

Poetry of Roaming as a Transcendent in Qing (1644-1911) China

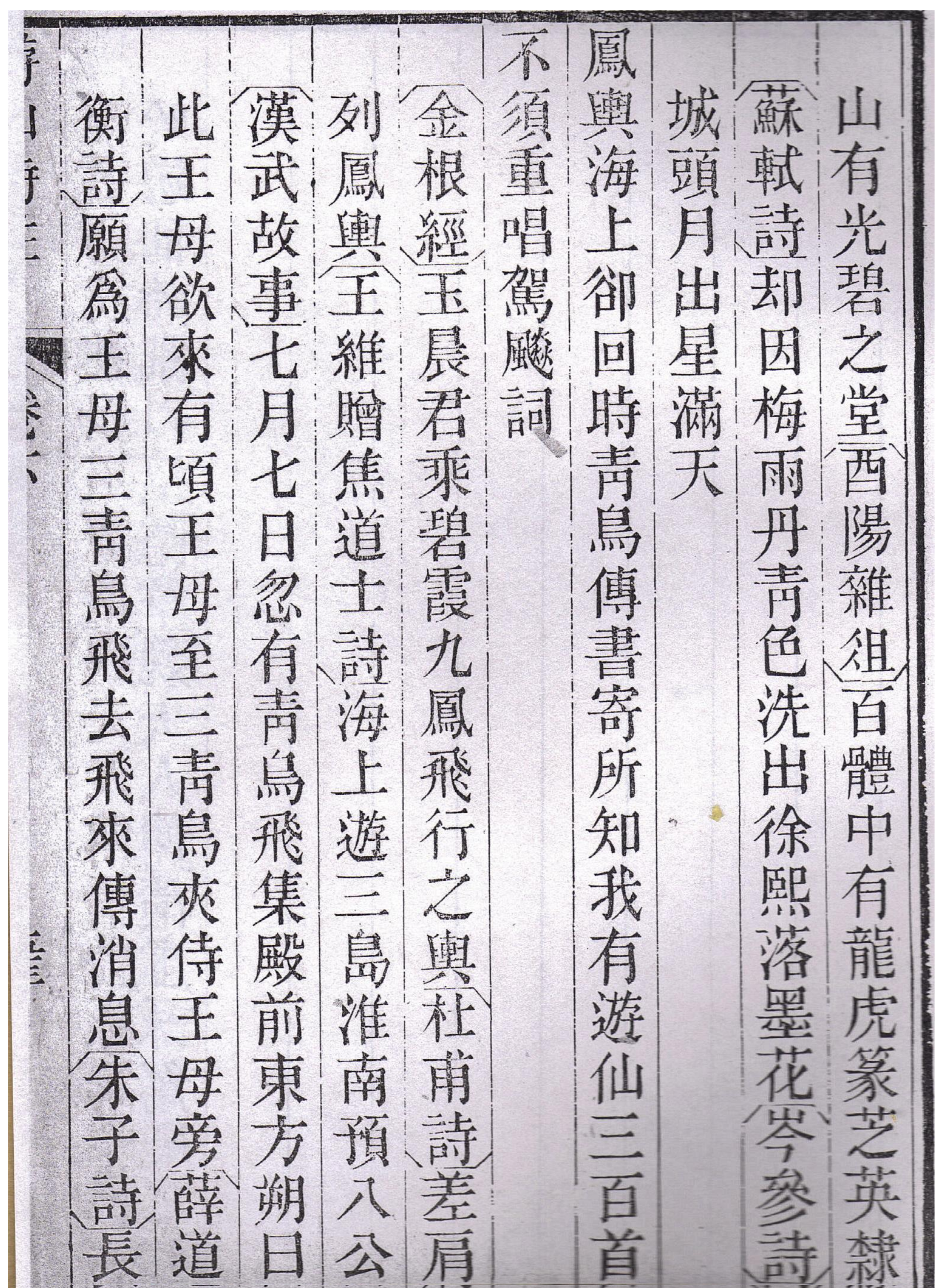
Despite the fact that *youxian* poetry (poetry of roaming as a transcendent), an important poetic genre, continued to be popular in literary circles in post-Tang (after 907) dynasties, existing studies on this topic have almost exclusively been on Tang (618-907) and pre-Tang periods, partially due to the assumption that this poetic genre declined afterwards. Since this type of poetry is closely related to Daoism, some scholars believe that it became inactive with the gradual decline of Daoism in later dynasties. Therefore, our knowledge of its development and cultural background in post-Tang periods is extremely lacking. In examining the works by both male and female authors, I argue that *youxian* poetry continued to flourish in the Qing dynasty and its development, although related to the vicissitude of Daoism, became more and more independent based on its own literary merits.

One of the challenges in such a study is to obtain rare primary materials. I have obtained two rare books from 1848 and 1877 that are crucial to my overall project. One of these rare books is an annotated version of three hundred *youxian* poems written by a single author. The annotation demonstrates the complexity of the texts which are replete with literary and religious diction and allusions.



Long-Term Project Outline:

- 1 A Brief History of Qing *Youxian* Poetry
- 2 Feng Ban: Early Qing (100 poems)
- 3 Li E: Mid-Qing (300 poems)
- 4 Ye Yinghua: Late Qing (100 poems)
- 5 Women's *Youxian* Poetry



“Poetry of Roaming as a Transcendent in the Qing Dynasty: Li E’s (1692–1752) Case,” The 220th Annual Meeting of the American Oriental Society, St. Louis, MO, 2010

Next Steps:

- In-depth research on the individual poets’ cases
- Conference presentation
- Journal article submission
- Book project

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