster.

9. Hui An is a second son of Heavenly King Li's (*Li Tianwang* 李天王), a commander of the Heavenly court. His other name is Mu Cha 木叉. Later he became one of Guanyin Bodhisattva's disciples.

10. *Jin Chanzi* 金蟬子 or Golden Cicada refers to Monk Xuan Zang. According to the legend, Monk Xuan Zang was a reincarnation of the Golden Cicada, the second disciple

of Buddha. Due to his ignorance to Buddhist sutras and disrespect to the Great Law, he was punished and descended to the human realm. Later his reincarnated form cultivated and became a monk named Xuan Zang, who was a disciple of a monk named Law Enlightenment (*Faming Heshang* 法明和尚).

11. *Jia Louluo* 迦樓羅 is one of the gods of Heavenly Dragons of Eight Departments. He is depicted as an enormous fabulous bird with gold wings. Each wing is decorated with splendid ornaments. His cry sounds sorrowful. He is fond of eating dragons. Each day he can consume one giant dragon and five hundred small ones. However, eventually all dragons that he had eaten poisoned him.

12. *Jie di* 揭帝 or *Jie di* 揭諦 or *Gaté* is one of the well-known protective spirits in Buddhism.

13. *Jinguang Shengmu* 金光聖母 or Golden Light Goddess is another important Taoist goddess. She is associated with the metal element in Taoist philosophy. In Chinese mythology, she is also known as Goddess of Lightning (*Dian Mu* 電母), who is in charge of striking the lightning. She is normally depicted as a goddess wearing a red robe and white pants and holding mirrors in both hands. Her appearance is elegant and majestic. She is a head of the Golden Light Army (*Jinguang Zhen* 金光陣).

14. *Jinjiao Dawang* 金角大王 or Golden-Horned Great King is one of the demons in the Lotus Cave (*Lianhua Dong* 蓮花洞). Originally he was a boy who looked after the gold stove of Lord Laozi. Guanyin Bodhisattva borrowed him and transformed him into a demon to test Monk Xuan Zang and his disciples. Sun Wukong later put him into the Jade Clean Vase (*Yujing Ping* 玉淨瓶).

15. *Jin Naluo* 緊那羅 is one of the gods of Heavenly Dragons of Eight Departments.

He is depicted with a horn on his head. He is good at singing and dancing, thus a god of music.

16. Lord Laozi 老君 was a philosopher and forerunner of Taoism. In a famous scene when Sun Wukong stole the immortality pills of Lord Laozi during revolt against Heaven. When Lord Laozi tried to capture Sun Wukong, Lord Laozi threw down his diamond bracelet from Heaven to knock down Wukong. Then Lord Laozi put Wukong in the Eight Trigrams Furnace. As a result, however, Wukong developed his piercing eyes.

17. *Li Shan Laomu* 黎山老母, *Li Shan Lao* 驪山姥 or *Li Shan Laomu* 驪山老母: Old Goddess of Mountain Li or Old Goddess of Black Horse Mountain is considered one of the respectable Taoist goddess. According to the mythology, she was a daughter of the Heaven who lived between the Yin 殷 and the Zhou 周 dynasties.

18. *Longnü* 龍女 refers to *Long Gongzhu* 龍公主 or Dragon Princess. She is a daughter of Dragon King (*Long Wang* 龍王). According to the legend, she is married with Little White Horse (*Xiao Bai Long* 小白龍).

19. *Ma* 馬, *Zhao* 趙, *Wen* 溫, *Guan* 關 or Lord Ma, Lord Zhao, Lord Wen and Lord Guan are four great heavenly lords who followed Heaven King Li to the Flowers and Fruits Mountain to capture Sun Wukong. However, they were defeated. Later they invited Tathagata to subdue Wukong with magic arts. Among the four lords, Lord Ma was the head of the group.

20. *Mo Houluo jia* 摩睺羅迦 is one of the gods of Heavenly Dragons of Eight Departments. He is depicted as a python god with a human body and a snake head.

21. *Niehe Longwang* 涅河龍王 or Dragon King of the Nie River is a Dragon King who controls the Nie River (present-day in the Wuxiang 武鄉 district in Shanxi 山西 province).

22. *Nazha* 哪吒 or Ne Zha was Heavenly King Li's third son. He was also one of Tathagata's disciples. He is always depicted wearing a child's hairstyle and lotus-shaped armor and wielding a powerful ring with his feet on fire-wheels. According to the legend, when Ne Zha was born, his left hand appeared a "Na" character, thus the name Ne Zha. Later he followed his father Heavenly King Li on a punitive expedition against Sun Wukong who revolted against the heaven but was defeated. When the Jade Emperor sent troops from heaven to capture Sun Wukong who had returned to the Flowers and Fruit Mountain (*Huaguo Shan* 花果山) after making havoc in the Heavenly Palace, Ne Zha fought with Wukong but was defeated by him again.

23. *Niumo Wang* 牛魔王 or Bull Demon King is Iron Fan Princess's husband and Red Baby's (*Hong Haizi* 紅孩子) father. He is also known as the Great Power King (*Da Li Wang* 大力王). He is also a sworn brother of Sun Wukong. He resided in the Water Curtain Grotto (*Shuilian Dong* 水簾洞). After Wukong entitled himself the Great Sage Equaling Heaven (*Qitian Dasheng* 齊天大聖), the Bull Demon King called himself the Great Sage Matching Heaven (*Pingtian Dasheng* 平天大聖) as suggested by Wukong. Later he discarded Iron Fan Princess and married Jade Princess (*Yu Nü* 玉女).

24. *Qianda Po* 乾達婆 or Old Lady Qianda is one of the gods of Heavenly Dragons of Eight Departments. According to the legend, she was born from fragrant air. She is a kind

of god who does not like drinking wine and eating meat. She is fond of nourishing fragrant air.

25. *Qianli Yan* 千里眼 or A Thousand-Eyed God is one of the great gods in the heavenly Buddhist realm. He is depicted having protruding eyes beaming with golden light.

26. *Renshenguo* 人參果 or Manfruit: The manfruit contains a magical power. According to the legend, it took 3000 years to bloom, 3000 years to produce the fruit, and another 3000 years to ripe. Only 30 fruit were formed each 10,000 years. Its shape was like a newborn baby, complete with limbs. Anyone whose destiny allowed him smell one would live for 360 years. And anyone ate it, he would live for 47,000 years.

27. *Sha Heshang* 沙和尚 or Monk Sha. His Buddhist name was Wujing 悟淨. He was originally a general in the Heaven. Once he became very furious and destroyed a valuable vase. He was punished by the Jade Emperor, who had him stroked 800 times with a rod and exiled to earth, where he was to be reincarnated as a terrible man-eating Sand Demon. There he lived in a river with sandy waters. Every seven days a sword would be sent from heaven to stab him 100 times in the chest before flying off. Sha Wujing's appearance was rather horrifying. He had a red beard and his head was partially bald and often wore a necklace consisting of skulls. He used the weapon he had in heaven, namely a staff with on either end. Later, Guanyin Bodhisattva came searching for powerful bodyguards in preparation of Monk Xuan Zang's journey. She recruited Wujing in exchange for some relief from his suffering. She then converted him and gave him his current name, Sha Wujing. His surname "Sha" means "Sand", while his Buddhist name Wujing means "Awakened to Purity" or "Aware of Purity". Finally, he was instructed to wait for a monk who would call for him.

28. *Sha Jieluo Longwang* 沙竭羅龍王 or Dragon King named Sha Jieluo is one of the gods of Heavenly Dragons of Eight Departments. According to the legend, he was born from a dragon's artery. Since childhood, he was fond of reading classic books. He possessed merciful heart and benevolence. He loved his people like his own sons. Later he became one of the heavenly gods. Heavenly Dragons of Eight Departments are regarded non-humanlike gods (*Ren Fei Ren* 人非人). They consist of eight different gods. In addition to Dragon King, there are Heaven (*Tian* 天), Yaksa, Old Lady Qianda, A Xiuluo, Jia Louluo, Jin Naluo, and Mo Houluo jia.

29. *Shunfeng Er* 順風耳 or An Obedient-Eared God is one of the great gods in the heavenly Buddhist realm. He is depicted having large ears.

30. *Si Da Jin Gang* 四大金剛 or Four Great Golden Courage Gods consist of Golden Courage God of Abundant Law of Great Supernatural Power (*Shentong Guangda Bofa Jingang* 神通廣大潑法金剛) who resides in the Mysterious Demon Cliff (*Mimo Yan* 秘魔岩) at the Wutai Mountain 五台山; Golden Courage God of Victory of Unmeasurable Law Power (*Fali Wuliang Shengzhi Jingang* 法力無量勝至金剛) who resides in the Clear Cold Grotto (*Qingliang Dong* 清涼洞) at the E'Mei Mountain 峨眉山; Golden Courage God of Grand Power of Pilusha Gate (*Pilu Sha Men Dali Jingang* 毗盧沙門大力金剛) who resides in the Rubbing Ear Cliff (*Mo'e Yan* 摩耳崖) at the Sumeru Mountain (*Xumi Shan* 須彌山); and Golden Courage God of Eternal Stay of Benevolent Venerable King (*Buhuai Zunwang Yongzhu Jingang* 不壞尊王永住金剛) who resides in the Kunlun Mountain 崑崙山.

31. *Sihai Longwang* 四海龍王 or Dragon Kings of Four Seas are the divine rulers of the four seas (each sea corresponds to one of the cardinal directions). Although Dragon Kings appear in their true forms as dragons, they have the ability to transform into human form. The Dragon Kings live in crystal palaces guarded by shrimp soldiers and crab generals. Besides ruling over the aquatic life, the Dragon Kings also manipulate clouds and rain. When enraged, they can flood cities. Dragon Kings of Four Seas consist of Dragon of the East (*Ao Guang* 敖廣), Dragon of the South (*Ao Qin* 敖欽), Dragon of the West (*Ao Run* 敖閏), Dragon of the North (*Ao Shun* 敖順). Among the four, Dragon King of the Eastern Sea is said to have the largest territory.

32. Sun Wuneng 孫悟能: Wuneng is a Buddhist name of Pigsy Zhu Bajie 豬八戒. He is a big-faced disciple of Monk Xuan Zang. According to the legend, Marshal Tian Peng 天蓬, who drank wine to seduce the moon maiden, was sentenced to exile in the mortal world by the Jade Emperor, and was mistakenly reborn from the womb of pig. Guanyin Bodhisattva accepted him as a follower of Buddhism. Subdued by Sun Wukong, he joined Wukong to escort Monk Xuan Zang in the pilgrimage for Buddhist scriptures. Still retaining his worldly desires, the pig has an appealingly naïve and foolish appearance.

33. *Tieshan Gongzhu* 鐵扇公主 or Iron Fan Princess, also known as daughter of Luo Sha 羅刹, is one of the most malicious demonesses who seduces Monk Xuan Zang in the *Journey to the West*. She is portrayed bewitching and seductive. She is the Bull Demon King's wife. Iron Fan Princess lived in the Plaintain Grotto (*Bajiao Dong* 芭蕉洞) in the Azure Cloud Mountain (*Cuiyun Shan* 翠云山). Her personal weapons were a three-inch sword and a plaintain fan. In the *Journey to the West*, the jealous Princess set the Flaming

Mountain (*Huoyan Shan* 火焰山) afire to block Monk Xuan Zang's pilgrimage. So Monk Xuan Zang and his disciples could not penetrate the flames. Sun Wukong then procured a magical plantain fan from Iron Fan Princess and waved it 49 times, causing heavy rains to extinguish the fire.

34. *Tuota Tianwang* 托塔天王 or God of Supporting Pagoda. Originally God of Supporting Pagoda had a last name Li 李 and name Jing 靖. He was also known as Heavenly King Li (*Li Tian Wang* 李天王). He was a commander of the heavenly court. He had three sons. His eldest son's name was Jin Zha 金吒, second son Mu Zha 木吒, who became a disciple of Guanyin Bodhisattva, and third son Ne Zha. Later God of Supporting Pagoda was sent by the Jade Emperor to lead the soldiers from heaven to go on two punitive expeditions against Sun Wukong who had caused trouble in the Heavenly Palace but was defeated twice. With the help of Tathagata, God of Supporting Pagoda later subdued Sun Wukong.

35. *Wei Tuo* 韋馱 here refers to *Wei Tuotian* 韋馱天, one of the gods of Heavenly Dragons of Eight Departments. He is also known as a god of war.

36. *Xu Jia* 徐甲 is a Taoist god that usually comes in a pair with Yin Xi to accompany Lord Laozi. Xu Jia used to be a carriage driver of Lord Laozi. According to the legend, Lord Laozi used to lend his money to Xu Jia every day which accumulating upto 7.2 million taels of silver. However, Xu Jia did not have money to return his master. He, together with Yin Xi, then went to see Lord Laozi to beg for his mercy. Lord Laozi then punished him by casting a spell on him. Consequently, Xu Jia transformed to be a dry

bone. Once Xu Jia admitted his mistake, Lord Laozi transformed him back to his original self. Later Xu Jia cultivated his merits and became a Taoist god.

37. *Ye Cha Ren Fei Ren* 夜叉人非人 or Nonhumanlike Yaksa is one of the gods of Heavenly Dragons of Eight Departments. He is a god who eats ghosts and demons. There are three kinds of Yaksa, namely one who resides on the earth, one who resides in the sky, and one who resides in the Heaven.

38. *Yinjiao Dawang* 銀角大王 or Silver-Horned Great King is another demon in the Lotus Cave. Originally he was a boy looking after the silver stove of Lord Laozi. Like the Golden-Horned Great King, Guanyin Bodhisattva borrowed him and transformed him into a demon to test Monk Xuan Zang and his disciples. Sun Wukong later put him into a gourd.

39. *Yin Xi* 尹喜 is another Taoist god that usually comes in a pair with Xu Jia to accompany Lord Laozi. According to the legend, Yin Xi was a philosopher who lived during the Spring and Autumn period. He was specialized in astronomy and physiognomy. Later he cultivated his merits and became Lord Laozi's disciple. Eventually he was worshipped as a Taoist god.

40. *Zhao Rong* 昭容 or Luminous Appearance Consort is the sixth rank consort among nineteen ranks during the Tang dynasty. These nineteen ranks of consorts are *Hui Fei* 惠妃, *Shu Fei* 淑妃, *De Fei* 德妃, *Xian Fei* 賢妃, *Zhao Yi* 昭儀, *Zhao Rong* 昭容, *Zhao Yuan* 昭媛, *Xiu Yi* 修儀, *Xiu Rong* 修容, *Xiu Yuan* 修媛, *Chong Yi* 充儀, *Chong Rong* 充容, *Chong Yuan* 充媛, *Xie Hao* 婕妤, *Mei Ren* 美人, *Cai Ren* 才人, *Bao Lin* 寶林, *Yu Nü* 御女, and *Cai Nü* 彩女 respectively.

The *Quanshan Jinke* or *A Golden Ledger for the Promotion of Kindness*:

1. *Ba Manwang* 八蠻王 are eight barbarian kings. They consist of King of Korea (*Chaoxian Guowang* 朝鮮國王), King of Vietnam (*Annan Guowang* 安南國王), King of Ryukyu Islands (*Liuqiu Guowang* 琉球國王), King of Japan (*Riben Guowang* 日本國王), King of Western Ocean (foreign country) (*Xiyang Guowang* 西洋國王), King of Khamil (a town in Sinkiang) (*Hami Guowang* 哈密國王), King of Dutch (or foreigners in general) (*Hongmao Guowang* 紅毛國王), and King of Siam (*Xianluo Guowang* 暹羅國王).

2. Fu Luobu 傅羅卜 is the male protagonist of the story. He is a son of Fu Xiang and Née Liu. Before he went to the Hades to rescue his mother, he was bestowed a Buddhist name Mu Jian Lian by Buddha.

3. Fu Xiang 傅相 is Fu Luobu's father.

4. Née Liu 劉氏 is Fu Luobu's mother.

5. Yi Li 益利 is Fu Luobu's servant.

The *Dingzhi Chunqiu* or *The Annals of the Three Kingdoms*:

1. *A'nan Jiaye* 阿難迦叶 or Sakyamuni is the sage of the Sakyas, a Buddhist–Lamaist god. He is the historical Buddha whose color is golden and attribute is a bowl.

2. *Babu Tianlong* 八部天龍 or Heavenly Dragons of Eight Realms: They are the eight protecting spirits of Buddhism.

3. *Bi qiu ni* 比丘尼 or Bhiksuni is a term to call a female Buddhist disciple; while a male disciple is called Bhiksu.

4. *Di Ya* 地啞 or the Earthly Mute and *Tian Long* 天聾 or the Heavenly Deaf are two other gods in the heavenly realm that usually come in a pair to accompany Lord Wenchang.

5. Diao Chan was one of the Four Beauties of ancient China. She was said to have been born in AD 169. In the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* she assisted in a plot by the official Wang Yun 王允 to persuade the warrior Lü Bu to kill his godfather, Dong Zhuo 董卓. She did this by becoming Dong Zhuo's concubine but also Lü Bu's mistress, then manipulating the two through their jealousy. Lü Bu had to escape shortly after killing Dong Zhuo and he lost a battle to Dong Zhuo's generals. However, he did meet up with Diao Chan once more. During the ploy to make Lü Bu kill Dong Zhuo, Diao Chan did fall in love with Lü Bu. Diao Chan died of illness several years later.

Guan Yu or Lord Guan was a General of the State of Shu. He became an associate of Liu Bei and his trusted commander. But he eventually was defeated by Sun Quan's forces and executed. After he passed away, he was appointed to be “Great Emperor of Subduing Demons” (*Fumo dadi* 伏魔大帝).

6. *Kuixing* 魁星 or *Chief Dipper Star* is the chief star of the Dipper, worshipped as god of literature.

7. Lü Bu was a military general and minor warlord during the late Eastern Han Dynasty and Three Kingdoms period. He was a master in horse riding, archery, and armed combat, and thus known as the Flying General.

8. *Shiba Luohan* 十八羅漢 or *Eighteen Indian Arhats*: They are eighteen Buddhists who have attained nirvana. Eighteen Indian Arhats consist of Protecting Pagoda Arhat (*Tuota Luohan* 托塔羅漢), Searching Arhat (*Tanshou Luohan* 探手羅漢), Crossing River Arhat (*Guojiang Luohan* 過江羅漢), Plaintain Arhat (*Bajiao Luohan* 芭蕉羅漢), Calm Seat Arhat (*Jingzuo Luohan* 靜座羅漢), Riding Elephant Arhat (*Qixiang Luohan* 騎象羅漢), Guarding Gate Arhat (*Kanmen Luohan* 看門羅漢), Descending Dragon Arhat (*Jianglong Luohan* 降龍羅漢), Holding Alms Bowl Arhat (*Jubo Luohan* 舉鉢羅漢), Sack Arhat (*Budai Luohan* 布袋羅漢), Long Eyebrow Arhat (*Changmei Luohan* 長眉羅漢), Cheerful Arhat (*Kaixin Luohan* 開心羅漢), Congratulatory Arhat (*Xiqing Luohan* 喜慶羅漢), Picking Ear Arhat (*Wa'er Luohan* 挖耳羅漢), Smiling Lion Arhat (*Xiaoshi Luohan* 笑獅羅漢), Subduing Tiger Arhat (*Fuhu Luohan* 伏虎羅漢), Profound Thought Arhat (*Chensi Luohan* 沉思羅漢), and Riding Deer Arhat (*Qilu Luohan* 騎鹿羅漢).

9. *Shiba Xianzhen* 十八仙真: Eighteen heavenly spirits here should refer to eighteen guardians (*Jia Lan* 伽藍) in Buddhism. They are namely Beautiful Sound (*Mei Yin* 美音), Pure Sound (*Fan Yin* 梵音), Heavenly Drum (*Tian Gu* 天鼓), Admiring Marvel (*Tan Miao* 嘆妙), Admiring Beauty (*Tan Mei* 嘆美), Polishing Marvel (*Mo Miao* 摩妙), Thunder Sound (*Lei Yin* 雷音), Master's Disciple (*Shi Zi* 師子), Marvelous Admiration (*Miao Tan* 妙嘆), Pure Echoe (*Fan Xiang* 梵響), Human Voice (*Ren Yin* 人音), Buddhist Servant (*Fo Nu* 佛奴), Eulogizing Morality (*Song De* 頌德), Broad Eyes (*Guang Mu* 廣

目), Marvelous Eyes (*Miao Yan* 妙眼), Profound Hearing (*Che Ting* 徹聽), Profound Eyesight (*Che Shi* 徹視), and Extensive Eyesight (*Bian Shi* 遍視).

10. *Tianwang* 天王 or Heavenly kings are regarded as protective spirits in different realms of Buddhist heaven.

11. *Wenchang Dijun* 文昌帝君 or *Red-Robed Wenchang*, Lord Wenchang is one of the Taoist gods. According to the legend, he used to be the sixth Dipper star. Like Lord Zitong, Lord Wenchang is also in charge of recording good and bad deeds of human beings as well as rewarding and punishing them.

12. Zhang Fei was an oath brother to Liu Bei. He was famous for his strength and might. He was one of the five tiger generals. Later he was killed by two of his subordinates on his way to Jiangzhou.

13. Zhuge Liang was a Taoist scholar also known as Wo Long 臥龍, or Sleeping Dragon. He was also a master of politics, strategy, and astronomy. He was recommended to Liu Bei and later became a key advisor of the Shu kingdom.

The *Zhongyi Xuantu* or *A Diagram of the Stars of Loyalty and Righteousness*:

1. Bai Shizhong 白時中 is a loyal general of the Song court.

2. Cai Jing 蔡京 is a wicked minister of the Song Court.

3. Fu Cha 傅察 is a loyal general of the Song court.

4. Gan Libu 幹離不 is a loyal general of the Jin court.

5. Gao Qiu 高俅 is a wicked minister of the Song Court.
6. Gao Lian 高廉 is a wicked minister of the Song Court.
7. Han Zong 韓綜 is a loyal general of the Song court.
8. He Guan 何灌 is a loyal general of the Song court.
9. He Ji 何薊 is a loyal general of the Song court.
10. He Tao 何濤, is a wicked minister of the Song Court.
11. Lei Yanxing 雷彥興 is a loyal general of the Song court.
12. Li Bangyan 李邦彥 is a loyal general of the Song court.
13. Li Gang 李綱 is a loyal general of the Song court.
14. Li Ruoshui 李若水 is a loyal general of the Song court.
15. Liu He 劉合 is a loyal general of the Song court.
16. Nian Mohe 粘莫和 is a loyal general of the Jin court.
17. *Pixi* 鼉 is the River God figured as a tortoise and used as a base for heavy stone tablets.
18. Song Jiang 宋江 is a leader of the 108 heroes of Liang Mountain Marsh.
19. Marshal Su Yuanjing 宿元景 is a loyal general of the Song court.
20. Tong Guan 童貫 is a wicked minister of the Song Court.

21. Wang Jin 王進 is a wicked minister of the Song Court.
22. Yang Jian 楊戩 is a wicked minister of the Song Court.
23. Zhang Bofen 張伯奮 is a loyal general of the Song court.
24. Zhang Shuye 張叔夜 is a loyal general of the Song court.
25. Zhang Zhongxiong 張仲熊 is a loyal general of the Song court.
26. Zhu Mian 朱覲 is a wicked minister of the Song Court.

The Zhaodai Xiaoshao or The Flute Music of the Prosperous Era:

1. *Beiyue Dadi* 北岳大帝 or King of the North Mountain Peak is one of the five kings of the mountain peaks located in the heaven. He is also known as Great King of Peaceful Heaven Black Sage of the Heng Mountain in the North Mountain Peak (*Beiyue Hengshan Antian Xuansheng Dadi* 北岳恒山安天玄聖大帝). Other four mountain kings are Great King of Heavenly Equivalence Benevolent Sage of the Tai Mountain in the East Mountain Peak (*Dongyue Taishan Qitian Rensheng Dadi* 东岳泰山天齊仁聖大帝), Great King of Controlling Heaven Luminous Sage of the Heng Mountain in the South Mountain Peak (*Nanyue Hengshan Sitian Zhaosheng Dadi* 南岳衡山司天昭聖大帝), Great King of Central Heaven Sacred Sage of the Song Mountain in the Central Mountain Peak (*Zhongyue Songshan Zhongtian Chongsheng Dadi* 中岳嵩山中天崇聖大帝), and Great

King of Golden Heaven Wishful Sage of the Hua Mountain in the West Mountain Peak

(*Xiyue Huashan Jintian Yuansheng Dadi* 西岳華山金天願聖大帝).

2. *Ershiba Su* 二十八宿 or Twenty-Eight Constellations consist of Horn Wood Dragon (*Jiao Mu Jiao* 角木蛟), Domineering Gold Dragon (*Kang Jin Long* 亢金龍), Foundation Earth Fox (*Di Tu He* 氏土貉), House Sun Rabbit (*Fang Ri Tu* 房日兔), Heart Moon Fox (*Xin Yue Hu* 心月狐), Tail Fire Tiger (*Wei Huo Hu* 尾火虎), Sieve Water Leopard (*Ji Shui Bao* 箕水豹), Dipper Wood Unicorn (*Dou Mu Xie* 斗木獬), Ox Gold Ox (*Niu Jin Niu* 牛金牛), Woman Earth Bat (*Nu Tu Fu* 女土蝠), Abstract Sun Rat (*Xu Ri Shu* 虛日鼠), Lofty Moon Swallow (*Wei Yue Yan* 危月燕), Room Fire Pig (*Wu Huo Zhu* 室火猪), Wall Water Ape (*Bi Shui Yuan* 壁水猿), Stride Wood Wolf (*Kui Mu Lang* 奎木狼), Wear Metal Dog (*Lou Jin Gou* 婁金狗), Stomach Earth Pheasant (*Wei Tu Zhi* 胃土雉), Pleiades Sun Rooster (*Mao Ri Ji* 昴日雞), Complete Moon Crow (*Bi Yue Wu* 畢月烏), Mouth Fire Monkey (*Zui Huo Hou* 觜火猴), Counseling Water Ape (*Shen Shui Yuan* 參水猿), Well Wood Wild Dog (*Jing Mu Han* 井木犴), Ghost Gold Goat (*Gui Jin Yang* 鬼金羊), Willow Earth River Deer (*Liu Tu Zhang* 柳土獐), Star Sun Horse (*Xing Ri Ma* 星日馬), Expanding Moon Deer (*Zhang Yue Lu* 張月鹿), Wing Fire Snake (*Yi Huo She* 翼火蛇), and Carriage Water Earthworm (*Zhen Shui Yin* 軫水蚓) respectively.

3. *Huangjin Jun* 黃巾軍 or Yellow Turban Army refers to rebellious citizens who formed a troop fighting against the government. This term has been used since the Eastern Han dynasty. In the Northern Song dynasty, it refers to Fang La Rebellion (*Fang La Qiyi* 方腊

起義). In this case Fang La led rebellions in Jiangdong 江東 and in Zhejiang 浙江 province.

4. *Jin Tong* 金童 or Golden Lad and *Yu Nü* 玉女 or Jade Maiden: They both are normally depicted to accompany Taoist Spirit named Dark Lord of the North (*Zhenwu Dadi* 真烏大帝). Both are said to help Dark Lord of the North to record the good and bad actions of the people in the world.

5. *Jiu Xiao* 九曜 or Nine Brightness Constellations consist of Gold Constellation (*Jin Xing* 金星), Wood Constellation (*Mu Xing* 木星), Water Constellation (*Shui Xing* 水星), Fire Constellation (*Huo Xing* 火星), Earth Constellation (*Tu Xing* 土星), Eclipse (*Shi Xing* 蚀星), Comet (*Ji Du Xing* 計都星 or *Sao Xing* 彗星), Purple Constellation (*Zi Xing* 紫星), and Sudden Constellation (*Yue Bo Xing* 月孛星).

6. *Liu Ding Liu Jia* 六丁六甲 or *Six Civil Attendants and Six Military Attendants*: Six civil attendants serve the Jade Goddess of Yin realm (*Yinshen Yunu* 陰神玉女). They are Ding Mao God named Sima Qing (*Ding Mao Shen Sima Qing* 丁卯神司馬卿), Ding Si God named Cui Juqing (*Ding Si Shen Cui Juqing* 丁巳神崔巨卿), Ding Wei God named Shi Shutong (*Ding Wei Shen Shi Shutong* 丁未神石叔通), Ding You God named Cang Wengong (*Ding You Shen Cang Wengong* 丁酉神臧文公), Ding Hai God named Zhang Wentong (*Ding Hai Shen Zhang Wentong* 丁亥神張文通), and Ding Chou God named Zhou Ziyu (*Ding Chou Shen Zhao Ziyu* 丁丑神趙子玉).

Six military attendants serve the Jade God of Yang realm (*Yangshen Yunan* 陽神玉男). They are Jia Zi God named Wang Wenqing (*Jia Zi Shen Wang Wenqing* 甲子神王文卿), Jia Shu God named Zhan Zijiang (*Jia Shu Shen Zhan Zijiang* 甲戌神展子江), Jia Shen God named Yi Wenchang (*Jia Shen Shen Yi Wenchang* 甲申神扈文長), Jia Wu God named Wei Yuqing (*Jia Wu Shen Wei Yuqing* 甲午神衛玉卿), Jia Chen God Meng Feiqing (*Jia Chen Shen Meng Feiqing* 甲辰神孟非卿), and Jia Yin God named Ming Wenzhang (*Jia Yin Shen Ming Wenzhang* 甲寅神明文章).

7. Pan Renmei 潘仁美 is a wicked minister character of the Song court. Pan Renmei character was modeled after a legendary Pan Mei 潘美. In the story of *Generals of the Yang Family*, Pan Renmei is portrayed as an evil general. However, in Chinese history Pan Mei was a loyal minister.

8. *Santai Beidou* 三台北斗 or the Dipper of the Third Rank is the third dipper among seven constellations in the north direction. He is also known as the Third-Ranked Dipper of Constellation Lord of Recording Real Man (*Beidou Disan Zhenren Lucun Xingjun* 北斗第三真人祿存星君), or Heavenly Armillary Sphere (*Tian Ji* 天玑). He is in charge of recording good and bad deeds of human beings and judging their behaviors.

9. *Santou Liubi* 三頭六臂 or A Three-Headed, Six-Limbed character refers to the Supreme General of Fairyland (*Tianpeng Yuanshuai* 天蓬元帥), one of the great gods in the central heavenly palace. He is also called “Pure Lord of Fairyland” (*Tianpeng*

Zhenjun 天蓬真君). Originally his surname was Ka 卞 and name Zhuang 庄.

According to Chinese mythology, he is said to have three heads and six limbs, each carry different weapons like axe, rope, arrow, bow, sword, and halberd. He is usually depicted having a 50-*zhang*-tall body, red hair, wearing a black robe, a black cap, and a gold armor. Normally he leads a troop of thirty-six thousand soldiers.

10. *San Xiao* 三霄 or Three Heavenly Realms consist of First Heavenly Supreme God (*Yuanshi Tianzun* 元始天尊), Divine Precious Supreme God (*Lingbao Tianzun* 靈寶天尊 or *Taishang Daojun* 太上道君), and Morality Supreme God (*Daode Tianzun* 道德天尊 or *Taishang Laojun* 太上老君).

11. *Sitou Babi* 四頭八臂 or A Four-Headed, Eight-Limbed character refers to the Supreme General for Heavenly Protection (*Tianyou Yuanshuai* 天佑元帥), one of the great gods in the central heavenly palace. According to Chinese mythology, he is said to have four heads and eight limbs, each carry various weapons like a gold clock striking to create a thunder and lightning. He is normally depicted having a 1000-*chi*-tall body, a large square mouth full of iron teeth.

12. Xie Jinwu is portrayed as a wicked minister in this drama. The plot of this play deals with how Xie Jinwu was ordered by his father-in-law, Wang Qinruo 王欽若, an evil minister of the Song court, to destroy a residence of the Yang family in the capital named the Clear Wind Bureau (*Qingfeng Fu* 清風府). During that time, Yang the Sixth or Yang Jing, who just returned to the capital, was captured. An associate of Yang Jing named

Jiao Zan 焦贊 then killed Xie Jinwu and his family. Eventually he and Yang Jing were accused of murder and sentenced to be beheaded. Fortunately, Yang Jing's mother-in-law rescued Yang Jing and Jiao Zan. Later another associate of Yang Jing named Meng Liang 孟良 captured Wang Qinruo and exposed his true identity. Wang Qinruo was killed in the end. And the Yang family regained their fame and renovated the Clear Wind Bureau. *Xing Chen* 星辰 or Morning Constellation is one of the gods in the central heavenly palace (*Zhongyang Tiangong* 中央天宮).

13. Yang Gao 楊高 or Yang the Third (*San Lang* 三郎) is the third son among seven sons of Yang Jiye. He was considered one of the seven brothers in the third generation of the Yang family.

14. Yang Jing 楊景 or Yang the Sixth is the sixth son among seven sons of Yang Jiye. He was considered one of the seven brothers in the third generation of the Yang family.

15. Yang Jiye 楊繼業 is the father of the Yang family and the loyal general of the Song court. He later committed suicide by smashing his head against the Li Ling tombstone after he lost the battle with the Liao.

16. Yang Tai 楊泰 or Yang the Eldest (*Da Lang* 大郎) the oldest son among seven sons of Yang Jiye. He is considered one of the seven brothers in the third generation of the Yang family.

17. Yang Xi 楊希 or Yang the Seventh (*Qi Lang* 七郎) is the youngest son among seven sons of Yang Jiye. He was considered one of the seven brothers in the third generation of the Yang family.
18. Yang Zheng 楊政 or Yang the Second (*Er Lang* 二郎) is the second son among seven sons of Yang Jiye. He was considered one of the seven brothers in the third generation of the Yang family.
19. Yang Zongxian 楊宗仙 is a name employed in the Peking Opera. He is also known as a legendary Yang Zongmian 楊宗勉 who was one of seven brothers of the fourth generation in the Yang family. He is a son of Yang Yanzhao 楊延昭.
20. *Yuhuang Dadi* 玉皇大帝 or Jade Emperor, also known informally by children and commoners as Heaven Grandpa (*Tian Gong* 天公) and known formally as the Pure August Jade Emperor or August Personage of Jade (*Yuhuang Shangdi* 玉皇上帝 or *Yuhuang Dadi* 玉皇大帝), is the ruler of the Heaven according to Chinese mythology and among the most important gods of the Chinese Daoist pantheon. From the ninth century, he was also the patron deity of the Chinese imperial family. The Jade Emperor is thought to rule over Heaven and Earth just as the earthly emperors once ruled over China. He and his court are part of a celestial bureaucracy ruling over every aspect of human and animal life.
21. *Zhongli Daoren* 鍾離道人 or Taoist Zhong Li, also known as Zhong Liquan 鐘離權 or Han Zhongli 漢鐘離, is one of the eight immortals in Chinese mythology. He is

described as fat and bald with a long beard. He was fond of alchemy, and became a hermit to pursue the esoteric. His peace came to an end when one particularly esoteric experiment caused an explosion in his dwelling. The walls shook and a large crack appeared, exposing to view a hidden container. This contained a good dosage of the elixir of life. This more than compensated for the damage. Zhong Liquan then became an immortal. He is usually shown with a fan. He represents the military man.

22. *Zitong Dijun* 梓潼帝君 or Lord Zitong is one of Taoist gods. According to the legend, he was a general whose surname was Zhang 張 and name Yazi 亞子. He resided in the Seven Songs Mountain (*Qiqu Shan* 七曲山) in Sichuan. He died in a battlefield. Later people built a temple to worship him, which is now called the Inheriting Heaven Monastery (*Chengtian Guan* 承天觀) located in the Wu Mountain 吳山. He and Lord Wenchang (*Wenchang Dijun* 文昌帝君) are two Taoist gods in charge of recording good and bad deeds of human beings as well as rewarding and punishing them.

23. *Ziwei Dadi* 紫微大帝 or the Purple Great God is one of the supreme gods among six gods in the heavenly realm. He is in charge of the north direction.

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY OF COURT PLAY ENTITLED

“ASCENDANT PEACE IN THE FOUR SEAS”

Source: Ye Xiaoqing. Ascendant peace in the four seas: Tributary drama and the Macartney mission of 1793. *Late Imperial China* 26 (December 2005): 89- 113.

Ye Xiaoqing has summarized the court play, entitled *Ascendant Peace in the Four Seas* (*Sihai Shengping* 四海生平) as followed:

“In this drama, Wenchang 文昌 leads a group of star spirits (*xing shen* 星神) to come to the “divine land” to offer their congratulations to the emperor. On the way they passed over the sea, where they witnessed a mirage, an auspicious sign from heaven. The play begins with the cloud spirits holding banners (representing auspicious clouds) coming out from the Longevity Stage (the lowest tier of the three-tiered stage), where they perform a dance. Then the Golden Lad and the Jade Maiden introduce Wenchang, who leads sixteen star spirits onto the stage from the Platform of the Immortals (the mezzanine stage at the back side of the lowest stage).

Wenchang then announces, “Our compliments to the Sage Son of Heaven, most benevolent and most filial, knower of all things and moral relations, inheritor of the great cause of the most illustrious virtue of King Wen and the achievements of King Wu! The ten thousand states look up in admiration at your magnificent achievements, achiever of the great plan of weaving the strands of heaven and earth. Within the four seas all acclaim your name and teachings, your benevolent influence reaches as far as the eight

deserts, your kindness reaches as deep as the four extremities. There is no violent wind or excessive rain in the skies, and no waves rising from the sea. And so the country of *Ying-ji-li* 英咭喇 (England), gazing in admiration at your imperial majesty, sincerely presents its tribute to the court. That country is several times further away than Vietnam. Some people have traveled from there with great difficulty for several years, and yet they have not always succeeded in reaching the shores of China. The boats of this tribute mission, however, departed in the first month of the New Year, and by the sixth month they had already reached the area around the capital. Oh Sage Son of Heaven, this is due to your benevolence and virtue reaching heaven, so the ten thousand spiritual essences are obedient to your will. If they did not have some supernatural being to escort them, how could their voyage be so swift and easy? This will be recorded in historical records. It is a marvel the likes of which has not been seen since ancient times. Today the time has come for them to present their tributary memorial (*biaowen* 表文) and be rewarded with a banquet. It is a great ceremony, joining heaven and man in celebration. This humble spirit (*xiao shen* 小神) also bathes in this glory, so I am hurrying to the court audience, together with the star spirits, to the divine land to offer our congratulations.”

All the characters on the stage then join in similar praise of the emperor. In the meanwhile, a large cloud-tray (*yunban* 雲板) was lowered from the heaven-well (*tianjing* 天井). Wenchang, the Golden Lad, and the Jade Maiden ascend the cloud tray. At this point, a mirage (*haishi* 海市) appears on the stage, and from the earth-pits (*dijing* 地井)

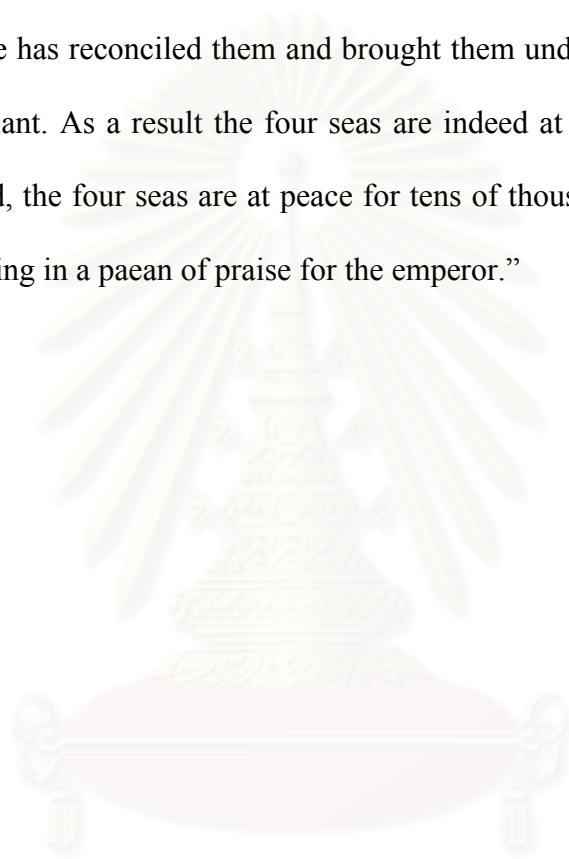
all sorts of sea creatures suddenly appear: shrimp spirits (*xiajing* 蝦精), fish spirits, turtle spirits, snake spirits, clam spirits, and so on.

Wenchang sings, “Ya! Suddenly waves arise one after the other. Surging, turbulent waves. What is the reason for that? The guard retainers are calling on the dragon kings of the four seas to attend an audience.” The four dragon kings come onto the stage from the earth pits. Wenchang says, “We are going to the divine land to offer our congratulations. As we pass by the seashore, water creatures appear. Why are they in our way?”

The dragon kings reply, “The sea has been calm for many years. However, there is a stubborn and stupid giant turtle whose huffing and puffing is causing these winds and waves. This is the reason the clouds (on which we travel) have been obstructed.” Wenchang replies, “After the English envoys have presented their tributary memorial and have finished the banquet bestowed on them, within a few days they will receive ceremonial gifts from the emperor and will be sent back. So the sea route should be clear of danger, and you sea spirits should protect them so that they can enjoy a smooth and secure voyage cross the sea and return to their country safely. Only in this way will they gaze up in awe at the benevolent and virtuous heart of our sage ruler. How can we tolerate these fish vermin raising wind and making waves?”

The star spirits then start fighting with the sea monsters. More sea monsters appear from the earth pit, including the giant turtle himself. On Wenchang’s side, the thunder, lightning, wind, rain, tide and river spirits lend their assistance. A battle ensues,

the characters leaping up and down the three levels of the stage. In the end Wenchang and his allies achieve victory over the giant turtle and the various sea monsters. A huge treasure urn appears on the stage. On the urn there are four characters: SI HAI SHENG PING (ascendant peace in the four seas). Wenchang says, “The Sage Son of Heaven in his extreme virtue has reconciled them and brought them under control, and the hundred spirits are compliant. As a result the four seas are indeed at peace.” The various spirits chime in, “Indeed, the four seas are at peace for tens of thousands of years!” The drama ends with all joining in a paean of praise for the emperor.”



สถาบันวิทยบริการ
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

BIOGRAPHY

Petcharapiruch, Sasiporn was born on October 27, 1975 in Bangkok, Thailand. In 1997 she received her B.A. in Chinese from the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University with First Honors and Gold Medal. Since 1998 she has been granted the Anandamahidol Scholarship, of which HRH Princess Sirindhorn is a chairman. She earned her M.A. in Chinese literature from Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts in 2000. From 2000 to 2006 she enrolled in the Department of East Asian Languages and Culture at University of California, Berkeley. She received her Ph.D. candidacy at University of California, Berkeley in 2004. Since 2006 she has transferred all credits and registered as a student in the Department of Comparative Literature, the Faculty of Arts at Chulalongkorn University. She currently works as a part-time instructor teaching Chinese at Sirindhorn Chinese Language and Culture Center, Mae Fah Luang University.

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