Hsiang Lectures on Chinese Poetry

Centre for East Asian Research
McGill University

Hsiang Lectures on Chinese Poetry

Volume 4

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Endowed by

Professor Paul Stanislaus Hsiang (1915-2000)

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Editor's Note

The three articles in Volume 4 of the *Hsiang Lectures on Chinese Poetry* are based on the lectures presented by Professors Judith Zeitlin (October 21, 2005), Xiaofei Tian (March 31, 2006), and Ellen Widmer (November 10, 2006). In "The Gift of Song: Courtesans and Patrons in Late Ming and Early Qing Cultural Production," Professor Zeitlin's richly documented approach to musical training, particularly the art of singing, as part of the courtesan's professional calling in the Late Ming and Early Qing moves away from conventional romanticized images of courtesan culture to recuperate the content and context of this important performative practice conducted between courtesans and their literati patrons. In "Parting Ways: Writing Trauma and Diaspora in the Poetry of Mid-Sixth Century China," Professor Tian provides close readings of poems by Yan Zhitui and Yu Xin written in exile in the north during the chaotic and brutal years of the period of division. She elucidates how the two poets, writing in very different styles, wrestled with difficult issues of survival and guilt in poetic mode. Professor Widmer's article, "Border Crossing and the Woman Writer: The Case of Gui Maoyi (1762-1835/6)," examines new patterns in women's social and literary culture developing in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century by focusing on the collections and social networks of the well-known woman poet and teacher Gui Maoyi. The wide-ranging topics of these three articles demonstrate the varied significance of poetic practice among different social groups, in different cultural settings and dynastic periods, and, not least of all, across genders.

We remain, as always, indebted to the late Professor Paul Hsiang for his generous endowment in support of scholarship on Chinese poetry.

Montreal, October 2008

The Gift of Song: Courtesans and Patrons in Late Ming and Early Qing Cultural Production

Judith T. Zeitlin 蔡九迪
University of Chicago

In recent years, scholars interested in recouping Ming-Qing courtesans as significant cultural agents have explored their poetry, and to some extent their painting, to find traces of genuine self-expression rather than mere signs of professional expertise.[1] While none would deny the centrality of song to the courtesan's arts, this aspect of the courtesan's cultural production has tended to drop out of the equation.[2] The lack of scholarly attention to music in the courtesan world has several deep-seated reasons. The history of performance is always hard to reconstruct, but in the Chinese case, this is especially true because music relied primarily on oral transmission, and vocal scores with full musical notation were not published until the eighteenth century.[3]

A more serious obstacle, perhaps, has been discomfort with the extent to which music and sex were intertwined in the courtesan world. The elevating and idealizing impulse evident in much of the contemporary scholarship extends a cultural bias in the historical sources themselves. To prove that a courtesan was truly cultured, her gifts as a poet rather than a musical performer were most important. Because of the supreme valuation of the written word and the exaltation of literary authorship in China, the most celebrated courtesans through the ages have therefore tended to be those skilled in writing verse, whose poetic output has at least in part been preserved on paper.

This essay likewise attempts to re-evaluate the courtesan's role in cultural production, but it addresses the relation of top courtesans to music-making and versification in a way that takes into account both the creative dimensions *and* the professional business of pleasure integral to male patronage of their careers as musicians and poets**.**

Music-making, especially song, was indispensable to the social and sexual activities of the late-Ming entertainment quarter, as it had been since the Tang dynasty, when a distinct urban courtesan culture first coalesced.

Classical Chinese has an extensive lexicon designating women with skill in the arts whose services could include sex, including *chang* 娼 and *genü* 歌女but the most frequent term is *ji* 妓.[4] Although in modern Chinese this character simply means "prostitute," etymologically *ji* combines the graph for woman (女) and the graph for entertainer (伎), and the function of a *ji* as a performer remained vital into the twentieth century. In her study of Song dynasty courtesans, Beverly Bossler notes that the word *ji* generally referred to the upper range of "the class of female entertainers;" even so, the term covered a multiplicity of roles and hierarchies. Part of what a *ji* could offer, at least during the Song period, Bossler argues, was sexual companionship, yet a *ji* "was first and foremost a performing artist." Even a low-class *ji* therefore "was not one who exclusively sold her sexual favors, but one who approached the banquet table and began to sing without having been invited."[5]

By the late Ming, the compound *mingji* 名妓 (literally "renowned *ji*") had come into common currency to distinguish the uppermost stratum of the profession, but the boundaries and terminology between echelons of courtesans were always slippery, mutable, and subjective. For instance, the 1616 preface to *Stylish Verses from the Green Bower (Qinglou yunyu* 青樓韻語), a book of poetry by courtesans, reserves the term *ji* for "those celestial creatures of innate seductive beauty and penetrating intelligence" 其天姿媚澤，機慧靈通人也，distinguishing them from common prostitutes—"those women who lean in doorways, proffering smiles at all comers indiscriminately" 依市門不擇人而獻笑.[6] Yet the collection also incorporates large chunks from a work labeled *The Classic of Whoring (Piao jing* 嫖經), juxtaposing cynical and idealized views of courtesans on the same page.[7]

Crucial in navigating the contested arena of what qualified someone as a *mingji* is the idea of composition and performance as gifts. James Davidson's discussion of the ancient Greek hetaera emphasizes the importance of a courtesan receiving "gifts" rather than payments from her clients because this shadowy and easily manipulated distinction implies that she, in turn, bestows her favors voluntarily as a return gift, rather than fulfilling a set payment for service.[8] In the Chinese case, the gift economy was likewise all-important in constituting the relations between a courtesan and her literati clients, but it was also expected that some of the gifts she received be of a literary (or artistic) nature—a poem, a painting, the lyrics to an aria—and that the courtesan be able to reciprocate in kind—by matching the poem, adding to the painting, or singing the song. All of this contributed to the fantasy of parity between a courtesan and her lover, of favors freely exchanged, and was the *sine qua non* for romance in the Chinese tradition.

The ability to participate in this gift-giving also determined the status of a courtesan because such literary exchanges were fundamental to the status and social life of her literati patrons. Despite (or because of) the increasing commercialization of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, direct payment for service or objects accorded high cultural value was considered déclassé or even degrading and had to be disguised. This is why, for instance, it is so difficult to ascertain the prices customers paid for paintings by famous artists in this period—the paintings are invariably couched as "gifts" bestowed by "amateur" artists on "friends," even when art historians think that cash actually changed hands.[9] For a courtesan and her client, the illusion of the disinterested gift was naturally even more critical. As the commentator to *Stylish Verses from the Green Bower* put it: "Even a single word or a single object received from a beautiful woman is precious—how could a man not respond in kind?" 一字一物, 出自麗人, 便覺珍重, 敢不圖報也. This exalted sentiment, however, is neatly punctured by a quotation on the same page from *The Classic of Whoring*: "When she sends a letter, it's like issuing a summons for money; when she sends a handkerchief or fan, it's like hurling a brick to extract precious jade" 寄信寄書, 乃發催錢之檄, 贈巾贈扇, 真拋引玉之磚.[10] In the same cynical vein, a song simply titled "Courtesan" (*ji* 妓) from *Hanging Branches* (*Guazhier*掛枝兒), a collection of popular songs published circa 1608-1617 by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, warns the would-be libertine: "Tiny writing on a handkerchief is a promissory note to snatch away your soul" 汗巾兒上小字兒是個勾魂票.[11]

A gift of verse or handkerchief might be dangerous, but the primary means to ensnare a man's passion was through song. In this essay I will begin with an exploration of the erotic connotations of the female voice in China to explain in part why courtesans specialized in singing before sketching the dominant genres and performance style of the courtesan's vocal repertory in the late Ming and early Qing. I then turn to printed collections of songs to consider what editorial decisions about the notation of authorship and transmission may reveal about improvisational and collaborative performing practices in the pleasure quarter. The conclusion of the paper explores the courtesan's vocal training and the complex value invested in her songs through a close reading of the singing lesson scene dramatized in Kong Shangren's famous play, *Peach Blossom Fan* (*Taohua shan* 桃花扇).

Music and Eroticism

Music and eroticism have long been linked in the Chinese calculus of pleasure. The terms *sheng* 聲 (sound, denoting music) and *se* 色 (visual allure, denoting beautiful women) had been paired from antiquity as a

metonym for the sensual overindulgence of rulers at court that could topple their kingdoms. As Joseph Lam asserts: "Music made by women is singled out by Confucian scholars as particularly corruptive because it seduces not only with sound but also with the physical presence of female performers." [12] The cover illustration of an entertainment miscellany published in 1610 offers the perfect witty correlative for music as foreplay (fig. 1). A courtesan is seated on the lap of her lover, who is dressed in the cap and robe of a man of letters, his two legs straddling hers. They are playing a "duet:" a *pipa* is stretched across her lap, a vertical flute at her lips. At first glance, it seems as though it is the man who is plucking the *pipa* and the woman who is playing the flute, but a closer look reveals that each of them is simultaneously playing both instruments. Only one hand on the *pipa* belongs to the man: his other hand fingers the flute as his arm encircles her; the woman, in turn, is touching the flute with one hand as she presses down on the *pipa* strings with the other. Adding to the piquancy of the picture are the double entendres involved: "blowing the vertical flute" is a flowery term for fellatio, while "zither strings" is a poetic locution for the clitoris. [13] Another piquant detail: the couple engaged in this act of mutual musical arousal is seated on a large ornamental garden rock that seems to billow up behind them. In the symbolic code of this period, the garden is a principal site for the arousal and fulfillment of desire, both romantic and sexual; any number of dramatic works and woodblock illustrations imagines the ingenious functions to which a garden rock could be put by the amorously inclined. [14] In the context of the image on the cover, then, even the miscellany's title suggests the titillating interplay of sex and music: it is entitled *Tempering the Reed Pipe in the Jade Valley* (*Yugu tiaohuang* 玉谷調簧). [15]

Some singing ability and a repertory of songs were minimal requirements for a courtesan. In a comic opera of 1618, *Dongguo ji* 東郭記, two courtesans on the make, who have "mastered dancing but not yet singing," complain: "We've got the "looks" (*se*) but not the "sounds" (*sheng*) . . . For girls like us, singing is number one: only then can we entice men and turn them on" 未歌先會舞, 有色卻無聲 . . . . 我每姐妹家, 第一會唱, 才勾引得人心動. [16] Their solution is to seek out a fashionable singing master, who agrees to teach them some popular songs. Strumming on a *pipa*, he instructs his new pupils in the fundamentals of their trade: "Gain some accomplishment at singing/ and those notes that 'wind sinuously 'round the rafters' will boost your reputation and price./ At banquets they'll love you to death/ and wherever you go, you'll steal all the men" 唱將來有幾個到得家, 遶梁音會的添聲價, 當筵真愛殺, 到處盡偷他. [17]

Singing was fundamental to the courtesan's arts in China, not only because song was a social and sexual lubricant and the lyrics appreciated for their literary and sentimental value, but because singing itself, when offered

Figure 1. Cover page of *Yugu tiaohuang*.

as entertainment at banquets or other settings, was culturally gendered as feminine. To perform a song was to submit oneself to the gaze as well as the ears of another, and there was a perpetual tendency for the audience to conflate the physical beauty of the singer with the acoustic beauty of the song. Hence another important group of singers, particularly in the late Ming, were "singing boys" (*getong* 歌童), who, like their counterpart "singing girls," were valued for their youth and looks as well as their voice and who could be purchased as private entertainers by the master of a wealthy household to provide musical and sexual diversion.

Already in the late twelfth century, Wang Zhuo 王灼 had complained that, although in the past excellent singers of renown could be found among both sexes, "nowadays people only prize the female voice" 古人善歌得名, 不擇男女. . .今人獨重女音. In fact, lists of famous singers from earlier times attest that a preference for female singers had probably predominated in the past as well.[18] Wang associated this preference for female singers in his own time with the "lovely and seductive" (*wanmei* 婉媚)—hence feminine—lyrics that his fellow literati liked to write. He cites the story of one fellow who refused to listen to an aged male singer, despite his reputed excellence: "A singer must be a person lovely as jade, with rosy lips, white teeth, and a complexion like ice. In communicating the private meaning of the lyrics, the words must sound charming with a waver in the voice, the syllables as round and lustrous as a string of pearls. This old man may understand the art of singing but what can be done about his snowy whiskers?" 唱歌須是玉人, 檀口皓齒冰膚, 意傳心事, 語嬌聲顫, 字如貫珠; 老翁雖是解歌, 無奈雪鬢霜鬚.[19] Although Wang's point is to disparage the "vulgarity" of this attitude, the frequent appearance of stock phrases, like "rosy lips, white teeth" and "a string of pearls" in poetic descriptions of singers at parties, reminds us that Wang's would have been the minority view.

Certain conceptions of the voice may have strengthened the sense of singing as an integral part of the body that produced the sound. "Voice" in English (and its equivalent in European languages) is, in fact, a curiously disembodied term. Although the Chinese words *yin* 音 (tone) or *sheng-yin* 聲音 (sound) can be used to denote the human voice, a common idiom for a singing voice in Chinese, both classical and vernacular, is "throat." The poetic equivalent of "good voice" in Classical Chinese, especially in descriptions of women, is "a throat for singing" (*gehou* 歌喉).

Even more striking is the metonymic appellation of the voice as an instrument of "flesh" (*rou* 肉). An eight-fold classification of musical instruments based on the material they were fashioned of had developed in early antiquity. In this system, bells are "metal," flutes are "bamboo," while lutes are "silk" (the material used for the strings), and so on. The human

voice did not figure in the original eight categories, but in the fifth-century collection *A New Account of Tales of the World* (*Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語), the term "flesh" was coined in a dialogue between a general and his aide on the superiority of the human voice over other instruments. The general inquires: "When I'm listening to performers, stringed instruments don't sound as good as bamboo, bamboo instruments don't sound as good as flesh. Why would that be?" Replies his aide: "Because you're getting closer with each one to what is natural" 又問: 聽伎, 絲不如竹, 竹不如肉, 何也? 答曰: 漸近自然.[20]

From the ninth century on, the aphorism, "String is inferior to bamboo, bamboo is inferior to flesh" 絲不如竹, 竹不如肉, is ubiquitous in disquisitions on singing.[21] Pan Zhiheng 潘之恒, one of our best sources for late Ming entertainment culture, even coins the term "notes of flesh" (*rouyin* 肉音) for singing to match "notes of bamboo" (*zhuyin* 竹音) to denote the flute accompaniment. Pan links the "naturalness" of the voice to its affective power, placing his lyrical discussion on song within the discourse on emotion or love (*qing* 情) so fashionable in this period. "At their most subtle, 'notes of flesh' will make the soul melt and make one perish from emotion. If 'notes of flesh' are performed and the listener doesn't perish, then the heights of emotion that flesh is capable of have not been scaled" 肉音微者可以魂銷, 可以情死. 肉奏而情不死者, 未足以盡肉之情.[22]

But it is Li Yu 李漁, professional playwright, novelist, publisher, and impresario, who, in his 1671 discussion on how to train female singers and dancers, explicitly linked this aphorism to a gendered discourse on the "natural" qualities of the female voice and the physical attractions of the female body and face:

> I further say that in terms of a male voice's being flesh, even if it reaches the most exquisite places, it can only stand shoulder to shoulder with string and bamboo; it still remains "string of flesh," "bamboo of flesh." How do I know this? Observe that when someone praises the beauty of a male voice, if they don't say: "It's as fine as a stringed instrument," then they'll say: "It's as clear as a bamboo instrument." But when it comes to a woman's voice, then it is praised purely because it is flesh. The saying goes: "A song-lyric must come from a beauty's mouth." I say: "She doesn't *have* to be a beauty." It doesn't matter whether she's pretty or ugly. Any girl who's gifted at singing will produce a sound that is extremely different from that of a man. There are instances in which a woman is not known for her looks, but is known for her sound [i.e. singing]. But there's never been a case of a good-looking woman

> whose voice is not worth listening to. You just need to teach her some method and direct her in artistry. She simply needs to develop her innate talent: just don't let her go against her own nature. [23]
>
> 予又謂男音之爲肉, 造到極精處, 止可與絲竹比肩, 猶是肉中之絲. 肉中之竹也, 何以知之? 但觀人贊男音之美者, 非曰其細如絲, 則曰其清如竹. 是可概見. 至若婦人之音, 則純乎其爲肉矣. 語曰詞出佳人口. 予曰不必佳人, 凡女子之善歌者, 無論妍媸美惡, 其聲音比迥別男人, 貌不揚而聲揚者有之, 未有面目可觀而聲音不足聽者也. 但須教之有方, 導之有術, 因材而施, 無拂其天然之性而已矣.

Although at one point Li Yu notes that "the program of study for music is the same for men and women" 然教習聲樂者, 不論男女, he emphasizes throughout the essay that a chief point of studying music for women is to enhance their appearance and deportment. As he puts it bluntly: "What's important for a man in playing an instrument is the sound; for a woman it's her looks" 男子所重在聲, 婦人所重在容.[24]

Li Yu's instructions on how to train women in the performing arts were aimed at a middlebrow audience of men wanting to educate their concubines or train household entertainers. He recommended that women first be taught to read and write, then to play an instrument, and lastly to sing or dance.[25] In terms of composition, the ideal strategy was to start them off on the short lyric (*ci*) before moving on to the longer and more difficult aria (*qu)* form. "Nothing in the past thousand years beats the incomparable charm of listening to a woman sing a song she herself has composed, uniting scholar and beauty in one person" 聽其自制自歌, 則是名士佳人合而爲一, 千古來韻事韻人, 未有出於此者.[26] Dorothy Ko has suggested that Li Yu's "program for training concubines can be taken as an ideal representation of education for women in the various grades of establishments in the entertainment world." [27] What may be most informative about Li Yu's prescriptions, however, are the assumptions that he makes about his male readers, whom we may take as emblematic of wealthy social-climbing patrons of the pleasure quarter. This parvenu clientele grasps the underlying sociological lesson that both music and women are primarily purchased for display as markers of taste and status but lacks the panache to carry it off. Li Yu therefore cautions that there is no point in having concubines or household entertainers learn forms of music a man does not enjoy or understand simply because the literati regard them as more elegant and he wants to show off at the banquets he holds. Thus, unless, a man himself is versed in the *qin*, the most exalted instrument in the

scholar's world and the most difficult to play and appreciate, there is no point in training his concubine in this art. "Then what about singing and dancing?'" an interlocutor interjects. "Does this mean that a man must also be skilled at singing and dancing before his women can be taught these arts? How many full-blooded bearded males are there who are any good at these?" Not to worry, assures Li Yu. "Singing and dancing are hard to perfect but easy to understand. You don't need to be a connoisseur of music to listen to the undulations in a woman's voice or watch the lightness and grace of her movements!" 人問: 然則教歌舞者, 亦必主人善歌善舞而後教乎? 鬚眉丈夫之工此者, 有幾人乎? 曰不然. 歌舞難精而易曉, 聞其聲音之婉轉, 睹見體態之輕盈, 不必知音始能領略.[28]

The Performing Repertory and Vocal Style of Courtesans

The courtesan's performing repertory in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was closely linked to the dominance of operatic forms of entertainment in this period. During the late Ming and early Qing, the passion for opera was at its height among the elite. Literary men, some from the highest echelons of officialdom, turned their hands to libretto-writing, and the richer ones even maintained household troupes to stage their works and those of their friends. Salon performances of operas (sometimes full plays but more often excerpted scenes) were ubiquitous fare at banquets in private homes and at court. For such performances, although permanent stages were not unheard of, all that was necessary to demarcate a stage was a rug, with an area to the back or the side to serve as a combination backstage/greenroom from which the actors could make their entrances and exits. The easily improvised and versatile nature of performance space, along with the absence of elaborate scenery, meant that, in principle, almost any location could double as a stage. It is not surprising therefore that operas were sometimes staged in courtesan houses, too, during the late Ming, though serving as a theater was never their primary function. The question is whether courtesans generally participated as actresses in these productions or whether they made up the audience along with their clients instead.

Historically, the line between courtesan and actress was blurred. Our main source for top Yuan dynasty (1264-1368) courtesans, for example, *The Green Bower Collection* (*Qinglou ji* 青樓記), mainly involves actresses connected with the stage. By the late sixteenth century, however, the two professions had essentially bifurcated, although there was still some back and forth. As theater historian Wang Anqi 王安祈 argues: "Even though Ming courtesans still counted dramatic singing and play-acting among their skills, these were only auxiliary arts for them, and in this respect they differed from professional actresses whose occupation was acting on stage."

明代妓女雖然也多擅唱曲演劇, 但演戲終究是附帶的才藝之一, 與專門以演劇爲職業的女優不同.[29] To this we may add: even though actresses were still expected to sell their sexual favors as part of their profession, this was only a sideline for them. *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou* (*Wuji baimei* 吳姬百媚), an early seventeenth-century collection that I will discuss later, also confirms this occupational division between courtesans and actresses; only one of the forty-one or so biographies in this book involves a courtesan once famed as an actress, and even here she became a courtesan only *after* she had abandoned her acting career.[30]

There were exceptions, of course. The famous sixteenth-century Nanjing courtesan Ma Xianglan 馬湘蘭, who even authored a now lost opera libretto, was said "to have trained her maids on the model of an acting troupe, and often had them perform to entertain guests" 教諸小鬟學梨園子弟, 日供張燕客.[31] This information is provided in Xianglan's biography as something worthy of note, rather than as something typical, however, and the wording of the entry acknowledges a tacit difference between the courtesan imitation and its acting troupe model. Zhang Dai 張岱, elite chronicler and wealthy connoisseur of the late Ming entertainment world, recalled attending a matinee performance that an opera troupe gave in the Nanjing pleasure quarter; that very evening he watched the courtesans, who had been in the afternoon audience, perform scenes from the same opera in emulation. Zhang asserts that "Nanjing courtesans considered putting on plays to be a stylish activity, and they took it very seriously," and he was pleased to be enlisted as their coach. 南曲中, 妓以串戲爲韻事, 性命以之.[32] In my view, Zhang Dai's recollection may most suggest an enthusiasm on the part of courtesans to mount amateur theatricals, echoing the vogue for such pastimes in certain late Ming literati circles.[33]

This hypothesis that sees top courtesans as theatrical amateurs, who did put on plays sometimes in their establishments but mainly left full-scale theatrical productions to professional acting troupes as their literati clients did, may be one way to reconcile the contradiction between Zhang Dai's account and Yu Huai's 余懷 1693 memoir of the Nanjing pleasure quarter, another of our best sources for late Ming courtesan culture. In his *Miscellaneous Records of the Wooden Bridge* (*Banqiao zaji* 板橋雜記), Yu Huai says that acting troupes frequently gave performances in the quarter at night,[34] but that a top courtesan considered performing plays on stage deeply humiliating. What she preferred was an intimate party with a few clients who were knowledgeable about music, and even then she had to be strenuously coaxed before she would sing. Those privileged to be present would be overwhelmed by the beauty of her voice and the movements of her fan and willingly paid "ten times the price" for this exclusive pleasure.[35]

He describes only one courtesan who was also celebrated as an actress for her skill at performing plays on stage; she is the only one, too, who is mentioned in conjunction with theatrical role types. In her case, she is doubly impressive because she performed both leading female and leading male roles.[36] Most of the information he provides about stage performers instead concerns male actors, who were also regular participants at parties in the quarter.

Instead of acting on stage, then, courtesans specialized in the performing practice known as "pure singing" (*qingchang* 清唱).[37] This entailed singing dramatic arias without the lines of dialogue interspersed in full playtexts, without theatrical make-up or costume, with minimal props (such as a fan) and minimal instrumental accompaniment (such as a set of clappers, a flute, or a stringed instrument), and with none of the elaborate dance steps customarily performed on stage. Another equally important segment of the courtesan's repertory, "independent" or "free-standing" arias (*sanqu* 散曲), which were composed apart from opera and never intended to be acted out, were only ever performed as pure singing.[38] Independent arias were largely on sentimental themes and were closely associated with the activities of the pleasure quarter. The independent aria is sometimes translated as "art song" to distinguish it from the more colloquial "popular song" (*suqu* 俗曲 or *xiaoqu* 小曲, literally "minor *qu*"), the third indispensable segment of the courtesan's singing repertory.

The term "pure singing" and the elegant vocal style it implies were closely associated with *kunqu* 昆曲. With its emphasis on vocal refinement and elaborate ornamentation, *kun qu* was particularly suited to intimate salon performances because it avoided the noisy percussion of competing opera styles and favored the plaintive and soft sounds of the flute as its leading instrumental accompaniment. The pure singing of arias by a coterie of professional male music masters, literati, and courtesans during the 1560s and 70s is the matrix out of which the musical system of *kunqu* had originally coalesced, but it quickly spread to the performance of full-fledged opera.[39] By the early seventeenth century, *kunqu* had become the reigning operatic mode for elites across the country, who extolled the elegance of *kunqu* and disparaged the vulgarity of competing styles. Top courtesans, keenly sensitive to the status differential of the music they performed, naturally specialized in *kunqu*, and pure singing—always considered a more refined and prestigious activity than acting on stage—remained a favored pastime in literati/courtesan circles.

Realizing the Tune

The salient compositional feature of *qu* is that of writing new words to a pre-existing melody identified by a tune title. This mode of versification,

like that of *ci*, required the poet to observe the individual rules governing rhyme, meter, and word tone prescribed for each tune pattern, which were codified in manuals that could be consulted for "filling in" new lyrics. Popular songs composed to tune formulas, much fewer in number, also became known by certain titles, but they had freer prosodic structure. The melodies were mainly transmitted orally and understood to be highly mutable over time. As Wang Jide 王冀德, author of *Rules for Qu* (*Qulü*曲律), an important seventeenth-century treatise on opera, says flatly: "The tunes of an age change every thirty years" 世之腔調, 每三十年一變.[40] The verses, on the other hand, were easily preserved through publication and could continue to be read or rewritten to new melodies long after the original music had disappeared.

The model of filling in new aria lyrics to pre-existing, abstract melodic patterns sounds straightforward, but it took considerable skill and effort to make such verses work in actual performance. From what we know about the composition of full-length operas for the late seventeenth-century stage, for instance, a literati playwright had to work extensively with a musical advisor to adjust his aria lyrics to conform fully to the melodies. Isabel Wong observes that the process of creating a *kun qu* opera typically required the "collective efforts of several groups of specialists:" 1) a poet-playwright to compose the verse, 2) a "music master" who was also a singer and one familiar with all the tunes in the repertory to ensure that words and melody fit properly, a process she terms "tune accommodation," and 3) a singer-actor skilled in *kun qu* singing techniques and ornamentation to realize the song in performance.[41] In the case of independent arias in the *kun qu* style, a similar, if much more streamlined process must have been required.

One of the most common paradigms in the literature on courtesans is that of literary men composing verses and courtesans singing them. "Such women were most valued as the performing voice of scholars' own poems," is how Stephen West describes the portrayal of the Yuan dynasty courtesan-actresses in *The Green Bower Collection*. "Yet," he adds, such women "were often extremely talented in their own right," and he notes their "prodigious memory" for arias and their ability to extemporize witty verse as repartee.[42]

West notes that the Yuan dynasty courtesans were for the most part illiterate, but by the late sixteenth century, in keeping with the greater emphasis on education for upper-class women, to be celebrated as a top courtesan required literacy. What are omitted in accounts of the courtesan singing her client's verse are precisely the kinds of adjustments of words and melody necessary to make lyrics and music fit together. The technical

Chinese musical term for this kind of activity is *duqu* 度曲, which may be imperfectly translated into English as "realizing the tune."

The phrase *duqu* means either "to perform a song" (in which case it is pronounced *duqu*) or "to fashion a song by fitting new words to a pre-existing tune" (in which case it is pronounced *duoqu*).[43] Both ways of "realizing the tune" required serious skill and understanding of music to execute, and both activities had one of the other in it. To perform a new song from written lyrics inevitably meant making prosodic and musical adjustments, part of which, in *kunqu*, were handled in performance through vocal ornamentation. Fashioning a song by fitting new words to an existing tune pattern demanded even more effort. Particularly challenging was the method of *jiqu* 集曲 (developing a "composite tune"), which involved piecing together individual lines from separate tune patterns in the same mode to create a patchwork melody with a new title.[44]

Isabel Wong notes that the music masters charged with the task of "tune accommodation" "usually came from the ranks of singing teachers, professional actors, or flute (*dizi* 笛子) players. . . and . . . generally came from a lower stratum of society than the playwright-poet."[45] I suspect that courtesans, who were also trained as professional musicians and also came from a lower stratum of society than poets, must have frequently assumed responsibility for tune accommodation in addition to that of singer-performer, especially with independent arias written for courtesans by their clients. To be sure, courtesan-singers must have sometimes relied on the intermediary services of music masters, who might also have doubled as their accompanists in performance. But a good deal of the fun and prowess in the courtesan's world came from displays of extemporaneous improvisation and repartee from participation in games and contests invented on the spot. A top courtesan singer would have been expected to render an impromptu performance of her lover's verses, and for that she would have had to have been capable of modifying the words and the tune on her own.

There are parallels with courtesans of the Italian Renaissance, as seen in the chapters in *The Courtesan's Arts* by Martha Feldman, Dawn De Rycke, and Drew Davies. A crucial resource at the disposal of the sixteenth-century Venetian courtesan were *arie* or *modi*—untexted compositions with unadorned melodies designed according to poetic meters for spontaneous adaptation to poetry. Davies suspects that "courtesans could have utilized the titled *aria* to extemporize musical settings of their clients' poetry on the spot, and because their musical phrase lengths correspond to conventional poetic meters most of them could also have been used as vehicles for semi-improvisation."[46]

But there are also crucial differences between the artistic processes and cultural emphases of the Italian "arie" and the Chinese *qu*. In the main sixteenth- and seventeenth-century manuals on the vocal techniques for *kun qu*, such as Wei Liangfu's 魏良輔 *Rules for Qu* (*Qulü* 曲律), Wang Jide's work of the same title, and Shen Pangsui 沈寵綏, *What You Should Know to Realize the Song (Duqu xuzhi* 度曲須知), the emphasis is consistently on how to fit the words to the music.[47] The techniques they teach therefore are equally important for writing new lyrics for arias as for performing them. Still, the extent to which they focus on seemingly linguistic criteria is not simply a literary bias of their authors. It lies at the heart of Chinese operatic music, especially *kunqu,* which emphasized musical strategies designed to preserve word tones in singing to enhance both the euphony and intelligibility of the lyrics in performance. Liang Mingyue observes that "frequently the final product—the composition—is a result of mutual compromise, and an alternative word may be substituted to match the existing melody better," which is one reason why "a beginning *kunqu* singer often makes the comment that the tune is easy, but correlating it with the words is never easy enough."[48]

Since one of the highly sought after talents for a courtesan was not only the ability to sing arias from famous plays but new arias by her clients—often extemporaneously—we gain a greater appreciation of the degree of musical and linguistic skill she was required to master, which may have approached something akin to composition in performance. "Realizing the tune" in the late Ming and early Qing therefore required literary skill and musical knowledge of the *qu* verse form, then, not only a good voice and a good memory.

Some courtesans who excelled both at versification and singing were able to craft their own lyrics to arias, although relatively few of these survive. Wang Duanshu's 王端淑 enormous anthology, *Classic Verse by Renowned Women (Mingyuan shiwei* 名媛詩緯), published around 1667, is our best source for independent aria lyrics by courtesans. Wang, a well-known writer in her own right, was the daughter of a famous literatus and a respectable married woman, but her omnivorous interest in women's writing extended to the literary efforts of courtesans as well. Her anthology focused on mainstream genres of poetry, *shi* 詩 and *ci* 詞, which constituted the bulk of women's literary output, but she did include two chapters of aria lyrics, one of which is entirely by courtesans. Wang was sufficiently broadminded to include a salacious aria credited to an unnamed "Courtesan from Chu" ("Chu ji" 楚妓) and subtitled "Sent to a Friend" ("Ji you" 寄友). This famous courtesan was renowned for her calligraphy, painting, music, and beauty, Wang tells us, and her arias were "especially amusing" 其曲見最爲娛. The aria involves a set of ribald double entendres about a common

mode of transporting heavy loads, in which bundles were tied on either side of a pole placed across the shoulders:

[Yellow Oriole]	[黃鶯兒]
When tying on the load of love,	風月擔兒拴
The moment it's lifted onto the shoulders is the hardest of all.	上肩時難上難
Even if the porter is a man of iron,	挑得的便是真鐵漢
it will crush the thighs and make them sore,	壓得人腿酸
It will make one pant till the mouth is parched.	喘得人口乾
And still one worries that the rope will snap mid-route.	半塗中又恐怕繩索斷
Have patience to toil through one more bout—	耐些煩一場辛苦
No matter then if you drop your load.	脫卻了沒相干

In her comment, Wang marvels that this piece had become famous in the Hunan-Hubei region and earned the praise of literati there, since, "the aria is certainly witty enough in a minor way, but it presents a great impediment to public morals." Yet she could still condone compositions of this sort as part of their author's profession: "Women in the quarter need arias like this, or they'll be unable to arouse the erotic thoughts of men" 總之, 小聰明則有餘, 于風化則大有礙也. 然教坊中人非此又不能動人艷思也.[49]

Less blatant in its wit but still well-suited for "arousing the erotic thoughts of men" is the following aria subtitled "Presented to a Friend" ("Zeng you" 贈友), which Wang Duanshu attributes to the famous late Ming courtesan Jing Pianpian 景翩翩:

[A Southern Xianlü mode modulating into Shuangdiao mode]: River Water with Two Variations	[南仙呂入雙調]二犯江兒水
My heart fluttering as I face you,	心旌相向
I remember in those days my heart fluttering as I faced you,	想當日心旌相向
When the first ripples of desire	情調初蕩漾
Held onto the falling of illusory flowers.[50]	把空花落相
As the bright moon rose,	青鳥廻翔
A bluebird soaring and circling sent tidings of my amorous heart.	寄春心明月上

Powdered butterflies rushed around for you,	粉蝶爲伊忙
As roving bees still hummed to themselves.	遊蜂還自嚷
Our love in the queen's palace,[51]	恩愛昭陽
Our dreaming souls like king and nymph at Gaotang lodge[52]—	魂夢高唐
It was just like a vast expanse of waves holding a black pearl.	恰便是含驪珠子千頃浪
Our past experience at the temple—	蕭寺行藏
but why speak of our past experience at the temple?	說什麽蕭寺行藏
To elope to the wineshop like Xiangru and Wenjun,[53]	臨邛情況
I'll meet you, seeker of immortal bliss, in the Tiantai peaks.[54]	向天台遇阮郎.

Generally speaking, Wang's evaluations in this chapter reinforce the truism that the independent aria was considered principally a performance genre. Her comments on Pianpian's arias seem deliberately to blur the boundary between composition and performance:

> Experts at 'realizing the tune' always lower their voice to make it more bewitching. True mastery lies not in forcing and interrupting but in passing smoothly from tune pattern to tune pattern in accord with the rhythm. Pianpian's first aria, "A Red Candle on a Silver Stand," is like a stringed instrument played without a single string broken;[55] the feeling is sad and calm. Her second aria, "My Heart Fluttering as I Face You," is like a duet in which "bamboo" and "flesh" exquisitely follow each other and the mood is never shattered. Raising a wine cup and turning your head to look at her, what more would you need? [56]
>
> 度曲家每低聲以媚之. 不在勉強湊插, 而在過腔合節乃爲當行. 翩翩 "銀臺絳蠟" 絃索一絲不斷而神情慘澹. "心旌相向" 竹肉縹緲相隨而意緒纏綿. 舉盞移顧, 何必在多?

Living some decades after Pianpian, Wang could never have heard her sing, so her evocation of the courtesan is purely imaginary, conjured up through reading the lyrics and the tune titles. The implication is that the words are incomplete on their own: the successful aria text must be able to invoke in the reader the compensatory *sensation* of witnessing a

performance—hence the emphasis on *looking* as well as listening. Wang cunningly describes the two arias in terms of voice and instruments to give the impression of how they would sound in concert, but the description is in fact metaphorical, meant to convey the musicality and expressiveness of Pianpian's skill as a writer. At the beginning of the passage, "realizing the tune" seems unequivocally to refer to "performing a song," but by the end it is clear that the other sense of "fashioning a song" is equally intended.

Authorship, Publication, and Transmission

One reason for the spread of southern forms of courtesan culture across the empire during the late Ming was that the cities of Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Suzhou, the locale of the most famous pleasure districts, were also centers of the publishing industry. Books about the courtesan world geared to the contemporary market were produced in rapid succession from the 1610s to the 1640s by literati editors capitalizing on their familiarity with the quarters. Although the format, stated aims, and content of such publications varied, they all include a large selection of lyrics to independent arias or popular songs and are important sources for understanding how flexible notions of authorship may be related to collaborative performance practices in a courtesan context.

Two such publications are *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou* (1617), compiled by Zhou Zhibiao 周之標 (under the pseudonym Wanyuzi 宛瑜子) and a sequel, *Seductive Courtesans of Nanjing* (*Jinling baimei* 金陵百媚 [1618]), compiled by Li Yunxiang 李雲翔 (under the pseudonym Weilinzi 爲霖子).[57] Both collections were printed in Suzhou and are examples of the parodic "flower registers" (*huabang* 花榜 or *hua'an* 花案) in which courtesans were ranked according to the grading system for successful examination candidates and then paired with a specific flower.[58]

Zhou Zhibiao had previously had a hand in compiling two anthologies of arias and drama excerpts, and he later published two collections of women's poetry.[59] A native of Suzhou, he was not only a habitué of the pleasure quarters and a self-avowed "slave to love" (*qing zhi nu* 情之奴) but an accomplished amateur singer himself. The entry for his girlfriend Wang Jiaoru王嬌如—ranked "Optimus" (*zhuangyuan* 狀元) in *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou*—confesses that the two of them frequently "realized the music together" until her madame, concerned about the lover's oath Jiaoru had sworn with a poor fellow of his ilk, abducted her.[60] His entry on the young courtesan Jin Jingluo 金驚洛 (ranked eighth in the top register) describes being cajoled by their friends into a singing contest with her at their first meeting. He lost the first two bouts but won the third.[61]

The Suzhou collection singles out three other courtesans (one per register) as top singers, one of whom, Liang (Yi) Xiaopian 梁(乙) 小翩, is

portrayed in the act of "realizing a tune" (fig. 2).[62] In the illustration, Xiaopian is draped elegantly, but casually against a chair, in a relaxed sensuous pose that no respectable woman would ever be pictured in. An exposed arm dangles across the back of the chair; the hand of the other is raised, propped up against her thigh, as though she were beating time to the music. On a stool facing her is another woman, a maid or perhaps a fellow courtesan, who is accompanying her, a flat drum on her lap and a drumstick in one hand, a clapper in the other. She may be setting the tempo before starting to sing or perhaps even beating out a tricky rhythm in the midst of fitting new words to a tune. It seems to be a rehearsal since no audience is present in the illustration, and Xiaopian's mouth is not even open, although the small rosebud mouth preferred for female beauty meant that women singing are not always portrayed with open mouths.[63] *A Ranking of Flowers* (*Pinhua jian* 品花箋), a huge late-Ming compendium on courtesans, flowers, musical instruments and other entertainments, includes a similar picture of a courtesan "realizing the tune," but here she is performing for an intimate drinking party of literati clients, who are watching her avidly as servant-boys heat and pour out the wine (fig. 3).[64]

The entry for Xiaopian includes a quatrain, the lyrics to an aria, and the words to a popular song. Both the quatrain and the aria pay tribute to her singing. The aria is uttered in the voice of a man propositioning a courtesan: its formulaic quality and trite allusions may be signposts of impromptu oral composition and performance, where seduction was clearly the point:

Heptasyllabic quatrain: A Glimpse in a Skiff	七言絕句: 舟中瞥見
A flash of her beating out a song against the side of a skiff—was it a dream, or was it real?	叩船一見夢耶真
The skiff pulls away, but the enchanting notes linger still.	船去盈盈別有聲
It's not simply her sublime song's power to move my soul –	不是曲高能動魄
How many true connoisseurs of singing have there ever been?	從來顧曲幾何人
Aria: To the tune *"Perfume of Hanging Branches"*	曲: 挂枝香
Her figure is charmingly slender.	態兒清瘦
She always magically understands a lover's heart.[65]	靈犀常透
Her singing has the elegance of "White Snow."[66]	度詞兒白雪堪稱

Figure 2. "Realizing the Music." From Zhou Zhibiao, *Wuji baimei.*

Figure 3. Courtesan singing at a party as one servant boy heats wine and another pours it. From *Pinhua jian*. Photo by Zhou Yuan.

It's no lie to say the notes "wind sinuously 'round the rafters."	聲嬝嬝繞梁非謬
In the Green Bower, it's rare to find her match.	青樓罕儔
I'm seeking a partner on the "Terrace of Love" [67]	陽臺尋偶
and have long heard of her fame.	芳名已久
Her smiling face bids me to stay.	笑相留
If we can get the light clouds to depart,	若得輕雲去
the bright moon's sickle will still be there.	依然明月鉤

The popular song, conversely, is a proposition from a woman to a man. It is an example of a dialect "mountain song" (*shan'ge* 山歌), an unaccompanied type of folksong originating in the rural areas around Suzhou that became fashionable among the urban populace during the late Ming. As is common in this kind of song, the speaker refers to herself as "Jie" 姐, and her lover as "Lang" 郎. The freshness and directness of the language, the reliance on double entendres and build-up to a punch line are also typical of the genre:

Huzhou Mountain Song: a fashionable tune	湖州山歌: 時腔
Jie has these feelings of hers,	姐有子個心來
and *Lang* has these feelings of his.	郎有子個心
Now take those feelings of yours	那你拿個那個心來
and come touch these feelings of mine.	著子姐個心
I'm not afraid that one set of feelings is soft,	弗怕一心硬來
and one set of feelings is hard.	一心軟
I'm just afraid that what's hard are your intentions,	只怕硬個是肚腸
and what's soft are your feelings.	軟個是個心

The interplay between "hard" and "soft" in the song implies a double entendre, especially because the images are more physical in the original: the word I translate as "feelings" is literally "heart" (*xin* 心), while "intentions" is "gut" (*duchang* 肚腸). The difficulty is figuring out precisely what is meant, especially because no personal pronouns are used in the last four lines in the original. "Heart of the flower" (*huaxin* 花心) is a bawdy term for the female genitals. Though no comparable usage can be definitively traced for "gut," it might, as the proverbial bodily seat of nefarious intentions, connote the male genitals. A popular song from Feng Menglong's *Hanging Branches* offers an instructive parallel. Entitled "Courtesan" (妓), it is addressed to "My loverboy" (*you qingge* 有情哥) in

a woman's voice, who complains that while his mouth expresses words of love, his lack of feelings is concealed inside his "belly" (*duli* 肚裏).[68]

Neither of the *Seductive Courtesans* collections provides authorial attribution for the verses in the courtesan entries, contrary to the fixation on authorship in most anthologies, which tend to resort to place keepers like "Anonymous" when the author is truly unknown. In this respect, the two *Seductive Courtesans* collections differ from *Stylish Verses from the Green Bower*, in which the authorship of each piece of courtesan's verse is clearly marked.[69] The *Seductive Courtesans* collections also differ from the many anecdotal or individual literary collections that included verse to or about specific courtesans by male literati, which likewise identify the authorship of each individual piece. Even within the entries in the *Seductive Courtesans* collections, in contrast to the unassigned authorship and polyphony of the verse selections, general comments are clearly labeled with the compiler's pseudonym.

From the content of the verse included in the two *Seductive Courtesans* collections, as the entry for the singer Liang Xiaopian suggests, many poems and arias appear to have been written in tribute to a courtesan by a male admirer; others, particularly the popular songs, are written in a female voice, often addressing a male lover. Some of the verse is purposefully vague—the sentiments it espouses could be voiced by either sex in a love affair. Kathryn Lowry has noted that most popular songs are couched in a woman's voice, and one major difference between independent aria and popular song is that the former tend to be written in the third person, the latter in the first person.[70] Since there is a long tradition of men writing in a woman's voice in China, however, a first-person feminine voice is by no means a definitive sign of female authorship. Conversely, since women writers were accustomed to depicting the beauty of other women, and perhaps even their own, in the poetry and songs they composed, adulatory description of a feminine body or face need not be a definitive sign of male authorship either.[71]

In his biography of the Nanjing courtesan Fu Lingxiu 傅靈修, who was the daughter of a famous actor and performed on stage with her brother, Pan Zhiheng appends two tributary *yuefu* 樂府 poems about her physical charms and musical talents: one that he composed and one composed by her good friend, the Nanjing courtesan Zhu Wuxia 朱無瑕, who had a reputation as a poet.[72] The poems may have been composed on the same occasion, at one of the parties at the "House of Twin Enchantments" (Shuangyan lou 雙艷樓) that the three of them attended in 1610. The poems are similar in style, and without the authorial attributions Pan provides, it would be impossible to determine that one was written by a man and the other by a woman.[73]

My hypothesis is that this very promiscuity of provenance in the *Seductive Courtesans* collections may be a key to the kinds of loose collaborative and improvisational types of music-making and versifying that went on in early seventeenth-century courtesan houses.[74] The collections provide no information as to the authors of the verses in each entry or the specific circumstances under which such verses were composed. *Love Lyrics of Stylistic Brilliance* (*Caibi qingci* 彩筆情辭), an anthology compiled by Zhang Xu 張栩 in the 1620's, which showcased arias by literati written to courtesans, includes one song-suite from *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou,* which it attributes to Wanyuzi, the pseudonym under which Zhou Zhibiao published the book.[75] In their eagerness to find an author, the modern editors of *The Complete Ming Arias* (*Quan Ming sanqu* 全明散曲) follow suit and attribute all the arias in the Suzhou volume to Zhou Zhibiao.[76] But there is no evidence to suggest a single authorship for the arias in either *Seductive Courtesan* volume, let alone the popular songs. Lowry's early suggestion that the collections included compositions both written to and by courtesans is plausible.[77] But in my opinion, authorship is not actually what is at stake here. If top courtesans excelled at performing their lovers' verse to music, and sometimes their own, and were also instrumental in transmitting and generating popular songs and arias, then at least a portion of the pieces clustered under the entry of a particular courtesan should be understood as characteristic of her *performing* repertory and certainly of her performing cohort and milieu. The courtesan's singing is a frequent topic of the poems and arias, which helps to keep the performance context of these offerings constantly in the foreground.

Important to my argument is the high density of arias and popular songs in these collections, since other verse forms, while chanted aloud, were not actually sung in this period. Furthermore, unlike more prestigious genres of poetry, which carried clear expectations of having an "author," arias, especially arias presented in a courtesan context, were more likely to remain anonymous or to have false attributions. When it came to popular song, the concept of authorship was not even really applicable.

Lowry has argued that the boundaries between arias and popular songs were quite permeable during the late Ming and that tune types were very flexible. Her research shows that at least in the case of popular songs, verses with very different prosodic forms shared the same tune title, while popular songs could sometimes even share the same tune titles as arias.[78] I interpret her findings to indicate that tunes and lyrics were continually mutating in performance through improvisation. Crucial to bringing about such mutations were courtesans who functioned as a principal "artery" for absorbing folk tunes into urban culture through popular song and disseminating them across the country.[79]

The anthologies of Feng Menglong help shed some light on contemporary attitudes toward the "authorship" of arias and popular songs arising from a pleasure quarter milieu. Playwright, editor, and publisher, Feng was a crucial figure in the early seventeenth-century publication of arias and popular songs as part of a movement championing such vernacular entertainment as more natural, authentic and full of feeling than classical verse forms. A native of Suzhou, he can be linked with both the *Seductive Courtesans* collections. In the Suzhou collection, Zhou Zhibiao calls him "a friend" and details Feng's liaison with the courtesan Liu Hanxiang 劉含香 (ranked sixth in the first register). Feng was directly involved in the compilation of the Nanjing collection, for which he wrote a preface and where his comments are appended to many entries.[80]

In 1627 or so, Feng published an anthology of arias mainly written to or about courtesans, *The Celestial Air Played Anew* (*Taixia xinzou* 太霞新奏), which included many of his own compositions. In it, he notes that "older generations did not wish to be known as the authors of arias, and although many of their arias were in wide circulation, we don't know from whose hand they came" 前輩不欲以詞曲知名. 往往有詞盛傳而不知出於誰手.[81] He scoffs at the 1616 anthology of arias associated with Zhou Zhibiao, *An Elegant Collection of Kun-Style Songs* (*Wuyu cuiya* 吳歈萃雅), which did provide names of authors for the arias, but often "recklessly mismatched them" 悉取文人姓字，妄配諸曲.[82] The problem of unknown or faulty attributions for arias, especially those of earlier periods, is also raised by Zhang Xu in his preface to *Love Lyrics of Stylistic Brilliance*.[83] Both Feng and Zhang's anthologies present themselves as novel endeavors to apply the rigorous standards of authorial attribution demanded of prestigious collections of verse to compilations of arias composed and performed in the courtesan world. At the same time, both men directed their anthologies to an audience of "reader-singers" *gelanzhe* 歌覽者 and adopted various organizational and typographical strategies meant to facilitate singing so that the literary value they were championing for the arias did not entirely eclipse their performance value.

The absence of authorial attribution in the *Seductive Courtesans* collections is consistent with the editorial practice of anthologies of popular songs from the 1610s or 1620s, notably *Hanging Branches* and *Mountain Songs* (*Shange* 山歌), both compiled by Feng Menglong. Only in a handful of cases are authors given for literary imitations inspired by a certain song, but courtesans are occasionally noted as the sources from whom Feng learned a song. The most extensive account in *Hanging Branches* concerns two songs that he got from his "good friend" Feng Xi 馮喜 (no relation), whom *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou* ranked as "Secondus" (*bangyan* 榜眼). On the night before she was to be married, she invited him to come bid

her farewell. The hour grew late. As he was about to leave, he asked whether there was anything she had left unsaid. She replied that she remembered two popular songs she had never divulged to him. And then she sang them for him. Feng Menglong prints the texts of the two songs, which are quite witty, and then waxes melancholy that he never saw her again: "Ah, this face as pink and lovely as a peach flower has long vanished, becoming the stuff of dreams. But whenever I read the lyrics of these songs, I faintly hear her voice 'winding sinuously round the rafters'" 嗚呼! 人面桃花, 已成夢境. 每閱二詞, 依稀遶梁聲在耳畔也.[84]

The songs are a parting gift that Feng Xi bestows on her friend Feng Menglong, whose interest in collecting and publishing popular songs would have been common knowledge in the pleasure quarter.[85] As befits a popular song, she uses the language of "remembering" (*ji* 記) rather than composing, though this would not rule out her having shaped or modified the words and music, and he credits her as the person who "passed on" (*chuan* 傳) the songs to him, not as their author. But even when all he has before him are the written texts, presumably that one of them had transcribed, the songs are indelibly stamped with her performing presence and his memory of the occasion upon which he heard them. This instance suggests how easy it was for writers on courtesans to slip into nostalgia, but Feng Menglong quickly follows this emotional outburst with clever imitations of Feng Xi's first song written by himself and his literati friends, which are among the few songs in the collection presented as the work of named "authors."[86] Still, their efforts pale in comparison with Feng Xi's, where the written text of her songs serves as a reminder of a whole sensory past, which lingers in the memory like an elusive scent or color.

The example of Feng Xi's parting gift to Feng Menglong and the memories it inspires suggest some of the subtleties possible in exchanges of song in the pleasure quarters. Feng Xi's songs that last night are bestowed as a privileged mark of friendship between equals rather than as a "mere" transaction between courtesan and client. On the eve of her marriage, which will make her the property of one man and take her person permanently out of the public eye, she sends forth her songs to circulate in her stead. Feng Menglong publishes her songs, which, framed between the anecdote on one side and the literary imitations on the other, succeed to some extent in preserving the aura she is about to forfeit. In so doing, Feng Menglong was following standard practice in the courtesan world where men of letters provided written endorsements of a courtesan's talents and charms to make or boost her reputation.

In this vein, both *The Celestial Air Played Anew* and *Love Lyrics of Stylistic Brilliance* include a suite of five arias written by one such patron, Yu Wanlun 俞琬綸, for the previously mentioned courtesan and actress Fu

Lingxiu 傅靈修, whose vocal talent was so praised by Pan Zhiheng and the courtesan Zhu Wuxia.[87] Yu, a top-degree holder, explains that Lingxiu had approached him for a written evaluation (*pinti* 品題) of her.

> I replied: "You enjoy singing, so I will present you with a set of songs." So I swiftly penned five tunes and showed them to her. Leaping to her feet, she cried: "In my whole life, I have never found anyone who truly understood me. Now these songs show true understanding!"

The first aria goes:

(To the tune *"Erlang shen"*)	[南商調二郎神]
In springtime,	春時候
watch how the contest of red flowers fills the yard.	看滿院繁紅爭鬥
Is the winner here?	第一當場人在否
Her childhood name is Shou,	小名名壽
courtesy name Qiuying, she also goes by Lingxiu.	字秋英又喚靈修
The books on her shelf are old friends.	架上圖書爲素友
Lute and song are her passion— she never refrains from playing or singing,	愛琴歌也無拘手口
but laughs at any payment in return.	笑纏頭
She's a dashing and dapper fellow of the female sex! [88]	他是個女中裘馬風流

Yu's preface does not mention whether she actually sang these songs for him; perhaps the assumption was so obvious it went unsaid, or perhaps tacking anything after this punch line would have detracted from the courtesan's praise of the author's superior understanding. It is striking that what begins as a story of a courtesan soliciting an endorsement of her talents from a client morphs into the courtesan's endorsement of her client's talents instead. As such, this anecdote beautifully shows the way in which mutual validation through gift-giving underpinned relations between top courtesans and their literati admirers.

But in bestowing his lyrics on a courtesan, how could a literary gentleman control their circulation? Most galling of all, in the promiscuous exchange of verse in the pleasure quarters, how could he be sure that another man wouldn't pass off these lyrics as his own? Such was the indignation suffered by Shi Shaoxin 施紹莘 (1581-1640), who is unusual in

having published a collection of his own verse that consists primarily of independent arias along with one section of *ci* lyrics. Like compilers of aria anthologies such as Feng Menglong and Zhang Xu, Shao presents himself as a bon vivant and connoisseur of courtesans and music, but he is even more committed to upgrading the aria genre by establishing his claim to total authorship. His book, entitled *Flower Shadows from the Autumn Floods Hermitage* (*Qiushui an Huaying ji* 秋水庵花影集), suggests how hard it was to "own" an aria. In his notice on "Circulation" ("Liuchuan" 流傳), he cautions readers that although his arias have been passed around for years among "cognoscenti" (*haoshizhe* 好事者), he has revised most of them so heavily—"to the point that in some pieces not a single word of the original remains" 至有終篇一字不同者; only the published version is "correct" (*zheng*正).[89] An even better example is his notice on "Plagiarism" ("Weiqie" 僞竊): "I realize that "xiaoci" [in his usage, referring both to arias and *ci* lyrics] are a rather low form, but when I've gone to the trouble of writing one then I rather prize it. But what can be done about people always stealing them from me? Once on a singing girl's fan I saw ten stanzas of a 'Dreaming of the South.' It was clearly my composition but it had another man's signature! There are numerous cases like this" 小詞雖極蕪陋, 然自寫一得, 亦頗自珍惜, 奈每每爲人掩竊. 曾於一歌女扇頭, 見夢江南十首, 宛然予作, 而已識他人姓字矣. 如此者多.[90] In other words, it may be difficult for a man to lay sole claim to a courtesan's favors, but shouldn't he at least be able to own the words to his own song?

In sum, the problem of certifying authorship of arias in the late Ming stems not simply from the print practices of unscrupulous editors and publishers or because some gentlemen disavowed their authorship of such a frivolous form, but because the lyrics to such songs were copied, freely changed, and recycled, both in performance and in manuscript, within the courtesan world.

Learning to Sing

Singing skill was highly profitable to a courtesan and her establishment, and training in the vocal arts was consequently regarded as an important investment. Singing in a performance context may have been culturally coded as feminine, but the main arbiters of musical taste (the amateurs) and the most prestigious singing teachers (the professionals) were certainly men. Studying with a top music master was understood as one major avenue to a successful career as a courtesan, whose reputation, at least at the outset, might be partially contingent upon the renown of her teacher. Pan Zhiheng's biography of the courtesan Xu Pian 徐翩, for instance, names the four male teachers of different arts with whom she studied simultaneously: one for calligraphy, one for the *qin,* one for poetry, and one for singing

arias.[91] Liang Xiaopian, the courtesan illustrated "realizing the tune" in *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou*, is said to have studied the art of the aria with "the best music master in the south," a certain Gong Muxi 龔慕溪. "More than two-fifths of all members of Suzhou singing societies were his pupils . . . Xiaopian's fellow students all acknowledged that she was the best among them. Whenever her name was mentioned, her peers would all sigh in admiration. In this way Xiaopian's fame came to top the whole region" 楓江有龔慕溪者曲冠江以南. 吳下歌友出其門者, 十之三四 . . . . [小翩]門人中雅稱第一. 輩中談及小翩靡不欽服. 小翩之名亦冠江以南矣.[92]

A dubious honor perhaps. The paragraph concludes with a remark that damns as much as defends her: "Who says that a girl who sings is not worth speaking of?"[93] The line implies that a talent for singing in a girl is ordinarily regarded as a sign of her lack of virtue; therefore, what wins her fame and increases her value in her profession as courtesan is precisely what makes her *not* "worth speaking of" otherwise.

Despite the greater prestige of male music masters, becoming a singing teacher was one possible source of livelihood open to a courtesan past her prime. A courtesan who left the profession and married might even coach her husband's maids in singing or eventually teach her granddaughters to pass on her musical legacy.[94] After the Manchu conquest in 1644, the great loyalist poet Wu Weiye 吳偉業 wrote a poem about one former courtesan singing instructor (possibly real, possibly imaginary), entitled "Ballad of an Old Courtesan from Huai'an" ("Linhuai laoji xing" 臨淮老妓行). The main point of this long poem is to lambaste the corruption of the despised renegade Ming general Liu Zeqing 劉澤清, who employed her in his household in Huai'an during his alliance with the Southern Ming court, and to lament the fall of the dynasty through the venerable trope of meeting a former entertainer of the high and mighty. The ballad nonetheless affords us a deeper view into such women than the brief mentions gleaned from the biographical and anecdotal record:

There still survives an old courtesan teacher	老大猶存一妓師
who can recall the old-world score for "Thorn Tree Branch."[95]	柘枝記得開元譜
Her soft voice gets through but one turn in the song before she begins to weep.	纔轉輕喉更淚流
In front of the revered company, she tells of the suffering of being alone and adrift.	尊前訴出飄零苦
"I used to be chief singer in General Liu's household.	妾是劉家舊主謳
My familiar name was Dong'er; I sang the tunes	冬兒小字唱梁州

of a now fallen state.
I taught his "Peach Leaf" troupe new lyrics that I wrote to the tune 'Water Music,' 翻新水調教桃葉
and I plucked model pieces on my rare *pipa* strung with crane gut to instruct his 'Never-Grieve' girls, too.[96] 撥定鵾絃授莫愁
In those days imperial relatives raved over me as a singer, 武安當日誇聲伎
and my superlative art was the admiration of the age. 秋娘絕藝傾時世
Tian Hongyu, the imperial consort's father, first brought me into his house in a golden carriage.[97] 戚里迎歸金犢車
Later I was transferred to the General's mansion in Huai'an. . . ." [98] 後來轉入臨淮第

We know that extensive training was required to gain the vocal expertise necessary for a top courtesan. Unfortunately, most sources are too terse or formulaic to provide any details on how courtesans were actually trained in singing. One place to find at least imaginative representations of such training sessions, however, are the scenes from operas in which courtesans or palace entertainers are being tutored in the performing arts. Such scenes became stock components of operas, no doubt because they helped vary the spectacle and incorporated the operatic injunction to sing into the plot. Although dramatized singing lessons can be found as early as the fifteenth century, the vogue for such scenes was probably launched by Liang Chenyu's 梁辰魚 famous *Washing Silk* (*Huansha ji* 浣紗記), said to be the first opera written expressly for *kunqu* performance. This opera features a scene entitled "Instruction in the Arts" ("Jiaoji" 教技) where the Queen of Yue teaches the palace lady Xi Shi 西施 to sing and dance so that she will be fully equipped to seduce their enemy, the King of Wu, and help topple his kingdom.[99]

Interestingly, one of two extant aria suites from the courtesan Ma Xianglan's otherwise lost opera, *A Jade Hairpin Passed Down Over Three Lifetimes (Sansheng chuan Yuzan ji* 三生傳玉簪記), comes from a scene entitled "Learning to Sing and Dance" ("Xuexi gewu" 學習歌舞). Since these arias survive only in a late Ming song anthology, which prints the tune titles and texts of the arias alone, without any dialogue, stage directions, or even role type indications, it is impossible to reconstruct fully what is going on, though we know that part of the play retold the famous story of Wang Kui 王魁, who betrayed and abandoned his courtesan lover Guiying 桂英. Nonetheless, the lyrics to this particular scene make it clear that a courtesan

is being taught a full complement of the performing arts. The arias conclude with the unidentified teacher's praise that this pupil now has what it takes to succeed in the profession:

(To the northern tune *"Selling Fine Wine"*)	[北沽美酒]
Now you've mastered the flute and the *pipa*	到如今吹成彈成
You've mastered singing and dancing, too.	歌成舞成
You'll see how before your gate, horses and carriages will jockey for space…[100]	呀看門前車闐馬競.

The best-known and most complex of the singing lesson scenes appears in *Peach Blossom Fan*. First completed and performed in 1699, *Peach Blossom Fan* is a historical drama about the fall of the Ming dynasty some fifty years earlier, which centers much of the action on the pleasure quarters in Nanjing. Virtually all the characters in the play are based on historical figures, including the courtesans, music masters, storytellers, and other denizens of the demi-monde. The scene in question is our first introduction to the heroine, a budding courtesan named Li Xiangjun 李香君, whose career has not yet been launched. The date is 1643, the year prior to the dynasty's collapse. The setting is the house in the Nanjing pleasure quarters in which Xiangjun lives with her adoptive mother, the courtesan Li Zhenli 李貞麗, who is grooming her to enter the profession. A patron of theirs, a politician and man of letters named Yang Wencong 楊文驄, has just come to call, in part because he's interested in finding a mistress for a friend of his, the hero of the play, the celebrated late Ming literary figure Hou Fangyu 侯方域. Yang first admires Xiangjun's beauty, then immediately inquires as to her skill in the arts. Her mother answers that she has hired a singing master to teach her how to sing arias and that she has already learned half of Tang Xianzu's famous opera *Peony Pavilion* ("Mudan ting" 牡丹亭), by now a classic of the *kunqu* repertory. Then she calls her daughter over.

> ZHENLI: Child, Mr. Yang is no outsider. Take out your songbook and quickly practice a few arias. After your teacher has corrected you on these, you'll be ready to start on some new tunes.
> XIANGJUN (*frowning*): How can I practice singing in front of a guest?
> ZHENLI: What a silly thing to say! For those of us in the entertainer ranks, singing and dancing are what put food on the table! If you won't apply yourself to singing, what are you going to do with yourself? *Xiangjun looks at her songbook.*

Zhenli sings, to the tune "Pawlonia Tree:"

For the likes of us born into the ranks of powder and paint,	生來粉黛圍
or who've made the leap into the "oriole-flower" brigade,	跳入鶯花隊
a good singing voice is a goldmine.	一串歌喉 是俺金錢地
Don't lightly give the token of your love[101] away	莫將紅豆輕拋棄
Just master lines like "The lingering moon sets in the morning breeze"[102]	學就曉風月墜
to the slow beat of the red ivory clapper.	緩拍紅牙
Then the splendor of the court music troupe you'll capture,[103]	奪了宜春翠
and the mounts of young nobles will be tethered at your gate. [104]	門前繫住王孫轡

The scene makes clear that Xiangjun, as befits a high-class courtesan is being trained in the elegant "pure singing" style rather than in the performance of full-fledged operas on stage. What Xiangjun sings for her teacher Su Kunsheng 蘇崑生 are two arias from the famous garden scene in *Peony Pavilion*, where the well-born heroine experiences her first carnal dream of love. Since Xiangjun omits all the interspersed dialogue written into the arias in the original play, however, the book she is consulting could not have been a full playtext but is most likely a collection of arias meant primarily for singing.

The lesson proper begins with her teacher asking Xiangjun the usual formula employed in scenes of this sort: "Do you have the arias you learned yesterday down cold?" 昨日學的曲子, 可曾記熟了? When she replies that she has, he asks her to begin.

XIANGJUN: *seated opposite SU, sings to the tune "Black Gossamer Robe" from* Peony Pavilion:

"See how deepest purple, brightest scarlet	原來奼紫嫣紅開遍
open their beauty only to dry well crumbling.	似這般都付與斷井頹垣
'Bright the morn, lovely the scene,' listless and lost the heart"[105]	良辰美景奈何天

SU: Wrong! Wrong! "Lovely" gets an individual beat and so does "lost." You can't just slur them together. Take it from the top again.
XIANGJUN:

"'Bright the morn, lovely the scene.'	良辰美景奈何天
—where is the garden 'gay with joyous cries"?	賞心樂事誰家院
streaking the dawn, close-curled at dusk,	朝飛暮卷
rosy clouds frame emerald pavilion—	雲霞翠軒
fine threads of rain.	雨絲風片

SU: Wrong again! "Fine threads" is the climax point (*wutou* 務頭); it should be sung from inside the throat. [106]

Wutou is a much discussed technical term in the traditional prescriptive literature on the vocal art of the aria.[107] As Marjory Liu defines the term: "In effect, it brings together in two or three words within a line or a song a concentration of literary-musical components that signifies an aesthetic climax. That is to say, a choice grouping of key words, usually in lyrical style each representing a different specific speech tone, coinciding with melodic and rhythmic highlights collectively constitutes a *wutou*."[108] The lingering emotional affect a *wutou* is thus supposed to create makes the interruption of the acoustic pleasure here particularly jarring for a knowledgeable audience.

The term *wutou* is employed in this scene as a piece of musical jargon that the layman is expected to recognize but not necessarily understand. The same usage appears in a scene where a male instructor critiques the vocal technique of a female pupil in a fifteenth-century opera written by the early Ming prince Zhu Youdun 朱有燉. In this play, the lesson takes place in the palace; the music master is an unnamed official in charge of entertainment for the inner court; his charge is not a courtesan but a nameless palace entertainer, and what she sings is not specified but improvised by the performer; the play script only indicates that "the female lead sings something from an opera excerpt" 旦唱一折了. The teacher is not overly pleased with her performance.

OFFICIAL: There are places in your singing where you lose the beat and your delivery of the *wutou* isn't terribly good. Listen to what I tell you.
He sings, to the tune "A Golden Goblet" 金盞兒:

In *xianlü* mode,[109] the opening notes must be quick;	唱的仙呂要起音疾
The final stanza of the suite must slow down at the coda.	賺煞要尾聲遲
You must hit the *wutou* with exquisite precision. . .	你將務頭兒撲得多標致

One important point of the musical jargon in *Peach Blossom Fan* is not only to convey the teacher's professional expertise but to bolster Xiangjun's credentials as a seriously-trained singer, important if she is to succeed as a courtesan. And it works. After she finishes the second aria, with a few additional interruptions, Yang Wencong is impressed. "How delightful that your daughter is so gifted. She'll become a famous courtesan, don't you worry!" 可喜令愛聰明的緊,不愁不是一個名妓哩.[110] And he promptly proposes to arrange a union with his friend, Hou Fangyu.

Coda: The Value of Withdrawal

A number of recent interpretations of this scene in *Peach Blossom Fan* emphasize the extent to which this technical treatment of the singing lesson in the play suppresses and distorts the romantic meaning of the *Peony Pavilion* lyrics that the courtesan sings.[111] Indeed the possibilities for irony are even greater, since the emphasis on learning a technical craft not only undermines the meaning of the lyrics the performer sings, but the affective power of the voice to transport the listener.

The historical nucleus of this scene derives from the biography of Li Xiangjun that Hou Fangyu wrote between 1650 and 1652 describing their former relationship and a letter covering some of the same ground.[112] The biography says that from the age of eleven or twelve Xiangjun studied singing with Zhou Rusong 周如松 and "completely mastered the music" 皆能盡其音節 of Tang Xianzu's four operas. In *Peach Blossom Fan*, Yang Wencong says that Su Kunsheng's former surname was Zhou 周, neatly conflating the two singing masters for dramaturgical purposes. Lu Eting 陸萼庭 has demonstrated, however, that this conflation was pure invention on the playwright's part. Su Kunsheng was never a habitué of the Nanjing pleasure quarters and although Su was indeed renowned as a specialist in the pure singing style of *kunqu*, he served as music master in the entourage of wealthy connoisseurs, where he would have coached household entertainers rather than courtesans.[113]

The historical Hou Fangyu was in a position to appreciate the fineness of Xiangjun's musicianship. He came from a wealthy family of officials, with its own household troupe of boys, and, according to one biographer, was known for "his passion for the vocal arts and knowledge of music" 雅

嗜聲技, 解音律. He is said to have hired a famous teacher for a singing boy he had purchased and to have participated himself in the boy's training, "pointing to the score himself to make sure that not one word was wrong." 身自按譜, 不使有一字訛譜. His ability to detect even minor errors during the performances of professional singers and actors is also reported.[114]

Hou's biography of Xiangjun mentions that she would "invite him to compose poems for her and then reciprocate by singing them" 妓嘗邀侯生爲詩, 而自歌以償上之.[115] There is more than meets the eye here. He uses the word *shi* 詩 here, which refers to poetry that was chanted, not sung, and therefore never written to pre-existing tunes as arias were.[116] Several short poems that he is thought to have written for her appear in his only extant collection of verse.[117] Although we do not know whether these are the poems she actually performed for him, it is clear that none of them would have been singable in that form. Unfortunately, Hou gives no indication of how Xiangjun was able to sing his poems, but they would have needed first to be set to music, by rewriting and expanding the words to conform to a current tune pattern.[118] In this case, "realizing the tune" must have required an unusual degree of literary and musical effort on her part.

Hou's biography of Xiangjun also notes that she was exceptionally skilled at singing arias from another famous opera, *The Pipa* (*Pipa ji* 琵琶記), but that she was extremely reluctant to perform them. When she does at last sing them for him, this initial reticence lends her rendition that much more power and weight. He recounts her passionate farewell at the riverbank upon his departure from Nanjing, in which she sang from *The Pipa* to see him off, knowing their relationship was over. Hou had come to Nanjing to sit for the triennial provincial exams and, as was customary, had taken a mistress from among the courtesans in the famous pleasure quarters directly across the river from the examination compound; now having failed the examination, it was time to take his leave of the city and of her. The transient course of such an affair was entirely predictable.

Yet Xiangjun interjects a deeper meaning into the standard farewell by choosing this particular opera from her repertory and by drawing a historical analogy to warn him against aligning himself with the evil faction of Ruan Dacheng 阮大城, then in power. "We cannot expect to see each other again, so I hope you will always take care of yourself. Don't forget the arias I have sung from *The Pipa*! I will never sing them again!'" 此去相見未可期, 願終自愛. 無忘妾所歌琵琶記也, 妾亦不復歌矣.[119] We know Xiangjun's words only through the remembered speech that Hou Fangyu includes in his idealized biography, but it is still worth pondering the two possible meanings of her last two lines. Why should he not forget the arias she has just sung?

On a superficial level, she is simply reinforcing the seriousness of her message: I will no longer be around to advise you, so you must engrave my words, underscored by these arias, in your memory. In this reading, "I will never sing them again" implies "I will never sing them again *for you."* On a deeper level, however, the arias become a substitute for her person, the injunction not to forget them replacing the more expected plea at a parting of lovers, "Don't forget *me."* Her performance of these arias is a farewell keepsake she bestows upon him, the rarity of her gift imbuing it with correspondingly greater value. In keeping with the logic of restricting the performance of certain arias to enhance their preciousness, a second interpretation of her last line is possible. In this reading, "I will never sing them again" implies "I will never sing them again *for anyone."*

As we have seen throughout this essay, one of the most important currencies at a courtesan's disposal was the performance of song. The dilemma that Li Xiangjun faced at the riverbank was how to turn the seemingly most banal gesture in a courtesan's repertory—singing arias for her lover—into a truly valuable thing, one that could adequately express the integrity of her feelings for him and repay his favor. Her solution was to withdraw these arias permanently from circulation from that moment on. Only in this way could she claim "ownership" of these well-known arias and present them to her lover as "his" forever.

The symbolism of this musical resolve anticipates the grand gesture for which she became famous: her principled refusal of the princely sum of 300 taels to join the household of Tian Yang 田仰, a wealthy and powerful member of the evil political faction that she had warned her lover against. It is for this act of loyalty that Hou Fangyu wrote her biography and that she is featured as the heroine of *Peach Blossom Fan*.

Endnotes

1. An earlier and shorter version of this essay was published as "'Notes of Flesh' and the Courtesan's Song in Seventeenth-Century China" in *The Courtesan's Arts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 75-99.
2. The main exceptions are: Kathryn Lowry's *Tapestry of Popular Songs in 16th- and 17th-century China: Reading, Imitation, and Desire* (Leiden: Brill, 2005) and her "Transmission of Popular Song in the Late Ming" (Phd. Diss., Harvard University, 1996), Dai Ning 戴寧,

"Ming Qing shiqi Qinhuai qinglou yinyue wenhua chutan" 明清時期秦淮青樓音樂文化初探, *Zhongguo yinyuexue jikan* (1997.3), pp. 40-54, Wang Ning 王寧 and Ren Xiaowen 任孝溫, *Kunqu yu Mingqing yueji* 昆曲與明清樂伎 (Shenyang: Chunfeng wenyi chubanshe, 2005), and several publications by Ōki Yasushi 大木康, including *Chūgoku yūri kūkan : Min Shin shinwai gijo no sekai* 中國遊里空間 : 明清秦淮妓女 の 世界 (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2002), recently published in Chinese as *Fengyue Qinhuai: Zhongguo youli kongjian* 風月秦淮：中國游里空間, trans. Xin Ruyi 辛如意 (Taipei: Lianjing, 2007), and his *Fū Bōryū sanka no kenkyū* 馮夢龍山歌の研究 (Tokyo: Keisō shobō, 2003).

3. Late Ming printed songbooks did often indicate the beat and mouth position of certain words to be sung, but publication of opera arias with the full *gongche* 工尺 method of musical notation did not begin until the eighteenth century.
4. *Chang* 娼 is cognate with *chang* 唱 (sing). The term "singing girl" (歌女) can be traced back to the Tang and is found in seventeenth-century sources but is far less common than it became in the twentieth century. The translation "sing-song girl" is a pidgin corruption of the Wu dialect pronunciation for *xiansheng* (先生) used in Southern establishments for "courtesan," but ordinarily meaning "master" or "teacher" and has nothing originally to do with singing.
5. Beverly Bossler, "Shifting Identities: Courtesans and Literati in Song China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 62. 1 (2002): 6-7.
6. *Qinglou yunyu* 青樓韻語, comp. Zhang Mengzheng 張夢徵 (Hangzhou, 1616); facsimile ed. in *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan erbian* 中國古代版畫叢刊二編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994), vol. 4, 1.1. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.
7. Although *The Classic of Whoring* does not survive as an independent book under this title, I have discovered that the identical content circulated verbatim in late Ming daily-use encyclopedias under headings such as "Regulations of the Green Bower" ("Qinglou guifan" 青樓規範 in *Santai wanyong zhengzong* 三台萬用正宗 21.294-348) or "Secret Mechanisms of Romance" ("Fengyue jiguan" 風月機關 in *Wuju wanbao quanshu* 五車萬寶全書 10.250-266 and *Miaojin wangbao quanshu* 妙錦萬寶全書 24.306-334), all reprinted in *Chūgoku nichiyo ruisho shusei* 中國日用類書集成 (Tokyo: Kyuko Shoin, 1999-2000). On these "brothel treatises," which were also included in drama miscellanies, see Yuming He, "Productive Space:

Performance Texts in the Late Ming" (Ph.D. diss, University of California at Berkeley, 2003), pp. 99-102. *The Embroidered Jacket* (綉襦記), a late sixteenth-century *chuanqi* play based on the Tang tale "Li Wa zhuan" 李娃傳, includes a reference to a *Classic of Whoring* as part of the banter between the courtesan Li Wa and her client, but the title is offered in the spirit of wit and not necessarily as an allusion to an actual book. See Scene 4, 15b in *Guben xiqu congkan chuji* 古本戲曲叢刊初集 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1954).

8. James Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1999), p. 124.
9. For example, see James Cahill, *The Painter's Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) and Jonathan Hay, *Shitao* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
10. Commentary by Zhu Yuanliang 朱元亮 in *Qinglou yunyu,* comp. Zhang Mengzheng, 1.230. "Hurling a brick to extract precious jade" is a set phrase meaning "to use some inferior thing to elicit and obtain a superior thing in kind" often employed as a modest reference to one's own writing when sending it to someone else.
11. Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, comp. *Guazhi'er* 掛枝兒 in *Ming Qing min'ge shidiao ji* 明清民歌時調集, ed. Guan Dedong 關德棟 et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 10.235.
12. Joseph S. C. Lam, "The Presence and Absence of Female Musicians and Music in China," in *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, ed. Dorothy Ko et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 97.
13. For the sexual meaning of these terms, see Wilt Idema and Stephen West, *The Moon and the Zither: The Story of the Western Wing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 147 and 151.
14. Judith T. Zeitlin, "The Secret Life of Rocks: Objects and Collectors in the Ming and Qing Imagination," *Orientations* 30.5 (May 1999): 40-47.
15. In *Shanben xiqu congkan* 善本戲曲叢刊, vol. 2, compiled by Wang Qiugui 王秋桂 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1984-87; henceforth, *Shanben*). *Yugu tiaohuang* 玉谷調簧 is the title on the cover page, but elsewhere the title is printed as *Yugu xinhuang* 玉谷新簧 (New Pipes in the Jade Valley). *Gu* 谷 (gully, ravine) can be used as a poetic double entendre for the vagina. In her reading of the picture and the title, He Yuming 何予明 suggests taking *yu* 玉 (jade) as a pun for *yu* 欲 (desire) and replacing *gu* 谷 with its synonym *he* 壑 to produce the saying "yuhe nantian" 欲壑難填 (Desire is an insatiable ravine).

(Xixue, diaoban yinshua yu wan Ming de wenhua shishang 戲謔，雕版印刷與晚明的文化時尚, in *Zhongguo wenxue: chuantong yu xiandai de duihua* 中國文學：傳統與現代的對話, ed. Zhang Hongsheng 張宏生 and Qian Nanxiu 錢南秀 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007), p. 212.

16. Sun Zhongling 孫鐘齡, *Dongguo ji* 東郭記 , scene 8, 16b-17a in *Guben xiqu congkan erji* 古本戲曲叢刊二集 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1955).
17. Ibid., 17b. The *locus classicus* for this cliché praising female singing is an anecdote in *Liezi* 列子 about a beggar woman who sings for a living. When she passes through the city gate, the lingering notes are said to "wind sinuously 'round the rafters," and to be audible for three days. For a full translation, see *The Book of Lieh-tzu*, trans. A.C. Graham (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 109.
18. See, for instance, the section on song in Duan Anjie 段安節, *Yuefu zalu* 樂府雜路 (ca. 894), which lists a few male singers but concentrates mainly on female ones. *Zhongguo gudian xiqu lunzhu jicheng* 中國古典戲曲論著集成 (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 1959), vol. 1, pp. 46-48. (Henceforth, *Xiqu lunzhu*).
19. Wang Zhuo 王灼, *Biji manzhi* 碧雞漫志, in *Xiqu lunzhu*, vol. 1, p. 111.
20. *Shih-shuo hsin-yü*: *A New Account of Tales of the World*, trans. Richard B. Mather (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 205.
21. The aphorism is cited, inter alia, in: Duan Anjie, *Yuefu zalu*, *Xiqu lunzhu*, vol. 1, p. 47; Yannan zhian 燕南芝庵 (pseud.), *Changlun* 唱論, *Xiqu lunzhu*, vol. 1, p. 159; Wang Jide 王驥德, *Qulü* 曲律, *Xiqu lunzhu,* vol. 4, p. 160; Pan Zhiheng 潘之恆, *Pan Zhiheng quhua* 潘之恆曲話, ed. Wang Xiaoyi 汪效倚 (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 1988), p. 19.
22. *Pan Zhiheng quhua*, p. 28; for another instance of the phrase "notes of flesh," see *ibid*., p. 8.
23. Li Yu 李漁, *Xianqing ouji* 閑情偶記, ed. Bei Jinheng 卑錦珩 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1999), 3.139.
24. Ibid., 3.138.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 3.135.
27. Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Quarters* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), pp. 264-65.
28. Li Yu, *Xianqing ouji*, 3.136-37.

29. Wang Anqi 王安祈, *Mingdai chuanqi juchang ji qi yishu* 明代傳奇劇場及其藝術 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1985), p. 87.
30. *Wuji baimei,* register 3, #16, 54a-b.
31. Qian Qianyi 錢謙益, ed. *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan* 列朝詩集小傳 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), vol. 2, p. 765. There is evidence that Ma Xianglan and her troupe also gave performances in other cities. Feng Mengzhen's 馮夢禎 diary records having seen two scenes from the northern version of *Xixiang ji* performed by Ma Xianglan and her girls at someone's private residence. Shen Defu's 沈德符 account in *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬歷野獲編 mentions that Ma Siniang 馬四娘 of Nanjing (presumably Ma Xianglan) brought her girls to Suzhou and put on a full-length performance of the northern version of *Xixiang ji* 西廂記 the same year and died soon after her return to Nanjing. Both are cited in Wang Anqi 王安祈, *Mingdai xiqu wulun* 明代戲曲五論 (Taipei: Da'an chubanshe, 1990), p. 10.
32. Zhang Dai 張岱, *Tao'an mengyi* 陶庵夢憶 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), pp. 69-70.
33. On the fashion for amateur theatrical performances in the late Ming and the backlash against it, see Sophie Volpp, *Worldly Stage: The Figure of the Theater in Seventeenth-century China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Asia Center Publications, forthcoming).
34. Yu Huai 余懷, *Banqiao zaji: wai yizhong* 板橋雜記: 外一種, ed. Li Jintang 李金堂 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), 11.8.
35. Yu Huai, *Banqiao zaji*, p. 11.
36. Ibid., p. 22.
37. Dai Ning, "Ming Qing shiqi Qinhuai," p. 43; Wang Anqi, *Mingdai chuanqi*, 87-94; Fu Xueyi 傅雪漪, *Kunqu yinyue xinshang mantan* 昆曲音樂欣賞漫談 (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1996), pp. 8-10. The term "pure" connotes cool, quiet, and elegant as opposed to noisy, hot, and vulgar.
38. *Quxie* 曲諧, vol. 4, 4.54b-55a in *Sanqu congkan* 散曲叢刊, comp. Ren Zhongmin 任中敏 (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1964).
39. Wang Xiaoyi 汪效倚, "Pan Zhiheng xiqu pinglun chutan" 潘之恆戲曲評論初探 in *Shuoshi xuewei lunwen ji: xiqu juan* 碩士學位論文集：戲曲卷 (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1985), pp. 124-25.
40. Wang Jide, *Qu lü* in *Xiqu lunzhu*, vol. 4, p. 117.
41. Isabel Wong, "Kunqu," in the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, vol. 7, ed. Robert C. Provine et al. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998-2002), p. 293.

42. Stephen West, entry on Yuan entertainers, in *Women Writers of Traditional China*, ed. Kang-i Sun Chang and Haun Saussy (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 115-16.
43. In "Transmission of Popular Song," Lowry translates *duoqu* 度曲 as "to realize or unfold a tune" (48) and defines the phrase as meaning "to shape a song in accordance with the score, or often (since there is no musical notation for 16th century popular songs till more than 150 years later) in accordance with the conventional notion of a tune, a tune type" (51). In *Tapestry of Songs* (286), she translates the term simply as "singing an aria," which "involves adaptation of the tune to the lyrics, resulting in a unique version of the tune." Another possible derivation might be from the meaning of 度 *du* "to make calculations, to measure," as in beating out a tune.
44. On the composite tune method, or what musicologists call "centonization," see Marjory Bong-Ray Liu, "Tradition and Change in Kunqu Opera" (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1976), pp. 64-65; 67. "Patchwork melodies" is Rulan Chao Pian's term in *Sonq Dynasty Musical Sources and Their Interpretation* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 36.
45. Wong, "Kunqu," p. 293.
46. Drew Edward Davies, "On Music Fit for a Courtesan: Representations of the Courtesan and her Repertoire," *The Courtesan's Arts*, p. 150.
47. Wang Jide, *Qu lü*, in *Xiqu lunzhu*, vol. 4; Wei Liangfu, *Qu lü*, and Shen Pangtuo, *Duqu xuzhi*, in *Xiqu lunzhu*, vol. 5.
48. Liang Mingyue, *Music of the Billion: An Introduction to Chinese Musical Culture* (New York: Heinrichshofen, 1985), pp. 240-41.
49. Wang Duanshu 王端淑, *Mingyuan shiwei* 名媛詩緯 (Qing edition), 38.4a-b. The same aria, credited to "A Courtesan from Hubei" ("Qizhou ji"祁州妓), also appears in Feng Menglong's 1627 anthology *Taixia xinzou* 太霞新奏 in *Feng Menglong quanji* 馮夢龍全集, ed. Wei Tongxian 魏同賢 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), 15: 742-43.
50. The meaning of this line is not clear.
51. Literally, Han dynasty Zhaoyang palace, where empresses lived. Here simply a cliché.
52. Cliché for the site of an erotic tryst between an ancient king and the Nymph of Wu Mountain from Song Yu's 宋玉, "Gaotang fu" 高唐賦. Following the correction 高唐 for Wang Duanshu's 高堂 in Xie Boyang 謝伯陽, ed., *Quan Ming sanqu* 全明散曲 (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1994), 3: 3419-20.

53. The Han dynasty court poet Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 and Zhuo Wenjun 卓文君, who opened a wineshop after eloping.
54. Wang Duanshu, *Mingyuan shiwei* ("yaji" 雅集), 38.6b-7a. Wang took this aria from *Stylish Verses from the Green Bower,* which she says her husband had bought for her, and which she acknowledges as her principal source for works by courtesans.
55. *Si* 絲, the character I have translated as "string," is commonly punned with its homophone *si* 思 to mean "thoughts of longing." Wang Duanshu probably took Jing Pianpian's first aria from *Songs of the Southeast, second series (Wu sao erji* 吳騷二集), comp. Zhang Qi 張琦 and Wang Huixuan 王煇選 (preface 1616), where it also credited to this courtesan. The attribution is spurious, however, because the aria had been published over a century earlier as the work of the mid-Ming poet Chen Duo 陳鐸 (d. 1507) in his *Kexuezhai gao* 可雪齋稿. See *Quan Ming sanqu*, 3: 3420-21.
56. Wang Duanshu, *Mingyuan shiwei*, 38.5a.
57. My deep thanks to Kathryn Lowry and Patrick Hanan for making copies of these rare works available to me. For the identification of Zhou Zhibiao, see *Quan Ming sanqu*, 3: 3690. For the identification of Li Yunxiang, see Hanan, *The Chinese Vernacular Story* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 89. In *The Tapestry of Popular Songs*, pp. 200 and 281, Lowry incorrectly asserts that *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou* is an expansion of one chapter in Deng Zhimo's 鄧志謨 *Debonair Collection (Sasa bian* 洒洒篇) and that *Sasa bian* furnished the model for both *Seductive Courtesan* collections. Quite the contrary. *Sasa bian* consists of unacknowledged abridgments of previously published books related to the courtesan world, including not only *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou,* but *Stylish Verses from the Pleasure Quarter* and *Songs of the Southeast (Wusao ji* 吳騷集)*,* comp. Wang Zhideng 王稚登 and published by Zhang Qi 張琦 (preface 1614), plus one or two collections whose sources are still to be identified.
58. On "flower registers," see Dorothy Ko, "The Bound Foot and the Written Word," in *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*, edited by Ellen Widmer and Kang-I Sun Chang (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 74-100; Goyama Kiwamu 合山究, "Kaan, kabo kō" 花案，花棒攷, *Bungaku ronshū* 35 (1989), p. 12.
59. The anthologies of arias are *Wind-Chime Lyrics (Shanshan ci* 珊珊詞) (*Shanben*, vol. 14) and *Wuyu cuiya* 吳歈萃雅 (preface 1616; *Shanben*, vol. 12-13). On his anthologies of women's poetry, *Nüzhong qi caizi*

Lanke ji 女中七才子蘭咳集, and its sequel, see my "Disappearing Verses: Writing on Walls and Anxieties of Loss," in *Writing and Materiality in China*, ed. Judith T. Zeitlin and Lydia H. Liu (Harvard Asia Center Publications, 2003), pp. 73-132.

60. *Wuji baimei*, 1.6b-7a.
61. *Ibid*., 1.56b-57a.
62. The other two are Feng (Chou) Youbai 馮 (丑) 幼白 (second in the top register) and Han Kui 韓葵 (tenth in the bottom register); the list of top singers appears in the general comments for Han Kui (2.48b).
63. Along the same grounds, Li Yu (*Xianqing ouji*, 3.138) advises that a woman looks best playing the vertical flute because it makes her mouth appear attractively smaller. This is why, he says, pictures of beautiful women like to portray them playing this particular instrument and why a woman should never play the shawm, which distorts the face.
64. On *Pinhua jian*, comp. Qingtiao huashi 清苕花史(pseud.), in the National Central Library in Taiwan, see Mao Wenfang 毛文芳, *Wu, xingbie, guankan: Mingmo Qingchu wenhua shuxie xintan* 物, 性別, 觀看: 明末清初文化書寫新探 (Taibei: Xuesheng shuju, 2001), pp. 384-92.
65. Literally, "penetrates the magic rhinoceros horn," a common poetic cliché for erotic love and mutual understanding between lovers taken from a line by Tang poet Li Shangyin 李商隱.
66. "White Snow" is an ancient tune title reused in the title of the important Yuan anthology of independent arias, *Sunny Spring and White Snow* (*Yangchun baixue* 陽春白雪), compiled by Yang Chaoying 楊朝英.
67. This erotic cliché derives from the site of lovemaking between an ancient king and the Nymph of Wu Mountain in Song Yu's 宋玉, "Gaotang fu" 高唐賦.
68. The aria appears in *Guazhi'er*, 10.236.
69. In the editorial notice (*fanli* 凡例, p. 23), *Stylish Verses* acknowledges that some of the verses lack authors and that the attributions for others may be shaky 時下頗乏作家. 有亦未能盡識. 据遠近徵得者若干首. 隨徵隨錄, 真贋未暇窮執也.
70. Lowry, "Transmission of Popular Song."
71. Ko, "The Written Word," pp. 90-95.
72. For Pan's biography of Zhu Wuxia, see pp. 116-17; on the inclusion of her work in major late Ming and early Qing poetry anthologies as evidence of her fame as a courtesan-poet in literati circles, see Sufeng

Xu, "Lotus Flowers Rising from the Dark Mud: Late Ming Courtesans and Their Poetry" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2007), p. 80.

73. *Pan Zhiheng quhua*, p. 127. Both poems are literary songs in the *yuefu* 樂府 style rather than popular songs or arias. Pan Zhiheng was a frequent guest at the "House of Twin Enchantments," whose name he coined to reflect the talents of Fu Lingxiu and her brother. See *Pan Zhiheng quhua,* pp. 51; 32; 120.
74. Martha Feldman makes a similar argument about the Italian renaissance in "Authors and Anonyms: Recovering the Anonymous Subject in Cinquecento Vernacular Objects," in *Music and the Cultures of Print*, ed. Kate van Orden (New York: Garland Publishing Inc. 2000), pp. 166-199.
75. The suite is entitled "Zeng Feng Xi sheng: Liangzhou xu" 贈馮喜生: 梁州序 in *Caibi qingci (Shanben* vol. 75, juan 1); in *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou*, it is the first *qu* under the entry for Feng Xi 馮喜.
76. Xie Boyang, ed., *Quan Ming sanqu,* vol. 3, 3670-3690. The entire entry is credited to Wanyuzi, who is identified as Zhou Zhibiao, but each aria also lists the courtesan under whose name it appeared in *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou.* Xie Boyang did not use *Seductive Courtesans of Nanjing* as a source, presumably because the only surviving copy is in Japan.
77. Lowry, "Transmission of Popular Song," p. 242; *Tapestry of Songs*, p. 293.
78. Ibid. pp. 3-5 and chapter 3.
79. "Artery" is the phrase used by Dai Ning in "Ming Qing shiqi Qinhuai"; for a more extended version of this argument, see Ōki Yasushi, "Sokuchô shu 'Guazhi'er' ni tsuite" 俗曲集掛枝兒にづいて in *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo* 107 (Oct 1988), pp. 95-96.
80. Hanan, *The Chinese Vernacular Story*, pp. 89-90.
81. *Taixia xinzou* 太霞新奏*,* comp. Feng Menglong in *Feng Menglong quanji*, ed. Wei Xiantong, vol. 15: 7. Only three of the arias in this collection are by women, only one of whom is a courtesan.
82. Ibid.
83. *Caibi qingci* in *Shanben*, vol. 75, pp. 14-15.
84. *Guazhi'er*, 4.107-8.
85. In the same collection, Feng Menglong describes how a female musician named Ayuan 阿圓, a pipa player who is also an expert at "pure singing" and skilled at "making new music," comes to see him

expressly to give him the words to some of her songs when she hears that he is expanding an earlier edition of such material (*Guazhi'er* 3.85).

86. For a translation and discussion of these songs, see Lowry, *Tapestry of Song,* pp. 192-199. Lowry ("Transmission of Popular Song," p. 193) suggests that Feng Xi may sing this particular song because the words obliquely express her own feelings about her imminent marriage.
87. In his biography of Fu Lingxiu (*Pan Zhiheng quhua*, p. 126), Pan takes credit for making her early reputation through his writing.
88. Yu Wanlun, "Fu Lingxiu wudiao" 傅靈修五調 in *Quan Ming chuanqi* 3:3658. It is listed under his *zi* 字 Junxuan 君宣 and entitled "Zeng Fu ji Lingxiu" 贈傅妓靈修, in Zhang Xu, *Caibi qingci*, 1.47-48.
89. Shi Shaoxin 施紹莘, *Quan Ming sanqu*, vol. 3: 3895.
90. Ibid. "Dreaming of the South" is a well-known *ci* tune title. Shi Shaoxin includes a ten-stanza *ci* to this tune subtitled "Longing in Autumn" (秋思十首), but does not clarify whether these were the plagiarized verses. (*Qiushui an Huaying ji*, facsimile of Ming edition in *Xuqiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995-2002), vol 1739, 5. 370-71.) For an example of *xiaoqu* to mean aria, see his colophon to 舟中端午, *Quan Ming sanqu*, vol. 3: 3803.
91. *Pan Zhiheng quhua*, p. 110.
92. *Wuji baimei*, 2.11a-b; list of top singers 2.48. On the phenomenon of late Ming singing societies for *kunqu* and the participation of courtesans along with literati and singing masters, see Ren Xiaowen 任孝溫, "Ming Qing Jiangnan quhui yanjiu" 明清江南曲会研究 (Ph.D. Diss., Nanjing University, 2005), ch. 2.
93. *Pan Zhiheng quhua*, 2.11b.
94. See Yu Huai, *Banqiao zaji*, pp. 27-28; 17.
95. Throughout the poem, Wu Weiye uses allusions from the Tang dynasty reign of Emperor Xuanzong, which was toppled by the An Lushan 安禄山 rebellion in 755, to refer to the fallen Ming dynasty. "Thorn Tree Branch," "Liangzhou" (which I translate as "tunes of a now fallen state"), and "Water Music" were the titles of music-and-dance pieces performed at the Tang court.
96. The poem uses names of famous entertainers and courtesans of the past to allude both to the old courtesan and to the household troupe of girls she instructs. I have kept two of them—the third-century "Peach Leaf" and the fifth-century "Never-Grieve"—in my translation.

97. The rich and powerful Tian Hongyu 田宏遇 was the father of the most favored imperial concubine of the last Ming emperor.
98. "Linhuai laoji xing" 臨淮老妓行 in *Wu Meicun shi xuan* 吳梅村詩選, ed. Wang Tao 王濤 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1987), pp. 149-51.
99. Liang Chenyu 梁辰魚, *Huansha ji jiaozhu* 浣紗記校注, ed. Zhang Chenshi 張忱石 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994), scene 25, pp. 142-47.
100. In *Qunyin leixuan* 群音類選, comp. Hu Wenhuan 胡文煥 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), vol. 3, 18.932-933.
101. Literally, "a red bean," a conventional symbol of lovesickness, whose color works nicely with the red clapper in the next line.
102. The line comes from "Yulin ling" 雨霖铃, a song lyric by the eleventh-century poet Liu Yong 柳永, which were said to be suited to be sung only by a girl of sixteen or seventeen, holding a red clapper.
103. An allusion to the Yichun 宜春 Palace, the site of the Tang dynasty Pear Garden academy of imperial musicians founded by Emperor Xuanzong.
104. Kong Shangren, *Taohua shan* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1980), p. 17.
105. Lines from *Peony Pavilion*, translated by Cyril Birch, *The Peony Pavilion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 44.
106. Kong Shangren, *Taohua shan*, ed. Wang Jisi 王季思 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1997 reprint of 1959 ed.), scene 3, pp. 17-18.
107. My translation of *wutou* follows Stephen H. West, "Text and Ideology: Ming Editors and Northern Drama," in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, ed. Paul J. Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Asia Center Publications, 2003).
108. Liu, "Tradition and Change in *Kun qu* Opera," p. 136.
109. *Xianlü gong* was a popular (e.g. not classical) name for one of the 28 modes. For the Song dynasty usage and meaning of these modal names, see Pian, *Sonq Dynasty Musical Sources*, pp. 43-58.
110. Kong, *Taohua shan*, p. 18.
111. For example, Wai-yee Li, "The Representation of History in *The Peach Blossom Fan,*" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115. 3 (1995), pp. 421-33; Tina Lu, *Persons, Roles, and Minds* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 161; and Stephen Owen, "'I Don't Want to Act as Emperor Anymore,'" in *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature*, edited by Wilt Idema et al. (Harvard Asia Center Publications, 2006), pp. 488-509.

112. *Hou Fangyu ji jiaojian* 侯方域集校箋, ed. Wang Shulin 王樹林 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1992), pp. 112-14; pp. 262-64.
113. Lu Eting 陸萼庭, "Su Kunsheng yu Kun qiang" 蘇崑生與昆腔 in his *Qingdai xiqujia congkao* 清代戲曲家叢攷 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1995), pp. 33-52.
114. Hu Jiezhi 胡介祉, "Hou Chaozong gongzi zhuan" 侯朝宗公子傳, in *Hou Fangyu ji jiaojian*, 562. Hu says he lived too late to have met Hou Fangyu, so he was not a direct contemporary.
115. Hou Fangyu, "Li ji zhuan" 李妓傳, in *Hou Fangyu ji*, p. 262.
116. In his letter, he refers to the *xiao shi* 小詩 ("little poems") that he wrote for her but does not mention her having sung them for him.
117. Hou Fangyu 侯方域, *Siyitang shiji* 四憶堂詩集 (Shanghai: Saoye shanfang, 1923), *juan* 2. One of these is the poem he inscribes on the fan on their "wedding night" in *The Peach Blossom Fan*. For the list of poems, see *Hou Fangyu ji*, p. 114, n. 8. His extant literary corpus preserves no *qu* or *ci*, which may make it more plausible that the verses he gave her were actually *shi* not *qu*.
118. For a *ci* whose lines are altered to conform to a *qu* tune pattern so that it can be sung, see the treatment of Li Bai's 李白 "Qingping diao" 清平調 in scene 24 of Hong Sheng 洪昇, *Changsheng dian* 長生殿 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1986), p. 126.
119. Hou Fangyu, "Li ji zhuan," p. 263.

Parting Ways: Writing Trauma and Diaspora in the Poetry of Mid-Sixth Century China

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In the Chinese cultural imagination, the North and South have long been associated with a set of fixed characteristics: the North is tough, harsh, austere; the South, soft, warm, sensuous. It is not difficult to identify these two sets of attributes with conventional gender characteristics and to conceive the North as masculine, the South as feminine. And yet, instead of "reflecting reality," these images are no more than cultural constructs which were first formed during the period known as the Southern and Northern Dynasties (317-581). At that time, China was politically divided into the South and North, with each side asserting political legitimacy and cultural dominance, each claiming to be the true upholders of Han Chinese culture. The formation of the images of the "North" and "South" in the literature of this period, situated within a larger historical and cultural context, is a consequence of the active construction of regional identities in discursive forms. The process of such a formation had started as early as in the third and fourth centuries, but did not reach its culmination until the Liang 梁 dynasty (502-557), and became firmly established only in the Sui 隋 (581-618) and Tang 唐 (618-907), the conquest dynasties that finally unified China and brought the North and South together.

The Liang was one of the Southern Dynasties. It was founded by Xiao Yan 蕭衍 (464-549), better known as Emperor Wu of the Liang 梁武帝 (r. 502-549), an energetic ruler and an enthusiastic patron of literature and arts. Under his rule, literary activities were carried out on an unprecedented scale, and the capital, Jiankang 建康 (modern Nanjing), was the world's most populous city in its day, a flourishing cultural and commercial center.[1] In 548, Hou Jing 侯景 (d. 552), a defecting Northern general, rebelled, and in the following year captured Jiankang after a bloody siege of five months. Emperor Wu died shortly after. The South was devastated by the Hou Jing rebellion: the once populous Jiankang was reduced to ruins, and a large number of elite members and commoners died in the siege and in the

subsequent civil war that broke out in the South. The much weakened Liang was overthrown by a Southern general, Chen Baxian 陳霸先 (503-559), in 557, who founded the Chen 陳 dynasty. Even though the Chen managed to rule the South for another thirty years or so, the fall of the Liang marked the end of a glorious era. The old balance of power, maintained for over two hundred years between the North and South, had been tipped; socially and culturally the Chen was a mere afterglow of the Liang, lacking in magnitude, boldness, and imagination.

This essay deals with the Southern poets' responses to the destruction of the old social and cultural order caused by the Hou Jing Rebellion. During the chaotic years, a number of Southern court poets were either captured by the Northern army or detained on their diplomatic trips to the North. Some of them, like Xu Ling 徐陵 (507-583) and Shen Jiong 沈炯 (502-560), eventually returned to the South; others, like Yan Zhitui 顏之推 (ca. 531-591) and Yu Xin 庾信 (513-589), never went home again. Such emigration enabled these poets, who were survivors of traumatic historical and social changes, to obtain a distance across time and space to reflect on, and make sense of, what had happened to their state, their families, and themselves. At the same time, the traffic of the Southern poets entering the North contributed to the "fusion" of the Northern and Southern cultures, and made a true comparison of North and South possible.

We will particularly focus on the works of Yan Zhitui and Yu Xin, two Southern courtiers detained in the North. They were rather different in temperament, and yet, both were intensely aware of their Southern identity and their status as survivors. Yan Zhitui to a large extent represented the average Southern courtier: well-educated, sophisticated, proud of his elite clan lineage, and keen to pass on the family's cultural heritage to his descendents. To Yan Zhitui, the fall of the Liang almost equaled the devastation of civilization itself, as he felt its impact in a much more cosmic way than he would about the collapse of just one dynasty; and yet, his sense of responsibility to family and clan ultimately transcended that to the state. Yan Zhitui was intent upon the survival of his family on many levels: physical, moral, and cultural; and he sought to deal with his grief over the fall of the South in a rational, pragmatic way. Although his choice of family over state might be frowned upon by austere neo-Confucian moralists in later times, it reflected the social reality of early medieval China.

In many ways, Yan Zhitui's writings provide the perfect background for Yu Xin. If Yan Zhitui was prosaic in his sentiments and in his choice of literary medium, then Yu Xin was the quintessential poet. He, too, served a series of official posts in the North, but unlike Yan Zhitui, he seemed to have never been able to accept the fate of the South with the same kind of resignation. Yu Xin's poetry in the North was haunted by a sense of guilt,

shame, and pain. These feelings were brought under a remarkable formal control, a delicate restraint that characterized the poetry of a Southern court poet. The intricate parallelism of the Southern court poetry was employed with a much simplified diction and an apparently casual ease, which, combined with Yu Xin's frequent description of a bleak and sparse Northern landscape in autumn and winter, convey a particular emotional force.

Survivors' Accounts I: Yan Zhitui

Many courtiers, after the fall of Jiankang to Hou Jing's troops, had fled to Jiangling 江陵 (in modern Hubei Province) to join the entourage of Emperor Wu's seventh son, Xiao Yi 蕭繹 (508-555), also known as Emperor Yuan of the Liang 梁元帝 (r. 552-555). In the winter of 554, the new Liang capital, Jiangling, fell to the army of the Western Wei 西魏. Many people, including Emperor Yuan himself, were killed. A courtier Yin Buhai 殷不害 (505–89) lost his mother in the chaos. It was bitterly cold at the time, raining snow and sleet, and the streets were filled with frozen corpses. Yin Buhai searched for his mother throughout the city, turning over every corpse in the ditches. He found her body after seven days.[2] In another part of the city, three brothers who begged to die in place of one another ended up being killed together.[3] A large number of survivors, about a hundred thousand in all, were taken to the North as captives. Because of the inclement weather and the harsh treatment, two or three out of every ten died on the way; the rest, except for top-level officials and their families, became slaves. Only a few were eventually released and made their way back to the South.[4] Among the captives, there was a gentry member surnamed Liu who had lost his family during the Hou Jing Rebellion and only had his youngest son with him. He carried the child in his arms and was unable to advance quickly because of the muddy road. Liang Yuanhui 梁元暉, a northern general, forced him to abandon the child. Liu begged to no avail: the soldiers snatched the boy from Liu's arms and tossed him in the snow. As he was being beaten and dragged away, Liu looked back at every step, crying his son's name and weeping. Because of the physical abuse, fatigue, and sorrow, he died in a few days.

This anecdote was recorded by a fellow-captive, Yan Zhitui, a well-known writer and scholar, in a work entitled *The Record of the Wronged Souls* (*Yuanyun zui* 冤魂志).[5] A devout Buddhist who believed in divine justice, Yan Zhitui added that Liu's ghost appeared to Liang Yuanhui every night and asked for his son's life. Liang fell ill and died a year later.

Yan Zhitui's account, intended to illustrate the principle of retribution, inadvertently preserves a local detail—the tragedy of one man and his little boy—from a vast canvas of brutality and devastation. Yan Zhitui himself and his family were among the captives traveling the hard winter road north.

But he was one of the lucky ones: his literary talent was appreciated by the Western Wei general Li Mu 李穆 (510–86), who dispatched him to Hongnong 弘農 (in Henan province) to be a secretary to his brother Li Yuan 李遠 (?–557), the Duke of Yangping.

In 555, the Northern Qi sent Xiao Yuanming 蕭淵明, a nephew of Emperor Wu of the Liang, to the South to be the new emperor of the Liang, along with many detained Liang courtiers, including Xu Ling. Yan Zhitui heard the news and thought that he might have a better chance to return to the South if he were in the Northern Qi. Taking advantage of the rise of the Yellow River, he gathered his family onto a boat and escaped to the Qi capital, an act of courage much admired by his contemporaries.[6]

Unfortunately, not long after Yan Zhitui arrived at the Qi court, the political situation in the South underwent a radical change: Chen Baxian killed Wang Sengbian, the general who supported Xiao Yuanming, deposed Xiao, and established Xiao Yi's teenage son as the new emperor. Liang and Qi were soon at war. In the winter of 557, Chen Baxian dethroned the Liang emperor and founded the Chen dynasty. The stateless Yan Zhitui stayed on at the Northern Qi. Twenty years later, on the eve of the fall of the Northern Qi, Yan Zhitui advised the Qi emperor Gao Wei 高緯 (r. 565–76) to flee to the South. His advice, although favored by the emperor, was opposed by the ministers, all of whom were Northerners. Yan Zhitui missed his last chance to return to the South. After the Qi fell, he was taken as a prisoner of war to Chang'an and given a minor post several years later.

A middle-aged man now, Yan Zhitui composed a *fu* entitled "Contemplating My Life" ("Guan wo sheng fu" 觀我生賦), giving a detailed account of his life during this chaotic age.[7] To highlight the autobiographical aspect, Yan Zhitui annotated the *fu* with comments in unrhymed prose, explaining references and furnishing details. These annotations recount the author's personal circumstances and explain larger historical events. Yan Zhitui was clearly writing with an audience in mind—people who he feared might not be acquainted with what had transpired in the South: northerners perhaps, but also future generations.

Like Yu Xin in his monumental *fu*, "The Lament for the South" ("Ai Jiangnan fu" 哀江南賦),[8] Yan Zhitui tried to rationalize the fall of the Liang by enumerating what Emperor Wu had done wrong. This was done in the spirit not of angry finger-pointing but of regret and disappointment. Beneath the polished surface of the courtier's stylized prose, one hears the painful question: "How could all this have happened?"

Nurturing a flying tiger endowed with wings, 養傅翼之飛虎
Emperor Wu of the Liang accepted the refugee Hou Jing and gave him command, which became the foundation

of Hou's later rebellion.

the emperor adopted a greedy wild wolf as his son.	子貪心之野狼
At first, Emperor Wu adopted Zhengde, the son of the Prince of Linchuan, as his heir; after the Crown Prince Zhaoming was born, Zhengde was returned to his natal family and received the special title of the Prince of Linhe. Feeling resentful, Zhengde defected to the North. After he came back to the South, he accumulated wealth and gathered soldiers, always harboring ulterior intentions.	
He first courted disaster from a faraway region,	初召禍於絕域
then again brewed trouble within palace walls.	重發釁於蕭牆
Zhengde asked the emperor's permission to fight against Hou Jing. When he arrived at Xinlin with his forces, he defected to Hou Jing, who then set up Zhengde as his master and attacked the Palace City.	
Although separated by the river of ten thousand miles,	雖萬里而作限
one reed leaf helped them cross over.	聊一葦而可航
Aiming at the golden tower with their long spears,	指金闕以長鎩
the rebels opened their strong bows on the imperial boulevard.	向王路而蹶張
Over a hundred thousand troops came to the rescue,	勤王踰於十萬
but none of them could relieve the strangled throat.	曾不解其捻吭
How sad that those upright generals and ministers	嗟將相之骨鯁
should all bend their knees to a dog and sheep.	皆屈體於犬羊
After the Palace City fell, the rescue armies all sent greetings to the emperor and the crown prince and paid their respects to Hou Jing.	
The Martial Emperor suddenly grew weary of the world,	武皇忽以厭世
the white sun was eclipsed and lost its brilliance.[9]	白日黯而無光
He had enjoyed the throne for fifty years—	既饗國而五十
how could the end have not come off well?	何克終之弗康
His successor submitted to the great evildoer,	嗣君聽於巨猾
ever anxious and uneasy, as if with thorns on his back.	每凜然而負芒

The Eastern Jin had sought a shelter from the catastrophe,	自東晉之違難
and lodged the rites and music at the Yangzi and Xiang rivers.	寓禮樂於江湘
Since then, it has been almost three hundred years,	迄此幾於三百
while those wearing lapels on the left spread to all sides.[10]	左衽浹於四方
I chant the poems about suffering from the barbarian invasion, and heave long sighs;	詠苦胡而永歎
I recite Confucius' remark about Guan Zhong, which only increases my grievances.[11]	吟微管而增傷

Yan Zhitui went on to describe the fall of Jiangling:

Countless people became captives;	民百萬而囚虜
a thousand carts of books turned into ashes.	書千兩而煙煬
Under the vast sky,	溥天之下
this culture of ours had come to total ruins.	斯文盡喪
The North has less than one-third the number of books that once existed in the South. During the fall of the Liang, the southern book collection became scattered and lost. Emperor Yuan gathered the remaining books, which amounted to over a hundred thousand scrolls: an unprecedented number in history. He had all of them burned after his defeat; so there is no more library within the four seas now.	
I pitied the innocent young children,	憐嬰孺之何辜
and was moved by the cruelties shown to the elderly and sick:	矜老疾之無狀
babies were snatched from parents' arms and abandoned in grass;	奪諸懷而棄草
the elderly and sick fell on the road, their possessions robbed.	踣於塗而受掠

Yan Zhitui's narration of the fall of the Northern Qi in the second half of his *fu* does not come close to this passionate lament over the destruction of "this culture of ours." To him, the fall of the Liang seemed to equal the devastation of civilization itself, and he felt its impact in a much more cosmic way than he did the collapse of one dynasty:

As for the banners carried by the five oxen,	若乃五牛之旌
the imperial carriage drawn by the nine	九龍之路

dragons,[12]
the gnomon template used for measuring the sun's shadow, 土圭測影
the astrolabe for calculating the stars— 璿璣審度
they were either fashioned and designed by the former sages, 或先聖之規模
or created as canons and precedents by the previous kings, 乍前王之典故
but now have all but vanished with the divine cauldrons, 與神鼎而偕沒
evoking our eternal longing for the immortal bow.[13] 切仙弓之永慕

Yan Zhitui also related how he had felt upon first setting foot on northern soil. What he had read about only in history books suddenly became real in front of his eyes, and yet, only the geography remained the same as before, not the "customs and teachings" of the ancient times. We see in this a gap opening between book knowledge and empirical experience. Although the author "knew better," he was unable to reconcile the North he saw with the source of orthodox Chinese civilization he had read about.

The customs and teachings of the sixteen states, 爾其十六國之風教
the land passed down by the seventy generations,[14] 七十代之州壤
though separated from the ear and eye in the past, 接耳目而不通
were well imagined in the course of my readings. 詠圖書而可想
Yet how different are their people today— 何黎氓之匪昔
only mountains and rivers still retain their former looks. 徒山川之猶曩

Yan Zhitui claimed that he had contemplated becoming a recluse but was afraid that it might get him in trouble; yet, even as he served the Wei, he yearned for his homeland.

I often thought of withdrawing to the rivers and lakes, 每結思於江湖
but I feared ending up in traps and nets. 將取弊於羅網
I listened to the sad music of the Dai, 聆代竹之哀怨
or the clear, sharp sound of "Going Out of the 聽出塞之嘹朗

Frontier."

Facing the bright moon added to my sorrow; 對皓月以增愁
even sweet wine failed to bring relief. 臨芳樽而無賞

In *Family Instructions of the Yan Clan*, Yan Zhitui explained in greater detail why he and his brothers decided to serve in the North:

> My brothers and I would not have entered public service except for the decline of the fortunes of our clan. We have few powerful clansmen and few close relatives. Wandering off to a foreign land, we were no longer protected by our family heritage. I feared that you might be degraded to becoming servants and grooms and bring shame to our ancestors. For this reason, we risked the shame of advancing in the society and did not dare to let our family status fall. Besides, the political culture in the North is so stern and harsh that there no one goes into reclusion.[15]

What this passage reveals is that one's responsibility to family and clan transcends that to the state. Although this would be frowned upon by austere Confucian moralists in later times, it reflected the social reality of the Six Dynasties.

Toward the end of the *fu*, Yan Zhitui reflected somberly on his experiences. Instead of complaining about cosmic or divine injustice, he was full of self-reproach—a final attempt to make sense of what had happened. In a way, it would have been much more comforting for Yan Zhitui and many other survivors of the Hou Jing Rebellion to believe that human error, rather than the will of Heaven, had caused all the misfortunes.

This one life of mine has undergone three transformations, 予一生而三化
filled with bitterness, sufferings, and hardships. 備荼苦而蓼辛
When I was in Jiankang, Hou Jing assassinated Emperor Jianwen and usurped the throne; then, at Jiangling, Emperor Yuan was defeated and killed; by now [i.e., the fall of the Northern Qi] I have been a man of the fallen state thrice.
A bird of the burned forest has its wings clipped, 鳥焚林而鎩翮
a fish taken out of water exposes its scales in the sun. 魚奪水而暴鱗
I lament and feel ashamed that in such a vast universe, 嗟宇宙之遼曠

there should be no place to lodge this body of mine.	愧無所而容身
. . . . .	
Suppose that I had hidden myself under a thatched hut,	向使潛於草茅之下
content to be a man plowing the fields,	甘爲畎畝之人
having never studied books or practiced swordsmanship,	無讀書而學劍
nor clasped my hands and pursued self-interest,	莫抵掌以膏身
but rather let this bright pearl be abandoned, taking pleasure in debasement,	委明珠而樂賤
turning down the offer of the white jade and remaining complacent in poverty,	辭白璧以安貧
then even [sage emperors like] Yao and Shun could not have brought glory to my simplicity,	堯舜不能榮其素樸
nor could [tyrants like] Jie and Zhou have stained my purity;	桀紂無以汙其清塵
and where would this adversity have come from,	此窮何由而至
and how could I have suffered from humiliation?	茲辱安所自臻
Thus, from now on,	而今而後
I shall not complain of heaven or weep for the captured unicorn.[16]	不敢怨天而泣麟也

Despite his claim that he would have been better off had he been an ignorant man, Yan Zhitui exhorted his sons to study. The author was compelled by the need to give an explanation for his sufferings in an autobiographical account contemplating his life, but in giving instructions to his sons, he had to fulfill the role of a responsible father, who wants the best for his children.

Yan Zhitui's most poignant work is a prose work that does not explicitly deal with, and yet is a direct result of, the fall of the South. This was *The Family Instructions of the Yan Clan*, which had been written over a long period of time, from the 570s when Yan Zhitui was serving the Northern Qi until after the Sui unified China in 589.[17] In this work, Yan Zhitui laid out a series of rules of conduct for his descendents. The man emerging from these lucid, well-written essays provides a fascinating character study. In many ways, Yan Zhitui represented the "average" Southern Dynasties courtier: he was a learned scholar and a talented writer, and yet he lacked the flair of a Yu Xin or a Xu Ling; admitting that he had

no interest in the abstract discourse of *Laozi* and *Zhuangzi*, he manifested a down-to-earth, pragmatic bent in his philosophy of life.[18] The topics discussed in this work range from children's education to household management, remarriage, scholarship, literary writing, maintenance of good health, mastery of miscellaneous arts such as calligraphy and painting, and various ethical codes. The work demonstrates a sixth-century Chinese man's vision of the world and shows a displaced southerner's self-conscious comparison of the South and the North. More important, Yan Zhitui's *Family Instructions* is characterized by his quest for an honorable *and* safe way of life in a dangerous age and by his painful attempt to establish an enduring value system when everything familiar had crumbled and things were in constant flux.

Going from the South to the North, Yan Zhitui witnessed the degradation of many members of the southern elite and the rise of those who had been commoners: a change in social order that would have been unimaginable for a southerner if not for the devastation of the South. "In these chaotic times," he said, "I have seen many captives. Those who could read the *Analects* and *The Classic of Filial Piety*, despite being [descended from] low-born men for a hundred generations, became instructors; those who knew nothing about reading or writing, even though descended from a noble lineage of a thousand years, had no choice but to plow the fields or herd horses." This led him to counsel his sons to acquire useful skills, and "of valuable skills easy to acquire, nothing compares to reading books."[19]

Yan Zhitui's grandfather had starved himself to death to protest Emperor Wu of the Liang's deposing of the last Qi emperor,[20] but Yan Zhitui expressed a rather different attitude toward the issue of loyalty to the state:

> Not surrendering to monarchs with different surnames—this is the integrity of a Boyi and a Shuqi; whoever one serves is one's ruler—this demonstrates the righteousness of a Yi Yin and a Jizi. Ever since the Spring and Autumn period, there have been many [cases of] families becoming split and going into exile, and of states being conquered and destroyed: there is no constant relationship between a prince and his subject.

Such a statement might be offensive to a neo-Confucian philosopher and even sound jarring to an orthodox-minded modern scholar; it nevertheless reveals the state of mind of many a Six Dynasties courtier. Yan Zhitui went on to advise his sons to avoid denouncing one's former ruler if they ever found themselves in such a situation: "However, when a gentleman breaks off friendship with a person, he does not speak ill of the latter. If one has to

bend one's knees and serve another, he should not change his thoughts [about his former ruler] even if [his former state] no longer exists."[21] This, Yan Zhitui decided, was the best one could do. Again, this might fall short of neo-Confucian moral standards, but Yan Zhitui was setting rules for his children on pragmatic grounds. There is nothing pretentious and high-sounding here, for the twelve-chapter work is more than a patriarch's "family instructions"—it is a survival guide.

Yet, when he was penning this guide, Yan Zhitui could not have foreseen the fate of his second son Minchu 愍楚.[22] Minchu was a well-known scholar at the Sui court and authored a work on pronunciation.[23] In the chaos ensuing from the collapse of the Sui in 617, he was captured by a ruthless rebel general, Zhu Can 朱粲 (?–621). At first, Zhu Can treated Minchu with respect, but as his army ran out of food, Zhu Can ordered his troops to make food of people. Minchu and his family were eaten by Zhu Can's soldiers.[24]

Survivors' Accounts II: Yu Xin

In many ways, Yu Xin formed a sharp contrast with Yan Zhitui. Yu Xin was the son of Yu Jianwu 庾肩吾 (487?-551), one of the most prominent courtier poets in the literary circle of Xiao Gang 蕭綱 (503-551), Emperor Wu of the Liang's third son and appointed successor, the ill-fated Emperor Jianwen 簡文 (r. 549-551). When Xiao Gang was the Crown Prince between 531 and 548, he and his literary coterie began writing a new verse known as the Palace Style Poetry (*Gongti shi* 宮體詩).[25] Yu Jianwu and his son Yu Xin, along with another court poet Xu Chi and his son Xu Ling, were all foremost practitioners of this new verse, so much so that the Palace Style was also called the "Xu/Yu Style" 徐庾體. While Xu Chi and Yu Jianwu passed away not long after the Hou Jing Rebellion, the fates of their sons, Xu Ling and Yu Xin, mirrored each other like a finely wrought parallel couplet. Xu Ling had been sent on a diplomatic mission to the Eastern Wei in the summer of 548. No sooner had he left than the Hou Jing Rebellion broke out. Xu Ling was trapped in the North, unable to return home, despite his repeated supplications. It was not until 555 that Xu Ling was finally sent back to the South. He was to serve the Chen for another sixteen years before he passed away in 581.

Yu Xin's story was quite different. On December 9, 548, Hou Jing's rebel army had penetrated to the capital city Jiankang. Xiao Gang put Yu Xin, then thirty-five years old and the mayor of Jiankang, in charge of a thousand soldiers defending the Red Sparrow Pontoon Bridge to the south of the Palace City. Xiao Gang had ordered Yu Xin to sever the great pontoon, but Xiao Zhengde 蕭正德, Emperor Wu's nephew who was conspiring with Hou Jing, opposed the decision on the grounds that it would

send the people of Jiankang into a panic. Unaware of Xiao Zhengde's collusion with the enemy, Xiao Gang took his advice, and Yu Xin just waited by the Qinhuai River with his soldiers.

As the Qinhuai River glistened in the cold December sun, Yu Xin was chewing on a stick of sugarcane, which, like the betel nut, was a favorite Southern snack, believed to "dispel irritability and alleviate hangovers."[26] A big fellow with a stout build, Yu Xin was no stereotypical "effeminate southerner" or man of letters.[27] Nor was he a stranger to warfare: in 542, when a rebellion broke out in Jiangzhou, he had discussed "river battles" with Xiao Yi, then the governor of Jiangzhou.[28] That rebellion was suppressed within two months, and Emperor Wu reportedly praised Yu Xin for his military astuteness. Xiao Gang no doubt had faith in Yu Xin's ability to prevent Hou Jing from crossing the Qinhuai River; Yu Xin perhaps trusted himself no less.

As soon as Hou Jing's army appeared on the south shore, Yu Xin ordered his soldiers to sever the pontoon. They had scarcely cut away one of the floats when Hou Jing's men, wearing armor under their dark green robes, loomed into full view. At the sight of their iron masks, Yu Xin and his soldiers fell back to the Red Sparrow Gate. An arrow struck the gate pillar, and the sugarcane in Yu Xin's hand fell on the ground at the twang of bowstrings. At that point, he turned and fled, followed by his troops, and the defense collapsed.

The rest was history. With no defenders left on the north shore, a member of Xiao Zhengde's faction had the pontoon bridge reconnected; Hou Jing's army crossed the Qinhuai River effortlessly and joined forces with Xiao Zhengde. Xiao Zhengde's men had been clothed in crimson robes with green linings; they reversed their robes so that the lining faced out and completely merged with Hou Jing's warriors. They advanced to the Xuanyang Gate of the Palace City, meeting little resistance on the way. A five-month siege began, which was to end with the disintegration of the Liang empire and the ruin of the South.

After Jiankang fell, Yu Xin escaped to Jiangling and joined the entourage of Xiao Yi, who was crowned emperor in 553. In the early summer of 554, Yu Xin was sent to Chang'an, the capital of the Western Wei, as an envoy. Five months later, when Yu Xin was still in Chang'an, the Western Wei launched a massive attack on Jiangling. In the deep winter of 554, Xiao Yi was captured and killed. Yu Xin was detained in Chang'an and never again returned to the South.

Thus Xu Ling and Yu Xin, scions of the two grand literary families of the Liang, went separate ways: one managed to go home to the war-torn and devastated South; the other remained in the North. Back in the southern court, Xu Ling was revered as the grand literary master, but it was Yu Xin,

in the North, who made the most of his life situation. A complicated man, Yu Xin seemed constantly tortured by guilt, shame, regret, and homesickness. These sentiments are reflected not only in his monumental *fu* "The Lament for the South" but also in his shorter prose pieces and poetry as well. Perhaps because he spent the rest of his life in the North, Yu Xin had the time and distance to reflect on the fall of the Liang, and he saw the impending doom of the South more clearly than did Xu Ling. Dying within two years of each other, neither lived to see the unification of China under Emperor Wen of the Sui, but if Xu Ling might still have entertained the illusion of a lasting southern court, Yu Xin finally brought himself face to face with the northerners—this time without the iron masks or a river between them. He came to recognize their ruthlessness, their determination, their untiring persistence. The last datable poem in his corpus, written in the last months of his life, envisioned the end of the South in no sentimental terms. It may be fashionable to state that how one tells one's life matters more than how one lives it, but the statement is not true, because how one lives one's life ultimately informs the way in which one tells it.

Not many classical Chinese poets have stirred such opposite reactions as Yu Xin did. Du Fu, arguably the greatest Chinese poet, deeply admired Yu Xin, but the Qing historian Quan Zuwang 全祖望 (1705–55) claimed that Yu Xin was simply a shameless man, and Lu Tongqun 魯同群, a modern scholar who wrote a critical biography of Yu Xin, tried hard to see the worst motives behind many of Yu Xin's poems and prose pieces, even interpreting "The Lament for the South" as a veiled request for office in the northern court.[29] What has troubled people about Yu Xin is perhaps not the fact that he served the enemy of his state, but that he kept vocalizing his feelings of guilt and shame in a body of extraordinary writings—extraordinary in no small measure due to the pain and regret expressed in them. Sometimes one cannot help wondering if Yu Xin preferred to stay in the North just so that he could write about it.

According to *The History of the Zhou* (*Zhou shu* 周書) and *The Northern History* (*Bei shi* 北史), after Chen and Zhou renewed diplomatic relations, the Chen court asked for the release of Wang Bao, Yu Xin, and a dozen others, but Emperor Wu of the Zhou "begrudged [Wang and Yu] and did not send them back, only releasing people such as Wang Ke 王克 and Yin Buhai."[30] Wang Ke had, in fact, been released in 555, before Emperor Wu of the Zhou was enthroned, and Yin Buhai returned to the South as late as 575. Emperor Xuan of the Chen (r. 569-582) did make an attempt to get Wang Bao and Yu Xin back in the early 570s; his request was immediately blocked by the Zhou emissary.[31]

There is, of course, no reason to doubt that Yu Xin was forcibly detained by the northerners, especially when he first arrived in the Western

Wei court as the Liang envoy, but it would also be perfectly understandable if Yu Xin did not want to return to the South after a number of years, for he had nothing to go back to. Whereas Xu Ling's family remained in the South for the entire time of his detainment, Yu Xin's family was brought to Chang'an after the fall of Jiangling; soon after that, the Liang collapsed—which had not yet happened when Xu Ling returned to the South. Moreover, Yu Xin was no common Liang courtier: he had been close to the top members of the Liang royal house. Without Xiao Gang and Xiao Yi, the South would never have been the same for Yu Xin, not to mention the fact that the Liang had been overthrown by the Chen. With no family and state to beckon Yu Xin, it was as he said in the twentieth poem of the "In Imitation of Linked Pearls" ("Ni lianzhu" 擬連珠) series:[32]

When the moats of Chu are flattened out,	楚塹既塡
the roaming fish has no place to lodge itself;	遊魚無託
the palace of Wu has been burned down,	吳宮已火
so where should the returning swallow nest?	歸燕何巢

And again in the last piece of the same series:

As the boat moored on the Wu River,	烏江艤檝
one already knew that there was no way to return;	知無路可歸
the white wild goose clutched a letter,	白雁抱書
and yet, there was no family to carry it to.	定無家可寄

Xiang Yu 項羽 (232-202 B.C.) was defeated by the founding emperor of the Han and chased to the shores of the Wu River. Turning down the village head's invitation to cross the river in the only boat available, Xiang Yu said:

> It is heaven's will to destroy me; what good would it do to cross the river? Besides, in the old days I have crossed the river and marched west with eight thousand sons from the land east of the river; now if I return alone, even if their fathers and elder brothers take pity on me and make me their king, how could I bear to face them? Even if they don't say a word, wouldn't I feel ashamed?[33]

Xiang Yu committed suicide by the Wu River. The wild goose alludes to Su Wu 蘇武 (ca. 143–60 B.C.), the loyal Han envoy detained by the Xiongnu. When a Han emissary demanded Su Wu's return, the Xiongnu court claimed that Su Wu had died. The Han emissary countered the lie by making up a story about the Han emperor shooting down a wild goose with a letter

attached to its feet—a letter written by none other than Su Wu. The Xiongnu court gasped, and Su Wu was henceforth released.[34]

Yu Xin was neither Xiang Yu nor Su Wu, although he shared Xiang Yu's shame and Su Wu's homesickness. *The History of the Zhou* makes a famous comment on Yu Xin: despite the prominent status he achieved in the North, "he always harbored thoughts of the homeland."[35] And yet, Yu Xin's homesickness was of a rather different quality than Su Wu's: to Yu Xin, the South was not merely a physical space, it was also a land of the past. What Yu Xin had lost and lamented was more than his state, even more than his prince; it was an entire era, a way of life. Such a sense of loss is more profound than that brought about by separation from one's native land.

Yu Xin's twenty-seven poems in the series "In Imitation of 'Singing of My Feelings'" ("Ni Yonghuai" 擬詠懷) have often been cited as best illustrating his "hopeless regret for what has happened, hopeless frustration with the present,"[36] and yet, despite their fame, these poems are not Yu Xin's finest or most characteristic. They are passionate outbursts uttered with too much agitation and disquietude to translate into successful poetry. The reader may be touched by the poet's anguish, but it is hard to suppress the feeling that the poetry suffers somewhat from an absence of restraint.[37] Indeed, Yu Xin was at his best only when he maintained his cultivated grace, framing the intensity of his emotions with that elegant discretion characteristic of a Liang court poet.

The following poem is entitled "Encountering Snow When I Was in the Suburbs" ("Jiaoxing zhixue" 郊行值雪):

Wind and clouds—both harsh and bleak;	風雲俱慘慘
the plain, a blurred expanse.	原野共茫茫
The snow flowers blossom in six petals;	雪花開六出
pearls of ice shining like the lamp of nine lights.	冰珠映九光
It is like driving a horse of jade,	還如驅玉馬
and, for a while, hunting silver roebucks.	暫似獵銀獐
Formation of clouds remain entirely still;	陣雲全不動
nothing in the cold mountain is fragrant.	寒山無物香
The one white fox fur coat of the Lord of Xue;	薛君一狐白
a pair of frosty chargers of the Marquis of Tang.	唐侯兩驌驦
At the cold pass, it is about to turn dark;	寒關日欲暮
braving the snow, I walk onto the river bridge.[38]	披雪上河梁

The poem opens with a desolate scene only to subvert it in the next couplet: suddenly, snow flakes become spring flowers, and ice glistens like pearls in the lamplight. The "harsh and bleak" wintry landscape is transformed into an enchanted world of light and delight, and the magic continues as the poet

feels, with almost a childlike joy, that he is riding on a horse of jade, chasing after a silver roebuck.

The phrase "for a while" (*zan* 暫) in the sixth line is crucial, since it reveals the temporary nature of the magical ambiance. As the roebuck runs away, it shakes off whatever snow had clung to its back. The spell is broken. Clouds, like formation of soldiers, remain ominous still and bode more snow, but the snowflakes no longer seem like flowers, for, after all, they are cold and give off no sweet scent. The poet pauses on the snowy plain: both sky and mountain are cold, immense, and immobile, pressing down on him with a primitive, threatening force. It is at this moment that he thinks of something warm—

The one white fox fur coat of the Lord of Xue 薛君一狐白

The Lord of Xue, better known as the Lord of Mengchang 孟嘗君, was a prince of Qi who lived in the third century B.C. and was detained in the state of Qin. The Qin king imprisoned the Lord of Mengchang and planned to have him killed. The Lord of Mengchang sent one of his retainers to the king's favorite palace lady and asked for her help; the lady requested the Lord of Mengchang's white fox fur coat in return. Unfortunately since the fur coat had been presented to the king as a gift, another retainer had to steal the coat from the palace storage and give it to the lady. The lady, as promised, put in a good word for the Lord of Mengchang, who was released and went back to his home state.[39]

The snow, the cold, and perhaps the silver roebuck being hunted make the poet yearn for the white fox fur coat, but he is no Lord of Mengchang. After all, that legendary white fox fur coat was one of a kind: "It was worth a thousand in gold," the historian said, "and was absolutely peerless in the whole world. After presenting it to King Zhao of Qin, [the Lord of Mengchang] had not another fur coat left." The poet longs for the fur coat in vain—after all, the Lord of Mengchang had given it away—there is no going home.

But the poet's imagination has been stimulated, and he keeps on dreaming in the snow:

a pair of frosty chargers of the Marquis of Tang 唐侯兩驌驦

In a *Zuozhuan* 左傳 story, the Marquis of Tang had a pair of frost-colored horses. Zichang 子常, the powerful minister of Chu, coveted them, but the marquis refused to give them to him. Thereupon Zichang had the marquis detained in Chu for three years. Finally, the people of Tang stole the horses and presented them to Zichang, who then let the marquis go.[40] Again, the

poet is not as fortunate as the marquis.

The horse of jade and roebuck of silver in the real world are bound up with legendary animals in the poet's imagination. These beautiful white animals, as soon as they are conjured up by the poet's word magic, are negated by a reminder of their uniqueness, which makes them unobtainable. They disappear into the snow-covered plains.

The last couplet echoes the opening lines of a poem attributed to Li Ling 李陵 (d. 74 B.C.), the Han general who was captured by the Xiongnu army, surrendered, and remained in the Xiongnu court for the rest of his life: "Hand in hand, we walk onto the river bridge: / it is dusk now—where is the wanderer going?" 攜手上河梁, / 遊子暮何之? The poem was supposedly addressed to Su Wu right before his return home.[41] Yu Xin's couplet changes these lines slightly, but significantly:

At the cold pass, it is about to turn dark;	寒關日欲暮
braving the snow, I walk onto the river bridge.	披雪上河梁

In a world that is growing dark, the poet steps onto the river bridge, alone. The question put forth in the original poem, "Where is the wanderer going?" is merely implied here, but becomes more poignant in its repression.

Yu Xin's forlornness is expressed just as effectively in a lavishly depicted spring scene, as in the following poem, "Seeing People Going on a Spring Outing" ("Jian youchun ren" 見遊春人):

Chang'an has narrow lanes,	長安有狹斜
the Golden Grotto abounds in luxuries.[42]	金穴盛豪華
Before mounting the steed, one is urged to drink many a cup;	連盃勸上馬
fruits are tossed at random toward the moving carriages.[43]	亂果擲行車
Dark red: the allure of the lotus seed;	深紅蓮子豔
fine brocade with the pattern of phoenix.	細錦鳳凰花
How could I learn to spew the wine?	那能學噀酒
There is no way to imitate Luan Ba.[44]	無處似欒巴

The poet appears in this poem as an observer: he looks on at the flirtatious drinking and fruit tossing, neither joining in the jovial crowd nor sharing their lightheartedness. The second couplet uses several verbs to describe a series of actions; in contrast, the third couplet is striking in its sudden stillness, since it is composed of only nouns and adjectives. A sensuous, yet enigmatic detail: lotus seeds are, so far as we know, never "dark red," and we can only assume that the color reminds the poet of something as

"alluring" (*yan* 艷) as lotus seeds, *lianzi*, which puns with "loving you." The next line confirms the impression that the poet is talking about fabric—a fine brocade imprinted with a phoenix pattern. Perhaps the clothing worn by one of the people on the spring outing has caught the poet's eye. The abrupt transfer from the hustle and bustle of the merrymaking crowd to a still close-up of a textile creates an unexpected effect; in this moment of focused vision, the poet's mood seemingly also experiences a shift.

As in most of Yu Xin's poems, the reader's familiarity with the allusions ultimately provides the key to understanding the message of the poem. The last couplet refers to the story of the Eastern Han official Luan Ba 欒巴. At the grand court gathering on New Year's Day, Luan Ba, a Daoist adept, was the last to arrive. At the banquet, instead of drinking the liquor, he spewed it out toward the southwest. He was subsequently charged with showing disrespect. Luan Ba defended himself by saying that his hometown, Chengdu, was having a fire, and so he spat out the liquor in order to make it rain and put out the fire. The emperor sent an emissary to Chengdu, and it turned out that on New Year's Day a fire had indeed broken out in the Chengdu marketplace, but at dinnertime a rain came from the northeast and extinguished the fire. Moreover, the rain smelled like liquor. Luan Ba was exonerated. Later, during a great thunderstorm, Luan Ba disappeared into the fog. Not long after, it turned out that he had returned to Chengdu on that day and taken leave of his relatives and friends, saying that he would not come back again. The historical Luan Ba committed suicide while imprisoned for a memorial he wrote to Emperor Ling of the Han (r. A.D. 168–89), but according to Daoist legend Luan Ba ascended to heaven as an immortal.[45]

In the last couplet of his poem, Yu Xin claimed that he could not imitate Luan Ba: there was a lot of drinking going on around him, and he was probably drinking too, but he had no magic power to make rain with his liquor and assuage the sufferings of his homeland, nor could he disappear, return to his hometown, and bid farewell to his relatives and friends. The emotional force of the ending couplet very much depends, however, on the build-up in the preceding lines. The cheerful, flirtatious crowd enjoying a spring outing reminds the poet of something as unseasonal as out-of-reach: lotus seeds, which with all their amorous implications evoke the sensuous allure of the South. The third couplet is the pivotal point: the poem would be dominated by the giddiness of the crowd without these lines, which exemplify the focused attention on a detail characteristic of the Liang court poetry. The textile provides a still center for the poet's longing as well as a figure for his pain, whose intensity is woven into beautiful patterns, controlled and balanced.

Yu Xin's two sons (we don't know if he had more than two sons) and

one of his daughters died during the Hou Jing Rebellion. After he went to the North, a grown-up daughter and a grandson also passed away. He wrote "*Fu* on a Grief-stricken Heart" ("Shangxin fu" 傷心賦) to mourn their untimely deaths. But even in the most melancholy life, there can be some small measure of joy. When a son was born to him in his middle age, he wrote an unusually jubilant poem, "Getting Drunk upon a Happy Occasion" ("Youxi zhizui" 有喜致醉), in celebration. Fortunately for Yu Xin, he never lived to see what was to happen to his son.

Sometimes pleasure had a bittersweet flavor to it, as he caught sight of a popular Southern fruit in the North:

Upon Suddenly Seeing the Betel Nut	忽見檳榔
Green pod with a thousand ripe nuts;	綠房千子熟
on a purple stalk, a hundred flowers blossoming.	紫穗百花開
Don't tell me that you have traveled ten thousand miles—	莫言行萬里
once upon a time, we were acquaintances. [46]	曾經相識來

The use of a numeral in each line, except for the last, creates an unexpected twist and effectively builds up the momentum of the ending.

Sometimes the poet imagined that he was still in the South, as in "Gazing at the Wei River" ("Wang Wei shui" 望渭水):

Trees are like those on the shore of Xinting;	樹似新亭岸
sand seems to be of the Dragon Tail Harbor.	沙如龍尾灣
One still thinks that at today's darkening ford,	猶言今暝浦
there should be a returning boat with dropped sails. [47]	應有落帆還

Both Xinting and Dragon Tail Harbor were southern place-names. Xinting, a suburb of Jiankang, had a special association. A *Shishuo xinyu* story relates that in the early fourth century northern refugees would often gather on the grass at Xinting, drinking and feasting. On one occasion, Zhou Yi remarked with a sigh: "The scenery is not dissimilar [from that of the old capital], and yet the mountains and rivers are different!"[48] Everyone present was moved to tears, except for Wang Dao, who changed his countenance and said: "We should strive together to work for the royal house and recover the sacred prefectures; what is the point of sitting here and facing one another like the captives of Chu?"[49] Yu Xin's quatrain is an ironic reversal of the *Shishuo xinyu* story: the poet is in the North now, and the scenery

took on a likeness of the southern landscape in his eyes.

The last two lines of the quatrain allude to a poem by the Liang poet He Xun 何遜 (d. ca. 518), "Sleeping Over at the Southern Isle Ford" (Su Nanzhou pu" 宿南洲浦).[50] This poem describes the traveler's hardship and homesickness, ending with the statement: "I sit up at night, with tears flowing; / on this evening, I have a particular longing for my hometown." Yu Xin's lines were inspired by the second couplet of He Xun's poem:

We untied the boat in time for the morning breeze,	解纜及朝風
and dropped sails at the darkening ford.	落帆依暝浦

Imagining that he will see a returning boat with dropped sails "at today's darkening ford," Yu Xin not only fuses North and South but also past and present.[51]

Although Yu Xin did not live to see the conquest of the South, he most likely saw it coming. In 577 the Northern Qi capital fell to the Zhou; a grand victory over the Chen army and the capture of Wu Mingche took place in the following spring. The unification of China seemed imminent.[52] The end, however, was not to come quite so soon. In the summer of 578, Emperor Wu of the Zhou died; his son, Emperor Xuan 宣帝 (559–80), was a ruthless and senseless young man. He had always been apprehensive of his uncle, the astute and capable Prince of Qi, and the first thing he did after being enthroned was to have the prince strangled. He delegated more and more power to his father-in-law, Yang Jian, and commanded his surviving uncles, including the Prince of Teng and the Prince of Zhao, both generous patrons of Yu Xin, to leave the capital for their fiefdoms on June 30, 579. The Prince of Teng edited Yu Xin's literary writings into a collection in twenty scrolls and sent it to Yu Xin from his fiefdom. In a letter expressing his gratitude, Yu Xin revealed that he had not been in good health.[53]

Some time that year or the next, Yu Xin decided to retire. Old age and deteriorating health were, however, not the only factors in his decision. A more important concern was probably with the state of the court. Emperor Xuan was a tyrant, and his mind was focused on trivial matters such as devising various titles for himself and his four empresses or building extravagant palaces and inventing elaborate dress codes. On April 1, 579, he ceded the throne to his young son and proclaimed himself "Emperor of Heavenly Beginning" (*Tianyuan huangdi* 天元皇帝).[54] As was customary, Yu Xin wrote a memorial congratulating the emperor on what he referred to as an "extraordinary affair."[55]

Yu Xin had lived through enough political coups by now to recognize that the Zhou ruling house was having serious problems. In September 579,

he composed "Returning from Tongzhou" ("Tongzhou huan" 同州還).[56] This poem gives an account of one of Emperor Xuan's many trips to Tongzhou and conveys a strong sense of anxiety about the trouble brewing just underneath the flashy surface of the imperial outing:

The Crimson Embankment winds around a new village,	赤岸繞新村
the emerald city wall rises with its splendid gate.[57]	青城臨綺門
Fan Ju was recently appointed the prime minister,	范雎新入相
while the Marquis of Rang has just left for his fiefdom.	穰侯始出蕃
In the Shanglin Park, the clamor of hunting;	上林催獵響
people competing to cross, noise on the river bridge.	河橋爭渡喧
Fleeing pheasants fly across the stretching ravine;	竄雉飛橫澗
a fox in hiding enters the broken plain.	藏狐入斷原
The general's lofty banquet lasts late into the night,	將軍高宴晚
and he pays a visit to the park of emerald bamboos.	來過青竹園

The Marquis of Rang was the maternal uncle of King Zhao of Qin. Fan Ju, newly appointed as the prime minister, persuaded the king to reduce the power of the marquis, and in 271 B.C., the Marquis of Rang was sent away from the capital to his fiefdom. This couplet is generally understood as an allusion to Emperor Xuan's appointment of Yang Jian as one of the four prime ministers on February 12, 579, and his rustication of the princes to their fiefdoms a few months later. What deserves note is the subtext of this allusion. At the end of "The Biography of the Marquis of Rang" in *Shi ji* 史記, the historian makes the following comments about the marquis: "He was the very reason why the state of Qin could expand its eastern territory and weaken the other states, so that the whole world bowed to Qin. When his status and wealth reached their zenith, one man gave the king some advice, and then the marquis was deprived of his power and eventually died of distress. [If this was what happened to someone as close to the king as the marquis,] how much more so for a minister serving in a foreign state?"[58] "A minister serving in a foreign state" was exactly how Yu Xin always regarded himself. The hunt, an intimate part of the elite life in the North, seems ominous against such a political background. As pheasants and foxes

sought shelter, the poet was probably thinking of withdrawing from public life as well.

The last couplet of Yu Xin's poem refers to the Qi Park: the Qi Park in the old Shang capital of Zhaoge was famous for its bamboo groves. The Eastern Han general Kou Xun 寇恂 (?–36) ordered his soldiers to cut down the bamboos in the park and had a million arrows made out of them for the purpose of defending the prefecture of Henei against rebel troops.[59] With this hint at preparations for war, Yu Xin's poem ends on a menacing note. Indeed, despite all the palace intrigues, the Zhou never slowed its pace in attempting to unify the realm. In December 579, Zhou generals captured three Chen cities, including Guangling, which was right across the Yangzi River from Jiankang.[60] With the capture of these cities, all the land to the north of the Yangzi River was in northern hands.

It was perhaps in the early summer of 580 that Yu Xin wrote a poem in response to Yan Zhitui's brother Yan Zhiyi, "A Companion Piece for Grand Master Yan's 'Newly Cleared Skies'" ("Tong Yan dafu chuqing" 同顏大夫初晴):

Vapors over water consume evening's light,	夕陽含水氣
rays thrown back shine on the river's high banks.	反景照河隄
Sopping petals blow away, but not far,	濕花飛未遠
shadowy clouds draw in, though still hanging low.	陰雲斂尚低
Swallows dry up and again turn to stone,	燕燥還爲石
the dragon falls apart and once more is mud.[61]	龍殘更是泥
A sweet-smelling spring pours a chilly torrent,	香泉酌冷澗
a small skiff fishes in a brook of lotuses.	小艇釣蓮溪
If only the mind could take all things as equal—	但使心齊物
why feel distress that things are not equal at all?[62]	何愁物不齊

There might be a touch of irony directed at the ritual of praying for rain in the sixth line: if the poem was indeed written in the summer of 580, Yu Xin is discreetly mocking the young emperor's supplications for rain on behalf of the people he hardly cared about. The metamorphoses of swallow into rock and dragon into clay are nevertheless wonderful illustrations of the last couplet, which echoes Zhuangzi's argument that all things, good or bad, beautiful or ugly, are on the same level. The poet seems to be suggesting to Yan Zhiyi to go with the flow; and yet, the advice about tolerance and acceptance is shadowed by the question: "Why feel distress that things are not equal at all?" In reality, things are "not equal," and this cannot but affect

a person's equanimity.

On June 22, 580, the young Emperor Xuan died. Power fell completely into the hands of Yang Jian. The Prince of Zhao and the Prince of Teng were killed on charges of conspiring against Yang Jian. In the following spring, Yang Jian forced the abdication of the child emperor. He assumed the throne himself and founded the Sui dynasty.

A few months later, the Sui emperor launched a massive military campaign against the Chen, appointing Gao Jiong 高熲 as the commander in chief. Yu Xin's friend Liu Zhen 劉臻 (?–598) was made Gao Jiong's secretary.[63] Liu Zhen, like Yu Xin, had served under Xiao Yi, and was taken to the North after the fall of Jiangling. Before embarking on the journey, he exchanged poetry with Yu Xin, who composed a quatrain, "In Reply to Director Liu Zhen" ("He Liu yitong Zhen" 和劉儀同臻). This was the last known poem written by Yu Xin.

To the south I climbed the banks of Guangling,	南登廣陵岸
and turned my head to gaze on the Shooting Star Fortress:	回首落星城
who would have thought of facing the former shore again	不言臨舊浦
only to see beacon fires illuminating the river?[64]	烽火照江明

In this quatrain of twenty characters are two place-names: Guangling and the Shooting Star Fortress. The Shooting Star Fortress was to the west of Jiankang; Guangling was north of the Yangzi River and had been taken over by the Zhou army in 579. Yu Xin had never participated in any of the campaigns; his description of Guangling and the Shooting Star Fortress was imagined from his friend's perspective.

The first two lines are directly taken from Wang Can's well-known poem "Seven Sorrows" ("Qi ai shi" 七哀詩). In 192, during the chaos of a civil war, Wang Can was forced to flee Chang'an and went to the South. On his way, he turned back and looked at the once-prosperous metropolis for the last time:

To the south I climbed the slope of Ba Mound,	南登霸陵岸
and turned my head to gaze on Chang'an.	回首望長安
And I understood why someone wrote "Falling Stream"—	悟彼下泉人
I gasped and felt that pain within.[65]	喟然傷心肝

The Ba Mound, or Baling, was the tomb of Emperor Wen of the Han (r. 179–157 B.C.), whose peaceful reign formed a poignant contrast with the

present war-torn Chang'an. The "Falling Stream" ("Xia quan" 下泉) is the title of a poem in *The Classic of Poetry*, which, according to traditional commentators, expresses longing for a wise king:

Biting chill, that falling stream	洌彼下泉
that soaks the clumps of asphodel.	浸彼苞蕭
O how I lie awake and sigh,	愾我寤嘆
thinking of Zhou's capital.[66]	念彼京周

Yu Xin's quatrain is thus like a "Chinese box," with one layer containing another containing another. And yet, these literary echoes would have been so obvious to Yu Xin's contemporaries or any educated premodern Chinese reader that the quatrain, rich with associations, remained transparent. Just as Wang Can looked back at the old capital at Chang'an before going to the barbarian South, Yu Xin imagined his friend ascending the riverbank at Guangling to gaze on the Shooting Star Fortress, the very place where the Liang troops had eventually overpowered Hou Jing's rebel army. As a matter of fact, the general who set up a camp at the Hill of the Shooting Star was none other than Chen Baxian, who later founded the Chen. Of all the place-names in the vicinity of Jiankang, Yu Xin chose the Shooting Star Fortress: Was this an acknowledgment of the supreme irony of history—that the Chen was facing its own nemesis now? Perhaps Yu Xin could also have selected this place-name simply to avoid a direct reference to Jiankang, or because the image of the shooting star matches so beautifully with that of the beacon fires raging along the Yangzi River.

In many ways, Jiankang itself was a shooting star of a city, whose brilliance was transient. During the reign of Emperor Wu of the Liang, Jiankang reached a dazzling height of cultural glory. But in the late sixth century, Jiankang had already fallen from its former splendor: devastated by the Hou Jing Rebellion, its light had long dimmed. Eight years after Yu Xin's death, following the conquest of the Chen, Yang Jian, now Emperor Wen of the Sui, ordered the destruction of the entire city: its walls, palaces, and houses were all to be demolished and the land returned to agriculture.[67] Yu Xin's quatrain turned out to be a "poetic prophecy" (*shichen* 詩讖) in a way he would never have intended: the star had fallen from the sky; once the raging beacon fires died out, it would be dark.

From the time when he left Jiangling in 554 until his death in 581, Yu Xin not only never returned to the South but never even got close to Jiankang or Guangling. His last datable poem envisioned his old capital engulfed in a night illuminated by a blazing light. The pathos was born not just of witnessing the destruction of one's birthplace but also of the fall of

an empire, the end of an era. The Chinese like to situate a poem in the context of a poet's life and age: indeed, without the background story, we would never know how much emotional power, intensified by restraint, is packed into a quatrain of twenty words.

Coda I: The Willow Song

Cui Tu 崔塗 was a southerner living in the late ninth century and took first place in the civil service examination in 888. To him was attributed the following poem, "Upon Reading Yu Xin's Collection" ("Du Yu Xin ji" 讀庾信集):

Four dynasties, ten emperors: you lived through all of them with panache;	四朝十帝盡風流
wandering, inebriated, in both Jianye and Chang'an.	建業長安兩醉遊
There is, however, just this one "Willow Song"	唯有一篇楊柳曲
that makes one sad for you, from South to North. [68]	江南江北爲君愁

One detects a hint of irony in describing Yu Xin's life in Jiankang and Chang'an as inebriated wandering,[69] but the Tang poet's attitude toward Yu Xin is more complicated than simple disapproval, since he singles out the "Willow Song" ("Yangliu ge" 楊柳歌) in Yu Xin's collection and expresses sympathy for its author. Yu Xin was famous for using tree imagery—barren, half-dead trees—to convey his sense of failure, loss of vitality, and lack of joy. His "*Fu* on the Barren Tree" ("Kushu fu" 枯樹賦) is perhaps the best-known example,[70] and the "Willow Song" may well be considered its poetic counterpart.

The "Willow Song" opens with the figure of a willow tree growing by the river, threatened by wind and waves. Such an allegorical treatment of a plant lodging its roots in the wrong place already had a long tradition,[71] but Yu Xin's poem soon departs from the willow and goes into a labyrinth of fragmentary, metaphorical images of memory and pain. In the dazzling display of textual allusions, wit, and linguistic ingenuity, we can nevertheless discern a narrative thread: the poet is reminiscing about his youthful years, the Liang court, and the Liang princes, perhaps especially Xiao Gang, Yu Xin's "understanding friend," [72] whose tragic fate is epitomized in a powerful poetic image of a white jade tablet falling into the gaping mouth of a bronze beast.

The willow tree by the river had boughs of a hundred feet,	河邊楊柳百丈枝

its long branches hanging curling to the ground.	別有長條踠地垂
The currents rushing and dashing, the roots of the willow in danger,	河水衝激根株危
suddenly it was blown by wind and waves into the river.	倏忽河中風浪吹
How pitiful—the young phoenix in the nest on the willow tree!	可憐巢裏鳳凰兒
Somehow, back then, it was severed from its home.	無故當年生別離
Once the drifting raft went off, it rose to the Pool of Stars,	流槎一去上天池
and should be taking away the loom-stone of the Weaver.[73]	織女支機當見隨
Who would believe that all it needed to shelter several states	誰信從來蔭數國
was only one little southeastern branch?[74]	直用東南一小枝
The young lord who in the old days made outings at Nanpi,	昔日公子出南皮
where can one find him now on the banks of Xuanwu Pond?	何處相尋玄武陂
A handsome charger galloping toward the northwest,	駿馬翩翩西北馳
to left and right the rider arched his bow, shooting at the Yuezhi.[75]	左右彎弧仰月支
The mudguard patterned with stringed coins got soiled in crossing the brook,	連錢障泥渡水騎
and the white jade tablet fell into the mouth of the coiled dragon.[76]	白玉手板落盤螭
New pipes of the phoenix, Xiao Shi had played them;	鳳凰新管簫史吹
through the spring window of vermilion bird, the Jade Maiden was peeping.[77]	朱鳥春窓玉女窺
The wine goblet containing clouds was made of red agate;	銜雲酒盃赤瑪瑙
the food vessel of purple glass reflected the sun.	照日食螺紫琉璃
If you think that a man has no ambition,	君言丈夫無意氣
let me ask you—how did Mount Yan acquire its stone stele?[78]	試問燕山那得碑
And yet, what has lasted a hundred years of frost and dew all at once withers,	百年霜露奄離披
suddenly one morning, accomplishments and fame are out of reach.	一旦功名不可爲

It must be that King Huai had erred in his plan,	定是懷王作計誤
recanting for no reason and trusting Zhang Yi.[79]	無事翻覆用張儀
Ah, one had better get drunk at the Gaoyang Pond,	不如飲酒高陽池
coming back at day's end, wearing one's cap upside down.[80]	日暮歸時倒接離
Who had transplanted the willow from the Wuchang city gate?	武昌城下誰見移
How could one still recognize it in front of the Guandu encampment?[81]	官渡營前那可知
I alone still remember the days when its catkins were blown around like goose feathers;	獨憶飛絮鵝毛下
today, there are no more silk threads hanging like the green horse-binders.	非復青絲馬尾垂
I would like to leave a song about the willow, a companion piece for "Plum Blossoms," [82]	欲與梅花留一曲
so as to play the tunes together on a long flute.[83]	共將長笛管中吹

The figure of the willow tree returns toward the end of the poem, in allusions of uprooting, transplantation, and metamorphosis. The willow is now barren: its green leaves all gone, the catkins dispersed by a gusty wind. The only consolation is to write a song about it—*this* song—a self-referential gesture typical of the Liang *yuefu* poetry.

Coda II: How It Really Ended

The Old Tang History contains the biography of a northern rebel general Xue Ju 薛舉, who started an uprising in 617, one year before the Sui fell. Xue Ju's son, Xue Ren'gao 薛仁杲, was described as a greedy and ruthless man who enjoyed killing. In an offhand note, the historian stated that Xue Ren'gao captured Yu Xin's son, Yu Li 庾立. Enraged by Yu Li's refusal to surrender, Xue Ren'gao had Yu Li spitted over a glaring open fire, sliced, and fed to his soldiers.[84]

There seems to be a dark humor in the turn of events, as the offspring of southern writers such as Yan Zhitui and Yu Xin were literally ingested and consumed by the northerners—a peculiar gastronomic unification of China. Hu Sanxing, the *Zizhi tongjian* commentator who was ever keen to uncover moral lessons in history, added this note to the narrative of the Yu Li incident: "The historian shows us that Xue Ren'gao could not gather upright men of letters around him and honor them. This was why he came to a bad end."[85] Such a reading was no doubt intended to bring out the cosmic justice inherent in the workings of human history, but it in fact exposes the commentator's deep-seated anxiety about the essential

irrationality and senselessness of the grand scheme of things. Just as Yu Xin had said in a poem presented to the Marquis of Yongfeng, a member of the Liang royal family who eventually surrendered to the Western Wei, "Benevolence and righteousness, to one's surprise, destroyed the state of Xu" 仁義反亡徐.[86] In the end, Yu Li's fate only serves to illustrate the violence of the age and the triumph, however temporary, of sheer brutal force.

Yu Xin might have been ashamed of his flight from Hou Jing's warriors on that fatal day in the winter of 548, and yet, we should be grateful that he did not hold out like his son, for he would almost certainly have been killed. And if Yu Xin had died that day, we would have been deprived of one of the best chroniclers of the conquest of the South and of the life of an individual at a time of profound historical changes. In the final analysis, that moment when the Liang court poet laid eyes on the iron masks of Hou Jing's troops summed up the encounter between the North and South. Yu Xin was to win the ultimate victory, but his conquest was of a different kind: much less tangible, much slower, and bringing almost no joy to the victor.

Endnotes

1. Jiankang's population may have reached over one million people, "including Han Chinese, aboriginal peoples, and foreigners (especially merchants and members of the Buddhist Sangha)." See Shufen Liu, "Jiankang and the Commercial Empire of the Southern Dynasties: Change and Continuity in Medieval Chinese Economic History," in *Culture and Power in the Reconstitution of the Chinese Realm: 200-600*, Scott Pearce, Audrey Shapiro, and Patricia Ebrey, eds. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Asia Center Press, 2001), pp. 35-36.
2. *Chen shu* 陳書, Yao Silian 姚思廉, comp. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972), 32.424–25.
3. Yan Zhitui, *Yanshi jiaxun jijie* 顏氏家訓集解, Wang Liqi 王利器, annot. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), 1.44–45.
4. Yuwen Tai 宇文泰, the Western Wei minister, freed several thousand gentry members from slavery in response to a Liang official Yu Jicai 庾季才 (d. 603). *Bei shi* 北史, Li Yanshou 李延壽, comp. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 89.2948.
5. Alternatively known as *The Record of Retribution for Grievances* (*Huanyuan zhi* 還冤志) or (*Huanyuan ji* 還冤記). Wang Guoliang 王

國良, *Yan Zhitui Huanyuan zhi yanjiu* 顏之推還冤志研究 (Taibei: Wenshizhe chubanshe, 1995), p. 115. Luo Guowei 羅國威, *Yuanhun zhi jiaozhu* 冤魂志校注 (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2001), pp. 88-89.

6. A poem entitled "Passing Dizhu at Night on My Way from Zhou to Qi" ("Cong Zhou ru Qi ye du Dizhu" 從周入齊夜度砥柱) and attributed to Yan Zhitui in the Northern Song encyclopedia *Wenyuan yinghua* 文苑英華 (comp. 986) supposedly relates the poet's night-time escape. However, this poem appears as an anonymous piece in the Tang work *Wenjing mifu lun* 文鏡秘府論, and, under a different title, is attributed to the monk Huimu 惠慕 in the Ming anthology *Gushi ji* 古詩紀. See *Quan bei Qi shi* 2.2283, in Lu Qinli 逯欽立, ed., *Xian Qin Han Wei Jin Nanbeichao shi* 先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995).
7. Toward the end of this *fu*, Yan Zhitui lamented that "I have one life, but went through three transformations," referring to Hou Jing's assassination of Emperor Jianwen, the death of Emperor Yuan, and the fall of the Northern Qi. We thus know that the *fu* must have been written before the new dynasty he was serving, Zhou, was overthrown in 581. For the text of the *fu*, see *Bei Qi shu* 北齊書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1972) 45.618–26; and *Quan Sui wen* 全隋文, 13.4088–90, in Yan Kejun 嚴可均, comp., *Quan shanggu sandai Qin Han sanguo liuchao wen* 全上古三代秦漢三國六朝文 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987). For an English translation of this *fu*, see Albert E. Dien, *Pei ch'i shu* 45: *Biography of Yen Chih-t'ui* (Bern: Herbert Lang, 1976).
8. The *fu* has been translated in its entirety and analyzed in detail by William Graham in *The Lament for the South* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).
9. "Growing weary of the world" is a euphemism for death.
10. "Wearing lapels on the left" was a way of "barbarian" dress.
11. The poems about suffering from the "barbarians" refer to the two poems attributed to the Eastern Han woman writer Cai Yan 蔡琰 (fl. late 2nd century). *Hou Han shu* 後漢書, Fan Ye 范曄, comp. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1965), 84.2801. Confucius said of Guan Zhong 管仲, the prime minister of the state of Qi: "If not for Guan Zhong, all of us would have spread our hair and bared our left shoulders by now." See *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏, in *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, Ruan Yuan 阮元, comp. (Taibei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1955), 14.127. To spread one's hair and bare one's left shoulder was a non-Han custom; Confucius implied that the Chinese heartland would have fallen under

"barbarian" rule if not for Guan Zhong.

12. The five oxen drawing the imperial carriage carried banners on their backs. *Jin shu* 晉書, Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 et al., comp. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1974), 25.754. The nine dragons refer to the legendary steeds acquired by Emperor Wen of the Han. See *Xijing zaji quanyi* 西京雜記全譯, Cheng Lin 成林 and Cheng Zhangcan 程章燦, annot. and trans. (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1993), p. 52. Wang Liqi believed that the nine dragons were patterns decorating the imperial carriage (Yan Zhitui, *Yanshi jiaxun*, p. 610).
13. The "divine cauldrons," the symbol of imperial power, disappeared in chaotic times and reappeared in an age of peace and prosperity. The "immortal bow" belonged to the Yellow Emperor; it dropped to the ground when he ascended to Heaven, and those of his courtiers who were unable to follow him clasped the bow and wept over his departure (*Shi ji* 史記, Sima Qian 司馬遷, comp. [Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959], 12.465, 28.1394).
14. The sons of King Wen of the Zhou were enfeoffed with "the sixteen states." See *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義, in *Shisanjing zhushu*, 15.255. The phrase "seventy generations" alludes to the descendents of the legendary Shennong emperor (*Taiping yulan* 太平御覽 [Taibei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1974 reprint], 78.494). The Qing commentator Lu Wenchao 盧文弨 (1717–96) believed that it refers to seventy-two ancient lords who held the *fengshan* ritual at the Mount Tai. See Yan Zhitui, *Yanshi jiaxun*, p. 611. Both the sixteen states and seventy generations indicate the ancient Han civilization of the Chinese heartland.
15. Yan Zhitui, *Yanshi jiaxun*, 20.534. Yan Zhitui had two elder brothers: Yan Zhiyi 顏之儀 (523–91) and Yan Zhishan 顏之善. For a complete translation, see Yen Chih-t'ui, *Family Instructions for the Yen Clan: Yen-shih chia-hsün*, Teng Ssu-yü, trans. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968).
16. Confucius had wept at the capture of a unicorn, an auspicious beast appearing only in times of peace and prosperity. See *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhushu* 春秋公羊傳注疏, in *Shishanjing zhu shu*, 28.356.
17. Yan Zhitui said, "I was recently appointed a gentleman of the palace gate [i.e., one of the imperial secretaries]"; this occurred in 572. In the last chapter, he mentioned the unification of China, which took place in 589. See *Yanshi jiaxun*, 13.319, 20.534.
18. Ibid., 1.179.
19. Ibid., 8.153.

20. *Liang shu* 梁書, Yao Cha 姚察 and Yao Silian 姚思廉, comp. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973), 44.727.
21. Yan Zhitui, *Yanshi jiaxun*, 9.240.
22. Minchu's name literally means "feeling sad for the Chu," Chu being a reference to Jiangling, a city in the ancient Chu region.
23. *Jiu Tang shu* 舊唐書, Liu Xu 劉昫 et al., comp. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1975), 46.1985.
24. Ibid., 56.2275.
25. For a discussion of the nature of Palace Style poetry, see Chapters 4 and 5 of my book, *Beacon Fire and Shooting Star: The Literary Culture of the Liang (502-557)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center Press, 2007).
26. *Zizhi tongjian* 資治通鑑, Sima Guang 司馬光, comp. (Beijing: Guji chubanshe, 1956), 161.4986.
27. Yu Xin's dynastic biography describes him as being "of a height of over six feet and having a waist of ten armfuls." See *Zhou shu* 周書 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1971), 41.733.
28. Yuwen You 宇文逌, "Preface to Yu Xin's Collection" in Yan Kejun, ed., *Quan hou Zhou wen* 全後周文, 4.3902.
29. Lu Tongqun, *Yu Xin zhuan lun* 庾信傳論 (Tianjin: Tianjin renmin chubanshe, 1997), pp. 160–61, 356.
30. *Zhou shu*, 41.734; *Bei shi*, 83.2794.
31. *Zhou shu*, 39.703.
32. Yan Kejun ed., *Quan hou Zhou wen*, 11.3938–39. "Linked Pearls" is a genre.
33. *Shi ji*, 7.336.
34. *Han shu* 漢書, Ban Gu 班固, comp. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 54.2466.
35. *Zhou shu*, 41.734.
36. See William T. Graham, Jr. and James Hightower, "Yu Hsin's 'Songs of Sorrow,'" *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 43, no. 1 (June 1983): 6. The entire set has been translated into English by Graham and Hightower.
37. The late Ming critic Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692) offered an interesting analysis of this poem series. He singled out No. 21 for praise. "As for the rest, it is not that they do not have coherence of thought, but on the whole they are too scattered and cannot be discussed as poetry." See *Gushi pingxuan* 古詩評選, Zhang Guoxing 張國星, ed. (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1997), p. 290.
38. Lu Qinli, ed., *Quan bei Zhou shi*, 3.2381.

39. *Shi ji*, 75.2354.
40. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi*, 54.944.
41. The attribution is almost certainly spurious, but what mattered was that people believed in it. Xiao Tong's 蕭統 (501-531) *Wen xuan* 文選 contains a series of poems by Li Ling and Su Wu, including the one to which Yu Xin alludes. *Wen xuan* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994), 29.1353. See also Lu Qinli, ed., *Quan Han shi*, 12.337.
42. "Chang'an has narrow lanes" is a line from a *yuefu* poem (*Quan Han shi* 9.266). "Golden Grotto" was used to refer to the house of Guo Kuang 郭況, the brother of Empress Guo in the Eastern Han, (*Han shu*, 10.403).
43. This alludes to the Pan Yue story. Pan Yue, the Western Jin poet, was a good-looking man. When he went out, women always tossed fruit into his carriage to show their admiration of him, and he would come home with a carriage full of fruit, (*Jin shu*, 55.1507).
44. Lu Qinli, ed., *Quan bei Zhou shi*, 4.2386–387.
45. *Hou Han shu*, 57.1842; Ge Hong, *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳, in *Liexian zhuan jinyi/Shenxian zhuan jinyi* 列仙傳今譯神仙傳今譯, Qiu Heting 邱鶴亭, annot. (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1996), p. 285.
46. Lu Qinli, ed., *Quan bei Zhou shi*, 4.2408.
47. Ibid., 4.2406.
48. The Western Jin capital of Luoyang resembled Jiankang geographically in that it was surrounded by mountains with rivers running through it, hence Zhou Yi's remark about the scenery being similar. But the names of the mountains and rivers were different.
49. Liu Yiqing 劉義慶, *Shishuo xinyu jianshu* 世說新語箋疏, Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫, annot. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), 2.92.
50. Lu Qinli, ed., *Quan Liang shi*, 8.1691–92.
51. The third line of Yu Xin's quatrain has a textual variant: "One still thinks of chanting poetry at the darkening ford" 猶言吟暝浦. This would evoke the earlier poet's presence in a more explicit manner.
52. The historian thus described Emperor Wu of the Zhou: "After the conquest of the Northern Qi, he planned to exploit the full potential of his army to overpower the Turks as well as subdue the South, so as to unify the entire world within a couple of years—such were his aspirations," (*Zhou shu*, 6.107).
53. Yan Kejun, ed., *Quan hou Zhou wen*, 10.3933.
54. *Zhou shu*, 7.119.
55. Yan Kejun, ed., *Quan hou Zhou wen*, 9.3928.

56. Tongzhou was the former place of residence of the Zhou royal family and the birthplace of Emperor Xuan. The Zhou emperors made frequent trips to Tongzhou. This poem has been dated to the year 580, because in the *Zhou shu* biography of Emperor Xuan, a passage about an outing to Tongzhou in 580 mentions "the Marsh of Crimson Embankment" (Chi'an ze 赤岸澤); see Lin Yi 林怡, *Yu Xin yanjiu* 庾信研究 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 2000), p. 163. This trip lasted from April 5 until April 14, (*Zhou shu* 7.123). But Emperor Xuan would have passed by the Marsh of Crimson Embankment on every Tongzhou trip. He visited Tongzhou twice in 570: once from September 7 until September 19; once from December 14 until December 18. The phrasing in Yu Xin's poem corroborates the dating of this poem to September 579, both because of the reference to contemporary affairs and because autumn is the traditional hunting season.
57. The Emerald City Gate (Qingcheng men 青城門) was one of the city gates of Chang'an, also known as the Splendid Emerald Gate (Qingqi men 青綺門); see Li Daoyuan 酈道元, *Shuijing zhushu* 水經注疏, (Nanjing: Jiangsu guji chubanshe, 1989), 19.1585. The gate's spontaneous collapse in 577 was considered a bad omen. See *Bei shi*, 10.369. *Sui shu* claimed that it did not bode well for the crown prince (later Emperor Xuan), for emerald was the color of spring, and the crown prince's palace was usually referred to as the Spring Residence. (*Sui shu*, 22.632).
58. *Shi ji*, 72.2329–30.
59. *Hou Han shu*, 16.621.
60. *Zhou shu*, 7.121. Guangling was the capital of South Yanzhou in the Liang, where Xiao Gang had served as governor from 510 to 513.
61. According to a legend, the stone swallows of Lingling turned into real swallows when it rained and then became stone again after the rain stopped. Dragons made of clay were used in sacrifices for rain.
62. *Quan bei Zhou shi*, 3.2380; translation (modified) from Owen, ed. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1996), p. 330. Yan Zhiyi, who had been tutor to the crown prince, was made Grand Master after Emperor Xuan took the throne in 578. The season of the poem is clearly early summer. The poem hints at a drought before the rain and the ritual of praying for rain, which might refer to the drought that had led Emperor Xuan to issue an amnesty edict on May 23, 580, and to pray for rain three days later. It rained on that day. (*Zhou shu*, 7.123–24).

63. Liu Zhen's father was a famous man of letters in the Liang court. Liu Zhen himself was an expert in the studies of the *Han shu* and *Hou Han shu* (*Bei shi*, 83.2809).
64. Lu Qinli, ed., *Quan bei Zhou shi*, 4.2401.
65. Translation from Owen, ed. and trans., *An Anthology of Chinese Literature*, p. 252.
66. Ibid., p. 253.
67. *Zizhi tongjian*, 177.5516.
68. *Quan Tang shi* 全唐詩 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1960), 679.7785. Also attributed to an anonymous author. *Ibid*., 785.8863.
69. Yu Xin made frequent references to drinking in his poems written in the North. In his "Willow Song," cited below, he explicitly states that one had better drown one's sorrows in drinking.
70. For a full English translation of this *fu*, see Stephen Owen, "Deadwood: The Barren Tree from Yü Hsin to Han Yü," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 1, no. 2 (1979): 157–79.
71. See Po Qin's 繁欽 (d. 218) poem "On Sweet Basil" ("Yong hui" 詠薫). Lu Qinli, ed., *Quan Wei shi*, 3.385. Also see Tao Yuanming's 陶淵明 No. 9 of "Imitations of Old Poems" ("Ni gu" 擬古), (*Quan Jin shi*, 17.1005).
72. No. 6 of Yu Xin's "In Imitation of 'Singing of My Feelings'" begins with these lines: "In the past I was treated as a gentleman of the state;/all my life I am grateful to a lord who understood me," (*Quan bei Zhou shi*, 3.2368).
73. Legend has it that as the Han envoy Zhang Qian 張騫 was looking for the source of the Yellow River, his raft arrived at the Heavenly River, and he obtained the stone used by the Weaving Girl to support her loom. See *Taiping yulan*, 51.379, citing Zong Lin's 宗懍 *Jing Chu suishi ji* 荆楚歲時記.
74. In a fragment from Sun Chuo's *Sunzi*, a man of the mountain tells a man of the sea that a huge tree of the Deng Grove may shelter several states, (Yan Kejun, ed., *Quan Jin wen*, 62.1815). This couplet refers to the former might of the willow tree and suggests the past power and glory of the Liang.
75. In these lines Yu Xin alludes to a number of writings by the Cao princes: in one of his letters, Cao Pi 曹丕 (187-226) recalled their outings at Nanpi in the old days; Cao Pi's poem "Written at the Xuanwu Pond" ("Yu Xuanwu pi zuo" 於玄武陂作) begins with the line: "Brothers go on an outing together." Cao Zhi's "Ballad on the White Horse" describes the military accomplishments of a chivalrous

knight-errant; see Yan Kejun, ed., *Quan sanguo wen*, 7.1089; and Lu Qinli, ed., *Quan Wei shi*, 4.400, 6.432–33.

76. It was said that the minister Wang Ji's horse had to cross a stream but feared staining the precious mudguard it was wearing. See *Jin shu*, 42.1206. Emperor Ming of the Jin (r. 322–24), while still a little boy and the crown prince, put his white jade tablet in the open mouth of a bronze coiled dragon; the jade tablet slipped in and could not be recovered, (*Taiping yulan*, 692.3222).
77. Xiao Shi was the son-in-law of the Duke Mu of Qin. Playing on his panpipes, he summoned a phoenix and rode away with his wife, (*Taiping guangji*, 4.25). In *Han Wudi gushi* 漢武帝故事, Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 was said to have peeped at the Queen Mother of the West through the vermilion bird window. See Lu Xun 魯迅, ed., *Gu xiaoshuo gouchen* 古小說鉤沉 (Taibei: Pangeng chubanshe, 1978), p. 346. The peeping Jade Maiden is an allusion to a line from the Eastern Han writer Wang Yanshou's 王延壽 (fl. 163) "Rhapsody on the Hall of Numinous Brilliance in Lu" ("Lu Lingguang dian fu" 魯靈光殿賦): "The Jade Girl, peeping from a window, looks below," *Quan hou Han wen*, 58.790; translation from David R. Knechtges, trans., *Wen xuan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 263.
78. The Eastern Han general Dou Xian inscribed his grand victory over the Xiongnu army on a stone stele on the Mount Yanran 燕然, (*Hou Han shu*, 23.814).
79. King Huai of Chu was duped by the Qin minister Zhang Yi and severed relations with the state of Qi. King Huai later died in Qin. See *Shi ji*, 40.1724.
80. Toward the end of the Western Jin, the state was beset with troubles, but Shan Jian 山簡, the governor of Xiangyang, cared only about drinking. He often drank by a scenic local pond, which he referred to as his "Gaoyang Pond," Gaoyang being a reference to the Western Han figure Li Yiji 酈食其, the self-styled "Drunkard of Gaoyang." A song was made about Shan Jian coming home drunk and wearing his cap upside down. See *Jin shu*, 43.1229–30.
81. The Eastern Jin general Tao Kan once recognized a willow transplanted from the west city gate of Wuchang. See *Jin yangqiu* 晉陽秋, cited in Liu Xiaobiao's 劉孝標 (463-522) annotation in Liu Yiqing, *Shishuo xinyu* 3.179. Cao Pi, in the preface to his "*Fu* on the Willow" ("Liu fu" 柳賦), relates that he had planted a willow at Guandu in 200; now, fifteen years later, the tree had grown a great deal, and "many of my followers had died." See *Quan Wei wen*, 4.1075.

82. Both “Breaking the Willow Branches” and “Plum Blossoms Fall” (“Meihua luo” 梅花落) were popular *yuefu* titles in the Southern Dynasties.
83. Lu Qinli, ed., *Quan bei Zhou shi*, 2.2353.
84. *Jiu Tang shu*, 55.2247.
85. *Zizhi tongjian*, 184.5746.
86. *Quan bei Zhou shi*, 4.2390. When the state of Xu was being invaded, King Yan, who “practiced benevolence and righteousness,” did not want to involve his people in battle and was subsequently conquered. See *Hou Han shu*, 85.2808.

Border Crossing and the Woman Writer: The Case of Gui Maoyi 歸懋儀 (1762-1835/6)

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The life of Gui Maoyi, a mid-Qing teacher of women, can be divided into more and less typical features. The more typical part is found in Gui's relationships with other women. With her highly literate mother and aunt (both published poets), her fellow disciples of Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716-98), her cohort of friends, students, and daughters, and her extensive teaching "career," Gui can be placed within a pattern devised by Dorothy Ko with reference to the seventeenth century:

> The ease with which itinerant teachers traversed domestic boundaries is remarkable, as is their ability to earn an income. Yet the job of educating girls was a natural extension of the sacrosanct duties of mothers in the domestic realm. And since itinerant teachers were housed in the women's quarters and had minimal contacts with men, they did not violate the integrity of the inner chambers. For these reasons, the rise of the profession of teacher of the inner chambers did more to reinforce the notion of separate spheres than to subvert it. In sustaining a woman-to-woman transmission of knowledge, these women can even be seen as the architects of a reconstituted women's sphere, one in which cultural education figured prominently. [1]

One way of describing Gui is as an elite literate woman of Jiangnan in the several decades before the Taiping Rebellion. In becoming Yuan Mei's disciple she enjoyed a high point of Qing women's culture and for the rest of her life taught students under conditions that the Taiping Rebellion (1851-64) would eventually change.

At the same time, there are some atypical features in Gui's life. I have singled out four for comment here. The first is the surprisingly commercial nature of her teaching activities. Gui's life circumstances were such that she

and her husband had to support themselves in this manner. Their activities could be described in more idealized ways, but commerce was never absent from their calculations. As Gui appears to have been the more renowned member of the couple, it may well be that she supported her husband upon occasion, rather than the other way around. The second atypical feature is her significant involvement in literary and artistic relationships with men, not only her husband, Li Xuehuang 李學璜, but also a number of others. Her ties to Yuan Mei and Chen Wenshu 陳文述 (1775-1845) are not especially surprising, because these two so often taught or corresponded with women, but she had other important mentors, and she corresponded for some years with the renowned Gong Zizhen 龔自珍 (1792-1841), nearly thirty years her junior. Consulting only one of her several collections, I have found nineteen men with whom she corresponded or who helped sponsor her publications, and there are no doubt others. It is especially when we find men other than Yuan and Chen corresponding with Gui and in roles other than teacher or patron that the woman-centered framework set up by Ko begins to need amendment. Thirdly, Gui is unusual in her ambition to publish. She published at least eight collections in her lifetime, all with her husband's support, and most with the same title. It appears that she was unusually concerned with leaving a name behind when she died. That publications continued to emerge through Gui's old age, when poverty overcame her, is one sign of how much she cared to leave a body of writing behind. The fourth and final point, Gui's smoking, may turn out to be more superficial than the others. This is because we do not know how widespread smoking was among women of Gui's class and interests. Her poem on the subject gives some reason to believe she was introducing smoking to readers for whom it was unknown.

I proceed first by presenting Gui's life story in terms of her contacts with women and with well known patrons of female talent like Yuan and Chen. After that I develop each of the four unusual features of Gui's life. At the end of the paper I take up the question of what these unusual features might mean. Do they constitute true border crossing or is there some better way to understand them? I will conclude that at least two of the four look like deliberate attempts to operate outside the norm.

Gui Maoyi's Life among *Guixiu*[2]

Gui was from Changshu, in present-day Jiangsu province. She was born in 1762 and died sometime between 1835 and 1836.[3] She used the courtesy name Peishan 佩珊. One of her literary names was Yushan nüshi 虞山女史, Yushan being a site in Changshu. She was the daughter of Gui Chaoxu 歸朝煦, a surveillance commissioner (*xundao* 巡道). Gui Chaoxu (and hence Gui Maoyi herself) was a descendant of the famed late-Ming essayist Gui

Youguang 歸有光 (1507-71). Her mother was Li Xinjing 李心敬 (courtesy name Yiming 一銘) of Shanghai, a published woman poet. Her mother's brother Li Xingeng 李心耕 was prefect (*taishou* 太守) of Shanghai. He was married to Yang Fengshu 楊鳳姝 (courtesy name Pinxiang 蘋香, literary name Rongcheng nüshi 芙城女史) of Suzhou, another published poet.[4] Both Gui's mother and Yang have entries in Wang Qishu's 汪啓淑 early anthology of women's writings, *Xiefang ji* 擷芳集 (A Nosegay of Poems) of 1773.[5]

Gui's mother was from Shanghai. She moved to Changshu when she married but died when Gui was five years of age.[6] She was under thirty at the time and never lived to witness her husband's successful career.[7] When it was Gui's turn to marry, a groom was found in Li Xuehuang, the son of her mother's brother and of Yang Fengshu. With this marriage, Gui's uncle and aunt became her father- and mother-in-law. Gui and her husband enjoyed exchanging poems,[8] but Li never advanced beyond the *xiucai* 秀才 degree.[9] Although he lived roughly as long as Gui,[10] the couple had no sons.[11] As a result, they were very impoverished during their later years.

Gui's life can be divided into phases. The first was a relatively happy childhood, but one significantly marred by the loss of her mother. We do not know how she managed to grow up literate, but she certainly did so. Her father probably took an interest in her education, and her aunt was a great source of encouragement. The record has many lacunae, but she may have begun endorsing the works of other women as early as 1781,[12] which is to say at age twenty. As she was probably not a published poet this early in her life, there must have been other reasons for this endorsement. These could have included her literary connections, those of her parents, or her own literary skill.

The endorsement is to the work of Cao Xishu 曹錫淑, a woman poet who died before Gui was born. Gui expresses regret at being born fifty years too late to have known Cao.[13] Like Gui's mother, Cao's hometown was Shanghai, and it may have been in Shanghai that Cao's work reached Gui. Ten years later, in 1791, Gui published her first collection, *Xiuyu xiaocao* 繡餘小草 (Little verses written after embroidery). These appeared in a combined edition (*heke* 合刻 alongside her mother's work *Duyu shicao* (蠹餘詩草, Draft poems leftover by bookworms). The combined edition was called *Eryu shicao* (二餘詩草, Two sets of Poetic "Afters").[14] Said to be an elegant edition,[15] its publication was paid for by her uncle and father-in-law, Li Xingeng.

Gui's career as a poet, if it can be called that, advanced to another level when she became a disciple of Yuan Mei, evidently in 1786.[16] We do not know how this connection was made, but it would be logical if it stemmed in part from Gui's published volume. One gazetteer has it that Yuan was

particularly struck by a line in Gui's poems.[17] Another possible link was Gui's ongoing ties to Changshu women, such as Xi Peilan 席佩蘭 (1760-1820?), a prominent Yuan Mei disciple and an important friend of Gui's. In Yuan's estimation, Xi was the best poet among his female disciples, and Xi and Gui are said to have been best friends.[18] Xi was from a wealthy Changshu family, and her husband, Sun Yuanxiang, was a leading literary figure of his day.[19]

Yuan was headquartered in Nanjing, and it appears that Gui did not actually meet him in person until approximately 1796, two years before his death, when he made an appearance in Shanghai, her second home town.[20] Throughout, she was in regular contact with others among his disciples, most of all Xi Peilan. In addition, Gui exchanged poems with Qu Bingyun 屈秉筠 (1767-1810) from Changshu, Wang Qian 王倩 from Shaoxing, Liao Yunjin 廖雲錦 from Shanghai, Zhang Yuzhen 張玉珍 (1759-?) from Songjiang, Dai Lanying 戴蘭英 from Jiaxing, and Luo Qilan 駱綺蘭 (1756-?) from Jurong, Jiangsu. The three from Changshu—Qu Bingyun, Xi Peilan, and Gui Maoyi—were dubbed the "three orchids" by Xi's husband, Sun Yuanxiang.[21] Additionally, Gui exchanged poems with many who were not disciples of Yuan.

Gui was a talented calligrapher, painter and embroiderer. One of her paintings, "Langao miju tu" 蘭皋覓句圖 (Seeking the right poetic word at Orchid Marsh; or I, Gui, seek the right poetic word),[22] elicited comments and endorsements from several of her poetical correspondents, including Yuan Mei himself, who first saw it in 1796, during his visit to Shanghai.[23] He subsequently invited Gui to endorse a scroll, completed slightly earlier, of thirteen of his female disciples, entitled "[Suiyuan] Shisan nüdi Hulou qingye tu 十三女弟湖樓請業圖 (Thirteen female disciples receiving instruction at Lake Tower). It was painted on the occasion of his eightieth birthday but commemorated a gathering that had taken place four years earlier. The painting and Gui's inscription to it survive to this day. Finally, Yuan's series of ten poems that was written in 1798 to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of his examination class prompted Gui to embroider them all, plus twenty matching poems of her own, on fine silk. Yuan's poem of appreciation mentions that hers was the first such response received.[24] Despite such impressive signs of cordiality, Yuan ranked Gui near the middle of his female disciples.[25] Sometime after Yuan's death in that same year, Gui gravitated toward the orbit of Chen Wenshu, as did quite a few other women in Yuan's entourage. However, unlike most of these, Gui did not consider herself Chen's disciple.[26] This may be because of her age. She was ten years older than Chen.[27]

So far Gui's life sounds fairly comfortable, but this state of affairs was about to change. She continued to endorse the work of other women,

perhaps all the more after becoming Yuan's pupil. A preface of 1811 to the work of Jiang Zhu 江珠 (1764-1804) of Suzhou, a celebrated female poet and sometime disciple of Yuan's,[28] mentions that Jiang's husband approached her husband after Jiang's death with the request that she write a preface, even though she had never met Jiang and belonged to a somewhat different poetical circle.[29] Gui's preface begins by relating that she had known of Jiang for more than twenty years but had never managed to meet her personally, much as she would have liked to. She praises Jiang as a good homemaker and talks of her erudition and good literary reputation. Her husband traveled a lot, Gui observes, and when he was away, Jiang held classes for the sons of the household. Though kindly, she treated them "in the manner of a strict teacher." She also read voraciously. "All of this rather resembles my own life," Gui observes.[30] It is clear, then, that Gui's role as teacher had begun by 1811, but she may not have been as peripatetic as she later became. Gui's sketch of Jiang is of further interest when it singles out a line from Jiang's poetry. The line states that it is fine to live a long life providing you are not poor. Gui signals her emphatic agreement with this line. This leads us to believe that she would have preferred to live a life of ease, like the one led by her close friend Xi Peilan, a point confirmed by other evidence.[31] Gui's other known prefaces to writings by women from this era date from 1803 and 1816.[32] Gui also endorsed the work of men.[33]

We do not know how Gui managed to handle motherhood—she had several daughters—as she traveled around the Jiangnan area, teaching students in such places as Hangzhou, Nanjing, Suzhou, Changshu, and her new home base of Shanghai. Poetical correspondence with friends indicates that her husband usually, perhaps always, accompanied her on her travels. Evidently, she often or always traveled by boat, and she sometimes quite enjoyed these trips, as we see from a delicately rendered poem about an excursion across the West Lake to two temples.[34] Another poem about the Qinhuai district of Nanjing is redolent of the city and its rich cultural lore.[35]

Even after embarking on her peripatetic life style, Gui managed to keep in touch with a wide range of friends. Surviving records suggest that during the 1810s and 1820s she was in closest contact with three women poets, Xi Peilan of Changshu, Wang Duan (1793-1838) of Hangzhou and Suzhou, and Ji Lanyun 季蘭韻 (1793?-1848) of Changshu. Of the three, only Xi was approximately her age. David Hawkes suspects that Gui was actually closer to Xi's husband Sun Yuanxiang than to Xi herself,[36] but in any case the names of Xi and Gui circulated in tandem in the literary world, especially after the death of Qu Bingyun in 1810.[37]

Ji and Wang were both born around 1793 and were thus over thirty years Gui's junior. In Ji's case, her friendship with Gui would likely have

evolved from their common contact with Qu Bingyun, who was both Gui's fellow disciple under Yuan Mei and an older relative of Ji's husband.[38] The friendship between Ji and Gui lasted for over a decade (between at least 1818 and 1834) and generated a number of poems.[39]

Gui's closeness to Chen Wenshu might have been what brought her into contact with Wang Duan 汪端. As previously noted, Chen inherited many of Yuan Mei's disciples, and Wang, who was married to Chen's son, was a leading figure in his circle of female writers. Wang's *Ming sanshi jia shixuan* 明三十家詩選 (Selected poems of thirty Ming poets) of 1822 is one of the most pathbreaking works edited by a woman of the Qing.[40] Wang took full advantage of her network of acquaintances in turning out this volume. Among its proofreaders were Xi Peilan, Qu Bingyun,[41] and Gui Maoyi.

Like Xi and Ji, Wang was in contact with Gui through letters even when she was too far away to visit. We know something about the mail system of this era. Privately financed, it enjoyed an expansion in the early nineteenth century. It could accommodate ordinary and express mail, letters, parcel post, and cash remittance, all deliverable within a prescribed number of days.[42] We are less certain about the boats on which she traveled: who found them for her, how they were paid for, and how distances were traversed when boats were not available. But Gui's was definitely a world in which contact and transportation were relatively easy, as opposed to later, once the Opium War began and the Taipings took control. This world can also be contrasted with the late Ming, when some elements of Gui's picture were already in place but where letters and travel appear to have played a lesser role.

By now Gui was traveling to her pupils' homes, often far away from her own. The surviving record among Gui's correspondents complements the frequent poems on travel found in her own writings. Friends were always writing to her at some distant spot (usually in Jiangnan), receiving her after a long separation, or sending her off on a new journey. Often they worried about her. The deaths of others in similar positions contributed to the worry.[43] Another worry was financial. We know from Chen Wenshu's *Xiling guiyong* 西泠閨詠 (Poems in praise of gentlewomen of Hangzhou)[44] that self-identification as a teacher did not necessarily guarantee students. There we learn of a teacher who turned to making bamboo objects when she could no longer support herself in this profession.[45] Gui certainly had students but sometimes lived from hand to mouth and clearly found travel more arduous as time went by.[46]

Despite many hints of Gui's success as a teacher, we know that by 1823 or so Gui and her husband were desperately poor and staved off despair by writing poems.[47] Around five years later, Chen Luan 陳鑾

(1786-1839), too, refers to the couple's poverty, mentioning that they lived in a studio made of paper with reed curtains.[48] It was apparently in this interval that Gong Zizhen's sister Gong Zizhang 龔自璋 began to study with Gui in Shanghai.[49] A retrospective poem by Gui about Gong Zizhang was written after their final separation:

Ten poems of remembrance mailed to Madam Guizhai (Gong Zizhang)	十憶詩寄圭齋夫人
It is just the time when a light chill suddenly turns warm.	正是輕寒乍暖時
Spring wind blows one's face and moves one to think of those absent.	春風吹面動相思
I remember your silk socks stepping delicately.	憶君羅襪纖纖步
As you walked by the cluster of flowers, [so quietly that the] butterflies did not notice.	行過花叢蝶不知
Now and then a burst of wind delivers its tender cool.	幾陣淺風送嫩涼
Mistily the quiet moon lowers across the balustrade.	濛濛淡月不回廊
I remember your special Heavenly charm.	憶君一種天人致
In your old and plain shirt you yet surpassed those decked out in finery.	半舊羅衫勝艷妝
I regret that I have never had a capacity for wine.	恨我生平酒力微
I met you with a full cup and, drunken, forgot about going home.	相逢痛飲醉忘歸
I remember you as naturally talented at letters.	憶君一種詩書味
I loved to listen to the jade flakes (of your words) flying like light snow in front of the wine flask.	愛聽尊前玉屑霏
Now the blue bird (poetic messenger) labors afar [carrying our letters] to and fro many times.	遠勞青鳥到連番
Wind and rain whistle, the plain room is cold.	風雨蕭蕭白屋寒
I ashamedly remember my rough kitchen, its fine dishes few.	苦憶荒廚珍味少
I repeatedly offered you food	盤飧頻餽 勸加餐
And urged you to eat more at meals.	

Before the flowers, beneath the moon, together walking to and fro.	花前月底共徘徊
When we met how we opened our hearts to each other.	憶得逢君懷抱開
A very bright intelligence and orchid breath (i.e., a pure, gracious spirit)	冰雪聰明蘭氣息
Ban Chao has a younger sister [Gong Zizhen]; of course she is very talented.	班超有妹果奇才
Altogether grieved, unable to sleep or eat	十分哀毀廢眠餐
Since you lost your mother the tears have been ceaseless.	自失慈幃淚不乾
I remember, in your mourning clothes and extreme grief—	憶得縞衣長慟處
And can still see you as a beautiful woman crying in the rain.	梨花一樹雨中看
Sisters of the inner quarters arrayed together	蘭閨姊妹列成行
I remember going to your house, a place of great flavor, where feelings were tender and deep.	憶過君家意味長
Out of grief that we'd soon be separated, I was greedy for time together.	爲惜將離貪暫聚
I managed the refreshments as a substitute for a peaceful sleep.	經營茶點替安床
My friends much lament that I am poor.	知己深憐范叔貧
I remember your generosity with food and clothes which was very sincere.	憶君推解最情真
A female scholar with the air of a man.	掃眉人帶鬚眉氣
You were not stingy with money for an old friend.	不吝黃金贈故人
Speaking without thinking, you turned out remarkable words.	脫口吟成絕妙辭
Laughingly taking up a brush made of speckled bamboo, you wrote a new poem.	笑拈班管寫新詩
I remember your nature as addicted to elegance.	憶君天性耽風雅
Your writing box accompanied you, never leaving your side.	研匣隨身不暫離

In the still and quiet women's quarters you will calm all arguments.	靜穆閨闈息是非
In a few lifetimes you'll be reborn as a man.	幾生修得到青衣
I remember your tranquil disposition.	憶君生就和平性
Your times of being happy were many, your times of being angry few. [50]	歡喜常多瞋怒稀

A first glance at this poem might suggest that this relationship took place under a non-commercialized, cultural education model, in which a strong friendship developed and was emphasized. Yet upon closer inspection another picture starts to emerge. First, as we learn from the fourth poem, their encounters took place in Gui's embarrassingly shabby house, at least some of the time. This in itself is a twist on a more standard pattern, one that Gui herself employed in her earlier years, of going to the student's home and living there as she gave instruction. I assume that when room and board were supplied by the student it was easier to pretend that teaching took place in an idealized, money-free environment. As we learn from the eighth poem, the chief sign of compensation in Gong Zizhang's relationship with her teacher was her gifts of food, clothes, and money. Perhaps Gong's generous outreach to Gui was one reason the women's relationship took on such intensity? (The reverse could also be true.) At any rate, the economic support Gong gave to Gui in her time of need makes the economic dimension of the relationship quite clear.

Throughout her many difficulties Gui maintained a reputation for inner and outer beauty. A poem by Wang Duan that sums up her life on the occasion of *Xiuyu xucao*'s publication (again, we do not know which *Xiuyu xucao*) is full of respect for her family background and her teaching career.[51] Moreover, quite a few women wrote poems of mourning when she died.[52] More than a decade after her death, Gui's life story and poetry were taken up in Shen Shanbao's 沈善寶, *Mingyuan shihua* 名媛詩話. Shen remarks that "her spirit is beautiful and refined, a bit like her poems." [53] Shen's expression of regret at having failed to make contact with Gui serves as a kind of bookend to Gui's poem of regret at having never meet Cao Xishu.

This body of evidence strongly suggests that Gui met the criteria of a *guixiu* and was regarded as virtuous by her peers. We may wonder today at her unusual life style, which so often took her away from home. But people of her era understood this as a necessity bred of her difficult economic circumstances and were able to take it in stride.

Four Border Crossings?

So far much of Gui's history fits into traditional paradigms. But there are four general areas in which she seems to cross the borders set up around *guixiu*. The first is financial. Gui is hardly alone among *guixiu* teachers in needing to support herself. Her relationship with Gong Zizhang is only somewhat surprising in that her teaching took place both in her own home and in Gong's. Still more surprising is Gui's competition for students with another woman poet, Zhu Geng 朱庚. Zhang Mujian's 張慕騫 preface to this Shanghai writer's poems introduces us to new details of Gui's operations. Zhang observes that Zhu and Gui offered rival teaching centers in Shanghai, one on the east and one on the west side of the Huangpu river. Both used banners to attract clientele.[54] It further notes that Gui's fame far surpassed Zhu's. This information seems to suggest that the secluded "inner chambers" were not the only venue for female teaching, but more work is needed to corroborate Zhang's account. Under the cultural educational model, students were acquired through introductions. Could there have been times that female teachers advertised themselves more directly? It is of further interest that this friend and younger rival of Gui's went on to publish her writings with the help of subscriptions by her female students,[55] something we would not expect if the cultural educational model were our only guide. No such support for publishing by women has yet been found in Gui's case, but it is not impossible that evidence will turn up later on.

The second unusual feature of Gui's biography is the number and range of her contacts with men. A recent gift of rare objects to the National Library of China in Beijing by the important collector Chen Qinghua 陳清華 includes a painting by the Yongzheng emperor, "Jiangshan wujin tu" 江山無盡圖 (An endless expanse of rivers and mountains), dated 1730, which was endorsed by Gui among sixty names.[56] The only other woman in the group is Cao Zhenxiu 曹貞秀. According to her inscription, Gui's endorsement took place in 1806 at an unspecified location. Gui explains that it was Gai Qi 改琦 (1774-1829) of Shanghai who invited her to endorse it. Gai was sometimes a teacher of women.[57] However, the picture of Gui we have created so far does not prepare us for certain features of this endorsement: first, its hint that Gui studied with Gai, but especially its suggestion that Gai put Gui on a par with the other known endorsers, many of whom are quite well known.[58] Moreover, it fails to prepare us for the cultural importance of the document that she endorsed. A more normal assumption about traditional women writers is that they were greatly concerned about one another's writings but had little to do with the most

highly valued cultural artifacts. That Gai Qi saw Gui (and Cao Zhenxiu) as worthy of endorsing "Jiangshan wujin tu" runs counter to this normal view.

Armed with this information, I have returned to the 1828-32 *Xiuyu xucao* and identified a number of men with whom Gui corresponded or who were otherwise associated with her. This project is by no means complete, because it is based on only one of her collections, but as of now it yields the following names:

Jinshi:
Yuan Mei, Sun Yuanxiang, Wu Weiguang 吳蔚光, Pan Yijun 潘奕雋 (1740-1830), Gong Zizhen, Feng Pei 馮培, Tu Zhuo 屠倬, Chen Luan, Tao Shu 陶澍 (1774-1839), Tang Zhongmian 唐仲冕, Wu Wenrong 吳文鎔 (1792-1854),[59] and *juren* Chen Wenshu, among several other *juren*

Artists and writers:
Gai Qi, He Qi 何琪, Zhou E 周鍔, Gu Rixin 顧日新, Jiang Yuan 江沅, Xie Kun 謝坤 (1784-1844), and Ge Zai 戈載

The chronological organization of the 1828/32 *Xiuyu xucao* provides a rough guide to when Gui was in contact with these people. It can also be used for detailing the ties between Gui and the women that she knew. Not surprisingly, none of the individuals so far mentioned, whether male or female, remained among Gui's correspondents from start to finish. If we divide the collection up according to its five *juan*, the names that are most prominent change. Here are some of the individuals mentioned so far, along with the *juan* in which they appear:

juan 1. Shanghai, Changshu—before 1809? (up to age 47)
Men: Sun Yuanxiang, Wu Weiguang, He Qi
Women: Xi Peilan, Dai Lanying

juan 2. Shanghai, Changshu—before 1809? (up to age 47)[60] This seems to overlap in time with the first *juan*.
Men: Wu Weiguang, Sun Yuanxiang, Zhou E
Women: Liao Yunjin, Xi Peilan

juan 3. Mainly Suzhou but also Nanjing and Shanghai—1809-19 (ages 47-57)
Men: Pan Yijun (Gui is a disciple by 1809),[61] Zhou E, Han Feng, Gu Rixin
Women: Wang Duan, Li Peijin, Ji Lanyun

juan 4. Suzhou, Shanghai, Hangzhou—1820-27? (ages 58-65?)

Men: Gong Zizhen, Jiang Yuan, Tu Zhuo, Chen Luan, Ge Zai, Xie Kun
Women: Duan Xun, Wang Duan, Ji Lanyun, Gong Zizhang, Zhang Xiang, Wu Zao

juan 5. Mainly Shanghai—1829-30 (ages 67-68?)
Men: Tao Shu, Chen Luan
Women: Gong Zizhang

Gui lived seven or eight years after 1828, but we do not have poems from that period. Some say she spent her later years in Suzhou, but it seems almost certain that she died in Shanghai.[62]

This outline does not encompass all of Gui's writing, travels, and relationships, but it provides a rough guide to where she was at certain periods of her life and who some of her correspondents were. Gai Qi is absent from this list, because as far as extant records indicate, Gui never corresponded with Gai. However, the link to Gai comes slightly more to life if we consider Gui's associates in *juan* 3. This *juan* marks the first appearance of Pan Yijun, a poet and painter, who tutored Gui between 1809 and 1820, if not longer.[63] Gui was frequently in Suzhou during this part of her life, and Pan was a Suzhou man. Pan was acquainted with Gai Qi, for Gai's drawing of Pan appears at the beginning of his collected writings.[64] Perhaps, then, Gui got to know Gai through Pan, or, given the date of her endorsement of the Yongzheng painting (1806), got to know Gai first in Shanghai and then started to work with Pan. This evidence allows for the possibility that Gui fell into a group that included Gai, Pan, and others during her Suzhou years. Even the famed Gong Zizhen, who came from Hangzhou and whose acquaintance with Gui is documented in writings of a slightly later period, first met Gui in Suzhou.[65] Their correspondence shows up in both of their collected works and seems to have taken place in the mid-1820s. It was probably later, most likely in Shanghai, that Gui met Gong's mother Duan Xun 段馴, the daughter of Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735-1815), and began to tutor his sister Gong Zizhang.[66]

The question of Gui's status among men generally is elucidated from another angle through the work of Huang Xiexun 黃協塤 (fl. 1918?), a writer of the late-Qing and early Republic.[67] According to Huang, Gui was only moderately well known until a certain provincial intendant (*jianci* 監司 or *daotai* 道臺) praised her five-part poem on butterflies, "Wuse hudie [heyun] 五色蝴蝶和韻 (Matching rhymes on five-colored butterflies)."[68] This provincial intendant has been convincingly identified as Chen Luan, a *jinshi* and frequent correspondent of Gui's later years.[69] According to Huang, after Chen's praise for the poem, her name became widely known among gentry (*shidafu* 士大夫), who held it an honor to receive her poems.

There is no way to further substantiate Huang's comment, but Chen Luan's preface to *Xiuyu xucao* of 1828 (1832 reprint) mentions four officials who first told him about Gui. This strengthens the possibility that her name circulated quite widely at this time. Her substantial fame is further confirmed in local histories.[70] Chen himself first met Gui in Shanghai in 1825. The playwright Xie Kun is another who made a special effort to meet Gui in Shanghai after first hearing her name from others.[71]

Our timeline based on *Xiyu xucao* confirms Gui's greater involvement with officials and writers in the third and fourth *juan*, which roughly coincide with the years she encountered Chen Luan and Xie Kun. Perhaps, then, Gui did enjoy a rise in fame among the gentry, whether or not the reason was the butterfly poem. If this rise was not quite complete when Gui worked with Pan Yijun, it was certainly so during *juan* 4 of *Xiyu xucao*, which is to say, approximately 1820-27, when Gui was approximately 59-66 years of age. It seems that her work with Pan Yijun in Suzhou was connected to her rise in fame.

Once again we have another situation that can be partly, but not fully, encompassed by Ko's "teacher of the inner chambers" model. Gui lived a full life among women, but she also experienced wide fame among gentry and high officials, some of whom sought her out and enjoyed exchanging poems with her. Whereas we are not surprised by evidence of a "buzz" about talented women that transmitted their reputations from women's quarter to women's quarter, sometimes long after their deaths,[72] we are less well attuned to such transmissions of women's writings in the world of men.

The third surprising aspect of Gui's life is her ambition. She put out at least five iterations of her *Xiuyu xucao* with overlapping but always some new content. Of these at least three were published. On the available evidence it seems that the expense of publication was largely undertaken by male friends. We also know that Gui (or her husband) made an effort to find prominent male endorsers; once in a great while female endorsers also appear. In the order of appearance of editions of *Xiuyu xucao*, the *ci* writer Ge Zai edited and may have sponsored a one-*juan* edition, that came out in 1823.[73] Tao Shu and Chen Luan were behind the publication of the much larger five-*juan* edition of 1828; the re-print of the 1828 edition of 1832 was paid for by male associates of Gui's husband, who asked them for donations.[74] There are also several unpublished collections of *Xiuyu xucao*. One in the Nanjing Library is in four volumes and has a colophon by Xi Peilan among many others. An edition of this text was apparently printed by Langao shiwu 蘭皋詩屋, Gui's own studio, but I lack other details about it. Another is in the Shanghai Library. This time the lead endorser is Rao Qingjie 饒慶捷(1736-?), a *jinshi* from Guangdong. Hu Wenkai lists a few

other unpublished versions, whether manuscripts or final drafts, each with different endorsers.[75] It is striking that even in conditions of extreme poverty Gui and her husband continued to turn out new versions of the evolving masterwork *Xiuyu xucao* (Continued verses written after embroidery). Gui's other published titles include: *Xiuyu xiaocao*, her part of *Eryu cao*, which came out in 1791; *Tingxue ci* 聽雪詞 (Lyrics on listening to snow), which was published with the 1823 *Xiuyu xucao*; and some letters that appear with some printings of *Xiuyu xucao*.[76] A manuscript entitled *Xiuyu jincao* 繡餘近草 (Recent verses written after embroidery), roughly datable to 1815 is held in the Tianjin Library. No doubt other titles will emerge.

Although many poems appear in more than one collection, this is still a very impressive quantity of writing for a woman writer of this time. We do not know exactly what prompted Gui to want to leave so much behind, but the record of published and unpublished works leaves little doubt that she sought to build a literary legacy. This was no self-effacing poet who burned her poems as she went along.

The last striking feature of Gui's history is her poem on smoking.[77] This series first appeared in her *Xiuyu xiaocao*, which means that it had to have been written by 1791. In 1791 Gui was thirty years (thirty-one *sui*) of age. We might be less surprised at the idea of an elderly woman enjoying a pipe, but Gui was hardly elderly when she wrote this series:

Smoke	菸
Who knew that besides eating and drinking	誰知渴飲飢餐外
Tobacco would show its wondrous qualities and transmit its marvelous taste.	小草呈奇妙味傳
As one discusses ancient times one is surprised, suddenly, that the window fogs up with mist.	論古忽驚窗滿霧
Pondering lines of a poem we are astonished when our mouths produce lotuses.	敲詩共訝口生蓮
An incense stick [used as a match?] burns, then one sees the slow exhalation outwards.	線香燃得看徐噴
The lotus handle [pipe] having been packed, one tries to inhale.	荷柄裝成試下咽
Then a stream of smoke wraps around the beaded door curtain, the wind pulls it thin.	縷繞珠簾風引細
Its shadow parts around the metal tripod, the incense cake just rounding [burning up].	影分金鼎篆初圓

For a pipe I use mottled bamboo, worked very fine.	筒需斑竹工誇巧
The decorations, silver plated, enhance the beauty.	制藉塗銀飾逞妍
Sitting at table and mat I pick it up often, it accompanies my brush.	幾席拈來常伴筆
Climbing to a high vantage point, I hold it in hand; it follows me wherever I go.	登臨攜去亦隨鞭
The smoke joins the Great Transformation as I exhale and then inhale.	久將與化噓還吸
The beautiful taste swirls around me, going and coming.	味美於回往復旋
I want to tell stories about "tobacco."	欲數淡巴菰故實
In the jade hall my polished writing already stands out.[78]	玉堂久已著瑤篇

Gui's sense that smoking aids her creative endeavor is one interesting point about this poem. Another is the masculine tone. When she talks of "climbing to a high vantage point" with her pipe in hand she does not sound like a retiring *guixiu*. Gong Zizhen is one among Gui's many male correspondents to remark that her ability to write "masculine" verse made it easy for her to exchange poems with a man. Finally, there is some basis to speculate about the poem's full description of what smoking is like. Could it be that Gui's acquaintances, especially her female acquaintances, were not familiar with smoking and had to be introduced to it? Here more work needs to be done.

Implications

In this final section I propose a few ways of contextualizing the four unusual features of Gui's life story. More work will be needed before firm conclusions can be drawn, but a few hypotheses can be proposed.

First, on the issue of commercialization, Gui was clearly not alone in seeking to support herself through her teaching activities. Ko's model of the woman teacher, drawn mainly from seventeenth century examples, already makes room for this possibility. What is different in Gui's case is the variety of arrangements through which money might be made. As Gong Zizhang's case elucidates, the teacher might not always go to the (presumably wealthier) student's house but could sometimes host the student in her own home. Additionally, the student could supply the teacher with necessities, sometimes long after the teaching relationship was over.

The evidence from Zhu Geng's biography constitutes another, particularly striking possibility: that teachers might set up shop in a relatively public setting, such as a river bank, and perhaps attract students with a banner. (Conceivably, the banner marked Gui's home, not some professional space.) We need more information to be sure. At any rate the possibility that women's teaching may have been initiated via banners and not through proper introductions will be an intriguing one to pursue.

Second, on the question of relationships with men, it would appear that Gui and her husband were far more active than most couples in fostering such contacts in the first place and that Gui's work, personality, and talent attracted male attention beyond the norm. Presumably because of Li Xuehuang's devoted patronage of his wife's literary activities, no scandal was ignited in the process. But Gui clearly moved well beyond what we have regarded as typical for *guixiu* writers in the range and extent of her contacts with prominent scholars, officials, and artists. When she traveled to them in the role of student, it is easier to fit Gui's patterns into what we have previously assumed about *guixiu* culture, but when it was patrons and admirers who traveled to see her it appears that something new was underway. This is not to say that Gui was the only woman of her era to enjoy such contacts. Several of Yuan Mei's disciples show evidence of this type of engagement with men.[79] But the sheer volume in Gui's case is outstanding. Her long correspondence with Gong Zizhen is another instance of behavior that challenges our understanding of the woman-only mores of the inner chamber.

Gui's ambition to publish her work is the third unusual feature of her story. This point relates to the first two raised. Thus, we have to note that whether she was rich or poor, her effort to leave behind poems, letters, and other writings for posterity never flagged. And a number of the men she encountered were instrumental in helping her publish, whether through financial contributions or in the form of prefaces and colophons. Here, as with the second point, we have to note the enthusiastic support of her husband Li Xuehuang. Li did not publish much himself,[80] but on at least one occasion (the 1832 *Xiuyu xucao*) it was through his energies that money was raised for a publication by his wife, and this is probably not the only example.

Finally we come to smoking. This is the most difficult of the four unusual features to contextualize in that the 1805 collection in which Gui's poem was reprinted offers no other poem by a woman,[81] and we do not have many other poems on smoking by women from this era. Nevertheless, Gui's poem on the subject sounds very daring and adventurous. On this relatively minor point a tendency toward unusual, even iconoclastic behavior can be hypothesized but not proved.

Adding these four points together, we find a basis on which to argue that Gui stepped well beyond the inner chambers in her search for money, contacts with famous men, and in her somewhat immodest ambition to make a name. The smoking habit may, in the end, turn out to be more conventional than we know at present, but it helps to build a picture of a woman who crossed boundaries rather freely and thought far beyond the box of the conventional woman's world. To an extent Gui's behavior can be explained by her poverty. Had she been born into a wealthy family, had her husband enjoyed examination success, or had she given birth to sons, things might have turned out differently. In other words, the commercial nature of her teaching may say less about her iconoclasm than her financial circumstances. But at least when it comes to her correspondence with men, her ongoing wish to publish, and perhaps her smoking, one suspects that deliberate border crossing was underway.

Endnotes

1. Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), p. 128.
2. *Guixiu* is defined as a talent of the inner chamber.
3. Her birth date is established by a note to a poem commemorating the anniversary of her mother's death, in her collection *Xiuyu xucao* 繡餘續草 (Shanghai: Li shi, 1832), 5:4a, held in the Harvard-Yenching Library. The third preface to this collection is dated 1832 and contains no suggestion that she has died. She was dead by 1836, when a poem of mourning came out in the continuation volume of Yun Zhu's 惲珠 *Guochao guixiu zhengshi ji* 國朝閨秀正始集, *Guochao guixiu zhengshi xuji* 國朝閨秀正始續集 (Hongxiang guan, 1836), in Harvard-Yenching Library. She may still have been alive in 1835, when Shen Shanbao wrote a poem about her in which there is no overt suggestion that she had died, but her death may be implied. See Shen's *Hongxue lou chuji* 鴻雪樓初集, 4:18b-19a. The poem takes up a painting of a broken willow branch Gui made for her student and good friend Gong Zizhang two years after their sad parting, which would have been sometime in the late 1820s. On Gong, see below. Gui describes the painting in *Xiuyu xucao,* 4:28b-29b. The broken branch was meant as a metaphor for their broken contact. Shen's poem, written at Gong's request, was an endorsement of the painting.

Evidently Gui's and Gong's strong feelings for one another were rather well known at the time.

4. Unless otherwise indicated, biographical data is drawn from Hu Wenkai 胡文楷, *Lidai funü zhuzuo kao* 曆代婦女著作考 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1985), pp. 784-85 especially; Goyama Kiwamu 合山究, "Enbai to jōdeshi tachi 袁枚と女弟子たち," *Bungaku ronshû* 文學論輯 (August, 1985), pp.113-45; and Goyama Kiwamu, *Min Shin jidai no jōsei to bungaku* 明清時代の女性と文學 (Tokyo: Kyuko Shoin, 2006), pp. 643-45 especially.
5. Held in the Academy of Sciences Library, Beijing. See *juan* 55 for Yang, *juan* 65 for Li. Yang's entry is by far the more extensive.
6. On the death of her mother, see Gui Maoyi, *Xiuyu xucao*, 5:4a.
7. Yu Yue 俞樾, *Tongzhi Shanghai xianzhi* 同治上海縣志 (Wumen xianshu, 1871), 26: 22b-23a.
8. Ke Yuchun 柯愈春, *Qingren shiwenji zongmu tiyao* 清人詩文集總目提要 (Beijing: Beijing guji chubanshe, 2002), p. 1253. Li has an unpublished collection which carries a preface by Gui.
9. See Chen Wenshu 陳文述, *Xiling guiyong* 西泠閨詠 (Hangzhou: Cuilouge chong kan, 1887 [1827]), 14:1.
10. He outlived her slightly, according to Wang Qingxun 王慶勳, *Kezuo ji* 可作集 (Shanghai: [no publisher listed], 1848), 1:1a. In Harvard-Yenching Library.
11. See Ji Lanyun 季蘭韻, *Chuwange ji* 楚畹閣集 (Changshu: Mohua xianguan, Qu Maozeng jiaoji, 1847), 7:14a and 19:23b. In Harvard-Yenching Library.
12. Hu Wenkai, *Lidai funü zhuzuo kao*, p. 539. It is perhaps more likely she came across this collection after 1781.
13. *Wanqinglou shigao* 晚晴樓詩稿. In Cao Yishi 曹一士, *Siyanzhai wenji* 四焉齋文集 (1750). In the National Library of China. Gui's poem comes at the end and was added after the original material.
14. This collection has an alternative name, *Xiumu tanqian* 繡幕談遷. See Wang Tao 王韜, *Yingruan zazhi* 瀛壖雜志 (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1989), p. 68.
15. Hu Wenkai, *Lidai funü zhuzuo kao*, p. 852. In another entry, Hu dates the publication twenty years earlier, to 1771, when Gui would have been just five years old. See p. 785. Here Hu repeats a mistake from *Zhengshi ji*.
16. Goyama, "Enbai to jodeshi tachi," p. 126.
17. Wang Zhong 王鐘, *Fahua xiangzhi* 法華鄉志 (n.p., 1922), 42a-b. In Harvard-Yenching Library.

18. Goyama, "Enbai to jōdeshi tachi," p. 115. I assume this close contact developed during Gui's early years in Changshu, hence before she met Yuan.
19. The Xi family of Changshu was a wealthy business family. Another branch of the family owned the Saoye shanfang 掃葉山房 bookstore in Suzhou. See: http://www.sass.org.cn/lsysis/articleshow.jsp?dinji=47&artid=8101. For more on Sun Yuanxiang, see Ke Yuchun, *Qingren shiwenji zongmu tiyao*, p. 961.
20. Goyama, "Enbai to jōdeshi tachi," p. 115. On Gui's entertaining Yuan, see her note to the famed "Suiyuan shisan nüdizi hulou qingye tu" 隨園十三女弟子湖樓請業圖 of 1796 in the Christie's auction catalogue from June 1, 1994, lot 237. Gui was not present at this gathering, which took place in 1792, as we know from Yuan's own notes on the painting, but she was asked to add an inscription, presumably during Yuan's visit. I am grateful to James Cahill for his photographs of the scroll and endorsements.
21. Hawkes, "Hsi P'ei-lan," *Asia Major*, n.s. 7, pts. 1-2 (1959), p. 120. Each had a name or pen name that included the syllable "lan."
22. It seems that Langao was one of Gui's literary names.
23. Goyama, "Enbai to jōdeshi tachi," p. 126. Gui's tutor Pan Yijun and her friends Xi Peilan and Gui's friend Wang Duan 汪端 also have poems on this painting. See Xi, *Changzhenge ji* 長真閣集 (Shanghai: Saoye shanfang, 1920 [1812]), 2:5a, 5b (two poems); also Wang, *Ziran haoxuezhai ji* 自然好學齋集, in *Linxia yayin ji* 林下雅音集, ed. Mao Jun 冒俊, 3.14b (Rugao Maoshi kanben, 1884). Both are in the Harvard-Yenching Library. Wang could have been no more than three years old when the painting was first painted, which means that Gui must have carried it around and accumulated endorsements for years.
24. Goyama, "Enbai to jōdeshi tachi," p. 126.
25. Ibid.
26. Goyama, *Min Shin jidai no jōsei to bungaku*, pp. 693-94.
27. Another sign of Gui's contact with Chen is found in his poetical sketches of Gui and these others, which appear in his collection *Xiling guiyong* 西泠閨詠 (In praise of *guixiu* of Hangzhou) of 1827.
28. Goyama, *Min Shin jidai no jōsei to bungaku*, p. 652.
29. Jiang was one of the "Ten Women of Wu." For more on Jiang, see Beata Grant, "Little Vimalakirti: Buddhism and Poetry in the Writings of Chiang Chu (1764-1804)," in *Chinese Women in the Imperial Past*, ed. Harriet T. Zurndorfer (Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 286-307.

According to a recent, unpublished paper by Clara Wing-chung Ho, "Overt and Covert Treasures: An Investigation into the Sources for Women's History in the *Sibu*," presented at "An International Conference on the Sources for Chinese Women's History," Honk Kong Baptist University, June 21-22, 2007, Jiang also wrote a postscript to a work of astronomy. See Ding Fubao and Zhou Yunqing (eds.), *Sibu zonglu tianwen bian* 四部總錄天文編 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1956), "tianwen lei," "buyi," 18ab.

30. The preface is found in Jiang's *Xiaoweimo shigao* 小維摩詩稿 of 1811. In the National Library of China.
31. See Zhang Zhongxing, "Gui Maoyi," http://www.fpe95.com/Article/show Article.asp?Article id=3038. My thanks to Wu Shengqing for finding this source.
32. Hu Wenkai, *Lidai funü zhuzuo kao*, pp. 441 and 510.
33. Ke Yuchun, *Qingren shiwenji zongmu tiyao*, p. 1064.
34. Gui Maoyi, *Xiuyu xucao*, 4:12.
35. Gui Maoyi, *Xiuyu xucao*, 3:31a-b.
36. Hawkes, "Hsi P'ei-lan," p. 120.
37. Wang Tao, *Yingruan zazhi,* p. 68.
38. Ji's hand-copied edition of Qu poems has survived. See Hu Wenkai, *Lidai funü zhuzuo kao*, p. 392.
39. Poems to or about Gui from Ji's collection, which is organized by date, range from 1818-1834. On this basis we can be certain that Gui was alive in 1834.
40. Arthur Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period* (Taipei: Chengwen, 1967 [1943]), pp. 839-40.
41. Qu's death in 1810 far antedated the publication of Wang's collection in 1822. This must mean that Wang worked on it over a long period of time.
42. Li Bozhong 李伯重 (of Tsinghua University History Department), "China's National Market, 1550-1840," (paper presented to the Eighth Annual World History Association International Conference, Victoria, Canada, June 27, 1999).
43. For example, Wang Duan, *Ziran haoxuezhai* ji, 3:11a-b.
44. Chen Wenshu, *Xiling guiyong* 西泠閨詠 (Poems in praise of gentlewomen of Hangzhou), (Cuilou ge chong kan, 1887 [1827]). In Harvard-Yenching Library.
45. Ibid, 12:6a.
46. A poem written in 1827 from Henan on her husband's birthday sounds very homesick. See Gui Maoyi, *Xiuyu xucao*, 5:4b-5a.

47. Xie Kun 謝坤, *Chuncao tang ji* 春草堂集 (1840), 9:3a.
48. Preface to Gui Maoyi, *Xiuyu xucao*.
49. Poems cited by Xie of work by Gui and Gong refer to this teaching situation, which could have begun elsewhere but continued into Gui's Shanghai years. See also Shen Shanbao 沈善寶, *Mingyuan shihua* 名媛詩話 (Poetry talks on famous women) (1845), 6:11a. In Beijing University Library. The order of poems in *Xiyu xucao* suggests that Gui first met Gong Zizhen in Suzhou then later met his mother in Shanghai, still later met his sister. For more on this see below.
50. I have used the edition in the Harvard-Yenching Library, which can be found on the McGill-Harvard-Yenching Library database, *Ming-Qing Women's Writings* (http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/mingqing). See Gui Maoyi, *Xiuyu xucao*, 4:22a-23b. Thanks to Wai-yee Li for help in translating the poems.
51. Wang Duan, *Ziran haoxuezhai ji*, 2:15a-b.
52. One such poem, by Zhu Shujun 朱淑均, appears in the supplement to the sequel volume to *Guochao guixiu zhengshi xuji*: Supplement, 63b.
53. Shen Shanbao, *Mingyuan shihua*, 10:5a-b.
54. Preface in Zhu Geng 朱庚, *Yanghao lou shichao* 養浩樓詩鈔 (1927 edition). In Academy of Sciences Library, Beijing.
55. Ibid.
56. http://www.nach.gov.cn/subject/wwzjcgz/gjg/center.htm
57. Another student was Qian Shoupu 錢守璞. See Ellen Widmer, *The Beauty and the Book: Women and Fiction in Nineteenth Century China* (Cambridge: Havard East Asia Monographs, 2006), p. 61.
58. For example, Pan Yijun 潘奕雋, Sun Yuanxiang and Huang Pilie 黃丕烈, 1763-1825.
59. Wu had certainly heard of Gui. See Yun Zhu, *Guochao guixiu zhengshi ji* (1831), Supplement 27b. I have no evidence that Wu and Gui ever exchanged poems directly.
60. This set of poems also appears in another of Gui's collections, *Xiuyu jincao* 繡餘近草 which is held in manuscript in the Tianjin Library. The last date on the colophons is 1815. A modern reprint is found in *Zhonghua quanguo tushuguan wenxian suowei fuzhi zhongxin*_中華全國圖書館文獻縮微復制中心 (Beijing: 1999).
61. Pan Yijun, *Sansong ziding nianpu* 三松自訂年譜 (Beijing: Beijing Tushuguan, 2004).
62. Wang Qingxun, a student of Li Xuehuang, was from Shanghai. His *Kezuo ji* gives the impression that she died there. See 1:1a.
63. Goyama, *Min Shin jidai no jōsei to bungaku*, pp. 644-45.

64. See *Sansongtang ji* 三松堂集 (1872) in Tôyô bunko. Gai was from Songjiang, a prefecture that includes Shanghai.
65. *Gong Zizhen quanji* 龔自珍全集 (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 1975), p. 561.
66. For more on the link between Gui and Gong Zizhang, see Shen Shanbao, *Mingyuan shihua*, 6:11a.
67. Huang's work is cited in Zhang Zhongxing, "Gui Maoyi."
68. In his *Chujingshushe lingmo* 鋤經書舍零墨, reprinted in *Gujin shuobu congshu* 古今說部叢書, 9.
69. Zhang Zhongxing, "Gui Maoyi."
70. See for example Wang Zhong, *Fahua xiangzhi*, 42a-b. See also Wang Qingxun, *Kezuo ji*, 1:1a.
71. See Goyama, *Min Shin jidai no jōsei to bungaku*, p. 645. See also Xie's *Chuncaotang ji*, 9:3a. Reprinted in *Xuxiu Siku quanshu, jibu, bieji lei* (Shanghai: Guji chubanshe, 1995-99).
72. For a quote from Qu Bingyun's poetry fourteen years after her death, see Widmer, *The Beauty and the Book*, p. 195.
73. Gui Maoyi, *Xiuyu xucao* (1823). In the National Library of China.
74. *Guochao guixiu zhengshi xuji*: Supplement 63b.
75. Hu Wenkai, *Lidai funü zhuzuo kao*, pp. 784-85.
76. Ibid.
77. *Xiuyu xiaocao*, 41a-b, in *Eryu shicao*. The series has had two interesting reprints. The first is in Chen Cong 陳琮, *Yancao pu* 煙草譜 (Manual of Tobacco) (1805), 6:12 a-b, in *Xuxiu Siku quanshu - zibu* 續修四庫全書 - 子部 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995-99), vol. 1117, p. 466. The other is in an advertisement for the modern Hongyun 紅雲 tobacco company. See: http://www.tobaccochina.com/culture/culture_content.aspx?id=16839. The modern reprint gets several characters wrong.
78. *Ibid*.
79. For example Huang Zhishu 黃之淑 studied with several painting teachers and received an endorsement from Tao Shu. See Xian Yuqing 冼玉清, *Guangdong nüzi yiwen kao* 廣東女子藝文考 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1948), p. 43.
80. An entry in the local history by Wang Zhong 王鐘, *Fahua xiangzhi* 法華鄉志, lists two works under his name. See 5:31b. It praises Li's erudition but mostly comments on his partnership with his wife.
81. See note 73 above.