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Man of Letters, Self-ordained Minister, and Madman: Jiang Dunfu (1808-1867) in
Nineteenth-Century Shanghai

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Master of Arts
in Asian Studies

by

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September 2018

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August 2018

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Nineteenth-Century Shanghai

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Chang Xu

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ABSTRACT

Man of Letters, Self-ordained Minister, and Madman: Jiang Dunfu (1808-1867) in
Nineteenth-Century Shanghai

by

Chang Xu

Examining Jiang Dunfu (1808-1867) in his different and even contradicting roles, this thesis aims to explore the manifold, problematic identity of the man and his fraught intellectual transformation in the historical context of late Qing China. Individuals' writings and expressions are shaped by particular social and cultural forces, yet simultaneously connected with the tradition from which they originated. In general, accounts of the earliest phase of China's modernization focus on "progressive" individuals' reactions to the new era, but it is also essential to ask how "conservative" individuals substantiated their values and defined themselves in the transformative period. By exploring Jiang Dunfu and making a place for traditional individuals like him, this thesis attempts to contribute to the study of Chinese intellectual life during the downfall of the Qing.

This thesis is organized into three interconnected sections. In consideration of his literary production, Chapter One sketches Jiang Dunfu's role as an educated man. Using his proposals as the major sources, Chapter Two focuses on his unsuccessful attempts endeavored to reinvigorate the declining Qing. Lastly, Chapter Three examines Jiang Dunfu's lifelong struggle and identity conflicts as an intellectual living through the last

decades of imperial China in the context of the label “madness” (*kuang*)—a time-honored identity marker in traditional Chinese literati culture. It emphasizes this significant perspective of Jiang Dunfu and will shed light on what the notion of “madness” discloses about the man and his time. At large, this study demonstrates how some intellectuals trained in classical learning lived and acclimated to the earliest phase of modernization in nineteenth-century Shanghai.

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Introduction

Jiang Dunfu 蔣敦復 (courtesy name Kefu 克夫; style name Jianren 劍人, 1808-1867), was active in the late Qing period. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Qing dynasty was under pressure from both internal strain and foreign intrusion, namely, bureaucratic corruption, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (1851-1864), the Opium Wars, and missionaries. The impact of such a transitional period on individuals' lives, ideas, and roles can hardly be exaggerated.

In recent years, many studies have focused on the reactions and contributions of individual scholars during this earliest phase of China's modernization. Paul A. Cohen, for instance, examines Wang Tao's 王韜 (1828-1897) perspectives on the new world. Viewing him as "an experiencer of history," Cohen argues that Wang assumed Chinese core values were indestructible and advocated institutional changes based on traditional culture.¹ Similarly, after examining the *Treatise on the Sea Kingdoms* 海國圖志, Jane Kate Leonard argues that Wei Yuan 魏源 (1792-1841) was a traditional reformer who tried to restore China's strength in the Asian maritime world.² These two studies are examples of scholars "understand[ing] the Chinese perspective from within," focusing not only on "Western-inspired" transformation, but also on reforms along traditional Chinese lines.³

Nevertheless, those who received attention, such as Wang Tao and Wei Yuan, were comparatively progressive and were thought to have probably influenced the thinking of

¹ Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, 6.

² Leonard, *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, 27.

³ Wang, "Foreword," *Wei Yuan and China's Rediscovery of the Maritime World*, xiv.

later revolutionary figures like Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927) and Sun Yat-sen 孫中山 (1866-1925). Those who did not have “innovative views” from the modern perspective and who were more “reserved” about the West are nonetheless overshadowed. Jiang Dunfu, for example, is mentioned mostly and merely as Wang Tao’s close friend, despite his literary achievement and the political motivations he shared with other intellectuals. However, Jiang’s insistence on traditional values and his unsuccessful attempts in offering advice to the Qing government reflected the general frustrations of Chinese scholars in the early nineteenth century. By examining Jiang Dunfu and making a place for individuals like him, this thesis attempts to contribute to the study of Chinese intellectual life during the downfall of the Qing. A principal emphasis of this study is to see how these intellectuals trained in classical learning lived and acclimated to the earliest phase of modernization.

When referring to the group of men of letters who received a traditional education but did not attain a position in officialdom, I draw on Catherine Vance Yeh’s definition and use the term *wenren* 文人, or “intellectuals.”⁴ Neither “intellectuals” nor other terms such as “literati,” “gentry,” and “local elites” have clear-cut categories. Benjamin A. Elman extends the definition of “literati” from official-scholars to “selected members of the gentry who maintained their status as cultural elites primarily through classical scholarship, knowledge of lineage ritual, and literary publication.”⁵ Philip Kuhn has pointed out that it is difficult to draw the boundary line of gentry, and whether lowest civil exam degree holders such as Jiang Dunfu belonged to the gentry class is debatable.⁶ Meanwhile, it is not likely that Jiang Dunfu can be defined as a member of the local elite since he did not “exercise dominance

⁴ Yeh, “The Life-Style of Four Wenren in Late Qing Shanghai,” 420.

⁵ Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations of Late Imperial China*, xvii.

⁶ Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China*, 3.

[with their social and economic power] within a local arena.”⁷ These men of letters must be defined broadly, in such a way that characterizes their literacy and their detachment from official appointments and local influence. According to Kōjirō Yoshikawa, *wenren* was first used in the Yuan dynasty to address “those literati who were not officials and who devoted themselves to literature and art while often displaying a degree of eccentricity or deviation from accepted norms.”⁸ In her article, Yeh elaborates on the features of the nineteenth-century intellectuals as follows:

...as a member of the gentry class, he grew up in a traditional village or a small-town environment; he received a traditional education and obtained some kind of degree through the imperial examinations; his attitude towards the West changed from hostility to curiosity and finally to acceptance; he might have learned a foreign language, but he saw no conflict between this and his classical learning; reading through translations of Western philosophy, social theories, and literature, he became aware of Western civilization; he might have gone abroad on a government investigating tour, worked in Chinese embassies, or have been sent by the government as a student, leaving to posterity diaries, travelogues, and collections of poetry that he wrote with the purpose of publication.⁹

For my purposes, “intellectual” is applicable in the way that it encompasses the group’s disengagement from the dynastic bureaucracy but maintains its association with cultural production. Though Jiang Dunfu did not meet all the above characteristics, it is reasonable to identify Jiang and those who shared the same standing as “intellectuals” in Qing China.

Jiang Dunfu provides a salient example of an individual’s struggle to adapt to an age of dramatic historical changes because he assumed multiple roles available in his time—his identities as a poet, social critic, and missionary assistant made him a rich historical

⁷ This definition is provided by Joseph Esherick and Mary Rankin. See Esherick and Rankin eds. *Chinese Local Elites*, 11.

⁸ Yoshikawa’s argument is quoted in Huang, *Literati and Self-Re/Presentation*, 29.

⁹ Yeh, “The Life-Style of Four Wenren in Late Qing Shanghai,” 420.

personage. The copious writings he left behind are also a valuable aid in understanding this figure. Despite all this, there are only a few studies of Jiang Dunfu. To my knowledge, other than the biographies of Jiang, there are three master's theses and five journal articles, and they primarily approach Jiang as a lyricist.¹⁰ This study attempts to explore Jiang's literary practice besides his songwriting, and to consider also his public persona. The historical Jiang Dunfu was a multifaceted man of conflicting traits. He was a talented and well-received poet, and poetry was an inseparable part of his life; yet he stated that his ambition was not in poetry. As a self-proclaimed "recluse" 山人 (*shanren*), he revealed his hope to isolate himself from the mundane world; yet he attempted throughout his life to offer strategies for defeating the Taiping armies. As a social critic, he saw the corruption of officialdom; yet he took the provincial examination five times in the hope of attaining a position in the system. He once stayed in a monastery but did not undertake the Five Precepts. He was a missionary assistant but openly criticized the British constitution and Catholicism. Examining the man in his different and even contradicting roles, this thesis aims to explore the manifold,

¹⁰ The biographies of Jiang include Zhang's "Tianan shi xu" 鐵案詩序, Xu's "Jiang Dunfu" 蔣敦復, Teng's *Jiang Jianren xiansheng nianpu* 蔣劍人先生年譜, Wang's "Jiang Jianren yishi" 蔣劍人軼事, "You ji Jiang Jianren shi" 又記蔣劍人事 and "Gong Jiang liang jun yishi" 龔蔣兩君軼事. The master's theses are Feng's "Lun Jiang Dunfu de cixue piping yiji cifeng" 论蒋敦复的词学批评以及词风, Zhang's "Jiang Dunfu ci jiqi cixue zhuzhang tanjiu" 蒋敦复词及其词学主张探究 and Wang's "Jiang Dunfu Xiaogutang shiji yanjiu" 蒋敦复啸古堂诗集研究. The journal articles are: Sun, "'Yi wu hou ru you jian' yu 'you hou u wu jian'" "以无厚入有间"与"有厚入无间", 292-296; Yang, "Gudang gexing de hunhan: Jiang Dunfu 'you hou u wu jian' bian" 鼓荡个性的浑涵——蒋敦复"有厚入无间"辨, 41-44; Zhu, "Jiang Dunfu 'you hou ru wu jian' de cixue guan" 蒋敦复"有厚入无间"的词学观, 167-173; Zhu, "Jiang Dunfu cixue shiye de zhuanbian he Jiaxuan lun" 蒋敦复词学视野的转变与稼轩论, 306-311; and Mo, "Jiang Dunfu de ci chuanguo ji Jiang Dunfu xianxiang de wenhua yiyi" 蒋敦复的词创作及蒋敦复现象的文化意义, 135-158.

problematic identity of Jiang Dunfu and his fraught intellectual transformation in the historical context of late Qing China.

I have divided my thesis into three chapters. Like most traditional Chinese intellectuals who subscribed to the Confucian ideal of public service and self-cultivation, Jiang Dunfu embodied the roles of both a man of letters and a social critic. Chapter One sketches Jiang's role as an educated man in consideration of his literary production. His published works include one collection of poems (*shi*), one collection of song lyrics (*ci*), one collection of criticisms on song lyrics (*cihua*), and one collection of essays (*wen*). His own autobiographical accounts, poems, letters, prefaces, and other writings are the primary sources for this study. He began writing as early as thirteen years old, and his underlying autobiographical impulse makes his work a self-record of his internal world and external activities. The themes of his work range from recording social events to uttering unfulfilling ambition to remembering the past, and the functions of his work range from recording, to self-expressing, to communicating with his contemporaries. By examining Jiang's poetry and prose, this chapter aims to identify major themes in his literary collections and to illustrate how an examination of his writings will aid in the reconstruction of Jiang's life and the world and time in which he lived.

While the first chapter explores the literary aspect of Jiang Dunfu as an educated man, Chapter Two focuses on his unsuccessful attempts to reinvigorate the declining Qing. Jiang Dunfu pursued a statecraft scholarship 經世之學 (*jingshi zhi xue*) passionately in hopes of saving the unraveling dynasty.¹¹ Using his proposals of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and

¹¹ For the translation of *jingshi*, I follow Timothy Brook's choice as "statecraft." Brook has noted that "the term [*jingshi*] is conventionally translated using the slightly archaic 'statecraft,' though a more literal translation of the embedded textile metaphor, 'the wrap of

Western affairs as the major sources, this chapter examines Jiang's interpretation of the Qing's ongoing social and political problems. In particular, it studies his suggestions regarding the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and Western newcomers. His suggestions on the latter topic touch upon issues including Catholic missionaries, British constitutions, and Sino-Western trade. By looking into Jiang's advice, this chapter hopes to shed light on classical intellectuals' reactions toward local rebellions and Western philosophies.

The final chapter examines Jiang Dunfu's lifelong struggle and identity conflicts as an intellectual living through the last decades of imperial China in relation to the image of "madness" 狂 (*kuang*)—a time-honored identity marker in traditional Chinese literati culture. In view of his minority position, Jiang's proposals and angry outcry, together with his unrestrained personality, struck his contemporaries as bizarre and contributed to his reputation of being "wild" or "mad." On the one hand, madness was an individual characteristic; on the other hand, the appearance of madness was a result of Jiang's multifaceted identities during a period of fluctuation between tradition and modernity, and the disjunction between his ambition and reality. The last chapter will emphasize this significant perspective of Jiang Dunfu and will shed light on what the notion of "madness" discloses about the man and his time.

Lastly, the conclusion will draw parallels between Jiang and his contemporaries in Shanghai, especially Wang Tao and Li Shanlan 李善蘭 (1810-1882)—together known as "The Three Madmen of Shanghai" 海上三狂士 (*haishang san kuangshi*) and "The Three

age,' gets closer to what those who subscribed to this ideal thought was their proper task as servants of the emperor: to consider every policy and practice of the state so as to improve the lives and morale of the people." See Brook, "The Artful Life of the Late-Ming Recluse," *The Artful Recluse*, 52.

Odd Fellows” 三異民 (*san yi min*). The frustrations and lifestyles shared by these figures will demonstrate that the notion of madness was not limited to an individual figure but applied to a large group of intellectuals in early nineteenth century China.

Chapter One

The Man of Letters

By the end of his lifetime, Jiang Dunfu left behind 392 published poems (*shi*), 236 song lyrics (*ci*) and 89 essays (*wen*). His poetry, letters, travel accounts, and other genres of self-reflective writing reveal his inner thoughts and his perspective on nineteenth-century China. Among all the writings, Jiang's poetry in the form of *shi* and *ci* expresses his innermost thoughts and records his life in the most personal and subjective way. Grace S. Fong cogently points out the autobiographical potential of poetry as received in Chinese culture: "While there existed other modes and genres of self-writing—from the autobiographical preface framing the author's own collection, to a range of prose records, including travel essays, autobiographical tomb inscriptions, and fiction—poetry remained, for the majority of educated men and women, particularly in the late imperial period, the most prevalent medium of self-representation."¹ In Jiang Dunfu's case, poetry served as the primary outlet for his emotions and illustrated his resentment towards war and his bitterness towards his underappreciation. It also served as a record of the poet's daily life activities, such as traveling and social gatherings. Studying Jiang Dufun's literary works is essential to understand who he was and allows us to reconstruct his internal and external worlds. This chapter accordingly focuses on his literary production, especially poetry, and examines the major themes in his writing (warfare, unfulfilled ambition, remembrance of the past, traveling, and communal writings).

¹ Fong, *Herself an Author*, 10.

Jiang's Early Education

In 1806, Jiang Dunfu was born into a modest gentry family in Baoshan 宝山, a north-eastern district of present-day Shanghai. According to record, his paternal grandfather, Jiang Yiyuan 蔣一元 (1742-1800), was an established poet. Jiang Dunfu's father, Jiang Hengtai 蔣亨泰 (fl. 1808), was also a poet and passed the county-level civil service exam at the age of seventeen.² Jiang Taiheng's example and the common goal of entering officialdom ensured that Jiang Dunfu would pursue a classical education in order to prepare for the civil examinations. Under the supervision of his father, he began formal education at the age of five and started composing poems at the age of thirteen.³ His extraordinary skills shown at an early age impressed his teacher and were recorded in his later account: "I was outstandingly intelligent at a young age. I had finished learning the thirteen classics by the age of nine all through education at home" 山人幼聰穎，九歲畢十三經，皆庭訓。⁴ His upbringing in a scholar-official family and his preparations in the civil service exams formed the basis for Jiang's vast knowledge of Chinese literature and history. His family, with at least two generations of poets, also stimulated his early endeavor in literary production and encouraged him to continue the literary tradition. Although Jiang left his family at sixteen, writing remained a major medium of self-recording and self-representation in his lifetime.⁵

² Jiang, "Linong shanren zixu," *Xiaogu tang wenji*, 1.

³ Jiang, "Shang fubu houguan gong shu," *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.3, 1.

⁴ The Thirteen Classics (*shisan jing* 十三經) is a group of thirteen Confucian classics that became the basis for Civil Service Examination in the Song dynasty. See Jiang's "Linong shanren zixu," *Xiaogu tang wenji*, 1. Jiang's anecdote at his early age can be found in Wang Tao's record "Jiang Jianren yishi," *Wengyou yu tan*, vol.1, 18.

⁵ According to Jiang's record, his father died, and his mother had conflicts with her mother-in-law and was expelled permanently to her natal family when he was sixteen. According to Wang Tao's record, Jiang Dunfu left his family left home in a fit of anger. See Wang's "Jiang Jianren yishi," *Weng you yu tan*, 18.

Jiang's Literary Themes

Jiang Dunfu started writing poetry at thirteen years old. Similar to other Chinese traditional scholars, his writings illustrate the poet's various motives of literary production. As Stephen Owen has summarized, scholars wrote "to complain about a social abuse, to explain one's position in a political crisis, to state one's most cherished values, to give an account of visiting a mountain, to talk about depression, or even just to tell what the poet did that day."⁶ Despite his various literary genres, Jiang's works are coherent with his experience and are an inseparable part of his life. His criticism of social abuses and his position on Qing dynasty crises are most evident in his writings on warfare; his depression and cherished values are illustrated in writings on unfulfilled ambitions and remembrance of the past; and his daily activities can be explored through his travel poems. In addition to expressive and reflective functions, Jiang's works helped to create networks within his literary society. This section, therefore, is devoted to these themes and explores how Jiang Dunfu gave voice to himself and built connections with others through his agency as a writer.

Warfare

The theme of war is frequently found in traditional Chinese poetry. The first half of the nineteenth century was a period on the brink of catastrophic and revolutionary change. Living in the lower Yangtze Delta for most of his life, Jiang Dunfu witnessed these major historical events: the First Opium War, the Small Sword Society, and the Taiping

⁶ Owen, "Poetry in the Chinese Tradition," *Heritage of China*, 295.

Rebellion.⁷ The following poem, “The Wusong District Falls into the Enemy’s Hand, While Martyrs Died Heroic Deaths, Numerous Official Fled or Were Utterly Defeated. Written to Record My Indignation” 吳淞失守，有死事甚烈者，逃潰文武亦眾，書以志憤， was written in the fifth month of 1842. It was the last year of the First Opium War, when the British army defeated and humiliated the Qing. To an intellectual who hoped to reinvigorate the state but continuously saw its failures, these wars were disheartening. Criticism of the Qing army and praise for the martyrs are recurring themes in Jiang’s writings:

Even women know to recite “Small Chariot,”⁸
 How can men act like spineless worms?
 The isolated city was burnt to ashes, and the wind remained violent.
 Martyrs called out in one voice; they were heroic even as ghosts.
 Jin Bi had troops, but they were all onlookers,
 Yafu [was known for his commands], but he could not bring the Qing
 soldiers into order.
 Wusong is full of the sounds of crying, and the dark green river is cold.
 The wind whistles forlornly through the reeds, and the sun cast its light on
 emptiness.⁹

女子猶知賦小戎，男兒那作可憐蟲。
 孤城一燼風猶烈，義士同聲鬼亦雄。
 晉鄙有軍皆壁上，亞夫無令在師中。
 吳淞野哭滄江冷，蘆葦蕭蕭夕照空。

Writing about the wars meant more than just a record to Jiang Dunfu. “Most pre-twentieth-century Chinese poet[s] served in the government” as J.D. Schmidt points out, “so the

⁷ The Small Sword Society 小刀會 is an underground anti-Qing organization that led an uprising in Shanghai and took over the city in 1850s. A brief introduction on the Small Sword Society can be found in Li, “Small Sword Society (1853-1855),” 413-416.

⁸ “Small Chariot” is a poem from *The Book of Odes*; it features a female voice which praises the fine chariots and yearns for a husband who went out to battle. The translated “Small Chariot” can be found in Legge, trans., *The Chinese Classics*, 193.

⁹ Jiang, *Xiaogu tang shiji*, vol. 5, 8.

connection between poetry and politics has always been close in China.”¹⁰ Despite Jiang Dunfu’s detachment from officialdom, because of his patriotic sentiment and his passion in statecraft, his poetry also served as a political means for him. In the poem cited above, he makes a mockery of the commanders and soldiers who fled the battlefield during the Battle of Wusong.¹¹ In the third line, he employs two allusions to satirize the Qing soldiers’ futility and disorder. Jin Bi (d. 257 BCE) was a general during the Warring States Period but acted as an onlooker and “watched the fighting from behind the rampart,”¹² and Yafu was a Han general who had the reputation of giving strict military orders. Using these two classic examples, the poet intended to criticize the Qing forces. Likewise, in the second line, “they were heroic even as ghosts” is a reference to Qu Yuan’s 屈原 (340-278 BCE) “To the Fallen State Martyr” 國殤, a literary piece from the Warring States Period praising the martyrs’ loyalty to the dynasty. By referring to this work and comparing cowardly action and loyal sacrifices, Jiang Dunfu illustrated his respect for those who sacrificed and his disappointment in those who fled.

Besides the Qing troop’s cowardice, Jiang Dunfu also repeatedly wrote about the soldiers’ misbehavior and exploitation of locals. The following poem, written in 1860 during

¹⁰ Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm*, viii.

¹¹ During the Battle of Wusong, Niu Jian 牛鑿 (1785-1858), the viceroy of Liangjiang, Wang Zhiyuan 王志元 (? - 1842), the commander of Xuzhou, Cui Jirui 崔吉瑞 (fl. 1842), the commander of Chuansha, and Zhou Shirong 周世榮 (fl. 1842), the commander of Susong, fled with thousands of soldiers from the battlefield, which led directly to the Qing force’s defeat.

¹² Jin Bi the general of Wei in the Warring State Periods, who was commended for helping Zhao when Qin invaded. However, King Wei Anli ordered Jin Bi to stay and not act due to his fear of King Qin’s threat. *Bishang* 壁上 literarily means “on the rampart,” and is derived from the term *zuobishangguan* 作壁上觀, meaning “watching the fighting from behind the rampart” or “to be an onlooker.”

the Taiping Rebellion, shows the poet's experience at that time and his resentment of Qing troops' brutality with a preface that reads, "The soldiers harassed the commoners; I compose this poem to satirize them" 官軍擾民，蔣子作詩刺之：

Dark clouds closed in on the city, and the city looked as though it would fall.
The old and the young cried and fled.
Waving large banners, the troop entered the city from the north gate.
The generals came and encamped to avoid the bandits.
Like monkeys, they shouted and broke commoners' doors.
Like a flock of lunatics, they looted everything in the market.
We could not tell if they were bandits or soldiers.
We only saw tigers and wolves sitting in houses.
The magistrate came to take an inspection: how could you be so late!
Demanding thousands of pecks of rice from us but allowing us no time.
Our soldiers were willing to exert themselves after they were sated.
They slaughtered us commoners as though they were killing chickens.
In the morning they snatched the boats and crossed the river.
Our wives are all their slaves.
Being afraid of death, mountain people collaborated to capture rebels,
Competed to bind them up and throw them into the water.
The general ordered our execution,
Heads were hung in rows over the encampment's gate.
People's possessions in this small county seat were exhausted.
Not even one piece was left in the pawn shops.
At first, we heard the warring drums shaking in the provincial capital,
While taking comfort that the bandits were hundreds of *li* away,
[Author's Note: Fuyang was 90 *li* away from Hangzhou.]
Then we heard they were dashing like rats,
The troops chased the bandits slowly and were pleased to attack their tails
only.
Alas! The rice-consuming soldiers came,
As if locusts block the sky—a disaster for the crops.
After the rice-guzzling soldiers left,
It is as though we had suddenly recovered from diseases.
Rice-guzzling soldiers, rice-guzzling soldiers, you should be ashamed.
You have not seen how the bandits fled when the Zhang troops arrived.¹³
The first thing in military strategy is to maintain law and order.
From time immemorial, the worthy generals would not commit the slightest
offense against the civilians.¹⁴

¹³ Zhang here is mostly likely refers to Zhang Fuoliang 張國樑 (1823-1860), who governed the troops in Jiangnan area and stopped the Taiping army from going south.

¹⁴ Jiang, *Xiaogu tang shi yiji*, 8.

黑雲壓城城欲傾，老幼啼抱奔出城。
高牙大纛北門入，將軍避賊來安營。
猿猱叫擲門打破，風漢一羣市攫貨。
不知是賊是官兵，但見虎狼屋上坐。
縣令來謁爾何遲，索米千斛勿后時。
我兵得飽肯努力，殺汝百姓如殺雞。
朝來奪船渡江去，若屬妻子皆吾虜。
山民怖死合力禽，縛以投水競快睹。
將軍下令誅爾民，駢首累累懸軍門。
縣城斗大膏血竭，火汝質庫無遺禪。
始聞鼓鼙震省會，且喜去賊尚百里（富陽距杭郡三舍）。
繼聞鼠輩抱頭竄，逸賊緩追請擊尾。
吁嗟乎！米兵來，如蝗蔽天禾稼災。
米兵去，如疾在體霍然愈。
米兵米兵爾勿驕，爾不見張兵一到賊兵逃。
兵家第一整法紀，古來良將不使百姓傷秋毫。

The First Opium War was followed by massive rebellions such as that of the devastating Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. This poem, entitled “The Rice-Guzzling Soldiers are Coming” 米兵來, was written to depict the Taiping army’s invasion of Hangzhou. Like most intellectuals from a gentry background, Jiang violently opposed the Taiping rebels, but when he observed the imperial army’s occupation of Hangzhou, he was astonished by how the army inflicted cruelties upon the common folk.¹⁵ In the poem, Jiang lists the Qing soldiers’ misdeeds: burning and looting everything along the way, abducting women, and slaughtering commoners. Those who were supposed to protect the local people ironically ended up harming them, and their misbehavior caused the commoners uncertainty as to “whether they were bandits or soldiers.” In another poem, Jiang Dunfu wrote a similar line with a cold fury: “The bandits pretended to be soldiers and fled. Acting like bandits, the official troops were even worse. / Demanding gold and silk, they claimed to be bandits as a

¹⁵ For example, the paired poem to the cited piece, “Killing the Long-haired Devils” 殺長毛 opposes the rebels. Jiang, *Xiaogu tang shi yiji*, 9.

cover. People said that they were really long-haired devils” 賊軍偽作官軍逃，官軍作賊意更豪。大索金帛冒賊號，百姓道是真長毛。¹⁶ “Changmao,” meaning long hair, was a nickname for the Taiping rebels to describe their resistance against imperial hairstyle norms.¹⁷ However, this apparent physical difference between the rebels and Qing soldiers was overshadowed by the brutality that they shared. By expressing indignation in his writings, Jiang channeled his anger through his brush while admonishing the Qing soldiers that “worthy generals would not commit the slightest offense against civilians.”

In addition to poetry, narrative prose was another medium to record wars for Jiang. In 1853, when he came back to Shanghai from Nanjing, he encountered the Small Swords Society. According to Wang Tao’s record, Jiang hid in a cottage for two years and composed “The Record of My Survival on the Grassland” 草土餘生記.¹⁸ The record is chronological and documents through narrative the thirteen days that Jiang experienced in Shanghai. Despite differences in format, Jiang’s concerns about the Qing troops’ incompetence and misbehavior appear in all of his war-time writings. They do not merely record what happened or what the poet observed but also speak to his perspectives on warfare and political concerns.

In Jiang Dunfu’s works on warfare, there is little abstract discussion of philosophical principles but instead a scathing description of chaos caused by the wars. As a commoner who lost both his property and sense of security, Jiang was likely to be occupied with personal feelings and anxieties rather than more sophisticated or philosophical thinking.

¹⁶ Ibid, 9.

¹⁷ Meyer-Fong, *What Remains*, 81.

¹⁸ Wang, “Gong Jiang liang jun yishi,” *Song bing suo hua*, vol.5, *Xiang yan cong shu*, vol.14, 18. Wang Tao, “You ji Jiang Jianren shi,” *Weng you yu tan*, 19.

Unfulfilled Ambitions

Among Jiang Dunfu's writings, there is a significant number of works that express his depression, which in most cases was due to his unfulfilled ambition. The theme of unfulfilled ambition is another stock theme in traditional Chinese poetry, and it also often occurred during the nineteenth century due to corrupt officials, foreign threats, and local rebellions. Feeling anxious about the dynasty's future, intellectuals desired to put to practice their thoughts and knowledge in statecraft. Nevertheless, their advice was considered insignificant. For instance, Gong Zizhen's "criticisms and comments on political and economic problems fell on deaf ears, his official career became a source of frustration, and he had no choice but to channel his unusual talents into scholarly and literary endeavors."¹⁹ Similarly, Wang Tao once wrote, "the student hopes to dedicate himself to his country, but in vain and alone he clings to his loyalty" 書生思報國，徒此抱孤衷。²⁰ Jiang Dunfu's writings on his failed political attempts, therefore, provide another instance of the depression he shared with this generation, a depression caused by the reality and the absence of a pathway to fulfill ambition.

The following poem, entitled "On the Precious Sword" 寶劍篇, indicates the poet's feeling of being unappreciated, as he sees himself as an unwanted sword:

In this world, a man should aim to serve those who understand him.
Purified by numerous trials, the refined did not have a chance to be used.
Being abandoned in this world, one should give up.
Yet the heart that fervently wants to serve the ruler has not died.
In autumn, fish and dragons are quiet in the water,
But their long howls will still worry the ghosts.
Worth a thousand *jin* of gold, the sword waits to meet its Xue Zhu,²¹

¹⁹ Wong, *Kung Tzu-chen*, 21.

²⁰ Wang, *Henghua guan shi ji*, vol.3, 16.

²¹ Xue Zhu was a figure in the Qin state during the Spring and Autumn period, and famous for evaluating swords.

And on one day, its fame will be equivalent to *wugou*.²²
 Born a talent, it must be useful one day.
 The hands are bloody beyond recognition, and the skeletons are frozen.
 A knight has a thought about killing bandits in the dead of nights,
 A general has ambitions for accomplishments on the frontier.
 Unable to kill a bandit and to achieve any merit,
 The sword whimpers and grumbles at the bedside.
 Three foot long, its shining light is as bright as the tail of a white fairback pheasant.
 A thunderbolt strikes—it sounds like the spirit of an azure dragon.
 It is disheartened to be given to a mediocre person,
 How can you know it will not have a chance to show its talent?
 Eventually, the body will pay back the state's favor,
 When the right time comes, the exceptional sword will be picked.
 You have not seen me wearing armor and fighting on the battlefield,
 Nor have you seen me riding a horse and holding two swords in my hands.
 When the emperor orders to expand the borderland,
 I will kill enemies for the superior.

丈夫出門事知己，百煉精金未一試。
 棄擲人間亦已矣，為君慷慨心不死。
 魚龍寂寞海天秋，長嘯還令鬼魅愁。
 聲價千金逢薛燭，功名一日等吳鉤。
 天生此才必有用，手血模糊骷髏凍。
 俠客三更殺賊心，將軍萬里封侯夢。
 封侯殺賊兩無成，嗚咽床頭鳴不平。
 三尺光芒白鷗尾，一聲霹靂蒼龍精。
 付與庸奴真短氣，安知不有風雲際。
 身在終酬國士恩，時來儻擇幹將器。
 君不見，縵胡短后走沙場，躍馬風生鉄兩當。
 武皇更下開邊詔，直斬樓蘭請上方。

As the title indicates, this poem is written about a sword. However, it is not devoid of Jiang's self-representation. The sword is one of his favorite symbols for self-illustration: he adopted the courtesy names "Man of Sword" 劍人 and "Old Sword of Jiangdong" 江東老劍 when he was fifty-seven.²³ As early as in *Zhuangzi*, the phrase "talking about swords" was used as a metaphor to discuss political affairs. Meanwhile, the sword itself had become a

²² Wugou is a well-known type of machete that was found in the Wu state during the Spring and Autumn period.

²³ Teng, *Jiang Jianren nianpu*, 21.

symbol of heroic deeds. Once the symbolic implication of the sword is established, the underlying frustration of Jiang's lines becomes clear. The poet saw himself as a precious sword that is able to fend off bandits, to fight in battlefields, and to suppress the rebels at the border. However, "in autumn, fishes and dragons are quiet in the water" implies that he might not have been born at the right time. This is derived from Du Fu's 杜甫 (712-770) words "the river is cold in autumn, and fishes and dragons are quiet in the water; a peaceful life in my homeland always in my thoughts." 鱼龙寂寞秋江冷，故國平居有所思。²⁴ This line, then, demonstrates Jiang's concern for politics regardless of where he was. Meanwhile, the "mediocre people" in the ninth line suggests that Jiang may not have met the right authority who can recognize and employ his talent. In either case, this valuable sword—or the poet Jiang Dunfu himself—is lost in oblivion. Despite the melancholic tone, the poet refuses to surrender his ambition in the face of his plight, as he mentions during the latter half of this piece. "How can you know it will not have a chance to show its talent?" and the following lines reveal the poet's dedication to the right course: the poet will keep waiting for the right time and chance to offer his talents. The line "born a talent, it must be useful one day" echoes a line by Li Bo 李白 (701-762) and suggests Jiang's confidence in being appreciated one day.²⁵ Shirleen S. Wong has pointed out that the sword image is dichotomous: "the unused sword registers the anguish of unrecognized talent; the active sword romanticized knight-errantry and its attendant heroic ideals and unconventional

²⁴ The complete poem "Autumn Meditation" 秋興 can be found in Waston, trans., *Selected Poems of Du Fu*, 134.

²⁵ Li Bo's lines reads as "born a talent, I must be useful one day" 天生我材必有用. The complete poem "Bing in the Wine" 將進酒 can be found in Owen, *The Great Age of Chinese Poetry*, 125.

values.”²⁶ The sword transformed from unused to active in this poem also exemplifies Jiang’s desire to alter his status quo.

The topos of swords became popular among poets in the nineteenth century. Jiang Dunfu’s contemporaries, such as Gong Zizhen 龔自珍 (1792-1841) and Wang Tao, who shared Jiang’s determination to save the declining dynasty, all adopted the symbolic association of the sword in their poems. For instance, in order to illustrate that both the poetry (flute) and defense (sword) were his lifetime goals, Gong Zizhen wrote “the flute and the sword, the two goals of my life, have made me endure the name of a madman for fifteen years” 一簫一劍平生意，負盡狂名十五年。²⁷ Wang Tao also stated that “I would rather learn about the sword while studying books” 宁愿学书兼学剑。²⁸ Writing about the sword was not only an exercise in the artistic conventions for 19th-century intellectuals, but also a shared literary practice in which one echoed another’s similar sentiments.

Compared to his other pieces, writings such as the previously cited piece are relatively explicit in expressing Jiang Dunfu’s unfulfilled ambition. The following lyric, which embodies a similar sentiment to “Sword,” is more implicit and subtle. The lyric includes the preface, “Reading Jiang Kui’s 姜夔 (1155-1209) line ‘The articles are refined, but what can I do with them,’ I sadly write this lyric” 讀白石文章信美知何用句，慨然賦此：²⁹

The traveler’s hair grows thin,
The plum blossom should laugh at
Those who are too slender because of their sentimental nature.
Being alone, I travel around the world;
Carrying with resentment, my heart is eternal.

²⁶ Wong, *Kung Tzu-chen*, 139.

²⁷ Wong, *Kung Tzu-chen*, 38. Translation by Wong.

²⁸ Wang, *Henghua guan shi lu*, vol.4, 20.

²⁹ This line comes from Jiang Kui’s song lyrics “To the Tune of Ling Long Si Fan” 玲瓏四犯. See Jiang, *Baishi daoren gequ*, vol.4, 15.

Climbing up, Wang Can wrote “Rhapsody on Climbing the Tower.”
Looking at clouds on the Xiang River, Qu Yuan plunged himself into the water.

The tall tower stands in the northwest, but the sun rises in the southeast.
Who can understand this bitterness?

I leisurely look at the road,
Hoping to accompany a pair of swallows in the great halls of the lords.
When willow leaves become thick, orioles find no place to stay;
When flowers begin to wither, the sound of the cuckoo sound disappears.
It took ten years to sharpen a sword, but it still ends up drifting.
Alas! This difficult and lonely journey awaits
A gull who takes an oath to become my companion among rivers and lakes.³⁰

客鬢漸絲，梅花應笑，傷春人瘦如許。無憀身四海，有恨心千古。
登臨仲宣罷賦。望湘雲、渺然湘浦。西北高樓，東南日出，誰識此情
苦。

悠悠眼看行路。傍雙飛燕子，王謝門戶。柳綿鶯思窄，花落鶉聲
去。十年一劍飄零矣，嘆落落，風塵孤旅待尋得，盟鷗共江湖倦侶。

In this lyric, titled “To the Tune of Ling Long Si Fan: In Accordance with Jiang Kui’s Rhyme” 玲瓏四犯 和白石道人均, Jiang Dunfu adopts a subtler way of articulating his frustration. His bitterness of being underappreciated is implied in the last three lines of the first stanza through allusions. “Rhapsody on Climbing the Tower” was written by Wang Can 王粲 (177-217) in the late Eastern Han, and in this poem, the poet worries that he will not be treasured during that chaotic time. The Xiang River in the following line refers to the place where Qu Yuan drowned himself. By referring back to this patriotic poet and minister who was not able to execute his political ideals and advice due to corrupt ministers, Jiang Dunfu was suggesting a similarity between his and Qu Yuan’s situations and emotions. This bitterness culminates in the last sentence of the first stanza. “The tall tower stands in the

³⁰ Jiang, “Hong na ci,” *Fentuoli shi ciji*, vol. 3. 11-12.

northwest” refers to “A Tall Tower in the Northwest” 西北有高樓, the piece which is interpreted to show the poet’s sorrow of not having anyone who understands him. When writing the line “the tall tower stands in the northwest, but the sun rises in the southeast,” Jiang Dunfu was expressing his anguish at having unrecognized talent.

Remembrances of the Past

In his preface to Jiang Dunfu’s *shi* collection, Wang Tao commented that “the only slightly unsatisfactory thing is that *yuefu* poems mimicking the ancient style occupy half of the collection, while places that can demonstrate his sincere inner nature and demeanor are scarce” 所微嫌者, 樂府擬古之作居其半, 而自見真性情真面目處反少.³¹ It is true that Jiang wrote abundant pieces commemorating ancient characters and traumatic historical events. But Wang Tao might disregard implications about Jiang’s inner nature in his writing, as Wong points out that Chinese poets usually criticize political events under the title of “On Historical Events” to avoid persecution and to express values and reflections on their time.³²

One of Jiang Dunfu’s poems remembering the past reads as follows:

The white bones were buried like hemp under the Great Wall.
Who would allow that extravagant armor mix on the battle field like dog’s
teeth?
The fire burning for three months was a strange sight on earth and under
heaven.
Strong wind and thunder fiercely blew up a pile of sands.
When Meng Tian went to the north, the First Emperor’s achievements were
destroyed.
When the trail of Sichuan connected to the West, the Han family started.
With sorrow, I speak of the old moon from the Qin period.
Without a care, the ravens resided at the Xianyang palace.³³

長城白骨葬如麻, 誰許華戎錯犬牙。

³¹ Wang Tao, “Preface,” *Xiaogu tang shiji*, 1.

³² Wong, *Kung Tzu-chen*, 59.

³³ Jiang, *Xiaogu tang shi ji*, vol.1, 4.

天地奇觀三月火，風雷疾卷一椎沙。
夢恬北去銷嬴業，蜀道西連啓漢家。
愁說秦時舊明月，咸陽宮闕自栖鴉。

Entitled “On Qin Dynasty” 秦中, Jiang fills the piece with familiar references for his audience such as the Great Wall, the burning Epang Palace, and Meng Tian 蒙恬 (d. 210 BC), the general of the Qin dynasty. Instead of merely writing about the decline of the Qin, Jiang puts its deterioration and its splendor aside: the glorious Great Wall versus the bones and deserted weapons underneath, the ornate palace versus the sand and ravens. This is not the only case. “On Qin Dynasty” is one piece of Jiang’s “Eight Poems on Historical Events” 懷古詩八首, and though each pieces focus on a certain dynasty, all of them write on the devastation and transformation. The poet is addressing the irrevocable loss of dynasties, expressing an indicate apprehension of the Qing, and illustrating his political concerns with those poems on remembering the past, and these are the places that can “demonstrate his inner nature.”

The Wandering Man

Throughout his life, Jiang Dunfu attempted the provincial level of civil examinations five times. Traveling to take exams, avoiding the wars, Jiang found himself sojourning for years away from home. Therefore, traveling became another recurring theme in Jiang’s writings. His individualized element of travel writings, such as first-person anecdotes and descriptions of landscapes, not only provide an objective record of the poet’s life but also disclose a subjective account stirred by what he saw and experienced.

Jiang Dunfu had many pieces whose titles were places to which he had traveled, and they together comprise a mobility map of the poet’s movements for later generations. For

instance, the poems titled “Tiger Hill” 虎丘, “Gazing at Lu River in Evening” 菘溪晚眺 and “Swallow Rock” 燕子磯 indicate Jiang’s continuous movement within Jiangsu province.

Using these sources and local gazetteers, Teng Gu has determined that Jiang was active in today’s Nanjing, Yangzhou, Suzhou, and Shanghai.³⁴

In addition to recording their activities, poets often fuse emotional, philosophical, and religious investigations with their writings. Jiang Dunfu’s descriptions on nature are also often mixed with such dimensions of meaning. For instance, the following poem,

“Recording Things in Suzhou” 閶門即事 reads:

I anchor outside the golden Chang gate as before.
It has been several years since I left Suzhou.
It is the seven-*li* Shantang on the night of the fifteenth.
The tall buildings appear like in dreams, and the moon looks like [it is enshrouded in] mist.
Once again, I mingle with dancing fans and singing girls.
Flowers fly and jewelry moves to send away their yearnings.
The sentiment of an idle gull coming over me like water,
I wish to become a fisherman on the river Feng.³⁵

金閶門外舊停船，自別蘇州又幾年。
七里山塘三五夜，樓臺如夢月如煙。
舞扇歌羣又一時，花飛釧動寄相思。
閑鷗心事真如水，付與楓江釣叟知。

This piece adopts a pleasant mood. After indicating the location in the opening line, Jiang depicts the beautiful scenery of the city and the good time he spent with courtesans. This kind of pleasure and carefree attitude, in contrast to Jiang’s turbulent and frustrating life during wartime, is highlighted in the last line. Despite his desire to recover the Qing’s glory, he reveals in this piece an intention to disengage himself from the mundane world. The

³⁴ Feng, “Lun Jiang Dunfu de cixue piping ji qi ci feng,” 6.

³⁵ Jiang, *Xiaogu tang shiji*, vol. 6, 2.

image of “an idle gull” is a metaphor for a recluse, and the image of the fisherman is also usually associated with hermits in traditional Chinese culture. Seeking solace in writing on nature and reclusive lives was a common literati tradition.³⁶ The intention to serve the government and to become a recluse usually coexisted in Chinese intellectuals’ artistic works, and it was “the dynamic of choice between two courses of action.”³⁷ Thus, this poem does not conflict with Jiang’s other statecraft-oriented works but is his vehicle to escape from a disappointing reality. Other than serving as records, the traveling poems also indicate the poet’s complicated inner world and are able to fulfill his emotional needs.

As is true for any sojourn, Jiang’s journeys were complicated with solitude and parting sorrow, and this kind of bitterness repeatedly appears in his writings. Zong-qi Cai notes that “whether for genuine self-expression or as pure literary exercise, literati poets habitually chose to portray themselves as lonely, world-weary wanderers perpetually yearning for home.”³⁸ In Jiang’s writing, he has mentioned many times “the sorrow of traveling cannot settle down” 羈愁無俚.³⁹ The Song lyrics became a perfect medium for Jiang to express these feelings. For instance, the following piece, “To the Tune of Tan chun man” 探春慢, reads :

Clear moon, drifting mist,
Lamp in a cold night and flying snowflakes in the wind.
The spring sorrow is like water tonight.
The black robe is drunk.
I am playing the panpipe, tears are shining like jade.
I have tasted all the flavors of this mundane world.
Who understand the bitterness of longing?
Holding the zither, I am lonely and desolate.
Feeling lazy, I lay on the silk beddings.

³⁶ Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm*, 17.

³⁷ Chaves, “Literary Expressions of Recluse,” *The Artful Recluse*, 64.

³⁸ Cai, *How to Read Chinese poetry*, 3.

³⁹ Jiang, “Bi tian ci,” *Fentuoli shi ciji*, vol, 2. 9.

The cuckoo's cries are approaching the window.

I think of the green sleeves in the red boudoir.
She must have grown thinner with her painted eyebrows fading,
But she languished and is in no mood to apply makeup.
The small mirror reflects the heart of the moon,
The lonely chamber houses her pure heart.
Yet she is afraid to ask whether the plum tree has blossomed.
It is already sunset again.
Even if one wishes to have sweet dreams,
There seems no way.
Randomly she embroidered an orchid-shaped pouch,
The mandarin ducks appearing under her needle with regrets.⁴⁰

素月流煙，寒燈颭雪，春愁今夜如水。中酒衫青，吹簫淚碧，諳盡
江湖情味。誰會相思苦，甚讀抱淒涼琴尾。倦來剛倚羅衾，子規啼近窗
紙。

因念紅閨翠袖。自瘦損眉痕，妝髻慵理。小鏡蟾心，空房犀膽，怕
問梅花開未。早又黃昏也，便好夢、商量無計。漫綉蘭囊，鴛針和恨挑
起。

This poem starts with a long preface: “The sorrow of traveling cannot settle down; the shadow of light weaves about. Reading Jiang Kui’s line, ‘When can I return? May it be the spring night with scattering plum blossoms,’ I am deeply touched. Thus, I composed this piece and sent it to Lingshi neishi” 羈愁無俚，燈影幢幢，讀白石甚日歸來梅花零亂春夜句，長觸余懷，譜此寄靈石內史. The preface illustrates that this lyric stresses on the parting sorrow and was a letter to his wife. “When can I return? May it be the spring night with scattering plum blossoms” are the lines of Jiang Kui who imagines his reunion with friends at a spring night.⁴¹ These lines elicit Jiang Dunfu’s homesickness. To express his

⁴⁰ Jiang, “Bi tian ci,” *Fentuoli shi ciji*, vol. 2. 9.

⁴¹ This line comes from Jiang Kui’s song lyrics “To the Tune of Tan Chun Man” 探春慢. See Jiang, *Baishi daoren gequ*, vol.4, 16.

sentiments, he depicts a longing husband in the first stanza and an imagined yearning wife in the second. Drinking, weeping, and imagining what the wife is doing in the inner chamber, the persona indulges in the sad feelings caused by separation from his lovely companion.

Writings Creating Networks of Social Relation

Writing in China was not merely an act of individual expression but also an essential means of social intercourse.⁴² Many of Jiang Dunfu's writings resulted from his poetry salons and gatherings with friends. These social activities—including traveling, celebrating festivals and visiting courtesans—were more than leisure and usually resulted in literary production. The poem “The Second Collection of Autumn Chanting Club: Writing on the Four Generals of the Song” 吟秋社第二集詠宋中興四將 is an example of his literary activities with other members in the Autumn Chanting Club,⁴³ and “On the Double Ninth Festival Master Lianquan Summoned the Bodhi Club to Climb a Mountain: I Responded in Accordance with the Original Rhyme” 重九日廉泉師召集菩提社登高奉次原韻 is an example of his writings in the Bodhi Poetry Club.⁴⁴ In addition, his get-togethers with friends led to the creation of works such as “A Record of the Journey to Tianzhong Mountain” 遊天鐘山記 and “A Record of the Journey to Fishing Terrace” 遊釣台記.⁴⁵

Jiang Dunfu often composed poems in response to others in the form of poetic exchange (*changhe* 唱和). This practice of echoing others with certain formal and thematic rules, as Jiang did in “On the Double Ninth Festival Master Lianquan Summoned the Bodhi Club to

⁴² Schmidt, *Within the Human Realm*, 91.

⁴³ Jiang, *Xiaogu tang shi ji*, vol.6, 12.

⁴⁴ Jiang, *Xiaogu tang shi ji*, vol.3, 13.

⁴⁵ Jiang, *Xiaogu tang Wenji*, vol.8, 7-8.

Climb a Mountain,” was a common practice among Chinese intellectual groups that creates networks of social relations.⁴⁶ Those to whom Jiang Dunfu wrote most frequently included Zhang Wenhui 張文虎 (1808-1885), Sun Linzhi 孫麟趾 (d. 1860), Tang Yifen 湯貽汾 (1778-1853) among a number of other poets and lyricists active in Jiangsu. Moreover, his recipients were not limited to male friends but also included his wife and other female companions. For instance, his four poems on willow catkins were composed in response to the rhymes of his female friend Qian Ying 錢瑛.⁴⁷ These writings not only provide information about the literary network in the Lower Yangtze region but also affirm the social function of literary production that prevailed in nineteenth-century China.

Meanwhile, other types of communicative writings include letters and literary gifts toward his superiors, friends, wife, and other female companions. In the previous section, the cited lyrics “To the Tune of Tan chun man” 探春慢 is a letter to Jiang’s wife that conveys his yearning for her companionship. The political suggestions which he submitted to the officials (to be examined in greater detail in the next chapter) are also in the forms of letters and essays. At the same time, poems also served as gifts to others. In Jiang’s *shi* collection, there are four quatrains entitled “Presented to the Lady of Xiaoxiang Pavilion” 贈瀟湘樓女子.⁴⁸ From this title and the preface, Jiang made it explicit that these four poems were written for the Lady of Xiaoxiang Pavilion, a courtesan whom he encountered in Suzhou. His preface reads as follows:

The lady surnamed Kang...intended to attend to me as a disciple. When I told her it was inappropriate, she wept: “Out of luck I have been sunk into this

⁴⁶ Li, “‘Singing in Dis/Harmony’ in Times of Chaos,” 216.

⁴⁷ Jiang, *Xiaogu tang shiji*, vol. 7, 7. The title for the group of poems is “Four Poems on Willow Catkins: Matching the Rhyme of Lady Qian Danren” 柳絮四首和錢淡人女士韻.

⁴⁸ Jiang, *Xiaogu tang shi ji*, vol.6, 14.

social category. This is my fate. If one day I could append my name to your writing collections, I would die with no regret.” I was touched, and therefore presented her with these four quatrains.

女子康氏……欲以弟子禮事余，不可，則泣曰：“兒不幸墮落至此，命也。他日願附姓字君詩文集中，死且不恨。”聞之憮然，乃贈四絕句。

Jiang Dunfu’s textual productions function as vehicles for communication. His writings composed during literary gatherings and the poems in the form of matching rhythms affirmed continual ties with Jiang and his literary-social circles. His poems as gifts also exemplified that poems can be “material object[s] whose exchange contributes to the instantiation of sociality.”⁴⁹ While literary works could represent the writer’s interiority, they also record his social life.

Conclusion

Specialized readers of classical Chinese poetry would probably recognize that Jiang Dunfu has employed many allusions and lines from recognized poets and works, such as Du Fu’s and Li Po’s lines in his piece “Sword.” These plentiful derivations demonstrate that Jiang Dunfu had a vast knowledge of the Chinese poetic tradition and substantial training in historical, philosophical, and religious fields. At the same time, he was self-conscious of the quality of his writings. He studied others’ works and composed a collection of remarks on others’ song lyrics, *Remarks on Lyrics Written in Fengtuoli shi* 芬陀利室詞話, and formed his own lyrical theory “entering the no-gap with thickness” 有厚入無間, which emphasized that a fine lyric needs authors’ sophisticated thoughts and writing techniques.⁵⁰ His

⁴⁹ Volpp, “The Literary Circulation of Actors in Seventeenth-Century China,” 952.

⁵⁰ Discussion on Jiang’s lyrical theory can be found in Feng’s “Lun Jiang Dunfu de cixue piping ji qi cifeng,” Zhang’s “Jiang Dunfu ci ji qi cixue zhuzhang tanjiu,” and Sun’s “‘Yi wu hou ru you jian’ yu ‘you hou ru wu jian.’”

continuous literary practice that infused all his life, the various topics that covered in his writings, his familiarity with traditional classics, as well as his consciousness of lyrical aesthetics all demonstrated Jiang Dunfu's literary persona as a Chinese traditional intellectual.

While he was recognized as a literary person, Jiang Dunfu held a political ambition that drove him to write an eight-volume collection of essays, *Xiaogu tang wenji* 嘯古堂文集, which contains his thoughts and suggestions on the Qing's ongoing social dilemmas. The next chapter will examine this collection, mainly focus on his response to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and Western newcomers, and attempt to understand Jiang as a self-motivated and statecraft-oriented scholar.

Chapter Two

The Self-ordained Official

Jiang Dunfu was a literary person shaped by his classical education and influential family figures of the older generation. At the same time, he was also politically oriented and concerned about contemporary sociopolitical crises. Being a self-ordained social critic, Jiang Dunfu had his own understanding of the Qing dynasty's ongoing problems. Nevertheless, it was not until later in life when he finally became an advisor 幕僚 (*muliao*) to provincial administrators that Jiang was in a position to implement his thoughts. As a result, he had no official position and limited chances to exercise his criticism and suggestions. Calling himself a self-appointed "official" or the peerless "subject" of the emperor 草莽孤臣 (*caomang gu chen*), he found a way to fulfill his political ambitions by inundating authorities with advice.

In Jiang Dunfu's prose collection there are a good number of writings on political affairs that serve as a significant source for us to examine his views on the Qing's social plights. These works present examples to study a classically-trained minor intellectual's reflections on the transformative period. This chapter thus focuses on Jiang's proposals and his views on the two major problems of the first half of nineteenth century China: the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the obtrusive Western presence. By reading into Jiang's works, this chapter aims to present the main arguments of his proposals, illustrate his enthusiasm in participating in solving social problems, and situate him in his particular time period.

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom

In his capacity as an unofficial advisor, Jiang Dunfu wrote mostly on military affairs in the suppression of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. This was, as Tobie Meyer-Fong writes, “the most devastating civil war in human history.”¹ Lands were devastated; millions of people were butchered by both the rebels and the Qing troops. Among all his proposals on how to deal with the Taipings, there exist three sets of essays that comprehensively contain his major advice on how to put down the Taiping rebellion: 1) “Words of Indignation in Three Parts” 憤言, “On Offense” 議戰, and “On Defense” 議守; 2) “Sequel to Words of Indignation in Three Parts” 後憤言; and 3) “Strategies in Ten Thousand Words” 萬言策.²

“Words of Indignation,” “On Offense” and “On Defense”

Jiang’s first set of suggestions on how to suppress the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was composed in 1853, when the Taiping army took over Nanjing. In this set, he argues that the Qing’s consecutive defeats resulted from having no capable armies. To resolve this problem, Jiang focuses on the regulation of troops and soldiers’ potential to improve military performance.

In accordance with Jiang’s poetry, this first set of essays was an outlet for his indignation. He again criticized the Qing soldiers for being aggressive when bullying

¹ Meyer-Fong, *What Remains*, 1.

² I group the first five essays into one set because they were written in the same year and about the same incident. In Jiang’s preface for “Words of Indignation I,” he states that “In the spring of 1853, the southern Yue bandits took over Nanjing. I, peerless ‘subject’ of the emperor, composed three pieces of ‘Words of Indignation’ and two pieces ‘On Offense’ and ‘On Defense’” 癸丑春粵匪南寇竊據金陵，草莽孤臣蔣敦復作憤言三篇戰守兩策。 Moreover, at the end of “Words of Indignation,” Jiang transitioned toward the other two essays. With the belief that Jiang Dunfu wrote these five essays together, I thus regarded them as one set and think that such is the best way to understand Jiang’s thoughts on the Taipings in 1853.

commoners but timid during battles, and he argued that “the governors lost their power to govern due to their ignorance of the tactical balance of power” 自忘其權失其權者.³

Compared with his poetry, this essay goes one step further from the poet’s indignation and provides a solution—establishing authority 立威 (*li wei*)—to reform the military force. This idea derives from Mei Yaochen’s 梅堯臣 (1002-1060) comment in his annotation of *The Art of War*, “a draconian law could establish authoritativeness” 嚴能立威.⁴ Echoing Mei and following the effective military leader Qi Jiguang 戚繼光 (1528-1588), Jiang suggests that establishing official punishments will restrain soldiers and prevent them from deserting during battle. Specifically, he proposes to issue the death penalty to the whole army if they fail to defend a city and to position commanding officers at the back of the battlefields in order to execute any soldier who may try to flee.

At the end of this first essay, Jiang writes: “[only when the soldiers are disciplined, can] offense and defense be discussed” 乃可以議戰, 乃可以議守.⁵ This refers to the following two essays “On Offense” and “On Defense,” whose titles are somewhat deceptive. In “On Offense,” Jiang Dunfu indeed proposes two methods of mobilizing the troops; and in “On Defense,” he states that offense is the best defense. In “On Offense,” Jiang summarizes two concepts in the conducting of warfare: “war with spirit” 心戰 (*xin zhan*) and “war with forms” 形戰 (*xing zhan*). The two terms may remind readers of the quote from *Records of the Three Kingdoms* 三國志: “battles conducted with weapons are not as superior as those

³ Jiang, “Fen yan shang,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.1, 3.

⁴ *Shiyi jia zhu sunzi*, vol.1, 6.

⁵ Jiang, “Fen yan shang,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.1, 6.

conducted with morale” 心戰為上，兵戰次之。⁶ However, instead of the strategies for defeating enemies as found in *Records of the Three Kingdoms*, Jiang’s art of war aims to stimulate soldiers’ *qi*, vital energy, or morale 作其氣, and “war with forms” aims to control soldiers with death threats 制其命。⁷

Qi, the vital energy or spirit, is what Jiang considers to be essential for a troop to reach optimal performance. He gives another effective general Tian Dan 田單 (fl. 286 BCE) as an example. Tian stimulated the morale of the soldiers by showing them the corpses in defeated towns, and as a result, the soldiers’ performance improved rapidly in the following battles due to anger and sadness. As vital energy is fundamental, Jiang asserts that the adept generals must be capable of employing their soldiers’ *qi*. However, in this essay, he did not introduce more specific suggestions on how generals could achieve this purpose.

For “war with forms,” he believes that “to first put our army into a perilous situation is to send the enemy to his doom” 先制我軍之死於是敵人之死命。⁸ Comparing training soldiers with domesticating beasts, he proclaims that it is only when soldiers’ lives are in danger that they will thoroughly follow their orders, and it is only when they realize that their defeat will directly lead to their death that they will act with perfect conduct. He again brings up the harsh punishments he previously discussed.

In the following essay “On Defense,” Jiang Dunfu states two reasons why an army should not be in a state of defense for a long time.⁹ First and foremost, defense will gradually cripple the imperial assets. Passively waiting for their enemies’ action will only

⁶ Chen, *Sanguozhi*, vol.39, 15.

⁷ Jiang, “Yi zhan,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.1, 6.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹ Jiang, “Yi shou,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.1, 8.

drain the Qing of its supplies. And prolonged inaction will deplete soldiers' vital energy, which will result in their becoming useless and sluggish. Being in a defensive stance, therefore, is not the ideal situation. Given the title "On Defense," Jiang argues against passive actions and asserts the necessity of positive actions.

In this first set of proposals, Jiang Dunfu's military suggestions focused on managing troops. Observing the Qing armies' misbehaviors as an ordinary person, he was occupied with instant modifications of military force, and his suggestions addressed the problems he witnessed. Meanwhile, though he brought up suggestions such as establishing authority and executing harsh punishments, more than half of his essays were again fused with his criticism instead of practical advice.

"Sequel to Words of Indignation"

In 1860, seven years after Jiang Dunfu wrote the aforementioned essays, the Taiping troops invaded Hangzhou. Jiang pushed another set of proposals, "Sequel to Words of Indignation in Three Parts," upon the local authorities. Compared to the previous pieces' strategies, which focused on troops, "Sequel to Words of Indignation" provides systematic proposals to different audiences.

The first piece was written to the emperor. It is possible that Jiang dared not criticize the emperor and thus instead criticizes the incapable ministers and stresses the significance of selecting able civil and military governors. He specifies the able governor's qualities as follows:

That person must be innately loyal and filial; [he must also have] authority and virtue that everyone yields to. He must be cunning, capable, and abstemious... He must carefully consider the difficulties of people; he must courageously shoulder the weighty responsibilities under heaven. He has to play down forms and stress practical uses, thus can he bring to his side all the

talents, and give orders to all the heroes in the world. He must be determined and clear in giving reward and punishment, promotion and demotion; thus can he change the world by influencing people's eyes and ears, and rouse up people's morale.¹⁰

其人必忠孝發於天性，威德服于人心，有猷有為有守……小其心以圖天下之艱，大其勇以任天下之重，虛其體，實其用，以延攬天下之人才，奔走天下之豪傑，明信賞罰，大舉黜陟，以變易天下以耳目，振作天下之志氣。

In particular, he provides the examples of Pei Du 裴度 (765-839) in the Tang dynasty and Han Qi 韓琦 (1008-1075) and Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989-1052) from the Song. Jiang argues that these are the generals who saved disordered armies during chaotic periods and prevented the decline of their dynasties, and these are the figures that the Qing needs. Obtaining most of his knowledge from traditional classics and having no access to contemporary officials, Jiang Dunfu recorded exceptional figures as his only sources for assessing today's generals.

In his second essay that targets ministers, Jiang specifically claims that the Qing's strength rests on the commoners' devotion, but the officials' misconduct has shaken the majority's loyalty. The reason that the Taiping armies could become savage is "because the state has lost the commoners' hearts" 失人心故也.¹¹ "From ancient times," he states, "peace and danger, success and defeat, were all determined by whether people's hearts were far from or close to [the regime], whether they supported or opposed it" 自古安危成敗之機皆視人心之離合向背以為斷.¹² Writing as a commoner, Jiang suggests that if people encountered helpful ministers, they would be willing to rely on them: "Though the

¹⁰ Jiang, "Hou fen yan shang," *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.1, 12.

¹¹ Jiang, "Hou fen yan zhong," *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.1, 12.

¹² *Ibid.*, 14.

commoners are extremely ignorant, if the officials were compassionate, prudent, honest, and upright, and they understand the need to cherish their good names, the commoners would love the officials like children love their mothers” 百姓雖甚無知，如有慈儉清正，稍知自愛之長官，不啻如嬰兒之戀慈母。¹³ And writing as a self-ordained official, he argues that if people feel positively toward the regime, “they will happily sacrifice their lives” 樂於效死。¹⁴ Since commoners comprise the majority of the state, Jiang reasons, their help will be significant for suppressing the rebels.

In the last piece of “Sequel to Words of Indignation,” Jiang Dunfu introduces the significance of the self-defense for the commoners. He starts with a criticism of the government: although the court set up military bases to protect the people, the soldiers were indeed the invaders rather than the guardians: “Before the wolves got inside, the tigers had already eaten us” 狼未入門，虎已食吾于室矣。¹⁵ He thus recommends employing the wealth of families to form the local defense:

All commoners in our locale can become soldiers themselves, defending their properties and guarding their villages. There is no need to bother [the government and have them] to send even a single troop or soldier to our land. Should defeated soldiers come to loot our assets, all of the commoners would rise together to attack them... Today, I entreat the young people from every family to form militias... to practice using weapons, drill military formations, train the eyes and ears, be of one heart and strength, be vigilant, investigate [the suspicious], re-examine registered residents, and join clans...

凡吾境內百姓自以為兵勇，衛身家，捍鄉里，無煩調一兵遣一勇涉吾之地，其有逃潰兵勇闖入猖獗，百姓群起擊之……今誠使各家子弟盡勒部伍……習器械，按行列，練耳目，齊心力，明偵探，探嚴稽，核保甲，并村宗……

¹³ Ibid., 13.

¹⁴ Ibid., 13.

¹⁵ Jiang, “Hou fen yan xia,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.1, 16.

Jiang suggests that the rich and prestigious families should remain and contribute their wealth and power to the local militarization efforts, which echoes Joseph Esherick and Mary Backus Rankin's argument that rural elites filled up the power vacuum when the imperial state was weakening.¹⁶ At the same time, Jiang also advocates that the commoners should not be isolated from local governors. He encourages cooperations between the two: "If the commoners and local officials take care of each other, why would they be afraid of rebels, scared of brutal soliders, and worried about bandits?" 官民相保，何畏乎逆賊，何懼乎兵勇，何憂乎土賊.¹⁷ As we shall see below, Jiang Dunfu repeatedly addresses the topic of local defense and local militia. When the state power waned, local gentry elites, including wealthy merchants and absentee landlords, sided with the state and defended their localities during the rebellion.¹⁸ While those with social and economic influence maintained control at the local level with their social and economic capital, Jiang Dunfu intended to play a proactive role with his individual resourcefulness.

Compared to the first set of proposals, the "Sequel to Words Dignation in Three Parts" is more detailed and organized. The three pieces are logically arranged and are not limited to the matter of troops. They also target incapable ministers and local officials. To criticize their misbehaviors, Jiang provides the correct models in his opinions; and to react to their incapacity, Jiang recommends that the commoners employ self-defense and protect their properties on their own. Many of these suggestions—such as self-defense—recur in Jiang Dunfu's proposals on fending against the Taipings and become increasingly developed.

¹⁶ See Esherick and Rankin eds. *Chinese Local Elites and Patterns of Dominance*, 11.

¹⁷ Jiang, "Hou fen yan xia," *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.1, 19.

¹⁸ Zheng, "Loyalty, Anxiety, and Opportunism," 45.

“Strategies in Ten Thousand Words”

One year after Jiang Dunfu wrote “Sequels to Words of Indignation in Three Parts,” he composed another long proposal, “Strategies in Ten Thousand Words.” This piece finally won Jiang a minor position as an advisor and was included in *A Sequel to Essays on Imperial Statecraft* 皇朝經世文續編, a collection of influential essays on statecraft in Qing compiled by Sheng Kang 盛康 (1814-1902).¹⁹ Jiang’s suggestions in this essay are not limited to suppressing the Taipings but extend to general advice on reinvigorating the Qing.

Jiang divided the essay into two parts. The first contains three ways to suppress the Taipings: 1) Exploiting all sources under heaven 合天下之全力; 2) Breaking all deadlocks under heaven 破天下之成局; and 3) Seeking all true talents under heaven 求天下之真才.²⁰ First, he argues that suppressing the Taipings is comparable to hunting a fierce tiger, which requires collaborative efforts. In order to utilize all sources under heaven, he suggests assigning particular duties to certain provinces: “the Chuan-Hu regions transport the grains, the Min-Guang carries commercial goods, the You-Bing recruits soldiers, and the Jiang-Huai builds boats” 令川湖運穀米，閩廣通商貨，幽并募騎士，江淮造舟楫。²¹ Second, “all deadlocks under heaven” refers to the corrupt officialdom. Jiang compares regulating officialdom to curing a sick body—both need a complete reformation rather than a gentle modification, and he also inquires to “execute all the civil and military ministers who

¹⁹ Sheng, *Huangchao jingshi wen xubian*, vol.83, 39.

²⁰ Jiang, “Wan yan ce,” *Xiaogutang wenji*, vol.2, 1.

²¹ The Chuan-Hu region roughly refers to the area which today crossed Shaanxi, Shanxi, Henan, Huguang and Sichuan; the Min-Guang region roughly refers to modern-day Fujian and Guangdong; the You-Bing region roughly refers to modern-day Heibei, Neimenggu and Liaoning; and the Jiang-Huai region roughly refers to modern-day Huaian, Yangzhou, and Xuzhou.

disobeyed laws and misled the government” 將封疆文武大吏之玩寇失律貽誤國家者，盡法誅殺。²² He then advises assigning appropriate rewards and punishments to ministers and commoners. Lastly, “seeking all talents” in some ways resembles Jiang’s argument about “finding able ministers.” In Jiang’s opinion, both talents and able ministers have to be loyal and filial and able to give proper reward and punishment. In addition, he adds “[they have to be] natural, wise and tactless, ardent and cautious at the same time. He drifts along with the flow of the mundane world, yet the world is unable to detect the bottom of his deep interiority” 純任自然，若智若愚，亦狂亦狷，涪湛於世，世不能測其底蘊。²³ Naturalness is described as an essential value in Daoism. Being wise and acting tactless is also emphasized in Daoist teaching. According to *Scripture on Stability and Observation* 定觀經, one could not “display his or her wisdom to others but should act as if stupid” 實智若愚; and in Jiang’s words, an able minister should be wise but act tactless.²⁴ In this case, not only military classics and Confucian canons but also Daoist ideas came into Jiang’s deliberation.

At the end of the first part, Jiang connects the three methods in a logical way: “Only when a deadlock situation is broken through [by executing the corrupt officials] can law and order be maintained; only when all true talents under heaven are recruited will people be in proper places; exploiting all sources to put the satate in order, how can the chaos under heaven not be managed?” 破天下之成局，而後有治法，得天下之真才，而後有治人，

²² Jiang, “Wan yan ce,” *Xiaogutang wenji*, vol.2, 2.

²³ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁴ More discussion can be found in Eskildsen, *Daoism, Meditation, and the Wonders of Serenity*, 234.

合天下之全力以治之，天下之亂不自此定乎。²⁵ Although Jiang's arguments in this part, such as executing corrupted officials and requesting able ministers, appeared in his earlier writings, they are presented in an extended and organized form, which indicates an improvement in his writing.

In the second part of "Strategies in Ten Thousand Words", Jiang goes on to note that there are three big maladies plaguing the Qing: no generals 無將, no soldiers 無兵, and no financial support 無財.²⁶ He argues rhetorically that the Qing is not lacking these three elements but is poor in implementing them. Practices that will treat these maladies should include selecting generals 擇將, training soldiers 訓兵, and controlling the costs 省財. On how to select generals, Jiang Dunfu writes:

How [does one] select generals? One has to inspect the personality. A person's disposition can be upright or flexible, and a person's temperament can be irritable or mild. For those who are upright and irritable, one can take them on adventure but should not expect them to obey the norm. Those who are flexible and mild will follow the orders but will not be willing to strive for the success. If the person is suspicious, he will not be able to initiate the schemes. If the person is stubborn, he will not be able to understand different ways of governing. If the person is tyrannical, he is able to seek private revenge but not public justice, and you need to be wary of his disobeying superiors. If the person is cunning, he is able to gain profits but unable to provide rational suggestions, and you will have to take his caprice into consideration.²⁷

何謂擇將，必審其人。夫人之質有剛柔，性有緩急。剛急之人，可與犯難，難與安常。柔緩之人，可與循分，難與圖功。又若狐疑之輩，不可謀始。膠執之徒，不能通方。殘忍之人，能報私仇，不能赴公義，且懼其犯上也。狙詐之人，貪利有餘，謀理不足，更慮其反覆也。

²⁵ Ibid., 5.

²⁶ Ibid., 5.

²⁷ Ibid., 6.

In “Sequel to Words of Indignation,” Jiang identifies ideal ministers in terms of morality. In “Strategies in Ten Thousand Words,” he focuses on how to establish the ideal personality and evaluates both positive and negative sides with certain characteristics. Compared with a description of an idealized moral archetype, this latter valuation is more realistic and concrete.

When suggesting methods to train soldiers, Jiang Dunfu delivers more ideas in addition to harsh punishment and the formation of local militia: such as incorporating soldiers and farmers and avoiding to employ foreign military talents. To begin with, Jiang suggests having the troops engaged in agricultural production when they are not in combat. He claims that this helps to prevent conflict between the soldiers and the farmers and to establish better cooperation.²⁸ Besides, he claims that if the ministers desire high morale from their soldiers, they have to win their hearts: “[If a general could win his soldiers’ hearts], the soldiers would confront with edges of knives, plunge into water and fire, fight to the death, and would not consider their own safety” 是以士卒冒白刃，赴湯火，出其死力，奮不顧身。²⁹ This argument echoes the one that commoners will themselves go to battle if their ministers are worthy: if the generals show their care toward the soldiers, the latter would respond with loyalty and performance. Meanwhile, this is also a practical comment on how generals could excite the soldier’s spirit that Jiang brought up in “On Offense.”

In the last part of training soldiers, Jiang Dunfu reasons that local defense should not implement foreign military talents. In the nineteenth century, there was a heated debate on whether the Qing needed to utilize foreign talents. Though the Qing government sought to

²⁸ Ibid., 8.

²⁹ Ibid., 8.

keep foreign influence ashore, inquires for recruiting foreigners flowed from Chinese officials as well as from local zeal for hiring foreign armies.³⁰ In contrast to the positive attitude towards foreigners, Jiang Dunfu uses unsuccessful preceding examples during the Tang and Song periods to declare that using foreign military force not only undermines the government's legitimacy but would also bring a potential threat to the state in the future.³¹ In another essay, he specifically compares employing foreigners with recruiting local people.³² He rationalizes that indigenous people are bound by family ties and will naturally fight rebels to protect their own families and villages; but foreigners will not be completely devoted to the nation since they are not attached to it. This opposition to foreign military talents is consistent with Jiang's xenophobia as will be seen below, and may result from his observation of foreign invasion as well as his confidence in his own country.

Lastly, although Jiang suggests that governors use their wealth reasonably, he admits that he has little knowledge about the topic. "The way of making profits is one I would not dare discuss. The harm of using capital is something I dare not discuss thoroughly" 生財之道，非愚之所敢知。用財之弊，愚亦未敢盡言。³³ His discomfort and unfamiliarity with the subject illustrates the Confucian intellectuals' traditional disparage of commerce, and also suggests that Jiang was following the Confucian principle that a gentleman should avoid commercialism.

³⁰ Smith, *Mercenaries and Mandarins*, 22. See also Zheng, "Loyalty, Anxiety, and Opportunism," 60.

³¹ Jiang Dunfu does not detail the names of incidents. But these incidents most likely are the An Lushan Rebellion in the Tang dynasty, instigated by the Uighur heir An Lushan 安祿山 (c. 703-757), and the Jingkang Incident during the Song, when the Jurchens besieged Bianjing. Both An Lushan and the Jurchens helped the Han in their early stages but brought about a devastating impact on the state.

³² Jiang, "Shang mou bingbei shu," *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.3, 7.

³³ Jiang, "Wan yan ce," *Xiaogutang wenji*, vol.2, 10.

Jiang Dunfu's proposals written in different years demonstrate the consistency of his thought. His major arguments can be summarized as follows: recruiting capable generals, regulating troops, utilizing local sources, and establishing local defense. He insists on the importance of able governors, the balanced use of rewards and punishments, and mutual trust between superiors and inferiors—between the governors and the commoners, the generals, and the soldiers. Jiang's suggestions, nevertheless, largely originated from early texts. His education in the classics allowed him to draw examples and solutions from previous works, such as the *Analects* and *The Art of War*. His descriptions of valuable generals and ministers are also similar to the noble person promoted by Confucius, who embodies the means of being moderate, balanced, and determined.

Jiang did not have formal military training or governing practice. His suggestions were based on his personal knowledge and perspective. Consider as an example his advice on executing all corrupt officials: it was impractical and would have significantly impacted societal functioning. On strategies to suppress the Taipings, though generals such as Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811-1872) also drew methods from the classics, Jiang was unable to modify traditional tactics based on the real situation due to his limited scope and position.³⁴ His friend Wang Tao, when writing on the same issue, had a more comprehensive view on the Qing army's weaknesses. In addition to bureaucratic corruption, Wang points out problems such as refugees, age imbalances, and the drawbacks of the examination systems.³⁵ On the topic of recruiting able ministers, Wang suggests hiring generals from different fields

³⁴ Zeng Guofan also turned to the practices of Qi Jiguang, such as recruiting local forces. In addition, he also emphasizing soldiers' vital energy, troop order, and the significance of selecting able generals. See Andrade, *The Gunpowder Age*, 276.

³⁵ Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, 36.

and establishing a military training academy and periodic examinations.³⁶ Nonetheless, we should not mistakenly assume that Jiang was intellectually inferior to Wang, as Wang Tao started plying the authorities with advice after he assisted in organizing and training town militia units from 1860.³⁷ Jiang Dunfu, on the other hand, did not participate in real governing as Zeng Guofan did, nor did he have military experience to some extent as Wang Tao had. The traditional classics, therefore, became the only sources for Jiang Dunfu to find solutions to current social problems. As “Strategies in Ten Thousand Words” finally earned him a minor position, his suggestions were confirmed to be somewhat valuable in the governors’ views. More critical judgments on the effectiveness of his proposals would require a new set of social and historical researches that merit full-length studies, but one thing of which we can be certain is that he took a proactive role in the public sphere as a literary man without an official post from the government.

Despite his limited experience and breadth, Jiang Dunfu was following and responding to ongoing debates in the court. In addition to the conversation about employing foreign talents, Jiang’s proposals on local defense also evolved with the growing discussion in the court. In “On Indignation,” Jiang briefly mentioned local defense; in “Strategies in Ten Thousand Words,” he noted the localized village militias system 團練 (*tuanlian*) but did not go into details; and in his later letter “To the *Tuanlian* Minister” 上團練大臣某公書, he continued the topic on *tuanlian* and provided more strategies such as appointing one or two vanguards 鋒 (*feng*) and establishing military prestige.³⁸ His understanding of this topic evidently developed in these few years. One possible reason is that the *tuanlian* system was

³⁶ Ibid., 40.

³⁷ Ibid., 35.

³⁸ Jiang, “Shang *tuanlian* dachen mou gong shu,” *Xiaogutang wenji*, vol.3, 10.

implemented by the Qing gradually after the 1850s. This system was first associated with the self-defense system that Lu Xiangsheng 盧象升 (1600-1639) instituted during the anti-White Lotus Rebellion war in the seventeenth century.³⁹ In the nineteenth-century, as Philip Kuhn notes, this system also became “the spontaneous militarization of the local elite who sought to protect their communities, their property, and their way of life.”⁴⁰ During the Taiping period, there was still debate about whether to implement this system, and it was not until the 1850s that local elites adopted the mechanism to protect their communities.⁴¹ As the letter “To the *Tuanlian* Minister” specified the audience to be a minister who was responsible for this practice, it is likely that the *tuanlian* system was fairly well-established at that point. Accordingly, despite his being a commoner, Jiang Dunfu was actively participating and replying to social issues that were gaining momentum.

In addition, Jiang Dunfu’s writings and thoughts were cultivated throughout these three sets of proposals. One of the changes is his tone of writing. Despite the anger that he expresses in all the essays, the latter two proposals “Sequels to Words of Indignation” and “Strategies in Ten Thousand Words,” adopt a more objective tone and are less plaintive. He is also able to skillfully blend his fury into proposals and to support his points in his later essays. Meanwhile, Jiang’s writings gradually become more organized. For example, in the first part of “Strategies in Ten Thousand Words,” he strictly starts each of his arguments with a metaphor, follows with the criticism of the current situation, and finishes with a suggestion. In addition to the writing style, Jiang Dunfu’s advice progressively becomes more detailed and comprehensive. For instance, “On Offense” points out the significance of

³⁹ Khun, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China*, 64

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 152.

exciting soldiers' vital essence but does not introduce specific ways of doing so until "Strategies in Ten Thousand Words." While Jiang's focus was only on troops in the first set, his view expanded to a broader scope to include the emperor and commoners in his later works. Therefore, at the same time Jiang Dunfu cultivated his arguments, he also paid attention to his writing style and developed a stronger way to explicate his political concerns. His consciousness in improving and refining both thoughts and writings and his attention toward current debates at the court all illustrate Jiang's proactive role in politics as a self-motivated, private common person.

The Obtrusive Western Presence

In "Strategies in Ten Thousand Words," Jiang Dunfu argues against employing foreign military talents. In his essays, Jiang chiefly tackles three other foreign issues that he opposed: Catholic missionaries, the British constitutional system, and Sino-Western trade. In his dealings with external conflict, his stance was ethnocentric; his sense of the superiority of the Chinese tradition prevented him from accepting Western matters. Hence, he argues against almost everything from the Western world. Nevertheless, his objections should not be read as mere blindness or stubbornness. His hostilities arose from his faith in Chinese culture and clear-headed observations on the difference between China and the West.

Catholic Missionaries

Being a student immersed in Confucianism from an early age, Jiang saw it as the single "True Way" 正道 (*zheng dao*) and despised other teachings.⁴² He insists that Catholicism is

⁴² In his essay, Jiang Dunfu refers to Confucianism as "fine tradition was transmitted from the ancient sage-kings, Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, King Wen, King Wu and the Duke of

inferior to Confucianism, as the latter never asks people to believe in it, but all follow it anyways: “Confucianism does not say anything, yet all people accept it as the truth. There is no need for it to convert others. Everything comes about naturally” 夫是以不言而信，不待勸而自成也。⁴³ In contrast, Catholicism makes a much greater effort:

The Western missionaries of the Catholic faith run about in all directions, learning other countries’ languages, and establishing lecture halls. In thousands of words, talking till they are hoarse, all for the sake of encouraging others to do one thing: believe... [Given such an effort,] there must be some aspects [to their belief] that are not worthy of belief... [They] are unworthy to believe but ask others to trust; they themselves do not believe, but ask others to believe.⁴⁴

天主一教，西國教士奔走四方，學習國語，開設講堂，千言萬語，舌壞唇傷，不過勸人一信字……此必其中有不可信之道矣……夫不可信而求信，已不自信而欲使人信……

As a matter of fact, Confucianism was not the teaching that had been “naturally” accepted by all Chinese people, and scholars from previous dynasties had struggled to establish Confucianism as the state ideology. But for an intellectual who still lived under the influence of Confucianism, it is likely that Jiang built his argument from a Confucian standpoint. Meanwhile, Jiang noticed that many Chinese who converted to Catholicism continued to live in Confucian ways. When the missionaries were present, the believers followed the Catholic rules, but to the missionaries’ unawares, they would esteem the divine spirits, worshipped their ancestors, and practiced rituals. Having made these observations, Jiang claims that these Catholic believers are still inclined towards Confucianism given the superior nature of the latter.

Zhou to Confucius” 堯舜禹湯文武周公孔子之教. See Jiang, “Ni yu Yingguo shichen Weituoma shu,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.3, 15.

⁴³ Ibid., 18.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 17.

Jiang Dunfu was not the only intellectual who went against Western teachings. As David Emil Mungello notes, “Christianity evoked hostile sentiments among the Chinese literati who saw it in much the same way that many of them saw Buddhism and Daoism.”⁴⁵ When comparing Confucianism and Catholicism, Jiang also brings up other teachings but argues further that Catholicism is beneath even those “heterodox teachings” 異端 (*yi duan*), namely Daoism and Buddhism. He remarks that Buddhism and Daoism are valuable in certain aspects, and “if the ruler uses these teachings, all under heaven can also be governed” 世主用之，天下亦可治。⁴⁶ On the other hand, however, Catholicism was sophisticated at the time of Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and Ferdinand Verbiest (1623-1688), but now “the affairs that [it] discusses are all absurd and superficial, and it does not understand the meaning of Chinese context” 所論教事荒謬淺陋，不曉中國文義。⁴⁷ Jiang argues furthermore that the missionaries promote Catholicism to allure the Chinese and “to make them betray their authorities when necessary” 叛其長上。⁴⁸ Since Jiang’s evaluations on Buddhism and Daoism were based on their values for governance, when Catholicism threatened the unity of the state, Jiang Dunfu saw it as a threat to the Qing regime.

British Constitutions

While assisting William Muirhead (1822-1900) in the preparation of the *History of Great Britain* 大英國志, Jiang Dunfu claimed to have independently published a more comprehensive study of the history of British constitutions. The publication never came to

⁴⁵ Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West*, 54.

⁴⁶ Jiang, “Ni yu Yingguo shichen Weituoma shu,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.3, 18.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

fruition, but the preface has survived. In it, Jiang summarizes the three principles of the British constitution and argues that these will cause devastating problems if China imitates them.

The three principles are: 1) The monarch and people share the governing power 君民共主 (*jun min gong zhu*), 2) Government and religion share the power 政教一體 (*zheng jiao yi ti*), and 3) Both men and women succeed to the throne 男女並嗣 (*nan nü bing si*). Adopting the hierarchy of *yin* and *yang*, Jiang argues that the British constitution violates the cosmic balance:

China treasures the *yang* and disparages the *yin*... Farmers work in the fields and are the way of the earth; women are inferior and are represented by the hexagram *kun*; teachings other than Confucianism belong to the *yin* part of the *yin* and *yang* system.⁴⁹ In the British system, however, the *yin* and the *yang* are reversed: people govern their emperor, religion flourishes more than the politics, and women come before men...

中國貴陽而賤陰……民處田間地道也，女為人下坤象也，其教論身後則亦陰教也。彼陰陽易位，且駸駸乎，民制其君，教隆于政，女先於男……⁵⁰

More specifically, to argue against the first principle, Jiang quotes the *Analects*: “In a world which follows the Way, there is no need for commoners to dispute over politics” 天下有道庶人不議.⁵¹ To criticize the combination of religion and politics, he asserts that it was the conflict between Catholics and Protestants that caused the execution of King Charles I (1600-1649); and since British society was ignorant of propriety, or *li* 禮, no one thought to

⁴⁹ This sentence is derived from *I Ching*: “This is the way of the earth; this is the way of wives; and this is the way of ministers” 地道也，妻道也，臣道也. The way of the earth is inferior to the way of the heaven. The hexagram *kun* has to follow the hexagram *qian*.

⁵⁰ Jiang, “*Yingzhi zi xu*,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.7, 5.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1. Translated by Simon Leys. See *The Analects* (Norton Critical Edition), 50.

punish “the rebels.” According to Jiang, “propriety is illuminating orthodoxy and stressing imperial inheritance” 明正統，重嫡嗣，禮也， and “the gods should not recklessly interfere with the ruling system” 天位神器不可妄干.⁵²

Confucian moral hierarchy was fundamentally in contrast with the three parts, and it was the yardstick for Jiang Dunfu to evaluate the British constitution. His opposition to the British system was indeed due to its challenge to the Chinese culture. The significance of social propriety, the emperor’s authority, and male superiority all came from Confucian teachings. Moreover, his argument in the previous quoted excerpt comes from Confucius’s comments on *Yi jing* 易經: “This is the way of the earth; this is the way of wives; and this is the way of ministers” 地道也，妻道也，臣道也.⁵³ Not only Jiang, his friend Wang Tao carried a similar attitude toward women. Although Wang had the chance to have contact with Japanese and European women, polygamy remained still prevalent in his stories and tales and his writings never mentioned whether or not gender equality should be applied in Chinese society. Even though Jiang Dunfu and Wang Tao had encountered with foreign countries, their ethnic values derived from Chinese tradition retained unshakeable.

Sino-Western Trade

In addition, Jiang also has the concern that Western ways are incompatible with China. On the topic of Sino-Western Trade, Jiang Dunfu argues against introducing foreign merchants by assessing the different conditions of China and the West. He firstly suggests

⁵² Ibid., 4.

⁵³ The received *I Ching* consisted of two parts: *Zhou yi* 周易 and the philosophical commentaries “Ten Wings” 十翼. “Wenyan” was commonly attributed to the Confucius and provides a moral interpretation of the first two hexagrams: *qian* 乾 and *kun* 坤.

that foreigners like to come to China, while the Chinese do not desire to go outside. “All of this is due to the different situations in China and in the foreign countries, and cannot be changed by force” 此中外人情不同，非可強而致也。⁵⁴ Meanwhile, he claims that China has traditionally “valued farmers and despised merchants” 重農賤商. Since China’s social condition is different from that of the West, a connection between the two would not profit the Qing.

Alternatively, Jiang reasons, if the Qing established Sino-Western trade, the foreigners would extend the contract and exploit everything in China:

Your Excellencies say that foreigners will ask for other things and will get them, and they will go on asking till they get all they want... When they are allowed to do whatever they like, then they will be happy. The myriads of the Chinese people are to serve them, the millions of Chinese wealth are to go into their treasuries, the countless acres of China with fields, palaces, houses, and gardens are to pay them taxes, all fish, flesh, and fowl are to obey their imperious voice, and are to delight their eyes and ears by reason of their abundance.⁵⁵

公等又云將來西國有所必請必得，請必遂其所得。而後已平心察之，其所必欲，乃我中國所必不能行之事。任其所之，無不快意肆志，而後可則必盡中國百千萬億人民工其役，使百千萬億財貨金寶入其府，藏百千萬億土田宮室苑囿納其賦稅，百千萬億精靈血肉飛潛動植。服其聲威，娛其視聽。

In contrast to Jiang Dunfu’s perspective, Wang Tao argues for the necessity of borrowing methods from the West. He predicts that Western technologies and scholarship will flourish in China and become the connection to the other continents.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, we should not conclude that Jiang Dunfu was more conservative than Wang Tao. Jiang Dunfu

⁵⁴ Jiang, “Ni yu Yingguo shichen Weituoma shu,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.3, 16.

⁵⁵ The translation is done by the anonymous author F. from *The North-China Herald Daily News*. See F. “The Recent Riot in China,” 244.

⁵⁶ Li, “Representing the Feminine ‘Other’,” 12.

wrote on the Sino-West trade in 1861 and assessed the British Constitution around 1855.⁵⁷ On the other hand, Wang Tao's evaluation of the West in 1859 was almost the same as that of Jiang Dunfu. He attacked Sino-West trade by referring to the example of India and argued that "the opening up of China to the West exposed the Chinese people to great harm in the long run."⁵⁸ Moreover, when reproaching those who praised Western knowledge, Wang Tao pointed out the exact same defect in British institutions as Jiang did and believed that "little or no provision was made for the possibility of a fundamental challenge to Chinese civilization."⁵⁹ Nevertheless, Wang Tao soon left Shanghai for Hong Kong in 1862, studied in the United States in 1863, and then traveled to Europe in 1867. In his letter to Li Hongzhang in 1865, his attitude toward the West changed, and he urged the Qing to adopt the West's advanced technologies, such as steamships and economic systems.⁶⁰ Accordingly, Wang Tao's attitude toward the West was gradually altered by his direct experience in Western countries and Westernized culture.

Jiang Dunfu's reservations about the West are better understood when his time and position are kept in mind. The initial Chinese reaction toward the West from the 1840s to 1860s was tradition-minded.⁶¹ Wei Yuan's proposal to "learn from the barbarians their superior techniques" was ignored, and Chinese literati "did not develop a nationwide sense of urgency" until the 1860s.⁶² Moreover, although Zongli yamen 總理衙門 and interpreters' school—which promoted the teaching of Western languages—was established in 1861 and

⁵⁷ Teng, *Jiang Jianren xiansheng nianpu*, 24.

⁵⁸ Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, 24-26.

⁵⁹ Cohen also points out that Wang Tao based himself on Jiang's critique of British government. *Ibid.*, 283.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁶¹ Hao and Wang, "Changing Chinese Views of Western Relations, 1840-1895," 156.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 156.

officials such as Zeng Guofan started stressing the importance of learning Western knowledge, they still believed that there was no need for China “to seek fundamental principles outside the system Confucius had laid down.”⁶³ Jiang Dunfu was not alone in foreseeing that the Qing’s reinvigoration should derive from its own tradition; but he was active at the early stages of China’s transformation. He had neither Wang Tao’s opportunity to travel to the West and appreciate its advantages, nor enough understanding of Western affairs as other intellectuals or officials did in the late nineteenth century. Moreover, after witnessing the aggressiveness and intractability of the foreign armies during the Opium War, Jiang’s xenophobic sentiment included an objection to Catholicism and the Western systems. Confined to the lower Yangtze area and being an educated Chinese in the first half of the nineteenth century, Jiang Dunfu maintained an unquestioning faith in China’s superiority that would not be challenged by others.

Taking into account all of Jiang Dunfu’s proposals, his discussions of foreign issues are outnumbered by those about the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. This is a consequence of the devastating civil war and Jiang’s social status. As a commoner who struggled in the wartime, he was most likely occupied with a concern for his locality as well as the end of the warfare. Meanwhile, in consideration of his intent to be appreciated by others or to enter officialdom, it is probable that he addressed the most urgent and attractive topics to the governors. Another possibility may relate to his occupation at The London Missionary Society Press 墨海書館, which started in 1853 and his position as an advisor to Ding Richang 丁日昌 (1823-1882), which began in 1864. Ding was one of the Shanghai officials who actively adopted Western technologies. Since Jiang worked as a subordinate of Ding

⁶³ Ibid., 162-165.

and had a close relationship with foreigners such as William Muirhead and Tomas Wade, it is likely that he was cautious about expressing his anti-Western sentiments.

Conclusion

Observing the rebellions and living in Shanghai, Jiang Dunfu developed a large scheme for trying to ward off the catastrophes he had witnessed. His proposals demonstrate his passion and understanding of the problems, even if they were limited. Being a product of Confucian society, Jiang looked to tradition for answers. His suggestions remain experiential and mostly conditioned by his knowledge of Confucianism and personal interest. To Jiang Dunfu and other similar intellectuals, it seemed that their identities as Confucian scholars were at risk of invalidation in the midst of imperial disasters. These intellectuals, including figures who today are considered “progressive,” such as Wang Tao, all turned to the Chinese classics for solutions to problems posed by the Taipings and foreigners. However, Jiang Dunfu’s lack of practical training and military experience were somewhat limiting. In addition, although they recombined traditional knowledge in ways that were not completely subservient to Western discourses, Wang Tao and Zeng Guofan did not entirely oppose the foreigners after further interactions with the West. Jiang, on the other hand, because of his historical place in the early stage of Sino-West contact, was largely influenced by his education and faith in his own culture.

Jiang Dunfu was self-motivated in undertaking public activities to bring about a rejuvenation of Chinese society, and his deliberations on social and political issues went beyond his literary persona. Jiang’s multiple identities as poet, self-ordained official, and missionary assistant, nevertheless generated a lifetime of frustration. The next chapter will

delve into his conflicting identities, investigate the disparity between his ambitions and reality, and lastly explore his reputation for being *kuang*.

Chapter Three

The Madman

The biographies of Jiang Dunfu have an identical way of highlighting his strangeness and unusual personality. Wang Tao, who recorded Jiang's life in the greatest detail, noted that he was "careless" 有跡弛名, "unrestrained" 落拓不羈, and "extraordinarily arrogant" 性情奇傲.¹ Similarly, Xu Shichang 徐世昌 (1855-1939), another close friend of Jiang, commented that he was "extremely arrogant" 性尤傲 and "had a reputation of being *kuang*" 以狂名著.² Following these nineteenth-century biographers of Jiang Dunfu, current scholars also characterize him as *guai* 怪 (strange), *ao* 傲 (arrogant), and *kuang* 狂 (mad, wild, crazy).³ Although all biographers focus on Jiang's personality, his being *kuang* was more than an individual characteristic. I argue in this chapter that the disparity between his ambitions and reality, and that between what he was able to do and what he desired to achieve also contributed to his self-fashioned *kuang*. Jiang Dunfu consciously chose to act out this way to resolve his conflicting identities and, ultimately, a way of self-realization.

¹ Wang Tao, "Gong Jiang liang jun yishi," *Song bing suo hua*, vol.5, *Xiang yan cong shu*, vol.14, 18. Wang Tao, "You ji Jiang Jianren shi," *Weng you yu tan*, vol.1, 19.

² Xu Shichang, *Wan qing yi shi ji*, vol.159, 13.

³ For instance, when introducing Jiang Dunfu as one of Wang Tao's closest friends, Cohen writes: "Jiang Dunfu was a child prodigy and was known for his bizarre behavior." See Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, 16. Mo Limin also titles his section on Jiang as "Jiang Dunfu: The Madman in Late Qing." Mo Limin, "Wan qing 'Kuangren' Jiang Dunfu," 203.

The Strange Characteristics

Wang Tao started one of his biographies of Jiang Dunfu with the following description: “His appearance was not attractive. He was also extraordinarily arrogant and tended to disparage and belittle others. Therefore, the people in Jianghuai area call him ‘the gnarly insect’” 狀貌不揚，而性情奇傲，喜詆肆人，江淮間人因名之曰怪蟲。⁴ The three features included in the description “the gnarly insect”—unattractive appearance, disregard of social conventions, and arrogance—were repeatedly highlighted in almost every biography of Jiang and contributed to the image of an unrestrained and bizarre figure in his contemporaries’ eyes.

Jiang Dunfu’s disregard for social conventions can be found in stories from both his early and late years. When he left home around the age of ten to go to Weiyang 維揚, present day Yangzhou 揚州, Jiang wandered around and found his way into Pingshan Hall, where Ruan Heng 阮亨 (1783-1859) was holding a banquet. Carrying no gifts and wearing shabby clothes, he angrily rebuked the gatekeeper and insisted on getting inside. Although he was eventually allowed to enter and later became one of Ruan’s retainers thanks to his ability to compose poetry on the spur of the moment, Jiang “harshly scolded others” 罵坐 when disagreeing with them later on and finally “left in anger” 拂衣去。⁵

His manner did not improve as he aged. When Jiang Dunfu was in Shanghai, he spent spare time with Wang Tao and Li Shanlan. “After composing the poem, we traveled and visited brothels. Once when a courtesan verbally attacked Jianren, he stormed out and destroyed her client’s cart. Shanlai was behind him and was blamed by the cart-drivers.

⁴ Wang, “You ji Jiang Jianren shi,” 19.

⁵ Jiang, “Linong shanren zixu,” 1.

Jiang's unrestrained manner can be glimpsed through this incident” 詩罷作狹邪游，有校書以語侵劍人。劍人怒而出，毀客之乘輿。壬叔在后，幾為輿夫所厄。落拓不羈，于此亦足見其一斑。⁶ In addition to frequenting the courtesan quarters, which was outrageous in the eyes of moralists, Jiang could be easily offended by others and did not care for others' feelings.

Additionally, Jiang Dunfu neither acted modestly nor kept a low profile. Once when drinking with his cohorts, Jiang said, “Whether it is the classical *shi* poetry, song lyric, or parallel prose, I have all reached the summit. None in Shanghai is able to compete with me” 詩詞駢體，鄙人皆已登峰造極，滬上寓居諸公無一人是抗手。⁷ Hearing this argument, another confronted him: “In the genres of song lyrics and prose, there is still Yao Meibo” 詞章者尚有姚梅伯。⁸ Yao Meibo refers to Yao Xie 姚燮 (1805-1864), who belonged to a group in nineteenth-century Shanghai that included Chen Shouqi 陳壽祺 (1771-1834 and Zhang Wenhui 張文虎 (1808-1885) and whose members were all accomplished in poetry and prose.⁹ Even if Jiang Dunfu was indeed exceeding these men in literary talent, his open boasting of his talent was at odds with the virtue of modesty that was customarily appreciated by Chinese literati. As a result, Jiang was egotistical enough to be considered as eccentric.

⁶ Wang, “Gong Jiang liang jun yishi,” 19.

⁷ Wang, “Xianfeng jiu nian si yue ershi ri,” 109.

⁸ Ibid., 109.

⁹ More details on poets and lyricists in the late Qing Shanghai can be found in Hu Xiaoming's *Jindai Shanghai cixue xi nian chu bian* and *Jindai Shanhai shixue xi nan chu bian*.

Disparity between Jiang's Expectations and Reality

Jiang Dunfu's many unconventional traits in personality were encapsulated in terms of *guai* by Wang Tao and *kuang* by Xu Shichang. Consistent with the polysemy of these two characters *kuang* and *guai*, Jiang's eccentricity also conveyed more than individual characteristics.¹⁰ Viewed by others as a literary talent, he desired to cultivate his public persona in statecraft. However, when he attempted to fulfill his political ambition, he was unable to achieve what he intended and could only live in less than desirable ways. The disparity between his expectations and the reality and the conflicts between his various identities all contributed to his *kuang* nature.

The Poet versus The Self-Ordained Official

The poetic works of Jiang Dunfu were best received; his prose, on the other hand, was disregarded and barely mentioned by critics. For him, nevertheless, his prose was more significant and valuable as a vehicle for delivering his thoughts on statecraft. While others saw him as a poet, Jiang considers himself a self-appointed "official" or the peerless "subject" of the emperor (*caomang guchen*), who did not have official titles but assumed responsibility for the emperor, the court, or the government. This conflict between how he saw himself and how others perceived him constitutes a major frustration for Jiang Dunfu.

As a poet, Jiang was considered by his contemporary Tan Xian 譚獻 (1832-1901) as one of the Latter Seven Masters of Song Lyrics in the Qing 清詞後七家.¹¹ Both his *shi* and

¹⁰ For the various meanings of the term *kuang*, see Santangelo, "Preface," *The Quest for the Childlike in Seventeenth-Century Fiction*, vii.

¹¹ Tan Xian, *Futang cihua*. The other six lyricists in of the Latter Seven Masters of Song Lyrics in the Qing are: Zhang Huiyan 張惠言 (1781-1802), Zhou Ji 周濟 (1781-1839),

ci were highly praised by others. Wu Jiaquan 吳嘉淦 (1790-1865), a nineteenth-century poet from Suzhou, comments that “his spirit is as lofty as Li Mengyang’s, his argument is as majestic as Chen Zilong’s, his structure is as concise as Gao Qi’s” 氣韻沉雄似北地，議論英偉似馭子，結構精練似青邱。¹² Moreover, when his lyrics were brought to the established lyricist Ge Zai 戈載 (1786-1856), the latter responded, “This is a lyricist of high caliber. What weak points are there for me to point out?” 此詞家射雕手，尚何疵可指耶。¹³ Comparing Jiang’s prose with his other forms of writing, Wang Tao argues that he likes Jiang’s *ci* most, followed by his *shi*, and lastly his *wen*.¹⁴ In contrast to the acclaim he received for his poetry, Jiang received few comments on his prose. The literary interaction between Jiang and other intellectuals mostly occurred through the vehicle of poetry, but a large portion of his essays was not composed for peer communication. The audience for Jiang’s prose consisted of governors, and its practical aspect overshadowed its literary values that were emphasized by other readers.

To Jiang Dunfu himself, on the other hand, his prose is more valuable than his other writings because of its political dimension and his understandings of and solutions for the social chaos at that time.¹⁵ While he deliberated on the writing style and aesthetic aspects of

Gong Zizhen 龔自珍 (1792-1841), Xiang Tingji 項廷紀 (1798-1835), Xu Zongheng 許宗衡 (1811-1869), and Jiang Chunlin 蔣春霖 (1818-1868).

¹² Wu, “Preface,” *Xiaogu tang shiji*, 1.

¹³ Jiang, *Fentuoli shi ci hua*, vol. 2, 7.

¹⁴ The original sentence reads “among what Jianren has written, I like his *ci* most, then his *shi*, and lastly his *wen*” 劍人著述，余最愛其詞，詩次之，文尤其次也。See Wang, “Preface,” *Fentuoli shi ci hua*, 1.

¹⁵ Jiang Dunfu’s prose collection is divided into eight *juan*, and each deals with specific topics: the first three volumes are his proposals for social and political issues; the fourth reflections on documents he has examined; the fifth biographies of friends and historical figures; the sixth epitaphs and memoirs; the seventh prefaces, mostly written for others’ literary collections; and the last travelling records and diaries.

the lyrics, Jiang weighted the arguments much more than the techniques of his prose. This practice mirrored his interest in “practical learning” 用世之學. “I learned writing prose relatively late in life and without the guidance of a teacher. Someone encouraged me to learn from essays of the Qianlong and Jiaqing reigns,” he writes, “but I was unwilling to do so... When I write, I only write what I want to say; when I have exhausted all I want to say, I stop” 古文一道，生較晚，無所師承。或有以乾嘉諸公文相勗，頗不願學……及下筆仍不過吐其胸中所欲言，言盡即止。¹⁶ In his last few years, Jiang wrote to his friend Ying Baoshi 應寶時 (1821-1890) and asked him to publish his works: “I labored throughout my life, but all I left was a reputation that I was seeking fame. Nevertheless, I still hope that the later generations will know my true intention.” 一生勤苦，祇剩好名二字，然亦望後世知我心爾。¹⁷ He specially requested that his essays be published before his poems and lyrics. As the essays best represent his concern for the declining Qing regime and the well-being of people, he desired for his audiences to recognize him as a statecraft scholar with practical learning in addition to his literary achievement.

At the same time, Jiang Dunfu emphasized his political thoughts and his image as a public figure; he consciously separated this persona from his identity as a poet. His wife, Zhi Ji 支機, observed such a tendency in him: “Jianren has supreme talent and ambition. He has devoted himself to practical learning. He does not care to become famous for his poetry, but has ironically become so” 劍人才高氣邁，務為有用之學，不屑曆以詩名，而竟以詩名。¹⁸ To Jiang, his literary achievement has no practical value in solving sociopolitical

¹⁶ Jiang, “Yu Cui Cangyu shu,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol. 3, 9.

¹⁷ Ying, “Epilogue,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, 1.

¹⁸ Zhi, “Preface,” *Fentuoli shi cihua*, 1.

problems. He once asked, “Heaven generates talents like us. We are supposed to provide medicine that can cure the world. However, apart from gaining a name for my poetry, what else have [I] achieved?” 彼蒼製才，我輩藥世，脫以詩名，復成何物。¹⁹ Although his identity as a poet was not necessarily incompatible with that of a statecraft-oriented scholar, he desired to be appreciated in the latter role.

To Engage or Disengage

The disparity between Jiang Dunfu’s expectations and reality also came from his constant failure to pursue a public career. His talent in statecraft was recognized in his early years, but he belittled the officialdom, which he saw as corrupt, and worked as a self-employed advisor. He had to hide in a monastery, though, to avoid persecution for his harsh criticism. When he later wanted to join in the bureaucracy to ease his family’s burden, he was unable to pass the higher level of civil service examinations or attract attention to his proposals.

Jiang Dunfu was aware of the ultimate weakness of the Qing government—the ineradicable corruption. He clearly demonstrated his unwillingness to join in it during his early years. As he himself writes, “Are there hungry simurghs craving for rotten rats? How can I let the white jade be sullied by green flies?” 豈有餓鸞貪腐鼠，肯教白璧玷青蠅。²⁰ By presenting himself as a piece of jade and portraying corrupt officials as flies, Jiang mocks the current officialdom. To preserve his virtue, Jiang claims that “I, Dunfu, am only a

¹⁹ Among the editions I found, Jiang Dunfu’s own preface was not preserved. But Xu Yuanrun has recorded this sentence in his preface of *Xiaogu tang shiji*. See Xu, *Xiaogu tang shiji*, preface, 1.

²⁰ Jiang, “Linong shanren zixu,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, 2. For the two poems, see Jiang, “Sui mu za gan,” *Xiaogu tang shiji*, vol.7, 8. Ibid, 2.

man from the east to the Yangtze River. I would not be tempted by a high salary from the government. How could I stand to exchange my pure substance for trivial materials?” 敦復江東男子一介，不取萬鍾，何加忍以皜皜之質受物之汶汶乎。²¹

His refusal to join the state system must not be confused with apathy towards social and political affairs. Before 1840, Jiang was active in advising local officials and entertained opportunities to join the system. For instance, Jiang Dunfu submitted a written statement to the Governor of Jiangnan and Jiangxi 两江总督, Tao Zhu 陶澍 (1779-1839), on the issues of water conservancy in northeast areas in China in 1832. Reading his statement, Lin Zexu praised him as “the talent of statecraft” 經濟才. Later, while Jiang was taking the elementary level of the civil exams in 1844, ministers Qi Junzao 祁雋藻 (1793-1866) and Mu Zhang'e 穆彰阿 (1782-1856) asked the examiner Zhang Fu 張芾 (1814-1862) to employ him: “Jiang from the northern part of Yangtze river is a worthy talent. It would be good if you could recruit him” 江左蔣生未易才也，君能收之藥籠中，則善矣。²²

Nevertheless, Zhang Fu notes, “in consideration of how this person [Jiang] regards himself, how would he be honored by the official salary?” 觀此子自命，豈榮以祿也. And sure enough, Jiang turned down the offer to show his distance from the corrupt system.²³

Alluding to the anecdote of Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989-1052), in which he divided frozen

²¹ Jiang, “Da Yao shifu lianfang shu,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol. 3, 4.

²² Jiang, “Shang fubu houguangong shu,” vol.3, 1.

²³ Other officials also note his arrogance and reluctance to join officialdom. While recognizing Jiang's talent, Lin Zexu commented: “This person is an excellent, talented person. Heaven will develop his ability and make him a great talent in days to come. How could you people keep him as a thing from a pond—as something of no account?” 此子天下奇士，天將老其才，俾異日得成大器。公等能養養之作池中物耶? See Jiang, “Shang fubu houguangong shu,” vol.3, 1.

porridge into small portions, and borrowing his words “concerned first about his country’s concerns” 先天下之憂而憂, Jiang wrote the line, “with the door shut, I divided porridge into portions, but I was concerned about the world” 閉門畫粥憂天下 to illustrate his care for his fellow people at a time when he was living in poverty and outside the bureaucracy.²⁴

Nevertheless, Jiang Dunfu’s harsh criticisms or his straightforward manner drove him away from what he wanted to do. From 1840, Jiang resided in a monastery for three years to avoid persecution. According to his autobiography, he “presented upon a proposal about military affairs, which was at odd with the intention of the governor” 上書言兵事，忤當事者意.²⁵ Wang Tao recorded a different story. According to Wang, Jiang openly attacked the Baoshan magistrate’s mistakes in the county level of civil service examination, and Jiang hid in a monastery to avoid the persecution he had invited.²⁶ Regardless of which story tells Jiang’s true intention, the monastery provided a sanctuary for him, but it also stopped him from caring for the Qing and its people in the way he desired.

In 1843, Jiang returned from the monastery and changed his courtesy name to Dunfu, meaning an “earnest return.”²⁷ The fact that Jiang took the second level of civil service examinations five times under his changed name suggests that this was a return to the “normal” track for educated males in his time. But it is most likely that he did this out of

²⁴ Lou Yao records the anecdote as “Everyday [Fan Zhongyan] made a pot of porridge, divided it into four portions, and took two in the morning and two in the evening. He cut pickled vegetables into several portions and mixed in a little salt. Fan ate like this for three years.” 日作粥一器，分爲四塊，早暮取二塊，斷齏數莖，入少鹽以啗之，如此者三年” See Lou, “Fan Wenzheng gong nianpu,” 5.

²⁵ Jiang, “Linong shanren zixu,” 1.

²⁶ Wang, “Jiang Jianren yishi,” 18.

²⁷ His courtesy name 敦復 derives from the I Ching’s “honest return with no regret” 敦復，無悔.

practical reasons to support his family. Even so, the door to an official career was closed because of his consecutive failures.²⁸ Instead of turning toward other routes, Jiang maintained that “if a heroic man cannot fulfill his ambitions, how can he [be satisfied] with just sufficient food and a peaceful abode? What is the difference between his death and that of grasses and trees?!” 丈夫生不能得志，豈飽食安居，死與草亡木卒等哉。²⁹ Thereupon, he “takes to writing to express his frustration” 發憤著書 (*fafen zhushu*), making his views known to later generations and achieving cultural immortality.³⁰ Although he believed that intellectuals who have no official positions should not honor reclusion but need to actively go forth and help the government solve social problems, his proposals were not recognized by others.³¹ While voluntarily taking the political responsibility, Jiang Dunfu was unable to deal with his critics the way he wanted to.

The Anti-Western Missionary Assistant

Jiang Dunfu was one of the earliest Chinese intellectuals who worked as a missionary assistant and helped to translate Western texts into Chinese. However, Jiang’s opposition

²⁸ In the normal course of events, scholars could not obtain an official appointment until they passed the second-level (provincial) examination. Jiang Dunfu, as a first-degree holder, was a low-ranking member of the gentry class.

²⁹ Jiang, “Linong shanren zixu,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, 2.

³⁰ The literary tradition of “taking to writing to express one’s anger” (*fafen zhushu*) is originated from the famous historian Sima Qian (b. 145 BC), and was carried on by Chinese writers. See Huang, *Literati and Self-Re/Presentation*, 17.

³¹ Jiang argues that “how hard it is to be happy! How boundless, all under the heaven, is the world’s sorrow! How can we honor Changju and Jieni’s³¹ reclusion into farming and their enjoyment of the misty forest!” 樂何容易！天下滔滔，其憂甚大，豈榮沮溺之耦耕，甘山林之杳靄哉。Changju 長沮 and Jieni 桀溺 are two recluses in the *Analects* who claim that the gentleman who has forsaken the world is better than the one who runs from one patron to the next, for no one can reverse the flow of the world. See Jiang, “You Tianzhong shan ji,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol. 8, 10

toward teachings other than Confucianism and his patriotic sentiment prevented him from dedicating himself to what he was doing.

In 1853, Wang Tao helped Jiang gain a position in The London Missionary Society Press: “Day by day, Jiang became poorer. Being his friend, I took pity on him, but there was nothing I could do. At that time William Muirhead was compiling *The History of Britain*. I recommended Jiang to him. Therefore, he wrote for the westerners” 其貧困無聊，日益甚，爲之友者雖憐之而莫能爲之地。適西儒慕維廉英志之輯，余力薦其才，遂爲西人司筆。³² Jiang’s practical reason for joining the press was not a secret. When Jiang’s essays against Catholicism and Western affairs were published posthumously, an anonymous writer satirized his writings as “an example of wild, reckless writing which cannot but have a most injurious influence on people” and argues it to be responsible for the anti-foreign riots.³³ His old coworker, Joseph Edkins (1823-1905), came to Jiang’s defense and explained that his bitterness shown in writing against Christianity and the reason he “writes politically from the Confucianist standpoint” is due to his wish “to gain the favour of Confucianist readers.”³⁴

The occupation that sustained Jiang’s life, however, diverged from his commitment to Confucian and Chinese culture. His disagreement with the British Constitution and Catholicism was not only explicit in his essays, as I have illustrated in the previous chapter, but also implicit in his manipulation of the translated texts. The way Jiang translated the

³² Wang, “You ji Jiang Jianren shi,” 20.

³³ J., “The Recent Riots in China,” *The North China Daily News*, September 9, 1891, 243.

³⁴ Edkins, “Dislike to Foreigners in Modern Chinese Books,” *North-China Herald*, September 18, 1891, 394.

title, *Da yingguo zhi* 大英国志, for *The History of Britain* was another form of resisting the notion of Britain's equal position with the Qing government.³⁵ The term *zhi* 志 was commonly used for the local gazette, whereas a history of the state was normally defined as *shi* 史. Jiang's choice of using *zhi* instead of *shi* was an implicit way of expressing his idea that Britain was not a state equal to the Great Qing. Moreover, while translating *The History of Britain*, Jiang Dunfu compiled a different version of the history of Britain and named it *Ying zhi* 英志. The addition of *da* (great, grand) before the name of foreign countries, such as *daying* 大英 (the Great Britain), *damei* 大美 (the Great America), or *dafa* 大法 (the Great France), Zou Zhenghuan argues, was created by Western missionaries to confront the great Qing, *daqing* 大清.³⁶ Removing the character *da* in his version is Jiang's way of differentiating it from Muirhead's version, and this choice also indicates his resistance to the Western incomers.³⁷ Accordingly, Jiang's position in a foreign institution was contradictory to his commitment to Confucian education and his own culture. During this first phase of the Sino-Western contact, Jiang Dunfu's confidence in Chinese culture and his values was incompatible with and was even shaken by his work with missionaries.

Niches Found Inside the Intersection of Frustrations

Jiang Dunfu assumed multiple roles available in his time, but many of these were against his will and conflicted with what he wanted. His identity as a poet, which was recognized by others, deviated from his preferred identity as a statecraft scholar or activist; his

³⁵ Yao Dayun, "Wan qing chuanjiao shi Zhongguo zhushou de shenfen renting wenti," 40.

³⁶ Zou Zhenghuan, *Xifang chuanjiao shi yu wanqing xi shi dong jian*, 127.

³⁷ Yao, "Wan qing chuanjiao shi Zhongguo zhushou de shenfen renting wenti," 42.

opportunities to join the officialdom did not cohere with his wishes to do so; and his occupation as a missionary assistant went against his identity as a Confucian scholar. The continuous conflicts between these roles resulted in Jiang Dunfu's *shanren* identity and his self-fashioned *kuang*—niches he found within the intersection of his conflicting identities and frustrations.

The Shanren Identity

The term “man of mountain” (*shanren*), which started in the Northern and Southern dynasties, suggests an inclination to retreat from the mundane world. It flourished in the sixteenth century and developed into a label for the emergent, non-official class of literati.³⁸ Zhang Dejian defines *shanren* as “a literati group that, moving from one place to another, by means of literary arts sought to be associated with influential officials, and whose main requests were to become an advisor to officials or to be financially supported.”³⁹ Jiang Dunfu adopted the name “The Man of Linong Mountain” 麗農山人 in his later years. This self-claimed *shanren* identity pays tribute to such a tradition formed by freelance literary men without official positions but living by means of their literary skills, and it also provided Jiang with a liminal identity to explore opportunities to serve the public as a self-ordained civil servant.

As Peter Sturman has noted, “reclusion is an act of disengagement yet, ironically, pronouncing reclusion is the opposite.”⁴⁰ Though Jiang has written lines such as “the sentiment of an idle gull coming over me like water, I wish to become a fisherman on the

³⁸ Zhang, *Mingdai shanren wenxue yanjiu*, 5.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 5.

⁴⁰ Sturman, “The Art of Reclusion,” 15.

river Feng,” expressing his desire to withdraw, he did not entirely disengage from political activities.⁴¹ Instead, he continued proposing and compiling gazettes for the local governments. His appearance of nonchalance toward the mundane affairs partly resulted from his reluctance to associate with corrupt officials and was partly a justification for his consecutive failure to pass the second level of the civil service examination. *Shanren*, as a path in between engagement (*rushi* 入世) and disengagement (*chushi* 出世) with the official world or paradoxically accounts for Jiang Dunfu’s detachment from the bureaucratic system and his urge to serve the government, or more precisely the people. When the door to an official career was closed to him, his *shanren* identity enabled him to exert individual agency to pursue his political ambition. It was thus a gesture that Jiang adopted to justify his non-official position, a way of self-expression, and an expedient way to realize his ambition.

Self-fashioned Kuang

The etymology of the term *kuang* is “mad dog” and was later embraced by individuals and biographers to elicit a complex and multifaceted character.⁴² It first appeared in *The Book of Poetry* 詩經 with a negative sense of “petulant” and “silly” and was developed and used in positive ways in Confucius’s time.⁴³ In *The Analects*, Confucius argues that “unable to find the company of those who travel the middle path, I would have to go with the *kuang* (ardent) or the *juan* (cautious). The *kuang* will advance in action, and the *juan* will refrain

⁴¹ Jiang, *Xiaogu tang shiji*, vol. 6, 2.

⁴² See Xu, *Shuowen jie*, 11. *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 [Explaining Graphs and Analyzing Characters] is the earliest Chinese dictionary by Xu Shen 許慎 (58-147) in the Eastern Han.

⁴³ Liu, “Zhongguo wenhua de kuangzhe jingshen,” 72.

from doing some things” 不得中行而與之，必也狂狷乎！狂者進取，狷者有所不為也。⁴⁴

Zhongxing, or *zhongyong* 中庸, was the supreme virtue promoted by Confucius which includes the qualities of being moderate, sincere, balanced, and determined.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, he admitted that this quality is difficult to achieve and can be substituted by the attitude of “endeavoring to improve one’s lot or acquire more,” namely *kuang*, and the attitude of being cautious, namely *juan*. In other words, being *kuang* would also be an appropriate choice, as those who are *kuang* are willing to work hard to achieve their goals, despite their “abnormal” actions.⁴⁶ Following Confucius’s words, He Yan 何晏 (195-249) in the Eastern Han period argued “those who are *kuang* endeavor to improve in a good way” 狂者，進取於善道。⁴⁷ Similarly, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) in the Song dynasty wrote “those who are *kuang* have extremely high ambitions while their behaviors are unorthodox” 狂者，志極高

⁴⁴ With the exception of a few minor changes, the translations of *The Analects* are by Peimin Ni. See Ni, *Understanding the Analects of Confucius*, 315.

⁴⁵ “Most supreme is the virtue/virtuosity of constantly hitting the mark (*zhongyong*)” 中庸之為德也。Ibid., 186. More introduction on the term *zhongyong* can be found in Ni’s “Key Terms” section in *Understanding the Analects of Confucius*, 73-75. For more interpretations of the term and Confucian followers’ notes and commentaries on the term, see “Introduction: The Zhongyong” in *Daxue and Zhongyong* translated and annotated by Ian Johnston and Wang Ping, 181-210.

⁴⁶ In *The Analects*, Confucius also complicated the term *kuang* by differentiating what kind is acceptable: “The Master said, ‘I simply don’t understand how people could become *kuang* (impulsive) and yet not upright, naïve and yet not honest, empty-minded and yet not trustworthy” 子曰，狂而不直，侗而不願，慳慳而不信，吾不知之矣，and “In ancient times, people had three types of shortcomings. Today, even these shortcomings can perhaps no longer be found. The ancients who were *kuang* (petulant) were unreserved, today’s *kuang* people are reckless; the ancients who were self-esteemed were restrained, today’s self-esteemed are resentful and irritable; the ancients who were stupid were straightforward, today’s stupid are nothing but devious” 古者民有三疾，今也或是之亡也：古之狂也肆，今之狂也蕩；古之矜也廉，今之矜也忿戾；古之愚也直，今之愚也詐而已矣。

Discussion on what is the “proper *kuang*” merits a full-length study in its own right, so I will not examine it here.

⁴⁷ He, *Lunyu jiejie jibian*, 185.

而行不掩。⁴⁸ Due to Confucius's prominent role as a cultural figure and Confucian scholars' continuous revisiting of his words, *kuang* was no longer an utterly negative term but was complicated with the meaning of "endeavoring to improve one's lot."

In the Six Dynasties, a chaotic period when the ruling class changed rapidly, there appeared a group of eccentric people who became prototypes of self-fashioned *kuangren* (madmen) in Chinese culture. Due either to corrupt officialdom or to the fear of being executed after the dynastic change, many intellectuals were unwilling to cooperate with the ruling class and resided in mountains. They were careless about social norms, acted abnormally, had disarrayed hair, and indulged in drink. Although they were described by others as *chi* 癡 (foolish), *ren* 任 (self-indulgent), *dan* 誕 (arbitrary) instead of *kuang*, these exemplary figures, such as the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove 竹林七賢 in the Jin dynasty, provided models for later intellectuals who continued this historical fashion of acting mad and for those who saw themselves sharing certain similarities with these idiosyncratic figures.⁴⁹ When it came to the Tang Dynasty, the positive connotation of *kuang* was enlarged, and the term was complicated and accepted as a space that embraced diverse types of non-conformity. He Zhizhang 賀知章 (659-744) adopted the courtesy name "The *Kuang* (mad) Sojourner in Siming" 四明狂客 in his late years for his distinctive personality as well as his wild cursive calligraphy (*kuangcao* 狂草). Likewise, Du Fu wrote "I lived dissolutely in the Qi and Zhao regions; having fur coats and fine horses, I was very *qingkuang* (unrestrained)" 放蕩齊趙間，裘馬頗清狂. Though the term continued to

⁴⁸ Zhu, *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, vol.7, 18.

⁴⁹ Although *kuang* shares the same otherness and eccentricity with the terms *chi*, *ren* and *dan*, the term *kuang* was not an accepted description of those unusual characteristics until the Tang Dynasty.

suggest “unrestrained” and “reckless,” these unorthodox characteristics were tolerated and even became prevalent for representing one’s individuality.

Carrying on this tradition, Jiang Dunfu adopted nonconformist behaviors, such as drinking and seeking company from courtesans, from previous *kuangren*. “Jiang Dunfu liked to read and talk about statecraft from his youth. He can be seen as a state official in today’s China. Being appreciated by no one, Jiang, therefore, adopted a self-destructive lifestyle of drinking and whoring” 鐵岸少讀書喜談經濟挾術，干當世卿大夫。無所遇，遂以酒色自污。⁵⁰ Drinking and acting crazy served as outlets for the conflict between Jiang Dunfu’s ambitions and reality, and his atypical behaviors “may imply an extreme separation from reality, or an absolute refusal to compromise with it.”⁵¹ Nevertheless, it should not be mistaken that Jiang Dunfu’s *kuang* was merely crazy behavior and nothing more than an outlet for Jiang’s frustration. Despite the fact that his eccentricity, as observed by others came, from his personality and peculiar behaviors, Jiang Dunfu consciously fashioned himself as *kuang* to accommodate his conflicting career trajectories and contradictory selves.

In his autobiography, Jiang Dunfu notes that “I am naturally ignorant of worldly affairs. I did not get along with others but enjoyed talking about the ways of *wang* and *bo*. All others consider me as *kuang* (crazy)” 鄙性疏闇于世，寡諧高談王伯之畧，人以爲狂。⁵² The ways of *wang* and *bo* refers to *wangdao* 王道, meaning ruling by morality, and *baodao* 霸道, meaning ruling by coercion, which were two ways of governing a country; debates on

⁵⁰ Zhang, “Tiean shi xu,” *Shuyi shi za lu*, vol.1, 41.

⁵¹ Santangelo, “Preface,” *The Quest for the Childlike in Seventeenth-Century Fiction*, iv.

⁵² Jiang, “Shang fubu houguan gong shu,” 2.

these two repeatedly took place in the Chinese court and among Chinese literati.⁵³ Understanding his minority position, Jiang confessed that “I know that those who have a low position yet talk about state affairs are committing a sin. How dare the commoners go against the orders and discussed those issues” 竊聞位卑而言高者，罪也，無位之士何敢抗言高論。⁵⁴ Fluctuating between his desire to care for the people and his non-official position that prohibited him from doing so, Jiang Dunfu adopted the *kuang* tradition as a niche in which he could muse on the conflict. In order to empower himself, Jiang refers to Confucius’s words and writes, “I am curious and Zheng is lazy; Zheng is the one who is *juan* and I am the one who is *kuang*./ In this shallow universe, we are not pleased with ourselves; arriving here the young men abandoned their heroic spirit” 蔣生好奇鄭生懶，鄭生狷者蔣生狂。乾坤逼仄不得意，男兒到此除豪氣。⁵⁵ This line came from Jiang’s poem to his friend Zheng Qingzhi 鄭慶之 (dates unknown) on the occasion of Zheng’s departure to Suzhou. As Jiang writes, their unfulfilled sentiment was a result of the “shallow universe,” or their current situation. Their choice of being *kuang* and *juan* was in alignment with Confucius’ words and was the alternative when their belief in serving a moral leader was undermined by their state. Jiang Dunfu’s *kuang* nature, therefore, was much more than an individual characteristic. It was a product of and a resolution of his continuous frustrations and conflicting identities.

⁵³ *Wangbo* 王伯 is equivalent to *wangba* 王霸. See Lin, *Lin Geng shiwen ji*, 174. van Bergeijk, Peter A.G. et al., eds., *Economic Diplomacy: Economic and Political Perspectives*, 65.

⁵⁴ Jiang, “Shang mou bingbei shu,” *Xiaogu tang wenji*, vol.3, 6.

⁵⁵ Jiang, “Song Zheng Yuqin huan Wumen,” *Xiaogu tang shiji*, vol.2, 8.

Jiang Dunfu's pseudonym "Mountain Man in Linong" justifies his identity as one who obtain no official degree. Assuming the self-fashioned *kuang*, at the same time, provided a niche for him to discuss political affairs as a commoner and serves as a substitution for his unfulfilled ambition. His unconventional behaviors were not different from previous *kuang* figures, and his lifestyle was similar to that of the *shanren* of former periods. Nevertheless, the reason for Jiang Dunfu to embrace this time-honored identity was distinctively determined by his time and location—when China was transiting from the old to the new and where Chinese tradition was encountering different philosophies and teachings from the West.

Conclusion

Jiang Dunfu's *kuang* should not be seen as a mere individual characteristic but needs to be interpreted as his attempt to resolve the assimilation failures with dramatic historical changes in nineteenth-century Shanghai. His poet identity and the traditional training he received were no longer practical in solving the unprecedented social, political, and cultural crises. The incoming Westerners provided him with sanctuary and an occupation for him, yet the new philosophies and knowledge they brought to China conflicted with Jiang's patriotic faith in his own culture. His knowledge and skills were challenged, and his values were questioned. Acting out and indulging in drinking, seeking the company of courtesans, and returning to the traditional identities of *shanren* and *kuang* were channels for Jiang Dunfu to express his frustrations with finding a new identity and the strategy by which he adapted himself to the changing world and substantiated his value in the transitional period.

Conclusion

Individuals' writings and expressions are shaped by particular social and cultural forces, yet simultaneously connected with the tradition from where they originated. In general, accounts of the earliest phase of China's modernization focus on "progressive" individuals' reactions to the new era, but it is also essential to ask how "conservative" individuals substantiated their values and defined themselves in the transformative period. The case of Jiang Dufun as presented in this study is a salient example. An analysis of Jiang illustrates the identities that classically trained intellectuals adopted and the problems they encountered in the first half of the nineteenth century. Born into a gentry family, immersed in Confucianism and Chinese classics, active in the first stage of China's modernization, and obtaining no major position throughout his lifetime, Jiang Dunfu was an intellectual whose case was representative, yet also unique.

As a traditionally trained man of letters, Jiang continued in his literary production in classical forms. His writings were the major media for recording his life and establishing relationships with others. Paradoxically, he was best received by others as a poet, yet consciously distanced himself from that identity. Witnessing the crises in the Qing, Jiang Dunfu voluntarily played a proactive role and looked back to Confucian classics in order to rejuvenate the declining regime. Nevertheless, as an enthusiastic commoner, he had no official opportunities to fulfill his ambition. Moreover, being the first generation of littoral intellectuals who worked with Westerners, Jiang Dunfu struggled to persist in his confidence

in Chinese culture.¹ When his literary and classical training were not able to solve the new social problems, and when his public persona was not affirmed, Jiang Dunfu suffered from the conflicts between the different roles. When his abnormal personality was regarded by others as “mad,” he also empowered himself by embracing the time-honored *kuang* identity to justify his political ambition. Meanwhile, to justify his minor position and constant struggle, he also adopted the identity of freelance intellectual by naming himself as the “Mountain Man in Linong.”

However unique is the case of Jiang Dunfu, to what extent does he represent his generation? In the nineteenth century, there were other intellectuals in Shanghai who shared with Jiang common backgrounds, social status, eccentric behaviors, and frustrations. Shanghai, being the treaty port that connected China and the West, provided a window for these intellectuals to view the world beyond their home country. Nevertheless, it also became a unique breeding ground for the 19th century “madmen” because of its contact with the West.

The entrance of Westerners in Shanghai provided both job opportunities and shelter for the Chinese under the Taiping army. Refugees and sojourners arrived and made the area the prototype of today’s metropolitan city. However, the new employment opportunities were likely to be found in institutions owned by foreigners, and the two cultures were tearing those intellectuals apart: they were rooted in the Chinese tradition but inevitably linked with the West. They were troubled by the contradiction of their identities. Their belief in

¹ Wang Liqun argues that intellectuals who joined the London Missionary Society Press, were the first generation of littoral intellectuals who worked with Westerners. See Wang, “Jindai shanghai kou’an zhishi fenzi de xingqi: yi Mohai shuguan de Zhongguo wen ren wei li,” 97.

servicing a moral leader under the education of Confucianism was contradictory to their occupations.² The new teachings brought by Westerners also conflicted with Chinese traditional teachings and shook the intellectuals' belief in Confucianism and their confidence in their state.

Jiang Dunfu, Wang Tao, and Li Shanlan were known together as the “Three Friends of Shanghai” 海天三友, “Three Madmen of Shanghai” 海上三狂士, and “The Three Heterodoxies” 三異民.³ Wang Tao, Jiang's friend and biographer mentioned many times earlier, was born in 1828 in Fuli 甬裡, a town in today's Suzhou. His early education was supervised by his father, a teacher who prepared young students for the civil service examination. He passed the first level of the examination in 1845 but failed in the advanced levels. He moved to Shanghai in 1848 and worked for missionaries in translating the Bible and Western works for thirteen years. At the same time when Jiang stopped attempting the civil service examination and started writing proposals, Wang Tao submitted numerous essays to officials, such as Wu Xu 吳煦 (1809-1872) and Zeng Guofan. His desire to establish a name in statecraft was equivalent to, if not greater than Jiang's: he sent eight letters to Wu Xu in only two months in 1860.⁴ Nevertheless, Wang also shared Jiang's bitterness of being disregarded.⁵

² Yeh, “The Life-style of Four *Wenren* in Late Qing Shanghai,” 421

³ Wang Tao recorded “Hu Yuan drew *A Picture of Three Friends of Shanghai* and gave it to Jiang” 雲閣胡遠為繪海天三友圖以貽之願. See Wang, “You ji Jiang Jianren shi,” *Weng you yu tan*, 20.

⁴ Yu, *Shanghai 1862*, 391

⁵ Some argue that when the Qing was not able to provide what Wang Tao and Jiang Dunfu wanted, they turned to the Taipings and sought for their appreciation. See Yu, *Shanghai 1862*, 389-396. However, these interpretations are arguable. Paul Cohen questioned the authorship of the letter that Wang Tao allegedly wrote to Taiping under the pseudonym of Huang Wan 黃畹. See Cohen, “A Reexamination of the Case,” *Between*

While working for the missionaries, Wang demonstrated his unwillingness like Jiang Dunfu did. “In name, I am an editor, but in fact, I am the one who is given orders. [My work] is so irrelevant and outside of true scholarship that if [the paper on which the work is written] is not used for covering pickle jars or pasting up windows, one might as well throw it straight into the privy. I idle away day after day wasting the best years of my life. Nothing I do here is meaningful” 名為秉筆，實供指揮。支離曲學，非特覆瓿糊窓直，可投之溷廁，玩時愒日，坐耗壯年，其無所取一也。⁶ Although his economic situation was improved through his work as a missionary assistant, Wang Tao’s self-confidence “was shaken by being a salaried employee in the service of foreigners.”⁷ His public identity as an assistant was inconsistent and even conflicted with his ideal persona as a scholar in Confucianism and statecraft. Confronted with similar frustrations as Jiang, Wang Tao adopted the names “the *Kuang* (mad) Sojourner of Fuli” 甫裡一狂客 and “the *Kuang* (mad) Sage of Grassy Marshland” 草澤狂夫 in depicting and expressing his frustration.⁸

Li Shanlan was a native of Haining 海寧 in Hangzhou. He was known for his talent in mathematics from childhood but failed to pass the second level of the civil service examination. He came to Shanghai in 1852 and assisted in translating mathematical and scientific works for eight years. His arrogance was no less than Jiang Dunfu’s. When Jiang

Tradition and Modernity, 47-55. Though there is no solid evidence showing Jiang and Wang’s attempt to join the Taipings, it is clear that they consciously associated with the state and attempted to change its fate.

⁶ Wang Tao, “Feng Zhu Xuequan jiu shi,” *Tao yuan chi du*, vol.4, 1. With the exception of few minor changes, this translation is by Catherine Vance Yeh. See Yeh, “The Life-Style of Four Wenren in Late Qing Shanghai,” 431.

⁷ Yeh, “The Life-style of Four *Wenren* in Late Qing Shanghai,” 433.

⁸ Fuli is current day Luzhi in Jiangsu. Wang Tao, “Wu Zhengyu xuan guan cha,” *Taoyuan chi du xu chao*, vol.1, 12.

pretentiously argued that there no one could compete with him in literary writing, Li Shanlan argued as follows: “If I am not today’s big name in astronomy and mathematics, who could be? Recently I have been translating a book on mathematics with Alexander Wylie (1815-1887) and it will be completed soon. When this book is published, everyone will revere me as the master. Li Shangzhi and Mei Dingjiu will be dumbfounded and consider themselves to be falling behind” 當今天算名家，非余而誰。近與偉烈君譯成數書，現將竣事。此書一出，海內談天者必將奉為宗師。李尚之，梅定九恐將瞠乎後矣。⁹ Li Shangzhi refers to Li Rui 李銳 (1768-1817), and Mei Dingjiu refers to Mei Wending 梅文鼎 (1633-1721), and both were established mathematicians at that time. Li Shanlan’s lofty self-statement was identical in nature to Jiang’s arrogance.

Gathering together, drinking, and chatting was their outlet for releasing their bitter feelings. Their shared ambition, excitement, and frustration were not understood by others: “Whenever we were tipsy, we clapped our hands and talked about grand issues. The sounds were always loud enough to shake the walls. Sometimes we talked spiritedly, sometimes we talked mournfully. The tears would not stop. Those who cannot understand us considered us to be mad.” 每酒酣耳熱，抵掌雄談，往往聲震四壁，或慷慨激，泣數行下，不知者笑為狂生。¹⁰ Their cooperation with foreigners was considered strange, not to mention their crazy behaviors such as talking about political reform in brothels, drinking while naked, and performing sword dances after getting drunk.¹¹ Despite individual differences, the central

⁹ Wang, “Xianfeng jiu nian si yue ershi ri,” 109.

¹⁰ Wang, “Tao yuan lao min zi zhuan,” *Tao yuan wen lu wai bian*. 407.

¹¹ Yu, *Shanghai 1862*, 407.

tension in Jiang's life—the conflict between being a public man and his ability—also existed in Wang Tao's, Li Shanlan's, and more Shanghai intellectuals' cases.

Other eccentric Shanghai scholars include Zhou Tenghu 周騰虎 (1816-1862), Gong Xiaogong 龔孝拱 (?), and Feng Guifen 馮桂芬 (1809-1874).¹² Some of them were Shanghai natives, and others were sojourners who came to the urban center for protection or opportunities. Gramsci's concept of "organic intellectual" is useful for examining this group of madmen in Shanghai, in reference to their positions which resulted from a conflict between their experience and the existing explanations available to them.¹³ These madmen emerged from a dialogue that "new narratives challenging the existing hegemony come into being."¹⁴ They were educated in the Confucian tradition but failed to pass the higher level of the civil service examinations. Jiang's talent, arrogance, and frustration in pursuing a public career were mirrored in this group of intellectuals. These unconventional individuals "represented a new social phenomenon on the Chinese scene which was to become increasingly important as the years rolled by: the treaty port intellectual."¹⁵ Seen in this context, Jiang's *kuang* goes beyond an individual case and can be conceived as an example of the collective frustration resulted from dramatic historical changes in nineteenth-century Shanghai.

In his last letter to Ying Baoshi, Jiang Dunfu requested that he publish his writings and help later generations to comprehend his heart. Thanks to Jiang's writings, we have now

¹² Details of their bizarreness and abnormal behaviors can be found in Yu's summary. See Yu, *Shanghai 1862*, 406-407.

¹³ Crehan, *Gramsci's Common Sense*, 190.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁵ Cohen, *Between Tradition and Modernity*, 16. Yu also summaries this group of scholars as a new class of "madmen on the sea" 海上狂士. See Yu, *Shanghai 1862*, 404.

started to learn about his life, his ambition, and his struggles. By looking at how Jiang Dunfu and other people in early nineteenth-century China came to terms with transformation and modernization, we may gain a new perspective on their world, and perhaps on ours as well.

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