

Nostalgia and Resistance: Gender and the Poetry of Chen Yinke

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On June 2, 1927, the great scholar and poet Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927) drowned himself at Lake Kunming in the Imperial Summer Palace in Beijing. There was widespread perception at the time that Wang had committed suicide as a martyr for the fallen Qing dynasty, whose young deposed emperor had been Wang's student. However, Chen Yinke 陳寅恪 (1890-1969), Wang's friend and colleague at the Qinghua Research Institute of National Learning, offered a different interpretation in the preface to his "Elegy on Wang Guowei" 王觀堂先生輓詞并序:

For today's China is facing calamities and crises without precedents in its several thousand years of history. With these calamities and crises reaching ever more dire extremes, how can those whose very being represents a condensation and realization of the spirit of Chinese culture fail to identify with its fate and perish along with it? This was why Wang Guowei could not but die.¹

Two years later, Chen elaborated upon the meaning of Wang's death in a memorial stele:

He died to make manifest his will to independence and freedom. This was neither about personal indebtedness and grudges, nor about the rise or fall of one ruling house... His writings may sink into oblivion; his teachings may yet be debated. But this spirit of independence and freedom of thought...will last for eternity with heaven and earth.²

Between these assertions from 1927 and 1929 is a rhetorical elision of potentially different positions. Chen Yinke seems to be saying that the essence of Chinese culture *is* "the spirit of independence and freedom of thought." This is all the more surprising because the 1927 elegy still

presents Wang as abiding by the “three fundamentals” (*sangang* 三綱)—the moral authority of the ruler, the father, and the husband, although Chen takes care to emphasize their meaning as abstract, Platonic ethical ideals rather than specific instantiations. Chen thus implies that even “old-fashioned” moral precepts emphasizing authority can be embraced in a spirit of independence and freedom, especially when such ideals no longer have a legitimating context. In this sense, the simplistic division of modern Chinese intellectuals into conservatives and progressives is profoundly misleading. The retrospective gaze of cultural nostalgia can be tied to alienation, resistance, and self-conscious agency.

By the time Chen Yinke wrote about Wang Guowei’s death, he was already honored as a distinguished historian whose wide-ranging research encompassed Sanskrit, Pali, and Turkic materials, the history of Buddhism, cultural relations between China and India and between China and central Asia. In the following two decades he was to write extensively on Sui-Tang political and institutional history. Chen Yinke was born in 1890 to a distinguished family of renowned poets and scholar-officials. Both his grandfather Chen Baozhen 陳寶箴 (1831-1900) and his father Chen Sanli 陳三立 (1853-1937) were actively involved in late Qing reform movements,³ and both were famous men of letters. Indeed, Chen Sanli is recognized as the preeminent late Qing poet. After periods of study and research in Japan, Europe, and the United States, Chen Yinke returned to China in 1926 and became a professor at Qinghua University. During the Sino-Japanese War, Chen ended up in southwest China. In the late 1940s, he briefly considered accepting an appointment at Oxford, in part to seek medical intervention for his failing eyesight. After the operation failed and he lost his vision altogether, he returned to China in 1949, declining opportunities to go to Taiwan or Hong Kong. He spent the last twenty years of his life as a professor at Zhongshan University in Guangzhou.

Brilliant scholarship itself does not explain the cultural significance of Chen Yinke. More fundamental factors establish him as a cultural icon for our time: namely, the ways he defends the integrity of intellectual inquiry against the encroachments of political dogma, the mergence of his profession of faith as a historian with the mission to define cultural values that defy barbarism and destruction, and his embodiment of a cultural nostalgia that opens up the space for ideological resistance by redefining subjectivity and the claims of political power. All these positions are already embedded in Chen’s writings about Wang Guowei, especially the summation of “independence” and “freedom,” which reverberate as a refrain in Chen’s writings in the last twenty years of his life. They constituted his self-definition as a scholar and as a human being.⁴

In 1953, Chen's former student Wang Jian 汪錢 (1916-1966) came to Guangzhou to try to persuade him to accept an appointment as head of the newly founded Research Institute on Middle Period History in the Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. In Chen's reply to the Academy, he begins by citing his memorial stele on Wang Guowei as the testament to his belief. He further explains: it is imperative for scholars to "pry their minds loose from the bondage of commonly accepted dictums" 脫心志於俗諦之桎梏. "The 'commonly accepted dictums' at the time (of Wang's suicide) referred to the Three People's Principles" ("people's self-rule," "people's rights," and "people's livelihood") 俗諦在當時即指三民主義而言. Needless to say, the "commonly accepted dictums" in 1953 meant Communist dogma. As conditions—obviously impossible—for accepting the appointment, Chen stipulates that "the Institute should be permitted not to uphold Marxism-Leninism and not to be involved in political education" 允許古史研究所不宗奉馬列主義, 並不學習政治 and that a written dispensation affirming this should come from Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893-1976) and Liu Shaoqi 劉少奇 (1898-1969). His students are to abide by the same independence and freedom. Wang Jian had joined the Communist party in 1950 and studied in the Marxist-Leninist Institute. Chen thus declared: "You are no longer my student."⁵ Wang Jian was to commit suicide in 1966, one of the first victims of the Cultural Revolution.

"Independence" and "freedom" are also words Chen Yinke use to eulogize the woman writer Chen Duansheng 陳端生 (1751-ca.1796) and the courtesan-poet cum Ming loyalist Liu Rushi 柳如是 (1617-1664), the foci of his scholarly endeavor in the 1950s and 1960s. In this essay I will explore how and why these women define an imaginative and discursive space wherein Chen Yinke forges his particular symbiosis of nostalgia and resistance. Nostalgia here is not just longing for the "good old days." The objects of nostalgia are women who represent "the independence of spirit" and "the freedom of thought" by challenging orthodoxy, tradition, and social norms—these are oppositional figures who promise to bypass the dichotomy of continuity and radical change (and perhaps in that sense solve the problem of Chinese modernity). Nostalgia here is both confirmation of cultural continuity and redefinition of culture,⁶ both attachment to the past and implicit critique of the present through protest against rupture. Nostalgia for the repressed and misunderstood elements in the tradition also amounts to nostalgia *for* the spirit of resistance. One may say that this is nostalgia that opens up the space for resistance by redefining subjectivity and the claims of political power.

More generally, gender perspectives and women's lives and writings signify agency and judgment in Chen's response to contemporary crises and

devastation. In his late poetry, we see the use of gender roles and gender boundaries to ponder moral and political choices in traumatic historical moments. Chen also participates in the wonted tradition of employing feminine imagery and themes to achieve the indirect expression of allegorical meanings (*jituo* 寄託). His empathy with Chen Duansheng and Liu Rushi becomes a mode of lyrical self-definition that also conveys historical and political judgments.

We may begin with Chen's ruminations on gender roles and their resonance with political choices (or lack thereof) in the early years of the Communist regime in "The Male *Dan* (Female Lead)" 男旦:

Remaking a man, creating a woman: a wholly new demeanor.	改男造女態全新
The very essence of theater was also the unmatched glory of time past.	鞞部精華舊絕倫
I sigh that, after such romantic élan has ebbed and faded,	太息風流衰歇後
It is the scholar who, against all odds, inherits the tradition. ⁷	傳薪翻是讀書人

Chen Yinke wrote this poem in 1952, when China was in the throes of "Thought Reform" (*sixiang gaizao* 思想改造), the reference to which is embedded in the first line, with the words "remake" (*gai* 改) and "create" (*zao* 造), as Yu Yingshi and Hu Wenhui have pointed out.⁸ There was a long tradition of men playing female leads on stage. Although its most famous modern practitioners, such as Mei Lanfang 梅蘭芳 (1894-1961) and Cheng Yanqiu 程硯秋 (1904-1958), were still alive at that point, the tradition was under siege amidst rumbles of "Theater Reform" (*xiqu gaige* 戲曲改革). The blood and sweat of socialist art forms had little use for the subtle beauty of cross-dressing in "feudal" theater. Indeed, female impersonation must have been anathema to the strident masculinity enshrined in socialist aesthetics. The abeyance of opera was symptomatic of the rejection of many aspects of traditional culture. But Chen noted ironically that the male *dan* did pass on their art. Their true heirs in 1952 were scholars who had learned to "remake" and "reform" themselves according to the demands of their times.⁹

While there is consensus on his persecution during the Cultural Revolution—Chen died three years into the "Ten-Year Calamity"—some Chinese scholars have been reluctant to concede the depth of his disaffection in the 1950s and early 1960s. Through insightful and extensive analysis of his later writings, Yu Yingshi and Hu Wenhui have painted a

compelling picture of Chen's alienation and his pervasive criticism of the ethos and policies of the communist regime.¹⁰ As the above poem shows, he was troubled by the compromises of intellectuals as early as 1952.

Chen continued the theatrical metaphor in another poem from the same year:

Written in Jest After Seeing By Chance the New Play "Thirteenth Lass"	偶觀《十三妹》新 劇戲作
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How thickly were rouge and powder applied? They want to turn an old man into a young beauty.	塗脂抹粉厚幾許 欲改衰翁成姣女
A roomful of spectators laughed, with a twinge of pity,	滿堂觀眾笑且憐
At this one stem of late bloom, bearing the rain of autumn. ¹¹	黃花一枝秋帶雨

Thirteenth Lass 十三妹 is the protagonist of the late Qing novel, *Ernü yingxiong zhuan* 兒女英雄傳 (Lovers and heroes) by Wen Kang 文康 (ca. mid to late 19th century). Here an old male actor plays the role of this supposedly beautiful young woman in the Beijing opera based on the novel. Chen compares the ludicrous and pathetic spectacle to a chrysanthemum ("late bloom") in the autumn rain, a twist on Bai Juyi's 白居易 (772-846) line on the beautiful spirit of the imperial consort Yang Yuhuan 楊玉環 (d. 756) as she weeps: "A stem of pear blossom, bearing the rain of spring" 梨花一枝春帶雨 ("Song of Lasting Sorrow" 長恨歌).¹² There is disagreement on whether Chen presents the transformation on stage as a metaphor for the indignity inflicted on him¹³ or for the shameless capitulation of other intellectuals,¹⁴ but few dispute that political analogy is intended. That the absurdity and perniciousness of "Thought Reform" should be linked to female impersonation also echoes how the trope is often treated in the literary tradition.¹⁵

The explicit argument in the "The Male Dan" is merely implied in "Written in Jest"; perhaps that accounts for the different interpretations. There are more enigmatic poems that seem to invite "decoding,"¹⁶ as in the following poem about the Double Seventh (seventh night of the seventh month) in 1957. Its images of betrayal, lost love, and hopeless longing allude to poems by Bai Juyi and Li Shangyin 李商隱 (813-858) about the doomed romance of the Tang emperor Xuanzong 唐玄宗 (r. 712-756) and his consort Yang Yuhuan.

The Double Seventh in the Year *Dingyou*
(1957)

丁酉七夕

Ten thousand miles, layers of passes: ask not about the distance.	萬里重關莫問程
There is no hope for this life—wait for the lives to come.	今生無分待他生
Her neck bends down low with what words cannot tell,	低垂粉頸言難盡
She bares her right shoulder, for the dream yet to come true.	右袒香肩夢未成
It was, to begin with, a pact made in jest with the Han emperor—	原與漢皇聊戲約
How to bear, then, the imposed covenant in the Tang palace?	那堪唐殿便要盟
Lasting sorrow, as unyielding as heaven, as undying as earth,	天長地久綿綿恨
Only won the words of the Daoist about the Immortal Realm. ¹⁷	贏得臨邛說玉京

The annual rendezvous of the celestial lovers, the Cowherd Star and Weaver Maid Star, on the Double Seventh is a recurrent topic in writings about love. Among the most famous is Bai Juyi's "Song of Lasting Sorrow." The poem chronicles how the love between the Tang emperor and Consort Yang is bound up with the dynastic crisis that ultimately costs Yang her life. After her death, a Daoist from Linqiong undertakes a quest for her spirit to console the grieving emperor. Their encounter in the celestial realm ends with Yang's parting reference to a secret vow she shared with the emperor on the Double Seventh: they were to be husband and wife in lives to come. The focus on the emperor's emotions and memory in Bai's poem displaces criticism of heedless passion, and the final reference to the vow underlines romantic pathos as the poem's key concern.

Li Shangyin gives a more caustic twist to the topic in his poem "Mawei" 馬嵬—Mawei is the place where Yang killed herself, after the Tang emperor had acquiesced to the rebelling troops' demand for her death. Li's poem begins with the betrayal of the vow of eternal conjugal devotion: "The lives to come cannot be divined, but all hopes fade for this one" 他生未卜此生休:¹⁸ Li's line is echoed in line 2 of Chen's poem. Chen's final couplet alludes to the last lines in Bai's poem: "Unyielding heaven, undying earth, will reach their limits, / This sorrow, relentless, will be never-ending" 天長地久有時盡 / 此恨綿綿無絕期.¹⁹ True love mourned for eternity in

Bai's poem, however, seems to be merely the Linqiong Daoist's fantasy (line 8) in Chen's poem, which focuses instead on the pain of love lost and promise betrayed. While the Tang allusions define the frame of reference, line 5 brings up another story about false promise: the Queen Mother of the West 西王母 visited Han Emperor Wu 漢武帝 (r. 141-87 BC) on the Double Seventh as promised, but the meeting did not grant him any secret of immortality.²⁰

Yu Yingshi argues that Chen wrote this in response to the Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957-1959):

"What words cannot tell" in the poem refers to the pact declared by Mao Zedong: "Nothing known left unsaid; nothing said left unfinished. For the speaker, absolution; for the listener, vigilance." The line about "baring the right shoulder" refers to how the dreams of "Rightist" intellectuals were dashed. Mao Zedong's sixteen-word guarantee was but "a pact made in jest," but the intellectuals took it seriously and finally used their blood and tears to compose a new "Song of Lasting Sorrow."²¹

Irrespective of whether one accepts Yu's claim of topical reference, there is little doubt that the theme of feminine sorrow conveys a sense of helpless anguish. Hu Wenhui links the image in line 4 to Hui Yuan's 慧遠 (334-416) disquisition on how monks should bare their right side.²² Such an image of profession of faith implies the dream that the government would respect freedom of thought. I suspect that lines 3 and 4 also work together as the ironic contrast between concealment and revelation. Mao Zedong had proclaimed that intellectuals could freely criticize the government with impunity, but those who eventually spoke out did so at their peril. Submission and silence in line 3 are the consequences of terror. The line also reflects on Chen's own choice of indirect poetic expression. Necessary concealment is contrasted with the dream of freedom of expression (line 4). In *Shiji* 史記 (Records of the historian), the general Zhou Bo 周勃 tried to distinguish loyalists to the Liu house from supporters of the Lü clan after the interregnum of Empress Lü's 呂后 (r. 202 BC-195 BC) rule: "Those who support Empress Lü should bare their right side; those who support the Liu house should bare their left side" 為呂氏右袒, 為劉氏左袒.²³ Hu Wenhui believes that this is not relevant because "baring the right side" means supporting the usurper. It is quite likely, however, that Chen Yinke is simply using "baring the right shoulder" as the metaphor for openly stating one's opinion, even if it were "politically incorrect." The trope of failed promise and the allusions to the doomed love of Emperor Xuanzong and

Yang Yuhuan cast the intellectual as the ill-fated consort betrayed by the false promise of a fickle ruler. His abject submission, enforced reticence, and vain hope for freedom is captured in the image of the lady with neck bent low, silent in the wake of failed seduction.

The gender role is reversed in line 5: here the intellectual, compared to the Han emperor, is fooled by the illusion of power, while Mao Zedong is the Queen Mother of the West who “made the pact in jest.” The next line restores the gender analogy pursued throughout the poem: the intellectual is like Yang Yuhuan who clings to the Tang emperor and urges him to make the vow of eternal love, as told in scene 22 of Hong Sheng’s 洪昇 (1645-1704) play *Changsheng dian* 長生殿 (Palace of lasting life). But the ruler considers this an “imposed covenant” (*yaomeng* 要盟) that had drawn him in against his will, which means that he did not have to honor it.²⁴ The stage is thus set for tragedy. The idea of intellectuals sacrificed for the ruler’s whims or factional power struggles is also tied to the story of the Tang emperor and Consort Yang through the fate of Hong Sheng, author of the most famous dramatic rendition of the story, *Palace of Lasting Life*, as Chen made clear in a set of poems dated 1954.²⁵ Hong Sheng and scores of other officials were exiled and banned from office because the play was performed during national mourning for Empress Tong 佟皇后 in 1689.

While the female role is tied to lies, betrayal, and alienation in critical appraisals of his times, Chen Yinke’s empathy, even identification, with women defines his self-understanding and historical vision. In the final phase of his writings, from the early 1950s to the late 1960s, Chen focused on women, creating what Yu Yingshi termed “history from the heart” (*xinshi* 心史) in his long essay on the prosimetric narrative *Zaisheng yuan* 再生緣 (Love in two lives) by Chen Duansheng and his monumental biography of the courtesan Liu Rushi.²⁶ *The History from the Heart* by the Song loyalist Zheng Sixiao 鄭思肖 (1241-1318) was said to have been discovered in 1638, encased in an iron box, at the bottom of a dried well in Chengtian temple in Suzhou after being buried there for three and a half centuries. It embodied the tenacious spirit that defies repression and a time out of joint, and became a potent symbol for Ming loyalists in the early Qing and late Qing nationalists. It also recurs in Chen Yinke’s poems and comments about his later writings, expressing his alienation and his expectation that his writings will be suppressed.²⁷ “History from the heart” thus refers to the radical disjunction between an author and his socio-political environment and to the hidden meanings of the author’s writings to be deciphered by posterity.²⁸ It also implies an affective understanding of the past, a kind of empathy and emotional engagement that conjoins historical understanding and self-understanding.

Chen alluded to the implications of writing about women in a poem addressed to his friend Wu Mi 吳宓 (1894-1978):

In the Seventh Month of 1961, My Old Friend Yuseng Came to Guangzhou from Chongqing. He Inquired After My Recent Situation, And I Wrote This In Response.	辛丑七月雨僧老友 自重慶來廣州承詢 近況賦此答之
Seeing you again at Guangzhou, my insides churned in sorrow.	五羊重見九迴腸
I may live on Mount Luofu, but my homeland is elsewhere.	雖住羅浮別有鄉
My life hangs on: I let myself be the object of ready scorn,	留命任教加白眼
As the only thing left for me to write is the praise of fair ladies. ²⁹	著書唯讚頌紅妝

Although Chen Yinke lived in Guangzhou in the last twenty years of his life (1949-1969), he often wrote about Guangzhou using images of exile.³⁰ His residence in Guangzhou constituted a self-willed removal from the center of political authority (Beijing), which was also an “inner exile” marking his sense of alienation from contemporary politics. In a manner reminiscent of Ming loyalists, he wrote about homelessness, “no place,” and an impossible, inaccessible Peach Blossom Spring:³¹ “For the place of escape, I cannot hope for a Mayflower” 避地難希五月花 (1949), “The Peach Blossom Spring is already blocked by the men of Qin” 桃源今已隔秦人 (1950), “What a pity: there is no place to send off the remnant of spring” 可憐無地送殘春 (1950), “It’s not that, being at the edge of the world, I have no thought of return: / But what is to be done when the date of return keeps on being postponed?” 天涯不是無歸意 / 爭奈歸期抵死賒 (1954) “Melancholy to be the last one in the Immortal Spring” 惆悵仙源最後身 (1955).³² The phrase “my homeland is elsewhere” echoes this sense of homelessness, confirmed by the worsening political climate (line 3),³³ for which the only antidote is to be sought in the imaginary space or “spiritual homeland” opened up by the scholarly endeavor illuminating the lives and writings of remarkable women.

Chen adds a note to line 4: “In the last eight years I drafted ‘On *Love in Two Lives*’ and ‘Between Qian Qianyi and Liu Rushi: An Explication,’³⁴ which went on for hundreds of thousands of words” 近八年來草《論再生緣》及《錢柳因緣釋證》等文凡數十萬言。³⁵ Why did these subjects offer Chen Yinke a kind of final mental and spiritual refuge? The heroine of *Love*

in *Two Lives* is Meng Lijun 孟麗君, who is forced by intrigues against her family and her fiancé's family to take up male disguise and to make her way in the world. She wins the highest honors in the civil service examination and becomes prime minister, eluding the efforts of her parents, her fiancé, and the emperor to expose her masquerade. The tone of the sixteen chapters chronicling these events, which Chen Duansheng wrote before the age of twenty, is playful and defiant. The death of Chen's mother, her marriage, and her husband's exile put a stop to her writing. When, twelve years later, she wrote chapter seventeen, her husband was still in exile in Yili (Xinjiang), and by the time he was pardoned and returned in 1796, Chen Duansheng had died. The mood of chapter seventeen is somber and tragic: it begins with Chen's autobiographical account of her own writing and describes how the emperor finally manages to expose Meng Lijun's disguise by having her boots removed after getting her drunk. Few can forget the stark image of Meng Lijun spitting blood on the white silk cloth used for binding her feet when she realizes she has been betrayed and exposed—although there is also voyeurism and perverse pride as the female attendants exposing her take care to emphasize that Meng Lijun, being a supreme beauty, has the smallest bound feet in the empire. Another woman writer, Liang Desheng 梁德繩 (1771-1847) added three chapters and brought the book to a "happy ending," with Meng Lijun returning to a traditional role as the principal wife in a polygamous household.

It is quite likely that Chen Duansheng did not finish the book not only because of personal misfortunes but because she could not follow her own story to its logical conclusion. Chen Yinke applauds the "freedom, self-respect, that is, independence" of Chen Duansheng's thinking (自由及自尊即獨立之思想), evident in the ways she implicitly demolishes "the three fundamentals" of traditional society based on the authority of the ruler, the father, and the husband.³⁶ The pleasure and energy of the narrative for the author (and for most readers) lie in the ways Meng Lijun foils the patriarchal order and imperial authority; once she is exposed, the supposedly comic reconciliation would be colored by a tragic sense of defeat, and the incongruity must have been unbearable. (The author of the sequel, being of a much more conventional temperament, had no trouble embracing the taming of Meng Lijun.)

Chen Yinke saw a kindred spirit in Chen Duansheng because he understood the unholy continuity between modern authoritarian politics and the "three fundamentals" in Confucian morality, as evident in his comparisons of the dogmatic, formulaic Marxist-Leninist rhetoric of his times to the pious rhetoric of examination essays in imperial China. Chen Duansheng and Chen Yinke thus shared an oppositional stance vis-à-vis the

prevailing structures of authority in their times.

Writings (1951)

文章

Octopartite essays and examination poetry
Claim lineage to Zhu Xi and glorify the sages
by set rules.

八股文章試帖詩
宗朱頌聖有成規

White-haired palace ladies laugh out loud:
The style they paint their eyebrows is again
fashionable.³⁷

白頭宮女哈哈笑
眉樣如今又入時

White-haired palace ladies, a transparent analogy for the intellectuals who were old enough to have seen other regimes come and gone, “laugh out loud” because they can be effortlessly fashionable. The same subservience to authority and unforgiving condemnation of “heterodoxy” made the transition only too easy.

In his essay “*On Love in Two Lives*” 論再生緣, Chen Yinke patiently unravels the forgotten details of Chen Duansheng’s life and times. He broke with his earlier discursive style and introduced many of his own poems, merging his experience of wars, devastation, and repression with his reading of Chen Duansheng. He paid special attention to the autobiographical chapter seventeen, whose lines are echoed in his own poems and essay, which in turn acquire a distinct self-reflexive ring. Like Chen Duansheng, he “early on grasped the seeds of enlightenment but was finally bogged down by mundane cares” 禪機蚤悟, 俗累終牽,³⁸ and bore the pain of “being lost and drifting, with writings deemed worthless” 淪落文章不值錢.³⁹ He described the narrative bent in his own poetry as being akin to Chen Duansheng: “When it comes to poetry, I too adopt the prosimetric mode” 論詩我亦彈詞體; he added in a note: “Years ago I wrote ‘Elegy to Wang Guowei,’ telling of events since the Guangxu (1875-1908) and Xuantong (1909-1911) reigns. Some critics compared it to heptasyllabic songs” 寅恪昔年撰王觀堂先生挽辭, 述清代光宣以來事, 論者比之於七字唱也.⁴⁰ The “Elegy to Wang Guowei,” written in an elevated diction, links Wang Guowei’s death to historical events in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. By comparing his own poem with prosimetric performance, Chen deliberately breaks down the barrier between elite and popular culture and implicitly elevates the cultural and historical significance of Chen Duansheng’s writings. Chen wrote “*On Love in Two Lives*” around 1953. A copy found its way to Hong Kong, where Yu Yingshi read it in 1958 and wrote his “Postscript,” the beginning of a scholarly (and also in some ways autobiographical) project on Chen Yinke

that lasted intermittently for almost forty years. The furor over Yu's essay in China led to accusations that Chen's essay and poems betray "anti-Socialist" tendencies and its publication was blocked until 1980.⁴¹

Chen Yinke's empathy with Chen Duansheng is based primarily on his recognition of her free, independent spirit and the fate of their writings to be misunderstood and maligned. He identified with her creativity in disempowerment: "Holding on to my writings, I too am content to be lost and adrift, / I seek not glory and honor but only poetry" 文章我自甘淪落 / 不覓封侯但覓詩.⁴² Chen brought to his *Liu Rushi biezhuàn* 柳如是別傳 (Biography of Liu Rushi), which he wrote from 1953 to 1964, the same lyricism, self-reflexivity, fervor for rescuing a talented woman from oblivion, and interest in the disjunction between individual vision and the mores of one's times. More than the earlier and much shorter work on Chen Duansheng, however, Chen's biography of Liu Rushi is colored by his empathy with the choices and dilemmas of those enduring the toll of political disorder. According to Chen, the sense of cataclysmic collapse in mid seventeenth century was shared by his own times: "From Ming to Qing: a painful history both old and new" 明清痛史新兼舊.⁴³ The generation that lived through the Ming-Qing transition captured his imagination in a way that the Qianlong personages (besides Chen Duansheng) in "On *Love in Two Lives*" never did. Chen writes not only with nostalgia for the glory and refinement of the late-Ming world, but also (perhaps even more) for the symbiosis of political loss and creative energy, disempowerment and cultural authority, in the wake of Ming collapse. It is not just the romantic élan of that generation, but also the pathos of dying for, or surviving, a lost world that spoke to his perception of the crisis of Chinese civilization during successive political movements in the 1950s and 1960s.

Chen famously described Liu Rushi as the representative of "the independence of spirit and freedom of thought of our people" 我民族獨立之精神, 自由之思想.⁴⁴ This echoes his praise of Chen Duansheng and Wang Guowei. What do Wang Guowei, Chen Duansheng, and Liu Rushi have in common that they should be honored with the same epithets? In the case of Chen and Liu, the possibilities and limits of their gender roles (despite class differences) define common grounds. In the case of Wang and Liu, one might say that they were both loyalists (of the Ming and the Qing respectively) and in that sense stood for the right of disaffection from the current regime, the need to claim a cultural-intellectual space not governed by political authority. All three are oppositional figures that seem to bypass the dichotomy of cultural continuity and radical change. Perhaps more than Wang Guowei and Chen Duansheng, Liu Rushi symbolizes the tension between center and periphery in the tradition. Learned and accomplished,

she is nevertheless only a “defiant and free-spirited” (*fangdan fengliu* 放誕風流) courtesan both courting and defying the establishment, a tantalizing pointer to the culture’s capacity for regeneration through crossing boundaries and encompassing opposites.

As with his essay on Chen Duansheng and *Love in Two Lives*, *The Biography of Liu Rushi* has an unmistakable autobiographical dimension. Chen Yinke wrote this *gāthā* upon the completion of his project:

Endless chatter that would not cease,	刺刺不休
Pleasures of indulgence that please.	沾沾自喜
By turn solemn, by turn slippery,	忽莊忽諧
Being literature, as well as history.	亦文亦史
Tell of events; speak of passions.	述事言情
Pity the living; grieve for the dead. ⁴⁵	憫生悲死
So many details, so tediously long,	繁瑣冗長
To the gentlemen, laughably wrong,	見笑君子
Sightless and lame I have become, ⁴⁶	失明臍足
But I am not yet deaf and dumb.	尚未聾啞
I got to finish this book—	得成此書
It was heaven’s gift that I took.	乃天所假
Reclining on the bed, I am sunk in thought.	臥榻沈思
Burning candles, eyes shut, writings I wrought.	然脂瞑寫
Unabashedly crying for the bygone ones,	痛哭古人
Leaving this as gift for the ones to come. ⁴⁷	留贈來者

The *gāthā* is a moving testament to the fusion of lyricism and historical research in Chen’s book on Liu Rushi. The line “Burning candles, eyes shut, writings I wrought” appears in Xu Ling’s 徐陵 (507-583) preface to *Yutai xinyong* 玉臺新詠 (New songs from Jade Terrace).⁴⁸ Since the preface celebrates female beauty and emotions as well as the image of the writing woman, it is an appropriate allusion for a book devoted to an extraordinary woman who was also a great poet. The image of “eyes shut” indicates concentration, reminiscent of the idea of “looking deeply by closing one’s eyes” (*bimu shenshi* 閉目深視)⁴⁹ in the process of internalization in aesthetic creation. In Chen’s case it alludes to his blindness, which may facilitate deeper insights, as in the lore about the ancient historian Zuo Qiuming 左丘明. The association is also brought up by the words “sightless and lame” (*shiming binzu* 失明臍足). The genealogy of suffering authors that Sima Qian 司馬遷 (ca. 145 BC- ca. 86 BC) presents as his antecedents in the last chapter of *Shiji*, as well as the letter to Ren An 任安, features the sightless Zuo Qiuming and Sunzi 孫子 whose feet were amputated. Sima

Qian sums up the endeavor of these authors driven by adversities to write: “They tell of events past, thinking of the ones to come” 述往事, 思來者.⁵⁰ These words resonate with the concluding lines of Chen’s *gāthā*, which also appear in Jin Shengtan’s 金聖嘆 (1608-1661) prefaces to his commentary on *Xixiang ji* 西廂記 (The western chamber) by Wang Shifu 王實甫 (14th century).⁵¹ How do these allusions come together? There is a tradition of literary thought that dismisses *New Songs from Jade Terrace* as being excessively ornate and overly “feminine” in its sensibility. By embedding Xu Ling’s preface in references to Sima Qian, Chen Yinke is implicitly defending his book on Liu Rushi as a grand summation of the past that may only be understood by later generations. His affinities with suffering authors also mean that alienation and disempowerment have given him special insights and moral authority. Like Sima Qian, the truth claim and moral burden of writing are no longer separable from the critical edge and empathetic imagination born of rejection and suffering. Chen may not go so far as Jin Shengtan, who creatively invokes the ancients to suit his own critical agenda,⁵² but he may well sympathize with the need to “personalize” interpretation, seeking the relevance of the past for the present and the future. This fusion of lyricism and meticulous historical research creates a new form of historical writing.⁵³

Chen Yinke’s admiration for Liu Rushi is evident in the names he used to entitle collections of his writings: *Jinming guan* 金明館 (Golden brightness studio) and *Hanliu tang* 寒柳堂 (Cold willow hall). Both refer to Liu Rushi’s song lyric, “Golden Brightness Pond, on Cold Willows” 金明池詠寒柳.⁵⁴ Autobiographical echoes are evident in Chen Yinke’s description of the origins of his project on Liu Rushi: He describes how, as a youth (in the final years of the Qing dynasty), he had read Qian Qianyi’s 錢謙益 (1582-1664) poetry (then still theoretically banned) without, he modestly claims, any adequate understanding. During the war with Japan (around 1939), he bought from a Kunming bookseller a red seed (*hongdou* 紅豆) supposedly from the garden of Qian and Liu at Changshu, paying a hefty price for it.

Since I acquired this seed, twenty years have passed in a trice.
Although the seed is still kept hidden away in boxes, it is as if it
exists yet does not. I no longer look at it. But since then I have
reread the writings of Qian, not merely to relive old dreams and let
my mind roam, but also to test the extent of my learning.⁵⁵

Why would a red seed from the garden of Qian and Liu look different from any other? Chen’s credulity regarding the provenance of the red seed confirms the self as source of meaning: he considered the red seed valuable

and meaningful because he *chose* to believe that it had a tangible relationship with the past. The almost arbitrary and defiant willfulness (in thus assigning meaning to things) stems from the awareness of rupture between past and present.

Qian Qianyi was an immensely learned man whose knowledge extended to esoteric Buddhist texts and the Daoist canon, and Chen noted that his own scholarly endeavor had taken him to related areas. Despite Chen's protestations of inadequacy, he must have realized that he was one of the few scholars equipped with the necessary literary and cultural competence to explain poets like Qian Qianyi or Liu Rushi, in addition to the host of related luminaries from the seventeenth century. In his biography of Liu Rushi, after unraveling a complex allusion to earlier texts (*gudian* 古典) or contemporary events (*jindian* 今典), Chen sometimes exclaims: "This would not be understood by many."⁵⁶ To the extent that Chen understands his appreciation of Liu Rushi as a function of his being "the condensation and realization of the spirit of Chinese culture" (the phrase he used to describe Wang Guowei), one may say that he is nostalgic about his nostalgia.

The red seed, also called "seed of longing" (*xiangsi zi* 相思子) because of the famous poem by Wang Wei 王維 (701-761), becomes a symbol of the tenuous continuity between past and present, conflating pain over a world in flames with hopes of recuperation, at least in longing and memory. The political dimension of this image seems to have developed in poetic anecdotes by the Song. In *Tang shi ji shi* 唐詩紀事 (Tang poems and their contexts), Ji Yougong 計有功 (fl. 1121-1161) tells how the court musician Li Guinian 李龜年 sings Wang Wei's poem at feasts in the wake of the An Lushan rebellion.⁵⁷

The historical and political significance of this image is also evident in the lines Chen wrote when he began to undertake this project in 1955: "Through kalpa ashes, the red seed of Kunming is still here, / The longing of twenty years has waited till now to be fulfilled" 劫灰紅豆分明在 / 相思廿載待今酬 ("On the Red Seed, with Preface" 詠紅豆并序).⁵⁸ Kunming, the city where Chen acquired the red seed, is a convenient pun on the Pond of Kunming, which the Han Emperor Wu built for naval exercises in anticipation of conflict with the natives of Yunnan and which in classical poetry serves as a standard allusion to vanished glory and power.⁵⁹ Kalpa ashes, found where the pond was dug, are ashes that remain from the periodic destruction of the world.⁶⁰ The kalpic ashes of Kunming thus symbolize cataclysmic calamities. Yet defying forces of obliteration is the image of the red seed, which allows Chen to retrace personal and historical memories, establishing the continuity between Chen's experience of

twentieth-century Chinese history and his perception of previous periods of turmoil, in this case the seventeenth century. If the red seed symbolizes the love between Liu Rushi and Qian Qianyi that defies dynastic collapse,⁶¹ it is for Chen Yinke a token of salvaging passion—in this case passion for cultural ideals through empathy with Liu Rushi—from the political ruins of modern Chinese history.

The red seed is also a recurrent image in Qian Qianyi's poetry. Qian used "red seed" as the title for three collections that include poems from, respectively, 1658, 1659, and 1660-1661,⁶² the same period that he invested in the last hopes of anti-Qing resistance and wrote the "Later Autumn Meditations" 後秋興 (1659-1663). The red seed tree (*hongdou shu* 紅豆樹) in Qian's garden bore one fruit in 1660 after a hiatus of twenty years, and Liu Rushi sent it to Qian as birthday present. He wrote ten quatrains on this miraculous omen of renewal.⁶³ The third series of Qian's "Later Autumn Meditations," devoted to Liu Rushi, concludes with a poem that deploys this image: "Once parted, we are bound by longing, whose namesake is the red seed, / Together we will finally find refuge on the green *wutong* bough" 一別正思紅豆子 / 雙棲終向碧梧枝.⁶⁴ These eight poems also appear at the end of *Hongdou erji* 紅豆二集 (Red seed, second collection) in *Youxue ji* 有學集 (In possession of learning).⁶⁵ The third series of "Later Autumn Meditations" was written in 1659, when Qian Qianyi took leave of Liu Rushi in the hope of joining Zheng Chenggong's 鄭成功 (1624-1662) naval forces in Chongming.⁶⁶ "Seed of longing," or "red seed," thus symbolizes not only their love but also their shared hopes and fears for the loyalist cause. Its parallel counterpart is the "green *wutong*" (*biwu* 碧梧), which according to Chen Yinke refers specifically to the loyalist endeavor to rally around Emperor Yongli 永曆 in Wuzhou 梧州 (in Guangxi).⁶⁷

The red seed as stubborn hope for a civilization in ruins appears in Chen's self-reflexive statement on his writing from 1957:

My Former Inscription on Yu Qiushi's Painting of Liu Rushi's Likeness as She Visited Banye Hall Did Not Exhaust My Meanings, So I Composed Two More Verses, <i>Dingyou</i> Year (1957), Second Poem	前題余秋室繪河東君訪半野堂小影詩意有未盡更賦二律丁酉其二
---	------------------------------

Buddhaland and Bodhisattava Mañjuśrī have all turned into dust. Why then should I still write about the one scattering flowers? White willows in front of the grave have been	佛土文殊已化塵 如何猶寫散花身 白楊幾換墳前樹
---	-------------------------------

replaced many times,	
The red seed, left behind forever, preserves	紅豆長留世上春
spring in this world.	
Boundless heaven and earth have no doubt	天壤茫茫原負汝
betrayed you.	
Seas and mulberry fields, in endless cycles, only	海桑渺渺更愁人
deepen the sorrow. ⁶⁸	
Declining and decrepit, how dare I judge events	衰殘敢議千秋事
of a thousand years?	
I can only chant poems on the reality of Cui Hui	賸詠崔徽畫裏真
in her painting. ⁶⁹	

“Mañjuśrī” (Manshu 曼殊, Wenshu 文殊) was adduced as a dignified explanation for the origins of the term “Manchu” after the Qing rulers embraced Buddhism.⁷⁰ Not only was the restoration of the Ming a vain dream, the Qing dynasty as well as a number of regimes (the warlords, the Nationalist government) that followed had come and gone. In face of such upheavals, what is the meaning of writing about Liu Rushi? What “enlightenment” does she promise? In the *Vimalakīrti Sutra*, the celestial maiden scatters flowers, which fall off the enlightened ones but cling to those who have not given up all attachments. Liu’s suitors often compared her to the celestial maiden, and Qian persisted in doing so even after their marriage.⁷¹ Such mixing of romantic and religious imagery is not uncommon and in Liu’s case is further justified by her Buddhist vows in later life.

Yang 楊 (willows) refers to Liu Rushi—*yang* is used interchangeably with *liu* 柳, and she at one time had the name Yang Ai 楊愛. Liu belongs to a distant past, yet her romantic and political passions, symbolized by the red seed, still beckon as promise. The third couplet juxtaposes the broken promises and failed hopes in her life with Chen’s own anguish over the cataclysmic changes that he had witnessed in his lifetime. He claims to decline to offer historical judgment, seeking instead to write about Liu Rushi. Cui Hui was a Tang courtesan who died pining for her lover; she had sent him her portrait with the message that “she no longer measured up to the one in the painting.”⁷² The “reality” in the painting is thus also a kind of aesthetic substitution: it restores a vanished past. “Reality of Cui Hui” here, however, is more than the act of creation; recovering the reality or the truth calls for precisely the kind of reflection and judgment for all time (“a thousand years”)—both past and present—that he ironically professes to forego.

The repressive forces in traditional Chinese culture distort or suppress the “truth” or “reality” of Liu Rushi. In order to reconstruct her life and

writings, Chen had to battle two and a half centuries of neglect, misunderstanding, and destruction. Many of Liu's writings are lost, and their existence or meaning can be inferred only indirectly from the works of her friends and lovers.⁷³ Chen Yinke is implying that his relationship to the literary and cultural heritage of China is similarly "archaeological," as fragments are retrieved and reconstituted. But the very possibility of overcoming absence and lacunae confirms his faith in his own writings as the endeavor of cultural continuity negated by his times.

In both the essay "On *Love in Two Lives*" and the biography of Liu Rushi, Chen quoted the Qing poet Xiang Hongzuo's 項鴻祚 (1798-1835) preface to his lyrics collection *Yiyun ci bingao xu* 憶雲詞丙稿 (In memory of clouds, third draft): "Yet if I do not do that which is useless, how can I take pleasure in this life that does have a limit."⁷⁴ There is self-conscious irony in the epithet "useless" (*wuyi* 無益). Only the category of the useless can establish the individual's freedom to define a private realm of significance, which is in turn a response to mortality. He was doubtful whether his work "in praise of fair ladies" could be published, given the political climate in his final years. (He died in 1969, and his collected works, with the exception of manuscripts destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, were published in 1980.) "Uselessness" is also a proleptic reply to the possible charge that such writings about women are somehow not the appropriate crowning achievement of a great historian who devoted most of his life to political and institutional history and the history of ideas.⁷⁵ By showing how Liu Rushi and Chen Duansheng inspire as cultural ideals through their free, independent spirit and oppositional stances, Chen redefined categories of significance in history.

Chen's biography of Liu Rushi is a key portal to the rich tapestry of the personages and events of the Ming-Qing transition. His destiny as "a remnant of the culture" or "cultural loyalist" (*wenhua yimin* 文化遺民) also illuminates the resonance and implications of the collapse of the Ming dynasty for our time. Chen wrote in 1952: "Where can we summon all the souls from time past?" 何地能招自古魂。⁷⁶ It seems the space demarcated by issues related to women and gender constitutes precisely one such venue for the "summoning of souls." Chen Yinke died on October 7, 1969, three years into the Cultural Revolution. His death was no doubt hastened by material deprivation, mental anguish, and the terror of the Red Guards' blaring broadcast right next to his apartment. It is perhaps fitting that he should be mourned as "cultural loyalist" (Yu Yingshi's phrase) and "the one to whom traditional historical culture entrusted its fate" 傳統歷史文化所託命, in the words of Chen's student Jiang Tianshu 蔣天樞 (1903-1988),⁷⁷ eulogies that echo Chen's lamentation of Wang Guowei. As for the

concretization of this “culture” as “independence” and “freedom,” Chen already shows us the path through tributes to the unlikely trio of Wang Guowei, Chen Duansheng, and Liu Rushi.

Endnotes

1. Chen Yinke, “Yinke xiansheng shicun” 寅恪先生詩存, in *Hanliu tang ji* 寒柳堂集 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), 7.
2. Chen Yinke, “Qinghua daxue Wang Guantang xiansheng jinian beiming” 清華大學王觀堂先生紀念碑銘, in *Jinming guan congkao erbian* 金明館叢稿二編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), 218.
3. See Chen Yinke, “Hanliu tang jimeng weidinggao” 寒柳堂記夢未定稿, in *Hanliu tang ji*, especially 170-182.
4. See Li Yumei 李玉梅, *Chen Yinke zhi shixue* 陳寅恪之史學 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1997), 92-120.
5. Chen, “Reply to the Academy of Social Sciences” 對科學院的答覆, cited in Lu Jiandong 陸鍵東, *Chen Yinke de zuihou ershinian* 陳寅恪的最後二十年 (Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1995), 112-113. Lu discusses the Chen-Wang relationship on pp. 99-125.
6. Note, for example, Chen’s elevation of prosimetric narrative (*tanci* 彈詞) to an elevated status analogous to that of the Greek and Indian epics. His exaltation of Liu Rushi’s poetry also implicitly questions the definition of poetic canon.
7. Hu Wenhui 胡文輝, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi* 陳寅恪詩箋釋, 2 vols. (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2013), 2:662-665.
8. Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:662-665; Yu Yingshi 余英時, *Chen Yinke wannian shiwen shizheng* 陳寅恪晚年詩文釋證 (Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1984), 53.
9. Liu Mengxi 劉夢溪 and Huang Chang 黃裳 believe that Chen Yinke was referring specifically to his one-time friend, the famous historian of religion Chen Yuan 陳垣 (1880-1971). See Zhang Jie 張杰 and Yan Yanli 楊燕麗, eds., *Zhuiyi Chen Yinke* 追憶陳寅恪 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 1999), 156-157, and Huang Chang “Hanliutang shi” 寒柳堂詩, *Wanxiang* 萬象 4.4 (2002). Both are cited in Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:665. Chen Yuan vocally embraced Marxist-Leninist thought and the Chinese Communist Party; Mao publicly praised him in 1951.
10. See Yu, *Chen Yinke wannian shiwen shizheng*, and Hu, *Chen Yinke shi*

jianshi. My readings are much indebted to these two books. On Chen's late life sufferings, see also Lu, *Chen Yinke de zuihou ershinian*.

11. Hu Wenhui, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:666-667.
12. Bai Juyi 白居易, "Changhen ge" 長恨歌, in Gu Xuejie 顧學頤, ed., *Bai Juyi ji* 白居易集, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1979), 1:228-229.
13. See Yu, *Chen Yinke wannian shiwen shizheng*, 353.
14. Liu Mengxi and Huang Chang think this is directed against Chen Yuan. See Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:666.
15. See, e.g., Pu Songling 蒲松齡, "Renyao" 人妖, in Zhang Youhe 張友鶴, ed., *Liaozhai zhiyi huijiao huizhu huiping ben* 聊齋誌異會校會註會評本, 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), 2:1171-1174. Cf. Judith Zeitlin, *Historian of the Strange* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993). In the prosimetric fiction *Tian yu hua* 天雨花 (ca. 18th century), the male protagonist Zuo Weiming 左維明 humiliates his enemies by having them dress as women and abase themselves as his "concubines," see *Tian yu hua*, attr. to Tao Zhenhuai 陶貞懷, ed. by Zhao Jingshen 趙景深 and Li Ping 李平, 3 vols. (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1984), vol. 1, 11.424. By contrast, female impersonation in poetry is pervasive and widely accepted as a standard mode of indirect expression. Cf. Wai-ye Li, *Women and National Trauma in Late Imperial Chinese Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2014), 14-25, 204, 461.
16. Yu Yingshi elaborates upon the "system of codes" (*anma xitong* 暗碼系統) in Chen Yinke's poetry in *Chen Yinke wannian shiwen shizheng*, 177-194.
17. See Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:1005-1012.
18. Li Shangyin, "Mawei," in Liu Xuekai 劉學鍇, ed., *Li Shangyin shige jijie* 李商隱詩歌集解, 5 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), 1:336.
19. Bai, "Changhen ge," 1:229.
20. An episode in "Han Wu gushi" 漢武故事, included in Wang Genlin 王根林 et al., ed., *Han Wei Liuchao biji xiaoshuo daguan* 漢魏六朝筆記小說大觀 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999), 173-174.
21. Yu, *Chen yinke wannian shiwen shizheng*, 50-51.
22. Hui Yuan, "Shamen tanfu lun" 沙門袒服論, cited in Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:1006.
23. Sima Qian, *Shiji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghu shuju, 1964), 8.409.
24. See *Zuozhuan*, Xiang 9.8: "The bright spirits do not preside over an imposed covenant, which lacks substance" 要盟無質, 神弗臨也. Yang

- Bojun 楊伯峻, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1990), 3:971.
25. See Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:797-807.
 26. See Yu Yingshi, "Shi shu Chen Yinke de shixue sanbian" 試述陳寅恪的史學三變, in *Chen yinke wannian shiwen shizheng*, 331-377; Li, *Chen Yinke zhi shixue*. C.H. Wang observes that Chen Yinke's interest in history might have resulted in overly literal readings of poetry but concedes that his temperament as a poet shines through in his later historical writings. See C.H. Wang, "Ch'en Yin-k'o's Approaches to Poetry: A Historian's Progress," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews* 3.1 (1981): 3-30.
 27. In a poem dated 1957, Chen wrote about his ongoing project on Liu Rushi: "Treasure the water in the well at Chengtian Temple: / Only this, in all of the human realm, safely flows" 珍重承天井中水 / 人間唯此是安流. He said in the preface that he does not know when or whether his book will be published. Chen Yinke, *Liu Rushi biezhu* 柳如是別傳, 3 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1980), 1:6; Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:994.
 28. Chen wrote about "the karmic connection that may yet bring a discerning kindred spirit from posterity" 後世相知或有緣 (1963), see Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:1127-1129.
 29. Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:1084-1088. "Yuseng" is the sobriquet of the well-known poet and scholar Wu Mi. The idea of "fair ladies" (*hongzhuang* 紅妝, literally, "rouged make-up") as solace and recompense for "ready scorn" (*baiyan* 白眼, literally, "[being shown] the white of the eyes") functions through the parallelism of "white" and "red." The term *baiyan* is based on Liu Yiqing 劉義慶, *Shishuo xinyu jianshu* 世說新語箋疏, ed. Yu Jiaxi 余嘉錫 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), 24.769.
 30. In his poems after 1949, he often called himself "the exiled person" (*liuren* 流人). There are also many implied comparisons of his fate with the respective banishment of Han Yu 韓愈 (768-825) and Su Shi 蘇軾 (1036-1101) to Guangdong.
 31. On this idea in early Qing writings, see Wai-ye Li, "Introduction," in Wilt Idema, Wai-ye Li, Ellen Widmer, eds., *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 44-49.
 32. See Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 1:495, 1:548, 1:559, 2:778, 2:857.
 33. Chen was publicly criticized in 1958, among others by Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1978) and some of his current and former students. Hu,

- Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:1085-1087.
34. Chen Yinke, “Lun Zaisheng yuan” 論再生緣, in *Hanliu tang ji*, 1-96. The title of the manuscript about Qian Qianyi and Liu Rushi was later changed to *Liu Rushi biezhuàn* (Biography of Liu Rushi).
 35. Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:1084-1088.
 36. Chen, “Lun Zaisheng yuan,” 59.
 37. Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 1:597-602. Chen is alluding to Yuan Zhen’s 元稹 (779-831) “Palace for Sojourns” 行宮 and Bai Juyi’s “The White-Haired One from Shangyang Palace” 上陽白髮人. See Yuan Zhen, *Yuan Zhen ji* 元稹集, edited by Ji Qin 冀勤, 2 volumes (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2000), 1:169 and Bai Juyi, *Bai Juyi quanji* 白居易全集, edited by Ding Ruming 丁如明 and Nie Shiwei 聶世美 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1999), 27. In a poem from 1954, Chen wrote that his own scholarship “did not resemble (current) writings honoring Zhu Xi and glorifying the sages” 不似尊朱頌聖文, see Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:803. Chen Yinke often uses changes in fashion to allude to political currents in his poetry, see Li, *Chen Yinke zhi shixue*, 112.
 38. Chen, “Lun Zaisheng yuan,” 54. These allude to similar lines in chapter seventeen of Chen Duansheng 陳端生, *Zaisheng yuan* 再生緣, with comments by Chen Yinke and Guo Moruo 郭沫若, edited by Du Zhijun 杜志軍 (Beijing: Huacheng chubanshe, 2000).
 39. Another line from *Zaisheng yuan*, ch. 17, cited in Chen, “Lun Zaisheng yuan,” 4.
 40. Chen, “Lun Zaisheng yuan,” 77; Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:737. The note is another reminder of the secret affinity between his writings on Wang Guowei and his essay on Chen Duansheng.
 41. Lu, *Chen Yinke de zuihou ershinian*, 368-373; Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:733-739.
 42. Chen, “Lun Zaisheng yuan,” 77; Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:736.
 43. Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:1149. Chen wrote this poem in 1963, when he was completing his book on Liu Rushi, having worked on it for ten years.
 44. Chen, *Liu Rushi biezhuàn*, 1:4.
 45. As Hu Wenhui pointed out, Chen Yinke shows empathy for those forced to make compromises even as he eulogizes martyrs in *Liu Rushi biezhuàn*. Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:1199.
 46. Chen broke his leg in 1963 after a fall. Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:1123, 1132.
 47. Chen, *Liu Rushi biezhuàn*, 3:1224; Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:1199-

1204. Another version of this *gāthā* is appended to an earlier draft of *Liu Rushi biezhuān*. With tragic-comical flourishes, it alludes to the role of students who persecuted him and his subsequent decision to quit teaching; Chen compares himself to the pedantic tutor Chen Zuiliang 陳最良 and unruly students to Liniang 麗娘 and Chunxiang 春香 in Tang Xianzu's 湯顯祖 (1550-1616) *Mudan ting* 牡丹亭 (The peony pavilion). Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:1201-1203.
48. Xu Ling, "Yutai xinyong xu" 玉臺新詠序, in Wu Zhaoyi 吳兆宜 and Cheng Yan 程琰, comp., Mu Kehong 穆克宏, ed., *Yutai xinyong jianzhu* 玉臺新詠箋注, 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1996), 1:13.
49. See Zhang Huaiguan's 張懷瓘 (8th century) treatise on calligraphy, "Wenzi lun" 文字論 in *Shufa meixue ziliao xuanzhu* 書法美學資料選注, edited by Cao Lihua 曹利華 and Qiao He 喬何 (Xi'an: Shaanxi renmin chubanshe, 2009), 639-643, and Gao Yougong's 高友工 discussion of the aesthetics of calligraphy in his *Zhongguo meidian yu wenxue yanjiu lunji* 中國美典與文學研究論集 (Taipei: Taiwan daxue, 2004), 148-152.
50. See Sima, *Shiji*, 130.3300; Ban Gu 班固, *Hanshu* 漢書, with annotations by Yan Shigu 顏師古 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 62.2725-2736; Gao Buyi 高步瀛, *Liang Han wen juyao* 兩漢文舉要, ed. Chen Xin 陳新 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), 104.
51. Jin Shengtan's first preface is entitled "Unabashedly Crying for the Ancients" 慟哭古人; the second one, "Leaving This as Gift for Future Generations" 留贈後人. See Cai Yi 蔡毅, *Zhongguo gudian xiqu xuba huibian* 中國古典戲曲序跋彙編 (Jinan: Qi Lu shushe, 1989), 2:708-713.
52. Jin Shengtan sometimes offers his own insights as gleanings from unspecified "ancient versions" (*guben* 古本) of the texts he comments on; this is especially true of his comments on *Shuihu zhuan* 水滸傳. Chen Yinke refers to this disparagingly in his preface to Liu Shuya's 劉叔雅 commentary on *Zhuangzi*. Chen, *Jinming guan congkao erbian*, 229. He contrasts Liu's careful exegesis with Jin's creative twists, whose echoes he discerns in some new interpretations of early Chinese thought in his time. He concludes ironically: "Books by these scholars—how can they avoid being the 'ancient versions' in the particular imagination of Jin Shengtan? But they turn around and want to 'leave it as a gift for posterity.' How can we not 'unabashedly cry for the ancients'?" Yu Yingshi believes that the last two lines of Chen's *gāthā* allude to his preface on Liu Shuya's commentary, implying his possible misinterpretation of Liu Rushi and Qian Qianyi

- as he forges his “history from the heart.” Yu, *Chen yinke wannian shiwen shizheng*, 376-377. However, the original context is probably too sardonic to be the intended reference here.
53. Chen is well aware of this generic “experiment”; see the alternative *gāthā* mentioned in n. 47: “Curse in anger, laugh in jest, / Being vulgar, as well as refined. / Neither old nor new: / A hornless bull, a horse with horns. / With special intention I mourn spring’s passing, / Harboring a fistful of tears” 怒罵嬉笑 / 亦俚亦雅 / 非舊非新 / 童牛角馬 / 刻意傷春 / 貯淚盈把. Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:1202-1203.
 54. Chen, *Liu Rushi biezhuàn*, 1:336-347.
 55. Chen, *Liu Rushi biezhuàn*, 1:3.
 56. Chen, *Liu Rushi biezhuàn*, 2:564.
 57. “After the An Lushan Rebellion, Li Guinian fled to the rivers and lakes. He once sang at a feast hosted by the Visiting Official of River Xiang: ‘The red seeds that flourish in the Southland: / How many branches have sprouted since the advent of autumn? / I wish you would pick them often, / For they are the best tokens of longing’” 祿山之亂, 李龜年奔于江潭, 曾于湘中採訪使筵上唱云: 紅豆生南國 / 秋來發幾枝 / 贈君多採擷 / 此物最相思. Ji Yougong, *Tangshi jishi jiaojian* 唐詩紀事校箋, ed. Wang Zhongyong 王仲鏞, 2 vols. (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1989), vol. 1, 16.423.
 58. Chen, *Liu Rushi biezhuàn*, 1:1; Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:881-882.
 59. Most famously in the fifth poem in Du Fu’s 杜甫 (712-770) “Autumn Meditations: Eight Poems.” In Du Fu, *Du shi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳註, compiled by Chou Zhao’ao 仇兆鰲 (Taipei: Wen shi zhe chubanshe, 1985), 864-874.
 60. Chen Yinke wrote in 1939 when he was in Kunming: “The ashes remaining from the kalpa of Kunming have all been blown away, / I can only talk to the Indian monk about fallen blossoms” 昆明殘劫灰飛盡 / 聊與胡僧話落花. Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 1:191-192. Chen recalls this poem in his essay “Lun Zaisheng yuan,” 76.
 61. See Chen Yinke: “So much love and longing in the red seed as spring is about to end, / So little chance for political intervention as the earth finally sinks” 紅豆有情春欲晚 / 黃扉無命陸終沈. The original couplet depends on the parallelism between “red seed” (*hongdou* 紅豆) and “yellow gate” (*huangfei* 黃扉, the prime minister’s gate). “The sinking of the earth” refers to the fall of the Ming. Chen, *Liu Rushi biezhuàn*, 1:5; Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:1019.
 62. Qian Qianyi, *Qian Muzhai quanji* 錢牧齋全集, annotated by Qian Zeng 錢曾, edited by Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯, 8 vols. (Shanghai:

- Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2003), 4:225-5:563.
63. Qian, *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 5:549-552.
 64. Qian, *Qian Muzhai quanji*, 7:14. This couplet is patterned on the second couplet in the eighth poem of Du Fu's "Autumn Meditations": "Fragrant grains, pecked to bits by the parrots; / Green *wutong* boughs, grown ancient with the perching phoenix" 香稻啄殘鸚鵡粒 / 碧梧棲老鳳凰枝. In *Du shi xiangzhu*, 873. The lines have a famous "reversed" structure. Qian Qianyi, in his annotations on Du Fu's poetry, cited various editions that have "seeds of longing (red seed)" (*hongdou* 紅豆) instead of "fragrant grains" (*xiangdao* 香稻). See *Qian Muzhai jianzhu Du shi* 錢牧齋箋注杜詩 (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1967), 15.5a. On the various interpretations of this couplet, see Ye Jiaying 葉嘉瑩, *Du Fu Qiuqing bashou jishuo* 杜甫秋興八首集說 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1988), 564-580.
 65. *Youxue ji* includes Qian Qianyi's writings after the fall of the Ming dynasty. A modern typeset edition was published in 1996 in three volumes, it was incorporated as volumes 4 to 6 in *Qian Muzhai quanji* (cited above) in 2003.
 66. For a discussion of these poems, see Li, *Women and National Trauma*, 356-387; Lawrence C.H. Yim, *The Poet-Historian Qian Qianyi* (Routledge: Academia Sinica on East Asia, 2009), 122-147.
 67. Chen, *Liu Rushi biezhu*, 3:1176-1177. Cf. Huang Zongxi's 黃宗羲 poem on Qian Qianyi's death in the series "Eight Laments" 八哀; it also uses the red seed as a symbol of the bond between Qian and Liu: "The fragrance of the red seed wafts in the maze of the moonlit road / As the beauty is about to stop her fingers on the strings of the zither" 紅豆俄飄迷月路 / 美人欲絕指箏弦. See the fifth of his eight poems collectively entitled "Eight Laments," in Huang Zongxi, *Huang Zongxi quanji* 黃宗羲全集, edited by Shen Shanhong 沈善洪, 12 volumes (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2005), 11:256.
 68. In a story from *Shenxian zhuan* 神仙傳 (The accounts of immortals), the goddess Magu 麻姑 tells Wang Fangping 王方平 that she has seen the Eastern Sea change thrice into mulberry fields. Included in *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記, compiled by Li Fang 李昉 et al., 10 volumes (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1961), vol. 1, 7.45-48.
 69. See Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:968-969. I also discussed this poem in "The Late-Ming Courtesan: Invention of a Cultural Ideal," in Ellen Widmer and Kang-i Sun Chang, eds., *Writing Women in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), 46-73.
 70. Hu Wenhui cites the views of various historians on the subject. Hu,

- Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:968-969.
71. See Chen, *Liu Rushi biezhuang*, 1:174, 2:549-550.
 72. According to Chen Yinke, Bai Xingjian 白行簡 (ca. 776-826) wrote “Cui Hui’s Story” while Yuan Zhen wrote “Cui Hong’s Song.” But Bai’s account is no longer extant, and Yuan’s poem exists only in fragments. See *Yuan Zhen ji*, 2:696. Cui Hui’s story is a common allusion in Song-Yuan poetry, see the examples cited in Chen, “Lun Zaisheng yuan,” 93-95.
 73. See, e.g., Chen, *Liu Rushi biezhuang*, 1:299-302; 331-333.
 74. Xiang Hongzuo is quoting Zhang Yanyuan’s 張彥遠 (9th century) remark in *Lidai minghua ji* 歷代名畫記, ed. Qin Zhongwen 秦仲文 and Huang Miaozi 黃苗子 (Beijing: Renmin meishu chubanshe, 1983), 35. For Chen’s quotation of these lines, see “Lun Zaisheng yuan,” 1; *Liu Rushi biezhuang*, 7. “Life’s limits” (*sheng ye you ya* 生也有涯) alludes to *Zhuangzi*, chapter 3. See *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, compiled by Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, edited by Wang Xiaoyu 王孝魚, 4 volumes (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 1:115.
 75. For example, Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯 (1908-2003) said that *Liu Rushi biezhuang* “did not clarify what matters”; Qian Zhongshu 錢鐘書 (1910-1998) claimed “it is not necessary to write such a big book for Liu Rushi” and even averred that the book “only suffices to invite scorn from the truly knowledgeable”; Yan Gengwang 嚴耕望 (1916-1996) laments that the book does little more than glorify Liu Rushi and conveys Chen Yinke’s own rancor and frustration. These and other critical judgments are cited in Hu Wenhui, *Xiandai xuelin dianjiang lu* 現代學林點將錄 (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2010), 4.28-29.
 76. See Chen, “Renchen chunri zuo” 王辰春日作, in Hu, *Chen Yinke shi jianshi*, 2:658-660. Chen is alluding to the late Tang poet Han Wo’s 韓偓 (b. 842) line, “From this far off place, it is hard to summon all the spirits from time past” 地迴難招自古魂. See Han Wo, *Han Wo shi zhu* 韓偓詩注, ed. Chen Jilong 陳繼龍 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 2001), 2.201. *Jiong* 迴 appears as *sheng* 勝 in some versions.
 77. Jiang Tianshu, *Chen Yinke xiansheng zhuan* 陳寅恪先生傳 (Beijing: Shumu wenxian chubanshe, 1990), 92.