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## Baiben Zhang (Hundred Volumes Zhang): A Scribal Publisher in Nineteenth-century Beijing

Zhenzhen Lu

*Bates College, zlu2@bates.edu*

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# manuscript cultures

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#### Editors

Prof. Dr Michael Friedrich  
 Universität Hamburg  
 Asien-Afrika-Institut  
 Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1 / Flügel Ost  
 D-20146 Hamburg  
 Tel. no. +49 (0)40 42838 7127  
 Fax no. +49 (0)40 42838 4899  
[michael.friedrich@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:michael.friedrich@uni-hamburg.de)

Prof. Dr Jörg H. Quenzer  
 Universität Hamburg  
 Asien-Afrika-Institut  
 Edmund-Siemers-Allee 1 / Flügel Ost  
 D-20146 Hamburg  
 Tel. no. +49 (0)40 42838 7203  
 Fax no. +49 (0)40 42838 6200  
[joerg.quenzer@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:joerg.quenzer@uni-hamburg.de)

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#### Editorial Office

Dr Irina Wandrey  
 Universität Hamburg  
 Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures  
 Warburgstraße 26  
 D-20354 Hamburg  
 Tel. No.: +49 40 42838 - 9420  
 Fax No.: +49 40 42838 - 4899  
[irina.wandrey@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:irina.wandrey@uni-hamburg.de)

#### Layout

Miriam Gerdes

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A 'letter from Heaven', ID no. I (33 J) 176/1963, Berlin, Museum of European Cultures (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Museum Europäischer Kulturen). Written in Ernstroda near Gotha, Thuringia, and dated 1776. The original sheet of paper was folded once, making four pages. Here we can see p. 1 with the title 'Himmels= Brief, welchen, Gott selber geschrieben' ('Letter from Heaven, which God Himself has written') and page 4. The written bifolium was then folded four times. Two words were visible on the two outer sides resulting from this: 'Gottes Brief' ('God's letter'), shown on p. 4. The upper part of the letter has been cropped and part of the illumination has been cut off. Photography: Christian Krug.

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## Article

# Baiben Zhang (Hundred Volumes Zhang): A Scribal Publisher in Nineteenth-century Beijing\*

Zhenzhen Lu | Lewiston, Maine

## Introduction

The scholarly narrative of literary production in late imperial China is dominated by print. Studies of publishing from the Song (960–1279) to the Qing (1644–1911) dynasty have shed much light on the social and cultural impacts of commercial woodblock printing, and have mapped the book trade from both the sides of production and reception.<sup>1</sup> Yet the enduring market for handwritten books, and their copious production outside of elite circles, remains little inspected.<sup>2</sup> This article

explores a special corner in this field: the commercial production of entertainment literature by a prolific scribal publisher of late Qing Beijing.<sup>3</sup>

Early twentieth-century collectors in the Beijing area noticed the name ‘Baiben Zhang’ (Hundred Volumes Zhang) because it was ubiquitous. The shop, which produced manuscripts of texts spanning the range of northern genres of popular performing literature, belonged to a milieu of establishments in the city specialized in producing handwritten books of stories and songs for sale. Among the vast collection of books gathered by the Academia Sinica from the Beijing area during the Republican era (1912–1949), there were thousands of manuscripts produced by Baiben Zhang.<sup>4</sup> There is also evidence to suggest that, among the two major collections of performance literature from Qing Beijing that became dispersed in the mid-1920s, the Chewangfu 車王府 (Mansion of Prince Che) and Shengpingshu 昇平署 (Court Theatrical Bureau) collections, significant numbers of manuscripts originally came from

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The manuscripts examined in this article contain a mix of ‘simplified’ and ‘traditional’ characters. In citing text from them, I have generally tried to replicate the forms; as the subject of orthographic variation is not the focus of this study, however, I have not replicated every variant, but have in a few cases employed the closest approximations available.

<sup>1</sup> Woodblock printing, which was present in East Asia by the early eighth century, was the dominant form of printing in China well into the nineteenth century. On the book trade in late imperial China, see Brook 1999, Brokaw 2007, Brokaw and Chow 2005, Chia 2002, Chow 2004 and Ōki 2004, among others; see also, Ding 2002, He 2013, Hegel 1998, Hsiao 2007, Keulemans 2014, Lowry 2005, Son 2018, Widmer 2006 and Wan 2020 among the growing number of studies by literary scholars that engage intensely with print culture. Monographs in Chinese on print shops (*shufang* 書坊) include Qi 2007 and Cheng 2008. Essays in Bussotti and Drège 2015 expand the view to the large field of non-commercial printing.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph McDermott, while arguing for the ascendance of printed books over manuscripts in the Yangzi delta in the sixteenth century, emphasizes

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the lasting role of manuscript culture in facilitating access to books and its continued presence in the lives of readers (McDermott 2006, 43–82). Writing on an earlier period, Christopher Nugent discusses the market circulation of poetry manuscripts in the Tang dynasty (618–907) (Nugent 2011, 214–221).

<sup>3</sup> By ‘commercial production’ I refer to the systematic production of books for sale on the open market, which in this case can be clearly established from Baiben Zhang’s extant manuscripts, including sales catalogs. On the potential ambiguities of the term ‘commercial publisher’ in the case of print publishing, see Chia 2002, 6–7 and McDermott 2015, 112–115. I employ the term ‘entertainment literature’ to refer to a wide range of literature spanning the genres of drama and storytelling. The term has the benefit of not discriminating against social classes. I am inspired here by a conversation with Wilt Idema (6 July 2017, Leiden), who suggested the term in lieu of ‘popular literature’.

<sup>4</sup> See ‘Xumu 序目’, in Li Jiarui 1933, 5. Li recorded ‘over 3000 varieties’ (*sanqian yu zhong* 三千餘種) of Baiben Zhang manuscripts collected from the Beijing area. The term *zhong* suggests titles instead of volumes (there could be multiple volumes to a title). On the Academia Sinica collection, see note 45 and Appendix 1.

Baiben Zhang and similar outlets.<sup>5</sup> The sheer quantity of manuscripts of commercial origin from a single area should draw our attention to their social and geographic context, as well as to the handwritten mode of production that made them available to readers and collectors.

Modern notions of publishing, in Chinese as in Japanese, are informed by strong associations with printing, as suggested by the very term *chuban* 出版 ('to publish') in reference to the printing block.<sup>6</sup> But if one takes a more encompassing view of publishing as a process by which texts are made available to communities of readers, the scribal medium facilitated the propagation of a variety of literature in late imperial times.<sup>7</sup> Just as manuscripts constituted a desired medium for distributing literature

within exclusive coterie,<sup>8</sup> so handwritten copies made a variety of entertainment literature available to wider communities of readers. A recent survey of the extant corpus of youth books (*zidi shu* 子弟書), a genre of verse narrative popular in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century north China, has highlighted the overwhelming proportion of handwritten texts in this genre in comparison with printed ones, while shedding light on a niche market for this literature dominated by Beijing's scribal producers.<sup>9</sup> The findings signal a large commercial landscape for the production of manuscripts in other genres of Chinese vernacular literature as well, whose detailed terrains remain to be explored.

The shops that produced handwritten books of entertainment literature in Qing Beijing were many and varied. Probably the most scholarly attention has been given to the lending shops of the late Qing that made a business of renting books of drum ballads and court-case fiction, exclusively hand-copied and catering to daily reading.<sup>10</sup> An early study by Li Jiarui has described the rental of manuscripts at so-called 'steamed bun shops', whose exact

<sup>5</sup> The Chewangfu collection comprises a massive corpus of plays, ballads and fiction that surfaced in the second-hand book market of Republican-era Beijing, and that came into public attention when the books were acquired in large numbers by Beijing's Kongde Xuexiao 孔德學校 (a secondary school named after the French philosopher Auguste Comte) in 1925 for its library. The precise identity of 'Prince Che' remains debated among scholars. On the provenance of this corpus, see Huang 2008, 140–151; for an overview of twentieth century Chinese scholarship on it, see Miao 2002. Huang Shizhong relates that, among some 285 manuscripts from this corpus which he studied at Peking University, a number bear traces of Baiben Zhang stamps that have been washed out incompletely, and he suggests that a larger number of them originally came from Baiben Zhang and other shops (Huang 2008, 149–51). As Huang's survey is limited to one genre (*zidi shu*), just what proportion of all the manuscripts in the Chewangfu corpus has commercial origins is a subject that has yet to be investigated. The Shengpingshu was established in 1827 (after the previous Nanfu 南府) as the central institution for managing theatrical entertainment at the court, and it remained in function until 1924, when the Puyi emperor was ousted from the palace. At this time, the bureau's large collection of manuscripts also became dispersed. Among Shengpingshu manuscripts in the present collection of Beijing's Palace Museum (merely a part of the vast original collection of the bureau), there are 26 items bearing Baiben Zhang stamps and 53 additional ones likely of the same provenance, judging from the layout of their title pages (see photo reprints in *Gugong zhenben congkan* vols 697–699). The proportion of manuscripts of commercial origin in this corpus likewise needs investigation. On the history of Shengpingshu, see Ye 2012, 15–56; on the dispersal of the manuscripts in the 1920s and subsequent efforts to gather them, see Xiong 2011.

<sup>6</sup> See Kornicki 2006, 23–24.

<sup>7</sup> See Love 1993, 35–37, on 'publish' in the sense of 'making public' (restoring an older meaning of the term), which is central to his conceptualization of 'scribal publication' in seventeenth-century England. In his pioneering work, Love categorized scribal publication into three kinds – 'author publication,' 'entrepreneurial publication' ('copying manuscripts for sale by agents other than the author') and 'user publication' (non-commercial replications) (Love 1987; 1993). In this scheme, the entrepreneurial productions that are the focus of this study make up only one form of scribal publication. Love does not make a case for quantity, but the large numbers of extant manuscripts from Baiben Zhang provide food for thought on this topic as well.

While late imperial China differs markedly from early modern England, the concept of scribal publication is useful for thinking about its varied spheres of manuscript production and circulation. In a study of scribal and print publication in twelfth-century China, de Weerd 2016 utilizes Love's terms to discuss 'author publication' by the scholar Wang Mingqing 王明清 (b. 1127), 'user publication' by his minor official friends, and the special case of scribal publication by the court for its own collections (de Weerd makes a case for the relatively quick acceptance of print in twelfth-century China compared with seventeenth-century England, given the different political statuses and relationships between manuscript and print media in the two cases; she points out importantly that in twelfth-century China, manuscript was not an alternative to print). In the later, Qing period, well-known works of literature such as *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *Strange Tales of Liao-zhai* circulated for decades in manuscript copies before being printed and continued to do so after print publication. On local and rural levels, copying and circulating materials by hand continued to constitute an important part of participation in the literate community, and served various social functions. The emphasis here on a 'community of readers' still excludes the vast amount of handwritten materials that were part of everyday reading and writing, produced to generate merit or served administrative functions, among other things.

<sup>8</sup> Hegel 1998, 157–162.

<sup>9</sup> Lu 2018. It remains to be seen whether the youth book was a special case. For comparison, one might look at the drum ballad (*guci* 鼓詞), another popular northern genre for which Beijing was a major center of production in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While the texts did circulate locally through a variety of manuscripts, in this case their print production across varied locations (in the form of woodblock imprints and lithographs) was more substantial, judging by numbers of extant titles (see Wan 2020, 22, 34–38, 49–53).

<sup>10</sup> On Beijing's lending shops, see Li 1936; Zhang 1996b, 448–451; Sahar 1998, 125; Pan 1999; Cui 2017, 231–241; and Wan 2020, 36–37. There were also lending shops that rented out hand-copied novels in Fuzhou and Canton in the early 1800s; see McDermott 2006, 96–98.

nature remains contested; dates on extant manuscripts suggest that they were a popular phenomenon of the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> But lending shops were far from the only kind of scribal businesses that existed in late Qing Beijing. From around the same period, many other venues offered manuscripts of entertainment literature for sale. The impressive variety of their offerings can be discerned from extant books of popular songs, prosimetric stories, and various regional operas bearing the stamps of these establishments.<sup>12</sup> Together they corroborate the existence of a thriving market for handwritten books nourished by the vibrant cultures of musical and theatrical entertainment in nineteenth-century Beijing.

In this study, the term ‘scribal publisher’ is used to describe Baiben Zhang and other venues that sourced, produced, and sold handwritten copies of entertainment literature, which can be ascertained on the basis of evidence from their manuscript products. By being responsible for this entire chain of activities, they were veritable publishers, whose range of products suggest not one but multiple clienteles with varying needs, purchasing powers, and interests in the entertainment offerings of Qing Beijing. In the sense that their books were produced through organized scribal production, they were also ‘copying houses’. While I also refer to them as ‘shops’, in recognition of their commercial nature, they are to be distinguished from bookshops that

<sup>11</sup> In his early study (1936), Li Jiarui suggests that the ‘steamed bun shops’ (in Chinese: *mantou pu* 饅頭舖, or more colloquially, *zhengguo pu* 蒸鍋舖) that rented out manuscripts of drum ballads and fiction were regular neighborhood shops that sold steamed buns. Zhang 1996b suggests rather that they were a different entity. In his account, they were shops that specialized in selling glutinous rice figurines (*jiangmi mianren* 江米麵人) of theatrical inspiration; he tells of storefronts in old times being decorated with banners inscribed with the names of opera scenes. At the door fronts, assortments of figurines clad in theatrical costumes were stuck all over the parapets on the city walls of a wooden model of the underworld city Fengdu 豐都. The model is known as a *hushi louzi* 斛食樓子 (‘house of offerings’—*hushi* refers to food for feeding the dead used in both Buddhist and Daoist rituals). The rental of manuscripts at these shops was initially a side business.

The dated manuscripts from lending shops that were described by Li Jiarui date between the years 1862 and 1908. Zhang 1996b, 449, cites a passage from *Yanshi jibi* 燕市積弊 published in the Xuantong era (1909–1911) in the *Jinghua xinbao* 京華新報 newspaper describing the popularity of lending shops, which suggests that they were still around at that time. Zhang suggests that they died out around 1926, a few years after the demise of Baiben Zhang and other shops, but provides no information on how he obtained these dates (Zhang 1996b, 451).

<sup>12</sup> Many such manuscripts can be found in the Sokodo Bunko 雙紅堂 collection in the library of the Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo 東洋文化研究所 at Tokyo University; they come from the former collection of the Japanese collector Nagasawa Kikuya 長澤規矩也 (1902–1980) (they are photo-reprinted in Huang and Ōki 2013). For a brief overview of the commercially produced manuscripts in this collection, see Huang 2011, 146–150.

solely stocked and sold books; as we will see, the sales of manuscripts took place at regular temple markets as well as at the shops. Baiben Zhang is chosen as the focus of this first study for having the richest sources in extant manuscripts and anecdotal literature; further study of the vast corpus of extant manuscripts may reveal multiple kinds of scribal enterprises and business models.

The story of Baiben Zhang is one intimately linked to a place in time. This article thus begins with portrayals of Baiben Zhang in anecdotal accounts, and the world of temple fairs with which it is remembered by contemporaries and later collectors. In the absence of dates on the manuscripts themselves, these sources help to establish the shop’s flourishing in nineteenth-century Beijing while breathing imagination into the figure of its proprietor Zhang. Proceeding from literary sources to manuscript objects, this article next presents Baiben Zhang as a full-fledged business. Stamps and catalogs provide glimpses into practices from branding and sales to scribal production; the variety of extant products points to the scribal publisher’s participation in multiple entertainment cultures. The article concludes with reflections on Baiben Zhang the shop, its business model, and the factors that contributed to its success in an age commonly perceived to be dominated by print.

#### Part 1, Baiben Zhang in anecdotal sources

At the beginning of a sales catalog, Baiben Zhang advertises its products in a plethora of entertainment genres:<sup>13</sup>

本堂專抄名班昆弋、二簧、梆子、西皮、子弟岔曲、趕板、翠岔、代牌子、梨腔、小曲、馬頭調、大鼓書詞、蓮花落、工尺字、東西兩韻子弟書、石派大本書詞。真不二價，不悞主顧。逢七逢八，在護國寺東碑亭。逢九逢十，在隆福寺西角門祖師殿。本堂寓北京西直門內大街，高井兒胡同，東小胡同，路北門。世傳四代，起首第一，四遠馳名。

This house specializes in copying [the scripts] of famous troupes performing [operas sung to the music of] *kun* and *yi*,

<sup>13</sup> The following text comes from Academia Sinica, ms Tj30-232, fols 1<sup>r</sup>–1<sup>v</sup>; the punctuation is mine. The manuscript has been rebound. The scholar Fu Xihua 傅惜華 (1907–1970) cites the same ad on the first folio of a sales catalog from Baiben Zhang entitled *Erhuang xi mulu* 二簧戲目錄 (Catalog of *erhuang* opera) in his private collection (now at the Chinese National Academy of Arts 中國藝術研究院 in Beijing) (Fu 1954a, 319). The subject of sales catalogs such as these will be discussed in detail in the next part of this article.

*erhuang, bangzi, and xipi*; the bannermen's ditties, [including] *ganban* and *cuicha*; linked tunes, lute songs, airs, port tunes, big-drum tales, the-lotus-falls, [as well as] scores, youth books of the eastern and western styles, and big books of ballads in Shi [Yukun] style.<sup>14</sup> [The manuscripts] are true to price, and not sold for less; we do not fool our customers. Every seventh and eighth day, we are at the Eastern Stele Pavilion at the Huguo Temple; every ninth and tenth day, we are at the Ancestral Master's Hall inside the Western Corner Gate of the Longfu Temple.<sup>15</sup> Our house is located north of the East Little Alley, [which extends from] the Tall Well Alley, [which shoots off] the Main Street inside Xizhi Gate. Having been in operation for four generations, we are number one in the business, and our name is known far and wide.

Here is a picture of Baiben Zhang the business, with an impressive spectrum of literature that it copied and sold. Judging by the fact that at least one of the named genres did not evolve until the nineteenth century, the catalog would date to that time or later, when many forms of drama and storytelling flourished on the stages and streets of the capital.<sup>16</sup> From extant catalogs, we know that a number of other shops similarly sold hand-copied books of songs and stories, though we know far less about them than about Baiben Zhang. The shop has left its traces not only on considerable quantities of extant manuscripts but also in a wealth of anecdotal sources: a mid nineteenth-century guidebook to Beijing, a song about a trip to a temple fair, notes by two early twentieth-century collectors, and a compilation of miscellaneous accounts of the Qing. While colored by literary imagination, these sources together attest to the shop's flourishing in the

nineteenth century and provide telling glimpses into the urban world of entertainment to which it belonged.

The specificity with which Baiben Zhang gives its address in the ad calls us to first imagine it on a map (Fig. 1a). Qing Beijing was built on the Ming city, comprised of the Inner City with the Imperial City at its center and the Outer City to its south. In the mid-seventeenth century, the new Manchu regime reorganized Beijing demographically and politically, so that the Inner City would be dominated by the bannermen populations in its service, while non-Banner populations were relocated to the Outer City.<sup>17</sup> Much of the city's commercial activity became concentrated in the areas outside the Inner City's three southern gates, and from the late seventeenth century onwards, playhouses clustered in these areas, with the neighborhood south of Xuanwu Gate in the western section of the Outer City becoming a hub of actors' homes and entertainment activities.<sup>18</sup> In close vicinity, Liulichang, with its many booksellers and publishers, emerged as a prominent center of the book trade by the late eighteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

Baiben Zhang's home near Xizhi Gate, in the northwestern corner of the Inner City (Fig. 1b, enlarged detail), was curiously distant from these sites of commercial activity, while striking for its proximity to regular gatherings of amateur performances by Inner City bannermen.<sup>20</sup> The earliest such gatherings are known to have existed in the Qianlong era (1736–1795), and these 'clubs' were important channels of entertainment in the Inner City, meeting in princely mansions and on temple grounds that afforded

<sup>14</sup> The list includes an assortment of musical genres in both drama and storytelling, as well as various types of tunes. Li 1933, which describes many of them, includes excerpts from texts contained in Baiben Zhang manuscripts. In the physical context of the books, these terms are perhaps best understood as labels or descriptions of types of products; I have seen a number of them on the title pages of manuscripts. Just how these products corresponded to performed genres will need further investigation.

<sup>15</sup> 'Every seventh and eighth day' includes the seventh, eighth, seventeenth, eighteenth, twenty-seventh, and twenty-eighth days of the month; likewise, 'every ninth and tenth day' includes six days of the month. These are the schedules of regular temple markets at the two temples.

<sup>16</sup> The 'big books of ballads in Shi Yukun style' refer to a form of prosimetric storytelling that derives its name from the famed nineteenth-century Beijing storyteller Shi Yukun 石玉昆 (to be discussed in detailed in the next section). 'Big drum tales' is another nineteenth-century genre of verse narrative. Fu dates the catalog in his collection to the end of the Qing (Fu 1954a, 321; see note 90).

<sup>17</sup> On the relocations of early Qing Beijing and the spatial segregation of the city, see Elliott 2001b, 98–105 and Naquin 2000, 289–298. On the history of the Eight Banners and Banner populations, see Elliott 2001b, 39–88.

<sup>18</sup> On the neighborhood of Xuannan 宣南 as a hub of actors' homes, see Wang Zhengyao 2014, 68–90. From the late seventeenth into the late nineteenth century, the Qing court prohibited commercial playhouses from being established in the Inner City, but attempts at regulations were in part futile; theatrical activities found their way in, and bannermen, who were prohibited from attending commercial playhouses, frequently crept out. See Goldman 2012, 69–76.

<sup>19</sup> See the articles in the special issue of *East Asian Publishing and Society* 7.2 (2017) on Liulichang and Qing book culture; also see Reed 2015. The classic study of Liulichang is Sun 1962.

<sup>20</sup> Known as *piaofang* 票房, these were meetings where aficionados of music and theater performed for each other. 'Amateur' is used here not in the sense that performers were less skilled than professional actors and storytellers, but in the sense that they were not paid: to be invited to perform was rather an honor. In this regard, the term *piaofang* is to be distinguished from its present-day connotations of commercial performance and its modern meaning as 'box office'. See Cui 2017, 243–274, which includes a discussion on amateur gatherings in modern-day Beijing.



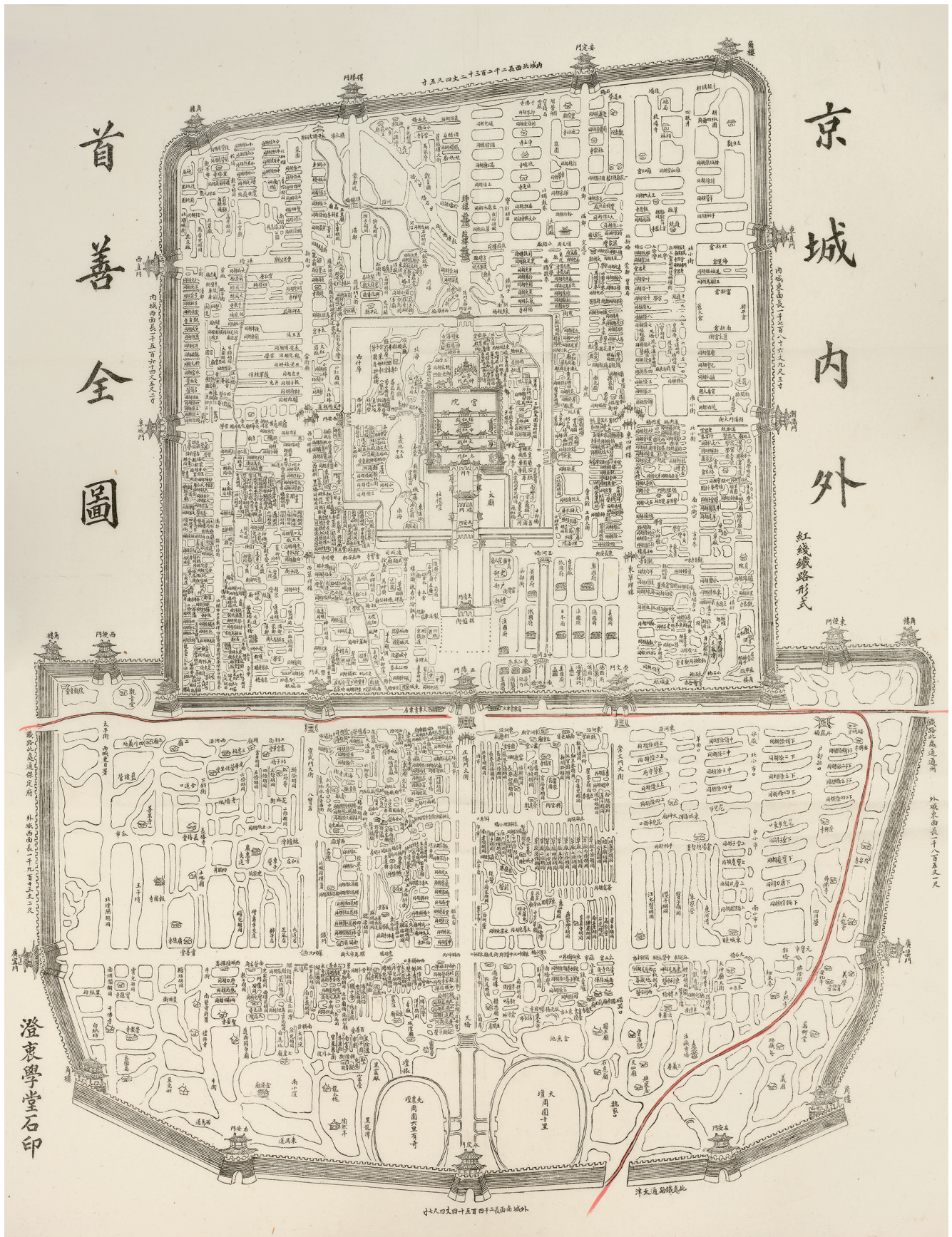


Fig. 1a: The Inner City and Outer City. Lithographed map of Beijing, early 20th century. Private collection, Hamburg. Original size: 63 x 56 cm.

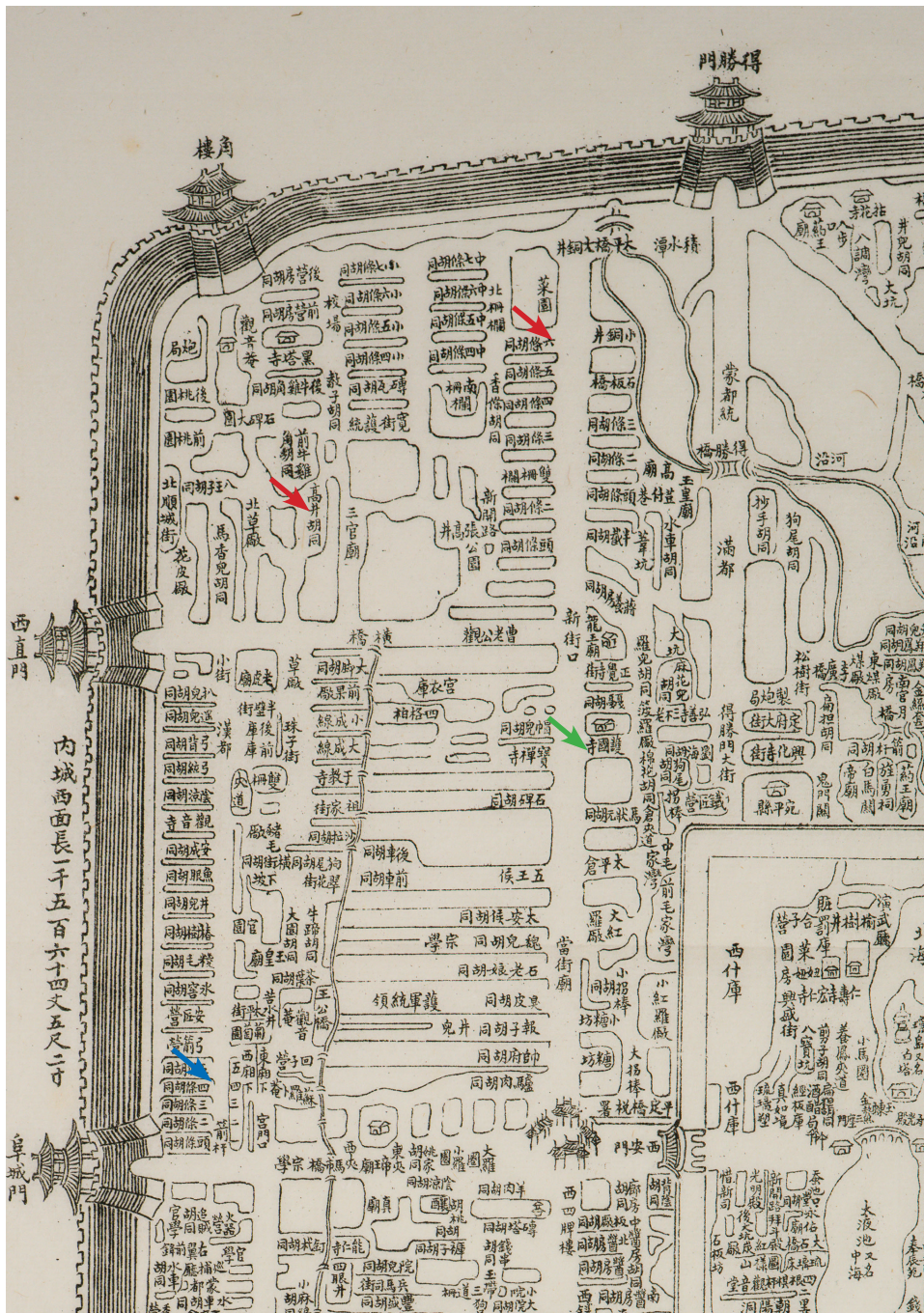


Fig. 1b: enlarged detail: Northwestern section of the Inner City. Baiben Zhang's two known addresses are marked with red arrows. Huguo Temple is marked with a green arrow. The address of another scribal publisher, Leshantang 樂善堂, is marked with a blue arrow.

privacy and protection from state surveillance. Gatherings took place around performances of eight-cornered drum songs (*bajiao gu* 八角鼓) and youth books (*zidi shu* 子弟書), popular forms of storytelling entertainment in bannermen circles, while they also increasingly included performances of scenes from plays, spurred by the popularity of commercial theater and restricted access to them in the Inner City. The theatrical activities of these clubs reached their height in

the late nineteenth century, with over a dozen new clubs having been established in the Guangxu era (1875–1908).<sup>21</sup> Gatherings took place almost entirely in the western section of the Inner City, with a major cluster in its northwestern section – in close vicinity to Baiben Zhang.

Located just south of Baiben Zhang's home, the Huguo Temple (Huguo si 護國寺) was the site of one of the most important temple markets of Qing Beijing. The location must have made it convenient for the shop to transport its products to the fairs where it regularly sold its manuscripts. Along with the Longfu Temple (Longfu si 隆福寺) in the eastern part of the city, the Huguo Temple hosted markets on regular days of the month from the mid-eighteenth century into the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>22</sup> On these occasions, which were popular outlets of commerce and entertainment for Inner City residents, people from all over mingled and all kinds of things were sold. The fairs were also important sites for the circulation of books, which as early as Ming times took place at floating markets throughout

<sup>21</sup> See Liang 2018, 14–18, which includes a map.

<sup>22</sup> On the two temples and their fairs, see Naquin 2000, 29–31, 115, 629–632; Beijing shi dongcheng qu yuanlinju 2002, 253–268; see also Wei 2018 on the Longfu Temple and the world of commerce associated with it during the Qing and Republican eras.

the city.<sup>23</sup> Being attached to the ritual calendar meant that the sales of manuscripts were part of a larger flow of commodities linked to shared cycles of cultural time and to the locality.<sup>24</sup> In anecdotal sources, Baiben Zhang is almost always remembered in connection with the fairs.

The figure of a Mr. Zhang at the temple markets who hand-copied songs for sale appears in the nostalgic reminiscences of an elderly gentleman of Beijing, Xiaolianchi Jushi 小蓮池居士 ('Gentleman of the Little Lotus Pond'), a collector of youth books at the turn of the twentieth century. The youth book was a genre of musical storytelling that flourished in Qing Beijing, associated with the city's bannermen and performed at private amateur gatherings, as well as at teahouses and other sites of entertainment.<sup>25</sup> Sometime during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as they faded from performance, the texts came to be collected by readers with great nostalgia. In a preface to a collection of songs dated 1922, Xiaolianchi jushi recalls:

[...] 則謂子弟書始自韓氏，殆無不可。先生者，嘉道間嘗游于京師東郊之青門別墅，所謂拐棒樓也者。所製曲，厥肆競為刊版。廟市有張姓，亦勾稿鈔鬻之。余兒時，都市猶不乏厥肆刊本，劇社亦間有歌之者。每一思維，青鏡年來，長安惟重桃李，此曲人間無聞久矣。

[...] Thus it can be said that the genre of the youth book originated with Mr. Han.<sup>26</sup> Sometime between the Jiaqing [1796–1820] and Daoguang reigns [1821–1850] the master

had visited the Blue Gate Mansion in the eastern suburbs of the capital, which was known as the Cane House. As for the lyrics that he composed, Liulichang's shops competed to print them. In the temple markets, there was a man of surname Zhang, who also sought out the texts, which he hand-copied and sold. When I was a boy, in the city markets there was no lack of woodblock-printed youth books from Liulichang's shops, and at theatrical gatherings they were still occasionally sung. Every so often, I think back upon those days; since I have become an old man, people in the capital have cared for nothing but sensuous music. These songs have long been lost among men.<sup>27</sup>

Mr. Zhang is remembered in connection with the songs of a bygone era, as one who hand-copied songs for sale while the shops of Liulichang competed to print them. In his time, the aging Xiaolianchi jushi was not the only one to remember the music and the books. His preface appears in an anthology of a hundred works in twenty fascicles, edited and compiled by a friend and fellow collector, Jintai Sanweishi 金臺三畏氏 ('The Thrice-Reverent One of the Golden Terrace'), another gentleman of Beijing.<sup>28</sup> In his preface, Sanweishi expresses his gratitude to Xiaolianchi Jushi for letting him copy works from his collection, and relates the fate of his own collection of youth books, which had once numbered over one hundred but had in the meantime become dispersed during the sieges on the capital in the year 1900. The present anthology, he wrote, was the result of great efforts to reclaim

<sup>23</sup> Writing in the Wanli (1573–1620) era, Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551–1602) records book markets that gathered with the schedule of the metropolitan examinations and also took place on a monthly basis at the City God's Temple in the western part of the city (see Hu 1958, 56).

<sup>24</sup> Temple markets as sites of book distribution have yet to be more fully studied. The experiences of buying books at temple fairs appear in a number of anecdotal accounts by Qing literati: in his essay from the Qianlong era on Liulichang, Li Wenzao 李文藻 (1730–1778) includes a description of booksellers at Longfu Temple (Li 1769, 31); a contemporary, Dai Lu 戴璐 (1739–1806), reminisces on the temple fairs at the Ciren Temple 慈仁寺 in the Outer City, long gone by his time, which in their glory days in the early Qing saw the likes of the great scholar-official Wang Yuyang 王漁洋, who went there regularly in search of books (see Dai 1796, 62–63). See also He Hai 1995, 45–52 and Wei 2018, 79–82 on the Longfu Temple and its book markets and print shops.

<sup>25</sup> While I employ the translation of 'youth book' for *zidi shu* 子弟書 in this article (see Elliott 2001a, 279, note 1, on this interpretation), the genre has also been translated as 'scions' tale' and 'bannermen tale' (see Goldman 2001 and Chiu 2018, respectively). Cui Yunhua suggests that the genre evolved at private amateur gatherings and was later adopted by professional performers and became more commercialized (Cui 2005, 92–97).

<sup>26</sup> The preface begins with remarks on the musical origins of the youth book genre and proceeds to the writer Han Xiaochuang 韓小窗, who is cited in a

number of youth book texts as their author. The translated passage continues in this vein ('Mr. Han' refers to Han Xiaochuang). On the works attributed to this prolific early composer of youthbooks and questions surrounding his biography, see Huang et al. 2012b, vol. 10, 4468–4479.

<sup>27</sup> Huang et al. 2012b, vol. 10, 4455. The italics are mine. The preface is signed 'On the day of the Chongyang Festival in Autumn 1922, written by the Gentleman of the Little Lotus Pond at Hanyanmao Studio, Shichahai' 壬戌之秋重陽日小蓮池居士書於什刹海漢嚴卯齋. The manuscript, *Lütang yinguan zidi shu baizhong zongmu* 綠棠吟館子弟書百種總目 (Comprehensive catalog of a hundred youth books compiled by the Poetry Studio of the Green Pear Trees), is only partially extant; it is presently held at the Capital Library of China and comes from the former collection of Wu Xiaoling 吳曉鈴 (1914–1995) (shelfmark *yi* 己 486).

<sup>28</sup> As with Xiaolianchi Jushi, the real name of Sanweishi is unknown; Sanwei is his courtesy name and Lütang yinguan 綠棠吟館 ('Poetry studio of the green pear trees') is his studio name. 'Sanwei' 三畏 comes from *Analec*s 16.8, 'Confucius said, "The gentleman has three things he stands in awe of. He stands in awe of the Mandate of Heaven, of persons in high positions, and of the words of the sages"' 君子有三畏: 畏天命, 畏大人, 畏聖人之言 (Watson 2007, 116). Jintai 金臺 ('golden terrace') here refers to Beijing. Judging by his words in the preface, Sanwei had intended that the collection be printed, but this seems to have never happened.

the works. In the ‘Fanli’ 凡例 (Editorial principles) section, Sanweishi recalls:

是種詞曲在咸、同以來，頗盛興一時，故前門外打磨廠一帶鋪肆，多有刊板出售者。此外如東城之隆福寺，西城之護國寺，有所謂百本張者，亦出售此項鈔本之書目。自庚子兵燹以後，而廠肆既相繼歇業，則百本張亦杳如黃鶴焉。...

Since the Xianfeng [1851–1861] and Tongzhi [1862–1874] reigns, this genre of songs was rather in vogue, and so many of the shops in the Damochang area outside of Qianmen had them carved and printed for sale. There was, in addition, the so-called ‘Baiben Zhang’ at the Longfu Temple in the eastern part of the city and the Huguo Temple in the western part of the city, who sold catalogs of hand-copied youth books. But ever since the sieges of the Gengzi year [1900], the shops of Liulichang shut down one after another, and Baiben Zhang was also gone like the yellow cranes ...<sup>29</sup>

This passage gives the most precise dates for Baiben Zhang in extant sources, linking the sales of manuscripts to the heyday of youth book performances in the late nineteenth century, and marking 1900 as a clear date for when it ceased. While it is ambiguous whether ‘Baiben Zhang’ refers to a person or a shop, the specificity with which Sanweishi recalls the sales catalogs suggests that he was intimately acquainted with the books. Like the account of Xiaolianchi Jushi, Sanweishi’s narrative subtly positions the manuscript-seller of the temple markets apart from the commercial print shops of the Outer City. It relates the abrupt decline of all to the fate of the city: rather than changes brought about by print technology, the reason later scholars often give for Baiben Zhang’s decline, these notes by a contemporary witness tell a different story.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Huang et al. 2012b, vol. 10, 4460. The yellow crane, associated with transcendence, is a metaphor for the irretrievable. The allusion is probably best known from the poem *Huanghelou* 黃鶴樓 (‘Yellow Crane Tower’) by Cui Hao 崔顥 (d. 754): ‘That man of old has already ridden white clouds away, / And here in this land there remains only Yellow Crane Tower. / The yellow crane, once it has gone, will never come again, / But white clouds of a thousand years go aimlessly on and on...’ (Owen 2000, 828).

<sup>30</sup> Later scholars have attributed the decline of Baiben Zhang to the advent of lithography; see Fu 1954a, 317, and Zhang 1996a, 446. Zhang dates Baiben Zhang’s closing to around 1921, but unfortunately does not give further information. Corroborating Sanwei’s account of 1900 as the date when Baiben Zhang closed shop, this year is given on the inside case covers of a series of Baiben Zhang manuscripts by their collector, signed Nahata, as the time when he had them rebound (Capital Library, *yi* 乙 448; these manuscripts are discussed in more detail in the last section of this article). The fact that by then Baiben Zhang manuscripts were clearly collector’s

Besides the reminiscences of these collectors, Baiben Zhang is mentioned in books from its own time. A lively narrative of shopping at a temple fair can be found in *Wandering through the Huguo Temple*, a youth book composed probably in the early to mid-nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup> The song, which recounts a wealthy gentleman’s wanderings through the Huguo Temple on the day of a fair, takes the reader along for a dazzling tour of the objects, foods, and performances that he sees.<sup>32</sup> There, the Zhang brothers make a curious appearance:<sup>33</sup>

至東碑亭見百本張擺着書戲本  
他翻扯了多時，望着張大把話云：  
我定抄一部施公案  
還抄一部綠牡丹，亞賽石玉昆  
張大不語扭着個臉  
又見張二在傍邊擺着泥人  
他說：這人兒眉眼兒精神兒做的真奇特  
就只是哄孩子拿在家中，一會兒工夫就稀爛無存  
張二說：石頭的也怕碰，不然咱們將鉄人鑄  
他說：哎呀呀，我可拿不起來，那麽挺沉

When [the gentleman] came to the Eastern Stele Pavilion and saw Baiben Zhang with books of tales and plays laid out, He perused them for a long time and said, looking at Zhang Da: ‘I’d like to order a copy of *The Cases of Judge Shi*, And also a copy of *The Green Peony*, just as if Shi Yukun [had told the story].’ Zhang Da did not say anything and frowned;

items suggests that they were no longer part of the circulating entertainment literature.

<sup>31</sup> The approximate date can be inferred from known biographical information about the text’s author, who is mentioned in the story itself to be Helüshi 鶴侶氏 (‘Mr. Companion to the cranes’), or Aisin Gioro Yigeng 奕賡 (1809–1848), twelfth son of Prince Zhuang 莊親王 (Mianke 綿謀, 1763–1826). On his life and other works, see Chen 2003b, 76–77, Chiu 2018, 236–257, and Huang-Deiwiks 2000, 65–66. Guan 1991, 17, dates this text to the period spanning the Daoguang (1821–1850) and Xianfeng (1851–1861) eras.

<sup>32</sup> One skillful reading has highlighted the multi-media and multi-sensory nature of this marketplace, where performances and objects were likewise commodities (Keulemans 2014, 113–124). This song has also been treated in Chiu 2019, 52–53 and 276–278; Wan 2020, 34–36.

<sup>33</sup> Several manuscripts of this work are extant, including a Baiben Zhang manuscript held at the Chinese National Academy of Arts. See Huang et al. 2012a, 427–428. The text cited below is taken from *Guang Huguo* 逛護國寺, Fu Sinian Library, ms no. T652, photo-reprinted in *Suwenxue congkan* vol. 398, 614–638 (the cited text appears on 620–621). The punctuation is mine; the line breaks are made after those in the manuscript.

Then [the gentleman] saw Zhang Er beside him, with his display of clay figurines.

[The gentleman] said: ‘These figures have such exquisite expressions!

Only, if one were to bring them home to entertain the children, They’ll be beat up into a mash in no time.’

Zhang Er replied: ‘Why, even stone would fear being smashed – lest we mold the figures from iron!’

The gentleman said: ‘My goodness, I won’t be able to pick those up, they’d be much too heavy.’

The scene vividly portrays an encounter between the gentleman and the Zhang brothers. The man’s exchanges as he wanders through the temple market show that he was a regular there, but not always welcomed by proprietors, especially as he flaunts his wealth and worldly knowledge but fails to commit to purchasing. While the scene appears as part of a literary representation, we notice two things: the manuscripts and figurines were on display at a stall of sorts and sold side by side, and the gentleman came to a decision to ‘order copies’ (*dingchao* 定抄) of specific titles after perusing books on display – possibly model books or catalogs. *The Cases of Judge Shi*, of which the gentleman wanted a copy, belonged to a group of court-case stories that was widely popular in nineteenth-century Beijing, propagated through performances, handwritten copies, and printed books.<sup>34</sup> *The Green Peony* was the title of a well-known martial arts novel that was widely printed during the same period, while the mention here of the famed Beijing storyteller Shi Yukun 石玉昆 (fl. Daoguang era, 1821–1850) would rather seem to point to a prosimetric version of the

<sup>34</sup> The cases of Judge Shi are the subject of an early court-case adventure novel with a preface dated to 1798; on extant printed edition, which all date to the nineteenth century, see Ōtsuka 1987, 169–170. The stories were also the subject of plays and prosimetric performances in the Beijing area (see Zhao 1936 and Miao 1998a, 109–110; Wan 2009, Wan 2010, and Wan 2020, which also discuss *The Green Peony*). Just what kind of text is requested by the gentleman in this scene is a topic for investigation, as is the relationship between the varied media of performance, manuscript and print in the circulation of court-case stories in the Qing. On this topic, see Blader 1977; Cui 2008; Keulemans 2014; Miao 1998a and 1998b; and especially Wan 2020.

A glimpse into the connected realms of oral and manuscript circulation can be had from a preface to the court-case novel, *The Cases of Judge Peng*: ‘The *Cases of Judge Peng* is copied all over the capital. In broad streets and shallow alleys, it is narrated everywhere as an extraordinary tale appetizing to all. Therefore there are countless storytellers performing this tale at temple fairs, with audiences packed so thickly that they form a solid wall and the listeners forget that they are tired...’ (translation from Keulemans 2014, 90; the source cited, ‘*Peng gong’an xu*’ 彭公案序 [Preface to *The Cases of Judge Peng*] by Sun Shoupeng 孫壽彭, in Ding 1996, vol. 3, 1616, comes from a 1892 imprint by Benlitang shudian 本立堂書店).

story closely related to performance.<sup>35</sup> Later in the narrative, the gentleman wanders to the stall of another bookseller, Tongletang 同樂堂 (‘House of mutual delight’), which, like Baiben Zhang, had ‘books of tales and plays’ (*shuxi ben* 書戲本) on display.<sup>36</sup> There, the proprietor presents his client with two newly composed works by Helüshi, one of which is *Wandering though the Huguo Temple*. ‘These two new tales are rather witty’ (*zhe liang hui xinshu dao huixie* 這兩回新書到談諧), pleads the proprietor eagerly.<sup>37</sup> In the marketplace of books, a story that is new and up-to-date is apparently a desirable commodity.

The floating sites of the temple fair stalls and the image of Mr. Zhang the person are likewise evoked in an expanded edition of the popular nineteenth-century guidebook, *Dumen jilüe* 都門紀略 (Records of the Capital), which introduced the sights and shops of the capital to sojourning merchants and other visitors.<sup>38</sup> An entry ‘Baiben Zhang’ appears in a section on ‘Skills’ 技藝, amid a list of curiosities ranging from tooth-pulling medicine to wrestling performances:

此人所賣者，皆是細小之物，但其樣式、材料，皆照市廛所用之大傢俱無二，能做大作小，曲盡其妙。雖為供搢紳少年之玩賞，而其心思之精巧，可謂極矣。在東西廟及廠甸等處出灘。

<sup>35</sup> Wan 2009, 10–11, points out textual affinities between the novels *The Green Peony* and *The Cases of Judge Shi*. On nineteenth-century imprints of the former, see Wan 2009, 133; the appendix in the same book lists performance-related versions of the story, including two manuscripts containing drum ballad versions. In the context of the passage, the mention of the storyteller Shi Yukun seems to suggest that the story was also transmitted in the form of a Shi-style tale, a prosimetric genre of storytelling named after him (to be discussed in more detail later in this article). Shi’s biography remains sketchy despite his legacy as a storyteller; see Keulemans 2014, 65–95, on his legacy. *Zhongguo quyi zhi* 1999, 654, gives Shi’s dates as c.1797–c.1871.

<sup>36</sup> The story divulges that the proprietor ‘newly added small pictures [in the books] in the hopes of striking it rich’ 近日他新添小畫想發財 (*Suwenxue congkan* vol. 398, 630), so he was selling illustrated books. It is not clear to me whether Tongletang’s books were hand-copied or printed.

<sup>37</sup> *Suwenxue congkan* vol. 398, 630. The other work mentioned is *The Worldly Fellow* (*Shidao ren* 時道人), which like *Wandering through the Huguo Temple* portrays a man of many pretensions; for extant versions of this text, all of which are manuscripts, see Huang et al. 2012a, 420–421.

<sup>38</sup> On *Dumen jilüe* (original preface by Yang Jingting 楊靜亭 dated 1845), which was printed numerous times in the late nineteenth century, see Naquin 2000, 464–467; Mokros 2017, 149–154. The version I have consulted is an expanded edition, entitled *Xinzheng Dumen jilüe zaji* 新增都門雜記, dated Tongzhi 4 (1865), printed by an unspecified Liulichang print shop; the line *Liulichang shufang cangban* 琉璃廠書坊藏板 (‘the blocks are kept by the print shop at Liulichang’) appears on the cover. It is digitized from the collection of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. The punctuation in the Chinese text cited below is mine.

What this person sells are all trifles, yet in style and material they are just like the full-sized furniture of the city shops; made smaller in size after the likeness of the big objects, they are utterly exquisite. Though they are for the amusement of youths from well-to-do families, utmost thought has been put into their making. They are sold on display at the Eastern and Western Temples and in the Changdian area,<sup>39</sup> among other places.

Here Mr. Zhang appears as a seller not of manuscripts, but rather of exquisite miniatures. The description of ‘youths from well-to-do families’ who purchased the objects for amusement is a particularly suggestive one. As a guidebook that boasts insider’s looks into the capital’s shops – and that thrives on its own fashioning of what is caché – its description probably contains a measure of exaggeration. At the same time, the passage reveals something about the status of the miniatures as collectibles; one may imagine the manuscripts to have had a similar status and clientele.

Still another account of Baiben Zhang can be found in the extensive anecdotal collection *Qing bai leichao* 清稗類鈔 (A categorized compendium of miscellaneous accounts from the Qing dynasty), compiled in the Republican era, which gives a lively account of Zhang the man. He is the protagonist of an entry entitled ‘Niefen 捏粉’ (Squeezing dough). The entire entry is translated below.<sup>40</sup>

近畿所傳捏粉之術。匠心獨運。鬚眉畢現。雖油畫鉛畫毛筆畫等。方之蔑如也。其法取麵粉一團。與求畫者對案坐。目不轉瞬。私自於袖底捏其形狀。捏成。取出。則面部上之一凹一凸。一紋一縷。無不纖微適合。擅此技者。光緒朝為津人張姓。張初為人鈔錄戲曲。顧記聞極博。能將各曲本互異之處。折衷改正。期於盡善而止。以是得名。津人稱之曰百本張。

自百本張之號出。而其真姓名轉隱。後改學捏粉。精其技。然性傲僻。非遇囊空爨絕。持金求之。不應也。時天津巨富首推海張五。張一日踵門往訪。乞借五千金。海張五拒之。張曰。君不應我。能無後悔乎。曰。何悔之有。張退。乃依海張五之身量長短肥瘦。捏成一形。置之通衢。而插草標於其首。曰。出賣海張五。過者驟

見之。以為真海張五也。即而視之。乃啞然失笑。詢其價值。則以五千金對。少一文不售也。海張五素以財力雄視一方。聞之。引為大辱。而又莫可如何。乃潛使門客。如數購之。而與張言和焉。張晚年目盲。偶墜地。折傷肢體。不能營舊業。遂困頓以死。

The art of ‘squeezing dough’ transmitted in recent times is a display of utmost skill. [The dough-artist can portray his subject] down to every strand of his brow and beard. Though there is oil painting, painting with pigments,<sup>41</sup> and brush painting, they are all looked down upon by him. The way it is done is as follows: he takes a ball of flour and asks the client to sit across the table from him. Without looking down for a second, he squeezes the dough into the subject’s likeness covertly under his sleeves. When he is finished and takes out the figurine, there is not a single dent and bulge, line or crease on it that does not match exactly [the subject’s] face.

In the Guangxu era, one who was adept at this was a Mr. Zhang of Tianjin. In the beginning, he had copied operas for people, and was therefore extremely knowledgeable in all manners of things. He could reconcile and correct the differences among the various librettos to the point of perfection, and got his name from this; the Tianjinese called him ‘Hundred Volumes Zhang’.

Once the name ‘Baiben Zhang’ got out, his true name became obscure. Later on he switched his profession and learned to squeeze dough. He became adept in the art, yet being proud and aloof in his nature, he would not accede to pleas with cash unless he was depleted of funds and on the brink of starvation. At the time, Hai Zhang Wu [‘loaded Zhang Wu’] was the richest among the billionaires of Tianjin, and one day Zhang deigned to visit his door, imploring to borrow five thousand cash. Hai Zhang Wu refused. Zhang said: ‘So you don’t agree. Will you really not have any regrets?’ Hai Zhang Wu replied, ‘What can there possibly be to regret?’

Zhang left, and afterward he molded into shape a figure matching the height and girth of Hai Zhang Wu, which he stood up on the main thoroughfare with a straw sign stuck on its head that said, ‘Hai Zhang Wu for sale’. Passers-by, struck by it, took it to be the real Hai Zhang Wu; upon further

<sup>39</sup> Changdian 廠甸 can refer to a particular section of the Liulichang area or to Liulichang more generally.

<sup>40</sup> Xu Ke 1917 (rpt. 1966), vol. 5, ‘Gongyi lei’ 工藝類 (Category on crafts), 44–45. I have reproduced the division of the paragraphs in the Chinese text in accordance with the reprint, but have parsed them into sections in the English translation for smoother narrative flow.

<sup>41</sup> Tentative translation of *qianhua* 鉛畫; it is not clear to me which technique it refers to and whether it comes from a Western artistic tradition (as oil painting does) or a Chinese one (as brush painting does). In premodern Chinese texts, *qian* 鉛 can refer to pigments used for the beautification of the face or for correcting documents.

examination, they would break into laughter. When asked the figure's price, Zhang would reply 'five thousand cash', and would not sell it for a dime less. Hai Zhang Wu, who had dominated the land with the power of his wealth, found this tremendously humiliating when he heard about it, but could do nothing. He secretly sent a retainer to buy the figure for the asked price and made peace with Zhang.

Zhang became blind in his old age. On one occasion, he fell and broke his limbs. Being unable to maintain his livelihood, he died in poverty.

In this account, Mr. Zhang was the protagonist of a delicious story of a humble artisan who outwitted a rich man, possessed of perfect skill in his trade yet not making obeisance to wealth and power. The story, with its colorful characters and narrative flourishes, has the flavor of hearsay rather than historical fact.<sup>42</sup> Given that in all the other sources, Baiben Zhang was located in Beijing, the compiler here most probably confused its proprietor with a contemporary of the same surname, Zhang Changlin 張長林 (courtesy name Mingshan 明山, 1826–1906) of Tianjin, who was a skilled maker of theatrical figurines. Just like the dough-artist recounted in the story, Zhang Mingshan was known to have possessed the skill of squeezing clay into the likeness of real persons while sitting across from them. His theatrical figurines were apparently collected by foreign visitors for high prices and displayed in museums; he was also said to have made 'little portraits' (*xiaozhao* 小照) for people.<sup>43</sup>

That the *Qing bai leichao* confused the two Zhangs, one from Beijing and one from Tianjin, probably has something to do with the fact that Baiben Zhang had at one point sold miniature figurines, as corroborated by the accounts in the youth book and in the guidebook *Dumen jilüe* cited earlier. The art of making theatrical figurines was popular in many

areas of China in the nineteenth century, both in Jiangnan and the north, and the existence of commercial workshops that produced both manuscripts and figurines is a topic that merits further exploration.<sup>44</sup> Like figurines, manuscripts were handmade objects; while differing in their raw materials, the two trades shared a common connection with a world of entertainment, which generated continual demand for fine, handmade, collectable things.

While the *Qing bai leichao* anecdote tells the story of a proud artisan who had utter disregard for commerce, it can also be read as an ironic comment on the power dynamics of the urban marketplace. Whatever we might make of the story and the other anecdotes before it, we can observe a few things about Baiben Zhang the business: its links to the world of theater and storytelling performance; its life connected to the temple fairs; its urban, commercial setting; and its date in the mid- to late nineteenth century. While these sources provide rich food for the imagination, in the next part of the article we examine extant manuscripts for a glimpse of the real-life operations of Baiben Zhang. They go far beyond the figure of Zhang the man, real or imagined, to reveal a full-fledged business operation.

## Part 2, The operations of a scribal publisher

Extant manuscript sources reveal Baiben Zhang to have been a leading producer in what was a highly competitive business of copying manuscripts of entertainment literature for sale. Thousands of manuscripts gathered during the Republican era, scattered among various collections in Asia today, attest to the quantity and variety of output from scribal producers of Qing Beijing.<sup>45</sup> For all their wealth, the commercial origins of

<sup>42</sup> The *Qing bai leichao*, first printed in the Republican era, was the product of a complex process of compilation. In the section on editorial principles preceding the main text, the compiler Xu Ke 徐珂 (1869–1928) divulges that its sources ranged from his personal jottings to books in his private collection, and still to newspapers, which often did not record their sources in detail. Xu further noted that, 'when it comes to what is chronicled, I do not dare to boast about the thoroughness of evidence, but have mostly made it a point that [stories] possess beginnings and endings' 凡所記載。固不敢以考證精詳自詡。要以具有本末者為多。See 'Fanli' 範例 (Editorial principles), 2–3, in Xu Ke 1917 (rpt. 1966), vol. 1.

<sup>43</sup> See Zhang Dao 張燾 1884 (rpt. 1986), 65. *Zhongguo xiqu zhi* 1999, vol. 2, 933, mentions extant figurines approximately 30 centimeters high at the Chinese National Academy of Arts in Beijing. Whether Zhang's theatrical figurines are present in overseas collections is a topic for further investigation. On the modern-day continuation of the Zhang family business, see Johnson 2015.

<sup>44</sup> Likewise, the topic of how traditional clay sculpture flourished alongside other varieties of portraiture from painting to photography merits further study. On portraiture (painting) in the Ming and Qing, see Ruitenbeek 2017.

<sup>45</sup> While the subject of collections merits a study of its own, a note is due on Beijing's special place in this history. In the 1920s and 1930s, the city was a locus of activity among China's elite, whose intense interest in the literary past outside of the canons was accompanied by active efforts to collect, on both institutional and private levels, diverse kinds of vernacular literature ranging from drama and fiction to folk songs and stories (see Hung 1985). In the collections that formed in this period, the antique book dealers of Liulichang played a major role. Baiben Zhang manuscripts were ubiquitous and appeared in many different collections. Notable figures to mention include Liu Fu 劉復 (Liu Bannong 劉半農) (1891–1934), who together with his assistant Li Jiarui 李家瑞 (1895–1975) collected thousands of manuscripts from Baiben Zhang for the Academia Sinica (see Fu 1954, 329, prefaces in Liu and Li 1932 and in Li 1933, and Wang Fansen 1998, 124–130; also see Børdahl 1999 and Zeng 2010 for general background on the collection, presently at the Fu Sinian Library at Academia Sinica in Taipei). Fu Xihua 傅惜華 (1907–1970) and Wu Xiaoling 吳曉玲 (1914–1995), both Beijing natives from a slightly later generation of scholar-collectors, privately



Fig. 2: Baiben Zhang manuscript, title page and back cover, Waseda University Library, Fūryō Bunko, *bunko* 文庫 19 F400 Z79. Baiben Zhang stamps (red and black) appear in the center of the title page. To the left, from top to bottom, the written characters indicate 'Song on opium' (the title), 'Moon over the West River' (the tune), 'Five hundred' (the price).

these manuscripts have not yet been systematically examined, while many of the books have lost their original appearance in the course of collection and preservation. With further study pending, this section of the article takes a first look into the operations of Baiben Zhang as a scribal publisher. Three aspects are examined: branding, sales, and scribal production.

### Branding

That selling manuscripts of entertainment literature was a competitive business is attested by the variety of stamps branding the manuscript products. Stamping was a common

collected many Baiben Zhang manuscripts (their collections are kept today at the Chinese National Academy of Arts and the Capital Library of China, respectively). Finally, among Japanese sojourners to China in the Republican era, the notable Nagasawa Kikuya 長澤規矩也 (1902–1980) collected many Baiben Zhang manuscripts (they are presently at the Sokodo Bunko at Tokyo University and the Nagasawa Bunko at Kansai University; on Nagasawa's collection, see Huang 2013). A full count has yet to be made of how many Baiben Zhang manuscripts are extant. Besides the libraries mentioned above, manuscripts are also held at the Fūryō Bunko at Waseda University, the National Library of China, Peking University, and the Palace Museum in Beijing. There are also items in Tianjin, Hebei, and St. Petersburg.

practice for branding handcrafted goods;<sup>46</sup> on manuscripts of commercial origin, a stamp bearing the name of the shop typically appears on the title page.<sup>47</sup> In his early study, Fu Xihua had enumerated nine different kinds of stamp and stamp combinations from Baiben Zhang, the greatest variety among known shops.<sup>48</sup> Several kinds of common stamps can be seen today. The most elaborate one is a rectangular stamp with the characters 'Baiben Zhang' in the middle

<sup>46</sup> These include paper; see Chang 2012 on papermakers' stamps found in printed books and manuscripts from the Qing dynasty. See Huang 2008, 151, on stamps containing the characters *Renlihe ji* 仁利和記 that he noticed inside two youth books, which have also been found by the scholar Boris Riftin (Li Fuqing 李福清) inside a handwritten copy of the novel *Gu wangyan* 姑妄言 (Words of delusion) held in Russia. Huang suggests they are the stamps of a papermaker.

<sup>47</sup> In this article, I refer to the first page of extant manuscripts bearing the title of the text as the 'title page'. In many cases, they were probably the front covers, but it is possible that some manuscripts also had covers that originally went over the title page but became lost in the process of being rebound. Typically, the genre of the text is labeled below the title, along with the price of the manuscript.

<sup>48</sup> Fu 1954a, 317–319.





Fig. 3: Baiben Zhang stamp, from the title page of *Zidi shu mulu* 子弟書目錄 (Catalog of youth books), Capital Library of China, *yi* 乙 459.



Fig. 4: Baiben Zhang stamps on the title page of *Chuzi tan zidi shu* 厨子嘆子弟書 (A cook's laments, a youth book). Capital Library of China, *yi* 乙 448, vol. 2.

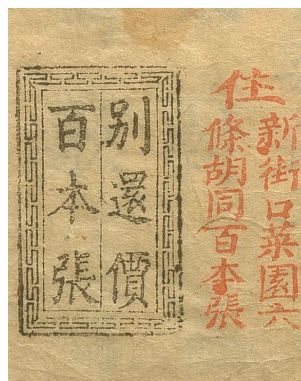


Fig. 5: Baiben Zhang stamps on the first inside folio of a catalog of youth books, Capital Library of China, *yi* 乙 473.

occasion (Fig. 5) I have come across a stamp stating 'Baiben Zhang, located at Xinjiekou / Vegetable Garden Alley Number Six' (*zhu Xinjiekou Caiyuan Liu- / tiao Hutong Baiben Zhang* 住新街口菜園六 / 條胡同百本張). Given that the two addresses are in close proximity to each other in the northwestern section of the Inner City, they were probably not different 'branch' sites, but rather indicate that the shop changed its location over time. The latter address was most probably the earlier one.<sup>50</sup>

Fu Xihua has noted still other stamps on the front of manuscripts.

(Fig. 2); the ornamental frame contains the motifs of plum blossoms, bamboo, pines, and chrysanthemums interspersed among the characters *tong sou wu qi* 童叟無欺 ('[we] do not fool the young or the elderly') in the left column and *yan wu er jia* 言無二價 ('no less than the stated price') in the right. A character at the top of the frame and another at the bottom make up the word *shichuan* 世傳 ('passed on for generations'). On manuscripts I have seen, the stamp impressions measure between 3.7 by 5.7 cm and 3.9 by 5.9 cm. Often this stamp is accompanied by another stamp on its right side, stating 'from the Qianlong era to today; we don't sell for less, so don't haggle' *you Qianlong nian qi zhi jin / shaoqian bumai bie huanjia* 由乾隆年起至今 / 少錢不賣別還價 (Fig. 2).<sup>49</sup>

Besides the stamp of Baiben Zhang with floral decorations, there is another black stamp bearing Baiben Zhang's name that appears on the title pages of manuscripts (Fig. 3). Measuring approximately 2.7 by 4.6 cm, it bears a frame of geometric patterns and contains six characters in the middle, in two columns and divided by a line, stating 'don't haggle / Baiben Zhang' (*bie huanjia / Baiben Zhang* 別還價 / 百本張). This stamp may appear alone or in combination with another red stamp giving the address of the shop. Most commonly seen is the address of Tall Well Alley (Gaojing Hutong 高井胡同) on the Main Street inside Xizhi Gate (Xizhimen Dajie 西直門大街) (as in Fig. 4), but on one

One stamp has *bie huanjia / Baiben Zhang* 別還價 / 百本張 enclosed by a simple double-line rectangular frame, which Fu suggests to date to the earliest time in the life of the shop; at times it is accompanied by a red stamp below it, stating 'look carefully / no returns' (*dang mian kan ming / na hui bu huan* 當面看明 / 拿回不換).<sup>51</sup> There exists still another red stamp that states, 'Patrons, please correctly distinguish [the products of] Baiben Zhang: "I readily make Huqiu [style] playthings; the theatrical figurines represent the joyous scenes of musical performance"; then [the manuscript] is genuine' (*fan cigu zhe renzhun Baiben Zhang ziji cheng zuo Huqiu wan / wu xiren dai su xingyue xirong bian shi zhen buwu* 凡賜顧者認準百本張: 自己成做虎丘頑物, 戲人代塑行樂喜容, 便是真不悞).<sup>52</sup> The curious couplet contained in these lines, while referring to the theatrical figurines sold by Baiben Zhang, may have served another function. Possibly it was a code for clients

<sup>49</sup> This has led scholars to believe that Baiben Zhang existed since the Qianlong era, but perhaps it is best interpreted as an advertisement until other sources are found. Here and below, I use " / " to indicate the divisions of columns as they appear in the stamps.

<sup>50</sup> On the manuscript in which the latter stamp appears, see note 80. This is the earliest known catalog of youth books, and an exception also in the sense that it is preserved with its original cover and binding, with no title page but the stamp appearing on the first inside folio. This stamp was not described by Fu Xihua and would appear to be an addition to the nine types of stamps and stamp combinations he enumerated. The same applies to the stamp depicted in Fig. 4; Fu describes several stamps containing the same Gaojing Hutong address, but they are worded slightly differently (Fu 1954a, 318–319).

<sup>51</sup> Fu 1954a, 317–318; image 331.

<sup>52</sup> Fu 1954a, 317–318. The punctuation is mine. Fu parses the lines differently (自己成做虎丘頑物戲人, 代塑行樂喜容).

to affirm the authenticity of the products, but just how exactly this functioned remains to be investigated.<sup>53</sup>

Besides stamps on the title pages, there are also those that appear on the back of manuscripts. There is a long red stamp, with densely packed text in three columns and measuring 1.8 by 8.4 cm (Fig. 6):

本堂書戲岔咄<sup>54</sup>，當日挑看明白，言明隔期兩不退換，／  
諸公君子莫怪。由乾隆年起至今，少錢不賣。住西直／  
門內高井胡同中間東小胡同東頭路北，張姓行二。

[If you wish to purchase] the stories and songs of this house, carefully select [the books] on the day of purchase; we have the express policy of not accepting returns or exchanges of items past the date, and seek you gentlemen's understanding. From the Qianlong era to the present, we have not sold our products for less than the stated price. [Our shop] is located north of the eastern end of the East Little Alley, midway down Tall Wall Alley inside Xizhi Gate. [My] surname is Zhang; [I am] second in the family line.<sup>55</sup>

These lines caution customers, again, that once sold, manuscripts are not to be returned or exchanged. The instructions to 'carefully select [the books] on the day of purchase' suggest that customers were given the chance to examine products before making purchasing decisions. This calls to mind the temple market displays for which Baiben Zhang was known, where probably selections of

products were readily available for purchase.<sup>56</sup> The no-return policy may be directed against customers who take manuscripts home simply to read and then return them, and distinguishes Baiben Zhang from lending shops.<sup>57</sup>

The resemblance between the name of Baiben Zhang and that of a certain 'Baiben Gang' 百本剛 ('Hundred volumes strong') has led one scholar to suggest that the latter may

have been an early incarnation of Baiben Zhang.<sup>58</sup> Like Baiben Zhang, Baiben Gang has a variety of stamps. The most striking one is a rectangular black stamp that appears on the title pages of manuscripts,

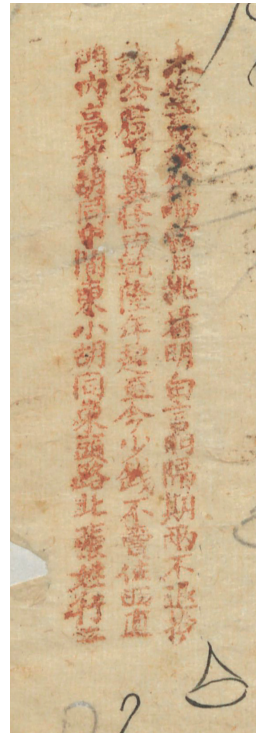


Fig. 6: Baiben Zhang stamp on the last folio verso, *Qianjin quande zidi shu di ba hui* 千金全德子弟書 第八回 (Virtue's rewards, a youth book, the eighth chapter), National Library of China, 107299.



Fig. 7: Baiben Gang / Yijuantang stamp on the title page of *Yuzan ji zidi shu san hui* 玉簪記子弟書 參回 (The golden hairpin, a youth book, the third chapter), Capital library of China, yi 乙 506.

<sup>53</sup> Lei Mengshui, who worked in Liulichang bookshops in the Republican era, tells of a practice used by antiquarian bookshops to encode prices using couplets. Books had both clearly marked prices and 'secret' prices, denoted by combinations of characters selected from special ten-character couplets known only to insiders. With significant differences between the marked prices and 'secret' prices, the system privileged distinguishing customers (Lei 1988, 70–71). The Baiben Zhang couplet is clearly something else, but the last line ('then [the manuscript is genuine]') suggests that it served some kind of authenticating function.

<sup>54</sup> This character, of uncommon orthography, stands here for the character *qu* 曲 ('tune'); in the present context, *chaqu* 岔曲 ('song') seems to refer to songbooks generally, while elsewhere it denotes a genre, such as when it is referred to as *zidi chaqu* 子弟岔曲 ('bannermen's ditty'; ref. the ad cited earlier). The character *qu* 咄 also appears in the title of a Baiben Zhang sales catalog of 'port tunes' (*matou diao* 馬頭調), where it is used interchangeably with the character *qu* 趣 (see *Matou diao shangqu mulu*, Appendix 2).

<sup>55</sup> National Library of China, ms no. 107299. The punctuation is mine. This stamp is also described in Fu 1954a, 318. One might note that, in *Wandering through the Huguo Temple*, there were two Zhangs – the younger brother, Zhang Er ('Zhang number two') was the one who sold clay figurines.

<sup>56</sup> Given that sales catalogs from Baiben Zhang list hundreds of titles, it is hard to imagine that it had all its products on display. Probably sales took places through a combination of purchases on the spot and pre-ordering through sales catalogs; this topic will be discussed in detail in the next section.

<sup>57</sup> One might also take into account the books' physical features. Manuscripts from lending shops are often made of durable, thick paper to stand wear and tear, while bearing elaborate stamps detailing lending policies such as daily exchange of books and loss of the initially paid deposit with their untimely return (Li 1933, 161). Baiben Zhang manuscripts, in contrast, tend to use thin paper, which corroborate their status as collectibles rather than books for frequent use. Sun 1999 has described Baiben Zhang as a lending shop, but does not provide evidence for this and seems to have confused some sources.

<sup>58</sup> Huang 2008, 150–151.



Fig. 8: Baiben Gang / Yijuantang stamps inside a rebound set of manuscripts. On the left, a black stamp and red stamp appear on the title page of *Mashang lianyin zidi shu shiyi hui shi'er hui* 馬上聯姻子弟書 十一回 十二回 (Love on the battlefield, a youth book, the eleventh and twelfth chapters). On the right, two red stamps appear on the verso of the last folio of the previous volume, presently bound together with this one (in the center: stamp with the characters 'Baiben Gang ji'; on the bottom left: circular stamp). National Library of China, 119984.

with the characters *Yijuantang / Baiben Gang* 億卷堂 / 百本剛 ('House of million scrolls / Hundred volumes strong') inside a frame of geometric patterns (Fig. 7). The frame and double column design make the stamp highly reminiscent of a common Baiben Zhang stamp (Fig. 3). Four tiny characters

are embedded in the left part of the frame, spelling out *jingdu di yi* 京都第一 ('number one in the capital'); another four characters are embedded in the right part, which would most probably have said *tian xia chi ming* 天下馳名 ('famed under



Fig. 9: Yijuantang stamp, from the title page of *Mashang lianyin zidi shu jiu hui shi hui* 馬上聯姻子弟書 九回 十回 (Love on the battlefield, a youth book, the ninth and tenth chapters). National Library of China, 119984.

heaven’).<sup>59</sup> The stamp, measuring 2.7 by 5.4 cm, is slightly longer than the Baiben Zhang stamp of similar appearance (2.7 by 4.6 cm).

There are also several red stamps from Baiben Gang. On the title pages of manuscripts, the black stamp is sometimes accompanied by a red stamp containing the characters *Yijuantang ji* 億卷堂記 (‘mark of the House of Million Scrolls’) inside a square frame of geometric patterns (Figs 8 and 9).<sup>60</sup> On the back of manuscripts, two additional kinds of red stamps can be found. One depicts the characters *Baiben Gang ji* 百本剛記 (‘mark of Hundred Volumes Strong’) (Fig. 8), and measures 1.9 cm wide and 4.7 cm long; the other is a circular stamp with a geometric frame encircling the same characters, with a diameter of 3.2 cm (see Figs 8 and 10).<sup>61</sup> Whether ‘Hundred Volumes Zhang’ and ‘Hundred Volumes Strong’ were indeed affiliated calls for further investigation; it is possible that they were competitors.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>59</sup> In the figure, the first character is not discernible on the rebound title page of the manuscript (*Yuzan ji zidi shu* 玉簪記子弟書, Capital Library, yi 己 506), but can be inferred from the parallel wording.

<sup>60</sup> This combination occurs on the title pages of several manuscripts that contain chapters from a youth book (*Mashang lianyin zidi shu* 馬上聯姻子弟書, National Library of China, 119984; the text is fourteen chapters long). In their present form, the manuscripts have been rebound together into two volumes; some of the title pages have been removed.

<sup>61</sup> Huang 2008, 150, tells that he had seen this stamp on various manuscripts at Peking University.

<sup>62</sup> Admittedly, it is much harder to come across Baiben Gang manuscripts today. Wu 1982, 152, notes their rarity.

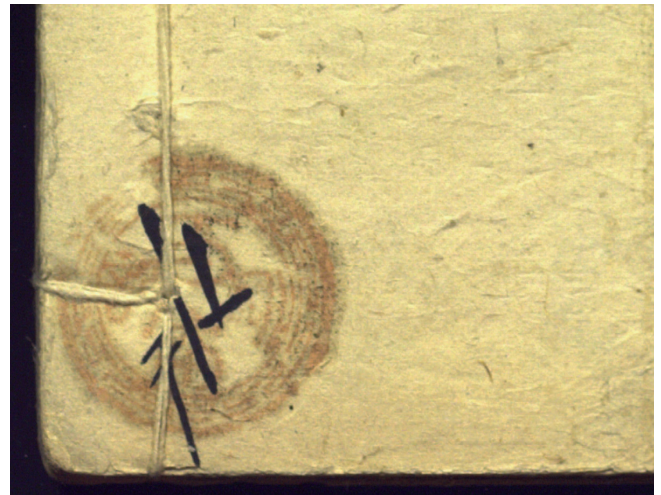


Fig. 10: Circular stamp on the back cover of the last manuscript in a set of manuscripts rebound together (*Lulin yuan quan shisan hui* 路林緣 全十三回; *Lulin yuan* in thirteen chapters), Capital Library of China, *jiasi* 甲四 1317, vol. 4.

Stamps from many other shops can be seen on extant books today. Besides Baiben Zhang, the shops Bieyetang 別埜堂 (‘The idyllic house’) and Jujuantang 聚卷堂 (‘House of accumulated scrolls’) leave the largest numbers of extant manuscripts. Bieyetang employed simple stamps with two four-character lines; one stamp advertises ‘The mark of Bieyetang / distinct from the rest’ (*Bieyetang ji / yu zhong bu tong* 別埜堂記 / 與眾不同), while another states ‘The seal of Bieyetang / distinct from the rest’ (*Bieyetang bao / yu zhong bu tong* 別埜堂寶 / 與眾不同).<sup>63</sup> Similarly, the stamp of Lao Jujuantang 老聚卷堂 (‘The old House of accumulated scrolls’) advertises: ‘Lao Jujuantang / Number one in the business’ (*Lao Jujuantang / qishou diyi* 老聚卷堂 / 起首第壹).<sup>64</sup> Possibly related to Lao Jujuantang, the shop Jujuantang 聚卷堂 has a ‘Li of Jujuantang’ (*Jujuantang Li* 聚卷堂李) stamp, with the characters encased by a frame of geometric patterns (Fig. 11).<sup>65</sup> Stamps existed as well for

<sup>63</sup> An example of the first stamp can be seen on the manuscript KS 4-056, Fu Sinian Library, *Caochuan jie jian kuaishu* 草船借箭快書 (Stratagem of the straw boats, a fast tale); the stamp impression measures 2.5 by 4.9 cm. An example of the latter stamp can be found on the title page of a catalog of youth books held at the Chinese National Academy of Arts, reproduced in Huang 2012, 3. *Bao* has the common meaning of ‘treasure’, but in this context it most likely refers to ‘seal’.

<sup>64</sup> An example of the stamp can be found on the title page of a manuscript at the library of the Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo, *Sokodo bunko gikyoku* 雙紅堂 戲曲 234, *Chunxiang naoxue* 春香鬧學 (Chunxiang causes a riot at school); it is reproduced in Huang and Ōki 2013, vol. 29, 55. The stamp impression measures 1.8 by 4.2 cm; the manuscript has been rebound.

<sup>65</sup> Li is a surname – probably that of the proprietor of the house. The stamp appears on the title page of a Jujuantang sales catalog among the set of manuscripts with shelfmark yi 乙 1008, Capital Library of China, entitled

Tongletang 同樂堂 ('House of mutual delight'), Jingyitang 景異堂 ('House of unusual sights'), Dunhoutang 敦厚堂 ('House of honesty'), Yanghetang 養和堂 ('House of nourishing harmony'), and Huijutang 匯劇堂 ('House of collected plays').<sup>66</sup> And there was another Baibentang 百本堂 ('House of hundred volumes') located in the Outer City, outside of Zhengyang Gate, which apparently sold medicine along with manuscripts of works in genres very similar to those Baiben Zhang sold.<sup>67</sup> While most of these shops leave few traces other than a few stamped manuscripts, they provide inklings into the diversity of the manuscript market. In the next section, we look at the variety of products offered by Baiben Zhang and its model of sales from catalogs.

#### Products and sales

In his early study of Baiben Zhang, Fu Xihua had observed its special function of both producing and distributing

*Bajiao gu shidao qu lianzhu diao paizi qu qingdan* 八角鼓 時道曲 連珠調 牌子曲清單 (Clear list of linked tunes: eight-cornered drum songs, tunes-of-the-times, jingles); the catalog is rebound together with other manuscripts.

<sup>66</sup> An example of the Tongletang stamp can be seen on manuscript T1-001, Fu Sinian Library, *Shu Luohan zidi shu* 數羅漢子弟書 (Counting the arhats); the Jingyitang stamp appears on KS 2-029, Fu Sinian Library, *Yuni he* 淤泥河 (The muddy river); manuscripts containing stamps from the other shops are photo-reprinted in Huang and Ōki 2013, vol. 15; also see Huang 2011, 146–150. Huang categorizes books from Yanghetang among manuscripts of theatrical troupes and aficionados, but the neat, regular handwriting in the manuscripts suggests rather that they were produced by a copying house (see photo reprints in Huang and Ōki 2013, vol. 7, 38–324).

<sup>67</sup> See the manuscript at the library of the Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo, *Sokodo bunko gikyoku* 雙紅堂 戲曲 108, *Po Hongzhou* 破紅洲 (Thwarting the siege of Hongzhou), reproduced in Huang and Ōki 2013, vol. 15, 488. This Baibentang has two elaborate stamps. One of them describes its location 'outside of Zhengyang gate in the capital' (*jingdu Zhengyang men wai* 京都正陽門外), and contains the characters *Baibentang Chen ji* 百本堂陳記 ('mark of [Mr.] Chen of Baibentang') in the middle. In smaller characters, it lists the shop's offerings, which include products in the genres of *xipi* 西皮, *erhuang* 二簧 [the character *huang* is not legible but can be inferred], and *dagu shu* 大鼓書.

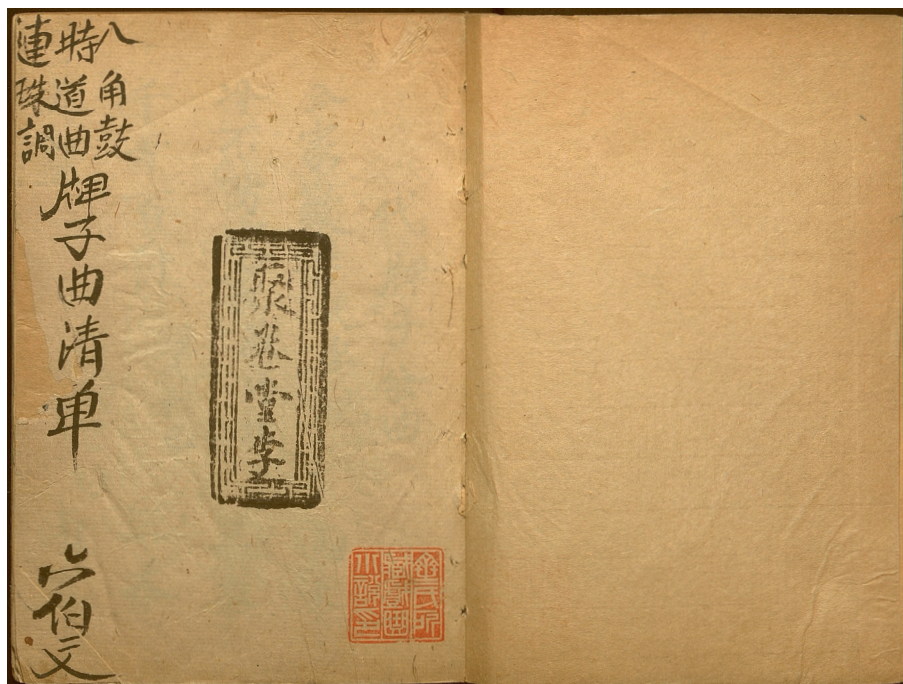


Fig. 11: Title page of a Juuantang sales catalog, *Bajiao gu shidao qu lianzhu diao paizi qu qingdan* 八角鼓 時道曲 連珠調 牌子曲清單 (Clear list of linked tunes: eight-cornered drum songs, tunes-of-the-times, jingles). Juuantang's stamp appears in the center. Capital Library of China, yi 乙 1008.

manuscripts for sale, a model that was shared by other shops.<sup>68</sup> Extant sales catalogs provide telling glimpses into their common business model of selling manuscripts from lists of titles. The catalogs, labeled with prices like other manuscript products, were clearly intended to be sold, and must be distinguished from internal inventories of any kind. By my estimate, there are at least twenty extant catalogs from Baiben Zhang, and several catalogs from Leshantang 樂善堂, Bieyetang 別墅堂, and Juuantang 聚卷堂.<sup>69</sup> Below, I provide a preliminary survey of Baiben Zhang catalogs, with attention to their dates, prices, and repertoires of products.<sup>70</sup> Dates for extant catalogs corroborate Baiben Zhang's flourishing in the late nineteenth century. Like other manuscript products, catalogs do not bear dates, but approximate dates can be inferred from a combination of circumstantial evidence, including titles based on historical events and known information about genres of musical and

<sup>68</sup> Fu 1954, 317. See also Stevens 1973, 23, which translates 'Baiben Zhang' as 'Omnibus Jang' and refers to it as a 'copying house'.

<sup>69</sup> Besides Baiben Zhang, only Leshantang's address is known; see note 108. Judging from the fact that manuscripts produced by the two other shops were also collected from the Beijing area in the early twentieth century, they were probably also located in Beijing.

<sup>70</sup> For a full list of extant catalogs, see Appendix 2.



Fig. 12: Title page, *Erhuang xi mulu* (Catalog of *erhuang* opera), Capital Library of China, *yi* 己1008. The manuscript has been rebound and given a new cover; notes by Wu Xiaoling on the inside cover (right) tell of his acquiring the manuscript in August 1972 in the Haiwangcun (Liulichang) area of Beijing.

theatrical performance. Among all the shops we know of, Baiben Zhang seems to have had the greatest variety of products. Its sales catalogs are extant for *erhuang xi* 二簧戲 (*erhuang* opera), *gao qiang xi* 高腔戲 (*gaoqiang* opera), *dagu shu* 大鼓書 (big-drum tales), *matou diao* 馬頭調 (port tunes), and *zidi shu* 子弟書 (youth books); probably there were also catalogs of products of other kinds.<sup>71</sup> Fu Xihua, who had an impressive knowledge of performed repertoires, dated the various catalogs in his personal collection to the Tongzhi (1862–1874), Guangxu (1875–1908), and Xuantong eras (1909–1911).<sup>72</sup> More recently, a scholar has dated Baiben Zhang’s catalogs of youth books between the Xianfeng era (1851–1861) and 1900.<sup>73</sup> Still another study has dated a Baiben Zhang catalog of *gaoqiang* opera to the beginning of the Guangxu era (1875–1908).<sup>74</sup> Together, these studies locate the shop in the late nineteenth century,

<sup>71</sup> See Appendix 2. Fu 1954a suggests that the shop must also have had a catalog for *bangzi* 梆子 opera. In the list above, *erhuang xi* and *gaoqiang xi* describe theatrical repertoires (to be discussed in detail below), while *dagu shu* and *zidi shu* are related genres of verse narrative. *Matou diao* is actually not a genre, but rather indicates a type of tune; these ‘port songs’ were popular in the capital already in the early nineteenth century and disappeared some time before the 1930s, and were known to have been sung by courtesans (see Li 1933, 77–80 and Wang 2008).

<sup>72</sup> See Fu 1954a, 319–328.

<sup>73</sup> Chen 2003a, 19–20; Chen 2003b, 50–52; Chen 2017, 52–54.

<sup>74</sup> Fan 2010.

while calling for further investigation into its evolution in time.

What information does a sales catalog contain? Generally, it contains a list of titles in a particular genre or type of tune (which we may think of as a ‘product line’), along with corresponding prices. Like other manuscript products, it typically features a title page stamped with the name of the house; next to the stamp, the title and price of the catalog are written (Fig. 12).<sup>75</sup> The majority of extant catalogs refer to themselves as *mulu* 目錄 (‘catalog’) in their titles, and occasionally *dan* 單 (‘list’) or *qingdan* 清單 (‘clear list’).<sup>76</sup> The main unit of account for prices listed in the catalogs is the *diao* 吊 (‘string’), with one *diao* being equivalent to one thousand units of cash.<sup>77</sup> Prices under one *diao* are simply written as numbers in increments of a hundred, i.e., *babo* 八伯 [百] ‘eight hundred’

for eight hundred cash; amounts over one *diao* are indicated by a number, with the ‘hundred’ assumed, i.e., *yi diao er* 一吊二 (literally, ‘one diao two’) for ‘one diao and two hundred cash’.<sup>78</sup>

A varied sample of Baiben Zhang catalogs can be found in the collection of the Capital Library of China, including three catalogs of youth books, a catalog of *erhuang* opera, and a catalog of *gaoqiang* opera. All adopt a similar layout in which prices are listed below the titles, five to a page.

<sup>75</sup> The figure depicts a catalog of *erhuang* opera, shelfmark *yi* 己1008, Capital Library of China. Measuring 14.6 by 10.8 cm, it has been trimmed and rebound together with another catalog.

<sup>76</sup> See Appendix 2. Fu 1954a, 326–328, lists two catalogs of port tunes that contain the terms *shangqu dan* 上趣單 and *shangqu mulu* 上咄目錄 in their titles. According to Fu, *shangqu* means the songbooks were ‘of utmost flavor’ (a literal interpretation of the characters), but the colloquial nature of the term may call for a different interpretation.

<sup>77</sup> The *diao* is a unit of account that is used in many places but is satisfied by different amounts of actual cash (in the form of copper coins) depending on the cash system used. On the *diao* as a unit of account in Beijing, see King 1965, 60–62 and 160–162. While *diao* literally means ‘string’, in the context of the prices listed in the catalogs, it would refer to a unit of account rather than a physical string of coins.

<sup>78</sup> This is the price on the title page shown in Fig. 12.

Table 1: Baiben Zhang catalogs in the collection of the Capital Library of China.

Title	shelfmark	number of folios	number of titles
<i>Gaoqiang xi [mulu]</i> 高腔戲[目錄]	<i>ding</i> 丁 6610	21	204
<i>Erhuang xi mulu</i> 二簧戲目錄	<i>yi</i> 己 1008	27	270
<i>Zidi shu</i> <sup>81</sup> [子弟書目錄]	<i>yi</i> 己 1008	32	319
<i>Zidi shu</i> <sup>82</sup> [子弟書目錄]	<i>yi</i> 己 473	27	262
<i>Zidi shu</i> 子弟書目錄	<i>yi</i> 己 459	32	314

They contain between 204 and 319 titles and between 2 and 32 folios (Table 1).<sup>79</sup> Manuscript *yi* 己 473 is a rare example of a Baiben Zhang book preserved with its original cover and binding; given that it contains no title and is stamped on an otherwise blank first folio, it seems to be an exceptional case (Fig. 13).<sup>80</sup>

Probably it would be useful to begin with the two catalogs of *xi* (‘drama’ or ‘opera’).<sup>83</sup> Beijing of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a flourishing center for drama, with performances taking place everywhere from the court to commercial theaters and teahouses, and still to temples and merchant guilds that regularly sponsored plays in regional traditions. The variety of dramatic genres in which Baiben Zhang offered products reflects the diversity of sounds present in the capital – from the lasting presence of Kun opera, the genre from Jiangnan favored by elites, to various regional musical traditions of more humble origins that would eventually find their way into the distinct ‘sound of



Fig. 13a: Original cover and binding of a catalog of youth books ; Capital Library of China, *yi* 乙 473.

<sup>79</sup> The third catalog (catalog of youth books, shelfmark *yi* 己 1008) is incomplete; see note 81.

<sup>80</sup> This catalog, *yi* 乙 473, Capital Library of China, is the earliest of Baiben Zhang’s youth book catalogs. See notes 101, 112, and 120.

<sup>81</sup> This catalog is incomplete, and has been rebound together with the *erhuang xi mulu* (with the same shelfmark). The title page is missing; the title in brackets above is my description. One folio has been ripped out at the end. An identical Baiben Zhang catalog held at the Chinese National Academy of Arts reveals that it should have 5 more titles, making for a total of 324 titles (Chen 2003b, 50).

<sup>82</sup> The catalog does not contain a title.

<sup>83</sup> I use ‘drama’ and ‘opera’ interchangeably to refer to the theatrical traditions of *xi*, which are invariably also musical in performance.



Fig. 13b: Baiben Zhang stamp appears on the first inside folio; Capital Library of China, *yi* 乙 473.

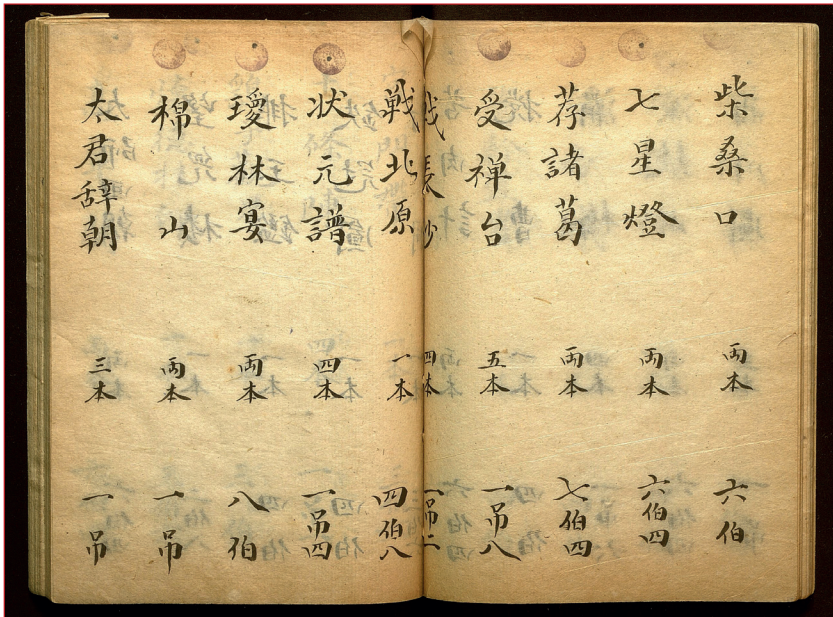


Fig. 14: Page layout with titles in the top row, numbers of volumes in the middle row, and prices in the bottom row. Stamp impressions appear above many titles. Capital Library of China, *yi* 己 1008, fol. 13<sup>v</sup> and fol. 14<sup>r</sup> (right to left).

Peking’ as described by late nineteenth-century observers from the south.<sup>84</sup> While much ink has been spilled over the histories of these genres, the processes of textual production associated with them remain little studied. Extant manuscripts and printed plays reveal multiple routes by which texts traveled between stage and page, as well as various agents – private, imperial, and commercial – involved in their production and consumption. The role of scribal publishing in this larger picture has yet to be fully explored.

*Erhuang* opera, originally a regional form, rose to great popularity in the capital in the course of the nineteenth

<sup>84</sup> See Wang 2014, 192–193, on the ‘sound of Peking’. On the diverse genres of opera in Beijing and their hierarchy in the eyes of the educated elite, see Goldman 2012, 115–119 and 129–131. Goldman 2001, 77–78, suggests that the texts contained in Baiben Zhang’s manuscripts resembled performed versions, and speculates that audience members may have used the manuscripts as libretti to follow what was being performed (she cites Qi Gong’s recollections of his childhood experiences; see Qi 1983, 313–314). Also cited is an intriguing passage by the playwright Chen Moxiang 陳墨香 (1884–1943) from his *Guanju shenghuo sumiao* 觀劇生活素描 (Sketches from a theatergoer’s life) of c.1934, which portrays the typical figure of a bottom-rate theater enthusiast: ‘He buys a handful of hand-copied play scripts from Baiben Zhang and then, without any attempt to differentiate, he treasures them as though they embodied the rule of law, and then, ass-backwards, he starts criticizing this and pontificating about that....’ (Goldman 2001, 78). Note that this passage postdates the time of Baiben Zhang; the cheap price of the manuscripts during the Republican era (probably through the second-hand book market), as well as clientele such as the figure described above, may have contributed to perceptions of these manuscripts as cheap books, but the status and prices of the manuscripts in their own time are likely to have been much higher (see the discussion to follow).

century.<sup>85</sup> The relatively large number of extant catalogs of titles in this genre suggests that it was a major product line for Baiben Zhang.<sup>86</sup> The present catalog (Fig. 12) contains over two hundred titles of *erhuang* opera, varying between one and eight volumes. Each page contains five columns and three rows, with titles in the top row, numbers of volumes in the middle row, and prices in the bottom row (Fig. 14). Stamp marks reveal signs of use. A circular red stamp appears above more than 80 of the 270 titles; many of these same titles are also marked with an ink dot. These overlapping marks possibly indicate two sides of a business

transaction, or a collector stamping the items already acquired.

While the manuscript is labeled as a catalog of *erhuang* opera, it also contains fifty-one titles from the repertoire of *Kunqiang* (Kun opera), a form originally from the Kunshan area in Jiangnan that came to be widely celebrated as an art genre in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and that retained its associations with elite culture in later times.<sup>87</sup> In Qing Beijing, Kun opera was one of two genres sanctioned by the court, and was performed in commercial theaters as well as the palace well into the late nineteenth century, at the same time

<sup>85</sup> Strictly speaking, *erhuang* refers to a modal system (or its main mode); *erhuang* and *xipi* 西皮 together form the *pihuang* 皮黃 musical system, the basis of what is presently known as Peking opera. There are differing accounts of the origin of the term *erhuang* (Wang 1934, 43–49). The performance of *erhuang* music in the capital has been traced back to 1790, when troupes from Jiangnan brought new regional sounds to the Qianlong emperor’s stages. Zhu Jiajin suggests that, at the beginning of the Guangxu era (1875–1908), troupes still did not refer to themselves as performing *erhuang* and *xipi*. According to Zhu, the earliest appearance of the term *erhuang* in the records of the Court Theatrical Bureau is in the year 1869; records from the following year mention *erhuang xi* being added to the program (Zhu 1995, 90; 92).

<sup>86</sup> Fu 1954a describes two different *erhuang xi* catalogs in his collection. Several catalogs at the Fu Sinian Library, whose shops are unknown, are also catalogs of *erhuang xi*.

<sup>87</sup> In spite of its perceived image of refinement, *Kunqiang* was performed by commercial troupes in Beijing during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in a manner that often incorporated musical styles from other operatic genres (see Goldman 2012, 116–117, 129–131). In the Kunshan area, there is a rural tradition, dating to the late nineteenth century, of *Kunqiang* being performed by often illiterate professional musicians in the agricultural off-season (Swatek 2002, 139–140).



that *erhuang* and other regional musical traditions rose to great popularity.<sup>88</sup> The breakdown of *erhuang xi* and *Kunqiang* titles in our catalog – 219 for the former and 51 for the latter – points to a time when *erhuang* had taken ascendance; that titles in both genres were listed suggests that they were directed to the same parties of musically versed clients. Toward the end of the catalog, under the heading ‘Kun melody’ (*Kunqiang* 昆腔), the titles are listed with a second tier of prices for texts marked with notation – ‘with music and beats’ (*dai gongche banyan* 代[帶]工尺板眼) or simply ‘with beats’ (*dai banyan* 代板眼) (Fig. 15).<sup>89</sup>

These products were clearly intended for singing; possibly they appealed to audiences familiar with the tradition of recital singing known as ‘pure singing’ (*qingchang* 清唱).<sup>90</sup>



Fig. 15: Capital Library of China, *yi* 己1008, fol. 26<sup>v</sup> and fol. 27<sup>v</sup>, list of *Kunqiang* titles. Prices for manuscripts with musical notation are noted in the middle tier.

<sup>88</sup> The ascendance of *erhuang* and *xipi* over *Kunqiang* in the course of the nineteenth century is a favorite topic among historians of Chinese drama, though just when and how this happened remains subject to debate. Zhu Jiajin observes that, as late as 1877, *Kunqiang* troupes constituted a significant proportion of commercial troupes registered with the Court Theatrical Bureau (four out of eleven); he suggests that in Beijing, *Kunqiang* did not fully give way to *erhuang* and *xipi* until the end of the Guangxu era (1875–1908) (Zhu 1995, 90; 95–96).

<sup>89</sup> *Gongche* notation, which employs Chinese characters to denote notes on the scale, was a common form of musical notation in the nineteenth century, and is still used today among village musicians in north China (Jones 1995, 120). *Banyan* indicates rhythm, with *ban* being the strong beats and *yan* being the weak beats.

<sup>90</sup> Beginning with Ye Tang 葉堂 (1736–1795) in the late eighteenth century, elite practitioners defended the recital tradition of ‘pure singing’ in response to the popular, staged Kun opera performed by commercial troupes (Goldman 2012, 129–131). It is not clear to me where Baiben Zhang products lay on this axis (I have not seen any manuscripts containing a *Kunqiang* text), and whether the two tiers of products, with and without notation, would have appealed to different interests (i.e., reading and singing). In the catalog, the prices given for *Kunqiang* products marked with notation range from two to more than four times as much as the same work without notation. While *erhuang* titles listed include complete plays, the titles listed in the *Kunqiang* section appear to be individual scenes from plays, with no volumes given (even though in both musical traditions there is the practice of performing short scenes from longer works, known as *zhezixi* 折子戲). In his study, Fu Xihua had described two *erhuang xi* catalogs in his collection, which had variations in their *erhuang xi* listings but contained an identical list of over sixty *Kunqiang* titles at the end (*yi* 己 1008 contains fifty-one, but being rebound, it is possible that the folios are not complete). According to Fu, these titles reflected those performed in Beijing theaters at ‘the end of the Qing’, when *Kunqiang* was in decline (Fu 1954, 320–21). On the other hand, he suggested that the *erhuang xi* titles contained in one catalog included dramas popular in Beijing venues before the Xianfeng (1851–1861) and Tongzhi (1862–1874) eras. Would this suggest that not all the *erhuang xi* products were contemporaneous to performances?

Manuscripts intended for singing can also be found among Baiben Zhang’s products of *gaoqiang xi* 高腔戲, or *gaoqiang* opera. Known in the capital since the early Qing, *gaoqiang* opera and Kun opera were the only genres officially approved by the court through the mid-nineteenth century, when the former saw a revival with princely patronage.<sup>91</sup> A Baiben Zhang *Gaoqiang xi mulu* (Fig. 16) has been dated to the early Guangxu era (1875–1908) partly on the basis of theatrical roles contained in it, which do not appear in sources before that time.<sup>92</sup> The small booklet of 21 folios contains over 200 titles, beginning with auspicious plays and followed by titles listed according to role. Comparison between the titles in the catalog and the known repertoire of a late nineteenth-century troupe reveals many overlaps, corroborating the catalog’s date in the same period.<sup>93</sup> Would the products have been intended for amateur singers? Extant manuscripts containing specialized notation for singing *gaoqiang* opera suggest this may have been the case. A printed insert found at the back of a Baiben Zhang

<sup>91</sup> The musical system of *gaoqiang* is also known as *Yi qiang* 弋腔 or *Yiyang qiang* 弋陽腔, after Yiyang, Jiangxi, where it is believed to have originated in the early Ming dynasty (1368–1644) before spreading through the empire to mix with local musical traditions and develop different forms. On *gaoqiang* and the court’s attempts to regulate performed genres in the capital, see Goldman 2012, 115–116. On its revival in the mid to late nineteenth century, see Wang 1934, 75–76.

<sup>92</sup> Fan 2010, 122–125.

<sup>93</sup> Fan 2010, 125–128.



Fig. 16: Title page, catalog of *gaoqiang* opera, Capital Library of China, *ding* 丁 6610.



Fig. 17: Title page, catalog of youth books, Capital Library of China, *yi* 己 459.

manuscript, which most likely would have been included in many other manuscripts, gives detailed instructions on how to vocalize the notations – consisting of dashes, circles, and combinations of them.<sup>94</sup> A handwritten version of this text, inside a reference booklet on the pronunciation of characters in singing, includes an additional line at the beginning: This book of *gaoqiang* opera is entirely the authentic text of the Hecheng troupe, with no inconsistencies...’ 此高腔戲本俱係和成班真本並無錯落。<sup>95</sup>

The catalogs from Baiben Zhang which have received the most scholarly attention to date are those of youthbooks (*zidi shu*), the northern genre of verse narrative widely popular among the bannermen populations of Beijing during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>96</sup> This was a genre that thrived as both a literature and a form of performing art, propagated through private gatherings of amateur singers as well as through performances in

teahouses and other commercial venues.<sup>97</sup> Its popularity is attested by thousands of extant manuscripts, ranging from personal copies made by amateurs and aficionados to commercial copies from scribal publishers.<sup>98</sup> The large quantity of manuscripts of the latter kind draws attention to the important role played by shops such as Baiben Zhang in the evolution of the literature, while handwritten sales catalogs from various shops, including Leshantang and Bieyetang, reveal the impressive variety of titles in scribal circulation.<sup>99</sup> Judging by the numbers of extant books, Baiben Zhang was by far the leading producer of youth books in the Qing, whether manuscript or print; *zidi shu* must have been one of its most important product lines.<sup>100</sup>

While Fu Xihua made the earliest attempt to date the catalogs,<sup>101</sup> later scholars have made further progress by studying the titles contained in them. The stories that touch on datable events of the nineteenth century have made rough chronological orderings possible. The scholar Chen Jinzhao has divided extant

<sup>94</sup> This single folio appears at the end of a Baiben Zhang manuscript of *Kaotong* 拷童 (*Sokodo bunko gikyoku* 雙紅堂 戲曲 65; photo-reprinted in Huang and Ōki 2013, vol. 7, 20–37). The instructions reveal that many of the notations have to do with ‘singing’ (*chang* 唱) or ‘accompanying’ (*bang* 幫) (*gaoqiang* is known for having chorus sections). The notations are not unique to Baiben Zhang manuscripts, but can also be found in products from other houses such as Yanghetang (Huang and Ōki 2013, vol. 7, 38–324).

<sup>95</sup> I have not been able to track down the Hecheng troupe. The manuscript belongs to a set of rebound booklets, with shelfmark *Sokodo bunko gikyoku* 雙紅堂 戲曲 333, at the library of the Tōyō Bunka Kenkyūjo (reproduced in Huang and Ōki 2013, vol. 15). It is undated; labeled as a *Jiantuan ziben* 尖團字本 (Book of characters with pointed and rounded sounds), it is a reference booklet containing lists of characters and their pronunciations for singing.

<sup>96</sup> For an overview of scholarship on this genre, see Chiu 2018, 16–19.

<sup>97</sup> See note 25.

<sup>98</sup> *Zidi shu* was also printed by woodblock print publishers and, toward the end of the Qing, by lithographic publishers, but manuscripts dominate the extant corpus by far. For a survey of extant *zidi shu* by the numbers and more detailed discussion on the role of commercial scribal publishing, see Lu, 2018.

<sup>99</sup> The Leshantang catalog will be discussed below. Fu 1954b, 14–15, dated the Bieyetang catalog to the Xuantong era (1909–1911), while Chen 2003b, 52, suggests it dates before 1900.

<sup>100</sup> See Lu 2018, 106–108.

<sup>101</sup> Fu 1954a and 1954b.

Baiben Zhang catalogs into three types, with the earliest dated to the Xianfeng era (1851–1861); catalogs of a second type date between that time and 1886; and the latest and the most commonly seen variety dates between 1886 and 1900 (Fig. 17).<sup>102</sup> Given that many works take historical events as their subject, including those that took place in Beijing, it is possible that scribal publishers capitalized on current events of public interest to market new texts. Interestingly, the vast majority of titles on historical events are extant only in handwritten form; as manuscripts of commercial origin are generally not dated, however, we do not know the actual amount of time it took between the events' occurrence and their appearance in the literature.<sup>103</sup>

The earliest extant catalog of youth books, from the shop Leshantang of Beijing, provides clues about how sales catalogs functioned. This catalog has been dated to the Daoguang era (1821–1850).<sup>104</sup> In an ad at the beginning of the manuscript, Leshantang extols the superiority of its texts in a market abundant with those of others:

本堂抄賣子弟書詞，并有石派帶讚新書，授自名人較正，情理符合，書義精微，非等閑之論也。別家或有是書，希惟應名獲利，書中章句、大畧均與石書相反。本堂數年來精工採訪，遂得數底，幸與石書相合。照顧者方知斯言不謬耳。諸公賜顧，詳認樂善堂為記。今將子弟書名、石韻書名，集成目錄，開載清楚，以備諸公選用，準定貨真價實。外抄名班戲本曲詞，另有目錄，一應俱全，不悞主顧。<sup>105</sup>

<sup>102</sup> See Chen 2003a, Chen 2003b, and Chen 2017, 52–54. The three catalogs of youth books at the Capital Library of China represent each of these types. *Yi* 己 473 is an example of the earliest type; the catalog contained in *yi* 己 1008 is an example of the second type; *yi* 己 459 belongs to the latest type. In conversation, Chen has described a fourth and latest type, examples of which include a catalog held at the National Library of China (5 October 2018, Taipei). I have not seen this item.

<sup>103</sup> Historical events touched on by texts in manuscripts from Baiben Zhang include: the banning of theater in the Inner City in 1799, the uprisings led by Jahangir Khoja in Xinjiang in the 1820s, the prostitution scandal at a Beijing temple of 1838 involving banner men and nobility, military corruption in 1841–1842, and the uprising of Hong Xiuquan (from 1851). There are manuscripts from Bieyetang that contain a text on French incursions in Vietnam in 1883–1884 (*Yuefa jiaobing* 越法交兵, Vietnam fights France). For extant works based on Qing dynasty stories, see Huang et al. 2012a, 341–434.

<sup>104</sup> On the date of this catalog, see Chen 2003b, 50–51. Chen suggests that it dates to some time between 1836 and 1838, given known biographical information about Helüshi 鶴侶氏, author of a work contained in it (*Shiwei tan* 侍衛嘆, Lament of the imperial guardsman), and the fact that the catalog does not contain the work *Lingguan miao* 靈官廟 (The Lingguan temple), which is based on scandals at a Beijing temple in 1838.

<sup>105</sup> Fu Sinian Library, Tj 27-212, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>–fol. 2<sup>r</sup>. The punctuation is mine.

This house copies and sells youth books and new Shi-style tales with sections of rhyming verses. Having been edited by well-known persons, [the stories] are true to sentiment and moral principle, and their messages are subtle and exquisite; they are not works of the ordinary variety. Other houses purportedly offer these tales, but they only tout the name for profit's sake, while the lines in their books and the plots likewise differ from the [true] tales of Shi [Yukun]. Only after several years of painstaking research has this house been able to obtain several manuscripts; fortunately, they concur with Shi's tales.<sup>106</sup> Discerning patrons know that our claim is true to the word. Patrons, carefully discern the mark of Leshantang. Now we have compiled a catalog of youth books and Shi-style tales, and have clearly listed [the available titles] for your selection and use. We promise that the products are genuine and true to the price. In addition, we copy the scripts and lyrics of the famous troupes, for which separate catalog(s) exist. Everything is available upon demand; we do not fool our customers.

The ad reveals the shop's involvement in the entire process of textual production, from seeking out texts and editing them to issuing catalogs containing available titles for patrons. Besides youth books, the shops apparently also sold plays and song books ('scripts and lyrics of the famous troupes') from separate catalogs. We might observe many similarities between this ad and the Baiben Zhang ad cited earlier. Just as that ad provided a detailed address for the shop, so at the end of Leshantang's catalog, information is given on the days and sites of its sales:

本堂抄本，遠近馳名。每逢七八，在護國寺後西角門。平常在阜成門內、宮門口內、四條胡同東口內、西頭路北門、首貼樂善堂王家便是。或開廟日遇風雨天，在家發賣。

<sup>106</sup> The exact nature of these hard-won manuscripts is not clear to me. The Chinese text simply has the term *di* 底, which literally means 'bottom' or 'base'; it can refer to a handwritten draft on which a printed text is based (*digao* 底稿) or to a version of a text from which copies are made (*diben* 底本). Possibly these were manuscripts transcribed or derived from performances. I interpret *Shi shu* 石書 ('Shi's tales') to refer to actual performances by the storyteller, given that the catalog probably came from his time. Note that the text employs a different term, *Shi yun shu* 石韻書 ('Shi-style tales') to refer to the books containing these tales.

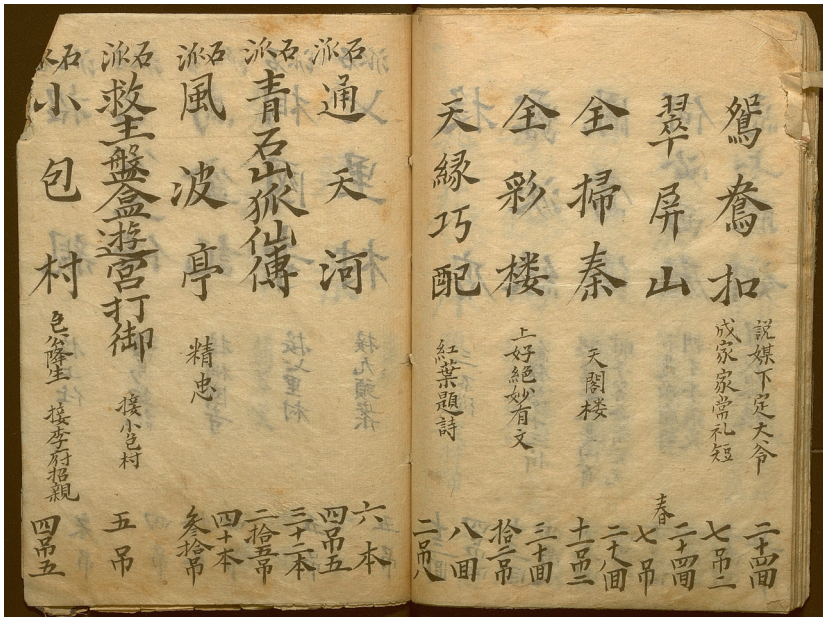


Fig. 18: List of Shi-style tales at the end of a catalog of youth books, labeled 'Shi style' (*Shi pai* 石派) at the top. Capital Library of China, yi 己 473, fols 25<sup>v</sup> and 26<sup>r</sup>.

The manuscripts of this house are famed everywhere. On every seventh and eighth day,<sup>107</sup> we are at the Western Corner Gate at Huguo Temple. On ordinary days, look for [Mr.] Wang's Leshantang, the first shop on the north end of West End Lane, inside the eastern entrance of the Fourth Alley in Gongmenkou, inside Fucheng Gate. When there is inclement weather on temple fair days, we sell from home.<sup>108</sup>

A word ought to be said here about the 'Shi-style tales', of which 22 titles are included at the end of Leshantang's catalog. The Shi-style tale, referred to in catalogs as *Shi yun shu* 石韻書 or *Shi pai shu* 石派書, is a genre of prosimetric storytelling related to the youth book, that is known to have flourished during the Daoguang and Xianfeng eras and ceased at the beginning of the Republican period.<sup>109</sup> The popularity of these stories in performance appears to have stimulated demand for the texts,

<sup>107</sup> This would mean the seventh, eighth, seventeenth, eighteenth, twenty-seventh, and twenty-eighth days of the month.

<sup>108</sup> Fu Sinian Library, Tj 27-212. The punctuation is mine. Leshantang's address is not far from Baiben Zhang's Xizhimen address in the western section of the Inner City.

<sup>109</sup> For an overview of this genre, see Chen 2002. While the Shi-style tale is sometimes referred to as *Shi pai zidi shu* 石派子弟書 ('youth book in the Shi style') in manuscripts (Chen 2002, 389), the actual relationship between the two genres has to be investigated. A special feature of these tales are sections of rhyming verse known as *zan* 讚; the first line in the cited passage thus refers to 'new Shi-style tales with sections of rhyming verses' (*Shi pai dai zan xin shu* 石派帶讚新書). Chen 2002, 11–12, notes the distinct visual layout of these verses in hand-copied books.

which, as Leshantang's ad reveals, were sought after by scribal publishers who competed to obtain authentic versions. Catalogs of youth books from the various houses typically end with a list these longer works (Fig. 18). A single sheet of unknown date, stamped by Baiben Zhang, announces a list of available and forthcoming titles that it has taken great effort to obtain:

風波亭一部現有

九頭案以後，從南俠暗行、婆子哭墓起，合計六十餘本，要者定抄。再，本堂有數樣石韻之書未能得全，現在託人挽轉。全行得妥，較正明白，再行定抄可也。

The title *The Pavilion of Trouble* is readily available.

As for the plot after *The Case of the Nine Heads*, from *Secret Ventures of the Southern Knight* to *The Old Woman Weeps at the Grave*, there are a total of over sixty volumes. They can be copied to order upon demand. Moreover, there are a number of Shi-style tales that this house has not been able to obtain in their entirety; at present we have employed someone to look for the missing parts, and the texts can be copied to order once they are complete and corrected.<sup>110</sup>

The titles referred to in the passage belonged to the cycle of stories about Judge Bao that were widely popular in the capital in the nineteenth century, judging by the many versions of extant texts.<sup>111</sup> The ad not only provides important clues into the textual evolution of these stories, but also reveals that *dingchao* 定抄, or 'copying to order', was the standard way in which manuscripts were produced and sold. In the Leshantang catalog, the final title listed is *Longtu gong'an*

<sup>110</sup> See Appendix 3 for the complete advertisement. Li 1934, 19, mentioned an ad by Baiben Zhang seeking texts of Shi-style tales. Possibly he is referring to this same item, although this seems to be an announcement rather than a call for texts.

<sup>111</sup> For a discussion of the titles listed in the ad and the textual evolution of Judge Bao stories, see Chen 2003b, 71–76. See also Miao 1998b, 209–211, on differences between Shi-style tales and drum ballad versions of the stories. On Judge Bao stories in Ming and Qing fiction more generally, see Bauer 1974, Blader 1977, Hanan 1980, Ma 1973, Ma 1975, and Ma 1979, 214–218; also, see Ge 2010 and Idema 2009 for ballads on Judge Bao from an earlier period.

龍圖公案 (*Cases from the Academician of The Dragon Hall*), an extended collection of Judge Bao court-case stories; under the title it says: ‘copied and sold by section; a separate catalog exists; copied to order’ 按段[段]抄賣, 另有目錄, 要者定寫.<sup>112</sup> We might also recall the anecdote from *Wandering through the Huguo Temple* in which the protagonist ordered copies of *The Cases of Judge Shi* and *The Green Peony*. For these longer works related to storytelling performance, then, ‘copying to order’ was a common procedure; it remains to be investigated whether it also applied to shorter works and to other genres besides the Shi-style tale.<sup>113</sup>

While pre-ordering appears to have dictated one sector of sales, there is evidence to suggest that shops like Baiben Zhang kept regular stocks of manuscripts. Apart from the sales catalogs discussed above, two items in the collection of the Fu Sinian Library at Academia Sinica appear to have been internal inventories. The first is a booklet of nine folios from an unknown shop, written in one hand, with running lists of titles.<sup>114</sup> Small triangles drawn beneath each title, indicating tallies, reveal that the first seven folios were part of an inventory.<sup>115</sup> The titles are grouped under headings



Fig. 19: Two titles marked for ‘copy-to-order’ (*dingchao* 定抄) at the top. Capital Library of China, *yi* 己 473, fols 16<sup>v</sup> and 17<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>112</sup> Fu Sinian Library, Tj 27-212, fol. 15<sup>v</sup>. The punctuation is mine. It seems that the scribe who copied this manuscript wrote *jia* 段 in lieu of a very similar character, *duan* 段 (‘section’). It is possible that the character *jia* 段 was written as a homophone for *jia* 價 (‘price’), in which case *an jia chao mai* 按段抄賣 would mean ‘copied and sold according to price’. But *jia* 價 (rather than *jia* 段) does appear elsewhere in the same manuscript (fol. 2<sup>v</sup>; in the line *huo zheng jia shi* 貨真價實 ‘the products are genuine and true to price’).

<sup>113</sup> In manuscript *yi* 己 473, Capital Library of China, the term *dingchao* is written above several titles of youth books, which suggests that they were available on a copy-to-order basis (Fig. 19). The titles are: *Kao hong* 拷紅 (2 *hui* [chapters], 1 *diao*), *Xuejiao guanhua* 薛蛟觀畫 (2 *hui*, 800 cash), and *Feixiong meng* 飛熊夢 (5 *hui*, 1 *diao* 800 cash). Compared with other titles in the catalog, these titles were not particularly long or expensive, and it is not clear to me presently why they were singled out. But they do suggest that at least some *zidi shu* titles were copied to order.

<sup>114</sup> Fu Sinian Library, Tj 31-240. The folios have undergone preservation (backing has been applied) and the binding is from a later time; the folios may have originally belonged to a larger set of papers. The digitized version at the Fu Sinian Library is incomplete and does not accurately reflect the correct orders of folio rectos and versos.

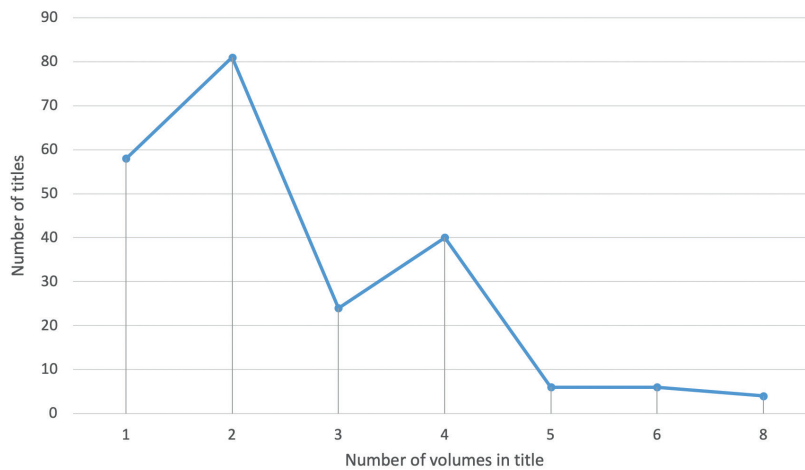
<sup>115</sup> On the last two folios, instead of tallies below each title, single triangles are drawn above selected titles, which suggests that these folios were part of something else – a secondary inventory. They are written in the same hand

containing the names of genres, including *Chuan xi* 川戏 (Sichuan opera), *ganban* 赶板 (swift beats), *lianhua lao* 蓮花落 (the lotus falls), *zidi shu* 子弟书 (youth books), *kuaishu* 快书 (fast tales), *Kun Yi xi* 昆弋戏 (Kun and Yi opera), *paizi* 牌子 (linked tunes), *dagu* 大古[鼓] (big drum), and *matou* [diao] 馬頭 (port tunes); the titles number well over 500 in total.<sup>116</sup> While we do not know which shop the inventory comes from, its impressive variety of stocked titles supports the thesis that shops like Baiben Zhang produced books in multiple genres at the same time. In another inventory containing a list of 52 titles on a single folio,<sup>117</sup> notes written under several titles reveal where manuscripts were kept: under

as the first seven folios and adopt a similar layout of listing abbreviated titles in multiple rows on a page.

<sup>116</sup> The count is made from lists contained in the first seven folios; besides the categories named, there are three more kinds of *xi* 戏, or dramas (I am not able to make out the writing before the character *xi* in each case), and a certain kind of tune (*diao* 调). In the headings, the name of the genre is sometimes followed by the term *di* 底 (‘base’), e.g., *ganban di* 赶板底 (‘‘base copies’’ of *ganban* [titles]). The last two folios contain titles in the genres of *erhuang* 二簧, *Kun Yi* 昆弋, *kuaishu* 快书, *zidi shu* 子弟书, *dagu* 大鼓, *matou* [diao] 馬頭, *paizi* 牌子, and *quandiao* 全调. The fact that *kuaishu* and *zidi shu* are listed separately suggests that the nine folios may date to sometime during the Guangxu era (1875–1908), when *kuaishu* evolved apart from *zidi shu* into an independent genre (Chen 2017, 53; 2003b, 70).

<sup>117</sup> Fu Sinian Library, Tj 28-225, fols 1<sup>v</sup>–1<sup>v</sup>. This single folio has been bound together with another thirteen folios from one or more sales catalogs, but clearly does not belong together with them. Which shop it comes from is unknown, and I have not yet identified the genre(s) to which the titles belong.

Chart 1: *Erhuang xi* titles by number of volumes.Table 2: Prices ranges in copper cash for *erhuang xi* titles.

Volumes ( <i>ben</i> ) in title	Lowest price	Highest price
1	300	500
2	400	2,000
3	1,000	1,400
4	1,000	2,000
5	1,400	2,000
6	1,800	3,500
8	4,000	4,800

one title, it says ‘there are [copies] at the temple’ (*miaoshang you* 庙上有); under another, ‘base copies of this are kept at the Wei Room’ (*shi dizi zai Wei wu* 是底子在未屋); under still another title, ‘there are no base copies of this’ (*shi dizi wuyou* 是底子无有). The ‘base copies’ possibly referred to manuscripts that were kept in-house – perhaps drafts from which copies for sale could be made.<sup>118</sup> We might recall the prefatory remarks in the Leshantang catalog that say its products were ‘completely available upon request’ (*yi ying ju quan*). This would have implied that it possessed the texts for all the titles, ready to be copied to order, and possibly that it stocked ready-to-sell copies; the unknown house to which the above inventory belonged apparently

had multiple sites of storage for its manuscripts, including at the temple.<sup>119</sup>

We might imagine that shops such as Baiben Zhang had multiple sectors of sales at the height of their careers – from pre-copied manuscripts at temple fairs to products copied to order (such as the longer works of Shi-style tales). We unfortunately have no extant sales records, but the prices and lengths of titles listed in catalogs offer some clues into production patterns. A survey of two sample Baiben Zhang catalogs may provide some food for thought. Of the 219 *erhuang xi* titles contained in the catalog of *erhuang* opera examined earlier in this article, the majority are between one and two volumes (*ben* 本); a total of sixteen titles are five volumes or longer (Chart 1).<sup>120</sup> The prices range between 280 cash for the cheapest one-volume title to 4,800 cash for a complete play in eight volumes, while the variation in prices among titles with the same number of volumes suggests that the price was not determined by length alone (Table 2). Of note is that the price of the catalog itself, written on its title page at 1,200 cash, is much higher than the one-volume products listed inside it, which range between 280 and 500 cash. If we look at a second catalog, a catalog of youth

<sup>119</sup> The unnamed site of storage for the titles other than the ones described may well be the home shop. Interestingly, the Shi-style tale does not appear among the many categories listed in Tj 31-240. The folios may have been incomplete, but it can also be due to the fact that these longer works were copied to order instead of being stocked for sale.

<sup>120</sup> The data contained in Chart 1 and Table 2 below is gathered from *Erhuang xi mulu, yi* 已 1008, Capital Library of China. I have not included the *Kunqiang* titles contained in it in this discussion, as their lengths are not given in the catalog.

<sup>118</sup> This is to interpret the term *dizi* 底子 in the sense of *diben* 底本, ‘base manuscript’ (refer to note 106).

Chart 2: *Zidi shu* titles by number of volumes.

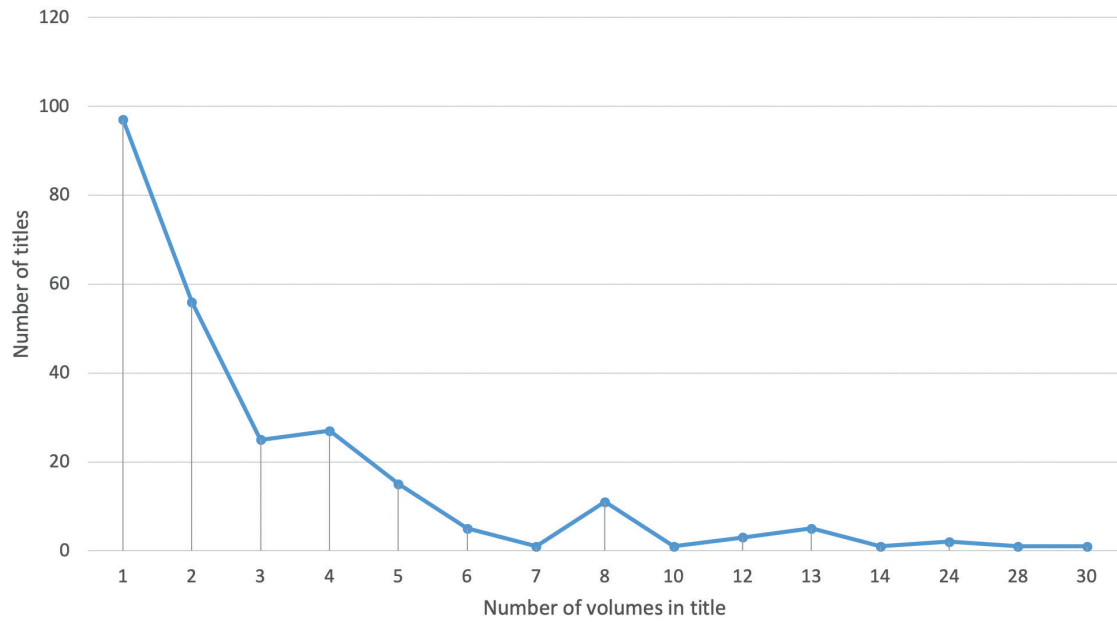


Table 3: Prices ranges in copper cash for *zidi shu* titles.

Chapters ( <i>hu</i> ) in title	lowest price	highest price
1	400	1,000
2	700	4,000
3	900	1,600
4	1,400	2,000
5	1,800	2,000
6	2,000	2,000
7	2,600	2,600
8	2,000	3,000
10	3,600	3,600
12	4,400	4,400
13	4,400	4,800
14	5,000	5,000
24	7,000	7,200
28	11,200	11,200
30	12,000	12,000

books, the patterns are similar.<sup>121</sup> Among a total of 251 titles of youth books, those containing one or two chapters (*hui* 回) constitute the majority of the products, even though the longest titles go up to thirty chapters (Chart 2). As in the catalog of *erhuang* opera, there is a good deal of variation in prices for titles of the same length (Table 3). What proportion of the shop's actual income came from shorter works and what proportion from longer ones? Does the range of products and prices allude to different sales sectors and different kinds of clientele – from individuals browsing books at temple fairs to wealthy households and institutions which could afford to keep libraries and private troupes of performers?

Probably it would be most telling to understand the prices listed in the catalogs compared with external prices of the same period. What first has to be said is that, despite the apparent wealth of price information contained in sales catalogs, they are more difficult to interpret than would appear, given the monetary fluctuations in Beijing in the second half of the nineteenth century and the absence of precise dates for the manuscripts.<sup>122</sup> We might nevertheless attempt a tentative comparison between manuscripts in relation to other reading materials and the cost of going to the theater at the beginning of the Guangxu era (1875–1908). A Baiben Zhang catalog of *gaoqiang* opera which has been dated to the beginning of this period lists prices for manuscripts ranging from 400 cash to sixteen *diao* (the equivalent of 16,000 cash).<sup>123</sup> From the same time, the price of a ticket at the theater varied between 600 cash for the cheapest seats in the 'pond' to 18,000 for the most expensive private balcony seats.<sup>124</sup> The lowest-priced

manuscripts, then, were slightly more affordable than the cheapest tickets to the theater.

For low-income residents of the city, both would have been luxuries. In his study of the wages of unskilled laborers, Sydney Gamble cites rates for daily wages fixed by Beijing's carpenters' and masons' guilds for unskilled workers, giving the figure of 140 cash for the years 1862–1877 and 160 cash for 1877–1887, with the amounts including both money wage and food money.<sup>125</sup> Taking these figures into account, a manuscript priced at 400 cash would have been the equivalent of several days' wages. Longer works in multiple volumes would hardly have been affordable for low-income city workers; probably they were expensive for many of the capital's bannermen as well, especially those who ranked low in the official hierarchy and had moderate incomes.<sup>126</sup>

Compared with other reading materials, the lowest-priced manuscript products from the *gaoqiang* opera catalog were far from the lowest on the rung. This is clear when we compare their prices with those of hand-copied literature rented out at lending shops. For the price of purchasing one Baiben Zhang manuscript at 400 cash, one could rent 44 volumes of entertainment literature, with a 9-cash rental fee per volume in 1875.<sup>127</sup> To own a Baiben Zhang manuscript, then, was something quite different from having access to leisure reading materials, especially considering that some of the titles it sold may have been available through

<sup>121</sup> The data contained in Chart 2 and Table 3 below is gathered from *yi* 己 473, Capital Library of China. In the discussion, I have not included the eleven titles of Shi-style tales listed at the end of the same catalog. While the unit employed for *zidi shu* titles is 'chapter' (*hui*), for the Shi-style tales, length is given in volumes (*ben*). Lengths are given for only some of the latter titles; they vary between six and forty volumes.

<sup>122</sup> On Beijing's cash system in the late nineteenth century, see King 1965, 58–65, 158–163, and 215–218. On changes in prices, wages, and costs of living, see Peng 2013. The serious inflations during the Xianfeng period (1851–1861) make it especially tricky to compare prices before and after the period.

<sup>123</sup> The manuscript is *ding* 丁 6610, Capital Library of China. On its dating, see Fan 2010. In the following comparison of prices, the understanding is that they all refer to the same units of account local to Beijing.

<sup>124</sup> These figures are given by Shen Nanye 沈南野 in his *Xuannan lingmeng lu* 宣南零梦录 (Record of scattered dreams of Xuannan), cited in Wang 1934, 81. Shen writes retrospectively from the early 1920s, relating that he was eleven years old in 1875. The commercial theaters of the Qing were sites of mixed social composition, with the various types of seats differentiated by price and associated with theatergoers of varying social

status. 'Pond' seats, those on the ground level directly opposite the stage, were the cheapest tier and were seen as occupied by the most vulgar fans; the wealthiest patrons occupied seats in the upper balconies to the side of the stage, separated by screens, also known as 'officials' seats'. See Goldman 2012, 77–84.

<sup>125</sup> Gamble 1943, 66–67.

<sup>126</sup> A capital bannerman's income consisted of a combination of silver and grain from the Qing state, and sometimes also income from land (Elliott 2001b, 194–95). But there was a great deal of social and economic disparity among the bannermen population of Beijing; many lower-class bannermen, especially those who did not have positions in the government, struggled financially in the late Qing (see Zheng 2018, 78–126). Elena Chiu suggests that the longest youth books from Baiben Zhang would have been out of the reach of most lower-class bannermen, given their incomes (Chiu 2018, 285).

<sup>127</sup> Li 1936, 162, notes this price from the cover of a manuscript of *Tian ci fu* 天賜福 (Heaven bestows blessings) from the lending shop Sanmeizhai 三美齋, dated to 1875. According to stamps from various lending shops that detailed their policies, readers commonly paid an initial deposit to the shop and were then able to rent out books, exchanging one volume for the next on a daily basis. The manuscript from Sanmeizhai was apparently lent out for exchange every two days. There were also penalties for losing a book; the price for a hand-copied volume of the *Sanguozhi guci* 三國志鼓詞 (Drum ballad on the Chronicle of the Three Kingdoms) from the lending shop Juwenzhai 聚文齋, of unknown date, was one *diao* (*ibid.*). Li mistakes 1 *diao* for 100 cash (instead of 1,000 cash) and others have inherited this error.



rental.<sup>128</sup> The expensive pricing of Baiben Zhang products is confirmed when we look at how affordably priced printed materials could be in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>129</sup> In the capital, an issue of a printed gazette – a common vehicle for the official news – cost as little as 7 cash in 1878; the total cost of a year’s worth of gazettes, 3,746 cash, would have been sufficient for purchasing merely a handful of Baiben Zhang’s medium-priced titles.<sup>130</sup> From these comparisons we might rather get a sense of the manuscripts as collectibles; this is echoed by the visual appearance of the pages, which, compared with cheaper sorts of printed and handwritten materials with writing squeezed densely onto the page, stand out for their spacious margins, large characters, and general aesthetic appeal (Fig. 20).<sup>131</sup>

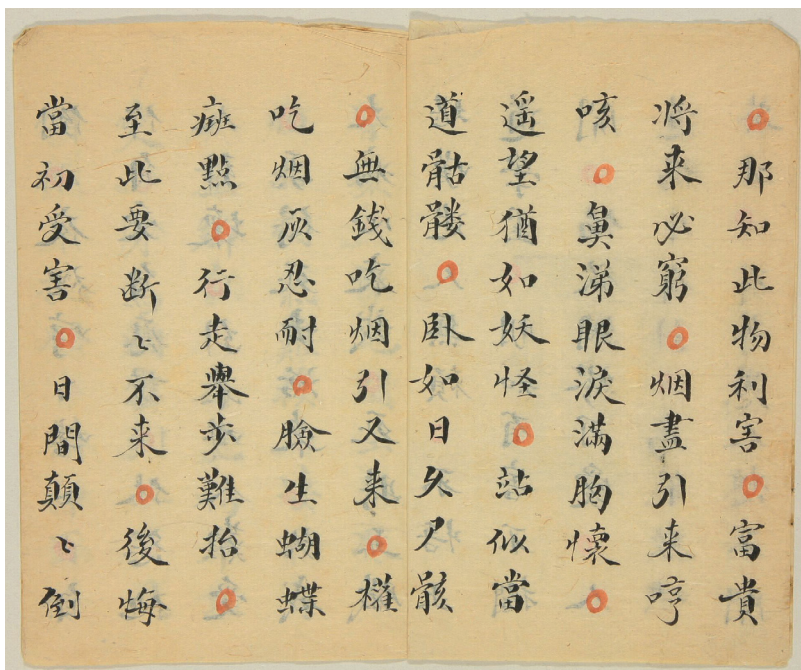


Fig. 20: Page layout with large characters and punctuation, inside a Baiben Zhang manuscript ('Song on opium'). Waseda University Library, Fūryō Bunko, *bunko* 文庫 19 F400 Z79, fols 1<sup>r</sup> and 2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>128</sup> While the lending shops were known to have rented out longer works of drum ballads and court-case fiction, some also rented out books of songs (Zhang 1996b, 450–451). Two items in the Sokodo Bunko (*Sokodo bunko gikyoku* 雙紅堂 戲曲 265 and 266, photo-reprinted in Huang and Ōki 2013, vol. 32, 368 and 523), bearing stamps of a Yongfa caiyuan 永發菜園 (The ever-flourishing vegetable garden), contain collections of port tunes (*matou diao*) and eight-cornered drum songs (*bajiao gu*), respectively; a note on the last folio recto of one of them, cautioning patrons not to rip or write over the text, suggests that the book was intended for rental (Huang and Ōki 2013, vol. 32, 520). Zhang 1996b, 451, suggests that youth books were also available at lending shops, which he divided into two kinds in accordance with the different types of manuscripts they offered, but this has to be corroborated by further evidence.

<sup>129</sup> A survey of catalogs from commercial and government print publishers reveals just how cheap printed books could be in the late Qing (Zhou 2005, contains a list of such catalogs; also see Li 2010).

<sup>130</sup> See Mokros 2016, 93–152, on gazettes in the capital. The prices above come from Osawa 2004 (cited in Mokros 2016, 142), who described them as contained in a note filed with a set of gazettes from Juheng Baofang 聚恆報房 kept at the Östasiatiska museet in Stockholm. The figure of 3,746 cash includes the price for the gazettes (7 cash each, with 338 issues printed in 1878, making a total of 2,366 cash) and the price for twelve book covers (at 115 cash each, making 1,380 cash in total). Juheng Baofang was one of the main publishers of printed gazettes in the late Qing; issues viewable through the digital collection of the National Library of Australia range between several to about a dozen folios in length (see *Jing bao* 1898). I am grateful to Emily Mokros for information on Juheng Baofang. The affordability of printed gazettes is corroborated by other sources from the period. There were varying tiers of quality among gazettes; manuscript gazettes continued to circulate alongside printed ones in the late nineteenth century, while often sold at much higher prices (Mokros 2016, 133–145).

<sup>131</sup> While it has been suggested that Baiben Zhang manuscripts were 'cheap' compared with certain novels (Cui 2005, 153; Chiu 2018, 285), these novels may well have been the exception.

The existence of catalogs points to the likelihood that a significant part of sales consisted of orders beyond single items. This is suggested by the many signs of use in extant catalogs, from stamp marks to numbers and dots marking titles and prices.<sup>132</sup> The shop apparently encouraged purchases in bulk: at the end of one catalog of youth books, a note lists discounts for purchases exceeding ten *diao*, a hundred *diao*, and a thousand *diao*.<sup>133</sup> These prices would not have been affordable for city residents of ordinary means. If we take into consideration who would have been able to afford the very large orders, we might recall that scores of Baiben Zhang manuscripts were present among the former collection of the Court Theatrical Bureau.<sup>134</sup> The shop's location in the western section of the Inner City, in a neighborhood close to

<sup>132</sup> Many of the catalogs held at Academia Sinica contain Suzhou numbers and various other marks suggesting signs of use. All the books have been rebound, however, some quite chaotically, with scattered folios from multiple catalogs. As such, they will need to be studied very carefully.

<sup>133</sup> The discounts were for ten percent, twenty percent, and thirty percent, respectively. See Huang et al. 2012b, vol. 10, 4378; the collation notes cite a Baiben Zhang catalog in the former collection of Nagasawa Kikuya. I have not seen this manuscript, and am not aware of similar discounts advertised in other Baiben Zhang catalogs.

<sup>134</sup> Given the increasing contact between the palace and the city's commercial troupes in the course of the nineteenth century, it is not surprising that the court also sourced texts from commercial establishments in the city. On the mutual influence between the palace and commercial theaters, see Ye 2012, 226–227.

prominent bannermen households, suggests that well-to-do Inner City residents may also have been among its clients.<sup>135</sup>

More in-depth study is due on the sales catalogs from Baiben Zhang and other scribal publishers. Further study should yield more insights into the precise dates of the shops and their evolving lines of products, as well as their possible connections to the world of commercial theater in nineteenth-century Beijing. On a practical level, the catalogs call attention to the manner of production that made possible books in great variety. In the next section, this article examines scribal hands in manuscript products for glimpses into the processes of organized scribal production.

### *Scribal Production*

While anecdotal sources might lead us to imagine a Mr. Zhang assiduously sitting at his desk and copying day and night, both the quantity and variety of extant manuscripts suggest that Baiben Zhang was (or became) a much larger operation involving organized scribal production. The number of scribes employed over the course of the house's lifetime of operation has yet to be ascertained – this may have to wait for an efficient method of sorting handwriting samples in the hundreds – but a glimpse of scribal production can be had from a look at even a small group of manuscripts. In the discussion below, we examine a selection of youth books from Baiben Zhang in the collection of the Capital Library of China. Given the quantity of extant manuscripts in this genre from the shop, they would seem to be a reasonable place to begin studying its productions.

Baiben Zhang's youth book manuscripts adopt a long, rectangular format (Fig. 21) and a regular layout to the text, with four columns on each page, each divided into two sections (Fig. 22). Each section of a column, corresponding to a sung line, contains space for seven characters, while longer lines are written partially in double columns using smaller characters. The handwriting is neat and formal, with the individual characters clearly legible and in a regular size, being the work of seasoned scribes who were practiced in writing neatly and consistently if not always elegantly.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>135</sup> See Liang 2018, 18–19, on princely mansions in the western section of the Inner City.

<sup>136</sup> Varying degrees of calligraphic grace can be found among scribal hands in Baiben Zhang manuscripts. Regardless of calligraphic merit, they were copied by practiced hands, and one might try to appreciate the writing in terms other than 'superior' or 'inferior' calligraphy. One might argue that the scribes valued different qualities (e.g., formal consistency of the characters, efficiency of writing) than those who practiced calligraphy as an art (e.g.,

The regularity of the hands in the manuscripts is such that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish one hand from another. In identifying hands, it is thus useful to find markers besides handwriting that display individual idiosyncrasies.

A common feature of manuscripts are L-shaped symbols that appear at the ends of lines, marking regular divisions of text within each chapter (*hui* 回).<sup>137</sup> While the functions of these symbols have yet to be well understood, here they provide an efficient means for distinguishing scribal hands. In spite of variations for each copyist at different times and with the change of the writing brush, there are points on the 'L' where pressure is applied consistently by the individual scribe, in many cases quite distinctly (Fig. 23). The amount of space between the marks and the characters, as well as their size in relation to each other, can also assist in this investigation. Where comparison of the L-shaped symbols yields questions, comparison of characters – focusing on the ways that the same strokes are written – can be further employed to distinguish one scribal hand from another.

The manuscripts examined here belong to a set of Baiben Zhang manuscripts rebound into six volumes.<sup>138</sup> The inside case covers of the two cases that enclose them are signed by the collector Nahata 納哈塔 and dated Guangxu 26 [1900]; his inscription inside the second case, which holds volumes five and six, states that the books were rebound at that time.<sup>139</sup> The bottom and top edges of the folios have been trimmed,

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variation, expressive grace). Boltz 2012/2013, citing inspirations from Bernhard Bischoff on Latin paleography, proposes a spectrum of formality for thinking about handwriting styles in early Chinese manuscripts; the presence of a neat, formal 'book hand' implies a high status for the object regardless of its textual content. Along this line of reasoning, the formal handwriting style in Baiben Zhang manuscripts would corroborate their status as collectibles.

<sup>137</sup> These L-shaped symbols can be found not only in manuscripts from Baiben Zhang, but also in those from other houses. It has been suggested that they marked divisions of episodes (*lao* 落) within each chapter, facilitating both the reading and performance of youth books; it is also possible that they indicated repetition (Cui 2005, 21–22). Similar L-shaped symbols can be found in manuscripts of other kinds of performance-related literature, such as ritual handbooks.

<sup>138</sup> They have the common shelfmark of *yi* 己 448, Capital Library of China.

<sup>139</sup> In his inscriptions, Nahata also listed the contents of the volumes contained in each case. Generally, they correspond to how the volumes presently appear, with the exception of volume five, which contains a text in twenty-four chapters not listed by Nahata (it is a copy of the youth book *Yuanyang kou* 鴛鴦扣 [The bond of matrimony]). Possibly the collector did not include it in his list because he was not able to identify it; there is no title page which precedes the folios of text in their current form. It is also possible that the volume was rebound again after Nahata's time. Besides Nahata's seals, manuscripts also bear the seals of Wu Xiaoling, to whom they belonged before being transferred to the Capital Library. There are also the seals of a certain Yinqiu shangguan 吟秋山館 (Fig. 21).

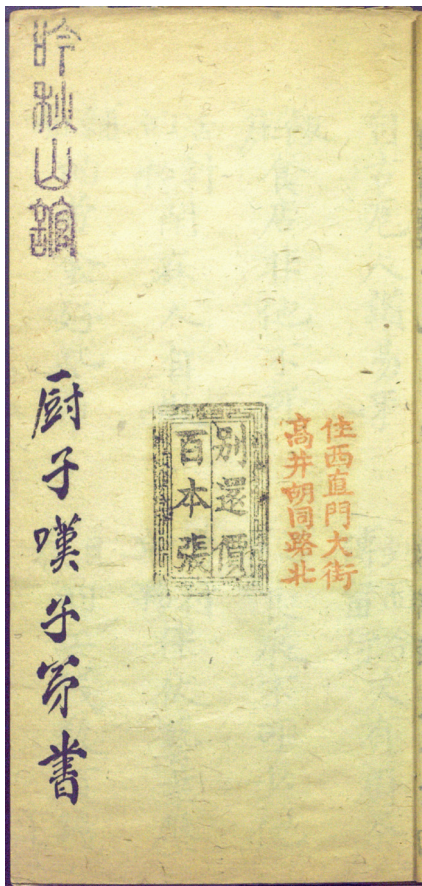


Fig. 21: Title page of *Chuzi tan zidi shu*, in Capital Library of China, yi 己 448, vol. 2. The stamp of the collector Yinqiu shangguan 吟秋山館 appears at the top. The manuscript has been trimmed and is rebound in a volume with other manuscripts.

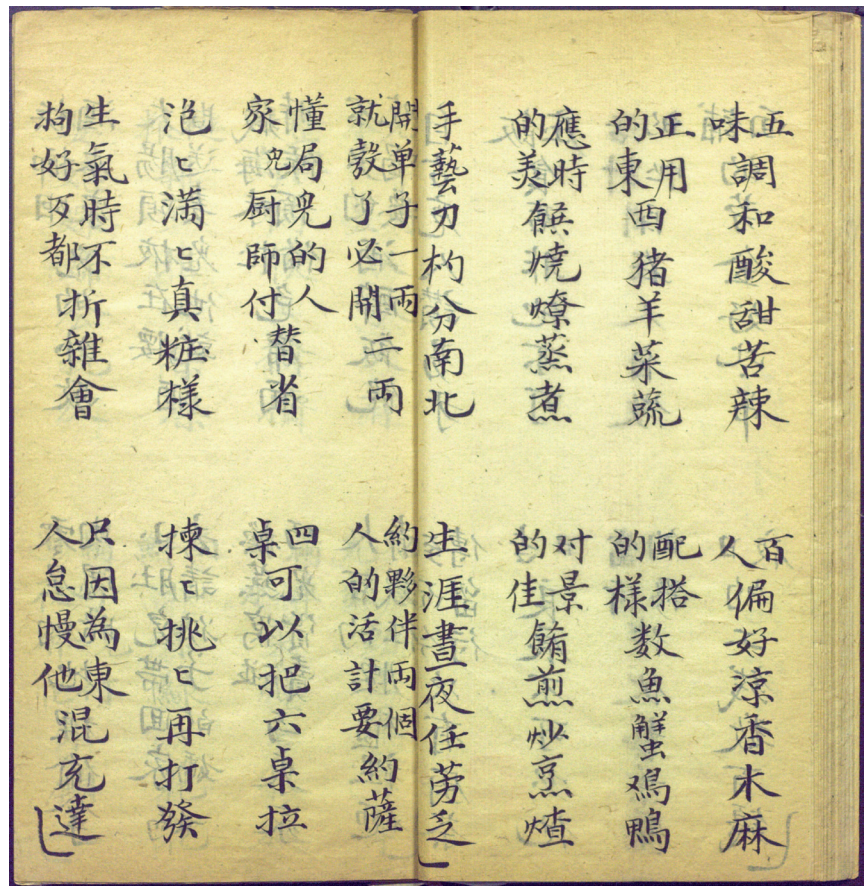


Fig. 22: *Chuzi tan zidi shu*, fol. 1' and fol. 2'. L-shaped symbols appear in the bottom left corners of each page.

so their original dimensions would have exceeded the current measurements (11.2 by 20.5 cm).<sup>140</sup> The six volumes each contain what were originally multiple manuscripts. In the first four volumes, 26 titles are represented, including many short texts ranging from five to eight folios long.<sup>141</sup> The fifth and sixth volumes each contains two titles of significant

<sup>140</sup> The case covers signed by Nahata measure 12.0 cm by 20.7 cm – the length being only slighter greater than the current length of the folios. Possibly they were trimmed by Nahata or were already trimmed by the time they came into his hands.

<sup>141</sup> Besides these short texts, there are longer titles which are only partially represented – e.g. the title page indicates that the manuscript is part of a sequence by labelling the title with *touhui* 頭回 (‘first chapter’) or  *yuan* (‘prime’) 元. It is not always clear to me whether each chapter originally formed one codicological unit. In a few cases, multiple chapters have been bound together into the volume, but only the title page for the first chapter is present. In the case of *Changban po zidi shu* 長坂坡子弟書 (The battle at Changban Hill, a youth book), two title pages are present, one labelled as *touhui* (the first chapter) and one as *erhui* 二回 (the second chapter), so each chapter was originally one manuscript. But this does not seem to apply universally, as there are also instances where the chapters of a text run continuously and do not match page divisions (so multiple chapters would have been bound together).

length.<sup>142</sup> The analyses below will examine the scribal hands in a selection of the manuscripts for clues into the processes of production.

In the manuscripts contained in the first four volumes, at least fourteen hands can be distinguished, based on the L-shaped symbols that appear in them (Fig. 24).<sup>143</sup> Interestingly, when one compares the handwritten titles on each of the title pages (one might pay special attention to the final three characters *zidi shu* 子弟書 which appear in all of them), recurring idiosyncracies in the execution of certain

<sup>142</sup> Volume five contains *Qianjin quande zidi shu* 千金全德子弟書 (Virtue’s rewards, a youth book), in eight chapters, and another work (presently identified as *Yuanyang kou*) in twenty-four chapters; the chapters range from four to six folios in length. Volume six contains *Qiao dongfeng* 俏東風子弟書 (The fair east wind, a youth book), in twelve chapters, and its sequel in eight chapters (the title page is fragmented, so only the first two characters of the title, *Xu Qiao* 續俏, are preserved); the chapters range from six to seven folios in length.

<sup>143</sup> In this count, I include only the hands that are clearly distinguishable to me; possibly more hands can be found with closer scrutiny. Generally, a unit of one chapter seems to have been copied by one scribe.



Fig. 23: Two hands with variations, from manuscripts contained in Capital Library of China, *yi* 已 448, vols 6 and 2, respectively. Top row, left to right: *Qiao dongfeng zidi shu* 俏東風子弟書 (The fair east wind, a youth book), 11 *hui*, fol. 3<sup>v</sup>, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>; 12 *hui*, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, fol. 2<sup>r</sup>. Bottom row, left to right: *Chuzi tan zidi shu*, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, fol. 2<sup>r</sup>; *Changsu tan zidi shu* 長隨嘆子弟書 (The servant's lament, a youth book), fol. 1<sup>r</sup>, fol. 2<sup>r</sup>.

strokes suggests that they were all written in one hand (Fig. 25).<sup>144</sup> If it is indeed true that one person signed all the titles, the manuscripts would belong to a common span of time. This also provides clues about the division of labor: there were multiple copyists and a single title-signer; the latter was possibly the possessor of the house stamps, the organizer of labor division, and the proprietor of the shop.<sup>145</sup> A survey of a larger sample of manuscripts should reveal whether there were changes in the title-signer; whether the fourteen hands seen here were recurring hands; and with more detailed surveys of handwriting (not only the L-shaped symbols, but also the characters), we may have clues about the growths and declines in the size of the scribal staff over the course of Baiben Zhang's lifetime.

We can glimpse the collaborative process of copying a multi-chapter text through the case of *Qiao dongfeng zidi shu* 俏東風子弟書 (The fair east wind, a youth book), a youth book in twelve chapters.<sup>146</sup> In their present, rebound form, the entire 12 *hui* are bound together and form the first part of a larger volume; the chapters number 7 folios each, with

each *hui* starting on a new folio.<sup>147</sup> What is very interesting is that four scribal hands were involved in copying this 12-*hui* text (Fig. 26). The first seven *hui* are by a single scribe, then *hui* 8 is in a distinctly different hand. *Hui* 9 and 10 are copied by yet a third copyist. *Hui* 11 is again in the hand of the first scribe, but only the first folio and fol. 2 recto; fol. 2 verso is left blank,<sup>148</sup> and then, beginning with fol. 3<sup>r</sup>, the remainder of *hui* 11 is in a different, fourth hand. This last copyist also completed *hui* 12. This raises the question whether the copyists in fact sat in the same room and took turns copying, which seems plausible given the return of the first scribe and then what seemed to be an abrupt departure in the middle of *hui* 11. Did he go on lunch break between *hui* 8 and *hui* 11 – when 21 folios, or 336 lines, were copied in his absence by his colleagues? And then, when he set about copying again, did some urgent task call him away, such that he had to leave the better part of the remaining two *hui* to yet another colleague?

The presence of multiple hands in other multi-chapter manuscripts from Baiben Zhang suggests that this case was not an exception. Rather, the phenomenon points to the efficiency and flexibility of organized scribal production, with scribes able to easily resume each other's work, while texts were copied in accordance with a standard layout. This would have most easily taken place at a workshop or other site of organized copying. Many questions are open: given the hundreds of titles advertised by Baiben Zhang in its catalogs, did copyists specialize in certain genres of texts or certain titles? For manuscripts sold with musical notations, was there a division of labor between copyists and notators – with the task of annotation requiring familiarity with musical performance? How was work allocated in other ways? And just how big was the Baiben Zhang operation at a given point in time – how many people were involved in the various roles of editing, copying, annotating, cover-signing, stamping, binding, inventory-keeping, temple-fair staffing, account-keeping, and delivering? These are questions for future investigation.

<sup>144</sup> For example, one might observe how the horizontal stroke is consistently written with a bend and how the final stroke of the mouth (*kou* 口) radical is always elongated. I am grateful to Uta Lauer for these observations and for pointing out to me that the idiosyncracies are consistent.

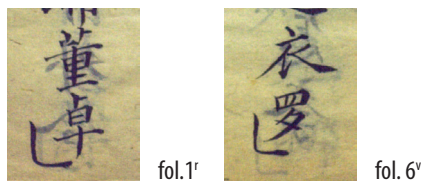
<sup>145</sup> Huang Shizhong, who first noticed the phenomenon of a repeated hand signing the title pages of manuscripts, has suggested that this person may have been the proprietor of the shop (Huang 2008, 151).

<sup>146</sup> Capital Library of China, *yi* 已 448, vol. 6.

<sup>147</sup> It is not clear to me how the manuscripts would originally have been bound (whether each *hui* was its own volume, or whether several *hui* were bound into one volume).

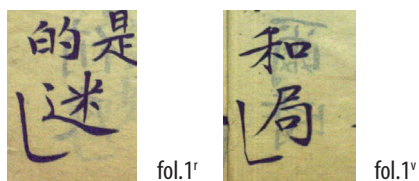
<sup>148</sup> Comparison with a manuscript (from the Chewangfu corpus) of the same title, contained in Huang et al. 2012b, vol. 8, 3109, shows that eight lines were skipped here.

Scribe 1



*Fengyiting zidi shu, juan shang*  
鳳儀亭子弟書 卷上

Scribe 6



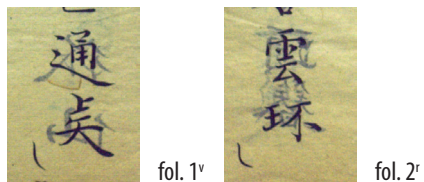
*Nüshiwei tan zidi shu* 女侍衛嘆子弟書

Scribe 11



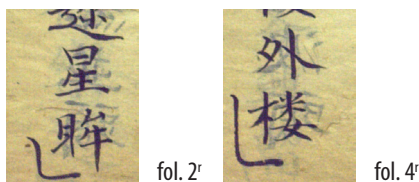
*Fengxian zidi shu* 鳳仙子弟書

Scribe 2



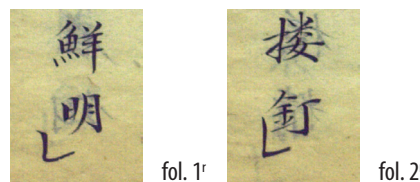
*Huli sichun zidi shu, yuan* 狐狸思春子弟書 元

Scribe 7



*Guang erzha zidi shu* 逛二閘子弟書

Scribe 12



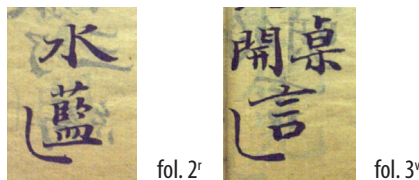
*Shaoshiwei tan zidi shu* 少侍衛嘆子弟書

Scribe 3



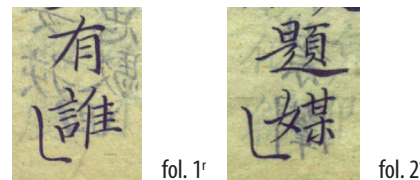
*Guanzhen tan zidi shu* 官箴嘆子弟書

Scribe 8



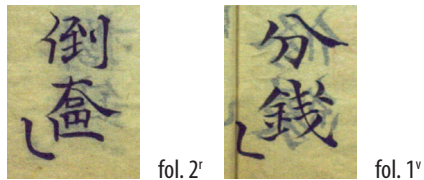
*Zuanxuzilun zidi shu* 纂鬚子論子弟書

Scribe 13



*Yu'er xianhua zidi shu* 玉兒獻花子弟書

Scribe 4



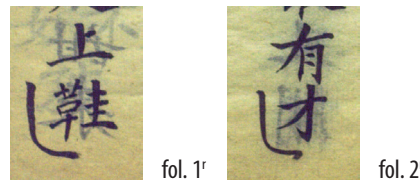
*Qiongui tan zidi shu* 窮鬼嘆子弟書

Scribe 9



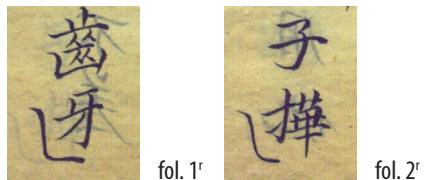
*Chuzi tan zidi shu* 厨子嘆子弟書

Scribe 14



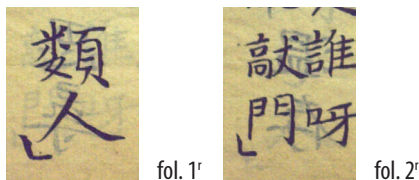
*Yanzhizhuan zidi shu, touhui*  
胭脂傳子弟書 頭回

Scribe 5



*Sanxuan yapailing zidi shu* 三宣牙牌令子弟書

Scribe 10



*Xuchaojieyin zidi shu, touhui* 續鈔借銀子弟書 頭回

Fig. 24: Scribal hands in fourteen youth book manuscripts, from Capital Library of China, yi 已 448, vols 1–4.

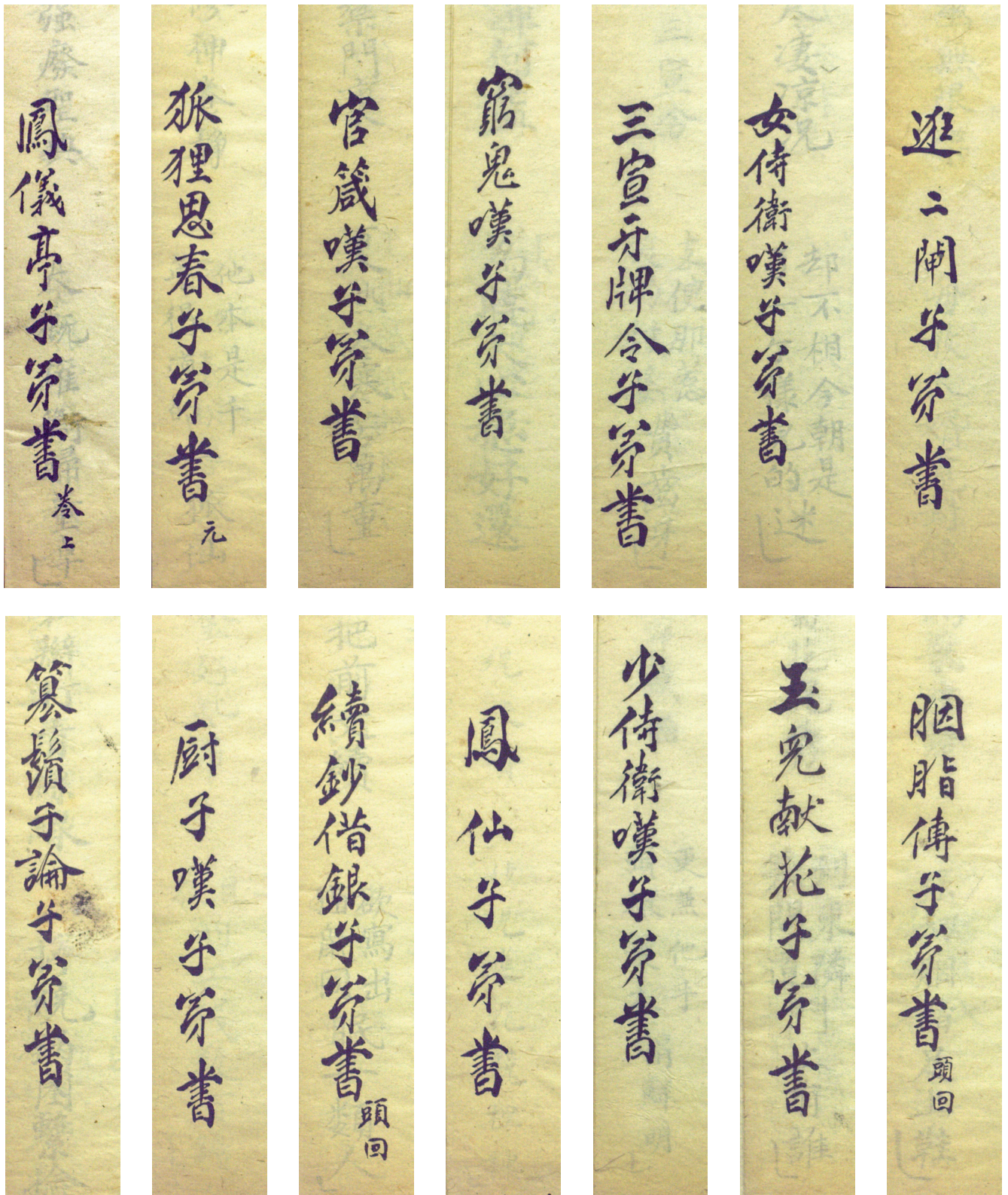
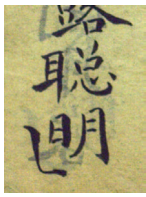
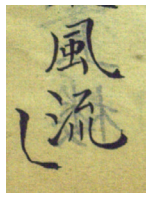


Fig 25: Handwritten titles on the title pages of fourteen youth book manuscripts, from Capital Library of China, yi 己 448, vols 1–4.

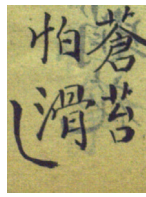
Scribe A



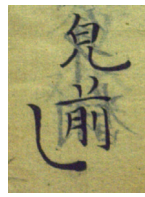
hui 1, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>



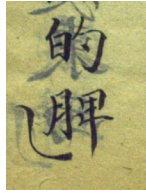
hui 2, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>



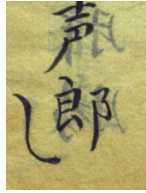
hui 3, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>



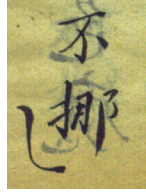
hui 4, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>



hui 5, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>

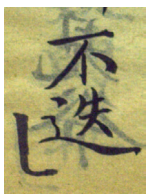


hui 6, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>

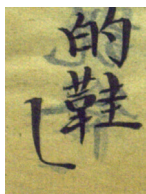


hui 7, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>

Scribe B

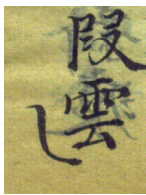


hui 8, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>

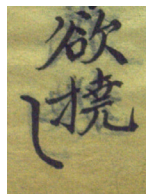


hui 8, fol. 2<sup>r</sup>

Scribe C

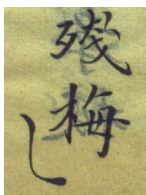


hui 9, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>

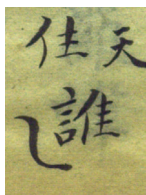


hui 10, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>

Scribe A

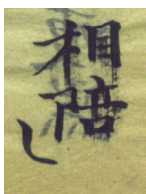


hui 11, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>

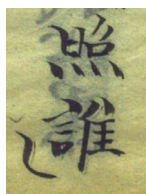


hui 11, fol. 2<sup>r</sup>

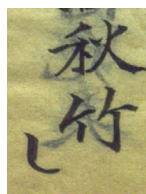
Scribe D



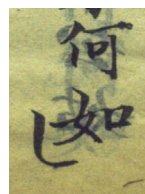
hui 11, fol. 3<sup>v</sup>



hui 11, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>



hui 12, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>



hui 12, fol. 2<sup>v</sup>

Fig. 26. Scribal hands in a 12 hui (chapter) text, *Qiao dongfeng zidi shu*, from Capital Library of China, yi 己 448, vol. 6.

## Conclusion

From anecdotal sources to manuscripts, this article has attempted to piece together a picture of Baiben Zhang's operations, while much remains to be understood – from the evolution of the scribal publisher over time to its role in the larger circulation of entertainment literature in Qing Beijing. While it may have been an outstandingly successful case, Baiben Zhang belonged to a milieu of shops that thrived on the sales of handwritten books. We might pause for a moment to reflect on the scale of their productions and the conditions that made it possible.

A sense of scale can be had from a survey of the extant literature of youth books that was so popular in Beijing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.<sup>149</sup> Among thousands of extant items, the significant proportion that bears signs of their commercial origin suggests that scribal publishers dominated the market for books in this genre. Whether by number of texts or variety of titles, the figures for extant manuscripts of commercial origin far exceed those for woodblock-printed books, pointing to Beijing's scribal publishers – Baiben Zhang foremost among them – as the leading producers of this popular regional literature. What is important to note is that the youth book was but one of a spectrum of products offered by Baiben Zhang; judging by the quantity of extant manuscripts in this genre alone, the shop's overall output must have been enormous indeed.<sup>150</sup>

The success of Baiben Zhang leads us to reflect on the urban context in which it thrived, given Beijing's vibrant cultures of entertainment; its large population of leisurely consumers, from bannermen to sojourners; and the ready pool of literate laborers in the capital, from examinees to clerks. In such a context, the advantages of a business model based on hand-copying books would have been many: from locally sourced texts to local scribal labor to a local clientele, it avoided the cost of transporting woodblocks and books while keeping products new and up-to-date. With the ease of scribal production – requiring only brush, paper, desk and copyist – it needed little initial investment, while the flexibility of handwritten production makes possible an

enormous variety of products copied on demand. If profit did not come from a huge number of copies of a single text, variety made up for it, while the wide availability of scribal labor and value attached to the calligraphic medium may have together contributed to high profit margins for the manuscripts as collectibles. In some sense, Baiben Zhang's success can be attributed to an old scribal technology put to use in a new urban context, where the changing vogues of entertainment – which saw their height in late nineteenth-century Beijing – generated desire for an ever-increasing variety of books.

Baiben Zhang and other scribal publishers formed a special milieu in China's changing book markets of the nineteenth century. In a time when new printing technologies came to be widely adopted and when commercial print publishers sought out new markets and audiences, they point to the lasting presence of a thriving, local book market tied intimately to the cultural life of the city.<sup>151</sup> Beijing's uniqueness as a locale must have been part of the story. The fondness with which Baiben Zhang is remembered with its temple markets in anecdotal sources calls attention to cycles of culturally shared time, whose own ebbs and flows in connection to technological change need further study. Just as people from far and wide came together in the space of the fair, so the books belonged to a larger flow of commodities, mixing old and new, cheap and extravagant, handwritten and printed, invented and recycled. It is within this larger context that they must be studied next.

<sup>149</sup> For detailed figures supporting the statements in this paragraph, see Lu 2018.

<sup>150</sup> For reasons that will be explored elsewhere, the youth book was privileged by collectors in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and they are much more accessible today as a corpus in libraries and archives than books in many other genres that were also important product lines for Baiben Zhang. The list in Appendix 1 gives the breakdown by genre for a large group of manuscripts collected in 1929; there the count of *zidi shu* comes after *Kun Yi* and *erhuang*.

<sup>151</sup> On China's changing book markets of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Brokaw and Reed 2010.



## APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Texts contained in Baiben Zhang manuscripts discovered  
by Liu Fu in 1929<sup>152</sup>

- 570 *erhuang* 二簧  
 460 *Kun Yi* 昆弋  
 314 *zidi shu* 子弟書  
 250 *matou diao* 馬頭調  
 125 *ganban* 趕板  
 122 *chaqu* 岔曲  
 96 *dagu shu* 大鼓書  
 85 *paizi qu* 牌子曲  
 31 *lianhua lao* 蓮花落  
 28 *kuaishu* 快書  
 12 *Huguang diao* 湖廣調  
 8 *qinqiang* 琴腔  
 3 *xijiangyue* 西江月  
 2 *bianguan diao* 邊關調  
 2 *Fujian diao* 福建調  
 2 *Jinan diao* 濟南調  
 2 *shiduohua* 十朵花  
 2 *taipingnian* 太平年  
 2 *danghuchuan* 蕩湖船  
 2 *dasijing* 大四景  
 1 *Laoting diao* 樂亭調  
 1 *xianhua diao* 鮮花調  
 1 *qunqu* 群曲  
 1 *shibeijiu* 十杯酒  
 1 *shachuangwai* 紗窗外  
 1 *xiujiuzhou* 綉九洲

Total: 2,124 texts

<sup>152</sup> Fu 1954a, 329, recounts that Liu Fu 劉復 discovered over 80 sacks of Baiben Zhang manuscripts at an unnamed Liulichang bookshop in 1929. Probably the categories in the above list (which range from names of genres to types of tunes) come from labels that are commonly found on title pages of manuscripts. Judging by Fu's wording, the numbers should refer to counts of distinct texts in each category, and not physical volumes (the term he uses is *zhong* 種 ['kind']). Fu notes that these books were all purchased by the Institute of History and Philology of the Academia Sinica under Liu's suggestion, but mistakenly records that they were lost in a shipwreck. A search for 'Baiben Zhang' through the Fu Sinian Library's electronic catalog today reveals several hundred items – there may be many more that were not catalogued as such but in fact come from Baiben Zhang.

Appendix 2: Extant sales catalogs and other lists from various scribal publishers<sup>153</sup>

Table 1: Sales catalogs, listed by house.

Title <sup>154</sup>	Collection and shelfmark (where known)
<b>Baiben Zhang 百本張</b>	
Catalog of youth books	Capital Library of China, <i>yi</i> 己1008 <sup>155</sup>
<i>Erhuang xi mulu</i> 二簧戲目錄 (Catalog of <i>erhuang</i> opera)	Capital Library of China, <i>yi</i> 己1008
<i>Gaoqiang xi mulu</i> 高腔戲[目錄] (Catalog of <i>gao qiang</i> opera)	Capital Library of China, <i>ding</i> 丁6610
<i>Zidi shu mulu</i> 子弟書目錄 (Catalog of youth books)	Capital Library of China, <i>yi</i> 己473
<i>Zidi shu mulu</i> 子弟書目錄 (Catalog of youth books)	Capital Library of China, <i>yi</i> 己459
<i>Erhuang xi mulu</i> 二簧戲目錄 (Catalog of <i>erhuang</i> opera)	Chinese National Academy of Arts <sup>156</sup>
<i>Erhuang xi mulu</i> 二簧戲目錄 (Catalog of <i>erhuang</i> opera)	Chinese National Academy of Arts <sup>157</sup>
<i>Dagu shu dan</i> 大鼓書單 (List of big-drum tales)	Chinese National Academy of Arts <sup>158</sup>
<i>Gaoqiang xi mulu</i> 高腔戲目錄 (Catalog of <i>gao qiang</i> opera)	Chinese National Academy of Arts <sup>159</sup>
<i>Matou diao shangqu dan</i> 馬頭調上趣單 (Catalog of port tunes)	Chinese National Academy of Arts <sup>160</sup>
<i>Matou diao shangqu mulu</i> 馬頭調上嘯目錄 (Catalog of port tunes)	Chinese National Academy of Arts <sup>161</sup>
<i>Zidi shu mulu</i> 子弟書目錄 (Catalog of youth books)	Chinese National Academy of Arts <sup>162</sup>
<i>Zidi shu mulu</i> 子弟書目錄 (Catalog of youth books)	Chinese National Academy of Arts <sup>163</sup>
Catalog of big-drum tales	Kansai University, L23 D 6478 <sup>164</sup>
<b>Bieyetang 別堃堂</b>	
<i>Geyang kuaishu mulu</i> 各樣快書目錄 (Catalog of various fast tales)	Chinese National Academy of Arts <sup>165</sup>
<i>Zidi shu mulu</i> 子弟書目錄 (Catalog of youth books)	Chinese National Academy of Arts <sup>166</sup>
Catalog of youth books	Hebei University Library <sup>167</sup>
<b>Juuantang 聚卷堂</b>	
<i>Bajiao gu shidao qu lianzhu diao paizi qu qingdan</i> 八角鼓時道曲連珠調牌子曲清單 (Clear list of linked tunes: eight-cornered drum songs, tunes-of-the-times, jingles)	Capital Library, <i>yi</i> 己1008 <sup>168</sup>
<b>Leshantang 樂善堂</b>	
Catalog of youth books	Fu Sinian Library, Tj27-212 <sup>169</sup>

<sup>153</sup> All the items listed below are manuscripts. I have assembled this provisional list from archival visits and various secondary sources, but there may be still more items that are extant. Typically, sales catalogs from scribal publishers contain lists of titles with prices and are themselves marked with a price. Below, they are listed by house where known, and ordered alphabetically by collection. Catalogs from the Fu Sinian Library whose provenance needs further research are listed separately. Finally, in cases where the status of an item is not clear to me (e.g. I have not seen it and a secondary source says that it does not contain prices), or where it is clearly a list of a different kind (e.g., an inventory), I have indicated this in a footnote and listed the item under the section ‘Other’ at the end of this appendix. The catalogs of youth books have thus far received the most scholarly attention; see Chen 2003b, Cui 2005, 117–119, and Huang 2012, 2–3, which includes photo reprints of pages from several of them. Huang et al. 2012b, vol. 10, has made available the catalogs from Bieyetang and Leshantang in typeset form and includes a list of titles collated from several Baiben Zhang catalogs. The collation notes do not, however, point out all the differences between the list and what is contained in the manuscripts used for collation.

<sup>154</sup> The titles on manuscripts are listed (in italics) where known; otherwise a description is given.

<sup>155</sup> *Yi* 己1008 contains a series of manuscripts from Baiben Zhang and Jujuantang, rebound into nine volumes. The title accompanying this shelfmark in the library’s electronic catalog is *Jujuantang Li, Baiben Zhang suochoao zaqu* 聚卷堂李、百本張所抄雜曲 (Miscellaneous songs copied by Jujuantang Li and Baiben Zhang). This and the next item have been rebound together into one volume; it is missing its title page.

<sup>156</sup> This catalog is described in Fu 1954a, 319–321. Manuscripts from Fu Xihua’s personal collection, which went to the Chinese National Academy of Arts, are not presently accessible to the public.

<sup>157</sup> See Fu 1954a, 321–322.

<sup>158</sup> See Fu 1954a, 325.

<sup>159</sup> Fan 2010, 123, citing Zhang Geng 張庚 and Guo Hancheng 郭漢城 (eds),

*Zhongguo xiqu tongshi* 中國戲曲通史 (Zhongguo xiqu chubanshe, 1992), 918, reveals that this catalog is held by the Materials Office of the Drama Research Institute at the Chinese National Academy of Arts 中國藝術研究院戲曲研究所資料室.

<sup>160</sup> See Fu 1954a, 326–327.

<sup>161</sup> See Fu 1954a, 327–338.

<sup>162</sup> See Fu 1954a, 322–324.

<sup>163</sup> See Fu 1954a, 324–325.

<sup>164</sup> Huang 2011, 147 mentions that Nagasawa Kikuya had acquired two catalogs, one being a catalog of big-drum tales from Baiben Zhang (the other item is unspecified). This would seem to be the item with shelfmark L23 D 6478, described as *Daiko shū daimoku oyobi enryō* 大鼓書題目及演料 (Titles and prices of big-drum tales) in the Kansai University library online catalog. Elsewhere, Huang describes a Baiben Zhang ‘changben mulu’ 唱本目錄 at Kansai from the former collection of Nagasawa (see Huang 2013, 8), but does not specify its title or the genre(s) contained in it, so it is not clear to me if there are in fact two Baiben Zhang catalogs at Kansai.

<sup>165</sup> Chen 2003a, 24 and Chen 2017, 51–54 and 149.

<sup>166</sup> See Fu 1954b, 14–15.

<sup>167</sup> Cui 2005, 119.

<sup>168</sup> This particular catalog contains lists of titles and volumes, without prices; given that the title page is labeled with a price, I have classified it as a sales catalog.

<sup>169</sup> The library’s electronic catalog gives its title as *Zidi dagu shu mulu* 子弟大鼓書目錄 (Catalog of youth books and big-drum tales), following what is written on the first folio inside the book, but this folio does not belong with the others (the book has been rebound and the original title page is no longer extant). This is a catalog of youth books and does not contain big-drum tales.

Table 2: Catalogs at the Fu Sinian Library for further study.<sup>170</sup>

Title in the library's electronic catalog	Shelfmark
<i>Dagu shu mu</i> 大鼓書目	Tj27-210
<i>Dagu shu mu</i> 大鼓書目	Tj27-211
<i>Zidi shu mulu</i> 子弟書目錄	Tj27-213
<i>Dagu shu mulu</i> 大鼓書目錄	Tj27-214
<i>Zidi dagu shu mulu</i> 子弟大鼓書目錄	Tj27-215
<i>Dagu shu mulu</i> 大鼓書目錄	Tj27-216
<i>Dagu shu mulu</i> 大鼓書目錄	Tj28-217
<i>Dagu shu mulu</i> 大鼓書目錄	Tj28-218
<i>Za paizi mulu</i> 雜牌子目錄	Tj28-219
<i>Matou diao mulu</i> 馬頭調目錄	Tj28-220
<i>Erhuang mulu</i> 二簧目錄	Tj28-221
<i>Zaqu mulu</i> 雜曲目錄	Tj28-222
<i>Zaqu mulu</i> 雜曲目錄	Tj28-223
<i>Matou diao mulu</i> 馬頭調目錄	Tj28-224
<i>Matou diao mulu</i> 馬頭調目錄	Tj28-225
<i>Matou diao mulu</i> 馬頭調目錄	Tj28-226
<i>Kunqiang mulu</i> 昆腔目錄	Tj29-227
<i>Gaoqiang, Kun qiang mulu</i> 高腔.昆腔目錄	Tj29-228
<i>Gaoqiang, Kun qiang mulu</i> 高腔.昆腔目錄	Tj29-229
<i>Gaoqiang, Kun qiang mulu</i> 高腔.昆腔目錄	Tj29-230
<i>Gaoqiang mulu</i> 高腔目錄	Tj29-231
<i>Erhuang, Kunqiang mulu</i> 二簧.昆腔目錄	Tj30-232
<i>Erhuang mulu</i> 二簧目錄	Tj30-233
<i>Erhuang mulu</i> 二簧目錄	Tj30-234
<i>Zengbu erhuang mulu</i> 增補二簧目錄	Tj30-235
<i>Xin erhuang mulu</i> 新二簧目錄	Tj31-236
<i>Erhuang mulu</i> 二簧目錄	Tj31-237
<i>Za qu mulu</i> 雜曲目錄	Tj31-238
<i>Matou diao mulu</i> 馬頭調目錄	Tj31-239

Table 3: Other.

Description	Collection and shelfmark (where known)
List of songs in various genres	Chinese National Academy of Arts <i>qu</i> 曲 309.60 / 0.198 <sup>171</sup>
Inventory	Fu Sinian Library, Tj28-225 <sup>172</sup>
Inventory	Fu Sinian Library, Tj31-240 <sup>173</sup>
Copy of a catalog of youth books (?)	Hebei University Library <sup>174</sup>
Catalog of youth books (?)	National Library of China, <i>wen</i> 文 571 <sup>175</sup>
Catalog of youth books (?)	Unclear <sup>176</sup>
Catalog of youth books (?)	Unclear <sup>177</sup>

<sup>170</sup> These are catalogs at the library whose provenance needs further research. For each item, I have given the title listed in the library’s online catalog, but they do not in all cases accurately reflect the content of the books. All the manuscripts have been rebound, and most are missing their original covers/title pages. A number contain partial folios from what originally were multiple catalogs. Tj27-210, Tj27-211, Tj27-213 and Tj30-234 contain title pages bearing Baiben Zhang stamps, but in at least one case (Tj27-213), the differences in paper suggest that the folios did not originally all belong together. I did not find stamps from copying houses in the other items, but they share the usual sales catalog format of listing prices beneath titles. I have arranged the list by shelfmark.

<sup>171</sup> This item, dated to 1886, is described as *Ganban paizi kuaishu chaqu matou diao geyang qumu* 趕板牌子快書岔曲馬頭調各樣曲目 (List of various swift beats, linked tunes, fast tales, ditties, and port tunes) in Huang 2012, 7; also see Chen 2017, 51–54. It is not clear to me if it is in fact a sales catalog from a scribal publisher, as these manuscripts are hardly ever dated.

<sup>172</sup> This single sheet, containing a list of abbreviated titles with notes, is rebound together with a sales catalog.

<sup>173</sup> This item of nine folios contains running lists of titles in various genres, with triangles indicating tallies. The first seven folios form one inventory, and the last two form another.

<sup>174</sup> Chen 2000, 221 note 20, suggests this may be a later-made copy of a sales catalog from Baiben Zhang (but gives no further details).

<sup>175</sup> The library’s electronic catalog gives the title of this item as *Zidi shu mulu* 子弟書目錄 (‘catalog of youth books’) and describes it as a manuscript in two volumes, dated between the second half of the nineteenth century and the early Republican period. No further information is given, but very possibly this is a sales catalog from a scribal publisher.

<sup>176</sup> This item is described in Huang 2012, 2, as a Baiben Zhang catalog of youth books from the former collection of Nagasawa Kikuya. The photo reprint of a page from the manuscript included with the description shows that titles and numbers of chapters are listed, but not prices, so it is not clear to me if it is in fact a sales catalog. The original cover of the manuscript is apparently missing (ref. Huang et al. 2012b, vol. 10, 4358). Huang does not specify the present location of this item.

<sup>177</sup> Huang 2012, 2, describes this item as a Baiben Zhang catalog with a later cover signed by the collector Lütang yinguan 綠棠吟館, ‘Complete list of youth book verses, a base copy from Baiben Zhang’ (*Zidi shu ciqun quanmu Baiben Zhang diben* 子弟書詞曲全目 百本張底本). That it is described as a ‘base copy’ raises the question whether it is in fact a sales catalog. Huang does not specify the present location of this item.

Appendix 3: Announcement from Baiben Zhang<sup>178</sup>

## 計開石派書列後

風波亭一部現有

九頭案以後，從南俠暗行、婆子哭墓起，合計六十餘本，要者定抄。再，本堂有數樣石韻之書未能得全，現在託人挽轉。全行得妥，較正明白，再行定抄可也。

今將未能得妥之石派書名列后

四郎探母	五本十六回
三矮奇聞	三本九回
義俠記	十本三十回
混元盒	兩本六回
鳳儀亭	兩本六回
長坂坡	兩本六回
下河南	五本十五回
長生殿	兩本六回
二心閨 <small>即真假幻</small>	兩本六回
二度霖	八本三十二回
仙俠緣 <small>聊齋紅玉</small>	兩本六回
綺閣春 <small>聊齋馬介甫</small>	四本十二回
謗閭醒夢	兩本六回
撞天婚	兩本六回

京都百本張具<sup>179</sup>

<sup>178</sup> I am grateful for Prof. Chen Jinzhao for generously sharing this source with me. I do not know the shelfmark for this item at the Fu Sinian Library. The text appears to be complete on a single sheet of paper. The punctuation below is mine.

<sup>179</sup> The characters *jingdu Baiben Zhang* 京都百本張 come from a stamp, while the character *ju* 具 is handwritten.

List of pending Shi-style tales to follow

The title *The Pavilion of Trouble* is readily available.

As for the plot after *The Case of the Nine Heads*, from *Secret Ventures of the Southern Knight* to *The Old Woman Weeps at the Grave*, there are a total of over sixty volumes. They can be copied to order upon demand. Moreover, there are a number of Shi-style tales that this house has not been able to obtain in their entirety; at present we have employed someone to look for the missing parts, and the texts can be copied to order once they are complete and corrected.

For the moment, those incomplete Shi-style tales are listed as follows:

*Silang Visits His Mother*, 16 chapters in 5 volumes

*Marvels of the Three Midgets*, 9 chapters in 3 volumes

*The Knights' Chronicle*, 30 chapters in 10 volumes

*The Box of Primordial Chaos*, 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*The Phoenix Pavilion*, 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*The Battle at Changban Hill*, 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*Going down to Henan*, 15 chapters in 5 volumes

*The Palace of Everlasting Life*, 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*Battle of the Two Minds* (i.e. *The Illusion of Reality*), 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*The Second Bloom*, 32 chapters in 8 volumes

*The Fairy and the Knight* (or *Hongyu*, from *Strange Tales of Liaozhai*), 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*Spring at the Pavilion* (or *Ma Jiefu*, from *Strange Tales of Liaozhai*), 12 chapters in 4 volumes

*Reprimanding Yama and Waking from the Dream*, 6 chapters in 2 volumes

*A Marriage by Heaven's Arrangement*, 6 chapters in 2 volumes

From Baiben Zhang of the Capital

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