

# **Honour, Esteem, and Social Recognition in Late Ming China**

## **The Case of Tu Long**

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I confirm that the work submitted is my own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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## **Abstract**

Social recognition in the late Ming Dynasty was generated by literati in two forms: honour and esteem. Changes in society, including economic development, shifts in social ethos, and the comparatively loosened control of the regime, especially regarding people's ideas and conduct, provided a suitable social environment for literati to explore a form of recognition other than honour based on the hierarchical mechanism. In the transitional society of the late Ming Dynasty, the literati's values and lifestyles were heavily influenced by the development of the commodity economy, while their autonomy as moral agents was enhanced through the rise of self-awareness stimulated by the School of Mind. Hence, the way literati recognised each other evolved from solely depending on the value of an honoured status to also focusing on their own values and achievements for self-worth, self-respect, and self-esteem within the reflexive relations of the literati community. The literati not only fashioned themselves to fit into different communities but also redefined the values and norms that underpinned the communities where their recognition was achieved. During the process of social recognition in these two forms, there would also be a crisis of recognition, and even misrecognition occurred when the literati faced different situations, especially in a transitional society where the social value system was also in the process of changing. In this context, the literati's struggle for recognition manifested in different patterns oriented by their values and norms, illustrating the process of transformation of social recognition in the transitional society of late Ming China.

Tu Long as a literatus, whose well-documented experience of his career and social life exemplified both representative and particular features of the literati in the late Ming Dynasty, provided a dynamic image of the literati's struggle for different forms of social recognition in detail.

**Keywords:** social recognition, honour, esteem, literati, Ming dynasty

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# Introduction

It was a cold snowy day in the winter of the year 1584, the twelfth year of the Wanli 萬曆 period (1573-1620), when a frustrated literatus walked out of Shenwu Gate 神武門, leaving the Forbidden City. The literatus, named Tu Long 屠隆 (1543-1605), had just been dismissed by the emperor due to another official's accusation. Outside the city, many literati, including officials who had heard of his bitter experience, gathered to wish him farewell and express their consolation and pity for the unfair treatment he had received. With the support of friends and the community of literati, his wretched departure became a grand send-off, which greatly satisfied Tu Long's sense of self-worth and self-respect, even though the dismissal itself had caused significant damage to his self-esteem and social status. What Tu Long could not shake off was the ruined honour as a literatus serving as an official, while what he was about to face would be a more contestable social environment for recognition in various intersubjective relations.

Tu Long lived during the late Ming Dynasty, from the early sixteenth century up to the fall of the dynasty in 1644. During this period, society experienced transitions in various fields, especially the commercialisation of the economy and changes in social values. The transitional situation greatly affected the way literati valued themselves in society, which correspondingly changed the form of recognition they struggled for within the literati community. In this context, the transitional society of the late Ming Dynasty provided a possibility to discuss social recognition based more on intersubjective relations than the hierarchical system of premodern society. Normally, in premodern society, social recognition was regarded as honour, where one's traits and peculiarities depended on their status group, rather than being an individuated subject, a political and moral agent.<sup>1</sup> Differentiating from the modern notion of recognition in modern Western society, which is based on rights, equality, and ethical community,<sup>2</sup> the form of social recognition in late Ming

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<sup>1</sup> Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, trans. by Joel Anderson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), p.xiv, 22. Also refer to Paul T. Wilford, 'The Theological Dimension of Agency: Forgiveness, Recognition, and Responsibility in Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit', *The Review of Metaphysics*, 72(2019), 497-527.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, Chapter 5, pp. 92-130; Iser, Mattias, 'Recognition', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2019 Edition), ed. by Edward N. Zalta <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2019/entries/recognition/>>.

society showed in a hybrid and developing state due to the limited and specialised social context and environment for generating social recognition. In addition to honour derived from hierarchical social status, esteem based on individuals' values and achievements, generated in self-mastered relations, became another prominent form of recognition within the literati community. These two forms of recognition coexisted during the literati's struggle, although they varied with changes in social environments.

Given the different contexts between the late Ming Dynasty and Western society, the concepts of honour and esteem as forms of recognition were also expressed differently in the late Ming Dynasty. The contrast between honour and esteem lies in whether the values and norms that underpinned the community where individuals sought these two forms of recognition were redefinable. Honour is based on the "presupposition that each individual particularity receives intersubjective recognition" through an affirmative relation,<sup>3</sup> while esteem is required by individual subjects who are "in relation to one another, each having a general claim to articulating what "We" do", within which particular values and norms derived from each member are shared mutually, so that they can be recognised in different forms of self-relations, namely self-worth, self-respect and self-esteem.<sup>4</sup>

In the context of the late Ming Dynasty, honour was more like "rong 榮" based on the literati's social status as members of a certain group, especially as officials, and the possible promotions, awards, and titles they would be granted by the emperor according to their achievements in office. In this case, officialdom became the primary social sphere for the literati's struggle for honour, grounded in the comparatively fixed values and norms of the strict code of morality and conduct. Esteem could be seen from "ming 名", achievements and reputation, especially the literati's attitude towards it. Esteem acted as a strong sense of self in relations with others through an individual literatus's own values and achievements based on their talent or moral integrity. The literati's struggle for esteem was shown through their self-fashioning and the approval and

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<sup>3</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, pp.22-23.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Khurana, 'The Struggle for Recognition and the Authority of the Second Person', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 29(2021), 552-561 (p.156).

acknowledgement of other literati when they associated and interacted within the literati community. For instance, in a letter to Li Xuanbai 李玄白, Tu Long wrote, “During my prosperous times, I was honoured and esteemed, my reputation spread far and wide 當不穀盛時，榮名被身，進賢加首”.<sup>5</sup> The “prosperous times” were when Tu Long’s social recognition reached a satisfying state, with both his honour and esteem achieved through the honour code within officialdom and his talent and cultivation within the broader literati community.

However, whether “rong” or “ming”, as representatives of the concepts of honour and esteem in the late Ming Dynasty, for most of the time in the literati’s interactions these concepts were not explicitly brought out by the literati to express their sense of recognition but were implied in their attitude towards their status and relations. In that era, it seemed there was no exact word for these two concepts, but the literati were already aware of the value of self in a collected community and further fashioned a specific image of self to seek greater respect and esteem in their interactions and relations. Certainly, honour, as a product of hierarchical society, was comparatively easier to find a corresponding alternative concept in the late Ming Dynasty when it was attached to social status. As for esteem, it was rather defined through how much a literatus’s virtues and behaviour were acknowledged by other literati when they exchanged poems with each other, commented on each other’s literary works, or frequently interacted with each other.

The literati discussed here as the main subjects of social recognition in the late Ming Dynasty tend to uphold a cultural identity that combined social, cultural, and political status. However, this was not limited to scholars or scholar-officials but also included the status of the elite and gentry who were valued for their literary and cultural virtues and cultivation. To discuss the social recognition of literati in the forms of honour and esteem in a different context from the original discussion, a specific example will help to explain and test the applicability of the discussion. The corresponding details will provide a clear clue to the transitional process of social recognition in the transitional society of the late Ming Dynasty. Tu Long is a useful example because his thoughts and behaviour show a complex state containing the features of social subjects in a transitional

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<sup>5</sup> Tu Long, ‘Da Li Xuanbai 答李玄白’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.463.



society, who experience the change in social values from conventional to innovative. Tu Long's life experience was rich, which almost represented the experience that literati at that time normally went through, thus it also showed various patterns of exploration for social recognition. The rich experience of Tu Long to a great extent, interprets the struggle for social recognition of literati in detail in the forms of honour and esteem, especially when he experienced changes in social spheres between officialdom and the literati community, and damage to social recognition caused by misrecognition, as well as the corresponding crisis of recognition. Tu Long's struggle explicitly shows how the structure of social recognition was transformed from presupposed "value-principles" to individualised "value-ideas" during the transitional period of a society.<sup>6</sup>

As a literatus, Tu Long's identity was constructed by the social status of literati in society and the potential official status in officialdom. It also stood for accomplishments in literature, as well as the corresponding virtues and cultural status. Tu Long's literary talent and achievements were where his high social reputation and cultural status came from, which also permeated his entire social recognition. His literary and cultural virtues and status were the basis of his struggle for social recognition through esteem, which led to a series of social activities and interactions in the reflexive relations he built himself.<sup>7</sup> Tu Long's sense of esteem came from his literary talent and achievements, which became the main elements for his recognition within the literati community. Hence, Tu Long's status within the literati community was not just maintained by the presupposed group context but was more self-mastered through his own values and achievements. In this process, Tu Long showed high autonomy in the struggle for a more individualised form of social recognition, namely esteem, in addition to honour.

Tu Long is a valuable example for the discussion of literati's social recognition in late Ming China because many of his literary works and letters survive, allowing exploration of his social relations and activities, as well as his state of mind in different stages of his life. The modern edition of his collected works, *Tu Long Ji* 屠隆集, *Tu Long Collection*, runs to twelve volumes.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, pp.121-130.

<sup>7</sup> Jason Miller, 'The Role of Aesthetics in Hegelian Theories of Recognition', *Constellations*, 23(2015), 96-109 (p.97).

<sup>8</sup> Tu Long 屠隆, *Tu Long Ji* 屠隆集, ed. by Wang Chaohong 汪超宏, 12 vols (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2021).

Especially rich are the letters written to his friends; Tu Long's collected works contain 522 letters written to 201 people. These letters are primary sources of information on Tu Long's social life, such as who he associated with and how his social state, including activities and interactions, changed according to different situations. These letters closely show the patterns of struggle for social recognition in different forms for Tu Long and other literati of the time. These letters were originally published by Tu Long and his friends mainly within four collections: *Tu Changqing Ji* 屠長卿集, *Tu Changqing Collection*; *Youquan Ji* 由拳集, *Youquan Collection*; *Baiyu Ji* 白榆集, *Baiyu Collection*; and *Qizhenguan Ji* 栖真館集, *Qizhen Hall Collection*. *Tu Changqing Collection* and *Youquan Collection* generally recorded Tu Long's social state in his early life before he passed the imperial examinations and during his time as the magistrate in Yingshang and Qingpu County. These two collections comprise two editions of one collection, named *Youquan Collection*. It was reprinted by Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎 (1548-1605) when Tu Long was in Qingpu while adding some more works. *Baiyu Collection* and *Qizhen Hall Collection* basically collected the letters from the period after Tu Long was dismissed.

I have sorted all his letters in two ways: one is according to the people he wrote to, which helps me see how many people there are, who those people were, how many letters Tu Long wrote to each person, how close he was to different people, and how many letters there are in total; the other is according to different events, activities, and interactions involving Tu Long, such as gift exchanges, descriptions of his dismissal, and various gatherings, visits, and travel plans. These two sorted references help to narrow down which area Tu Long's struggle for recognition relates to and which group of literati are involved. For instance, gift exchanges point to material culture, showing how materials as capital functioned in a social way and how this act was symbolic for recognition. Meanwhile, the table of correspondence can quickly provide information about a particular person, such as where that person came from, which year he passed the Metropolitan Examination, and his official post. From this, we can further understand the relationship with Tu Long, how close they were, and what was special about this person for Tu Long. By cross-referencing people and events recorded in Tu Long's letters, his relations within the literati community and how he

maintained these relations will be clearly shown, which further provides a dynamic image of his struggle for different forms of social recognition.

All Tu Long's letters and literary works were chosen and published by Tu Long himself and his friends, making the different collections, especially the letters, a kind of individualised expression of Tu Long himself and his relations. This closely shows how Tu Long recognised himself in reflexive relations. As mentioned above, the *Youquan Collection* was reprinted by Tu Long's friend Feng Mengzhen, while it was originally selected by the local literati in Yingshang. In the *Baiyu Collection*, it was printed as "Taimo Gong Yaohui Zixing 太末龔堯惠梓行", meaning Gong Yaohui from Taimo selected and published.<sup>9</sup> *Qizhenguan Collection* was selected by Tu Long's friend Lü Yinji 呂胤基,<sup>10</sup> whose family was famous in theatrical writing and performing in Yuyao 余姚.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, one of the most famous literati in the late Ming Dynasty, Chen Jiru 陳繼儒 (1558-1639), also edited Tu Long's *Suoluoguan Yigao Juanzhi'er* 娑羅館逸稿卷之二, *Sal-Tree-Hall Lost Drafts second volume*; his *Hongbao Ji* 鴻苞集, *Hongbao Collection* was selected by Mao Yuanyi 茅元儀 (1594-1640), who was Mao Kun's 茅坤 (1512-1601) grandson. Both were well-known writers with significant statuses within the literati community.<sup>12</sup> Although Tu Long or his friends did not specify how they selected his works and letters in the prefaces of Tu Long's collections or in the selected letters, the literati who participated in the publication of his collections showed their approval of Tu Long's works and talent. Their reputation and status within the literati community also represented Tu Long's status and the extent to which he was esteemed within the community.

Specifically, the selected letters show Tu Long's self-mastery of his public persona to seek greater esteem. This can be seen in those whom Tu Long corresponded with, what they talked

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<sup>9</sup> See *TLJ*, vol.3, vol.4.

<sup>10</sup> See *TLJ*, vol.5, vol.6.

<sup>11</sup> For details, refer to Zhang Ping 張萍, *Mingdai Yuyao Lishi Jiazu Yanjiu* 明代余姚呂氏家族研究 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang daxue chubanshe, 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Mao Kun was seen as the leader of the Tang-Song School 唐宋派. Refer to Lin Chunhong 林春虹, 'Mao Kun Guwenguan de Fazhanyu Jiajing Wanli Shiqi Fugu Sichao 茅坤古文观的发展与嘉靖万历时期复古思潮', *The Northern Forum* 北方论丛, 6(2022), 163-169. Mao Yuanyi's *Wubei Zhi* 武備志 was seen as the encyclopaedia of armament and military in the Ming dynasty. For details, see Ren Daobin 任道斌, *Mao Yuanyi Zhushu Zhijianlu* 茅元儀著述知見錄 (Beijing: Shumu Wenxian Chubanshe, 1985).

about in the letters, and the kind of interactions they had between each other. The people Tu Long corresponded with most can be classified in three categories: the literati who had passed the Metropolitan Examination in the same year as him, the literati from the same county and local community as him, and the famous and respected literati and officials of the period, such as Wang Shizhen and Wang Xijue. The three groups constitute the most solid part in his relations and the part he tried to cultivate the most. On the one hand, his correspondence with the literati shows that Tu Long regarded himself as the group of literati who were well-known, respected and talented. On the other hand, by publishing letters to famous literati, Tu Long's own public persona would also be improved, helping him well cultivate the esteem in which he is held. Furthermore, the letters record different kinds of social activities and interactions between Tu Long and his friends, showing their sense of aestheticism and taste, and further shaping his image as a talented, tasteful and cultured literatus, elite, and official.

Additionally, Tu Long also appeared in other literati's letters and diaries, such as those of his best friend Feng Mengzhen's collection, *Kuaixuetang Ji* 快雪堂集, *Kuaixue Hall Collection*, as well as Tang Xianzu 湯顯祖 (1550-1616) and Yuan Hongdao's 袁宏道 (1568-1610) poems and letters to Tu Long.<sup>13</sup> These materials are not only important proof of Tu Long's struggle for social recognition but also significant evidence that the theory of social recognition can be applied to other literati in addition to Tu Long's case. From Tu Long to the literati community, it manifests the complexity of society in the transitional moment of the history, highlighting the changes in the literati's state of life culturally, financially, politically, and socially.

## Forms of social recognition: honour and esteem

If the human form of life is essentially social, then individuals are not only "conditioned by a social context but constituted by and individuated by their social relations", during which social acknowledgement is generated between subjects in the community and constitutes, on Hegel's

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<sup>13</sup> Feng Mengzhen 馮夢禎, *Kuai Xue Tang Ji* 快雪堂集, 64vol., Wanli edition, <<https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&res=779296>>

account, an essential human need: to recognise oneself in one's environment.<sup>14</sup> Thus, only in relations with other autonomous subjects can we gain self-consciousness as autonomous agents.<sup>15</sup> Deriving from Hegel's interpretation of intersubjective recognition, the process of recognition involves a kind of reciprocal relations, in which "I" can not only recognise another person, but another person can also recognise "me", and further, "We" can recognise each other, as Hegel says, "the I that is We and the We that is I".<sup>16</sup> The kind of mutual recognition guarantees our existence as social beings. Meanwhile, being an integrate ethical and political subject within a particular community depends on receiving and conferring appropriate forms of recognition.

Hegel was heavily influenced by Fichte's view of autonomy, which posits that mutual recognition is essential for human beings to understand themselves because one could only notice one's own actions and utterances as expressions of an intentional self while understanding that the other's actions are also intentional. He argues that understanding ourselves as an independent self-consciousness requires the recognition of another, which is the normative character of reflexive self-awareness.<sup>17</sup> This is then considered by Honneth as a kind of reflexive self-relations, a conception of self adequately reflected in the other in terms of love, right and solidarity, which provide self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem respectively. Therefore, recognition requires optimally reflexive self-relations, so that the senses of self-confidence, self-respect and self-esteem can be generated when all individuals receive and confer recognition on one another. In this way, recognition can be regarded as a social-psychological good, so that misrecognition is not only a moral and psychological harm occasioned by the denial of social and cultural status, but also a violation of the identity of subjects, because a subjects' identity is shaped precisely through relations to others.<sup>18</sup>

Returning to Rousseau's idea of being recognised by others, an individual acquires a

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas Khurana, 'The Struggle for Recognition and the Authority of the Second Person', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 29(2021), 552-561(p.553).

<sup>15</sup> The idea is expressed in G. W. F. Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. and ed. by Terry Pinkard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>16</sup> Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, p.177.

<sup>17</sup> Peddy McQueen, 'Social and Political Recognition', on The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, ISSN 2161-0002, <[https://iep.utm.edu/recog\\_sp/](https://iep.utm.edu/recog_sp/)>. [accessed 6 Aug 2020]

<sup>18</sup> Jason Miller, 'The Role of Aesthetics in Hegelian Theories of Recognition', p.98; Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.25.

“sentiment of his own existence”.<sup>19</sup> The idea of dependence on the recognition of others, then taken by Honneth, suggests “that we are related to each other by means of various forms of recognition”.<sup>20</sup> The mutual dependence generates from the shared “We” which differentiates, while “distinguishable ‘I’”s in relation to one another each have a general claim to articulating what it is that ‘We’ do.”<sup>21</sup> “We”, thus, is fundamentally contestable due to the distinguishable “I”’s claims to the community, which means that the plurality of forms of recognition inevitably coexists in the same context. Meanwhile, the primacy of community over the sphere of proximity of individuals makes the construction of shared norms and values that underpinned the community a priority for the struggle for recognition. Individuals inevitably belong to some kind of community, or more, which means they are also involved in the struggle for at least one form of social recognition. Different forms of social recognition not only apply within different forms of communities, but they also demonstrate varying degrees of contestation based on the tension between “I” and “We”, such as how open the community is to individuals redefining the values grounded in itself. A community can be seen as a strong environment for social recognition when the construction of shared values and norms is open to being redefined; otherwise, it will be seen as weak. What kind of recognition is appropriate for individuals to receive and confer will then depend on the kind of community they struggle in.

The historical development of the concept of social recognition shows the different demands due to the historically established and changing ideas of what kind of recognition people deserve. In premodern society, recognition was regarded as a concept of honour which was assigned to persons as members of a group within a hierarchical social structure. In Honneth’s opinion, one’s standing in society and one’s status as a moral and political agent were fused in the concept of honour, thus the rights and duties were those of one’s status group or “estate”, instead of “one’s status as a free legislator in either the local kingdom or the ‘kingdom of ends’”.<sup>22</sup> While in the

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<sup>19</sup> Frederick Neuhouser, ‘Rousseau and the Human Drive for Recognition (*Amour Propre*)’, in *The Philosophy of Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by Hans-Christoph Schmidt am Busch and Christopher F. Zurn (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010), pp.21-43 (p.24).

<sup>20</sup> R. Jay Wallace, review of Axel Honneth, *Recognition: A Chapter in the History of European Ideas* (2021), *Mind* (2021) f zab058, xiv + 178, <<https://doi.org/10.1093/mind/fzab058>>, p1.

<sup>21</sup> Khurana, ‘The Struggle for Recognition and the Authority of the Second Person’, p.556.

<sup>22</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, p.xiv.

modern context, the notion of “status as a person” is distinguished from the notion of “social standing”, which generates the distinct modes of recognition between self-respect and self-esteem, based on the modern notion of equal respect awarded to all agents capable of autonomy and one’s achievements and value within a certain community.<sup>23</sup> Because of the tension between autonomy and dependence that dynamically promotes social changes, the struggle of individuals for social recognition also changed gradually from honour to esteem when the relations between “I” and “We”, to some extent, changed with the development of society.

Since scholarly discussion of social recognition in premodern China is rare, the emphasis on the social recognition of the literati will be on honour rather than esteem based on the hierarchical society, especially the status honour as a member of a status group. It usually focuses on the literati’s crisis of identity that was specifically shaped through their social recognition in the context of the late Ming Dynasty and how they coped with it.<sup>24</sup> However, there are studies discussing the Confucian view of recognition, which mostly focus on the asymmetrical recognition of others. Eric Nelson argues that the early Confucian ethical self-cultivation is unfolded in the context of unravelling reactive and negative emotions in order to promote concrete relationships of reciprocal and mutual yet graded and asymmetrical recognition between oneself and others.<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Xiang Shuchen proposes that a virtuous agent “affords recognition to others without seeking recognition for themselves”.<sup>26</sup> In my opinion, recognition, as “a vital human need”,<sup>27</sup> though it may be expressed in an alternative way, or a comparatively asymmetrical version under the impact of Confucianism, in the premodern context, is essential for social beings recognising others, as well as being recognised by others within the community, whatever emotions they

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid; Mattias Iser, ‘Recognition’, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, (Summer 2019), ed. by Edward N. Zalta, <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2019/entries/recognition/>>.

<sup>24</sup> About the studies of literati’s crisis of identity, refer to: Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley, Calif.; London: University of California Press, 1999); Craig Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*; *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (London : Reaktion, 1996); Wu Renshu 巫仁恕, *Pinwei Shehua: Wanming de Xiaofei Shehui yu Shidaifu* 品味奢華：晚明的消費社會與士大夫 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Eric S. Nelson, ‘Recognition and Resentment in the Confucian Analects’, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 2(2013), 287-306 (p.287)

<sup>26</sup> Xiang Shuchen, ‘Worthy of Recognition: The Confucian Ethics of Recognition’, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 49(2022), 388-404 (p. 388)

<sup>27</sup> Taylor, *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, p.26.

encounter in themselves or others. In practical, literati, who were educated and cultivated in Confucianism, had the expectation of being recognised by others, which for human beings is a the very basic emotional need in primary relationships among friends, family and between lovers.

The hierarchical society of the late Ming China could scarcely fulfil the criteria for the modern sense of social recognition, but within the conventional value system in a transitional context, there exists the possibility of exploring the detailed process of transforming social recognition from honour to a form that is closer to the modern sense, and whether the means of social recognition can be applied to the rapidly changing society of the late Ming Dynasty. Tu Long allows us to see how the two forms of honour and esteem are closely intertwined in the structure of the social recognition of literati.

## **Social recognition in late Ming China**

The form of social recognition that could be applied in the context of the late Ming Dynasty is based on the influence of a series of changes of the society, including the development of a commodity economy, the rise of awareness of the value of self due to Wang Yangming's School of Mind, and the comparatively loosened control of social order by the central government. These changes influenced each other and collectively affected the literati's state of life. The development of the commodity economy, to some extent, altered the conventional economic structure by shifting labour from farming to handcrafts and commerce. According to He Liangjun 何良俊 (1506-1573), before the Zhengde 正德 period (1491-1521), "Out of ten common people, one served in officialdom, and nine worked in the fields. This was because the four essential occupational classes each had their fixed occupations. The common people were content with farming and had no other ambitions, and the government also encouraged them to engage in agriculture ..... [However,] in the past forty or fifty years, ..... the number of people leaving farming to engage in handcrafts and commerce has tripled compared to before. ....Generally speaking, out of ten common people, six to seven have already left farming 百姓十一在官，十九在田，蓋因四民各有定業，百姓安於農畝，無有他志，官府亦驅之就農，.....自四五十年



來……今去農而改業為工商者，三倍於前矣。大抵以十分百姓言之，已六七分去農”。<sup>28</sup> As commentators then saw, it was “the decay of the old order” and the collapse of morality, but it was also the development of both the domestic economy and overseas trade, which fundamentally affected “the scholastic Confucian commitment and social hierarchy resting on settled village life”.<sup>29</sup>

With more and more market-based commercial activities spreading widely and rapidly from urban to rural areas, the impact of the commodity economy became extensively embedded in people’s lifestyles and the way they valued themselves. This was also true of different communities, such as the literati, gentry, and officials.<sup>30</sup> Not only had the circulation of commodities been boosted throughout the realm, making commercial activities indispensable in people’s daily lives that “all goods rely on trade for their supply 百物皆仰給予貿易”, but also more and more people since the Zhengde period started to explore their own commercial opportunities, which greatly shaped their economic calculations.<sup>31</sup> Common people were not the only participants in commerce; literati also put their literary talent or cultural disposition in the market for evaluation through their works to gain approval and the value of self in the commodity market. This certainly troubled the Confucian value embodied in the literati and the hierarchical system, which led to a society in “a restless rejection of norms and traditions”.<sup>32</sup> In this circumstance, the social order of the four essential occupational classes of traditional China 四民秩序, ranking in the order of scholars educated in the Classics, farmers, artisans and merchants, to some degree, was shaken during the

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<sup>28</sup> He Liangjun 何良俊, *Siyou Zhai Congshuo* 四友齋叢說 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), p.110.

<sup>29</sup> Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure*, pp.124-151.

<sup>30</sup> About the impact of silver as the currency to the economy in late Ming, refer to Richard von Glahn, *Fountain of Fortune: Money and Monetary Policy in China, 1000-1700* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996), pp.140-152; William Atwell, ‘Ming China and the Emerging World Economy, c.1470-1650’, in *The Cambridge History of China: The Ming Dynasty, 1368-1644, Part 2*, ed. by Denis Twitchett and John K. Fairbank (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), vol.8, pp.381-388; Fu Yiling 傅衣凌, *Mingdai Jiangnan Shimin Jingji Shitan* 明代江南市民經濟試探 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1957), pp.2-6; Wan Ming 萬明, ‘Mingdai Baiyin Huobihua de Chubu Kaocha 明代白銀貨幣化的初步考察’, *Researches In Chinese Economic History* 中国经济史研究, 2(2003), 39-51; Chao Zhongchen 晁中辰, ‘Ming Houqi Baiyin de Daliang Neiliu jiqi Yingxiang 明後期白銀的大量內流及其影響’, *Journal of Historical Science* 史學月刊, 1(1993), 33-39; Weiwei Luo, ‘Money and Future in Late Ming China’, *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 45(2019), 50-70.

<sup>31</sup> The quote is from Gu Qiyuan 顧起元, *Kezuo Zhuiyu* 客座贅語 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), p.67. Fu Yiling 傅衣凌, *Mingdai Jiangnan Shimin Jingji Shitan*, pp.6-20; Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China*, p.101.

<sup>32</sup> Timothy Brook, *The Troubled Empire: China in the Yuan and Ming Dynasties* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), p.264.

transition.<sup>33</sup>

In Honneth's opinion, during the transition to modernity, the hierarchical order of recognition also went through a "process of structural transformation, because in the wake of cultural innovation, the conditions for the validity of a society's ethical goals changed as well".<sup>34</sup> The development of the commodity economy boosted the breakdown of social class hierarchies, and people were valued not just on the basis of their social status, especially when the consumer society gradually formed after the breakdown of the sumptuary law. In the consumer society, different classes shared the same consuming spaces, "elites and commoners both could afford to buy their way out of simplicity and obscurity and into pleasure and notoriety".<sup>35</sup> Consumption within the literati community was no longer for essential needs; instead, it became a kind of conspicuous behaviour. The literati, especially the elite, including the gentry and officials, gradually cultivated a cultural and tasteful lifestyle based on materials. This greatly affected the symbols of power as expressed in different aspects of the literati lifestyle, such as the form of transport they used and clothing that revealed their identity and taste.<sup>36</sup> Thus, the literati became involved in and even developed a taste for conspicuous consumption while starting a long-term competition of consumption with other social classes, especially the wealthy merchants.<sup>37</sup>

The consumption competition actually became a competition of social power within society. In order to "win" in the competition, the literati were more and more involved in commercial activities, which they had looked down upon in the conventional ethical order, and the literati

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<sup>33</sup> Yü Ying-Shih 余英時, *The Religious Ethic and Mercantile Spirit in Early Modern China*, trans. by Kwong Yim-tze, ed. by Hoyt Cleveland Tillman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2021), pp.8-9; *Shi yu Zhongguo Wenhua* 士與中國文化 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1987).

<sup>34</sup> Honneth, *Struggle for Recognition*, p.124.

<sup>35</sup> For more details about how economy influenced the society of Ming Dynasty, refer to Liu Zhiqin 劉志琴, 'Wan Ming Shifeng Manyi 晚明世風漫議', *Sociological Studies* 社會學研究, 3(1992), 107-111; Liu Hehui 劉和惠, 'Lun Wan Ming Shehui Fengshang 論晚明社會風尚', *Anhui Shixue* 安徽史學, 3(1990), 23-29; Wu Renshu, *Pinwei Shehua*, pp.1-55. Quote: Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure*, p.151.

<sup>36</sup> Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, pp.150-165; Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure*, pp.173-237; Wu Renshu, *Pinwei Shehua*, pp.65-164.

<sup>37</sup> About the change of literati's idea of consumption, see Zhang Bangjian 張邦建, 'The reason of the Luxury Consumption in the mid and late Ming Dynasty research 明代中后期消费奢靡原因探析', *Journal of Fuyang Teachers College(Social Science)* 阜阳师范学院学报(社会科学版), 4(2007), 130-132; 'On the Characteristics and Changes of the Consumption Ideas in the Mid-late Ming Dynasty 明代中后期消费的特點及消費觀的變化', *Journal of Graduate School of Chinese Academy of Social Science* 中國社會科學院研究生學報, 4(2008); Chang Jianhua 常建華, 'Lun Ming Dai Shehui Shenghuoxing Xiaofei Fengsu de Bianqian 論明代社會生活性消費風俗的變遷', *Nankai Journal* 南開學報, 4(1994), 53-63.

identity did not impose any ethical constraints on them under the broken social order.<sup>38</sup> For instance, the Senior Grand Secretary Xu Jie 徐階(1503-1583) not only bought a lot of land and houses around Suzhou 蘇州 and Songjiang 松江 but also employed many female weavers to produce clothes for the market.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, wealthy merchants used their money to buy their way into officialdom while establishing good relationships with the upper classes to upgrade their status. Therefore, when the occupation of merchant was no longer regarded as ethically lower than, but even similar to literati, as Wang Daokun 汪道昆 (1525-1593) wrote, “a moral businessman is as good as a great learned literatus 良賈何負閥儒”,<sup>40</sup> not only did the boundary between social classes, especially between literati and merchants, become somewhat blurred, but it also meant that people’s occupational choices were not judged as harshly as conventionally, especially for the literati who were given more freedom to forge a good life.

The development of commodity economy not only immediately released the literati from the burden of ethics to generate a more individualised recognition in society but also affected the way the literati struggled. Facing the prevalence of consumption in society, the literati not only derived pleasure from material goods and consumption, but they also deeply participated while creating their ways of aestheticism and consumption, which further enhanced the significance of material goods and the act of consumption in their lifestyle, as well as in showing the identity of literati. Consumption, especially the kind related to culture, became a symbol of identity and social status.<sup>41</sup> On the one hand, literati became the main group in society involved in cultural consumption; on the other, the material goods and activities that embodied the literati’s distinct taste, such as books, paintings and antiques; the consumption space, like tea houses; and the

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<sup>38</sup> Yuan Zujie 原祖傑, ‘Luxury Consumption and Identity Identification of Gentries in Late Ming Dynasty 奢侈性消費與晚明士商身分認同’, *Shi Lin* 史林, 5(2009), 103-109.

<sup>39</sup> Yu Shenxing 于慎行, *Gushan Bichen* 穀山筆塵 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), p.39.

<sup>40</sup> Wang Daokun 汪道昆, ‘Gao Zeng Fengzhi Daifu Hubu Yuanwailang Chenggong Ji Zeng Yiren Minshi Hezang Muzhiming 誥贈奉直大夫戶部員外郎程公暨贈宜人閔氏合葬墓志銘’, in *Taihan Ji* 太函集, ed. by Hu Yimin 胡益民 (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 2004), vol.5, p.1146. The study of the detailed meaning of “良賈何負閥儒”, refer to Liang Renzhi 梁仁志, ‘New Exploration of the Conviction “Lianggu-bufu-hongru” and Some Reflections on Social Status of Chinese Merchants and Merchant-intellectual Relation in the Ming-and-Qing Dynasties “良賈何負閥儒” 本義考——明清商人社会地位與士商關係新論’, *Journal of Hubei University(Philosophy and Social Science)* 湖北大學學報(哲學社会科學版), 4(2018), 107-114.

<sup>41</sup> Clunas, *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China*.

cultural activities, such as education, religion, and tourism, symbolised their identity.<sup>42</sup>

During the enjoyment of the materials and consumption, the literati also generated the distinction of taste between *ya* 雅 (tasteful) and *su* 俗 (vulgar/popular). The taste-driven consumption of literati was an important pattern of struggle for recognition based on their cultural disposition and cultivation, which greatly enhanced their esteem not just in interactions within the literati community, but also in the competition of consumption between classes. While antiques became the most favourable consumption, the literati preferred to decorate their rooms with certain “ancient objects..... in a functional as well as a rhetorical or social sense” as a kind of “elegant interior design”, which included calligraphies, paintings, bonze vessels, ancient jades, ceramics, and some specific plants and food, in order to maintain the status of literati, especially the elite.<sup>43</sup> Especially the gardens, as a part of the conspicuous consumption manifesting the material culture in the late Ming Dynasty, this special form of material was “consciously constructed and aesthetically perceived artefacts”.<sup>44</sup> Books and the closely related activity of publishing were largely promoted by literati, particularly novels, dramas, and daily reference books, based on the literati’s talent and ability to create and write.<sup>45</sup> As for tourism, a comprehensive social activity, this to a great extent, also expressed the literati’s distinct cultural tastes and cultivation through

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<sup>42</sup> Zhou Jianbo 周建波 and Sun Huaining 孫淮寧, ‘Ming Qing Shiqi de Wenhua Xiaofei 明清時期的文化消費’, *Social Scientist* 社會科學家, 8(2009), 145-148; Deng Wanchun 鄧萬春, ‘Ming Dai Zhong Wan Qi Wenhua Xiaofei Xingsheng Yuanyin Chutan 明代中晚期文化消費興盛原因初探’, *Journal of South-Central University for Nationalities (Humanities and Social Sciences)* 中南民族大學學報(人文社會科學版), 4(1999), 67-70; Wang Hongtai 王鴻泰, ‘From Consumer Space to Consumption of Space: Urban Tea Houses During Ming and Qing Dynasties 從消費的空間到空間的消費——明清城市中的茶館’, *Journal of Shanghai Normal University (Philosophy & Social Sciences Edition)* 上海師範大學學報(哲學社會科學版), 3(2008), 49-57; Niu Jianqiang 牛建強, *Mingdai Zhonghouqi Shehui Bianqian Yanjiu* 明代中後期社會變遷研究 (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1997); Zhan Xuelei 戰雪雷, ‘A Study of The Scholar-officials’ Benefiting from Cultural Business and The Roles They Play in The Cultural Production & Consumption in the Late Ming Dynasty “以文征利”與“倚商事文”——晚明士人文化活動的趨利化及對文化消費風尚的影響’, *Palace Museum Journal* 故宮博物院院刊, 5(2011), 139-144; Luo Zongqiang 羅宗強, *Mingdai Houqi Shiren Xintai Yanjiu* 明代後期士人心態研究 (Tianjin: Nankai daxue chubanshe, 2006).

<sup>43</sup> Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, p.100, 91-108.

<sup>44</sup> Craig Clunas, *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd, 1996), p.15, 13-15.

<sup>45</sup> About the impact of publishing in late Ming China, refer to: Joseph McDermott, *A Social History of The Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006); Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian (11th-17th Centuries)* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center for the Harvard-Yenching Institute, 2002); Zhang Xianzhong 張獻忠, ‘Riyong Leishu de Chuban yu Wan Ming Shangye Shehui de Chengxian 日用類書的出版與晚明商業社會的呈現’, *Jiangxi Shehui Kexue* 江西社會科學, 12(2013), 120-127; Guo Ziyin 郭姿吟, ‘Ming Dai Shuji Chuban Yanjiu 明代書籍出版研究’, (unpublished master thesis, National Cheng Kung University, 2002); Chen Jingyu 陳靜宇, ‘Influence of Ming Dynasty Social Cultural Evolution on Popular Fiction 明代社會文化的演化對通俗小說的影響’, *Academics* 學術界, 2(2012), 157-167.

their choices of transport, utensils, and even food and drink, as well as the destinations and forms of interaction. Tourism also became the literati's favourite means of interaction with one another and an efficient way of enhancing mutual connections in the relations for better intersubjective recognition within the community.

We can see from the above that the rise of the commodity economy and the corresponding emergence of the consumption culture largely changed the values and norms that were conventionally shared within the literati community. The value of the literati based on the conventional social order had been diluted during the transition of society both financially and politically. Financially, extravagant consumption became both a popular and a symbolic lifestyle. In addition to those who came from a rich family background or powerful local gentry, the literati struggled to adopt a life of luxury, not to mention that many common literati suffered from poverty. There are two reasons for this situation: the financial and political conditions that affected the literati. The first was the low pay for working in traditional ways as a literatus, for example, as an official or a teacher. Even if the literati did pass the imperial examinations and become officials, it is well known that the salary of an official throughout the Ming Dynasty was the lowest in the history.<sup>46</sup> According to Gu Yanwu's 顧炎武 (1613-1682), ten *dans* of rice could only convert into three *qian* of silver, but the lowest price of rice at that time was two and half *qian*, which meant ten *dans* of salary could barely pay for one *dan* of rice.<sup>47</sup> A magistrate's whole salary of the year in Ming, in addition to one *dan* of rice every month, was only around twenty-six *liang* of silver. Compared to the salary of the Song Dynasty, a magistrate could at least receive one hundred

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<sup>46</sup> About the system of official's salary in Ming Dynasty, refer to Chen Xiukui 陳秀夔, *Zhongguo Lidai Caizheng* 中國歷代財政 (Beijing: Shiji Shuju, 1981); Chen Guanlong 陳關龍, 'Mingdai Wenguan de Xinfeng Zhidu jiqi Yingxiang 明代文官的薪俸制度及其影響', *Journal of South-Central University for Nationalities (Humanities and Social Sciences)* 中南民族學院學報(社會科學版), 5(1991), 95-100; Shan Xueyong 單學勇, 'Shilun Mingdai de Bofeng Zhi ji Weihai 試論明代的薄俸制及危害', *Social Sciences in Nanjing* 南京社會科學, 2(2003), 41-44; Zhang Zhaokai 張兆凱, Chen Changquan 陳長泉, 'On the Causes of the Development of the Salary System in the Ming Dynasty and its Influence 論明代俸祿制度演變的原因及其影響', *Journal of Changsha University of Science & Technology (Social Science)* 長沙理工大學學報(社會科學版), 3(2004), 73-76; Liu Kejin 劉科進, Huang Xiurong 黃秀榮, Hu Hua 胡華, 'Mingdai Guanyuan Difeng Chengyin Tanxi 明代官員低俸成因探析', *Seeker* 求索, 6(2006), 219-222;

<sup>47</sup> *Dan* 石, unit of weight in ancient China, 1 *dan* equals around 70 kg. *Qian* 錢, monetary unit in ancient China, also *wen* 文 and *liang* 兩. 1 *qian* equals around 100-1500 *wen*, and 1 *liang* equals around 10 *qian*, but it changes in different periods of Ming Dynasty. During Wanli period, 1 *liang* could buy 148kg rice. Gu Yanwu 顧炎武, Huang Rucheng 黃汝成, 'Feng Lu 俸祿', in *Ri Zhi Lu Jishi* 日知錄集釋 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1985), p.952; Chen Guanlong, 'Mingdai Wenguan de Xinfeng Zhidu jiqi Yingxiang', p.97.

forty-four *liang* and four *qian* of silver a year.

In political matters, the low pass rate among candidates in the imperial examinations further diluted the conventional value of the identity of literati. The low pass rate meant there would be a large number of literati who could not become officials.<sup>48</sup> However, the identity of a literatus had a very strong political orientation, the primary goal of being a literatus was to become an official by passing the imperial examinations. The main reason for the low pass rate of the imperial examinations was the expansion of local schools for officials around the country, which led to a large number of scholars competing in the imperial examinations. Records show that the number of *shengyuan* 生員, also called *zhusheng* 諸生, Government Student, commonly called *xiucai* 秀才, Cultivated Talents, who were trained in local or national academies and qualified to take the imperial examinations, grew rapidly from approximately 30,000 during the Xuande 宣德 period (1426-1435) to around 500,000 in the late Ming, an increase of almost seventeen times, while the pass rate in Provincial Examinations and Metropolitan Examinations only rose two to three times.<sup>49</sup> When the most common and dignified career choice for literati became so difficult to achieve, their careers became very unstable. Not only did they have very limited opportunities to gain status in officialdom to seek honour as officials, but they also had to search for other ways of earning a living, such as farming, practising medicine, or doing business.<sup>50</sup>

On the one hand, this situation indeed reduced the political value of the literati as honourable officials; on the other, it also, to some degree, stimulated the literati to seek value from other fields, either related to conventional literati career choices or not, instead of the honourable status of an official, even that of a common literatus. It also meant the constraints imposed on the literati by the ethical social orders were further broken. Therefore, whether the common literati, officials, or

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<sup>48</sup> For more details about the passing rate and impact, see Liu Xiaodong, 'Keju Weiji yu Wanming Shiren Shehui de Fenhua 科舉危機與晚明士人社會的分化', *Journal of Shandong University* 山東大學學報, 2(2002), 32-36.

<sup>49</sup> Gu Yanwu, 'Shengyuan Lun 生員論', in *Ting Lin Wen Ji* 亭林詩文集, Sibu Congkan 四部叢刊 edition, pp.17a-22a; Liu Xiaodong 劉曉東, 'Mingdai Shiren Benye Zhisheng Lun: Jianlun Mingdai Shiren zhi Jingji Renge 明代士人本業治生論——兼論明代士人之經濟人格', *Collected Papers of History Studies* 史學集刊, 3(2001), 70-75; 'Diwei Xiangbei yu Shenfen Xuanfu: Shengcun Zhuangtai Shijiao xia de Mingdai Shiren Shehui Diwein Chuyi “地位相悖”與“身份懸浮”——生存狀態視角下的明代士人社會地位芻議', *Social Science Front* 社會科學戰線, 2(2003), 97-102 (p.98).

<sup>50</sup> Xu Yongbin 徐永斌, 'Ming Qing Shiqi Wenren de Zhisheng Guannian 明清時期文人的治生觀念', *Chinese Culture Research* 中國文化研究, 04(2011), 123-129; Liu Xiaodong 劉曉東, 'Lun Ming Dai Shiren de Yiye Zhisheng 論明代士人的異業治生', *Journal of Historical Science* 史學月刊, 8(2007), 96-102.

the elite and gentry, their status honour, which, according to Weber, “is normally expressed in the fact that above all else a specific style of life is expected from all those who want to belong to the circle”, was correspondingly weakened.<sup>51</sup> The literati then became more eager to redefine the value of themselves, instead of being constrained by seeking honour in the hierarchical status. As the basis for recognition in the social environment, the literati community gradually became a contestable sphere for new values and norms that somewhat confronted the honour code while sharing in a new kind of relations for recognition.

During the rapid transition of society in the late Ming Dynasty, new values and norms gradually reconstituted the community, while old values and norms remained intact. The conflict between the new and the old generated a sense of confusion and anxiety among the literati regarding their identity and status.<sup>52</sup> On the one hand, the traditional ethical social order still guaranteed the social status of literati, but only at a superficial level. In both practical and moral matters, the literati’s social status was reduced due to the prevalence of consumption and the emergence of other social classes. According to Craig Clunas, “the aping by the lower orders of specific types of cultural consumption, access to which had been previously restricted by cultural as much as by economic barriers, upset contemporary elite commentators”.<sup>53</sup> Moreover, official posts could be purchased without passing the imperial examinations by other classes other than the literati. This group experienced a crisis of identity as the only class who could traditionally become officials. Neither could the authoritative environment maintain the honour of the literati efficiently by preserving their exclusive status or guaranteeing their career paths in society, nor could the literati community associated with the commodity economy convince the literati to reconcile enjoying the situation with criticising it, making it difficult for them to seek greater recognition in one form. The literati then struggled in two forms of recognition while evolving different patterns in the process of their struggle.

In addition to the practical effect of economic and political situations in the late Ming Dynasty,

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<sup>51</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), p.932.

<sup>52</sup> Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure*.

<sup>53</sup> Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, p.155.

what encouraged the literati more to seek a kind of self-mastered social recognition inevitably came from subjective initiative, which derived from the change in ideas about the value of self. This change in ideas was attributed to the new social trend of thought brought by the School of Mind founded by Wang Yangming 王陽明 (named Shouren 守仁, 1472-1529). Wang Yangming's theory, as well as the further development of the School of Mind, laid the moral foundation for the literati to seek different forms of recognition and played a significant role in the emergence of the modern notion of recognition in the transitional society of late Ming China. It was the innovative value emerging from the conventional value system of late Ming society which, though not intentionally against conventional Confucianism, did to some extent free literati from orthodox Confucian ethics. The fundamental impact of the School of Mind on the social trend of thought was from its account of *liangzhi* 良知, which was regarded as a kind of innate knowledge, introduced by Wang Yanning. *Liangzhi* was seen as the natural capacity to perceive moral truths; every aspect of daily life contained moral principles that could be learned and enquired by everyone from every class.<sup>54</sup> It was also “a kind of emotional disposition, ..... immediate, pre-reflective self-awareness.....” and “.....pure origin of all functions of the human mind.....”<sup>55</sup>

The idea of *liangzhi* then prompted the rise of self-awareness in individual social subjects, particularly literati, in the hierarchical society, encouraging them to find their values from themselves instead of the hierarchical status. *Liangzhi*, as the principle of the School of Mind, became a kind of moral support for the literati to seek intersubjective recognition through their self-fashioning and self-mastered relations. During this process, the literati also became the moral agents who could forge a life that was meaningful from their own point of view. In this case, the literati gained the autonomy to generate esteem between each other. Autonomy is crucial for a social subject to generate mutual recognition in relations with others, which means that one's own integrity, agency, or sense of self can be acknowledged by others. With the guidance of the School of Mind, the moral code of the literati's life is partially occupied by the consciousness of the ethical

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<sup>54</sup> Jiao Kun, 'The Learning of the Mind as An Ideological Movement: Probing the Historical Origins of the School of Wang Yangming', *Sungkyun Journal of East Asian Studies*, 21(2021), 191-210 (pp.191-192).

<sup>55</sup> Kai Marchal, review of Iso Kern, *The Most Important Thing in Life: Wang Yangming [1472-1529] and His Successors on the "Realization of Original Knowledge"* (2010), *Philosophy East and West*, 63(2013), 676-680 (p.677).



qualities of their own intensions

Additionally, the School of Mind, at the moral level, created a comparatively equal social environment between social subjects, which can be seen from the later development of the theory by Wang Gen 王艮(1483-1541), the founder of the Taizhou School, whose perspective became an influential branch of Wang Yangming's theory. According to Wang Gen, ordinary people were no different from sages. As he said, "the order in which the common people conduct their daily lives is the same as the order established by the sages 百姓日用條理處，即是聖人之條理處".<sup>56</sup> The sage then was also no different from ordinary people. Wang Gen's view seemed to reduce the mysterious honour of the sage. In fact, it expressed an idea of equality based on *liangzhi*, the "pure origin" of human mind, which eliminated the various differences caused by social hierarchy. Once again, it highlighted the value of individuals, their value as social subjects, as well as moral agents. Wang Gen himself was a good example; he was born into a family that made a living by boiling salt 灶戶 and became a merchant afterwards, which was the lowest class within the four essential occupational classes, yet he still became the leader of a significant branch of the School of Mind.

Although the School of Mind raised personal value from the level of being a human being, the sense of equality at the social level could not eliminate the hierarchical order between social classes. The breaking of the barrier between classes was unidirectional, which meant access was from higher classes to lower classes, literati towards merchant class, but rarely in the opposite way. It did not mean people in the lower classes, such as from merchant families, could not become the literati, but a merchant could hardly turn their social status from a lower one to a higher one directly in ethical matters, even if they could buy their way into officialdom. It meant that the sense of equality was more gained and practised within the higher classes, like the literati community. Literati guided by the idea of the School of Mind had a greater range of autonomy in their choice of career without reducing their moral integrity. It then prompted literati to further master the values and norms that defined themselves and their community.

When the values and norms underpinned the literati community could be reconstructed, the

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<sup>56</sup> Wang Gen 王艮, *Wang Xinzhai Quanj* 王心齋全集 (Nanjing: Xiangsu jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), p.29.

literati community could also form multiple collective “We” as fractional communities. Each fractional “We” could be regarded as a recognitive sphere constituted by intersubjective relations for mutual recognition, within which the members would share more featured and delicate values and norms with each other for better and stronger recognition. Because the literati’s social recognition in the late Ming Dynasty was mainly in two forms, honour and esteem, it meant that their struggle would not be successful in a single community. The most explicit communities for the literati’s struggle would be officialdom and the literati community. Given the strong political orientation of the identity of literati, officialdom was the main social sphere in which to seek honour through gaining a higher social status by passing the imperial examinations. The values and norms grounding officialdom could be seen as the honour code, which was difficult to redefine. As for the literati community, which included officialdom, it was a more contestable sphere for different kinds of values and norms. On the basis of the different values and norms, the fractional communities were classified in various ways. In addition to the fundamental classification depending on political status, officialdom and non-officialdom, they could also be classified by cultural, economic, and social elements. It also meant that there were overlaps between each community, thus one literatus could have been involved in several fractional communities, because of the overlapping of social status, or the overlapping of personal virtues and cultural disposition, such as taste. For instance, the elite could be seen as a fractional community within the literati community, which included the officials in political classification and the local gentry in both cultural and economic matters, and even political matters in some places. The overlaps between different fractional communities made the literati’s struggle for social recognition even more complicated, so that the struggle of literati was prompted to evolve more patterns during the process.

In the context of late Ming China, the transitional society provided the most outstanding value in the discussion of social recognition, which was its ability to allow different societal forms to coexist in the same context. Hence, the literati’s struggle for recognition was expressed in hybrid forms. The special and fast-changing period of the Ming Dynasty revealed how a society was in

the process of transition in different aspects, especially how economic development prompted the change in people's value and thought and further impelled the transformation of social recognition from hierarchical honour to self-mastered esteem in a premodern society. The transformation was a complex and long process. Combined with the context of the late Ming Dynasty, the transformation of social recognition even created a more complicated and featured state. The specific situation of late Ming China, the change from a hierarchical social order to an individual's value and lifestyle, together affected the process of transformation. It then gives us an opportunity to discover the details of the change of social recognition in the transitional society through individuals and groups of people, their social relations, activities, and interactions. Therefore, tracking a specific individual's life experience and his interaction within different communities could perhaps reveal the complicated process of social recognition in late Ming China.

## **Tu Long and his struggle**

In order to explore Tu Long's struggle for social recognition in its hybrid forms, we need to track his thoughts, behaviour, and activities through his life trajectory. Hence, according to Tu Long's life trajectory, his struggle can be roughly divided into three periods: the early life period before he passed the Metropolitan Examination, his official time, and the post-official time after he was dismissed. Discussing his struggle in this way highlights how the subjective and objective situations in these three periods change greatly, which shows how the process of social recognition evolves in different social environments and how the patterns of struggle for recognition change correspondingly. Through Tu Long's struggle, I aim to provide a comparative and explicit picture of how the literati struggled within the literati community for either the old or the new kinds of values and norms that defined them or were defined by them in an innovative cultural environment.

Based on Tu Long's letters, his life trajectory, state of mind, sense of self, and his attitude towards his own experience and the literati community can be regarded as his self-representation rather than total historical realities. Although Tu Long's feelings and views on the literati community, officialdom, and the ethos of the literati community derived from the realities of the

community and society, and also reflected the real situation that the literati were experiencing at that time, his feelings and views compelled him to fashion a specific image of himself, which was a representation of himself. For instance, when Tu Long failed the Metropolitan Examination, his dissatisfaction with the system not only reflected the strictness and low pass rate of the imperial examinations in the late Ming Dynasty but also show his sense of self, which was mainly about his talent and value in the local literati community, and how much esteem he should have sought within the local, even the wider range of literati community. In fact, sometimes Tu Long's thoughts and behaviour were opposed to common values and conduct. For instance, his dismissal was seen differently from his own point of view and from the comments made by others later, and his indulgent behaviour was also greatly criticised. Just because of the difference between Tu Long's own opinions and those of others, we can see how rising self-awareness would prompt an individual literatus to redefine the value of self, as well as the value of the social elements to themselves, such as the tradition of imperial examinations, officialdom, and even the literati community.

Although Tu Long's feelings and views were very personal representations and could not entirely represent other individual literati, they reflected the general difficulties of literati in that era. Additionally, to discuss literati's struggle for esteem as a form of social recognition, it had to be about literati's own self-representation, only then could the process of the new form of social recognition be seen and discussed in the transitional hierarchical society, especially when esteem was sought out of literati's autonomy as moral agents. Hence, in the discussion of literati's social recognition, it was not so much about what the historical realities of literati were like, but more about the individuals' own sense of what happened to themselves. This thesis is mainly based on Tu Long's own view of his experience but also takes into account the opinions of literati from the same era, as well as the criticism of others writing later, to show that Tu Long shared the same experience and sense of feelings as others and that the awareness of self was generally held throughout the literati community.

We divide Tu Long's life and his struggle for social recognition into three periods. These cover

his early life period, which is the time before he passed the imperial examinations and spent the most time in his hometown, Yin County 鄆縣; the official period, in two parts: the first when he was the magistrate in the local government, and the second when he was a Bureau Secretary in the Ministry of Rites in the central government; and the post-official period. In these three periods, Tu Long experienced different social spheres containing different kinds of shared values and norms, which could basically be divided into two: official and non-official. The differences of Tu Long's struggle between the official and the non-official spheres were clear, while in his early life and post-official periods when Tu Long was a common literatus without any official status, his struggles were different from each other because, in practical matters, his status and relations had changed a lot. Tu Long's early life period was mostly spent trying to pass the imperial examinations and pursuing institutional honour within officialdom, which was based on his disposition and cultivation as a member of the elite in the local community of Yin. Therefore, before the official period, Tu Long tended to seek the status honour of the elite and local gentry through his respected and esteemed literary talent and reputation within the literati community in the process of social recognition. However, after Tu Long had been dismissed from office, the status honour as one of the elites had become a way to seek greater esteem through different kinds of social activities and interactions based on his own virtue and cultivation in the process of his social recognition.

Because Tu Long was born into a famous super-elite family among the gentry lineages of Yin with widely recognised literary talent, his moral and cultural disposition was cultivated within the cultural group of the elite, thus his struggle for recognition correspondingly reflected the status of the group, including its values and lifestyle. Because of his outstanding literary talent, the precedence of being among the elite literati became one of the elements forming the sentiment of honour. Meanwhile, by conceiving the virtues by studying Confucianism and cultivating the morality that could be looked up to and adhered to by others, either within or outside the literati group, the identity had become virtuously honourable. Therefore, during his early life period, his struggle for social recognition was largely based on the status of an elite literatus, and his crisis of recognition was also limited to being unable to meet the criteria of the group, such as his failure in

the imperial examinations or inability to maintain the elite lifestyle.

However, after Tu Long passed the Metropolitan Examination and was no longer a common literatus but an official, his recognition also changed according to his social status. Within officialdom, Tu Long gained both satisfaction and restriction. The official status itself represented honour in the bureaucratic institution. Hence, although the code of honour in terms of morality and conduct came down in one continuous line of Confucianism, it was more restricted than within the literati community. Tu Long, however, as an enlightened literatus in the trend of thought of the School of Mind, cultivated a sense of constraint with the honour code of officialdom, which indicates that he was seeking a more self-mastered form of social recognition, namely esteem, in a broader social environment. During this period, official honour was relatively more significant than self-mastered esteem in Tu Long's social recognition. Therefore, he tried to balance his struggle in two forms, especially to relatively constrain his self-mastered values and behaviour within the range of the code of honour, so that he could seek greater honour and esteem together in his post. Also, his act of balancing the two forms indicated one of Tu Long's self-mastered ideal image of an official according to his own value and virtue, which was *yanhuo shenxian* 煙火神仙, the worldly transcendent existence.<sup>57</sup> This image exactly showed his awareness and autonomy of mastering the value of self and the ethics of the official status as a moral agent. However, the unstable official environment, as well as Tu Long's misbalanced struggle, caused the greatest crisis of his social recognition, and his dismissal brought about misrecognition and broke the structure of his social recognition in the hybrid forms of honour and esteem, which caused serious damage to Tu Long's social recognition and affected his struggle for esteem within the more contestable social environment, the literati community.

The damage caused by his dismissal to Tu Long's social recognition directly led to the denial of his status and misrecognition as an official. Hence, during the post-official period, Tu Long suffered from emotional damage for a long time. Even so, it can still be seen that Tu Long was freed from the strict honour code and able to start his self-mastery of greater esteem in the reflexive

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<sup>57</sup> Tu Long, 'Suoluo Guan Qingyan Juanzhishang 娑羅館清言卷之上', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.541.

relations cultivated by his own values and virtues within different fractional literati communities. During this process, Tu Long explored the values of self and fashioned an image that could be better recognised in other literati's eyes through various social activities and interactions, as well as his self-cultivation. It cannot be assured how thoroughly Tu Long carried out self-relations, especially self-esteem, but he had already revised most of the traditional social honour as social recognition and discovered more individuated values and norms that manifested his esteem as a social subject instead of a group member. Tu Long's social relations and activities then clearly showed the process of the self-mastered struggle patterns for social recognition, during which we could see his conservatism, his breakthroughs, and the conflicts between the two. It showed the contradictory situation of literati in the transitional society from value to conduct, and also displayed how literati's varied ideas and activities affected the values and norms shared within the literati community.

## Literature Review

As a talented and comparatively influential literatus in late Ming society, Tu Long's social network was a significant part reflecting the trajectory of his life, which specifically indicated the process of Tu Long's struggle for social recognition through his social relations in different social spheres. Hence, the studies of the chronological biography of Tu Long helps in tracking his activities and experiences in detail, such as Zheng Run, Xu Shuofang, and Qin Wanchun's comprehensive chronology, and the corrections to chronologies by Li Min.<sup>58</sup> Meanwhile, Tu Long wrote more than five hundred letters to about two hundred people, which are valuable for understanding the structure of his social relations, as well as his social actions as a literatus in the context of late Ming China.

However, only a few studies of Tu Long mention his social relations; most focus on his

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<sup>58</sup> Zheng Run 鄭潤, 'Tu Long Nianbiao', in *Jinpingmei he Tu Long* 金瓶梅和屠隆 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1994); Xu Shuofang 徐朔方, 'Tu Long Nianpu 屠隆年譜', in *Ming Qing Qujia Nianpu* 明清曲家年譜, vol.2 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1993), pp.392-393; Qin Wanchun 秦皖春, 'Tu Long Nianpu 屠隆年譜' (unpublished master thesis, Fudan University, 2003); Li Min 李敏, 'Dui Youguan Tu Long Nian Pu, Nian Biao de Kaoding 對有關屠隆《年譜》、《年表》的考訂', *Journal of Qujing Normal University* 曲靖師範學院學報, 2(2007), 5-9.

interaction with particular friends. For example, Xu Zhao'an's study of the association between Tu Long and Wang Shizhen mainly discusses the religious self-cultivation of literati, especially Daoism in the sixteenth century. It even shows the interaction and competition for superiority in rhetorical arena, where Tu Long tried to challenge Wang's leadership in the field of religious self-cultivation.<sup>59</sup> Tu Long's cultivation of Daoism is also evident in his interaction with Guan Zhidao 管志道 (1536-1608) as discussed by Araki Kengo.<sup>60</sup> Zhao Zhizhong's study of Tu Long's relations with Tang Xianzu and Liu Bin's discussion of Tu Long's association with Long Ying 龍鷹 (1560-1622) both focus on specific activities and interactions, particularly in relation to literature, in order to help us to understand their literary thoughts and details of their lives.<sup>61</sup> Such examples of Tu Long's social life can comparatively show his status within the literati community, such as his relationship with Wang Shizhen, which not only reflects Tu Long's influence on literature but also shows their struggle for power within the literary arena. They also show his achievements in other areas where the literati were active, such as poetry, playwriting, and religious cultivation. However, these studies barely refer to how Tu Long's social relations affected the way he viewed at himself or how other literati viewed him, which can hardly present a dynamic process of how his social relations varied with the change in his social status, from common literatus to official and back to common literatus again. Meanwhile, if we try to explore the patterns of Tu Long and certain other literati's process of struggle for social recognition in different forms, the key is to find out the varied connection between social relations and social environments.

This thesis aims to fill the gap in the study of Tu Long in terms of his social relations and actions and their effect on his struggle for social recognition in late Ming society. However, as an influential literatus, his achievements and contributions make a difference in several other areas, and thus the studies about him also concentrate on these aspects. This review will consider the

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<sup>59</sup> Xu Zhao'an 徐兆安, 'Religious Self-Cultivation in 16th Century Literary Circles: The Exchange between Tu Long and Wang Shizhen 十六世紀文壇中的宗教修養——屠隆與王世貞的來往', *Journal of Sinological Studies* 漢學研究, 1(2012).

<sup>60</sup> Araki Kengo 荒木見悟, 'Tu Long yu Guan Zhidao 屠隆と管志道', *The Sinological Society of Japan* 日本中國學會報, 28(1976), 187-199.

<sup>61</sup> Zhao Zhizhong 趙治中, 'Tang Xianzu yu Tu Long Jiaoyi Kao 湯顯祖與屠隆交誼考', *Journal of Lishui University* 麗水學院學報, 3(2007), 24-27; Liu Bin 劉斌, 'Long Ying yu Tu Long Jiaoyou Kaoshu 龍鷹與屠隆交游考述', *Literatures (Theory Edition)* 文學界(理論版), 11(2012), 283-284.



main studies of Tu Long from the point of view of literature, religion, and his personal characteristics. Tu Long's literary achievements are discussed in most of the studies and focus on his literary ideas, forms, and creations, especially dramas. Also, Tu Long's religious cultivation concerning the theory of Reconciling of Three Teachings 三教合一, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, is important for the study of this theory, especially its formation and development. As for the studies of Tu Long's personal characteristics, which mainly focus on his indulgence, they introduce the literati's state of mind in the context of the late Ming Dynasty. These studies of Tu Long not only demonstrate his value in the history of literature and the ethos of the literati community but also provide a basis from which to explore Tu Long's life experience in depth as an example for the further study of literati in that era.

There is little doubt that as a famous literatus Tu Long's literary achievement is the most outstanding one. What is even more outstanding about his literary achievements are the literary ideas, mainly led by the idea of *xingling* 性靈, a writing style of literature that expresses the real feelings of self instead of imitating the old ways. Tu Long's pioneer status in the development of the Xingling School is what is most studied by scholars. The reason Tu Long could be given such high praise in literary history is because his pivotal role between the Revivalism School 復古派 and the Xingling School 性靈派. According to Tan Peifang, Tu Long inherited the revivalist thought from Li Mengyang 李夢陽 (1472-1529) and developed the idea of *xingling*, which is associated with the prominent literatus Yuan Hongdao of the Xingling School.<sup>62</sup> This was why Tu Long was able to be accepted by two literary schools with somewhat opposing ideas. He was listed in the revival group of the Latter Five Masters 末五子 having a very good relationship with Wang Shizhen while being highly praised by Yuan Hongdao and Tang Xianzu. Tu Long's literary creations have distinct feature of transition during the late Ming Dynasty, which shows an explicit change of thought from orthodoxy or convention to innovation. It is valuable to find out Tu Long's influence and status in literary history, while from studies we can also see how the value of Tu

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<sup>62</sup> Tan Peifang 談蓓芳, 'Mingdai Houqi Wenxue Sixiang de Yanbian de Yige Cemian: Cong Tu Long dao Jingling Pai 明代后期文學思想演變的一個側面——從屠隆到竟陵派', *Fudan Journal (Social Sciences Edition)* 復旦學報(社會科學版), 1(1989), 44-52.

Long's literary talent and achievements influenced his struggle for social recognition through his relations with different groups of literati in the community.

Tu Long was able to generate such literary propositions in that area due to the prevalence of the School of Mind and the influence of Buddhism within the literati community. According to Zhou Qun, Tu Long's literary ideas were derived from revivalism, his concept of *xingling* was heavily influenced by Buddhism and Wang Yangming's theory. Through these influences, Buddhist dhyana and the theory of *liangzhi* introduced philosophical features to his idea of *xingling*, distinguishing it from that of Yuan Hongdao.<sup>63</sup> On the basis of this, Tu Long made a breakthrough at Style Theory, *gediao* 格調說 of The Latter Seven Masters 後七子, and aligned his idea with the literary emancipatory trends of his time. His concepts of disposition, *xingqing* 性情說, his Ability and Wisdom Theory, *fucai* 賦材說, and his proposition of desire 情慾觀 advocated for following the writer's genuine emotions and fully using their talent and ability in creation.<sup>64</sup> Regardless of the specific idea, Tu Long's work emphasised a rejection of rigid imitation in literary creation and upheld self-expression. Tu Long's notion of "desire" in his literature, according to scholars' studies, was embodied in two main aspects: his creation of dramas and his prose, but it was also in his behaviour.<sup>65</sup> This "desire" has been described as his spirit of unrestraint and uprightness 狂狷, which is evident in the themes of his dramas and his indulgent behaviour.<sup>66</sup> Tu Long's idea of disposition and desire not only derived from his thought of *xingling* but also, to some extent, enhanced the expression of *xingling* in his literary works, combining elements of

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<sup>63</sup> Zhou Qun 周群, 'The Theoretical Foundations of Tu Long's Literary Thought and his Idea of "Xingling"' 屠隆的文學思想及其 "性靈" 論的學術淵源, *Journal of Nanjing Normal University (Social Science Edition)* 南京師範大學學報(社會科學版), 6(2000), 119-124.

<sup>64</sup> Liu Dezhong 劉德重 and Li Min 李敏, 'Tu Long dui Qizi Pai Gediao Lilun de Fazhan he Tupo 屠隆對七子派格調理論的發展和突破', *Journal of Shanghai University (Social Sciences Edition)* 上海大學學報(社會科學版), 5(2005), 90-94; Qian Haiying 錢海英, 'Tu Long Wenxue Lilun Yanjiu Zongshu 屠隆文學理論研究綜述', *Journal of Hangzhou Teachers College (Social Sciences Edition)* 杭州師範學院學報(社會科學版), 3(2006), 206-209; Wu Xinmiao 吳新苗, 'Tu Long's Development of Emotional Theory of the Ancient Restoration School by His Moody Theory 論屠隆 "性情說" 對復古派 "真情說" 的發展', *Journal of Huzhou Teachers College* 湖州師範學院學報, 5(2008), 8-12; Li Ranqing 李燃青 and Zheng Run 鄭潤, 'Tu Long yu Wenxue Jiefang Sichao 屠隆與文學解放思潮', *Journal of Ningbo Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)* 寧波師範學院學報(哲學社會科學版), 2(1992), 1-7; Li Xiangyao 李祥耀 and Wang Hong 汪泓, 'Tu Long Shiwen Chuangzuo Guan zhi Fucai Shuo 屠隆詩文創作觀之賦材說', *Journal of Southern Yangtze University (Humanities & Social Science)* 江南大學學報(人文社會科學版), 1(2004), 77-79.

<sup>65</sup> Li Ranqing and Zheng Run, p.7.

<sup>66</sup> Meng Binbin 孟斌斌, 'Qianxi Tu Long Shiwen zhong de Qingyu Guan 淺析屠隆詩文中的情欲觀', *Wen Jiao Zi Liao* 文教資料, 21(2011), 12-13.

personality, religion, and indulgence. This contributed to his literary reputation and became a significant element in his struggle for social recognition within the literati community.

Tu Long's different literary thought, based on the idea of *xingling*, which contains both personal disposition and Buddhist influence, profoundly affected his literary creation and connoisseurship.<sup>67</sup> Various studies discuss on how Tu Long's literary works, influenced by *xingling*, manifest in his poetry, prose, and dramas, with particular emphasis on how *xingling* is expressed in his poems and dramas. Scholars mainly focus on four aspects: first, how Tu Long's self-awareness is reflected in his literary creations influenced by the School of Mind; second, how his religious thought, including both Buddhism and Daoism, shaped his idea of *xingling* in his poetry; third, the development of Tu Long's poetic thought and creation from both revivalism and *xingling* to highlight his significant status between two schools and his distinctive writing style; and fourth, how Tu Long's idea of *xingling* promoted discussions on the connection between literary forms and content.<sup>68</sup> Additionally, Tu Long's connoisseurship-related literary works illustrate his idea of *xingling* in terms of distinctive aesthetics, which provides valuable insights into the study of literati taste in the late Ming period. For instance, his *Cha Shuo* 茶說, *Discussion of Tea*, contributes to the study of the history of *longjing* tea 龍井茶; and also his commentary of paintings in *Hua Jian* 畫箋, *Treatise of Paintings*, introduces the concept of “*qu* 趣”, which conveys a sense of interest as a refined taste in paintings, to evaluate the history of paintings.<sup>69</sup> This literati taste then becomes the key in the competition of identity and social status, especially in culture-related materials, which integrates into the literati's struggle for social recognition and

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<sup>67</sup> Shi Youmin 施由民, 'Mingdai Tu Long de Xingling Zhuiqiu yu Cha Lun 明代屠隆的性靈追求與茶論', *Nongye Kaogu* 農業考古, 2(2000), 3-6.

<sup>68</sup> Zhang Jingqiu 張靜秋, 'Shiyi Wei Mei, Changshu Xingling: Tu Long Wenxue Piping Yipie 適意為美 暢抒性靈——屠隆文學批評一瞥', *Journal of Lianyungang Normal College* 連雲港教育學院學報, 2(2000), 12-15; Xu Meijie 徐美潔, 'Tu Long Jing Ming Dao Xinyang jiqi Xingling Shilun 屠隆淨明道信仰及其性靈詩論' (unpublished master's thesis, Shanghai Normal University, 2008); Zheng Lihua 鄭利華, 'Tu Long yu Mingdai Fugu Pai Houqi Shixue Guannian 屠隆與明代復古派後期詩學觀念', *Literary Review* 文學評論, 1(2010), 51-59; Huang Lina 黃麗娜, 'Tu Long jiqi Shige he Wenxue Sixiang 屠隆及其詩歌和文學思想' (unpublished master's thesis, Hunan University, 2011); Chen Yongbiao 陳永標, 'Tu Long de Yishu Fengge Lun 屠隆的藝術風格論', *Journal of South China Normal University (Social Science Edition)* 華南師範學院學報(哲學社會科學版), 3(1979), 48-52.

<sup>69</sup> Wang Jianping 王建平, 'Chongxin Gaiyi, Zicheng Yijia: Tu Long yu Ta de Cha Shuo 崇新改易, 自成一家——屠隆與他的《茶說》', *Agricultural Archaeology* 農業考古, 5(2012), 275-282; Jiang Liu 蔣榴, 'Qianxi Tu Long Hua Jian Zhong de Huashi 'Qu' Tan 淺析屠隆《畫箋》中的畫史“趣”談', *Masterpiece Review* 名作欣賞, 35(2013), 170-171.

forms a significant pattern in their pursuit of esteem.

In addition to these aspects, Tu Long's outstanding literary achievements are also evident in his three dramas. Corresponding studies concentrate on how these dramas reflect Tu Long's idea of *xingling*, particularly about his self-expression and awareness, as well as his spiritual pursuits and religious beliefs, specifically his thought on the Reconciling of Three Teachings.<sup>70</sup> The studies primarily focus on three areas: first, Tu Long's Buddhist thoughts, especially in the drama, *Tanhua Ji* 曇花記 *Story of Millennium Flower*; second, how his thought on the Reconciling of Three Teachings is integrated into the characterisation in the three dramas; and third, the possibility of combining drama and Buddhism in late Ming through Tu Long's works.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, scholars have analysed Tu Long's three dramas from three additional important perspectives. One examines the female images in the *Story of Millennium Flower*, discussing the how religion created a utopia for women in that era while demonstrating his sympathy for them. Another perspective considers how the three plays serve as an autobiography reflecting his own thought and experience. The third focuses on the performance forms in his dramas, such as the theory of *pai chang* 排場, the form of stage performance, and how the structure of dramas affects the performance.<sup>72</sup>

It can be seen that Tu Long's dramas are valuable not only in literary and artistic creation but also in studying the trends of thought within the literati community and the forms of stage

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<sup>70</sup> Wu Xinmiao 吳新苗, 'Tu Long Yanjiu 屠隆研究', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Capital Normal University, 2006); Liu Yi 劉易, 'Study on Tu Long 屠隆研究', (unpublished doctoral thesis, East China Normal University, 2008).

<sup>71</sup> Tian Tongxu 田同旭, 'Yi Chuanqi Chan Foli Cai Shiliao Wei Xiqu: Lun Tu Long de Tanhua Ji 以傳奇闡佛理采史料為戲曲——論屠隆的《曇花記》', *Journal of Teachers College of Shanxi University* 山西大學師範學院學報, 2(2000), 52-57; Liu Qun 劉群, 'Tu Long Sanjiao Sixiang jiqi zai Chuangzuo zhong de Biaoxian 屠隆三教思想及其在戲劇創作中的表現', *Academic Exchange* 學術交流, 5(2007), 173-176; Lin Zhili 林智莉, 'A Study of Tu Long's Beliefs and Views on Life using Siou Wun Ji as the Core Material 屠隆之信仰與生命觀——以《修文記》為核心探討', *Journal of National Taiwan Normal University* 師大學報, 2(2011), 95-120; Wang Mengxiao, 'Reconciling the Three Teachings: Tu Long's(1543-1605) Self-Cultivation and Playwriting', *Late Imperial China*, 41(2020), 1-37; Lin Zhili 林智莉, 'A Study on the Possibility of the Integrating Drama and Buddhism and the Creative Scope from the Perspective of Buddhist Drama Creation in the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties 熱鬧場中, 度化有緣: 從明末清初佛教中人戲曲創作觀點看戲佛融通的可能性及其創作規範', *Bulletin of Chinese* 國文學報 52(2012), 145-175; Xiao Ziqiang 肖自強, 'Tu Long Fojiao Sixiang Yanjiu 屠隆佛教思想研究' (unpublished master's thesis, Nanjing University, 2012).

<sup>72</sup> 'Tu Long Tanhua Ji zhong de Nüxing Xingxiang Jiedu 屠隆《曇花記》中的女性形象解讀', *Lan Zhou Xue Kan* 蘭州學刊, 4(2011), 7-10; Wu Xinmiao, 'Lun Tu Long Xiqu de 'Zi Zhuan Xing' Tezheng 論屠隆戲曲的“自傳性”特徵', *Journal of National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts* 中國戲曲學院學報, 3(2008), 17-21; Fei Zhenzhong 費振鐘, 'Quzhong Renbujian: Tu Long he Ta de Tanhua Ji 曲終人不見——屠隆和他的《曇花記》', *Shu Wu* 書屋, 7(2000), 44-45; Zhong Shaozhen 鍾韶真, 'Ming Tulong Ji Feng Yi Ge Yue Fu Pai Chang Yi Shu Yan Jiu 明屠隆及《鳳儀閣樂府》排場藝術研究' (unpublished master thesis, Soochow University, 2015); Liu Yi, 'Study on Tu Long', pp.150-156.

performance in late Ming. The significance of his dramas extends beyond literature to encompass various societal discussions of that era. Tu Long's reputation as a playwright also secured him a stable status within the literati community, maintaining his position among the elite and cultivating stable social relations with other prominent playwrights, such as Tang Xianzu, Liang Chenyu 梁辰魚 (1520-1592) and Mei Dingzuo 梅鼎祚 (1549-1615). This reputation greatly supported his struggle for social recognition in the form of esteem, particularly after his dismissal from office. Tu Long even organised his own troupe, performing in Hangzhou, Suzhou, Wuxi, and Fuzhou, while participating in various drama activities to maintain the connections with certain other group of literati.<sup>73</sup>

Meanwhile, Tu Long's thought on the Reconciling of Three Teachings is not only evident in his literary creation but also developed into a comparatively comprehensive theory. Wu Xinmiao's study elaborates how Tu Long's thought was cultivated through his life experience, analysing the concrete arguments in his theory based on *ti* 體 (the base of three teachings), which Tu Long identified as *xin* 心(heart); *yong* 用(practice), particularly the practical significance of Buddhism and *geyou qizhi* 各有其至, which refers to the different effects of each teaching.<sup>74</sup> Although Tu Long was dissatisfied with the conflicts among the three teachings, his thought remained rooted in Confucianism.<sup>75</sup> This perspective, on one hand, established Tu Long's position in the development and promotion of the Reconciling of Three Teachings itself; on the other hand, it significantly influenced his values. For instance, the ideal state of living he envisioned was called *yanhuo shenxian*, a transcendent thought and attitude based on the official status. It is clear that Tu Long's thought on the Reconciling of Three Teachings greatly influenced his path to self-cultivation.<sup>76</sup>

Tu Long's literary achievements are also evident in his contributions to the development of a literary form of late Ming essays, known as *qingyan* 清言. His *Suoluoguan Qingyan* 娑羅館清言, *Sal-Tree-Hall Qingyan*, can be regarded as a key work in establishing the *qingyan* style, which is

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<sup>73</sup> For details, see Yang Huiling 楊慧玲, *Xiqu Bansshe Yanjiu: Ming Qing Jiaban* 戲曲班社研究：明清家班 (Xiamen: Xiamen University Press, 2006); Yin Yalin 殷亞林, *Mingdai Xiqu yu Wenhua Jiazu Yanjiu* 明代戲曲與文化家族研究 (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2016).

<sup>74</sup> Wu Xinmiao, 'Tu Long Yanjiu', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Capital Normal University, 2006). pp.17-22.

<sup>75</sup> Liu Qun, p.174.

<sup>76</sup> Wang Mengxiao, pp.3-4.

characterised by a clear awareness of its standards and high artistic quality in both content and form.<sup>77</sup> Tu Long is not only a significant writer of *qingyan* essay but also a leader in the creation of *qingyan* among the literati of late Ming, making the maturation of this literary form.<sup>78</sup> In the cultural context of that time, Tu Long's creation of *qingyan* was inevitably influenced by the School of Mind and religion, particularly Buddhism, incorporating the thought of dhyana to express his philosophy of life.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, Tu Long's literary achievements in the development of late Ming literature represent the most significant highlights of his life. Studies about his literary works clearly demonstrate his value as a writer, while his literary contributions also impact his role as a social subject within the literati community. All of Tu Long's accomplishments enhance his esteem as a talented literatus among other literati, including the elite. Thus, his ideas and works become powerful elements in his struggle for social recognition in forms of both honour and esteem.

However, Tu Long's value extend beyond his literary ideas and creations; his behaviour is also a valuable aspect of studying the literati of the late Ming Dynasty, which includes his religious cultivation and lifestyle. In my research Tu Long's religious cultivation holds greater significance in his religion-related activities, especially those associated with Buddhism. Timothy Brook's study elaborates on the close connection between Buddhism and local gentry, highlighting how Buddhism influenced the social status and identity of local gentry, especially the elite gentry.<sup>80</sup> In his book, Yin County is presented as an example of monastic patronage by the gentry. Tu Long was regarded as the outstanding "county figure most associated with the patronage of Buddhist institution in the closing decades of the sixteenth century, not just in Yin but nationally".<sup>81</sup> For Tu Long, his intensive involvement in literary patronage can be attributed, on the one hand, to his family origin as part of a super elite lineage, and on the other hand, to his literary ability and

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<sup>77</sup> Lin Ying 林瑩, 'The Mirror Image in Tu Long's *Sāla House Qing Yan*: Also, on an Alternative Dimension of Qing-Yan Style Essay in Late Ming Dynasty 屠隆《娑羅館清言》的多層鏡像——兼談晚明清言小品的另一維度', *Graduate Students' Journal of Peking University* 北京大學研究生學誌, Z2(2013), 130-141 (p.131).

<sup>78</sup> Wu Xinmiao, 'Tu Long Yanjiu', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Capital Normal University, 2006). p.118.

<sup>79</sup> Lin Ying, p.140.

<sup>80</sup> Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge (Massachusetts): Harvard University Press, 1993).

<sup>81</sup> Timothy Brook, pp.249-277, p.272.

reputation, both of which strongly support his struggle for social recognition within the cultural elite, both locally and nationally. Therefore, in this thesis, rather than discussing Tu Long's religious cultivation of Buddhism and Daoism as content—topics that other scholars have already closely studied on—I will focus on how these elements effectively influenced his social interactions, especially in maintaining his social relations and, most importantly, in his struggle for social recognition within the literati community.

The discussion of Tu Long's lifestyle primarily focuses on his indulgence and reclusion as significant aspects that illustrate the decline of intellectual ethos and values in the late Ming Dynasty. These studies mainly examine the changes in Tu Long's state of mind from his early life to the period following his dismissal from officialdom. In the study by Xu Long and Xu Meijie, it is noted that Tu Long experienced a series of change in his state of mind from a confident, somewhat conceited literatus on the basis of his literary talent, to a state of suffering and escapism. This shift let him to become reclusive, which reflected his dissatisfaction and disappointment with officialdom, as well as the resistance to the circumstances faced by the literati.<sup>82</sup> The key reason for Tu Long's changing values and behaviour was his dismissal, which was a significant blow to his pride, self-worth, and real life, resulting in indulgent behaviour as a means of coping with his anguish. Hence, he has been accused of exerting a negative moral influence on the literati community through his involvement in partying, visiting prostitutes, and engaging with catamites.<sup>83</sup> However, while Tu Long's indulgent behaviour is a notable aspect, he cannot simply be defined as a “naturally indulgent person who lusted for pleasure”.<sup>84</sup> His life experience reveals that he was a literatus who upheld orthodox Confucian values and aspired to gain some

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<sup>82</sup> Xu Long 許龍, 'Zifu, Zilian, Zidu: Shilun Tu Long de Wenren Xintai 自負、自戀、自瀆——試論屠隆的文人心態', *Journal of Jiaying University* 嘉應大學學報, part.1, 2(1998), 56-60; part.2, 4(1998), 60-65; Xu Meijie 徐美潔, 'Wanming Jiangnan Wenen Yinyi Fengxi de Wenhua Gongxing: Yi Chen Jiru yu Tu Long Weili 晚明江南文人隱逸風習的文化共性——以陳繼儒與屠隆為例', *Academics* 學術界, 1(2013), 133-139.

<sup>83</sup> “明之末年，國政壞而士風亦壞，掉弄聰明，決裂防檢。遂至於如此。屠隆陳繼儒諸人，不得不任其咎也。” Ji Yun 紀昀, 'Zhangshi Cangshu 張氏藏書', in *Siku Quanshu Zongmu Tiyaoyao* 四庫全書總目提要 (Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1922), vol.134, p.2772; Gui Xinyi 桂心儀, 'Yichao Caizi Zhuan Tu Long 一朝才子傳屠隆', *Journal of Ningbo Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)* 寧波師範學院學報(哲學社會科學版), 3(1993), 23-28; Meng Binbin, 'Qianxi Tu Long Shiwen zhong de Qingyu Guan', pp.12-13; Meng Binbin 孟斌斌, Tan Ying 譚英 and Wu Jiadi 吳佳娣, 'Tu Long's Conversion of Literary Thoughts from the Perspective of His Passion Conception 從屠隆的情慾觀看其文學思想的轉變', *Academic Exchange* 學術交流, 8(2011), 152-155 (pp.154-155).

<sup>84</sup> Li Ranqing and Zheng Run, p.7.

achievements in his official career as a conscientious and effective magistrate. Even after leaving officialdom, his sense of responsibility was evident in his concern during a local famine, which manifested not only in practical actions, such as praying for rain alongside the magistrate, but also in his literary works, such as prose of discussion of his political thought and policy, including Huang Zheng Kao 荒政考 and Study of Famine Administration, Sanwu Shuili Kao 三吳水利考, Study of Water Conservancy of District of Sanwu.<sup>85</sup> Tu Long's commitment to his duties and the wellbeing of local people indicates that he was not merely an unrestrained literatus indulging in pleasure; he was also a literatus with strong sense of political responsibility, aligned with the expectations of Confucianism, and an honourable official who valued his administrative duties.<sup>86</sup>

From this review of Tu Long's various thoughts and behaviours, it is clear that he was a complex individual during a transitional period in society, reflecting a mixed state involving multiple dimensions. Both his values and actions show a transition from convention to innovation, where both conventional and innovative values and behaviours are expressed as incomplete. This certain incompleteness of Tu Long makes him a suitable figure for exploring the struggle for social recognition among the literati in different forms, while highlighting the coexistence or conflict between these forms.

## Outline

In this thesis I will use four chapters to discuss Tu Long's struggle for social recognition in the hybrid forms of honour and esteem throughout three periods of his life. The first chapter will be about Tu Long's early life, concentrating on the process of social recognition in the form of status honour as local elite gentry member before he passed the imperial examinations. It will introduce Tu Long's family background and local social environment to draw out the basic values and norms that shaped his initial sense of recognition within the community. I will focus on Tu Long's

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<sup>85</sup> Meng Binbin 孟斌斌, 'Tu Long Shiwén zhōng de Zhèngjiào Guān 屠隆詩文中的政教觀', *Literature and Art Criticism* 文藝評論, 8(2012), 126-127.

<sup>86</sup> About the detailed evaluation of Tu Long, refer to Wu Xinmiao, 'Tu Long Yanjiu', pp.22-35; Kui Fei 隗芾, 'Tu Long Shengping Zhushu Kao 屠隆生平著述考', *Shehui Kexue Zhanxian* 社會科學戰線, 6(1993), 220-223.



interaction with the local elite community and how these influenced his struggle for recognition both then and after. Additionally, the process of Tu Long passing the imperial examinations is also important, particularly his crisis of recognition when he failed twice in the Provincial Examination and when he worked as a teacher elsewhere. This period of life is regarded as fundamental in preparing Tu Long for his later struggles for social recognition in officialdom and after his dismissal.

The second chapter will address Tu Long's official period, focusing on his pursuit of institutional honour within officialdom and how he balanced the struggle for honour and esteem. This period will be divided into two parts: first, his work as a magistrate in Yingshang County 潁上 and Qingpu County 青浦; second, his promotion to the central government in Beijing. The local official time will concentrate on his efforts to pursue greater honour through his duties and achievements, during which his sense of constraint contributed to the rise of his self-esteem in terms of social relations and interactions, not only as an official but also as a talented literatus. During his time in the capital, which marks the final stage of Tu Long's official career, his social recognition reflects a comparatively harmonious state through his self-fashioned image of *yanhuo shenxian*. Here, Tu Long gained both greater honour and esteem within the two social communities of officialdom and the literati. This period will also explore how Tu Long's struggle for esteem, based on his own values and virtues, conflicted with the code of honour in officialdom, eventually leading to his dismissal.

Chapter three will specifically discuss Tu Long's dismissal, including both the immediate and deeper reasons behind it, and how this dismissal resulted in misrecognition within officialdom and a crisis of recognition in his struggle. This chapter will primarily focus on Tu Long's own statements of the case and his emotional responses. I will explain the damage caused by Tu Long's dismissal to his social status and recognition, and how the dismissal itself became a sign of esteem in his struggle for recognition. Additionally, I will examine the various conflicts in Tu Long's thoughts and behaviours as he navigated the differing value systems of the two social communities: officialdom and the literati, as well as the changing values in a transitional society.

The fourth chapter will explore Tu Long's total self-mastered struggle for social recognition in the form of esteem during his post-official period, discussed thematically according to his social relations and activities. According to Tu Long's letters to friends, I will analyse his struggle patterns through two main themes: his different forms of socialising and his self-cultivation. Tu Long's socialising during the period can be divided into two types: one focusing on specific social forms, such as literati associations; the other being his flexible socialising within self-mastered relations. The literati associations represent intensive social activities that boost the concentrated interactions among literati across different social spheres, grounded in their various virtues and cultivation. In contrast, flexible socialising addresses Tu Long's immediate social needs, showing his total self-mastery in seeking greater esteem through multiple connections oriented by personal values and virtues. As for his self-cultivation, apart from practical socialising, Tu Long aimed to cultivate a virtuous image of a literatus through his taste and lifestyle, focusing on the design and decoration of his houses and gardens, writing, and spiritual cultivation. In this chapter, I expect to show Tu Long's clear awareness of how to use his accumulated social and cultural capital to maintain and enhance his esteem in his struggle for recognition within the literati community, as well as the different kinds of patterns developed during this process.

The conclusion will make a discussion of how the application of social recognition in pre-modern China, specifically during late Ming Dynasty, is constrained yet possible. Tu Long's case vividly reflects the struggles of literati for social recognition during this transitional period, which presents a dynamic picture of how social recognition transforms from hierarchical to modern forms. This detailed process contains progress and retrogression, convention and innovation, breakthroughs and confusion. Although Tu Long's struggle for social recognition provides a reference point for understanding the literati's experiences in late Ming China, it cannot encompass all transitional states of social recognition across different periods in China or other countries. This thesis, focusing on the single case of Tu Long, aims to describe a miniature representation of one dynamic aspect within a long historical context.

# Chapter 1

## The Pursuit of Honour

Literati, as a group educated within the value system cultivated by Confucianism, conventionally aimed to become officials. Being an official was the most orthodox career choice for a literatus, it not only meant a rise in social status from a common literatus to one with official status but also conferred honour as a member of the officialdom community. Hence, it was a significant way of achieving recognition for the identity of literati. However, in the context of the late Ming Dynasty, factors such as the low passing rate of imperial examinations and a changing social ethos encouraged literati to pursue new or even anti-orthodox life. Consequently, the desire to become an official, or the aspiration to do so, was not an absolute measure of a literatus's value at that time. The honour associated with official status remained a vital form of recognition within officialdom that could not be easily diminished.

For literati, passing the imperial examinations and serving as officials were still the first choice in their life. They spent the most of their time and energy in the series of examinations to prove their worth in society by gaining honour within officialdom. The community of literati, composed of individuals at varying levels, had different realistic or psychological demands for honour as officials, depending on their family origin, personal talent, and cultivation. These factors determined the social environments in which literati were cultivated and the communities shaped by different values and norms from which they derived their sense of recognition. For instance, literati from elite groups, such as gentry lineages or families with comparatively higher status in officialdom, were close to officialdom and had greater access to various officials. This proximity provided them with more opportunities to interact with officials or higher educated literati, as well as a stronger desire to prove their values and qualifications as members of the elite community. While this was not the only way to gain self-value at the time, it remained the most common and widely acknowledged path for literati.

As a literatus living in the late Ming Dynasty, Tu Long also dedicated much of his early life to the pursuit of honour as an official. As a member of a local gentry lineage and a well-known talented literatus, he received support from the local elite community, which cultivated a cultural and moral disposition along with a corresponding lifestyle shared by his peers. Before Tu Long became an official in 1577, his primary goal was to pass the imperial examinations and attain a higher social status, transitioning from a common literatus to an official. Hence, the process of achieving this goal was the essential process of his pursuit of honour as an official, a form of social recognition. Patterns of Tu Long's struggle for social recognition were established during this early pursuit, where identified himself through the values and norms constructed within the local elite community while building fundamental relations for recognition. It seems that as Tu Long cultivated himself within the local elite community, he was also accumulating the social and cultural capital, which later helped him maintain his social and cultural standing when faced with crisis of recognition. Throughout his early pursuit, not only did he establish his preferred community for recognition, but he also developed a sense of self-respect and self-esteem through his personal talents and achievements, as well as his position within the literati community. These aspects were evident in his social activities and interactions with various local elite and literati, during which Tu Long successfully built his literary and moral reputation. However, he also experienced anxiety and crisis of recognition when confronted with changes in social environments and the failure to achieve his life goal of passing the imperial examinations.

To explore how Tu Long's early life influenced his social recognition later on, first, it is essential to consider his family origin and the primary social environment that cultivated his sense of belonging and self-worth. As mentioned, being part of a prominent local gentry lineage meant that Tu Long's fundamental social environment was already more privileged than that of ordinary literati. However, his specific circumstances were not as simple as those of other elites, which complicated his pursuit of honour, and enriching his experience. Born in 1543 in Ningbo Prefecture 寧波府 in Zhejiang 浙江 Province, Tu Long was a member of Tu family, one of the elite gentry families in Yin County. When he was six years old (1548), his father's shipping business failed

due to a maritime accident.<sup>87</sup> This led the family into a difficult situation, forcing his father to sell their family house in Taohua Du to make ends meet and move to a smaller residence. Therefore, from a young age, Tu Long experienced the disparities caused by financial difficulties, which meant that his family's practical circumstances did not align the status of the Tu family within the local elite community. As Tu Long grew up and built his reputation as a talented literatus, this disparity continued to affect his life, particularly during challenging times when it created a sense of asymmetric recognition between his talent, reputation, status, and the social environment that could not meet his social needs. Growing up in a prominent elite family, the education and cultivation he received shaped his cultural disposition and self-values. For example, when Tu Long went return from school without food to alleviate his hunger, his "father would calmly recite the Classics and histories [to him], telling the idea that a man of virtue did not need to be full 公第從容與語經史，及君子無求飽大指".<sup>88</sup> Generally, Tu Long's family environment provided him with orthodox Confucian values, although their difficult circumstances did not allow him to enjoy an elite lifestyle in practical terms.

Fortunately, Tu Long possessed great talent in writing, which was quickly acknowledged by the local elite. His recognition began with the appreciation from members of the Tu family, particularly Tu Dashan 屠大山 (1500-1579), Tu Long's nephew, who was forty-two years older than him, and Tu Dashan's friend Zhang Shiche 張時徹 (1500-1577). Both held senior positions in the Ministry of War and belonged to the core of local gentry lineages. As Tu Long wrote to Li Guancha 李觀察, who possibly the inspector of the local administration at that time, "When I tied up my hair [meaning reaching fifteen], I was appreciated by the Two Simas [originally referring to the Minister of War, later an unofficial reference to an official in the Ministry of War]. ..... The reason the Two Simas knew me was for my literary talent 某束髮時，嘗受知兩司馬。.....兩司馬之知某者，以文爾".<sup>89</sup> With the endorsement of respected members of the elite community, Tu Long gradually gained recognition from other elite and renowned literati, such as Shen Mingchen

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<sup>87</sup> Wang Shizhen, 'Tu Danxigong Muzhiming 屠丹溪公墓誌銘', in *Yanzhou Xugao* 兗州續稿, 270vol., *Qinding Siku Quanshu* edition, vol.93, pp.11a-b.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p.13a.

<sup>89</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Li Guancha 與李觀察', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.389.

沈明臣 (1518-1596), a talented poet appreciated by Zhang Shiche, who introduced Tu Long to literary circles and later became his tutor and good friend.<sup>90</sup> It can be seen that Tu Long was recognised by the local elite and the literati community as soon as he showed his literary talent, even as a boy when he was referred to as a “child prodigy 奇童”.<sup>91</sup> Praise for him was widespread, with descriptions such as “born with special talent 生有異才”, “young but smart 少而警穎”, and “as especially talented as ancient models 天才橫軼, 不讓古人”.<sup>92</sup> His literary talent played a significant role in his success in the imperial examinations, and he gained the qualification of Cultivated Talent when he was twenty years old (in 1562).<sup>93</sup>

There was no doubt that Tu Long’s literary talent was a crucial element in his struggle for recognition in his early life, which established his status in the local elite community and built his personal reputation within the broader literati community. His talent enabled him to seek status honour as a member of the elite group in the local community, while simultaneously serving as an outstanding virtue that fostered self-esteem based on the literary values and norms. Because of the acknowledgement of his talent, Tu Long developed a strong sense of belonging to the local elite community. His struggle for social recognition was primarily framed by the values and norms shared within this community, allowing him not only to be recognised but also to identify himself within the elite cultural environment. Tu Long’s family origin as part of an elite lineage and the cultural disposition cultivated in this environment significantly influenced his social recognition, particularly in the interplay between status honour and self-esteem. In this context, honour as an elite was more important than self-esteem as a talented literatus, especially during his pursuit of honour as an official. However, this status honour was effectively maintained through the esteem afforded to his talent within the elite community. Meanwhile, Tu Long’s complex personal situation meant that his struggle was not only focused on elite virtues and lifestyles; he also faced

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<sup>90</sup> About the exact years Tu Long started to have interaction with Shen Mingchen, Tu Dashan and Zhang Shiche, see Qin Wanchun’s ‘Tu Long Nianpu 屠隆年譜’ and Li Min’s ‘Dui Youguan Tu Long Nian Pu, Nian Biao de Kaoding’.

<sup>91</sup> Tu Long, ‘Lun Shi Wen 論詩文’, in *Hongbao Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.8, p.446.

<sup>92</sup> Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉 and others, ‘Xu Wei, Tu Long 徐渭、屠隆’, in *Ming Shi 明史* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), p.7388; Wang Shizhen, ‘Tu Danxigong Muzhiming’, p.13a; Li Yesi 李鄴嗣, ‘Shu Tu Changqing Xiansheng Chidu Hou 書屠長卿先生尺牘後’, in *Gaotang Shiwenji 杲堂詩文集* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1988), p.689.

<sup>93</sup> The details can be seen from Tu Long’s letter to Yan Jing 顏鯨(1514-1591): ‘Yu Yan Yinglei Shiyu 與顏應雷侍御’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol. 6, p.383.

the general difficulties experienced by ordinary literati in the late Ming Dynasty. Therefore, the formative stage of Tu Long's social recognition should be discussed from two aspects: first, his elite status influenced by the Tu family and the local elite environment; and second, the crisis of recognition he experienced due to personal circumstances.

The gentry lineages and the elite cultural environment mutually reinforced each other: the gentry lineages constituted the elite community in the local area and created the corresponding cultural and social environment, while the elite environment provided local elites and literati with a social sphere for sharing and maintaining elite values and norms. Yin was a typical place flourishing with gentry lineages and a prosperous economic and cultural environment. The Tu family, as one of these gentry lineages, contributed to the prosperity of Yin, and Tu Long, as a member of the Tu family, greatly benefited from both the family's status and the elite environment. The prosperity of Yin, particularly its local elite culture, was a miniature version of the broader development of elite families, dating back to the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) when the capital was relocated to Lin'an 臨安 (now Hangzhou 杭州). As the regime shifted to the northern area of Zhejiang, many elite families from the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) immigrated southern, with Yin in Ningbo being one of their settlement areas. The Tu Family was among those who moved directly to Yin from Daliang 大梁 (now Kaifeng 開封), the capital of Northern Song Dynasty.<sup>94</sup>

These historical and political reasons cultivated the local elite culture and social environment in Yin, which was described as "old families and gentry lineages gathering, with famous mountains and great halls of temples..... the literature of Siming [another name of Ningbo] was at the top of the Zhejiang area 故家士族，名山琳宇.....四明文獻，甲於兩浙".<sup>95</sup> Within this context, competition among influential families was evident, based on their influence in the local official affairs, reputation, and status. However, much of the competition was about cultural leadership within the local social community, grounded in the cultural and political achievements of each family. There even were various rankings for the most prominent families generated within the

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<sup>94</sup> Wang Shizhen, 'Tu Danxigong Muzhiming', pp.10b-11a.

<sup>95</sup> 'Fanli 凡例', in *Qianlong Yin Xianzhi* 乾隆鄞縣誌, 1788, p.1a, 2a

local elite community, with the Tu family also included in these rankings. By the mid-Ming, the Tu family had become one of the Top Four Great Families in Yin, alongside the Yang, Zhang, and Lu families, who led the local elite culture and established the values and norms constituting the basis of the local elite community and social environment. These unofficial rankings of elite families indicated that a family's status, to some extent, was not only decided by the official ranks its members achieved but also involved a relatively open social environment for competition, in terms of cultural influence and reputation, particularly in forming new values and norms within the community. Although the connection between family members' official ranks and the number of family members passing the Palace Examination remained significant criteria in this competition, and the elite itself represented a hierarchical status, the public appraisal of elite families' reputations and achievements reflected an emerging awareness of self-values as moral agents and individualised social subjects. Therefore, the competition extended beyond family contests to contain the personal reputations and achievements of individual elite or literatus, which fostered self-esteem linked to status honour. As previously mentioned, regarding Tu Long's nephew Tu Dashan, in addition to being referred to alongside Zhang Shiche, as the "Two Simas", he was also ranked among the Three Simas of Donghai 東海三司馬 with Zhang Shiche and Fan Qin 范欽 (1506-1585), the owner of Tianyi Pavilion 天一閣, which was Fan Qin's private library with a vast collection of books. This illustrates the high status of Tu family within the local community, both in familial and personal matters. Tu Long, as a family member and a well-known talented literatus, was greatly influenced by the social environment created by the Tu family and other elite families, along with their leadership in the elite community.

Therefore, Tu Long was inevitably shaped in the values and norms of elite while developing a sense of honour as a member of the elite gentry class. His personal reputation for literary talent was largely aligned with the cultural status of the Tu family within the local community. As mentioned earlier, the status of an elite gentry family was heavily influenced by the official ranks of its members. The Tu family earned its position not only through cultural influence but also due to the high ranks attained by its members in officialdom. The Tu family emerged from Tu Yong 屠



浦 (1440-1512), who was a cousin of Tu Long's father and Tu Dashan's grandfather, making Tu Dashan Tu Long's nephew. Tu Yong passed the Palace Examination in 1466 and reached the rank of Minister of Personnel in 1497. Because of this position, he was also referred to Tu Tianguan 屠天官, as "Tianguan" was an alternative name for the Minister of Personnel, responsible for overseeing all state officials. Tu Dashan, as one of the Three Simas, served as the vice-minister of the Ministry of War in Nanjing, which allowed his son Tu Benjun 屠本峻 (1542-1622) to qualify for official status without taking the imperial examinations. This was known as "Protection Privilege 蔭", a recruitment system for officials of rank three and above (in the early Ming period, officials of rank seven or higher could also benefit from this privilege), allowing their sons to gain official status automatically. Given this official lineage, Tu Long's early pursuit was primarily for the honour associated with being an official, which not only realised his self-worth as a talented literatus but also maintained his status within his elite gentry family and the local elite community, rather than merely securing a post in officialdom.

Although Tu Long had a very good relationship with his grandnephew Tu Benjun, and his talent and reputation were comparable, he did not have the same opportunity as Tu Benjun. Despite not belonging to the same branch of the family, Tu Benjun's automatic attainment of official status placed additional pressure on Tu Long in his pursuit of an official career. Therefore, passing the imperial examinations and attaining official status, even advancing to a relatively high rank, was a significant goal for literati from elite families like Tu Long. While failure to pass the examinations might not severely undermine their elite status, it is important to note that in the late Ming, literati values could be realised in multiple ways. Many renowned literati gained esteem based on their personal reputations and achievements, yet the significance of being officials remained crucial for elite literati in their process of social recognition. In Tu Long's case, this pursuit was very important and necessary for maintaining his status within the local elite community and seeking social recognition in hybrid forms.

While the pursuit of official honour was the main goal in Tu Long's early life, maintaining relationships within the local social and cultural community was also essential for enhancing his

sense of self-worth, respect, and esteem. A series of social activities and interactions based on literary cultivation and the tasteful elite lifestyle shared by local elite and literati became the primary patterns of seeking recognition. This included participating in the literati associations, such as the Yongshang Shishe 甬上詩社, the Yongshang Poetry Association founded by Zhang Shiche, and visiting friends or touring cultural and scenic spots while creating poems during these outings. Through these social interactions, Tu Long not only established his leadership status within the local literati community but also enhanced his literary reputation and cultivation. According to Tu Long's letters, he frequently interacted with the poet Shen Mingchen and his friends Yu Yin 余寅 (1541-1615) and Yang Chengkun 楊承鯤 (1550-1589). Together, they were later referred to as the Yongshang Sijia 甬上四家, the Four Great Writers of Yongshang in the Ming Dynasty.<sup>96</sup> Like Tu Dashan, Tu Long earned his position in the local ranking system through his own talent and literary achievements. Tu Dashan and Zhang Shiche played significant roles in introducing Tu Long to the elite circle and helping him build his reputation within both the local and broader literati community.

For instance, in 1573, two years after Tu Long failed his Provincial Examination in 1570, the Surveillance Vice Commissioner, Liu Xuan 劉翹 (1527-?) visited Ningbo on an inspection tour. All three Simas—Tu Dashan, Zhang Shiche and Fan Qin—recommended Tu Long to him. Liu tested Tu Long's abilities with a poetic essay, Minghai Botian Fu 溟海波恬賦, Rhapsody of Quiet Sea, which impressed him greatly.<sup>97</sup> Since then, Tu Long's literary reputation had extended beyond the local literati community of Yin, spreading throughout the Zhejiang area. Meanwhile, Tu Long's leadership, derived from both his elite status and his outstanding talent and reputation, was firmly established within the local literati community. Hence, his socialising was not limited to elite but also included local literati. For example, he had to decline Zhang Shiche's invitation to go hiking in the mountains with local literati, which showed Tu Long's reputation within the local

<sup>96</sup> This was enumerated by Wan Sitong's 萬斯同 (1638-1702).

<sup>97</sup> Yang Dezhou 楊德周, 'Ming Gu Wenlinlang Libu Yizhi Sizhushi Chishui Tugong Muzhiming 明故文林郎禮部儀制司主事赤水屠公墓誌銘', in *Yongshang Tushi Zongpu* 甬上屠氏宗譜, ed. by Zhang Meiyi 張美翊, Tu Kequan 屠可全, 36vol (Jiqin Tang 即勤堂 wooden block printed edition, 1919), vol.22.

social community.<sup>98</sup>

Although it seemed that Tu Long possessed an advantage in the struggle for recognition within the local elite community due to both his family origin and personal talent, this process was still accompanied by various crisis that threatened his status and recognition in his social environment. The uncertainty in his struggle stemmed from both his family and personal circumstances. While Tu Long was a member of the Tu family, the prestige associated with the family primarily came from the branch other than his own, which indicated that the situations of different family branches could vary significant. In the prosperous branch of Tu Dashan, for example, Tu Benjun, who was only one year older than Tu Long, was able to attain official status without taking the imperial examinations, thanks to his father Tu Dashan. In contrast, Tu Long faced repeated failure in the examinations. Tu Long's failures in the imperial examinations were not uncommon; many literati experienced similar circumstances. The pass rate for the imperial examinations had been steadily declining during Ming Dynasty, especially for the Provincial Examinations. Statistics from the twelve provinces regarding the passing rates of twenty-nine Provincial Examinations from the first year of the Longqing period (1567) to the final years of the Ming Dynasty reveal that the average rate of designating *ju ren* 舉人, Provincial Graduates, was only 3.1%. Throughout the Ming Dynasty, the Provincial Examination was held ninety times, resulting in a total 102,399 literati being designated as Provincial Graduates. During this time, eight-nine Palace Examinations were conducted, with 24,599 Provincial Graduates becoming *jinshi* 進士, Metropolitan Graduates, indicating that only 24% of Provincial Graduates passed the Metropolitan Examination. However, this 24% only reflects the enrolment rate of Metropolitan Graduates, not the actual pass rate, as Provincial Graduates could attend the Metropolitan Examination successively. In the recorded sixty-three Metropolitan Examinations from the Hongwu 洪武 period (1368-1398) to the Wanli period, the average pass rate was 8.6%. The pass rate for the fifth year of the Wanli period (1577), the year Tu Long passed Metropolitan Examination, was only 6.7%.<sup>99</sup> The low pass rate was not

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<sup>98</sup> Tu Long, 'Bao Zhang Dasima Shu 報張大司馬書', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.301.

<sup>99</sup> Details of the passing rate of imperial examinations in the Ming Dynasty, refer to Guo Peigui 郭培貴, 'The Scale of Different Level Imperial Examinations in the Ming Dynasty and its Enrollment Rate 明代科舉各級考試的規模及其錄取率', *Journal of*

because of a decrease in enrolment but rather an increase in candidates. As mentioned earlier, the number of enrolments could not keep pace with the rise of number of participants, which made it increasingly difficult for literati to realise their values through the imperial examinations. This situation significantly contributed to the crisis of recognition faced by literati, including Tu Long.

In comparison to Tu Benjun who could be directly appointed to an official post because of his father's privilege, the official lineage of the Tu family placed considerable pressure on Tu Long to pass the imperial examinations, which led to a crisis of both status and identity following his failures. In contrasting trajectories of Tu Long and Tu Benjun in their pursuit of official status further show the complex patterns of the literati's struggle for recognition, especially for those like Tu Long who held both elite and gentry status. In Tu Long's branch of the Tu family, none of his ancestors, from his great-grandfather to his father, had ever engaged in the occupations related to literati, let alone being officials. Tu Long was the first to achieve higher social status through the imperial examinations. Therefore, despite gaining almost all cultural privileges and earning greater esteem due to his talent, Tu Long faced a more challenging path to achieve the primarily life goal compared to his grandnephew, who was born into a more prestigious branch of the family. This was why Tu Long's social recognition was rooted in his family origin, while his crisis of social recognition also stemmed from it. The asymmetric state between the family's high social status and Tu Long's individual failure in the examinations caused a sense of crisis regarding his recognition, which led to feelings of self-doubt. After Tu Long failed the Provincial Examination for the second time in 1570, he felt that "people started to lose confidence in me, even I began to lose confidence in myself 人於是始不信屠子，雖某亦不自信也".<sup>100</sup> Hence, the failure to pass the examination could be regarded as a denial of social recognition in Tu Long's pursuit of honour.

On one hand, it was a blow to his self-respect and self-esteem, which he sought through his outstanding talent and reputation within the local and broader literati community. Additionally, Tu

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*Historical Science* 史學月刊, 12(2006), 24-31; Guo Peigui, 'Mingshi Xuanju Zhi yu Mingdai Xuanju Zhidu Kaolun 《明史·選舉志》與明代選舉制度考論' (unpublished PhD thesis, Nankai University, 2005); Qian Maowei 錢茂偉, *Guojia, Keju yu Shehui: Mingdai Keju de Luquli* 國家、科舉與社會：明代科舉的錄取率 (Beijing: Beijing Tushuguan chubanshe, 2004); Wu Xuande 吳宣德, *Zhongguo Jiaoyu Zhidu Tongshi: Mingdai Juan* 中國教育制度通史·明代卷 (Jinan: Shandong jiaoyu chubanshe, 2000).

<sup>100</sup> Tu Long, 'Dasima Dongsha Xiansheng Lei 大司馬東沙先生誄', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.357.

Long feared that he could not live up to the status expected of in the local elite community, where attaining a higher status as an official seemed essential. On the other hand, Tu Long expressed emotional indignation at his failure. In the letter to Yang Chengkun, who also failed the examination that year, he wrote, “I was so angry that if we two could not pass the exams, then who can 僕氣勃勃不能平，顧吾兩人不第，第何人也”.<sup>101</sup> Yang Chengkun came from the same county as Tu Long, and his family shared a similar literary reputation within the local literati community. Tu Long believed that the high acknowledgement for his talent and ability from the elite circle led by his family members should have made it easier for him to pass the Provincial Examination compared to other ordinary literati. It is also true that Tu Long’s talent contributed to his designation as a Cultivated Talent and his selection as a *boshi dizi* 博士弟子, a student of the Imperial College, in 1566, after he failed to pass Provincial Examination the first time. This then created another asymmetric state between Tu Long’s high personal talent and reputation and the difficulty he faced in attaining a higher status as an official. In this case, Tu Long’s outstanding talent and high reputation became additional pressures that troubled him emotionally in his pursuit of status within officialdom.

Therefore, while Tu Long’s family origin and personal talent provided him with a social environment and reputation for recognition, they also caused different asymmetric situations in his pursuit of honour. The sense of asymmetric recognition arose from the inability of individual values and status to be consistently acknowledged by the community. This could happen in two situations: first, when an individual’s talent does not align with their status in the social community; and second, when the social community cannot provide an appropriate environment to recognise individual values. For Tu Long, the first situation happened only when he failed the examinations, while the second situation troubled him for several years when he had to leave Yin to seek a living elsewhere due to his family’s difficult circumstances. As discussed earlier, Tu Long’s social recognition was primarily generated within the elite community of Yin, which shared elite values and norms, shaping his social interactions and moral disposition. Hence, Tu Long could only better

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<sup>101</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Yang Boyi Shu 與楊伯翼書’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.302.

recognise himself or be recognised in the relations that shared elite values and norms. This meant that he needed a specific social and cultural environment to satisfy his social needs and maintain his recognition. When he left for a different environment, especially one that did not match the cultural or social level of the elite community in Yin, it became difficult for Tu Long to sustain his recognition.

From 1562, Tu Long spent several years as a teacher in two places, Kaihua 開化 and Xi'an 西安, both of which were counties of Quzhou Prefecture 衢州府 in Zhejiang.<sup>102</sup> In these locations, Tu Long faced challenges in gaining recognition due to the social communities and environments being much lower than his elite status and virtues. In Kaihua, the family with whom he stayed as a private teacher was notorious for their bullying in the local area. As Tu Long wrote in his journal:

The students were extremely naughty ..... and the host was quite domineering in the neighbourhood, thus when they encountered me, they treated me with great rudeness. Previously, guests at the banquet were expected to be jocular, acting as the host's favourite courtiers to gain favour. I alone maintained a stern and serious demeanour, refusing to flatter, which led the entire household to be displeased with me.

門弟子者黠甚……而主人亦橫一鄉，所以遇玄同子者，禮甚倨。先是，在賓席者率自附於談諧，爲主人弄臣，爲悅取容。玄同子獨方嚴正色，無所阿，主人家無大小咸疾玄同子。<sup>103</sup>

This illustrates that Tu Long felt like an alien in a social setting filled with flatterers and bullies, where his virtues were greatly undermined. Neither his talent nor his morality was valued; instead, they were entirely denied in that environment. Even his friends were unable to visit his because of the host's interference. Consequently, Tu Long was practically isolated from his familiar social circle and trapped in an environment that only fostered a sense of denial, which caused him a great

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<sup>102</sup> Tu Long, 'Kaihua Jiyou Xia 開化記遊下', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.256.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, pp.256-257.

emotional damage during this time.

Although the situation improved somewhat after Tu Long moved to Xi'an, it still did not provide a suitable environment for social recognition for an elite literatus. In Xi'an, Tu Long found that "most of my students came from families of butchers or vendors who were not cultivated in etiquette 諸子多屠沽家兒，不習爲禮讓".<sup>104</sup> According to the four traditional social classes, these families were classified as the lowest. While Tu Long's students were free to receive education and take the imperial examinations, and even had the chance to become officials, their family origins and cultivation in a lower-class social environment decided they lacked the virtues associated with higher social classes. Hence, they could hardly share the similar values and norms as Tu Long, the elite literatus, and certainly could not understand his thoughts and conduct. As time passed, Tu Long found it very difficult to receive any payments from his students. Asking for money from employers was regarded as morally questionable and violated the Confucian values and literati virtues that Tu Long had cultivated through his elite family origin and social community, because it suggested a degree of greed. To maintain his integrity, Tu Long refused to demean himself in this situation; he endured hunger and later rejected payments from employers when he was about to leave Xi'an, as he said, "I am not a vendor of vegetables, how could I serve for profits 吾非賣菜傭，安所事增直".<sup>105</sup> Unlike the difficulties he faced in Kaihua, the challenges in Xi'an were primarily from the shared values and norms of a social class and environment that were incompatible with Tu Long's virtues and lifestyle, preventing any mutual recognition. This situation represented another denial of Tu Long's values and virtues in the process of seeking social recognition.

Tu Long's experiences as a teacher highlight significance of the practical social environment in individuals' struggles for social recognition. Although his relationships and recognition were not entirely detached from the elite community of Yin when he moved elsewhere, the practical circumstances of his social life contributed to a sense of denial regarding his recognition, especially when he struggled to establish mutual relations and appropriate interactions with those who shared

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid, p.257.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, p. 258.

his values and norms. Experiencing emotional damage in an incompatible social environment made Tu Long aware of the importance of social circles for his self-worth. This may explain why Tu Long never returned to teaching away from home, even after he was dismissed from office and during a comparatively difficult period; he also maintained close connections and interactions with the elite literati community throughout the rest of his social life. At that time, it seemed that Tu Long had only one way to affirm his values while maintaining his status and virtues as an elite: passing the imperial examinations. Otherwise, he risked suffering from asymmetric recognition, either by being in an unrecognised social environment or by doubting his own values.

Although Tu Long did experience a denial of recognition for a time because of his failures in the Provincial Examination and relative poverty of his family, his sense of recognition within the local elite and literati community of Yin generally remained stable. Overall, Tu Long was fortunate as a literatus navigating the economic and social context in the late Ming Dynasty. His talent was significant enough to align with the relatively high social status of an elite, and he received great support from his family, who held leading positions in the local elite and literati community. In this social environment, Tu Long earned respect and esteem in the relations he built up within the community. Even though his failure in the Provincial Examination led to some self-doubt and a lack of confidence, he received direct encouragement from family members like Tu Dashan and elites such as Zhang Shiche. It can be said that Tu Long rarely experienced a lack of recognition within the elite community during his early life, especially since he later successfully passed both the Provincial and Metropolitan Examinations, achieving his main life goal.

However, few literati were as fortunate as Tu Long at that time. Many faced similar difficulties but lacked the support and status that he enjoyed. In fact, the challenges Tu Long faced in terms of money and failures in imperial examinations were common among literati. Given that the identity of literati contains political, cultural, and social dimensions, a crisis of recognition could arise when any one of these dimensions was not met, with the political dimension conventionally being the most significant one in realising cultural and social values. When literati's politically oriented aspirations could not be fulfilled through passing the imperial examinations, they often



experienced self-doubt and sought confidence and value from other dimensions.

The School of Mind established the value of individuals based on their innate knowledge, which provided literati with moral agency in terms of self-worth and self-esteem. The moral agency not only encouraged literati to fashion themselves with an innovative value system but also developed a sense of resistance to conventional value system. Hence, a group of literati known as *jiren* 畸人, eccentric literati, who navigated the social context of the late Ming Dynasty by acting eccentrically.<sup>106</sup> In fact, such odd behaviour was a form of innovation and resistance against the existing conventional value system. This behaviour typically manifested in three ways: first, being proud of their talent and daring to boast; second, being headstrong and assertive; and third, indulging in women and dramas. Regardless of the specifics, all these behaviours aimed to resist the proprieties that represented Confucian values and norms. Hence, the literati regarded as *jiren* were also seen as possessing great talent, such as Xu Wei 徐渭 (1521-1593) and Zhu Yunming 祝允明 (1461-1527). Xu Wei, whose madness was as renowned as his talent, was described as having “unrestrained and reckless character, when those he associated with adhered strictly to the proprieties, he would become annoyed over time 性縱誕，而所與處者頗引禮法，久之，心不樂”，not to mention that he killed two of his wives.<sup>107</sup> Zhu Yunming was similarly indulgent in sensual pursuits and disdainful of those who adhered to accepted proprieties. There were also other literati who behaved eccentrically. For instance, the literatus Li Zhiqing 李至清, known as a talented boy from a young age, would imitate donkey brays when he encountered people on the road, “just to respond to greetings 聊以代應對耳”.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, the literatus Zhang Xianyi 張獻翼 (1534-1604) was renowned for his talent and, along with his two brothers, Zhang Fengyi 張鳳翼 (fl. 1613) and Zhang Yanyi 張燕翼 (1543-1575), were collectively known as the “Three Zhangs” for their literary reputation and achievements. He would wear different coloured fake beards while going out and display signs outside each day with phrases like “selling wine”, “selling

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<sup>106</sup> More details about the eccentric literati and eccentric literati's literature, refer to Zheng Lihua, 'Ming Dai "Jiren" yu "Jiren Wenxue" 明代“畸人”與“畸人文學”', *Chinese Classic and Culture* 中國典籍與文化, 1(1997), 32-36.

<sup>107</sup> Tao Wangling 陶望齡, 'Xu Wenchang Zhuan 徐文長傳', in *Xie'an Ji* 歇庵集, 20 vols (Wanli edition), vol.14, pp.22a < <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=93060&page=44> >

<sup>108</sup> Qian Qianyi 錢謙益, 'Lisheng Zhiqing 李生至清', in *Liechao Shiji Xiaozhuan* 列朝詩集小傳 (Shanghai: Gudian wenxue chubanshe, 1957), p.564.

dance”, “selling *xia* 俠, a strong heroic and noble morality” or “selling *chi* 痴, a foolish state”.<sup>109</sup> It seemed that the literati with their talented reputations and odd behaviours were often pursued and flattered by their peers.

Therefore, the group of *jiren* and their eccentric behaviours became a phenomenon within the literati community during late Ming Dynasty indicating that literati at that time sought and needed changes in response to the conventional value system. Being eccentric, or *ji*, almost became a pattern for the literati’s struggle for esteem based on their talent and achievements through self-mastered values and norms shared within a smaller community. The literati, whether they attained official status, would use *ji* to describe themselves to highlight their distinguished virtues. Tu Long also used *ji* to describe himself, emphasising his outstanding talent and conduct, which implied his virtues. This self-fashioned eccentric figure reflected the demands of the literati in that era, particularly their desire for self-esteem. They expected a more individuated approach to social recognition, rather than merely conforming to the conventional status honour as a part of a group, such as literati, elites, or officials. They paid more attention to their own values and abilities, which could bring them respect and esteem within the community. This phenomenon in the late Ming Dynasty specifically illustrated the rise of literati’s self-awareness and moral agency as social subjects.

Tu Long, as a literatus living within his social context, was inevitably affected by the ethos of his time. This influence may not have been immediately obvious, but it exerted a subtle impact on his thoughts and behaviour. Tu Long’s struggles primarily stemmed from a crisis of social recognition, arising from his family’s difficult circumstances and his failures in the imperial examinations. Additionally, he faced conflicts between the conventional values and goals cultivated in him by the Confucian value system and his own innovative ideas shaped by social ethos. On one hand, Tu Long could not entirely break away from the conventional values and norms that grounded the literati, especially given his cultivation in a family of high status within both officialdom and the elite community. Hence, honour as an official became essential for his

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<sup>109</sup> Zheng Zhongkui 鄭仲夔, ‘Jin Qi 矜奇’, in *Er Xin* 耳新 (Lianghuai Yanzheng Caijin edition 兩淮鹽政採進本) <https://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=452645>

integrated social recognition for him. On the other hand, this predetermined pursuit of honour constrained Tu Long's struggle for social recognition. The greater esteem he sought through his talent and achievements within the elite and the literati community intensified the blow he suffered from his failures in the imperial examinations. In this process, Tu Long's self-esteem was, to some extent, undermined by the imperial examination system, which represented a higher social status and moral authority.

Tu Long expressed his anger at the underestimation of his talent and ability, which reflected a dissatisfaction with the constraints of the conventional value system, especially when literati had opportunities to realise their values outside officialdom through their own talent. This conflict reflected the contradictory situation literati faced by literati in the late Ming Dynasty, who experienced emotional damage from the denial of self-worth following failures in the imperial examinations, while struggling to abandon the pursuit of honour as officials. Although conventional values showed some flexibility, they remained intact, significantly influencing values and norms of the literati. Fundamentally, the conflict lay between honour and esteem in the process of social recognition, and the challenge of harmonising the role of being an honourable group member and a uniquely esteemed individual. The literati like Tu Long faced the crisis of losing both by sacrificing one, particularly honour, while successfully seeking esteem could also pave the way to honour. This is why the struggle for social recognition among the literati manifested in a hybrid form, generating both old and new intersubjective relations among individuals across various social spheres.

Eventually, in 1576, Tu Long passed the Provincial Examination, followed by the Metropolitan and Palace Examination the next year, at the age of thirty-four. After passing the Provincial Examination, he needed to travel to Beijing for the final two examinations. However, he could not begin his journey until deep winter due to insufficient funds for travel. In contrast to his friends who passed the examination that year, Shen Jiuchou 沈九疇 (1533-1600) and Yu Yin, who commenced their journeys shortly after passing the examination in autumn—when the climate was favourable—Tu Long had to endure harsh weather and various dangers. Shen Jiuchou belonged to

an elite gentry lineage of Yin, and his brother, Shen Yiguan 沈一貫(1537-1615), who served as Senior Grand Secretary from 1601 to 1605 and was also the nephew of Shen Mingchen, sent Tu Long a farewell poem as he began his journey.<sup>110</sup> This indicates that Shen Jiuchou shared a similar family background and social status with Tu Long in the local elite community, while Yu Yin enjoyed equal fame with Tu Long in terms of literary talent and reputation among the local literati. However, Tu Long's financial difficulties became an obstacle in keeping pace with his elite peers. The relationships among the literati were founded on their virtues and cultural cultivation, with material connections primarily reflecting their tastes rather than financial resources. Fortunately, Tu Long's virtues and cultural disposition, cultivated within the elite community, along with his outstanding talent, provided a solid foundation for his relations with various literati and officials. During his journey, Tu Long fell ill and stopped in Suzhou 蘇州 for recovery, where he met the renowned literatus Wang Zhideng 王稚登 (1535-1612) and quickly established a strong friendship with him. This friendship was largely based on Tu Long's talent and his reputation in Zhejiang.

After becoming an official, Tu Long encountered more complex situations within the dual social spheres of officialdom and the literati community, where his talent and reputation functioned differently in his struggle for recognition. It was not until the second month of 1577 that Tu Long arrived in Beijing and successfully passed the Metropolitan and Palace Examinations.<sup>111</sup> From that point on, the stage of pursuing honour in Tu Long's struggle for social recognition came to an end. With the talent he was proud of and confident in, he became an official and embarked on a different life in officialdom, where he faced further conflicts in his struggle and had to balance not only the demands of official duties and personal life but, more significantly, the two forms of social recognition: official honour and self-mastered esteem.

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<sup>110</sup> Shen Yiguan 沈一貫, 'Song Tu Changqing Gongche 送屠長卿公車', in *Huiming Shiji* 鳴鳴詩集 (Ming edition), vol.6, pp.17b-18a <<https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=40235&page=39>>.

<sup>111</sup> Tu Long, 'Bei Zheng Ji 北征記', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.259.

## Chapter 2

### Balance between Honour and Esteem

By passing the imperial examinations, literati would face a comparatively different social environment, where the primary social subjects were officials. Compared to the literati community, officialdom was like a superior social sphere included in the literati community. The officials originated from the literati community, specifically those who met a series of criteria and gained a higher status than the common literati. When the literati successfully completed the imperial examinations and became officials, they were granted a higher status along with corresponding recognition within officialdom, namely honour. Officialdom, as a specific expression of hierarchical system, was constituted by stricter and more unmodifiable values and norms that guaranteed official honour. Hence, there were different levels of honour according to the ranks of official posts and the political achievements of officials.

Tu Long, as a literatus who passed the final Palace Examination, began his life within officialdom. Throughout his official career, Tu Long's struggle mainly revolved around maintaining honour as an official while balancing his official duties with a tasteful literati lifestyle. This involved navigating the pursuit of social recognition between honour and esteem. As an official, Tu Long was bound by the duties and moral expectations of officialdom, yet as a talented elite literatus, he required a more liberated social environment to engage in his self-mastered social activities reflective of his distinct cultural disposition. The social sphere of officialdom provided honour for Tu Long through his official status, while the broader literati community generated esteem that he sought through his literary talent and reputation. There was a difference in the degree of these two forms: honour constituted the major position, while esteem served as a guarantee and protection that not only filled the gap in his social recognition but also maintained his self-mastery in social interactions. Although Tu Long was initially recognised as a literatus, which laid the foundation for his social recognition, the honour of being an official spontaneously

became the predominant form of recognition when he elevated his status from common literati to official. Given the distinguished values and norms inherent in officialdom, literati needed to fashion themselves to the code of honour within higher intersubjective relations to seek recognition.

Generally, throughout his official career, Tu Long's main struggle was to balance honour and esteem. In the early stages, this struggle was more about the asymmetric recognition between himself and officialdom. The honour provided by officialdom could not compare to the self-esteem Tu Long gained within the literati community. Tu Long expected to achieve greater recognition within officialdom from the outset of his career, ideally at a level comparable to that of the elite community. This situation could be seen as an incomplete denial of social recognition, where the way and importance Tu Long was recognised within officialdom did not fully align with the level he recognised himself. Therefore, Tu Long endeavoured to enhance the degree of honour he received in officialdom by emphasising his sense of duty in his post and gaining political achievements. His struggle for social recognition can be analysed in three parts: first, when he had just passed the Palace Examination and awaited an appointment in Beijing; second, after he was assigned to local government as a magistrate, which can be further divided according to his two assignments; and third, the year he was promoted to the central government. During these three periods, Tu Long experienced different political, cultural, and social lives, and his sense of social recognition was influenced by the varying circumstances, particularly when comparing the two periods he spent in Beijing. Moreover, the process of his struggle for social recognition presented differently, reflecting changes in his state of mind across different social environments.

During the brief time Tu Long spent in Beijing awaiting his appointment, and even during his first year in local government, his state of mind was characterised by anxiety. On one hand, he expected to be assigned to a post related to literature, given his literary talent and reputation; on the other hand, he feared that too much attention would be paid to his literary reputation. Hence, Tu Long's struggle for social recognition relied on the esteem he gained through his literary talent to establish new social relations within each new sphere, namely officialdom. He expressed his “*ju* 忌, fear” that higher esteem might affect his pursuit of honour within officialdom due to the

differing value systems of the two social spheres, which caused misunderstandings regarding his virtues in relation to the honour code.

Although Tu Long's literary reputation was a significant asset for his social relations, the values and norms within officialdom differed from those of literati community. Even though officials originated from the literati, the sphere of officialdom, after all, exceeded the literati community in social hierarchy. In officialdom, officials were constrained by a code of honour defined by strict moral and conduct standards, which, to some extent, contradicted the value placed on innovation within the literati community. Influenced by the social ethos of the late Ming Dynasty, especially the prevalence of consumption and the rise of individual awareness, literati possessed the moral agency to define their own values not only through their honoured status as officials but also through their tastes and lifestyle. Hence, while an indulgent lifestyle associated with material enjoyment and social interactions might be esteemed within the literati community, it could be questioned and even deemed dishonourable when a talented literatus became an official. This did not imply that a tasteful and cultural lifestyle was disapproved of within officialdom, rather, the honour code of officialdom demanded a more self-disciplined conduct than a more self-indulgent lifestyle. Consequently, even though Tu Long was highly respected and esteemed by officials for his talent and taste, he was still criticised for his tasteful lifestyle and eventually dismissed. Clearly, Tu Long's conflicts arose from the differing requirements imposed on members of the two social communities, despite their shared origins. This disparity also explains Tu Long's struggle, not only during the early stage of his official career but throughout his entire time as an official.

Tu Long's struggle with the asymmetric recognition and his sense of not being recognised were particularly concentrated and expressed at the beginning of his official career. When Tu Long made becoming an official his life goal, he had great aspirations based on his literary talent and ability. In a letter to Liu Ziwei 劉子威 he recalled, "I have had lofty aims since my youth with a deep desire to be respected for my literary achievements and be seen by the world 不佞少有大志，慨然欲以文章功業自表見於世".<sup>112</sup> Given the high self-esteem Tu Long derived from widespread

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<sup>112</sup> Tu Long, 'Da Liu Ziwei Shiyu 答劉子威侍御', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.357.

recognition of his literary talent, it was reasonable for him to have such ambition, and it was a practical goal that he could achieve. However, the first setback came from his rank in the Palace Examination. Tu Long was ranked 110th by merit placing him in the third group (*jia* 甲) of Metropolitan Graduates, which meant he would be assigned to local government rather than remaining in the central government. In a letter to Yu Yin, he expressed his disappointment: “The emperor chooses literary servants so carefully that I cannot be given the honour 主上慎選文學侍從之臣，不佞隆不得與”.<sup>113</sup> This statement reflected his disagreement with the outcome, which he felt did not accurately represent his talent and ability, and it greatly offended his esteem and reputation within the literati community. When Tu Long was dismissed, he wrote to Wang Xijue 王錫爵 (1534-1614), who held the prestigious position of Secondary Grand Secretary, saying:

I accidentally steal a false reputation because of my insignificant writing skills, and I am closely appreciated by those who easily believe what they hear in this age.....

不幸以雕蟲小技，偶竊虛聲，爲當世耳食人所矚就.....<sup>114</sup>

Similar to what he said that he was not assigned to a literary post because he was not good enough, this was a polite way to express his dissatisfaction. When discussing his achievements and reputation, he used words such as “accidentally”, “insignificant”, or “false”, to show a culturally required modesty. However, it was somewhat contradictory that he expressed self-confidence so many times; the example is just one of the many selected from the letters Tu Long wrote to the important friends of him, such as Wang Shizhen and Wang Xijue. Based on his outstanding talent and reputation, Tu Long expected to achieve honourable goals through his ideas and words deriving from his literary talent and his identity constituted by both an official and a literatus. Although he fully recognised himself and was recognised within the broader literati community, when he entered the social sphere of officialdom, his esteem was somewhat diminished due to the

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<sup>113</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Yu Junfang Shu 與余君房書’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.307.

<sup>114</sup> Tu Long, ‘Ji Wang Jingshi Gelao 寄王荊石閣老’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.489.



lower level of honour he received. This reduction was evident in the low-ranking official post he was assigned, which corresponded to a lower honour. The strict hierarchical system of officialdom stipulated the rank of honour, leaving officials with very limited opportunities to redefine it through self-mastery; they could only adhere to it. This transition was an inescapable and painful phase as he changed social environments. Unlike his early life, when the environment could not provide him with mutual recognition due to its inferiority to his own talents, officialdom initially failed to offer Tu Long reciprocal recognition because he did not attain the higher rank of honour he could have achieved through the Palace Examination. This conflict caused a sense of asymmetry between his talents and the honour he received, intensifying Tu Long's struggle for social recognition within officialdom.

The intensity of Tu Long's struggle for honour can also be seen through comparisons with his peers. For instance, his close friends Shen Jiuchou and Yu Yin, whom he bade farewell to when they left for Beijing, were both ranked in the second group of graduates and assigned to the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Works as secretaries, respectively, both within the central government.<sup>115</sup> Two of Tu Long's lifelong good friends, Shen Maoxue 沈懋學 (1539-582) and Feng Mengzhen, ranked at the top of the successful candidates: Shen achieved the number one place, *zhuangyuan* 狀元, in that year's Palace Examination, while Feng was ranked third in the second group. As a result, Shen was appointed as an editor in the Hanlin Academy, known as *xiuzhuan* 修撰, and Feng was assigned as Bachelor, *shujishi* 庶吉士, also in the Hanlin Academy, which was the position Tu Long expected to serve in with his talent and ability. In contrast, Tu Long and other close friends, such as Wang Shixing 王士性 (1547-1598), Ding Cilü 丁此呂 (fl.1577) and Fu Guangzhai 傅光宅 (1547-1604), who were all ranked in the third group like Tu Long, were appointed outside the capital to different local governments. Comparing the posts in the central government with those in local government, not only were the ranks of capital posts generally higher than those of local magistrates, but the degree of honour by being a capital official was also greater, as they served directly under the emperor. Moreover, the political status of the

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<sup>115</sup> Yu Yin passed the final two examination in 1580, which was three years later than Tu Long.

capital's social environment was difficult to match with that of local areas, which was why Tu Long felt that his talent was underestimated by officialdom. It was not that Tu Long was only acknowledged as talented within the literati community of his hometown, and when placed in a larger community competing with more literati, his talent appeared less prominent. In fact, Tu Long's talent was widely appreciated and acknowledged across the country. Shen Maoxue and Feng Mengzhen only became aware of Tu Long after the examinations, when they had seen one of his essays and fully appreciated his talent and ability.<sup>116</sup> Even graduates who ranked in the top positions marvelled at Tu Long's talent and frequently visited him to engage in conversation. Tu Long's talent and reputation instilled confidence in his self-worth, but this, to some extent, magnified the asymmetric recognition he received within officialdom.

Because the identity of literati was constituted by political and cultural dimensions, when literati became officials, the political dimension was inevitably emphasised, even overshadowing the cultural dimension. If a talented and reputable literatus had already become an official, yet the cultural dimension under their official status still exceeded the political dimension, they would experience a sense of asymmetry, feeling that their official posts could hardly match their cultural talent and ability. This created an inner conflict within the identity itself because of its multi-dimension nature. The asymmetric recognition between officials' self-worth and the recognition granted by officialdom fundamentally stemmed from the differences between the two social spheres: officialdom and the literati community, each governed by distinct values and norms. The conflict between these two social spheres not only shaped the inner conflict of the literati identity but also generated an imbalance between the two forms of social recognition derived from their respective value systems—honour and esteem. Therefore, officials like Tu Long faced struggles that could be divided into two parts: one was honour within officialdom, and the other was self-mastered esteem within the literati community. One was constrained by the recognition code, while the other allowed for greater freedom to contest the values and norms shared in their relationships. Tu Long's struggle for social recognition involved balancing these two forms of recognition: on

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<sup>116</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Ou Zhenbo 與歐楨伯', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.226.

one hand, reducing the asymmetric gap; on the other, adjusting the proportion of honour and esteem.

As Tu Long saw it, the urgent problem he encountered in his pursuit of social recognition after becoming an official was the conflict between his literary reputation and the corresponding social expectations within officialdom. This situation exemplified the asymmetric recognition he faced upon joining the official ranks. To narrow or conceal this gap, during his brief time in Beijing before being assigned to a local government post, Tu Long was discreet about his social life and sought to fashion an image of himself as a man of integrity with a straightforward nature. In a letter to Zhu Geng 朱賡(1535-1680), an official in the Hanlin Academy during Tu Long's time in local government, he recalled his stay in Beijing after passing the examination, saying that he "falsely stole the reputation of writing 濫竊文章之聲". From this, he felt that his literary reputation was almost an unfortunate status.<sup>117</sup> Although these words were largely a gesture of modesty, they also indicated that his literary reputation might threaten his pursuit of honour in officialdom. This created a comparatively conflicting situation for Tu Long and other literati like him. Since they relied on their literary talent and ability to gain promotion or build relations within officialdom, their literary reputation could lead to a "tarnished reputation 骯髒聲".<sup>118</sup> This term referred to the ethos of literati in the late Ming Dynasty, whose values to lifestyles were influenced by a transitional society that was criticised for its moral decay and for pursuing fame and gain. By being discreet about social interactions based on fame and benefits with a wide range of officials, Tu Long preserved his moral integrity, which better aligned him with the honour code. He was aware of his situation and mastered his social activities with caution, saying that he would "close the door to preserve moral integrity 杜門自守" and refrained from associating with anyone without good reason.<sup>119</sup> This behaviour effectively prevented him from being labelled as decadent, as he was cautious about visitors and limited in his social interactions. It not only avoided false fame through wide socialising but also protected his good name.

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<sup>117</sup> Tu Long, 'Shang Zuozhu Zhu Taishi Xianheng Shu 上座主朱太史先生書', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.342.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Tianshu Shu 與田叔書', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.309.

In fact, this approach not only allowed Tu Long to maintain his virtues as a literatus but also served as a testament to his outstanding quality as an official among his peers, showing that his esteem deserved a higher honour than what he had received. Hence, Tu Long's strategy for reducing the asymmetric recognition between honour and self-esteem was to distinguish himself as a virtuous and well-cultivated literatus in his official role, using esteem to promote recognition within officialdom. Although he said he would conceal his talent and ability to avoid distinguishing from other officials, his actions already set him apart, especially in a context where many sought to curry favour with high-ranking officials, treating such behaviour as normative. In my opinion, Tu Long may have thought of hiding his remarkable talent for virtuous and modest reasons, or to protect himself in the capital's social environment. However, this proved difficult, because his talents and virtues were so prominent that he could not help but be appreciated, acknowledged, and even admired. Furthermore, his talents and virtues contributed to bridging the gap in his social recognition, leaving no reason for him not to enjoy a sense of recognition in this new social sphere because of his outstanding abilities.

However, based on Tu Long's social activities in Beijing, his discretion in socialising or even his avoidance of excessive social interactions was more about the image he wished to be recognised by other officials. During his brief time in Beijing, Tu Long actually had a rich social life with peers and officials who shared similar literary cultivation. His literary works, including poems, prefaces, and essays, were numerous and varied, created both individually and collaboratively. Each gathering with friends resulted in poems as records, and whenever his friends had travel plans or family events, he would write poems or essays to commemorate or celebration these occasions. In the six months from the third month of 1577, when Tu Long became a Metropolitan Graduate to the ninth month when he left Beijing for home, he participated five gatherings, two of which were held at his residence. These gatherings greatly strengthened his relationships with close friends, such as Feng Mengzhen and Shen Jiuchou. Additionally, they helped Tu Long build new connections and expand his social circle, including a friendship with Wang Shimao 王世懋 (1536-1588), Wang Shizhen's brother, who later introduced Tu Long to

Wang Shizhen. His relationship with the Wang brothers greatly affected Tu Long's status in the literati community, and his self-mastery regarding esteem, which would become more evident in his post-official period.

At time, when Tu Long created some good poems, he would also be excited to invite friends to share in the enjoyment, with Feng Mengzhen and Shen Maoxue being his most frequent guests. The literary interactions that Tu Long had with fellow literati who shared the similar talents and ability not only fulfilled his social needs within officialdom but also satisfied his demand to maintain his literary virtues and relationships within the literati community. Therefore, although Tu Long was discreet in his social activities and circles, the need for recognition from other literati who shared similar values and norms was strong and indispensable, especially as he was a new member of officialdom struggling with a lack of recognition from other officials; only his literary talent could somewhat alleviate his sense of alienation. Tu Long had to carefully manage the extent of his socialising to ensure it did not interrupt his pursuit of honour while also satisfying his sense of esteem.

While carefully screening the visitors and guests he associated with through modesty and caution, Tu Long also endeavoured to fashion himself into an honourable figure who met the strict standards expected of officials within officialdom. Hence, as a man of integrity with a straightforward nature, he aimed to create a distinguishing image that differentiated from the decadent ethos of the time, particularly in terms of his incompatible behaviour and lack of social skills among his peers. He specifically described two scenes when he visited senior officials:

When I had just passed the examination and paid a formal visit to the minister in the hall of the Ministry of Personnel alongside my fellow graduates. When we were going into the hall, I was preoccupied with an essay and accidentally stumbled. Given the strict conventions of the Ministry of Personnel, my misstep startled every present. Later, during the selection of Hanlin Bachelors, we went to the hall of the Grant Secretariat to meet the Senior Grand Secretary. Once again, I committed a slight breach of etiquette because I was still

contemplating my essay, and my fellow graduates all laughed at me.

初第時，與諸同年庭謁冢宰，方庭謁而心猶構思一文，至步履顛錯。舊制，吏部堂上規矩最嚴，眾咸駭之。及館選，同諸君赴內閣庭謁相公。亦以構思文義稍失禮，同年又笑焉。<sup>120</sup>

It seemed that Tu Long felt somewhat alienated among the fellow graduates and embarrassed himself, which may have hindered his recognition within the group. Officialdom, as a new social environment for Tu Long, adhered a different code of conduct compared to the literati community. Hence, the virtues he possessed as a talented literatus, such as his intense attention on writing rather than socialising, appeared incompatible. In fact, Tu Long aimed to distinguish himself virtuously; he expected to embody “*zhuo* 拙, artlessness”, a traditional moral virtue of officials, to navigate the challenges he faced in officialdom, especially regarding his duties and responsibilities. He was willing to be an “artless official”, representing his innate knowledge without any polishing, which signified his honourable virtues and his resistance to being corrupted by the ethos of the time.<sup>121</sup> However, he lacked awareness of how to integrate into the social circle and felt too “foolish” to learn or adapt. Tu Long was not afraid of being unrecognised due to his differences; rather, he feared that his integrity, ability, and talent would not be acknowledged. He demonstrated his integrity while working as a teacher in Xi'an by rejecting the payments he was entitled to. Unlike those tempted by monetary gain, Tu Long also refused to be swayed by the benefit of status that could be obtained through currying favour with other officials, especially those of higher rank.

Tu Long's integrity was a rare and valuable moral character among officials, in contrast to the prevalent customs of greed for benefits and fame that characterised officialdom at that time. He dared to seek recognition through his individuality rather than conforming to the group, which demonstrated a strong sense of self-awareness and self-fashioning, even in a less contestable social community. This was not only a matter of desire but also of capability. His family origin and early

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<sup>120</sup> Tu Long, ‘Zhuo Huan 拙宦’, in *Hongbao Ji* 鴻苞集, in *TLJ*, vol.10, p.1323.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

life cultivation within the elite community endowed him with high-level virtues and established a fundamental mode to seek social recognition. Additionally, Tu Long's outstanding literary talent and widespread reputation further distinguished him.

Because of his exceptional talents and virtues, Tu Long believed he was distinguished from common officials by being “artless” and not worldly-wise in social affairs.<sup>122</sup> His “artlessness”, involved refusing to be stained by the prevalent customs of officialdom while maintaining his good character, helped him become an honourable official. At the beginning of his official career, with limited social capital to uphold his recognition, the self-esteem derived from his literary achievements was the most effective means to bridge the gap between the two forms of recognition. Therefore, his thoughts and actions, which distinguished him from other officials and the ethos of the time, could be seen as moral achievements that aided his pursuit of honour within officialdom. Even if this approach meant sacrificing certain opportunities, we can never know whether he missed out on the selection of Hanlin Bachelor and the chance to serve in the central government due to his preoccupation with his writing ideas at that moment.

## Virtue for honour

During his time as a magistrate in local government, Tu Long primarily described two states in his life of duty: “fear” and “artless”. Tu Long's “fear” was more like a sense of anxiety of social recognition as he entered a new social sphere, facing unfamiliar environments and relationships. In officialdom, the moral and conduct codes differed from those of the literati community, where officials were valued for their “virtue and capability 賢能”. While Tu Long's virtues and capabilities had been rooted in the elite literati community and his literary talent, his “fear” stemmed from concerns about whether his well-cultivated literary skills would meet the demands of his role as a magistrate, and whether his tasteful literati lifestyle would clash with the values and norms of officialdom. Throughout his five years working in two local governments, the objects

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<sup>122</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Liu Guancha Xiansheng Shu 與劉觀察先生書’, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.312; ‘Yu Zhou Minbu Shu 與周民部書’, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.313.

of Tu Long's "fear" shifted according to the local political, economic, cultural, and social contexts. However, the core of his "fear" consistently revolved around the struggle for honour. Meanwhile the virtuous nature he associated with himself—"artlessness"—became the way he coped with this "fear". As a form of moral achievement, Tu Long's "artlessness" enabled him to attain remarkable political successes in both local governments while helping to bridge the gap between honour and esteem during the main period of his official career.

As a "rookie" official yet a reputable literatus, Tu Long was particularly anxious about being recognised more as an honourable official than as a self-esteeming literatus, especially during his tenure in Qingpu. His first appointment was in Yingshang, where he served for only one year, from the eleventh month of 1577 to the twelfth month of 1578, before being relocated to Qingpu, where he worked for four years (1579-1582). The social environment of Yingshang for Tu Long was comparatively "plain and simple 簡樸". In a letter to Gu Shaofang 顧紹芳, who also passed the Metropolitan Examination in 1577, he said: "Though Yingshang had registered the households for nineteen *li*, it was a small county 潁上雖編戶十九里, 小邑爾".<sup>123</sup> Even in this modest county, Tu Long expressed the majority of his "fear" during his time there. Tu Long articulated ten "fears" of being a magistrate in letters to Zhu Geng and his friends, including Sun Jigao 孫繼皋 (1550-1610), who was the top graduate in the Palace Examination of 1574 and became friend with Tu Long while he was in Beijing; Feng Mengzhen; and Shen Jiuchou:

Fear that post would be ruined by corruption; fear that duties would be carelessly performed due to laziness; fear of being too straightforward, which might be perceived as showing off; fear of being too soft, leading to indecision; fear of being too unyielding, making one easy to break; fear that artlessness would incur lowly treatment; fear that artfulness would provoke jealousy; fear of being speaking too much, which could cause trouble; fear of being stained by fame and becoming a target of anger.

愚官以賄敗, 愚務以惰廢, 愚率而矜露, 愚柔而繞指, 愚剛而若槁, 愚拙取賤, 愚巧

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<sup>123</sup> *Li* was the unit of length, 1 *li* equals to 500 meters now. Quotes are from Tu Long, 'Yu Gu Shifu 與顧實甫', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.231; 'Ji Zhou Shijun 寄周使君', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.347.



誨妒，思多言而數窮，思骯髒而逢怒。

Fear that there would be injustice in the jail [meaning fear of judging cases unjustly] .....

思囹圄積冤.....<sup>124</sup>

In these letters, he also expressed that to be a magistrate, he “had no other outstanding capability, but only the fear of day and night 無他材能，有朝夕思而已矣”.<sup>125</sup> It seemed that “fear” was not merely a state of anxiety for a junior official starting a new career, more importantly, it became a significant element in being a good magistrate, which was almost as important as working capability. As Tu Long believed, “The problem with doing all things is not a lack of competence, but a lack of acknowledgement of fear 天下事不患無能，而患不知懼”.<sup>126</sup> The ten “fears” of being a magistrate were precisely the reasons that could ruin an official’s honour, and a lack of vigilance towards these “fears” was the real obstacle in the way of seeking for honour within officialdom.

Tu Long’s “fears”, such as the potential for corruption, laziness, carelessness, or indecision in his duties, were not mere fabrication, but reflected the real situation that generally existed within officialdom. Since the Zhengde period, many officials had paid more attention to benefits and fame, leading to an atmosphere filled with corruption and a pursuit of extravagant lifestyles. During the Wanli period, corruption and greedy for wealth and status, especially engaging in internal strife or forming cliques to pursue self-interest, became commonplace among officials, from the emperor down to various ranks. Even the emperor himself set a poor example by engaging in corrupt practices. For instance, to reward the Senior Grand Secretary, Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525-1582), the emperor directly awarded the second place in the examination to Zhang’s eldest son, Zhang Sixiu 張嗣修 (1553-1627) in the same year Tu Long passed his Palace Examination (1577). In

<sup>124</sup> Tu Long, ‘Shang Zuozhu Zhu Taishi Xiansheng Shu’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, pp.341-342; ‘Yu Sun Taishi Feng Jishi Shen Bibu Shu 與孫太史馮吉士沈比部書’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p313.

<sup>125</sup> Tu Long, ‘Shang Zuozhu Zhu Taishi Xiansheng Shu’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.341.

<sup>126</sup> Tu Long, ‘Shang Dazongbo Wang Xiansheng Shu 上大宗伯汪先生書’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.338.

1580, the emperor granted the first place to Zhang's third son, Zhang Maoxiu 張懋修 (1558-1639). Such actions by the emperor and high-ranking officials undermined the integrity of officialdom and set a troubling example for others. Following Zhang Juzheng's example, relatives and friends of senior officials in the Grand Secretariat, such as Zhang Siwei 張四維 (1526-1585) and Shen Shixing 申時行 (1535-1614), more or less benefited from their associations.<sup>127</sup> The ethos of officialdom became decadent, and integrity, as a fundamental moral quality for officials, seemed to become a rare. Those who genuinely upheld integrity within officialdom were often regarded as aliens, leading many officials to abandon this vital quality. Even officials like Zhang Juzheng, who demonstrated great administrative competence and achieved notable successes, ultimately lost their honour due to no "fear" for immoral behaviour.

The decay of official ethos was evident not only in the loss of integrity but also in an obsession with material pleasures and a decline in moral standards. Tu Long was highly critical of this decadent ethos: unlike former officials who maintained a simple and frugal life for decades, officials of his time, once gaining an official post, focused on accumulating wealth and indulging in luxurious lives filled with grand houses, carriage, and beautiful women. Morally, they showed a lack of responsibility in governance, integrity, and righteousness. What troubled Tu Long the most was that the lives of officials, built on such corrupt practices, were envied by their friends and others, which became a prevailing custom of the time. In contrast, officials who upheld moral virtues and integrity that did not want to yield to the customs were ridiculed and resented, often regarded as odd.<sup>128</sup>

Tu Long was aware of the evils within officialdom and the venality of its officials. The virtues of literati were greatly diminished by the material benefits and the luxurious lifestyles afforded by their power. Officials' moral integrity was deeply compromised, largely replaced by dishonourable values and behaviours characterised by flattery and subservience to higher authorities. This was

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<sup>127</sup> Tian Shu 田澍, 'Corruption and Maladministration: The Other Side of Zhang Ju-zheng's Management of Government Affairs 腐敗與弊政: 張居正施政的另一面', *Journal of Northwest Normal University (Social Sciences)* 西北師大學報(社會科學版), 6(2001), 43-47 (p.44).

<sup>128</sup> Tu Long, 'Yongqi Lun 庸奇論', in *Hongbao Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.7, pp.297-298; 'Huo Yu Shang 藹語上', in *Hongbao Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.7, pp.199-200.

exemplified by Tu Long's uncle, Tu Yong 屠滂 (1440-1512), who, as Censor-in-Chief in the Chief Surveillance Office 都察院 once faced a minor mistake in paperwork related to the powerful eunuch, Liu Jin 劉瑾 (1451-1510). Liu was very angry and reprimanded the officials harshly, during which:

Censor-in-Chief Tu Yong led the censors of thirteen Circuits in apologising for the offence, censors were all kneeled at the bottom of the palace stairs while Jin enumerated their faults and severely reprimanded them. Everyone kowtowed and did not dare to look up. Since then, the officials from various agencies were required to kneel [whenever they encountered Liu Jin].

都御史屠滂率十三道御史謝罪，御史跪階下，瑾數其罪斥責，皆叩頭不敢仰視，自是科道部屬官皆行跪禮。<sup>129</sup>

The servile behaviour of officials did not just exist towards senior officials who held the great power because of their capabilities or the emperor's preference; it extended to anyone close to the highest power in the dynasty. This behaviour, while undoubtedly immoral, had become a common occurrence at the time, diminishing the overall honour associated with the status of officials during late Ming Dynasty.

However, if there were officials like Tu Long who could recognise the evils of officialdom, there were also those who endeavoured to correct it. Compared to Zhang Juzheng, another Senior Grand Secretary, Zhang Cong 張璁 (1475-1539), who made significant contributions to political reform during Jiajing period, was almost a model of integrity.<sup>130</sup> He outlined three qualities a magistrate should possess, "sincerity in loving the common people, integrity in self-discipline, and

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<sup>129</sup> Chen Hongmo 陳洪謨, *Jishi Jiwen* 繼事紀聞 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), p.75.

<sup>130</sup> For details refer to Tian Shu, 'Incorruptness, Boldness, and Bearing Burden: The Political Literacy of Reformer Zhang Cong (張璁) 廉政、敢為、負重：改革家張璁的政治素養', *Collected Papers of History Studies* 史學集刊, 6(2023), 4-14.

capability in handling affairs 有愛民之誠，有守己之操，有處事之才”。<sup>131</sup> The magistrate served as the all-purpose local representative of the emperor, responsible for governing the people, which required a strong sense of responsibility and detailed capabilities in managing various local affairs.<sup>132</sup> Hence, two of the three qualities emphasised personal virtue; while capability was important, it could hardly surpass the significance of moral integrity, which reflected Tu Long’s “fears” to be a magistrate.

In his letters to Zhu Geng, Tu Long directly pointed out the challenges of being a magistrate, such as how to handle affairs while keeping integrity, how to deal with the relationships with superior officials, and how to balance between being administrative responsibilities with the pursuit of fame, and between the literati virtues with official moral standards. He also pondered what would happen if his talents and abilities went unappreciated by higher authorities.<sup>133</sup> It can be seen that the role of a magistrate was complex, and the responsibilities were substantial. Tu Long used two rhetorical questions to express his “fear” of his failing in his duties: “It is so hard to be a magistrate; how could I not fear?” This reflected his anxiety about not having an honourable start to his official career. Even after his dismissal, when he encouraged his friend Cai Yingqi 蔡應期, the magistrate of Haiyan County, he still believed that “a virtuous man who has passed the imperial examinations and take an official post should be more concerned about his ability to conduct himself and cultivate his morality than about lower ranks or poor living conditions 大丈夫業登賢科，有祿位，患身名不立、德業不脩，豈憂官爵卑下、八口饑寒哉？”。<sup>134</sup> Hence, Tu Long consistently pursued the virtue he had cultivated within the elite community, which distinguished him from other literati and helped him seek honour within officialdom. After all, whether through Zhang Cong’s emphasis on moral qualities or Tu Long’s “fear”, being a recognised official was mainly about honour, which was significantly influenced by the moral

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<sup>131</sup> Zhang Cong 張聰, ‘Lun Guanxuan Xunfu Bingbei Shouling 論館選巡撫兵備守令’, in *Zhang Cong Ji* 張聰集, ed. by Zhang Xianwen 張憲文 (Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2003), p.97.

<sup>132</sup> Charles O. Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1985), p.78.

<sup>133</sup> The contents of the letter see ‘Shang Zuozhu Zhu Taishi Xiansheng Shu’, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.342. Zhu Taishi may be Zhu Geng 朱廣 (1535-1608), who was promoted to be *rijiang guan* 日講官 in Hanlin Academy, which was responsible to read and explain Classics and histories for the emperor, in 1578, so Tu Long could call him Taishi.

<sup>134</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Cai Haiyan Yingqi 與蔡海鹽應期’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, pp.376-377.

integrity and virtue that officials possessed.

With an awareness of the importance of virtue in the struggle for honour within officialdom, Tu Long's other moral achievement, "artlessness", was used to prevent the risks of dishonourable consequences when he managed local affairs and duties. Among the three qualities of a magistrate, "*cheng* 誠, sincerity" was regarded as a significant virtue. However, what underpinned his sincerity was actually his "*yu* 愚", which can be interpreted as "*zhuo*", meaning "slow-witted".<sup>135</sup> Sincerity was an important element in seeking honour, and Tu Long believed that his "artlessness", whether expressed as "*yu*" or "*zhuo*", directly contributed to his honourable virtue. Even though he "was not familiar with local affairs 不嫻於世務" or "had no other capability 無他材能", Tu Long still gained great achievements and earned a strong reputation during his time as magistrate in both Yingshang and Qingpu, which led to his promotion to the central government.<sup>136</sup> For instance, in a letter to several friends, Tu Long mentioned how he organised the local people of Yingshang to build river dykes to control flooding, saying:

I used my genuine artlessness to care for local people, never spending a single penny from official funds, and ten days later the river conservancy workers informed me that the dyke had been completed. This could not be done through strategy but might be the result of artlessness.

隆以其款款之愚風百姓，不煩官錢一錢，旬日而河工告成事。此非可以智計取，則或其拙之效也。<sup>137</sup>

Tu Long attributed the success of river dykes to the "effort of artlessness", which could never be accomplished by "*zhi* 智, strategy". He positioned "strategy" as the opposite of "artlessness", seeing any talent or capability as ineffective in the challenging role of a magistrate.

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<sup>135</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Jizhong Shu 與箕仲書', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.340.

<sup>136</sup> Tu Long, 'Ji Zhou Shijun', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.347; 'Yu Jizhong Shu', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.340.

<sup>137</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Zhang Changgong Zhujun Shu 與張長公諸君書', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.316.

If Tu Long's "fear" can be regarded as his awareness of the impact of virtue in his struggle for honour, then "artlessness" served as a virtue to protect and, more importantly, to fashion his honourable image. This is why he could say that he "would rather be artless than clever 寧拙不巧".<sup>138</sup> Tu Long's "artlessness" was a declaration of his identity as a literatus who served in an office capacity, forming the moral foundation of his sense of responsibility and commitment to his duties. He believed:

Before the Hongzhi period of our dynasty, people's inherent qualities were closer to the past; the ethos of literati was pure and honest, and the customs of people were simple and kind. From the Zhengde period onwards, [things] gradually deviated from this nature. The gentry placed personal benefits above public interests, while hats and clothes became adorned in showy and luxurious styles, losing their decency and simplicity. The people competed in idleness and neglected honest work, while officials focused on quarrelling and creating disturbances. Many things were counterfeit, and people became adept at disguising their true intentions, appearing [steadfast] as Mount Jiuyi while being as changeable as the waters of Sanxia. The recent customs are close to decadence, how terrible it is!

我朝弘治以前人心近古，士氣淳龐，民風樸野；正德以後，漸漓其真。縉紳先私利而後公家，章縫飾浮華而忘本實，閭閻競遊閒而廢恒業，朝市騰口舌而生風波。物多作賈，人善匿情，對面九疑，轉眼三峽。風俗之近衰晚也，可畏哉！<sup>139</sup>

It can be seen that Tu Long, as a literatus, resisted the decadent ethos of the time. His perspective was guided by the politically orientated dimension of the identity shaped by Confucian values and norms, which defined what an honourable official should embody. Therefore, when Tu Long confronted the new social sphere and the gap between his "low" honour and "high" esteem, he could confidently rely on his "artlessness", even "became outstanding through artlessness 以拙亮

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<sup>138</sup> Tu Long, 'Ji Li Zhiwen 寄李之文', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.172.

<sup>139</sup> Tu Long, 'Zhanyan Xia 詹炎下', in *Hongbao Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.8, p.363.

焉”, given that he not only gained remarkable achievements but also enjoyed the firm support of the local people.<sup>140</sup> During his tenure as a magistrate, Tu Long cultivated the primary image he fashioned for himself as an official—the “artless official”—a symbol of honour in that era. Moreover, Tu Long believed that the path towards honour could only be traversed by literati, officials “had to be [good] literati first, then excel in local administration 必文人而後善吏治”.<sup>141</sup> As a literatus, both his morality or ability were well cultivated and maintained within the literati community, particularly regarding erudition. Although Tu Long was modest about his own abilities, he remained faithful to his identity as a literatus and noticed its importance in seeking social recognition within officialdom.

Despite believing that his “artlessness” could serve as a solid foundation for his struggle for honour, Tu Long’s honour as an official was still questioned. In his letters to Shen Sixiao 沈思孝 (1542-1611) Tu Long mentioned that there was a common perception of talented literati as being “untrammelled and arrogant 誕謾”, which made it difficult for them to deal with complex tasks and heavy responsibilities.<sup>142</sup> Tu Long was also perceived as “unrestrained 狂”, akin to Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) and Li Bai 李白 (701-762), or regarded as a “Confucian scholar with meagre knowledge 文墨豎儒”, leading people to simply define him as the kind of literati incapable of being a good magistrate.<sup>143</sup> Even during his two terms as a magistrate, his sense of duty and commitment to the wellbeing of the local people was often seen as merely “building a reputation 脩名”, allowing him to “gain widespread famous and then ascend to higher ranks 求聞於世, 梯通顯爲”.<sup>144</sup> However, this was precisely the image Tu Long sought to avoid, especially within officialdom, which prompted him to even try “not to be too excellent for a well-known name 不敢過於脩削以……求聲名”.<sup>145</sup> This reflected the disparity in social recognition between Tu Long’s official honour and his self-esteem. The perception of Tu Long as a literatus serving as an

<sup>140</sup> Tu Long, ‘Ji Yu Shen Er Taishi 寄余沈二太史’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.347.

<sup>141</sup> Tu Long, ‘Shang Dazongbo Wang Xiansheng Shu’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.337.

<sup>142</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Shen Shaoqing Shu 與沈少卿書’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.331.

<sup>143</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Tang Sizong 與唐嗣宗’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.251; ‘Yu Lu Yusheng Sikou’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.284.

<sup>144</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Qu Ruihu 與瞿睿夫’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.207.

<sup>145</sup> Tu Long, ‘Ji Yu Shen Er Taishi’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.347.

official had the potential to undermine his honour, which was undoubtedly a “fear” during his time in office. He explicitly expressed this in his letters to Zhu Geng, saying:

The literati who excel in literature are often regarded as not being good at administration; ..... How can I then be a magistrate? This stereotype is applied to me by other officials and literati. Given this, my fears grow.

夫好文章家，則以爲必薄吏事；……如令何？是諸公之所以相隆也。如是，則隆滋愚矣。<sup>146</sup>

From this last sentence, the problem of being recognised as a leisurely literatus, unfit for administration, yet eager for fame, deeply troubled him and intensified his struggle within officialdom.

Tu Long’s “fear”, stemming from his official duties, was also expressed in his concern about shamming those who appreciated him. This fear arose not only from his inability to deal with his official responsibilities effectively but also from the moral decline caused by corruption and a lack of cultural cultivation. Tu Long mainly aimed to maintain an honourable image within the literati community while striving to avoid losing the respect from his friends. His “fear” of shame was rooted in the recognition of the values and norms shared in officialdom, which guided the way to honour. This sense of shame was an awareness of honour, understanding what could lead to its loss. Historically, this awareness existed within the Confucian values shared by literati across different eras, as the identity of a literatus itself inherently represented a kind of status honour based on educational and cultural disposition, and more importantly, their political disposition. The potential for joining officialdom introduced another level of honour, especially, when they were able to serve in government. When this potential honour became a tangible pursuit, literati faced various reasons that could lead to shame, which was the denial of recognition in their

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<sup>146</sup> Tu Long, ‘Shang Zuozhu Zhu Taishi Xiansheng Shu’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.342.



relationships within officialdom. Tu Long's "fear" of bringing shame to his friends reflected his anxiety about being denied recognition in his social relations, both within officialdom and the literati community. Moral decline not only jeopardised one's honour as an official but also damage one's esteem as a literatus of integrity.

Tu Long's "fear" of protecting integrity was primarily based on his duties as an official. However, in addition to these responsibilities, a magistrate also had to deal with relationships within the local social community, including local power holders such as gentry lineages. To keep his integrity, Tu Long had to be discreet about his social activities, which extended beyond those based on his literary talent and reputation to include interactions that could expose him to corrupt environments, thereby compromising his moral integrity. He expressed this concern to his friend Shen Jiuchou, saying "I do have great fear that common customs and conventions are so unpredictable; literary pursuits and morality are lost; the clamour for fame is increasing daily, while moral qualities decline. All this is the consequences of being a magistrate 余竊有大懼焉，世俗情深，風雅道喪；聲譽日增，人品日減，則令之故也".<sup>147</sup> This "fear" became more notable after Tu Long relocated to Qingpu. In a letter to Gu Shaofang, he wrote, "It was fine [to be artless] when I was in the north, where customs were plain and simple; after moving to the area of Wu-Kuai, it was not a place suited for me. The sophistication and cleverness of the people is something I greatly fear, let alone for someone like me who can only work artlessly 居北方簡樸處猶可，移之吳會，非鄙陋所宜矣。園轉敏捷尚思不堪，而況僕之固陋用拙者哉".<sup>148</sup> With the change of post, the specific social environment also shifted; apparently, the situation in Qingpu was more complex, especially regarding social life and worldly associations, which troubled Tu Long and intensified his "fear".

But why did Qingpu evoke such "fear" in Tu Long? Firstly, this can be explored through the local context. During late Ming Dynasty, Qingpu belonged to Songjiang Prefecture, which also included the counties of Shanghai 上海 and Huating 華亭. According to the Investigation of Customs of Songjiang Prefecture 松江府風俗考, Songjiang was not only rich in natural resources

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<sup>147</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Jizhong Shu', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p340.

<sup>148</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Gu Shifu', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.231.

and products but also boosted a developed business and vibrant cultural environment, producing many renowned literati who formed a leading status in literature and art, including the Yunjian School of poetry, as well as calligraphy and painting. However, the local gentry were not only known for their literary achievements but also for their great reputation of morality, meritorious services, and indifference to worldly rewards, which fostered a group of influential elite families that held a comparatively higher status in the local community. Even newly risen families could not easily intermarry with them.<sup>149</sup> The flourishing of Songjiang Prefecture had a long history, encompassing literature, art, taste, education, commerce and Buddhism. This rich historical and cultural environment produced a group of local gentry and elite who constituted a high-level local social community, creating a corresponding cultural atmosphere. In letters to Yang Dezheng 楊德政, a fellow graduate, and Shen Maoxue, he noted that “the high-ranked officials and powerful families were as many as the stars in the sky 大人長者多如星” and “the thoroughfares of Sanwu [referring to Songjiang] were filled with mingling officials’ hats and carriages 三吳孔道冠蓋旁午”.<sup>150</sup> This environment was quite similar to Tu Long’s hometown, Yin, which also had a flourishing cultural and social atmosphere and an elite literati community. As the magistrate of Qingpu, Tu Long not only had his official duties but also a familiar social environment to maintain his esteem within the literati community; his residence was “then filled with visitors each day 門中之刺日滿”<sup>151</sup>

Like his discretion in social interactions in Beijing, in Qingpu—especially within its elite social environment—Tu Long’s literary talent and reputation became comparatively large challenges than in Yingshang. When Tu Long just arrived Qingpu, he was quickly surrounded by guests, and soon found himself overwhelmed by various literati, both genuinely talented and otherwise, some sincerely appreciating his abilities while others did not.<sup>152</sup> Tu Long was aware that magistrates

<sup>149</sup> ‘Songjiang Fu Fengsu Kao 松江府風俗考’, in *Qinding Gujin Tushu Jicheng* 欽定古今圖書集成, ed. by Chen Menglei 陳夢雷 and Jiang Tingxi 蔣廷錫, 808 vols (Taipei: Zhonghua Shuju, 1934), vol.116, p.49a-b.

<sup>150</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Yang Gongliang 與楊公亮’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.221; ‘Yu Shen Jundian 與沈君典’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.177.

<sup>151</sup> Tu Long, ‘Feng Liu Guancha Xiansheng 奉劉觀察先生’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.311.

<sup>152</sup> For the details, see Tu Long’s letters: ‘Yu Shen Jundian’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.177; ‘Feng Liu Guancha Xiansheng’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.311; ‘Yu Baigu 與百穀’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.317.

typically attracted many visitors from the local community, a situation that was not unusual or dishonourable, at least not in the past. He discussed this with Guan Zhidao, saying:

In the past, magistrates, aside from their official duties, would tour the mountains and rivers in their jurisdiction during their leisure time, which was treated with approbation. Nowadays, however, this has become forbidden. Additionally, magistrates of the past were valued for being peaceful and gentle, while those now are valued for being demanding and meticulous.

古之爲守令者，職事而外，間覽其境內山川，折節于高士，以爲美譚，而今則爲世大禁。又古之吏治貴清靜，今之吏治貴苛細。<sup>153</sup>

Tu Long pointed out the conflicts between the shared values and norms within officialdom in the past and those of his own time. The virtues of an official in the past were generally consistent to those of the literati, which meant the honour code was compatible in both officialdom and the literati community. A literatus with a good reputation for his writing could also be recognised as an honourable official. However, during Tu Long's era of, personal lifestyle and the working requirements of officials had changed significantly. Although cultural activities were not entirely forbidden for officials, Tu Long's social life in Qingpu demonstrated that he practised a tasteful literati lifestyle, which was still regarded as contrary to the established honour code of officialdom in his time, regardless of how refined it was. This strict honour code had been established since the Hongwu period, but by the late Ming Dynasty, the ethos of both the literati community and officialdom had been heavily influenced by the prevalence of consumption. In practical terms, literati enjoyed in the pleasure brought by material and luxury lifestyle, while the values and norms that grounded in officialdom and the virtues that honoured officials constrained them in terms of morality and conduct.

The intensive social life in Qingpu terrified Tu Long because of the possibility of being denied

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<sup>153</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Guan Dengzhi 與管登之', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.337.

proper honour. Although the pronounced cultural environment attracted him, there were still aspects he “dared not” jeopardise. For instance, in a letter to Wang Shimao, he wrote:

Now being a minor magistrate, ..... I am ashamed to just embrace only the insignificant skills in writing, ..... As for adopting a literati lifestyle, living freely and unfettered while neglecting public affairs.....How could I dare to do that!

今爲小吏，……恥空抱筆墨區區與雕虫角技。……至於踵文士習氣，逍遙以遨而蔑視民事，……則吾豈敢哉。<sup>154</sup>

The things that Tu Long “dared not” neglect, due to his cultural disposition, were closely tied to his struggle for honour. His sense of “dared not” conveyed a feeling of shame also for focusing on literature. Clearly, it was insufficient for Tu Long to be recognised merely as a talented literatus; he wanted a higher level of recognition from a more elevated social sphere. He perceived literary cultivation and activities, which typically brought him esteem in the process of social recognition, as lacking in aspiration. His experiences in Yingshang, especially the achievements he gained through hard work and reputation he earned from his virtues, led him to a more important geographic jurisdiction, Qingpu, which motivated him to seek greater honour within officialdom. Hence, Tu Long “dared not” relax in his duties, yet he did not neglect his cultural lifestyle either. It could be said that the four years in Qingpu were a time when Tu Long achieved a balance between his honour and esteem. I will return to this later.

In addition to preventing the literati lifestyle from damaging his honour, especially through social interactions with local literati, Tu Long also had to be cautious about the corrupting influences of local power holders. His “fear” stemmed from his awareness of virtue and its implications, with his moral integrity being key to achieving honour. The greatest “fear” Tu Long had during his official tenure was corruption, which, regardless of the values involved, constituted

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<sup>154</sup> Tu Long, ‘Ji Shaozongbo Wang Gong 寄少宗伯王公’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.179.

dishonourable conduct. When Tu Long was involved in the mutual recognition in the elite literati community in Qingpu and enjoyed its flourishing culture and lifestyle, he also encountered the privileges of the local gentry lineages, which were largely composed of families of powerful officials with long-standing influence in the area. Their power effectively controlled local affairs, particularly in intervening and manipulating local administration. One of the most powerful families in Songjiang was the Xu family in Huating, which had prospered since Xu Jie 徐階 (1503-1583) served as Senior Grand Secretary during the Longqing period and was also the mentor of Zhang Juzheng. The power and influence of the Xu family were so extensive in the Songjiang area, that “there were barely any local officials who did not build deep connections with [the Xu family] in order to have a good ending as a magistrate 地方之吏，未有不深自結納而得令終者”.<sup>155</sup> Moreover, when new officials were assigned to the jurisdiction, they would quickly be recruited by the Xu family’s influence. Tu Long described this in a letter to Feng Fangbo when he received the recruitment:

The powerful family of Huating was glorious outside and profound inside, held sway at the time, was as rich as the state. When I just reported for duty, trusted subordinates from [the Xu family] came to speak with me, saying: “Although he has already evaded your way, his disciples and old friends are all over the important places, remotely holding power in the government. Manipulating people’s fortunes or misfortunes is as easy as turning a hand. .... You should seriously bear this in mind.”

華亭巨室，飾外深中，權足傾時，富可敵國。某初到官，便令心腹人來說某，云：“彼雖已避賢者路，門生故舊，布滿要地，遙執國柄。彼其禍福人，易於翻掌。……明府其熟計之。”<sup>156</sup>

It is evident that threats played a significant role in this recruitment, making it difficult for officials,

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<sup>155</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Feng Fangbo 與馮方伯’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.319.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, pp.318-319.

especially those newly appointed in Songjiang, to contend with such great power. Their official careers could easily be manipulated by these influential families.

This situation became one that Tu Long not only “feared” but also found challenging to navigate. He said: “I do not think resisting corruption is difficult, but I do feel it is very hard to follow others’ minds without my own judgement 顧弟不難於廉潔，而難於媵阿”.<sup>157</sup> Submitting to local power holders would tarnish Tu Long’s honour as an official, while confronting them could result in losing his official post entirely, which would also mean losing his honourable status. In light of this, Tu Long directly declined the offer to form a connection with Xu family, let alone flattering them by obeying their orders or assisting their family members in evading punishments according to the law.<sup>158</sup> For example, Tu Long once sentenced one of Xu’s relative, Zhou Shihua 周時化, to death because of his wrongful conduct in the locality.<sup>159</sup> Tu Long’s integrity was not merely an awareness of “fear” but was genuinely put into practice, as he used real cases to express his moral quality.

Given the Xu family’s control over local affairs and their bullying behaviour towards the local people, Tu Long found himself in a difficult position to deal with local relations. In these circumstances, the risk of jeopardising the honour of a literatus serving as an official was not solely influenced by a tasteful literati lifestyle or a respectable reputation for writing; it could more seriously arise from corruption or bending the law for personal gain, leading to a tarnished reputation. This was the “fear” that threatened Tu Long’s honour, and it was something he believed needed to be seriously guarded against. Even during his time in Qingpu, Tu Long expressed his concerns about social interactions, stemming from his literati lifestyle. Compared to the corrupt conduct of local powers, his tasteful lifestyle was almost akin to the virtuous conduct expected of a magistrate, like in the old days, which was another way Tu Long demonstrated his integrity.

Among all of Tu Long’s “fears”, none were unrelated to the pursuit of honour within officialdom. The “fears” he articulated almost existed during his tenure as a magistrate. Hence,

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<sup>157</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Gu Shifu’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.231.

<sup>158</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Feng Fangbo’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.319.

<sup>159</sup> Tu Long, ‘Zhou Shihua 周時化’, in *Hongbao Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.10, p.1152.

this period was one of striving to enhance his honour to align with his esteem. During this time, Tu Long may have intended suppress his esteem somewhat, but in reality, he never ceased to maintain his self-mastered esteem. Regardless of his comments on how his identity as a literatus might affect his honour, the esteem derived from his position in the literati community continuously constructed a significant and reliable part of Tu Long's struggle for social recognition.

## **In the process of balancing between honour and esteem**

The five years of Tu Long's life as a magistrate provided plenty of opportunities for him to achieve a balance between his official honour and self-mastered esteem. Although the two forms of social recognition were based on different social spheres, they could not be considered incompatible, as they were constituted by the same community. Tensions arose during the process of seeking these recognitions, which were mainly caused by the differing ways dictated by their respective value systems. For official honour, Tu Long had to demonstrate moral integrity and a rigorous attitude towards local affairs and people, which, in practice, meant being devoted to his official duties and striving to achieve remarkable goals. In contrast, self-mastered esteem was an area where Tu Long excelled, rooted in taste-oriented interactions and a culturally rich lifestyle.

When Tu Long wrote to Dong Fen 董份 (1510-1595), who was as high-ranking as the Minister of Rites during the Jiajing period 嘉靖 (1521-1567) and held a high reputation in Huzhou 湖州 as a local gentry, he expressed his ideal career image as a magistrate:

I hope to make my name as a minor magistrate, establish my honour and reputation, embrace goodness while upholding righteousness, set an example in the world, and then leave for the lake, singing like the man of Yue [here referring to Fan Li 范蠡, 536 BC-448 BC].

欲庶幾以小吏起家，立功名，懷仁負義，垂耿耿天壤，然後拂衣五湖，長嘯姻水作越

For Tu Long, being a local magistrate was a position where he could achieve the goals of being both an honourable official and an esteemed literatus, with the two forms of shared values and norms complementing each other. Moreover, self-mastered esteem could effectively support his struggle for honour, because the virtue of literati not only earned him a moral reputation but also provided him with an honourable conclusion of his career, even his life, as an official. Like the example Tu Long admired, the ideal image of an official would be akin to Fan Li, who not only achieved great successes in his post but also garnered an outstanding reputation upon leaving, treating fame as less important than his own virtue. Therefore, during his time as a magistrate, Tu Long's expectation in his struggle for social recognition was to maintain his esteem while increasing honour in which he was held through hard work in his official duties and personal social activities in his leisure time.

Tu Long's achievements as a magistrate were significant access points to honour. As mentioned earlier, the reason he was relocated to a wealthier county than Yingshang was due to his remarkable work on building river dykes. The situation was dire, as Tu Long described in a letter to Shen Mingchen, expressing the challenges of working as a magistrate:

There was a big river by the east gate of the city wall; for years, floods had caused damage, making the wall thinner and thinner. The old dyke could hardly withstand the flood, and the elder people were frightened, fearing they would become fish in the water. When I arrived at the post, elders and youths stood all over the road to discuss the project [of building dykes] at the east gate. Previous discussions had lasted for ten years without results, estimating the budget would require thousands of taels of silver. The county had already suffered from starvation and decline; what was the purpose of this magistrate post if the city became empty

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<sup>160</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Dong Zongbo 與董宗伯', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.381. Fan Li was from the state of Chu in the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476B.C.), who used his talent and competence helped King Goujian of Yue destroy the state of Wu and become one of the Five Overlords of the Spring and Autumn Period. After that, Fan Li did not stay for rewarding but sailed off into the lakes.



while people drowned? I then initiated the project, working diligently day and night. It began on the fourth day of the first month and was completed by the end of the third month; the dyke was successfully built, and I never laid a whip on the people.

城東門臨大河，歲洪水爲妖，薄我城垣。故隄失守，父老惴惴，恐一夕化爲魚。隆抵官，老幼遮道，爲言東門之役。先是，議數十年無成，度支可萬金。下邑枵然漙落，獨奈何守空城，坐待魚也？隆寔興是役，昕夕兀兀矣。始於王正四日，終於三月晦日，而告成事，未嘗以一鞭箠使其民也。<sup>161</sup>

It is evident that the flood problem in Yingshang, caused by the large river, had remained unresolved for ten years. The people suffered from the threat of flood every year, yet no magistrate had come up with a solution. Tu Long believed this was not due to a lack of capable among past magistrates but rather a lack of willingness to undertake hard work. The reason he could rally the people to complete this significant project was his “artlessness” or “slow-witted”, which represented a pure virtue. This virtue fostered his genuine sense of responsibility for the wellbeing of the local people and informed the way he dealt with his duties, such as the specific task of building dykes. This is why Tu Long said that it was not a task that could be accomplished through strategy; rather, the effort he invested was driven by his energy and genuine heart, which were key to getting the job done. Such qualities in an official who would sacrifice personal interests for public affairs are where honour originates. In fact, once the successful completion of the dykes and Tu Long’s dedication were acknowledged, he was appointed to another county facing similar flood issues, albeit with a more complicated social and political environments.

As Tu Long complained to his friend, Shen Zibin 沈自邠(1554-1589), who passed the Metropolitan Examination in the same year as Tu Long, “since I arrived in Qingpu the work has

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<sup>161</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Shen Jiaze Xiansheng Shu’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.322. In ‘Xiu Yingshang Xian Dongmen Hedi Beiji 修穎上縣東門河堤碑記’, Tu Long said the finishing time was on twenty-ninth of the second month, also he said the dyke cost fifty days, which the date should be twenty-ninth. So here the date of thirty of the third month may be the end of winding up.

doubled compared to my time in Yingshang 不佞自抵吳中，勞苦倍於居潁時”。<sup>162</sup> If Qingpu’s well-developed cultural environment largely satisfied Tu Long’s quest for social recognition in the form of self-mastered esteem, the serious political and economic conditions, along with the struggles of the people, provided him with opportunities to achieve greater administrative accomplishments and elevate his official honour. Although Qingpu benefited from Songjiang’s cultural atmosphere, it gained little from its economy while bearing the high taxes of Songjiang. The difficult situation in Qingpu is illustrated in the *Gazetteer of Qingpu*:

The area of Qingpu was a barren field in the southeast of Huating and Shanghai. The people who live there are not original inhabitants, they are escaped criminals from seven counties who have settled into a village. Each year, harvests are affected by floods or droughts, and taxes are defaulted daily. Both counties suffered, leading to the establishment of a new county with a recreated administration, where all affairs are primitive.

青浦者，故華、上東南瘠土惡壤也。民無土著，七邑逋逃居之，成一村落。歲坐水旱不登，國額日逋，兩大縣患苦之，爲別置邑，治又新創，百務草昧。

Tu Long shared a similar impression of the local situation in Qingpu. According to his own experience, he wrote in a letter to Wang Shimao:

Qingpu is now a thoroughfare in Wu-Kuai, its administration, compared to the other two counties, is worth less than one-ten, yet the tributes and decrees are the same. The land is barren, taxes are heavy, and the cunning and hypocrisy abound; issues are as many as spines of a hedgehog. Moreover, I must daily serve the powerful gentry, and I am already overwhelmed with correcting mistakes, so how can I find time to fulfil my duties as a magistrate?

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<sup>162</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Shen Maoren 與沈樸仁’, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.228.

青浦今為吳會孔道，縣治視二大邑十不當一，而供億徵令等之。又土瘠賦重，狡僞朋興，百事如蝟。又日承事諸薦紳大人，救過不暇，奈何令為。<sup>163</sup>

Qingpu was the poorest district of Songjiang, suffering not only from population loss caused by flooding and famine but also from the heavy taxes imposed by Songjiang. The farmland in Qingpu was limited and infertile, with far fewer households than in the other two counties. However, the taxes and corvée were as burdensome as those in the other counties, with the “exemption of taxation not worth one out of ten 今賜租十不當一”, which was “the same as in Shanghai, even though Shanghai was one of the best harvest districts [in Songjiang] 又上海諸縣最稔，而賜租與敝邑等”.<sup>164</sup> This is why Tu Long said that “there were no prefecture more difficult to administer than Yunjian (here representing Songjiang), and the most challenging part would be Qingpu 天下郡縣莫難於雲間，雲間莫難於青浦”.<sup>165</sup>

But why was Songjiang considered the most difficult place to govern? It was not only due to the many gentry lineages and senior officials involved in official affairs but also because of the heavy taxation throughout the Ming Dynasty. The taxation in Suzhou and Songjiang Prefecture was the heaviest in the country, also significantly more so than during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368). This heavy taxation began at the start of the Ming Dynasty:

In the initial period of the dynasty, the total grain tax across the country amounted to approximately twenty-nine million and forty-three thousand *dan*, with Zhejiang contributing over two million seven hundred and fifty-two thousand *dan*, Suzhou over two million eight hundred and nine thousand *dan*, and Songjiang over one million two hundred and nine thousand *dan*. Zhejiang’s tax was one-ninth of the national total, while Suzhou’s as a prefecture’s tax exceeded that of Zhejiang, a province, making it the heaviest in the country.

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<sup>163</sup> Tu Long, ‘Ji Shaozongbo Wang Gong’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, pp.178-179.

<sup>164</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Wang Baigu Er Shou 與王百穀二首’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.202.

<sup>165</sup> Tu Long, ‘Ji Gao Shengbo 寄高升伯’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.185.

Songjiang's tax was half that of Suzhou's, with Suzhou having seven counties and Songjiang only two, which just had a quarter of Suzhou's farmland, thus making Songjiang the most heavily taxed region in the realm.

国初总计天下税粮，共二千九百四十三万余石，浙江二百七十五万二千余石，苏州二百八十万九千余石，松江一百二十万九千余石。浙当天下九分之一，苏赢于浙，以一府视一省，天下之最重也。松半于苏，苏一州七县，松才两县，较苏之田四分处则天下之尤重者，惟吾松也。<sup>166</sup>

Although Songjiang's taxation was half that of Suzhou's, its farmland was only a quarter of Suzhou's, highlighting the severity of the tax burden. This situation arose not only because Songjiang was historically economically developed with many official lands but also due to man-made factors, especially the punitive measures imposed by Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (reg. 1368-1398) on the local people of Suzhou and Songjiang.<sup>167</sup> When Zhu Yuanzhang was establishing the Ming Dynasty, a military faction led by the insurrectionist Zhang Shicheng 張士誠 (1321-1367) occupied Suzhou. Due to Zhang's benevolent policies over many years, he gained significant local support. Hence, when Zhu Yuanzhang attacked Zhang's forces, the local people fought on Zhang's side. In response, Zhu was "angry at their defence of Zhang Shicheng, so he registered the lands of the great lineages and wealthy landlords as official lands, taxing them according to their private land records 怒其为张士诚守，乃籍诸豪族及富民田以为官田，按私租簿为税额", which was "specifically to punish the disorderly people of that time 特以惩一时顽民".<sup>168</sup> The emperor's anger, combined with local economic and historical factors, made Songjiang the most challenging prefecture to govern. As for Qingpu, at the beginning of the Ming

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<sup>166</sup> Tan Qian 谈迁, *Guo Que* 国榷 (Beijing: Guji chubanshe, 1958), p.586. *Dan* 石 is the unit of volume for grain, which is equal to 100 litres.

<sup>167</sup> For details, refer to Zheng Kesheng 鄭克晟, 'The Heavy Land Tax in the Ming Dynasty: Political Causes 明代重賦出于政治原因说', *Nankai Journal(Philosophy, Literature and Social Science Edition)* 南開學報(哲學社會科學版), 6(2001), 64-72; Zhou Qichen 周岐琛, 'Causes of Heavy Taxation in Suzhou and Songjiang Regions in Ming Dynasty 明代苏松重賦的成因', *Journal of Huaiyin Teachers College(Social Sciences Edition)* 淮阴师范学院学报(哲学社会科学版), 1(2014), 82-85, 140.

<sup>168</sup> Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉, "Shihuo Er 食貨二", in *Ming Shi* 明史, Siku Quanshu edition, pp.4a-b.

Dynasty, Songjiang had only two counties, Huating and Shanghai. The jurisdiction of Qingpu changed three times thereafter, and it was not until 1569 that Qingpu was officially established as one of the counties in Songjiang, inheriting the heavy tax burden equally with the other two counties, despite being situated on some of the most infertile lands in the prefecture.

The burden of Qingpu must have been heavy for any magistrate working there, especially when faced with famine caused by flooding and the flight of people leaving the land to lie waste, along with interference in official affairs from local powerful gentry. As for the heavy taxes, Tu Long even wrote to Xu Jie, outlining three aspects of the difficulties faced by the administration and the local people, and asking Xu to speak to the Grand Coordinator about reducing the land taxes for the year. As mentioned earlier, Tu Long resented cooperating with Xu's local power, but for the sake of people's wellbeing, he was willing to lower his esteem to seek Xu Jie's assistance. In Tu Long's view, relieving the suffering of the people was far more important than keeping a moral reputation or his integrity by avoiding connections with powerful local officials. Moreover, seeking help from more influential officials who could effectively relieve local suffering was not an act of currying favours but a responsible act as a father-and-mother official. This stance also strongly refuted the perception that he worked hard merely to build a respectable name for climbing the ranks. Hence, Tu Long preferred to seek honour through tangible actions that achieved real goals in officialdom rather than just preserving a good name. Therefore, in addition to requesting tax relief for local people, Tu Long also focused on the addressing issues that led to poor harvests, especially flood control in the local place.

In letters to his two best friends, Wang Shizhen and Feng Mengzhen, Tu Long described how hard he worked alongside local people to build the dyke:

I suffered from an unkempt appearance day and night, unable to perform any good deeds as a magistrate, I had no other ideas to save my elders and juniors, so I walked in the rain, leading them to take up digging tools and build the dyke myself.

隆日夜蓬跣自傷，爲令無狀，無能出一籌救我父老子弟，徒步走雨中，率父老子弟，

親操畚鍤築隄阡。

This spring, I attempted to repair the dyke in advance to block the floods, taking up tools instead of merely praying, so that our county could avoid disaster.

今春嘗預脩水田隄阡，力障洪川，而不佞手擲瓣香，即操畚耜，敝邑當得不災。<sup>169</sup>

A talented elite literatus, who typically worked with pen and ink and lived a refined lifestyle, set aside prayers to take up tools build protection against the overflowing river. Although it may be somewhat exaggerated that Tu Long worked directly with the local people, his main expression was one of devotion to duty and a sense of responsibility towards the local people. Tu Long presented himself not just as a refined literatus detached from the people but as a practical official engaged in substantial work. This demonstrated his latent capability to merge the two roles, each built on different values and norms, effectively in his official post. Hence, hard work was a significant step in proving himself and establishing himself as an honourable official, especially in a region with rich cultural and social environments. Under Tu Long's leadership, the following year, only Qingpu escaped disaster in Songjiang and Suzhou.<sup>170</sup>

Tu Long regarded the project as a significant achievement in seeking honour as a magistrate. In a letter to Feng Mengzhen, he expressed “if there were floods again next year, and people's lives were greatly harmed, I would be so ashamed to be this magistrate 有如兩歲再災，民生行且殄，令將安歸”。<sup>171</sup> This shame was a clear reflection of Tu Long's sense of honour as an official. Even though “the work was extremely hard that my hair became grey 積勞殊苦，毛髮爲枯”，Tu Long felt he could not indulge in the pleasures of a tasteful lifestyle.<sup>172</sup> When Wang Zhideng sent him a box of incense as a gift, he thought he “should have sat in a small room burning Longnaozi [name of a type of incense] and reading books such as Yu Tai and Xiang Lian, but these things really were

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<sup>169</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Wang Yuanmei Er Shou 與王元美二首’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.192; ‘Yu Feng Kaizhi 與馮開之’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.243.

<sup>170</sup> Tu Long told the good result in the letters to his friends, such as Shen Maoxue and Wang Shizhen, see ‘Yu Shen Jundian’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.303; ‘Yu Wang Yuanmei Xiansheng 與王元美先生’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.239.

<sup>171</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Feng Kaizhi’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.243.

<sup>172</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Li Zhiwen 與李之文’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.241.

really not what a magistrate should do 當坐一小閣中，然龍腦子而讀《玉臺》、《香奩》諸書，然非爲令事矣”。<sup>173</sup> The standards Tu Long set for himself as a magistrate were strict and high. It seemed there was never a moment when he did not remind himself of his official status. Even when Wang Zhideng asked for local cloth in return for his gift, Tu Long declined to send any due to his deep concern for the wellbeing of the local people.

You wish to have one *jian* of cloth to make a gown. Although Qingpu traditionally produced cloth, it was all for men and women exchanging it for money and rice, worth only one *dou* of rice. One *jian* is barely enough for you to wipe scabies. Thinking about our county's desolation, where people have no means of livelihood; they weave this one cloth daily to trade for rice for their meals as a common practice. If there is no cloth to sell for the day, children and women will go hungry.

足下欲得布一縑，作大袖方袍。青浦故產布，然皆市民里婦易錢米者，直可斗米。一縑耳，僅堪輿足下擦疥。因思敝邑荒落，民無生計，日織此一布易斗米晨炊，戶以爲常。布一日不售，則子婦有枵腹。<sup>174</sup>

Tu Long's sense of duty as a magistrate was showed not only in practical matters but also in his compassion for the local people. He effectively embodied the role of the magistrate as the “father-and-mother official”. In both Yingshang and Qingpu, Tu Long led prayers during the extreme weather, such as droughts or heavy rainings, in order to save the harvest. He even rebuilt the Dragon King Zhang's Temple 張龍王廟 in Yingshang because the previous one had misaligned the deity's position.<sup>175</sup> Additionally, to better educate the local people and enrich their

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<sup>173</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Wang Baigu Er Shou’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.202. *Yu Tai* is short for *Yu Tai Xin Yong* 玉臺新詠 *New Songs for the Jade Terrace*, which is a poetry collection collecting the poems from Eastern Zhou Dynasty to Liang Dynasty. *Xiang Lian* is *Xiang Lian Ji* 香奩集, *Vanity Case Collection*, which is also a poetry collection. Both collections mainly concentrate on the poems describing romance between men and women.

<sup>174</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Wang Baigu Er Shou’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.202. *Jian* 縑, the unite of length, one *jian* equals to around four meters. *Dou* 斗 is the unit of volume, which is equal to 10 litres.

<sup>175</sup> Tu Long's praying for raining in Yingshang could be known from his essays ‘Daoyu Ji Qian 禱雨記前’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*,

lives, Tu Long organised to build a library, memorial archways, halls, and a riverbank fence.<sup>176</sup>

Regardless of his hard work or genuine care for the local people, Tu Long adhered to the three qualities of a magistrate proposed by Zhang Cong. He gradually shaped his virtues and sense of responsibility to become an honourable official while navigating various social environments. In dealing with different local affairs across two separated counties, Tu Long successfully showed his capabilities. With his unassailable moral character and practical working ability, he established the image of a capable official of integrity.

By living up to his self-fashioning, Tu Long achieved the honour he expected since entering officialdom. In 1581, he received an imperial edict conferring the title of *Wenlin Lang* 文林郎, Literary Gentleman. His parents and wife also received corresponding honour because of his achievements. The *Yongshang Tushi Zongpu* 甬上屠氏宗譜, *The Genealogy of Yongshang Tu Family*, records the reason for Tu Long's award:

..... Tu Long, having made his name through the merit group of examinations, served as magistrate in Ruyin [Yingshang], known for his integrity and diligence. .... your literary and administrative skills are both outstanding; you have addressed the abuses of officials and the hidden troubles of the people, historically referred to as a *caili* [meaning talented magistrate]. I bestow upon you the title of Literary Gentleman. The district of Wu has suffered from flood for years; I have felt sorrowful while looking south and have urgently issued orders for tax exemptions multiple times, only you have understood my intentions and have worked tirelessly to ensure the welfare of the people. Therefore, I grant you this honour for your

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in *TLJ*, vol.1, pp.240-242 and 'Daoyu Ji Hou 禱雨記後', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, pp.242-244; '重建勅封昭靈張龍王祠碑記', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.253-254; 'Gao Chenghuang Wen 告城隍文', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, pp.273-274, pp.274-275; 'Zai Gao Chenghuang Wen 再告城隍文', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, pp.276-278; 'San Gao Chenghuang Wen 三告城隍文', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, pp.278-279; 'Ji Chenghuang Xieyu Wen 祭城隍謝雨文' and 'Gao Zhang Longwang Wen 告張龍王文', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.275; 'Ji Zhang Longwang Wen 祭張龍王文', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.280; 'Ji Wu'an Wang Xieyu Wen 祭武安王謝雨文', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.281. Tu Long's praying for fine weather in Yingshang could be known in the essays of 'Ji Chenghuang Xieqing Wen 祭城隍謝晴文', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, pp.281-282. Tu Long prayed for fine weather in Qingpu was recorded in 'Qi Qing 祈晴', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.284 and 'Xieqing Wen 謝晴文', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, pp.284-285. Dragon King refers to the God of Rain in Chinese.

<sup>176</sup> Wang Yong 王昶, Sun Fengming 孫鳳鳴, 'Xue Xiao 學校', in *Qingpu Xianzhi* 青浦縣誌, 1788, vol.12, pp.1b-2a



efforts.

……屠隆，起家甲第，試宰汝陰，廉幹有聞。……而爾文學與政事兼優，吏弊與民隱悉照，古稱才吏爾。其庶幾茲以考最授爾階文林郎。錫之敕命。吳中累歲大祲，朕惻焉南顧，亟下蠲恤之令屢矣，唯爾良有司尚體朕意，益殫乃猷務，俾元元並蒙其福。則予汝嘉爾，其懋哉。<sup>177</sup>

As the emperor's representative in the locality, Tu Long received acknowledgement from the emperor. The honour granted him was not only for his outstanding achievements in local governance but also for his virtue as a literatus. The title of "*caili* 才吏", talented magistrate, was one of the highest recognitions of his identity as a literatus serving as an official. It was also proof of Tu Long's success in balancing between honour and esteem. His self-esteem derived from his literary talent and reputation no longer functioned as an obstacle to his pursuit of honour; instead, it became a support in his struggle within officialdom. At that moment, Tu Long achieved his goal of merging two forms of social recognition within overlapping social spheres.

Indeed, Tu Long's talents and capabilities as both an official and a literatus during his tenure as magistrate were highly recognised by other officials and literati. In a letter to Lu Shusheng 陸樹聲 (1509-1605), the Minister of the Ministry of Rites, who was also from Huating, Lu praised Tu Long's integrity in office: "the magistrate of Qingpu can rid himself of hypocrisy and pretence, abandon glibness, and keep a pure heart, unlike those common officials 青浦令破雕剗偽，去其圓巧之風，而獨守純白，不作世俗吏仗倆".<sup>178</sup> Similarly, Zhang Dai 張岱 (1597-?) noted that although Tu Long was renowned for his literary talent, he "actually possessed the talent for administering state affairs 實具經濟大才".<sup>179</sup> In the *Gazetteer of Qingpu*, Tu Long was described as a magistrate who "was not only skilled in administration but also excelled in writing; the literati

<sup>177</sup> 'Zeng Wenlinlang Zhili Sognjiangfu Qingpuxian Zhixian TLJ Feng Ruren Yangshi Chiming 贈文林郎直隸松江府青浦縣知縣屠隆及封孺人楊氏敕命', in *Yongshang Tushi Zongpu* 甬上屠氏宗譜, ed. by Zhang Meiyi 張美翊, Tu Kequan 屠可全, 36vol (Jiqin Tang 即勤堂 wooden block printed edition, 1919), vol.18.

<sup>178</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Lu Pingquan Zongbo 與陸平泉宗伯', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.455.

<sup>179</sup> Zhang Dai 張岱, 'Tu Long Yu Chunxi Huang Ruheng Liezhuan 屠隆虞淳熙黃汝亨列傳', in *Shi Kui Shu* 石匱書, 78 vols, vol.71, p.42a.

from all quarters were eager to know him. Regardless of floods or droughts, as long as he wrote prayers, they would be answered. Despite the many official duties, he maintained his literary cultivation while effectively managing administrative tasks 既精於吏治，善屬文，四方騷雅之士，爭歸之。水旱疾疫，輒以文禱，亡不應。邑事旁午，不廢吟詠，而事亦辦”。<sup>180</sup> Not only were Tu Long’s competence and literary talent well recognised in officialdom and the literati community, but also his virtues were also greatly honoured. Tu Long genuinely considered to both his working and personal life. He seemed to successfully fuse his identity as a literatus with his status as an official, earning recognition as a “literati official”, just as he had admired the approbation of magistrates in the past.

It was true that Tu Long endeavoured in his duties as a magistrate and successfully enhanced honour of officials. However, he also greatly navigated his social relations within the literati community while practising a tasteful literati lifestyle, effectively maintaining his esteem in Qingpu, and it was also a progressive process, with his earlier tenure as magistrate of Yingshang playing an important role. Although Yingshang was not as culturally or economically rich as Qingpu, it marked the first step in Tu Long’s official career. He still tried to engage in social activities with officials to sustain the relationships he had built within officialdom. For instance, Sun Jigao visited Tu Long in Yingshang specifically to meet with him, during which Tu Long created three poems for their gathering.<sup>181</sup> During his year in Yingshang, a more significant relationship developed: his friendship with Wang Shizhen.<sup>182</sup> At that time, Wang had already become a leader in the literary arena, Tu Long introduced himself to Wang primarily to gain his acknowledgement of his literary talent and his status within the literature community.<sup>183</sup> With Wang Shizhen’s approval, Tu Long’s position in the literati community became even more secure, facilitating the maintenance and expansion of his social networks in Yingshang. As mentioned

<sup>180</sup> The quote is from Kangxi Qingpu Xianzhi, the original text could hardly be seen, so here cited the quote from Qin Wanchun’s ‘Tu Long Nianpu’, p.59.

<sup>181</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Feng Kaizhi Nianzhang Shu 與馮開之年丈書’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, pp.332-336; ‘Yu Sun Yide Taishi Shu 與孫以德太史書’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, pp.324-325; ‘Xi Sun Taishi Zhizi Taihe Ershou 喜孫太史至自太和二首’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.104; ‘Song Sun Yide Beishang 送孫以德北上’, in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.106.

<sup>182</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Wang Yuanmei Xiansheng Shu 與王元美先生書’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, pp.326-330.

<sup>183</sup> About Wang Shizhen’s leadership of the literary arena, see Qian Qianyi 錢謙益, ‘Shen Jishi Mingchen 沈記室明臣’, in *Liechao Shiji* 列朝詩集, dingji dijiu 丁集第九, pp.16a-b <<https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=43964&page=32>>

earlier, Tu Long's literary works were collected and printed by local government students, later reorganised and reprinted by Feng Mengzhan and Shen Maoxue in the *Youquan Collection* in Qingpu. After all, the time Tu Long spent in Yingshang was relatively brief, limiting what he could maintain in terms of relationships and lifestyle. In contrast, Qingpu provided a social environment where Tu Long could fully express his cultural disposition and tasteful lifestyle. In a letter to Xu Yisun 徐益孫, a talented literatus within the same social circle as Tu Long and Feng Mengzhen, he wrote, "After relocating to Wu-Kuai I found the work very difficult, but I was very happy to associate with the local talented literati 移官吳會，僕誠仄仄難之，而喜得從吳中文人才士遊".<sup>184</sup>

In Qingpu, Tu Long eventually found himself in a comfortable social environment enriched by culture and relationships that supported his self-esteem. However, alongside his concerns about literary reputation in seeking honour, he began to worry that his heavy duties as a magistrate would affect him to maintain his virtues and lifestyle as a talented literatus, further influencing his status and esteem within the literati community. Tu Long expressed his frustrations to several friends, including Wang Xijue, Feng Mengzhen, Shen Maoxue, and Sun Jigao, complaining that he "not only needed to deal with paperwork but also had to take care of visitors, leaving almost no leisure time 內理簿牘，外罷將迎，真無刻暇", and that "till midnight he still could not rest 夕至漏下四五鼓不得休".<sup>185</sup> In a letter to Shen Zibin, he expressed his desire to keep in close touch with friends but noted that "every time he picked up a brush to write a letter, all kinds of official affairs flooded his mind, which was quite annoying, forcing him to give up 每握筆欲作一交遊書，而俗務種種，無端攪人，擲筆起罷矣".<sup>186</sup> It is evident that the loaded work troubled Tu Long significantly, and more seriously, it greatly affected him to maintain friendships. Consequently, he developed a sense of anxiety regarding his value as a talented and tasteful literatus, as well as a crisis of recognition based to the shared values and norms within the literati community, all because of his busy life as a magistrate. In a letter to Guan Zhidao, he expressed this concern:

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<sup>184</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Xu Mengru Er Shou 與徐孟孺二首', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.180.

<sup>185</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Jingshi Xiansheng 與荊石先生', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.354; 'Yu Shen Jundian Feng Kaizhi Shen Jizhong Sun Yide Zhou Yuanfu Zhuzi Shu 與沈君典馮開之沈箕仲孫以德周元孚諸子書', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.319.

<sup>186</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Shen Maoren', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.228.

Since I enter Wu, I have been both lowly and overwhelmed. . . . . so that I have no time for refined and tasteful affairs. Since my arrival in Wu, I have been unable to reach the famous sites, such as Tiger Hill, Han Mountain, Stone Lake, and Ling Wu. Even the so-called Jiufeng and Sanmao, which are so close that they are just underfoot, I have not been able to visit for years.

不肖自入吳來，既賤且冗。……固無暇爲風流標致之事。某之入吳，無論虎丘、寒山、石湖、凌屋諸勝，遠莫能至。即所謂九峰、三泖，近在履舄之下，亦經年而不一寓目。

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Tu Long's life seemed so consumed by official affairs that aspects related to the cultural and tasteful lifestyle of the literati were severely neglected. He quickly felt that he had become "vulgar from deep inside 五臟俱俗", and presented himself as a "*suli* 俗吏, vulgar magistrate".<sup>188</sup> Hence, what Tu Long was afraid of was being "*su* 俗, vulgar", which was directly opposed to the cultural and tasteful cultivation and lifestyle of the literati. Moreover, he felt his dignity had been diminished, reducing him to the status of a lowly official rather than an esteemed literatus. In a letter to Zhou Guanggao 周光鎬(1536-1616), the secretary of the Ministry of Personnel in Nanjing, he said:

As a lowly official, the honourable officials regard me as a slave. . . . . thus, I have gradually sunk into the mud, looking at the high-ranking officials as if they were celestial beings, no longer daring to introduce myself. Even when I do introduce myself, I rarely received a response.

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<sup>187</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Guan Dengzhi', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.337.

<sup>188</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Feng Kaizhi Nianzhang Shu', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.334; 'Yu Guan Dengzhi', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.337.

身爲賤吏，賢士大夫奴視之。……以此日淪泥塗，望貴人長者如天際真人，不復敢以姓名通。即以姓名通，罕所省答。<sup>189</sup>

Because of this difficult situation, Tu Long mentioned in a letter to Shen Maoxue, “at first, you strongly urged me to abandon the appointment as a magistrate and become a court academician. I did not follow your advice, and now I regret it 始足下勸僕棄去吏事，作京兆博士甚力。僕不從，乃今悔之”。<sup>190</sup>

However, whether considering greater honour gained when Tu Long received the honourable title of Literary Gentleman or the compliments he received as a magistrate with literary talent, it is clear that he did not lose his cultural and tasteful cultivation or lifestyle, nor did he regret being a magistrate. His worries and regrets primarily stemmed from the conflicts between seeking two different forms of social recognition within two distinct social spheres. On one hand, Tu Long feared that his literati image would undermine his true capabilities as an official; on the other hand, he worried that his dedication to his official duties might be perceived by other literati or officials as a pursuit of higher ranks and fame. The notion of being “*su*, vulgar” represented a denial of his values as an elite literatus, a denial of his literary reputation, and a denial of his self-esteem, especially when he felt he could hardly maintain his social relations effectively, practise the literati lifestyle properly, or uphold his dignity as a culturally distinguishing elite. This awareness of crisis highlighted his struggle for a more balanced and harmonious social recognition as a literatus serving in officialdom, and also helped Tu Long achieve an ideal state of social recognition between honour and esteem. Hence, during his four years as magistrate of Qingpu, Tu Long also did well in fashioning the image of a tasteful literatus.

As part of the tradition of literati and the constraints of official status, Tu Long maintained his esteem as an elite literatus primarily through literature-related activities. The most common social activities shared between Tu Long and his friends would be literary gatherings, whether through visiting someone’s residence or touring culturally or historically significant sites. Given the heavy

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<sup>189</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Zhou Guoyong Libu 與周國雍吏部’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4 p309.

<sup>190</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Shen Jundian 與沈君典’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.324.

duties of magistrate, during his time in Qingpu, Tu Long only visited his friends' homes three times: once at Wang Shizhen's Yanzhou Shantang 弇州山堂, Yanzhou Mountain Hall, once at the residence of Mo Shilong 莫是龍 (1539-1587), and once at his grandnephew Tu Benjun's Xiashuang Ge 霞爽閣, Xiashuang Pavilion.<sup>191</sup> The remaining gatherings took place at Tu Long's official residence in Qingpu, where Shen Mingchen, Feng Mengzhan and Shen Maoxue were the literati who visited him most frequently. In the first two years of Tu Long's time in Qingpu, Shen Mingchen and Feng Mengzhen visited him four times, three of which were together. Additionally, Wang Zhideng, Tu Benjun, Wang Shizhen, Liang Chenyu, and other local literati also came due to Tu Long's esteemed literary reputation.

The act of visiting itself was a significant means of maintaining relationships among literati, and it also indicated the level of esteem a literatus could achieve within the literati community based on the members of their social circles. Literati gatherings not only contained the symbolic norms of identity shared within the community but also implied mutual recognition between each other. For instance, during Shen Mingchen and Feng Mengzhen's first visit to Tu Long in 1579, they went boating on the lake, hiking in the mountains, and visiting a memorial temple. This provided a great opportunity to enhance and spread their literary cultivation and reputation while fulfilling their quest for literary creation. Not to mention, the works they created during their tours and gatherings were later published in the *Qingxi Ji* 青溪集, *Qingxi Collection*. Moreover, the presence of a prestigious literatus like Wang Shizhen represented a high level of the esteem; thus his invitation or visit could be regarded as an approval of Tu Long's esteem within the literati community, and even more so within the elite community. When Tu Long published the *Qingxi Collection*, he asked Wang Shizhen to contribute some poems, even though Wang did not attend their gatherings. This action reflected Tu Long's perception that, on one hand, Wang Shizhen's reputation was sufficient to elevate the collection's standing within the literati community; on the

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<sup>191</sup> Tu Long's visiting to Wang Shizhen, Mo Shilong and Tu Benjun's place could be known from the poems: 'Chunri Yan Wang Yuanmei Xiansheng Yanzhou Shantang Fende Qing Ceng Erzi 春日燕王元美先生弇州山堂分得青岑二字', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.105; 'Chunri Tong Yuan Lüshan Xu Changru Peng Qinzhi Gu Zhongfang Ji Mo Tinghan Zhaizhong Fenyun Sishou 春日同袁履善徐長孺彭欽之顧仲方集莫廷韓齋中分韻四首', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, pp.126-127; Shen Mingchen 沈明臣, 'Renwu Eryue Shuo, Ji Tu Bibu Tianshu Xiashuang Ge Shi'er Yun 壬午二月朔, 集屠比部田叔霞爽閣十二韻', in *Fengdui Lou Shixuan* 豐對樓詩選, 1596, vol.24, 5b-6a < <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=129868&page=144> >

other, Tu Long's literary cultivation and status were also reputable enough to align with Wang Shizhen's leadership. The collection indeed created a sensation in the literati community, as Wang noted, "At that moment, all the renowned literati, such as Xu Changru [Xu Yisun] and others, contributed poems for the occasion. How grand and flourishing it was 一時諸名士如徐長孺輩皆有屬和之什，離離乎盛矣".<sup>192</sup>

From Tu Long's connections to the literati community during his time in Qingpu, it is evident that some of his social relations were retained from his previous elite social circle in Yin, such as Shen Mingchen and Tu Benjun. Others were graduates who passed the Metropolitan Examination in the same year as Tu Long, along with members from the local literati community of Qingpu. Regardless of whether these were old or new relations, they were mostly formed by the elite literati. The old connections with the elite of Yin served as an anchor in his pursuit of esteem, as seen in Tu Long's visits to Tu Benjun's residence to gather with old acquaintances such as Shen Yiguan, Shen Jiuchou, and Yu Yin, as well as in his sending of his new collection, *Youquan Collection*, to Li Zhiwen. The new relationships with elites such as Wang Shizhen, Shen Maoxue, and Feng Mengzhen, demonstrated Tu Long's awareness of self-mastery in seeking a stronger sense of social recognition within the literati community. During this time, Tu Long even arranged the marriage of his son to Shen Maoxue's daughter during his son's one-month celebration.<sup>193</sup>

This initiative derived from Tu Long's cultivated disposition and strong sense of self-esteem, which also gave him the confidence to actively correspond with Wang Shizhen, the leader of the literary arena at that time. The status of a leader within the literati community in the late Ming Dynasty was less connected to official power compared to the Tang and the Song Dynasty, and even the early Ming Dynasty. It was decided by approval and prestige within the literati community, making it a position open to contest.<sup>194</sup> Tu Long demonstrated his ambition for this contestation,

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<sup>192</sup> Wang Shizhen, 'Xu Changru Shijuan 徐長孺詩卷', in *Yanzhou Xugao*, vol.160, p.7a.

<sup>193</sup> This event could be seen from Tu Long's letters to Shen Maoxue, 'Yu Jundian Hunyue Shu 與君典約婚書', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.317; to Wang Zhideng, 'Yu Wang Baigu 與王百谷', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.242; to Shen Mingchen, 'Yu Shen Jiaze Ershou 與沈嘉則二首', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, pp.249-250; to Li Zhiwen, 'Yu Lizhiwen 與李之文', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.316; to Sun Jigao, 'Yu Yide 與以德', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.318-319.

<sup>194</sup> About the difference of leader status in the literati community in different dynasties refers to Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞, 'Mingdai de Wenren Jituan 明代的文人集團', in *Zhaoyu Shi Gudian Wenxue Lunji* 照隅室古典文學論集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji

particularly as he recognised Wang Shizhen's high status and his own status within the literati community. Although Tu Long did not successfully attain the leader status from Wang Shizhen, his own status and reputation within the literati community remained solid due to his talent. This was evident through the frequent interactions between Tu Long and his friends, especially the regular visits his friends made to his residence, which helped him attract and built new relationships with a broader range of literati.

In the last year of Tu Long's tenure in Qingpu, the famous playwright Liang Chenyu specifically brought his theatrical troupe to Qingpu to perform his drama *Huansha Ji* 浣紗記, *Story of Washing the Silken Gauze*, while Tu Long wrote a preface for Liang Chenyu's *Lucheng Ji* 鹿城集, *Lucheng Collection*.<sup>195</sup> Given Tu Long's renowned talent and reputation in literature, he was often asked to write prefaces for his friends' books. For instance, Wang Zhideng's *Zhujian Bian* 竹箭編, *Bamboo Arrow Collection*, Tu Long not only wrote a preface but also helped to print it at his own expense. Additionally, the preface for *Guochao Minggong Hanzao* 國朝名公翰藻, *The Literary Grace of Famous Literati in the Dynasty*, was written at the request of the editor Ling Dizhi 凌迪知 (1532-1601), who had heard of Tu Long's great talent.<sup>196</sup>

There is no doubt that Tu Long's strong sense of esteem within the literati community was based on his outstanding literary talent and reputation. Furthermore, his talent also brought him greater honour within officialdom, as he was awarded the title of Literary Gentleman by the emperor. However, in addition to honour within officialdom, Tu Long sought greater esteem within the literati community based on his distinguished literary talent and his cultural and tasteful lifestyle. Hence, he adopted the sobriquet "xianling 仙令", which meant "magistrate living like a transcendent being", when he governed Qingpu.<sup>197</sup> Compared to *xianling*, *caili*, talented

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chubanshe, 1986), pp.518-610; Chen Yuanfeng 陳元鋒, *Beisong Guange Hanyuan yu Shitan Yanjiu* 北宋館閣翰苑與詩壇研究 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2005), pp.267-270.

<sup>195</sup> Liang Chenyu visited Qingpu and performed *Huansha Ji* was recorded in Shen Defu 沈德符, 'Liang Bolong Chuanqi 梁伯龍傳奇', in *Wanli Yehuo Bian* 萬曆野獲編 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), p.644.

<sup>196</sup> Tu Long, 'Guochao Minggong Hanzao Xu 國朝名公翰藻叙', in *Guochao Minggong Hanzao* 國朝名公翰藻, edit by Ling Dizhi 凌迪知, 1582, pp.1a-6b < <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=130460&page=23> >; Tu Long, 'Yu Ling Zhizhe 與凌稚哲', in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.342-343.

<sup>197</sup> Qian Qianyi, 'Tu Yibu Long 屠儀部隆', in *Liechao Shiji*, dingji diliu 丁集第六, pp.28a-b < <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=43961&page=56> >



magistrate could only contend with *suli*, vulgar magistrate, which Tu Long resisted becoming. The concept of *xianling* represented a higher state for a magistrate, embodying Tu Long's self-presentation as a literatus serving as an official. This image was not only a symbol of the compatibility of two forms of social recognition—official honour and self-mastered esteem—but also represented a highly integrated state of social recognition for the literati in society. Through this image, the differences in shared values and norms between the two social spheres were diminished, while the conflicts arising during the process of seeking recognition in both spheres were resolved through moral virtue and tasteful lifestyle. Neither serving as an official nor literary reputation would obstruct one another; instead, they would support a more fulfilling social recognition. By projecting the ideal of the *xianling*, Tu Long achieved harmony between his honour and esteem.

The image of *xianling* not only represented a balanced state in Tu Long's struggle for social recognition but also served as a model of virtue that alleviated the local people's suffering on a psychological level. Tu Long once hiked in Mount Tianma 天馬山 himself, "almost a thousand peasants and children tracked and followed my route 田父兒童躡而隨之者千人".<sup>198</sup> As the "father-and-mother official" of the local people, Tu Long's political influence and public reputation were certainly high. However, as a *xianling*, what attracted people was his personal virtue and lifestyle as a talented and renowned literatus. A literatus serving as an official, like Tu Long, exemplified a life that transcended worldly affairs and suffering, using his distinctive taste to lead a liberated and peaceful existence. This attraction stemmed from the values and norms shared by literati, creating a kind of "celebrity effect" in the late Ming Dynasty. Not only were renowned literati pursued, but even the places they visited became popular hotspots. For instance, a friend of Tu Long's, the renowned talented literatus from Songjiang, Chen Jiru, once visited a stream on the outskirts of Songjiang, where there was a grove of peach trees—an otherwise ordinary spot that typically went unnoticed. After Chen's visiting, "a path had been trodden by

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<sup>198</sup> Tu Long, 'Deng Tianma Shan Si Shou Xu 登天馬山四首序', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p. 124.

visitors under the trees after a few days 花下數日間便爾成蹊”。<sup>199</sup> A personal activity transformed into a cultural phenomenon; people pursued not just beautiful scenery, but the additional values derived from the cultural or moral influence of the literati. By following the literati on their excursions, ordinary people felt they gained access to a higher level of social activities, even entering the literati community. It was as if literati opened a small window for ordinary people, to some extent, providing comfort through an ideal image of life.

When Tu Long maintained his social relations by practising a cultural lifestyle, religious cultivation was also a distinguishing element in the lifestyle shared by the literati, particularly within the elite community. Religious activities became a symbol of status among literati, reflecting who could participate in religious practices, how to cultivate, and what could be done for cultivation. Gradually, religious cultivation implied a hierarchical system within the literati community, where literati contended for honour and status through esteem derived from personal ability and achievements. In his interactions with Wang Shizhen, Tu Long not only contested leadership in the literary arena but also engaged in religious cultivation, specifically concerning the Master of Tanyang 曇陽.<sup>200</sup> Tanyangzi 曇陽子, whose actual name was Wang Taozhen 王燾真, was the daughter of Wang Xijue, who had served as Senior Grand Secretary. It was claimed that since 1579, Tanyangzi could perceive abnormal phenomena, and on the ninth day of the ninth month of 1580, she ascended as a transcendent being, predicating her own death and instructing Wang Shizhen to build a niche for her.<sup>201</sup> Tanyangzi's identity and her accurate prophecy of her own death precisely addressed the literati's demands for self-projection. On one hand, she provided a concrete, successful, and realistic figure for literati to worship, which satisfied their needs for religious cultivation as part of their cultural lifestyle. On the other hand, unlike traditional deities that were fully defined and shaped, Tanyangzi emerged as a new deity within the literati's environment, shaped by their ideas and values, including beliefs about who could participate in

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<sup>199</sup> Chen Jiru 陳繼儒, 'You Taohua Ji 遊桃花記', in *Chen Meigong Ji 陳眉公集*, *Xu Xiu Si Ku Quan Shu 續修四庫全書* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995), vol.1380, p.143.

<sup>200</sup> Xu Zhao'an, 'Religious Self-Cultivation in 16th Century Literary Circles: The Exchange between Tu Long and Wang Shizhen'.

<sup>201</sup> Ann Waltner, 'T'an-yang-tzu and Wang Shih-chen: Visionary and Bureaucrat in the Late Ming', *Late Imperial China*, 8.1(1987), 105-133; Wang Shizhen, 'Tanyang Dashi Zhuan', in *Yanzhou Xugao*, vol.78, p.22a.

her worship; the doctrines surrounding her, and who was qualified to receive her divine manifestation. Hence, this was a completely literati-led religious worship, during which the individual status and reputation of the literati within the community were prominently displayed, particularly within the fractional community constituted by a specific group of literati with more identical values and norms. This is why Wang Shizhen was chosen by Tanyangzi to be the agent responsible for her worship after her death.

Wang Shizhen's status and reputation within the literati community were indeed high enough to lead the worship of Tanyangzi. He not only controlled access to writing her biography but also decided which literatus could participate in her worship. Because of Tu Long's talent, reputation, and status within the literati community, he qualified to write a biography for Tanyangzi, certainly with Wang Shizhen's approval.<sup>202</sup> Tu Long was like a secondary leader in the community of Tanyangzi's worship, which showed his closeness to the leadership contest with Wang Shizhen. In this role, Tu Long used corresponding privileges; he not only introduced his friends Feng Mengzhen and Shen Maoxue into the community but also became a "missionary" for Tanyangzi. Even though Tu Long remained under the supervision of the absolute leader Wang Shizhen in the various worship activities, his comparatively superior status within this specific community was already evident. This recognition had features of both status honour as a group member and esteem as an individual social subject, based on the specific community and its status, as well as the individual status gained through talent, reputation, and achievements. Overall, it focused on individual values and virtues; although there were hierarchical distinctions within the group which differentiated access to honour among members, it represented a micro social sphere and community shaped entirely by the values and norms created and redefined by literati themselves, indicating their moral and cultural agency in seeking esteem through mutual achievements.

This special hybrid form of social recognition for literati within both cultural and official status while struggling in a hybrid social environment. Because of this satisfying sense of recognition, which was also related to religious cultivation, literati—especially the elite, a group of individuals

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<sup>202</sup> It can be seen from Tu Long's letters to Wang Shizhen and Shen Maoxue: 'Yu Wang Yuanmei Xiansheng 與王元美先生', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.319-320; 'Yu Jundian 與君典', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.321-322.

in a comparatively higher status within the literati community—demonstrated great enthusiasm for social activities oriented around religious cultivation to effectively maintain their social recognition. For Tu Long, the social activities and interactions with other literati friends, oriented by religious cultivation, greatly helped his self-mastery for esteem when his social recognition was damaged by his dismissal. Meanwhile, the social activities and interactions Tu Long engaged in varied in form and content, which showed the diversity of literati relations. This will be discussed in detail in Chapter four.

The period Tu Long spent as a magistrate in local government provided him with a significant opportunity to achieve his goal of being both an honourable official and an esteemed literatus. From his initial caution regarding his identity as a literatus in Beijing to mastering this identity in his element in Qingpu, Tu Long gradually bridged the gap between these two forms of social recognition. During this time, he not only successfully enhanced his honour within officialdom but also maintained, or even elevated, his esteem within the literati community, supported by the honour he gained as an official. Tu Long enjoyed the satisfaction of social recognition as a literatus serving as an official, especially with explicit duty goals to achieve and a conducive social environment for practising literati values and lifestyle.

After Tu Long was promoted to the central government and returned to Beijing, he wrote to his friend Fu Guangzhai 傅光宅(1547-1604), who was also his fellow graduate, expressing that he “still often recalled the memories of being a magistrate and pondered them a lot 猶時津津爲令風味”.<sup>203</sup> Tu Long not only sought a higher level of honour as an official but also wanted a less restrained social environment to nurture his self-esteem in the relations. In the letter, he said, “if there is something that can make one content, then it would be a joy to be a magistrate; if there is nothing that can bring contentment, then being an official in the capital would also a kind of suffering 若其中有以自得，則爲令亦有樂；若其中無以自得，則爲京朝官亦有苦”.<sup>204</sup> The “self-satisfied things” for Tu Long, when comparing his life as an official in local government to that in the central government, reflected the social environment in which he struggled for social

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<sup>203</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Fu Bojun 與傅伯俊’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.450.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

recognition, especially self-mastered esteem, where the range of social activities differed significantly. This was why Tu Long missed the life as a magistrate, even though being an official in the capital conferred higher honour. In a letter to Shen Yizhong 沈一中, who was also from Yin and passed the Metropolitan Examination in 1580, Tu Long described his feelings on the way to Beijing to take up his post, likening it to “stepping on the walkway along a cliff, going down the winding hillsides while facing to the deep abyss 如行閣道、下九折坂，而臨百丈之溪”.<sup>205</sup> It seemed that Tu Long had a premonition of danger in the capital.

## The peak of Tu Long’s social recognition

After Tu Long achieved the goal of balancing honour and esteem in his role as magistrate, he successfully elevated his honour by being promoted to an official post in the central government. In the final year of his official career in Beijing, he practised an ideal state of life as a literatus serving as an official. During this time, his struggle for social recognition in his hybrid form reached its peak, as he was both a capable official with a literary reputation and a talented literatus holding an honourable rank. The asymmetric recognition between himself and officialdom, as well as the gap between the two forms of social recognition, were minimised, allowing his sense of social recognition in these overlapping social spheres to reach a harmonious state. His improved official rank as a Secretary in the Ministry of Rites indicated honour within the hierarchical system, which alleviated Tu Long’s asymmetrical sense of recognition deriving from officialdom, particularly regarding his grade six rank as an official in the capital and the title of Literary Gentleman granted by the emperor. How Tu Long was recognised in officialdom aligned closely with how he recognised himself. Meanwhile, the social environment of the capital and central government provided a setting for developing relationships that emphasised elite values and norms, allowing Tu Long to use his self-mastery to fashion the image of a particular *yanhuo shenxian*.

Working in the central government was not as busy or challenging as in local government, but the social environment was less unrestrained and cultural than in regional areas. The comparatively

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<sup>205</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Shen Changru Shu 與沈長孺書’, in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.310.

relaxed duties gave Tu Long plenty of time to cultivate his mind and lifestyle, as well as to shape his identity. In letters to his friends, including the Marquis of Linhuai 臨淮侯 Li Yangong 李言恭, Wang Shixing 王士性(1547-1598), his fellow graduate, and his grandnephew Tu Benjun, Tu Long described his life as an official in the capital:

The fragrant office is like a monk's dwelling, with one burner for eaglewood and one volume of sutra, cultivating thoughts of transcending the mundane. . . . . I live like a leisurely person, fearing only to ride out, holding the whip, and wearing spurs, while the wind blows sand into my face, causing me to secretly think of the clear streams and green stones of Jiangnan for my enjoyment. Though the wind blows sand on my face, I have clear streams and green stones in my heart; what can it do to me? Whenever many horses gallop together, stirring up dust, I simply look up at the sky and clouds, sending my thoughts into vastness, and a poem is born. 含香之署如僧舍，沉水一鑪，丹經一卷，日生塵外之想。……居然雲水閒人。獨畏騎款段出門，捉鞭懷刺，回飈薄人，吹沙滿面，則又密想江南之青谿碧石，以自愉快。吾面有回飈吹沙，而吾胸中有青谿碧石，其如我何？每當馬上千騎颯沓，堀堞紛輪，僕自消搖仰視雲空，寄興寥廓，踟躕少選而詩成矣。

I live in the capital, indifferent and unambitious, like a monk with hair. . . . . In the official I burn eaglewood, sitting under the bamboo by the southern window, which helps me adjust my spirit and energy cultivate myself diligently.

僕居長安，澹矣寡營，蕭然髮僧。……署中焚沉水，坐南牕修竹下，正可調神御炁，密緯潛修。<sup>206</sup>

Tu Long created a very personal and spiritual environment for himself, the office, which represented official power, became for him a “Buddhist room” suitable for transcendent and cultural cultivation. In this way, Tu Long achieved psychological consistency, keeping his

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<sup>206</sup> Tu Long, ‘Da Li Weiyin 答李惟寅’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.399; ‘Yu Wang Taichu Tianshu Er Daoyou 與王太初田叔二道友’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.403.

transcendent values and tasteful norms in a worldly context. His life as an official in the capital reflected a strong sense of recognition, affirming his identity as a literatus serving as an official role. Compared to his state of recognition in Qingpu, the anxiety and eagerness in seeking honour as a magistrate greatly diminished, while his satisfaction and enjoyment to his identity increased. Although Tu Long's social recognition had already reached a harmonious state by the end of his tenure as a magistrate, as evidenced by his self-presentation of *xianling*, magistrate living like a transcendent being, in Beijing this harmonious state was further enhanced by his promotion and the corresponding level of honour. He then adopted the sobriquet *faseng* 髮僧, the monk with hair, to express the harmony between his inner self and outer identity. Comparing *xianling* to *faseng*, the former represents a worldly official living a transcendent lifestyle, while the latter signifies an otherworldly religious believer enjoying a worldly environment. The focus shifted from a worldly role to an otherworldly one; although the virtuous characteristics remained unchanged, the perspectives of the two images shaped in different social environments were altered. The monk staying in worldly officialdom presented a more internally consistent image, showing the unity of two conflicted statuses and the fusion of two forms of social recognition.

As for the image of the harmonious fusion of Tu Long's honour and esteem, *faseng* can be seen as a superficial appearance. Deeply, Tu Long held an ideal image of a literatus serving as an official, fashioned to show his virtue and conduct, which were not only compatible but also distinguished within both social spheres. This ideal was encapsulated in the image of *yanhuo shenxian*. Tu Long defined the state of *yanhuo shenxian* as the person “not making irresponsible remarks from the mouth, not showing worries on the brow 口中不設雌黃，眉端不掛煩惱”.<sup>207</sup> He also illustrated a state of life during his time in the central government that closely resembled a detailed description of what a life as a *yanhuo shenxian* would be like. This is evident in a letter he wrote to Li Yangong:

At the fifth watch of the night [around four o'clock in the morning], I enter the court, the morning dew on my clothes, the moon reflecting on the palace trees. I dismount and take the

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<sup>207</sup> Tu Long, 'Suoluo Guan Qingyan Juanzhishang', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.541.

carriage, passing by the imperial moats. My thoughts wander to the fairy mountains, my mind lost in the magic herbs; my body is in the court attire, but my heart is in the misty valleys. Others see only my appearance and do not know my true feelings, thinking I am still that official.

五鼓入朝，清露在衣，月映宮樹，下馬行輦，道經御溝，意興所到，神遊僊山，托咏芝朮，身穿朝衣心在煙壑。旁人徒得其貌，不得其心，以爲猶夫宰官也。<sup>208</sup>

From Tu Long's description of his morning commute, it is clear that his state of being a *yanhuo shenxian* had real meaning and genuinely existed only when he possessed an integrated identity that encompassed both his official status and his identity as a literatus, meeting the political, cultural, and social dimensions. The image of *yanhuo shenxian* contained two elements, one was *yanhuo*, which referred to satisfaction derived from worldly affairs, including an illustrious career, high social status, and, importantly, sufficient wealth; the other was *shenxian*, representing a transcendent existence that set aside worldly concerns in favour of otherworldly pursuits. As Tu Long expressed, "my body is in the court attire, but my heart is in the misty valleys".

To embody both elements of this image, the individual should be a cultivated literatus with a cultural disposition, possessing a comparatively high social status and a stable source of income. Because of the characteristics of literati identity, this ideal image could only be fully realised when a literatus held an official post. Otherwise, the image would lose the practical significance and remain merely a beautiful spiritual imagination. This was the image Tu Long specifically fashioned for himself, one he wished to present to other officials and literati in order to seek recognition as an outstanding individual, rather than just being a member of the community of officialdom. Hence, Tu Long pursued recognition based on more personal values and achievements, which could provide a higher level of self-esteem, not only within the literati community but also within the official community. He aimed to develop new values and norms into the established honour code

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<sup>208</sup> Tu Long, 'Da Li Weiyin', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.399.



to bridge the gap between the two social spheres. The image of *yanhuo shenxian* that Tu Long created reflected literati's self-awareness in a transitional society during the exploration of a comparatively innovative form of social recognition.

At the peak of his struggle for social recognition, Tu Long also devoted considerable energy and time to his social life and relations. His frequent social activities began when he went to Beijing for the annual report as the magistrate of Qingpu. The entire journey resembled a grand social tour; from his departure, Tu Long's farewell group included not only local people and literati but also renowned literati with whom he had close relationships, each presenting him with poems. At nearly every stop on the trip, Tu Long was surrounded by various elites and literati who organised farewell parties for him. Especially in the first three stops—Loudong 婁東, Suzhou 蘇州, and Wuxi 無錫—Tu Long worshiped Tanyangzi's memorial temple first in Loudong, Tiandan guan 恬憺觀, Tiandan Temple, while strengthening his position within the elite group. He then visited the homes of Wang Shizhen, Wang Shimao, and Wang Xijue, during which local renowned literati were attracted to participate in gatherings for Tu Long's farewell. In Suzhou and Wuxi, not only thousands of people came to see Tu Long, but local elites also hosted grand farewell feasts at Tiger Hill or accompanied him on outings, particularly Wang Zhideng, who attended Tu Long's farewell parties twice at these two stops.<sup>209</sup> In addition to literati, Tu Long's farewell group also included Buddhists and Daoists. Although Tu Long's interactions with religious figures were less frequent during his time as an official than after he dismissal. Buddhist and Daoist cultivation, as significant aspects of literati lifestyle, remained deeply intertwined with Tu Long's social life. This was primarily evident in Tu Long's worship of Tanyangzi and his commitment to her devotees.

During the journey from Qingpu to Beijing, Tu Long maintained a high profile, displaying his reputation within the literati community, as well as the typical literati lifestyle and social style. The themes of these gatherings often revolved around literary creation, while the activities included drinking, feasting, and outings. This was regarded as a tasteful lifestyle shared among literati and elites, with some social activities being exclusive to the elite, such as the small-scale gatherings

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<sup>209</sup> Tu Long, 'Fa Qingxi Ji 發青谿記', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.3, pp.283-293.

Tu Long held with close friends. In Wuxi alone, Tu Long composed sixteen poems during a gathering with Sun Jigao and Qin Kun 秦焜. The interactions between Tu Long and his elite friends greatly strengthened his social relations within the literati community and solidified his position. During these interactions, the shared values and norms were reinforced through literature and culture-oriented social activities, showing their distinctive cultural dispositions and lifestyles while creating a better environment for social recognition. As for Tu Long's social life in Beijing, it began while he awaited a response to his annual report. During this time, he reconnected with his fellow graduates such as Fu Guangzhai, and his friend from Qingpu, Mo Shilong. Tu Long even borrowed travel expenses for his return home after the annual report from Fu Guangzhai. More importantly, he formed relationships with Xing Tong 邢侗 (1551-1612) and Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1602), who later provided significant help after Tu Long's dismissal. After Tu Long knew his assignment to the post of Secretary in the Ministry of Rites, Tu Long delayed his trip to report for duty by half a year because of a lack of funds. Eventually, it was Qin Kun, Zhang Jiayin 張佳胤 (1527-1588), and Gu Yangqian 顧養謙 (1537-1604) who either lent Tu Long money or bought him a boat for his journey, so that he could make the trip.

The esteem Tu Long received in his social relations stemmed not only from the appreciation and acknowledgement of his literary talent or abilities but also from the financial support of his friends. Additionally, Tu Long was recognised for his virtue as both a literatus and an official within the social environment of Beijing. In a letter to Zhang Jiayin, he wrote:

Being a minor official, I was generous and incorruptible, winning the favour of the common people. I also enjoyed selecting talented individuals, making fair critiques, and supporting the loyal and upright, rewarding ethical conduct. The people in the capital saw that I had no significant shortcomings, so they were fond of approaching me.

爲小吏以寬和廉潔，媚於黔首。又好采月旦，清議扶忠，直獎人倫，都人士見以爲無

他大過，多暱就之。<sup>210</sup>

It is evident that compared to the six years before he went to Beijing, Tu Long returned with a high profile and a much more confident approach to the social environment in the capital. The “fear” stemming from anxiety about not being recognised had dissipated, and his caution in screening guests and visitors had greatly decreased. During his year in Beijing, Tu Long enjoyed a vibrant social life within the capital elite community. In the Ministry of Rites, he built strong relationships with Dong Sicheng 董嗣成 (1560-1595), Hu Congzhi 胡從治, and Long Ying, who were not only outstanding literati serving as officials but also provided Tu Long considerable psychological and financial support after his dismissal.<sup>211</sup> Tu Long also met and became good friends with the well-known playwright Tang Xianzu while Tang was serving as an observer in the Ministry of Rites.<sup>212</sup> The friendships Tu Long cultivated became solid relationships he relied on in his struggle for recognition later. During his time in central government, the social circle comprising talented literati and officials from the capital constituted a significant part of Tu Long’s social relations, though it was not the only part. Due to Tu Long’s high literary reputation, the Marquis of Xining 西寧侯, Song Shi’en 宋世恩, was so impressed by Tu Long’s literary talent that he wished to become his disciple. Although Tu Long did not accept this “honour” from Song, he agreed to “interact with the etiquette of brothers 以兄禮事”.<sup>213</sup> From that point on, Tu Long was involved in every grand feast Song held. This not only elevated Tu Long into a new level of social circle, providing him with opportunities to enhance his esteem, but also made him involved in a more complex environment.

From Tu Long’s early experiences and his journey to report to duty in Beijing, it is clear that his financial situation was not enough to support frequent social activities. However, despite this, Tu Long’s social recognition peaked while he was also in the midst of an intensive social environment. He was troubled by a lack of money; in a letter to Gu Yangqian, he wrote: “I was

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<sup>210</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Zhang Dasima Xiaofu 與張大司馬肖甫’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.426.

<sup>211</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Jiang Zhongwen 與姜仲文’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.420-421.

<sup>212</sup> Tu Long, ‘Zeng Tang Yireng Jinshi 贈湯義仍進士’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.18.

<sup>213</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Zhang Dasima Xiaofu’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.427.

poor when I lived in the capital, begging for rice in the market every day, yet the number of guests never decreased 僕居長安貧，日乞燕市米，而座客不減”。<sup>214</sup> Although Tu Long did not beg for food, he would ask for credit from the store, highlighting his straitened circumstance. In order to maintain his social circle and state in the capital, Tu Long had to host many guests daily. The popularity he enjoyed among literati and officials not only reflected his reputation and status in the capital community but also played an important role in his self-esteem, during which he reached the peak of his struggle for recognition. In a letter he wrote to Dong Fen, he described the difficulties of maintaining his social standing, saying that he “often took his wife’s fine dresses and ornaments and sold them to buy drink for hosting guests. The guests laughed and jumped while asking for drink, unaware that Madam Huan of Bao Xuan’s jewels had already run out, and I had to act ostentatiously 時時脫細君繡襦簪珥，向燕姬壚頭貰酒佐客歡。客跳地仰天，大呼浮白。不知鮑宣家桓夫人耀首之具盡矣，蘭省客亦大豪舉哉”。<sup>215</sup> Tu Long’s extravagant gestures towards his guests became well-known in the literati community in the capital. One literatus, Wang Jixia 王季夏, even wrote a poem, *Xiaodaixing* 銷帶行, *Story of Selling Belt*, to recount an incident happened involving Tu Long, because once when Tu Long had no money to pay for the wineshop, he had to use his only silver belt to settle the bills.<sup>216</sup> This story quickly became an anecdote circulated approvingly among the literati community; even Wang Zhideng and Shen Mingchen wrote to Tu Long to praise his behaviour.<sup>217</sup> Although the intensive social life placed great financial pressure on Tu Long, it created a social environment conducive to his virtuous image and sense of self-esteem.

Being “poor”, or even keeping a “poor” state, was, to some extent, a significant virtue for literati, especially those serving as officials. Valuing friendship over money aligned with Tu Long’s moral integrity, which was a cherished virtue in the ethos of officialdom and the literati community

<sup>214</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Gu Yiqing 與顧益卿’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.400.

<sup>215</sup> Tu Long, ‘Bao Dong Bonian 報董伯念’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.425. Madam Huan, also known as Huan Shaojun 桓少君, was Bao Xuan’s wife living in Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-25 AC), who was famous of virtue and kind-heartedness that was willing to live in a difficult life with husband.

<sup>216</sup> This story can be seen from the letters Tu Long wrote to Xing Tong and Wang Shimao: ‘Zai Yu Ziyuan 再與子愿’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.481; ‘Yu Wang Jingmei Taichang 與王敬美太常’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.361.

<sup>217</sup> Qin Wanchun, ‘Tu Long Nianpu’, p.73.

at that time. In the capital, where elites from various local gentry lineages gathered, life was hardly simple or easy, especially given the numerous temptations of official ranks and benefits. Tu Long's hospitality towards his guests in Beijing made it clear that a respected literatus holding an official post was often pressured to live an extravagant lifestyle that reflected the prevalent atmosphere in officialdom, even when it was financially challenging. Moreover, this decent life was eagerly pursued by literati, as it represented high status and reputation, which brought them both honour within circles of high-level officials and esteem derived from their own abilities and achievements.

As for the practical financial challenges that literati inevitably faced, adopting a pose of being poor was a useful strategy. For instance, being "poor" did not necessarily mean lacking money; rather, it reflected an attitude towards wealth and benefit, to show their moral quality as virtuous literati. Additionally, during late Ming Dynasty, rapid economic development and the expansion of wealth, consumption, and material cultures more and more occupied the social lives of literati, while their financial resources often failed to keep pace with their social status. The comparatively relaxed social environment regarding material consumption, brought about by economic growth, allowed members of other social classes who had become wealthy to engage in luxury consumption with few real restrictions. Money, to some extent, replaced traditional social hierarchies in terms of material goods. In this context, literati faced a crisis of identity as their social and cultural authority was overstepped. The priority of being a literatus in society diminished, especially as access to things symbolising the specific identity and social status of literati became available to all, particularly those from lower classes. The social status of literati no longer held definite privilege anymore within the four traditional social classes. While their cultural status had not yet diminished in the cultural environment, it was also increasingly challenged by the relatively open access to cultural materials. Consequently, an intangible pressure and crisis emerged in the lives of literati. On one hand, they had to compete in the consumption of material goods, especially those related to their distinctive cultural disposition; on the other, they need to fashion a virtuous image that distanced them from money, thereby emphasising their values to confront the crisis while maintaining their culturally tasteful social lives. It indicated in the

display of literati's taste and cultural values through various connoisseurship texts, which distinguished their social status, particularly as cultural elite, and through the things they used in their interactions or personal activities, such as transport and utensils. I will discuss how the taste of literati functioned in their struggle for recognition specifically in Chapter four.

Tu Long once wrote a letter to Shen Maoxue's son, Shen Youze 沈有則; by that time, Shen Maoxue had already passed away. In the letter, while expressing care and comfort, Tu Long also shared his feelings and thoughts about the state of "poor". He wrote:

Since I reported to my post in the Ministry of Rites in Beijing, I have had much leisure time. The office is as clear as water, allowing me to burn the incense and read books. Yet I suffer from the poverty of Dongfang Manqian [Dongfang Shuo 東方朔, 154B.C.-93B.C.], ..... An upright official would rather be lean than well-fed; even in poverty, one can still be tasteful. Inside, there are luxurious houses and beautiful women; outside, fine clothes and spirited horses. These are what the poor envy, but they are not what I desire. In front of the officials in the capital, I find joy in my own company and never act with a false face. A man may be hungry, but how can he wag his tail before others?

僕入京，出入蘭省，多清暇。署中如水，可以焚香讀書。獨苦東方曼倩之貧爾，.....然烈士寧瘦無腴，雖貧，亦楚楚有致哉。入有華屋麗姬，出有鮮衣怒馬。閭左所艷，僕不願也。乃對長安諸公，日婆娑自得，絕不作措大面孔。男子饑即饑爾，安能向人搖尾也。<sup>218</sup>

Generally, Tu Long emphasised his moral integrity as a virtuous literatus who served as an official, while also mentioned a state of being *youzhi* 有致, tasteful. The life of *youzhi* represented the refined lifestyle that literati pursued to cope with the pressure of consumption. What constituted *youzhi*? Chen Jiru provided some examples to explain:

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<sup>218</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Shen Shifan 與沈士範', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.378.

A famous courtesan reads sutra, an old monk brews wine, a general visits in literary venues, and a literatus steps onto the battlefield; though they may lack true essence, they each have their own taste.

名妓翻經，老僧釀酒，將軍翔文章之府，書生踐戎馬之場，雖乏本色，故自有致。<sup>219</sup>

Chen Jiru's examples, as himself noted, seemed to "lack true essence" or be pretentious, which were contrasted with Tu Long's defence of his own nature of artlessness. However, these pretentious qualities displayed the distinguishing taste of literati, which could only be appreciated by those sharing the same cultural disposition. The renowned literatus of the time, Yuan Zongdao 袁宗道 (1560-1600), also believed that a respected literatus should be "*jiaoqing* 矯情, affectedly unconventional".<sup>220</sup> The literati's pursuit of *youzhi* was a quest for a self-mastered image and lifestyle, contending with conventional values and norms, as well as the increasingly materialistic and prevalent social ethos of the time.

The pursuit of *youzhi* was akin to the phenomenon of *jiren*, eccentric literati, as the core of both was fundamentally the same: to differentiate themselves from conventional values by fashioning a distinguishing image based on self-mastered values, so that they could be recognised for their self-worth rather than simply their social status. The fashioning of both *youzhi* and *jiren* represented the literati's self-awareness of their own values as individual social subjects. While *youzhi* was rooted in the distinctive cultural disposition of literati, *jiren* aimed at being eccentric. Although both sought to be special and unique, to the level of self-presentation, they also represented an acceptable means of achieving esteem. Tu Long's *youzhi* involved using his refined literati taste to deal with the "poor" situation, the extravagant lifestyles of officials, and the decadent ethos in officialdom. Hence, Tu Long not only fashioned a virtuous image of self but also

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<sup>219</sup> Xu Feng'en 許奉恩, 'Heng Er 姪兒', in *Li Cheng* 里乘 (Chongqing: Chongqing chubanshe, 2000), p.88.

<sup>220</sup> Yuan Zongdao 袁宗道, 'Lun Xie An Jiaoqing 論謝安矯情', in *Baisu Zhai Leiji* 白蘇齋類集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1989), pp.291-292.

presented this image within the literati community to earn respect and esteem.

The tasteful literati lifestyle that Tu Long practised, whether for self-fashioning or for distinguishing the values and norms shared within the literati community, inevitably led to a certain indulgence. Although Tu Long aimed to reshape and even lead the ethos of the literati and official community, he could not entirely escape the influence of social trends and fashions of the time. His life in the capital was described as “more indulgent in poems and drinks 益放詩酒”.<sup>221</sup> It seemed unlikely that Tu Long was unaware of the excessive nature of his social activities, which might cause him to overlook his official duties, especially given his concerns after being relocated to Qingpu. In letters to two of his esteemed friends, Wang Shizhen and Wang Xijue, who held high reputations in both officialdom and the literati community, Tu Long explicitly expressed his worries:

Having lived in the capital for over a year, the gentry from across the realm frequently visit, and my home is often crowded. I cannot conceal my presence, and I am afraid of offending the worthy of the time, so I lean in to entertain them, trying to ensure each departs satisfied. .... Yet I still worry that those in power see me as merely a literatus who engages in empty and lofty literary discussions and neglects official responsibilities. Day and night, I toil, keeping a close eye on paperwork. My hair grows shorter each day, and my vitality wanes. I often worry that one day I will vanish like the morning dew, filling the grave.

居長安歲餘，海內縉紳掃門通刺，戶履嘗滿。隆不能掩滅迹，又重懼得罪于時賢，傾身延獎，務令各得其所而去。……猶慮當事者以隆空持文墨議論，而曠廢吏事。日夜兀兀，留神簿領。髣髴日短，精以銷亡。長恐一旦先朝露，填溝壑。<sup>222</sup>

Tu Long shared the same “fear” of acquiring the “tarnished reputation” of neglecting his official duties, due to excessive socialising with other officials and literati, especially after passing the

<sup>221</sup> Qian Qianyi, ‘Tu Yibu Long’, in *Liechao Shiji*, p.28a < <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=43961&page=56> >

<sup>222</sup> Tu Long, ‘Ji Wang Yuanmei Yuanyu Liang Xiansheng 寄王元美元馭兩先生’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.428-429.



Metropolitan Examination and staying in Beijing. Additionally, he worried that too much socialising might lead to troubles that could threaten his official post and honour he sought. Tu Long's instincts were quite accurate; the social circles in the capital were complex and intertwined with various relationships and benefits. Hence, being discreet and adhering to the honourable values and norms within officialdom was always a prudent choice. Tu Long was aware of the dangers within that environment, having noticed them even on his journey to Beijing. During his trip, when he passed Nanchu 南滁, he wrote a poem about being halted by heavy snow, which included the line, "touring while living and buried under the wintry mountain, never stepping into Chang'an this entire life 生遊死葬寒山下，一生不向長安走".<sup>223</sup> Compared to an earlier poem he created when heading to take the Metropolitan Examination in Beijing, "taking the pellets out of Zhangtai, buying the pearls into Chang'an 挾彈出章台，賣珠入長安", Tu Long's courage in pursuing a successful career seemed to have declined sharply.<sup>224</sup>

In fact, Tu Long's return to Beijing was honourable, and his previous anxieties had largely dissipated. However, he remained concerned about was the complicated relationships and social environment of the capital. This concern was cruelly proved by his dismissal after forming a friendship with Song Shi'en and participating in his grand parties. It is evident that Tu Long was aware of the dangers, but he was not vigilant enough, particularly because he had enemies in the capital from his days in Qingpu. The frequent interactions with other elites in the capital fostered such a strong sense of self-esteem in Tu Long that he found it difficult to resist various social activities, especially as his social demands increased significantly with his enhanced social recognition. Tu Long's pursuit of honour and his effort to balance honour and esteem within officialdom truly peaked during his time in the capital. This period could be regarded as a significant phase in the literati's struggle for social recognition, harmoniously merging the two social statuses that constituted the identity of literati while being recognised in both social spheres. Tu Long's official period can be seen as a satisfying and a well-recognised time.

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<sup>223</sup> Tu Long, 'Nanchu Daxue Ge 南滁大雪歌', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.3, p.48.

<sup>224</sup> The two lines talk about a handsome man taking a beautiful prostitute out of the brothel and later buying a courtesan into Chang'an. Quote: Tu Long, 'Za Gan Liushou 雜感六首', in *Tu Changqing Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.1, p.36.

If the official period was the peak of Tu Long's struggle for social recognition, then his dismissal was the hand that pushed him from that peak. The dismissal was a profound psychological blow for Tu Long, as he not only lost the honour that associated with his official post but also spent the rest of his life coping with that loss, attempting to recover from the shock while mending the damage to his social recognition.

## Chapter 3

### Misrecognition by the Denial of Social Status

If recognition is considered a social-psychological good, misrecognition can be seen as a moral or psychological harm, resulting from the denial of social or cultural status. For literati, not just in the Ming Dynasty, losing status in officialdom represented a denial of social status, which led to misrecognition and harm to their morality and emotions. However, the identity of literati fundamentally represented a cultural status while also strongly directing towards a social and political status. This meant their identity was constituted by multiple statuses, so the denial of one status of literati did not mean total misrecognition but rather a damage to their social recognition.

When literati serving as officials lost their posts, they experienced misrecognition within officialdom, manifesting as a loss of honour, a form of social recognition. In the Ming Dynasty, especially the late Ming Dynasty, the influence of the “innate knowledge” of the School of Mind led to a rise in self-awareness among literati and a comparatively loosened control from the central regime. Literati thus possessed greater moral agency in mastering their values and norms shared within the literati community. Their social recognition was generated not only through honour based on hierarchical mechanism but also through esteem based on their values and achievements in their reflexive relations demonstrating how they perceived themselves. If the literati in the late Ming Dynasty could maintain their social recognition in different forms, they could comfort the moral and emotional harm caused by the loss of honour with esteem sought within the literati community.

Losing an official post in the late Ming Dynasty, or any other dynasties, was not uncommon for the literati and sometimes did not entirely harm their reputation or esteem. This could occur in two ways: voluntarily leaving the post or being dismissed. Voluntarily leaving was not regarded as a denial of their status as officials and thus was not misrecognition; rather, it could be seen as a disapproval of officialdom by the individuals. Dismissal, however, was an actual denial of their

official status and misrecognition within officialdom, but it was not always entirely negative for their social recognition. Except for officials dismissed because of corruption or other legal violations, dismissals often occurred because the literati's ideas or moral virtues, such as integrity and straightforwardness, offended the emperor or powerful senior officials, leading to demotion or dismissal, as in the famous case of Hai Rui 海瑞 (1514-1587). Another reason for dismissal, not generally seen as a moral virtue, still did not entirely harm literati's social recognition. This related to their cultural status and virtues esteemed within the literati community but not necessarily honoured in officialdom, such as their cultured and tasteful lifestyle, which was sometimes seen as indulgent. While dismissal represented misrecognition occasioned by the denial of their official status, within the literati community, it could signify esteem.

In the late Ming Dynasty, one dismissal could be regarded as both misrecognition and recognition, a denial and an approval, simultaneously. This was possible because the literati as moral agent more and more defined their own values and norms, so when their lifestyle or conduct was not approved in a conventional value system, they could still be appreciated within their self-mastered community. Literati might not be honoured within officialdom but could be esteemed within the literati community. It was also because the literati's values were not limited to being officials; their cultural values were cultivated for achievements in various fields such as literature, connoisseurship, and even economic market. The literati had a broader environment to recognise themselves through various relationships in reflection of their values and virtues. The environment of officialdom in the late Ming Dynasty, including conflicts between cliques, control by senior officials, and eunuchs' dictatorship, directly influenced literati's official career. For instance, some literati quit office due to dissatisfaction with Zhang Junzheng's refusal to take leave for mourning his mother. Tu Long's close friend Shen Maoxue was one such individual. Tu Long's dismissal was also a result of conflicts among cliques. Additionally, losing the status within officialdom would not necessarily misrecognition, just as holding status within officialdom was not always recognition, as seen in Zhang Juzheng's case. The emphasis was on awareness of self-value and achievements in seeking esteem in the process of the literati's social recognition.

Tu Long's dismissal was no doubt the denial of his status as an official, which caused misrecognition within officialdom and the damage to his social recognition in the hybrid forms of honour and esteem. It ended his official career and broke his life goal that he spent half of his life pursuing, denying all his achievements as an official. This dismissal was a psychological harm affecting his self-mastery of social relations and lifestyle, as well as his self-cultivation. However, it also became a turning point, changing his status from an official to a common literatus. Although dismissed literati differed from those who had never been officials; the harmonious state of his social recognition between honour and esteem was broken. Tu Long's social recognition could then only be generated within the literati community by seeking esteem in his self-mastered relations. Being dismissed from officialdom brought a crisis of recognition for Tu Long, especially as his struggle for recognition was undermined by his dismissal and his forced departure from Beijing, the capital's social community with its senior officials. As mentioned earlier, although the misrecognition of Tu Long occasioned by his dismissal was real, it did not mean the effect was entirely negative. Tu Long gained greater respect and esteem within the literati community when people believed he was wrongly accused to be dismissed, which was helpful in mending and enhancing his social recognition. Leaving officialdom also freed him from its constraints, allowing him to fully engage in a more contestable social environment with various opportunities for self-mastery in his social activities and lifestyle.

However, the dismissal was primarily a denial of Tu Long's honour as an official, causing him moral and emotional harm. This was mainly expressed through the denial of his moral integrity and cultural virtue as a literatus serving as an official, due to the accusation of "being indulgent 淫縱".<sup>225</sup> The criteria for "being indulgent", which could lead to an official's dismissal, were not as clear or strict as legal standards, but were based on moral standards. In fact, with the decadent trend in the ethos of literati and officialdom, the literati indulgence was often seen as a normal way of socialising and practising a cultured lifestyle. This was something Tu Long valued as he sought to maintain esteem in his social relations in the capital with other elites and literati, based on his

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<sup>225</sup> Zhang Tingyu and others, 'Xu Wei, Tu Long', in *Ming Shi*, p.7388.

literary reputation and achievements of which he was very proud. Tu Long invested significant time, energy, and even money in maintaining the lifestyle and social activities that contributed to achieving a harmonious state of recognition as *yanhuo shenxian* in two overlapping social spheres with two fused social statuses. However, the esteemed values and lifestyle that had helped him gain greater honour by being awarded the title of Literary Gentleman suddenly became the reason for the denial of his honour and status as an official. Tu Long's dismissal was thus not only a denial of his honour but also of his esteem, in terms of values, virtues and taste. Therefore, the damage to Tu Long's social recognition caused by his dismissal also meant additional damage to his struggle for esteem when the virtuous image he fashioned was tarnished.

The entire dismissal incident began with an accusation of a secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Yu Xianqing 俞顯卿 (fl. 1583), who reported to the emperor that Tu Long had inappropriate relationships and behaviour with Marquis Song Shi'en and his wife.

The secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Yu Xianqing, was a vicious man who had once been denounced by Long, and he resented Long greatly. He accused Tu Long and Song Shi'en [of past misdeeds], implicating the Minister of Rites, Chen Jingbang. Long and others submitted memorials to the emperor to defend themselves, detailing Xianqing's false accusations driven by personal vendetta. Consequently, the authorities dismissed both of them and suspended Shi'en's salary for half a year.

刑部主事俞顯卿者，險人也，嘗為隆所詆，心恨之。訐隆與世恩，詞連禮部尚書陳經邦。隆等上疏自理，並列顯卿挾仇誣陷狀。所司乃兩黜之，而停世恩俸半歲。<sup>226</sup>

The two significant reasons eventually caused Tu Long's dismissal: his interaction with Song Shi'en and his grudge with Yu Xianqing. The relationship between Tu Long and Song Shi'en seemed to be the direct reason. Given Tu Long's vibrant social life in the capital and Song Shi'en's

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

great appreciation of him, their close and frequent interactions were essentially true. Additionally, their interactions appeared to extend to their family members. In a letter to Zhang Jiayin, Tu Long explained how their families seemed to have close interactions. He said:

Xining [Song Shi'en], not understanding the situation, often said to people: "Is Mentor Tu willing to become a family friend with me?" He also said to me: "By the grace of heaven, I have been fortunate enough to be acknowledged by you as a brother. In the future, my wife will do obeisance to your mother and wife." Many guests in the hall heard this, but it never actually happened.

西寧不解事，時向人抵掌言：“屠先生幸肯與宋生通家乎。”又向不佞言：“徽天寵靈，業蒙先生許某稱弟。異日者，家弟婦將扶伏拜太夫人、嫂夫人。”堂下座客多聞此語，實未行也。<sup>227</sup>

In Tu Long's words, the close interactions between two families were just rumours, and nothing happened. However, other historical records suggest that Tu Long did have some interactions with Song Shi'en's wife. In Shen Defu's 沈德符(1578-1642) *Wanli Yehuo Bian* 萬曆野獲編, it is recorded:

Lady Xining was talented and beautiful, skilled in music, and Tu also excelled in creating new music, often showing off his abilities. Whenever there was a performance, he would join the troupe and perform among the actors. Lady Xining would watch from behind the curtains and sometime reward him with tea. .... As for close relationships between two families, which were also true.

西寧夫人有才色，工音律，屠亦能新聲，頗以自炫。每劇場輒闌入群優中作技，夫人從

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<sup>227</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Zhang Dasima Xiaofu', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.427.

簾箔見之，或勞以香茗。……至於通家往還亦有之。<sup>228</sup>

Both Song Shi'en's admiration and Tu Long's display of his literary and cultural cultivation indicated tasteful ways of social interactions between literati, and the closeness based on shared values and norms. Ever since Tu Long had passed the Metropolitan Examination in Beijing and served as magistrate in Yingshang, he feared being recognised as a literatus who only cared about enjoying social pleasures while gaining a "tarnished reputation" for hankering after fame. However, he was now exactly accused of having that very "tarnished reputation". Although Tu Long believed his actions were based on the virtues and taste of an elite member, his behaviour led to the consequence that he not only indulged in literati's social activities and interactions but also gained a widespread reputation as an indulgent literatus.

The image Tu Long fashioned in his pursuit of greater social recognition at different stages of his official career had been reshaped with the changing priorities of his struggle. As a junior official, his primary goal was to improve the degree of honour he held by demonstrating his work capability and responsibility. Once his official honour reached a satisfactory level, Tu Long began to pursue a more self-mastered image, containing personal values and norms derived from those shared among the literati, or more specifically, the elite community. It is evident that Tu Long's attempt to gain greater esteem in other officials' eyes through his creative self-mastery and fashioning still offended the honour code of officialdom, so that he was stripped of his official status and the greater honour he had only recently achieved.

As for the grudges between Tu Long and Yu Xianqing, they superficially appeared to be a personal issue but implied potential conflicts between being a straightforward, talented literatus who built relationships based on values and virtues shared among cultured elites and literati, and being a sophisticated official who maintained relationships within officialdom according to practical benefits, promotion or job security. It also highlighted the tension between a cultured literati lifestyle and a strict honour code for officials' conduct. This conflict could be traced back

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<sup>228</sup> Shen Defu, *Wanli Yehuo Bian*, p.645.



to the time when Tu Long was governing Qingpu, where he saw himself as a *xianling* with high literary, political, and moral reputation, as well as many admirers seeking his friendship. As a talented and respected literatus, Tu Long had many guests and loved to help literati in difficulties, he preferred those with talent and morals, while Yu was the kind of literati he screened out. In a letter to Feng Fangbo, he explained how he and Yu incurred hatred. He said:

The slanderer, being harsh and bullying the neighbourhood in the village, showed off as a talented literatus to sell his writings. Though I was fond of literati, I alone rejected him, and he swore not to live under the same sky or on the same land [meaning to be my mortal enemy]. Later, he lived in a prominent family in the capital and spent a fortune to bribe officials to defame me. Day and night, he sent people to spy on my actions, but they found nothing.

讒夫者，以刻鵠橫里中，而陽託詩文自銜鬻。某故好士，獨擯絕彼夫，彼夫乃誓不與戴天履地。其後彼居京師大家，行千金賄之下石。日夜使人偵某行事，無所得。<sup>229</sup>

In a letter to Wang Shizhen and Wang Xijue, he described how Yu's inappropriate behaviour caused his aversion:

When I previously served in Qingpu, Yu was in Shanghai and interfered in Qingpu's administration. He ruled with violence and tyranny, causing the resentment of the local people. I judged every matter according to the law, but because of his jealousy over writings, his resentment accumulated. When official in the capital widely spread the news of his framing of his minister, I happened to hear it and refuted it. My words leaked to Yu, deepening his great enmity and hatred, making it even more irreconcilable.

不肖向待罪青浦，俞以上海分割，隸治青浦。暴橫把持，鄉間切齒。不肖每事以法裁

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<sup>229</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Feng Fangbo', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.319.

之，復因詩文相忌，積成仇恨。比長安士大夫盛傳其構陷堂官事，不肖偶聞而非之。語泄于俞，大仇深恨，遂愈結而不可解。<sup>230</sup>

In addition to Tu Long's account of grudge, other literati's records, such as Shen Defu's, also highlighted Yu's resentment towards Tu when Tu rejected and insulted him.

Yu, a native of Shanghai in Songjiang prefecture, during his time as a candidate for the imperial examinations, Tu Long was assigned to Qingpu as magistrate. Yu sought a meeting for a matter, Tu did not listen and even insulted him. Yu harboured deep resentment.

俞，松江之上海人，為孝廉時，適屠令松之青浦，以事干謁之，屠不聽，且加辱慢。俞心恨甚。<sup>231</sup>

To the guests visiting him for his literary talent and reputation, Tu Long normally expressed his welcome and hosted them generously, “regardless of gentry or ordinary literati 無問縉紳逢掖”，he would “lean in to entertain them, trying to ensure each departs satisfied 傾身延獎，務令各得其所而去”，also “loved to make friends and treated the guests extravagantly 廣交泛愛，好客似奢”.<sup>232</sup> This quality was a significant virtue to Tu Long as a member of the elite and a cultivated literatus. Hence, he had his own criteria for the moral quality of his guests, which Yu clearly did not meet. Later, when both were serving in the central government, Tu Long straightforwardly expressed his dissatisfaction with Yu's immoral behaviour. It is evident that Tu Long's grudges with Yu stemmed from his moral integrity and his straightforwardness, as well as his personal choices regarding his social circles and the mastery of his social relations based on mutual values and virtues. The problem was that he applied the criteria for building esteemed

<sup>230</sup> Tu Long, 'Ji Wang Yuanmei Yuanyu Liang Xiansheng', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.429.

<sup>231</sup> Shen Defu, *Wanli Yehuo Bian*, p.644-645.

<sup>232</sup> The views Tu Long had to himself can be found in the letters he wrote to Zhang Jiayin, Wang Shizhen, Wang Xujue, and Yang Taizai (probably Yang Wei 楊巍[1516-1608] who was the minister of the Ministry of Personnel): 'Yu Zhang Dasima Xiaofu', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.426; 'Ji Wang Yuanmei Yuanyu Liang Xiansheng', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.429; 'Feng Yang Taizai Shu 奉楊太宰書', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.393.

relationships to deal with relations within officialdom in order to be similarly esteemed, even honoured. While Tu Long could keep his reputation within the literati community, he might endanger his status in officialdom.

According to Tu Long, Yu was apparently bribed by a “prominent family” to spy on his activities and wait for a chance to attack him. The “prominent family” was related to Tu Long’s experience and work in Qingpu, specifically the Xu family in Huating, Songjiang, mentioned in last chapter. The power of the Xu family in the locality was mainly based around the former Senior Grand Secretary, Xu Jie. Even though Xu had already retired from his post, his power and connections in officialdom remained functional. Tu Long was not the only one who suffered retaliation for displeasing Xu Jie. A more famous dismissal masterminded by Xu Jie after his retirement was that of Hai Rui. Xu Jie had promoted Hai Rui to the post of Grand Coordinator of Yingtian 應天, but also caused his dismissal because Hai Rui’s policies hurt the Xu family’s interests. This was very similar to Tu Long’s case. While working in Qingpu, Tu Long not only rejected Xu’s recruitment but also handled cases related to the Xu family with justice. It seemed that during the four years Tu Long worked in Qingpu, he did have opportunities for promotion, but none were successful due to the Xu family’s obstruction. Tu Long’s final dismissal was also a result of Xu’s manipulation.

It was a serious situation that literati had to face after passing the imperial examinations with difficulty and becoming officials, as the political environment was not conducive to maintaining moral integrity or achieving honourable goals. From the decadent ethos of officialdom, where officials were more interested in the pursuit of fame and benefits than in being a responsible in their duties, to the manipulation by senior officials in government and national affairs, literati who served as officials found themselves in a very complicated environment. On one hand, the honour code was still operated within the community of officialdom, requiring officials to uphold moral qualities that maintained the honour of official status. On the other hand, the honour code was partially broken by corruption at the top of the hierarchical system and partially revised by the prevalence of an extravagant atmosphere in society. Hence, literati were in an environment, where

they either suppressed their social need for greater esteem through their personal values and virtues, restraining themselves with the honour code, as Tu Long did in the early stage of his official career; or they kept their moral virtue and cultured lifestyle for greater esteem, as Tu Long did later when he served as a magistrate of Qingpu and when he tried to fashion a new image of literati in officialdom while in the central government.

However, regardless of which way to choose, Tu Long could not avoid dismissal. This was not only because his indulgent behaviour and lifestyle did not completely fit the honour code, but also because his integrity could easily offend the powerful senior officials, and because of deeper reasons stemming from inner conflicts in the central government. Tu Long was actually a victim of conflict between the cliques of the Senior Grand Secretary, Shen Shixing 申時行 (1535-1614) and the Secondary Grand Secretary, Wang Xijue. Although Tu Long never showed his allegiance to either power, he did have close relations with Wang Xijue because of his daughter, Tanyangzi, and with officials involved in the conflicts, such as Zou Yuanbiao 鄒元標 (1551-1624) and Ding Cilü 丁此呂 (fl. 1577), who were his fellow graduates and close friends. Therefore, when Shen Shixing discriminated against Wang Xijue's supporters, Tu Long became collateral damage in this power competition.<sup>233</sup>

Although the political environment was the deeper reason for Tu Long's dismissal, what directly caused his psychological and moral harm was the questioning of his achievements in office, especially the investigation into his work in Qingpu. In *Wanli Yehuo Bian*, it is recorded:

At this point, all memorials were submitted accusing Tu's indulgence and also implicating his work. .... Additionally, there were disrespectful remarks such as "noble family and government office are like brothel". The emperor read this and became furious.

至是具疏指屠淫縱，並及屠帷簿。……又有“翠館侯門，青樓郎署”諸媒語。上覽之，

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<sup>233</sup> For details see: Jia Wensheng 賈文勝, Li Min 李敏, 'Tu Long Baguan Kao 屠隆罷官考', *Science and Technology of west China*, 6 (2006), 43-44.

大怒。<sup>234</sup>

In a letter to Zhang Jiayin, Tu Long said:

The emperor ordered an investigation into the accusation. The investigation found no substantial evidence, concluding that the person had falsely accused out of personal vendetta, and that I was accused of indulgence in poetry and drinking. Both charges were dismissed. It also touched upon my governance in Qingpu. How absurd it was! The accusations in the memorial were slanderous and found to be baseless. How could the treacherous person be excused, and yet seek other minor faults? Should I be dismissed along with the treacherous person? And regarding my governance of Qingpu, should it be denied? Again, is now the time to question my governance of Qingpu?

主上令廉訪其事。廉訪而了無實狀，乃坐伊人挾仇誣陷，而坐某以詩酒放曠。兩議罷。又及不佞青浦之政。嗟嗟，上所置問疏中污蔑事爾，業廉無之。伊人之傾險何辭，而乃別求他細過。令與險者同罷邪？又及青浦之政，青浦之政應罷邪？又今日是問青浦之政時邪？<sup>235</sup>

Besides the accusation of indulgence, Tu Long's work in Qingpu was also questioned and investigated by the emperor. Throughout his official career, being the magistrate in Qingpu was not only the longest but also the most fruitful period for him. During this time, both his competence in administration and his cultured lifestyle were greatly recognised, Tu Long himself gained greater honour and esteem within both officialdom and the literati community. Wang Shizhen once said: "For now, no one's administration in the Jiangnan district can be better than Tu Long's 今江南治亡踰屠長卿者".<sup>236</sup> However, due to one person's defamation, the recognition of Tu Long as

<sup>234</sup> Shen Defu, *Wanli Yehuo Bian*, p.645.

<sup>235</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Zhang Dasima Xiaofu', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.427.

<sup>236</sup> Wang Shimao 王世懋, 'Yu Tu Changqing 與屠長卿', in Wang Fengchang Ji 王奉常集, vol.37, p.6a <<https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=130005&page=13>>

*caili* and the honoured title of Literary Gentleman granted by the emperor were all denied. Moreover, the investigation revealed that the accusations against Tu Long, which led to the denial of his honour, were groundless. According to the quotation, Tu Long used three questions to express his dissatisfaction not only with losing his official post but also with the process of his dismissal, which almost denied all the values and achievements he was confident, respected and esteemed for. This illustrates how misrecognition brought about psychological harm to those who experienced it, and the denial of Tu Long's achievements during his official career he treasured and prided upon the most genuinely became a great emotional pain that affected his struggle for recognition in the rest of his life.

As the accusation focused on two aspects, Tu Long's refutation also focused on two points: his behaviour of self-discipline in interactions with other literati, and the honourable reputation he built as a magistrate. These explanations and self-proofs can be found not just in one of Tu Long's letters, but in several letters, he wrote to friends, such as Zou Guanguang 鄒觀光(fl.1580), Zeng Guancha 曾觀察 and Dongfen. He said:

Officials were drinking heavily and feasting on fresh delicacies, indulging themselves freely, but the one, who did not even touch the wine cup, was accused of drunkenness, which was utterly absurd.

諸公則浮白擊鮮，頽然自放，而令手不近鸚鵡者坐酒過，祇堪絕倒。

During my time in Yunjian, I loved the local people and keep my integrity, serving for four years as one day. Moreover, I humbled myself before the poor literati and extended my kindness to the common folk. This was well-known in Wu-Yue.

隆在雲間，愛民潔己，四年一日。且也折節寒畯，推恩白屋。吳越所聞也。

In the past, I served twice as a minor official, adept at understanding people's sentiments and comprehending the principles of things. I was just, loyal, and incorruptible, taking the creation

of a harmonious world as my duty. I brought local bullies to justice and distributed my wealth to help people in difficult and straitened circumstances. My honourable reputation spread throughout Wu-Yue, and juniors and chivalrous persons often praised it.

往兩爲小吏，善得人情，通物理，公忠廉潔，以萬物一體爲己任。操三尺以繩豪橫，散千金以急貧窮。蓋義聲在吳越間，少年俠士往往能頌之。<sup>237</sup>

It can be seen that when Tu Long tried to mend the damage to his social recognition, he focused directly on his moral virtue as a literatus who served as an official. As he wrote in a letter to his friend Li Xuanbai, “what the dismissal damaged is just the superficial, ..... my real self still keeps intact 夫此所傷者，長卿皮毛耳。.....長卿真我無恙也”.<sup>238</sup> This “real self” was his virtue, which was the substantial element that gained him esteem in the eyes of other literati. While his official post, status as an official, and even honour he achieved within officialdom could all be denied, his virtue and value could not be easily denied because they were deeply rooted in him through his cultivation within the elite community he grew up in. When Tu Long’s virtue and value could not be easily denied, he could continue seeking esteem, even though the misrecognition within officialdom caused him emotional harm.

Hence, the model that Tu Long used to compare himself changed from Fan Li to Qu Yuan 屈原 (343B.C.-278B.C.) and Wu Zixu 伍子胥 (559B.C.-484B.C.), who were representatives of virtuous officials wrongly treated in officialdom, to stress his own virtue and value. Tu Long also expressed his view to the literati like him in a letter to Xu Xuemo 徐學謨(1522-1594), the Minister of Rites, as he believed, “Throughout history, most of the extraordinary and virtuous literati have often fallen victim to malicious slanderers. In which era has this not occurred 古來瑰奇倜儻之士，多不免于惡口含沙之虫，何代無之”.<sup>239</sup> Tu Long used these two virtuous models to reflect himself while fashioning an esteemed image in other literati’s eyes.

In the comparison of Tu Long and these models, the dismissal seemed to become a sign of

<sup>237</sup> Tu Long, ‘Da Zou Furu Libu 答鄒孚如吏部’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.460-461; ‘Zai Yu Zeng Guancha 再與曾觀察’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.389; ‘Yu Dong Zongbo’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.381.

<sup>238</sup> Tu Long, ‘Da Li Xuanbai 答李玄白’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.463.

<sup>239</sup> Tu Long, ‘Feng Xu Dazongbo 奉徐大宗伯’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.340.

recognition regarding virtuous literati, which not only stressed their own virtues and values but also helped them gain greater respect and esteem within the literati community. This is evident in the reaction of officials, literati, and any others on the day Tu Long left Beijing after receiving the order of dismissal. Tu Long described it in a letter to Wang Shizhen and Wang Xijue:

When the rumours suddenly arose, the entire nation was shocked. Gentry and officials came to the capital to see me, expressing their indignation and sympathy, with countless voices showing their support. Even the soldiers of security guard and the common folk in the streets were agitated, all proclaiming my innocence. On the day of my departure, guards surrounded me, and the onlookers as numerous as a city wall. The eunuchs and imperial guards were deeply saddened by my unjust treatment, and they all cursed the slanderer as a traitor, blaming him together. The blows fell like rain, such was the public's anger.

當口語陡興，舉國駭愕。縉紳臺省諸公，傾都而來視不肖，扼腕慷慨，義形于色者，何止萬口。雖武夫宿衛、閭巷小人，洶洶譚譚，無不爲不肖稱冤。陛辭之日，交戟外環，而觀者倏如堵城。貂璫緹騎，盡傷不肖無妄，交口而罵伊人以虜，衆共擊之。梃下如雨，公忿如此。<sup>240</sup>

In Tu Long's case, because the dismissal was regarded as a frame-up and he was seen as a victim, it greatly stressed his moral virtue through the "public's anger". Tu Long gained greater respect and esteem from the truth of the dismissal showing how an official of integrity was dishonoured, evoking sympathy from other officials and even common folk. As Tu Long felt, his virtues and values were as great as those virtuous models, thus his dismissal could also function similarly in his pursuit of esteem within the literati community. When dismissal was regarded as a sign of esteem, it highlighted the conflict between literati's virtue and the honour code of officialdom. The literati like Tu Long increasingly relied on their personal virtue and achievements to recognise

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<sup>240</sup> Tu Long, 'Ji Wang Yuanmei Yuanyu Liang Xiansheng', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.430.



each other in reflexive relations, while the conventional honour code still played a significant role in generating recognition among literati. Although there was already a group of literati with great talent and achievements who tried to avoid involvement in officialdom in their struggle for recognition, most literati, like Tu Long, struggled with hybrid forms of recognition, which depended on their status within officialdom while being restrained by it. The official status also seemed to become an obstacle to finding the “real self”, thus being stripped off the official status was a kind of release, or, as Tu Long said, the cure of the suffering. He expressed this view in a letter to Li Xuanbai:

Since I lost my insignificant official post because of the slanderer, the superficial fame has been broken; since people made friends with me for benefits, the friendships have been broken; since my words incurred jealousy and repentance, the hindrance of words and writings has been broken; it is Heaven removing my suffering.

自以讒人去雞肋官而浮名破，自世人以市道交不穀而交情破，自不穀以言語文字招忌取悔而盲語文字之障破，天去其疾也。<sup>241</sup>

Tu Long's dismissal was a typical misrecognition within officialdom, but it also played a functional and helpful role in literati's struggle for esteem. Hence, a dismissal in late Ming China represented both misrecognition and recognition in various social communities and spheres, reflecting the complex values in the transitional society. It further indicated the incompatibility of values and norms shared in two social spheres and the conflicts in the process of seeking for honour and esteem. Though Tu Long briefly but successfully practised the possibility of merging the two forms in harmony, the hierarchical mechanism of officialdom could hardly provide an environment for him to sustain his ideal state of social recognition.

Regardless of how much Tu Long tried to present his dismissal positively, either as a great

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<sup>241</sup> Tu Long, 'Da Li Xuanbai', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.463.

opportunity to free himself from constrained officialdom or to help his self-cultivation, it could not change the fact that it was a significant fall in his career and reputation, but more importantly, in his struggle for a harmonious social recognition in two forms. The dismissal was a great blow on Tu Long, but as mentioned, it was also a great opportunity for his self-mastery in seeking for esteem in a contestable social environment constituted by literati, elite, and gentry. Returning to his hometown, Tu Long was again surrounded by the local literati community. After only six years in office, he could no longer be satisfied with the local social environment, but a broader and more competitive environment awaited him. Tu Long then started his new struggle from the community that cultivated his primary sense of recognition, which was stronger and more varied than before.

## Chapter 4

### Open Environment for Social Recognition

The literati community in the late Ming Dynasty created a comparatively open social environment for contesting values and norms grounded in the community. The literati, based on their moral agency and self-awareness gained during the process of the transformation of the value system from convention to innovation in a transitional society, were motivated to create a more compatible sphere for their specific demand for social recognition through relations linked by multiple connections related to the literati's virtue and lifestyle. Within this community, the literati were relatively free to shape their own images and enhance them through self-mastered relationships with other literati who shared similar values and norms. Hence, different fractional communities formed within the literati community through various connections among literati.

As mentioned earlier, officialdom was also part of the literati community, albeit at a higher level, because the social status of literati as officials was generally higher than that of common literati. The values and norms grounded in officialdom was relatively different from those of the literati community, which led to different forms of social recognition between honour and esteem within the two social spheres. The social sphere derived from the community of officialdom was distinct from those derived from fractional communities. The vital difference was that the social environment created by fractional communities within the literati community was open to contestation, whereas officialdom was much less so. When officials left officialdom, they transitioned from a less contestable social environment to the open and contestable social environment of the literati community. Although leaving officialdom did not mean a total detachment, especially not from the relationships established within it, since officialdom was contained within the literati community, the literati would be freer to maintain relationships according to their own social needs and preferred types of connections. The literati were then greatly encouraged to explore their values within the broader social sphere of the literati

community, which was an open social environment for their struggle for social recognition in the form of esteem.

After leaving officialdom, whether voluntarily or through dismissal, the literati faced the loss of status as officials and the status for seeking honour in officialdom. They began a self-mastered social life to enhance their relationships and status as the common literati within the literati community. Without the prestige of officials, the literati could only rely on their moral and cultural values and virtues to achieve self-esteem. Hence, they needed to maintain their relationships through various interactions in different forms of social activities related to their literary, cultural, and religious cultivation. They also had to fashion an image through their personal virtues and lifestyle to be recognised by other literati. The struggle of literati in this open environment within the literati community highlighted the unique nature of the literati's social recognition in the late Ming Dynasty, which differentiated between conventional honour as a group member in a hierarchical society and self-mastered esteem as an individualised social subject with relatively full moral agency. Unlike being restrained by the necessary pursuit of honour or the honour code in officialdom, the literati could freely express their values and virtues in seeking an innovative form of recognition with social subjects having relatively equal access to each other in a less-restrained social sphere. Therefore, the literati engaged in various social activities related to almost every aspect of their values and norms in order to be seen and valued in the community while generating the sense of self-esteem. As for Tu Long, in his earlier life periods, he had already shown a strong awareness of shaping his virtuous image and balancing his social demands within different social spheres. After his dismissal and leaving the social sphere of officialdom, Tu Long began a new period of struggle for recognition in the open, contestable literati community.

In the post-official period, Tu Long's struggle for social recognition focused on self-mastered esteem. Based on his identity as a literatus, Tu Long's struggle was guided by the value system of the literati community, within which he was relatively free to master individualised virtues and lifestyle. Tu Long's self-mastery demonstrated how a literatus struggled in rebuilding and maintaining social relations for recognition after the structure of social recognition had been

damaged by losing official status. His social activities and interactions with other literati displayed a series of patterns based on shared values and norms in the process of seeking recognition. Compared to the earlier periods, unlike being constrained by the honour code of officialdom where Tu Long had to balance between two forms of recognition, in the post-official period, his self-mastery for his social and personal life was bolder and more fearless in the open social community, though it was correspondingly more competitive in the process. Unlike the period of his early life, although it seemed that in both periods Tu Long was a literatus without an official post, the status of a common literatus who had never been an official and one who had been an official was already different. This is why Tu Long's struggle in his early life for esteem could hardly be compared to his post-official struggle. Previously, he was constrained in the pursuit of honour, which decided that his struggle for esteem was first for the status honour as a member of the elite gentry in local social community and eventually for honour as an official in officialdom. After his dismissal, Tu Long was relatively free from the constraint of the honour code and fully involved in seeking esteem through his talent and achievements. Meanwhile, the status as a member of the elite gentry became a tool in seeking esteem, rather than a goal in his early life, even though there were similar patterns during the process. Therefore, Tu Long, or literati like him, could be stimulated to engage in achieving self-esteem in the process of social recognition comprehensively, which was heavily influenced by the experience of leaving officialdom, either voluntarily or through dismissal.

In the post-official period, Tu Long's crisis of recognition was less about not fitting into the values and norms of the elite community or officialdom, and more about not mastering effective interactions in the relations cultivation recognition or not fashioning an image recognised by other literati through his virtues and lifestyle. Hence, Tu Long showed the greatest initiative in these two aspects. Although his dismissal caused significant damage to his social recognition, the literati community provided an open social environment for Tu Long and others like him to mend the damage by rebuilding and enhancing relationships through their outstanding talent and cultural disposition, while fashioning a virtuous image through self-cultivation. During this process, self-mastered relations played a significant role in displaying the image and making it functional in

interactions with other literati. Meanwhile, the image, shaped by the literati's values and virtues, established their reputation and boosted their sense of self-esteem within the literati community. In this context, the relationships that revolved around the individual literati's personal virtues gradually formed different kinds of more delicate and compatible minor social spheres for the members to better recognise each other, which were oriented by the literati's specific cultivation, thereby generating a stronger sense of self-esteem. Tu Long, with his outstanding talent and self-cultivation, as well as his status as an elite gained through both his family origin, achievements, and his status as a member of gentry lineages in Yin, established his relationships within the literati community through multiple connections, which prompted him involved in different fractional literati communities. This involvement allowed Tu Long to achieve a comparatively strong sense of self-worth, self-respect, and self-esteem through each fractional community that satisfied his social demand in different fields related to literati's virtues and lifestyle, and a generally stronger sense of recognition in the literati community.

Therefore, in this period, Tu Long's struggle for recognition in the form of esteem concentrated on two themes: maintaining social relations through multiple connections in various social activities and cultivating a virtuous, cultural, and tasteful personal life alongside his social life. Due to the influence of his dismissal, particularly in the early stage of his post-official period, Tu Long not only lost the status to seek honour in officialdom but also had to leave the social environment of officialdom and the capital, causing some loss of relationships and connections established in that environment. It is evident that a practical social environment was very importantly for the struggle of literati for recognition, as Tu Long experienced in his early life. Hence, facing the change of environment and loss of connections to part of the literati community, Tu Long prioritised socialising to quickly and effectively rebuild and enhance his relationships within the literati community. The social activities he managed to maintain his relationships could be classified by form-oriented, content-oriented, and status-oriented connections, which were intertwined during their interactions. These connections reflected Tu Long's disposition and cultivation in literature, culture, religion, and socialising, derived from the values and norms of the

literati, particularly the elite. His self-cultivation, which was comparatively separated from his social life, mainly functioned in shaping the image of a virtuous literatus with great taste and cultivation, as well as a family in consensus with his moral and cultural virtues. By balancing socialising and self-cultivation, Tu Long not only fashioned his virtuous image in the eyes of other literati but also built solid bonds within his relationships and with the different fractional social communities cultivated by the self-mastered values and norms of literati.

Because of his talent and his practice of the literati's values and norms, Tu Long's struggle for esteem in the literati community demonstrated valuable patterns in the discussion of the literati's struggle for social recognition in a comparatively open, contestable social environment. First of all, Tu Long's socialising in various social activities can be discussed in two parts: his socialising through different literati associations and his self-planned interactions with friends. In the first part, literati associations, as an outstanding social phenomenon within the literati community in the late Ming Dynasty and a special social form of literati interaction, occupied Tu Long's social life in the early stage of his post-official period, which significantly mended the social and emotional damage caused by his dismissal. Literati associations were both form-oriented and content-oriented social interactions, each with specific themes and contents set by the members, and Tu Long was primarily involved in literary and religious associations. Besides socialising in special forms, Tu Long's self-planned socialising with friends was more flexible and personal, revolving around various connections oriented by the cultivation and lifestyle shared with friends, based on religion—Buddhism and Daoism, cultured and tasteful lifestyle, aesthetic connoisseurship, gifts, money, and family members. The forms of interaction were simpler and more focused on their own wills, which were mainly delivered through visiting each other, gathering, or touring certain places. Although intensive socialising played a significant role in seeking esteem, self-cultivation was also irreplaceable in distinguishing Tu Long's values and virtues within the literati community. Hence, Tu Long spent time at home practising his taste in decorating his houses and gardens, cultivating his spiritual world, and, most importantly, writing books.

## **Socialising and the struggle for recognition**

Participating in various social activities was the primary theme in Tu Long's post-official period, aimed to enhance connections with different social groups and further to maintain relations within the literati community. These activities were practised in two ways: participating in various literati associations and visiting, touring, gathering with friends at historically, culturally or aesthetically significant places. Both methods aimed to straighten relationships through shared cultural dispositions, which comprehensively addressing the literati's various demands in maintaining intersubjective relations. Frequent gatherings with the literati and elite significantly reduced the distance between Tu Long and the literati community, not only in geographical locations but also in relationships. Closer and stronger relationships greatly increased Tu Long's sense of self-respect and self-esteem within the community, while the stronger self-relations led to stronger social recognition as an individual literatus.

Therefore, engaging in various social activities was the most effective way for Tu Long and the literati in the late Ming Dynasty to seek self-mastered recognition. Through these activities, the literati could largely control the social subjects they wished to build relationships with and the values and norms they wanted to share mutually. A literatus's social activities could be very personal, according to their individual needs for recognition, while also being representative of the universal struggle of literati in that era. Close interaction within the literati community compensated for Tu Long's sense of loss caused by his dismissal and relatively mended the damage to his social recognition when he lost official honour. The crisis of recognition caused by the damage to the structure of social recognition was also generally present in the literati community, leading to a series of social patterns in the process of rebuilding or recovering the social recognition among literati, such as joining or forming different literati associations based on their literary or religious cultivation or establishing relationships through different kinds of connections.

Between participating in literati associations and flexible socialising according to Tu Long's own will, the two kinds of socialising complemented each other to some extent. Literati associations were like intensive social circumstances where literati greatly enhanced their relations



for recognition by emphasising shared values and norms. Each association was like a variable interval social activity, gathering members to practise their cultural and tasteful lifestyle. Literati associations were like small-scale teams between Tu Long and other literati directed towards group esteem, while Tu Long's self-planned visiting and gathering were an individualised form of socialising aimed at self-esteem by sharing talent and achievements intersubjectively. Therefore, literati associations tended to highlight the distinguishing elements symbolising the identity of literati, so the associations Tu Long joined primarily concentrated on literary and religious themes. As for Tu Long's own visits and tours, every detail expressed his personal disposition and taste, from the choices of destinations to the subjects, from the forms to the contents, and from the transport to utensils, food, and drinks. The two forms of socialising completed Tu Long's struggle for esteem in relation to himself and the multiple communities derived from his multiple social statuses. Regardless of the form of Tu Long's socialising, it demonstrated distinctive characteristics of the individual literati and the era.

During the frequent socialising in Tu Long's post-official period, literature was consistently the dominant theme of various social activities. Whether it was where his primary status cultivated and established through the local elite community of Yin or it was what helped him earn the country-wide reputation later, these stemmed from Tu Long's literary talent and achievements. Tu Long's identity as a literatus was gradually shaped by his literary disposition and cultivation within the literati community, particularly the elite community. The literature-related values and norms not only constituted the foundation of Tu Long's struggle for social recognition but also were the most solid and competitive elements in his self-mastery for esteem. Literary cultivation, as the most distinguishing element, made up the identity of literati, determining the social status of a literatus. The level of literary cultivation also decided the level of the esteem that literati could seek in the community. The more talented the literati, the higher and stronger the sense of self-esteem gained during interactions in relationships. Tu Long as a talented literatus from a young age, certainly depended heavily on his literary cultivation and achievements in his struggle, especially when his social recognition could only be sought in the form of esteem based on the

literati community. If Tu Long wanted to maintain his level of esteem, he had to be well recognised through his most competitive value, which was also the most outstanding achievement in his life—literature. Additionally, the level of Tu Long's literary cultivation greatly affected him as a member of the local gentry lineages, prompting his interaction with local monasteries. Religious cultivation was also a significant element in the literati's struggle for recognition. Besides general cultivation in Buddhism and Daoism and connections with monks and priests, literary interaction with monastic institutions further enhanced Tu Long's elite status and the corresponding status honour as one of the most outstanding gentries in Yin. In this stage of Tu Long's life, status honour became one of the distinguishing achievements to seek greater esteem within both the literati and elite communities.

## **A specific social form in literati's socialising**

Joining different literati associations and participating in their gatherings was one of Tu Long's primary form of socialising. As an intensive social circumstance, each literati association functioned like a social workshop of the literati with similar values and lifestyle. The interval gathering in the name of the association were concentrated expressions of the collected self-mastery of social relations derived from each individual literatus. The relationships maintained within associations evolved into stronger social bonds, where members generated highly mutual recognition through their individualised values and norms. Each association thus became an individual micro social sphere for literati to seek either personal esteem or wider recognition through the association's reputation. It also provided a social sphere where literati could enhance their intersubjective recognition in a concentrated and intensive manner. The literati's social needs could be effectively satisfied through an association event in a short but concentrated time. This form of socialising was exclusive to literati due to their distinctive cultural disposition and lifestyle, which decided the associations' social contents and the ways they delivered their social events. Moreover, because literati associations were entirely formed and recruited through personal reputation and achievements, they depended on the individual social capital accumulated through

various interactions within the literati community. The associations created a more contestable sphere due to the criteria set according to the founders' personal values and virtues. The literati who wanted to join or co-found an association were strictly selected based on how compatible their values, virtues, status, and achievements were with those of the founders. This is why literati's self-esteem could be so effectively enhanced through interaction within different literati associations.

Therefore, literati associations became a flourishing phenomenon and an outstanding form-oriented social activity for literati in late Ming China. Regardless of the numbers or categories, literati associations involved many literati with different social needs and covered almost all aspects related to their cultural lifestyle. The large number of literati associations indicated the significant demand for the literati's self-mastery of social relations. In the Ming Dynasty, including the Southern Ming, there were as many as 930 literati associations, with 710 associations that could be roughly tracked by specific time. During the late Ming period, from the Wanli period to the Chongzhen 崇禎 (1573-1644) period, there were as many as 397 associations founded in the seventy-two years, compared to 197 associations in the two hundred and five years from the early to the mid-Ming Dynasty. The numbers showed a sharp increase in the late Ming Dynasty, reflecting not only the intensive social needs of literati but also the high demand for recognition within the literati community.

The situation of literati's socialising also showed in the geographic distribution. In the Jiangnan district, where most historical gentry and elite families gathered, cultivating a great number of literati and a rich cultural environment, there were as many as 363 different literati associations distributed across Suzhou (76), Yingtian 應天 (55), Hangzhou 杭州 (50), Songjiang (50), Changzhou 常州 (33), Huizhou 徽州 (22), Fuzhou 福州 (22), Jiaxing 嘉興 (22), Ningbo (18), and Shaoxing 紹興(17) Prefecture. Meanwhile, in Shuntian Prefecture 順天府, where the capital of Beijing was located, the number of literati associations also reached 41, given its special standing in the country. However, no other prefecture could compare to Suzhou, due to its cultural

status as the centre of the core five prefectures in the Jiangnan district.<sup>242</sup> From the association members and distribution, literati, as the subjects of this social activity, boosted the development and flourishing of literati associations. The form of literati association greatly affected the way literati established and maintained their social relations. The prevalence of associations in the literati community made involvement in different themed associations a shared experience. Recruiting or being recruited to associations also became a sign of recognition in various values and achievements within the literati community.

Literati associations were formed by literati based on their cultural disposition and lifestyle, prompting the development of areas related to literati's values and norms. These associations not only became a significant part of literati lifestyle but also served as a means of communication among literati, particularly in literature.<sup>243</sup> The various themes of associations reflected the literati's social needs in different aspects and could be sorted into six categories: poetry creation, prose writing, senior wellbeing, religion cultivation, lecture learning, and others. Among these, the associations for poetry and prose creation were the most numerous, with 291 and 228 respectively.<sup>244</sup> Although the other categories inclined towards different themes, their contents were generally based on literary cultivation. Through the gatherings of associations, the literati's demand for communication in terms of literature, culture, religion and taste, was greatly fulfilled in various forms and contents of each social event. Despite the associations' literary features, which were hard to avoid, literati expressed other exclusive virtues and tastes based on this distinguishing element. The themes of some associations were created with the literati's distinctive tastes, such as Canli Hui 餐荔會, Lychee-tasting Association, founded by Xie Zhaozhe 謝肇淛 (1567-1624), specifically for eating and assessing lychees. There were also associations based on some "bad habits" of literati, such as gambling. Zhang Dai's Douji She 鬥雞社, Cockfighting Association, gathered the literati to gamble on each other's antiques, calligraphy, paintings, and other items

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<sup>242</sup> More details of literati associations' number and distribution, refer to Li Shiren 李時人, 'Ming Dai "Wenren Jieshe" Chuyi 明代 "文人結社" 芻議', *Journal of Shanghai Normal University* 上海師範大學學報, 44(2015), 76-85; Li Yushuan 李玉栓, *Mingdai Wenren Jieshe Kao* 明代文人結社考 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2013), pp.605-611.

<sup>243</sup> He Zongmei 何宗美, *Wenren Jieshe yu Mingdai Wenxue de Yanjin* 文人結社與明代文學的演進, 2 vols (Beijing, Renmin chubanshe, 2011), vol.1, p.21.

<sup>244</sup> Li Yushuan, *Mingdai Wenren Jieshe Kao*, pp.6-8, p.612.

through cockfighting. Regardless of the themes, forms, and contents, the core of literati associations, the specific social form, was to satisfy the literati's social demands in various fields related to their cultivation and lifestyle. The associations served as platforms for literati to display their cultivated and fashioned values and virtues within different fractional communities while offering a social sphere to practise.

Therefore, the values and norms grounded in each social sphere derived from literati associations, formed according to members' distinguishing tastes and achievements, became a code of esteem for the literati's social recognition. During this process, literati, as members of the associations, successfully generated a sense of recognition by possessing and practising the shared code of esteem. Unlike the code of honour, the code of esteem within the social sphere created by literati associations was varied and open to adjustment according to specific associations, especially when associations had their own agreements for the members. However, the reason that the adjustable code of esteem could be the code for social recognition was that it was able to be fixed by shared values and norms within the literati community. Although individual literati might have their specific tastes and lifestyles, these were basically cultivated through the broader literati values and norms. As long as the source was stabilised, the core of the code of esteem remained stable. It was also because it was a code of esteem, not honour, that personal distinction, especially deriving from literati's outstanding talent, cultivation, distinguished taste, and achievements, was important in the process of social recognition.

Literati associations provided a sphere not only for practising mutual values and norms for different groups of literati but also for emphasising individual values and achievements through intensive and concentrated interaction among members. This is another reason why the social form of literati associations could function so effectively in the literati's struggle for social recognition in the form of esteem. Literati associations played roles in distinguishing those with established cultural status from newcomers, endowing members with corresponding status within certain associations.

The prevalence of literati associations, based on the literati values and virtues, influenced

related social fields within the literati community, especially in the development of literary schools and forms, the religious cultivation and interaction, and even political sphere. Literature, as the most common and important element in literati's social activities, was boosted the most through associations. In the process of intensive practice of self-mastered virtues and lifestyle, literati's creative literary ideas were greatly stimulated during association events. Revolving around several distinguished literati with outstanding literary talent, reputation, and achievements, different literary schools emerged under the influence of innovative values and ideas, especially the awareness of self. For instance, the two predominant literary ideas of the late Ming—the idea of classical revivalism, which promoted literary creation adhering to classical styles, especially prose from the Qin and Han Dynasties and poems from the early Tang Dynasty, and the idea of *xingling*—were either boosted through associations or founded on associations. The Latter Seven Masters, a literary group represented the Revivalism School, included leaders Wang Shizhen and Li Panlong 李攀龍 (1514-1570), who held the Liuzi She 六子社, Six Masters Association, and its follow-up association in Beijing. The idea of *xingling* was prominently developed through the three Yuan brothers—Yuan Zongdao 袁宗道 (1560-1600), Yuan Hongdao, and Yan Zongdao 袁中道 (1570-1626)—and the Gong'an School 公安派 they created, which was founded and developed through associations, such as Nanping She 南平社, Nanping Association, and Putao She 蒲桃社, Grape Association, formed by the three Yuans, particularly Yuan Hongdao. Different literary ideas were thoroughly practised through social activities based on literati associations. The literati who held different, even opposing ideas and values could choose suitable social groups to satisfy their social needs in mutual relations, gaining greater esteem for social recognition rather than being denied for holding different values. In addition to literary ideas, different forms of literature also promoted intersubjective relations among literati, such as associations for drama and novel creation and discussion, like Liang Chenyu's Liantai Xianhui 蓮臺僊會, Lotus Seat Immortal Association.

The literary associations also affected the social and cultural environment of the local literati community. By holding these associations, local literati, mainly the elite and gentry, cultivated and

led the local cultural trend. This was not only to maintain their social and cultural status in the local social community, but also to achieve a higher level of group esteem through cultural reputation and valuable literary works derived from different associations. For example, Yongshang Poetry Association in Yin, mentioned in Tu Long's early life, was one of the most famous poetry associations since the mid-Ming dynasty. It existed for a comparatively long time and had a profound and continuous influence on the local cultural and social environment, leaving behind two widely spread poetry collections. Literati's struggle patterns in terms of literature were practised in multiple dimensions through literati associations, from literature itself, including literary ideas, forms, and schools, to the influence of literature within different social communities, whether based on culture or social status.<sup>245</sup>

Literati associations made a great contribution to literati's esteem sought through their literary values and achievements. For instance, the Six Masters Association was a poetry association famous not only for its members' creations but also for their literary ideas and theories of classical revivalism. This helped the association and its members earn a great reputation and achievements, such as Wang Shizhen's *Yiyuan Zhiyan* 藝苑卮言, *Discussion in the Realm of Literature*, and Xie Zhen's 謝榛 (1499-1579) *Shijia Zhishuo* 詩家直說, *Direct Points from Poets*. Initially, Xie Zhen held the highest reputation and most mature insight into poetry theories among the six members. It was recorded that "at the beginning of the Seven Masters starting the association, Li [Panlong], Wang [Shizhen] were not very famous, and the rules and forms of poetic composition were mostly decided by Siming [Xie Zhen's alternative name] 七子結社之初, 李、王得名未盛, 稱詩選格, 多取定於四溟".<sup>246</sup> It is evident that Wang Shizhen and Li Panlong's literary achievements in theories or creations greatly benefited from Xie Zhen's perspective of the Revivalism School, through frequent socialising within the association. These members later formed the Latter Seven Masters, a representative literary group of the Revivalism School in literary history. In this case, greater esteem achieved by the members not only through the relationships and interactions within

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<sup>245</sup> The two poetry collections are *Yongshang Qijiu Shi* 甬上耆舊詩, *Poems of Respected Seniors of Yongshang*, and *Xu Yongshang Qijiu Shi* 續甬上耆舊詩, *Extended Poems of Respected Seniors of Yongshang*.

<sup>246</sup> Zhu Yizun 朱彝樽, *Jingzhiju Shihua* 靜志居詩話, ed. by Yao Zu'en 姚祖恩 and Huang Juntan 黃君坦 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1990), p.386.

the association but also extended to those within other associations and the broader social sphere, such as the literati community and the literature-based social sphere, due to the great reputation of the association.

Literati associations, in displaying their values and virtues, exceeded beyond literature. Religious cultivation, particularly Buddhism, became a significant element in the literati's cultural lifestyle, and associations related to religious cultivation also play important roles in their struggle for social recognition. Religion-oriented associations were formed and recruited not only by literati themselves but also together by literati and religious people, such as monks or priests. Literati's obsession with religious cultivation and their close and frequent interaction with religious people in the late Ming Dynasty boosted the rise of this kind of literati associations. Religion-oriented associations primarily had two forms: literati participating in monk's associations, where the main body of the association was monks, such as Wang Daokun's Zhaolin She 肇林社, Zhaolin Association; and associations based on literati's social demand related to religious cultivation, particularly Buddhism. It was this second form of religion-oriented associations that made a difference to literati's esteem through their social activities, interactions and relations related to religious cultivation.

These associations gradually fused literary and religious cultivation. Not only did literati show a great passion for Buddhist or Daoist cultivation, but the monks or priests also joined in literary creation and the literati's tasteful lifestyle. The combination of literature and religion, or the Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist values and norms, became a vehicle for self-mastery of different values in the literati community. The Reconciling of Three Teachings (Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism) was an innovative value system created in the religion-oriented social sphere within the literati community, which greatly fused conventional social values with spiritual values. This indicated that the literati had a high awareness of autonomy as moral agents, fashioning the value system according to their own judgement and needs. This outstanding value was certainly expressed and practised in the literati associations. For instance, some of the associations held by Yuan Hongdao, the leader of the idea of *xingling*, and his two brothers, were significantly



influenced by Buddhism, reflecting their awareness in Buddhist cultivation, such as the Grape Association mentioned earlier, as well as Xiangguang Association 香光社, Qinglian Association 青蓮社, and Huayan Association 華嚴社. The names of the associations explicitly expressed the meaning of the Chan Sect, a doctrine of Buddhism. During late Ming Dynasty, literati associations were also called literati Chan associations 文人禪社, indicating the close connection between literati and religious cultivation.<sup>247</sup> Besides the literati, religious figures also deeply involved in literati's associations, with the Four Eminent Monks of the late Ming Dynasty being the most distinguishing figures in interaction with literati.<sup>248</sup>

Given this close and profound relationships and connections between literati and religious figures or institutions in the late Ming Dynasty, religion-oriented literati associations played a special role in literati's socialising and establishing more status-oriented connections. The connections and interactions between literati and religious figures or institutions, which heavily relied on literati's literary and cultural disposition and cultivation, were fundamentally built within the elite community due to its relatively high social and cultural status and capital in the general literati community. Meanwhile, literati invested religious doctrine and cultivation with their values and norms forming it into a significant element in their socialising and self-cultivation. This gradually became a social sphere based on literati's religious values and cultivation for their intersubjective recognition.

Based on the political dimension of the identity of literati, the associations exhibited political effects and features. On one hand, literati regarded associations as social spheres to comfort their sense of loss in officialdom and enhance their moral virtue, especially when they could hardly seek honour or value within officialdom or were wrongly treated. In the early stage of the Wanli period, Zhang Juzheng controlled the government, leading some officials with different political views to leave office voluntarily and form associations to express dissatisfaction with officialdom and uphold their moral integrity. For instance, Wang Daokun left officialdom in 1580 due to discord

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<sup>247</sup> Li Yushuan, *Mingdai Wenren Jieshe Kao*, p.13.

<sup>248</sup> The Four Eminent Monks include Yunqi Zhuhong 雲栖株宏 (1535-1615), Zibai Zhenke 紫柏真可 (1543-1603), Hanshan Deqing 憨山德清 (1546-1623), and Ouyi Zhixu 藕益智旭 (1599-1655).

with Zhang Juzheng and formed the Baiyu She 白榆社, Baiyu Association, in his hometown, She County 歙縣. This association was also significant for Tu Long, who joined it after his dismissal from office.

On the other hand, some literati relied on the influence of associations to directly interfere with the significant state affairs. The Fu She 復社, Restoration Society, is a typical example. The leader of the Restoration Society, Zhang Pu 張溥 (1602-1641), not only participated in political decisions as a junior official but also manipulated the appointment of the Senior Grand Secretary of 1641 with other association members. Additionally, politically oriented associations sometimes developed into influential political parties, such as Donglin Faction 東林黨, which derived from the Donglin Association 東林社.<sup>249</sup> In this sense, some literati associations became public spheres undertaking partial political functions. This was a concentrated expression of the political character within the identity of literati, also showing their function in seeking hierarchical honour. However, for most of associations formed under the frustrated atmosphere within officialdom, the main function of them was to emphasize the moral character of virtuous literati while seeking recognition from members who shared similar virtues or experiences. By losing or giving up the pursuit of official honour, literati associations became supportive spheres for the literati seeking esteem to meet their demand for recognition.

As significant and popular as literati associations were in the literati's social life, Tu Long, as a well-known talented literatus, local elite, and gentry, was also involved in various associations, especially in his post-official period. Tu Long participated in and formed eight literati associations in total, six of which were related to literature, including poetry and dramas; one was about Buddhist cultivation, and one was an association for the literati's gathering. Considering the time distribution, six out of the eight associations were in Tu Long's post-official period, one in his early life, and one during his official period. This shows that after his dismissal, Tu Long's struggle for esteem through close and frequent interaction with other literati was more intense than in the previous two periods. This strongly indicates that the dismissal caused a crisis of recognition for

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<sup>249</sup> Li Shiren, 'Ming Dai "Wenren Jieshe" Chuyi', p.79, 82.

Tu Long. Additionally, he genuinely practised his autonomy in mastering his virtue and lifestyle for recognition in different social spheres within the literati community. The six associations primarily focused on literary creation, which greatly emphasised his literary reputation, achievements, and his status in the literati community. When the association's reputation turned into individual achievement, group esteem also turned into individual esteem. Through intensive interaction with the literati who shared high compatible values and norms, Tu Long's social needs, especially at the beginning of his post-official period, were met, and his sense of self-esteem was satisfied in intersubjective relations.

In Tu Long's early life and official career, he participated and formed only two associations: the Yongshang Poetry Association before he passed the imperial examinations, and the Yunshui She 雲水社, Clouds and Rivers Association. The history of the Yongshang Poetry Association was long. According to the preface of Quan Zuwang's 全祖望 (1705-1755) *Gouyu Tuyin Xu* 句余土音序, *The Poems from Gouyu*, "the poetry association in the Ming Dynasty was firstly held by Hong Bingbu, secondly by Tu Shangshu, thirdly by Zhang Dongsha, fourthly by Yang Mianyang and fifthly by [Quan Zuwang's] forefather Zhangong, through his gathering of Linqun 明之詩社, 一舉於洪兵部, 再舉於屠尚書, 三舉於張東沙, 四舉於楊沔陽, 五舉於先詹公林泉之集".<sup>250</sup> Tu Shangshu was Tu Long's nephew, Tu Dashan, and Zhang Dongsha was Zhang Shiche. Both made great contributions to Tu Long's literary reputation and his status in the local elite community. Hence, this poetry association was not just a place for Tu Long to practise his literary talent, with seven poems collected in Tu Long's *Youquan Collection*, but more importantly, it was a place for him to establish his relationships and form his identity through cultivating a basic sense of recognition within a community.<sup>251</sup> The members of the association, such as Shen Mingchen,

<sup>250</sup> Quan Zuwang 全祖望, *Quan Zuwang Ji Huijiao Jizhu* 全祖望集彙校集注, ed. by Zhu Zhuyi 朱鑄禹 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), p.1234.

<sup>251</sup> The poems include Zhengyue Liu Ri Yuji Simagong Liubo Guan De Qingzi Ershou 正月六日雨集司馬公流波館, 得青字二首, Yuanxi Ji Simagong Zhai 元夕集司馬公宅, Wang Changwen Jiyu Wengong Chanfang Shezhong Zhujun Guocun Jinde Tongren Erzi Ershou 汪長文寄寓文公禪房, 社中諸君過存, 今得通人二字二首, Zaiji Simagong Xinshan 再集司馬公新山, Xiari Tong Cheng Mengru ji Shezhong Zhujun Ji Zhang Sima Yuan 夏日同程孟孺及社中諸君集張司馬園, Zhang Sima Xinshan Cheng yu Shezhong Zhujun Fu 張司馬新山成, 與社中諸君賦, Qiuyu Huai Zhang Simagong Shezhong Zhuyou Shier Shou 秋雨懷張司馬公社中諸友十二首, in *Youquan Ji* 由拳集, in *TLJ*, vol.2. The social activities held within the poetry association could refer to: Hu Wenxue 胡文學, 'Bingbu Shangshu Dongsha Zhang Xiansheng Shiche 兵部尚書東沙張先生時

Shen Jiuchou, and Tu Benjun, were core figures in Tu Long's lifetime relationships. They not only boosted his esteem in the process of his struggle for honour but also compensated for the damage to his social recognition after losing his official honour. This association was the first step in Tu Long's struggle for social recognition within the literati community after his dismissal and the beginning of the process of self-mastered esteem in the elite community.

During his official period, due to a comparatively satisfied sense of recognition in both forms of honour and esteem, Tu Long did not need intensive social interaction to boost his relations. However, he did possess the privilege of social relations during his time as an official, especially in the local social environment of Qingpu. The Yunshui Association was the only association Tu Long formed based on his reputation and status, and it was primarily organised for literati gatherings. In the *Yunjian Zhilue* 雲間志略, *Gazetteer of Yunjian*, it was recorded:

The friends made in hard times from his hometown, such as Shen Jiaze, and the virtuous literati, such as Mo Tinghan, Fang Zhongfu, and Xu Mengru, would frequently stay for several days, ..... [They would] cherish emotions in their bosom, singing loudly and drinking heavily, not distinguishing between others and themselves or between host and guest. Moreover, there were common folk who joined the Yunshui Association, where everyone was content. They regarded Qingxi as their external residence and the magistrate of Qingxi as Linqiong.

其鄉人之窮交者如沈嘉則，士君子之賢者如莫廷韓、方眾甫、徐孟孺輩，輒數日款留，.....舒抱披襟，皓歌劇飲，不知人為我，我為我，主為主而賓為賓也，且有結布衣交盟雲水社者，人人意得，以青溪為外府，以青溪令為臨邛矣。<sup>252</sup>

In the association Tu Long played the primary role, giving the association his distinct personal

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微', in *Yongshang Qijiu Shi* 甬上耆舊詩, in *Qinding Siku Quanshu*, 30 vols., vol.8, 105b-108a <<https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=64884&page=212>>

<sup>252</sup> He Sanwei 何三畏, *Yunjian Zhilue* 雲間志略, 24vols, vol.4, pp.17b-18a <<https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=236907&page=56>>

characteristics, shared virtues, and lifestyle. It was an expression of Tu Long's successful struggle for recognition in forms of honour and esteem, as he described the state of *xianling*, which was illustrated in miniature in a micro-sphere based on his own relations. His leadership status in the local political and cultural environments was the primary support for forming a social association. During this period, Tu Long's status honour was the dominant form constituting his recognition. Hence, any form of socialising within the literati community not only benefited from his honour but also, to some extent, enhanced his honour. This association founded by Tu Long well functioned in the process of his social recognition.

Given the comparatively stable and simple social environment during Tu Long's early life and official periods, his demand for recognition was met in the two forms through normal social activities and interactions, so associations did not occupy much of his social life. Additionally, based on Tu Long's status in the literati community, either in his hometown or Qingpu, he relatively held the initiative in interactions with other literati, allowing him to lead and even define the associations to suite him rather than him suiting the associations. However, after losing his official post, the status of initiative shifted from Tu Long to the literati with stronger and higher status and reputation in the literati community. This implied a power shift in the relations and interactions between literati, in terms of political, cultural, and social aspects, which closely connected to changes in their social status.

Tu Long's leading position in local communities derived from his elite and official status. When he lost his official status, his position in the literati community was somewhat shaken, leading to the power shift that implied a relative decline in Tu Long's social power and influence. The most obvious expression of this was the shift in locations of his various social activities, such as participating in literati associations or other visits and gatherings. For instance, events of the Yongshang Poetry Association and the Yunshui Association were held in environments familiar to Tu Long or in his home area. But after his dismissal, the locations or primary roles of the associations he attended in his post-official period changed to places that were more culturally well-known, had more influential literati, or were simply the organisers' home areas. This meant

Tu Long had to rely on the external environment and support from more culturally and socially powerful literati to compensate for his declined social power and influence within the literati community.

The power shift also indicated changes in the state of Tu Long's struggle for social recognition. Previously, his struggle aimed at building and enhancing, but later he had to focus on mending and maintaining, indicating the crisis of social recognition he experienced in post-official life. This crisis stimulated Tu Long's socialising and pressured him to enhance intersubjective recognition more intensively. Associations became the most efficient and effective social form for Tu Long. In the first two years of his post-official period, he had already participated in half of the remaining six literati associations. The frequency not only showed Tu Long's desperation in rebuilding his social relations but also positively affected his struggle for esteem within the literati community.

The three associations, Baiyu, Nanping 南屏, Xiling 西泠, which Tu Long joined separately in 1586, played significant roles in maintaining his status and relations within the literati, especially the elite community. All three associations were poetry associations, with well-known literati as organisers and participants, representing the highest literary level of that time. For instance, Wang Daokun was one of the organisers and leaders of all three associations, sharing equal fame and status with Wang Shizhen. Under Wang Daokun's leadership, the three associations were large in scale, but more importantly, their reputation was high and widespread throughout the realm, especially the Baiyu Association, "so that the country-wide literati at that time were all looking up to Baiyu Association 以故天下騷客詞人，咸跂望白榆之社".<sup>253</sup>

Hence, among the three associations, the Baiyu Association was the most important for Tu Long due to its reputation and influence in the literati community. It was the first association he joined after his dismissal, and the association event he attended was the grandest of all events of the Baiyu Association. The significance and impact of the Baiyu Association on Tu Long were profound, especially since he was specifically invited by the two organisers, Wang Daokun and Long Ying 龍鷹 (1560-1622). In a letter to Long Ying, Tu Long wrote:

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<sup>253</sup> Huang Rensheng 黃仁生, *Riben Xianchang Xijian Yuan Ming Wenji Kaozheng yu Tiya* 日本現藏稀見元明文集考證與提要 (Changsha: Yuelu Shushe, 2004), p.286.

Your steadfast heart, like a green pine, remains unchanged. You invite me from far away, and your letter is filled with impassioned words. .... Zhan Sheng, serving as an envoy to Baiyu, arrived at Siming, .....urged to set off, I thus embarked on a journey to Mount Baiyue and Mount Huang, and this profound and distant journey begins here. Although I lack the excellent poetry of Xie Tiao, it is enough to thank your refined taste. .... Moreover, you are a literary leader of our time. This journey of mine is not only to fulfil my wish to visit Mount Baiyue and Mount Huang but also to enjoy the company of you two [meaning Long Ying and Wang Daokun]. On the twelfth of this month [this is in lunar calendar, in Western calendar it was the 1st of January 1586], I will depart from Guannu City, and in fifteen days, I should arrive at Dazhang, where we can gather together.

足下青松心竟不改，千里相招，書辭忼慨。……詹生充白榆使者至四明，……敦迫上道，不佞遂發白嶽、黃山之興，冥寥遊且始於此矣。第無謝朓驚人詩，足酬賢使君高雅。……且也司公當今人文海岱，僕此行非惟畢願白嶽、黃山，亦樂附兩君子青雲，以此月十二日發官奴城，旬日可抵大鄣，把臂入林矣。<sup>254</sup>

The warm invitation from the hosts was a great comfort for Tu Long at a time when he was in disgrace because of his dismissal. The virtuous, literary, and social level of the participants, such as Hu Yinglin 胡應麟 (1551-1602) and Xu Gui 徐桂 (1551-1605), who was the Metropolitan Graduate in the same year as Tu Long, created a conducive social sphere matching Tu Long's demand for mutual interaction. It was not only the respect Tu Long gained in the relations but also the recognition of his virtue and status. Joining the Baiyu Association greatly relieved the psychological pain and emotional damage caused by his dishonourable dismissal. It was the first step in Tu Long struggled for social recognition and the prelude to self-mastery in social life.

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<sup>254</sup> Tu Long, 'Bao Long Junshan Sili 報龍君善司理', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.398-399. Also see, Wu Guanghui 武光輝, 'Long Ying Canyu Wanming Jieshe Huodong Kaolun 龍膺参与晚明结社活动考论', *Research of Chinese Literature* 中國文學研究, 1(2013), 47-51.

The prelude to Tu Long's social life was closely followed by two other associations, Nanping and Xiling, both held the year after the Baiyu gathering and in the same location, the West Lake. In these two associations, the participants were concentrated more on elite literati, mostly being close friends to Tu Long, including those he made in his official period, such as Dong Sicheng 董嗣成 (1560-1595), Wang Huan 王萱 (fl.1583), and also those famous talented literati, such as Wang Shizhen, Wang Zhideng, and Feng Mengzhen. The gathering events of these two associations contained more cultural and tasteful characteristics of the elite, evident from the choice of location and the contents of the gatherings. The West Lake was a historically cultured site for literati to stimulate their creative ideas, while Xiling's gathering was held in a temple beside the Lake, named Jingci Temple 淨慈寺, which satisfied the literati's literary demands and implied the Buddhist feature of the elite's lifestyle. It was a gathering of practising elite virtue and lifestyle in a distinguishing location through exclusive forms by a group of people with mutual recognition. The social events of the associations aimed to enhance the identity of literati in an environment that literati could recognise and be recognised intersubjectively.

In the Nanping and Xiling Association, Tu Long played more important roles than in the Baiyu Association. During the gathering of the Nanping Association, Tu Long was the leader of the literati from Yin, Suzhou, and Huating, including Wang Liyue 汪禮約, Yang Chengkun, Cao Changxian 曹昌先, and Lu Wanyan 陸萬言.<sup>255</sup> Additionally, after the gathering of the Xiling Association, Tu Long wrote the preface for *The Collection of Xiling* 西泠社集.<sup>256</sup> As he wrote to one of the organisers of the Xiling Association, Zhuo Mingqing 卓明卿 (1538-1597), "the distinguished assembly on the Lake [meaning the West Lake] with all of you was no less historic than Cao's (Cao Cao 曹操) rise in Nanpi. Xiling was indeed as great as Nanping 湖上諸君子雅集, 遂足千古, 不減曹氏南皮興。西泠更爲南屏, 良是".<sup>257</sup> Tu Long's literary talent and taste were greatly valued and respected in the two associations. Through the interaction, his sense of self-esteem was also increased.

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<sup>255</sup> Details refer to: Wang Daokun, 'Nanping She Ji 南屏社記', in *Taihan Ji* 太函集, vol.76, pp.12a-14b < <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=39840&page=66> >

<sup>256</sup> Tu Long, 'Xiling She Ji Xu 西泠社集叙', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, pp.184-186.

<sup>257</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Zhuo Chengfu Guanglu 與卓澈父光祿', in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.372.



There was another social element in the gathering of the Nanping Association that represented the identity of literati and the social status of the elite. This was the presence of courtesans who performed and served the participants.

The host brought out twelve renowned courtesans to serve wine, ..... I was given a special seat [with a courtesan], while the others were seated with one courtesan between every two seats. ....The courtesans entered in single file, singing softly, and then instructed guests to make poems according to the music played in the musicians' room. The courtesans continued to enter, not daring to stay overnight.....

主人出名姬十二人，將命酒，……余得專席，其餘則置一姬當二席中。……諸姬魚貫而進，爲緩聲歌，乃命樂師房中之樂問作。……諸姬旅進，亡敢以夜……<sup>258</sup>

Boating on the lake with courtesans was a typical social activity showcasing the exclusive taste of literati, and even the virtue of their identity. For literati, this form of entertainment could only be appreciated by those with well-cultivated cultural accomplishments and understood by others who shared the same virtue and character. The literati regarded it as an expression of the value system within the literati community. While the content might be seen as an indulgent conduct and against the honour in officialdom—something Tu Long avoided when he was an official—it could immediately become an element generating intersubjective recognition or even an esteemed achievement within the literati community. It was highly praised and respected among literati, especially those who were talented and renowned. In such social activities, literati highlighted the characteristics of their group and further enhanced their identity through their exclusive tasteful style. As a talented literatus, Tu Long was quite familiar with and somewhat depended on this kind of social activity to emphasis his value and status within the literati community. Hence, in his self-planned socialising apart from participating in literati associations, Tu Long greatly enjoyed this

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<sup>258</sup> Wang Daokun, 'Nanping She Ji', in *Taihan Ji*, vol.76, pp.13b-14a.

kind of social activity. Especially in the late period of his life, he even engaged in more indulgent social activities when he was struggling in recognising himself and being recognised.

The three literati associations at the beginning of Tu Long's post-official period essentially made up for the emotional damage caused by his dismissal in a short time while satisfying his sense of self-respect and self-esteem in mutual relations. The reason that Tu Long could enhance his relations through the three poetry associations was entirely due to his literary talent and reputation, which were the core competitiveness in his struggle for recognition within the literati community. Similar literature-oriented associations that Tu Long participated in again after these three were already in his old age. One was held by his grandnephew, Tu Benjun; the other was the Linxiao Tai Dashe 鄰霄臺大社, Linxiao Terrace Great Association (also called Lingxiao Terrace Great Association 凌霄臺大社). There was not a specific name for Tu Benjun's association, so it was more like an association for regular literary gathering in the local literati community of Yin. The scale and form of this association was small and simple, usually "exchanging poems with Tu Yunshi Hanpo, Yibu Chishui, and Shen Shangbao Xuanhu every day 與屠運使漢陂、儀部赤水、沈尚寶玄扈日相唱和". For Tu Long, it was for the daily need for socialising, like a kind of social supplement during his self-cultivation at home. Also, Tu Benjun, as Tu Long's grandnephew, though one year older than Tu Long, was from the same family lineage, sharing the same cultural disposition and social status. Not to mention Tu Benjun's father, Tu Dashan's appreciation and support to Tu Long's talent and social status in his early life. Hence, during Tu Long's life, their relationship as both relatives and friends was solid. This relationship brought Tu Long great sense of confidence, respect, and esteem in their interactions.

The literati with relative relationships participating in social activities together was a common phenomenon, such as the Wang 王 brothers, Wang Shizhen and Wang Shimao; the Wang 汪 brothers, Wang Daokun and Wang Daoguan; the Yuan brothers, Yuan Zongdao, Yuan Hongdao, and Yuan Zhongdao. The overlapping relationships of literati provided a strong sense of self-relations in the process of their struggle for recognition and a more solid bond in intersubjective relations. In 1601, Tu Benjun was also dismissed and returned to Yin, where he extended his house,

Palm-of-the-Hand Garden 掌園, and bought the Gather-Ganoderma Hall 采芝堂 next to his for Tu Long, making their connection and interaction much closer.

Not until 1603, two years before Tu Long died, did he participate in his last and grandest association, the Linxiao Terrace Great Association, which was for the Wushi Terrace Mass Gathering of the Mid-Autumn Festival 烏石臺中秋大會.

When Ruan Jianzhi governed Jin'an [ancient name of Fuzhou], held a grand gathering of poets at the Lingxiao Terrace of Mount Wushi during the Mid-autumn Day of the *guimao* year [the way of numbering the years in lunar calendar based on the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches, which was the year of 1603]. Over seventy distinguished literati attended, with Tu Long serving as a libation. Several theatrical troupes performed, and the onlookers were as numerous as a wall. When the wine was drunk up and music came to an end, Tu Long wearing a cloth of head covering and white monk robe, raised his sleeves and performed *Yuyang Can*. As soon as the drum sounded, the square was like empty, the mountain clouds flew quickly, and the sea waters rose. Lin Maozhi, a young man, sat at the lower position, and Tu Long took his hands and said, "You should beat the drum and sing to me. How delightful! This night will be remembered for all eternity!"

阮堅之司理晉安，以癸卯中秋，大會詞人於烏石山之鄰霄台，名士宴集者七十餘人，而長卿為祭酒，梨園數部，觀者如堵。酒闌樂罷，長卿幅巾白衲，奮袖作《漁陽摻》，鼓聲一作，廣場無人，山雲怒飛，海水起立。林茂之少年下坐，長卿起執其手曰：“子當為搥鼓歌以贈屠生，快哉，此夕千古矣！”<sup>259</sup>

This association was a great social event for talented writers, “the feast gathering was so grand that its reputation spread throughout the country 宴集之盛，傳播海內”.<sup>260</sup> The reputable association event gathered a significant group of renowned literati at that time. Tu Long's role in

<sup>259</sup> Qian Qianyi, *Liechang Shiji Xiaozhuan*, p.445.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid, p.646.

overseeing the libation before the banquet demonstrated his status and reputation among talented literati. Besides poetry creation during the feast, theatrical performance was another significant theme of this association event. Tu Long delivered a brilliant performance, displaying his outstanding talent not just in playwriting but also in stage performance. He became the most impressive literatus during the entire gathering event. The respect and esteem Tu Long gained in this association event primarily due to his distinguished literary cultivation of drama. In Tu Long's literary values and achievements, drama was a significant part of his struggle patterns for esteem within the talented literati and elite communities. His talent, cultural disposition, and cultivation in writing scripts and organising performances all helped him seek greater esteem in drama-related relations and interactions, just as he did in this grand association event.

It was already the last couple of years of Tu Long's life, yet he still achieved a great sense of self-respect and self-esteem through specific theatrical interactions within the literati community. It might have been a normal association formed based on the host's interests, but for Tu Long, it was a happy ending to his struggle for recognition, especially in the post-official period seeking greater esteem in various literati communities. It indicated that Tu Long's struggle was a comparatively successful process of social recognition, which, as Tu Long himself felt, was eternal for him.

In addition to literature-based associations and events, religious cultivation was a distinguished aspect of the literati cultivation, a significant content in their social activities and interactions, and a primary theme of literati associations. The influence of religion on literati's social life could be seen primarily from the choice of the location of Xiling Association's gathering, while a more profound impact was showed in associations formed specifically for religious cultivation. The religion-oriented associations and the activities engaged during their events implied literati's great demand for interaction with a specific group of literati through more detailed virtues and lifestyles.

The only association related to religious cultivation that Tu Long joined during his post-official period was the Fangsheng She 放生社, Freeing-Captive-Animals Association, also named Shenglian She 勝蓮社, Superb-Lotus Association, formed by Tu Long's closest friends, Feng

Mengzhen and another famous literatus, Yu Chunxi 虞淳熙 (1553-1621), from 1593 to 1605. The name Fangsheng, meaning freeing captive animals, indicated its relation to Buddhist cultivation. In the *Agreement of Superb-Lotus Association* 勝蓮社約 revised by Yu Chunxi, there was a rule that: “Those who come to the event of the association must bring flying or swimming animals. The cost on animals, ranging from one *zhu* to several *yi*, with no fixed amount. However, if they come empty-handed as before, they will be fined one *qian* of silver, which can be redeemed at the next meeting or on the same day 至社者必攜飛泳之物來，所費鍰錢，自一銖至累鎰無量，但空手如昨，罰銀一錢，留次會或當日贖生”.<sup>261</sup> By buying captive animals to set them free, the participants aimed to practise philanthropy and make confessions for Buddhist cultivation. Based on Buddhist principles, they only ate vegetarian meals. Additionally, this association’s Buddhist features showed on its participants, especially with monks participating in their social events and interactions. As recorded:

In his later years, [Feng Mengzhen] crafted a delicate boat, filled it with books and courtesans, and roamed the West Lake for amidst spring flowers and autumn moon, not returning for a whole month. He also formed the Freeing-Captive-Animals Association with Monk Lianchi, Shao Chongsheng, Yu Chunxi brothers, and Zhu Dadu. People believed they were worthy of Bai Taifu, Su Changgong. At that time, Sili Xu Gui, whose alternative name was Maowu, a native of Yuhang, was learned, genteel, and well-versed in poetry, especially in object poetry, and enjoyed collecting wine vessels, books, and paintings, earning praise as a connoisseur. Cibu Tu Long, styled Changqing, from Siming, came to the West Lake every year to join the Freeing-Captive-Animals Association, composing many poems.

晚制桂舟，貯書載歌姬，春花秋月，遨遊西湖，竟月不返，亦時與僧蓮池、邵重生、虞淳熙兄弟、朱大復諸公結放生社。人以為無愧白太傅、蘇長公云。是時司理徐桂字

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<sup>261</sup> The words, *zhu*, *yi*, *qian* are all the units of weight. Yu Chunxi 虞淳熙, ‘Shenglian Sheyue 勝蓮社約’, in *Wulin Zhanggu Congbian* 武林掌故叢編 (Dingshi Jiahui Tang 丁氏嘉惠堂, 1886), p.1b  
<<https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=en&file=83279&page=33>>

茂吳，餘杭人，博雅工詩，尤長詠物，喜畜樽彝書畫，稱賞鑒家。祠部屠隆字長卿，四明人，歲歲來湖上入放生社，賦詠甚富。<sup>262</sup>

Monk Lianchi (Lotus Pond) was Yunqi Zhuhong 雲栖株宏 (1535-1615), one of the Four Eminent Monks in the late Ming Dynasty, usually named Monk Zhuhong. The close interaction between literati and monks, especially elite literati and eminent monks, cultivated a special social sphere in the literati community. It also indicated that Buddhism deeply influenced literati's values and norms, so their social forms and activities were inevitably oriented by Buddhist cultivation. The Buddhism-related associations were quite popular within the elite community, such as the famous Grape Association formed by Yuan Hongdao. This association mainly focused on discussing Buddhist ideas, especially related to dhyana and corresponding cultivation, while the *Book of Changes* was also a primary topic in the association gatherings. Although the organisers or participants were all the talented literati of their time, poetry creation was not regarded as essential in the association, "considering poetry as a mundane task, there is no time to compose 以詩為塵務，不暇構也".<sup>263</sup>

Although the Freeing-Captive-Animals Association was based on Buddhist cultivation, the core of the association was still heavily related to literature and the distinct taste of literati. In the association, the members' talent and conduct were seen as great and tasteful as the two models in literary history, Bai Juyi and Su Shi 蘇軾 (1037-1101). The participants' connoisseurship was valued during the Buddhist social activity. The religion-themed interaction between literati or between literati and religious figures, such as Monk Zhuhong, was no longer limited to religious cultivation. It also involved literati's values and norms. In the close relations between literati and religious figures, not only were literati's virtues and lifestyles greatly influenced by religious cultivation, but also religious figures also participated in literary creation.

Monk Zhuhong was one of the typical religious figures in the late Ming Dynasty. He was a

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<sup>262</sup> Wanli Qiantang Xian Zhi 萬曆錢塘縣誌, in *Wulin Zhanggu Congbian* 武林掌故叢編 (丁氏嘉惠堂, 1886), pp.313b-314a <<https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=83332&page=66>>

<sup>263</sup> Yuan Hongdao 袁宏道, 'Huasong Youcao zhier 華嵩遊草之二', in *Yuan Hongdao Ji Jianjiao* 袁宏道集箋校, ed. by Qian Bochong 錢伯城 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1981), p. 1485.

literatus before he became a monk. His family, Shen 沈, was an influential gentry in Hangzhou, and he even gained the Cultivated Talent when he was seventeen. Hence, Zhuhong himself had already received a comparative high-level cultivation in literature and culture within the literati and local elite communities before he embraced Buddhist cultivation. The impact of religion on literati caused a combination of identities in the late Ming Dynasty. Even if the literati did not want to become monks or priests, they would give themselves or their houses names with religious meanings. For instance, Tu Long changed the name of his house from Qizhen Guan 栖真館, Truth-Resting Hall, to Suoluo Guan 娑羅館, Sal-Tree Hall, after he moved a Sal tree from King Asoka Monastery 阿育王寺 to the front of his house. Additionally, the literati's literary ideas and creations were greatly influenced by religious ideas and cultivation. Tu Long had a very close relationship with Yunqi Zhuhong and Hanshan Deqing. Influenced by their thoughts, Tu Long wrote theses such as Thesis of Stop Taking Animal Lives 戒殺生文, Memorial of Redeeming Suffering Souls Stop Taking Lives 超度歷劫戒殺眾生疏, and Memorial of Feeding Hungry Ghosts 放焰口疏. It is evident that literati gave religious cultivation and doctrine cultural and literary characteristics, and also religious cultivation and doctrine enriched literati's virtues and lifestyle.

The communication between literati's values and norms and religious cultivation gradually became a deep connection between the literati community and the religious sphere, becoming a significant element for literati to maintain their relations for intersubjective recognition. In the social sphere combining literati and religious cultivation, two main aspects played outstanding roles in their struggle for recognition. The first was literati's contributions to religious ideas through the theory of Reconciling of Three Teachings. Tu Long's *Hongbao Collection* was a book of his ideas on Reconciling of Three Teachings. Tu Long believed that Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism supported each other and guided people's lives. The moral and spiritual influence of religion on literati's thought and virtue prompted their autonomy as moral agents to create an innovative value system based on literati's conventional values and prevalent religious values. This system then guided literati's social activities, interactions, and relations, gradually shaping into a pattern when literati sought recognition within different communities. This pattern was exclusive

to literati because its core was still based on literati's education, as well as their literary and cultural cultivation, which were the elements determining literati's social status and forming their identity.

The outstanding social form of literati associations and the social contents of literati and religious cultivation formed multiple social spheres and communities through frequent social activities among literati based on different social statuses and self-cultivation. For individual literati like Tu Long, socialising based on groups and their status provided the primary soil and source for their struggle for social recognition outside officialdom. The scales and prevalence of these social activities produced enough influence on the literati community, especially in forming different fractional communities when literati tried to foster their fundamental values and norms according to their own social demand for recognition. The power and impact of these social activities and interactions based on literati associations in the process of social recognition could hardly be compared to self-mastered personal activities. Personal social activities and interactions helped literati seek greater esteem within the literati community, given that those activities and interactions were more flexible to suit their very personal and detailed demands in the process of social recognition according to their own circumstances. Tu Long participated in different literati associations, greatly satisfying his demand to be recognised in different fractional communities. Meanwhile, Tu Long's personal socialising, planned by himself, and his self-cultivation in daily life further complemented his struggle for social recognition in more detailed demands that group or status-based activities could not meet.

## **Flexible socialising for recognition**

Unlike literati associations, Tu Long's self-planned socialising was not constrained by specific social forms or locations. This allowed his social activities and interactions to be more flexible form and content. Consequently, his socialising could focus more on maintaining various social relations within different fractional communities, while also meeting his specific social needs in his struggle for recognition. The forms and contents of Tu Long's flexible social activities and interactions largely stemmed from his own values and lifestyle, which were cultivated through



literati's values and norms. This also reflected the patterns of literati's struggle for recognition in the late Ming Dynasty. Through diverse, content-oriented activities and interactions, Tu Long built multiple connections in his self-mastered relations within different fractional communities, demonstrating his virtue, taste, cultivation, and lifestyle.

This aspect of Tu Long's socialising highlighted the complexity of his status, thoughts, and conduct. It illustrated the various patterns of his struggle for social recognition, especially when he faced emotional damage from the denial of recognition by officialdom. Simultaneously, he sought to mend and enhance his esteem through his virtues and achievements. In this process, Tu Long's sense of self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem were fulfilled through his relationships along with multiple connections.

## **Religion-related interaction**

According to Tu Long's social needs, his self-planned socialising primarily focused on maintaining close friendships through tours and gatherings. Derived from literati's virtues and lifestyle, the themes of Tu Long's socialising can be divided in religious cultivation and cultural disposition. The religious aspect, involving both Buddhism and Daoism, significantly influenced literati's social relations and lifestyle. Generally, Buddhism-related social activities and interactions played a more prominent role and occupied more of Tu Long's religion-oriented social life. This included Buddhism cultivation in interactions with friends and engagements with various Buddhist monasteries, particularly through literary patronage. This social pattern not only showcased individual literati's prominent literary talent and value but also determined participants' social status, as such interactions were predominantly within elite and gentry communities. When literati engaged in these activities to seek esteem through their distinguished cultural values and high status, their social recognition was generated within two overlapping communities: one religion-oriented and the other status-oriented. During these activities, literati's interactions relied heavily on individual talent and self-cultivation, as well as the social capital individuals possessed based on their social status, especially when dealing with country-wide renowned institutions.

The social status of the elite and gentry provided the cultural foundation for these overlapping communities, as their cultural disposition and cultivation decided the content of social activities, whether literature-related or religion-related. Conversely, literati's religious activities and interactions also enhanced and elevated their status as elite and gentry and their identity of literati, highlighting their achievements in literary patronage to monasteries through their literary talent and reputation, thereby greatly satisfying their esteem, as a form of social recognition, within these overlapping communities. This pattern, based on group status and individual virtue, talent, and achievements, indicated the literati's struggle for social recognition in which the literati sought esteem through status honour within the elite and gentry communities.

During the last decade of the sixteenth century, Tu Long engaged in the most frequent interactions with local monasteries, particularly through Buddhist patronage. His outstanding value in the local social community, oriented by both social status and Buddhism, was due to two factors: the prominent position of the Tu family in Yin and strong foundation of Buddhist cultivation in the local social environment. The Tu family, at the top of gentry lineages, including talented members such as Tu Long and Tu Benjun, was considered super-elite. This status granted them absolute privilege in social activities and access to abundant social resources. Tu Long then accumulated considerable social capital with this community, especially close connections and opportunities for interaction with local monasteries. According to Brook's analysis of elite gentry's patronal activities in Yin from 1500 to 1644, the fifty-three gentry lineages included seven super-elite lineages, thirteen greater gentry lineages, and middle gentry lineages. The seven super-elite lineages, Dong, Fan, Li, Shen, Tu, Zhang, Zhou, accounted for more than half of the literary patronage in the county, with thirty-three instances, while the remaining forty-six gentry lineages were involved in monastic affairs only twenty-five times. Among these, the thirteen greater gentry lineages participated twelve times, and the thirty-three middle gentry lineages shared the rest. In the seven super-elite lineages, the Tu family of Jiangbei 江北, Tu Long's lineage, was involved in monastic affairs as many as seven times.<sup>264</sup> These numbers demonstrated the distinct performance

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<sup>264</sup> The detailed numbers of different levels of gentry lineages involved in monastic affairs refers to Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China*, pp.274-275.

of the super-elite in the local patronal activities with various monasteries.

The super-elite lineages of Yin achieved such prominence partly due to the historical and profound Buddhist monasteries and cultural traditions. In Yin, there were two nationally renowned monasteries, Tiantong Temple 天童寺 and King Asoka Monastery, both of which had numerous monks and believers, as well as the strong financial resources to support their management.<sup>265</sup> As a member of the super-elite lineages of Yin and possessing high literary talent and reputation within the local community, Tu Long was well-equipped with the factors that determined his value in interactions with local monasteries: the high social status and recognised talent. For instance, Tu Long was invited by Lu Guangzu 陸光祖(1521-1597) to participate in fundraising for restoring the hall for Buddhist relics at King Asoka Monastery by writing an appeal.

I was greatly honoured to be entrusted as a patron for the Buddha Sarira Hall of King Asoka Monastery. Being poor, I could not make financial contributions, so I drafted a fundraising appeal to encourage good deeds, making a small effort like a humble servant.

蒙委作阿育王舍利殿檀越，竊人不能爲財施，惟草募疏勸善緣，少效犬馬耳。<sup>266</sup>

He also wrote the appeal for a new edition of the Tripitaka 大藏經 produced by Abbot Mizang Daokai 密藏道開 at King Asoka Monastery.<sup>267</sup> The literary patronage was not just “socially specific to the highest levels of county gentry society”, but also “restricted to member of gentry lineages highly placed in the social hierarchy of the county”.<sup>268</sup>

These exclusive social activities stabilised Tu Long’s status as a super-elite while guaranteeing his status honour in the local elite gentry community. Through these activities guided by his comparative higher status, Tu Long’s reputation also rose in the religious community, especially in interactions with monastic institutions. Tu Long was also entrusted by Hou Jigao 侯繼高(1533-

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<sup>265</sup> Details refer to Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China*, pp.253-264

<sup>266</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Lu Yusheng Sikou’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.285.

<sup>267</sup> Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China*, p.272.

<sup>268</sup> Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China*, p.273.

1602) to compile the gazetteers of monasteries in Putuo (Potaraka), *Gazetteer of Mount Butuo Luoqie* 補陀洛伽山志, and wrote the preface for it.<sup>269</sup> Tu Long regarded this experience as significant, mentioning it to several of his good friends, such as Feng Mengzhen and Lu Guangzu. For instance, he specifically sent the gazetteer to Feng Mengzhen for comments:

General Hou entrusted me to edit and finalise the *Gazetteer of Butuo*, which I am attaching for your review.

侯開府屬不佞校定《補陀志》成，附上覽政。<sup>270</sup>

For Lu Guangzu, due to his high reputation in Buddhist cultivation within the literati community, Tu Long thought Lu should have some works included in the gazetteer. Therefore, he wrote four poems on behalf of Lu. As he said:

Recently, General Hou entrusted me with editing the *Gazetteer of Mount Butuo Luoqie*. Considering you [Lu Guangzu] as a distinguished figure in the Buddhist community, ..... how could the gazetteer lack a word from you? However, the distance is vast, and I can hardly obtain your contribution immediately. Therefore, I dare to compose four poems on your behalf and respectfully send them for your review.

近者侯將軍屬某脩《補陀洛伽山志》。念先生佛門白眉，.....志中何可無長者一言？而道里寥遠，一時不能購求，乃妄爲代譔四詩，敬錄上覽政。<sup>271</sup>

“Among the top three major Buddhist sites throughout the realm, Mount Putuo in the East China

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<sup>269</sup> Tu Long, ‘Butuo Luoqie Shanzhi Xu 補陀洛伽山志序’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, pp.211-214. Tu Long also wrote a journal for this experience as “Butuo Luoqieshan Ji 補陀洛伽山記”, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, pp.433-435.

<sup>270</sup> Tu Long, ‘Zaida Feng Kaizhi 再答馮開之’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.414.

<sup>271</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Lu Yusheng Sikou 與陸與繩司寇’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.402. The poems Tu Long created on behave of Lu Guangzu were collected as ‘Butuo Luoqie Shan Zuo 補陀洛伽山作’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, pp.76-77, p.88, p.132.

Sea is considered the foremost 震旦國中三大佛道場，以東海補陀爲第一”， which was a monastic complex located in the mountain in Zhoushan Archipelago.<sup>272</sup> Tu Long stayed in Putuo for a month, during which he not only helped with the gazetteer of the temples but also inevitably became involved in poetry creation, whether on behalf of others or from his own will, such as “The Eight Poems for Mount Butuo Luoqie 補陀洛伽山八首”.<sup>273</sup> Additionally, with Tu Long’s increasing reputation during interactions with Buddhist institutions, when Lu Shusheng sought sponsors for the Mao Pagoda 泖塔 in Qingpu, Tu Long was also entrusted with an account of its depository of Buddhist scriptures.

Recently, a monk from the Mao Pagoda brought a letter from Feng Jishi, requesting the Account of Depository of Buddhist Scriptures.

頃泖塔僧以馮吉士書來，索《藏經閣記》。<sup>274</sup>

Through Feng Mengzhen, Tu Long also helped a monk named Quanquan 權權 write an appeal to restore the Jiguang Ancient Temple 寂光古剎 in 1603.

At the Qiantang Gate, I met the Sichuan monk Quanquan, who plans to restore the ancient temple in Peng County and requests an appeal from me.

錢塘門晤蜀僧權權，將復澎縣古剎，乞有屠長卿書。<sup>275</sup>

Therefore, when literati were deeply involved in Buddhist activities, these activities also exhibited the explicit characteristics of literati’s values and norms. In Tu Long’s interactions with Buddhist institutions through literature-related activities, his literary and cultural values were greatly

<sup>272</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Hou Dajiagun 與侯大將軍’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.342.

<sup>273</sup> Tu Long, ‘Butuo Luoqie Shan Bashou 補陀洛伽山八首’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, pp.137-138.

<sup>274</sup> Tu Long, ‘Feng Lu Dazongbo 奉陸大宗伯’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.339.

<sup>275</sup> Feng Mengzhen, *Kuaixuetang Ji*, vol.60, p.13a < <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=96746&page=26> >

recognised. His interactions showed a harmonious fusion between literature and religion, or between literati's values and religious cultivation.

The outstanding performance of Tu Long's literary interactions with different monasteries indicates the effect of the pattern in the literati's, especially the elite's, struggle for recognition within the overlapping communities. Buddhism, at the level of socialising, had become deeply intertwined with the identity of literati, affecting their struggle for social recognition in both status honour and self-mastered esteem. For Tu Long, reinforcing hierarchical status and honour was more like a supplement to his lost official status and honour. More importantly, the status honour as elite gentry in the local community greatly enhanced his reputation while seeking esteem in other literati communities. Although there was no clear line separating the status honour and esteem, and literati regarded it as a way to fashion a better life according to their own virtue and tasteful lifestyle, the effect of literature-based religious activities and the literati's awareness of creating a comparatively innovative value system oriented towards social activities significantly boosted individuals' personal achievements aimed at being recognised within the literati community.

Buddhism, as a more significant element in literati's relations and socialising related to religion, created important connections between individual literati based on their personal cultivation and interaction. In Tu Long's self-planned Buddhist socialising, there was a concentrated cultivation with Feng Mengzhen and Yu Chunxi in 1596, during which the three of them cultivated Buddhism with Monk Zhuhong in the Southern Mountain 南山 in Hangzhou for three months. This Buddhist cultivation gathered the primary members of the Freeing-Captive-Animals Association and occurred during the active period of the association. This activity functioned much like a supplement to group socialising, further enhancing connections within Tu Long's social circle. Given the fame of the participants of this cultivation and the corresponding influence on the religious literati community, Tu Long's sense of self-esteem was also improved through the interaction.

The special part of self-planned socialising was that it could meet literati's personal demand

for social recognition. Hence, gathering in a Buddhist place could have different social purposes. For instance, in a letter to 鄒迪光 (fl.1574) and Long Ying, Tu Long mentioned that he and Feng Mengzhen gathered at a monk's dwelling in Zhaoqing Temple 昭慶寺 in Hangzhou in 1602, just to spend a summer night.<sup>276</sup> This shows that even the most common meetings between literati often took place in Buddhist locations. Buddhism had deeply influenced literati's personal and social life. In fact, Buddhist sites, including monasteries and locations related to Buddhism, were very popular for literati gatherings, ranking second only to cultured sites in literati's social life. Religious associations like the Freeing-Captive-Animals Association would choose Buddhism-related locations, such as Shangfang Pond 上方池, Wangong Pond 萬工池 of Jingci Temple, and Xianghua Pond 香華池 of Zhaoqing Temple. Even poetry associations like the Xiling Association, which involved feasting and carousing, would also choose a temple as the location. For Tu Long's own trips for literati meetings, Buddhist monasteries also played a significant role. For example, he planned to visit Jiangxin Temple 江心寺 when visiting Long Ying, as he wrote:

Jiangxin Temple, a renowned monastery from ancient times to the present, ..... is considered the foremost among the mountains and rivers of the South-East. ....Now, I shall carry a cloth bag and visit you, fulfilling my long-cherished wish to see this famous mountain.

江心寺古今名剎，……爲東南山川第一。……今便當攜一布囊，來訪足下，并了名山宿願也。<sup>277</sup>

In a letter to Zou Guanguang, Tu Long mentioned Zhenru Temple 真如寺, which he visited three times:

I stayed in the mountain hut of the old monk Zhenru at night in Zhenru, .....It felt as if I was

<sup>276</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Zou Yanji 與鄒彥吉', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, pp.325-326; '與龍君善', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, pp.335-336; Feng Mengzhen, *Kuaixuetang Ji*, vol.59, p.9b < <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=96745&page=19> >.

<sup>277</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Long Junshan', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.335.

in the ancient snows of Mount Emei. Twenty years ago, I briefly travelled to Jiuli and stayed in the old monk's hut for six nights before leaving. Fifteen years later, I revisited the temple with Kaizhi, .....our affection was even more genuine when meeting the old monk, making the visit all the more precious. Now, on my third visit to the temple, the monk's hair was as white as snow. Upon seeing him, he laughed heartily like [monk Huiyuan, Tao Qian, and priest Lu Xiuqing laughing] at Huxi, and we were like old friends.

道民夜來襪被宿真如老僧山房，……如此身在峨眉古雪中。蓋道民二十年前薄遊就李，託宿老僧房，六夕而去。後十五年而同開之重遊此寺，藉草刻竹，舊題宛然。雖無紗籠及紅裊，老僧相見，情意彌真，故當勝之。今者三至寺中，此僧頭顱如雪，一見作虎谿大笑，即依依故人……<sup>278</sup>

In Tu Long's self-planned tours and gatherings, the virtues and lifestyle possessed and shared by literati invested their religious destinations the taste and characteristics of literati. The Buddhist sites became a sign of literati's distinguishing cultural disposition. This did not mean that the religion-related activities were entirely about literary or cultural cultivation, but fundamentally, they were about practising literati's values and norms, especially the part they mastered themselves, while maintaining multiple connections in self-mastered relations cultivated in self-mastered social spheres and communities. When religious sites such as Buddhist monasteries became places for literati to leave their creations and names to show their outstanding taste and cultivation, visiting religious sites or cultivating religion became an expression of literati's cultural disposition rather than a pure pursuit of religious belief.

In Tu Long's self-planned socialising related to religious cultivation, Daoist cultivation was as significant as Buddhist cultivation. In 1587, Tu Long learnt Daoism from a priest, Li Hai'ou 李海鷗 in August. Then, in October, he cultivated Daoism for a month with another Daoist priest, Nie Daoheng 聶道亨, at Tongxuan (Daoist) Temple 通玄觀 in Wu Mountain 吳山 in Hangzhou.

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<sup>278</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Zou Yanji', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.325.



During this time Tu Long's best friend Feng Mengzhen was also with him, learning from Master Nie. He mentioned this in a letter to Lu Guangzu:

In the middle of ninth month [October in 1587] in autumn, I arrived at Wulin and met the master who could help to awake to the truth. Together with Kaizhi, we became his disciples, learning his great way of making golden pellet medicine and good elixir. We stayed at Tongxuan Temple for a month before parting ways with Kaizhi.

秋九月中，嘗抵武林，遇證道主人。與開之同北面師之，授其金丹玉液大道，栖通玄一月，乃別開之。<sup>279</sup>

This was also recorded in Feng Mengzhen's diary:

Dinghai [1587] ..... in the ninth month..... on the sixteenth day [17th of October] ..... I kept the appointment with the priest of Tongxuan, accompanying Master Nie and Tu Long. ....and received an elixir from Master Nie'.

Honoring the appointment with the Daoist of Tongxuan, I accompanied Mr. Nie and Tu Zhangqing... and received the One Qi Elixir Seal from Mr. Nie.

丁亥 (1587).....九月.....十六.....赴通玄道士約，陪聶先生、屠長卿。.....受聶先生一氣丹印。<sup>280</sup>

Tu Long was able to learn from Nie Daoheng thanks to an introduction from Long Defu 龍德孚 (1531-1602), as he said, "By the grace of your favour, I had the fortune to meet Master Nie 某籍先生寵靈，得遇聶師".<sup>281</sup> Long Defu was the father of Long Ying, who invited Tu Long to join

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<sup>279</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Lu Sikou 與陸司寇', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.278.

<sup>280</sup> Feng Mengzhen, *Kuaixuetang Ji*, vol.47, p.11b < <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=185536&page=83> >

<sup>281</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Long Bozhen 與龍伯貞', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.254.

the Baiyu Association. This Daoist cultivation occurred a few months before Tu Long participated in the Baiyu Association. Later, after learning from Nie, Tu Long also met a priest, Jin Xuzhong 金虛中, who was the teacher of Li Hai'ou.<sup>282</sup> This Daoist cultivation created a series of social relations among literati, also between literati and Daoist figures. Daoist cultivation acted as media connecting literati's relations. This single case illustrates how literati's personal social activities gradually formed a fractional social community through specific connections between individual literati.

Daoist cultivation not only showed how Tu Long's relations fostered a sphere based on their self-mastered values and norms but also demonstrated the multiple connections between literati. The foundation of literati's relations was literature, further enriched by multiple elements related to literati's cultural disposition, with religion being one of them. For example, the relationship between Tu Long and Wang Shizhen started from mutual appreciation of each other's literary talent and deepened through their worship of Tanyangzi. Later, after learning from Master Jin Xuzhong, Tu Long introduced what he learnt to Wang. This clearly showed the development of literati's connections from a single point to a network. These multiple connections were intertwined into a social pattern to maintain and enhance relationships for recognition.

The relationship between Tu Long and Long Defu could be connected through similar Daoist cultivation, high-level literary cultivation via his son, or even local administration. For instance, in a letter to Long Defu, Tu Long mentioned praying for rain for local people with Long Defu while giving suggestions about relieving people in stricken areas:

I have twice served as a magistrate and am aware that the urgency of collecting taxes and managing records is like a wildfire. However, seeing that the local people's strength is exhausted, there is no solution. It is advisable to temporarily halt the collection of both new and old taxes, especially the old ones. Moreover, I have heard that other counties have already

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<sup>282</sup> The details of Tu Long learnt from Jin Xuzhong and the relation between Jin Xuzhong and Li Hai'ou see Tu Long's letter to Wang Shizhen, 'Yu Wang Yuanmei Sima 與王元美司馬', in *TLJ*, vol.5, pp.280-282 and Wang Daokun, 'Yu Wang Boyu Sima Shu 與汪伯玉司馬書', in *TLJ*, vol.5, pp.258-260; also in Feng Mengzhen's diary, *Kuaixuetang Ji*, vol.47, p.12a.

stopped collecting taxes. As you learn the Way to love the people, why not do the same? I earnestly request an immediate halt to the collections, at least until the wheat harvest. If you insist on collecting, not only will it be unsustainable, but I fear the local people will resent you.

僕嘗兩爲令，非不知簿書徵會急於星火，顧視百姓力竭矣，無可爲計，新糧舊額，宜一切暫停徵，而舊者尤所當緩。且聞外縣業已停徵，明公學道愛人，爲何？願急停止，以姑待麥秋。必持而徵之，非但勢不能支，竊恐百姓怨明公也。<sup>283</sup>

Tu Long and Long Defu's relationship was not limited to the spiritual and cultural world but also involved local administration. Although Tu Long had already dismissed from officialdom, the political element constituting the identity of literati could not be erased by losing an official post. Even less erasable was the moral virtue of literati. Therefore, in interactions between literati, the identity virtue was enhanced in intersubjective relations, prompting mutual recognition. The political feature of the identity and Tu Long's official experience also contributed to multiple connections with friends. For example, Tu Long's relationship with Dong Sicheng developed into a close friendship and interaction as early as when Tu Long was still an official in the central government. Both had comparatively high honour and esteem within officialdom and the literati community. Tu Long also had a good relationship with Dong's grandfather Dong Fen. Additionally, Tu Long recommended Dong Sicheng Wang Chuyang 王初陽, a Daoist perfected one, someone entered a very high level in Daoist cultivation, to help with his sickness.<sup>284</sup>

The relationship between Tu Long and Feng Mengzhen more explicitly demonstrated these multiple connections between literati. From the above, almost all of Tu Long's self-planned socialising involved Feng Mengzhen. It can be said that Feng established a tie among Tu Long's social activities. The interaction between Tu Long and Feng Mengzhen prominently showed the

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<sup>283</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Long Bozhen 與龍伯貞', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.275.

<sup>284</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Dong Bonian 與董伯念', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, pp.352-353; 'Yu Dong Zongbo 與董宗伯', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, pp.351-352; pp.380-382.

multiple connections between literati and how these connections functioned in their struggle for recognition in different fractional communities. During Tu Long's post-official period, he had the most frequent interaction with Feng. Besides the activities mentioned earlier, which involved form-oriented social sphere like literati associations or content-oriented sphere such as religion and drama, the gathering they planned themselves with different purposes and forms further expressed literati's struggle patterns related to their values and norms. It is clear that Tu Long and Feng Mengzhen were deeply connected in both Buddhism and Daoism. In 1602, after participating in the event of Freeing-Captive-Animals Association, Tu Long immediately held a ritual to invoke the immortals, which Feng also attended.

Intercalary second month .....on the sixteenth [4th of April], raining in the morning. ....I attended the event of the Freeing-Captive-Animals Association. Tu Weizhen, Zhu Dafu, Shen Shian were also present. .... On the nineteenth [11th of April], raining, and we went boating on the [West] Lake. We invited Hu Zhongxiu and Xu Ranming with courtesans to accompany Tu Changqing. That day, Changqing set a alter for invoking the immortals in a repository on the south of the Lake. I went with Hu and Xu to visit him. ....Changqing did not board the boat as he needed to guard the alter.....

閏二月.....十六，早尚雨。.....余赴放生會。屠緯真、朱大復、沈士安與焉。.....十九，雨，下湖。以歌姬行邀胡仲修、許然明，陪屠長卿。長卿是日請仙于湖南之庫房。余同胡、許往訪之。.....長卿以守壇不登舟.....<sup>285</sup>

It is evident that there was almost no obstacle for literati to switch between different kinds of cultivation and social activities. After a day of cultivating Buddhism, a Daoist activity could take place within three days, not to mention the inclusion of courtesans for their gatherings before religious rituals. The complexity of literati's lifestyle, guided by various values, was demonstrated

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<sup>285</sup> Feng Mengzhen, *Kuaixuetang Ji*, vol.59, pp.5b-6a < <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=96745&page=11> >

through a series of social activities. Facing multiple social elements functioning in their struggle for recognition within the literati community, their social activities and interactions also exhibited a state of complexity. This was not only a reflection of the literati's state of mind and life but also a reflection of an era undergoing a transition in its value system.

## **Interactions based on taste and lifestyle**

However, the outstanding interaction Tu Long had with Feng Mengzhen was still concentrated on the literati's worldly lifestyle, compared to the religious part, showing literati's distinguishing taste and cultivation. This was what literati excelled at and the most effective pattern to enhance their identity in term of cultural disposition and cultivation in a social environment conducive to recognition. Relations for intersubjective recognition provided the environment for literati to practise their values and norms, while the practice itself was the process of seeking esteem through self-mastery. The goal of self-mastered socialising was to maintain a more personal relations through the solid bond of cultural advantages between literati. Hence, their distinguishing taste and lifestyle, in terms of location choices, forms and contents of gatherings, and even what was used, eaten, and drunk, made their social activities functional in the process of social recognition.

During the post-official period, most of Tu Long's social activities were held either in cultural and historical spots or at friends' residences, rather than his own. On one hand, this was about the shift of social power mentioned earlier; on the other hand, his choices of locations for gatherings and visits not only offered extra support to his struggle in cultural matters but also helped him be closer to the centre of the literati community. For instance, the interactions between Tu Long and Feng Mengzhen in 1589, 1591, 1597, 1599, 1602, and 1603 were all at Feng's places, mostly located on the West Lake, except in 1599 when Tu Long went to Qingpu, passing by Mount Zhonggu 鍾賈山 and meeting Feng. The West Lake in Hangzhou was one of the most popular cultural sites among literati's favourite sites. Personal socialising often took place on the lake, and large association events were also held there. This was because its scenery or the entire scenic area with literary and cultural traditions represented literati's virtues and norms, which certainly

boosted their literary creation and socialising.

The drama-related social activities and interactions also played significant roles in literati's social life for enhancing their relations for greater recognition within the literati community. Tu Long's drama-related socialising combined literati's cultural cultivation and tasteful lifestyle, not only in the choice of locations for gatherings but also in the forms and contents of the social activities. The theatrical activities greatly relied on literati's cultural disposition and cultivation. The requirement of these activities for participants, locations delivering both performance and interaction between literati, dramas themselves, and even choices of performing troupes specifically demonstrated literati's great taste and lifestyle. As mentioned in Tu Long's socialising in literati associations, theatrical cultivation was already a significant part of literati's literary and cultural cultivation, which greatly enhanced their esteem within the literati community. In Tu Long's self-mastered social life, in addition to participating in associations such as Linxiao Terrace Great Association, he also relied on private social activities themed around dramas.

Tu Long's theatrical activities and interaction considerably involved Feng Mengzhen, with the choice of locations centred on where Feng lived, even though Hangzhou had always been the most renowned and cultured site for literati, especially the West Lake. In 1602, Tu Long had arranged a theatrical event at the Misty-Rain Tower 烟雨樓 in Hangzhou, performing his own drama, *Story of Millennium Flower*, for two consecutive days. According to Feng Mengzhen's diary, Tu Long invited different literati and officials for his drama performance:

The day before, Changqing invited the esteemed official to watch the performance of the *Story of Millennium Flower* at the Misty-Rain Tower, accompanied by Huang Zhen. Today, he invited the two magistrates again and asked me to join. .... In the afternoon, I went to the Misty-Rain Tower to keep Changqing's appointment. .... The two magistrates took the main seats and played the *Story of Millennium Flower* again.

長卿先一日邀太尊公看曇花于烟雨樓，黃貞所陪。今日復邀兩邑侯，招余陪。……午

後，過烟雨樓，赴長卿之約。……二邑侯主上席，復演曇花。<sup>286</sup>

This two-day performance was about a month after the literary gathering in September of 1602 which was specifically held for Tu Long at the West Lake by his friends, including Feng Mengzhen:

The fifteenth day [30th of September], sunny. Tu Changqing and Cao Nengshi hosted a grand gathering at the West Lake, dining on a boat. The banquet was set at the Chen family's estate at Golden Sand Beach. Changqing's servant performed the *Story of Millennium Flower*, and they stayed overnight on the boat, accompanied by four courtesans. .... On the sixteenth day [1st of October], it was sunny with some clouds. These literati held another gathering at the West Lake in response to Changqing.

十五，大晴。屠長卿、曹能始作主唱西湖大會，飯于湖舟，席設金沙灘陳氏別業，長卿蒼頭演曇花記，宿桂舟，四歌姬從。……十六，晴，稍有雲氣。諸君子再舉西湖之會，以荅長卿。<sup>287</sup>

Tu Long again played the significant role in the two theatrical gatherings, and his dramatic work was greatly appreciated. This was not only an approbation of Tu Long's talent and ability but also a great success for his drama. *Story of Millennium Flower* was the first drama he finished and performed for literati in public, which stimulated his confidence and esteem in the literati community and also prepared him for the grand event of Linxiao Terrace Great Association later.

Theatrical socialising was a type of content-oriented social activity, and the corresponding social sphere cultivated by playwrights and literati was also based on drama creation or performance. It certainly constituted one of the significant fractional social communities for Tu Long's struggle for recognition. Tu Long took two trips to visit friends in 1587 and 1595, both themed around dramas. When Tu Long was in Xuancheng 宣城 in 1587, he met Lü Yinchang 呂

<sup>286</sup> Feng Mengzhen, *Kuixuetang Ji*, vol.59, pp.21b-22a <<https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=96745&page=43>>

<sup>287</sup> Feng Mengzhen, *Kuixuetang Ji*, pp.16b-17a <<https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=96745&page=33>>

胤昌 (1560-?) and Mei Dingzuo, staying in Xuancheng for a month because of them. During this month, he built a close relationship with these two renowned literati through daily literary interactions, with both Lü and Mei appreciating Tu Long's talent. Although Lü Yinchang was not a well-known playwright, his family was one of the most renowned theatrical families in Yuyao, which was not only reputable in theatrical community but also possessed abundant cultural and financial resources.<sup>288</sup> Tu Long's *Qizhen Hall Collection* was selected by Lü Yinchang's brother Lü Yinji. Mei Dingzuo invited Tu Long to participate in revising his drama, *Yuhe Ji* 玉合記, *Story of Jade Box*, and entrusted him wrote a preface for the drama. Additionally, Tu Long and Mei Dingzuo co-created *Yuyang Sanzhua* 漁陽三搥, *Three Beats of Yuyang*.<sup>289</sup> Another friend Tu Long visited during this trip was Tang Xianzu, one of the most renowned playwrights in literary history. Tu Long and Tang Xianzu began to appreciate each other's talent when they were both working in the central government. During this visit, their mutual appreciation was enhanced through close interaction, especially the communication of similar ideas for drama creation and literary writing, thus reinforcing their friendship. The good relationship with one of the most talented and well-known playwrights and literati at that time greatly increased Tu Long's sense of respect and esteem within the community. Especially, Tu Long was entrusted to write a preface for Tang Xianzu's personal collection, *Yumingtang Ji* 玉茗堂集, *Jade-Tea Hall Collection*.

Tu Long's dramatic reputation and achievements greatly emerged through a series of theatrical socialising and interaction within the corresponding community. In addition to participating in gatherings and associations with dramatic themes, personal theatrical troupes in the late Ming Dynasty were an outstanding way to fulfil literati's demand for recognition. These troupes not only showed the cultural disposition and cultivation of their owners but also symbolised their comparatively higher social and cultural status, such as the group of elite literati. Forming and maintaining a theatrical troupe required the owner to have a comparatively good financial situation

<sup>288</sup> See Zhang Ping, *Mingdai Yuyao Lishi Jiazu Yanjiu*.

<sup>289</sup> Tu Long, 'Zhangtai Liu Yuhe Ji Xu 章台柳玉合記跋', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in TLJ, vol.5, p.197; Mei Dingzuo 梅鼎祚, 'Dongri tong Tu Changqing Fan Chengdong, Changqing yu Zhouzhong Feipao Zuo Yuyang Sanguo Ershou 冬日同屠長卿汎城東，長卿於舟中緋袍作漁陽三搥二首', in *Luqiu Shishi Ji* 鹿裘石室集, p.23a-b.<  
<https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=38250&page=46>>



and, more importantly, distinguished talent and cultivation to create scripts, music, and organise the performances. This vividly demonstrated the owner's connoisseurship in literature, art, and taste. When theatrical troupes started their performing tours, it was also a great test of the owners' ability, reputation, and achievements, reflecting their social and cultural status and capital while determining how much esteem they could seek in the socialising through the performance of their personal troupes. Hence, it was a comprehensive struggle for esteem related to multiple cultural requirements for literati. Only the literati cultivated in the elite community, possessing the status of an elite and its corresponding social and cultural capital and cultivation, could possibly generate a satisfying sense of self-esteem during the process.

Owning theatrical troupes became a mark of status, distinguishing a special social sphere for recognition from the theatrical sphere. In this context, theatrical troupes experienced a sharp rise in the late Ming Dynasty, boosting the development of theatrical performance at that time.<sup>290</sup> Although Tu Long did not have strong financial support, he had more important elements such as great personal talent, cultural cultivation, and high status as an elite gained from the local elite community of Yin. This meant he was able to form his own theatrical troupe, which could function for him to seek esteem within the community. In the later stage of his post-official period, Tu Long took his troupe on tour to different places to perform his own dramas. Despite expressing difficulties in living and supporting his family, he seemed able to maintain a troupe. There were relations and interactions between Tu Long and his friends centred on troupe performances. For instance, when Tu Long was the magistrate of Qingpu, the famous playwright Liang Chenyu took his troupe to perform at Tu Long's place, playing *Washing the Silken Gauze*. Tu Long's friends, particularly those with great reputations and elite family origins, such as Feng Mengzhe, Wang Shizhen, Wang Daokun, and Mei Dingzuo, also had their own theatrical troupes, either for internal entertaining or open performance. Tu Long's own troupe satisfied his demands for both self-entertaining and socialising, but more significantly, it greatly supported his struggle for recognition within both theatrical and elite communities.

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<sup>290</sup> Yang Huiling 楊慧玲, *A Study on Opera Troupe of Family in Ming and Qing Dynasty* 戲曲班社研究：明清家班 (Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe, 2006).

Tu Long's outstanding taste and lifestyle were certainly esteemed through themed social activities in specific form and delivered in cultural sites. His other culture-related trips for socialising also functioned in terms of forms, contents, and choice of locations. Throughout the Jiangnan district, including northern Zhejiang, southern Nanzhili (now Jiangsu), and Anhui Provinces, was historically the cultural centre where elite families gathered. Tu Long's self-planned socialising was concentrated in this area, not only due to its rich cultural environment and renowned scenic sites but also for the social environment formed through elite and literati's values and norms. Besides boating on the lake, ascending heights to create poems was also a symbolised activity in their interactions. In Hangzhou, regardless of the West Lake, mountains such as Wu Mountain and Southern Mountain were also chosen as gathering and touring sites for Tu Long and his friends. Once Tu Long visited friends in Haiyan 海鹽 and mentioned it in a letter to Cai Yingqi and Chen Rubi 陳汝璧 (fl. 1583). In another letter to Chen Rubi, he wrote:

During a brief visit to Yanguan, I climbed Mount Qinzhu and wrote a poem. An enthusiast inscribed it on a stone.

薄遊鹽官，海上登秦駐山一歌，好事者爲之勒石。<sup>291</sup>

Ascending a height, creating a poem, and inscribing it on a stone—these elements of literati's struggle for esteem were integrally collected during this tour, showing tasteful choices that reflected Tu Long's cultural disposition, literary cultivation, and reputation derived from acknowledged values. Additionally, Tu Long visited Dong Sicheng in 1586 in Wuxing 吳興 in Zhejiang Province, Wang Zhideng in 1589, and Yuan Hongdao in 1595 in Suzhou in Jiangsu Province.<sup>292</sup> Regardless of the high reputation or status of these literati in both local and broader

<sup>291</sup> Tu Long, 'Zai Da Chen Lifu 再答陳立甫', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.377.

<sup>292</sup> Tu Long, 'Jichou Dongri Tong Xindu Luo Bofu Wanling Mei Ruzi Qimin Zhu Ziming Yanguan Liu Lingyi Ji Wang Baigu Banji An 己丑冬日同新都羅伯符宛陵梅孺子七閩朱子命鹽官劉令彝集王百谷半偈菴', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, pp.162-163; Yuan Hongdao, 'Tang Yireng 湯義仍', 'Tu Changqing 屠長卿', in *Liyun Guan Leiding Yuan Zhonglang Quanjia* 梨雲館類定袁中郎全集, vol.21, pp.14a-14b, p.14b < <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=130171&page=29> >

literati communities, Tu Long could be friends with them because he shared similar values and lifestyles. Visiting them at their places was a way to maintain connections and enhancing their relationships in a more cultured social environment, which not only expressed Tu Long's taste but also brought wider influence and reputation in the literati community. On a more emotional level, Tu Long's visits showed his sense of belonging to the cultural community and dependence on friendships, which greatly contributed to his sense of self-respect and self-esteem. Whether through the relationship itself or the interaction, at an individual level, it highlighted Tu Long's virtues and cultivation; at a community level, it enhanced identity through shared values and norms.

This does not mean that no literati visiting Tu Long at his place. In fact, in 1586, Chen Rubi visited Tu Long while on official business in Siming. The same year, Gan Yu 甘雨 (fl. 1577) and Pan Shizao 潘士藻 (1537-1600) visited Tu Long and went boating on the Dongqian Lake 東錢湖. In 1588, Pan Zhiheng 潘之恒 (1536-1621) came to tour Mount Siming and invited Tu Long to join him. That same year, Huang Zhibi 黃之璧, introduced by Marquis Song Shi'en when Tu Long was in Beijing, spent a month with him at his home. In 1589, Long Xiang 龍襄 (fl. 1582), Long Ying's brother, visited Siming and built a good friendship with Tu Long.<sup>293</sup> Similar to Tu Long's travels to visit friends, his friends' visits to him also focused on interactions based on mutual cultivation and lifestyle. The social activities during these visits mostly focused on literary cultivation and typical touring patterns, such as boating on the lake or hiking in the mountains, with Mount Siming being one of the most renowned mountains in the realm.

When Tu Long became the purpose of socialising, it still greatly focused on his outstanding literary cultivation and cultured lifestyle, which were the most competitive elements for seeking respect and esteem within the literati community. Through these virtues, Tu Long was deeply recognised. In this context, not only did Tu Long gain greater esteem, but his friends who visited

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<sup>293</sup> Chen Rubi's visit see the letter to Long Ying: 'You (Yu Long Junshan Sili) 又(與龍君善司理)', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.470-471; Gan Yu and Pan Shizao's visit see the letter to Wang Shixing: 'Yu Wang Hengshu Nianzhang 與王恒叔年丈', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, pp.378-379; Pan Zhiheng's visit see Tu Long's journal: 'You Siming Shan Ji Xu 遊四明山記敘', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, pp.175-176; Huang Zhibi's visit see the letter to Lü Yuan 呂元: 'Yu Lü Diaofu 與呂調父', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.296 and Chen Tailai 陳泰來(1550-1594): 'Yu Chen Chen Bofu 與陳伯符', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.297; Long Xiang's visit see the letter to Wang Daokun: 'Yu Wang Boyu Sima 與汪伯玉司馬', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, pp.407-408.

him also gained reciprocal esteem through their interactions with him. Although Tu Long's social power and influence comparatively declined because of his dismissal, requiring him to travel more to satisfy his social demands in more influential social activities, the respect and esteem based on his consistent high literary reputation and achievements were not significantly diminished. These remained the most solid values in his struggle for recognition, allowing him to maintain a comparatively high status in the literati community and a virtuous image in other literati's eyes. Hence, he could arrange the social activities he needed the most and interact with social subjects who could provide the greatest sense of self-esteem. This is why, even with a shift in social power, Tu Long could still generate a satisfying sense of recognition in social activities led by other literati.

The cultural disposition in the process of literati's struggle for esteem functioned not only through the taste of gathering and touring locations but also through the taste of social elements, including entertaining styles and materials used in social activities. Compared to literati's religious cultivation and their choices of culturally meaningful places, social elements were more visualised expressions of their values and norms. According to Tu Long's social experience, the entertaining style could be as private as the meeting with close friends in a small boat with drinks and poems, such as in 1591 when he visited Feng Mengzhen on the West Lake, or as grand as the two-days performance of his drama. It could also show the indulgent side of literati's cultural disposition. In the event of Nanping Association, there were courtesans to liven up the interaction, and courtesans often appeared in interactions between Tu Long and Feng Mengzhen. This showed how Tu Long arranged the most suitable social activities in terms of social forms and contents and chose social subjects to interact with. Hence, Feng Mengzhen was consistently and deeply involved in Tu Long's self-mastered social activities within different fractional communities, whether based on forms, status, or different kinds of cultivation. This friendship encompassed every element related to literati's values and norms, allowing Tu Long to maintain this specific relationship for a long time, ensuring consistence of the interaction and managing it through multiple and complex connections oriented by various values.

Tu Long's social activities related to indulgent style greatly involved Feng Mengzhen,

especially when it played a significant role in literati's distinguishing taste and Tu Long's struggle.

In the year of Dingyou (1597), Feng Kaizhi served as the Chancellor of Directorate of Education in Nanjing, attracting renowned literati from the South-East to gather in Jingling. At that time, Tu Changqing, dismissed for a long time, received an imperial edict to be resume his official status and lived in a state of hermit. Adoring the famous courtesan Kou Si'er, named Wenhua, [Tu Long] first sent brocade headband as a gift. On the appointed day, he arrived in official gown and headgear, entered the hall with imposing manner, and sat facing south calling out the procuress out to bow. He ordered the courtesan Kou to serve wine and exchanged witty remarks with her. The next day, [his behaviour] was spread all over the brothels, making it a topic of conversation.

頃歲丁酉，馮開之年伯為南祭酒，東南名士雲集金陵。時屠長卿年伯久廢，奉恩詔復冠帶，亦作寓公。慕狹邪寇四兒名文華者，先以纏頭往。至日俱袍服頭踏，呵殿而至，踞廳事南面呼嫗出拜，令寇姬旁侍行酒，更作才語相向。次日，六院喧傳，以為談柄。

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This circumstance happened in 1597 when Tu Long had the chance to return officialdom to compile the dynastic history. He was still at Feng Mengzhen's place in Nanjing 南京 when he received news of being recalled back to officialdom and waited for the imperial edict. If having courtesans in the social activities Tu Long attended before was just a kind of assistance to literati's poetry creation and gathering feasts, which was still group activities, this time it was entirely his own action. Tu Long acted somewhat out of the usual conduct that literati would have with courtesans in public; otherwise, his behaviour would not have become a topic of conversation among the brothels of Nanjing, especially at a time when he was about to be recalled to officialdom.

It was not unusual for literati to interact with different courtesans in the brothels; it was also a

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<sup>294</sup> Shen Defu 沈德符, *Gu Qu Za Yan* 顧曲雜言 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), p.8.

kind of exclusive taste that literati possessed based on their literary talent and cultural cultivations. This is why having courtesans was very common in literati's social activities and interactions, whether for association events or personal meetings. However, this action of Tu Long implied a strong emotional demand, as he seemed to act absurdly on purpose to be independent in action and thus be noticed. While Tu Long consistently fashioned an image of himself as a talented literatus or a man of integrity, this time he seemed to adopt the opposite persona, more like an indulgent and unrestrained literatus. Although the indulgent image was also a representative literati image, the style was against the honour code of officialdom. This exact conflict had caused Tu Long's dismissal. Instead of maintaining the image of integrity that suited officialdom, Tu Long acted in a dishonourable way when he had the chance to return. In the end, the edict of resuming Tu Long's official status was dismissed. There was no explicit reason given to explain whether it was related to the conflict between different cliques in officialdom or because of Tu Long's indulgent behaviour that offended the honour code of officialdom, just like his dismissal.

From 1584, the year Tu Long was dismissed, to 1597, when he had a chance to be an official again, in the fourteen years Tu Long struggled with the damaged social recognition caused by the shame of his dismissal, making seek esteem within the literati community became the primary goal in his post-official life. The social life he mastered, whether related to group activities or personal ones, oriented by social status or contents, was for fashioning and enhancing the image shaped by his own virtue and cultivation, so that he could be seen by different literati while earning the respect and esteem through reciprocal relations. On one hand, Tu Long was used to be recognised through his particular talent and cultivation and adapted to the comparatively open, contestable social environment supporting his self-mastery in the struggle for recognition. On the other hand, being away from officialdom for so long, the honour code did not necessarily rule his thought and conduct anymore, the official honour became somewhat strange for him. The result corresponded to Tu Long's behaviour, and eventually, the recalling was dismissed.

Although Tu Long lost the chance to wash away the shame of his dismissal, it did not mean that he, his self-fashioned image, his values and virtues, or even his indulgent behaviour were not

recognised within the literati community. The years of recognising self and being recognised as a talented and tasteful literatus had already shaped his social recognition to be sought largely through esteem as an individualised social subject, rather than solely through status honour as a member of a status group. The reputation he gained through his indulgent conduct, though deviating somewhat from conventional values and norms, was still an irreplaceable element shared by literati. Therefore, Tu Long not only did not restrain himself but also became more involved in social activities with indulgent conduct in the following years. For instance, in 1599, Tu Long and Feng Mengzhen visited Lu Wanyan's house, Ji Shu 畸墅, Eccentric Garden, in Qingpu. According to Feng Mengzhen's diary:

Intercalary fourth month.....twenty-second day [14th of June], sunny, cloudy in the afternoon, drizzle. Together with Tu Changqing and other literati, we visited Mount Tianma, passing through the beautiful forest and the monks' dwelling at Yuanzhi Temple. ....We then visited Lu Junce's mountain residence, creating two poems. Later we visited Junce's garden, which is named was Eccentric Garden. On that day, a banquet was set up to entertain the two of us, with two courtesans, both surnamed Zhang. Changqing, known for his cultivation in religious doctrines, did not eat pungent food but was particularly fond of young boys. Among the boys he held with him were Lu Yao, Tang Ke, and five to six others, with Lu Yao being especially favoured. He stayed close to Changqing, whispering in his ear from time to time and passing him wine and meat by hands. [Tu Long] Boasted that he could preach ten boys and girl in one night, which was quite amusing.

閏四月.....二十二，晴，午後陰，微雨。同屠長卿諸君子遊天馬山，歷嘉樹林圓智寺諸僧房。.....同長卿過陸君策山居，詩二首。再過君策園，園名畸墅。是日，設席款待余兩人，有二歌姬，俱張姓。長卿名為入道，不茹葷，顧特戀諸嬖童。所挈羣奴，有陸瑤、湯科五、六輩，而陸瑤特嬖，侍身畔，不少離，時時耳畔私語，手過酒饌食之。

自言一夕可度十男女，其可笑如此。<sup>295</sup>

In this gathering, there were not only courtesans but also young boys as companies. As recorded, Tu Long was fond of young boys, despite the religious doctrines. These seemed to be no causality between cultivating religion and enjoying young boys' company, even though these two things conflicted. Additionally, during the daytime, they had just visited the Buddhist temple in Mount Tianma. This conflict again showed the complexity of the values shared by literati, as well as the complexity of the identity formed in the social environment under a transitional society.

Tu Long's indulgent behaviour and words were just like the name of Lu Wanyan's garden, eccentric, which was not only an expression the identity of literati but also a kind of rebellion against the conventional value system. It was a clear sense of self-awareness to fashion new values and norms that was more suitable for literati living a good life in society. As mentioned in the first two chapters, the emergence of a group of *jiren*, eccentric person, was a special phenomenon in the literati community, showing the transitional features of late Ming society. *Ji*, eccentric, instead of being used in a derogatory sense, became a virtue representing literati's outstanding ideas and conduct. The literati not only used *ji* as the name of their houses, such as Lu Wanyan's Ji Shu; they also used it to name their books. For example, the famous writer Xu Wei wrote an autobiography for himself called *Ji Pu* 畸譜, *Eccentric Chronology*, using *ji* to define himself, his thoughts, and behaviour, to emphasis his distinguishing values and virtues. Additionally, literati would even call themselves *ji*, such as one of Tu Long's friends, Huang Jiren 黃畸人, who once visited Tu Long in Gouyu 句餘 in 1587 before Tu Long had the trip for mourning Shen Maoxue.<sup>296</sup> Tu Long even called himself *jiren*. In a letter to Lu Guangzu, when reflecting on his official period, he said he "was the abandoned eccentric person of the world 爲世之棄物畸人".<sup>297</sup> This seemed to express a sense of uselessness but actually highlighted the distinct virtue he possessed that could not be recognised in the conventional value system. *Ji* almost became a synonym for the outstanding

<sup>295</sup> Feng Mengzhen, *Kuaixuetang Ji*, vol.57, pp.21a- 22b < <https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=96743&page=42> >

<sup>296</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Huang Jiren Mishu 與黃畸人秘書', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, pp.261-262.

<sup>297</sup> Tu Long, 'Da Lu Wutai Sikou 答陸五臺司寇', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.252.



figure of literati, who refused to yield to the constrained hierarchical reality and chose to stand for their own values while acting opposite to the “normal”. This also explained why Tu Long acted in such an indulgent way when he had the chance to return to officialdom but maintain the indulgent social style in interactions with friends. Tu Long’s *ji* was like a manifesto of his virtues and values, making his indulgence his standing point. At this level, Tu Long almost finished fashioning his image in other literati’s eyes as an independent, unrestrained, and tasteful literatus, through which he realised his autonomy as a moral agent in seeking esteem within the literati community.

If Tu Long’s newly indulgent social style, as an expression of literati’s eccentric pursuit, aimed at showing literati’s individualised values, the taste of materials in literati’s social activities showed how their cultural disposition functioned in maintaining social recognition while enhancing identity under the consumption culture in the late Ming Dynasty. The role material consumption played in the literati’s struggle for social recognition mainly concentrated on distinguishing *ya* (tasteful) from *su* (vulgar/popular), which was for distinguishing themselves from other social classes. In the social context of the late Ming Dynasty, especially in terms of economic development and the emergence of material culture, literati came up with a series of tasteful standards for different kinds of materials, specifically those deeply related to literati’s activities, socially, culturally, and religiously. This was not only for displaying the virtues and norms of their identity but also for cultivating better interactions and closer relations within the literati community. Similar taste was key to maintain relations between literati, especially when their taste connected to the social status, cultural levels, and reputation. For instance, when Tu Long participated in the event of the Freeing-Captive-Animals Association, from the food to the plates, there were specific rules:

Each table is set with four dishes of fruits, nuts, and flour-based food, served on the plate in size of one *chi*. For the lunch, there are four dishes of vegetables and the extra, shared by four people, with rice and a bowl of soup. In the late afternoon, upon returning to the boat, tea and snacks are also limited to four dishes. On the day of summer solstice, each person is served a

bowl of noodles, accompanied by four dishes of vegetables, but no fruit is provided.

每一案設果核粉麵食共四器，器用一尺盤，午齋蔬四器有副，四人共之，飯至湯一甌。  
晡時歸舟，用茶食亦止四器。長日，用煮麵各一甌，侑以蔬四器，不設果也。<sup>298</sup>

According to this description, what the participants ate or used was not about their monetary value but about how much those could show literati's worth, through implied cultural cultivation and level. Meanwhile, making the rules and standards for the association events itself just like literati making the standards of their taste, cultural values and their status and setting the norms for the community, even for society.

Therefore, literati not only regulated the materials in their associations and gatherings but also set the connoisseurship of materials. This was a presentation of individual taste and virtues and in the defence of literati's social and cultural status. According to Clunas, in the relationship between materials and social order, the literati, especially the elite, maintained and enhanced their social and cultural status through the connoisseurship of things, in which "elite literati were achieved partly through the actual practices of social interaction, .....partly through the production of texts".<sup>299</sup> During late Ming Dynasty, literati invested their cultural disposition and cultivation into materials, creating books of connoisseurship of things to set up aesthetic values, present the virtue of self, and to avoid forgery. These books of connoisseurship emphasised the status of cultural elite, based on literati's cultural values and virtues, rather than whether they passed the imperial examinations and gained official status. For example, Gao Lian's 高濂 (1527-?) *Zunsheng Bajian* 遵生八箋, *Eight Discourses on the Art of Living*, for which Tu Long wrote a preface, set aesthetic criteria for things, and Gao's own taste were respected and even taken as example, despite Gao never holding any degree through the imperial examinations. Hence, it greatly focused the personal achievements and how much they could be approved within the literati community or even the

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<sup>298</sup> Chi is the unit of length, which is equivalent to 0.333 metre. Yu Chunxi, 'Shenglian Sheyue', pp.1b-2a <  
<https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=en&file=83279&page=34> >

<sup>299</sup> Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, p.8.

broader social community based on the economic market.

Tu Long was also one of the most well-known literati involving in the connoisseurship of things, like Gao Lian and Wen Zhenheng 文震亨 (1585-1645), his book *Kaopan Yushi* 考槃餘事, *Desultory Remarks on Furnishing the Abode of the Retired Scholar*, was a respected creation of connoisseurship among the cultural elite, showing Tu Long's distinguished taste while bringing greater esteem in his struggle for recognition. There were different categories of commentary, which took the form of “*jian* 箋, treatises”, including Calligraphy and Books 書箋; Rubbings 貼箋; Paintings 畫箋; Types of Paper 紙箋; Ink 墨箋; Writing Brushes 筆箋; Inkstones 硯箋; Qin Zithers 琴箋; Incense 香箋; Tea 茶箋; Basins and Vessels 盆玩箋, including Potted Flowers 盆花, Vase Flowers 瓶花, Simulating Flowers' Blossom and Withering 擬花榮辱; Fishes and Cranes 魚鶴箋, including Golden Fishes Grades 金魚品 and Crane Grades 鶴品; Mountain Studio 山齋箋, including Study Room 書齋, Medicine Room 藥室, Thatched Pavilion 茆亭, Plants 花樹, Family Hall for Worshipping Buddha 佛堂, Tea Room 茶寮; Necessities of Life and Dress 起居器服箋, Utensils of the Studio 文房器具箋, Travel Accessories 遊具箋.<sup>300</sup> Those kinds of things and aesthetic criteria for them greatly related to almost every aspect of literati's cultural, social, and daily life. These were regulated by the distinct taste of literati and became guidebooks for both literati and people from lower, even higher classes, to possess a higher-level cultural disposition. Both literati's esteem and identity were enhanced through taste sharing, which meant not only were literati recognised as a tasteful individual, but their social class and status were also recognised in society.

In his self-planned socialising with friends, Tu Long paid an attention to the materials used in their interactions, mainly focusing on the transport they usually use and the food and drink they had during meetings and gatherings. For Tu Long, the most common mode of transport was the boat, as he mostly travelled in the south, where water transport was more convenient and widespread. In order to show the special taste of literati, the form or name of the boat was often

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<sup>300</sup> Though the writer of *Kaopan Yushi* was questioned whether it was Tu Long or not, the different editions of *Kaopan Yushi* were inscribed with “Ming Donghai Tu Long Wrote 明東海屠隆著”. Details refer to Qin Wanchun's ‘Tu Long Nianpu’, pp.148-152. Tu Long, *Kao Pan Yu Shi* 考槃餘事 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985).

invested with literary or cultural meanings. There were three main types of boats Tu Long often took: *qingque chuan* 青雀舡, Black Sparrow boat; *zemeng zhou* 柁艚舟, Grasshopper boat, and *dao* 舢, a small boat shaped like long narrow knife.<sup>301</sup> The exact shapes of those boats were probably similar, but their literary and cultural origins were the actual reasons they were chosen as a tasteful literatus's transport. For example, the Black Sparrow, according to *Fang Yan* 方言:

A boat, to the east of the [Hangu] Pass, is called *chuan*, to the west of the Pass is sometimes called *zhou*. Two boats sailing side by side may refer to *hang*. Additionally, the bow of the boat is called *lū*, or sometimes head of fish hawk. Guo Pu's [276-324] annotation states: Nowadays, the people with high status in the lower reaches of the Yangtze River decorate the front of their boats with a black sparrow, which symbolised this.

舟，自關而東謂之舡，自關而西或謂之舟。方舟或謂之航。又曰：舡首謂之鵠，或謂之鷁首。郭璞注曰：今江東貴人舡前作青雀，是其象也。<sup>302</sup>

The Black Sparrow became a symbol of higher status, so it also became a symbol of status when taken by literati. As for the Grasshopper, it was even more famous because of one of Li Qingzhao's 李清照 (1084-1155) lyric poems, *Wuling Chun* 武陵春: "I fear that the grasshopper boat on the Twin Streams, cannot carry so much sorrow 只恐雙溪舡艚舟，載不動許多愁". The literary tradition contained in the name of this boat was the genuine taste of literati towards a simple boat.

Regardless of the law of materials based on hierarchical system, literati's choices of transport were not in pursuit of the hierarchical status but for cultural status. Hence, what really mattered was the forms and decorations and what was invested with the things, which greatly displayed the recognitive elements belonged to literati's values and norms. It was not so different when Tu Long

<sup>301</sup> Those boats are mentioned in Tu Long's letters to Wang Shizhen, 'Yu Wang Yuanmei Ershou', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, pp.192-193; to Xu Yisun, 'You (Youyu Xu Changru) 又(又與徐長孺)', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.368; to Zhu Zaiming, 'Yu Zhu Zaiming 與朱在明', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.371-372; to Huang Zhibi, 'Yu Huang Baizhong 與黃白仲', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, pp.267-268; to Long Ying, 'Yu Long Junshan Sili 與龍君善司理', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.469-470.

<sup>302</sup> Li Fang 李昉, 'Xu Zhou Zhong 敘舟中', in *Taiping Yulan* 太平御覽, 1000 vols. (Song edition) vol.769, p.1a <  
<https://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=80631&page=16> >

chose beverages for gatherings, including wine and tea. For instance, in two letters to Wang Baigu, he mentioned two kinds of wine and a kind of tea that he prepared for hosting: Lotus Wine 蓮花酒, *Baxian Baijiu* 八仙白酒 and Hongban Wine 紅板酒, as well as Tianchi Tea 天池茶, Heavenly-Pond Tea.<sup>303</sup> Besides the drink that symbolised literati's taste, there were also special items showing literati's distinguishing cultural values, such as dozens of vessels of spring water from Hui Mountain 慧山 that Zou Diguang provided for Tu Long to meet him at Misty-Rain Tower, or the "snow lotus roots and icy pears 雪藕冰梨" Tu Long had when he cultivated Daoism in the mountain.<sup>304</sup> These items introduced social and religious characteristics into literati's interactions, greatly indicating personal taste and aesthetics.

## The symbolic act as an act of recognition

The material-based and taste-oriented connections between literati derived from their cultural disposition and cultivation, which not only was an expression of personal virtues but also maintained and enhanced literati's social relations. In this context, tasteful materials played important roles in literati's struggle for esteem within their community. In addition to the materials used during the practical social interaction, the materials exchanged as gifts and the behaviour of gift exchanging itself, which greatly contained literati's taste, were also significant in the process of social recognition. When material gifts were not exchanged based on its economic values but on their cultural value, the acts of gift exchanging were not just about the gifts but about the relations established on shared cultural cultivation, disposition and status. According to Bourdieu, in "an exchange of gifts, where the gift ceases to be a material object to become a sort of message or symbol suited to creating a social link", the act of exchange of gifts became a symbolic act, while the gifts themselves became symbolic capital representing cultural and social status of the individuals involved.<sup>305</sup> This symbolic act of gift exchanging between literati could be seen as an

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<sup>303</sup> Tu Long, 'Da Wang Baigu 答王百谷', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, pp.311-312; 'Yu Wang Baigu 與王百谷', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, pp.339-340.

<sup>304</sup> Tu Long mentioned these two things in the letter to Feng Mengzhen, 'Zaida Feng Kaizhi', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, pp.412-414; and Gao Libu, 'Yu Gao Libu 與高吏部', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.453.

<sup>305</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p.104.

act of recognition within the literati community, through which their distinguishing taste and cultivation were expressed and exchanged in a specific form.<sup>306</sup>

In fact, the act of exchange of gifts was common and frequent among literati, serving as a very important pattern of their struggle for recognition. In Tu Long's rich social life, this act was certainly involved in his interactions with his friends and became a significant connection in his relationships. Although the act was common and the gifts exchanged were largely based on literati's shared values and norms, when it related to specific individuals, both the act itself and the gifts would reflect outstanding personal features according to personal taste and achievements. Tu Long's act of exchanging gifts was deeply connected to his cultural and tasteful cultivation and lifestyle, which was evident in the different categories of gifts.

First, there were gifts symbolising literati's most distinguishing values and norms, which were their literary cultivation and communication. Poems and books were the most representative gifts frequently and commonly exchanged between Tu Long and his friends. Especially after creating a very satisfying poems or finishing a book of their own ideas, they would send these as gifts to each other. Then there were items related to literary cultivation being very common in Tu Long's gift exchanging, such as folding fans with poems, fine papers, ink sticks, ink slabs, and seals. Additionally, items that showed the literati's aesthetic taste and cultivation in art and objects occupied a significant part in his gift exchanging, which implied multiple connections between Tu Long and his friends within different fractional communities. These included paintings, calligraphy, utensils such as wine cups and vases; and other items like incense, tea, wine, herbs, flowers, head-covering, and ornaments. There was also a special category of gifts representing literati's lifestyle, such as courtesans or young boys. For example, Tu Long once received a young boy from Feng Mengzhen's father and gave him to Gu Yangqian.<sup>307</sup> This indicated the indulgent aspect in Tu Long's lifestyle, which was still seen as a tasteful and distinguished element deriving from literati's status, values, and norms. All these gifts involved almost every aspect of the literati's cultural and daily life, matching and practising what Tu Long wrote in his book of connoisseurship. Hence, the

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<sup>306</sup> Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, p.100.

<sup>307</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Gu Yiqing 與顧益卿', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.419.

interaction involving gift exchanging not only showed Tu Long's status and achievements but also effectively enhanced his sense of self-esteem in his relationships with multiple connections.

The common occasions and normal gifts indicated that the act of gift exchanging was generally functional in generating recognition between literati who shared identical dispositions and cultivation. However, when the process involved a specific literatus, its effect of showing individuals' values and achievements was emphasised, greatly leading to literati's esteem in the relationships. For example, the case mentioned earlier that when Tu Long was the magistrate in Qingpu, Wang Zhideng asked him to send a cloth for making a gown. Although a cloth made by local people was not a valuable item, it implied Tu Long's status as the local highest official, and the achievements Tu Long gained in the post. Also, from Tu Long's disapproving attitude towards giving out local people's products, it indicated his moral integrity as an official.

Additionally, because of Tu Long's outstanding cultivation of Buddhism and Daoism, the gifts exchanged took on a religious feature in maintaining his relationships based on different social communities. For instance, Buddhist sutras and literary creations such as Gaoceng Zhuan 高僧傳, Biography of Eminent Monks, were the most representative items. There were also other objects, such as ink sticks that Tu Long sent to Xu Yisun specifically for writing Buddhist sutras, called *xiejing mo* 寫經墨, sutra-writing ink, and a portrait painting that his friends Ding Yunpeng 丁雲鵬(1547-1628) drew for his mother's ninetieth birthday themed with Buddhism, named Fo Mu Tu 佛母圖, Buddha Mother Image. There were also gifts related to Daoism, particularly the portrait painting of Master Tanyang that Tu Long drew and sent to Chen Rubi, and also the pellet medicine from Long Defu, and raw material for making Daoist medicine, such as cinnabar and realgar for Shen Mingchen.<sup>308</sup> These gifts, whether implying Tu Long's social status or emphasising his outstanding cultivation in different fields, together distinguished his virtues and achievements through the act of gift exchanging while generating a great sense of recognition in the process.

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<sup>308</sup> These gifts could be seen from Tu Long's letters to Feng Mengzhen, 'Yu Kaizhi 與開之', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.321; to Xu Yisun 'Da Xu Mengru 答徐孟孺', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.466; to Ding Yunpeng, 'Yu Ding Nanyu 與丁南羽', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.344; to Chen Rubi, 'Yu Chen Lifu Sili 與陳立甫司理', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.472; to Long Defu, 'Yu Long Bozhen', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.255; to Shen Mingchen, 'Yu Shen Jiaze Ershou', in *Youquan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.2, p.250.

Given that the act of exchange of gifts as a symbolic act was taken as an act of recognition, functioning when the two parties had “identical categories of perception and appreciation”, the value of the gifts exchanged between each other could only be measured through symbolic capital, rather than economic capital.<sup>309</sup> For literati in the late Ming Dynasty, symbolic capital implied their social and cultural values and status, which could be anything related to their taste and virtue. For instance:

In the small courtyard to the west, there is a piece of land to plant a few flowers and trees. I have heard that Jiangyin and Wuxi are abundant with peonies and herbaceous peonies. I hope you can find a couple of them and send me with a servant to provide for a recluse’s poetic musings. ....A landscape painting by Zhao Qianli, four pieces of seal script calligraphy by Princess Yi, a copy of the *Han Changli Collection*, a copy of the *Luo Nian’an Collection*, a piece of Hu silk, a poetry fan, and a tripod from the first year [49B.C.] of the Huanglong period of the Han Dynasty [141A.C.-87B.C.], are offered to express my sentiments.....

小堂西隙地可栽花木數本，聞江陰、無錫多牡丹、芍藥，乞足下覓一二種，付奴子來供幽人吟嘯。……趙千里山水一幅、益王妃篆書四幅、《韓昌黎集》一部、《羅念菴集》一部、湖羅一端、詩扇一柄、漢黃龍元年鼎一枚，奉將鄙情……

A tripod from the first year of Emperor Xuan of the Han Dynasty is sent to you. You can use it to burn eaglewood incense while reading Buddhist and Daoist texts. This tripod has been authenticated by several learned and genteel persons from the Wu-Yue. It is a genuine Han artefact, not a counterfeit.

漢宣帝黃龍元年鼎一枚奉去。焚沉水香，讀二氏書，此鼎已經吳越間博雅者多人鑒定，真漢物，非贗。<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, p.100.

<sup>310</sup> Tu Long, ‘Zaiyu Ziyuan’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.482; ‘Yu Qin Junyang 與秦君陽’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.367.



From these two examples, the gifts Tu Long sent to his friends, from common plants to famous artists' works, to books and articles for daily and cultural use, even to antiques, all greatly showed the social and cultural disposition shared between Tu Long and his two friends, Qin Kun and Xing Tong. What was special for these two literati was that both of them had offered or promised to offer Tu Long financial support when he was in difficulties after his dismissal, Qin Kun, whom he made a friend with while working in the central government, had offered Tu Long farmland, and Xing Tong promised to give Tu Long money. Both received a valuable antique from Tu Long as a gift. Especially in the second example, in the letter Tu Long wrote to Xing Tong, he asked for money while sending him an antique tripod. Similarly, Tu Long sent several valuable art works to Qin Kun. It seemed that Tu Long returned their kind favours based on their mutual relations with gifts that were culturally and socially valuable for both parties. The value of the gifts Tu Long sent could not be, or was even forbidden to be, calculated and equivalent to the economic value of farmland or money they had offered because the symbolic capital was valued in the exchange when it represented a shared cultural disposition and social status. Hence, the exchange of gifts was for satisfying emotional demand of literati, to be recognised through their cultural values.

Meanwhile, those two same antique tripods contained great value in social relations; otherwise, they would not have been sent as valuable gifts twice by Tu Long to maintain his relations. Because of the high value of antiques in both economic and cultural senses, according to Clunas, ancient objects like antiques became literati's most favourable things to purchase, which were endowed with functional, rhetorical, social sense. When the literati enjoyed the consumption of antiquities, the antiquities also played the roles in maintaining elite status.<sup>311</sup> Due to the prevalence of antiques in literati's socialising, there were many counterfeits to cater to their consumption needs, but more importantly, to their social needs with antiques. In this context, the literati used antiques as gifts in their interactions to socially distinguish themselves from common social environment and to maintain and enhance their comparatively higher social status within the literati community. Hence, Tu Long's act of buying and exchanging two antique tripods as gifts also distinguished his social

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<sup>311</sup> Clunas, *Superfluous Things*, pp.91-108.

and cultural status to the elite level, while the act of gift exchanging involving antiques becoming a status-oriented connections between literati for their greater esteem within the literati community.

If symbolic capital could be anything functional in the relations for social recognition, real economic capital, like properties such as houses and farmland, or money exchanged between literati based on mutual appreciation and acknowledgement of each other's social and cultural values, was also transfigured into symbolic capital. When this transfiguration was accomplished in the interaction between literati, the act related to this kind of symbolic capital also became an act of recognition to fulfil social subjects' emotional needs. Because of the rise of consumption needs in society in the late Ming Dynasty, the literati's demand for money to maintain their social relations and tasteful lifestyle also rose significantly. In order to satisfy these social needs, literati often had to ask for help from friends, especially when they generally experienced comparatively difficult situations in the context of late Ming society.

As a member of one of the super-elite families in the local social community of Yin, Tu Long also suffered from a lack of money, such as having to work as a teacher away from his hometown. The money they asked for was usually called "money for buying mountains 買山錢". Literati not only felt no shame in asking for this money but were even esteemed for doing so because it was an opportunity to show their personal virtue of integrity and straightforwardness rather than merely to fulfil their life demands. In this context, money in literati's relations also became symbolic capital, while the act of asking for money became an act of recognition based on their shared social values and status.

During Tu Long's life, he accepted friends' active financial help many times. When he still served as an official, he received friends' money and boats for travelling. He also asked for "money for buying mountains", more often after losing his official post and stable living sources. Tu Long himself also voluntarily helped other literati in difficulties. In a letter to Hu Congzhi, Tu Long said: "in the past, when I twice served as a magistrate..... I used my salary to assist relatives and friends in difficulties, concerning it would not be enough. As a result, my official residence often had no food left for the next day 往僕兩爲令……推俸錢以急九族貧交，惟恐不及，官舍恒無隔宿

糧”.<sup>312</sup> In Tu Long’s view, this behaviour showed his virtue, so when he asked for money from friends, it was like offering them an opportunity to show their virtue. Furthermore, he would use this reason to persuade his friends. In the same letter to Hu, Tu Long mentioned:

General Gu Yiqing of Liaoyang, in past years, promised to buy mountains for me [meaning to offer me money help]. I suppose he may be occupied by military affairs and have forgotten. I wish to send a messenger to visit Gu Shijun myself, but person as poor as me cannot afford the expenses for a long journey, and I have heard that there are restrictions on commoners leaving the [Shanghai] Pass. Now, I am writing this letter to you, Congzhi. I kindly ask you to send a reliable messenger directly to Liaoliang to deliver my letter to Yiqing and ask Yiqing to send someone to Siming. If I can obtain a hundred *mu* of farmland, it would greatly help me and my descendants. Given your generous character, I am sure you will readily take on this task for me. If you also wish to share the same kindness [of offering me money help] as Yiqing, that would be even better, though I do not dare to hope for it.

遼陽開府顧益卿，往歲許為不穀買山，想以兵事嬰心，忘之耳。欲走一介詣顧使君，貧士力不能治遠行裝，且聞白衣人出關有禁。今修一札，奉從治先生。煩先生為不穀特遣一力，直抵遼陽，致不穀書于益卿所，令益卿遣一力，直抵四明。不穀第得百畝之田，則在世、世出兩大事濟矣。以先生風格，當慨然為不穀任此無疑。儻先生遂欲分取益卿仁義，更善。非所敢望矣。<sup>313</sup>

Therefore, money in the relations of literati became a kind of moral criteria measuring their morality and conduct. It even became a moral connection between literati, in which both parties gained esteem from this act. If gift exchanging was more based on mutual cultural disposition and cultivation, asking for money was more based on their mutual moral virtue. Though the acts seemed different, in essence, they were acts of recognition based on symbolic capital exchanged

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<sup>312</sup> Tu Long, ‘Da Hu Congzhi Kaifu 答胡從治開府’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.495-496.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid*, p.495.

in relations with shared values and norms. During Tu Long's post-official period, as many as seventeen friends offered him money for living or travelling, such as Wang Shizhen, Feng Mengzhen, Wang Daokun, Zhang Jiayin, Lu Guangzu, and Dong Sicheng.<sup>314</sup> Among these friends, not only did Tu Long receive money from Wang Shizhen several times, but he also asked Wang to introduce clients who would like to buy literary works.<sup>315</sup> In this case, the social status and values implied in the symbolic capital were shared in a practical way, transforming symbolic capital into economic benefits, and more importantly, social capital. Given Wang Shizhen's status and reputation in the literati community, the act of asking Wang to introduce clients was already an act of recognition towards their shared values and virtues. Compared to asking for money directly, this way seemed to emphasize Tu Long's values more significantly, bringing him a strong sense of self-esteem in the process.

Comparing the act of receiving financial help from friends for recognition, rejecting such help was also a highly esteemed act. Although these two acts seemed opposite, both derived from literati's virtue. Facing friends' kind help and appreciation, Tu Long did not accept them all without distinction. When he was just dismissed, there were three chances for him to acquire a considerable amount of farmland in different places, offered by his friends Qin Kun, Sun Jigao, and the people of Qingpu. In a letter to Xing Tong, Tu Long wrote:

My old friend from Wuzhong, Qin Junyang, strongly persuaded me to follow the example of Liang Boluan and move my family to Liangxi. He would settle the house and articles for daily use for me, but my father has not yet been properly buried, and my mother is elderly, so I can not merely move there.

吳中故人秦君陽公子，力勸弟做梁伯鸞故事，移家梁谿。蓋為問田廬小具，而父即未

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<sup>314</sup> See Tu Long's letters: 'Yu Yuanmei Xianbo 與元美仙伯', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, pp.263-264; 'Yu Feng Kaizhi 與馮開之', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, pp.270-271; 'Da Wang Boyu Sima 答汪伯玉司馬', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, pp.345-346; 'Yu Zhang Xiaofu Dasima 與張肖甫大司馬', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.452; 'Yu Lu Yusheng Sikou 與陸與繩司寇', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.314; 'Yu Dong Bonian', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, pp.352-353.

<sup>315</sup> Tu Long, 'Bao Yuanmei Xiansheng 報元美先生', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.486-487.

葬，母年又高，不能旦暮徙居之。<sup>316</sup>

In a letter to Sun Jigao, he expressed his gratitude to Sun's brother:

In the past, I was slandered and went down to the east, and your elder brother met me at the river. On the boat, he worried that I was clean and honest serving as a magistrate of Qingpu so I did not have any land saved for living. He discussed with two to three generous literati to buy a hundred *mu* of farmland in Yunjian, so that I could receive annual rent to support the eight people in my family. This was such a righteous deed. However, when my wife heard about it, she was strongly opposed it, saying, "You are slandered and stripped of your position, losing your standing and reputation. A righteous man can be killed but not humiliated. Even if we starve to death, we will not eat the food from the land where the slanderer stands." Therefore, I just held back their proposal. Nevertheless, I remain deeply grateful to your elder brother and will never forget his kindness.

往不佞被讒東下，辱令兄逆之江上。舟中念青浦令廉而貧無負郭，謀與二三高義士同買田百畝雲間，令不佞得歲收租以養其八口。此甚義舉，山妻聞而力辭於不佞曰：“君以彼中人讒削籍，身名摧敗。士可殺，不可辱。即餓死，義不食讒夫腳下土。”於是，遂寢其議。而不佞固心德令兄不敢忘。<sup>317</sup>

Also, as recorded in the History of Ming, Tu Long received farmland from local people in Qingpu.

When I passed Qingpu on my way back home, the local people collected a thousand *mu* of farmland, inviting me to move there. I declined, and we enjoyed three days of joyful drinking before I took my leave.

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<sup>316</sup> Tu Long, 'Zaiyu Ziyuan', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.482.

<sup>317</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Sun Yide 與孫以德', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.342.

歸道青浦，父老為僉田千畝，請徒居。隆不許，歡飲三日，謝去。<sup>318</sup>

Tu Long directly refused his friends' kindness, but the excuses were different: for Qin Kun, he used filial piety, stating that his mother was too old to move; for Sun Jigao, the excuse or the reason was that his dignity did not allow him to stand on the same land as the person who caused his dismissal, which was Yu Xianqing. It might also be similar that he did not stay in Qingpu. Regardless of the excuse, it explicitly showed Tu Long's personal moral virtue and integrity. He also refused money before when he worked as a teacher in Xi'an. Although it was a different situation, the moral virtue he expected to show in front of other literati in the community was the same. For literati, keeping a distance from money or benefits gained in an unrighteous way, or regarding money and benefits lightly, such as giving out money to friends and receiving money from friends, was an expression of the virtue of identity, but more importantly, the virtue of self.

For the outstanding way to show Tu Long's personal virtue, using "excuses" rather than "reasons" to explain Tu Long's refusal is because there was a deeper and more important reason for him to refuse to stay in other places and return to his hometown. It was the more familiar social environment and the profound sense of belonging to the local elite community, as well as the corresponding higher status as one of the super-elite gentries in the local community. According to the social activities that Tu Long had in this status, whether related to Buddhism or literature, these really helped him significantly in his struggle for esteem during his post-official period.

## Connections through family members

There was a special part in Tu Long's excuses for refusing the lands in Yunjian, which was his wife. In the interaction between Tu Long and his friends, family members, especially the female members, his mother and wife, were also an important connection in their relationships. The literati's outstanding virtue considerably influenced their family members through whom the bonds

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<sup>318</sup> Zhang Tingyu, 'Xu Wei, Tu Long', in *Ming Shi*, vol. 288, p.7388. *Mu* was a traditional unit of area of Chinese land measure, equal to one fifteenth of a hectare, or 0.165 acre.

in their relations were also enhanced. For example, when Tu Long refused Sun Jigao's lands, expressing the reason by his wife, instead of himself, better highlighted his moral virtue. It indicated that Tu Long's virtue was so great that even his family members possessed the same one and shared the identical perception with him. Tu Long often used "Jie's mother and Lai's wife 介母萊妻", or "Qianlou's wife 黔婁之妻" to praise his mother and wife's virtue of supporting him in leaving officialdom and being content with living a difficult life with him.<sup>319</sup> Especially his wife, whom he praised the most for her virtues. In a letter to Sun Jigao, Tu Long praised her moral virtue:

My wife is virtuous and wise, and she is quite content with poverty.

婦也賢明，頗甘貧賤。<sup>320</sup>

In a letter to Wang Heng 王衡(1561-1609), who was Wang Xijue's son, Tu Long praised his wife's practical virtue:

My wife is virtuous and has the talent to manage the household. In past years, when I reported for duty in Beijing, she quickly bought a small three-room house with the surplus from my salary.

細君賢，有治家才。往歲僕北上計，以俸餘急構小樓三間。<sup>321</sup>

In a letter to Chen Rubi, he described his wife's cultural virtue, with which she could share a similar

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<sup>319</sup> Jie's mother and Lai's wife 介母萊妻 means Jie Zitui's 介子推 mother, whose story can be seen in 'Shiji: Jin Shijia Dijiu 史記・晉世家第九'; and Lao Laizi's 老萊子 wife, whose story refers to 'Lienv Zhuan: Laolai Qi 列女傳楚老萊妻'. Qianlou's wife 黔婁之妻 refers to 'Lienv Zhuan: Lu Qianlou Qi 列女傳・魯黔婁妻'. All those women are famous for being content with the poor situation of their families. Quotes: Tu Long, 'Bao Yuanmei Xiansheng', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.487; 'Yu Zhao Rushi Sicheng 與趙汝師司成', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.6, p.364.

<sup>320</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Sun Yide 與孫以德', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.323-324.

<sup>321</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Wang Chenyu 與王辰玉', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.467.

sense of life with Tu Long:

My wife came to inform me that there was no rice in the kitchen for the next morning, I smiled and replied, “Tomorrow’s matters will be taken care of tomorrow. For now, let us not waste the beauty of the moonlight on the phoenix tree.” My wife understood this sentiment well and enjoyed the moment together with me.

妻孥來告，詰朝厨中無米，笑而答之：“明日之事，有明日在，且無負梧桐月色也。”  
婦亦頗領此意，相共怡然。<sup>322</sup>

Tu Long could have a proper place to live after his dismissed because of his wife’s effort, which also guaranteed his return and his follow-up self-mastery of socialising in different forms. Compared to the respect from friends and esteem from his achievements, love from wife, or more generally from family members, also the relationship played an important role of recognition in his social circles.

The connection through family members, especially the female ones, between literati also indicated literati’s other virtues besides morality, which, with no doubt, concentrated on their cultural and literary cultivation. First of all, it expressed in the religious cultivation, especially Buddhism. Tu Long once wrote to Wang Xijue saying:

My elderly mother has been devoted to Buddhism for decades and has long abstained from alcohol and meat. My wife is simple and wear plain cloth, not caring for luxury. Now, my mother and wife spend their days before the Buddha’s lotus seat Buddha, burning incenses and candles, and studying and reciting the *Vajracchedika Sutra* and the *Heart Sutra*, with no other concerns.

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<sup>322</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Chen Lifu Sili’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.472.



老母奉佛數十年，久斷酒肉。荊人蕭然荊布，不愛繁華。今姑婦日向大師蓮座前，焚香燃燭而學誦《金剛》、《心經》，都無所事事。<sup>323</sup>

Though the Buddhist cultivation of Tu Long's mother and wife was not simply a reflection of his own, his outstanding Buddhist cultivation and lifestyle certainly influenced his family members. When he mentioned this in letters to friends, it fashioned a virtuous image of himself. His mother and wife's cultivation could be seen as a continuation of his own, as well as a special part of his virtuous image. It was also common in the late Ming Dynasty for literati's religious cultivation to influence family members in different ways. The most special example would be the worship of Tanyangzi, the daughter of Wang Xijue. Although she was the subject in the worship, the doctrine, which was the Buddhist core with Daoist coat, and the figure of Tanyangzi and the worship of her were clearly special expressions of literati's ideas and conduct, reflecting their self-mastery of values and norms.<sup>324</sup> Even though family members' similar cultivation in reflecting literati's values was not as significant as practical interactions within literati's relations, it was also a special connection between literati and a sign of their personal virtues.

If literati's family members' cultivation was a continuation and reflection of their self-cultivation and values, it would not be limit to only religious aspect but also involve others, especially the most distinguished cultivation and value, their literary cultivation and value. This mainly expressed in literary communication in two ways: literati wrote poems in the name of their female family members and exchanged with friends, and internal communication and interaction in literature among female family members. The first kind of connection between each other's family members was a continuation of literati's relations, still a special connection between literati through family members. For example, Shen Maoxue once wrote three poems in the name of his wife, née Sun, for Tu Long's wife:

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<sup>323</sup> Tu Long, 'Feng Wang Songbo Yuanyu Xiansheng 奉王宗伯元馭先生', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.327.

<sup>324</sup> The details about the doctrine of the worship of Tanyangzi refer to: Ann Waltner, 'T'an-yang-tzu and Wang Shih-chen: Visionary and Bureaucrat in the Late Ming', *Late Imperial China*, 8.1(1987), 105-133

Née Sun's three poems were created on your behalf. .... I read and explained them repeatedly to my wife, and she was visibly delighted.

孫夫人三詩，是足下代爲之。……爲寒荊回環讀而解之，寒荊喜形於色矣。<sup>325</sup>

However, the other kind of literary communication within one's own female family members was more distinguishing in terms of expressing literati's outstanding literary and cultural cultivation and lifestyle, even generating a new sphere between female members. For instance, Tu Long's daughter, Tu Yaose 屠瑤瑟, and Shen Maoxue's daughter, Shen Tiansun 沈天孫, who was also Tu Long's daughter-in-law, had a great literary interaction between each other and created a cultural sphere within the family. Their relations and activities were recorded as:

Xiangling [Tu Yaose] and Qixiang [Shen Tiansun] were two literati's beloved daughters. From a young age, they were both wise and talented, able to read, recite, and compose poems. ....After Jundian's death, Qixiang, at the age of seventeen, married into the Tu family. Xiangling, though already married, would often return to visit her parents, [the two girls] would discuss classical stories, compile books, and assign topics for writing..... Tu Long's wife was also well-versed in poetry, and they would often compose and revise poems together. .... This was genuinely a remarkable family event, and a beautiful story passed on with approval of the time. In the winter of the Gengzi year [1600] of the Wanli period, Qixiang passed away. Not long after, Xiangling also passed away. The brothers of the two families compiled their poems and printed into a collection titled *Liuxiang Cao* [*Fragrant-Depositing Draft*], with prefaces written by Tu Long and Yu Changru.....

湘靈、七襄為兩公之愛女，少皆明慧，讀書誦詩能詩。……君典歿，七襄年十七，歸於屠。湘靈既嫁，時時歸寧，相與徵事紬書，分題授簡……長卿夫人亦諳篇章，每有諷詠，

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<sup>325</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Shen Jundian', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.304.

就商訂焉。……信一家之盛事，亦一時之美談也。萬曆庚子冬，七襄卒。未幾，湘靈亦卒，兩家兄弟匯刻其詩曰留香草，而長卿與虞長孺為之序……<sup>326</sup>

In this case, the literary communication within literati's family members became an independent literary activity stemming from literati's cultivation, relations, and interactions. This literary activity amongst family members was regarded as a tasteful and virtuous sign of a family of literati and an approbatory form of lifestyle, showing their outstanding personal virtues. The literary cultivation and achievements of Tu Long and Shen Maoxue's daughters also benefited from the great education and influence of their fathers' great talent and cultivation in their original families. It derived from literati's lifestyle and then became a kind of literati's achievements, bringing high and widespread reputation within the literati community. The literary interaction and their poetry collection of Tu Long's daughter and daughter-in-law were achievements for themselves and for literati's family members, but also enhanced Tu Long's image as a virtuous, cultured, and tasteful literatus in the eyes of other literati. Through this achievement, Tu Long's esteem within the literati community was greatly enhanced. Therefore, this kind of connection involving literati family members not only advanced the process of recognition but also introduced a new element for literati's struggle for recognition in reciprocal relations.

## Self-cultivation in daily life

Tu Long's self-cultivation, as part of his self-mastery for social recognition apart from the interaction with different literati in different social spheres, inevitably involved his personal daily life, which showed his virtues and lifestyle through his state of mind and cultural aesthetics. During the times that Tu Long did not attend any literati social activities, his daily lifestyle became another sphere for him to fashion and maintain his image in terms of virtue and taste. On one hand, Tu Long used his cultural taste to express his outstanding virtue of valuing his own nature and innate knowledge over the fame and status that an official post would bring. This means that Tu Long

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<sup>326</sup> 'Tu Jinshu Qi Shenshi 屠金樞妻沈氏', in *Qinding Gujin Tushu Jicheng*, vol.420, p.43a.

wanted to recognise himself and to be recognised through his own values rather than an honourable status. On the other hand, he sought to use these virtues and values to enhance his sense of esteem. These values were implied by Tu Long in the plants in his garden. For instance, in a letter to Wang Heng, he described:

In front of my house, there are various flowers and trees, but I lack the strength to obtain famous and fine plants. Also, I do not want to disturb my minds with these, I only planted wild grasses and bushes, creating a modest taste. .... I planted a few bamboos, suitable for spring rain and winter snow; two pine trees, suitable for autumn moon and evening breeze. ....When there were guests staying for fresh fishes, we shared a simple meal of millet while engaging in light conversation. Our talks were often about unworldly affairs. Sometimes, when they happened to involve the worldly, I would quickly pour it off with the breeze under the pine tree.

樓前裸樹花木，力不能得名花嘉木。又不欲以此亂人意，止取野草樹蒙茸，小有致而已。……栽竹數箇，宜春雨，宜冬雪；松兩株，宜秋月，宜晚風。……有客以筍魚留，共脫粟清譚。譚多在人世外。或及方內，急取松下風澆之。<sup>327</sup>

The value of his plants in his garden was not about how precious they were but how they represented the owner's will. It was only about *youzhi*, tasteful, how much it could comfort Tu Long's mood, and how much it could avoid the sound from officialdom. What his taste was suitable for could be the spring rain or the autumn moon, but not official affairs, which meant his taste was for virtuous cultivation, not for honourable fame. Hence, Tu Long's taste also functioned as resistance to officialdom. It was not only about resisting anything related to officialdom but also about resisting the shame that his dismissal brought. Meanwhile, *youzhi*, as the pursuit of literati's distinct taste, was further aimed at fashioning the personal tasteful style based on shared norms

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<sup>327</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Wang Chenyu', in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.468.

distinguishing from general norms.

Tu Long's values were also implied in the relationship between himself and the natural world, through which he found himself and also lost himself. Finding self was to find the innate self, aware of the natural value of self, in his words, it was “*zixing* 自性”, which was not related to any hierarchical status or honour but was only for self-cultivating and self-esteem.<sup>328</sup> Then it was also the process of losing himself when he “escaped into the emptiness 逃於空虛”, which was his cultivation of his state of mind when he faced the situation as a dismissed literatus.<sup>329</sup> To match his tasteful lifestyle, Tu Long had to have the corresponding mental state that showed his virtue as a literatus, so he sought it through cultural and spiritual cultivation. He borrowed Zhu Xi's 朱熹 (1130-1200) words directly from his Penghu Shoujuan 蓬戶手卷, Hand Scroll of Humble House, to analogise himself, which could be seen as the process of finding himself and recognising himself through the virtue and value as a talented and virtuous literatus.<sup>330</sup> It was not just to compare himself to a cultural and moral model to express that he possessed similar virtues and values, indicating his status within the literati community, but more importantly, to seek greater esteem through fashioning his image as a literatus as virtuous as the outstanding model in other literati's eyes. Additionally, Zhuangzi's idea of “*wusangwo* 吾喪我” would be the process of Tu Long losing himself in the awareness of self.<sup>331</sup> *Wusangwo* could be understood as the spiritual self that eliminated the practical self, representing a supreme realm of life. It was a state of mind that Tu Long cultivated to shield the effect of worldly reputation, status, and honour, in order to concentrate on the cultivation of self to fashion an even more virtuous image as a literatus. In this context, his esteem would be further enhanced through spiritual cultivation.

The self-cultivation based on the values and virtues that Tu Long mastered himself was then presented in his taste, in terms of real items and his personal style. It was like a special display entirely according to personal taste and aestheticism, specifically for esteem recognised in his

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<sup>328</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Chen Lifu Sili’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.472.

<sup>329</sup> Tu Long, ‘Yu Tang Sizong’, in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.250.

<sup>330</sup> The quotation of Zhu Xi's words sees Tu Long's letter to Chen Rubi: ‘Yu Chen Lifu Sili’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, pp.471-473.

<sup>331</sup> See Tu Long's letter to Fang Yingxuan 方應選: ‘Da Fang Zhongfu 答方衆甫’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.480.

relations. The display mainly involved Tu Long's design of his house and gardens, indicating his distinguished aesthetic taste and fulfilled his needs of cultural or spiritual cultivation. In a letter to Long Ying, Tu Long described his garden:

To the west of my house, there is a half-acre garden, where I made a small pond, about the size of a palm of the hand. The pond is filled with lotuses, and around the embankment, various reeds and smartweed flowers are planted. Over the water a small pavilion is built, which only had the capacity of four people. I put a small table and a incense burner inside, with windows on all four sides. To the east, I can see the rosy clouds of dawn and the rising sun over the sea; to the west, I can sleep with the scenery of sunset and the shadow of the mountains. Above, I can overlook the high city walls and flying pavilions; below, there are mighty waves of the Yangtze River flow. I, with my head uncovered and barefoot, lie down within. The breeze from the south comes gently, cool and refreshing. Holding a *Huang Ting Jing* [referring to *Taishang Huangting Neijing Yujing* 太上黃庭內景玉經 and *Taishang Huangti Waijing Yujing* 太上黃庭外景玉經, which are the Daoist scriptures], I recite it several times. The imperial throne is not far, and the floating clouds drift lower. Men are not small, yet the world still feels narrow. Why must people restrained themselves to look up to the top of Mont Songyang?

宅西半畝園，鑿一池，如掌大。池中多栽芙蓉，繞隄雜藝蘆葦蓼花。跨水築小樓一間，中僅可坐四人。安一几一爐，四面開窗牖。東望朝霞海旭，西睡夕景峰陰。上臨高城飛觀，下走長江巨波。僕科頭袒跣，偃臥其中。薰風南來，泠然颯爽。手金碧黃庭，朗誦數過。帝座非遠，浮雲轉低。鬚眉不小，六合猶隘。亦何必減竦身日觀嵩陽之巔也？<sup>332</sup>

In a letter to Xu Wengren 徐翁仍, he also described his state of life:

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<sup>332</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Long Junshan 與龍君善', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.246.

After returning home I decided to live a secluded life, closing my door to the outside world ..... Only friends who share the same ethereal interests as me are allowed to visit. .... I rest and meditate there, sometimes sitting in the lotus position and practising deep breathing, sometimes translating sutra and writing books. .... My plan for seclusion is complete, and my ambitious spirit is cooled.

道民歸而遂作掩關計……非烟朋霞友不得登……道民遊息其中，時而跣趺胎息，時而繙經著書。……道民隱計成矣，雄心灰冷矣。<sup>333</sup>

According to Tu Long's description, what he wanted to express in his tasteful design was still about the self-value as a literatus, which included both his cultural and moral values. This can be seen from his idea of making light of official status or even resisting anything related to officialdom. Although it was a traditional virtue in the literati's value system, in the social context of the late Ming Dynasty, this virtue helped literati deal with the crisis of their identity and recognition caused by changes in social status and environments. By mastering their own values, they could fashion an esteemed image as literati through their distinguished taste. For Tu Long, as a literatus who experienced the changes that commonly happened among literati—from a common literatus to a literatus with the status as an official and back to a common literatus—by taking the imperial examinations, passing them, becoming an official, being promoted, and then being dismissed, what he could always rely on for his social recognition were his own values and virtues. These not only maintained his image in other literati's eyes but also greatly gained respect and esteem within the community.

The way literati sought social recognition in the form of esteem through their own virtues was different from the way that an honoured status as officials functioned. For instance, when Tu Long lost his official post, he also lost the status to seek honour in officialdom, while the cultivated

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<sup>333</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Xu Wengreng 與徐翁仍', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, pp.290-291.

virtues of literati could not be just lost. Hence, literati's esteem could be continuously sought for their social recognition. Although the dismissal did affect individuals' personal reputation or social values and, to some extent, affected literati's self-esteem, it would not change the way of seeking esteem in the process of literati's social recognition. Therefore, what Tu Long or other virtuous literati resisted was not honour as a form of recognition itself, but the way to recognition. This is why Tu Long emphasised his unworldly spirit in the display of his taste and self-cultivation.

Besides, for Tu Long, there was a more representative way to seek for esteem by presenting literati's values and norms: writing books. This was an act exclusive to the group of literati, especially talented literati or those with the kind of achievements. As a talented and renowned literatus with great cultivation in literature and frequent communication based on his relations bonded by literature, Tu Long had rich literary works collected and published by other literati of his time and later. As early as 1580, he published his first collection, *Youquan Collection*, which was widely spread among literati. By 1586, this collection was still popular in the market. In a letter that Jiang Yingke 江盈科 (1553-1605), a representative figure of the famous literary school, Gong'an School, wrote to Tu Long, he said: "In the spring of the Bingxu year [1580], while travelling and living in the capital, I bought *Youquan Collection* from the book store 丙戌之春，旅食京華，從書肆中得購由拳集".<sup>334</sup> During his post-official period, as an important part of his self-cultivation, Tu Long wrote several books, such as *Hongbao Collection* that comprehensively elaborated his idea of Reconciling of Three Teachings. He also finished three dramas, *Story of Millennium Flower*, *Caihao Ji* 彩毫記, *Story of Talented Writing Brush*, and *Xiuwen Ji* 修文記, *Story of Writing*. There were also collections about new literary form—*qingyan*, such as *Suoluo Guan Yigao* 娑羅館逸稿, *Sal-Tree-Hall Lost Drafts*, and *Sal-Tree-Hall Qingyan*. In addition to literary works, Tu Long wrote a treatise on official administration, *Huangzheng Kao*, derived from his experience when he served as a magistrate.

Tu Long's writing and all those books and works he wrote oriented to his distinguishing values and virtues. Through these, he gained a great sense of self-esteem when his outstanding talent and

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<sup>334</sup> Jiang Yingke 江盈科, 'Yu Tu Chishui 與屠赤水', in *Jiang Yingke Ji* 江盈科集, ed. by Huang Rensheng 黃仁生 (Changsha: Yuelu Shushe, 2008), p.417



ideas were directly presented achievements in literature, economy, and politics. Through these directly presented achievements, Tu Long's esteem was also more directly generated not just in different kinds of relations and social spheres within the literati community, but also within a broader community open to all who could access his works in society. The act itself and the books were like a kind of propaganda of literati's personal achievements, making their values widely recognised.

Meanwhile, Tu Long could possibly seek esteem through various achievements in a broader social community, benefiting from the social context in the late Ming Dynasty, especially the emergence of a commodity economy. When literati's literary and cultural cultivation also became a kind of commodity entering the economic market, in terms of books, arts, even their aesthetic taste for things, with the increasing need for this kind of cultural commodity, literati, as the group of people in the dominance of culture, had their values endowed with economic calculations.<sup>335</sup> In this context, literati's values would also be measure through the market. In the act of gift exchanging, which indicated the transfiguration from economic act to symbolic act that functioned in mutual relations, calculating economic values was a taboo. Unlike that, when literati's works were put in the social sphere of the market, their cultural values were inevitably measured by economic values. Moreover, the relations in the act of calculation were no longer intersubjective but between social subjects and cultural commodities. A high economic value of literati's works also represented a high achievement of literati, an approval of their cultural values. However, this kind of achievements of literati could only be functional in seeking esteem when it was in the relations for social recognition based on mutual values and norms. For example, Tu Long's *Youquan Collection* sold in the bookstore in Beijing and bought by another talented literatus, Jiang Yingke. The collection that could be sold in the bookstore for years indicated both economic and cultural values of Tu Long's work. This achievement helped Tu Long gain a great sense of self-esteem when his friend bought and appreciated it. It was just because of the special context in the transitional society of the late Ming Dynasty that the literati's struggle for social recognition took

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<sup>335</sup> About literati's economic calculations see Timothy Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China*, pp.101-104.

such special various patterns.

Above all, whether from Tu Long's socialising within different literati communities or self-cultivation of values and virtues, he seemed to fix the damage to social recognition causes by his dismissal and greatly deal with the crisis while meeting the social demand for recognition within the literati community. In general, Tu Long's self-mastered struggle for social recognition in the form of esteem could be seen as fulfilled, even though, during the satisfying process, the sense of crisis of recognition and shame of being dismissed still more or less existed and troubled him.

This mainly expressed in two ways, one was that Tu Long chose to seclude himself in the tasteful living sphere he built for himself, the other was that he somewhat suffered from loneliness due to a lack of guests and visitors. The damage that his dismissal brought to his social recognition was not only emotional but also practical. Firstly, his seclusion was not really isolating himself from the outside world; it was more like an attitude to the reality that could not be changed and a method to deal with the denial of recognition. It was also a way to avoid further emotional damage from the denial. Hence, it would more like cutting off a part of the former relations from his social and personal life than secluding himself from the social world completely. Like he said in the letters to Liu Guancha and Tang Sizong 唐嗣宗:

Since I was dismissed, I have isolated myself from worldly affairs ..... even my old friends from across the country have not heard from me.

挂冠以來，屏絕世事……即海內舊交，都無聞聞。

Since I lived in seclusion, .....I often shut my door and avoided socialising. When I go out, I seek out farmers and old villagers, gathering acorns and chestnuts, and talking about mulberry and hemp.....

僕屏居以來，……往往杜門塞兌。出則尋田父野老，拾橡栗，話桑麻……<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Tu Long, 'Yu Liu Guancha Xiansheng 與劉觀察先生', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.269; 'Yu Tang Sizong', in *Qizhenguan Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.5, p.250.

Cutting off from old relations helped Tu Long achieve self-cultivation during his time at home, but it could not help him to ignore the sense of loss when he had to seclude himself due to the inevitable decline of his reputation caused by dismissal. This attitude towards old friends and life not only showed his spiritual virtue of keeping distance from any people or affairs related to officialdom but also expressed his dissatisfaction with his dismissal and a kind of emotional resistance to the way of struggling for recognition based on official post and status.

The living state of seclusion, as a traditional virtue shared by the literati, almost accompanied Tu Long in his official and post-official periods. However, the pursuit of seclusion during the official period aimed at screening unnecessary social activities and interactions, while after losing his official post, seclusion was more like a mask covering the decline of admirers and visitors. Although hosting guests brought him a lot of pressure in terms of money, like how tight he was when he was involved in the socialising in the capital community, it could not be denied that popularity within the literati community was a strong sign of being recognised as an esteemed literatus and an honourable official. By the denial of honour, what was closely attached to it also fell off. This was the realistic consequence of the damaged social recognition to a literatus. Tu Long described the situation in the letters to Li Xuanbai and Wang Heng:

Even so, the changing clouds, sometimes like white clothes, sometimes like black dog [meaning the fleeting nature of life] has always been a source of lament. The bright sun and green pine [meaning life with beautiful nature], have been easier to say than to do. During my prosperous times, I was honoured and esteemed, my reputation spread far and wide. People admired my appearance, and my household was filled with visitors. Those who came to my door sought to climb the social ladder; those who wanted to build friendship with me often referenced the legendary friendship of Guan [Zhong] and Bao [Shuya]. But one day, I was slandered and dismissed, my reputation and status both destroyed. The friends I had known all my life were now half-hearted and held a wait-and-see attitude. . . . . Now, I live in solitude and quiet, secluded and without socialising.

雖然，白衣蒼狗，從古嗟傷。皦日青松，譚何容易。當不穀盛時，榮名被身，進賢加首。人望須眉，家拾咳唾。掃門而懷刺者，爭號登龍；把臂而論交者，動引管鮑。一旦遭讒去國，身名兩摧，生平心知，半懷觀望。……乃今則蕭寥閑寂，屏居無營。

Also, because I live in a remote and desolate place, I rarely see visitors from afar. When I just moved here, there were still elderly relatives and retired officials visiting me, offering their hands in greeting and expressing their concerns. But over time, even they stopped coming. Now, the door is so quiet that birds and sparrows could nest there.

又以僻居窮海，眇四方過客。甫入里門，猶有父兄三老，過而執手勞苦。久之，亦不復來。門可羅鳥雀矣。<sup>337</sup>

Though Tu Long possessed the virtue and awareness of valuing the innate knowledge of self instead of honour or fame attached to him, for the moment in the tasteful environment he formed for cultivation and fashioning the virtuous image of self, it might work. As he said, it was easier to say than to really enjoy the days only accompanied with “bright sun and green pine”. The loneliness was the real emotional pain caused by a lack of interaction and recognition. Therefore, his cultivation for self-value and virtue, and his praise to family members’ virtue and cultivation, were also for offsetting the crisis of recognition apart from the time that he engaged in socialising outside. The socialising mastered by Tu Long himself, however, was the genuinely effective struggle to deal with the crisis of social recognition.

Take an overall view of Tu Long’s self-mastery of struggle for social recognition during the post-official period, it was a successful practice, though the crisis caused by the denial of recognition had never totally rested. His own values and virtues were greatly emphasised through his self-mastered socialising and self-cultivation. Especially through the multiple connections built in his relations, he gained greater esteem within various fractional communities and the literati community. In the end, Tu Long died of syphilis, which was even greatly complimented by Tang

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<sup>337</sup> Tu Long, ‘Da Li Xuanbai’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.463; ‘Yu Wang Chenyu’, in *Baiyu Ji*, in *TLJ*, vol.4, p.467.

Xianzu with ten poems sending to Tu Long. His death was regarded as a sign of his distinguished, tasteful lifestyle and for the last time generated esteem within the literati community.

Tu Long is a suitable case for discussing the literati's struggle for social recognition in late Ming China due to his extensive experience, which led to various attempts in the process of social recognition. While his experience was rich, they were not so exceptional that no other literati had similar ones; rather, they were typical of what most literati faced in late Ming society, including incidents, denial, and crisis. Tu Long uniquely encapsulated the collective experience of the literati, achieving notable successes in the process. This makes Tu Long a unique and valuable case in the study of the literati's social recognition in the premodern China.

# Conclusion

The discussion of social recognition in premodern China is, to some extent, constrained by the hierarchical social system. However, in the late Ming Dynasty, the transitional society provided a comparatively suitable social environment for people, particularly the literati, to gain recognition not just in the form of honour with the prestige of a specific social status, but also in the form of esteem, derived from self-mastered values and norms shared in the reflexive relations within the literati community. The reason the literati's social recognition can be discussed in different forms is due to the context of the transitional society in the late Ming Dynasty. This is mainly expressed in the transformation of the ethos and values of the literati community, greatly influenced by the development of the commodity economy and the rise of the School of Mind. The commodity economy changed the way the literati lived and socialised in society, while the School of Mind stimulated their self-awareness and autonomy as moral agents, enabling them to forge a more self-valued life, rather than one entirely defined by hierarchical values.

This thesis aims to analyse the literati's social recognition between honour and esteem as they navigate the transformation of social ethos and values, and how these two forms of recognition coexisted and conflicted with each other. It also ambitiously explores whether and how social recognition transforms during the process of social transitions, especially with changes in the value system; how people recognise themselves and other amidst the conflict between old and new values and norms within the social community.

There has not yet been a study examining how social recognition is generated in a specific person or group, and what actions they practically take in their struggle for social recognition. Using the literatus Tu Long as an example in the discussion of literati's social recognition in the late Ming Dynasty allows for an exploration of the process in detail through his life and social experiences. This includes examining what factors enhance or undermine recognition, what might cause misrecognition within the community. Tu Long's rich experiences illustrate various situations in the process of social recognition and reflect the general struggles of literati in the late

Ming Dynasty. Tu Long also has his particularity. His multiple social statuses as a literatus, elite, and gentry, his outstanding talent and cultivation, his innovative ideas in literature and religious doctrine, and the conflicts and harmonies in his thoughts and actions, all highlight the complex situations the literati faced in the transitional society of the late Ming Dynasty. With both common and particular features in his life and social experiences, Tu Long's struggle for social recognition is a microcosm of the era. Moreover, his thoughts, life, and social experiences are well-documented through his letters and other writings, making him an excellent case study for the literati's social recognition.

Tu Long's social recognition generally took two forms: honour and esteem, which he sought differently in different periods of his life, greatly influenced by changing social environments. Like most literati, in the first half of his life, passing the imperial examinations and gaining status as an official was his main goal, as it was the most important way to realise his values in society. Tu Long's family origin as part of a super-elite gentry lineage decided his status as a member of the elite in the local community of Yin. Meanwhile, his literary talent and reputation earned him respect and esteem in his relations established within the elite and gentry community. This elite status and self-esteem intensified the necessity of passing the imperial examinations, in order to prove that his value matched his elite status and reputation. During this early life period, Tu Long's self-esteem was functioned more in the pursuit of status as an official. However, several failures in the Provincial Examination brought about a crisis of recognition, especially when he began to doubt himself. This crisis also occurred when Tu Long had to seek a livelihood in a social environment constituted by individuals of immorality or from lower classes. The incompatibility between the values and norms of this environment and those of the elite community that cultivated Tu Long's values and virtues made him an alien, unable to form reciprocal relations or interactions, let alone generate intersubjective recognition. Although Tu Long's social relations remained within the elite community, the practical change in environment caused a sense of crisis and misrecognition, especially when his values and virtues were not appreciated, and his elite status was not respected.

Tu Long's struggle for social recognition changed after passing the Metropolitan Examinations and became an official, shifting his status from a common literatus to a literatus serving as an official. During his official period, Tu Long primarily focused on seeking greater honour within officialdom while maintaining his esteem in the similar degree. In the early stage of this period, he experienced asymmetric recognition from officialdom, believing his value was not fully recognised by officialdom, meaning the degree of honour did not match his self-esteem. Hence, balancing honour and esteem became the goal of his struggle for social recognition, which he achieved when he is awarded the title of Literary Gentleman and promoted to the central government, where he fashioned himself a virtuous image as a *yanhuo shenxian*, indicating a harmonious state of the two forms of recognition.

However, his dismissal caused by a dishonoured reason of indulgence not only disrupted his self-mastered state of recognition but also brought about misrecognition through the denial of his official status. Due to Tu Long's multiple statuses and the different forms of recognition he sought, the dismissal did not result in entire misrecognition but significantly damaged his structure of social recognition. Additionally, his dismissal becomes a sign of recognition when it was regarded as a wrongful accusation, emphasising his great virtue. Since then, Tu Long's struggle for recognition had focused solely on esteem in his post-official period. The dismissal itself highlighted the potential conflict between the values and norms of officialdom and those of the literati community, reflecting the broader conflict between conventional values and the values of a changing society in the literati's thoughts and actions.

After his dismissal, Tu Long experienced misrecognition from officialdom but also gained freedom from its constraints of the social community of officialdom. He then began his struggle for recognition in a comparatively open and contestable environment within the literati community, where shared values and norms were more redefinable. The literati community, with diverse values, cultivation, and social statuses, consisted of various fractional communities that allowed for more delicate recognition in self-mastered relations. Tu Long's demand for recognition increased following the damage to his social recognition. This demand was mainly satisfied through frequent



social activities and interactions related to shared cultural and social status and cultivation. During these activities and interactions, Tu Long's values and virtues were highly esteemed by his peers.

Tu Long's socialising can be divided into two types: participation in literati associations and personal social needs, which were expressed in flexible forms and contents. These included religious and literati cultivation, symbolic acts such as gift exchanging with friends, and interactions involving family members. In addition to his practical socialising, Tu Long sought greater esteem by fashioning an image as a refined literatus through his taste and virtue. This was evident in his decorations of gardens, self-cultivation through writing, and his spiritually seclusive lifestyle.

Tu Long's trajectory of struggle for social recognition between honour and esteem throughout different periods of his life comprehensively illustrates various states of the literati's social recognition in the late Ming dynasty: the comparatively satisfied state, the harmonious state, and the state of denial. These states of recognition generating in different social spheres reflect how the literati recognise themselves in a transitional society with changing social ethos and values, and the struggles they faced during this process. While discussing social recognition in a hierarchical society may be controversial, the context of the late Ming Dynasty and the case of Tu Long provide an opportunity to explore a more complex form of recognition in premodern China, beyond just honour. Social transition is a long and complicated process, allowing for the possibility of hybrid states of social recognition in different forms. Although Tu Long may not be the most outstanding figure amongst the literati of the late Ming Dynasty, he is arguably the most suitable and valuable for studying the complexity of the social recognition in premodern China.

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