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The Book and the Barbarian in Ming China and Beyond: The *Luo chong lu*, or “Record of Naked Creatures”

In a text titled *Record of Grand Lessons to Wake the Errant* 大義覺迷錄, the Yongzheng emperor (r. 1723–1736) of the Manchu Qing dynasty argued that the indigenous Chinese word *yi* 夷 (commonly translated as “foreign” or “barbarian”) was merely an archaic equivalent of the latter-day word for “birthplace,” and thus ought not be thought insulting to Manchu sensibilities, as was suggested by the practice of some early Qing authors who self-censored their writings by avoiding the use of the graph *yi*.¹ Whatever the success of this attempt to lay to rest any debates over the term, in what way might recent uses of it have led either to self-censorship or to Yongzheng’s claim that it was inoffensive? A key element to the answer will involve gaining a better understanding of the complex and lively history of descriptions, opinions, and fantasies about the outside world and its inhabitants during the Ming (1368–1644).

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¹ For discussion of this text in relation to eighteenth-century and later disputes over the term “*yi*,” see Lydia Liu, *The Clash of Empires: The Invention of China in Modern World Making* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), chap. 3, particularly pp. 81–88 (note that Liu renders the title as “Awakening to Supreme Justice”). See also Liu’s discussion of the

The present essay aims to contribute to this end by studying the *Luochong lu* 羸蟲錄 (Record of naked creatures), a text that for much of the Ming was the most popular, comprehensive, and widely circulating source of documentation about exotic lands and peoples, yet has since the eighteenth century or so fallen almost totally into neglect.² The *Luochong lu* (figure 1) is a block-printed text from the Ming dynasty that assembles images and descriptions of over a hundred types of *luochong* 羸蟲 (literally, naked creatures), otherwise known as *yi* 夷 (barbarians, foreigners).³ Its entries, organized under headings for various “*guo*” 國 (state, country, or polity), cover countries and polities from all across Asia and the Indian Ocean region, the Middle East (e.g., Dashi wusili 大食勿斯離, present-day Mosul in northern Iraq), Africa (e.g., Mojiala 默伽臘, present-day Morocco), and Europe (e.g., Sijialiye 思伽里野, Sicily).⁴ The focus of the text is on “outside foreigners” (*waiyi* 外夷) beyond the territory of the “Central States” (*zhongguo* 中國), but it also includes ethnic groups within that territory, as well as legendary countries originally recorded in early Chinese texts such as the *Shanhai jing* 山海經 (The classic of mountains and seas). Like that text, moreover, with which it was often paired in the Ming, the *Luochong lu* places emphasis not only on written accounts of exotic peoples but also on often “outlandish” illustrations.⁵

Ming maritime activities brought increasing direct contacts between Asia and Europe, and this generated numerous writings on the

clashes over the word *yi* in the Anglo-Chinese Treaty of Tianjin signed in 1858, where the character *yi* 夷 was banned from use in reference to “the Government or subjects of Her Britannic Majesty in any Chinese official document issued by the Chinese Authorities either in the Capital or in the Province,” in *ibid.*, 31–107.

² A photo facsimile reproduction of this text was published by Xueyuan chubanshe in Beijing in 2001. For works that noted this text or versions of it, see for example Zhou Xinhui 周心慧, *Zhongguo gu banhua tongshi* 中國古版畫通史 (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2000), 179; *Zhongguo banhua shi congkao* 中國版畫史叢稿 (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2002), 241; Bai Qianshen, *Fu Shan's World: The Transformation of Chinese Calligraphy in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard East Asian Monographs, 2003), 17–18; Laura Hostetler, *Qing Colonial Enterprise: Ethnography and Cartography in Early Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 92–96.

³ Specific numbers of the entries vary from edition to edition. The *Miaojin wanbao quan-shu* 妙錦萬寶全書 edn. (see fig. 1) has 139; this edn. was published in 1612 by Liu Shuang-song 劉雙松 of Anzheng tang 安正堂. It has been reproduced as *Myōkin banpō zensho* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 2003–04).

⁴ The identification of the countries and regions recorded in *Luochong lu* is based on Lu Junling 陸峻嶺, annot., *Yiyu zhi* 異域志, in *Zhenla fengtu ji jiaozhu, Xiyu lu, Yiyu zhi* 真臘風土記校注·西遊錄·異域志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000).

⁵ The Ming book market favored the illustrated versions of the *Shanhai jing*. See Ma Changyi 馬昌儀, *Quan xiang Shanhai jing tu bijiao* 全像山海經圖比較 (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 2003). For a recent English translation of selections from a 1597 illustrated edition of *Shanhai jing*, see Richard Strassberg, *A Chinese Bestiary: Strange Creatures from the Guideways through Mountains and Seas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002).

foreign.⁶ The *Luochong lu* stands out among the other works in several ways. First, it is a pictorial, and thus closely linked to the flourishing industry of block-printed illustrations (*banhua* 版畫) at that time. Second, it stands out for its effort at comprehensiveness, covering countries and polities in both continental and maritime worlds. Most significantly, as the following discussion will show, it enjoyed wide circulation and popularity among a large and diverse readership, and thus can shed light on a world of Ming reading that includes, but is by no means limited to, the elite discourses of formal scholarship and state policies. Despite its place in the Ming world of printing and reading, however, the *Luochong lu* has fallen almost entirely out of modern scholarly discussions of Ming cultural history. With this in mind, this essay takes as its main task the reconstruction of its early history, adopting a methodological perspective largely derived from book history.⁷ The history of the *Luochong lu* to be retraced here includes both close readings of texts and pictures from the work as well as its history of circulation, promotion, and use: its various editions, makers, and intended readers, as well as how it was circulated and read across time and space by actual readers. In this way we may gain a sense of not only what the text says, but how it came to say it, and how the readers of the time heard it.

At the very outset, the term “*luochong*” itself merits some explanation. It belongs to a zoological schema from the classical tradition dividing creatures into five groups: the scaled 鱗蟲, feathered 羽蟲, haired 毛蟲, shelled 介蟲, and naked 羸蟲 (*luo* 羸 is also written *luo* 倮 or *luo* 裸). A typical formula of this schema appears in *The Family Sayings of Confucius* (*Kongzi jia yu* 孔子家語):⁸

⁶ For a sample of important Ming works on the foreign, see the *Zhongwai jiaotong shi ji congkan* 中外交通史籍叢刊 (1960, rpt. 2000) by Zhonghua shuju in Beijing. For recent studies on Ming interactions with foreigners, see for example Roderich Ptak, *China, The Portuguese, and the Nanyang: Oceans and Routes, Regions and Trades (c. 1000–1600)* (Aldershot, Hampshire, Great Britain; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004) and his other works.

⁷ Recently, the field of the history of books has produced groundbreaking works. For an overview of the field, see David Finkelstein, Alistair McCleery, eds., *Book History Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002). For English scholarship on Chinese Ming-Qing printing history, see, e.g., Robert Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Lucile Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th–17th Centuries)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003); Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow, eds., *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005); Joseph McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006); Cynthia Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007). For reviews, see Tobie Meyer-Fong, “The Printed World: Books, Publishing Culture, and Society in Late Imperial China,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 66.3 (August 2007): 787–817; Cynthia Brokaw, “Book History in Premodern China: The State of the Discipline I,” *Book History* 10 (2007), 253–90.

⁸ This zoological schema also appears in such early texts as the *Da Dai Li ji* 大戴禮記, *Lun*

Of feathered creatures there are three hundred and sixty, and the phoenix is their leader; of furred creatures there are three hundred and sixty, and the *qilin* is their leader; of shelled creatures there are three hundred and sixty, and the tortoise is their leader; of scaled creatures there are three hundred and sixty, and the dragon is their leader; of naked creatures there are three hundred and sixty, and the human is their leader.⁹ 羽蟲三百有六十而鳳爲之長，毛蟲三百有六十而麟爲之長，甲蟲三百有六十而龜爲之長，鱗蟲三百有六十而龍爲之長，倮蟲三百有六十而人爲之長。

The human being, in this five-class system, is the leader of the “naked creatures.” Although the notion continued to be brought up, for example, in relation to classicist learning in pre-Ming writing,¹⁰ it appears to have been the Ming book market that brought this word back to the attention of a wide readership, and played rather uninhibitedly for humorous effect on the labeling of human beings as *chong* 蟲, meaning bugs, worms, insects, reptiles, or sometimes more generally “critters” – associations that inspire comical whimsy. The peculiar choice of the title *Luochong lu* not only (re)introduced to the broad Chinese reading public the notion of *luochong*, but also set the tone for the Ming popular imagination about the foreign and exotic. While the word *yi* 夷, as seen above, became a focal point for elite cultural and diplomatic disputes over notions of ethnicity and foreignness, the term *luochong* makes its reappearance in the Ming book world in association with a less highbrow mode of representation that is marked by humor, playfulness, informality, and unabashed exoticism. Thus although the term *luochong* has classical antecedents, we may also think of it in this latter incarnation as something of a Ming neologism, a reinvented notion meant to help create an expectation of novel and amusing information about the inhabitants of foreign lands.¹¹

heng 論衡, *Guanyinzi* 關尹子, *Guanzi* 管子, and *Huangdi neijing* 黃帝內經。

⁹ See Chen Shike 陳士珂, *Kongzi jiayu shuzheng* 孔子家語疏證 (Changsha: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1939), 168.

¹⁰ What exactly *luochong* signified was debated from time to time. Many early and medieval Chinese scholars used *luochong* to signify “barbarians,” but some disagreed. For example, Lin Xiyi 林希逸 of the Song dynasty explained that “*luo*” (naked) means “short hair” (*qianmao*), referring to a zoological class that includes tigers (*hu*) and leopards (*bao*). See Lin Xiyi, *Kaogong ji jie* 攷工記解, vol. 2, Wenyuange SKQS, 27b.

¹¹ In light of the air of irreverence and comic play that the term *luochong* connoted in the Ming, it is perhaps unsurprising that another Ming work responsible for the circulation of the term and the old five-part schema was the *Xiyou ji* 西遊記 (*The Journey to the West*). See *The Journey to the West*, trans. Anthony Yu (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), vol. 1, 111.

The following discussion examines the *Luochong lu* from a series of separate yet related perspectives: first, its composition and recomposition by compilers and publishers of various versions of the work; then, its reception among disparate groups of readers; and finally its repackaging and promotion in late-Ming daily-use encyclopedias, the printing genre in which the *Luochong lu* came to enjoy its widest currency and influence in the world of late Ming books. A short concluding section will briefly survey the fate of the *Luochong lu* in the Qing dynasty and beyond.

THE COMPOSITION OF THE *LUOCHONG LU*

The ultimate origins of the *Luochong lu* are somewhat murky.¹² Comparison with the fifteenth century *Yiyu tuzhi* 異域圖志 (Pictures and descriptions of foreign lands) commissioned possibly by the Ming prince and polymath Zhu Quan 朱權 (1378–1448), however, reveals that these two titles refer to essentially the same text.¹³ The earlier title “Yiyu tuzhi” had the more restrained and classical-sounding tone, while subsequent later productions of the text as *Luochong lu* tended to highlight the potential in the material for humor and sensationalism. The latter title seems to have essentially replaced “Yiyu tuzhi” in the early sixteenth century, and remained the predominant name under which the text was known to Ming readers.

We know of three distinct types of Ming edition of the *Luochong lu*. The first, the fifteenth century form circulating under the title *Yiyu tuzhi*, exists in an exemplar of an imprint commissioned in 1489 by Jin Xian 金銑, the governor of Guangxin 廣信 prefecture in Jiangxi, now housed in the Cambridge University library. The second type comprises imprints under the later and more widespread title *Luochong lu*, the form in which the text became widely known and eventually a best-seller in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as the Wanli era (1573–1620) commercial publisher Zhuang Rujing 莊汝敬 notes in his preface to a 1593 reprint: “This book, the *Luochonglu*, has been in circulation for a long time, and there has been a profusion of editions.”¹⁴ A copy of this

¹² E.g., what is the relation between the pictorial *Luochong lu* and a written text called *Yiyu zhi* 異域志, reputedly by Yuan-era Zhou Zhizhong 周致中. The texts in these two books overlap.

¹³ On the *Yiyu tuzhi*, see A. C. Moule, “An Introduction to the *Iyü t'u chih*,” *TP* 27 (1930): 179–88. Moule mentions that Zhu Quan commissioned a text by the title *Yiyu tuzhi* between 1392 and 1430.

¹⁴ This edition is included in Hu Wenhuan’s 胡文煥 ambitious publishing project “Collecanea of books inquiring into and extending knowledge” (*Gezhi congshu* 格致叢書), which reproduces over 100 titles drawn from a variety of sources.

same 1593 imprint is now housed at the Beijing Capital Library. The third type comprises the numerous reprintings of the *Luochong lu* as a chapter in daily-use encyclopedias, a publication genre whose popularity mushroomed in the late Ming.¹⁵ We have abundant extant copies of this final type, including the famed *Sancai tuhui* 三才圖彙 (Pictorial compendium of the three realms) and dozens of other daily-use encyclopedias. In the end, the *Luochong lu* circulated not in one “correct” version, but in a range of versions that shared a common origin and were modeled after each other, albeit with various editorial changes.

The compilation of the *Luochong lu* drew on textual materials from an impressive range of previous works, such as *Lingwai daida* 嶺外代答 (Proxy answers concerning what is beyond the ranges),¹⁶ *Shanghai jing*, *Shilin guangji* 事林廣記 (Compendium of a forest of matters),¹⁷ *Youyang zazu* 酉陽雜俎 (Miscellaneous morsels from Youyang),¹⁸ *Bowu zhi* 博物志 (Treatise on broad learning of things),¹⁹ *Yuan chao mishi* 元朝秘史 (A secret history of the Yuan), in addition to official dynastic histories. Further, the concept of producing pictures for all the exotic peoples treated is also ambitious if not visionary.²⁰ Such a compilation project smacks of the work of an archival collector, drawing from sources inaccessible to most readers to assemble a gallery of rarities, in the form of exotic human and human-like beings.

¹⁵ The materials in daily-use encyclopedias range widely: e.g., astronomy and calendars, geography and history, law and dream interpretation; this variety substantiated the claim to provide readers all practical information needed for everyday life. This printing genre appeared in the Song dynasty, but exerted its full impact in the late Ming, when different publishers competed to rush out their own editions of more or less the same book. Important works on this genre have emerged in the past several decades, e.g., Sakai Tadao 酒井忠夫, “Mindai no nichiyō ruisho to shomin kyōiku” 明代の日用類書と庶民教育, in Hayashi Tomoharu 林友春, ed., *Kinsei Chūgoku kyōikushi kenkyū: Sono bunkyō saisaku to shomin kyōiku* 近世中國教育史研究—その文教政策と庶民教育 (Tokyo: Kokudoshā, 1958), 39–51; “Confucianism and Popular Educational Works,” in Wm. Theodore de Barry and the Conference on Ming Thought, *Self and Society in Ming Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 332–33; Sakade Yoshihiro, “Kaisetsu—Mindai nichiyō ruisho ni tsuite” 解説—明代日用類書について, in *Gosha bakkin* 五車拔錦 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1999), 7–30; Wu Huifang 吳惠芳, *Wan Bao quan shu: Ming Qing shiqi de minjian shenghuo shilu* 萬寶全書：明清時期的民間生活實錄 (Taipei: Guoli Zhengzhi daxue lishixue xi, 2001); Shang Wei, “*Jin Ping Mei* and Late Ming Print Culture,” in Judith Zeitlin and Lydia Liu, eds., *Writing and Materiality in China: Essays in Honor of Patrick Hanan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 187–238.

¹⁶ Authored by Zhou Qufei 周去非 (*jinsi* 1163). For a German translation, see Almut Noltitzky, *Das Ling-wai tai-ta von Chou Ch'ü-fei: Eine Landeskunde Sudchinas aus dem 12. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1977).

¹⁷ Compiled during the Song by Chen Yuanjing 陳元靚; the extant copies date to the Yuan and Ming dynasties.

¹⁸ A 9th century collection of miscellaneous tales and records by Duan Chengshi 段成式.

¹⁹ A 3rd century text on curiosities by Zhang Hua 張華.

²⁰ Some of the pictures had come from age-old visual conventions. For example, the “Country of [Men with] Holes in Their Chest” appears in stone carvings from early China. See Ma

The sixteenth century is the key period for the *Luochong lu*'s rise to popularity. Two significant changes took place during this span: first, whatever its precise origins, the text had by then become fully commercialized, picked up and printed by numerous commercial publishers for marketing to a broad and diverse readership. In the process it became accessible to a broader audience, carrying with it the cachet of rarity and novelty as a textual cabinet of curiosities. A second change occurred in the late sixteenth century, when it was appropriated wholesale as the text for one of the chapters conventionally included in the daily-use encyclopedias – under the “Various Barbarian Lands” (*si yi* 四夷 or *zhu yi* 諸夷) rubric.²¹ That the *Luochong lu* was chosen to fill out this encyclopedic category is attributable to two distinctive qualities: the comprehensiveness of its listings, and the fact that it accorded significant space to pictures. In other words, what made the *Luochong lu* re-packageable and re-salable was its quality as a portable “museum,” and this attractiveness stemmed not only from the rarity of some of its textual sources, but also from the appeal of its visual depictions of exotic curiosities. Of course, by the late sixteenth century, the text had also accumulated a reputation of rather long standing, which would also have added to its appeal both for encyclopedia publishers and for their reading publics. It was through the daily-use encyclopedia that the *Luochong lu* both shaped and gained its firm place in the system of knowledge in the Ming.

The content and composition of specific entries in the *Luochong lu* themselves also yield clues as to how the text was compiled. The text reveals itself as a hybrid in many ways. For example, older classical or classical-sounding rubrics are employed in classifying and labeling the entries, but the entries themselves reveal extensive ad hoc modifications to incorporate a range of later and often more colloquial-sounding material. This sort of textual heterogeneity, characteristic not only of the *Luochong lu* but also of a wide range of popular Ming woodblock imprints, was later condemned by eighteenth-century bibliophiles such as the Siku project editors,²² but if our goal is to understand how Ming readers interacted with this text, then we should at least consider the possibility that they might have viewed such hybridity not as a failing but as an attraction. Here we will examine a couple of entries to

Changyi, 1036–38. The *Luochong lu* may be the earliest block-printed pictorial with a pretension of including all foreign peoples known in Ming China.

²¹ Here we may note the link between the terms “*yi*” and “*luochong*,” which seem to be used as near synonyms, though perhaps with distinct connotations or tone.

²² See discussion below, in the concluding section of this essay.

see two aspects of the sort of heterogeneity we find in the *Luochong lu*, first in the geographical and ethnographical information compiled under its entries for various *guo* or “states,” and second in terms of the jumbling of different written styles and linguistic registers we observe throughout the text.

For our first example we will consider the entry on “The Country of Japan”:

“Riben guo” (The Country of Japan) 日本國

Also known as “Dwarf Land.” It is located in the ocean southeast to the country of Silla. [People of this country] dwell on a nine hundred *li* stretch along the mountainous islands, and their exclusive way of making a living is to work as bandits. China (*Zhongguo*) calls them “wokou” (“the dwarf bandits”). 即倭國。在新羅國東南大海中。依山島居九百餘里，專一沿海盜寇爲生。[中]國呼爲倭寇。²³

This short entry is complex in the ways in which the three main East Asian geopolitical entities we now know as China, Korea, and Japan are referenced. Silla (57 BCE–935 CE)²⁴ was one of the three powers during the Korean Three Kingdoms period, which by the Ming had long since become ancient history. The reference to this medieval kingdom suggests an earlier frame of reference. At any rate with its use here in the *Luochong lu* we see a past designation used as a spatial marker for mapping the space of Ming-era East Asia. Here, this archaic terminology recalls the ancient Silla kingdom’s enormously important role in the history of regional relations – as “the greatest period of maritime activity in Korean history.”²⁵ Not only did Silla have a great impact in medieval East Asian interstate affairs, and act as a conduit for Chinese cultural transfer to Japan (this is not to ignore the fact that Japan had direct and active interaction with China), its “sailors and traffickers dominated the triangular trade with China and Japan” by the ninth century.²⁶

What was the textual origin of this frame of reference? A survey of historical documents shows that the formula of referencing Japan (referred to in early Chinese texts as Wo 倭) via a locale on the Korean peninsula is typical and formulaic in early Chinese histories.²⁷ A

²³ *Yiguo tuzhi*, third entry. Later editions often use “Zhongguo” 中國 instead of only “guo” 國.

²⁴ The basis for the founding date of 57 BCE is in myth. Michael Seth, *A Concise History of Korea* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 37.

²⁵ Seth, 65.

²⁶ Warren Cohen, *East Asia at the Center: Four Thousand Years of Engagement with the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 98.

²⁷ The third-century *Sanguo zhi* 三國志, for instance, states that “The people of the Wo are

decisive change in documenting Japan was seen in the tenth-century *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書, which still gives an individual entry for Wo 倭, but where the designation Riben 日本 is also introduced as a replacement. It is also in *Jiu Tang shu* that one finds the exact language used in the *Luochong lu* entry: “The country of the Wo... is located in the ocean southeast of Silla, [People of this country] dwell along mountainous islands.”²⁸ The conjecture that the *Luochong lu* entry is extracted from the *Jiu Tang shu* is confirmed, first by the disappearance of this exact language in the *Xin Tang shu* 新唐書, and further by the discontinuation altogether of the formula of referring to Japan’s location via the Korean peninsula in the *Song shi* 宋史.²⁹

The above survey shows that the *Luochong lu* chose a medieval frame of reference that bears witness to the stage when Japan was still mapped as remote and removed, as a periphery of a periphery. The fact that the name Silla remained well-known in Ming China due to the popularity of the legend of Xue Rengui 薛仁貴 (614–683), a Tang dynasty general who waged military campaigns in the Korean peninsula,³⁰ contributed to the legibility of the reference, and may have been one more reason for its use in the *Luochong lu*. After quoting the *Jiu Tang shu*, the entry snaps readers back to the border crisis current in Ming times: pirate incursions along the coasts. In this entry’s mapping of East Asian triangular power, “Japan,” “Silla,” and “China” (literally, the Central States) are terms with divergent constellations of spatial, chronological, and cultural connotations. While “Silla” perpetuates the memory of a past world order, and “Central States” suggests an entity that transcends time and trans-regional change, “Woguo” (Land of Dwarves) consigns Japan to seemingly perpetual and congenital liminality. Against the range of tone of these terms is staged the Ming dynasty’s actual pressing border issue – that of the “pirate” incursions on the southeast seaboard.

located in the ocean southeast of Daifang 帶方.” This frame of reference became formulaic in subsequent official histories, the only change being that the reference to Daifang was updated by newer place names in keeping with changes in the administrative geography of the Korean peninsula. For example, The *Song shu* records that “The country of Wo is located in the ocean southeast of Gaoli 高麗.” See Chen Shou 陳壽, *Sanguo zhi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), 854. Daifang is one of the commanderies in Korean peninsula established by the Chinese in the 3rd century; Shen Yue 沈約, *Song shu* 宋書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 8: 97.2394.

²⁸ Liu Xu 劉昫 et al., *Jiu Tang shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 5339.

²⁹ For an illuminating survey of Sino-Japanese relations that sheds light on Chinese documentation of Japan, including some of the sources mentioned in this paper, see Joshua A. Fogel, *Articulating the Sinosphere: Sino-Japanese Relations in Space and Time* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), particularly 7–50.

³⁰ I am indebted for this point to one of the reviewers of this article for the journal.

As the “Country of Japan” entry suggests, the entries were composed based on or excerpted from prior documents with a nod to the world of the contemporary readers. Once put together, the individual entries seem generally to have remained stable throughout its roughly two centuries of circulation. Changes were occasionally made, however, and these changes are very often revealing of the dynamics of the text’s reception and circulation. “The Country of Japan” is again a case in point. As discussed above, the suturing of historical documentation bearing witness to the medieval world-order together with a current report of border troubles reveals a textual tension: Japan is viewed as both peripheral or even as a periphery of a periphery, and at the same time as a serious military threat, so much so that military aggression is described as Japan’s sole purpose. This textual tension between dominance and affliction, between the self-image of a civilizing center and an awareness of territorial threat, is made still more manifest by the changes made to the picture that accompanied the entry. While the fifteenth-century *Yiyu tuzhi* and its later imitators portrayed the people of Japan as amiable and properly robed, with ceremonially proper-looking deportment (figure 2), others depict a half-naked figure wearing a *fundoshi* lower garment, with an unsheathed sword brandished threateningly and carelessly at the shoulder, ready to attack (figure 3). The entry, especially carrying the depiction of a bandit, had a ring of a social, even news report.³¹ As recent scholarship has shown, the actual pirates came from various regions of the Pacific coast, by no means limited to or even primarily centered in Japan. What we see here is an example of Ming pictorial propaganda making the border crisis solely foreign, and pirates solely external.

The entry on Japan is revealing of the construction of the *Luochong lu* entries in general. Each entry heading serves as a placeholder for a descriptive summary and a picture of the country under discussion, heavily drawing from previous documents but also mindful of more recent developments. As also attested by the entry on Japan, later editors made modifications as they saw fit, through a process that reveals much about the spectrum of attitudes and sentiments towards various foreigners at the time.

In our second example, the entry for “Xiongnu” 匈奴 (the Huns), we will focus on how the mixing of traditional and newly incorporated elements in the *Luochong lu* is reflected at the level of style and language:

³¹ By news report, I refer to the circulation of materials such as *dibao* 邸報, the imperial bulletin through which current affairs were reported regularly.

“Xiongnu” (The Huns) 匈奴

This breed comprises five types. One, with yellow hair, was born from a mountain ghost and a cow. One, short-necked, stout and fat, was born of the *juejia*-ape and a wild hog. One, with black hair and white body, is the remaining offspring of the troops of Li Ling of the Han. One is called Tujue; their ancestor was Shemo who was born from a union of the female divinity of the Sheli Ocean and the golden-horned white deer.³² Since Shemo killed the chief of the A’nuo tribe with his own hands, to this day they perform human sacrifice to their banner.³³ Their customs set great store in archery and killing. They worship the Zoroastrian god, and do not maintain ancestral temples.³⁴ They carve felt into icons, and put these onto fur bags.³⁵ Whenever they take actions, they smear the icons with butter. Sometimes they tie the icons to a pole, and they worship them in all four seasons. Another tribe is of the ancestry of the Tabachi Khan. *The Secret History of the Yuan* says:³⁶ this line was born of the grey wolf and pale deer. Its twenty-fifth generation gave birth to Tiemuzhen, who was called the Ruler from Great Mongolia (Genghis Khan), and who usurped the title of “emperor.” For generations they lived six thousand *li* northeast in the desert. Later they moved to the north of the mountains. They are called the Tatars. Their land produces sheep and horses, with no cities, moats, and houses. They set up their dwellings wherever the water and grass are. Their customs set great store in archery and hunting, and they eat animals such as sheep, horses, and wild deer. They clothe themselves in leather and skins. Tiemuzhen’s fourth generation grandson Kublai Khan usurped the empire of China (*zhongguo*) and called himself emperor.³⁷ 其種有五色。一種黃

³² This tale can be found in *Youyang zazu*, and *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (comp. 10th century). “Nü” 女 is missing from the *Yiyu tuzhi* entry, but added here according to the *Youyang zaju* account. The tale itself is a bit murky; according to the *Youyang zaju*, the female divinity of the Sheli ocean sends a white deer to escort Shemo to the ocean at night for ten years before ending the union. See Duan Chengshi, collated by Fang Nansheng 方南生, *Youyang zaju* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 44–45.

³³ “Jin” 金 (metal, gold) here serves as a phonetic substitution for “jin” 今 (present days).

³⁴ “Yaoshen” 妖神 is a mistranscription of “xianshen” 祆神.

³⁵ This line and the following line are difficult to read. According to Jiang Boqin 姜伯勤, this refers to the practice of putting an icon, cut from felt, on a saddlebag. Jiang refers to several Tang *sancai* (tricolor glazed ceramic) camels that show an image of a god on the side of the saddle as evidence. See Jiang Boqin, *Zhongguo xianjiao yishushi yanjiu* 中國祆教藝術史研究 (Beijing: Sanlian chubanshe, 2004), 227–31.

³⁶ A 13th century work in a certain Mongolian language; unknown authorship.

³⁷ *Yiyu tuzhi*, tenth entry.

毛者，乃山鬼與犴牛所生。一種短項矮胖者，乃獾猴與野猪所生。一種黑髮白身者，乃漢李陵兵遺種也。一種名突厥，其先乃射摩，舌利海神女與金角白鹿交感而生。射摩因手斬阿訶首領，金以人祭燾。俗尚射殺，事妖神，無祠廟，刻氈爲形，盛於毛袋，行動之處以脂蘇塗之。或繫竿上，四時祀之。一種乃塔巴赤罕之祖。《元朝秘史》云：蒼白狼與慘白鹿所生。二十五世生帖木真，是稱大蒙古部長，僭號皇帝。世居沙漠東北六千里。後居山陰。號韃靼。地產羊馬，無城池房舍，隨水草所居。俗尚射獵，食羊馬野鹿。衣皮革。帖木真四世孫忽必烈僭居中國稱帝。

This entry is a recklessly simplified sampling of notations about peoples of the northern regions; it covers an enormous span of time, from an un-specific mythical time down to the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1279–1368). It is framed by the notion of *zhong* 種, which can mean “kind,” “race,” or “breed.” The sense of “breed” is amplified throughout the entry, when five sub-breeds are listed, all born, except for one group descended from Han Chinese ancestors, by the cross-breeding of animal species.³⁸ Instead of weaving together citations from official histories, this entry, in its language and in its choice of sources, bears clear marks of “unofficial history” (*ye shi* 野史 – a designation that itself refers both to a type of document and to a mode of storytelling). It uses a peculiar language that mixes the vernacular and the literary. As for its sources, the source for some of the information on the Mongols is stated explicitly in the entry itself: it is *The Secret History of the Yuan* (hereafter, *Secret History*). The rest of the entry, whose source is not mentioned, is based on the *Youyang zazu*, a Tang dynasty compendium of curiosities.³⁹

Reference to the *Secret History* is a crucial point for a number of reasons. Scholarly consensus has it that this text was composed as a Mongolian text in Uighur script, and that from the time of its completion some time in the mid-thirteenth century it was carefully guarded by the Yuan imperial house,⁴⁰ significant precautions being taken to prevent the text’s being transmitted to outsiders. When it fell into the

³⁸ This sort of origin myth, tracing the beginnings of an ethnic group to an ancient instance of animal/human interbreeding, is of course quite common in Chinese tradition and elsewhere. Along with the accounts from the *Youyang zazu* discussed below in relation to this *Luochong lu* passage, see for example the account in the fourth-century compilation *Sou shen ji* 搜神記 explaining the societies and customs of peoples of the south and southwest in terms of an ancient case of human/dog interbreeding, *Sou shen ji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 168–69.

³⁹ The relevant passages from *Youyang zaju* are also included in the 10th century compendium *Taiping guangji*.

⁴⁰ For the history of translation, printing, and transmission of *The Secret History of the Yuan* (a.k.a. *The Secret History of the Mongols*), see William Hung, “The Transmission of the Book Known as *The Secret History of the Mongols*,” *HJAS* 14.3-4: 433–92; Bai Tmrbagen, 白·特木爾巴根, “*Yuanchao mishi xiezuo guocheng kaolue*” 元朝秘史寫作過程考略, *Nei Menggu shida xuebao* 內蒙古師大學報 (Zhaxue shehui kexue ban 哲學社會科學版), 2001 (3): 30–26; “Mingdai shisheng zhulu *Yuanchao mishi kaolue*” 明代史乘著錄元朝秘史考略, *ibid.*, 1990 (3): 56–63; “Qingdai cangshujia zhulu *Yuanchao mishi kaolue*” 清代藏書家著錄元朝秘史考略, *ibid.*, 1992 (3): 83–90.

hands of the Ming court, it became a document of great interest to court scholars of Yuan history, and a key text for training state translators in the Translators' Institute (*Siyi guan* 四夷館). It was also consulted during the Hongwu era (1368–1398) in the compilation of the linguistic treatise *Huayi yiyu* 華夷譯語 (Chinese and foreign languages: translation and transliteration). Within this context of locating, studying, and drawing on Yuan documents in the early Ming, the *Secret History* was translated by court scholars into a peculiar kind of Chinese vernacular that aimed to retain some of the linguistic features of the original, a style of translation referred to as “yingyi” 硬譯 (rigid translation).⁴¹ The early Ming imperial house made a print edition of the translation, and later also included it in the *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典. The *Secret History* thus appears to have been well-known in Ming court circles, but there is still no evidence that it circulated among a broader public. By referencing this text of the Mongols, the *Luochong lu* advertises to its readers that they are getting a unique glimpse of Mongolian lore. It also plays into the impact of dynastic change on the meaning of the text: the mythical origin of the Mongolian rulers' ancestors now could be read as a confession and evidence of their uncivilized and animal origins. References in the *Luochong lu* entry to Mongol emperors having “usurped” the title of emperor of course do not reproduce the voice of the *Secret History* as far as Yuan legitimacy is concerned, and such adjustments to the source text allow the entry's Ming narrator to reassert an authentic and orthodox lineage (*zhengtong* 正統) of “Chinese” rule over the central kingdom while playing on the allure of the secret and exotic source.

What kind of voice, then, is projected by the Ming narrator? The rest of the entry gives more cues. As mentioned above, another source for the entry is *Youyang zazu*. The description of the fourth sub-breed, the Tujue, is a verbatim excerpt from that source. The description of the third sub-breed, that of the Chinese descendants, alters the *Youyang zazu* slightly, yet significantly:

Those with whom mustache and sideburns alike are black are the descendants of Li Ling, the Han general, and his forces. 其髭髻俱黑者，漢將李陵及其兵眾之胤也。(*Youyang zazu*)

There is one breed, with black hair and white body—these are the remaining offspring of the troops of Li Ling of the Han. 一種黑髮白身者，乃漢李陵兵遺種也。(*Luochong lu*)

⁴¹ Tonglaga 通拉嘎, Wu Liqun 吳立群, “Meng Yuan yingyi ti dui Menggu mishi fanyi de yingxiang” 蒙元硬譯體對蒙古秘史翻譯的影響, *Nei Menggu shifan daxue xuebao*, 2006 (4): 32–34.

The most obvious change is from “qi” (those) to “yizhong” (one kind/breed) so as to fit the line into the overall narrative of “five breeds” (*wuzhong*). The descriptions of the first two sub-breeds diverge more from those in *Youyang zazu*, but traces of textual connection still appear:

(The God on High’s daughter, Zize, was jealous by nature, and had her maidservants banished into the four mountains...) In the north, [the maidservant] mated with the *juejia*-ape.⁴² The resulting offspring is called the “*cang*”.⁴³ (帝女子澤，性妒，有從婢散逐四山...) 北通獼猴，所育爲儻。(*Youyang zazu*)

There is one breed with short necks, stout and fat—these were born of the *juejia*-ape and a wild hog. 一種短項矮胖者，乃獼猴與野豬所生。(*Luochong lu*)

Along with the agreement as to the cardinal direction in which the breeding took place (the north), the term “*juejia*” also marks a link between the *Youyang zazu* account and the *Luochong lu* entry, as this rare animal name seems only to have appeared in *Youyang zazu* prior to the *Luochong lu*.

Now, regarding the first sub-species in the entry:

The tribe of Jiankun is not descended from the wolf. The cave where their ancestor was born was at the north of the Quman mountain. They themselves say that in early antiquity a god and a cow mated in this cave. They have yellow hair, green eyes, and red beards.⁴⁴ 堅昆部落非狼種。其先所生之窟在曲漫山北。自謂上代有神與牯牛交於此窟。其人髮黃目綠赤髭髯。(*Youyang zazu*)

One, with yellow hair, was born from the mountain ghost and a cow. 一種黃毛者，乃山鬼與牯牛所生。(*Luochong lu*)

The mating between a spirit and a cow (*boniu* 牯牛) and the color of their descendants’ hair (yellow) are two details shared by the corresponding *Youyang zazu* and *Luochong lu* accounts. It appears that the descriptions of the first two sub-breeds are creative paraphrasings of those in the *Youyang zazu*. Even if the *Youyang zazu* was not the immediate source text, these parallel passages nonetheless provide a useful system of comparison with the *Luochong lu* in terms of tone and register,

⁴² *jue* is defined in traditional dictionaries as a female monkey 母猴 (e.g., in *Shuowen jiezi*), or as a big ape 大猿 (e.g., in *Longkan shoujian* 龍龕手鑑). *Jia* 狻, a variation of 猻, is defined in traditional dictionaries as a pig (e.g., in *Guang yun*), or male pig (e.g., *Shuowen jiezi*). Zhang Hua’s *Bowu zhi* records a kind of macaque called *jiajue* 狻猻, who captures women to be its wives. See *Bowu zhi jiaozheng* 博物志校正 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), collated by Fan Ning 范寧, 36.

⁴³ *Youyang zazu*, 44.

⁴⁴ *Youyang zazu*, 45.

allowing us to see the sorts of changes taking place between the classical text and the Ming rewriting. Below are some comparisons:

YOUYANG ZAZU

胤 *yin*髮黃 *fahuang*髭髻俱黑 *ziran ju hei*(山) 神 *shanshen*

LUOCHONG LU

遺種 *yizhong*黃毛 *huangmao*黑髮白身 *heifa baishen*山鬼 *shangui*短項 *duanxiang*矮胖 *aipang*

The *Luochong lu* entry consistently transposes literary Chinese into a vernacular register. In place of literary wordings such as *yin* 胤 and *fahuang* 髮黃 to mean “descendants” and “yellow hair,” *Luochong lu* uses the colloquial-sounding *yizhong* and *huangmao*. The formal “*ziran ju hei*” (the mustache and sideburns are both dark), along with being in classical Chinese, is also more technical, alluding to the classical erudition of taxonomy; whereas “*heifa*” (black hair) merely falls in the realm of simple description, so does “*baishen*” (“white body”), which is put forth to expose the naked truth of the subject’s lineage. To mirror the rhetorical effect of colloquialism, the entry also vulgarized the story: the mating between a mountain god and ape is told as the mating between a mountain ghost and ape.⁴⁵ Further, the *Luochong lu* entry also introduces a distinctly colloquial-sounding register with the expressions *duanxiang* 短項 (“short neck,” an attribute commonly associated with pigs) and *aipang* 矮胖 (stout and fat), neither of which, strikingly, had ever appeared in any of the official dynastic histories at the time the *Luochong lu* was compiled. By using all these linguistic cues, the entry distances itself from the formality and norms of official and classical documentation to access the alternate authority and novelty of the vernacular voice.

Further, the theory – or better yet, the *shuofa* 說法 – that there are all together “five kinds” of Huns, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, appears to have been concocted by the compiler(s) of the *Luochong lu* based on his own excerpts from the chosen sources. This theory, in its crowd-pleasing simplicity and boldness, is reminiscent of the voice of the story teller. All these features reveal the text’s intriguing hybridity, as it interweaves classical citations and vernacular

⁴⁵ One should note that “mountain ghost” is a title of the Chu songs of early China, and refers to god-like figures. But at the time when the *Luochong lu* was compiled, the class difference between a *shen* and a *gui* is clear.

turns of phrase. We see at least three interlocked modes of vernacular discourse in this entry: first vernacular as the voice of the story-teller, then as speech vis-à-vis written language, lastly as means of translation, including drawing on non-standard or colloquial registers to mark the “otherness” of a text (that is, the *Secret History*) originally written in a foreign language.

Several of the daily-use encyclopedias eventually crowned the cumulative process of rewriting this entry with a new title, a whimsical creation of a wholly factitious ethnographic epithet—“Xiongnu Dada guo” 匈奴韃靼國 (The Country of Huns and Tatars). The classification of peoples of north and central Asia has been a thorny issue for historians, who often must attempt to parse overlapping and conflicting terms for tribes, peoples, and confederations that are hopelessly enmeshed in misinformation and competing claims.⁴⁶ But the coinage “Xiongnu Dada,” the wanton melding of two epithets with quite different chronological and political origins in Chinese documents, seems oblivious to such problems of historical accuracy. Viewed purely as part of the project of “voicing” the text to address the concerns and frame of reference of the *Luochong lu*’s readers, however, the coinage does reveal a certain logic. The designation “Dada” gives a sense of contemporary relevance, since this term was pointedly revived in the Ming after the Yuan ruling house had suppressed its use due to its perceived derogatory tone, while “Xiongnu” (Huns) activates associations with a storied and ancient – and culturally and territorially expansionist – period of Chinese history, particularly the Western Han (206 BCE–9 CE). All this reminds us as well that the notion of “*guo*” was very loosely applied in the *Luochong lu*, often more a unit of distinctive fashioning of a cultural or ethnic “other” than any recognizable political or social entity. In doing so, the inventor(s) of this epithet also invented a kind of historical continuity about the northern border, making it easily manageable at least textually, or vicariously through text.⁴⁷ In the end, such Ming dynasty ethnographic fabulation draws on the same sort of imagination that in earlier eras had created countries such as the “Country of [Men with] Holes in their Chests,” which was recorded in the *Shanghai jing*.

Here we may pause and further consider the uniqueness of the *Luochong lu* among Ming sources on the foreign, and reflect on the issue

⁴⁶ Modern scholarly efforts at parsing the terms for peoples of north and central Asia are too numerous to recount here. For one influential early example, see Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877–1927), “Dada kao” 韃靼考, *Wang Guowei ji* 王國維集, ed. Zhou Xishan 周錫山 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2008), vol. 4, 237–62.

⁴⁷ I owe this insight to one of this journal’s reviewers.

of textual hybridity alluded to earlier. In its ease in paraphrasing and inventing not only details but historical visions, it mingles the scholarly mode of historical writing with bold verbal and narrative imagination, interweaving the textual modes of *shi* 史 and *xiaoshuo* 小說. It may well be that such textual interweaving, along with the interplay between text and picture that distinguished the *Luochong lu*, were key reasons for the attraction the text exerted among Ming readers. Just this vernacular flair and exuberance of invention, however, became a source of unease among some later readers. As noted above, the *Luochong lu* was incorporated as a chapter in the famed *Sancai tuhui*, first printed in 1609. When the 1609 blocks were used to run another printing some years later, most likely in the Qing dynasty, the new publisher decided to alter some of the blocks, for example by planing away the entire text for the entry “Xiongnu guo,” leaving an empty page to accompany the picture. The empty page, however, shows clear traces of the scraping.⁴⁸ Scholars under the new Manchu regime were conventionally dismissive of the sloppiness of Ming scholarship and book culture, and when derisive depictions of northern barbarians were involved the response was naturally doubly intolerant. With the scraping of the block containing the *Luochong lu* “Xiongnu guo” entry, we have perhaps an analogue to the anxiety and self-censorship that prompted the Qing authors to remove the character *yi* from their writing.

A HISTORY OF RECEPTION

We now turn to the question of how the text was read and how it circulated. Through unearthing and interpreting relevant contemporary records, we can chronicle episodes of the book’s impact on a range of reading communities, and reach an understanding of its status in general as well as among various groups of readers.

A recorded conversation that took place between 1525 and 1527 between Wang Duanxi 王端溪 (1484–1565) and one of the leading intellectuals of the period, Lü Nan 呂柟 (1479–1542), provides early testimonial to the prominence of *Luochong lu* in the reading culture of the sixteenth century:

[Duanxi] inquired about *Luochong lu*, saying, “*The Luochong lu* is not as good as *The Classic of Mountains and Seas*; *The Classic of Mountains and Seas* is not as good as *A Treatise on Broad Learning of Things*; *A*

⁴⁸ One can see this empty page in a copy of *Sanci tuhui* housed in the East Asian Library at the University of California at Berkeley.

Treatise on Broad Learning of Things is not as good as *Approaching Elegance*; *Approaching Elegance* is not as good as *The Odes*. Hence Confucius says: “Little ones, why do you not study *The Odes*?” 問《俛蟲錄》。不如《山海經》；《山海經》不如《博物志》；《博物志》不如《爾雅》；《爾雅》不如《詩》。故曰：“小子何莫學夫詩。”

[Lü Nan] said, “*The Odes* is not simply superior to *Approaching Elegance*, *On Broad Learning of Things*, *Mountains and Seas*, and *The Naked Creatures*. Books like *Approaching Elegance* only illuminate things; *The Odes* take things as an occasion for illuminating the human.”⁴⁹ 曰：詩非止優於《爾雅》、《博物》、《山海》、《俛蟲》也；《爾雅》等書止明物，《詩》則即物以明人耳。

This conversation appears in *Duanxi wenda* 端溪問答 (Questions and answers with Duanxi), compiled by Lü Nan’s disciples in the tradition of *yulu* (recorded sayings), modeled on, for example, Zhu Xi’s (1130–1200) famous *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Master Zhu’s sayings, recorded and categorized), and ultimately on the Confucian *Analects*, in a textual genre presenting itself as the verbatim transcript of the speaking voice of a figure of great cultural authority.

Around the time of the conversation, Lü Nan established the Jie-liang Academy 解梁書院 in Shanxi and promoted his own curriculum and philosophy of learning. The inquirer Wang Duanxi, also known as Wang Chongqing 王崇慶, was another influential scholar-official of the time, and his writings would include studies on the *Yijing* and local history. Both men passed the *jinshi* examination in 1508, with Lü Nan taking the top honor for that year (*zhuangyuan*). By 1525 they had already become recognized public figures of learning and civil service. Lü Nan was particularly influential, and had an enormous number of followers. His impact on the world of learning was said to almost equal that of the contemporary iconic figure Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529).⁵⁰

Though Lü Nan’s own attitude towards the *Luochong lu* as expressed in the above exchange is rather dismissive, its inclusion in the discussion indicates that the book had sparked enough interest among scholars and students of the era to make it a topic of conversation.

As we saw, Wang Duanxi proposes a list of relevant texts in order, each superior to the previous, and concludes with Confucius’ famous

⁴⁹ Lü Nan, *Duanxi wenda* 端溪問答, in *Jingye zi nei pian* 涇野子內篇, collated by Zhao Ruimin 趙瑞民 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), 34.

⁵⁰ Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲, *Ming ru xuean* 明儒學案, in *Mingdai zhuanji congkan* 明代傳記叢刊 (Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1991), vol. 1, 11.

advice on learning – actually the *locus classicus* for traditionalist study of *mingwu*, or “names and things” – that the *Odes* was the superior text through which to know the world. The *Luochong lu* is treated here as a representation of the latest stage in the gradual decline of orthodox learning. However, despite the view of the relative merits of these texts reflected in the conversation, Wang Duanxi later produced one of the better editions of *Shanhai jing*, supplying it with his own commentary. Interestingly, moreover, the *Shanhai jing* and *Luochong lu* later became cousin texts in the Ming publishing world. They were frequently cross-referenced, even appearing on the same page, as we see for example in the pages shown in figure 1, where the top register is drawn from *Shanhai jing*, and the bottom from the *Luochong lu*. Thus Lü Nan and Wang Duanxi’s conversation, though it allots a relatively low status to the *Luochong lu*, nonetheless attests to the fact that that text had become a pervasive reference point in the Jiajing world of learning, and reflects not only the rising popularity of the book in this period but also the bibliographical context in which it came most typically to be circulated – that is, in conjunction with the *Shanhai jing*.

Lü Nan’s comments suggest that the status of the *Luochong lu* as an object of serious study was problematic. As it happens, this text also became the occasion of problems for Jiajing era statesmen and diplomats. Zheng Kaiyang 鄭開陽 (1503–1570), a scholar, military strategist, and cartographer, gives an account of one such complication in his *Illustrations and Descriptions of Liuqiu* 琉球圖說:

In the eleventh year of the Jiajing reign (1532), [King] Shang Zhen died. His son Shang Qing requested to succeed to the kingship. Civil official Chen Kan and Ambassador Gao Cheng were dispatched to offer condolence and sacrifices, to enfeoff Qing as the new king, and to present the King and his consort with hats, clothes, and fine fabrics. When the embassy arrived at that country, Shang Qing bowed and said: “The imperial commands now stored in gold caskets here in this country number eight. I request to retain this edict as a national treasure.” When the embassy returned, the king sent Ning Ji⁵¹ of the royal family and the Senior Scribe Cai Huan to deliver a memorial to express his gratitude, and to say, “In the *Yitong zhi* (Gazetteer of the Unified Empire),⁵² it

⁵¹ Yan Congjian’s 嚴從簡 (active Jiajing reign) *Shuyu zhouzi lu* 殊域周咨錄 gives the name as Ning Gu 寧古. Further study is needed to determine which one is a mis-transcription. See *Shuyu zhouzi lu*, in *Guojia tushu guan cang Liuqiu ziliao huibian*, 138.

⁵² I.e., *Da Ming yitong zhi* 大明一統志 (Gazetteer of the unified empire of the great Ming), a state-sponsored geography of the whole Ming empire.

is documented that Liuqiu has a *luoji*-maelstrom,⁵³ and that skulls are piled beneath the walls of the king's residence. This is untrue. Moreover the things recounted in Master Du's *Comprehensive Canons (Tongdian)*,⁵⁴ in the *Deep Ocean of Collected Matters (Ji shi yuan hai)*,⁵⁵ in the *Luochong lu*, and in *Spectacles of the Starry Rafts (Xing cha sheng lan)*⁵⁶ are all erroneous reports. I humbly request that this matter be submitted to the Office of History." This request was granted. 嘉靖十一年，尙真卒，子尙清請嗣，遣科臣陳侃、行人高澄弔祭，封清嗣王，賜王及妃冠服錦綺。使臣至其國，尙清拜曰：天朝詔敕，藏金匱者八葉於茲矣。請留爲鎮國之寶。比還，遣其王親寧吉長史蔡瀚奉表入謝，并言：《一統志》中，載琉球有落漈，王居壁下聚鬪體，非實事。《杜氏通典》、《集事淵海》、《羸蟲錄》、《星槎勝覽》所述，亦皆傳聞之妄。乞下史館。從之。

[Zheng Kaiyang's comment:] This is a matter of wild regions beyond the seas reverently submitting to kingly transformation, and thereby gradually changing their former practices, until relations between lord and subject, father and son are now all ceremonious and proper. The splendor of civilization there is far different from other states.⁵⁷ 蓋海外荒服，欽承王化，漸革故習，君臣父子間彬彬有禮，文物之盛，迥殊他邦矣。

Zheng Kaiyang here singles out a moment in Ming-Liuqiu relations when Liuqiu officials protested against distorted mythical accounts of the dangers and primitiveness of their kingdom in almost all the primary records in Ming China, including the *Luochong lu*. Ming ambassadors shared this sentiment. Chen Kan 陳侃, who is mentioned in the above passage as one of the Jiajing-era envoys to Liuqiu, submitted a memorial on the unreliability of documents on Liuqiu. When preparing for his mission to Liuqiu, Chen had been struck by the utter lack of practical and reliable documents to consult. To improve this situation, he composed *Records of a Mission to Liuqiu (Shi Liuqiu lu)*, prefaced in 1534) after his return. In it was a section titled "Verifying Doubtful Points

⁵³ A whirlpool said to suck in passing ships. In 1895, L. C. Hopkins states that "luoji" is a book term for what is locally known as *gou* 溝 (the current), the western branch of the *Kuro-siwo*. See "Letter of Mr. L. C. Hopkins to Mr. G. Schlegel," *TP* 6: 529-30.

⁵⁴ Compiled by Du You 杜佑 in the Tang dynasty.

⁵⁵ A Ming text. Extant editions can be dated to Hongzhi (1488-1506) or Zhengde (1506-1522) reigns. See *Bokelai Jiazhou daxue Dongya tushuguan Zhongwen guji shanben shuzhi* 柏克萊加州大學東亞圖書館中文古籍善本書志, 219-20.

⁵⁶ A Ming text; the author Fei Xin 費信 participated in Zheng He's 鄭和 expeditions to the Indian Ocean in the fifteenth century.

⁵⁷ *Liuqiu tushuo*, in *Zheng Kaiyang zazhu* 鄭開陽雜著 (1693, rpt. 1970. Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe), 556-57.

in the Various Books” 群書質疑, in which Chen first quotes accounts of Liuqiu from the following books, followed by his own notes (*an* 按):

Gazetteer of the Unified Empire of the Great Ming
Luochong lu
Spectacles of the Starry Rafts
Deep Ocean of Collected Matters
 Master Du’s *Comprehensive Canons*
Guidelines for Dignitaries 使職要務
The Collected Statutes of the Great Ming 大明會典

We note that many of these books were brought up in the reported Liuqiu memorial as well.⁵⁸

Chen Kan and Zheng Kaiyang differ in their perspectives on these records. While Chen attempts to correct them for practical reasons of statecraft, Zheng Kaiyang views the discrepancy between written record and current reality as reflecting the progress of Liuqiu’s sinification. The early records, in Zheng Kaiyang’s view, are not unreliable and fanciful mythography, but rather reflect an earlier primitive state of Liuqiu civilization. In other words, even though the records may not be accurate now, the Liuqiu requests for corrections reflect not source texts that were faulty to begin with, but rather the laudable progress made by Liuqiu in becoming more civilized under Chinese influence.

After Chen Kan, it became conventional for Ming dignitaries to Liuqiu to compile their own *Records of a Mission to Liuqiu* (hereafter *Records*). In these later *Records*, Chen Kan’s “Resolving Doubtful Points in the Various Books” section remains virtually intact, while new comments are appended.⁵⁹ “Resolving Doubtful Points in the Various Books” in effect became a routine exercise in bureaucratic archiving, a marker of reliable *Records (lu)*. It eventually influenced how Qing scholar-official Xu Baoguang 徐葆光 critiqued Ming records on Liuqiu in his much acclaimed *Zhongshan chuanxin lu* 中山傳信錄 (Account of a mission to Zhongshan), compiled 1718–1720.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ One should keep in mind that this Liuqiu memorial was reported in the Ming statesman Zheng Kaiyang’s treatise. Without corroboration from another source, it is possible that the Ming writer invented or misrepresented the Liuqiu mission to the court. Further, as one reviewer of this essay pointed out, some of the Liuqiu envoys were actually Chinese.

⁵⁹ Guo Rulin 郭汝霖 and Li Jichun 李際春 were sent to Liuqiu in 1561 to enfeoff another new king, and consequently composed *A Recompilation of a Mission to Liuqiu* 重編使琉球錄 (preface dated 1561). The section of “Resolving Doubtful Points in the Various Books” from Chen Kan’s text remained, and Guo and Li added their own comments to Chen Kan’s critique. “Resolving Doubtful Points” appeared later in Xia Ziyang 夏子陽 and Wang Shizhen’s 王士禎 *Records*, with Xia Ziyang’s own critique added.

⁶⁰ Lai Zhengwei 賴正維 and Huang Shan 黃珊, “Xu Baoguang yu *Zhongshan chuanxin lu* kaoshu” 徐葆光與中山傳信錄考述, *Fuzhou daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexueban)*, 2005 (2):

Despite such persistent queries by diplomats, the *Luochong lu* circulated continuously without any alteration to its record of Liuqiu. For private readers, the text was the latest product in the long history of books on extraordinary phenomena, and as such drew much of its appeal precisely from the outlandishness of its accounts of distant places. The Jiajing scholar Lang Ying 郎瑛 (1487–1566) presents the following musings in his *Qi xiu lei gao* 七修類稿 (Manuscript in seven categories), offering a glimpse into the mentality of the Ming book culture that welcomed and sought out texts like the *Luochong lu*:

The Yuan dynasty poet Chen Fu went on an embassy to Annam. One of his poems on events includes the lines, “Noses that drink like water jars;/ heads that fly like windlasses.” This describes the locals who are able to drink through their noses, and those who have heads that can fly to the sea to eat fish at night, and return to their bodies again at dawn. I saw the account in the *Luochong* collection which states, “People of the country of Laos drink liquids with their noses; their heads fly and eat fish.” In recent times, Wang Haiyun could also drink with his nose. As for flying heads, that is truly strange. Recently I saw that *The Spectacle of the Starry Raft* also says, “Among the people of the country of Zhancheng, there are those with flying heads—they are women. Their heads fly at night to eat the tips of human excrement. When such persons are discovered, if they have their necks firmly secured, or if the body is moved, they die.” The person who composed this book said that he witnessed this himself. I have further investigated the matter, and found that Zhancheng is adjacent to Annam to the south, and Laos is adjacent to Annam to the northwest. Indeed, Chen’s poem was no fabrication.⁶¹ 元詩人陳孚，出使安南，有紀事之詩曰：“鼻飲如瓴甌，頭飛似轆轤。”蓋言土人能鼻飲者，有頭能夜飛於海食魚，曉復歸身者。予見《羸蟲集》中所載：“老撾國人，鼻飲水漿，頭飛食魚。”近汪海雲亦能鼻飲。頭飛則怪也。昨見《星槎勝覽》亦言：“占城國人，有頭飛者，乃婦人也。夜飛食人糞尖。知而固封其項。或移其身則死矣。”作書者自云目擊其事。予又考占城正接安南之南，而老撾正接安南西北。信陳詩之不誣也。

This short essay is placed in the chapter “The Strange and the Humorous” (*qixue* 奇譎) in Lang’s book. Lang’s perspective differs from that

92–95. Xu reiterated in his preface that “Beyond the standard histories, as for example in Master Du’s *Comprehensive Canons*, the *Deep Ocean of Collected Matters*, the *Spectacles of the Starry Raft*, the *Luochong lu* and so on, the geographical, cultural, and material items recorded are always full of errors and omissions.”

⁶¹ Lang Ying, *Qi xiu lei gao* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), 713. My punctuation is slightly different from the collator’s.

of defenders of classicist orthodoxy such as Lü Nan, as well as from that of court officials concerned with the reliability of information available to civil servants. For Lang, the *Luochong lu* is one of a range of recent books that can be mined for new and amusing information. Such books provided him a bibliographical field to track down cross-references and formulate his own equally “strange and humorous” ideas. We should note that Lang Ying is a bibliophile, and what he does here is to quote books of his time to comment on a poem from the previous dynasty. His comment on these exotic reports begins and ends in the moments of reading: the Yuan poem provides a pretext for him to recall what he saw in the *Luochong lu* first, then in *The Spectacle of the Starry Raft* “recently.” The essay eventually develops a narrative of discovery, of encountering and realizing (*jian* 見) through accumulative reading, when he reports a breakthrough in his reading by writing this very essay. In light of this narrative, his conclusion – “Indeed, Chen’s poem was no fabrication” – expresses a kind of bibliographical pride. Essentially, this essay projects a reader self, who indulges in explorations of the boundary between fantastic tales and actual geo-political reports. Bibliographical inquiries allow him to display a form of erudition and wit that separates one’s private world of letters from bureaucratic writing and public discussion of state matters. If Lang Ying’s reasoning – in its close attention to the “thing” (a poem’s depiction) under investigation, in its parsing of the patterns embedded in the “thing,” and in its final arrival at an interpretation – appears to follow the philosopher Zhu Xi’s script of “investigating things” (*gewu* 格物), what is noteworthy is that reading and bibliographical knowledge form the core of that process.

This mode of reception that promotes bibliographical expertise can also be seen later in Xu Yingqiu’s 徐應秋 *Yuzhi tang tan hui* 玉芝堂談薈, compiled in the Wanli era (1573–1620). By gathering records from various books, Xu cataloged a curious species of human being: “The *man*-Barbarians of Flying Heads” 飛頭蠻.⁶²

“The *man*-Barbarians of Flying Heads” 飛頭蠻

Huan Tan’s *New Treatise*: “In Jingzhou, there are *man*-barbarians who drink with their noses; in Nancheng, there are *yi*-barbarians of flying heads.” *Records of the Search for Spirits*: “Zhu Huan of the Jin had a maid whose head flew at night. Sometimes she flew in and out of the high window, using her ears as wings. She always came back at dawn. . . .” *Record of the North-facing Window*: “In

⁶² In a narrow sense, *man* refers to the southern barbarians: the barbarians of the four directions were known as the western *rong* 戎, the northern *di* 狄, the southern *man* 蠻, and eastern *yi* 夷. In a broad sense, *man* can refer to all barbarians, as *yi* does as well.

the caves and creeks south of the five peaks, there are often those whose heads can fly...⁶³ *The Spectacles of the Starry Rafts*: “Among the women of the country of Zhancheng, there were those whose heads could fly. When those who detect this seal the neck, or move the body, then they die.” *Compendium of Naked Creatures*: “People of the country of Laos drink liquids with their noses; their heads fly and eat fish.” *Spectacles of “Immortals’ Isles”*: “There are corpse-head barbarians in Zhancheng, who have only eyes, with no pupils...⁶⁴ *Record of Lost Accounts*:⁶⁵ “At the time of the Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty, the country of Yinchi reported that there were people whose bodies can disassemble. They could make their heads fly to the south sea...⁶⁶ 桓譚《新論》：“荊州有鼻飲之蠻，南城有頭飛之夷”。《搜神記》：“晉朱桓一婢，其頭夜飛。或從天窗出入，以耳為翼，將曉復還...”。《北戶錄》：嶺南溪洞中，往往有飛頭者...《星槎勝覽》：“占城國婦人有頭飛者，人知而封固其項，及移其身，則死。”《蠙蟲集》：“老撾國鼻飲水漿，頭飛食魚。”《瀛州勝覽》：占城有尸頭蠻，但眼無瞳...《拾遺記》：漢武時因墀國言南方有解形之民，能使頭飛南海...

To Xu Yingqiu, the *Luochong lu* is to be mined for fantastic accounts of denizens of outlandish regions and zoological anomalies. It was one of the source books for extracting ethnographical information on an evidently universal species: barbarians with flying heads. Driving Xu’s aggregation of related tales from a broad range of books was a reading culture that avidly sought out unique and rare books, as testified by Xu’s own words at the very beginning of his preface to *Yuzhi tang tanhui*, “Master Yuzhi has no other obsessions, but delights in reading books that he has not before seen, earnestly admires displays of erudition and comprehensive knowledge, and delights to speak of unusual matters.”⁶⁷

After revealing an appetite for books and curiosities, Xu Yingqiu offers his view on records that seem to shock people with their bizarre and unbelievable tales. The problem, according to Xu, does not lie with the records themselves, but rather with their readers. He cites the commonplace expression that “those who have seen very little are shocked

⁶³ A book on the local customs and environment of Lingnan 嶺南 (south of the five peaks, including modern day Guangdong, Guangxi, Hunan and Jiangxi) by Duan Gonglu 段公路 of the Tang dynasty. The quotation here actually is from *Yuyang zaju*, not *Beihu lu*.

⁶⁴ A book by Ma Huan 馬歡 on the countries that he visited on Zheng He’s Indian Ocean expeditions. Ma Huan was a translator for the expeditions.

⁶⁵ A book of anecdotes and strange tales by Wang Jia 王嘉 of the Eastern Jin.

⁶⁶ Xu Yingqiu, *Yuzhi tang tanhui*, juan 12, in *Biji xiaoshuo daguan xubian* 筆記小說大觀續編 (Taipei: Xinxing shuju, 1962), vol. 3, 2756–57.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 2639.

by much” 少見多怪 to explain the reactions of such readers.⁶⁸ For Xu the issue of the strange is not whether the account is truthful, but whether the reader is qualified to read it. The key is to cultivate the right reading subject, what Xu calls “a comprehending man of wide reading” 弘覽之通人. As his “Barbarians of Flying Heads” shows, the usefulness of recent books on foreign countries is brought to light when these are placed alongside classical tales of the strange and rare. A qualified reader, for Xu, would seem to be one with sufficient book knowledge and bibliographical sophistication, including the proper repertoire of genre-specific modes of reading.

The *Luochong lu* also inspired new works, chief among which is the *Dongyi tushuo* 東夷圖說 (Pictures and descriptions of eastern barbarians), commissioned in 1586 by the Provincial Administration Vice Commissioner of Guangdong province Cai Ruxian 蔡汝賢 (*jinshi* degree 1568).⁶⁹ Cai’s book contains twenty pictures, some copied from the *Luochong lu* (such as the one for Java 爪哇), and some newly added (such as the one for Folangji 佛朗機, that is, the Portuguese; see figure 4).⁷⁰

Guangdong was one of the most active regions in global trade at this time. Cai Ruxian, in his official capacity, had had ample opportunity to receive tribute bearers and merchants from overseas, and his pictorial is prompted by and based on direct contact with these peoples. Cai’s book is oriented toward *shi* 實 (the real): real-time situation and real-time observation. In this regard he is similar to the Jiajing reign diplomat Chen Kan. Both of them were concerned with pragmatism and accuracy. What differentiates Cai from Chen is that besides concerns raised in statecraft, Cai recognizes the value of popular and fanciful books such as the *Luochong lu*. Here is what he said in his preface to his own pictorial:

Someone asked, “...Are all the Southeastern barbarians collected here?” I answered, “No. The accounts seen in all those books such as Master Du’s *Comprehensive Canons*, the *Deep Ocean of Collected Matters*, the *Spectacles of the Starry Raft*, the *Luochong lu*, and the *Records of My Learning* are truly numerous. With such things it is accept-

⁶⁸ This expression originated in Ge Hong’s *Baopuzi*. When commenting on those who are skeptical about the belief and practice of alchemy, Ge Hong says, “When one sees very little, one feels shocked very often – this is the norm in the world” 夫所見少，則所怪多，世之常也。

⁶⁹ Woodblocks for this text were carved by Zhu Guoru 朱國汝 of Fujian.

⁷⁰ Some believe this illustration to be the earliest Chinese block illustration of the Portuguese. See Tang Kaijian 湯開建, “Zhongguo xiancun zuizao de Ouzhou ren xingxiang ziliao – *Dongyi tuxiang*” 中國現存最早的歐洲人形象資料—東夷圖像, *Gugong bowuyuan yuankan* 故宮博物院院刊 2001 (1): 22–28. For Sino-Portuguese interactions in early modern history, see e.g., Ptak, *China, the Portuguese, and the Nanyang*.

able to simply preserve them without opining about them.”⁷¹ 或曰：“...東南夷該此乎？”曰：“未也。雜見於杜氏《通典》、《集事淵海》、《星槎勝覽》、《羸蟲錄》、《吾學編》諸書，蕃乎夥矣。存而弗論可也。”

The books such as Master Du’s *Comprehensive Canons*, the *Deep Ocean of Collected Matters*, *Spectacles of the Starry Rafts* and the *Luochong lu* – all of which, we recall, were also cited in “Resolving Doubtful Points in the Various Books”⁷² – were given legitimacy: “With such things it is acceptable to simply preserve them without opining about them.” Cai seemed to be able to balance his recognition (if not appreciation) for popular books and his own endeavor of making factually reliable pictures. As Cai’s preface continues, one wonders if he possessed a personal quality that a rising class of people dealing with foreign issues (later called *yangwu* 洋務) cultivated in themselves, namely “kaiming” 開明 (enlightened, or worldly-wise):

[Someone asked,] “...As for the appearances and habits pictured, are they accurate?” I answered, “‘Ways of life differ within a thousand miles; customs vary within a hundred miles.’ This is true even within the central states – how much the more must it be so in the case of barbarians? Such things appear through reciprocal comparison – with such things we may opine about them without being inflexible about literal accuracy.”⁷³ [或曰:] “...所圖狀貌習尚審乎？”曰：“千里殊風，百里異俗，中國且然，矧夷乎？彼此互見，論而弗膠可也。”

Here he expresses a worldly understanding of the inter-referentiality between “us” and “them”: foreign appearances and customs are to be understood with reference to domestic analogues, and vice versa.

The popularity of the *Luochong lu* remained high through the late Ming, as the text enjoyed a remarkable number of reprints: as mentioned above, the *Luochong lu* was appropriated to fill a chapter in daily-use encyclopedias. Since numerous publishers rushed to print their own editions of more or less the same daily-use encyclopedia during this period, and the number of these totaled at least a few dozen, the result was at least several dozen reprintings of the *Luochong lu* in the late Ming in encyclopedias alone.⁷⁴ The text does indeed seem to

⁷¹ Cai Ruxian, *Dongyi tushuo*. *Siku quanshu cunmu congshu* 四庫全書存目叢書, Shibu 史部, vol. 255, 410.

⁷² Cai also added another title: *Wu xue bian* 吾學編, possible unknown to Chen Kan when he listed the questionable books. *Wu xue bian* is a book on early Ming history written by Zheng Xiao 鄭曉 (1499–1566, *jinshi* degree 1523). Its earliest extant edition is dated 1567.

⁷³ Cai Ruxian, *Dongyi tushuo*, *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Wu Huifang counted thirty-five extant late-Ming daily-use encyclopedias. See Wu, *Wanbao quanshu: Ming Qing shiqi de minjian shenghuo shilu*.

have enjoyed very widespread currency in the late Ming. The 1607 Buddhist treatise *Fajie an li tu* 法界安立圖 (Maps of the configuration of dharmadhātu) refers to the *Luochong lu* as a supplementary lay source text for information about the human realm, the continent known in Buddhist cosmology as Jambudvīpa: “The layman’s book *Luochong lu* records various countries with a diverse range of human forms. These are likely the various small islands in the ocean” 俗書《羸蟲錄》載諸國人形各異，或是海中諸小洲也。⁷⁵ Private bibliophiles of the Ming and early Qing also recorded this title in their catalogs, showing that many of the most illustrious book collectors of the time did not shun the *Luochong lu*. These private library catalogs include the *Bibliography of the Chao Family’s Studio of Treasured Text* 晁氏寶文堂書目 compiled during the Jiajing reign, the *Bibliography of the Studio of Detached Life* 澹生堂書目 of the Wanli reign, and later the *Bibliography of the Thousand Acre Studio* 千頃堂書目 compiled in the early Qing.⁷⁶

The above reconstruction of various episodes related to the social influence of the *Luochong lu* in the Ming suggests that the *Luochong lu* was read or known broadly, by literati, religious practitioners,⁷⁷ common readers, officials, and foreigners.⁷⁸ It appears to have been the most prominent – if not the only – pictorial document offering an exhaustive inventory of the foreign peoples in the world as these were known in Ming China. It became a source book and reference book – the bibliographical category that most effectively shaped the collective consciousness of the readers. In the following section we return to consider some of the specific features of the text as it circulated within Ming daily-use encyclopedias, as their packaging of the *Luochong lu* provides a unique window into how the *Luochong lu* was viewed in relation to the broad social order of the time.

⁷⁵ Ren Chao 仁潮, *Fajie anli tu* 法界安立圖, in *Xu zang jing* 續藏經 (Taipei: Xin wenfeng, 1993), vol. 150, 913.

⁷⁶ A text titled *Yingchong lu* 羸蟲錄 was recorded in the Ming bibliography *Wanjuan tang shumu* 萬卷堂書目, and the authorship is attributed to a Chen Qing 陳清. It is unclear whether this *Yingchong lu* is *Luochong lu*. I have not seen any other evidence of a *Luochong lu* attributed to a Chen Qing. Qian Qianyi’s 錢謙益 (1582–1664) *Jiangyun lou shumu* 絳雲樓書目 records a book titled *Siyi tu* 四夷圖. Whether this *Siyi tu* is related to the *Luochong lu* also requires further investigation. See *Ming Qing cangshumu sanzong* 明清藏書目三種 (Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe), 379.

⁷⁷ Here I have in mind the author and readers of the Wanli reign Buddhist treatise *Fajie anli tu* later incorporated into *Xu zang jing* 續藏經, cited and discussed above.

⁷⁸ Even if we discredit the Ming narrative of Liuqiu protest as evidence of the book’s being read in Liuqiu, we have hard evidence that the book was circulated to Japan. See discussion below.

PACKAGING THE *LUOCHONG LU*: PREFACES AND ILLUSTRATIONS IN ENCYCLOPEDIA EDITIONS

The sheer number of reprintings of the *Luochong lu* as a chapter in late-Ming daily-use encyclopedias provides rich material for us to examine how publishers packaged their texts and, further, what kinds of implied readers they envisioned. Here we will focus on two kinds of supplement that often appeared in reprintings, namely, prefaces and chapter-head illustrations.

As figure 1 shows, the “Various Barbarian Lands” chapters packaged the *Luochong lu* together with a listing of “Strange Beings of Mountains and Seas” 山海異物 (largely drawn from the *Shanhai jing*) in a double-register format. The double-register layout is characteristic of the encyclopedia as a whole, but this particular juxtaposition also gave apt expression to Ming readers’ already well-established association between the *Luochong lu* and the *Shanhai jing*.⁷⁹ In these encyclopedias, a preface appeared to explain the origin of the term “Luochong” and the association between foreigners in the lower register and fabulous animals in the upper register:

“Preface to the *Record of Naked Creatures*” 羸蟲錄序

Of scaled creatures there are three hundred and sixty, and the dragon is their leader. Of feathered creatures there are three hundred and sixty, and the phoenix is their leader. Of haired creatures there are three hundred and sixty, and the *qilin* is their leader. Of shelled creatures there are three hundred and sixty, and the tortoise is their leader. Of naked creatures there are three hundred and sixty, and the human is their leader. “Naked creatures” refers to the barbarians of all four directions outside the sphere of transformation. Why, then, is it said “humans are the leader of the naked creatures”? The book says: those born and residing

⁷⁹ As discussed above, Wang Duanxi and Lü Nan considered these two texts to be in the same category. Another example of the perceived connection between the two was Zhuang Rujing’s preface to Hu Wenhuan’s 1593 imprint of *Shanhai jing*, in which Zhuang was all too delighted to discuss the link between the two texts: “*Illustrations to the Book of Mountains and Seas* has much that is fetched from the deeps and obtained from afar, which is beyond what eyes and ears can see and hear. I dared not truly believe it. However, once I took the book *Luochong lu* and viewed (them) together, I realized that beyond the farthest corners and remote lands, there are thousands of aspects and myriad appearances that simply cannot be captured by form and shape. Inside the *Luochong lu* are many tributary counties, those of which documented in books such as *Guang yu tu* (Expanded maps of the world) are certainly verifiable. Hence, the book is not without its reliable sources.” See *Shanhai jing tu* 山海經圖, in *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan erbian* 中國古代版畫叢刊二編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994), vol. 1, 5–6.

in the middle kingdom, who receive the correct and proper *qi* of heaven and earth, are human; those born outside the sphere of transformation, who do not receive the correct and proper *qi* of heaven and earth, are animals, and are therefore called “naked creatures.” Confucius says, “Governing the *yi*-barbarians and the *di*-barbarians is like governing animals” – thus we see that this explanation is of long standing and authority. Because they do not have ethical principles, love war and battles, take life lightly and delight in death, they share the nature of tigers and wolves. Because they hanker for material gain and are fond of licentiousness, just like the behavior of incestuous deer, their nature and disposition are truly distant from the human.⁸⁰ 鱗蟲三百六十而龍爲之長，羽蟲三百六十而鳳爲之長，毛蟲三百六十而麟爲之長，介蟲三百六十而龜爲之長，羸蟲三百六十而人爲之長。羸蟲者，四方化外之夷是也。何則以人爲羸蟲之長？書曰：生居中國，故得天地之正氣者爲人；生居化外，不得天地之正氣者爲禽獸，故曰“羸蟲”。孔子曰：“治夷狄如治禽獸。”其說有自矣。原其無倫理綱常，尙戰鬥輕生樂死，虎狼之性也；貪貨利好淫僻，麀鹿之行也，故與人之性情實遠矣。

This preface has two noticeable formal attributes. Overall, it is structured by the familiar steps of *qi-cheng-zhuan-he* 起承轉合 (beginning, elucidation, turning, and closing), a basic compositional principle engrained in the minds of civil examination aspirants and students of prose in general. Further, it features an elevated proportion of quotation. Specifically, the preface opens (*qi*) its discussion by quoting, though without specifically saying so, from *The Family Sayings of Confucius* and the like, and moves on to an elucidation (*cheng*) of its key concept *luochong*. Though some earlier scholars had believed that the *luochong* were a class of short-haired animals such as tigers and leopards,⁸¹ these earlier philological inquiries are beyond the concern of our anonymous author, who resolves to simply assert that *luochong* means “barbarians.” The author then poses a question (*zhuan*) to himself and the readers: “Why, then, is it said ‘humans are the leader of the naked creatures’?” and answers with yet another quote, this time from an anonymous “book” (*shu*): “those born and residing in the middle kingdom, who receive the correct and proper *qi* of heaven and earth are human; those born outside the sphere of transformation, who do not receive the correct and proper *qi* of heaven and earth, are animals.” Thus, to the author, barbarians are those “naked creatures” whose endowment makes them

⁸⁰ *Miaojin wanbao quanshu* (1612; rpt., Tokyo: Kyuko Shoin, 2004), 209. This preface also appeared in other encyclopedias, sometimes with minor changes.

⁸¹ On this point see n. 10 above.

in some way less than fully human.⁸² Finally, the author concludes by a third quote, this time from none other than Confucius, “Governing the *yi*-barbarians and the *di*-barbarians is like governing animals,” and continues this thought with a quick-tempo portrayal of these barbarians’ beastly attributes: “Because they hanker for material gain and are fond of licentiousness, just like the behavior of incestuous deer, their nature and disposition are truly distant from the human.” In this preface, the *yi* is glossed as and “proven” to refer to an animalistic or subhuman sort of creature. Texts like this and the ideas that they formulated would later prompt writers in the Qing to suppress the use of the graph *yi* 夷 in a regime that was run by, according to these texts, such a subhuman.

Compared to other prefaces and comments on the *Luochong lu*, what this preface does *not* do is to philosophize or historicize the relation between China and barbarians. Instead, it quotes. It quotes from the most familiar and authoritative stock phrases, first with an undeclared direct quotation from the medieval *Confucius’s Family Sayings* and the like, then with a declared quotation from an anonymous book, finally with the ultra-authoritative Confucius, although the particular quotation is not found in received texts clearly attributed to Confucius, but rather is a recurrent idea in early classical writings such as *Han shu* 漢書 and *Guo yu* 國語. “Confucius” is invoked here as a label for authoritative wisdom rather than as the author of a definite text. The familiarity of the overall structure and the dependence on commonplaces make the preface a great piece of comfort reading that confirms a set of conventional assumptions. As a matter of fact, the preface is a pastiche of the most common clichés and stereotypes when it comes to the representation of foreigners, particularly in its strong reliance on animal analogies. The animal motif in depicting foreigners is seen across time and space in world history, and it is undoubtedly played up in this preface, and enhanced by the juxtaposition of exotic peoples and fantastical animals. This is not to say, however, that some readers during

⁸² Of course, beneath (or along with) the ethnocentric smugness of this formulation lie resonances in the culture of the examination essay and the Four Books on true humanity not as a natural given but rather as something requiring constant effort and striving for moral perfection to be truly realized, as e.g. in *Mencius* 4B.19: “That wherein the human differs from the beastly is infinitesimally small: the common folk depart from it; the superior person fosters it...” 人之所以異於禽獸者幾希。庶民去之，君子存之。 At this level it is possible to read the preface as involving an implicit critique of those who in spite of being born in the central domains still fail to cultivate the humanity that distinguishes them from the uncivilized “naked creatures.” Rather than speculate on authorial intent in this regard, though, perhaps it is more helpful simply to note that such resonances make this preface all the more familiar-sounding from the perspective of the broader culture of the examination essay.

Ming times would not recognize the preface as a clever text intending to evoke laughter, albeit at the price of foreigners. The point is that, while there is no doubt the dissemination of the *Luochong lu* expanded readers' knowledge and awareness of the world, it also continued a certain prejudice against the other. However, we should note that text itself alone does not complete the meaning, which can only be actualized by a reader, and there were diverse ways of reading the *Luochong lu*. Prejudice and enlightenment can come out of the same text, and the marketplace spreads knowledge that can be used and read in different and at times opposing ways.

Prefaces aside, publishers of encyclopedias put even more effort into producing chapter-head illustrations to promote their own products and to accommodate and guide readers' viewing experience. Below we will consider four illustrations appearing in daily-use encyclopedias at the heads of chapters on "Various barbarian lands."

All four examples follow the general visual formulae for illustrations of court scenes, but adopt a specific pictorial subject here – *zhigong* 職貢, the presentation of tribute objects by foreign envoys. *Zhigong* had long been established as a pictorial genre in court painting (in fact one painting of this type is attributed to the Emperor Yuan of the Liang [552–555]). State offices (such as Bureau of Receptions 主客司 of the Tang and Song dynasties) also produced likenesses of foreigners as part of the empire's ethnographic documentation. Painters outside court circles produced versions of this pictorial topic as well; the sixteenth-century Ming painter Qiu Ying 仇英, for example, is credited with one of the most acclaimed such paintings.

As a matter of fact, the chapter-head illustration in *Miaojin wanbao quanshu* (figure 5), probably made by the very active late Ming painter and engraver Liu Ciquan 劉次泉, is reminiscent of Qiu Ying's "Picture of Tribute Bearers," where the tribute bearers are depicted in groups rather than as individuals.⁸³ There are other obvious borrowings from established visual convention – the bird, for example, is commonly seen in *zhigong* paintings. The overall tone of this picture is one founded on *renao* (lively and loud), which differs from the solemnity often seen in iconic court paintings. What is presented to readers is a group of happy, chatty, festive people dressed in exotic costumes on their way to the Chinese court.

⁸³ On Liu Ciquan, see Zhou Xinhui 周心慧, *Zhongguo gudai banke banhua shi lunji* 中國古代版刻版畫史論集 (Beijing: Xueyuan chubanshe, 1998), 53–54.

The attention to detail and clear reference to iconic paintings are far less prominent in the chapter-head illustration in *Wuche wanbao quanshu* 五車萬寶全書 (figure 6). On the one hand, one could argue that it is rather sloppily produced. On the other hand, it does show an economical approach that favors significant features rather than details.⁸⁴ These features include the steepness of the steps and the palace top surrounded by auspicious clouds, which serve as visual cues to convey the sense of Ming China being the “Heavenly Country” (*tianguo* 天國) or the “Supreme Country” (*shangguo* 上國).

Figures 7 and 8 bring readers into the interior space of the court ceremony known as “Foreigners Present Tribute” (*Fan jin gong* 番進貢), which are the exact characters appearing on the booklet that the dignitary is holding in figure 8. In this ceremony, tables are laid out to display the foreign products being presented, and dignitaries in indigenous costumes appear before the emperor. On these two pictures we see three Chinese officials, the one seated in the center depicting either the emperor or his presiding representative.⁸⁵

Figure 8 is skillfully done in several regards, and warrants close attention. In addition to the four figures, the illustration also presents a few “things”: a tripartite screen, a desk, a cart, and a display table. These people and “things” weave a complex relational web, mapped out in the way that they occupy the space of the page.

The upper half of the picture is the “us” space: all three Chinese court members are dressed uniformly in ceremonial court attire, with benevolent facial expressions and composed bodily posture. They are surrounded by objects that signify culture and civilization: a screen with landscape painting, a desk covered by ornamented brocades on which are set an inkstone and brushes, and the *hu*-tablet 笏 held by ministers during audiences with the emperor.⁸⁶ Thus the “we-group,” China, is represented as both civilized and civilizing.

⁸⁴ Here I draw insight from Katsushika Hokusai’s 1816 book *The Three-style Picture Album* (*Santai gafu*), where he discussed three approaches to drawing: “‘grass’ drawing emphasizes silhouette and form, ‘running’ drawing emphasizes significant features, and ‘true’ drawing emphasizes detail and pattern.” See, Roger S. Keyes, *Ehon: The Artist and the Book in Japan* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2006), 32–33.

⁸⁵ In Ming woodblock illustrations, sages and emperors are at times represented with visual formulae that do not clearly distinguish them from common officials or even commoners, the identification being left to captions or accompanying text. In this specific case, the question how to “read” the central figure seems open.

⁸⁶ A long narrow tablet, made of various materials, that is used as a writing surface and ritual prop when having an audience with the emperor.

In the lower half is a single barbarian in what was stereotypically understood to be emblematic of “barbarian” indigenous costume: feathered hat and animal skin clothes. He is holding a memorial with the characters “Foreigners Present Tribute.” His equipage, in contrast with the upper space, includes only a single cart (actually, one corner of a single cart – presumably what he used to transport his tribute), a display table for the objects themselves, which include items such as coral and a rhinoceros-horn cup. This lower space of “the other” is exotic, material, and numerically disadvantaged. At the border of the upper and lower space of this picture is the third official, accepting the memorial submitted with the tribute objects. He mediates the relation between the upper and lower spaces of the picture, and guarantees the propriety of the ceremonial relationship – in that it is ritually appropriate *not* to submit the memorial to the throne directly, but rather through the mediation of a court official, so as not to be transgressive.

The spatial relation between the upper and lower halves of the picture is also coded in two different visual languages. The upper half is metaphorical, representing China and all its lands and waters, its sophisticated culture and civilizing influence. The lower part is synecdochic: just as the partial cart pictorially represents the whole cart, the single display table represents all the display tables, the four emblems on the table represent all the treasures from lands and waters outside China, and the single foreigner represents all the tribute countries outside China.

Also noticeable in this spatial mapping is how the side panel and the front panel of the tripartite screen form an angle of pivots that accommodates the reader’s viewing. Along this line, in all four illustrations here, the foreign dignitaries all face the direction of reading towards the viewer. Their three-quarters view conveniently accommodates a triangular relation among the foreign dignitary(ies), the court (absent or present), and the viewer. Both the throne and the barbarian became part of a court drama, brought to the quotidian life of ordinary readers of the late Ming.

As we have seen, in its early days of circulation, the *Luochong lu* was of dubious authority in the realm of diplomatic relations and the writing of official documents, but once it entered the realm of mass production and consumption, its questionable quality was forgotten as it took on an aura of fascination. The daily-use encyclopedias further celebrated a particular kind of reader position: the chapter-head illustrations demystify court ceremony and make the court part of a drama

for the curious eyes of an ordinary reader. That is, the emperor's court is transmutable to become part of a world of endless wonders offered for the enjoyment of a reader.

CONCLUSION: THE LEGACY OF THE *LUOCHONG LU*

The *Luochong lu* continued to circulate in the Qing. As a matter of fact, the most telling sign of the *Luochong lu*'s fame and authority – which had been acquired due to its popularity in the book market, rather than through the sanction of the state or of scholarly orthodoxy – is seen in how it was referenced and appropriated in the new Manchu dynasty. The prestigious imperial *Kangxi Dictionary* 康熙字典 (completed 1716) quotes it to define the character *ge* 虺: “*Gelu* 虺魯, a name of a country. ‘To go from there to the Jiangnan region by horse takes seven months.’ Seen in *Luochong lu*.”⁸⁷ Another example of its continued but now somewhat hidden influence was the fact that the *Gujin tushu ji cheng* 古今圖書集成 (Complete collections of illustrations and writings from the earliest to current times), compiled under the auspices of Prince Yinzhi 胤祉 and the Kangxi emperor (reign 1662–1723), ultimately based its pictorial section on foreigners on the *Luochong lu*.⁸⁸ Official disapproval of the text did not come until the Qianlong period (1736–96), when the Siku scholars dismissed it, saying “such a text is most decidedly not to be relied on as a source of information.”⁸⁹ From this point on, the *Luochong lu* entered into its prolonged obscurity.

It did not, however, die out entirely. First, Ming imprints remained in the hands of book collectors and could be accessed and read. More to the point, the daily-use encyclopedias printed in the Qing continued to have the chapter of “Barbarians of Various Lands,” where the Ming preface to the *Luochong lu* discussed in the previous session remained virtually intact. And this is the preface that, we may recall, had the statement that “Confucius says, ‘governing the *yi*-barbarians and the *di*-barbarians is like governing animals.’” However, the evidence available to me suggests that the title “*Luochong lu*” had faded away, as this chapter in Qing daily-use encyclopedias was now called “Pictures

⁸⁷ See the following section in *Kangxi zidian*: the “chong” radical 虫字部, the “shen” section 申集, in the “Supplement” 補遺.

⁸⁸ *Tushu jicheng* names *Sancai tuhui* as its source. However, as this article demonstrates, *Sancai tuhui*, along with other Ming encyclopedias, used the already extant *Luochong lu* to fill its chapter on foreigners.

⁸⁹ This statement is from the eighteenth-century *Siku quanshu* editors on the *Yiyu tuzhi*, at the geographical section in the history division, in the “*cun mu*” 存目 category, that is, among those texts whose existence is noted but which are not deemed worthy of inclusion in the *Siku* compendium itself.

of Foreign Peoples and Their Local Products” 外夷土產人民圖.⁹⁰ We can note two things here: one, what was known as the *Luochong lu* in the Ming was still in circulation in Qing popular encyclopedias, but it was disassociated from the title “Luochong lu.” Two, though the Yongzheng emperor redefined *yi* as the equivalent of “birthplace,” and therefore not insulting to Qing sovereignty, the word *yi* was continuously imbued with slighting connotations in popular books, which seem to have exempted themselves from imperial vision and/or self-imposed censorship. The popular discourse and elite and court discourse do not agree but compete with each other – all the more reason for the court and court scholars to be nervous.

Looking beyond China, the *Luochong lu* had quite a colorful life: In early Edo Japan (1600–1868), it was remade into a popular pictorial and narrative genre of the day – the “Nara picture book” (Nara *ehon* 奈良繪本) – with the pictures rendered delicately in vivid and elegant colors. Not surprisingly this hand-copied album, titled *Ikoku monogatari* 異國物語 (Tale of foreign countries), replaced the picture and description of Japan in the original Chinese; a new picture of “Great Japan” (*Dai Nihon koku*, figure 9), depicting a scene of warriors, contrasts with the original Chinese depictions (figures 2 and 3). Still, in this Japanese rendition, the Chinese perspective remains loosely apparent, as Japan is still ranked among the “foreign countries” (*ikoku*). While the circulation of *Ikoku monogatari* suggests a shared East Asian view of the “world” shaped by common texts and images,⁹¹ it also brings to attention the complex process through which the entity called “Great Japan” (*Dai Nihon*) came to be understood in Edo Japan vis-à-vis China and the world, a process in which the reworking of Chinese books and frames of reference became a crucial and contested issue.⁹²

The *Luochong lu* circulated in other parts of the world as well. The encyclopedias that incorporated the *Luochong lu* were brought to Korea and Europe,⁹³ and the *Luochong lu* further became part of the global

⁹⁰ This title of “Pictures of Foreign Peoples and their Local Products” already appeared in a late-Ming encyclopedia called *Wanjuan souqi quanshu* 萬卷搜奇全書 (Jiayang: Cunren tang, 1628), but the title of the “Luochong lu” is still mentioned in this Ming book.

⁹¹ In addition to the hand-copied *nara ehon*, a woodblock print of *Ikoku monogatari* was also produced in early Edo Japan.

⁹² On this topic, see Marcia Yonemoto, *Mapping Early Modern Japan: Space, Place, and Culture in the Tokugawa Period* (1603–1868) (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003).

⁹³ See Paul Pelliot, Tokio Takata, *Fandigang tushuguan suocang Hanji mulu* 梵蒂岡圖書館所藏漢籍目錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006), p. 16, p. 96, p. 118. Chŏn In-ch’o, *Han’guk sojang Chungguk hanjŏk ch’ongmok* 韓國所藏中國漢籍總目 (Seoul: Hakkobang, 2005), 681–83.

circulation of books and ideas.⁹⁴ To conclude this essay, one may want to note how mercurial and adaptable the *Luochong lu* and its spinoffs proved. It easily survived and circulated in whole or in parts or changed forms. Its value in relation to the notion of the foreigner that was being worked out in the Ming and beyond is not just in its subject matter as such, but in the ways that it made itself, reached readers, and realized its social impact as a book or part of a book. It is in the coming together of the subject matter of the barbarian and the social process of the making and using of books that the *Luochong lu* becomes a unique window into the history of early modern China.

⁹⁴ For example, in Korea we find *Luochong lu* passages excerpted in Han Ch'i-yun's 韓致瀾 (1765–1814) *History of Korea (Haedong yōksa 海東繹史)* (Kyōngsōng: Chosōn Kwangmunhoe, 1912–1913), 3. Han attributed this passage to *Sancai tuhui*, which, as this study shows, can be considered a later edition of the *Luochong lu*.

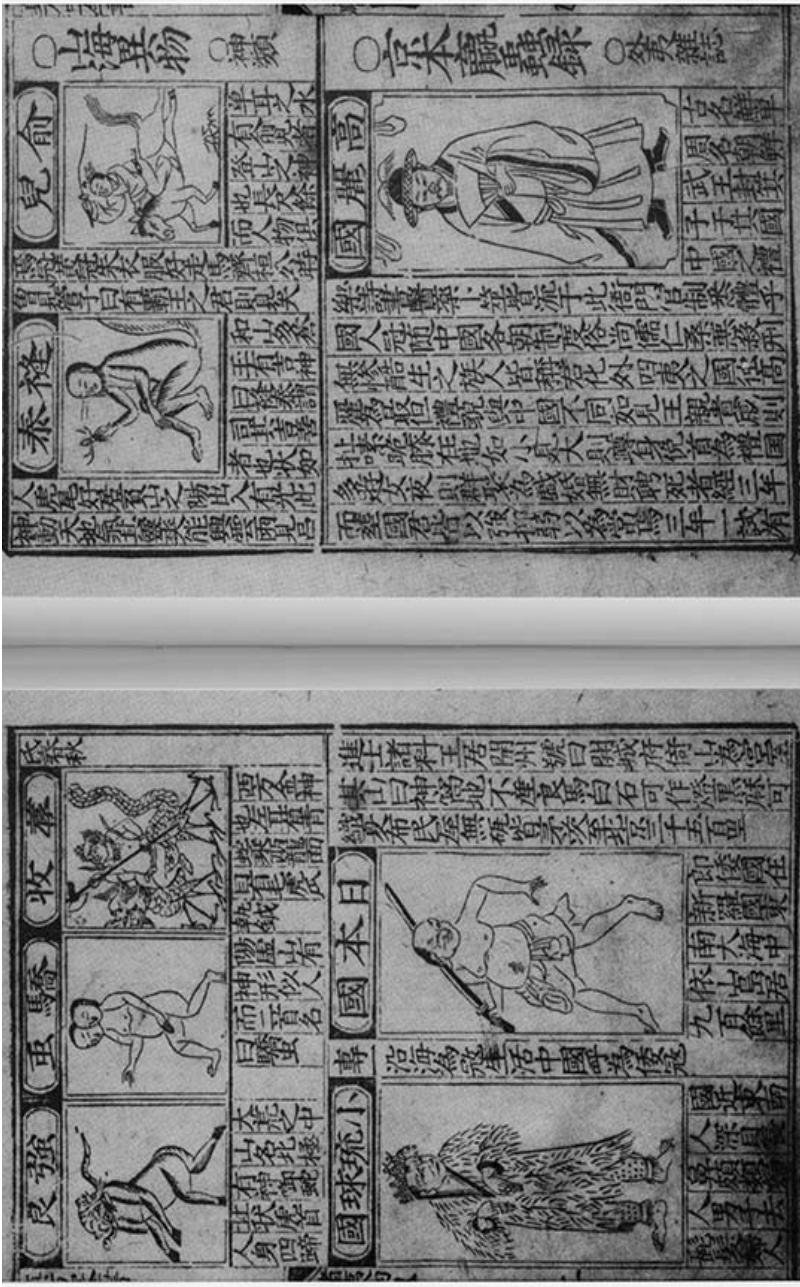


Figure 1. The Luochong lu as *Encyclopedia Chapter*
 See bottom register of this daily-use encyclopedia, *Miaojin wanbao quanshu* 妙鈔萬寶全書. After Myōkin banpō zensho
 (cited n. 3), pp. 210–11.



Figure 3. "The Country of Japan" in *Miaojin wanbao quanshu* After Myōkin banpō zensho (see n. 3), p. 211.

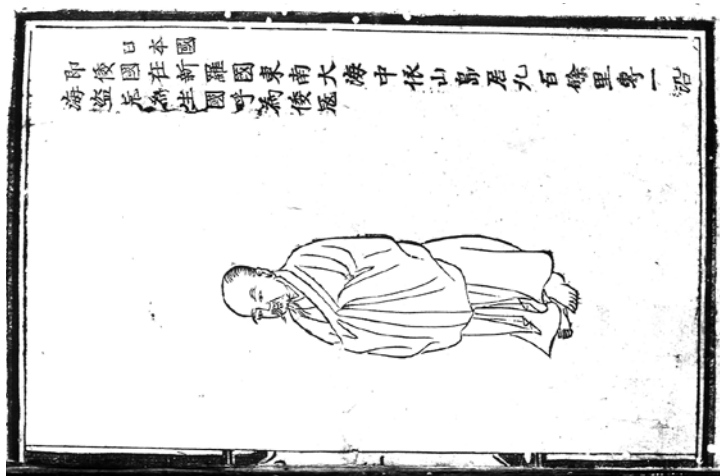


Figure 2. "The Country of Japan" in *Yiyu tuzhi* 異域圖志 The 15th-c. edn. of *Jin Xian*. (Information about *Yiyu tuzhi* is given above, in main text, between notes 12–14). After microfilm housed in Cambridge University Library, frame # 3.



Figure 4. Illustrations from the Dongyi tushuo 東夷圖說 of 1586

On the right, a picture of Java; the left, "Folangji." After Siku quanshu cummu congshu, sect. shi 史 255, p. 415.



Figure 5. Chapter-head Illustration

After Myōkin banpō zensho (see n. 3), p. 209.



Figure 6. Chapter-head Illustration in *Wuche wanbao quanshu* 五車萬寶全書

Printed in Wanli reign by *Shude tang* 樹德堂, *Jiayang*. After the reproduction *Gosha banpō zensho* (Tokyo: *Kyūko Shoin*, 2001), p. 125.



Figure 7. Chapter-head Illustration in *Wanshu yuanhai* 萬書淵海 of 1610. Published by Yang Qinzhai 楊欽齋 of *Jishan tang* 積善堂, Jiayang. After the reproduction *Bansho en kai* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 2001), p. 185.



Figure 8. Chapter-head Illustration in *Wanyong zhengzong buqiuren* 萬用正宗不求人. Printed in Wanli reign by Yu Wentai 余文台, Jiayang. After the reproduction *Banyō seiso fukyūjin* (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 2003), p. 455.



*Figure 9. A New Picture to Accompany "The Country of Great Japan"
In Ikoku monogatari 異國物語, early Edo period. After the
reproduction Ikoku monogatari (Tokyo: Koten Bunko, 1995), p. 10.*