

September 2017

Preservation and Distortion: the Recording, Editing and Publishing of Yangzhou Storytelling

Huarong Wang

Follow this and additional works at: <https://tsla.researchcommons.org/journal>



Part of the [Chinese Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Wang, Huarong. 2017. "Preservation and Distortion: the Recording, Editing and Publishing of Yangzhou Storytelling." *Theoretical Studies in Literature and Art* 37, (4): pp.119-132.
<https://tsla.researchcommons.org/journal/vol37/iss4/10>

This Research Article is brought to you for free and open access by Theoretical Studies in Literature and Art. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized editor of Theoretical Studies in Literature and Art.

Preservation and Distortion: the Recording, Editing and Publishing of Yangzhou Storytelling^①

Wang Huarong

Abstract: Affected by the Chinese Communist Party's policies on literature and art and the aesthetics of written literature, during the recording, editing and publishing Yangzhou storytelling, the editors revised or deleted the undesirable or negative content including the parts that did not comply with the social ideology. Meanwhile, the editors tended to follow the style of written literature to normalize the language of Yangzhou storytelling. On the one hand, the recording and publishing work saved some repertoires of Yangzhou storytelling, and let more people know and enjoy Yangzhou storytelling. It also promoted the development of academic research on Yangzhou storytelling. On the other hand, the work also had some flaws. It undermined some of the characteristics of storytelling as oral literature, and it was not good for the further development of academic research. We should adopt more diverse and scientific methods to record, edit and publish Yangzhou storytelling, to preserve storytelling repertoires, and to provide a better foundation for the further study of Yangzhou storytelling.

Keywords: Yangzhou storytelling; record, editing and publication; policy on literature and art; orality

Author: Wang Huarong, Ph. D., is a lecturer in the School of Chinese Language and Literature, Jiangxi Normal University (Nanchang 330022, China), with research interests in ancient Chinese fiction and drama. Email: ivywanghr@sina.com

标 题: 保存与破坏: 关于扬州评话记录与整理的思考

摘 要: 受中共文艺政策和书面文学审美的影响,在扬州评话的记录和整理过程中,整理者们对一些不符合社会意识形态的内容进行了删改,同时也对评话的一些语言进行了书面规范。评话的整理一方面保存了评话书目,扩大了评话的影响范围,也推动了评话的学术研究;但是另一方面它破坏了评话作为口头文学的特质,也不利于学术研究的进一步发展。应该采用更为多样的、更为科学的方法来记录整理评话,以保存评话书目,并为进一步研究评话提供更好的基础。

关键词: 扬州评话; 记录整理; 文艺政策; 口头性

作者简介: 汪花荣,文学博士,江西师范大学文学院讲师,主要研究方向为中国古代小说与戏曲。电子邮箱: ivywanghr@sina.com

As an oral and performing art, Yangzhou storytelling (*Yangzhou pinghua*, 扬州评话) has been transmitted by word of mouth through successive generations. This mode of transmission has determined its spread in time and scope. Some traditional repertoires of Yangzhou storytelling such as “Yangzhou Talk” (《扬州话》), “Diagram of Good and Evil” (《善恶图》) and “Diagram of Five Beauties” (《五美图》), which used to be performed

in the storyteller's houses during the Qing period, have disappeared a long time ago (RQY 110).

How is it possible to strengthen the dissemination and reception of oral arts? An important method for preserving oral art was to write the repertoires down and publish them as books, thus breaking through the limitations of time and space. It is, however, important to understand, that once an oral art is committed to paper, it is not truly

'oral' anymore; it changes into a written text (Vibeke 55). Until the founding of New China in 1949, there were few recorded texts or printed books of Yangzhou storytelling repertoires.

I. The historical background of the recording, editing and publishing of Yangzhou storytelling

Before discussing the recording, editing and publishing of Yangzhou storytelling, we shall review the historical background. As early as the Song and Yuan Dynasties, some ancient Chinese storytelling repertoires were printed into books, which were named 'folk books' (*pinghua* 平话) or *huaben* (话本). In the Qing Dynasty, some Yangzhou storytelling repertoires were printed as novels, such as *The Legend of the Braggart* (《飞跽全传》) and *Clear Wind Sluice* (《清风闸》). However, it is doubtful that these publications reflected the reality of storytelling faithfully. There are some differences in the publication of Chinese storytelling between the earlier and the modern period. In the past, booksellers printed books of storytellers' repertoires mostly for the purpose of entertainment and making profit. For the selection and revision of storytelling as published after 1949, the political ideology plays a fundamental role.

In the traditional Chinese society, storytelling used to be a very common and popular public recreational activity. However, Chinese intellectuals formerly often treated folk literature with disdain, because they thought it was crude and boorish. The rulers sometimes even banned performing storytelling, if they felt the regime was threatened by the style and contents of such performances. "Many youngsters among the people do not work in decent professions, but travel around in towns and hamlets, performing storytelling and story-singing (*cihua*, 词话), and acting various kinds of drama, which leads to lascivious behavior. Both are forbidden" (Li Xiusheng 2117). In the Qing Dynasty, the government high-handedly implemented its cultural

policy. A large number of books were banned and destroyed, some of which were associated with storytelling, such as *Clear Wind Sluice*, *Green Peony* (《绿牡丹》) and *Water Margin* (《水浒传》).^② In the early 20th century, some intellectuals changed their mind about folk literature and planned to use storytelling and other folk arts to educate and enlighten people. In fact, in former times, storytelling already had a function in educating people morally and telling them how to behave.^③

After the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911, a "literary revolution" took place, and in this movement folk literature or popular literature was thought to be able to play an important role in ideological remolding and promoting social change. In December 1913, Lu Xun (鲁迅 1881—1936) issued an article entitled "Opinion on How to Promote the Arts" (《拟播布美术意见书》) in the *Monthly Magazine of the Department for Compilation, Ministry of Education* (《教育部编纂处月刊》). In the article Lu Xun took the initiative, "to establish a National Academy of Arts and Letters to collect songs, slang and proverbs, legends, fairy tales etc. throughout the country; to understand their meaning, analyze their features, develop them, and use them to assist education" (Lu Xun 44). Influenced by the suggestion of Lu Xun, Peking University in the 1920s established the Ballad Research Council, which opened up the trend of studying and publishing Chinese folk literature and arts in modern time. From the point of view of Lu Xun, one of the goals of studying and publishing was to educate people through folk literature, which was different from entertainment for people. However, at that time few storytelling repertoires had been collected or published. For one reason, the length of most storytelling texts is huge. Another reason was that storytelling was very popular at that time, so people did not worry about its existence.

The recording, editing and publishing of Yangzhou Storytelling started mainly in the early days of New China. It is worth noting that the Chinese Communist Party's Policy on literature and

art before the establishment of the People's Republic of China had great instructional significance for the collection and edition of Yangzhou Storytelling as well as other folk literatures and arts. "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art" (《在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话》) by Mao Zedong was an important manifestation of the Chinese Communist Party's policy on literature and art, which was reported in 1942, and had an important influence on literary and artistic policies after the founding of New China.

It is pointed out in the Talks that "our aim is to ensure that revolutionary literature and art follow the correct path of development and provide better help to other revolutionary work in facilitating the overthrow of our national enemy and the accomplishment of the task of national liberation" (Mao Zedong 1 - 2). The "Talks" were an integrated part of the political struggle — literature and art was considered a powerful weapon in spreading political ideas and educating the public, with little concern about the development of these arts in their own right.

On the one hand, the "Talks" inherited the traditional concept that literature and art should educate the public. On the other hand, Mao Zedong promoted the keyword "remoulding": "We should take over the rich legacy and the good traditions in literature and art that have been handed down from past ages in China and foreign countries, but the aim must still be to serve the people. Nor do we refuse to utilize the literary and artistic forms of the past, but in our hands these old forms, remoulded and infused with new content, also become something revolutionary in the service of the people" (Mao Zedong 31 - 32). The keyword "remoulding" played an important role in the collection and publication of folk literature and art.

Literary and artistic policies after the founding of New China continued and developed the ideas of the "Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art". Both before and after 1949, there was a strong movement for reforming the Chinese drama. The

Ministry of Culture held a national drama conference in 1950 with the aim of studying how to reform the Chinese opera. Actors of opera and artistes of the performed narrative arts (*quyi* 曲艺) participated in the meeting. The conference concluded by drawing up the "Proposals to the Ministry of Culture on the Improvement of the Drama" (《关于戏曲改进工作向中央文化部的建议》). On this basis, the Government Affair Council of the Central People's Government issued "Instructions Concerning the Implementation of the Drama Reform" (《关于戏曲改革工作的指示》) in 1951. "Currently the drama reform work should primarily examine and approve the most widespread popular traditional drama repertoires. Those with undesirable content or bad performance methods need appropriate modification. The seriously poisonous ideological content must be eliminated. Concerning the performance methods, we must remove the performances that are brutal, bloodcurdling, lascivious, insulting to the nation and anti-nationalist. ... When modifying the traditional repertoires, we should be careful not to violate the truth of history and the edifying effect" (SWIDFNC 251).

From this document, we know the basic ideas of the drama reform and the principles of modification. The "Instructions" gave also directions to collect, record, print and publish traditional or new opera and *quyi* repertoires on a large scale. This was the historical background for the work of collecting, recording and editing drama and *quyi* repertoires from all over the country, including Yangzhou. In this process *Chen Yun's Talks and Communications about Pinghua and Tanci* (《陈云同志关于评弹的谈话和通信》) had important significance. "By mobilizing artists for creating the new and revising the old, we can strengthen the political and ideological leadership. In the revising the old work, the process of critically absorbing is also the process of educating artists. Through creating the new and revising the old, we can solve the problems in three areas: The First is to meet the needs of large audiences; the second is to

remould the artist's thought; the third is to improve the ideology and artistry of storytelling repertoires" (Chen Yun 3). Its guiding ideology was consistent with the "Instructions", but its specific target was storytelling.

The collection and publication of Yangzhou storytelling began in the 1950s. During the Second Literature and Art Workers National Congress in 1953, Zhou Enlai pointed out that the storytelling of Wang Shaotang (王少堂 1889—1968) was a precious cultural heritage and should be rescued (LHHP 1023). According to Premier Zhou's directive, the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Jiangsu Province invited Wang Shaotang to perform his repertoire from the "Wang School of Water Margin" (王派水浒) in Nanjing. The Bureau of Culture of Nanjing Municipality used radio equipment to record the full repertoire. Subsequently, they handed over to Yangzhou Municipality the text in transcription from the recording of Wang Shaotang's performance. In order to study and publish Yangzhou storytelling, a research group on Yangzhou storytelling was set up, while some government officials assumed a leading position in the group (Li Zhaoqun 356—57). Besides the "Wang School of Water Margin", other Yangzhou storytelling repertoires such as "Three Kingdoms" (《三国》), "Journey to the West" (《西游记》), and "Clear Wind Sluice" were also recorded and published. During the Cultural Revolution, the recording, editing and publishing of storytelling repertoires were interrupted. Not until the 1980s was the work recommenced. Government departments played a very important role in the recording, editing, and publishing of Yangzhou storytelling.^④ Traditional repertoires of Yangzhou storytelling are usually very long, and the government departments were able to gather the necessary work force, material and financial resources. Another important factor was that many storytellers were unwilling to show their scripts to others, because storytellers make a living from their storytelling, they were afraid that other storytellers "stole" their scripts or repertoires, and

competed with them, which would affect their income. Only with government's intervention could the storytellers be convinced to reveal their repertoires to the public. What became obvious was that the government's intervention and guidance left a trail of the official mainstream ideology in the works recorded and edited in this way.

II. The principles of the revised editions of Yangzhou storytelling after the founding of New China

Despite the guiding ideology, there were at the beginning different ideas among the researchers on how to edit. There were three main views: 1) accurate recording of the spoken performance; 2) careful edition or revision of the original oral materials; 3) free creation by the editors on the basis of the oral materials. Initially, Wang Shaotang and a few of the researchers believed that the repertoires of the "Wang School of Water Margin" inherited from several generations of storytellers were perfect, so the researchers only needed to record the words of the repertoires and keep the original spoken version of storytelling. But this view was criticized,^⑤ so there was no storytelling publication reflecting this stand. The two other views were exemplified in corresponding publications. However, the second view was dominant. What were the principles of the revised editions of Yangzhou storytelling?

The first principle was to revise or delete the undesirable or negative content. In most revisers' opinion, traditional repertoires were inherited from the old society, which retained traces of bad things from the old days, inevitably mixed with a lot of feudal dross and permeated with the bad taste of the general public. So it was necessary to revise or delete some portions not meeting the requirements of the times. Discarding the dross and selecting the essence is the principle for Chinese Communist Party's attitude to the traditional culture. Chen Yun gave instructions about the revision of traditional

repertoires: “The first group of storytelling repertoires are the traditional repertoires, also known as the old repertoires (*laoshu* 老书). In this kind of repertoires, the essence and the dross coexist together; some have more dross, some less.” (Chen Yun 1) “The edition of traditional repertoires can be divided into two steps. The first is to delete the worst.” (Chen Yun 3) “Get rid of the bad portion, and retain the essence and harmless portion; while some portions can be adapted or rewritten.” (Chen Yun 10) The work of revision was affected by the social ideology of that time, embodied in the following two slogans:

a. Oppose the vilifying of heroes, insulting of peasants, and glorifying of landlords!

The standard theory during the early days of New China was that the main contradiction in feudal society was the class contradiction between the landlord class and the peasant class, and the peasant class was the oppressed and exploited class. However, the peasant class as an important part of the worker-peasant alliance should not be insulted or ridiculed. Proletarian Literature and art should serve the workers, peasants, and soldiers, and therefore passages mocking the peasant class must be deleted. For example, in the “Wu Song” repertoire, the storyteller described a squire’s servant who was from the countryside as ridiculous and idiotic. The editor would consider this an insult to the working people, so this kind of passage had to be deleted. (Wang Shaotang 1118)

A hero must be depicted as noble and positive. Any description vilifying a hero must be removed. For example, when the storyteller performed Sun Erniang’s appearance, there was originally the following prose-poem (赋赞).

Her face is the color of sand and mud, her hair is in a mess.

Her eyebrows are painted as scarlet as cinnabar.

She has two strange eyes, and a mouth of black scorched teeth.

Her hands look like palm-leaf fans,
and her feet are as large as two huge pumpkins.

Mrs. Sun from the Zhang family is a beautiful woman,

But the Ogress has the capacity to ruin states and cities.

面似沙泥发似麻,娥眉淡扫赛朱砂。
生成两只俊怪眼,长就一嘴黑焦牙。
玉手尖尖双蒲扇,两只金莲赛南瓜。
张门孙氏多娇女,倾国倾城母夜叉。

A farcical prose-poem like this would during performance attract the audience and trigger laughter. But it was deleted in the revision, because it vilified a female hero of peasant background. Besides, a hero’s political stand should be consistent with that of the peasants, so a hero should not hurt a peasant, otherwise this was not only insulting to the peasant class, but also destroyed the noble image of the hero. For example, why did Wu Song come to Chai village? According to the storyteller’s performance, this happened because of a drought, during which many poor persons and rogues robbed the shops. Wu Song fought against injustice, but accidentally killed a person. So he obeyed his brother’s suggestion and went to Chai village in Hebei province to avoid punishment. But the editors thought the poor belonged to the oppressed and exploited class, and if Wu Song fought them, it was not right. This was considered a mistake of the basic principles and must be rewritten (Wang Shaotang 1118).

As the antithesis of the peasant class, the landlord class should be criticized. In the oral performances from the “Wu Song” repertoire, Ximen Qing’s wife, concubines, and children all cried bitterly when their husband died. The editors thought the description whitewashed Ximen Qing. The head of Mengzhou prison guard Kang Wu was skilled at making money in irregular ways. But

storyteller portrayed him as a guileless, strictly upright, and correct fellow. The editors thought this description would blur the social contradictions for the public, and therefore they rewrote such passages (Wang Shaotang 1118).

b. Oppose feudalist superstition and vulgar content!

Yangzhou storytelling was traditionally closely connected to the citizens of the small townships. The content of storytelling was influenced by their customs and aesthetic taste. The storytellers used to add episodes of superstitious and erotic character to attract listeners. The original transcript of “Wu Song” had a section called “Wu Da Appears as an Omen” (武大托兆), about how Wu Dalang (武大郎) after his death appeared in Wu Song’s dream. Wu Dalang in this way gave his brother a detailed account of what had happened to him. This passage was considered superstitious, and the message from Wu Dalang in Wu Song’s dream was changed into hearsay from the streets. Many other small details of superstitious customs or beliefs were rewritten or deleted (Wang Shaotang 1118 – 1119).

So-called vulgar content was another important part that needed revision. This phenomenon had already occurred formerly in Chinese history. During the Daoguang Period of the Qing Dynasty (1838), the “Proclamation about Sujun setting up the Bureau to collect and destroy pornographic books and a list of banned books” (《苏郡设局收毁淫书公启并禁书目》) listed 116 kinds of forbidden pornographic books, a large part of them were associated with storysinging (*tanci* 弹词), drumballads (*guci* 鼓词), folk songs (*suqu* 俗曲), opera librettos (*changben* 唱本), drama scripts (*xiwen* 戏文), etc. Some titles had ties to Yangzhou storytelling, such as “Green Peony”, and “Clear Wind Sluice”. (Ding Shumei 191 – 94) According to the reminiscences of the storyteller Wang Xiaotang (王筱堂 1918—2000), adopted son of Wang Shaotang, in old days, storytellers, who performed “Peng gong’ an” (《彭公案》), “Shi gong’ an”

(《施公案》), “The Legend of Emperor Qianlong” (《乾隆传》) or “Clear Wind Sluice”, usually said three jokes at first to please their audience. Most of these jokes were vulgar and pornographic. During the Republican period, storytelling was once banned in Jiangsu Province. At that time, the Party Headquarter of the Chinese Kuomintang in set up the Repertoire Review Committee for reviewing theater, opera and *quyi*. The Committee staff listened to storytelling in various storytellers’ houses (*shuchang* 书场) and thought some of the plots were too vulgar. Therefore, they issued a ban on storytelling all over the province (Wang Xiaotang 130 – 31). After the founding of New China, the authorities also insisted that unhealthy content in storytelling should be revised. For example, the editors recorded and revised “Clear Wind Sluice” which had been listed as banned repertoire several times. They cleaned the superstitious and vulgar content.

With the development of the new age, people’s thinking changed. Some of the contents formerly pruned or revised in 1950s and 1960s were again resumed in its original form in 1980s and 1990s. Compared with Wang Shaotang’s edition *Wu Song* (1959), some of the revised or deleted contents were resumed in Wang Litang’s edition (2005), such as the prose-poems of Sun Erniang, the episode “Wu Da Appears as an Omen”, etc. On the other hand, some revised passages had been accepted by the later storytellers. For example, the reason why Wu Song wanted to avoid punishment was first revised to “he was used to fight against injustice in his hometown, a punch killed a person, and so he fled to Chai village to avoid punishment”, and this is the version found in Wang Litang’s performance video from 1998.^⑥ However, in her re-edited publication of 2005, the person killed by Wu Song was again a bully, as in the edited version of Wang Shaotang from the 1950s.

Another important factor having impact on the editing of repertoires was the difference between oral literature and written literature.^⑦ Generally, the language of oral literature is wordy, longwinded and

repetitious, while written literature is concise and follows certain norms of written style. Chen Yun said, “something we have heard in *pingtan* may feel good, but if we put it down in a novel, we may feel the passage wordy. Wang Shaotang’s “Wu Song” was fine, but when you read the revised book, you might not be able to stomach it, though the word count of the revised book was less than half of the performance. Conversely, if the storytelling is performed according to the novel, you would feel it dry and boring. The genres of the novel and of *pingtan* are different arts.” (Chen Yun 58 – 59) Editors tend to follow the style of written literature when they edit oral literature, and Yangzhou storytelling is no exception.

1. Revision/deletion of poems and prose-poems.

The opening poem of the original transcript of “Wu Song” was “Chai Jin accommodates guests in Henghai County. Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge”, which we can still hear in a radio broadcast of Wang Shaotang (Vibeke 281 – 93, 505). Further, the storytelling episode “Drinking his fill and beating the Door-God” (醉打蒋门神) also had two verses: “Shi En reigns again on the Mengzhou road; Second Brother Wu drinks his fill and beats the Door-God” (施恩重霸孟州道, 武二醉打蒋门神) (Wang Shaotang 1112). The two poems are the titles of chapters 23 and 29 in the novel *Water Margin*. Here we can see a direct link between storytelling and the novel, but in Wang Shaotang’s published edition of 1959, the opening poem was replaced with another poem: “Second Brother Wu, his courage was great, stood up and went straight to Jingyang Ridge, with his clever fist he killed the mountains tiger, since then his great fame has swept over all the world!”^⑧ This poem is usually located at the end of the episode of “Wu Song Fights the Tiger” in the storytelling of the “Wang school of Water Margin”, where the storytellers use the poem to praise Wu Song’s behavior.^⑨ The poem of “Drinking his fill and beating the Door-God” was deleted in the revised publication. Why was it so?

One possible reason is the requirement for a unified form. Only those two chapters had this kind of opening poem. The editors might have deleted them, in order to unify the form of the whole book. It was possible that the opening poem of the first chapter could be regarded as the introduction to the whole storytelling repertoire. But why was it replaced with the poem of “Wu Song fights tiger”? It could be because the contents of the verse “Chai Jin accommodates guests in Henghai County” is not told in the storytelling repertoire. Then why did Yangzhou storytellers choose the verses “Chai Jin accommodates guests in Henghai County, Wu Song fights a tiger on Jingyang Ridge” as the opening poem? It might be a left-over trace from the inheritance of several generations of storytellers. The early storytellers such as Wang Deshan (王德山), Deng Guangdou (邓光斗), Xu Dianzhang (许殿章), Deng Futang (邓复堂), and Song Chengdian (宋承殿) from the nineteenth century all told perhaps the whole “Water Margin” repertoire (RQY 109). But the subsequent storytellers told the story more and more detailed, so that the whole “Water Margin” repertoire was divided into several repertoires: “Ten Chapters on Lin Chong and Lu Zhishen” (*Lin Lu shi hui*, 林鲁十回), “Ten Chapters on Wu Song” (*Wu shi hui*, 武十回), “Ten Chapters on Song Jiang” (*Song shi hui*, 宋十回), “Ten Chapters on Shi Xiu” (*Shi shi hui*, 石十回), “Ten Chapters on Lu Junyi” (*Lu shi hui*, 卢十回), etc. We know “Fighting a tiger on Jingyang Ridge” is called a “hot story” (*re shu* 热书) in the storytellers’ jargon, while “residing in Chai village” is a “cold story” (*leng shu* 冷书). Perhaps to attract listeners, storytellers began their repertoire with “Fighting a tiger”, and the cold plot of “Residing” was passed over. However, the traditional opening verses were retained by successive generations of storytellers (Vibeke 215, 232 – 33).

In addition to the opening poems, storytelling repertoires had lots of other poems and prose-poems, but many of them were deleted in the revised

publications. For example, the first time Ximen Qing(西门庆) meets Pan Jinlian (潘金莲), the storytellers used to perform two prose-poems where they praise each other,¹⁰ but the prose-poems were cut later. Some people complained that lots of the prose-poems were similar to those of other storytelling genres, but this phenomenon is precisely one of the characteristics of storytelling as oral literature. Poems and prose-poems were not sung in storytelling, but recited in a way that shows certain musical features. Deleting these poems or prose-poems weakened the oral characteristics of storytelling as published in book-form.

2. Revision of chapters and chapter titles.

If we take *Clear Wind Sluice* as an example, there was a major change of the contents in the editing process. First, the homicide case(the death of Xiaogu's father) which was narrated in some detail in the old novel *Qingfengzha* (1819), was told quickly by the storyteller of the recent oral tradition, Yu Youchun, and in the modern book edition Pi Wu's story became the main content. At the end of the whole story, the editors deleted the two traditional stories "Baogong settle the lawsuit" (包公断案) and "Mrs. Qiang wanders to four doors" (强氏游四门), rewrote the story "Xiaogu redresses an injustice" (孝姑鸣冤) which simply mentioned the plot of solving the crime, and added a new story "The magistrate sells letters of confession" (县官卖结) as the end. After the editing, the story began with Pi Wu and ended with Pi Wu, so *Clear Wind Sluice* was renamed *Hothead Pi Wu* (*Pi Wu lazi*《皮五辣子》) (Yu Youchun 518).

The edited book version, *Wu Song*, based on the dictated version of Wang Shaotang's "Ten Chapters on Wu Song" (Wu shi hui) had some changes of chapter titles. *Wu Song* was formerly called "Wu shi hui", because it could be divided into ten large chapters. Every large chapter could be divided into several smaller chapters. In the editing process, several large chapter titles were revised, as shown in the following table:

Original dictated script	Edited publication
Blood Spattering Mandarin Duck Mansion (血溅鸳鸯楼)	Killing in the General's Hall at Night(夜杀都监府)
Hanged and Beaten in White Tiger Town(吊打白虎镇)	Hanged and Beaten at White Tiger Mountain (吊打白虎山)
Stealing Two Dragons Mountain(盗取二龙山)	Seizing Two Dragons Mountain by Stratagem (智取二龙山)

In the original dictated script, the smaller sections of the large chapters had no subtitles. In the published book, the editors used some of the large chapter titles as subtitles for small chapters according to traditional style, and added some new subtitles.

Large chapter title	New subtitles after editing
Taking Shelter at Crossways Rise(十字坡打店)	"The Ogress Sells Poisoned Wine" (母夜叉卖药酒) "Taking Shelter at Crossways Rise" (十字坡打店)
Arriving at Night on Centipede Hill(夜走蜈蚣岭)	"Arriving at Night on Centipede Hill" (夜走蜈蚣岭) "Rescuing Wu Jinding" (搭救武金定)
Hanged and Beaten in White Tiger Town(吊打白虎镇)	"Beating Kong Liang in a Fit of Anger" (怒打孔亮) "Hanged and Beaten in White Tiger Mountain" (吊打白虎山) "Song Jiang Thinks out a Ruse to Solve the Enmity" (宋江设计解冤仇)
Stealing Two Dragons Mountain(盗取二龙山)	"Producing Misunderstanding by Talking about the Old Days" (叙旧生误会) "Working out the Scheme of the Fake Letter" (定计造假信) "Entering Baozhu Temple" (深入宝珠寺) "Seizing Two Dragons Mountain by Stratagem" (智取二龙山)

Obviously, revising or adding titles and subtitles was meant to unify the style of the written book, but it undermined the characteristics of the original oral performance.

3. Polishing and modifying the text.

Oral language is relatively free and repetitious, while written language is generally more concise and standardized. Contraction of longwinded “tedious” portions and the use of standard language were considered necessary in the editing work. Oral performances of Yangzhou storytelling are speckled with Yangzhou dialect expressions. For the convenience of readers in other regions, a considerable part of the dialect vocabulary and grammatical forms was revised.^⑩ The postscript of *Selections of Yangzhou Storytelling* (《扬州评话选》) summarized the principles for revision: “According to the different situation of the repertoires, different revising methods were taken. Some basically good repertoires only needed minor corrections and language improvement. As for works with illogical sections, it was necessary to add or delete some portions. Some storytelling repertoires that included contents not closely related to the theme, vague characters, inconsistency of the plot development, should be discussed and rewritten by the editors and the storytellers together. For the convenience of reading, each chapter must have a head and a tail.” (SWYS 386) From this statement, we realize that the principles were due to the requirements of the reading public.

III. The gain and loss of the work of recording and publishing Yangzhou storytelling

How should we evaluate the collection, revision and publication of Yangzhou storytelling after the founding of New China?

On the one hand, the benefits of the work of recording and publishing Yangzhou storytelling repertoires are obvious and undeniable. First,

through the published works, people of different regions and even of different times would have the opportunity to know and enjoy Yangzhou storytelling. Before repertoires of Yangzhou storytelling were printed and published in 1950s and 1960s, the impact of this art was limited, mainly spreading in Yangzhou, Zhenjiang, Nanjing, Shanghai and northern Jiangsu. The main reason for this phenomenon was related to the Yangzhou dialect used by the storytellers for performance. In the edited and published books of Yangzhou storytelling, Yangzhou dialectal language was reduced and normalized into standard Chinese. The standardized books had a much wider audience than the local oral performances and Yangzhou storytelling in book form expanded into other areas of China.

Second, the recording and publishing work saved some repertoires of Yangzhou Storytelling from getting completely lost. Formerly, recording technology was not yet developed, and therefore preserving the storytellers’ repertoires in manuscripts and printed books was the only way to preserve oral literature. Through printed books, later generations could understand at least something about the original form of Yangzhou storytelling. At the same time, these printed repertoires could also serve the function of scripts (*jiaoben* 脚本) for later generations of storytellers. Nowadays, when the profession of storytelling is declining, recording and preserving storytelling repertoires still has great significance.

Third, the recording, editing and publishing work promoted the development of academic research on Yangzhou storytelling. The editors of Yangzhou storytelling were the first group of researchers in this field, such as Sun Longfu (孙龙父 1917—1979), Chen Wulou (陈午楼 1923—1998). They not only recorded and edited the repertoires, but also published articles on Yangzhou storytelling. At the same time, other researchers began to pay attention to Yangzhou storytelling. Their studies were based on the edited and printed books,^⑪ because it was easier for them to get hold of the books than to listen

to oral performance. In 1990, part of the research articles were published in *Collected articles on the Wang School of "Water Margin"* (《王派水浒评论集》). To some extent, the work of recording, editing and publishing Yangzhou storytelling made Yangzhou storytelling enter the modern academic field. Such were the benefits that the work of recording, editing and publishing Yangzhou storytelling had brought about.

On the other hand, the publication of Yangzhou storytelling repertoires also had some flaws. As mentioned above, the social political ideology and the reading habits affected the principles of recording and publication. These factors undermined some of the characteristics of storytelling as oral literature. Therefore, these edited publications of storytelling did not reflect the storytellers' oral performances in a scientific way. In the 1980s and 1990s the Danish scholar Vibeke Børdahl began to carry out field investigation in Yangzhou, listened to storytelling, and recorded the performances with tape-recorder and/or video camera. Based on these first-hand materials, she conducted research on the oral and dialectal aspects of Yangzhou storytelling.

It is quite understandable that some modifications are necessary in a printed version in order to make the book easier to read for the general reader. But if researchers want to investigate the manifestation of oral literature, such editions are not completely trustworthy. The original storytelling performance reflects many different kinds of social phenomena, people's psychology, and folk customs from the old days. Many such elements were rewritten or deleted in the printed books. This method of publication is not conducive to the study of history, sociology, folklore, linguistics and other disciplines, because it is not first-hand, but processed second-hand materials. In the early 1990s, a number of Yangzhou storytelling repertoires were published in re-edited books that retained more of the original language from the oral performances, but still had a certain amount of repair, deletion or rewriting. These books reflected the oral versions

more truthfully, but still could not be considered real oral literature. Oral performance is always in a changing state, but recording and publishing make it solidify, and each repertoire will be preserved in only one textual version. For academic research of the overall characteristics of storytelling this kind of material can only be secondary.

The work of recording and editing Yangzhou Storytelling has furthered research on storytelling, but in most cases the research was affected by the structure of the printed books. Many researchers analysed Yangzhou storytelling as written literature; based on printed books, they studied Yangzhou storytelling following the academic paradigm and conceptual framework of written literature.^⑬ Generally, they ignored the oral performance characteristics of Yangzhou storytelling. The early research was not without achievements. However, if the research methods and concepts were never changed, the study of Yangzhou storytelling might stagnate. In the concept of Yangzhou storytelling as written literature the oral art is seen as a servant of written literature. The rightful position of Yangzhou storytelling as oral literature might never be seriously realized.

How can we record and edit Yangzhou storytelling in a scientific way? The view of Zhong Jingwen(钟敬文 1903—2002) is highly revelatory. In the article "The Issue of Fidelity in Recording and Revising Stories-Written with a view to the work *Reference Materials to the Recording and Revision of Folk Tales and Legends*" (《关于故事记录整理的忠实性问题——写在〈民间故事、传说记录、整理参考材料〉的前面》), Mr. Zhong pointed out the different requirements of researchers, general readers and writers of folk tales and legends. As for the issue of recording and publishing, several different attitudes and practices should be taken into account. "Folk tales and legends as research material for the humanities, must be faithfully recorded in accordance with people's oral expression, and without any change of the original form (of course, it must go through a certain process

of scientific edition method). Even when the original oral storytelling has some incomplete form or contains obvious errors of contents, we should not high-handedly delete or change such ‘errors’. It is best to leave such passages as they are, so that later researchers may have a chance to decide whether to discard or retain the original words.” (Zhong Jingwen 107) Mr. Zhong didn’t say explicitly what kind of scientific edition method he had in mind. But according to his view, the recording of folk tales and legends still needs a certain process of scientific edition, and therefore the published editions could never be first-hand materials. Probably we should not just record in writing, but also to use the advanced electronic recording methods, such as video recording.

Written record is the oldest recording form of oral literature. It requires a certain professional technique on the part of the recording person. As the speed of speech is much faster than writing, the recording person (the script-writer) should master some shorthand writing system or other method to facilitate fast recording, otherwise the recorded text would miss some of the contents. Even if the script-writer had a perfect shorthand technique, the written version would still inevitably have flaws, because only words would be recorded. “In oral literature it is not just artistic language that plays a huge role. Also music, singing, dancing and the living environment where the oral literature is performed are highly important” (Sokolov 80). Performance of Yangzhou storytelling includes “mouth, hand, body, step, and look” (口、手、身、步、神). “Mouth” means the storyteller’s spoken language during performance, while “hand, body, step, and look” refer to the storyteller’s movements and facial expressions. However, apart from the words, the other features are lost in the written record. As for the words of the “mouth”, the storytellers pay attention to voice, intonation, stress, pause, and many other aspects, but most of these features are lost in the written record. The late Qing scholar Yu Yue (俞樾 1821—1907) in his work *Collected Notes*

from the Tea Aroma Room (《茶香室丛钞》) said that he was disappointed after reading the novel *Clear Wind Sluice*. He asked, “maybe the oral fascination is not reflected in writing?” (Yu Yue) What Yu Yue said already at that time reveals that storytelling is an oral performance art, different from written literature, and that oral performance recorded with pen and ink necessarily means an incomplete record. Sound recording of later times is better than written record; it can record the storytellers’ spoken language and voice quality, etc. However, sound recording also has flaws. In sound recording, the movements and facial expressions of the storytellers are lost. Among the current technologies, video recording is the best method.

Since the 1990s, many TV stations invited storytellers to perform storytelling on TV, recording a large number of repertoires, such as the video of “Wang Litang’s Art of Storytelling” (王丽堂评话艺术). Compared with the performances in the storytellers’ house, the performances on TV are often pruned, because television broadcast time is limited. In addition, the producers’ personal inclinations and the censorship of broadcast and television will limit the storytellers’ freedom. They cannot perform on TV just like in the storytellers’ house. In the project *Four Masters of Chinese Storytelling – Full-Length Repertoires of Yangzhou Storytelling on Video* (扬州评话四家艺人全书表演录像) conducted and edited by Vibeke Børdahl, Fei Li and Huang Ying, four storytellers of the elder generation had their full repertoires recorded on video. This work has much value, since the video recordings provide a trustworthy original text for researchers. However, the collection of videos is not so easily accessible. Copies of the collection (360 hours in total) are available in the libraries of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, the Library of Congress, Washington D. C., the Academia Sinica, Taipei, and the Danish Folklore Archives, Copenhagen. But because of copyright, the videos cannot be copied without explicit agreement with the storytellers.

There are some aspects about video recording that we need to pay attention to. First, not only the performance of the storytellers but also the reaction of the audience and the circumstances of performance need to be described. The audience and the circumstances may influence the storyteller's performance. Second, since each performance is different, the researcher should record many different performances of a certain repertoire: the same storyteller telling the same episode several times, or different storytellers telling the same episode.^⑤ In this way, researchers will be able to analyze the differences between the various versions of the same 'episode' or 'story'.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it is evident that the advantages and disadvantages of the recording, editing and publishing of Yangzhou storytelling are undeniable. We should pay attention to the advantages and shortcomings of the work, especially the latter. The edition work, which undermined the oral characteristics of Yangzhou storytelling, was affected by the social political ideology and the editors' personal preference. The edited publications of Yangzhou storytelling are not the first-hand documents. As a result, recording, editing and publishing Yangzhou storytelling is just a method for preserving the repertoires, and it has many flaws, even if the editors hadn't made any changes. Writing the repertoires down only saves the words of storytelling, but the manner, tone, and movement of storytellers in performance are all lost. So more advanced means should be used to record storytelling performance objectively, such as tapes, videos etc. It is worth noting that each record method has its shortcomings, and we can use a variety of recording methods in a comprehensive way.

In addition, each storytelling performance is different, even if the same story is told by the same storyteller at different time. So, it's necessary to record more performance versions as much as

possible, and to record the performance environment and audiences, for they influence the storytellers' performance.

注释【Notes】

① I am indebted to Vibeke Børdahl for discussing this paper with me in detail and revising the English language.

② In the nineteen years of Qianlong, *Water Margin* was banned. In the seventh years of Tongzhi, Ding Richang (丁日昌 1823—1882), the Governor (Xunfu 巡抚) of Jiangsu, banned a number of books which were thought to be illicit songs and works of fiction, including *Water Margin*, *Clear Wind Shuice*, *Green Peony*. (Wang Liqi 王利器, *Yuan Ming Qing sandai jinhui xiaoshuo xiqu shiliao* 元明清三代禁毁小说戏曲史料 [*Historical Materials on the Banning of Fiction and Plays during the Yuan, Ming and Qing Dynasties*]. Shanghai: Shanghai Classics Publishing House, p.44, p.143, p.145.)

③ For example, in the Song and Yuan folk books "Killing Cui Ning by Mistake" (*Cuo zhan Cui Ning*, 《错斩崔宁》), the storyteller or author gave explanations in the opening poem and talked with his listeners or readers in order to educate people. (*Jingben tongsu xiaoshuo* 京本通俗小说, Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House, 1988. pp. 69 - 87.) This function is still retained in modern Chinese storytelling. For example, when Wang Shaotang performed "Wu Song Fights the Tiger" from his repertoire of "Wu Song" (《武松》), he advised people to drink wine only sparingly.

④ The intervention and leadership role of the Party and government was vast, not only in the recording and editing of Yangzhou storytelling, but also in other folk literatures. (*Chuangshiji* 创世纪 [*Genesis*]. Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1962, p.94.)

⑤ Wang Shaotang said that his ideological understanding had enhanced after liberation, and he knew that traditional repertoires should be revised to serve socialism. (Wang Shaotang 王少堂, 'Zhengli Yangzhou pinghua "Wu Song" de jingyan' 整理扬州评话《武松》的经验 ['The experience of editing and publishing Wu Song from Yangzhou storytelling'], *Jornal of Literature and Art* 文艺报. 1960, No. 15 - 16; 81 - 83.)

⑥ Research Database on Chinese Storytelling, < <http://www.shuoshu.org/researchdatabase/pap.asp?id=66> >.

⑦ Vibeke Børdahl had talked about this question in her paper entitled 'Oral and Written Aspects of Chinese Storytelling:

on the Wang School of Water Margin in Yangzhou pinghua' (《中国说书艺术的口头性与文体性: 说扬州评话的王派“水浒”》), her analysis focused on Wang Shaotang's tape recording of “Wu Song fighting Tiger” and the same story plot part in Wang Shaotang edition *Wu Song*. (*Mianxiang 21shiji de minzu minjian wenhua* 面向 21 世纪的民族民间文化 [China's National Folk Cultures Facing the 21 Century]. Nanning Academy of Social Sciences press, pp. 393 - 400)

⑧ Cf. Vibeke Børdahl, ‘The Storyteller’s Manner in Chinese Storytelling’, *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 62 - 1, pp. 65 - 112. The translation is from Vibeke Børdahl, *Chinese Storytellers: Life and Art in the Yangzhou Tradition*, Cheng&Tsui Company, p. 239.

⑨ See the various storytellers’ versions of this episode in Vibeke Børdahl, *The oral tradition of Yangzhou storytelling*. People’s Literature Publishing House, 2006.

⑩ Wang Shaotang’s edited version in 1959 has no prose-poems about Ximen Qing and Pan Jinlian when they first met, but in Wang Litang’s re-edited publication of 2005 the two prose-poems were resumed.

⑪ Vibeke Børdahl’s article “The Voice of Wang Shaotang in Yangzhou Storytelling” pointed out: “the editors seek to remove dialectal vocabulary that is considered too specialized and generally give the texts a language washing in the direction of Modern Standard Chinese, so that dialect grammar will not disturb the readers...They also remove what is considered redundant or faulty, and rewrite the spoken texts in order to obtain the kind of narrative logic expected by a reading public.” *CHINOPERL Papers* No. 25 (2004), the Conference on Chinese Oral and Performing Literature, INC.

⑫ Vibeke Børdahl’s article “The Voice of Wang Shaotang in Yangzhou Storytelling” points out this phenomenon: Not only Chinese researchers, but also most overseas scholars studied only the edited and printed versions

⑬ Liu Zongdi talked about the problem of folk literature: Oral literature is first changed into written text, and then studied as written literature, which leads to the loss of independence of the folklore literary discipline. (Liu Zongdi 刘宗迪, “From the written paradigm to the oral paradigm: on Paradigm of Transition and Independent Discipline of Folk Literature” 从书面范式到口头范式: 论民间文艺学的范式转换与学科独立, *Studies of Ethnic Literature* 民族文学研究. 2004, No. 2: 57—64.)

⑭ Cf. how the episode “Wu Song Fights the Tiger” is recorded and analyzed in Vibeke Børdahl, *The Oral Tradition of Yangzhou Storytelling*, Copenhagen, Curzon Press, 1996. See also 易德波, *Yangzhou pinghua tantao* 扬州评话探讨.

Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 2006.

引用作品 [Work Cited]

易德波:《扬州评话探讨》,米锋、易德波译。北京:人民文学出版社,2006年。

[Børdahl, Vibeke. *The Oral Tradition of Yangzhou Storytelling*. Trans. Mi Feng, and Vibeke Børdahl. Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 2006.]

陈云:《陈云同志关于评弹的谈话和通信》。北京:中国曲艺出版社,1983年。

[Chen, Yun. *Chen Yun’s Talks and Correspondences about Pinghua and Tanci*. Beijing: Chinese Quyi Publishing House, 1983.]

丁淑梅:《清代禁毁戏曲史料编年》。成都:四川大学出版社,2010年。

[Ding, Shumei. *A Historical Chronicle on the Banning of Plays During the Qing Dynasty*. Chengdu: Sichuan University Press, 2010.]

湖北地方志编纂委员会:《湖北省志人物志稿》。北京:光明日报出版社,1989年。

[Editorial Committee of Local Chronicles of Hubei. *Local History of Hubei Province: Records of Personages*. Beijing: Guangming Daily Press, 1989.]

李修生:《元史》第4册。上海:汉语大词典出版社,2004年。

[Li, Xiusheng. *A History of Yuan Dynasty*, volume 4. Shanghai: the Great Chinese Dictionary Publishing House, 2004.]

鲁迅:《集外集拾遗补编》。北京:人民文学出版社,1993年。

[Lu, Xun. *A Complement to the Supplement to The Collected Works Outside the Collected Works*. Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1993.]

李兆群:《王派水浒出书记》。《拨乱反正 江苏卷》,中共江苏省委党史工作办公室编。北京:中共党史出版社,1998年。

[Li, Zhaoqun. “Record of the Publishing Wang School of Water Margin.” *Bring Order out of Chaos. Volume of Jiangsu*. Ed. Party history research office of the CPC Jiangsu Provincial Committee. Beijing: Chinese Communist Party History Publishing House, 1998.]

毛泽东:《在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话》。北京:人民文学出版社,1967年。

[Mao, Zedong. *Talks at the Yan’an Forum on Literature and Art*. Beijing: People’s Literature Publishing House, 1967. The translation is from <<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/>>

- mswv3_08.htm).]
- 中共中央文献研究室:《建国以来重要文献选编》第二册。北京:中央文献出版社,1992年。
- [The Party Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee. *Selected Works of Important Documents since the Founding of New China*. Volume 2. Central Party Literature Press, 1992.]
- 《扬州曲艺志》。南京:江苏文艺出版社,1993年。
- [*Records of Quyi in Yangzhou*. Nanjing: Jiangsu Literature and Art Publishing House, 1993.]
- 梭柯洛夫:《什么是口头文学》,连树声,崔立滨译。北京:作家出版社,1959年。
- [Sokolov, I. M. (I. M. COKOJOB). *What is Oral Literature*. Trans. Lian Shusheng, and Cui Libin. Beijing: Writers Publishing House, 1959.]
- 王少堂:《武松》。江苏人民出版社,1959年。
- [Wang, Shaotang. *Wu Song*. Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing House, 1959.]
- 王筱堂:《我在镇江书坛的活动》。《镇江文史资料》第17辑,1990年。
- [Wang, Xiaotang. "My Storytelling Performance in Zhenjiang." *Cultural and Historical Documents of Zhenjiang*. Volumes 17. 1990.]
- 余又春:《皮五辣子》。南京:江苏文艺出版社,1985年。
- [Yu, Youchun. *Hothead Pi Wu*. Nanjing: Jiangsu Literature and Art Publishing House, 1985.]
- 扬州评话研究小组:《扬州评话选》(第二集)。上海:上海文艺出版社,1982年。
- [Yangzhou storytelling research group. *Selected Works of Yangzhou Storytelling*. Vol. II. Shanghai: Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House, 1982.]
- 钟敬文:《钟敬文民间文艺学文选》。合肥:安徽教育出版社,2010年。
- [Zhong, Jingwen. *Selected Works of Zhong Jingwen on Folk Literature and Art*. Hefei: Anhui Education Publishing House, 2010.]
- 俞越:《茶香室丛钞》卷17。清光绪二十五年春在堂全书本。
- [Yu, Yue. *Collected Notes from the Tea Aroma Room*. Volume 17. The version of Chunzai Tang, 25th Year of Guangxu (1900).]

(责任编辑:孟祥春)

