ABSTRACT: Relations Between Actors and Scholars During the Ming-Qing Transition, as Seen in *Tao’an Mengyi*

Author: Wenxin CHEN and Tianbi GAO

During the final phase of a declining political order, during troubled times, or under other exceptional circumstances, concord between outsider scholars and political authority is easily ruptured. The psychology of scholars and certain actors who were subject to the same “authority” pressure thus came to rest on a common foundation. Zhang Dai’s *Recollections of Tao-an’s Past Dreams (Tao’an mengyi 陶庵夢憶)* can be seen as a manifestation of the relationship between scholars and actors in troubled times. Through a deep analysis of the text of “Dream Recollections of Tao An,” we can see scholars beginning to have an emotional appreciation for the independence and individuality of the actors. At the same time, a certain self-consciousness of the actors was awakened, whereby the actors provided spiritual and material support to the scholars during this difficult period. The performance of many scholars in amateur theatrical shows also meant that the status of low-ranking scholars and actors was not significantly different. This new scholar-actor relationship is inseparable from the thought, politics and economics of the late Ming and early Qing period, and should be understood in just such a context.

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