The culture of food and drink occupies a central role in the development of Chinese civilization, and the language of gastronomy has been a vital theme in a range of literary productions. From stanzas on food and wine in the *Classics of Poetry* to the articulation of refined dining in *The Dream of the Red Chamber* and Su Shi’s literary recipe for attaining culinary perfection, lavish textual representations help explain the unique appeal of food and its overwhelming cultural significance within Chinese society. These eight essays offer a colourful tour of Chinese gourmets whose work exemplifies the interrelationships of social and literary history surrounding food, with careful explication of such topics as the importance of tea in poetry, “the morality of drunkenness,” and food’s role in objectifying women.

### Scribes of Gastronomy

Representations of Food and Drink in Imperial Chinese Literature

Edited by Isaac Yue and Siufu Tang
Contents

List of Contributors vii

1 Food and the Literati: The Gastronomic Discourse of Imperial Chinese Literature 1
   Shi Fu Tang and Isaac Yue

2 From Conservatism to Romanticism: Wine and Prose-Writing from Pre-Qin to Jin 15
   Tak Kam Chan

3 The Morality of Drunkenness in Chinese Literature of the Third Century CE 27
   Nicholas Morrow Williams

4 Making Poetry with Alcohol: Wine Consumption in Tao Qian, Li Bai and Su Shi 45
   Charles Kwong

5 The Interplay of Social and Literary History: Tea in the Poetry of the Middle Historical Period 69
   Ronald Egan

6 The Obsessive Gourmet: Zhang Dai on Food and Drink 87
   Duncan Campbell

7 Tasting the Lotus: Food, Drink and the Objectification of the Female Body in Gold, Vase, and Plum Blossom 97
   Isaac Yue

8 Eating and Drinking in a Red Chambered Dream 113
   Louise Edwards

Notes 133

Index 159
6

The Obsessive Gourmet

Zhang Dai on Food and Drink

Duncan Campbell

[For the people, food is Heaven (民以食為天)²
A greedy Dongpo,
Starving at Solitary Bamboo.
——Zhang Dai 張岱,
‘Inscription for My Own Tomb’ (Zi wei muzhiming 自為墓志銘)³

A dandy in white silk breeches will never starve.
——Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770), ‘Twenty-two Rhymes Presented to Wei Ji, Assistant Director of the Left in the Department of State Affairs’ (Fengzeng Wei zuo cheng zhang ershier yun 奉贈衛左丞丈二十二韻)

Among the rich, frugality is considered to be a virtue, but one that is observed intermittently, as periods of fast alternate with those of feast; at this level a frugal diet is associated more with fasting and voluntary denial than with famine and the ineluctable elements; abstinence was internalized as a way to grace rather than the result of external pressures that heralded starvation.
——Jack Goody, Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology⁴

Of the various books that the late Ming dynasty historian and essayist Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597–1684)⁵ either wrote or compiled over the course of the long and prolific second half of his life, many did not safely negotiate that passage from manuscript to imprint that so often spelled the difference between survival and loss of text in China.⁶ Although, somewhat unusually in this respect, the late 1980s and 1990s saw the first publication of a number of his manuscripts, found preserved in various libraries;⁷ sadly, given both Zhang Dai’s privileged upbringing and his finely-honed instincts for fine living, one work that now seems lost forever is his book of recipes, entitled the Old Glutton’s Collection (Loatou ji 老饕集), which was based on an earlier compilation put together by his grandfather. Fortunately, however, Zhang Dai’s preface (序) to this work, translated below, was included in the major collection of Zhang Dai’s prose writings, his Paradise Collection (Langhuan wenji 琅嬛文集), and has thus survived.⁸
It is a preface of some considerable interest, quite apart from the insights it provides into Zhang Dai’s own life and preoccupations. In his preface, Zhang Dai provides something of an insider’s digest history of the traditional Chinese discourse on food and cooking, a tradition that, in the opinion of the anthropologist Jack Goody, represents one of the world’s most complex of cuisines and associated culinary discourses. Goody speaks of the culinary differentiation of culture (between private and public, and along regional and hierarchical lines) which, in China, as much as in the classical world, was ‘linked to a particular kind of hierarchy, with distinct “styles of life”, a hierarchy that is in turn based upon a certain type of agricultural system’, and which engendered opposition at both the conceptual and the political levels.  

Goody notes a set of specific characteristics of such cuisines: the link between cuisine and class; contradictions, tensions and conflicts connected with this differentiation; an increased range of ingredients and menus resulting from exchange, tribute and commerce; the specialization of cuisine encouraged by the collection and publication of recipes; an elaboration of the gendered division of culinary labour with high-status tasks often being transferred from women to men; a close and long-standing link between food and sex; and finally, a link between eating and health.  

We can observe many of these characteristics at work in Zhang Dai’s preface.

K.C. Chang has argued that ‘perhaps one of the most important qualifications of a Chinese gentleman was his knowledge and skill pertaining to food and drink’.  

In these terms, Zhang Dai seems splendidly qualified. He was a man of many and varied obsessions: rocks and gardens, actors and operas, books, handcrafts, painting and calligraphy, friends and flowers, birds, dreams, tea and medicine, and, perhaps above all else, the West Lake of Hangzhou. Eating was one of his abiding preoccupations as well, and his voluminous writings are studded with memories of eating and of food, all of them recalled to mind and recorded at a time when Zhang Dai was suffering, by his own account, from extreme privation: ‘If starvation too is such a common-place affair, / Then how marked a feature of my life it has now become!’  

It was of two poems entitled ‘Birthday of the Jiawu Year: On this Day, I Starve’ (Jiawu chu shu shi ri, 甲午初度是日殤) written in 1654, a decade after the fall of Beijing, the northern capital of the Ming. He ends this poem with the lines: ‘When poverty becomes as real as this, / Recalling the past, oddly, affords a modicum of joy’ — a sentiment he would express in his later years.

Here, before I turn to Zhang Dai’s preface, for instance, is an item from his Dream Memories of Taoon 陶庵夢憶 that reveals the extent to which his own obsession with food was one that was very much a function of the circumstances of his gilded upbringing.

Zhang Donggu’s Addiction to Wine 樓東谷嗜酒

Ever since the time of my great-great-grandfather, Zhang Tianfu (1513–1578), my family had been renowned as great drinkers; over the generations, however, this ability has been lost.

Neither my father nor his brothers could drink much more than a single goblet of wine, accompanied by a plate of pickled eggplant, before their faces would turn a bright red. At family meals and banquets they paid attention solely to the food. As a consequence, the fare of our kitchen was the best to be had throughout the region east of the Yangzi River. As soon as a platter of food appeared on the table my uncles would tuck in. In an instant the food would disappear, and my uncles, their bellies now bulging, would get up and wander off on their own various pursuits, having not raised a cup to their lips throughout the entire meal. Even when guests happened to be present, my uncles would quit the table before they had a chance to bid their hosts goodbye.

That man of the mountains, Zhang Donggu, was a great drinker who was often left most frustrated by this habit of my family. On one occasion he rose to his feet and, exasperated, exclaimed to my father: ‘You brothers really are most eccentric! The meat you eat, regardless of whether it is good or not; the wine you don’t drink, without even knowing if it is worth drinking or not.’ His was a finely tuned sentence or two, embodying all the refined and insouciant air of the men of the Jin dynasty. More recently, however, some reprobate included Zhang’s bon mot in a work entitled A Record of the Glories of the Tongue but so mangled is it in the retelling that it becomes the stiff and lifeless: ‘The brothers Zhang are eccentric in the extreme by nature! Regardless of whether or not the meat is good to eat, they will not eat it, and regardless of whether or not the wine is good to drink, they will not drink it.’

So many there are in this age of ours who seem to have at their disposal a reverse version of the Midas Touch, invariably turning whatever they touch into stone!

Zhang Donggu was a most jocular figure, but he happened also to be desperately poor with, in the saying of old, ‘not the ground to stick an awl’. On one occasion he took a case against a local young good-for-nothing who accused him of being an old moneybags. Zhang Donggu rushed off to see my grandfather, complaining: ‘Shaoxingers are such a hateful lot—lying to my very face, calling me a moneybags!’  

My grandfather would always laugh out loud whenever he retold this story.

余在家時太極公嘗欲飲，後竟失傳。余父叔不能飲一飲之，食於菓，弗而即餓，妄嘗幾可，但心懷壯，處處之罪，遂甲中江。一貴為，兄弟呼為之苦，飲即去，終始求蘇無時。有客至，不待客語，亦即去。山人張谷，酒色也，每飲絕不自停。一日，起餓家為曰：「爾兄弟奇矣！」肉失味也，不善好不善好也；酒失不各，不知會不喫不喫。」語極顛倒，有習人風味。後有好事者之《京華誌》，曰：「張氏兄弟飲性奇矣！肉不知異，只是好；酒不知異，只是不不好。」字字駱駝，尤生千千，華不少飲盡爛手也。宗谷言縮窮，黃言並織，與 veya s.,
of urbanization and social mobility. A commercialized publishing industry fed off of and into an expansion of literacy and educational opportunity and a flourishing popular culture that displayed a greater willingness to question Neo-Confucian orthodoxies. In the eyes of contemporaries, accompanying such socioeconomic changes were those age-old and unmistakable tokens of dynastic decline; at the upper levels, incompetent and extravagant emperors, the expansion of eunuch power, factionalism and corruption at court, and the empire's increasingly obvious inability to deal effectively with threats, both internal and external, to the political order; at the local level, ever increasing conspicuous consumption. The collapse, when it finally came in the form of peasant rebellion followed by 'barbarian' invasion, proved one of the most dramatic and cataclysmic in Chinese history.¹⁰

Before the collapse, the disordered circumstances of the times induced among the Chinese literati intense anxieties about self-definition and worth, status, learning and money. After the collapse and the establishment of Manchu authority, Chinese men-of-letters were faced with more acute choices concerning those most important of Confucian virtues, loyalty and righteousness.

The economic boom of this period, especially in the lower Yangtze region, made it possible for rich merchants, traditionally a most despised class of people, to buy themselves the trappings of culture and fine living. This spurt in conspicuous consumption, and the consequent breakdown of the hitherto strictly enforced summptuary laws, seems to have become particularly evident after the 1550s, and, in the minds of contemporaries, provided stark contrast to the simplicity and austerity of early Ming food culture.¹¹

To contemporary men of letters such as Zhang Dai, it was good taste and good taste alone that could buttress their status as self-declared defenders of culture and tradition. What exactly constituted good taste was something that they sought to define in countless handbooks of refined living in which they categorized, listed, ranked, praised and blamed the commodities that seemed so much more available to everyone. Critical to this enterprise were the issues of artificiality and authenticity that Zhang Dai highlights in his preface.²² As Craig Clunas has argued in his analysis of such handbooks, they must be understood as 'consciously constructed attempts to reduce the confusion of the Ming world of goods to order',²³ and the unprecedented number produced in this period 'points to a heightened awareness of the production and consumption of luxury goods as an arena for potential social conflict, if not correctly handled'.²⁴ The handbooks sought to differentiate between people on the basis of what and how they consumed, and as such they serve to engender in their contemporary
readers a sense of reassurance in an otherwise rapidly changing world, whilst for us they betray the social anxieties and political insecurities of a male elite threatened by new sources of wealth and power. The discourse on food, in the hands of men such as Zhang Dai, was a highly moralized one that had implications of the most serious kind about political legitimacy and historical continuity.

Preface 自序, The Old Glutton’s Collection 老饕集

The various flavours of the fowl and the beast, the insect and the fish, the plants and the trees were all differentiated, the one from the other and throughout the empire, during the age of Shennong. Thus it is that our mouths can now distinguish immediately the salty from the sour, the bitter from the pungent. As to such flavours as the sourness of chicken, the pungency of the goat, the saltiness of the cow’s curd and of grain, however, these sage alone can distinguish. During the middle age of antiquity, then, only Confucius truly understood flavour, and the two words ‘finest’ and ‘finely’ from the line in his Analects [X.8] that goes: ‘Even if his rice is of the finest quality, he does not gorge himself; even if his meat is finely minced, he does not gorge himself’ serve to encapsulate the profundities of food and drink. In terms of the eating of cooked food, Confucius’ own behaviour served to sum things up for, after all, we are told that: ‘If it is badly cooked, he does not eat it’, whilst the same is true of raw food for we are also told that: ‘If it is not served at the right time, he does not eat it’, these sentences constituting a veritable Classic of Food and Eating, being also therefore a theory about the nourishing of life.

With the death of Confucius, however, schisms developed, resulting in the production of works such as He Zeng’s Menus, Wei Juyan’s Classic of Food, Duan Wenchang’s Food Regulations in 50 jin, Yu Cong’s Recipes in 10 jin, Xie Feng’s History of Food also in 10 jin, and Meng Shu’s Food Statutes in 100 jin. In the processes of frying and boiling, roasting and broiling, food becomes adulterated with the blood of sacrificial animals, with intestinal fat, with the odour of the goat and with fragrant herbs, and the basic tastes of the various foods are lost completely. Nowadays the Grand Provinciers to the Court use sugar to mask the proper taste of imperial meals and this has given rise to all sorts of artificiality and affectation, their crime in this respect being as heinous as that of those who eat their food raw and unprepared.

In later ages, it was only the Song dynasty scholar Su Shi who understood such matters. Both his ‘Poem-on-the Old Pork’ and his ‘Song of Pork’ so comprehensively related the gluttony that they set the mouths of readers watering. To understand the single word ‘cooked’, as found in both these pieces, is already to apprehend more than half the story. Towards the end of the Song dynasty, however, when the learning of the Way began to prevail and scholars did not want the mouth and the stomach to overburden their understanding of the Nature of Man and his Destiny, this art was discarded and little discussed, even common folk having a laugh at Su Shi’s expense for his practice of marinating his meat with a pinch of tea. By the time of the Yuan dynasty with their habit of eating their game unskinned and still bloody, food was eaten almost uncooked. With the flourishing of our present dynasty, it was only with the advent of the reign of the Xuanzong Emperor [1426–27] that the usages of the various eating and drinking vessels were again fully understood, hence the saying: ‘The third generation of officials wore clothes and ate cooked rice.’ Although the discourse of the age refers to the common people, in essence the family habits of the Imperial Household are no different.

My grandfather Zhang Ruin formed an Eating and Drinking Society with Bao Yingdeng and Huang Ruheng [1558–1626] of WuLin in order to investigate the proper tastes of things. He compiled the History of Cooked Food in 4 jin, taking much of his content from Gao Lian’s Eight Tractates on the Art of Living, but I must admit, neglecting the peppers, the ginger, the shallots and the onions. I, for my part, am dissatisfied with the cooking methods of the Grand Provinciers and so I have edited and supplemented the text of my grandfather’s work, and have thus corrected its faults. How can a poor pedant such as myself ever hope to surpass the efforts of my forefathers? Is it just that I have been blessed with the ability to distinguish between the taste of the water of the Sheng and of the ZI rivers, to tell when the flesh of the goose is that of a black or a white one, whether which the chicken has perched in the open air or when the meat has been cooked over firewood that is already worn-out, and have become so besotted with such matters that I could not resist editing this task. Thus is it that I have taken up his book and rearranged it, ensuring that it is properly cut, retaining what is fresh in taste and deleting all the artificialities of the meagre and broiling. Although this present work has none of the exhaustiveness and refinement of either the History of Food or Food Statutes, a troop of three thousand hand-picked mounted cavalry may nonetheless occasionally defeat an exhausted army of ten thousand men. It is only in the mouths of those who eat it all, that all, especially the entire meal of meat may be understood at the first bite.

世有神農氏, 而天下鳥獸之草木之滋味始出, 若鹹酸苦辣, 著口既知, 若苟凝味酸, 鹹味鈍, 甜味無味, 酒不必醉也。中古之世, 知味處孔子。食不厭精, 飲不厭細。“精細”二字, 已得飲食之義, 至熟則取其失失不食, 凝熟則取其不知不食。曰甘為, 飲藥也, 亦曰參生論也。孔子之後, 分門立戶, 何曾有異? 營豆有《食经》, 段文岳《食經》五十一, 唐宋有《食方》十卷, 謝薦有《食經》十卷, 蔡氏《食經》十卷, 魏菊《食經》十卷, 難以詳細貫穿, 言之本味蓋失, 於今之大而能故, 應用諸無異正味, 則語碌強造作, 罪且與生存於命章句矣。後來評述, 有諸家者, 《老饕賦》與《鯇肉賦》, 清儒論析, 不嘗論析, 但知有“熟”之者, 則意味全矣, 而後宋末遺學盛行, 不欲以口腹異性, 此道避之不講, 弘詞者有東坡使君《食論》, 何等不入食論。我與, 至觀賀, 始得有食飲書籍之志, 謀曰: “三代之德, 著著飲食。”世無齊平之民, 金知齊王家亦不能外也。余大父與《食論》諸先生, 皆食黃先生為飲食社, 謂為正味, 論《墨書》多卷, 然多取 descargar_v8, 皆不取諸書。用大官烹煮, 亦不多, 為猶喜也。時亦有所好之者, 其名有諸家之名, 皆不論其味。唯取其義, 一切均無。
In his youth, he was a dandy in white silk breeches, addicted to luxury and extravagant display, to monasteries, to beautiful maids and seductive serving boys, to gaudy clothes and fine food, stallions, lanterns, fireworks, actors and music, to antiques and flowers and birds. He craved good tea and a game of chess, was afflicted by the love of books and the demons of poetry.

Having expended the energies of half his lifetime on such things, they all became but a dream when, in his fiftieth year, his state fell and his family was destroyed. He fled the chaos to live amidst the mountains, all that remained to him being a dilapidated bed and a rickety teapoy, some chipped antiques and a cracked lute, a few tattered volumes and a broken ink stone. He dressed now in coarse linen and dined off plain vegetables, with often not enough for the next meal. Reflecting on his life twenty years earlier, he seemed now to belong to another world altogether.

The death of his beloved boats made me melancholy. A simple wish to pour a cup of tea, to light a candle, to play a tune, was all that remained to me. I shuddered and began to weep. I wished for nothing more than to be left in peace, to have the freedom to be happy again. But my heart was heavy, and I could not bear to think of the past.

Zhang Dai’s celebrated and moving author’s preface to his *Dream Memories of Taoan* makes it clear the extent to which his memories of past pleasures were now most uncomfortable ones:

He wrote his own elegy and frequently found himself on the verge of suicide; but because his *Book of the Stone Casket* was as yet not complete, he continued to gaze upon and breathe within the world of man. But his bin was often empty of grain; he had no firewood for cooking. It was only then that he understood that the story about the two old men of Mount Shouyang, Boyi and Shuqi, and how they determined to starve themselves to death, unwilling to eat the rice of Zhou, was simply the humbug of those who lived after them. For his part, with whatever vigour was left him through his pangs of hunger, he was wont to amuse himself with brush and ink.

Just as the especial importance of Zhang Dai’s obsession with food can be readily observed in the ease with which he moves, in his preface to *The Old Glutton’s Collection*, from a generalized and moralized history of cuisine to a history of his own family’s involvement with food and then on to the nature of his own ‘besottedness’ (yi yuán shèngjì) with it, it can be seen also in his close juxtaposition, in his author’s preface to *Dream Memories of Taoan* and elsewhere, of the processes of eating and those of living and writing.
There is one final and marvellous illustration of my point. Suddenly, towards the end of his ‘Inscription for My Own Tomb’, Zhang Dai finally introduces himself into his own text in the first person for the first time, in the following manner:

He was born during the Mao hour [5–7am] of the 25th day of the 8th month of the Dingyou year [1597], this being the 25th year of the reign of the Wanli Emperor of the Great Ming dynasty, the first son of Master Zhang Yaozhang [1572–1633], minister of the State of Lu, and his wife, née Tao 端. As a child, he suffered frequently from asthma and for his first decade he was raised in the household of his maternal grandmother, née Ma [1599–1620]. His great-grandfather on his maternal side, Tao Yunjia [1556–1632], had once served in office in the combined Province of Guangdong and Guangxi and whilst there had stored up enough Bovine Yellow Pills to fill several boxes, and for the first sixteen years of my life I ate my way through this supply of medicine until my condition was completely cured.

生於萬歷丁酉八月二十五日卯時，魯國相大瀟範之端子也，母三陶宜人。幼多疾，養於外大母馬太夫人者十年。外太祖雲谷公雲庵，藏生牛黃九盈載箱，自余以至十有六載，食盡之間疾始瘳。47

In a sense, then, and particularly in terms of his own representation of himself, Zhang Dai was, quite literally, what he ate, for it was only in the process of eating that his ‘self’ was born as a subject within his autobiographical text. And, as embodied in the second of my epigraphs for this chapter, Zhang Dai’s explicitly final textual representation of himself (‘A greedy Dongbo, / Starving at Solitary Bamboo’) is as a gourmet transfixed by the moral imperative to starve himself. Fortunately for us all, however, he continued to gaze upon and breathe within the world of man and to ‘amuse himself with brush and ink’.

7
Tasting the Lotus
Food, Drink and the Objectification of the Female Body in Gold, Vase, and Plum Blossom

Issac Yue

Food and sex are commonly perceived as two of the most dominant neurotic compulsions in any living creature—a phenomenon that is substantiated by different disciplinary investigations. The anthropologist Richard Leakey, for example, acknowledges the importance of such compulsions and comments that ‘[f] our ancestors had not invented the food-sharing economy of gathering and hunting around three or so million years ago, we would be neither as intelligent as we are today, nor so interested in each other’s sexuality.’ In psychology, the significance of these two compulsions is similarly recognized as libidinal drives. In China, the association of food with sex was recognized at an early historical stage, and carries with it distinctive imprints of a patriarchal culture that reflect the development of the Chinese civilization. For instance, in ‘Sumoning Back the Soul’ 招魂 from the Songs of the South 越巖, the deliberate parallelization of food with women (as sexual objects) is unmistakable in the poet’s identification of the two ‘items’ as equally instrumental to the return of the spirit. That beautiful women are presented alongside a range of delicacies, including the ‘aromatic stew of fatty beef tendon’ 肥牛之膝髓rixùìte，and the ‘braised turtle and roast lamb with sugar cane syrup’ 頭蝄炮蒸荷糖漿，not only reveals the way society perceived women and food as of parallel importance, but helps establish the tradition of chauvinistic hedonism in China, in which women are delegated to the same level of food and objectified by men during the rite of supplication. It is an ideology that endured and intensified through many of the Chinese imperial dynasties.

This chapter examines the legacy of this social gender ideology as reflected in the literary ‘tradition’ of late Ming society and considers its implementation, and thereby implications, in one of the most representative literary texts of the era—Gold, Vase, and Plum Blossom (Jingpingmei cihua 金瓶梅詞話, hereafter referred to as GVP). As a text that is intended first and foremost to be a piece of social criticism, GVP is widely appreciated by today’s critics for its critique of society ‘mainly driven by lust, greed, and vanity’. Compared to the powerful discourse evoked by the text with regard to the tension between patriotism and religious piety,
Chapter 6

1. An early version of this paper was presented at the New Zealand International Conference on Asian Studies (12th Conference) held at Massey University, Palmerston North, 26–29 November 1997 and was subsequently included in a series of working papers published by the Asian Studies Institute of Victoria University of Wellington.

2. ‘For Kings, the people are Heaven, for the people, food is Heaven’, opined Li Yiji (B.C.E. 206–195), the self-styled ‘Tippler of Gaoyang’ (Gaoyang ji jiu), in the course of advising Liu Bang (247–195 B.C.E.), the future founding emperor of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.–220 C.E.), for which, see Ban Gu, Li Yu zhu, Shusun Zhuhan (Hong Kong: Zhonghua shuju, 1970), 5:210. Li Yiji was later ordered boiled (peng) to death by Tian Guang (206 BC), under suspicion of betraying him.

3. Langzhou wenwu, ed. Yun Guo (Changsha: Yuelu shudian, 1985), 201. Dorgoq is the great Song dynasty scholar and poet Su Shi (1036–1101), a man who, as we see below, Zhang Dai believed was one of the few to have preserved ancient knowledge about the art of eating; the father of the brothers Boyi (伯夷) and Shuqi (叔齊), those two ancient paragons of dynastic loyalty who, by legend, chose to starve themselves to death rather than eat the grain of the Zhou dynasty (c. 1027–256 B.C.E.) once it had replaced their own Shang dynasty (c. 1600–1028 B.C.E.), was Lord of Solitary Bamboo (Guzhujiu) (孤竹君).


6. The particular vicissitudes of Zhang Dai’s age—the cataclysmic collapse of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) and its replacement by the Qing (1644–1911)—meant that only one of his books was published in his lifetime, this being his Gujin yilie zhi (古今樂器志). Published (according to its various prefaces) sometime between 1628–32; for a note on this book and its publication history, see Hu Yimin, Zhang Dai youju, 206–7.

7. In particular, Shiren yu yu shuo (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1985); Kunyuan shuo (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1984); Ye ling chuan (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1987); and most importantly, Zhang Dai’s magisterial history of the Ming dynasty, Shihai shi (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997), vols. 318, 319, and 320.

8. Thepreface is undated; judging from its tone, however, I believe that the work to which it is attached was compiled before the fall of the dynasty in 1644, and the consequent and drastic change in Zhang Dai’s circumstances. The prefaces to two other books by Zhang Dai particularly germane to the concerns of this paper, his Cha shi (茶史) and his Toan zhounoufang (陶庵夢憶), have also been preserved in this collection, the manuscripts of the books themselves, it seems, having been lost to us forever.


14. Zhang Dai’s ‘Author’s Preface’ (Zixu shu) is dated 1660. To a considerable extent, his memories of the culinary indulgences of his youth must have been coloured by his experience of the extreme famine that struck his home district in 1641 and his involvement in local efforts of food relief. For a recent discussion focused particularly
off boiled butter); (2) zhukeng 脆听 (said to be either a wine made of horse milk of perhaps of a roebuck); (3) yuetui 野骆驼 (hoof of a wild camel); (4) luchun 麈唇 (lips of a deer); (5) tiuurui 銀鱗 (camel curds); (6) lianzi 天鹅炙 (roasted crane); (7) zuizhuang 紫玉棠 (pulp of purple jad—said to be grape wine from the western regions); and (8) xuanzyulang 玄玉琅 (pulp of wondrous jade—said to be horse curds). Allen Grieco makes the suggestion that zhukeng here (number two above) is likely to be a reference to koumiss.

17. In another section in *Dream Memories of Taoan*, entitled 'The Sweet Tangerines of the Chen Clan of Fanjiang' (Fanjiang Cheneliu 與江陳氏錄), Zhang Dai writes: 'The Chen clan of Fanjiang had established an orchard (guozuan 果園) on a patch of land they had cleared, enclosing it with a fence of hardy orange tree. The staple grown here is the betel vine, the leaves of which are made into paste; the glutinous rice is used to ferment wine. This wine, fragrant in the extreme and a dull amber colour, has won the praises of all serious drinkers. The fruit and the melons produced by the orchard are steeped in honey to make confit. More than a hundred Xie's tangerine trees have been planted here, the fruit of which is not picked when still green or when still sour. Only once the fruit has turned orange on the trees after the first falls of frost are they picked, and even then this is done so by cutting them off the trees with their stems still attached. When such a procedure is followed, the skins of the tangerines prove thick and easy to peel, their colour is deep orange, their flesh firm, their segments easily divided, their taste sweet and fresh. The tangerines produced at Fourth Gate, Tao's Embankment, Daoxu, even Tangxi, cannot stand comparison with them. Each year I would insist on visiting this orchard, even if it was late in the season and the tangerines were expensive and few to be had. Once I had made my purchase, I would store the tangerines in earthenware vats upon a mat of rice straw from Zhanzhang or dried pine needles. Every ten days or so, whenever the straw had begun to moulder, I would have it replaced, and in this way the tangerines could be made to last until the end of the third month, as sweet and crisp as when first picked. The Master of Hardy Orange Township earns himself a hundred bolts of silk a year from his hundred or so tangerine trees, these trees truly living up to their sobriquet 'Wooden Slaves' (mumu 木奴) (Taoan mengyu: Xiuh mengyu, 82–3). In his annotations to this item, Xia Xianchun notes that Xie's tangerines were produced by the descendants of Xie Xuan 謝玄 in their family orchard.
Roundabout: Essays in History and Culture (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), 231. On sumptuary laws, see Craig Clunas, ‘Regulation of Consumption and the Institution of Correct Morality by the Ming State’, in Norms and the State in China, ed. E. Zürcher (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), 39–48. Other areas of life during the late-Ming period seem equally prone to such lavish and ostentatious display, and the inevitable countervailing discourse. Sarah Dennece, in her ‘Sartorial Modesty and Genteel Ideals in the Late Ming’ (in Daria Berg and Chloë Starr, eds., The Quest for Gentility in China: Negotiations Beyond Gender and Class [London & New York: Routledge, 2007], 134–54), examines the extent to which contemporary men-of-letters became concerned at what they saw as the increasingly opulent clothing being worn by women. Xia Xianchun, in his Wun Ming shijing yu wenxue 明末士風與文學 (Beijing: Zhongguo shuhuike xue chubanshe, 1994), 62, cites the Shaoxinger Tao Shiling 過飆麟 (1571–1640) to the effect that: ‘When I was a young man there were certainly no gardens to be found in Shaoxing, such things having only become numerous in recent years’ and Qi Baojiu as declaring that the construction of gardens in the district began with Zhang Dai’s great-grandfather Zheng Tianfu. For an important analysis of this garden ‘mania’, see Joanna F. Handlin Smith, ‘Gardens in Ch’i Piao-chia’s Social World: Wealth and Values in Late-Ming Kiangnan’, The Journal of Asian Studies, 51 (1992), 55–81.

Interestingly enough, such anxieties about artificiality were in evidence as well, as shown by Stephen West, ‘Playing with Food: Performance, Food, and the Aesthetics of Artificiality in the Sung and Yuan’, Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, 57 (1997), 67–105.


23. Ibid., 8.

24. As both Clunas and Timothy Brook have pointed out, such handbooks also served the social and cultural purposes of precisely those who were intended to stigmatize. As Brook puts it: ‘The texts of connoisseurship available on the book market in the late Ming, ironically perhaps, served both sides of the cultural barrier between gentry and merchants. They set what highly educated gentlemen of the age felt were the appropriate standards by which luxury goods should be consumed. But they also commoditized the knowledge that was needed to participate in this rarified realm of cultural exchange’, for which, see his ‘Communications and Commerce’, in Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote, eds., The Cambridge History of China: Volume 8: The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644, Part 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 705.

25. According to legend, Shenong was the second emperor of pre-dynastic China and was attributed with the invention of the first plough, the practice of animal husbandry and the discovery of the various usages of medicinal herbs.


27. He Zong (159-279), an extravagant man whose kitchen, according to his biography in the Jin shu 晉書, produced cuisine of a quality that exceeded even that of the palace.

28. A man of the Tang dynasty who served as an official during the reign of the Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690–83).

29. A member of the Hanlin Academy, also during the Tang, and a skilled cook.

31. An official in the Kingdom of Qi during the Southern Dynasties whose family was renowned for their recipes. It is said that on one occasion the emperor asked him for some recipes but Wu Cong refused the request.

32. For a translation of this prose-poem, see Cyril Crum Brown Clark, trans., The Prose-Poetry of Su Tung-p’o (New York: Pantheon Book Reprint Corp., 1964), 205–11.

33. In his Dream Memories of T’ouan, Zhang Dai provides the following portrait of this man: ‘To the storehouses that now ply West Lake were in fact the invention of the Surveillance Vice Commissioner of the Education Intendant Circuit Bao Yingdeng. They come in three sizes; in the largest, one can lay out a banquet, accompanied by singing boys; the middle-sized ones are sufficiently large to transport one’s books and paintings; in the smallest, there is just room enough to hide away a beautiful young maiden or two to keep one company. Bao Yingdeng’s singing girls were beyond comparison with ordinary maids-in-waiting, and, in imitation of the practice of Shi Chong 石崇 and Song Qi 宋之, he frequently ordered them to appear before his guests. Painted of face, they would amble in like ponies with mincing step as sauntering slowly, lingering leisurely, they threaded their way through the willows, all to bring joy and laughter to their audience. Standing in front of the bright railings and windows decorated with silk filigree, they would stretch out their song, play their flutes and pluck their zithers, the music they made akin to the warbling of the golden oriole. As guests arrived, the singing boys would begin the opera, dancing in rows, singing as they kept time with their drums. Their skills quite excelled those of others. When the mood took him, Bao Yingdeng would take his performers touring, sometimes not returning home for ten days or more, and attracting huge crowds, all of whom would ask where the troupe was next to perform. Bao’s South Garden was sited beneath Thunder Peak Pagoda, his North Garden below Flew-Her Peak. Rocks abounded in both gardens, heaped up here and piled up there all higgledypiggedly, but always forming the most eccentrically shaped precipices. In some places, rocks were used to construct a bridge over a brook, but in such instances, unlike the artificial mountains found upon the hill, these bridges were ingeniously designed and crafted. The ridgepoles of the main halls were held in place by cantilevers, thus obviating the need for pillars at all four corners, making the halls spacious enough for lion dancers to perform within. In North Garden, a chamber was built in the form of the Eight Trigrams, with a round pavilion partitioned into eight sections and shaped like a fan. Eight beds were placed horizontally in the narrow corners of each pavilion, curtained off on both sides. When the innermost curtains were lowered, the beds faced outside, and when the outermost curtains were lowered, the beds would face each other. Old man Bao would sit in state in the middle of the chamber with clear windows in his doors, and as he lay there propped up against his pillow burning incense, he could see each and every one of the eight beds. In such an excess of extravagance and wantonness did he grow old beside West Lake for more than twenty years, the splendour of his gardens not a jot inferior to those of Golden Valley or Mu Village, nothing less than the apotheosis of luxury and magnificence, what the locals of Hangzhou however were wont to dismiss by saying: “Well, that’s just how it is.” The grand families of West Lake wanted for nothing, and at the time is