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Contributions to The Editor, *East Asian History*
Division of Pacific and Asian History
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200, Australia
Phone +61 2 6125 3140 Fax +61 2 6125 5525
email geremie@coombs.anu.edu.au

Subscription Enquiries to Subscriptions, *East Asian History*, at the above address, or to
marion@coombs.anu.edu.au

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Cover calligraphy Yan Zhenqing 顏真卿, Tang calligrapher and statesman

Cover illustration Okinawan *Seasar* (© photograph by Ken Yonetani 米谷建)

Lions have never been found on Okinawa, and the custom of revering them as 'king of the beasts' and symbols of protection is said to have originated in ancient Persia. By the time this custom reached Okinawa via China in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, the stone figures bore less and less resemblance to real lions. Early Chinese recordings of a stone 'lion-dog' figure placed within a shrine of the Ryukyu Kingdom (currently Okinawa) date back to 1683. From the late seventeenth century, influenced by Chinese conceptions of *feng shui* 風水, the lion-like symbols or 'seasar' (シーサー, also spelt *shiisaa* or *seesar*) became known for their powers of protection against fire, and could be found in front of the gates of temples or castles, at entrances to the tombs of noble families, and at the entrances of villages or sacred shrines. Today, seasars are placed to ward off any kind of evil spirit, and many different lion-like forms made not only from stone, but from clay, concrete and other materials, with varied colours and styles, may be seen on roofs, gates and at entrances to buildings across the Okinawan archipelago. (—*Julia Yonetani*)

ZHOU LIANGGONG AND *CHIDU XINCHAO* : GENRE AND POLITICAL MARGINALISATION IN THE MING–QING TRANSITION

史 David Pattinson

This paper examines the relationship between the marginal status of a genre of personal letter-writing called *chidu* 尺牘 and the expression of a sense of dispossession and marginalisation felt among the Chinese cultural élite in the wake of the Manchu conquest of China after 1644.¹ Specifically, I will discuss my reading of *Chidu xinchao* 尺牘新鈔, an anthology of *chidu* compiled by Zhou Lianggong 周亮工 (1612–72) and published in 1662, as one attempt by the compiler to negotiate his position as a willing collaborator with, yet marginalised figure in, the newly-established non-Chinese Qing dynasty.² I will argue that it was precisely the minor status of the *chidu* genre among literary genres at the time which made it an ideal tool for Zhou's purposes.

There has not been much research done into the history, function and meanings of *chidu*, and the topic is too complex to be discussed in detail here.³ Instead I will attempt a brief description of why the *chidu* genre was considered marginal, so as to provide the setting for the rest of my argument below.

¹ Although terms used in English such as 'informal letter' and 'familiar letter' suggest themselves as translations for the term *chidu*, in many instances I prefer to leave the term in Chinese because I am not satisfied that any English translation of it satisfactorily covers the range of Ming and Qing letters which it could describe. For example, one kind of communication often labelled a *chidu* by the late Ming was a short but formal letter written to fulfil the requirements of social etiquette, and it was in fact descended from the letters which appeared in earlier etiquette manuals called

/sbuyi 書儀.

² The 1662 *Chidu xinchao* was only the first of three anthologies in what became a *Chidu xinchao* series. In the footnotes below, the edition referred to as *Chidu xinchao* is the printing of the first anthology most commonly available now, namely the Shanghai Shudian's 1988 reprint of the Shanghai Zazhi Gongsi's 1935 edition. However, Zhou's margin notes are not reproduced in this edition, so I have used the woodblock edition when quoting this marginalia. The edition I have used is

/catalogued in the Australian National University Library as the 1662 edition, but I have noticed minor differences between this and other 1662 editions held in libraries in China. Therefore I suspect that the edition held at the A.N.U. might have been reprinted with minor alterations to the original woodblocks after Zhou's death in 1672. This edition will be referred to in the notes below as *Chidu xinchao wb*.

³ A second *Chidu xinchao* collection with the added title of *Cangju ji* 藏弃集 was published in 1667, and a third collection entitled *Jietin ji* 結鄰集 was published in 1670. Although I have not studied these two collections closely, my observations suggest that they in fact strengthen the argument made in this paper.

³ I have discussed the origins and development of *chidu* in the first four chapters of my PhD dissertation, "The *chidu* in late Ming and early Qing China" (Australian National University, 1998). This is mostly a description of the evidence outlining the development of *chidu*, which I hope lays the foundation for further exploration of the genre's meanings and functions. See also Eva V. W. Chung, "A study of the 'shu' (letters) of the Han dynasty (206 BC–AD 220)," PhD diss. (University of Washington, 1982), for a discussion of formal letter-writing practices in China, though *chidu* are not dealt with to any great extent.

Although forms of letter-writing labelled *chidu* can be traced back to the Western Han dynasty (206–25 BC), *chidu* have never been included in anthologies and other works which effectively served to legitimise certain genres as ‘literature’. Even the compilers of *chidu* anthologies in the late-Ming and early-Qing dynasties—a period during which the genre enjoyed significant popularity—admitted that the genre was a minor one. Indeed, many of the prefaces they wrote were devoted to trying to show that the genre was in fact respectable and had a classical pedigree. But this insecurity actually suggests that the genre was always suspect in relation to the canonical genres which were clearly legitimised by centuries of literary practice.

Another difficulty with the study of the *chidu* genre is that, over the centuries, there was considerable variation in perceptions of what a *chidu* was. This was certainly due in part to the fact that *chidu* had never been anthologised before the Song dynasty, and were not anthologised in any significant number until the late Ming, so there was no standard to look to. Although it is a question deserving a dedicated study, for the purposes of this article it can be said that the predominance of collections of comparatively short, often (though not always) informal letters which were labelled *chidu* during the late Ming and early Qing period suggests strongly that there was a broad, if ill-defined, agreement as to what constituted a *chidu*, and that the relative consistency in the kind of letters which were included in late Ming and early Qing *chidu* collections seems to have been more the result of some unspoken

consensus which developed after the Song dynasty, than of significant debate in the public domain about what constituted a *chidu*.

In the discussion below, I will show how Zhou Lianggong was able to make use of the relatively low and unstable status of the *chidu* genre to give expression to the tensions which resulted from his decision as a former Ming official to collaborate with the alien Manchu regime after 1645, tensions which might have been relatively mild at certain stages in his life, but which would have been heightened as a result of his experiences during the period before *Chidu xinzhao* was published in 1662. In arguing this, we need to be aware of a number of other strategies which Zhou used to further ‘distance’ himself from the possibly sensitive suggestions that

Figure 1

Portrait of Zhou Lianggong by Yu Zbiding (1647–after 1701). Album leaf mounted as a hanging scroll, ink and colours on paper, height 31.7 cm, width 38.4 cm. Brooklyn Museum of Art, Gift of the Wang Chi-ch'ien Collection, 1997.185.7 (—photograph from the C. C. Wang Family Collection)



he was making in the anthology. First of all, most of the letters in *Chidu xinchao* are by other people, and the letters by Zhou himself are included under the pseudonym Zhou Qi 周圻. The fact that the letters which touch upon issues relating to the Ming–Qing transition are all by other hands would seem to be an attempt on the editor's part to deflect responsibility for their content. Secondly, in compiling the anthology, Zhou sought the help of twenty-four friends who are credited with 'selecting' the letters for each chapter (two 'selectors' worked on each chapter). This again makes the compilation seem like a group effort, which to some extent it was. However, it is clear from Zhou's statement of editorial principles that he selected the initial pool of material, and his assistants chose from that pool.⁴ Furthermore, most of the assistants were either loyalists or writers and painters who did not hold government posts. Many of them were probably indebted to Zhou for the assistance that he might have given them as one of the major art patrons in Nanjing at the time. So it is likely that they would have known Zhou's views about the fall of the Ming and the establishment of Manchu rule, and his feelings following a six-year trial for corruption at the end of which he was lucky to escape death, and sought to represent them in the anthology under Zhou's guidance. As I will show briefly below, it is also easy to identify several other themes running through the letters included in *Chidu xinchao*, and this fact further strengthens the argument that Zhou and his assistants had certain agendas in mind as they put the collection together. Finally, we should note that most of the writers of the letters discussed below are either minor authors or Ming loyalists who had chosen not to take part in the new Manchu political order.

Zhou Lianggong's life has been described at length by Hongnam Kim in her book *The Life of a Patron*, so I need not repeat all the details here.⁵ However, because I argue that Zhou used *Chidu xinchao* to express his attitudes towards the fall of the Ming, we need to try to establish the reasons why Zhou chose to collaborate with the Manchus, and to examine in what ways Zhou might have continued to entertain feelings of loyalty towards the Ming, even after he had become a Qing official.

Collaboration and Loyalism—Zhou Lianggong and the fall of the Ming

Perhaps some of the most important reasons why Zhou chose to collaborate with the Manchus after their conquest of Nanjing were practical ones. It had not been easy for Zhou to become an official. Although his family seems to have maintained gentry status since the Song dynasty, by the time Zhou was born, the family could only be considered obscure lower gentry. Thus Zhou was not accepted into Nanjing high society until he made some name for himself as a poet in his late teens, and even then he could only move on its fringes. Furthermore, although Zhou was born in Nanjing, his family's

⁴ For a full discussion of the editorial principles Zhou used in compiling *Chidu xinchao*, see Pattinson, "The *chidu* in late Ming and early Qing China," pp.99–117.

⁵ Hongnam Kim, *The life of a patron: Zhou Lianggong (1612–1672) and the painters of seventeenth-century China* (New York: China Institute in America, 1996). This is a reworking of her PhD thesis, "Chou Liangkung and his 'Tu-hua-lu' (Lives of Painters): patron-critic and painters in seventeenth century China" (Yale University, 1985). The 1996 book was produced to accompany the exhibition "The Life of a Patron: Zhou Lianggong (1612–1672) and the Painters of Seventeenth-Century China," held at the China Institute Gallery, New York, 23 October–21 December 1996. It includes many examples of calligraphy and paintings by artists who associated with Zhou. A biography of Zhou also appears in Arthur W. Hummel, ed., *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period* (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1943–44), pp.173–4.

⁶ Zhou's ancestors had actually lived in Jiangxi since the Song dynasty, but Zhou's grandfather had moved the family to Xiangfu. Zhou's father brought the family to Nanjing before Zhou was born. See Kim, *Life of a patron*, p.23.

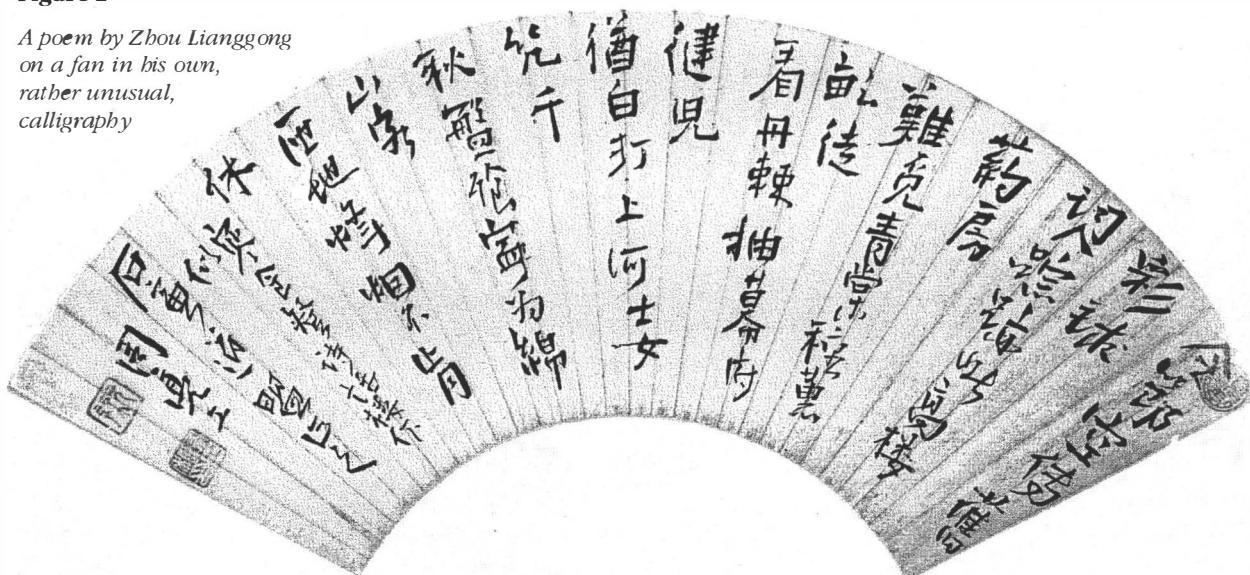
registered place of abode was Xiangfu 祥符 (modern Kaifeng 開封 in Henan province).⁶ This became a barrier to his advancement through the civil service examinations when, in 1631, he came first in the local examinations in Nanjing. After the results were announced, local families protested that he was not a native of Nanjing, so his name was removed from the list of successful candidates. Thereupon he was forced to go back to Xiangfu alone in order to pass the examinations. Although he received support from his host, the prominent local scholar Zhang Minbiao 張民表 (d. 1642), and later from the magistrate Sun Chengze 孫承澤 (1593–1675), and despite the fact that he passed the three levels of civil service examination without further problems, he found the eight years he spent away from his family with limited financial resources very difficult, and this made him value his position as an official even more.

A related result of the Zhou family's relatively marginal status within the gentry was that, once Zhou Lianggong became an official, the family depended upon the emoluments he received for his official duties as its only substantial source of income, besides which he was the first high official the family had produced for centuries. This would have been an important consideration when Zhou was contemplating collaborating with the Manchus, as his family would probably have found itself back in the relatively straitened circumstances that it was in before Zhou became an official if he had decided not to serve the Manchus. So there was also family pressure on him to remain an official.

More altruistically, Zhou seems to have genuinely believed that the main task of an official was to improve the livelihood of the common people, a belief which he probably inherited from his father, Zhou Wenwei 周文燁 (d.1659). Zhou Wenwei never passed any of the civil service examinations,

Figure 2

A poem by Zhou Lianggong on a fan in his own, rather unusual, calligraphy



but in 1623 he accepted a minor post as Assistant Magistrate in Zhuji 諸暨 in Zhejiang province, taking the young Lianggong with him. Despite his lowly position, there is a biography of Zhou Wenwei in the “Famous Officials” section of the Zhuji gazetteer, in which he is described as an upright official who won the respect of the local people as he overturned unjust decisions.⁷ However, Wenwei’s zeal upset his superiors, so he resigned and returned to Nanjing, never to serve again. Zhou’s friend Huang Yuji 黃虞稷 says that a desire to help the common people was his main reason for collaborating with the new dynasty,⁸ and Zhou’s eldest son, Zhou Zaijun 周在浚 (b.1640) emphasises how his father tried to alleviate the sufferings of the people of the Huai-Yang 淮揚 area in his first post under the Qing.⁹

Further evidence of Zhou’s beliefs in the importance of good government for the ultimate good of the people is that in 1630 Zhou joined the Xingshe 星社, or Star Society, which was almost certainly one of the literary societies under the umbrella of the Fushe 復社, or Restoration Society.¹⁰ This suggests that Zhou identified with the broad aims of the Restoration Society, which had inherited many of the ideals of the the Donglin 東林 group of a decade or so earlier. Prominent among Donglin ideals was the belief that the problems of the empire would be solved if government was in the hands of upright men.¹¹ The possibility that Zhou’s links with the Restoration Society were reflected in *Chidu xinchao* is supported by the fact that the collection begins with letters by Gao Panlong 高攀龍 (1562–1633) and ends with letters by Wei Dazhong 魏大中 (1575–1625), both prominent Donglin martyrs.

After Zhou passed the Metropolitan Examination in 1640, he served the Ming dynasty capably for three years before the dynasty fell, at one stage successfully defending Wei 濰 county in Shandong, where he was magistrate, from marauding Manchu armies, though all the nearby towns fell. He was promoted to a post in Beijing, but arrived there just days before Li Zicheng’s 李自成 (1606–45) rebel army took the capital in 1644. Although it was traditionally believed that officials serving a particular dynasty should commit suicide when that dynasty fell, Zhou instead fled to Nanjing.¹² Once in Nanjing, Zhou was offered a post in the Southern Ming government, but he refused it when Ruan Dacheng 阮大鍼 (d.1646) demanded that Zhou impeach the former Donglin activist and prominent philosopher Liu Zongzhou 劉宗周 (1578–1645) as a condition for receiving the appointment. Zhou was repelled by the corruption of the Southern Ming court, which perhaps led him to give the Ming cause up as hopeless. After that, Zhou withdrew to Mt Niushou 牛首山 outside Nanjing, and had no more to do with the Southern Ming government. When Nanjing fell to the Qing, as the Manchus called their new dynasty, in 1645, Zhou soon came out of retirement to seek a post with the new rulers, and over the next decade he served them well.

As mentioned earlier, the Manchus first appointed Zhou to posts in the Huai-Yang region, where he spent two years working to rebuild the local economy following its devastation during the Manchu invasion. In 1647, Zhou was promoted to Surveillance Commissioner for Fujian, where he

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Huang Yuji, “*Xingzhuang*” 行狀 [Biographical account], in Zhou Lianggong, *Laigutangji* 賴古堂集 [Collected works from the Hall of Relying on the Ancients] (1675; reprint ed., Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1979), p.953.

⁹ Zhou Zaijun, “*Xingshu*” 行述 [Biographical account], in Zhou Lianggong, *Laigutangji*, pp.982–5.

¹⁰ The Star Society was established by Wu Fei 吳騏. Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–95), along with Zhou, was also among the founding members. See Huang Zongxi, *Huang Zongxi quanji* [The complete works of Huang Zongxi] (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Guji Chubanshe, 1994): vol.1, p.358.

¹¹ Charles Hucker argued in his article on the Donglin movement that in fact the Donglin partisans were only united in this general belief that the empire’s problems would be solved if the government could be run by upright men committed to ‘true’ Confucian values. Apart from that, the movement lacked real coherence. See Charles O. Hucker, “The Tung-lin Movement of the late Ming period,” in *Chinese thought and institutions*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1957): 132–62.

¹² As Frederic Wakeman Jr. has shown, in fact few Ming officials committed suicide when the capital fell to Li Zicheng, and those who did were mostly officials who had served the dynasty for a relatively long period of time. See Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The great enterprise: the Manchu reconstruction of imperial order in seventeenth-century China*, 2 vols. (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1985), pp.268–72. For a broader discussion of the arguments advanced at the time regarding the question of whether or not scholar-officials should die as martyrs to the Ming cause, see Ho Koon-piu, “Should we die as martyrs to the Ming cause? Scholar-officials’ views on martyrdom during the Ming–Qing transition,” *Oriens Extremus* 37.2 (1994): 123–51. Although not stated explicitly in sources, the fact that Zhou’s parents were still alive probably also contributed to his decision not to commit suicide.

¹³ Kim, *Life of a patron*, p.108. The quotation is from Zhou's *Yinren zhuan* 印人傳 [Biographies of seal engravers].

would stay until 1654. He seems to have performed very well in that unstable province, as he was promoted to Left Vice Censor-in-Chief in the capital, where he arrived in February 1655. However, not long after Zhou arrived in Beijing, he was accused of corruption while in Fujian, whereupon he was arrested and put on trial, at first in Fujian and later in Beijing. The accusations seem to have been made by enemies he made while in Fujian, and the faction which would have supported him at court fell from power just at the time Zhou arrived in the capital. The trial lasted six years, and in the end Zhou was sentenced to death. This was commuted to exile to Ningguta 寧古塔 in the bleak northeast, but just before Zhou was due to leave, he was released in an amnesty following the death of the Shunzhi 順治 emperor in early 1661. *Chidu xinchao* was published in the following year.

Like most former Ming officials who collaborated with the Manchu regime, Zhou's attitude towards the Ming was complex. The family's economic plight and his apparent distaste for the Southern Ming regime, mentioned earlier, along with the dedication with which he served the Manchus after he decided to collaborate with them, suggests that Zhou in fact felt little fealty towards the Ming. This would seem to undermine the argument that Zhou wished to use the letters in *Chidu xinchao* in part to express his sentiments towards the Ming. However, it is possible to explain why Zhou might have been able to serve the Qing while inwardly hoping for a restoration of the Ming at some time in the future. Like almost all educated Han literati, Zhou would have felt that Chinese civilisation was under threat as long as China was under 'barbarian' rule. Furthermore, Zhou had grown up under the Ming, and had served the Ming dynasty, however briefly. He had been associated with the Restoration Society, an organisation which considered itself to represent the highest ideals of Confucian culture. It would seem, then, that Zhou justified his collaboration by arguing that as a political entity the Ming dynasty was dead, so the best an upright Confucian could do was to try to help the common people by continuing as an official, until native Chinese rule could be restored. In the meantime, one had to do whatever one could to preserve Ming culture, which certainly was one of his motives in compiling *Chidu xinchao*. It seems that most of Zhou's friends, who included many loyalists, understood his decision to collaborate; there is little evidence that any of them avoided him, though there is not a lot of information about this for the years immediately after the fall of Nanjing.

Significantly, though, Zhou's collaboration does not seem to have prevented him from making occasional gestures of tacit support for the loyalist cause. To begin with, Zhou was one of the most important patrons of art in China during the early Qing, and many of the artists and poets in his circle were loyalists. Although we will never know what Zhou and his loyalist friends talked about when they were alone, it seems that many of them trusted him. Kim cites the example of the painter Zhang Feng 張風, who presented Zhou with a painting containing an obviously seditious meaning whilst Zhou was in prison in Beijing; Zhang would not have done this if he did not trust Zhou.

Furthermore, Zhou wrote about this gift, “I was moved by his intention. I have treasured this painting until now.”¹³ More significant, however, is a poem Zhou composed in 1659 as a colophon to a painting by his loyalist friend Xu You 許友 (also known as Xu Mei 許眉, about whom we shall say more below), entitled “Han ya ge” 寒鴉歌 (Song of Cold Crows).¹⁴ Although any ‘loyalist’ sentiments are couched in allegorical language, the thrust of the poem is that the Manchu regime will be just a temporary interregnum, which will sooner or later be replaced by a native Chinese dynasty. There are also allusions to Zhou’s being slandered and imprisoned, and his wish at times to withdraw from political life. However, the poem is not one of unrelenting despair (a mood, however, that seems to have characterised Xu’s attitude), as in the final lines Zhou suggests that the best approach to the situation is to take heart and “... wield your writing-brush with great splendour/It will be possessed of a miraculous breath”; in other words, that instead of simply grieving, one should work actively to revive native culture.¹⁵ We should note, though, that Zhou chooses a cultural metaphor to suggest the revival of Ming culture. Of course this is in part because the poem was a colophon to a painting, and in part because to make more aggressive allusions would have increased Zhou’s chances of getting into even deeper trouble. However, it might also reflect a certain realism on Zhou’s part. Zhou had witnessed first hand the power of the Manchu army, and knew that there was no chance for the time being of loyalists defeating the Manchus militarily.¹⁶ Therefore he seems to have felt that the most important thing was to strive to maintain the glory of Chinese culture, and wait for a time in the future when the reestablishment of Chinese rule might be possible. This, I argue, is one of the main motivations for Zhou’s compiling *Chidu xinchaio*.

Before we turn to examine how Zhou used the letters in *Chidu xinchaio* to express his attitudes towards the fall of the Ming, we must also consider the wider political situation in the Jiangnan 江南 region, which was the intellectual centre of Ming loyalism, even though the lower Yangtse valley had been under Qing rule for some time. The years 1661–63 were particularly heady for the Jiangnan gentry, and the problems began with the same event that gave Zhou Lianggong his freedom: the death of the Shunzhi emperor in February 1661. While Zhou escaped exile to Ningguta in the ensuing amnesty, a number of scholars who gathered in the Confucian temple in Suzhou to mourn the death of the Shunzhi emperor turned the event into a protest, which would eventually lead to their deaths. This would become known as the “Lamenting in the Temple” case. The impact this case had on the southern gentry and their relations with the Manchu dynasty was compounded by the even more far-reaching “Tax Arrears” case of 1661–62, which resulted in thousands of gentry and officials being dismissed, imprisoned, stripped of titles and so on. A fuller account of these cases has been provided by Lawrence Kessler.¹⁷ Zhou arrived back in Nanjing just as these cases were unfolding, and they continued to unfold throughout the period during which *Chidu xinchaio* was being compiled. Although Zhou

¹⁴ The poem appears in the entry for Xu (Xu You jie) in Zhou Lianggong, *Du hua lu* [Lives of painters], ch.3. A common edition may be found in *Congshu jicheng chubian* [Complete collection of collectanea, first collection], ed. Wang Yunwu 王雲五 (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1935–37). Kim has translated most of the poem in *Life of a patron*, pp.105–7.

¹⁵ Kim, *Life of a patron*, p.107.

¹⁶ At the time Zhou wrote this poem, the armies of the last Southern Ming emperor, Yongli 永曆, had been defeated and the emperor had fled into Burma. He would be captured and executed in 1662. See Wakeman, *Great enterprise*, pp.1030–6, for a concise account of the defeat of the last Ming emperor. The parallels between Zhou’s poem and one written by Gu Yanwu 顧炎武 (1613–82) in 1651 for the loyalist painter Wan Shouqi 萬壽祺 (1602–52), discussed by Wakeman in another article, are striking, as both seem to look forward to a restoration of Chinese rule at some time in the future, but apparently regard the chances of a Ming restoration as being rather slight—especially in Zhou’s case. See Wakeman, “Romantics, stoics, and martyrs in seventeenth-century China,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 43.4 (1984): 644–6.

¹⁷ Lawrence D. Kessler, *K’ang-hsi and the consolidation of Ch’ing rule 1661–1684* (Chicago, Ill.: University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp.30–9. This is based on his article “Chinese scholars and the early Manchu state,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 31 (1971): 179–200.

¹⁸ Zhuang's father had been imprisoned, where he died. Kessler, *Consolidation of Ch'ing rule*, pp.82–3, and Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp.205–6.

¹⁹ Lynn A. Struve, "Early Qing officials as chroniclers of the conquest," *Late Imperial China* 10.1 (June 1989): 6–7.

²⁰ I have discussed this in detail in Pattinson, "The *Chidu* in late Ming and early Qing China," pp.144–66. As mentioned earlier, the first collection begins and ends with letters by Donglin writers (the second and third collections in the *Chiduxinchao* series also begin with letters by literati associated with the Donglin). Other themes which can be identified in the collection include certain literary controversies, such as the attack on the Jingling 景陵 School of literature led by Zhong Xing 鐘惺 (1574–1624), and the apparent advocacy of a certain philosophical eclecticism.

²¹ Qian Yiji 錢儀吉, ed., *Beizhuan ji 碑傳集* [Collected engraved and other biographies] (1826; reprint ed., Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1993), p.3465. Ji's residence in Wuxi was called 'Dongtian' 東田 (Eastern Fields) in reference to the old Donglin (Eastern Forest) Academy nearby. Ji later gained a reputation as a dramatist, but was imprisoned along with the Governor-General of Fujian, Fan Chengmo 范承謨, during the uprising of Geng Jingzhong 耿精忠 (d.1682) and was executed at the same time as Fan in October, 1676, just before Geng surrendered to the Qing, ending his part in the Rebellion of the Three Feudatories. See William H. Nienhauser, Jr., ed., *The Indian companion to traditional Chinese literature*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1986), pp.420–1, and Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "Romantics, stoics, and martyrs," pp.648–51.

²² This Mr. Zhou was styled "Jibai" 計百, but I have been unable to identify him.

²³ This most likely refers to Jin's *Zhiyi caizi shu 制義才子書*, a collection of examination essays by successful candidates published in about 1654.

was not implicated—he had, after all, been in prison—his position as a collaborating official recently released from prison after a long case involving corruption would have been delicate. If he sympathised with the disaffection of the southern literati towards the Manchu regime too openly, he would have been taking a great risk, since the regents in the capital were trying to crack down on the expression of dissent in the Jiangnan region. We should remember too that, at about the same time, the inquisition of Zhuang Tinglong 莊廷鑑, or rather of those associated with the publication of a history of the Ming dynasty initially carried out under Zhuang's direction (Zhuang had died in about 1660), was under way as a result of perceived slights to the Manchu regime contained within that work.¹⁸ Although by the time *Chidu xinchao* was published these episodes had come to an end, for most of the time Zhou and his assistants were working on the collection, the relationship between the Jiangnan gentry and the Qing authorities was tense. However, as Lynn Struve has pointed out, the Qing government never stated openly what sort of material was considered subversive, and there seems to have been no systematic attempt to uncover material of a loyalist slant. Often exposure occurred only because the writer became involved in factional struggles in government and enemies used the works to attack him. The Zhuang Tinglong case came to light because a former official who had a grudge against the Zhuang family alerted the government to the alleged slights. However, other potentially offensive works seem to have been able to circulate for years without their authors incurring the wrath of the authorities.¹⁹

Therefore, at the time Zhou was working on *Chidu xinchao*, he was no doubt embittered after spending six years in prison on trial for crimes he did not commit. There are many letters in the collection which either recall the deeds and ideals of the Donglin group, or in which the author complains about suffering injustice as an official, and there seems little doubt that Zhou used *Chidu xinchao* to assert his integrity. I would argue that this fact actually strengthens the central thesis of this paper: that Zhou found that the marginality of the *chidu* genre made it an ideal tool for the expression of protest, and not only in relation to the question of loyalism and collaboration.²⁰

The Expression of Loyalist Sympathies in Chidu xinchao

We will begin with an example of how an apparently simple letter could be used to hint at sympathy with loyalist sentiments in Jiangnan at the time. Ji Yongren 嵇永仁 (1637–76), a young scholar from Wuxi 無錫 with a great interest in political gossip,²¹ wrote the following letter to Huang Yuji, the famous bibliophile and friend of Zhou's, about the critic Jin Renrui 金人瑞 (1610–61; better known as Jin Shengtian 金聖歎):

Recently an extremely strange thing happened. Mr Zhou was working on a case at Gengnan 賡南.²² He came to read Jin Shengtian's *Works by Men of Talent*, and was filled with admiration for Jin.²³ Thereupon he sent a messen-

ger with money to cover the expenses for Jin to come and visit him, but it happened that at the time Jin was busy compiling an anthology of Tang poems, so he didn't make the trip. However, Jin did intend to meet Mr Zhou later.

In the following year, Mr Zhou had a dream in which a man with long, dishevelled hair and bare feet jumped up onto his desk. Covering his face and crying, this man said, "I am Jin Shengtan." After Mr Zhou got up the next morning, he said to a visitor, "Jin Shengtan has left us." He again sent a messenger to Suzhou, who found out that Jin Shengtan had died on the morning after Mr Zhou had the dream. Strange indeed! I wrote a poem recording the dream, and a poem in memory of Jin; I ask you if you would like to write one in response.²⁴

On the surface, this seems to be little more than just another example of the fantastic stories which have been a part of Chinese tradition for centuries. However, if we consider this letter in the light of how Jin Renrui actually died, we will discover that there is more to this letter than is immediately apparent. Jin Renrui came from Suzhou 蘇州, and became widely known for his commentaries on the novel *Shui huzhuan* 水滸傳 (The Water Margin) and the drama *Xi xiang ji* 西廂記 (The Western Chamber), in which he expressed views considered controversial at the time. In May 1661, Jin was arrested for his part in the "Lamenting in the Temple" incident and put on trial. Although the protest at the temple was mainly directed against the excessive methods employed by the magistrate of Wu county in collecting overdue taxes, loyalism became an issue both because the Governor reported to the court that the protesters had "defiled the late emperor's memory,"²⁵ and because the case became linked to the trial of men who stood accused of assisting Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 (1624–62) when he attacked Jiangsu two years earlier. It also happened that at the time the regents ruling on behalf of the new emperor were looking to intimidate the southern gentry, many of whose loyalist sympathies had clearly not faded. In the end, eighteen of the accused were beheaded for treason on 7 August 1661, of whom Jin Renrui was the most famous. These executions aroused a great deal of bitterness in the Jiangnan region. Thus there is more to this Mr Zhou's dream than meets the eye, and of course to Zhou's inclusion of the letter.²⁶

In a note in the margin above this letter, Zhou Lianggong wrote: "Shengtan had already published five-hundred pages of a book entitled *Like chengmo caizi shu* 歷科程墨才子書 (Model Essays of Talented Scholars from Previous Examinations). That there is now no one to continue his work is much to be regretted."²⁷ One suspects that as Jin faced the executioner, this was not uppermost in his mind, and one cannot help but wonder if Zhou did this deliberately as a kind of smokescreen for his true intentions in including the letter, with "to be regretted" implying more than just regret that *Model Essays* would proceed no further. Furthermore, this letter, the only one in the collection by Ji Yongren, contains no lines of obvious literary merit, yet the lines describing the dream and the discovery of what had happened to Jin

²⁴ *Chidu xinbao*, p.56.

²⁵ Kessler, "Chinese scholars," p.185.

²⁶ There is a further discussion of the phenomenon of temple lamentation, including the case of Jin Shengtan in Ch'en Kuotung, "Temple lamentation and robe-burning—gestures of social protest in seventeenth-century China," translated by James Greenbaum, *East Asian History* 15/16 (June/Dec. 1998): 33–52.

²⁷ *Chidu xinbao wb*, 2.33a. It seems that Jin was working on a sequel to or expansion of *Zhiyi caizi shu*. He was also working on commentaries on the poems of Du Fu when he died, which corresponds with Ji Yongren's account. See Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p.165.

²⁸ *Chiduxinbao*, pp.120–1; *Chiduxinbao wb*, 5.15a–b.

²⁹ *Chidu xinbao*, 112.

on the morning after Mr Zhou had the dream are highlighted with emphatic dots being put beside the characters.

There are two letters by Jin in *Chidu xinbao*. The second would appear to have been included purely because it presents one of Jin's views on poetry. However, the first letter, simple as it is, seems to be an example of Zhou's taste for irony. The two parts of the text in italics are those that have been highlighted by the editor:

Those pine seeds I planted so carefully all those years ago *only now stand as tall as people*. It would be truly wonderful if fate would grant me twenty years without illness and without worries, so that I could eat my meals with a smile. **And** I would take the many books before me and write notes and commentaries on them one by one. Indeed this would be the greatest fortune. *But how could I dare hope to live till the age at which pine trees are covered with thick bark like the scales on a dragon!*²⁸

Of course in this case the clever use of the pine tree image provides literary grounds for the inclusion of this letter and the editorial highlighting. The margin note at the top again comments on Jin's literary activities, though in this case it seems more closely related to the letter below it. But it is difficult to believe that Zhou missed the irony of the letter, or of the last line in particular.

These are perhaps the most pointed examples of letters in the collection that appear to express sympathy with loyalist elements in the post-conquest period. This is particularly so because of the collection's proximity to the events surrounding Jin's death less than a year before *Chidu xinbao* was published, and because of the disaffection which the incident caused among the Jiangnan literati in particular. We should remember that the "Tax Arrears" investigations which followed on the heels of the "Lamenting in the Temple" case were only called off at about the time *Chidu xinbao* was published, so emotions would still have been running high. Therefore, although the two letters I have cited relating to Jin Renrui might seem uncontroversial on the surface, I find it difficult to believe that their inclusion was simply coincidental.

Another letter which contains intriguing references is one by the painter Wang Duo 王鐸 (1592–1652). Most of Wang's letters are politically unexceptional, but this letter hints at the mental anguish Wang suffered late in his life because of his decision to collaborate, anguish which Zhou perhaps shared.

Ill luck has placed the towering mountains of Fujian between us, and we have both experienced the greatest calamities. It hardly needs saying that we are but gnats flying through the universe.

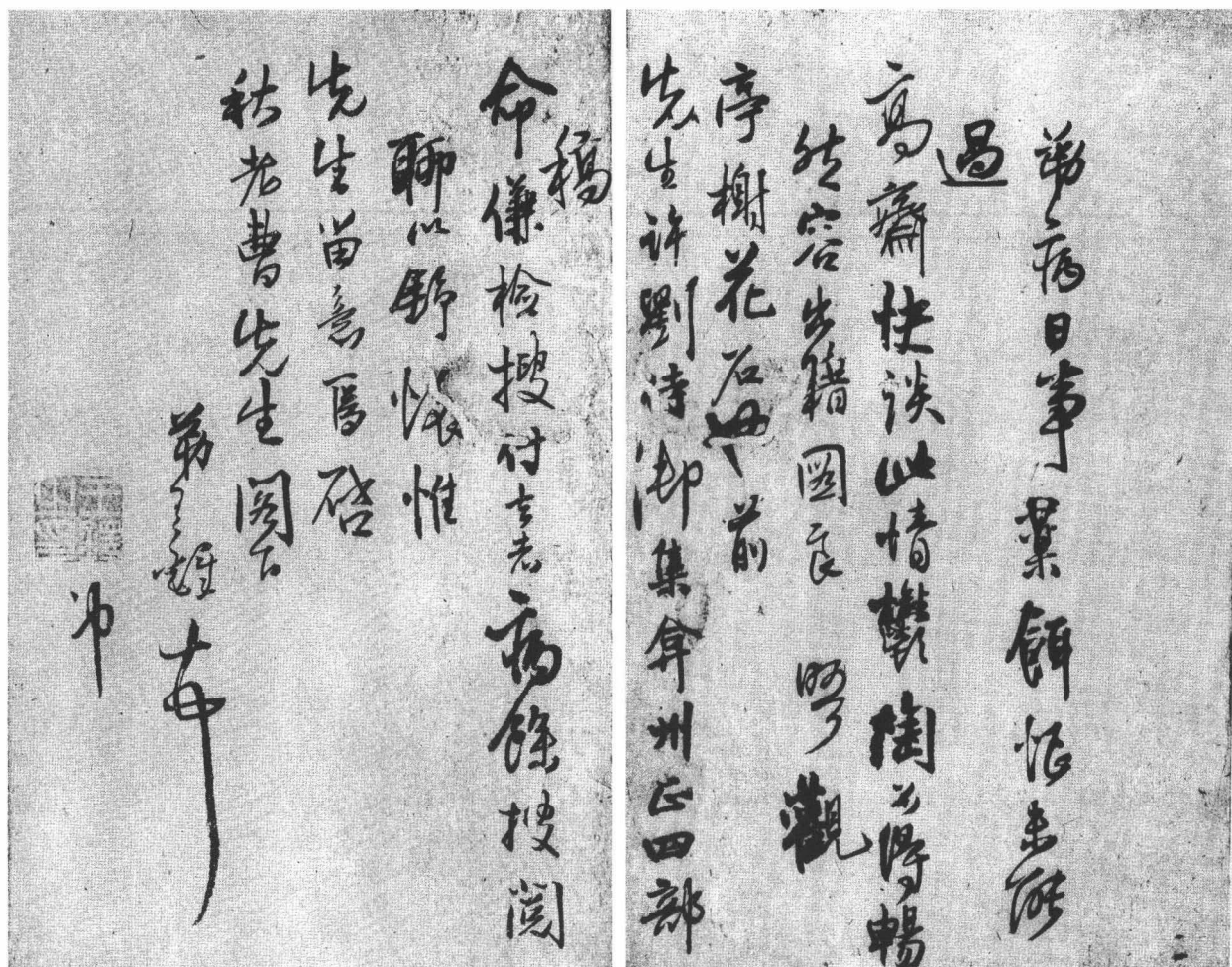
Your poetry never becomes frivolous or superficial, and the structure of your composition is far above the common run. Last night I sat with my flute on one side and wine cup on the other and drank without restraint. Although I dare not sing in the manner of Wang Dun, tapping the beat with my back-scratcher against a spittoon, I sing impassioned laments, but with such disorder around me, how could I just weep in silence!...²⁹

In view of Wang's position at the time the second paragraph is particularly noteworthy. The letter must have been written after Zhou arrived in Fujian in 1648. In some of the poems he wrote in his last years, Wang laments the passing of the Ming dynasty and expresses "strong feelings of self-pity,"³⁰ and in this context the reference to Wang Dun 王敦 (266–324) is especially suggestive. Wang Dun was a high official during the last years of the Western Jin (263–327) and the early years of the Eastern Jin (317–420). After the establishment of the Eastern Jin court in Nanjing, the general Liu Wei 劉隗 (273–333) and the official Diao Xie 刁協 (d.322) established themselves as the favourites of the Jin Emperor Yuan 晉元帝 (Sima Rui 司馬睿, 276–322) and sought to sideline the powerful Wang clan. Wang Dun, who had a strong army under his command and ambitions to take the throne for himself, was greatly frustrated, and in his cups would sing the following lines from a famous poem by Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220): "Though an old horse does no more than drink at the trough, he still thinks of running a thousand miles.

³⁰ Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, p.1435.

Figure 3

A chidu to a friend by Wang Duo



³¹ See Fang Xuanling, *Jin shu* [History of the Jin dynasty] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1974), p.2557.

³² This refers to the six bridges along the dikes that stretch across the West Lake (Xihu 西湖). So famous were these bridges that the term was often used to refer to the West Lake, and even to Hangzhou as a whole.

³³ This kind of dragon was said to light up the whole world when it opened its eyes, or alternatively, when it took a candle in its mouth.

³⁴ The Qinhuai River runs through the southern part of the city of Nanjing, and was the main area for gentry entertainment in Ming and Qing times. Activity centred around the Confucian Temple. Zhou Lianggong grew up near this area.

³⁵ *Chidu xinbao*, p.107.

Though an ambitious man might be in his twilight years, his heart still harbours great plans,” at the same time tapping the beat with his back-scratcher on a spittoon. Wang later brought his army to the capital and killed Diao and others, and the emperor died shortly after. However, Wang himself was dead within two years, his ambitions unrealised.³¹ Wang Duo would therefore seem to be saying that the idea of rebellion has crossed his mind, but he dare not put it into practice. Coming from a figure like Wang, this sounds rather pathetic, but the allusion is an interesting one. Perhaps Zhou found in it an expression of his own feelings of displeasure at being mistreated by the new regime. The two men must have had a great deal in common, as both were collaborators with mixed feelings about their collaboration, and they shared a deep interest in art. So by including a letter like this, tucked in at the end of a series of eighteen letters by Wang, Zhou seems to be saying something about his own feelings at the time. There are also some parallels between this letter and the ideas expressed by Zhou in the “Song of Cold Crows” mentioned earlier.

However, few of the letters which touch upon the Ming–Qing transition are so directly political. Letters which recount disruption and dispossession in the lives of the writers, the loss of friends, changes in the places which they used to frequent that were caused by the Manchu conquest, and nostalgic memories of life during the last years of the Ming are more typical. In all of these letters there is an unmistakable sense of displacement and marginalisation, a feeling that the writers no longer have control of their lives, that they can only look on as the world they knew is taken away from them and often laid waste.

A poetic example of this is a letter by Wang Ruqian 汪汝謙, a minor poet from Xiuning 休寧 who resided in Hangzhou, to Zhou Lianggong’s younger brother:

Many people are frightened of seeing the moon when boating on a lake, and criticise the people of Hangzhou for their habit of doing just this. In fact this criticism is unjustified. Thirty years ago, the notables of the city liked to go on outings by the West Lake at night, when they would admire the flowers and choose girls to perform for them. They would find a place along the Six Bridges, and set themselves up by a blossoming peach tree with a single lantern.³² When a breeze sprang up, all the lanterns began to sway, and the effect was like the mythical candle dragon about to take flight.³³ It was even more brilliant than the boats lit up on the evening of the Dragon Boat Festival along the Qinhuai River 秦淮河.³⁴ However, after the upheavals and changes of recent times, the lake has become a watering hole for horses: even most of the day-trippers dare not visit the place for long, and are careful to go home early.³⁵

The contrast of the romantic past with the desolate present would have in itself stirred feelings of loss in the reader. However, by mentioning the horses, which were most probably those of the Qing cavalry, Wang reminds the reader of the disruption caused by the wars associated with the Manchu

conquest. But the subject is treated subtly, and any political statement that might have been intended is hidden in the mists of nostalgia.

The theme of destruction and loss, with possible allusions to foreign domination, can be found in another moving letter written by the loyalist poet Zhuo Fazhi 卓發之 to one Mr Ding 丁氏. Although details about his life are sketchy, Zhuo came from a large clan based in Hangzhou and, in the late Ming at least, he owned a large garden at the foot of Qingliang Hill 清涼山 in Nanjing, “sixteen scenes” of which the painter and later Southern Ming official Yang Wencong 楊文聰 (d. 1646) had painted, and the poet Xue Cai 薛棻 had eulogised in verse.³⁶ Although Zhuo’s name appears in several anthologies of loyalist poetry, there is little known of what happened to him after the fall of the Ming, so it is likely that he died within a few years of 1644. The letter below is impossible to date, but the contents suggest that it was written soon after the Manchu conquest of Jiangnan:

Another two years have passed since we last had any news of each other. In the spring of this year, I returned to the provincial capital and had occasion to pass by the old temple we used to frequent. It is now deserted, with not a monk to be seen. The latticed window-frames and railings, and the tiles from the rooves, have fallen off and lie decaying among the weeds which have taken over the grounds. Such sad emotions welled up in my heart as I looked over the decay of this place which is so dear to me. The boatman pointed to the land on the other side of the river and told us that it now belonged to another family. The trees around the halls appeared desolate, their branches close to breaking off. This place in which gliders now flit about and mice scamper here and there, in which melancholy mists shed tears of dew, is the same place as where the two of us would lie reciting poetry amid the spring flowers or below the bright autumn moon. That which gave joy in the past now brings sorrow. Someone has said that there is no joy or sorrow inherent in sound, and there should be no joy or sorrow inherent in this place either.³⁷

The young people who used to visit this place are grown old now, and some now lie listening to the wind blow through the graveyard trees. I do not know most of the youths at the nearby market. Are these emotions not enough to bring grief even to hearts of the hardest steel! I am not like a Buddhist who has returned here after a pilgrimage, no longer attached to this mortal world, and thus I cannot stop myself from recalling times past.³⁸

The reference to the land now belonging to another family might suggest the change of ruling house, but even if this reference was not intended, the sense of loss and desolation is very clear indeed.

The next example, a letter written to Zhou himself, is by Xu You, the painter of the painting to which Zhou attached the “Song of Cold Crows” as a colophon, and one of Zhou Lianggong’s assistants in the compilation of *Chidu xinchao*. Biographical sources give few details about Xu’s life, but we can assume that he experienced considerable trauma after the collapse of Ming rule. He was a Government Student (生員) under the Ming, and a

³⁶ See Chen Tian, *Ming shi ji shi* [Selected Ming poems with related records] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1993), pp.3274–5, where eleven of the sixteen poems are recorded.

³⁷ This is a reference to the third century scholar Ji Kang's 嵇康 (224–63) essay on music, *Sheng wu ai le lun* 聲無哀樂論 (That joy and sorrow are not inherent in music), in which Ji argues that music has an objective existence, and that there is no inherent causal relationship between the music and the emotions of joy or sorrow.

³⁸ *Chidu xinchao*, p.90.

³⁹ *Beizhuan ji*, pp.4122–3.

⁴⁰ *Duhualu*, pp.26–7. This passage appears just before Zhou's "Song of Cold Crows" in Zhou's biography of Xu.

⁴¹ In Chinese mythology, the Jade Pond 瑤池 was a body of water found on Mt Kunlun 崑崙山 beside which lived the Queen Mother of the West 西王母. The latter was a beautiful immortal who looked like a person, but had a leopard's tail and tiger's teeth, and in ancient times was a symbol of immortality associated with the peaches of immortality which grew in her garden. In the *Mu tianzi zhuàn* 穆天子傳 [Biography of King Mu] she is said to have drunk with King Mu of Zhou 周穆王 and sung for him on the banks of the Jade Pond.

⁴² The allusion is from the *Laozi* 老子: "Though the adjoining states are within sight of one another, and the sound of dogs barking and cocks crowing in one state can be heard in another, yet the people of one state will grow old and die without having any dealings with those of another." This translation is taken from Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching* 道德經, trans. D. C. Lau (Harmondsworth, Mddlx: Penguin Books, 1963), p.142. What Xu means here is that all the families live in close proximity to each other.

student of the eminent and upright late-Ming statesman Ni Yuanlu 倪元璐 (1593–1644). However, after the establishment of the Qing dynasty, Xu no longer sought to serve in government. The rest of his life seems to have been devoted to poetry and painting. He died some time in the mid-Kangxi 康熙 period, and was almost certainly a little younger than Zhou.³⁹ Xu was best known for his painting of delicate bamboo, though Zhou records that whenever Xu went north of the Yellow River, he would no longer paint bamboo, but instead painted bare trees and crows as they appeared in the wintry landscape. "So bleak were these paintings that one could hardly look at them. Most probably he was just pouring his feelings of emptiness (無聊之氣) into these works."⁴⁰ It seems likely that Xu's change of style and Zhou's comment are related to Xu's feelings upon approaching the capital of the Manchu dynasty, and therefore to Xu's loyalist sympathies. The chapter of *Chidu xinchao* for which Xu helped select the letters has a decided emphasis on Ming and loyalist figures and, for some reason, on people from the Hangzhou area, including Wang Ruqian discussed above. The letter to Zhou below cannot be dated with absolute certainty because of the vagueness of some of the internal references, but it appears to date from the time that Zhou was being taken north for the continuation of his trial in Beijing, which means the second half of 1658. The main evidence found for this is in the last lines, where the author advises Zhou not do anything to get himself into more trouble, and the assurance that everything will be all right soon. This letter begins with a description of Xu's journey south to his home in Fujian, and how the scenes he encountered reminded him of Zhou. He then goes on to speak of the destruction caused by the fighting in his home area and its effect upon the inhabitants:

The walls around my home town no longer stand tall and even, but are more like a ragged mound covered in piles of rubble. Furthermore, following the violent winds from the sea, most of the buildings and houses are ruined and deserted. Fear is written all over the faces of my family, and they wail in distress. Their creditors are cruel and humiliate them, while local troops demand provisions from them. Each attack is like a sword cutting deep into their flesh. In recent times, all my friends and relatives have had little contact with each other, and the gatherings we used to have, where we would all chat over tea or wine, like the banquet of the Queen Mother of the West at Jade Pond, are no more.⁴¹ To the left, right, front and back, our home has been divided amongst several families, and the part in which I myself live is but a tenth of the original house. So the owner has become like a guest. Now, whenever I see the smoke from different chimneys curling together, and hear the crowing of roosters and the barking of dogs,⁴² and see how our home has become a village, I sigh at how different things are now. When Gao Zhao 高兆 came to visit me, we had a cup of tea standing up in the lane outside, said a few words, then he left. When you have mortgaged your home to someone else, you cannot regain possession of it till the mortgage period ends. However, when other people's mortgage period has come to an end, they are unable to come up with the money to regain possession,

and because the house is as full as a beehive or an ants' nest, all they can do is find a little corner for themselves and live there. Apart from Gao Zhao, none of my other friends have come to see me.

The prices of seafood, firewood and rice are quite low at the moment, but this is really because there is no one buying them. On the first of this month, Xi Shi's tongues and Han River scallops arrived at the market⁴³—there were mountains of them, and they were fresh and firm. For thirty cash you could fill your basket, but when I tried to scrape together enough money from my family, there was nothing the colour of Mt. Shushi to be found.⁴⁴ On the thirteenth, I pawned some clothes, and so we ate our fill for five or six days. My young sons fought over them, and asked me what they were called, and why they had not seen them for several years. While I was away, they never saw these things, and my family didn't dare buy them—they had too many other things to worry about. I wonder if you can believe these things I am telling you?

Although Xu's description of his family's plight was perhaps more or less factual, it is highly likely that it also provided a convenient metaphor for the plight of China as a whole. The 'violent winds from the sea' might refer to the attacks by the army of Zheng Chenggong, while the rest could be read as a veiled reference to the occupation of China by the Manchus. In particular the comments leading up to the sentence "So the owner has become like a guest" hint at the fact that Chinese were now "guests" in their own country, and the following section describing how people are unable to regain possession of mortgaged property could be understood as referring both to the local situation and to the inability of Chinese to reestablish native rule. Xu concludes:

Whatever you do, you must look after your health, though someone with your strength of will hardly needs to wait to be told. The implications of getting into trouble as a result of one's writings are not as serious now as in times past, but I advise you to burn your inkstone and bury your writing brush, and for the time being be like a bare winter tree, so that the frost and snow upon you will remain pure white.⁴⁵ In due course spring will return, bringing with it luxuriant growth and life-giving rain. I will be watching most anxiously to see how things turn out for you.⁴⁶

This final section of the letter, in which Xu exhorts Zhou to stop writing for the time being so as to avoid further tribulations, is significant. Firstly, it is further evidence that Zhou did have a tendency to write things which could have got him into trouble. Secondly, the phrase "The implications of getting into trouble as a result of one's writings are not as serious now as in times past" would, by 1662, have seemed ironic. If my dating is correct, and this letter was written in about 1658; at that time, the Zhuang Tinglong affair had not yet broken out, so Xu's statement would have seemed valid enough. However, in 1662 this affair had just come to an end, and the repercussions had been felt throughout the southern gentry, so the irony of Xu's comment would not have been lost upon readers of the letter.

⁴³ Both are seafood delicacies from Fujian. Zhou has entries on them in his *Minxiaoji* 閩小記 [Minor account of Fujian]. Part of the entry on "Xi Shi's tongues" (*Xi Shi she* 西施舌, a kind of shellfish), reads as follows: "In grading paintings, artists talk of 'inspired works', 'skilled works' and 'sublime works' [it is not clear whether Zhou meant these to be in descending order or not, as the order he uses is not the usual one]. If we rank the seafoods of Fujian in the same way, Xi Shi's tongues should be classed as 'inspired', *lifang* 礪房 (a kind of oyster that grows in clusters) should be classed as 'skilled', and *jiang yao zhu* 江瑶柱 (river scallops) as 'sublime'. Xi Shi's tongues are outstanding for their colour and flavour, like the flowering crabapple ... riverscallops are outstanding for their sublime coolness, like plums" Zhou Lianggong, *Min xiao ji*, Guadi'an Cang Ming-Qing Zhanggu Congkan (1666; reprint ed., Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1985), p.2.12a-b.

⁴⁴ Mt Shushi 朱提山 was in the north of what is now Yunnan province, probably in the west of modern Zhaotong 昭通 county. It was famous for the silver that was mined there, so Mt. Shushi later became synonymous with silver, and thereby with money.

⁴⁵ 'Snow and frost' usually refer to maintaining one's moral purity. In this context, Xu is advising Zhou not to write anything in order to avoid giving his enemies any more material with which to attack him.

⁴⁶ *Chidu xincho*, pp.286-7.

⁴⁷ *Ming shi*, p.6275.

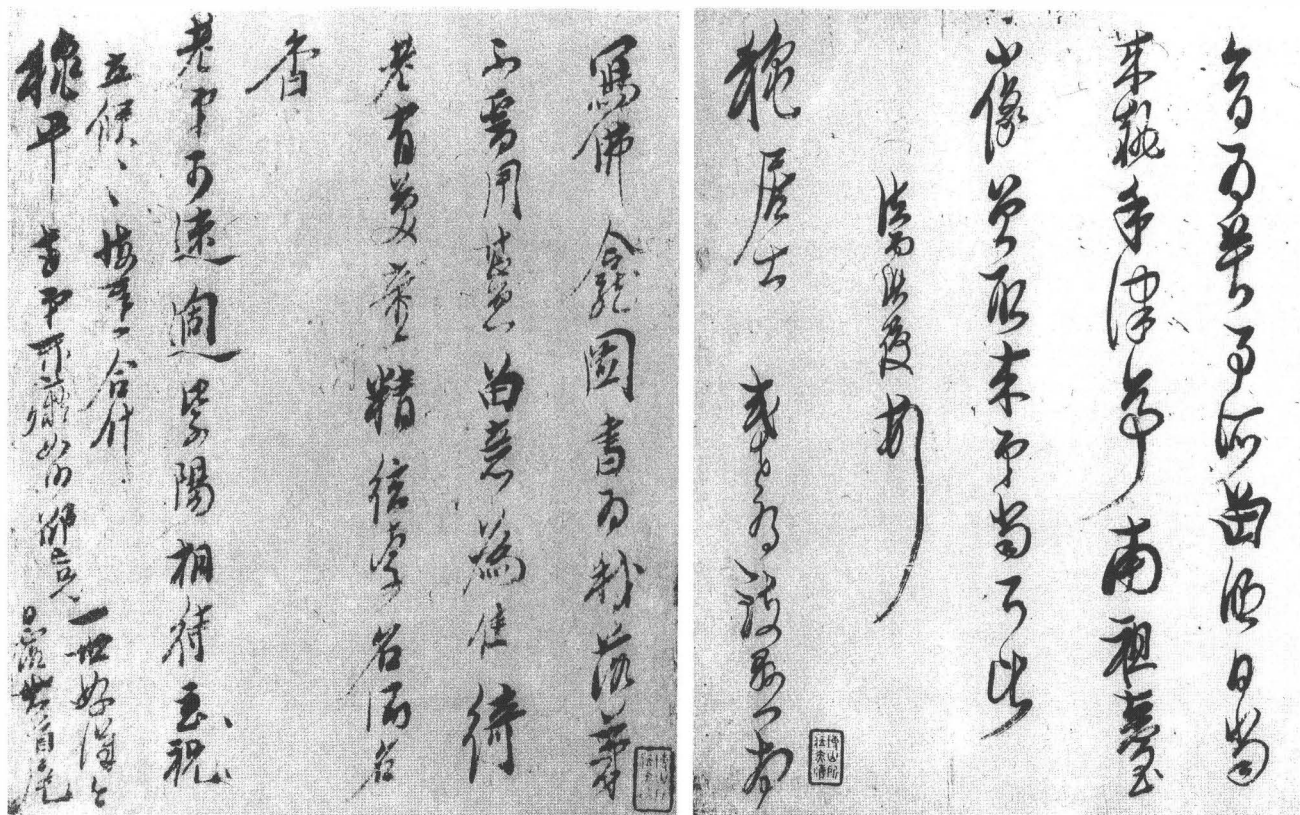
⁴⁸ Shi Runzhang, *Muzhiming* [Epitaph] for Chen Hongxu, in Li Huan 李桓, ed., *Guochao qixian leizheng chubian* [Classified bio-graphies of eminent figures of the present dynasty] (reprint ed., Taipei: Wenhai Chubanshe, 1966), p.12,750.

⁴⁹ *Qing shi liezhuan* [Arrayed biographies for the history of the Qing dynasty] (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1987), p.5691.

The theme of destruction and loss is continued in three letters by Chen Hongxu 陳弘緒 written after the fall of the Ming. Chen was the son of Chen Daoheng 陳道亨 (d. c.1624), who had served as Minister of War in the Southern Capital after 1622, and who was identified with the Donglin faction.⁴⁷ Chen Hongxu never passed the Metropolitan Examination, but because of his father's high official post, he was entitled under the *yin* 蔭 system to be appointed to minor posts. According to Shi Runzhang 施閏章 (1618–83), Chen initially declined such offers, as he wanted any appointments to be made as a reward for merit, but some high officials were jealous of his talents and frustrated his attempts to advance through the examination system.⁴⁸ However, when the dynastic crisis became more desperate, he accepted a post as Subprefectural Magistrate of Jinzhou 晉州 in modern Hebei. He successfully defended that town from a Manchu attack in 1638, but incurred the wrath of Grand Secretary Liu Yuliang 劉宇亮 when he refused to allow Liu's troops to billet in the town. It is said that Chen's arrest was ordered, but the people of Jinzhou, grateful for his role in defending their town, offered themselves as ransom, so he was transferred to a minor post at Huzhou 湖州 in Zhejiang.⁴⁹ By nature fiercely upright, he offended powerful local interests when he tried to correct abuses in the town. Shi's account says that he was nevertheless successful in chasing up certain overdue taxes, and was

Figure 4

A chidu by the painter Chen Hongshou 陳洪綬 (1598–1652). Chen was one of the most original painters of the Ming–Qing transition period, and in his later years was one of the artists supported by Zhou



appointed magistrate of Shucheng 舒城 in Anhui.⁵⁰ But the frustrations caused by his lack of a degree, which was a barrier to his being appointed to the higher posts he desired, led him to return to his home in Xinjian 新建, Jiangxi. For the rest of the Ming dynasty he refused offers of further official postings, and declined to serve the Southern Ming as well. He seems to have taken no part in the fighting in Jiangxi (which continued till 1649), though clearly he was very much affected by it as the letters below reveal. Nevertheless, though his relations with the Ming had not been happy, he remained loyal to that dynasty in principle, and declined several recommendations to serve the Qing.⁵¹ In 1653 he was able to build a home by the Zhang River 章江 at Nanchang. He spent his remaining years mostly at home, where he wrote a number of books, many with clear loyalist sentiments. He was reputedly poor, but used whatever money he earned as an official to buy books, and had an extensive library.⁵²

Jiangxi was particularly badly affected by the fighting of the last years of the Ming and the early Qing. In addition to the usual local bandits, Zhang Xianzhong's 張獻忠 (1606–45) rebel army had moved through the area in about 1643 pursued by the Ming general Zuo Liangyu 左良玉 (1599–1645). Further destruction was caused by Zuo's army before it surrendered to the Qing, then by the Qing armies themselves. Jin Shenghuan 金聲桓 (d.1649), a commander who had originally been assigned to assist Zuo's army (now led by his son, Zuo Menggeng 左夢庚, following Liangyu's death), took as much of northern Jiangxi as he could before surrendering to the Qing and thereby giving the Manchus control of much of that province. Later, Ji'an 吉安 fell, and after some hesitation and a long siege, Ganzhou 贛州 fell in November 1646. This was apparently the end of organised resistance to the Manchus in that province, and some areas began to rebuild. However, in February 1648, Jin Shenghuan reverted his allegiance to the Ming because the Qing were not giving him the honours he felt he deserved, and were working to replace his private command with a regular command and bureaucracy. The implications of Jin's reversion were huge, and many officials even in faraway places followed suit, including Fujian, where Zhou Lianggong was at the time. It was an enormous setback for the Qing, but they were able to recover and retake Nanchang, "long since ... reduced to cannibalism,"⁵³ in March 1649, and soon after regained control of the whole province. However, it was quite a few years before the province recovered.⁵⁴

What Chen did during that time is not known, but it must have been a very traumatic time for him, as the three letters below indicate. Together these letters are perhaps the most moving account of personal loss in *Chidu xinchaohao*. The first letter is to Zhou Lianggong himself. It appears that Chen, who seems not to have known Zhou personally before, had written to Zhou with some request, and Zhou had replied. In the first part of the letter, Chen, in very humble terms, thanks Zhou for writing back to him. Chen then proceeds to discuss the difficulty of writing and mastering the principles of the classical prose style, and how fate and history can decide which writers'

⁵⁰ Shi Runzhang, "Chen Hongxu," p.12,750.

⁵¹ *Qing shi liezhuan*, p.5692.

⁵² Shi Runzhang, "Chen Hongxu," p.12,751, and *Qing shi liezhuan*, p.5692.

⁵³ Lynn A. Struve, *The Southern Ming, 1644–1662* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984), p.138.

⁵⁴ This account is based on *ibid.*, pp.67–8, 98–9, 125–7, 138, and on the biography of Jin in Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp.166–7.

⁵⁵ Guo Yunsheng was a native of Xincheng 新城 in Jiangxi, and a member of the Restoration Society. Nothing else is known about him. See Wu Shanji 吳山嘉, ed., *Fushe xingshi zhuantüe* 復社姓氏傳略 [Brief biographies and name-list of members of the Restoration Society], Haiwang cun guji congkan (c.1776; reprint ed., Beijing: Zhongguo Shudian, 1990), p. 6.18b.

⁵⁶ Shu Zhongdang was a native of Jinxian 進賢 in Jiangxi, and passed the Provincial Examinations in 1630. Chen Tian, *Ming shi jishi*, p.3383. He might have died fighting the Qing.

⁵⁷ *Chidu xinbao*, pp.79-80.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* The fire in Qian Qianyi's library occurred in 1650 (it was in fact only partly destroyed), so the letter must date from 1650 or 1651.

names will be passed down to posterity and whose will not. He talks about a number of Jiangxi writers who he thinks deserve wider recognition, including Ai Nanying 艾南英 (1583-1646), Xu Shipu 徐世溥 (1607-57), Chen Yunheng 陳允衡 and a few other now obscure figures, then continues:

Now some of them are still alive, and some are dead. The dead have disappeared into the desolate mists, while the living are spread far and wide like willow catkins in the wind or duckweed drifting down a river, so there is no way that their works can be found to send to you. The original editions of Wan Shihua 萬時華 and Guo Yunsheng's 過雲生 works have long been reduced to ashes,⁵⁵ and Shu Zhongdang's 舒忠謙 *Drafts from Hesai Studio* (He sai xuan gao 褐塞軒稿) is also no longer to be found.⁵⁶ I also heard that the essays which one Zeng Yu 曾裕 had kept at home were thrown into a muddy ditch by bandits; I don't know whether the essays of Su Huan 蘇桓 have survived or not. Those of our esteemed friends who were fortunate enough to pass away earlier on have been spared the pain of watching their works being destroyed and dispersed in the savage wars of the last decade or so, so that all that is left is a few scraps and little else. Such destruction is tantamount to their very persons being slaughtered in the flames of war.

Recently the situation has improved a little, and the roads are slowly being opened up, so I am taking up my brush and paper and writing to bibliophiles everywhere, in the hope that they can copy out the works they have and send them to me as soon as possible, though of course I can impose no deadline ...⁵⁷

This letter appears to have been written in the lull between the initial Qing conquest of northern Jiangxi following the submission of Jin Shenghuan in 1646, and Jin's reversion of allegiance to the Ming in 1648. It clearly reflects the widespread destruction and dislocation that occurred in Jiangxi at the time, and Chen's concern that efforts be made to save whatever works of merit could still be found, particularly those by writers from his home province.

The theme of preservation is continued in the next letter, to Huang Yuji, the owner of the huge private library in Nanjing, and one of Zhou's biographers, as mentioned above. Chen begins by commenting that since 1644, he and Huang have rarely seen each other. He then emphasises how important it is to collect rare books during times of dynastic change, and cites a number of examples from the Han to the Song in support of his argument. He mentions how Qian Qianyi's library was "the best in the southeast, but was recently burnt to ashes," and points out how many books that were thought to have disappeared were later discovered in wells, walls, graves and so on even centuries later. In view of this, any effort to preserve and print rare books is to be encouraged, as this will increase the chance of works surviving the vicissitudes of time.⁵⁸

The third letter in the series seems to date from about 1651, perhaps

written shortly after the letter to Huang. Following on from the first two letters, where he talked about the preservation of literary works in times of upheaval, and mentioned the destruction of others' libraries, the tragedy of what happened to Chen as described by him in the third is particularly poignant. I quote it in full:

During the battles of 1648, as I went into hiding deep in the mountains west of here, I injured my arm on a rock.⁵⁹ Now every time that wound aches, a writing-brush begins to look like a long, heavy lance. Your Honour has been very kind to me, and it pains me greatly that I have failed to write even a scrappy letter to express my sincere gratitude. However, on this clear and quiet night, feelings of guilt have finally overwhelmed me, so nursing my pain I am writing this to you. I have read your excellent poems and found they have a rare elegance, with all the outstanding qualities of the verse of Wang Wei 王維 and Du Fu 杜甫, such as has not been seen for several centuries. I wish I could layout your works, which I treasure, and study them daily whether sitting up or lying down. In that way I might be able to benefit a little from your genius, which I look up to as my ultimate inspiration.

When I came to the mountains in 1645, I carted many hundreds of books from my library with me. But when the cavalry came and set up camp by the river which runs past my little home, they took away every scrap of food and every thread of cloth. My books were cut and torn up and used to make thousands of little plates of paper armour, streaked with red and black ink, which were then laid over the backs of mules. The left-over scraps became stuffing for pillows or matting to be trampled on. Thousands of volumes were thus destroyed overnight. Amongst these books was one entitled *A Classified Collection of Ming Prose* (Ming wen lei chao 明文類抄). For thirty years I had been gathering material from all over the land, and had managed to gather just about everything into this collection. It was of similar size to *Jewels of Literature* (Wen yuan ying hua 文苑英華).⁶⁰ Now it has been thrown into a river.

I have also compiled a collection of annotations of the Confucian classics, leaving aside the authoritative commentaries. This volume is the result of an extensive search through the whole range of scholarly writings, including the collected prose of individuals, the sayings of famous people, reference books, miscellanies and notebooks, works of history and biography, and explications of the classics which have not yet been included in any similar work. To the *Book of Changes* (Yi jing 易經) I appended a section on methods of divination, while to the *Book of Odes* (Shi jing 詩經) I added textual notes on the birds, animals, shrubs and trees. To the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (Chun qiu 春秋) I have appended different textual variations, such as the alternative reading of Yan 鄆 as Wu 鄆 in Lu Chun's 陸淳 edition,⁶¹ and Mr Cui 崔氏 as Cui Yao 崔夭 in the engraved Tang edition.⁶² I had also added some previously overlooked works on the *Book of Rites*, such as Wang Kekuan's 汪克寬 *Addenda to the Book of Rites* (Jing li bu yi 經禮補逸), which in my opinion has a number of worthwhile insights, and my discussion of them was attached.⁶³ Now all that is left is the *Appendix to the Book of Changes* (Yi jing bei kao 易經備考) in four

⁵⁹ That is, when Jin Shenghuan changed his allegiance back to the Ming. At the time Chen was living in retirement in his home town of Xinjian, near Nanchang 南昌, where he had been since leaving the last post he held under the Ming.

⁶⁰ An imperially-sponsored collection of literary works covering the period from the Liang dynasty to the end of the Tang, in 1,000 chapters, completed in AD 986.

⁶¹ Lu Chun (d. 806) was a specialist on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.

⁶² The "engraved Tang edition" refers to the engraving of the Confucian classics on to stone tablets under the auspices of the Tang imperial house, undertaken with the aim of preserving the most authoritative version of the classics available at the time. The texts were first engraved on stone in AD 175 during the Han dynasty, and it was done another six times during dynastic times. Today only the Tang (837) and Qing (eighteenth century) engraved canons survive in full.

⁶³ The text gives the author's name as Wang Kuan 汪寬, but this is certainly erroneous. Wang Kekuan lived during the Yuan dynasty.

⁶⁴ The text reads Zhaowu 昭武, but this does not seem to make sense. Zhou was in Shaowu, Fujian, in 1647–48 fighting rebels, and returned there from Fuzhou to quell another rebellion in 1651, possibly the year in which this letter was written.

⁶⁵ *Chidu xinbao*, pp.81–2. The translation of this letter has been published in *Renditions* 41 & 42 (1994): 98–101. I have made some minor changes.

⁶⁶ I am grateful to the late Professor Zhao Qiping 趙齊平 of Peking University for his comments on this question.

⁶⁷ Wu Weiye, *Cheng Kunlun wen ji xu* 程崑崙文集序 [Preface to the collected prose of Cheng Kangzhuang 程康莊], in *Wu Meicun quanji* [The complete works of Wu Meicun] (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1990), pp.682–3.

volumes, and even in that book the *Commentaries* (Xi ci 繫辭) section is missing. However, there is still much worth studying in these four volumes. I hope that you might agree to a request to write a few words by way of a preface for this book so that it might achieve immortality. I am informing you of this intention in advance, and hope that at some time in the future I will be able to make the journey to present my request humbly in person. I also have a few works of my own of various sorts, but since all the upheavals began, I have had enough trouble feeding myself, let alone finding someone to correct and print those works. How deep are our sorrows!

Wu Fei has already joined our ancestors, the news of which brought me to tears. Fang Yizhi 方以智 has disappeared without trace, so I continually worry about his well-being, and I don't know whether Su Huan is still alive or not. There has been no news of him either.

There is still occasional fighting in the Shaowu 邵武⁶⁴ area and the roads are cut, so I shall wait until the situation has settled a little, then try to pay you a visit to express my boundless gratitude.⁶⁵

Perhaps this last letter is the most interesting of the three, not the least because it contains an account of the destruction of his own library. Of course it is not possible to be certain which army it was that inflicted the damage. It has been suggested to me that they were Qing troops, on the grounds that the cavalry was so prominent in the Qing army.⁶⁶ If they were Qing troops, and presuming Zhou knew it, then we have a loyalist describing the destruction of his library (which included the works Chen had collected for his *Classified Collection of Ming Prose*) by the army of an alien regime to a collaborating Qing official involved in mopping up resistance to the new dynasty. Nevertheless, even if the troops were part of the born-again loyalist army under Jin Shenghuan, it is still likely that the account of the destruction of the Ming prose collection was meant as an analogy with the general political situation. Furthermore, in mentioning Wu Fei, Fang Yizhi and Su Huan, Chen was perhaps just passing on news about old friends, but as far as I have been able to establish, none of them collaborated with the Qing, but either died fighting the invaders, or went into hiding. We cannot know if there were any hidden meanings in mentioning their deaths or disappearances, but by the early 1660s references such as these would have served as reminders of the losses which had occurred during the Manchu conquest. Thus the emphasis on gathering and preserving examples of the achievements of the culture of the dynasty to which Chen was still loyal, even though he chose not to fight for it.

The same concern for the preservation and publication of the works of Ming writers can be seen in a letter by the famous Qing poet Wang Shizhen 王士禎 (1634–1711) to Cheng Kangzhuang 程康莊, a native of Shanxi and himself a minor poet. Cheng was Assistant Prefect in Zhenjiang 鎮江 at the time Wang was serving in Yangzhou, and according to Wu Weiye 吳偉業 (1609–71), the two men were close friends and often exchanged letters and poetry.⁶⁷ Although there is evidence that Wang lamented the fall of the Ming

dynasty (though he was only ten years old in 1644), this letter cannot be construed to have loyalist meanings: it is simply a record of how Wang, an enthusiastic bibliophile, wished to preserve the works of an old scholar.⁶⁸ However, for Zhou Lianggong it would have echoed his own concern that works by Ming scholars be published in order to preserve the memory of the fallen dynasty:

Mr Lin Gudu 林古度 is now eighty-four years old. He is one of the grand old men of the literary world, and with his fine achievements he stands out like a beacon on a towering mountain. I saw him a while ago, and asked what had happened to his works. They are all stored at Mount Ru 乳山 in Lishui 丽水 county. Ever since a collection of his poetry was published in 1604, Mr Lin has been very poor, and has not the resources to publish any more of his works. Even if he did find a way, the number of copies would be so small that they would soon disappear into oblivion anyway. Young scholars these days try to show off their talent and learning, sobbing and weeping themselves hoarse in poem after poem, which they then have printed in volume after volume and distributed all over the capital. This venerable gentleman, on the other hand, has enjoyed an outstanding reputation for seventy years, but it seems he might be unable to pass on a single word to posterity. This would be a great pity!

I intend first to make a list of his recent works, then compile a collection of his works by finding some people willing to edit a chapter each. Stone by stone we will create a mountain, and stitch by stitch we will sew a fine gown. These are fine words, but I fear that the number of people willing to help will be few indeed.⁶⁹

There is nothing very original in the content of this letter, though the contrast between Lin's situation, which prevents him from publishing his works of great value, and the younger scholars, who have the resources to publish their insincere and inconsequential writings, is used by Wang to good effect. The final comment, that it will be difficult to find people willing to assist in the work of compiling this worthy man's opus, is in itself unremarkable, but following on from the previous paragraph, it adds a poignant touch as it reinforces the idea that by the time Wang was writing, people seemed to have little respect for the established, genuinely talented writers of the older generation who learned their skills under the Ming, but who had since been neglected.

Certainly feelings of desolation, marginalisation and loss as a result of the fall of the Ming were often expressed in other genres, notably poetry, and calls for the preservation of Ming culture were not confined to *chidu* either. The tradition of loyalist poetry alone is enough to demonstrate this. But it is significant that an important collaborator, who almost by definition occupied an ambiguous position in early Qing society, should have chosen the relatively minor *chidu* genre to express such sentiments. Equally significant is that, as far as we can tell, quite a number of writers chose to express their feelings about the transition to Manchu rule through this minor genre. My

⁶⁸ The main evidence for Wang's loyalist sentiments is found a poem he wrote in 1657 entitled "Qiu liu" 秋柳 [Willows in autumn], about which "annotators seem to agree that the author's 'distant' intention was to lament the fall of the Ming Court at Nanking in 1645." See Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, pp.832–3.

⁶⁹ *Chidu xinchaobao*, p.28.

⁷⁰ *Late Imperial China* 10.2 (1989): 1–43.

own observations suggest that most of the literati in the late Ming and early Qing period who either compiled *chidu* anthologies or who could be considered major practitioners of the genre were people who were marginalised in some way or another: some had simply not succeeded in the civil service examinations, while others, like Zhou, had run into difficulties in their official careers. It seems that they found in *chidu* a genre in which they could write about their frustrations, anger and feelings of loss more freely, as they were relatively unencumbered by the conventions which had built up around many of the more legitimised genres, and whatever they wrote in their *chidu* probably carried less political weight than writings in canonised genres. We should also note that, as Ellen Widmer has shown in her article “The Epistolary World of Female Talent in Seventeenth-Century China,” female poets used *chidu* to maintain contact with each other, which again supports the contention of this article that *chidu* were an attractive tool for people who were in some way marginalised within the politically and economically dominant class.⁷⁰

In the case of Zhou Lianggong himself, *Chiduxincha* can be seen in part as an attempt by Zhou to make a statement to the effect that although he had served the alien regime, he was still committed to the ideal of native rule, and to the preservation of Ming culture in the face of ‘barbarian’ conquest. His gathering together of so many examples of late Ming *chidu*-writing was in itself an act of preservation and commemoration, as well as a record of the dispossession and marginalisation which so many Chinese felt in the wake of the alien conquest of their lands. It is difficult to imagine that Zhou could have composed a piece of formal prose expressing his ambivalent attitude to Manchu rule. However, a *chidu* collection, regarded by most as a form of entertainment (whatever pedigrees might have been assigned to the genre by compilers and preface-writers) was, by its very nature as a marginal genre, ideal for his purposes.

David Pattinson ●

Department of East Asian Studies
University of Leeds
Leeds LS2 9JT
West Yorkshire UK
d.pattinson@leeds.ac.uk