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## **AUTOCHTHONOUS CHINESE CONCEPTUAL HISTORY IN A JOCLAR NARRATIVE KEY: THE EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT QING**

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Understandably, conceptual history in Germany and indeed in Europe at large as well as in the US has predominantly been a matter of words: the use of words, the definition of words and the function of words as factors creating spaces for action in history. Everyone knew, of course, that terminological history is not the same as conceptual history, but in practice it has been most convenient to identify the terminological repertory connected with a concept and then go on to study the uses and functions of that terminology in discourse.

Chén Chūn 陳淳 (1159–1223) *Běixī zì yì* 《北溪字義》 "Běixī's Meanings of Characters" shows that conceptual history of such a traditional kind has its deep roots in China. For Chén Chūn does discuss the keywords of what in the West has come to be called school of Neo-Confucianism for a sufficiently long time for this misleading term to have become endemic and acceptable. The Chinese did not really have a standard term for this complex movement, though *lǐ xué* 理學 "Study of Principles" and *dào xué* 道學 "Study of Principles" were used for whatever the essence of the movement was. Not "school" in any case, but "study".

Chén Chūn's perspective on conceptual history is pervasively serious, albeit defiantly colloquial in style. Also, his discourse is definitively conceptual. It concentrates on the analysis of key concepts in key philosophical texts. Chén Chūn distills from this the essence of the semantic force of these "buzzwords" and their characteristic role in Chinese intellectual history.

Such concentration on high-flown discourse at the pinnacles of the pyramidal hierarchy of philosophical analysis and spirituality seemed natural enough at Chén Chūn's time. But it provoked in China a reaction by China's greatest folklorist of

folk narrative, China's first great joculographer, China's first great anthologiser of popular erotic poetry, the sublime late Ming dynasty scholar Féng Mènlóng 馮夢龍 (1574-1646).

Nothing introduces Féng Mènlóng's bent of mind better than the his introduction to Xiàofù 笑府 “Store-House of Laughter”, perhaps the most famous piece of joculography, or jestbook in China. And nothing can serve better as an introduction to the present offering than this precious short text imbued with humorous scholarly self-awareness:

古今來莫非話也，  
話莫非笑也。  
兩儀之混沌開闢、列聖之揖讓征誅  
見者其誰耶？  
夫亦話之而已耳。  
後之話今  
亦猶今之話昔。  
話之而疑之  
可笑也。  
話之而信之  
尤可笑也。  
經書子史  
鬼話也。  
而爭傳焉。  
詩賦文章  
淡話也，  
而爭工焉。  
褒譏伸抑  
亂話也，  
而爭趨避焉。  
或笑人  
或笑於人。  
笑人者  
亦復笑于人；

笑於人者  
亦復笑人。  
人之相笑  
寧有已時。  
笑府集笑話也。  
十三篇猶曰薄乎云爾。  
或閱之而喜  
請勿喜。  
或閱之而嘖  
請勿嘖。  
古今世界一大笑府  
我與若皆在其中。  
供人話柄  
不話不成人，  
不笑不成話。  
不笑不話不成世界。  
布袋和尚，吾師乎，吾師乎。

From ancient times to the present nothing is not mere talk,  
and mere talk is never anything other than a laughing matter.  
The undifferentiated mass of Yin and Yang dividing when the world began, the assorted sages  
bowing profusely and executing each other,  
who of us was witnessing this?  
They surely just give us mere talk about these things, that is all.  
When future generations tell their mere talk about our present  
that too is just like us telling empty tales about the past.

If, when they tell these empty tales, one is suspicious about them  
one is laughable.  
If, when they tell these empty tales, one believes them  
then one is even more laughable.

The classics, the documents, the philosophers, the histories,  
are just so many weird empty tales,  
and yet people compete to transmit them.  
Lyrics, rhyme prose, and essays  
are just so many insipid empty tales,

and yet people compete to work at these forms.

Praise and ridicule, promotion and dismissal  
are just so many empty tales of an age of confusion,  
and yet people compete in going for the one and avoiding the other.  
Some laugh at others,  
others are laughed at by others.  
Those who laugh at others,  
are in turn laughed at by still others;  
and those who are laughed at by others,  
will in turn laugh at others.  
That people laugh at each other  
when will that ever end?

The Store-house of Laughter collects jokes that make one laugh.  
Thirteen chapters of this must still count as a slim volume.  
Some will read this and feel pleased with themselves,  
but I must warn them not to be so pleased.  
Others will read this and get angry,  
but I must advise them not to get so angry.

This world, past and present, is one big store-house of laughter  
And I as well as you, my gentle readers, are all inside:  
providing for mankind a laughing stock for empty tales.  
Without empty tales one is no man,  
without laughter, there are no empty tales.  
Without laughter and empty tales, there is no world!!  
Monk Budai (died A.D. 916)! My master! My master!

Féng Mènglóng did think that we were all a bit of a joke, and that one can only take intellectually seriously those who recognise the unserious nature of the exercise that is the conduct of human life in this bizarrely contingent world.

Various forms of emotional and especially amorous infatuation, serious as they are for the infatuated, serious as they are also for defining the ends of human life, are naturally the subject of much light-hearted and jocular narrative banter. They are ludicrously contingent in all too many manifest ways. It is the ludicrous contingency of what is so crucial to human life that captured the romantic imagination of Heinrich Heine: *Ein Jüngling liebte ein Mädchen, das hatt' einen andern erwählt...*

... Féng Mènglóng was, in the end, less romantically inclined than Heinrich Heine, as we shall see. And his scientific interest in emotions and amorous entanglements certainly did not pass over in silence those varieties of homophile experience where *Ein Jüngling liebte nen Jüngling, der hatt' einen andern erwählt*. More on this below.

Féng Mènglóng's sensibilities are perhaps nowhere more intimately intimated than in the Preface to his anthology of the peculiar genre erotic folk poetry, the genre of *Shān gē* 山歌. This Preface - really a postface, but US editors tend to insist that this word does not exist so we must thank the lord if this parenthesis slips through editorial scrutiny of a European press, for the time being - this Postface, I say, is too long to be presented in full, but the following extract from its autobiographic beginning will give a fair idea of the way in which Féng Mènglóng's literary mind was carved. At points one is indeed at a loss with Féng Mènglóng, just as he was with some of his sources. At times one sympathises with him when he merrily complains on the occasion of some ditties in in his Postface: 不知何義，其詞頗趣。"I don't really know what it means, but the wording is fascinating." This seems to me to be a very fine way of speaking of delicate lyrical poetry. Here, in any case, is the general part of his introduction, translated as best I can:

敍山歌

書契以來，

代有謠謠。

太史所陳，

並稱風雅，

尚矣。

自楚騷唐律，

爭妍競暢，

而民間性情之響，

遂不得列于詩壇，

於是別之曰山歌，

言田夫野豎矢口寄興之所為，

薦紳學士家不道也。

唯詩壇不列，  
薦紳學士不道，  
而歌之權愈輕，  
歌者之心亦愈淺，  
今所盛行者，  
皆私情譜耳。  
雖然，  
桑間濮上，  
《國風》刺之，  
尼父錄焉，  
以是為情真而不可廢也。  
山歌雖俚甚矣，  
獨非《鄭》《衛》之遺歟？  
且今雖季世，  
而但有假詩文，  
無假山歌，  
則以山歌不與詩文爭名，  
故不屑假。  
苟其不屑假，  
而吾藉以存真，  
不亦可乎？  
抑今人想見上古之陳於太史者如彼，  
而近代之留於民間者如此，  
倘亦論世之林云爾。  
若夫借男女之真情，  
發名教之偽藥，  
其功於《掛枝兒》等，  
故錄《掛枝詞》而次及山歌。

### **Writing a Postface for the Mountain Songs**

Since there have been written records  
in every period of time there have been folk songs.  
As the Grand Historian (Sīmǎ Qiān) has pointed out,  
this includes both the fēng songs and the yǎ songs,  
and these are the most important (in the Book of Songs).  
Since the *Lísāo* from Chǔ and the regulated verse from Táng dynasty  
there has been competition regarding beauty and its displays,  
but as for the echos from the emotions among the people  
these did not get to be ranked on altar of lyrical poetry.  
For this reason single such poems out and call them Mountain songs.  
The point is that what peasants and country layabouts produce, untrammelled and  
with literary gusto,  
this is something that spruced-up gentlemen and scholars do not speak of.  
It is true enough that these are not lined up on the literary altars,  
and these are literary things that spruced-up gentlemen and scholars do not speak of,  
but the less the influence of the songs,  
the less pretentious the attitude of the singers.  
And those songs that are en vogue at present  
are all just scores for illicit love.  
This may be so,  
but the (risqué) *Sāng jiān* on the River Pú  
is being taken up in the *Guó fēng* section of the Songs,  
our father-figure Confucius has made the record about them  
and on the basis of this emotions count as genuine and must not be dismissed.  
The Mountain Songs may be very vulgar  
but are they not the relics of the states of Zhèng and Wèy (famous for their lewd  
love songs)?  
But if in this degenerate age  
there are only fake *shī*-lyrics (notorious for their conventionalism)  
and never any fake Mountain Songs  
this is because the Mountain Songs do not compete for fame with the texts of lyrics,  
therefore one is unwilling to fake these.  
If they really have not been prepared to fake these  
then for me to avail myself of these and to preserve the genuine articles

is that not appropriate?

Now the present generation imagine that antiquity as presented by the historian Sīmǎ Qiān is as presented in the songs from the states of Zhèng and Wèy, and that what remains of it among the people is like the Mountain Songs, then presumably the Mountain Songs must be judged to belong to the Parnassus of our age.

If I can borrow the true feelings between men and women to deploy this as an antidote against the false pretences of conventionalism, their merit will be as great as that of the *guà zhī ér* erotic songs. Therefore I record these *guà zhī ér* erotic songs. ... ..

Respectable scholarly life, to Féng Mènglóng was not just boring. It was factitious, mendacious, presumptuous, pretentious, emotionally anaemic, and intellectually desiccated. Above all, scholarly life appeared to him disastrously devoid of that lifeline of any honest and true aesthetic as well as philosophical spirit, that indispensable catalyst of authenticity which he called *qíng* 情, and which one might try to gloss preliminarily as "emotional engagement" in English until one finds a better rendering. Féng's interest in *qíng* 情, it becomes very clear in his writings, was almost pathological: nothing whatsoever seemed to matter to him without an inner glow of *qíng* 情 in it. Nothing was likeable or dislikable without this element of *qíng* 情, of course! But really, nothing whatsoever deserved any serious attention anyway insofar as it was without *qíng* 情. For without *qíng* 情 he found there was none of that crucial quality *zhēn* 真 "authenticity".

Instead of expatiating now on how far this is romanticism or *Sturm und Drang à la chinoise*, that is, instead of merely subsuming what I feel I ought to try to understand, instead of that, I say, I shall look at the characteristically autobiographic way in which Féng Mènglóng introduces the major encyclopaedic work he has devoted to this all-important matter of *qíng* 情. Féng's ideal was indeed to be, *in this sense*, a *zhēn rén* 真人 "an authentic person".

As it happens, Féng Mènglóng proves pretty indifferent in the definition of this *qíng* 情 that mattered so much to him. He did not discourse extensively upon the subject

the concept of *qíng* 情. His passion was for the very thing: 天下莫重於情，莫輕於財。"Nothing is more important under Heaven than *qíng* 情, nothing is less important than material wealth!", he expostulates in the final short general comment on volume 18 of his encyclopaedia *qíng shǐ lèi lüè* 情史類略 "Classified Summary of the Records on *qíng* 情".

Féng Mènglóng thought he could best get an intellectual handle on this thing *qíng* 情 by writing a comprehensive encyclopaedia about it in the form of a reasoned, sub-classified **narrative** encyclopaedia, and that idea of a narrative encyclopaedia deserves our close attention. His interest was not in how the word *qíng* 情 might be defined, but how the thing enters concrete narratives of human lives. To be sure, he was not interested in "the rhetoric of emotions" in narrative either. Nor was he ultimately concerned with these narratives as such at all! He was not in any business of mere literary history. His thought was that the narratives of human lives recorded in China throughout the ages might indeed have important things to illustrate about the role of the thing *qíng* 情 in human life.

Here again, I feel I can do no better than to let Féng Mènglóng speak for himself in the introduction to his historical narrative encyclopaedia which he called *qíng shǐ lèi lüè* 情史類略 "Classified Summary of the Records on *qíng* 情"

情史序

情史，余志也。

余少負情癡，

遇朋儕必傾赤相與，

吉凶同患。

聞人有奇窮奇枉，

雖不相識，

求為之地，

或力所不及，

則嗟歎累日，

中夜展轉不寐。  
見一有情人，  
輒欲下拜。  
或無情者，  
志言相忤，  
必委曲以情導之，  
萬萬不從乃已。  
嘗戲言，  
我死後不能忘情世人，  
必當作佛度世，  
其佛號當云「多情歡喜如來」。  
有人稱贊名號，  
信心奉持，  
即有無數喜神前後擁護，  
雖遇仇敵冤家，  
悉變歡喜，  
無有嗔惡妒嫉種種惡念。  
又嘗欲擇取古今情事之美者，  
各著小傳，  
使人知情之可久，  
於是乎無情化有，  
私情化公，  
庶鄉國天下，  
藹然以情相與，  
於澆俗冀有更焉。  
而落魄奔走，  
硯田盡蕪，  
乃為詹詹外史氏所先，  
亦快事也。  
是編分類著斷，

恢詭非常，  
雖事專男女，  
未盡雅馴，  
而曲終之奏，  
要歸於正。  
善讀者可以廣情，  
不善讀者亦不至於導欲。  
余因為序  
而作情偈以付之。

偈曰：

「天地若無情，  
不生一切物。  
一切物無情，  
不能環相生。  
生生而不滅，  
由情不滅故。  
四大皆幻設，  
性情不虛假。  
有情疏者親，  
無情親者疏，  
無情與有情，  
相去不可量。  
我欲立情教，  
教誨諸眾生：  
子有情於父，  
臣有情於君，  
推之種種相，  
俱作如是觀。  
萬物如散錢，  
一情為線索，

散錢就索穿，  
天涯成眷屬。  
若有賦害等，  
則自傷其情。  
如睹春花發，  
齊生歡喜意。  
盜賊必不作，  
姦宄必不起。  
佛亦何慈悲，  
聖亦何仁義。  
倒卻情種子，  
天地亦混沌。  
無奈我情多，  
無奈人情少。  
願得有情人，  
一齊來演法。」

### **Postface to Classified Records of *qíng* 情**

The (writing of) history of *qíng* has (long) been my aspiration.

Since I was young I bore a craziness for *qíng*.

When I meet my friends I was sure to pour out my innermost thoughts with them,  
and the fortunate things as well as the unfortunate I suffer together with them.

When I hear that someone else is in extraordinary distress or suffers extraordinary  
injustice,

even if I am not acquainted with him

I seek something I might do to help him. [I suspect the 地 is corrupt.]待考

When, for some reason, my strength is insufficient (to help)

then I would be sighing for days,

in the middle of the night I will toss and turn and be unable to sleep.

When I see someone who has *qíng*

I invariably feel the urge to bow deep before him.

And if by chance someone is devoid of *qíng*  
and his aspirations and speech are at variance,

I am bound to guide him in subtle indirect ways,  
and only if he will not follow me after innumerable attempts will I give up.

I have once said in jest:

"Even after I die I will be unable to forget the men of *qíng* in this world.

I am sure to become a Buddha to deliver the world.

My Buddhist name will be "The Joyful Tathāgatha of Much *qíng*".

There will be those who sing the praise of my name,  
and who will faithfully support me.

And then there will be innumerable Spirits of Joy who will guard me from in front  
and behind.

Even if I run into bad enemies or those who feel they have suffered injustice from  
me

in every case I will turn their grievances to joy:

there will be no bad thoughts at all of any resentment or envy.

Again, my wish was to choose the most beautiful accounts of *qíng*, old and new,  
and to make a brief account of each of them

so as to let others understand how *qíng* can be made to last,

and how at that point absence of *qíng* turns into its presence,

selfish *qíng* turns into public-spirited *qíng*,

how all regions, states, and the whole world

can interact kindly in accordance with *qíng*

and how one can hope to introduce change to shallow conventions.

However, lately my fallen spirits have been on the run

my Inkstone Field studios all overgrown with weeds,

So then, having been preempted by Mr Zhānzhān wàishǐ

is surely an occasion for joy.

This compilation is divided into categories and thus cut up,  
and it is long-winded in the extreme.

Even if the subject matter is especially about men and women,

and it is not everywhere dignified and proper,

but at the final phase

it will all revert to correct propriety.

Those who have eyes to read can broaden their *qíng*

and those who have no eyes to read properly will not get to guide their desires.

Thus, on this basis, I have made this preface,  
and I have made a *qíng* Buddhist gāthā to go with it.

The gāthā goes like this:

"If Heaven and Earth had no *qíng*  
they would not have created all creatures.

If all creatures had no *qíng*  
they would not be able in turn to generate each other.

They go on producing, and they are not ruined,  
and all this is because their *qíng* is not ruined.

The Four Elements have all been set up inanely,  
but *xìngqíng* are neither empty nor fake.

If there is *qíng* then even those who are far away from each other are close,  
and if there is no *qíng* then even those who are close to each other are distant.

Those lacking *qíng* and those having *qíng*  
are immeasurably distant from each other.

I wish to establish an education in *qíng*  
and to teach *qíng* to the living creatures.

Children have *qíng* for their father,  
subordinates have *qíng* for their ruler,  
and generalising from features like these  
they all present this aspect.

All things are like coins strewn about  
one feeling is the string that ties them together.

When the strewn-about coins are strung together with string  
then all the world become relatives.

If there is poetry on harmful things, 待考  
then one will harm one's own *qíng*.

If one observes the spring flowers blossom  
then together with them there arise joyful thoughts.

Then thieves will not arise  
and wickedness will not occur.

What is there then for the Buddha to show compassion for,  
what is there for the sage to show off his morality to?

When the seeds of *qíng* are spread out

Heaven and Earth are all in confusion.  
One can do nothing about it: my own *qíng* is abundant.  
One can do nothing about it: other people's *qíng* is less.  
My hope is to find a person who has *qíng*  
and together with him to develop the *dharma*-Truth.

These are strong words of introduction. I want to turn, now, to a brief systematic survey of the organisation of Féng Mènglóng's narrative encyclopaedia in which he has tried to realise his ambitions.

Féng Mènglóng divided it into the numerologically pleasing number of twenty-four small volumes. I shall present all of them in their proper order, with what I hope are some useful excerpts from Féng's comments on his systematic collection of narrative material.

The first small volume is devoted to impeccable behaviour motivated by *qíng* 情. It declares itself to be concerned with the *lèi* 類 "category" of such behaviour as such, as well as its subcategories. Every category is commented upon at the end of its small volume in a mini-postface which provides general comments on the whole little volume. In the opening of the present postface Féng Mènglóng remarks: 情主人曰：「自來忠孝節烈之事，從道理上做者必勉強，從至情上出者必真切。夫婦其最近者也。無情之夫，必不能為義夫，無情之婦，必不能為節婦。The host of *qíng* 情 comments: From time immemorial the matter of devoted effort, filial piety, moderation and distinction will always be performed in a forced way as long as they are practised (deliberately) *according to their principles*, but when they come from the ultimate *qíng* 情 then they will always be authentic. Husband and wife are the closest there are in the world. But a husband who is without *qíng* 情 is not a proper husband; a wife without *qíng* 情 is not a decent wife."

第一卷 情貞類 **VOL. 1: The category of emotional virtuousness**

Virtuous couples

Virtuous wives

Virtuous concubines

Virtuous courtesans

We can see that such impeccable virtuous behaviour will have to occur in the social and institutional context of marriage, concubinage, or of the regular patronage of courtesans. And we have learnt why Féng Mènglóng found such moral purity is less important to dwell on narratively in husbands than in their wives.

Needless to say, the encyclopaedist does not moralise on the rights and wrongs of these traditional social institutions. (The enlightenment has yet to arrive in China.)

The second chapter is devoted to the category of preordained strokes of emotional good luck.

Here again, there is no question of Féng Mènglóng disapproving of the outrageous practice of women choosing husbands, and the equally deviant cases of dissolution of marriage and remarriage. His concern is to lay out the narrative categories as he finds them in his society, almost but not quite in the spirit of Stith Thompson, *Motif Index*. Féng Mènglóng comments: 情史氏曰：「夫人一宵之遇，亦必有緣焉湊之，況夫婦乎！」The historian of *qíng* 情 comments: 'Even a one-night meeting needs to be a fated serendipity, how much more in the case of husband and wife!'

## 第二卷 情緣類 VOL. 2: The category of emotional fated affinities

Unexpected marriage

Men who marry in their old age

Women who choose their own husbands

Re-union of husbands and wives

The third main category is that of *sī* 私 "private" emotional engagement, which in the nature of things Chinese had to be conducted in secret, and which while connoting the illicit, was currently condoned as long as it was discreet in classical Chinese society. On this category Féng Mènglóng has prudential rather than moralistic advice: 慎勿以須臾之歡，而誤人於沒世也。 "Take care that you do not for a moment's pleasure make a life-times mistake for others."

## 第三卷 情私類 VOL. 3: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL SECRECY

Clandestine emotion leading to marriage

Clandestine emotion not leading to marriage

Clandestine rendezvous

Clandestine affairs with maidservants

The fourth main category is that of chivalry in emotional engagement, and it clearly gives Féng Mènglóng great pleasure to start out this category with three subcategories of female chivalry. It is to be noted that the "incongruous" idea of female chivalry was popular in traditional Chinese popular literature. Féng Mènglóng comments to show that chivalry is all a matter of emotional empathy: 己若無情，何以能體人之情。其不拂人情者，真其人情至深者耳。 "If these (chivalrous people) had no *qíng* 情 how could they understand other people's *qíng* 情? Since they do not disturb other people's *qíng* 情, this shows that their human *qíng* 情 is extremely profound."

#### 第四卷 情俠類 VOL. 4: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL CHIVALRY

Chivalrous women who can choose their own husbands

Chivalrous women who can assist others

Courtesans who can defend the name and integrity of others

Chivalrous fellows who can understand the more subtle human emotions

Chivalrous fellows who accomplish tasks for others

The chivalrous who can kill those without emotion

The sixth category is that of effusive extrovert emotionality under which Féng Mènglóng very sensitively places bravery: one perceives the taxonomic bent in his way of thinking. Féng Mènglóng comments: 雖然，無情者又能勇乎哉！」 "In any case, how could a person without *qíng* 情 have courage?" Without *qíng* 情, courage is foolhardiness.

#### 第五卷 情豪類 VOL. 5: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL EFFUSIVENESS

Magnanimous extravagance

Magnanimous splendour

Magnanimous eccentricity

Magnanimous bravery

The sixth category singles out the element of affection which I do not think one should confuse with sexual infatuation. Here again, in true encyclopaedic form,

Féng Mènglóng subdivides the field quite logically, but leaves out the cases of men's affection for men and women's affection for women because the latter are culturally marked as restricted to the sphere of the *sī* 私 "private and illicit". Féng Mènglóng needs to be quoted at some length on this sensitive matter: 情生愛，愛復生情。情愛相生而不已，則必有死亡滅絕之事。其無事者，幸耳！雖然，此語其甚者，亦半由不善用愛，奇奇怪怪，令人有所藉口，以為情尤。情何罪焉？ "qíng 情 engenders erotic passion, and erotic passion engenders qíng 情. When qíng 情 and erotic passion engender each other endlessly, then there is bound to be destruction and break-ups. When there are no such things, that is simply a stroke of good luck. Still, this way of talking is probably excessive. Half the trouble is that one is not good at handling erotic passion. Then things get strange indeed, and it leads to people making excuses and putting the blame on qíng 情. But why should qíng 情 be to blame?" The point is

#### 第六卷 情愛類 **VOL. 6: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL EROTIC PASSION**

Men's erotic passion for women

Women's erotic passion for men

Men's and women's erotic passion for each other

The seventh category of besotted infatuation suffers no subcategorisation, according to Féng Mènglóng. One senses the delight with which Féng Mènglóng places emotional attachments in the logical vicinity of besotted doltishness. He comments: 自達者觀之，凡情皆癡也，男女抑末矣。 "When one looks at it from the point of view of someone of successful cold intelligence, as a matter of principle all qíng 情 is besotted, and the matters between men and women are trifling."

#### 第七卷 情癡類 **VOL. 7: EMOTIONAL FOOLISHNESS**

No subcategories.

The eighth category is one that is related to what in ancient China was a theory of cosmic resonance that was the explicit subject of a whole chapter *gǎn yìng xùn* 感應訓 in the book *Huáinánzǐ* 淮南子. (See Charles Le Blanc 1981) In the concept of Féng Mènglóng's encyclopaedia the focus is on such resonance as it relates to qíng

情. The subclassification is again quite nicely taxonomic. Féng Mènglóng comments: 鬼有人情，神有鬼情。"Ghosts have the *qíng* 情 of humans; spirits have the *qíng* 情 of ghosts."

## 第八卷 情感類 VOL. 8: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL RESONANCE

Emotional resonance in humans

Emotional resonance of spirits and ghosts

Emotional resonance of inanimate things

The ninth category is one that is openly inspired not by Taoist thought, but by Buddhist theory: the theory of illusion, the delusoriness of all worldly features is a common subject of Buddhist discourse. Féng Mènglóng concentrates on the way such illusoriness becomes narratively relevant to the world of *qíng* 情. Féng Mènglóng comments: 事所未有，夢能造之；意所未設，夢能開之。"What is never there in the facts, dreams can create it; what is never there in conscious thought, dreams can open it up."

## 第九卷 情幻類 VOL. 9: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL DELUSION

Delusory dreams

(Delusory) separations of soul from body

(Delusory) reincarnation in a new body

(Delusory) summoning of souls

Delusory paintings

Delusory anecdotes

Delusory magic

The tenth category remains in the realm of what western scholars are wont to regard as that of the religious, the supernatural efficacy of emotions in various ways. Féng Mènglóng comments in his Postface: 情史氏曰：「人，生死於情者也；情，不生於人者也。人生，而情能死之；人死，而情又能生之。"The historian of *qíng* 情 said: Man is the sort of creature that is born and dies from *qíng* 情; *qíng* 情, on the other hand, is not born and does not die because of man. When a man lives, *qíng* 情 can cause him to be dead; when a man is dead *qíng* 情 can cause him to become

alive again."

**第十卷 情靈類 VOL. 10: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL  
SUPERNATURAL EFFICACY**

Supernatural efficacy in curing illness

Supernatural efficacy in resurrection

Supernatural efficacy in dying together

Supernatural efficacy in desires fulfilled after death

Supernatural efficacy in promises carried out after death

Supernatural efficacy in pursuing the beloved after death

Supernatural efficacy in desires fulfilled in the next incarnation

Supernatural efficacy in sending a message after death about reincarnation

Supernatural efficacy in reappearing after death

Supernatural efficacy in love-making after death

Supernatural efficacy in supernaturally efficacious coffins

The eleventh category of eighteen stories in all is without subdivisions because it is devoted to a phenomenon hard to handle intellectually but prominent in certain narratives: the mysterious transferral of emotional effects across widely different realms of reality, like the wind emotions are said to blow across reality, taking shape even in plants and animals. Just as plants, says Féng Mènglóng in his introduction to this section, as bearers of emotions obtain a certain significance, so men without emotions should be taken to lose any significance they might otherwise have had. Féng Mènglóng comments: 情史氏曰：「情主動而無形，忽焉感人而不自知。有風之象，故其化為風。The historian of *qíng* 情 says: "The main thing in *qíng* 情 is movement and the absence of fixed mundane form. Suddenly it moves people, and they do not know what is happening to them. It is in the image of the (medico-metaphysical category of) the wind, that is why it transforms into the wind..."

**第十一卷 情化類 VOL. 11: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL  
TRANSFORMATION**

No subdivision into subcategories.

The category of matchmaking is an obvious one to predominate in the narratives of

*qíng* 情, and it remains important to remember that amorous association that is not *sī* 私 "private/illicit" must in general be mediated by others than the participants in it. Thus *qíng* 情 is not construed as a personal matter between those who have *qíng* 情. It inscribes itself into a prescriptive matchmaking context that includes much more than matchmakers proper, right down to the odd ant. Féng Mènglóng comments much in the manner of the traditional court historian: 情史氏曰：「媒者，尋常婚媾之事也。常事不書，有異焉則書之。」 "The historian of *qíng* 情 says: 'Matchmaking refers to the ordinary matter of arranging marriages. Ordinary matters I do not record, only when there is something extraordinary do I write it down.'"

## 第十二卷 情媒類 VOL. 12: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL MATCHMAKERS

Immortals as matchmakers

Officials as matchmakers

Wives as matchmakers

Calligraphy as matchmakers

Poetry as matchmakers

Lyrics as matchmakers

Ghosts as matchmakers

Wind as matchmakers

Red leaves as matchmakers

Tigers as matchmakers

Foxes as matchmakers

Ants as matchmakers

The thirteenth category focusses on regretful concomitants of *qíng* 情. The central significance of this category is not evident until one recognises that emotional engagement comports vulnerability. Féng Mènglóng comments: 賦情彌深，蓄憾彌廣，固其宜也。 "The deeper the *qíng* 情 one is endowed with becomes, the broader the realm of what is to be regretted: that is as it should be."

## 第十三卷 情憾類 VOL. 13: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL REGRETS

Regrets about non-fated ties  
Regrets about unsuitable *liaisons*  
Regrets about lamenting the dead  
Unconsumed resurrections

The fourteenth category is that of what militates against emotional attachment. Féng Mènglóng's comments here take proverbial common life experience as a point of departure: 情史氏曰：「語云『歡喜冤家』，冤家由歡喜得也。夫『靡不有初，鮮克有終』。」 "The historian of *qíng* 情 says: 'As the saying goes: *enemy in love*. The enemy becomes an enemy out of love. As the saying goes: *everything has a beginning, but few things get to their proper end*.'"

#### 第十四卷 情仇類 VOL. 14: THE CATEGORY OF ENEMIES OF EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT

Marriages opposed by parents  
Separations imposed by parents  
Infidelity  
Jealousy  
Slander  
Deceit  
Encountering villainy

The fifteenth category is concerned with what inspires emotional attachment in traditional narratives. Féng Mènglóng comments: 情主人曰：「草木之生意，動而為芽。情亦人之生意也，誰能不芽者？」 "The host of *qíng* 情 says: 'When plants have the *elan vital* they move and produce sprouts. The *qíng* 情 are surely the *elan vital* of humans. Who could be without such sprouts?' He continues at the end: 然必曰草木可不必芽，是欲以隆冬結天地之局。吾未見其可也！" "And yet, when they insist on saying that plants do not necessarily have sprouts that is like making the universe end with any winter, and I do not see how this is an acceptable thing to say."

#### 第十五卷 情芽類 VOL. 15: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL INSPIRATIONS

Great sages

Notable worthies

Distinguished monks

Talented ladies

The sixteenth category places emotional attachments in the context of the traditional Chinese current notions of retribution. Particularly common, it turns out, is negative retribution suffered by the heartless. Féng Mènglóng begins his comment with the obvious relevant proverb: 情史氏曰：「諺云：『種瓜得瓜，種豆得豆。』此言施報之不爽也。情而無報，天下誰勸於情哉！」The historian of *qíng* 情 says: 'As the proverb says: *When you sow melons you harvest melons; when you sow beans you harvest beans.* This says that retribution is not arbitrary. If there was no retribution for *qíng* 情, then who in thi world would be urged on by *qíng* 情?

第十六卷 情報類 THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL RETRIBUTION

Retribution for the warm-hearted (2)

Retribution for the heartless (14)

The seventeenth popular category concerns debasement in a traditionalist fashion, starting out - defiantly - with degeneration in the imperial household. Here Féng Mènglóng turns moralist: 情猶水也，慎而防之，過溢不上，則雖江海之洪，必有溝澮之辱矣。"The *qíng* 情 are like water, when you are careful in your defence against it, then no matter how much they flow over, even if there is a flood like the Yangtse River or the sea, the disgrace will always remain bounded within canals and channels." Later, he even goes on: 夫有奇淫者必有奇禍。漢唐貽笑，至今齒冷。"Those who show extraordinary licentiousness will inevitably suffer extraordinary disasters. From Hàn to Táng times our teeth get cold, so much we laugh at them."

第十七卷 情穢類 VOL. 17: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL DEBASEMENT

Debasement within the imperial palace

Debasement among the imperial relatives

Extraordinary forms of debasement

Miscellaneous forms of debasement

The eighteenth category is concerned with the ill effects concomitant with emotional attachment. One of these, very interestingly, is the inherent lewdness of the women involved. Féng Mènglóng notes in his postface: 嗇財之人，其情必薄。 "A person who is stingy with his material wealth is bound to be shallow in his emotional attachments."

第十八卷 情累類 **THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL ENTANGLEMENTS**

Entanglements of financial loss  
Entanglements of getting things wrong  
Entanglements of defamation  
Entanglements of encountering dangers  
Entanglements of false accusations  
Entanglements of bodily harm  
Entanglements of loss of life  
Entanglements as a result of the lewdness of women

The nineteenth category is that of spurious emotional attachment in narratives, the implausibilities in the tall tales of *qíng* 情. Féng Mènglóng comments: 身非瞽史，言無百舌，吾所以不敢抹其情，而終不敢不存其疑也！ "Personally I am neither bard nor court historian. I have not a hundred tongues. And so I dare not disregard these (doubtful) cases of *qíng* 情, but in the end I dare not fail to have my doubts about them."

第十九卷 情疑類 **VOL. 19: THE CATEGORY OF SUSPICIOUS EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENTS**

In Buddhaland  
Among celestial beings  
Among various immortal ladies  
Among terrestrial immortals  
Among mountain spirits  
Among water spirits  
Among dragon spirits  
Among temple image spirits  
Among miscellaneous sprites

The twentieth category is concerned with the *qíng* 情 as felt and acted on by the world of spirits and ghosts. Féng Mènglóng comments: 人情鬼情，相投而入，如狂如夢，不識不知。"When the emotional attachment of men and that of ghosts merge, they are as if mad, like in a dream, they know not *what* they are doing."

## 第二十卷 情鬼類 VOL. 20: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL GHOSTS

Famous ghosts of the inner quarters in the imperial palaces

Ghosts of talent

Ghosts living in tombs

Ghosts attending funerals

Ghosts hovering about coffins

Nubile ghosts

Unidentified ghosts

The twenty-first category is that of amorous monsters. Féng Mènglóng comments: 禽獸草木五行百物之怪，往往託少女以魅人。其託於男子者，十之一耳。嗚呼！"Extraordinary spirits of beasts, plants the five elements and the various creatures of the world often avail themselves of women to bewitch men. It is only once in ten times that they avail themselves of males."

## 第二十一卷 情妖類 THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL MONSTERS

Human monsters

Monsters from strange lands

Yaksa (Buddhist) monsters

Bestial monsters

Feathered monsters

Scaly monsters

Shelled monsters

Insect monsters

Plant monsters

Monsters that are heartless things

Monsters from artefacts and the like

Unidentified monsters

The twenty-second category is the very important one of homophile *qíng* 情. Féng Mènglóng comments: 世固有癖好若此者，情豈獨在內哉？"In this world there are those who are strongly addicted to this practice: how could emotional attachment only be directed to the other sex?"

第二十二卷 情外類 **VOL. 22: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL HOMOPHILY**

Homophile chastity

Homophile passion

Homophile infatuation

Homophile *gǎn*

Homophile transformation

Homophile remorse

Homophile infidelity

Homophile adversaries *chóu*

Sisters and brothers both loved by emperors, that love being unlasting

Homophile retribution

Homophile debasement

Homophile entanglement

Evil spirits

Supernatural efficacious ghosts

The twenty-third category of emotional communication across species. Féng Mènglóng explains: 人於萬物中處一焉。特以能言，能衣冠揖讓，遂為之長，其實覺性與物無異。"Man just occupies one place among the myriad kinds of creatures. Just because he can speak, dress up, bow down then one considers him superior. But in fact his enlightened nature is no different from that of the other creatures." He goes on to summarise: 生在而情在焉。故人而無情，雖曰生人，吾直謂之死矣！"Where there is life there is *qíng* 情. Therefore if a man does not have *qíng* 情, they may call him a living man, but I shall simply declare him dead!"

第二十三卷 情通類 **THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL TRANSFER**  
Birds

Beasts

Fish and Insects

Plants

The twenty-fourth and last category is concerned with the properly literary traces left by *qíng* 情, which Féng Mènglóng places firmly into an encyclopaedic context: 鳥之鳴春，蟲之鳴秋，情也。迫於時而不自已，時往而情亦遁矣。人則不然，韻之為詩，協之為詞，一日之謳吟歎詠，垂之千百世而不廢。"When the birds sing for the spring, and when the insects sing for the autumn, that is a matter of *qíng* 情. They are pressed to do this by the seasons and will not cease of themselves. When the season is gone, the *qíng* 情 is also gone. Man is not like that. He sets things to rhymes so as to make *shī* poetry, they harmonise things so as to make free *cí* poetry. The humming and declaiming of one day will be handed down uninterruptedly to millions of generations without being abandoned." He goes on to finish his last volume along these lines: 人以情傳，情則何負於人矣！情以人蔽，奈何自負其情耶！"The heritage of men is transmitted because of *qíng* 情. The *qíng* 情 will never fail a man. *qíng* 情 may be obscured by others. But why should anyone himself fail his own *qíng* 情?"

第二十四卷 情跡類 **VOL. 24: THE CATEGORY OF EMOTIONAL (LITERARY) VESTIGES**

Episodes in (regular) *shī* 詩 poetry

Episodes in (free) *cí* 詞 lyrics

Miscellaneous episodes.

So then, by the lights of Féng Mènglóng, it is by emotional attachment and engagement that we are what we are. It is by virtue of such *qíng* 情 that we will be remembered - *if at all*.

In conclusion to this entirely unoriginal little essay, aiming only to let Féng Mènglóng speak for himself in our times, I want to add a little personal point of my own. It is essentially through the *yǒu qíng* 友情 of friendship that intellectually ambitious milieus have been created throughout history. Moreover, it is through

such continuing *yǒu qíng* 情 that these milieus are maintained. A happy few of us develop the talent to facilitate that elusive intellectual *yǒu qíng* 友情. A blessed very few of us learn the talent to even create institutional surroundings for intellectual *yǒu qíng* 友情. We owe Björn Wittrock *gǎn qíng* 感情, which is more than ordinary "gratitude" for what he has done and keeps doing for so many of us, for so many years.

### NOTES ON FURTHER READINGS

A convenient printed edition of *Qíng shǐ lèi lüè* will be found in:

*Qíng shǐ* 情史, Shényáng: Chūnfēng wényì chūbǎnshè, 1989

An invaluable continuation of the *Qíng shǐ lèi lüè*, beautifully printed, providing a vast amount of traditional Chinese narrative material on love relations, and organised very much along the lines of the *Qíng shǐ lèi lüè* is this:

Cáo Xiùjūn 曹綉君, *Gǔ jīn qíng hǎi* 古今情海, photographic reprint edition Shanghai: Shànghǎi gǔjí chūbǎnshè, 1991 (first ed. 1915)

The decisive Western work on *Qíng shǐ lèi lüè* remains the classical book by Mowry which was indeed the completely indispensable inspiration for the present essay. I have often deviated from its interpretations, but everywhere I have greatly profited from this pioneering work without which I could never have dared to write about my subject:

Mowry, Hua-yuan Li, *Chinese Love Stories from Ch'ing-shih*, Hamden: Archon Book, 1983

On the emotions in Ming and Qing China in general, the patient reader will find Paolo Santangelo's massive works over the past decade a mine of inspiration as well as an orgy of comparative bibliographic information:

Paolo Santangelo, *Sentimental Education in Chinese History: An Interdisciplinary Textual Research on Ming and Qing Sources* Leiden: Brill, 2003

Paolo Santangelo, *Love, Hatred, and Other Passions: Questions and Themes on*

*Emotions in Chinese Civilization* by Paolo Santangelo and Donatella Guida,  
Leiden: Brill, 2006

Santangelo, Paolo, "Two different treatises on love and their different concepts of love, *Qingshileilüe* and *De amore*", in *Ming Qing Yanjiu* 2007, Naples, pp. 117-  
Santangelo, Paolo, *Materials for an Anatomy of Personality in Late Imperial China (Emotions and States of Mind in East Asia)* Leiden: Brill 2010

On Chén Chūn 陳淳 and his dictionary of Neo-Confucian terms the very pleasant and user-friendly classical work of reference remains

Wing-tsit Chan, *Neo-Confucian terms explained: the Pei-hsi tzu-i Neo-Confucian studies*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1986

On the concept of *gǎn* 感 see Charles LeBlanc, *Huai-nan-tzu: Philosophical Synthesis in Early Han Thought. The Idea of Resonance (Kan-Ying). With a Translation and Analysis of Chapter Six*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1996