

The Transformation of the Ghost Image in Modern China

Shibei Shen

ABSTRACT

This article explores the transformation of the ghost (鬼, *gui*) in Chinese literature from the late imperial to the early modern period, arguing that this shift reflects deeper cultural, political, and epistemological ruptures in modern Chinese history. In Qing dynasty fiction, ghosts often functioned as extra-legal arbiters of justice, reinforcing Confucian moral codes and aligning with the cosmological and social hierarchies of the time. With the introduction of Western science, rationalism, and the reformist ideologies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ghosts came under intellectual scrutiny. Figures such as Chen Duxiu and Lu Xun recast the ghost not as a transcendent moral agent but as a metaphor for political oppression, societal decay, and psychological fragmentation. By tracing the ghost's descent from supernatural judge to object of critique, this study demonstrates how the spectral became a site of negotiation between tradition and modernity, superstition and science, and cultural identity and national reform.

Keywords: Ghosts, Chinese modernity, Qing fiction, New Culture Movement, superstition and science

INTRODUCTION

Richard von Glahn has argued that, ‘Arthur Wolf’s classic study of religion draws attention to the marked correspondences between popular images of supernatural beings and the categories of social identity and interaction. The tripartite division of the spirits into gods (*shen* 神), ancestors, and ghosts (*gui* 鬼) mirrored popular perceptions of the principal divisions of social life: officialdom, family, and the amorphous mass of “strangers” with whom one had no kinship ties.’¹⁴ In many cases, however, the images of these three are not so exact. Other people’s ancestors may be ‘ghosts’ and good ‘ghosts’ may be ‘gods’, so ‘ghost’ is still a very vague concept. Of course, ghosts are also believed to have changed from other living beings. In short, there are many different interpretations of ‘ghosts’.

Shibei Shen is pursuing his PhD at Queen’s University, Belfast specializing in Modern Environmental History of China. Correspondence should be sent to School of History, Anthropology, Philosophy and Politics, Queen’s University Belfast, Belfast, BT7 1NN, Northern Ireland. Email: sshen03@qub.ac.uk. © 2025 Shibei Shen. This publication and its contents are protected under UK law by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, as amended, and applicable international treaties.

¹⁴ Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (California: University of California Press, 2004), 6.

‘The doctrine that the Universe is one compound of an infinite number of kwei (gui) and shen’.¹⁵ The ‘ghost culture’ in China has a long history. More than two thousand years ago, we could often find references to ghosts in Confucian and Taoist texts. After the Two Han Dynasty, the involvement of Buddhism enriched the cultural connotation of ghosts, and to a certain extent, ghosts even became the common theme and intersection of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. Since then, Chinese folk tales of ghosts and monsters have been enriched in the process of integration with Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, and became more perfect in the Qing Dynasty.

‘The doctrine that the Universe is one compound of an infinite number of kwei (gui) and shen’.¹⁶ The ‘ghost culture’ in China has a long history. More than two thousand years ago, we could often find references to ghosts in Confucian and Taoist texts. After the Two Han Dynasty, the involvement of Buddhism enriched the cultural connotation of ghosts, and to a certain extent, ghosts even became the common theme and intersection of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. Since then, Chinese folk tales of ghosts and monsters have been enriched in the process of integration with Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, and became more perfect in the Qing Dynasty.

However, by the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, with the modernisation of the West and the introduction of scientism, the image of ‘ghosts’ underwent a great transformation. ‘Westernisation became the right new thinking. Compared to science, which was the basis of Westernisation, faith was a superstition that corrupted people's hearts and minds, and a demon that could not stand in the same place as science.’¹⁷ Ghosts, as the representative of traditional Chinese folk superstitions, were inevitably impacted by Westernisation at this time. When the so-called Western technological civilisation - sound, light, electricity and steam - gradually entered China, it seemed that traditional ‘ghosts’, who were afraid of the light, had become invisible all of a sudden.

Under such circumstances, the interpretative space and inherent system of ‘ghosts’ formed in traditional societies are bound to change. This paper aims to outline, from the perspective of literary works, how the image of ‘ghost’ has been reconstructed in modern societies, and what are the differences between the ‘ghost’ in

¹⁵ Roel Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 166. As cited in J. J. M. De Groot (1892-1910; rpt.1964), Vol.4, 157.

¹⁶ Roel Sterckx, *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China*. (New York: State University of New York Press, 2002), 166. As cited in J. J. M. De Groot (1892-1910; rpt.1964), Vol.4, 157.

¹⁷ CHOI Chi-cheung 蔡志祥 Wei Jinxin 韦锦新 POON-shuk-wah 潘淑华, *Mixin huayu baozhang yu qingmominchu de yifengyisu* 迷信话语 报章与清末民初的移风易俗 [*Superstitious Discourse, Newspapers, and the Transformation of Customs in the Late Qing Dynasty and Early Republican China era*], (HongKong: Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Huanan yanjiu zhongxin 香港科技大学华南研究中心, 2013), 1.

traditional societies and the ‘ghost’ in modern societies. Further, I will explore the underlying reasons for the shift in the image of ‘ghost’.

I. GHOSTS IN QING DYNASTY FICTION

In most of these ghost stories, be it ‘*Notes of Yuewei chaotang*’ (*Yuewei caotang biji* 阅微草堂笔记) or ‘*Confucius doesn't talk*’ (*Zi Buyu* 子不语), the plots are about wrongful convictions, heartless men, money-grubbers, and infatuated lovers. In these stories, the ‘ghost’ often plays the role of a ‘free judge’ who is outside the law, whose judgement is based on the traditional Confucian moral system, and Buddhist principle that ‘good and evil are rewarded.’ For example, there is a story about ‘an old scholars who did not get the first rank’ (*Laoru budi* 老儒不第) in the ‘*Autumn Lanterns Series of Stories*’ (*Qiudeng conghua* 秋灯丛话) written by Wang Jian (王械)¹⁸ of the Qing Dynasty. The story started with a very talented old scholar who forced his sister-in-law to remarry after the death of his elder brother. He did so because he was influenced by the gossip of the village people, and he was also afraid that his sister-in-law's behaviour would bring shame to the whole family, and as a result, she committed suicide in grief. Since then, this old scholar was haunted by the ghost of his sister-in-law every time he took an examination, and he failed to pass the examination time and again.¹⁹

Another example is that in the ‘*Records of Night Talks*’ (*Ye Tan suilu* 夜谭随录) written by the Master of Owner of Ji Garden (*Ji Yuan zhuren* 霁园主人), it is recorded that a filial daughter took care of her asthma-stricken father every day without resting or forgetting to eat and prayed every day for an early recovery of his illness, and in the end, her father's illness was cured by magic under her care, and she was married into a rich family with a dowry of no less than several thousand gold.²⁰ These two stories are about evil being rewarded for evil and good being rewarded for good, and this kind of ‘reward’ is actually outside of the law. It reflects certain simple moral standards of the folk, which incorporate Buddhist concepts such as ‘karma’ and, more importantly, Confucian standards of living. As expressed by Rania Huntington in their study of the Fox Fairy

¹⁸ Wang Jian (王械), He was a native of Fushan County, Shandong Province, during the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty, and the exact year of his birth and death is unknown.

¹⁹ Wang Jian 王械, *Qiudeng conghua* 秋灯丛话 [*Autumn Lanterns Series of Stories*], (Yinchuan: Huanghe chubanshe 黄河出版社, 1990).

²⁰ He Bange 和邦额, Wang Yigong 王一工 Fang Zhengyao 方正耀 eds, *Yetan suilu* 夜谭随录 [*Records of Night Talks*], (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1998).

story: 'In these tales the literatus has conspicuously taken the place of the professional exorcist, and the emphasis on morality and reasoning, rather than arcane arts.'²¹

As to why 'ghosts' appear in most of these novels as a kind of detachment from human society, or even as a judge above human society, I think it is firstly based on some ancient cultural traditions. The *Book of Rites* (*Liji Biaoji* 礼记·表记) mentioned, 'The rule of the Xia dynasty was to respect life and serve ghosts and gods, but to honour them.' (*Xiadao zunming, shi guishen jingeryuanzhi* 夏道遵命，事鬼敬神而远之). In *The Analects of Confucius*, (*Lun Yu* 论语) it is said, 'How can one serve ghosts when one has not served men? How can one know death without knowing life?' In these ancient texts, the image of 'ghosts' seems to be vague, isolated from human society, and to be 'kept far away' (*Yuanzhi* 远之). Meanwhile, In the texts, the concept that 'ghosts' are superior to 'human beings' has already been conveyed, otherwise, why would there be the saying that 'one should first serve human beings' before 'serving ghosts'?

In addition, this concept of 'ghosts are superior to human beings' implies a certain kind of class, and in fact, it also has a hidden role in building up the rationality of the ethical programme of 'kings and ministers, fathers and sons' (*Junchen fuzi* 君臣父子) in the traditional Chinese society. 'It has been noted by numerous writers in recent years that village religion in China mimics the imperial tradition. Deities are dealt with as if they were emperors and officials, and the priests behave like courtiers.'²² As Friedman argues, these 'small traditions' in the countryside were in fact not very different from the 'big traditions' of the Chinese dynasty.²³ Therefore, it can be said that people's devotion to 'ghosts and gods' is also devotion to imperial power. In traditional Chinese society, 'the state was itself involved in communication with the spirit world through many channels. It had its own cults of Heaven, Earth, and assorted nature deities, along with the welter of popular deities it had co-opted into its religious system.'²⁴ The interaction between these folk deities (including, of course, ghosts) and the state power extends, to some extent, the power of the state into the 'capillaries'.

²¹ Rania Huntington, *Alien Kind: Foxes and Late Imperial Chinese Narrative*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 110.

²² David Faure, *Emperor and Ancestor: State and Lineage in South China*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 216.

²³ Maurice Freedman, *Lineage organization in southeastern China*. (London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1965).

²⁴ Philip A. Kuhn, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 89-90.

Wei Yuan (魏源)²⁵, who opened his eyes to the world, also thought that ‘the talk of ghosts and gods was beneficial to the hearts of the people and the spread of the king's teachings.’²⁶ Therefore, to a certain extent, the ghosts and gods helped the royal power, or even replaced it, by entering the wider popular space. In the past, some scholars believe that ‘imperial power does not go down to the county’ (*Huangquan buxia xian* 皇权不下县), the clan and the gentry have a certain degree of autonomy in the folk space. The ‘ghosts and gods’ were likely an important means for the clans and gentry to maintain this autonomy. David Faure, in *Emperor and Ancestor: State and Lineage in South China*, also mentions that ‘natural justice resided not in lineage theory, but in folk religion, in the world of the spirits.’²⁷ Ghosts, as C.K Yang defines them in their study as a diffused religion, are widely integrated with secular life.²⁸

ii. THE RECONSTRUCTION OF GHOSTS IN MODERN LITERATURE

When the Western ships and cannons ‘opened’ the door of the Qing Dynasty, the modern intellectuals seemed to have a brand new understanding of ‘ghosts’. Contrary to the Qing Dynasty's scholars attitude of treating ‘ghosts’ as judgemental figures, they even attributed the cause of the country's downfall to ‘ghosts’.

In the late 19th century, the Revolutionary Party and the Reformist Party protested against each other. Though their attitudes towards the Qing government differed, their attitudes towards the ‘ghosts’ were surprisingly the same. Tan Sitong (谭嗣同)²⁹ of the reformist school believed that ‘the falsehood of the last days, which is caused by the ghosts and gods, has made the people tired of their work and become slaves of foreign

²⁵ Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1857) was a native of Shaoyang City, Hunan Province. He was an Enlightenment thinker, statesman, and literary scholar of the Qing Dynasty. He was a representative of the first batch of intellectuals who ‘opened their eyes to the world’ in modern China.

²⁶ Wei Yuan 魏源, *Mogu zhipian* 默觚.治篇[*Wei Yuan's Epigraph. Regarding governance*], Liaoning: Liaoning renmin chubanshe, 辽宁人民出版社, 2000. Original text: “Guishen zhishuo, youyiyu renxin, yinfu wangjiaozhe shenda 鬼神之说, 有益于人心, 阴辅王教者甚大。”

²⁷ David Faure, *Emperor and Ancestor: State and Lineage in South China*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 11.

²⁸ C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors*. (California: University of California Press, 1991).

²⁹ Tan Sitong 谭嗣同 (1865-1898) was a figure of the Hundred Days' Reform in the late Qing Dynasty, one of the Four Gentlemen of the Reform and the Six Gentlemen of the Hundred Days' Reform.

countries.’³⁰ On the other hand, the revolutionary Chen Huang (陈榷)³¹ said, ‘Observing the cause of the rise and fall of the nation, I know that it has a lot to do with the beliefs of ghosts and gods.’³² Their questioning and criticism of ghosts was, in fact, to a certain extent, a criticism of the ruler's policy of using ghosts to ‘educate the people’ as well as other kinds of policies to ‘educate the people’. The reason for starting with ‘ghosts’ may also be due to the extensive and universal nature of ‘ghosts’ in the perception of the civil society. ‘Ghosts’ in the civil society gradually became a sentiment for intellectuals to oppose the traditional ills and express their dissatisfaction with the reality. In the mid-1910s, when the New Culture Movement (*Xinwenhua yundong* 新文化运动) began, this became even more common.

Chen Duxiu (陈独秀)³³ published the ‘Ghost Skepticism’ (*Yougui zhiyi lun* 有鬼质疑论) in *New Youth* (*Xin qingnian* 新青年), he said, ‘So in the case of ghosts and gods that cannot be explained by science, I do not dare to judge whether they are there or not, but now I also adopt the doctrine of compliance with the skepticism, and before advocating the absence of ghosts, I have doubts about the existence of ghosts, and I hope that those who advocate the theory of ghosts will give me an answer.’³⁴ It can be seen that although Chen said that he remained sceptical, judging from his strong words and the questions he asked afterwards, it was obvious that he did not agree at all with the exist of ‘ghosts’, and he tried to explain the problem with the Western scientific system. At that time, there were many other articles like this one, such as Liu Xunyu's (刘薰宇)³⁵ ‘*Gossip in a Half-Manor House*’ (*Banlian lou xianhua* 半间楼闲话). He said, ‘In the midst of this

³⁰ Liu Zhongyu 刘仲宇, *Zhongguo jinguai wenhua* 中国精怪文化[*Chinese culture of elves and monsters*], (Shanghai :Shanghai renmin chubanshe 上海人民出版社, 1997), 299. Original text: “Sufen moshi zhi wuwang, huoyu guishen zashi shi minfu weiweihushiye, zuowei yibang nuli 夙愤末世之诬妄, 祸于鬼神杂识使民弗壹乎事业, 作为异邦奴隶。”

³¹ Chen Huang 陈榷 (1872-1931) was a native of Yiwu. He joined the Guangfu Society and the Tongmeng Society, and participated in the revolutionary activities against the feudalism of the Qing Dynasty.

³² Wang Yousan 王友三, *Zhongguo wushenlun shigang* 中国无神论史纲 [*Outline of the history of atheism in China*], (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe 上海人民出版社, 1986), 456. Original text: ‘Guan minzu guojia xinwang zhi gu, zhiqi yu guishen huofu zhi shuo, dayou guanxi 观民族国家兴亡之故, 知其与鬼神祸福之说, 大有关系。’

³³ Chen Duxiu 陈独秀 (1879-1942), advocate, initiator and main flag-bearer of the New Culture Movement, ‘Commander-in-Chief of the May Fourth Movement’, one of the main founders of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and a major leader of the Party in its early days.

³⁴ Chen Duxiu 陈独秀, ‘Yougui zhiyi lun 有鬼质疑论 [Ghost Skepticism]’. *Xin qingnian* 新青年 [*New Youth*], No.5, VOL.4. (15th-May-1918). Original text: ‘Sui yu buneng yi kexue jieshi zhi guishen wenti ,weigan qingduan qi youwu,jin yu yi caina zunyi zhuyi,yu zhuzhang wu gui zhi xian 遂于不能以科学解释之鬼神问题, 未敢轻断其有无, 今予亦采纳遵疑主义, 于主张无鬼之先, 对于有鬼之说多所怀疑, 颇期主张有鬼论者赐以解答。’

³⁵ Liu Xunyu 刘薰宇 (1896-1967), a native of Guiyang, Guizhou, a member of the Communist Party of China (CPC), graduated from the Mathematics and Science Department of the Beijing Higher Normal School, a member of the Chinese Democratic League, and the headmaster of Guiyang High School during the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression.

pandemonium, I think: in order to talk about science, we must first talk about exorcising ghosts.’³⁶ It can be seen that ‘ghosts’ seem to have been pulled down from their lofty position as the judge. Chen's argument is to question the existence of such a judge as ‘ghosts’, while Liu goes one step further, saying that it would be best if they do not exist, and if they do exist, they have to be driven away and replaced by science. ‘Ghosts’ have changed from being the judge in ghost stories to being judged, questioned and even driven away.

The importation of Western thought and science is of course an important reason for the change in the image of the ‘ghost’. To some scholars, there seems to be a strong tension between Chinese ‘ghosts’ and Western science. They hope to use science to identify the truth and falsity of ‘ghosts’, to refute some of the so-called ‘superstitious’ things in traditional culture, and ultimately to achieve the ‘anti-traditional’ and the introduction of Western science. In addition to ghosts, there are also a large number of things that have been classified by scholars as ‘superstition’, ‘the pejorative and trivializing neologism *mixin* (superstition), by which the entire realm of popular religion was now characterized, brought with it a much more absolutizing distinction between the scientific and the primitive.’³⁷

Apart from making use of ‘ghosts’, opposing the tradition and introducing Western science, scholars have also taken another approach by comparing ‘human beings’ to ‘ghosts’ to express their dissatisfaction with the current situation and their accusation of the darkness of reality. Lu Xun (鲁迅)³⁸, in ‘*The Lost Hell*’ (*Shidiao de hao diyu* 失掉的好地狱), directly compared the people oppressed by the warlords to ghosts and the human world to ‘hell’. In ‘*The Sorrows of Ghost Talkers*’ (*Tan gui zhe de beiai* 谈鬼者的悲哀), Chen Zizhan (陈子展) said, ‘Nowadays, the darkness is so dark and the ghostly atmosphere is so eerie that it is about to complete a ghost country, and I myself have become a living ghost like a corpse walking on the street.’³⁹ ‘Ghosts’ are no longer something to be “kept far away”, but to be pulled into the crowd. Writers try to use this literary method to connect “ghosts” with people, so as to express that in reality, the darkness and horror of the ‘human’ world has turned people into ‘ghosts’.

³⁶ Xu Hualong 徐华龙, *Guixue quanshu* 鬼学全书[*The Complete Book of Demonology*], (Beijing: Zhongguo huaqiao chubanshe 中国华侨出版社 1998, Vol.4), 2257. Original text: ‘Zaizhe wuyanzhangqi de jingkuang Zhong,woxiang: yaotan kexue de tan qugui 在这乌烟瘴气的景况中,我想:要谈科学先得谈驱鬼。’

³⁷ Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press,1997), 97.

³⁸ Lu Xun 鲁迅 (1881-1936), formerly known as Zhou Shuren, pen name Lu Xun, a native of Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province, was a modern Chinese writer, designer, and one of the leaders of the New Culture Movement.

³⁹ Chen Zizhan 陈子展 (1898-1990), a native of Changsha, Hunan Province, was a Chinese writer and scholar, and a member of the Jiu San Society.

CONCLUSION

From the case of Qing Dynasty fiction to the literary works of the New Culture Movement, the transformation of the image of ghosts reflects the transformation of modern Chinese culture and intellectual consciousness. In traditional societies, ghosts were agents of morality, judges who transcended human law, reinforcing moral norms and reflecting the hierarchical structure of imperial China. Since ghosts originated from people's worship of their ancestors, and everyone has ancestors, ghosts have always been widely integrated with civil society, and the melding of ghosts and folk religion is also a manifestation of the extension of state power into the daily lives of the people, whereby the mainstream precepts of the state can be carried out to a more nuanced area through ghosts and related folk religions.

However, with the emergence of modernity, Western science, and intellectual movements like the New Culture Movement, the ghost has walked off the pedestal and become a symbol of superstition and a relic of a lagging tradition. Modern intellectuals have questioned or outright rejected the existence of ghosts, arguing that widespread belief in ghosts has hindered state progress and scientific enlightenment. This shift can also be understood as part of the broader narrative of Sino-Western interaction in modern China. At the same time, this shift also meant that after the introduction of Western technology and culture, the Chinese began to doubt and rethink their traditional culture and religion.

Meanwhile, like traditional intellectuals, modern writers and thinkers have utilised the metaphor of ghosts to express inner aspirations. However, unlike traditional intellectuals, modern intellectuals are more inclined to use the metaphor of ghosts to criticise the socio-political reality of the period. They pulled ghosts into the physical world and equated them with the oppressed and the disillusioned highlights the darkness and decadence of society, and by depicting this darkness, expressing the desire for modernity.

In short, the two main paths of change in the image of ghosts in modern China are: first, from the transcendent, which needs to be kept away from, to the earthly, figurative; second, from the judge of morality to the object to be criticised. Behind the transformation of the image of the ghost is a certain scepticism and re-understanding of its own traditional culture in the face of globalisation and Sino-Western interaction in modern China. Thus, the transmutation through the image of ghosts may provide some possible valuable lessons for other cultural or folk religious fluxes in modern China.

REFERENCES

- Chen Duxiu 陈独秀, 'Yougui zhiyi lun 有鬼质疑论[Ghost Skepticism]'. *Xin qingnian* 新青年 [New Youth], No.5, Vol.4. (15th-May-1918).
- Chen Zizhan 陈子展 'Tanguizhe de beiai 谈鬼者的悲哀[The Sorrows of Ghost Talkers]'. *Lunyu* 论语 [Argumentation]. No. 93(1936).
- CHOI Chi-cheung 蔡志祥 Wei Jinxin 韦锦新 POON-shuk-wah 潘淑华, *Mixin huayu baozhang yu qingmominchu de yifengyisu* 迷信话语 报章与清末民初的移风易俗[*Superstitious Discourse, Newspapers, and the Transformation of Customs in the Late Qing Dynasty and Early Republican China era*], HongKong, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology Huanan yanjiu zhongxin 香港科技大学华南研究中心, 2013.
- Duara, Prasenjit. *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*. Chicago : University Of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Faure, David. *Emperor and Ancestor: State and Lineage in South China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007.
- Freedman, Maurice. *Lineage organization in southeastern China*. London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1965.
- Glahn, Richard von. *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture*. California : University of California Press, 2004.
- He Bange 和邦额, Wang Yigong 王一工 Fang Zhengyao 方正耀 eds, *Yetan suilu* 夜谭随录[*Records of Night Talks*], Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 1998.
- Huntington, Rania. *Alien Kind: Foxes and Late Imperial Chinese Narrative*. Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Kuhn, Philip A.. *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768*. Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1990.
- Liu Zhongyu 刘仲宇, *Zhongguo jinguai wenhua* 中国精怪文化[*Chinese culture of elves and monsters*], Shanghai :Shanghai renmin chubanshe 上海人民出版社, 1997.
- Sterckx, Roel. *The Animal and the Daemon in Early China*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2002.

- Wang Jian 王槭, *Qiudeng conghua* 秋灯丛话[*Autumn Lanterns Series of Stories*], Yinchuan: Huanghe chubanshe, 黄河出版社, 1990.
- Wang Yousan 王友三, *Zhongguo wushenlun shigang* 中国无神论史纲[*Outline of the history of atheism in China*], Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe 上海人民出版社, 1986.
- Wei Yuan 魏源, *Mogu zhipian* 默觚.治篇[*Wei Yuan's Epigraph. Regarding governance*], Liaoning: liaoning renmin chubanshe, 辽宁人民出版社, 2000.
- Xu Hualong 徐华龙, *Guixue quanshu* 鬼学全书[*The Complete Book of Demonology*] , (Beijing: Zhongguo huaqiao chubanshe 中国华侨出版社 1998, Vol.4), 2257.
- Yang C. K., *Religion in Chinese society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors*. California : University of California Press,1991.