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FROM THE WELLSWEEP TO THE SHALLOW SKIFF: LIFE AND POETRY OF WANG ANSHI (1021-1086)

University of Washington PH.D. 1986

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FROM THE WELLSWEEP TO THE SHALLOW SKIFF:

LIFE AND POETRY OF WANG ANSHI (1021--1086)

by

JONATHAN OTIS PEASE

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

1986

Approved by David R. Knechtges
(Chairman of Supervisory Committee)

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Program Authorized
to Offer Degree Asian Languages and Literature

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Abstract

FROM THE WELLSWEEP TO THE SHALLOW SKIFF:

LIFE AND POETRY OF WANG ANSHI (1021--1086)

by Jonathan Otis Pease

Chairman of the Supervisory Committee: Professor David R. Knechtges
Department of
Asian Languages and Literature

Wang Anshi, who as prime minister oversaw imperial China's most massive economic and political reform program, was also one of the Northern Song dynasty's greatest writers of prose and verse. This study aims to introduce his poetry, particularly the celebrated verses from his retirement at Jinling (1076--1086). Also included is a relatively detailed study of Wang's life and thought, as a background for the 107 poems that are translated.

When anecdotal and official sources are combined with Wang's writings, one finds a complex personality. Dedicated to his political mission, Wang relentlessly pursued all practical knowledge that could benefit the people. Though he seldom compromised with his opponents, he seems to have been more tolerant and less arrogant than he is usually depicted. The poetry of his retirement reflects his love of nature and strong Buddhist leanings, overarched by an apparent conviction that his political mission had succeeded. Evidently he had given up the "well-sweep" (economic and technical projects) to relax in his "shallow skiff" (pastime of retired statesmen); earnest indignation was replaced by optimism. Yet an uneasiness evident in some of the poetry complicates

the picture.

As a poet, he developed steadily throughout his life in the direction of serenity and frankness. His technique was among the subtlest and most rigorous of any poet in the dynasty, this in spite of the fact that he considered poetry a pastime or a tool, and spent most of his attention on public affairs. His poetic craft inspired Huang Tingjian (1045—1105), though we probably should not consider him a co-founder of Huang's school of verse. Rather, Wang's poetry covers a broad range, and represents Northern Song poetry at its best and most characteristic.

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PREFACE

Background: The Song Dynasty

When we study a "modern" period of history, we expect to see it as clearly as a photograph. We assume its heroes to have been complex, its conquests flawed, its poetry realistic and original. We expect to view leaders of such an era the way we see our own leaders: with their vacillations as well as their greatness, their private as well as public selves. The Song dynasty has been labelled the beginning of modern China, and the label has persisted through the ensuing debate about whether the dynasty was actually "modern," "neo-traditional" or something else.[1] Regardless of what label one chooses, the Song does produce different perceptions than earlier dynasties do. When one thinks of the Eastern Jin (fourth century AD), one recalls the leader Xie An as if from an old saga, resisting Northern armies and domestic assassins mainly through his calm valor. The Northern Song (eleventh century) on the other hand, brings to mind Wang Anshi strengthening his

[1]For an overview of this debate: James T.C. Liu, "The Neo-Traditional Period (ca. 800--1900) in Chinese History, *Journal of Asian Studies* 24.1 (Nov. 1964) 105-107. Also James T.C. Liu and Peter J. Golas ed., *Change in Sung China: Innovation or Renovation?* (Lexington: Heath, 1969) vii-xiv, 1-14, 27-29.

country through economic institutions and administrative reforms. We must remind ourselves that Xie An's armies had survived on fiscal policies as well as valor, and that Wang Anshi had to use old-fashioned valor to promote his fiscal policies. To what extent, then, does the Song appear modern because of true differences from earlier ages? How much of its apparent modernity is simply a result of the fact that we have more data about the Song, and can see it freer of legend and guesswork?

This dissertation began with a desire to show the Song prime minister Wang Anshi in three dimensions, particularly in his least-studied aspect as a major poet. The work was colored by anticipation that the plentiful data would reveal Wang and his times as knowable and somehow "modern." That anticipation had to be modified. Much is missing: Wang lived at the time of the Norman conquest, too long ago for us to know him as we know Disraeli or Zhou Enlai. Also, data alone does not make knowledge: in the end, we may not know any more of Wang's essential qualities than we do of the fourth-century poet Tao Qian, whose slim volume of writings contains far less "data" than Wang Anshi's hundred folios. Still, through studying Wang Anshi one can confirm that the Song did have unique qualities, as did he, although one cannot apply the word "modern" to these qualities except as a technical term, carefully defined. It may help here to review some of those aspects of Northern Song life and though most relevant to the study of Wang Anshi.

The Song had securely united China for the first time in two hundred years, and would keep it stable and secure for a century and a

half. The first Emperor had established central control under his own authority and that of civilian officials: military commanders could no longer amass power along the borders and dismember the state as they had in the Tang. There was no more "aristocracy," with its disruptive regional loyalties: civil service examinations, open to anyone literate, were almost the only path to officialdom. Peace, agricultural development and the growth of cities brought most people a better livelihood than ever before in history.

But this new order produced tensions with its benefits. The major tensions perceived by the literati centered around the intertwined issues of security, finances, administration and moral fibre. National security may have been the fundamental issue: Song armies were never able to recover the sixteen northeastern prefectures held by the Liao or Khitan state. The Khitans, and later the fiercer Tanguts to the west, would agree to peace only in return for tribute payments from the Song. These payments were cheaper than war, but they humiliated the Song rulers and worried Song officials. The Song rulers generally felt a need for a strong army, but were reluctant to use it lest the army's power get out of control. The result was a weak army on the borders, where strength was needed, and a strong army in the central areas where it was less critical. By Wang Anshi's time there was growing sentiment that the army was too large and expensive, yet would prove useless in a crisis.

On finances: Maintaining an army was costly; so were the tribute payments that were the alternative to its use. China was prosperous, but the economy was structured differently than in earlier

ages. The Song government needed to find new ways to tap that prosperity without disturbing the agricultural and commercial order that ensured its continuation. Wang Anshi's solutions involved, in many cases, putting the government on an equal footing with commercial enterprises.

Administration: The growing bureaucracy was an obstacle in two ways. It was another expensive part of the government, and as the ranks of bureaucrats increased, their inertia and occasional corruption hindered attempts to reform the economy and raise revenue.

Moral fibre: As decades passed without making headway against the northern powers, and Song thinkers wondered what direction China should go, debate centered around how to better implement Confucian principles. Confucianism had always come in many varieties, with different emphases or basic precepts, but was especially diverse in the Song. Despite the variety, most thinkers were seeking within the tradition for a single truth, or what we could call an orthodoxy--because most agreed that a nation that ran on conflicting philosophies would be as weak as one run by conflicting generals. Wang was one of those thinkers who found their orthodoxy in practical knowledge, statecraft, economics and common sense. Opposed to this "utilitarian" approach were other Confucians who believed such practical ends could not be realistically pursued until the nation's leaders cultivated morality in themselves, and instilled people with their standards. Some anti-utilitarians found many of the utilitarian goals themselves to be unnecessary. Both Confucian schools worked from a fundamentalist

stance, harking back to the earliest classics for their authority.[2] Both schools were descended from the Tang neo-Confucian movement that had called for a return to ancient values as a counter to superstition, religion and all forms of decadence. Both schools gained confidence by being able to trace gradual improvements in many aspects of life since the Tang. Confucian practices had made China a civilian state: if Confucianism were further improved and promoted nationwide, could it not remove the nomad threats and inefficient government--the last remaining evils?

In the Qingli period (1040's), under the long-reigning, relatively unimaginative Emperor Renzong, a group of energetic officials instituted a slate of fairly ambitious administrative reforms. Spurred by the Tangut invasions into northwest China in 1040, the Qingli reforms were intended to streamline the government, decrease the number of unqualified officials, and raise revenue. But after the Song negotiated peace, the reforms were rescinded and their leaders demoted, in an atmosphere of resentment and factionalism, and without a clear verdict as to whether the measures could have succeeded.

Wang Anshi, an official in his twenties, shared the reformers' ideals and strove for a chance to act on them. Twenty years later he would get that chance, as chief minister to the young Emperor Shenzong. Wang's reform program was perhaps the most drastic in history, as

[2]For details on this issue, see William Theodore de Bary, "Common Tendencies of Neo-Confucianism," in David S. Nivison and Arthur Wright ed., *Confucianism in Action* (Stanford, 1959) pp. 28-42.

were the looming crises that he intended to prevent. The Emperor seems to have considered recovery of Chinese sovereignty on the borders to be the reform program's ultimate goal. Wang's goal may have been more idealistic: he aimed for a prosperous nation that functioned on Confucian principles and could thus resist the barbarians as a matter of course. But Wang underestimated the drastic reactions to his measures: facional disputes increased to the point that Wang's opponents dismantled the reforms to the last iota as soon as they had the chance in 1086. When pro-reform partisans regained power in 1093, they in turn persecuted the anti-reformers and adamantly restored the reforms. Their corrupt and cynical regime, which carried out only the letter of Wang's institutions, ended in 1125, just before the dynasty fell to the Jurchen state, conquerors of the Khitans. After the Northern Song fell, Wang Anshi's school of thought was so discredited that it would not be revived until the late nineteenth century, when China once again faced threats of conquest and internal chaos. Even then it never became a majority ideology.

The Northern Song's political development, then, was one of gradual decline from strong, orderly beginnings, all within the context of military weakness and a thriving economy, in whose prosperity the government was not always able to share. Wang Anshi, living in the second half of the Northern Song, was aware of the decline, and spent his life trying to reverse it.

Writers in the Song

Song social structure was somewhat different from earlier ages:

without an aristocracy, elite society consisted only of the Imperial house on one hand and literati-class officials on the other. In this centralized state, the literati could have only one loyalty: to the whole nation, represented by its ruling house. Some thinkers emphasized loyalty to the ruler; some considered the nation's welfare itself more important, and were loyal to ideas and principles more than to any person.[3] Neither view was necessarily opposed to the other, and both reflected a Confucian principle that underlay the lives of most of the famous Song literati: the purpose of a man's life was to be useful, or at least to cultivate the knowledge and ethical habits that would allow one to be useful as soon as the opportunity came. For a literatus, that opportunity would be found in service to the state. This point of view, centuries old, was stronger in the Song than before.

As a result, most of the greatest Northern Song writers thought of themselves as statesmen, members of a group of people striving for wisdom that would make them useful. Writing poetry and essays was one activity through which they performed their work, developed their wisdom and interacted with the others in their group. These writers included such men as Ouyang Xiu, Su Shi, Wang Anshi, and even the lyricist Yan Shu, who in his working hours was once a prime minister. To examine any one of these people "as a writer" would be a distortion of what writing has meant in the Chinese tradition, particularly in the Song. One might go so far as to say that writing in China is not an

[3] Ch'en Fang-ming 陳芳明, "Bei Song shixue di zhongjun guannian" 北宋史學的忠君觀念 (MA thesis, National Taiwan University, 1972) pp. 28, 35.

act of "creation" or even of self-expression as we think of it, but is a form of interaction among human beings, and a natural response by the writer to what he sees and senses around him. A man's writings, personality and work are separated by the scholar only at a risk.[4]

Even without going so far, it is essential to think of a writer such as Wang Anshi in his entirety. Though vilified for his disruption of the state, and ridiculed for some of his scholarship, as a poet and essayist his stature was never assailed: that is not because he was being considered separately "as a writer;" on the contrary, his literary success and political failure were seen as integrated aspects of his life. His unquestioned success in literary areas proves that he was still a full member of the Song Confucian brotherhood. To have suffered *hubris*, or to have miscalculated in his political career, does not condemn him as a writer any more than Su Shi would have been condemned for suffering exile. The lessons we can learn from Wang are simlar to those to be learned from many writers, but are special because of the way he shows the Song writ large: the intensity of his *hubris*, the passion with which he worked, and his enormous literary talent.

More specific than saying that the Northern Song literary tradition was Confucian, is to say that it tended toward *balance*, *reason*, *realism*, *clarity*, and *understatement*, even in the lyric (*ci*)

[4]For discussions that touch on this idea, see Stephen Owen, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World* (Wisconsin, 1985), esp. pp. 58-63, 78-90, 223-242. And James J.Y. Liu, *Chinese Theories of Literature* (U. of Chicago, 1975), pp. 9-13.

which reached its height in those years. Of the most talented writers, Mei Yaochen developed those characteristics, Ouyang Xiu and Wang Anshi typified them, Su Shi transcended and renewed them, and (some believe) Huang Tingjian spoiled them. All of those men have recently been studied as writers, except Wang, whose political role was so important that it has eclipsed his literary reputation.

Purpose of This Study, and Relation to Previous Studies

The following pages, then, will focus on Wang's poetry, particularly the celebrated verses of his retirement. But because it seems increasingly clear that to understand a Chinese poet's work one must connect it at some point with his life, this study describes Wang's life first, in as much detail as feasible, giving special weight to the development of his thought. His entire life is considered, as is the full range of his poetry, but *the goal is to show what were the events, pressures and thoughts that eventually produced his remarkable outpouring of late verse.* For the student of literature that is a sufficient goal; for the historian, it is hoped that through this study Wang can appear as a human being, and that his actions will be easier to interpret than they have been hitherto.

Poems have been included according to combinations of the following criteria:

literary excellence (about 75 of the poems chosen);

biographical value (about 60 poems);

illustrative of Wang's political or religious thought (about 30 poems);

famous works hitherto unavailable in English (about 15 poems);

works that have appeared in English, but are retranslated here because of exceptional fame or quality, or because previous translations are outdated (about 10 poems).

Earlier studies of Wang began with his biography. Li Bi's fourteenth-century annotations to Wang's poetry are a mine of information that we are lucky to have, and are one reason why the present work can sometimes present Wang's life through his verse with more confidence than one should ordinarily place in such a procedure. In about 1800, Cai Shangxiang, of Wang's home county, wrote a long biography that seems to have tried to rehabilitate Wang's reputation or at least declare him a subject worthy of study. Shen Qinhan's slightly later annotations to Wang's works furthered this effort. Cai and Shen together enabled the progressive thinker and political reformer Liang Qichao to write a biography that praised Wang as a model for Liang's own time. In the twentieth century, biographies appeared by Ke Changyi and others in China, and by H.R. Williamson in England. Those biographies did not venture far beyond Liang Qichao's boundaries, as they spent time defending Wang's character in the face of still-perceived hostility from the orthodox neo-Confucian tradition.

The past thirty years have seen more sophisticated appraisals of Wang's career. Most useful for American readers is James T.C. Liu's succinct, broad and thoughtful *Reform in Sung China* (Harvard, 1959). On the mainland, Deng Guangming has led a group of scholars in examining the course of the reforms, and Wang's role in them. In Japan, Higashi Ichio has brought into one book and several articles more infor-

mation on Wang and his reforms than any modern scholar so far. Other Japanese scholars, all researching Wang's political or religious thought, include Andō Tomonobu, Shoji Sōichi, Teraji Jun, Yamashita Ryūji, and Shimizu Kiyoshi.

Tao Jinsheng, writing in both Chinese and English, has explored Wang's foreign policy. Wang Jinguang, in Hong Kong, has cleared up some biographical details and amassed a thorough bibliography. Winston Lo and Peter Bol are studying Wang's thought. Michael Freeman has recounted the history of Wang's political opponents.

So far, no one has tried to present Wang's biography primarily in terms of what kind of person he was: historical concerns have dominated instead. And, except for Zhu Ziqing, Shimizu Shigeru and Zhou Xifu, no one has studied Wang's poetry in even a superficial way. The present project, therefore, attempts to present his poetry in a combined literary and biographical study. The task is only begun. Well over 1200 poems, many of high quality, many datable, remain untranslated. The *Xu Zizhitongjian changbian* and other histories contain rich records of Wang's actions and conversations during the reform, and should be read carefully. Wang's prose has been examined for clues to his thought and dates, but not for much else. The author plans further research on Wang's contemporaries, particularly Wang Anguo and Wang Ling; still there is much to learn by studying Wang Anshi himself.

The present work has been aided by recent research on other Song literary figures, and hopes to complement those efforts. Most useful are two books on Ouyang Xiu, one by T.C. Liu about the man and

his times, one by Ronald Egan on his literary works. No one scholar has yet managed to present Su Shi in such a complete context, but recent dissertations by Stanley Ginsberg and Michael Fuller have filled in major gaps.[5] Tiang Seng-yong's work on Huang Tingjian is a useful introduction to the problem of just what Huang meant to do with literature. Jonathan Chaves has well described the less complicated but equally seminal poet Mei Yaochen, who profoundly influenced Ouyang, Wang and Su.[6]

Translation Mechanics, Style, Dating

Prose translations use *pinyin* romanization for personal names, and English translations for certain place names when the meaning is significant. The only liberty taken in prose translation has been (as much as feasible) to give every person only one name throughout the dissertation: Wang Anshi is usually translated "Wang Anshi," even though he may have been called "Jiefu" (his *zi*), "Banshan" (his *hao*), "Jinggong" (the Duke of Jing), "Gong" (Duke) etc. The attendant loss of nuance should be compensated by a gain in clarity.

Poetic translations do not follow a single format. The decision to use several translation styles was reached after long deli-

[5]Michael Anthony Fuller, "The Poetry of Su Shi (1037--1101). Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale, 1983. Stanley M. Ginsberg, "Alienation and Reconciliation of a Chinese Poet: The Huangzhou Exile of Su Shi." Ph.D. Dissertaion, U. of Wisconsin, 1974.

[6]*Mei Yao-ch'en and the Development of Early Sung Poetry*. Columbia U., 1976.

beration of the alternatives, all of which have good points and drawbacks. It is hoped that the number of styles used here can approximate the variety of styles and meters which Wang employed, although there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the styles of the original poems and those of their translations. Here are the principles which the present translations attempt to follow, regardless of style:

a) Each translation tries to be a poem itself: i.e., it is hoped that the reader can be moved by the English words directly, without having to imagine what the effect would be like in Chinese.

b) In recognition of the fact that the original verse all has rhyme and meter, the translations use a regular metrical scheme when possible, even including rhymes or half-rhymes.

c) Free verse is adopted in the following cases:

--when a metrical rendering would make the translation inaccurate;

--when a metrical translation cannot duplicate the force with which ideas greet the reader in the original;

--when the original lines are so allusion-laden that only extra words can make the English rendering intelligible.

In practice, most of Wang's verse in five-character meter has been rendered in pentameter lines. The density of his five-character lines (i.e. ratio of the amount of meaning to the number of words) is generally well-suited to the density of English pentameter. It is for the seven-character lines that free verse translations have been employed most often, because English heptameter is too lengthy to scan easily, and also because heptameter often requires more words than

necessary to convey Wang's meaning. Free verse has also been used for certain poems whose diction is especially dense, or in which ideas are expressed with more gravity and deliberation than usual.

d) Translations are divided into stanzas in accordance with perceived transitions in the Chinese: either units of thought or changes in rhyme. Stanza division is intended to compensate for the loss of rhyme schemes, parallelism and other organizing elements of the original.

e) Whenever a translated line is excessively different from the original, a literal rendering is provided in the notes. The notes also gloss nonstandard romanization of names, or indications of weights and measures.

DATES: Dates are given in a modification of a style that has become fairly wide-spread in English-language sinology. Years are given in Western numbers, treated as if the Chinese year and the Western year exactly coincided. (I.e., Xining 1 is called 1068; the twelfth Chinese month of Xining 1 is still listed under 1068, even though it actually fell in the Western year 1069.) Chinese months and days *are not* converted to the Western calendar. Sample format: 1069.3.25 is "the 25th day of the 3rd month, year Xining 2." 1067.3R is "the intercalary (*run* 閏) third month of Zhiping 4." The 15th of every month is the full moon. Spring comes in months 1-3; summer in 4-6; autumn in 7-9; winter in 10-12.

The letter "P" before the number of each translated poem stands for "Poem #."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Part of this dissertation took form under the auspices of the K.C. Hsiao Memorial Scholarship Fund in 1984. The late Dr. Hsiao Kung-ch'üan, for whom the fund is named, has been an inspiration through his life and works. I never had the chance to take a course from Professor Hsiao, but there are several of his former students among the people to whom this dissertation owes great debts. Chief among these is Professor David Knechtges. His insistence on clarity and thoroughness, his intimate knowledge of sources and sensitivity to the finer points of wording, all helped improve the work in basic ways. In addition, his enthusiasm for the material and his warm respect for Chinese literature have long been a sustaining force. Professor Hok-lam Chan generously drew on his vast resources to suggest changes that would allow the dissertation to make more sense and present its points in context. Professor Frederick Brandauer has been supportive both within and beyond the scope of the project: these pages are richer for his participation on the committee.

Professor Feng-hwa Mah has my gratitude for his solicitude for the dissertation. And Professor Ching-hsien Wang contributed insights into Wang Anshi's verse. Scholarly habits taught by Professor Paul L.M. Serruys made much of that verse easier to parse into English

than it would have been otherwise; while poetic habits learned from Professor Parker Po-fei Huang at Yale have helped illuminate Wang Anshi's sense of what poetry was.

The staffs of the libraries at the University of Washington, Dartmouth College, the Yenching Library at Harvard and the National Central Library in Taipei have all been helpful. And Mrs. Liu Hsing-tzu found books overseas, including materials that I would not have discovered otherwise. American taxpayers supported the research directly through a National Resource fellowship in 1982-83.

My fellow students were supportive in uncountable ways: I especially mention Michael Broschat, the force behind Students in Asian Studies, whose forums allowed some raw findings about Wang Anshi to meet a lively audience. The office staff of Asian Languages and Literature were also helpful, the bulk of my sometimes messy paperwork being cheerfully expedited by Eva Dalton. I hope that the atmosphere of cooperation, serious purpose and good humor that infuses Asian Studies at the University of Washington has found its way into the pages that follow.

I thank Li Yun-ch'ang and Wang Shun-t'iao for introducing me to the world of rural development, in two projects in southern Taiwan. Working with them provided direct contact with local government and rural people, and eventually made it easier to understand some of the economic and social issues with which Wang Anshi dealt in other parts of China nine hundred years ago.

Foremost among those parts of China is Nanjing (Jiangning),

where last summer I had the chance to walk the paths near the site of the Dinglin Temple, finding the green slopes and shade just as alluring as Wang Anshi described. Guiding me were Lin Fan of Beijing Normal University and Huang Dawei of Nanjing Engineering College, both of whom also went to great lengths trying to obtain permission for me to visit Wang's former home at Banshan, now military property.

My wife, Liu Shunwan, wrote the Chinese characters that pepper these pages. And for four years she and our daughter Naomi have provided, with grace and cheer, the encouragement without which no project like this could come into being.

I also owe gratitude to others not mentioned. Where mistakes or misjudgments do stubbornly persist, it is through my fault alone, and is in spite of all these people's best efforts.

PART ONE

WANG ANSHI'S LIFE

1. JIANGXI: 1021--1036

The boy whose family called him "Badger" 獾郎 was born at his father's official post in Qingjiang Prefecture 清江縣, sixty miles due west of the family home at Linchuan 臨川, Jiangxi.[1] He was his mother's first child: his two elder brothers were children of their father's first wife, now deceased. It was the eleventh month and twelfth day of 1021: the third Song emperor, Zhenzong 眞宗, was completing the twenty-fourth year of his reign.

Jiangxi was a prosperous region, fortified by mountains, and linked by ever-growing waterways to the even richer areas of Jiangsu and Zhejiang.[2] Wang's family, probably farmers in his great-grand-

[1] His father Wang Yi 王益, was Staff Supervisor for Linjiang Military Prefecture 臨江軍判官. See Cai Shangxiang 蔡上翔, *Wang Jinggong nianpu kaolüe* 王荊公年譜考略 (Beijing 1959, rep. Taipei, Hung Shih 1975) 1/39, quoting a *Linjiangfu minghuan zhi* 臨江府名宦志. Also mentioned in H.R. Williamson, *Wang An Shih, Chinese Statesman and Educationalist of the Sung Dynasty* (2 volumes, London: Probsthain, 1935-1937), I.1.

Wang Anshi's baby-name "Badger" came about because someone saw a badger run across the room where Wang was being born. See *Mengzhai bitan* 蒙齋筆談, attr. to Zheng Jingwang (Song); *Baihai congshu* edition, B.11a. Also quoted in Shen Qinhan 鄭景望 (1775--1832) ed., *Wang Jinggong shiwen Shenshi zhu* 王荊公詩文沈氏注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959; rep. Hong Kong, Zhonghua, 1977) p. 44.

[2] See Wang's "Record of the Jianshan Pavilion at the Fuzhou Subprefect's Headquarters" 撫州通判廳見山閣記, in his collected works: *Linchuan xiansheng wenji* 臨川先生文集 (first edition 1140; modern edtion rep. Hong Kong: Zhonghua, 1971) 83/873.

father's time, had two doctoral degree holders when Wang was born: his great-uncle and his father. Eventually they would claim a total of at least eight, including Anshi, three brothers, a cousin and a son.[3] The women of the family, including Wang's grandmothers, were highly literate. His mother was versed in divination.[4]

The family home at Linchuan, in Fuzhou District 撫州 on the lowlands south of Boyang Lake, was the site of the "Ink Pool" 墨池, where it is said that Wang Xizhi 王羲之 (321--379) had once practiced his famous calligraphy--so often and so long that the water turned to ink as he repeatedly rinsed his brushes in the pool. In Wang Anshi's day there was a prefectural school at this site. Among the instructors were a certain man named Wang who put up a commemorative plaque by the pool, and also a man whose courtesy name was Wu Yanzhen 吳彥珍, a relative of Wang Anshi by blood and later by marriage.[5] Wu Yanzhen's father had married a woman named Zeng 曾 from Nanfeng 南豐 to the south. Her nephew Zeng Gong 曾鞏 (1019--1083), two years older than Wang Anshi and one generation senior, was to become one of Wang's life-long friends, and (along with Wang) one of the "Eight Prose Masters of the

[3] Cai 1/40, under year 1028.

[4] See Zeng Gong's tomb inscription for Wang's mother (née Wu), in Zeng's collected works: *Yuanfeng leigao* 元豐類高 (*SBBY* edition) 45.5b. She had learned divination from her own mother.

[5] This may have been Wu Rui 吳芮 or Wu Meng 吳蒙, paternal cousin of Wang Anshi's mother, and paternal uncle of his wife. (About Ink Pool: see also *Nenggaizhai manlu* 能改齋漫錄 by Wu Zeng 吳曾 (fl. 1127--1160), *CSJC* edition 11/272.

Tang and Song Dynasties" 唐宋八大家. It was Zeng Gong who in 1048 would write the commemorative essay to accompany Professor Wang's plaque at the Ink Pool.

Thus the Wangs of Linchuan, the Wu's of Jinxi金谿, and the Zengs of Nanfeng were bound by marriage, friendship, literati status, and a commitment to the tradition of diligent learning and service to humanity. To practice the aesthetic art of calligraphy until the pool ran black was a symbol of how the ancients had cultivated virtue. In other words, behind Jiangxi's aesthetic heritage, which would entice Wang all his life, lay the stern imperative to become a sage and be useful. Though it was sages' minds that could produce the best poems and calligraphy as natural byproducts of their wisdom, it was only by serving society that sages found their highest use. A sage who spent too much time on purely aesthetic pursuits would gradually cease to deserve the name "sage" --unless he were deliberately retreating from a society too corrupt to use him. In normal times he should be glad to serve. But in fact, serving the nation was arduous and often thankless, while literary and other private pursuits--though difficult--were basically a comfort and pleasure for those who excelled in them as Wang did. Mental conflicts and reconciliations between public and private goals would prove especially sharp for a man like Wang, whose temperament was serious, ambition high, and whose "eyes rolled constantly" with mental vigor.[6]

[6]According to the Song-dynasty *Daoshan qinghua* 道山清話 (attr. to Wang Wei 王暐, *CSJC* edition p. 24), Huang Tingjian once remarked as follows: "Men's eyes move when their eyes move; Wang Anshi's eyes would roll incessantly all day." Quoted also by Zhu Ziqing 朱自清

To what extent the Jiangxi intellectuals of that century formed a new group with a markedly utilitarian, activist approach to government is still a matter of debate. Also debatable is the exact way in which Jiangxi as a region may have contributed to a gradual Southernization of elite Chinese thought. Nonetheless, at least a dozen major eleventh-century intellectuals came from Jiangxi, several from Linchuan specifically. Though they were not cliquish, their individual contributions and mutual ties were undeniable factors setting them off as a political and intellectual force.[7]

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follows: "Men's eyes move when their minds move: Wang Anshi's eyes would roll incessantly all day." Quoted also by Zhu Ziqing 朱自清 (posth.) in his *Song wujia shichao* 宋五家詩鈔 (Shanghai Guji, 1981) p. 58.

[7] See James T.C. Liu, *Ouyang Hsiu, an Eleventh-Century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford, 1967) p. 24. Also Liu's *Reform in Sung China: Wang An-shih and his New Policies* (Harvard, 1959) p. 26.

A brief list of Jiangxi intellectuals:

In addition to Wang and his brothers, there were the first two Southerners to become state councillors: Wang Qinruo 王欽若 (962--1025), and Yan Shu 晏殊 (991--1055). The latter (from Linchuan) inspired such reformers as Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989--1072) and Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007--1072, also a Jiangxi man by ancestry).

Li Gou 李覯 (1009--1059), who like Wang advocated a "rich nation with a strong army," and emphasized the *Zhouli* (*Rites of Zhou*) as a practical handbook, hailed from Nancheng 南城, halfway between Wang's home and Zeng Gong's. (See Hsieh Shan-yuan, *The Life and Thought of Li Kou, 1009--1059*. San Francisco: Chinese Research Materials Center, 1979.)

Lesser figures, made prominent by Wang's administration, included Zeng Gong's younger half-brother Zeng Bu 曾布 (1035--1107), and the general Wang Shao 王韶 (1030--1081, from the Jiujiang area).

There was also the classical scholar Liu Chang 劉敞 (1008--1069) and his brothers, with whom Wang Anshi exchanged poetry. And Pei Yu 裴煜 (1046 *jinshi*, d. 1068), associated with Wang and with Ouyang Xiu. (See P 28.)

The Jiangxi School of poetry, founded by Huang Tingjian 黃庭堅 (1045--1105, from Hongzhou), espoused poetic principles that Wang Anshi had helped to develop.

The Wang family home stood near Linchuan's Water Gate, where salt barges docked.[8] Wang may have lived here as a boy of seven or eight, when his father, Wang Yi 王益, was stationed near Chengdu (too far and perhaps too bandit-ridden to take the family); and at ages twelve through fifteen, when Wang Yi was in mourning for Wang Anshi's grandfather (Wang Yongzhi 王用之, d. 1033?). But all other times the family followed Wang Yi to his posts. The farthest appointment was to Shaozhou 韶州, southwest of Jiangxi in what is now northern Guangdong Province. Wang Yi's tour of duty lasted from 1030 to 1033, Wang Anshi being nine to twelve years old. Wang remembered those years well, recounted them in detail in the biography of his father, and would wax nostalgic decades later when he was visited by a Mr. Yu from Shaozhou, whom Wang had watched brush-writing as a boy.[9]

In the 1050's, Wang wrote to an acquaintance that there were a great many "Southern intellectuals" 江南士大夫, unknown to most people. Wang's correspondent had known only of Li Gou, Zeng Gong and Wang himself: Wang said that was not a representative sample. See "Reply to Wang Kaizu" 王開祖(*zi* Jingshan 景山), in *Linchuan* 77/819.

[8] See *Nenggaizhai manlu* 9/228; quoted in Shen p. 79.

Li Bi 李壁 (1160--1222), annotator of Wang's poetry, visited the Wang clan temple at the site, approximately a century and a half after Wang's lifetime. See Li's note to the poem "On Crossing the Mountains" 過山即事, in *Jianzhu Wang Jingwengong shi* 箋注王荊文公詩 (1306 edition rep. Taipei: Kuang Wen, 1974) 33.2b/810.

For Wang's own description of where his home was: *Linchuan* 83/875 (on the renovation of the Dazhongxiangfu Daoist temple, 1046).

[9] Li Bi 30.9b/748. Other information about Wang Yi, and about Wang Anshi's early life, comes largely from Anshi's "Life of my Deceased Father" 先大夫述 (*Linchuan* 71/750). See also Zeng Gong's tomb inscription for Wang Yi, based on Wang Anshi's piece, in *Yuanfeng leigao* 44.6-7. Williamson translates most of Wang's piece, I/2-5.

Shaozhou was rugged and morally backward: as Wang tells it, the people observed too few distinctions between male and female. Wang Yi, noting that these people were also human beings, believed that they could and should be trained in the proper Confucian relationships. Under his regime, men and women learned not to walk together in the streets. He also aborted a revolt, improved roads and markets, and systematized the administration. He refused an obsequious gift of tigers' heads: local officials claimed the tigers had died of their own accord, in response to Wang Yi's stern reputation. He seems to have been kind and open to his children, instilling in them a sense of moral responsibility that Wang Anshi took strongly to heart.

When Wang Anshi's grandfather died in 1033, the family returned to Linchuan. Wang, now twelve, spent much time with his maternal grandparents' large family in Jinxi, at a place called Black Stone Hill (Wushigang 烏石崗).[10] The grandmother who lived there, Wang tells us, was more than moderately literate, but so self-effacing that outsiders had no chance to discover how well-educated she was.

It was also at Jinxi that Wang met a local celebrity, the

[10] *Linchuan* 90/939. Tomb inscription for his maternal grandmother Huang.

child prodigy Fang Zhongyong 方仲永.[11] A boy about Wang's age, Fang came from a peasant family. At age four, Fang, who had never seen brush or ink, suddenly started to cry, begging for a set. When they were brought, he immediately wrote out and signed a quatrain. Thereafter, well-crafted verses sprouted from him at will; he wrote of affection for his parents, or about any object pointed at him. His father enjoyed the free meals and occasional gifts that came to him as he displayed his son to the neighbors, but he neglected to educate the boy. By the time Wang first saw him, Fang was losing his poetic touch. Thirteen years later he had become a completely common man. In 1046, Wang analyzed this as a case in which genius--a gift from Heaven--could wither if not cultivated by human beings. The implication, one imagines, is that it is a desirable social goal to educate even peasants, and that a practical educational system is necessary to achieve that goal. Only active social reform could ever hope to introduce such a system. Wang's family had been peasants themselves not many generations earlier: education had allowed them both to prosper personally and to serve humanity as officials. Wang's lament for Fang Zhongyong's wasted life is not the patronizing, elitist work that the modern reader may at first think it to be: it is a genuine lament by one who well knew the value of what Fang's father--and society--had thrown away. One would

[11] Our knowledge of Fang, summed up in the following narration, comes from Wang's famous essay "Sorrow for Zhongyong" 傷仲永, written 1046 or later. *Linchuan* 71/754.

be surprised to find a similar essay by a member of the Northern upper class.[12]

[12]It is also interesting to note that the people of Jinxi later worshipped the mountain peak beneath which Fang had been born, calling it the "Child Genius Peak"神童峯. Cai Shangxiang, whose home was at Jinxi, felt rather sensitive about this. He found it ironic that a man who had ended up worthless could be celebrated for his genius: made famous by Wang's essay, Fang was being venerated in total contradiction to the sad point the essay had tried to make. (Cai 2/46, also noted by Williamson I/15.) Perhaps the object-lesson Wang would have drawn from this misguided worship of the peak is as follows: education is needed so that people will *nurture* the geniuses among them, rather than simultaneously idolizing and destroying them through ignorance. And society should be able to cultivate enough geniuses that they no longer need be worshipped as rare beings.

One might also compare Wang's farewell piece to Hu Shunyuan 胡舜元, whose parents had insisted that he pursue an education, despite the fact that all other well-to-do families in their boorish county had long since decided it was foolish to pursue the civil-service career, as none of the local candidates ever passed the examinations. In the face of local ridicule, Hu Shunyuan eventually did pass the *jinshi* in 1059. (*Linchuan* 84/885.)

2. BIANJING, JIANGNING: 1036--1041

By the time he was sixteen, Wang had lived in all three of the places that would dominate the rest of his life: Jiangxi, followed by the capital Bianjing 汴京 (modern Kaifeng), and finally Jiangning 江寧, popularly called Jinling 金陵 (modern Nanjing). The trip to Bianjing which Wang Yi took in 1036 was presumably to report that his mourning had ended, and to await orders for his next post.[1] We do not know what the Wangs did in the capital, except that one day Wang Anshi visited the Western Temple of the Great One 西太一宮, with his father and elder brothers.[2]

In 1037, Wang Yi was appointed governor of Jiangning, an important post which two of his sons would also hold decades later (Anshi and Anli). This was where the immediate family would settle after Wang Yi died, and the place that they would consider their real home after

[1]The trip to the capital is dated 1036 by a line in Wang's long poem to his cousins, which Williamson translates as "Reminiscences" 憶昨詩示諸外弟. (Li Bi 20.5a/519; Williamson I/11-12. Williamson's translation is incomplete.) This poem, probably written in 1043, fixes several dates in Wang's early life, as well as confirming the general impression of Wang as a dedicated, studious young man.

[2]This was a national Daoist temple. See two poems Wang put up on the wall there about thirty years later. (P 58-59.)

he was buried there.[3] Jiangning had been the imperial capital during the Six Dynasties, serving as a stronghold of Chinese civilization while nomadic dynasties held the North; had been the home of poets and heroes whom Li Bo and Du Fu acknowledged as their forebears; the place where Buddhist seeds had grown and branched; the center of a new South Chinese civilization, now ten centuries old: for poets, the name Jinling went hand-in-hand with "Contemplation of the Past" 懷古. Wang would later sum up the place in two lines of a poem with that title:[4]

Hills and water desolate, silent
the Breath of Kings buried within them
Wind and mist moldering, cold
fill the windows of monks

山水寂寥埋王氣，風煙瀟颯滿僧窗.

One can sense many ideas in those lines, all pointing to a harmony of

[3] See "Four Miscellaneous Odes: the First" 雜詠四首,其一, Li Bi 40.6b/964, trans. under P 74. This is not the place to discourse on urbanization of Chinese gentry during the Song. However, the Wang family is an example of what must have been happening to other families as well: Wang Yi moved to a city, was buried there, and his sons were educated there. Their education was so good that several of them attained the *jinshi* degree. Meanwhile, the grandmother and cousins remained at Linchuan: the city branch of the family produced several famous men, but few ever heard of the relatives who stayed at home.

[4] "Jinling huaigu" 金陵懷古, third of four poems. (Li Bi 35.6a/863; Zhou Xifu ed. *Wang Anshi shixuan* 王安石詩選, Hong Kong: Joint Publications, 1983, p. 98.) The "breath of kings" 王氣: actually the *qi* or *pneuma* that surrounds certain places, figuratively presaging that a king may arise from there. See also P 55.

Buddhism and Confucianism in the deep reaches of Wang's thought. "Breath" or *qi* is buried with the kings in their ruined tombs, but *qi* is not a dead thing--it is as vibrant as the mountains and water; though invisible, this *qi* lies within palpable objects on earth, just as the impalpable spirit of good government takes form in canals, defense policies, well-conducted civil service examinations. Conversely, the physical presence of Buddhist monks and buildings belies their true expression, which is their message that all things are unreal--a message discernible through the winds and mists that disappear whenever one's physical eyes come close to them. Whether it is kingly *qi* or temple windows, in either case the teachings they represent were born in Nature, as was this poem; and are thus natural, valid, in harmony, and perhaps ultimately at one with each other.

Although Wang was probably not thinking such thoughts when he started school in Jiangning at age sixteen, the place must have attracted him. It would supply images for most of his later poems on longing to leave the bureaucracy, and was the site where he would write his finest verse: the quatrains of his last decade.

In 1038 his sister Wang Wenshu (王文淑, age thirteen, the next child after Anshi) married a man named Zhang Kui 張奎, from Sha Prefecture in central Fujian. They soon moved to Jiangxi, and lived much of the time in the Jiujiang area, at the foot of Mt. Lu 廬山. We know little of Zhang Kui, except that he would be appointed to serve in Sichuan, and that Wang liked him. (P 32.) Wang's sister was

bright, literary, and exchanged poems with Wang.[5]

His schooling was now directed toward the *jinshi* or doctoral examinations in the capital. After his father died in office early in 1039, Wang continued his studies, hoping to pass the examinations so he could support the family, whose finances were precarious.[6] Late in 1041 he went to Bianjing, and in 1042 passed the *jinshi*, fourth name from the top, on his first try.[7] Wang said of himself then, "Stupidly, I do not recognize how affairs change; I believe only in the Ancients." When in school, he would shut himself away with the most ancient writings, entering into a trance-like oblivion to all personal feelings.[8]

Of his boyhood friends in Jinling, we know of one named Deng Ziyi 鄧子儀, with whom Wang recalled plaiting rushes and wandering by streams together.[9] We owe our knowledge of another friend, the

[5]See Wang's tomb inscription for her, *Linchuan* 99/1021.

[6]Wang Yi died in 1039.1.23. ("Life of My Deceased Father" 先大夫述, *Linchuan* 71/751.)

[7]Wang Zhi 王銍(fl. 1126) says: Wang Anshi was to have been the first-place examinee, but his essay contained a taboo phrase. So he was switched to fourth place, while Yang Zhi 楊寘(fourth place) was raised to first place. Yang Zhi, eager for glory, and before learning about the switch, made spiteful talk about being only in fourth place. Wang, by contrast, never even murmured about being knocked from the top rank: an indication, says the anecdote, of Wang's magnanimity as well as the lack of importance he attached to the examinations. See *Mo ji* 默記(Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981) C/38-39.

[8]See first letter to Zhang Taibo 張太博 (written 1045), *Linchuan* 77/810.

[9]See two poems written to Deng, in Li Bi 32.5b/790. First one translated in Yoshikawa Kōjirō, *An Introduction to Sung Poetry*, Burton Watson trans. (Harvard, 1967), p. 90.

Northerner Ma Zhongshu, to the fact that he died young and Wang inscribed his tomb. The inscription follows:[10]

TOMB INSCRIPTION FOR MA ZHONGSHU 馬仲舒

Ma Zhongshu of Hefei, whose courtesy name was Hanchen 漢臣, was descended from a Maoling family. (11) When his father, Ma Gao, served as Expediter of Shipping for the Eastern Yangzi, he settled the family at Jinling. Hanchen entered school there, older than the rest of the class. He enjoyed wine and women. Raw soul-baring and overexuberance dominated his talk. Though his parents did not like this, their immense love for him left them powerless to educate him against the flow of his notions. In addition, Hanchen was free with money, always rescuing those in trouble, never calculating his own interests. Among all the classmates, it was myself in particular that he admired and sought to approach. Recognizing that he could be taught, I guided him toward the Rites and Norms 禮法. And indeed he awakened, and followed that awakening with much molding and shaping of himself, as he endeavored to enter the realm of Rites and Norms. After a few months of study with me in preparation for the doctoral examinations, his writings grew luminous and fully worthy of the course he was pursuing. (12)

Hanchen being four years my senior, I treated him as a brother. Yet in his view he was a pupil, I his master. He assisted in my uncle's funeral as if he, too, shared the family name. (13) In 1046, five years after his coming of age, Hanchen went to the capital with me to await the doctoral examination. In the sixth month he grew ill and died. I was sick also, but he had an uncle in the capital, who could procure a coffin to take Hanchen

[10] *Linchuan* 26/990; Shen 7/371. Ma's dates: 1017--1046.

[11] Maoling 茂陵: in Shaanxi, near Xi'an.

[12] These months of study probably occurred after Wang had passed the *jinshi* and was serving in nearby Yangzhou: Wang by then would have been a qualified teacher.

[13] It is not known which uncle this was (叔父), or when he died.

> back to Jinling. There he was buried, at X place in the X month of year X. In the words of Confucius: "There are those who flower yet bear no fruit:" truly Hanchen ended as one of those! (14)
>
> And alas, now I inscribe his tomb!

Those statements about Ma help confirm certain aspects of Wang's character: Wang's earnest, intense, but perhaps rather rare friendships; his firm belief in the usefulness of moral teachings; and an unforced conviction that he himself was following the right path, and was qualified to lead others on it. This latter quality, when eventually it was manifested in a standard classical curriculum issued from Wang's office, intended for the whole empire to follow, perhaps aroused more ire with later intellectuals than any other thing about Wang.[15]

[14] *Lunyu* 論語 (text of *Lunyu yinde--A Concordance to the Analects of Confucius*; Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series, Supplement #16; Peking, 1940) 17/IX/22.

[15] Wang also sought moral guidance from others, however, as he did from his friend Li Tongshu 李通叔 (*zi* Buyi 不疑), another Jinling schoolmate who died of drowning before 1046. See Wang's lament for him, *Linchuan* 86/899, partially tranlated by Williamson, I/9.

3. DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND FIRST POST AT YANGZHOU: 1042--1046

Wang's classmates of 1042 were an interesting group. Out of 839 successful candidates, the second, third and fourth-ranked scholars all would become chief executives in later years. (They were #2 Wang Gui 王珪, 1019--1085; #3 Han Jiang 韓絳, 1012--1088; and #4 Wang Anshi.)[1] Other future luminaries were Lü Gongzhu 呂公著 (1018--1089), son of the conservative premier Lü Yijian 呂夷簡 and later chief architect for Sima Guang's repeal of Wang Anshi's reform; and Su Song 蘇頌 (1020--1101), astronomer and pharmacologist. Another classmate, Wu Chong (1021--1080) soon became one of Wang's closest friends. Also a Southerner (from inland Fujian, near Jiangxi), Wu had been born the same year as Wang, would serve with Wang in the Livestock Commission, would marry his son to Wang's daughter, and late in life would replace Wang in the premiership. Eventual political differences between Wang and Wu seem to have been minor, and would never affect their friendship.[2]

[1] See Wang's "Inscription on the Wall of the Central Secretariat:" "...One must believe the Court puts heavy trust in Confucian arts: / In one time, from the same roster, it uses three men" 須信朝家重儒術，一時同榜用三人. (Longshu 68/728.)

[2] Other identifiable classmates with whom Wang kept some contact:
1. Wang Jie 王介 (*zi* Zhongfu 中甫). Passed the prestigious *Xianliang fangzheng* examination in 1061, along with Su Shi and Su Che.

Almost immediately upon receiving his degree, Wang was sent to Yangzhou, on the north side of the river, as sub-prefect for Huainan 淮南通判. The prefect of Yangzhou was the Northerner Han Qi 韓琦 (1008--1075), soon to participate in the Qingli-era or Minor Reform. Despite rumors to the contrary (already questioned by Li Bi in 1214), we can probably assume that both Han Qi and Wang respected each other personally and held somewhat compatible political views.[3] In summer

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(Wang Anshi was a grader.)

2. Liu Yu 劉敞 (*zi* Hefu 和甫), of Linchuan. Brother of the classical scholar Liu Chang 劉敞 (1008?--1069), and of Wang's friend Liu Bin 攽 (*zi* Gongfu 貢甫, 1023--1089).

3. Liu Jin 柳瑾 (*zi* Ziyu 子玉). Also associated with the poet Mei Yaochen. See Shen 3/82.

4. Ma Zhongfu 馬仲甫 (or 中甫), d. 1080. Memorial poem in Li Bi 50.1b/1228.

5. Chen Zhu 陳洙 (*zi* Shidao 師道, 1013--1061). Associated with Sima Guang.

The accusation in Wang's *Song shi* biography that he attained this degree through influence (Zeng Gong's recommendation to Ouyang Xiu) has been adequately refuted by Cai, 2/43. See also Williamson I/10-11.

[3] Shao Bowen 邵伯溫 (1057--1134) claimed that Wang often studied through the night, then rushed to work in the morning without having had time to wash. Han Qi assumed Wang had been carousing, and said "A young man like you should not give up studying--you'll throw your life away." Wang did not answer, but later he told other people, "Han Qi does not truly know me." Supposedly Wang's diary from then on would refer to Han as a man with an impressive exterior but few other good points.

Wang's poem on the painting of a tiger, says this source, was supposedly a veiled castigation of Han. (Li Bi 7.1a/283.) Li Bi doubts that. There is also little reason to see any resentment implied in Wang's memorial poem for Han. (Li Bi 49.7a/1223, written in 1075.) See *Sanchao mingchen yanxing lu* 三朝名臣言行錄 (*SBCK* edition) 6:2.5ab, quoting Shao Bowen's *Henan shaoshi wenjian qianlu* 河南邵氏聞見前錄. Also Shen p. 19. For a complete discussion, see Cai 3/52 (year 1045).

Wei Tai 魏泰 (ca. 1050--1110) says that Wang and Han differed politically, but that Wang had great respect or even affection for

of the next year (1043.4), Han went to the capital as Assistant Commissioner of Military Affairs 樞密副使, along with Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹(989--1052). Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修(1007--1072) replaced the ailing conservative Lü Yijian as Policy Critic-advisor. The reformist forces were maneuvering into position: Wang Anshi wrote a poem lauding this development en route to his home leave.[4]

This short-lived reform movement, predecessor to Wang's own reform twenty-five years later, had as its main goal a better-qualified, better-organized bureaucracy. It failed partly because its leaders were impatient and did not brook opposition: Ouyang Xiu's memorial "On Factions" 朋黨論(summer 1044) could hardly mask, much less cure, the polarization that was occurring.[5] By 1045, when Wang's term there was almost ended, Han Qi had already been sent back to Yangzhou. The court's return to "routine administration in the conventional ways" may have been one reason why Wang chose to seek another provincial appointment, rather than submitting further examination essays to advance his career in the capital.[6]

Wang spent most of one year on home leave at Linchuan:

Han. Wang's extant writings suggest that Wei Tai was right. See Wei's *Dongxuan bilu* 東軒筆錄(*Baihai congshu* edition) 6.1b-2a.

[4]"Reading the Official Bulletins at Zhennan, Written 1043.4" 讀鎮南邸報, 癸未四月作, Li Bi 25.5a/617.

[5]See T.C. Liu's account of the reform, *Ou-yang*, Chapter 4.

[6]"Routine administration..." T.C. Liu, *Ou-yang*, p. 51.

probably 1043, from the third month until late in the year.[7] His letter to his superior Xu upon returning, mentions two months' journey from Yangzhou to Linchuan by boat, and the flood of relief he felt upon seeing his grandmother for the first time in ten years. (*Linchuan* 76/804.) He presented a poem to his cousins, which narrated his most recent life and thoughts.[8] More important, it was probably on this trip home that Wang married a Miss Wu from Jinxi, whose father was a first cousin of Wang's mother. Her grandmother (nee Zeng, 985--1058, Zeng Gong's aunt) was more adept in the literary tradition than many well-travelled gentlemen.[9] Miss Wu herself was

[7]He had reached the Boyang Lake area ("Zhennan") by 1043.4. (See note 4.) Reached Linchuan in the fifth month. (*Linchuan* 76/804.) Had left Yangzhou in the third month: Li Bi 20.6a/521, *Linchuan* 76/804.

There is also evidence that it was 1044, or at least that he stayed into that year: Wang records that he visited his maternal grandmother's grave in 1044. (*Linchuan* 90/939.) Cai believes 1044 is a mistaken date in that text, and should read 1043 (i.e. Qingli 3 rather than Qingli 4). But he can produce no evidence.

However, it seems likely that the bulk of Wang's trip took place in 1043, as did his wedding. One assumes that Wang went to Linchuan to get married, rather than having the bride sent to Yangzhou: Linchuan was the official home of both families. If he got married at Linchuan in 1043, the birth of his son in 1044 would make sense. But if he had been married there in 1044 (arriving the 4th or 5th month), his son could not have been born in 1044. And one doubts that he married as early as 1036 at 15, his most recent time in Linchuan. More evidence: Wang dates a preface to 1043.8, written at the request of a man whom Wang had come to know at Linchuan "after my return (home) from Yangzhou." (*Linchuan* 84/884.)

[8]Li Bi 20.5a/519. See p. 10, note 1 above. This was also the year in which Wang saw Fang Zhongyong again, and discovered that Fang had become completely conventional. (See pp. 7-9 above.)

[9]According to Wang Anshi's tomb inscription for her, *Linchuan* 100/1029.

also a writer. One fragment of her verse survives: three lines from a *ci* or lyric, inviting family and friends to a gathering:[10]

"...So wait until the coming year, to lift the wine again
hand in hand,
who shall know there is no rain, no wind?..."

待得明年重把酒
攜手
那知無雨又無風

In 1044 they had a son, Wang Fang 王雱,[11] who in his short life would become Wang Anshi's closest collaborator and confidante, and who mirrored or even exaggerated his father's soberness, patriotism and devotion to duty.

During the term at Yangzhou, Wang maintained his friendship with Zeng Gong, who was still in Linchuan, and became intimate with another man named Sun Mou 孫侔 (1019--1084), who lived at Yangzhou. Wang hoped that Zeng and Sun would have a chance to meet, because despite their different personalities, they had two overriding points in common: their worthiness was unrecognized, and they hoped to emu-

[10] Preserved by Wei Tai in *Lin Han yinju shihua* 臨漢隱居詩話 (*CSJC* edition), p. 14. See also Tang Guizhang 唐圭璋 ed., *Quan Song ci* 全宋詞 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1965) 1/209; Zhou Xifu, p. 219.

[11] Actually pronounced *Pāng* in modern Mandarin. But his younger brother's name, 旁, is pronounced the same way, and it would create confusion to romanize them alike.

late the Sages.[12] Sun Mou seems to have had a gritty, uncompromising self-assurance often associated with those who sought sageliness. As Wang put it, a sage agrees with himself, while the mass of men agree with prevailing fashion. Mencius, Han Yu, and now Sun Mou were men who dared to support their own convictions against the trends of the times.[13] Sun Mou wrote prose in the "ancient style" preferred by those who desired to recapture the ancient *Dao*, and his writing was "strange" and "antique" 奇古 , like jutting crags. He never passed the *jinshi* examination; after his mother died, he vowed never to hold office. He grew harsh and prone to anger in his later years, quarreled with his neighbors, but always remained intimate with Wang Anshi, regardless of how high Wang rose in society.[14]

[12]See Wang's essay on parting with Zeng Gong (probably written 1043, on Wang's departure from Linchuan): "A Piece for a Classmate: Parting with Zeng Gong" 同學一首別子固 , *Linchuan* 71/755.

[13]See Wang's famous "Preface Sending Sun Mou on a Journey" 送孫正之序 , *Linchuan* 84/884.

[14]See Li Bi's notes under "To My Younger Brother's Rhymes, Upon Meeting with Zeng Gong, Remembering Sun Mou" 次韵舍弟過子固憶少述 (35.7a/865), and "Sent to Sun Mou" 寄孫正之 (10.9a/349.)

4. BIANJING AND YIN PREFECTURE: 1046--1050

In 1044 Zeng Gong wrote (from Linchuan?) a letter to Ouyang Xiu in the capital, recommending Wang as an extraordinary talent who should not be ignored. Ouyang, who was on an emissary mission to the Khitan state when the letter arrived, apparently did not answer. Zeng wrote a second letter in 1045, probably timed to coincide with Wang's arrival in the capital after Yangzhou. This time Zeng recommended two of Wang's friends as well, the brothers Wang Hui 王回 (1024--1065) and Wang Xiang 王向, both of whom Anshi's mother had helped raise.[1]

By the eighth month of 1045, when Wang had been in the capital only a few months, Ouyang Xiu was banished to Chuzhou 滁州, about sixty miles west of Yangzhou. Probably in 1046, Zeng Gong was in Jiangning; he crossed the Yangzi to Chuzhou and stayed with Ouyang for twenty days.[2] Zeng showed Ouyang the writings of the three Wangs; Ouyang was impressed. Zeng therefore urged Wang Anshi to get to Chuzhou so he could meet Ouyang in person. Zeng also conveyed Ouyang's wish

[1] See *Yuanfeng leigao* 15.17ab, quoted also in Cai 3/54. Wang Hui would be one of Wang Anshi's companions exploring the cave at the Baochanshan Temple in Anhui, 1054. See Chapter 5, also P 29.

[2] First letter to Wang Anshi, *Yuanfeng leigao* 16.5ab. See also Ronald Egan, *The Literary Works of Ouyang Hsiu (1007--1072)*, Cambridge University 1984, p. 20-21.

that Wang free up 開廓 his writing, and not tie himself to the ideas of Mencius and Han Yu: "Outstanding as their writings are, there is no need for (our own work) to resemble theirs," said Ouyang.

Ouyang's demotion had been the result of attempts by his political enemies to pin an incest charge on him. Wang Anshi and Zeng Gong were among those who belittled the accusations as fraudulent, and Ouyang's demotion as the kind of thing that upright men often suffer in imperfect times.[3] Wang likely saw in Ouyang those fiercely independent, righteous qualities of Mencius and Han Yu that Wang himself valued: hence Wang's absorption of their prose style was almost inevitable.

Wang stayed in Bianjing until late in 1046, when he was appointed to govern the prefecture of Yin 鄞縣 (modern Ningbo, in Zhejiang).[4] This was his second local post in a row. As mentioned on page 18, he would ordinarily be eligible, indeed was expected--and would later be required--to present essays and an account of himself that could qualify him for a *pro forma* examination and a year of unpaid probation in a central post. Most young officials eagerly pursued this opportunity for advancement. Yet although Wang was writing essays that would suit the purpose, he never submitted any and never took the

[3] In 1057, Wang resoundingly praised Ouyang's defender Su Anshi 蘇安世, especially Su's loyalty to truth in the face of slander by the "men high in power" 權貴人. (Tomb inscription for Su Anshi, *Linchuan* 92/954.)

[4] *Yin* is the official modern reading. Williamson has *Chin*; T.C. Liu *Chen*.

examination. Except for Lin Yutang, all of Wang's biographers since Cai seem to agree with Wang's own writings, which emphasize that the overwhelming reason he accepted only provincial posts until 1054 was that he needed the salary to support his family. There is no reason to believe the post-reform historical tradition that Wang (especially this early) was proudly holding himself aloof, trying to build a mysterious reputation, intending finally to descend upon the capital and turn the world on its ear, as soon as the unbearably curious Emperor summoned him at last.

Lin Yutang suggests that Wang may have felt intimidated at the capital by the presence of "older, better and sounder scholars," such as Fan Zhongyan, Sima Guang, Ouyang Xiu and Zeng Gongliang; that Wang had a psychological need "to be the boss wherever he was, and when serving as a magistrate in an outlying district, he was the big frog in a little puddle."[5] There is no doubt that Wang was ambitious, intolerant of conventional bureaucracy and social injustice, and was often hard to work with. And perhaps he occasionally felt a desire to "be the boss:" (Lin may have been more to the point when he said Wang "wanted to change the rules and run things in his own way," p. 78). However, Lin and the anecdotists take no account of other dimensions of the man, which would explain more accurately *why* Wang may have had such tendencies. If one focuses mainly on the panorama of government

[5]From Lin's biography of Su Shi, *The Gay Genius* (New York: John Day, 1947), p. 78. Lin's account depends heavily on anecdotes, and in fact is the best source in English for the traditional anti-Wang viewpoint.

officials as an interplay of personalities, virtually unconnected to the actual work of running the country (as anecdotal sources tend to do), one will miss the essential fact that there were people such as Wang, who were interested primarily in the *actual duties of their jobs*. Local posts gave Wang the chance to learn precisely how the economy and society functioned, and how they responded to different treatments. Moreover, extensive local experience would be indispensable if one wanted to save the nation as a whole--and Wang seems to have hoped from quite early for a chance to attempt that task.[6]

We do not know if the older scholars in the capital intimidated Wang, thus making him shy from them. He certainly made no special effort to become known, as Zeng Gong said. He missed several chances to meet Ouyang Xiu.[7] What we do have is ample evidence that Wang *disliked* and *disapproved of* certain other kinds of people who could be found anywhere: those "high in power" 權貴人 , concentrated

[6]This is the point that Deng Guangming 鄧廣銘 emphasizes: Wang pursued local appointments because they provided more experience, and knowledge of how the government really worked, than he could gain at a desk job in the capital. He could "use some of what I had been learning" 少施其所學 (Wang's words). See Deng Guangming, *Wang Anshi--Zhongguo shiyi shiji de gaigejia* 王安石 -- 中國十一世紀的改革家 (rev. ed., Beijing: Renmin, 1979), p. 20.

Wang's reasons for requesting the posts he did may not always be easy to know. At one point he may have tried to be assigned to the pleasant backwater of Jiangyin 江陰 , apparently a popular place for officials who wanted a relaxed career. (See poem to Zhu Mingzhi, "On Requesting a Post at Jiangyin and not being Granted..." 予求守江陰未得 , Li Bi 34.9a/875; Zhu p. 98.

[7]Wang did, however, submit ten pieces of his writing to a Zhang Taibo 張太博 in 1045 or 1046 (see page 13, note 8). He also submitted ten pieces (the same ones?) to someone else. ("Letter to a Certain Person" 上人書 , *Linchuan* 77/811.)

in the capital; the "run of the mill" or "common crowd" 流俗, and of course the private-sector "monopolists" 兼并 --classes of men who collectively weakened the nation and made the people hungry. A twenty-six-year-old minor bureaucrat could not break their power at the capital, but could begin to deal with them locally, one district at a time. Bending the rules, or being the "big frog," were both legitimate tools in this struggle: it is not necessary to see those activities as psychological needs.[8]

Wang's route to Yin took him through Hangzhou, home of several friends and acquaintances; he would visit there four more times in the next few years. Sun Mou praised the clustering of young idealist administrators in that region during this time: Wang at Yin Prefecture; Han Zhen 韓縝(1019--1097) at Qiantang; Xie Jingchu 謝景初 (1020--1084) at Yuhang, and Xie's brother Jingwen 謝景溫 at Guiji.[9] Wang's famous quatrain written at Hangzhou's "Peak that Came by Flight" is commonly thought to reflect the optimism with which he approached his new assignment.. (P 63.)

[8]Wang emphasized the importance (and rarity) of capable local administration in his record of the development of Tongzhou 通州 (written 1054.6.6, when Wang was resisting an appointment to the capital: *Linchuan* 82/866). During the reform period, Wang made it a policy to hire local officials for specific tasks, keeping them in the same posts for long periods.

[9]According to a tomb inscription for Xie Jingchu, written by Fan Chunren 范純仁 (1027--1101). See *Fan Zhongxuangong quanji* 范忠宣公全集 (1707 edition) 13.7a. Quoted also by Li Bi in note to Wang's poem "Sent to Xie Jingwen" 寄謝師直, 25.7b/622.

He arrived at Yin early in 1047, with his younger brothers, sisters, and one assumes with his mother as well. In the fourth month his second child, a daughter, was born; she would die the next year.

The capital was suffering a drought.[10] Yin was also plagued with water problems, but they stemmed from improper management, not lack of water itself. Wang's vigorous work on the irrigation and flood control systems at Yin contributed to his later reputation as an expert in this area.[11]

Most of his earliest datable poems were written during his stay here. One constant theme is concern for the common people, and a barely restrained outrage at policies (or their lack) that allowed human beings to starve and suffer. His poem "On Confiscating Salt" attacks the government salt monopoly, an institution that would "vie with others for a hairsbreadth gain" --preventing the island people from making salt, their only livelihood.[12] Another earnest poem on the proper way to reduce the anti-nomad defenses may have been written

[10]"Reading a Proclamation"讀詔書, Li Bi 39.3b/940.

[11]See his letter to Du Yan杜衍 on the water issue, and his record of a tour through the prefecture (the latter dated 1047.11). *Linchuan* 75/794, 83/868.

[12]Li Bi 17.4a/471. Also in the Guangzhou Railway, Tool Works, Provincial Command, and Zhongshan University ed., *Wang Anshi shiwen xuanzhu* 王安石詩文選注 (Guangzhou: Renmin, 1975), pp. 217-18. Zhou Xifu p. 4. Trans. by Yang Hsien-i and Gladys Yang, "Wang An-shih--Poems," in *Chinese Literature* #11 (1965), p. 70. Also trans. by Burton Watson in his *Chinese Lyricism: Shih Poetry from the Second to the Twelfth Century* (New York: Columbia, 1971), p. 213.

at Yin also.[13] Probably on the same tour on which he saw the salt farmers, Wang passed an overpopulated monkey island, and compared the monkeys' ravaging of their terrain to the rapacious,. shortsighted attitudes of human beings—especially those in official uniform. (P 1.)

Other writings were less overtly political. Wang believed, along with most Song Confucians, that Rites, manners, human decency, the tendency for people to form governments and seek order, all stemmed from natural instincts of the human mind. Wang's Buddhist associations also stimulated his thinking about the source of nature and harmony. He became friends with monks wherever he went. In Yin Prefecture we know that he made the acquaintance of Ruixin 瑞新 (Master Dead Mind 死心禪師, d. 1053), who was then at the Jingde Temple 景德寺 , located on the shoulders of Mt. Taibo 太白山 , about fifteen miles east of Wang's headquarters.[14]

On one early-summer visit there, Wang found a world of creatures and plants completely at peace: why, he wondered, were human

[13]"Economizing on Troops"省兵 , Li Bi 17.4a/471; Cai 4/65-67; Guangzhou pp. 252-4. Written in response to Wen Yanbo's proposal to reduce the army, this poem expresses in a nutshell Wang's approach to foreign policy and national reform. Wang supported the idea of troop reduction, but said it could only work if better generals were used, and the national infrastructure improved: the nation should increase production to support the soldiers, and the soldiers should also farm, to support themselves and have something to do with their time.

The poem is adequate artistically, but might be an example of what Ouyang Xiu meant when he suggested that Wang need not follow Han Yu's (didactic) style too closely.

[14]See Wang's piece from 1053.6, "Written on Master Ruixin's Wall"書瑞新道人壁 , *Linchuan* 71/756; also a poem to him, in Li Bi 13.6a/397. See also Chapter 12, under "Wang as a Buddhist."

beings alone caught in misery? Wang's other writings imply that he felt mankind theoretically could regain this natural harmony, but it would take a long struggle. (P 64.)

Late in 1047, Wang petitioned the premiers' office for a leave to entomb his father properly at Jiangning. Leave was granted in 1048.[15] In the sixth month of 1048, Wang's daughter died at fourteen months. His reticent, brief epitaph for her hides the grief he revealed in a quatrain on leaving Yin in 1049: "I have lived thirty years, already a faded old man" 行年三十已衰翁.[16]

Wang had followed his father's activist example, improving the waterways, begging relief from government harassment on behalf of the salt raisers,[17] possibly instituting low-interest agricultural loans which foreshadowed his "green-sprouts" policy in the 1070's,[18] and earning the community's lasting respect.[19]

[15]Wen Yanbo had become First Privy Councillor. This may be when Wang's name first came to Wen's attention (Cai 3/60). It was on this leave that Wang composed the "Life of my Deceased Father" (see page 6, note 9).

[16]"Farewell to My Daughter Born at Yin" 別鄞女, Li Bi 48.9b/1142; Zhou Xifu p. 16. Comment by Liu Xuxi 劉須溪 (1231--1294): this is rather early to call oneself old and faded, even in hyperbole. The daughter's epitaph: *Linchuan* 100/1028.

[17]Letter to Censor Sun, *Linchuan* 76/807; also Williamson I/21.

[18]Williamson I/18, quoting Wang's *Song shi* biography. Annotated edition of the biography: Lin Ruihan 林瑞翰, "*Song shi* 'Wang Anshi zhuan' zhu" 宋史王安石傳註, *Dalu zazhi* 27.1-5 (1963), 27.1 p. 23.

[19]In 1546 Ying Yunluan 應雲鸞 said the people of Yin still appreciated Wang. (Colophon to Wang's works, *Linchuan* p. 1047.) However, this may have as much to do with local pride at having been host to a famous figure as with actual memories of what Wang had done.

5. LINCHUAN, SHUZHOU: 1050—1054

Wang's exact traces in 1050 are hard to follow. Early in the year he left Yin for Linchuan, passing through Hangzhou for probably the fourth time. He climbed the drum tower at Yuezhou, where his friend Xie Jingwen was prefect, and bade farewell to the region.[1] By the summer of 1050 he was in Linchuan again, drinking with his maternal cousins.[2] Sometime in the same year he left Linchuan and visited Hangzhou again, perhaps en route to his true home at Jiangning.[3]

He was trying to obtain another provincial appointment, and to be exempted from the examination for a post at the capital. Wen Yanbo granted Wang that exemption in the fifth month of 1051.[4] Probably soon

[1] "Climbing the Yuezhou City Tower" 登越州城樓, Li Bi 20.4b/518, Zhou Xifu p. 17.

[2] "Drinking with my Maternal Cousins" 過外弟飲, Li Bi 44.13a/1089. Wang wrote an inscription for the Sanqing Hall 三清殿 at Fuzhou, dated 1050.5.25.

[3] His own inscription, which Li Bi saw at Jinfeng 金峯 in Fuzhou, states that he had slept at Jinfeng in 1050 on his way to Qiantang 錢塘, i.e. the Hangzhou area. "On First Leaving Linchuan" 初去臨川, Li Bi 39.2b/938. He may also have visited Suzhou on this trip. See "The Walls of Guxu" 姑胥郭, Li Bi 38.9a/931.

[4] Bi Yuan 畢沅 (1730—1797) et al., *Xu zizhi tongjian* 續資治通鑑 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1958) 51/1251. Cai attributes the same proclamation to the fourth month (Cai 4/69). Also named were Wang's future close friends Zhang Gui 張瓌 and Han Wei 韓維. Wen Yanbo cited all three as models of selflessness and virtue.

after that, Wang was appointed to Shuzhou 舒州 (in modern Anhui) as a sub-prefect 通判.[5]

In the ninth month, apparently before beginning his duties, he took a trip to see some local sights, accompanied by his brother Wang Anguo (1028--1074). On the sixteenth of the ninth month they stayed at the Shangu or Mountain Gorge Temple 山谷寺, visiting the Stone Ox Grotto (Shiniu dong 石牛洞) with one of the monks. The elegant inscription Wang had carved there compares the place to the mythical Peach Blossom Spring, at whose headwaters a Utopia could be found. Wang, like others before him, could only seek those headwaters but could not reach them. (P 57.)

On the way there, at the new moon (early ninth month, 1051), the Wang brothers had visited the Jiuhuashan 九華山 or "Nine Petalled Peaks," on the south side of the Yangzi. In two long poems Wang developed the eremitic themes which had appeared in some of his verse already. Not only were the mountains a place for men to retreat from the hypocritical official world--but the mountains themselves were hermits, who by their remote magnificence served as a silent rebuke to evil emperors, and to the more worldly Five Sacred Peaks who guarded those emperors' legitimacy. The mountains at Jiuhuashan may represent Nature's inherent standards, or Nature itself, but they do not bring calamities. Even when Nature does make trouble, such as the current drought, the blame for its terrible effects should go to officialdom, not to "Nature" or "Heaven."

[5]The administration was at Huaining 懷寧, near Mt. Qian 潛山.

Wang's reluctance to end his year of contemplation for the official life found an outlet in the writing of these poems. Written to rhymes by Anguo, the verses are also a tribute to Anguo's introspective and literary spirit.[6]

Anguo was Anshi's closest friend among his brothers: Wang Anshi probably exchanged more poems with him than with anyone else. Anguo was only twenty-three years old at this time (seven years junior to Anshi: at least one sister had been born between them). He played the flute. Some of his poetry survives, enough for us to understand why during their lifetimes Anguo's poetry was at least as well-liked as his brother's. During the reform period some Korean emissaries would request copies of his verse, somewhat to Anguo's amusement.[7] Anguo never had to study how to write; it was a sport for him. His poems are smoother than Anshi's; they "sing," while Anshi's verses can sound cerebral, prosaic, preachy; conversational; occasionally convoluted or barely grammatical. Anguo never passed the *jinshi* (it would be bestowed on him in 1068), was politically more conservative than his brother, perhaps more susceptible to life's pleasures, and ultimately took state affairs less seriously. He married a Miss Zeng, who eventually bore him five daughters and two sons.

[6] P 66 and 67. Other poems from that period that treat eremitism: P 25, 57.

[7] *Dongxuan bilu* 8.9a. Quoted also in *Songchao shishi leiyuan* 宋朝事實類苑 by Jiang Shaoyu (Song), (Shanghai Guji, 1981) 35/452; Shen p. 323. Also *Xitangji qijiu xuwen* 西唐集耆舊續聞 by Chen Hao 陳鵠 (fl. 1216), *CSJC* edition 9/61.

Their eldest half-brother Wang Anren 王安仁 (1015--1051) died in office at Jiangning about the time the younger two were visiting the Shangu Temple. Anren had been a teacher, and had received his *jinshi* only two years before, in 1049. In 1051 he had served as a census official in Xuanzhou 宣州 (in the area of the Jiuhuashan) for three months until summer, when he was transferred to the Jiangning salt administration.[8]

One of Wang Anren's *jinshi* classmates was a man named Zhu Mingzhi 朱明之 (*zi* Changshu 昌叔) of Yangzhou, whom Wang Anshi may have befriended earlier at Gaoyou 高郵 north of Yangzhou. After a few years it was probably Wang Anshi who arranged for Zhu to marry one of Wang's younger sisters.[9] Zhu now lived at Huaining, the Shuzhou prefectural seat, where he and Wang spent time reading, versifying and travelling together.[10]

Wang's second elder half-brother Wang Andao 王安道 also died this year or earlier. Wang Anshi was now head of the family, responsible for at least seven adults and a number of children, as well as the burial of two brothers. However, finances were improving, so that by 1054 he could afford to reluctantly take a post in the capital.

[8]See Wang Anshi's epitaph for him, *Linchuan* 96/987.

[9]After the sister died (in or before 1065), Zhu married another girl from the Wang family. For data on Zhu, see Wang's poem "Sent to My Sister Mrs. Zhu" 寄朱氏妹, Li Bi 8.5b/306. Also Zeng Gong's epitaph for Wang's mother, *Yuanfeng leigao* 45.5b. Date of the sister's death: indicated in Zeng Gong's third letter to Wang (of 1065), *Yuanfeng leigao* 16.8a.

[10]Poem to Zhu, Li Bi 33.10a/825; Shen p. 82.

Next spring (1052), Wang went to Jiangning to bury Wang Anren and presumably to sweep their father's tomb as well.[11]

Wang's post at Shuzhou probably had connections with military affairs. However, the main concerns which he has recorded involved the famines and droughts that plagued the southern regions in 1051 and 1052, and the flaws in the government that made famine worse. His famous poems about "The Monopolists"兼并 , "Moved by Events"感事 , and "Opening the Granaries"發廩 were written at Shuzhou.[12] "The Monopolists" castigates not only profiteers, but also the "conventional Confucians"俗儒 who not only let the monopolists go free, but actually compete with them for their lucre, at the people's expense. "Moved by Events" goes beyond indicting the mismanaged bureaucracy, into a confession that Wang himself, an official, is in danger of becoming an accomplice in what he had always hated: "Because those very people I once pitied / Are now the ones whose troubles I control!" 昔之心所哀，今也執其咎 . He loathed being a useless bureaucrat, with his concomitant vain need for money utterly out of proportion to any good he may have done. (P 4.)

Some of the themes in Wang's poetry of the time may be explained by the fact that he had been collecting the verses of Du Fu

[11]Evidence in P 69; also in the quatrain for Wang Anren's funeral, "The cortège of the Lord of Xuanzhoufu Passes through Jinling" 宣州府君喪過金陵 (Li Bi 48.7a/1187), and tomb inscription for Anren (*Linchuan* 96/987).

[12]"Monopolists," translated as P 2; "Moved by Events" is P 3. "Granaries," see Li Bi 17.5a/473; translated in Williamson I/27.

杜甫 (712--770), a socially conscious writer and a man who had gone ahead and "created what everyone knows no man can create" 人知非人之所能為,而為之者、惟莫甫也 . Two hundred hitherto-unknown poems which Wang had been given in Yin Prefecture he identified as being Du Fu's because they had this quality. By 1052 Wang had readied them for printing.[13]

It should not be considered unusual that the urge to give up and retreat appeared often in Wang's poetry, even when he was in his twenties. It is a common theme among writers, and in Wang's case it is no surprise that a man who worked so conscientiously at his job would find official life trying and frustrating. The second of two poems he wrote at Mt. Simurgh 鳳凰山, during his tour at Shuzhou, expresses the same urge in a sardonic way: he envies the "carefree young gents" 輕薄兒 of the early Tang, "spending a life at cock-fighting and dog-racing, oblivious of peace or danger in heaven or on earth!" 鬪鷄走犬過一生, 天地安危兩不知. (Li Bi 8.8b/311.)

Though Wang longed in his public writings for the ancient times of true peace, lines such as the above show a more ironic wish: for a time as outwardly placid and basically dangerous as his own, but in

[13] In the fifth month, perhaps on the same trip to Jiangning to bury his brother. See Wang's "Preface to a Supplemental Collection of Master Du's Verse" 老杜詩後集序, *Linchuan* 84/880. Wang's poem "On Du Fu's Portrait" 杜甫畫像 pays tribute by imitating Du Fu's style and borrowing his phrases, with such fluency that one can tell Wang had been exploring Du's writings for some time. (Li Bi 13.1a/387.) Wang's statement about Du Fu may be a paraphrase of *Lunyu* 30/XIV/38, which describes Confucius as a man who "knows it cannot be done, yet does it" 知其不可而為之者 ..." A stoicñ an idealist.

which *no one realized* there was danger. Wang saw too clearly the disaster toward which the Song was steering: an exhausted economy inviting nomadic invasion and ultimate defeat. It would be temperamentally impossible for him to ignore this crisis. The only way to achieve personal tranquillity would be to live in a different century.

In summer, 1053 (sixth month), Wang was sent to inspect flooding near Suzhou 蘇州, an area where frequent disasters had increased poverty and banditry. Wang may have given some advice, but did not stay to oversee the solution, which would take shape in 1055 as the Kunshan Dyke.[14]

Much has been written about his four refusals of the post he was commanded to take in 1054.3.22.[15] That spring he was exempted both from the examination and from the customary unpaid probation; instead he was commanded to appear in Bianjing and serve as a Reader in the Hall of Assembled Worthies (*Jixian jiaoli* 集賢校理).[16] In addition

[14] 崑山 / 至和塘. See the detailed account, "Zhihe tang ji" by a contemporary local official, Qiu Yuquan 丘與權, in *Wudu wencui* 吳都文粹 ed. by Zheng Huchen 鄭虎臣 (*Siku quanshu zhenben* edition) 5.23. Wang also has poems describing the area, which he seems not to have visited again.

[15] *Linchuan* 40/426-8; Cai 4/79-81; Williamson I/28-32.

[16] Williamson follows Zhan Dahe's 12th-century chronology of Wang, stating that it was Ouyang Xiu who recommended Wang for the post. Cai disagrees; he believes Ouyang did not recommend Wang until 1056, if at all. (Williamson I/28, note 2.) Cai's date makes more sense: in 1054, Ouyang had not yet met Wang; also the extant recommenation by Ouyang recommends Wang for a censorate position, not the library post offered in 1054. Most important, Ouyang had been in mourning, and would not arrive in the capital until 1054.6. The question then remains: was someone in the capital looking out for Wang's interests? We cannot yet be sure. (See chronology in *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 歐陽修全集 ed. by Hu Ke 胡柯, Song; Taipei: World, 1971; p. 10.

to his usual financial reasons for refusing, Wang strongly added the fact that he he did not want to be singled out for a favor, or to break precedent. By the ninth month, 1054, he finally accepted a post in the capital as a Staff Supervisor on the Livestock Commission 群牧司判官.[17]

Before leaving, in the seventh month he probably visited his friend Wang Hui at Ruyin 汝陰, from which they made their famous tour of the cave at Baochanshan Temple.[18] The cave was deep: torches in hand, they penetrated to where few had ever been, yet it was only one-tenth as far as the most adventuresome had explored in the past. When someone in their party wanted to turn back before the torches burned too low, they all came back out together. Once outside again, Wang felt sorry he had listened to that person. (One wonders which one it was, and how he felt upon reading Wang's essay!) The ancients, said Wang, had made their great moral and ethical discoveries only by taking dangerous paths, by thinking into uncharted reaches of ideas, not by following other people. Did not Wang hope to be an "ancient" as well? Wang taught himself that from now on he should cultivate strength, independence, oblivion to ridicule and to

[17]This commission (which Williamson translates as the Imperial Stud) was chiefly connected with raising horses for the military.

[18]"Record of a Tour to the Baochanshan" 遊褒禪山記 *Linchuan* 83/868. Wang's younger brothers Anguo and Anshang 安上 also went, along with a friend Xiao Jungui. Translated by Jan Walls: "Wang An-shih's 'Record of an Excursion to Mount Pao-ch'an: A Translation and Annotation," in *Critical Essays on Chinese Literature*, William Nienhauser et al. ed. (Hong Kong: Chinese University, 1976), pp. 159-166. Translated and analyzed by Stephen Owen, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World* (Wisconsin, 1985), pp. 180-190.

personal remorse: in other words, he should eliminate all obstacles to a thorough exploration of whatever needed to be explored. Intellectually, he and Wang Hui were drawing charts for the caverns of sage wisdom, as contained in the early Confucian texts. Politically, Wang hoped to do things for the nation that no one had succeeded in doing since the times of Yao and Shun. Modest as he was, his ambition to serve in a high post some day was unmistakable.

6. BIANJING: 1054--1057

Wang stayed in the capital for over two and a half years this time, joined Ouyang Xiu's circle of friends, and made friends of his own. He began work in the Livestock Commission in the ninth month of 1054; next year (1055.6) his doctoral classmate Wu Chong 吳充 was named to the same commission.[1] During part of this period, Sima Guang also worked for the Livestock Commission; but he and Wang seem to have had little contact outside of work, and possibly found it hard to cooperate with each other. Wu Chong, on the other hand, became a fast friend of Wang's. In late 1056 or early 1057 they would be companions on a routine diplomatic assignment, escorting Khitan envoys between the northern border and the Song capital.[2] Wang's closest friend in addition to Wu

[1]See *Xu zizhi tongjian changbian* 續資治通鑑長編 by Li Tao 李燾 (1115--1184), (Taipei: World, 1964) 18.6b, year 1055.6.7. Also Shen p. 81.

[2]Wang Jinguang 王晉光 has skillfully traced the tenuous evidence for the dates of Wang's northern trips. (*Wang Anshi shumu yu suotan* 王安石書目與索探 ; Hong Kong: Huafeng, 1983; pp. 87-96.) According to him, there were three trips, of which the first two went only to the border. It is fairly certain that Wang went in the first few days of 1060, escorting the yearly Khitan New Year's Day emissaries back north to the frontier. (See Chapter 8, note 7 below.) That was his second trip. The first occurred three years earlier, at the end of 1056 (if he was escorting the Khitans into China), or in the beginning of 1057 (if he was escorting them back home).

Evidence:

1. In 1059, Wang's friend Liu Jin 劉瑾 was appointed Record-keeper at Daming 大名 or Ye 鄴 in modern Hebei, on the route north. (See

Chong may have been Han Wei 韓維(1017--1098), of a distinguished Kaifeng family. Han Wei's brother, Han Jiang 韓絳(1012--1088) had been a *jinshi* classmate of Wang and Wu Chong; Han Wei himself would not take the *jinshi* examination, and had declined appointments several times.[3]

Mei Yaochen's poem sending off Liu Jin, *Mei Yaochen ji* 29/1115.) Wang wrote a poem for Liu Jin at Ye, datable therefore to 1061. In it Wang says:

"For *three years* I have not climbed the Ye King's terrace;
Now, when the red geese return, *I have come north again*..."
三年不上鄴王臺，鴻雁歸時又北來.

(Li Bi 34.2a/831.)

2. Wang wrote to his sister Wenshu:

"So I fret that for *three years* I have been away
from our lakes and waters,
And now, *again* I make a *thousand-mile dusty journey*."
自憐湖海三年隔，又作塵沙萬里行.

(Li Bi 30.4b/738.)

3. It seems that Wu Chong went with Wang in 1057, it being almost two years since they had started working together on the Livestock Commission. Wang wrote,

"For *two years* we have esteemed each other and
enjoyed a common voice;
Bridle next to bridle, in dust and sand,
clear-eyed just the same..."
二年相值喜同聲，並轡塵沙眼亦明

("To the Rhyme *xing*, at Wu Chong's Banquet" 沖卿席上得行字, Li Bi 30.9b/748.)

[3]See Herbert Franke ed., *Sung Biographies* (Wiesbaden, 1976): S. Aoyama for Han Wei (I/387), Y. Shiba for Han Jiang (I/364).

In 1051 Han Jiang had been in charge of famine relief in the Jiangnan region. By advocating that richer peasants be freed from the duties of local office service, he anticipated Wang's later reform of the Hired Service System. But after Wang's reform went into effect, Han Jiang criticized some of its excesses--apparently to Wang's and the Emperor's displeasure.

Han Wei's opposition to Wang's Green Sprout System would eventually cause the pro-reform zealots to condemn him after Wang's death. But his relations with Wang himself seem always to have been cordial; the two men helped each other in major ways. Also they were both related to Wu Chong by marriage. (*Changbian* 213.4-5; T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 64.)

In 1076, Wang would pick Wu and Han to succeed him in leading the reform. But as younger men, their friendship involved more ordinary activities, according to Ye Mengde:[4]

> Wang Anshi by nature was not one for embellishment or good grooming: he would spend a whole year without taking a bath, and did not wash his clothes even after they had deteriorated. (In 1056), he and Wu Chong both served as Staff Supervisors on the Livestock Commission. Han Wei was also in the government at the time; they formed a close and friendly trio, and not a day passed without their meeting. (Han and Wu) made a pact, by which every month or two they would take (Wang) to bathe at the Dingli Yuan 定力院. (5) Each household provided new clothes, which they turned out for Wang to wear. They called this "Unstitching and Washing Wang Anshi" 拆洗王介甫. When Wang came out of the bath and saw the new clothes, he would simply put them on without asking where they came from. (6)

Shen Gua 沈括 (1030--1094), who knew Wang fairly well, relates how Wang (probably later, during his premiership) suffered from shortness of breath, but refused a special medicine "because I have managed to live without it so far." But the blackness of his face still

[4]The following anecdote is from Ye's *Shilin yanyu* 石林燕語 (*CSJC* edition) 10/98. For better punctuation, see Shen p. 81.

[5]I have not yet located the passage in the *Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華錄 that reportedly describes the Dingli Yuan. (Quoted by Shen, p. 110.) It was a temple that had bathing facilities, and was situated by the Baokang Gate 保康門, the leftmost of the southern gates in the old city wall.

[6]This story grew into a more widely-quoted version, in which it was Han Zhen 韓縝 (1019--1097, Han Wei's brother, Wang's neighbor) who secretly put out a new set of clothes for Wang to change into, while Wang was bathing. Wang came out, put on the clothes, *never noticing* that they were not the filthy rags he had gone in with. See *Quyu jiuwen* 曲洧舊聞 by Zhu Bian 朱弁 (d. 1154), (*CSJC* edition) 10/80.

worried some of his staff, who asked a doctor. The doctor said, "This is just grime, he's not sick," and brought some soap powder for Wang to wash his face. Wang said: "Heaven put this blackness on my face--so what does soap powder have to do with me?"[7]

Such stories may be exaggerated, but they do bear out what we know of Wang's simple lifestyle, frugal personal tastes, and his concentration on important tasks to the exclusion of most else. During these years he sometimes joked about his appearance: at a banquet given by Liu Bin劉斌 of Linchuan, Wang praised Feng Jing馮京 as a free-spirited Heavenly Steed, Han Wei as a "white crane alighting on a clear pool," Wu Chong as a bed of flower-petals, Shen Gou 沈遘 as "jade snow making pristine reflections" --but then "there is myself, whose ugly face scares all you worthies / In the mirror I look just like a Fright God's mask" 唯予貌醜駭公等/自鏡亦正如蒙僕.[8] Wang's real joke here was about his own emulation of Confucius--the "Fright God Mask" refers to a passage in *Xunzi*: "Confucius' likeness resembled a Fright God mask."[9]

More historically important than Wang's personal appearance is

[7] *Xin jiaozheng Mengxi bitan* 新校正夢溪筆談 (Hu Daojing ed., 1957; rep. Hong Kong: Zhonghua, 1978) #168, 9/109.

[8] "To Liu Bin's Rhymes at a Banquet" 和貢父燕集之作, Li Bi 10.8a/347. The "Fright God" (*mengqi* 蒙僕) refers either to a god that scares away pestilence, or to the mask or make-up representing such a creature, hairy and bearded, used in ceremonies.

[9] *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解 in *Xinbian Zhuzi jicheng* 新編諸子集成 (Taipei: World, 1978 vol. II): Chapter 5 ("Against Phrenology" 非相篇) 3/47.

the fact that during these years he finally met Ouyang Xiu. Subsequently both Wang Anshi and Wang Anguo entered Ouyang's circle of friends and followers.[10] Ouyang had quested all his life to emulate Li Bo's poetry and Han Yu's prose; he hoped Wang Anshi might inherit that quest. Wang replied that his true search was for Truth such as Mencius had taught. Writing was secondary, and Wang would never be so audacious as to compete with Han Yu or with Ouyang himself. (P 26.)

Also in 1056, Wang may have first met Su Xun蘇洵 and his sons Su Shi軾 and Su Che轍. The threesome had left their home at Meishan in Sichuan, arriving in the capital in the fifth month. Ouyang Xiu gave a farewell banquet that month, to send off his friend Pei Yu裴煜

[10]Ye Mengde says their meeting occurred in 1054 or 1055 (the Zhihe period). See his *Bishu luhua*避暑錄話 (*Xuejin taoyuan* edition) A.63ab. Evidence can be traced in at least five ways:

1. Wang wrote several poems on the same occasions, with the same rhymes, as datable poems by Ouyang's close friend Mei Yaochen. (Li Bi 15.6a/433, 19.3b/500, 30.2a/733, 32.11b/802 and others.)
2. Wang wrote a poem upon Mei's death, to the same rhymes as one by Ouyang. (1060 or later: Li Bi 13.4b/394.)
3. Two of Mei's poems seem to have found their way into Wang's collected works. (Li Bi 21.2a/529, 21.7b/540.)
4. It is likely that Ouyang recommended Wang for a censorate or advisory position. Such a text does exist in Ouyang's works, but the dating is tenuous. ("Directive Recommending Wang Anshi and Lü Gongzhu"薦王安石呂公著劄子, in *Ouyang ji*, "Zouyi ji" 奏議集 14/870, attributed to 1054 or 1055.) In 1056, Ouyang praised Bao Zheng包拯, Wang's friend Zhang Gui, Lü Gongzhu and Wang himself. (In Ouyang's second memorial about floods in Kaifeng: "Zouyi ji" 14/865.) (See discussions in Cai 4/77, 17/234-236.)
5. Ouyang and Mei Yaochen had long wanted to meet the Wangs. (See above, pp. 22-23, for Ouyang's comments on Wang's writings as early as 1046.) Mei Yaochen and Wang Anguo had been exchanging verses before Anguo's arrival in the capital app. 1056. (See Zhu Dongrun ed., *Mei Yaochen ji biannian jiaozhu* 梅堯臣集編年校注, Shanghai Guji, 1980, 26/833: "Poem to the Rhymes of one Sent by Wang Anguo"依韵和王平甫見寄.)

to a post at Wujiang 吳江 in the south. The guests included Su Xun, Mei Yaochen, Wang Anshi, Wang Anguo and others, eight or nine in all.[11] According to anecdotes, this was the banquet at which Su Xun, new in town, lingered after the other guests had gone, and asked Ouyang: "Who was that man with jailbird's head and sackcloth face 囚首喪面 who was sitting over there?"

Ouyang replied it was the rising literatus Wang Anshi— "Have you not heard of him?"

"As I see it," replied Su Xun, "some day this man will wreak havoc throughout the realm. If he achieves his ambition to establish a regime, he will hoodwink even an intelligent ruler. Why do you, a Hanlin scholar, consort with him?"[12] Su Xun, it seems, then went home

[11] See discussion in Cai 10/153. Several poems by Wang and Mei survive from that banquet. (Wang's: Li Bi 10.3a/337ff; one single poem and a group of three. Mei's: *Mei Yaochen ji* 22/889. Ouyang's: *Ouyang ji*, "Jushi ji" 6/42.

Cai quotes Gong Yizheng 龔頤正 (fl. 1162), who notes the difficulty of some of the rhymes Ouyang assigned. (See Gong's *Jieyin biji*, *CSJC* edition p. 11.) Wang's poems were clearly superior to Su Xun's (says this source), and that fact may have contributed to a rift between Su and Wang. That rift, however, in the light of research by Cai and other scholars, seems to have been largely fictitious. Even this fairly innocuous anecdote may be suspect: one probable inaccuracy is its listing among the guests a man named Zimei 子美; this should refer to Su Shunqin 蘇舜欽, but Su had been dead for eight years.

[12] Fang Shao 方勺 (b. 1100), *Bozhai bian* 泊宅編 (*Baihai congshu* edition) A.1b-2a. Quoted and refuted in Liu Naichang 劉乃昌, *Su Shi wenxue lunji* 蘇軾文學論集 (Jinan: Qi Lu, 1982), pp. 218-219. One ground for refutation: how could Su Xun not know the name of someone with whom he had been eating dinner and composing poetry all evening? Another ground for suspicion: the modern critical edition of the *Bozhai bian* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983, 3-*juan* section A/65) names Sima Guang as the host, not Ouyang: this should indicate that the anecdote has passed through many hands.

and immediately composed the famous essay "On Recognizing the Treacherous" ("Bian jian lun" 辨姦論). This vitriolic attack on the personality and morals of an unnamed "traitor," according to Lin Yutang in 1947 was "one of the most popular essays for school reading today." (*The Gay Genius*, p. 79.) But evidence suggests that the "Bian jian lun" may have been a later forgery, and that the anecdote about Su Xun after the banquet is also untrue.[13]

Forgery or not, Su Xun seems seldom to have associated with Wang; but the career of his son Su Shi was to be bound up with Wang in many ways. Though he would be exiled under the reform administration that Wang founded, Su Shi seems never to have lost his personal and intellectual respect for Wang himself.

Probably the most important event Wang witnessed during his stint in the capital was Ouyang Xiu's supervision of the 1057 *jinshi* examination, in which Ouyang, despite bitter protests, "made it known that he would pay attention to the substance of the examination papers, not their style."[14] But style was in fact important: formats currently

[13]Cai quotes the "Bian jian lun" and its alleged supporting documents, 10/150ff. It also appears in *Xinyi Guwen guanzhi* 新譯古文觀止 (Taipei: San Min, 1971), pp. 599-602. Williamson translates the piece and repeats most of Cai's argument (II/148-157). Liu Naichang doubts the piece's authenticity, but advocates further research (pp. 217-222). Zeng Zaozhuang discusses the issue in *Su Xun pingzhuan* 蘇洵評傳 (Sichuan Renmin 1983), pp. 105--115. Even a casual reader may notice a sense of anachronism, hindsight and legend in the phrasing of the documents in question. Although important for its role in perpetuating anti-Wang sentiments in post-Song China, for now the "Bian jian lun" itself is best disregarded in the study of Wang's actual career.

[14]T.C. Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu*, p. 70. See also Egan, p. 27-28.

in common use were seen as unsuited to expressing "substance." By passing candidates who wrote in the lucid "ancient style" (*guwen* 古文), rather than the "tense, odd, eccentric and dry" 險怪奇澀 modes that had prevailed hitherto, Ouyang was achieving a goal that reformers had cherished since the mid-Tang, and that Wang Anshi would continue to support: candidates for office should demonstrate through clear essays their ability to think, and the bulk of their thoughts should involve issues they might confront in office.[15] Although this ideal remained elusive, the "ancient" style itself would dominate the examinations from 1057 onward. The success of that examination revealed how far the Song had evolved from the Han and Tang emphasis on literary style as the mark of a gentleman, to a new emphasis on ethics and reasoning as tools for a civil servant.

Among the successful candidates: Su Shi and Su Che; Zeng Gong; Wang Anshi's friend Wang Hui (whom Zeng Gong had recommended to Ouyang eleven years earlier); Jiang Zhiqi 蔣之奇 (1031--1104, who ten years later would ask that Ouyang be put to death for incest);[16] Wang Anshi's future right-hand men, Lü Huiqing 呂惠卿

[15]"Tense, odd..." See *Xu tongjian* 56/1375, year 1056.1.

[16]See T.C. Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu*, p. 80. The charge was fraudulent.

and Wang Shao 王韶.[17]

Although Wang learned much from the influential Ouyang Xiu, his job at the Livestock Commission probably had little to teach him. He continued to press for a provincial post, citing ill health (dizziness, headaches), financial troubles, and limited talent. One imagines that he also wanted to continue his experiments at improving local administration, and to hold a job in which he could do something directly useful.

After many requests, and undoubtedly with Ouyang's help, Wang obtained an assignment as prefect of Changzhou 常州 (east of Jiangning, north of Lake Tai).[18] The rank and responsibilities were by far the greatest he had ever been given. Ouyang arranged a farewell party for Wang, "at a bathhouse or the Dingli Yuan."[19] It was the twenty-second of the fourth or fifth month, 1057. Wang

[17]An example of fresh blood brought in by that examination: a man named Jia Dan賈耽, a farmer's son from Kunshan (where Wang had visited flooding in 1053), was the first *jinshi* in the dynasty from that depressed area. Later Jia would have his son study under Wang Anshi at Jiangning. See *Zhongwu jiwen* 中吳紀聞, by Gong Mingzhi龔明之(1091—1182), (*CSJC* edition) 3/34, 4/58; quoted in Shen, p. 92.

[18]See Wang's second letter to Ouyang, *Linchuan* 74/784.

[19]*Ouyang ji*, "Shujian"書簡 6/1287, also Cai 5/93: Ouyang's note inviting Mei to the occasion. The other guest of honor was Zeng Gong, also leaving the capital.

had been on the Livestock Commission for two and a half years.[20]

[20]He also may have been employed in the Imperial Library (*Jixian Yuan*), although he had refused that appointment three times in 1054.

About the 1057 date for Wang's Changzhou appointment: Williamson gives it as 1057 (I/37, following chronology by Zhan Dahe 詹大和, 1093--1140, Li Bi p. 19), and 1056 (I/38, following Cai 5/91). This is an important point: if Wang had left the capital in 1056, he would have had only a few days to meet the Su family, would have associated with Ouyang Xiu (whose influence was at its peak) for a year less, and would not have been present during the planning and execution of the pathbreaking 1057 examinations. But the evidence suggests that Wang did indeed remain in the capital into 1057. Cai may have merely made an editor's error when he listed Wang's posting to Changzhou under 1056.

Evidence in favor of 1057 (Jiayou 2):

1. In a memorial conclusively datable to the second half of 1056, Ouyang spoke highly of Wang, whose position he listed as "Erudite of Imperial Sacrifices and Staff Supervisor in the Livestock Commission" 太常博士群牧判官王安石. ("Second Report Discussing the Floods" 再論水災狀, in *Ouyang ji*, "Zouyi ji" 14/865.) This would indicate that well into 1056, Wang had been promoted in rank but had no new job.

2. Mei Yaochen has a poem sending off both Zeng Gong and Su Shi (*Mei Yaochen ji* 27/947). We know that Su Shi left the capital in about the fourth month of 1057, to mourn his mother's death at home. We also know that Zeng Gong and Wang Anshi left the capital at about the same time as each other (see Ouyang's letter to Mei Yaochen, note 19 above). Therefore, Wang Anshi most likely left the capital in the fourth or fifth month of 1057, simultaneously with Zeng Gong and the Su family.

3. Ouyang's editors dated Ouyang's letter to Mei, placing it in 1057. (*Ouyang ji* 6/1287, *Mei Yaochen ji* 27/946.) Ouyang has a letter to Mei mentioning a set of "Farm Tool Poems" 農具詩, to which both Mei and Wang Anshi wrote variations: Ouyang's editors date the letter to 1057. (*Ouyang ji*, "Shujian" 6/1288.)

4. Wang probably went on a Khitan mission in early 1057. (See above, pp. 39-40, note 2.)

5. Zhan Dahe dates Wang's Changzhou appointment to 1057. (Li Bi p. 19.) Ke Changyi 柯昌頤 also accepts this date: see his *Wang Anshi pingzhuan* 王荊公評傳(Shanghai: Commercial, 1933; rep. 1948), biographical table, p. 13.

7. CHANGZHOU AND THE JIANGDONG CIRCUIT: 1057--1058

Wang left the capital for Changzhou in 1057.5. When his youngest brother Anshang fell ill, the party stayed forty days in Chuzhou while he recovered.[1] At Yangzhou they stayed with Anguo, who had settled there; there it seems an infant or toddler son of Wang Anshi's died.[2] They also spent time there with Liu Chang劉敞, the great

[1] In northern Jiangsu, south of Huaiyin.

[2] See Wang's third letter to Ouyang Xiu (*Linchuan* 74/785, Cai 5/91). Wang's dates do not add up: "I left you in the fifth month, arriving at Chuzhou in the sixth month, at which time our seventh brother (Anshang) fell sick. We stayed forty days. Arrived at Yangzhou and stayed with our fourth brother (Anguo)..."

Then follows a sentence which may mean: "*I lost the son who was born while I served in the Livestock Commission*"失郡(群?)牧所生一子. The modern *Linchuan* edition punctuates the sentence 失郡牧所生一子: this way the second phrase would mean, "A son was born to me (at Yangzhou)." (That would be Wang Pang王旁, whose dates we do not know.) The first phrase, however, would then make no sense. I prefer the first reading given in this note, in which Wang loses a son. That reading depends on taking郡 "prefecture" as a mistaken graph that should have been群 "herds:" a mistake easily made by copyists who may not have known there was a群牧(司) "Livestock Commission," and assumed that the word should be郡牧 "Shepherd of a prefecture" (i.e. governor). The same mistake appears in the title note to a poem by Wang Ling, presented to Wang Anshi upon his appointment to the Livestock Commission: the title in the *Siku quanshu zhenben* edition of Wang Ling reads寄介甫(時為郡牧) "To Wang Anshi, who at the time was a *jun* (*sic*) *mu*."

A poem from Wang to Pei Yu mentions a "perished child"殤子 for whose death Wang could not be consoled. See "Reply to Pei Yu"酬裴如晦 (Li Bi 33.2b/810). That poem, however, seems to fit better with Wang's stint at Yin, where we know he had lost a daughter in 1049. Wang Jinguang discusses the issue of Wang's sons on pages 71-86.

revisionist scholar of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*; Liu found that Wang Anshi had "the Ancient spirit" 古人風.[3] Liu and the Wangs sent verses to Ouyang Xiu and Mei Yaochen, written on a visit to the PIngshan Hall 平山堂 which Ouyang had built in 1048.[4]

Wang did not reach Changzhou until 1057.7.4, at which time he requested the throne that he be allowed a lengthy term of office, to provide the continuity to accomplish something.[5] One of his attempted projects seems to have been the cutting of a canal, a plan that was thwarted by the unwillingness of his superiors to approve enough corvée labor, and by the heavy rains which affected the laborers' health.[6] After only seven months, Wang was promoted to Judicial Intendant of the Eastern Jiangnan Circuit 江南東路, with headquarters at Jiangning. (1058.2.) With this appointment he became one more statistic in the rapid turnover of administrators at Changzhou (and other places) which he had so deplored.[7]

[3]Wang's own note to poem in reply to Liu: Li Bi 13.2b/392.

[4]Wang Anshi: "Poem on the Pingshan Hall" 平山詩, Li Bi 34.3a/833. Letter from Ouyang requesting a copy of the poem, *Ouyang ji*, "Shujian" 2/1238. Mei Yaochen's reply to Liu Chang's poem, *Mei Yaochen ji* 26/903.

[5]Letters to Secretariat中書 and to the circuit supervisors , *Linchuan* 80/838.

[6]Letter to Liu Chang, *Linchuan* 74/785; quoted and explained in Deng Guangming, pp. 19-20. Cai, however, suspects that Wang was not involved in this project at all: 5/93-94.

[7]The usual title given for this position is 提點江東刑獄. Wang's protest against this assignment includes the following boldly-phrased passage: "Some people may feel that the proper conduct of a minister, when serving his King, is to go left or right on the King's

His new duties did not allow him to spend much time in his hometown headquarters. Instead he travelled the region, learning more than ever about the realities of local administration: "For a civil servant these days, it is impossible to talk of 'ancient times:' we are constricted by regulations, hemmed in by prevailing trends 勢; unable to stay in one office long enough to gain the people's trust. The people, inevitably as a waterfall, flow daily into wretched poverty."[8]

Williamson emphasizes the conflict during these years between Wang's desire to "serve the state in some higher and more influential sphere" (I/42), and his need to take care of his family with the income and comparative leisure that provincial service afforded. It is true that Wang harbored high ambitions, despite his protests of incompetence (P 28). But we should also note that Wang was partial to the provinces in many ways: we have seen his occasional disgust with the central court, where egos like mighty catalpa trees alternately fawned and bragged;[9] his use of time in the provinces to test how to improve things; and his quest for sagehood in his own life and

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command, never daring to flee even from life-threatening perils, and not to resign though exhaustion would make him ill. But I (frowardly) disagree! When the ruler commands men to do what their talent suits them to do, under circumstances that do not conflict with their situations, then (and only then) is it permissible to command them to go left or right, and for them to obey..." ("Letter to Councillor Zeng Gongliang" 上曾參政書, *Linchuan* 74/781; Cai 5/94.)

[8]From Wang's reply to Wang Gai 王該, *Linchuan* 77/816. Opening portions translated in Williamson I/41-42.

[9]P 66, lines 61-62.

behavior, wherever he might be. In other words, his options did not swing between "important posts at court" and "insignificant provincial jobs" alone.

Inevitably, greater responsibilities entailed more complex obstacles, greater failures, and fewer clear-cut successes than before. Wang began to face obstinacy, incompetence, and deliberate misunderstanding. "Starting with my Jiangdong appointment, I was slandered daily by men of common minds 流俗之士 ; but as I examine my own mind, I see that it never changed in response (to the slander). Thus my mind harbors no fawning toward the world, and I am unable to make peace with the common crowd."[10] As a middle-level bureaucrat, he could blame many of these difficulties on the fact that his hands were tied by the ranks of bureaucrats above and around him--but one wonders if he expected less frustration and more success if he ever became Prime Minister, "with one man above and ten thousand below"?

Probably in this period, Wang began to write poems in the veiled protest traditions of "Singing from the Heart" 詠懷 or "Without Title" 無題 .[11] Not only did he capture the style and passion of Ruan

[10] Second reply to Wang Hui, *Linchuan* 72/768.

[11] 28 of these comprise *juan* 11 of Li Bi's edition, and could form a study in themselves. Li tentatively dates them to 1057--1060, including Wang's years in Changzhou, Jiangdong and the capital. Yoshikawa-Watson translates #6 (p. 88): "Yellow Chrysanthemums, Perfect in Nature" 黃菊 有至性, in which a discerning poet-official, rejected by his king as was Qu Yuan, feeds on pure flowers as he helplessly watches the nation decline. (Li Bi 11.2b/356. Also translated in James J.Y. Liu, *The Art of Chinese Poetry*; London, 1962, p. 129.)
P 6 is another of this group.

Ji阮籍 (210--163) or Li Shangyin李商隱 (813--858) in some of these poems, but he also matched their obscurity. Though his underlying concerns may have been clearer at the time, many are hard to trace now. However, "Two Steeds All of Whose Teeth are Strong" 兩馬齒俱壯 --one with a noble saddle, one wandering dejected--most likely hints at the need for a change in the government.[12]

His work allowed him a trip back to Linchuan, via the Boyang Lake.[13] The journey was surely brief, and we know little of what he thought or did there.[14]

Wang's friendships deepened during these two years, particularly that with Wang Ling 王令 (*zi* Fengyuan逢原, 1032--1059), whom Wang Anshi had first met on the way to the capital in 1054.[15] Although Wang Anshi had friends among the rising officials at the capital, most of his closest friends were idealists who seldom or never held office, and

[12]Li Bi thought it might be a satire on the two holders of the premiership at the time--the faded reformers Wen Yanbo and Fu Bi. But this hypothesis is unprovable. (11.1a/353.)

[13]See Wang's inscription at Jinfeng, Jiangxi, dated 1058 (page 30 note 3 above). He also wrote an inscription for the Chengpo Yuan 城陂院at Fuzhou, dated 1058. The latter reads as if he had been invited in person to write it while he was there. (*Linchuan* 83/869.)

[14]He might have written P 65 on that journey. Other possible dates: autumn 1043 (from Linchuan back to Yangzhou); autumn (?) 1050 (from Linchuan to the capital via Hangzhou); or 1067 (early autumn, on the way from Jiangning through Linchuan to appointment in the capital).

[15]According to Shen Wenzho's chronology, *Wang Ling ji*, p. 434. Wang Ling may have arranged to meet Anshi through Anshi's brother-in-law Zhu Mingzhi, when Anshi was passing through Gaoyou where Zhu lived.

lived in the Jiangning area or near by in what is now Anhui: Sun Mou and Wang Hui come to mind. Wang Ling was in some ways the closest, most compatible, and perhaps the most promising of these.[16] The two Wangs shared ideals, devotion to the examples of such thinkers as Mencius or Han Yu, and a consuming desire to "bring all strength to bear against heterodoxy" 力排異端. That fundamentalist stance opposed deification of Confucius just as it resisted Buddhist and Daoist influence on state affairs.[17]

Wang Anshi had met Wang Ling at Gaoyou three years before. He was so impressed with this man eleven years his junior, that he arranged for Wang Ling to marry a Miss Wu, cousin of Anshi's

[16]A study of Wang Ling and his relationship with Wang Anshi will be made, but not in this dissertation. Wang Ling's collected works (*Guangling ji* 廣陵集), it should be noted, were edited with admirable care by his grandson. Except for different *juan*-divisions, there seem to be few discrepancies between the two major editions (*Jiayetang congshu* and *Sikuquanshu zhenben*). The appendix includes a lengthy biography by Liu Fa劉發, and a total of twelve letters to Wang Ling from Wang Anshi--five more than we find in Wang Anshi's collection. Those twelve texts are taken from the actual letters that Wang Ling received (the sender calls himself "Anshi"), while the versions in Anshi's works are taken from drafts (he calls himself "X" 某). One should use Shen Wenzho's collated edition of Wang Ling's works, called *Wang Ling ji* 王令集 ; Shanghai Guji, 1980, based on *Jiayetang congshu*, with a chronology added.

Wang Ling's poetry shows debts to Han Yu, Meng Jiao and Li He: Tang fundamentalists, *guwen* advocates, and writers of grotesque prose and imagery. Yet Wang Ling's talent was prodigious; had he lived, his verse could have surpassed that of Wang Anshi.

[17]"Sent to Wang Ling"寄王逢原 , Li Bi 10.8b/348.

own wife.[18] After Wang Ling died, his wife would remain a chaste widow, raising a daughter, refusing her elder brother's efforts to have her remarry.[19] In retirement, Wang Anshi would help arrange the marriage of Wang Ling's daughter, also to a Wu.[20]

Whether from poverty, ill health, or idealism, Wang Ling did not take the *jinshi* examination. He lived in various places in the Jiangning and Wu areas, teaching, studying and writing, staying somewhat out of society partly because of shame that his sister, a widow, had been forced to remarry for economic reasons.[21] His collection includes poems to Li Ding 李定 and Lü Huiqing, later to become two of Wang Anshi's most infamous associates, although their reputations were impeccable in the 1050's.[22] Wang Ling criticized, cajoled, boosted, and sympathized with Wang Anshi; Anshi strongly hoped that Wang Ling

[18]Wang Ling probably married late in 1058. See two letters by Anshi to a maternal uncle Wu Fen 吳賁, *Linchuan* 74/789. (First letter probably dates to 1057.11, the second to 1058.1.) Also a petition for engagement written to the same man by Wang Ling, dated (1058?) 7.9. Wang Ling may have been at Boyang Lake with Anshi. Conceivably Anshi helped Wang Ling put up some of the bride price. (*Wang Ling ji* 17/303; also chronology on pp. 442-445.)

[19]See Shen 8/378, quoting *Changbian* 471.6b, year 1092.3.9.

[20]Letter to Wu Hao 吳豪 (*zi* Teqi 特起), *Linchuan* 74/788. Wu Hao was Wang Ling's brother-in-law.

[21]Wang Ling lectured on Mencius, and began to write a commentary just before he died. (See "Postface to Wang Fengyuan's Lecture Notes on *Mencius*" 題王逢原講孟子後, *Linchuan* 71/752.) When Wang Anshi was at Changzhou, Wang Ling was teaching in Jiangyin 江陰, only twenty miles away. (*Wang Ling ji*, chronology, p. 442.)

[22]See Ouyang Xiu's praise of Lü in a letter to Wang Anshi from autumn 1058: *Ouyang ji*, "Shujian" 2/1238.

could help him in the future.[23]

In 1058.10, Wang Anshi, at Jiangning, was summoned again to the court, as a Staff Supervisor in the Budgetary Bureau 度支判官. His thoughts churned within him, and "circled Mt. Zhong" all night after he received the news,[24] but he eventually accepted the position.[25] He may have written Wang Ling then as follows:[26]

> ...The instructions (in your letter) corresponded exactly with what my lowly mind had desired to hear. I had wanted to invite you here, but I have already been ordered back to the capital. This means I shall be free of this place--and that, at least, is a cause for rejoicing. However, this new appointment, like the last, is not for unworthy people such as myself to hold: inevitably I will disturb and pollute the Imperial court, thus increasing the slanders of those who do not understand me.

[23]Letter sent from the capital in 1059, reporting Wang Ling's death to Cui Gongdu 崔公度 at Gaoyou (*zi* Boyi 伯易), *Linchuan* 74/787.

[24]"Called Back from Jiangdong" 江東召歸, Li Bi 45.9b/1110.

[25]*Xu tongjian* 58/1406 lists him under that title.

[26]Third letter to Wang Ling, in *Wang Ling ji* p. 390, *Linchuan* 75/791. Wang's state of mind in the letter seems to fit this year (he had run into significant human obstacles while at Changzhou and Jiangdong); however, the geographical references are confusing (translated in next note). Even without a firm date, the letter still shows us Wang's long-standing ambivalence about serving in the provinces vs. the capital, and (despite his modest phrases) his unbending resistance to opposition.

> Yet this is what I have always calculated would happen--how can I concern myself with the chaos of common minds? (27)

Within a year, Wang Ling--fellow battler against the "common mind" --would be dead at twenty-seven.

[27]The letter continues: "Soon I shall arrive at Zhenzhou 真州, and hope that you will visit, although I do not know if you have the time--I hope you can reply positively. I shall be staying at Hezhou 和州; all I plan to do at Zhenzhou is to meet my mother (his mother coming from Jiangning, to accompany him to the capital?), and to see my younger sister (Mrs. Shen Jizhang, who lived there), after which I will return to Hezhou to await orders. Take care in the winter cold. Anshi salutes you." (He seems to have made a brief trip from the capital to the Zhenzhou area to pick up his family: see second letter to Wang Hui, *Linchuan* 72/769.)

8. BIANJING: 1059--1063

Wang's departure for what most people would regard as an immensely successful stage in his career, may have been accompanied by some wintry thoughts: "Youthful woes and cares have damaged my vigor / I have grown old, misusing half a life on state affairs." (P 30, date 1058.10.) He told his brothers he had no mind to recommend them for office, but hoped they would stay home to enjoy the streamside: "We have our pact--when I return, we'll walk there, wine in tow." The sudden loss of Wang Ling in 1059.6 not only saddened Wang, but more specifically (as he often attests) robbed him of an important potential ally. Anshi sent a tomb inscription down to Changzhou, kept track of news from Wang Ling's family, and wrote how he brooded, wandered aimlessly, exhausted and at odds with the entire world. (P 31.)

But he did not spend all his time mourning. At some point after arriving in the capital he reported to the throne on his activities in the provinces. This report took the form of his famous "Ten-thousand-word Memorial" ("Wanyan shu" 萬言書), in which Wang examined how to mold, educate, select and employ human talent--the prerequisite for a reformed nation.[1] It should hardly have been a surprise that this

[1]This major political document, whose proper title is "Letter to Emperor Renzong, Discussing State Affairs" 上仁宗皇帝言事書, has been discussed and translated elsewhere. It probably dates to 1059. Chinese

memorial--to an Emperor in his thirty-seventh year on the throne, who had not sponsored a major reform for a decade and a half, and that perhaps reluctantly--fell on deaf ears, as such memorials often did. Yet, although Wang's proposals may have been snubbed, his career could hardly be called a failure by most standards. He went to the capital as Staff Supervisor of the Budgetary Bureau 度支判官 (appointed 1058.10); was assigned to the Jixian Yuan 集賢院 in 1059.5, accepting three or four months later; accompanied a Khitan delegation (1059.12 or 1060.1); was made a Staff Supervisor on the Finance Commission 三司度支判官 (1060.5), appointed to a task force to evaluate the military horse-breeding system (1060.7); refused twelve times a concurrent post as Imperial Recorder 同修起居注(1060.4), but finally accepted (1060.11).[2] Early in 1061, he was made a Gentleman in the Board of Works 工部郎中, and served as a final grader for the *jinshi* examination; in the eighth month he graded the prestigious *xianliang fangzheng* examination, was promoted to special drafting official in the Secretariat 知制誥(1061.6), and soon was also given judicial duties.[3] At the

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text: *Linchuan* 39/410; *Tang Song wen juyao* 唐宋文舉要 (Gao Buying ed., Shanghai Guji, 1982) 7/865. English translations: Williamson I/48, rep. Meskill p. 1-15; also by Ch'ü T'ung-tsu in William Theodore deBary ed., *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia, 1964) I/413ff.

[2] Wang at one point fled into the privy to avoid the imperial summons. Sima Guang was also given such an appointment, likewise accepting after refusals no less adamant.

All dates for appointments mentioned above are based on the *Xu tong jian*, except for the Khitan expedition, for which please see note 7 below.

[3] 管幹三班院. See Williamson I/94, apparently based on Wang's *Song shi* biography. The biography's actual text has him as

same time, his brother Anshi 安世 was Chief Recordkeeper at Dangtu, and Anli held the same rank at Shen Prefecture 莘縣 in Daming-fu 大名府 (modern Hebei). (*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.5b.)

In addition to his qualifications, a major reason for Wang's swift rise into powerful middle-level posts with good futures was certainly Ouyang Xiu's patronage. When Wang reached the capital in 1058 or 1059, Ouyang was governor of Kaifeng; in 1060.11, Ouyang had risen to Vice-minister of War 樞密副使; by 1061.8R he was Second Privy Councillor 參知政事. Wang, however, may have tried to avoid the appearance of benefitting from excessive patronage such as that of Ouyang, or from the protection of a "faction," hence his strong refusal of the Imperial Recorder position.

It was after rejoining Ouyang's intellectual circle that Wang's fame as a poet began to grow, notably with two verses on Wang Zhaojun, the Han dynasty's "Radiant Consort." (P 7-8.) Ouyang Xiu, Zeng Gong, and even Sima Guang all wrote corresponding verses to Wang's rhymes. Several things show in Wang's two verses that we do not find in the others: his belief in the universality of human love;[4] the capricious blows that rulers can deal their subordinates; and Wang's typical pugnacity: his eagerness to take a minority position, to say bluntly what he thought was true. Wang's poems may also be the first by a major

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糾察在京刑獄, a kind of justice of appeals, which Williamson translates as "Chief Inspector of Justice of the capital." ("*Song shi* Wang Anshi zhuan zhu," *Dalu zazhi* 27.1, p. 28; Williamson II/31.)

[4]Higashi Ichio 東一夫, *Ō Anseki shimpō no kenkyū* 王安石新法の研究 (Tokyo, 1970), chronology p. 1043.

writer to talk of Wang Zhaojun--rejected by her own court--as finding a warm welcome among the tribes to whom she had been banished.

Tang poetry also occupied Wang's time. In 1060 he collaborated with his friend and colleague in the Finance Commission, Song Minqiu 宋敏求 (*zi* Cidao 次道, 1019--1079, scholar and book collector), on an anthology: *Selections from One Hundred Tang Poets* (*Tang baijia shixuan* 唐百家詩選).[5] The anthology was influential for its inclusion of hitherto rarely accessible works by minor or little-known writers.[6]

[5]The anthology still exists, rep. Taipei: World, 1979. Or *Siku quanshu zhenben* edition. See the study by Nishimura Fumiko 西村富美子: "Ō Anseki *Tō hyakka shisen* shōron" 王安石唐百家詩選小論, in *Shitennoji Joshi Daigaku kiyō* 四天王寺女子大學記要 10 (1077.12) 46-64. Also a short description in Yu Dacheng 于大成, "Wang Anshi zhushu kao" 王安石著述考, in *Guoli Zhongyang Tushuguan guankan* 國立中央圖書館館刊, N.S. 1.3 (1968), p. 46. There has been debate as to whether Wang or Song was the editor; most scholars favor Wang, although the selection was made from manuscripts in Song's library. More important for us is the fact that Wang wrote the preface (somewhat curt and ungracious?), and claimed there that he had spent more time on the project than he would have liked to. His own writings show that he knew thoroughly the work of the poets in the anthology.

Shao Bo 邵博 (fl. 1122, d. 1158) talks about Wang's alleged sloppy habits in connection with this anthology (*Shaoshi wenjian hou lu* 邵氏聞見後錄, *CSJC* edition, 19/121): it seems that Wang's method of selecting poems was to slip bookmarks into Song Minqiu's books, and have Wang's clerks copy the poems thus marked. But when Wang was out of the room, the clerks would move the markers away from long poems and place them by shorter verses that Wang had not chosen. Wang, being "careless by nature," never checked. As a result, Wang's clerks were "the real editors." (This sort of thing happened often in the compiling of anthologies: see Qian Zhongshu 錢鍾書, *Song shi xuanzhu* 宋詩選注, Beijing, 1958, preface p. 27-29.) It may be that Wang was not "careless by nature" in this case, but rather felt that a purely literary project at that time was superfluous compared to other things he had to do.

[6]Wang did not ignore famous works, however: at some point he edited a separate "Selections by Four Poets" 四家詩選 (now lost), which covered Du Fu, Han Yu, Ouyang Xiu and Li Bo--the sequence is not necessarily significant. (Yu Dacheng, p. 46.)

Rumors have persisted, since the "Four Poets" collection came

It may have been a trip north that inspired Wang's poems on "The Radiant Consort," and also reinforced his hawkishness about border defense. In early 1060 he was sent on his second mission to escort Khitan diplomats: this time he was taking them back to the border after their New Year visit to the Chinese court.[7] The Khitan (Liao) and Song courts had exchanged emissaries several times a year since the 1004 treaty of Shanyuan. Peace may have been good for the Song economically: by paying tribute to the Khitan court, the Song saved what could have been a vast expense of maintaining active border armies for the hitherto futile mission of recovering the sixteen northern prefectures held by the Liao. Much of that area had not been under firm central control for three centuries, so its absence from the map was nothing new. But the yearly exchange of envoys with a nomad dynasty on equal terms, was a shameful symbol to many Song officials. It indicated that the Song had abandoned hope of conquering the Liao, and might

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out, that Wang considered Li Bo inferior to the other three. Huang Tingjian asked Wang if that was true. Wang said it was not, and that he had selected in the order that he received sets of the poets' works from his friend Chen Yi 陳繹 : that order was arbitrary, and involved no ranking. Chen Yi confirmed that fact to Huang Tingjian. See *Qingxu zalu* 清虛雜錄 (*Zhibuzu zhai* edition) by Wang Gong 王鞏 (fl. 1073 and later) 1.31a.

[7] See Wang Jinguang, p. 89. Main evidence: The Chinese emissary to the Liao court in 1059-60 was Wang's friend Shen Gou 沈遘 (1025?—1067?). On his return south late in 1060.1, Shen met Wang going north with the Khitan envoys; the two men exchanged poems at Jizhou 冀州 . (Wang's poem: Li Bi 29.9b/720. Shen's poem: *Xi xi ji* 西溪集 , in *Shen shi san xian wenji* 沈氏三先文集, *SBCK* edition, *juan* 3; also in *Song shi chao*, 4b-5a. Shen Gou had set off from Bianjing in 1059.11.22, see "Leaving the Court on the 22nd of the 11th Month" 十一月二十二日朝辭 , *Xi xi ji* 3. He had been appointed in 1059.8: see *Changbian* 190.10a.)

lose even more land if it were careless. The Song's apparent weakness against the northerners added tension to all arguments about both foreign and domestic policy. Strength against the nomads would be a major goal of Wang's reforms; some say it was the reforms' ultimate purpose.

Whether good or bad, diplomatic relations with the Khitans were a fact, and it was common for a middle-level official to be sent occasionally as an emissary to the Liao court, as an escort for the Liao emissaries between the border and the capital, or as a reception official hosting envoys at the Chinese court. Su Shi found the socializing on these assignments awkward and forced; humorously he ranked "conversing with barbarian diplomats" on a par with "a farmer attending a courtesan's banquet," or a non-drinker keeping a tipsy man company, or perhaps with trying to explain something long and bothersome to one's superior officer.[8] Border assignments were physically harsh. Most trips went at the New Year, and involved weeks on horseback in the cold. Liao officials, who often spoke no Chinese, sometimes tested their Song counterparts' drinking prowess,[9] or scared them with cavalry "raids" by night.[10] Those Khitan officials who did speak Chinese often knew the language well enough to test the Song officials in instant versifying or composing couplets. Occasionally a Khitan official would wax wroth

[8]Attributed to Su Shi, in Li Shangyin et al., *Za zuan* 雜纂 (*Gujin shuohai* edition) C.1b.

[9]Wang Jinguang, p. 112.

[10]As told to Su Xun. *Changbian* 105.4; Wang Jinguang, p. 111.

after misreading a Song official's lines;[11] on the other hand, Song officials who had pleased the Liao court with their poetry could be punished for their efforts by the Song after they got home.[12] Both sides tried to gather intelligence while preventing the other side from learning too much.[13]

Wang Anshi had first gone to the border three years earlier, but was probably a junior member of the party, and Wu Chong had been with him. (See p. 39.) I believe it was this second trip, escorting envoys back north, that left the deeper impression on him. The journey took eighteen days one way. Finding himself saddle to saddle with men who did not know his language, Wang composed poems to pass the time. He circulated the poems among his friends after he returned.[14] This was not a trip into Central Asia, the borderlands that haunt Tang poetry: the Khitans were a more settled people who occupied an ancient section of China, only two weeks from the capital, with no natural barriers to their further intrusion. Wang found Khitans hunting and planting with impunity on Chinese land,[15] heard eyewitness accounts of

[11] Tao Jinsheng, pp. 194-195.

[12] *Changbian* 104.4; *Song shi* 319/10407-10; Wang Jinguang, pp. 112-113; Tao Jinsheng, pp. 182-183.

[13] Wang Jinguang, pp. 110-111. Wang Anshi's friend Liu Chang discovered that the Khitans had put bends and detours on the highway into their territory, possibly to make the land seem larger than it was. (*Sanchao mingchen yanxing lu* 4:4.4ab.)

[14] Wang's "Preface to Poems Written while Escorting the Northern Dynasty's Envoys" 伴送北朝人使詩序 is undated. But I believe it stems from this second trip in 1060, not the 1057 trip. (*Linchuan* 8/883.)

[15] "Ballad of Baigou" 白溝行 , Li Bi 7.5a/291.

Khitan raids;[16] found rich soil, and fish as long as human beings.[17] A banquet with these nonchalantly aggressive people was a gingerly affair: Wang's relief that the hosts stopped drinking at a reasonable point may correspond to the Song garrisons' relief whenever Khitan hunting parties went back home without causing damage. The garrisons could not actually light their beacon fires any more than Wang could stop the feasting. The Chinese were at the nomads' mercy in both cases. (See P 9.) Peace in this region was tenuous, and the stakes were high. Wang never forgot that.

Next spring (1061) Wang became a civil service examiner. Shen Gua tells a story that could imply several things: 1) Wang sometimes broke the rules; 2) possibly Wang had access to secret information, through Ouyang Xiu or other high-ranking friends; and/or 3) Wang was unusually perceptive:[18]

The *jinshi* examination papers were graded in a three-tiered system: Primary Graders 初考官 read and ranked the papers, then sent them to Re-graders 覆考官, who read and ranked them independently, not knowing how the primary graders had ranked them. Then the papers were brought to the Final Arbiters 詳定官, who unsealed the first two sets of rankings. If the arbiters found a discrepancy between the two rankings on any candidate's paper, their job was to decide whether to follow

[16]"Shanyuan" 澶州, Li Bi 7.6a/293.

[17]"Ballad of an Old Man on the Frontier" 塞翁行, Li Bi 7.5a/291.

[18]See *Mengxi bitan* 1/28, Shen p. 71. The following passage is a summary.

the first set of rankings or the second; they could not assign a third ranking. Wang Anshi and an older man named Yang Tian楊畋 (*zi* Ledao 樂道, 1007--1062) were the Final Arbiters this year.

Before the examination began, rumors surfaced that the top candidate would be a certain Wang Junmin 王俊民 --but no one knew who he was, or where the rumor came from. When the grading began, Wang Anshi approved of neither the primary graders' nor the secondary graders' top candidates. He wanted to choose someone else. But Yang Tian refused to break the rules. News of their heated argument reached the secondary grader Zhu Congdao 朱從道 (1009--?), who said "What are they wrangling for? I heard ten days ago that Wang Junmin would take first place. It must have been decided already. They will be sorry they just made trouble for themselves." But Wang and Yang appealed their cases to the central court, whose command was to follow Wang Anshi's choice. It turned out he had chosen Wang Junmin.

Wang's argument with Yang Tian left no rancor, if indeed it took place. The two men seem to have agreed on their ideals for the civil service examinations. Wang's verses to Yang are gracious, and after Yang died the next year, Wang contributed a preface to Yang's collected works. (P 34-35; *Linchuan* 84/880.)

Wang Anshi was one of many who for decades had insisted that the examination system as it stood was testing the wrong things: what rationale could justify choosing state administrators on the basis of their ability to write? Would not ability to think be a more appropriate yardstick? Ouyang Xiu's emphasis on "ancient prose" essays, the writing

of which required reasoning skills, had been a step in the right direction. But perhaps in 1061 many candidates were still penning empty essays, even if their style was "ancient" on the surface. Or they were writing good essays, but on irrelevant subjects. Wang Anshi as an examiner surely did not forget his own refusal to go beyond the *jinshi*: certainly he thought of his brilliant friends--Sun Mou, Wang Ling, his own brother Anguo--who had never passed or even taken the *jinshi* at all. Despite their argument over procedure, in the long struggle to reform the entire system of official recruitment, Wang must have seen Yang Tian as an ally.

Wang also had the privilege of attending a fishing and flower-viewing banquet hosted by the Emperor Renzong himself (1061.3). The event is famous for Han Qi's poem in which the illustrious senior minister recalled how "Twenty years ago I once attended such a feast." Someone suggested to the Emperor that Han really meant to hint that these functions were too rare--Renzong laughed heartily.[19] Even more famous is Shao Bowen's story that Wang Anshi ate an entire platter of fishbait pellets, thinking they were *hors d'oeuvres*.[20]

[19]See Li Bi's notes to Wang's two poems written on the occasion (28.10b/698-700).

[20]*Shao qian lu* 2/10. Li Bi, to my knowledge and to his credit, does not mention this anecdote. Cai vigorously rebuts it (10/154-5). The point of Shao's story--and its weakest link--is his assertion that the incident caused Renzong to think of Wang as a "cheat"詐人也 and "inconsiderate"不情也 (on the assumption that Wang surely must have known his mistake after the first bite--so why finish a whole platter?), and that the incident also caused Wang to pan Renzong in his diary thereafter. Furthermore, says Shao, Wang's dislike of Renzong even spilled over into criticisms of Renzong's great ministers (Fu Bi, Han

In the fall of 1061, Wang (now promoted to be a writer of edicts) and Sima Guang were among the examiners for the most brilliant panel of candidates ever to pass the arduous and rarely-held *xianliang fangzheng* examinations ("Worthy, Excellent, Forthright and True" 賢良方正). The three successful examinees were Su Shi (third rank), Wang Jie 王介 (with whom Wang Anshi had cordial relations--fourth rank), and Su Che (second fourth rank). Sima Guang wanted to place Su Che third along with his brother, but one of Che's essays criticized the Emperor so directly that Wang Anshi, Fan Zhen and Cai Xiang 蔡襄 objected to his arrogance; Wang even refused to write the subsequent edict giving Che a post at Shangzhou 商州.[21] Perhaps the seeds were being sown here for Su Che's later outspoken criticisms of Wang, and

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Qi, Wen Yanbo), and of the Han-dynasty Emperor Wu.

Cai's suspicion of this anecdote seems to make sense: in essence, Cai points out that real people do not act like the characters in Shao Bowen's story. Outsiders easily imagine political factions growing around personal vendettas, especially when the details are as entertaining as in Shao's anecdote; nevertheless, Wang had less colorful but potentially stronger reasons to disapprove of Renzong, and more particularly of the tired regime as a whole. But the extent of Wang's disapproval (it may have been only slight and directed at a few people) is hard to estimate now.

Another reason to suspect the story: in a poem written shortly after, commemorating the banquet, Wang has these lines: "Foggy fragrance streams from the *fishing bait*, / Falling leaves disturb the swimming scales (i.e. startle the fish)" 霏香逐釣餌，落葉亂游鱗. That conventionally ornate couplet would be ludicrous had Shao's story been true. The poem bears no trace of humor, tongue-in-cheek or otherwise. ("Imitation of the Poems to His Majesty's Rhymes on the Occasion of Flower-viewing and Fishing"擬和御製賞花釣魚, Li Bi 25.8b/624.)

[21] *Xu tongjian* 59/1448-9; George Hatch, "Su Shih" in Franke, p. 910.

for Wang's rift with Sima Guang.[22]

Aside from the edicts that he composed, we have few datable writings by Wang from 1061 and 1062. We know from his poetry that he mourned for Mei Yaochen, who died in 1060 of a plague; that he continued his friendships with Wu Chong and with Zhang Gui 張瓌. (Zhang Gui was perhaps closer to Anguo. Zhang seems to have been every bit as difficult, unbending and blunt as Wang Anshi could be--perhaps more so, if his frequent exiles and demotions are any indication.) Many of Wang's evocative poems about the Kaifeng area, especially winter scenes, surely date from this period.[23] Like anyone else, he missed his home at Jiangning, missed leisure and absent family. He and Zeng Gong sent off a colleague to a position in Jiangxi with rousing long poems extolling the robust beauty and richness of their native land.[24]

[22]One other incident related in Wang's *Song shi* biography, which supposedly happened about this time, was the "Fighting Quail Case" that had originated in the Kaifeng prefectural court. Wang opposed the death penalty for the owner of a fighting quail who had killed a friend who ran off with the quail. Wang said it was not a case of murder, but of foiling a robbery. The higher tribunal upheld the Kaifeng governor's verdict of murder, and forgave Wang's "transgression" 罪 . Wang insisted that he had made no "transgression," because he had been right. The censorate impeached Wang, but the impeachment was tabled, perhaps because Wang's friends interceded. See "*Song shi* Wang Anshi zhuan zhu," *Dalu zazhi* 27.1, p. 28; Williamson II/31-33.

[23]There are at least 35 poems in his collection whose imagery centers around the streets, palaces, gardens, temples, crowds, or suburbs of the capital. Yoshikawa/Watson quote three of them (pp. 16, 18, 20).

[24]The year was 1061; the colleague was Cheng Shimeng 程師孟, a man who loved to write verse. Wang Anshi often versified with him, and may have married a niece to one of Cheng's sons (see Wang's reply to Cheng, *Linchuan* 80/843). Wang's poem of farewell to Cheng is one of the best pieces Wang ever wrote: "Sending Cheng Gongbi to Govern Hongzhou"

In late 1062 and early 1063, Wang went on a third mission northward, this time as a New Year's emissary to the Khitan court, travelling all the way into Liao territory. It probably took three months round trip. Except for a poem, we have no sure record of what Wang found there. He had refused the appointment two years in a row, presumably considering it a nuisance.[25]

In 1063.3 the Emperor Renzong died. His successor Yingzong, a nephew, had an attack of mental illness shortly after taking the throne. A crisis ensued, in which the Empress Dowager acted as regent; officials and eunuchs took sides; frictions grew among the top ministers. During

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送程公闢守洪州, Li Bi 8.9a/309; Shen p. 22; Zhu p. 76; Gao Buying ed., *Tang Song shi juyao* 唐宋詩舉要 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959; rep. Hong Kong: Zhonghua, 1978) 3/329.

[25] See Wang Jinguang, pp. 89-94. "Zhuozhou"涿州, the poem's title, is the name of a place that was under Liao control and on the envoys' route. Wang mentions "carrying Han (Chinese) credentials"持漢節. (Li Bi 45.8a/1107.)

1062-3 is the only year Wang could have gone as an emissary. In 1059-60 he had been an escort to the border (see p. 62ff above). He was appointed to go in 1060-61, but refused. Instead, in 1061 he became *jinshi* examiner. (See *Changbian* 192.7a, date 1060.8.24. His substitute was Wang Yi王繹. A work called the *Shuo ji* 朔記 says it was 1060.9, and that three others went with him. It does not mention Wang's refusing. Quoted in Li Bi's note to "Sending Wu Shukai to the South"送吳叔閒南征, 23.6b/578.)

In 1061-62 Wang was appointed a second time, but got Zhang Gui to substitute. (*Changbian*, section from *Yongle dadian* 永樂大典, 12429.10b, lists Zhang Gui as the appointee, date 1061.8R.9. Zhang was Wang's colleague, a fellow Drafter of Edicts. In a note to a poem, Wang says that Zhang Gui substituted for him; it must have been this year. See Li Bi 29.10b/722.

It makes sense to say that Wang went in 1062-63, unable to refuse a third time in a row without a compelling reason. (Records of envoys' names are incomplete for 1062 through 1069. After 1063, Wang was in the South. Before 1060, his rank had been too low to be an envoy; after 1068 it was too high. We know he refused for 1061 and 1062; thus 1063 is the only date remaining.)

this interval, Wang Anshi's mother died (1063.8). Wang returned with her coffin to Jiangning, where he remained throughout the rest of Ying-zong's brief, weak reign.

9. JIANGNING: 1063--1068

Much happened in the capital while Wang was at Jiangning. The old triumvirate of Ouyang Xiu, Han Qi and Fu Bi disintegrated.[1] Factions formed over the proper title for the new Emperor's deceased father; animosity generated by that debate eventually contributed to Ouyang Xiu's removal from the scene. Peng Siyong (彭思永, 1000--1070, Jiangning governor for a portion of Wang's mourning period, friendly with Wang) became a censor, and in 1067 accused Ouyang Xiu of incest with a daughter-in-law. Another accuser was Jiang Zhiqi, a former protégé of Ouyang. Only Wu Chong (Wang Anshi's old friend and classmate), father of the woman involved, came to Ouyang's defense.[2] During this period, few steps were taken in the capital to avert impending fiscal and military crises.

Wang Anshi stayed out of Yingzong's administration, refusing all appointments until 1068, after Shenzong had taken office. Instead, for five years Wang wrote, studied, visited and theorized.

Within two months of her death in the capital, Wang's mother was

[1] In 1064, Han Qi removed the Empress Dowager from power, without consulting Fu Bi. Miffed by this and other incidents, Fu retired the next year.

[2] For a summary of the above events, see T.C. Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu*, pp. 76-82.

buried at Mt. Jiang (1063.10).[3] Her second son Anguo mourned the hardest, living in a funerary hut for the full three years, and copying out sutras with his own blood.

Wang Hui sent a draft of his interpretations of Confucius' *Analects* for Wang Anshi and Zeng Gong to read.[4] In 1065, after Wang Hui died, Zeng Gong told Wang Anshi that, with only a handful of like-minded comrades left, "Now only you should be able to promote Wang Hui's aspirations" 而介父於此獨能發其志.[5]

Wang Anshi socialized with the Jiangning governors, especially with Wang Weizhi 王微之(name Xi 晳 ?), and Peng Siyong. He wrote essays on the ideal national educational system,[6] and the significance of the Classics.[7]

A studious young man named Zheng Xia 鄭俠 (1041—1119), having failed the *jinshi*, came to Jiangning where his father was stationed, to study at a temple. Zheng's devotion to his books became so famous that in 1066 Wang Anshi had one of his own tutees study with him. Zheng later passed the examinations, and went on to become one of the most

[3]Epitaph by Zeng Gong, *Yuanfeng leigao* 45.4b. Mt. Jiang 蔣山, Mt. Zhong 鍾山, and the North Hill 北山 are the same mountain.

[4]See Anshi's third reply to Wang Hui, *Linchuan* 72/769.

[5]Third letter to Wang Anshi, *Yuanfeng leigao* 16.7b.

[6]In the "Record of the Academy at Qianzhou" 虔州學記 (*Linchuan* 82/858, dated 1064.2).

[7]In a letter to Han Zongshu 韓宗恕 (*zi* Qiuren, son of Han Zhen 縝), a friend of Wang's sons who had been a neighbor in the capital. The letter dates from 1063-65. *Linchuan* 72/761; Cai 11/168.

fervent critics of Wang's New Policies. Wang's student did not pass: no doubt a just result in the eyes of later historians.[8]

In 1065 Wang refused a court appointment on grounds of health. But he could not stay out of office much longer. Probably in 1066, Wang Anli went to the capital (Li Bi 14.1a/405). Wang Anshi's son Wang Fang, now 22, may have accompanied Anli: early in 1067, Wang Fang passed the *jinshi*. Yingzong had just died; nineteen-year-old Shenzong 神宗 appointed Wang Anshi Governor of Jiangning. Wang refused the post once but soon accepted it: it would be indiscreet and difficult to reject an important appointment at one's own home by a new ruler. And it is likely that Wang wanted to accept it in the first place.

Wang must have understood that this Emperor planned actively to take charge, and would likely rule for a long time. If Wang were to carry out his ideals, it would have to be under this administration. Probably many people, including Wang himself, sensed that Wang would become a statesman at least on the order of Ouyang Xiu before him. So, it seemed, would Sima Guang, Chen Shengzhi 陳升之, Lü Gongzhu 呂公著, Wu Kui 吳奎 and others. But from the material I have seen to date, it does not seem as if anyone suspected Wang would become the political giant that he did; likewise, his intellectual and literary reputation, while good, was not yet that of a giant either.

1067 is the last year in which Wang inhabited a normal personal,

[8]See Shen, p. 83. Wang's student was Yang Ji 楊驥, later a friend of Wang's in retirement. See Chapter 12.

mental and working environment: in looking at his later actions and writings, even those from his retirement, one must remember the pressures put on Wang by being the leader of a complete renovation of the empire, subordinate only to an Emperor who more often than not looked to Wang for direction rather than giving Wang orders. Did the next decade "burn him out"? Traditional histories think so, and it is believable—the decade certainly changed him. But because his diaries are lost, and he wrote few essays after 1068, we have little to observe but his public actions, as recorded in the histories or contemporary writings. Most of these actions were intended to put his political ideas into practice. The reform administration failed partly because of resistance to these ideas, but perhaps it was also because of the unsuitability of Wang's personality to the job (i.e., the reform failed because Wang was there). On the other hand, the gravest reform-related abuses and failures that occurred after his retirement and death may well have come about partly because *he was not there* to administer it—or at least there was no strong leader in evidence.

The following chapter will briefly summarize what we can learn of Wang's thought, character, and view of his own place in society on the eve of the reform: though this will rely on much undated source material, the bulk of the sources used most likely date from before 1067.

10. PORTRAIT OF WANG PRIOR TO 1067

To describe a complex person who lived a millenium ago is difficult; to accurately "label" such a man is impossible and would be presumptuous even if it were possible. Yet some temporary catchword may be useful in order to make sense of the surely distorted evidence that history has left us. Wang has been called slovenly and also fastidious; absent-minded and also sensitive; at heart a Legalist--a Confucian--a Buddhist; ultimately a poet, ultimately prosaic; pragmatic, but also bookish and unrealistic; honest, bullheaded, unpretentious, arrogant, wooden, humorless. Indications from actual evidence are that he was driven and intense; utterly ethical; not interested in possessions or fleshly pleasures; could be playful, but was not easy-going or happy-go-lucky; not an aristocrat; not a bureaucratic climber; not a city sophisticate, despite having received what was surely the best education in Jiangning. With trepidation, let me advance the word "rustic" as a term which can accomodate all of the above judgments--contradictory and presumptuous as they are.

A "rustic"--at heart an outsider--resembles the mountain shrike, a creature liable to sing for joy at springtime, forgetting he has become a high official in the Forbidden City. (P 72.) Wang called himself a "man of the moors" (or fields) 野人, or an "old rustic" 野老 (P 19). Su Che patronized him as a "man of the hills and moors" 山野

之人 (almost what an American might call a "hick"?); Su Shi marvelled at him as a "wild fox-spirit of the moor" 野狐精.[1] His roots lay in farming; much of his verse revolved around nature; his political themes were the restoration of the ancient farming state, the welfare of peasants, simplification of ideology.

He was filled with energetic tension; "He could not bear to sit still--if he was not lying down, then he would be walking."[2] His drive to accomplish what he thought most important, to the exclusion of all else, can explain much that has been said about him. The Chan master Zanyuan analyzed Wang in the 1060's, advising him to reconcile the inner conflict between his ambition on the one hand, and his anxiety about its fulfillment on the other.[3] Wang's calligraphy is thin, even haggard, but sensitive and clearly imbued with "sinew" as well as "bone" --nervous, edgy, strong; some specimens show him writing

[1] Wang's first quote is found in "Going Out from the City Wall" (Li Bi 45.7b/1106). In this poem, as a "rustic man with rustic interests," his talent useless to the times, Wang finds solace in clean communion with mountains and brooks.

Su Che's quote: Wang "is a man of the mountains and moors, dim and ignorant about matters of civil service..." 於吏事冥無所知. In Su's collected works, *Luancheng ji* 欒城集 (*SBBY* edition) "San ji" 8.8a.

Su Shi quote: *Songchao shishi leiyuan* 39/508, admiring Wang's six-character verse lines.

[2] 王荊公不耐靜坐, 非臥即行. In Ye Mengde, *Bishu lu hua* A.4b.

[3] See Nian Chang 念常 (1282--1341) ed., *Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代通載 (in *Taishō Tripitaka* vol. 49) 19:16/672c. This fascinating passage, which seems authentic, will be quoted in full in Chapter 12.

determinedly on after running out of ink.[4] In signing official documents, the word *shi* 石. in his name, which Wang intended (in cursive script) to look like a bracket over a circle 石 , often came out jagged 石 , because he felt too rushed to write a proper circle. Word spread that his *shi* 石 looked rather like the word *dai* 歹 ("vicious, depraved"). Wang got wind of the rumors, but still could not always make his circles round: one summons on which he made a big black correction to the signature, was treasured by collectors for at least a generation.[5]

In 1056, during Wang's first stint in the capital, few colleagues could match his intensity and erudition in debate.[6] His much-remarked absent-mindedness surely sprang from that same intensity. If he did not bathe, or know what food he was eating, or even laugh at entertainment, probably it was because he had no energy or interest to spare for such things, any more than he had time to draft proper circles in his signature.[7] All his life he tried to balance a desire for per-

[4]Li Zhiyi 李之儀 (fl. 1085—1102) found "sinews" in Wang's *Diamond Sūtra*. See *Guxi jushi wenji* 姑溪居士文集 (*Yueyatang congshu* edition) 40.8b.

For an example of an autograph letter, see *Songren moji jice* 宋人墨蹟集冊 (Taipei: National Palace Museum, 1961) Vol. 2, p. 7-8.

[5]See *Shilin yanyu* 4/37; also Zhu, p. 59.

[6]According to Lü family records, Lü Gongzhu was the only man who won a debate with Wang. See Li Bi's note to Wang's poem "Sent to Wu Chong" 寄吳沖卿, 10.6a/343. Details of a debate between the two: *Shao qian lu* 12/83.

[7]*Bathing*: See pp. 41-42 above.

Eating: A well-known anecdote tells how an acquaintance believed Wang's favorite dish was venison, because he had seen Wang eat

fection 求全 against the need for speedy results 欲速.[8]

Some of his writings are notoriously perfunctory. In particular, one notices grave inscriptions in which the names and birthplaces of much of the family, sometimes even the deceased himself, are simply called "X" 某 . The style of some of these inscriptions is so wooden, or the piece so short, that one cannot believe Wang took much longer to compose them than it takes us to read them. Most of those pieces, of course, were written as obligations or favors, or in answer to requests by strangers or distant kin. Wang (perhaps as "modern" in this area as he was in economics) probably adhered to the philosophy that one had to budget one's time, often at the expense of such unproductive obligations.[9] (His haste and frustration at editing the *100 Tang Poets*

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a whole plateful. At the next meal, Mme. Wang demonstrated that this was mistaken: she put a plate of different food next to Wang's place. Wang ate the whole plate, but touched none of the farther dishes, including venison. (*Quyu jiuwen* 10/80.)

Watching entertainment: Peng Cheng 彭乘 (Song) tells the following story: Wang was a constant, voracious reader, even in bed and at dinner. At a banquet while governor of Changzhou (1057), Wang laughed out loud during the entertainers' performance. Several guests gave large tips to the entertainers, for having made this stern man smile for the first time ever at a public function. But one person suspected the entertainers had not been the real reason for Wang's mirth. When he quietly asked Wang, sure enough, Wang had laughed out of uncontrollable exultation at finally realizing the meaning of a passage in the *Book of Changes*. (From *Moke huixi* 墨客揮犀 , also in Zhu, p. 59.)

[8]See his poem "Seeking Perfection" 求全 , Li Bi 23.2a/569.

[9]Cai discusses Wang's lackadaisical tomb inscriptions at length (4/77). Shen, apparently frustrated from trying to annotate those pieces, testily queries why people bothered to ask Wang for tomb inscriptions at all, given his "down-and-out, reckless nature" 潦倒任性(p. 399). Of course, any X's in the draft would be filled in by the family involved, and therefore full names would appear on the actual tombstone. Yet Wang must have known that future survival of those inscriptions would be more likely through his printed works (edited from drafts, not

have also been noted--see page 61, note 5 above.)

Time and again, people have remarked at how Wang was literally oblivious to money, pleasure and other details of life, and passive toward activities that did not matter. If he did not bathe, neither did he mind being taken to a bathhouse. In the old phrase, he thought no more of material goods than of "floating clouds."[10] His self-castigation, especially in poetry predating his premiership, is too frequent and impassioned to be mere modesty: nothing upset him more than the feeling that he was "pilfering" an undeserved salary--not wokring hard enough, not finding a niche in which he could be truly useful. "I face my dinner, ashamed that I unworthily obtained it" 臨饗恥苟得 --what attraction could gourmet pleasures have for a man who felt so strongly about whether he deserved to eat at all?[11] Lying in bed before dawn, hearing a cart-driver on the street, Wang suddenly felt ashamed of his "pilfered food," of having sold out all that he had

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from stone rubbings) than through the stones themselves.

Compared to Wang's, Han Yu's grave inscriptions are more lively and creative as a whole. (But was he called upon to write as many and as often as Wang was?) Ouyang Xiu's, even those for women, are scrupulous about providing full names and adequate detail. But are Ouyang's inscriptions more complete simply because his works had a better editor than Wang's? One tends to think not: Ouyang was more meticulous than Wang in other areas as well.

Two particularly perfunctory inscriptions by Wang: For Mme. Li 李 (*nee* Sheng, *Linchuan* 99/1023), and for Mme. Xiao 蕭 (100/1035).

[10] Huang Tingjian, "Colophon to Wang Anshi's Buddhist Pieces," 跋王荊公禪簡 , in Huang's collected works, *Yuzhang Huangxiansheng wenji* 豫章黃先生文集 (*SBCK* edition) 30.9ab; full translation Chapt. 12.

[11] "Reply to Yu Chunweng" 答虞醇翁 , Li Bi 6.9b/280. Admittedly this poem seems to have been written on an occasion that called for modesty.

ever tried to stand for.[12] It was hard enough to think he was an unwitting conniver in the official abuses he had always hated; when he further suspected himself of greedily "aspiring" to comfort, of wanting a material reward for his labor, his discomfort grew even greater. (P 3.) The sight of simple road workers (corvée labor), who wished nothing for themselves, but whose exertions helped the government and their fellow men--these were "rustics"野人 somewhat like his former self: how could he face them now? (P 4.) Wang indicated more than once that one of his ideals was the Boddhisattva: the person who has conquered mortal desire, risen above "dust and sand" (mundane details), yet turns back to the world, mastering those details so that he can save other people. (P 28, lines 13-14; P 86.)

Wang's personal mores differed little from Sima Guang's. Both men refused to take concubines: Shao Bowen relates Wang's case as follows (*Shao qian lu* 11/82):

> When Wang Anshi was a drafting official (in the capital, approx. 1061)? Mme. Wang brought him a concubine. "What's this woman doing here?" asked Wang when he saw her.
>
> "Your wife has commanded me to serve you," the concubine replied.
>
> "What family do you come from?"
>
> "I have a husband who lost a boatload of rice he was shipping for the army command. Everything we had was taken away, but we still owed money; he sold me to pay the debt."

[12]"Making Myself Get Out of Bed"強起. Probably written in the capital, winter 1055. (Li Bi 16.8b/460. Trans. Yoshikawa/Watson, p. 20.)

> Greatly agitated, Wang asked, "How much did my wife buy you for?"
>
> "Nine hundred strings of cash."
>
> Wang summoned the husband, told them to be man and wife as before, and let them keep the whole amount...(There follows a similar story about Sima Guang.)
>
> ...Both men (Wang and Sima) were immune to fleshly allure, not eager for official appointments, did not collect emoluments: in these areas they were alike. They often refused appointments to government positions six or seven times, accepting only if things came to a total impasse...Wang Anshi would turn over his salary to his younger brothers, never asking how they used it... It was only after their disagreement over the reform policies that the two men wrote letters ending their life-long friendship.

In areas that mattered, such as statecraft, his own frugality, and other people's welfare, Wang did his best to be uncorrupt and thorough. This deep-reaching sense of purity 察察 (Burton Watson renders it "fastidiousness"), associated with the ancient poet Qu Yuan, was what made much of Wang's poetry sensitive, even sentimental; lyrical, serious, and sympathetic to humankind.[13]

His deepest affection was for other human beings; and it was in

[13]According to Yoshikawa/Watson, p. 94. The word *chāchá* is found in Wang's "Poem to a Further Set of Rhymes Sent me by Wu Jiye" 次韻吳季野再見寄 (Li Bi 31.1b/756; trans. Yoshikawa/Watson, p. 87): "The common crowd still suspects my *spotless purity* 流俗尚疑身察察 (my translation). Wang is echoing Qu Yuan, the "only sober man in a world of drunks," exiled by a benighted king, who would rather drown himself than "submit my *spotless purity* to the dirt of others" 安能以身之察察受物之汶汶者乎. See "The Fisherman" 漁父, in *Chuci buzhu* 楚辭補注(*SBBY* edition) 7.2a. Translation by David Hawkes, in *The Songs of the South: An Anthology of Ancient Chinese Poems by Qu Yuan and other Poets* (Penguin Books, 1985), p. 206.

the land that he found both obligations and solace. When leaving Shuzhou for another post, the sight of people he knew upset him more . . than anything else; coming back to Jiangning after what he saw as a failed mission, he was ashamed not only to look at his own reflection, but even to face the hills themselves. (We do not know the date. P 71, 70, P 31, final four lines.) Yet love for humanity does not always include an ability to deal skillfully with people. Wang undeniably had warm friendships--more than some biographers would imply. Yet as his political power increased, so did his frictions with friends and colleagues. Perhaps the wholesale resignations of central officials under the reform would have occurred during such a period even had the leader been someone other than Wang. But would another leader have lost so many personal friends because of policy issues as Wang seems to have lost? Did Wang make more than his share of mistaken judgments in hiring or trusting subordinates? Putting aside the question of how many "small men" or sycophants Wang inadvertently allowed into his trust (traditional histories exaggerated the number), what were the reasons for Wang misplacing his trust when he did do so? Was it because, as a good man, he had trouble identifying base motives in others? One friend thought so:[14]

[14]The speaker was Xie Jingwen謝景溫 (*zi* Shizhi師直), who governed Guiji in 1048 while Wang was at Yin Prefecture. Xie would also serve under the New Policies, and be demoted over a policy disagreement: see T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 65. The remark was reported by Liu Bin劉攽, quoted by Li Bi in a note to Wang's poem "Sent to Xie Jingwen"寄謝師直, 25.7b/622.

> Wang Anshi's knowledge of men is the kind that can recognize the above average, but cannot always realize when a man is less than average. Is it because his psyche is that of a man "alone on the heights" 由其性韻獨高而然乎？

"Alone on the heights" 獨高 ---the word again recalls Qu Yuan. It implies that Wang saw himself as morally upright, and thus lost touch with ordinary human character.

Yet, aloof though he may have been, surely Wang's strict ethics insured better results than would have occurred under a less ethical leader, whether aloof or not. (Witness the treachery and resentment as soon as Lü Huiqing gained power--described in the next chapter.) An additional, simpler reason for Wang's interpersonal difficulties (and his political success, at least in the beginning of the reform) may have been that same obsessive devotion to principle, often at the expense of tradition, friendship and his own welfare. Such devotion surely involved extraordinary courage. His blanket term "common crowd" 流俗, referring to conventional thinkers including most of his fellow officials, does indicate both a man who is aloof, or "alone on the heights," and a man who will cleave to a principle regardless of personal considerations.

What were some of those principles he espoused? Wang's thought has been ably discussed in several contexts, and a systematic analysis would be a study in itself.[15] Here let us merely survey several

[15] T.C. Liu's summary is indispensable reading for understanding Wang and his times. (*Reform*, Chapt. 3, esp. pp. 40-58.) I have also benefitted from an unpublished paper by Peter K. Bol, "Wang An-shih's

aspects of Wang's political philosophy, leaving literature and religious thought to other chapters. Two general headings will suffice: 1) A description of Wang's Confucianism, especially in relation to other philosophies; 2) His principles of action--how he intended to achieve results.

Wang Anshi's Confucianism

Wang was a Confucian. The statement must be reiterated, because *a*) he was also a Buddhist, starting midway through his career or even earlier; *b*) he has been praised (and damned) as a Legalist; and *c*) there were many kinds of Confucian thought in the Northern Song, which are constantly being reappraised, and it is time to look again at Wang's particular brand.

It has been suggested (by detractors, admirers, and twentieth-century historians) that Wang brought Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy into his political theory and work. Scattered hints in his writings indicate that such was indeed the case.[16] Yet nowhere does he make the connection explicit. In one common formulation, Wang could be considered "outwardly Confucian, inwardly Buddhist" 陽儒陰佛 . It is important to explore what that phrase means, because it could apply to many of Wang's contemporaries as well: there was a strong element of Chan

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Theory of the Activist State" (presented at Association for Asian Studies Annual Meeting, Washington DC, March 1984). Professor Bol is especially helpful in discussing Wang's idea of "unity."

[16]See again P 28, lines 13-14. Also T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 36; *Changbian* 233.14, 275.11.

Buddhism in most of the neo-Confucian thought that was developing. I do not believe he was a secret Buddhist pretending to be a Confucian. And it would be oversimplifying to say that Wang used Buddhism to guide his inner life and Confucianism to guide his public career, although to a large extent this was true. More precisely, I believe Wang felt there was a metaphysical truth overarching all other truths--the *yang* or visible world describable in Confucian terms existed under a mantle or dome of *yin* or impalpable truth. The connections between the two fundamental entities (also describable as "existence" 有 and "non-existence" 無) had been an issue in Daoist thought, but were only beginning to be explored in writing by such Confucian philosophers as Zhang Zai and Zhou Dunyi. Although Wang did not write on the subject, I believe his thinking did place the two worlds into some kind of relationship.

One may more specifically surmise that Wang thought of all the work he did, including the deepest theoretical and spiritual exploration of the Confucian *dao*, to be "dust and sand," all embraced within a Buddhist world-view which Wang generally kept to himself. In other words, Confucianism was only an affair of the apparent temporal world, and had nothing to do with the true universe. Yet because one could use Confucianism to save humanity, being a Confucian politician was not trivial at all, but was rather the most important and urgent thing one could do with one's life. The way to emulate the Boddhisattva, then, was by being a good Confucian.[17]

[17]Another analogy: One man looks at the stars, realizes how vast the universe is, and decides life is too trivial to worry about;

Was Wang a Legalist? Recent mainland Chinese writings have considered him one, although the value of the term is limited due to its use recently as a code word for relatively progressive pre-modern thinkers. But the idea of Wang being a Legalist did not start with twentieth-century scholars. He had been branded a Legalist as early as the Southern Song, when his reforms were blamed for the loss of the North. Specifically, Southern Song commentators saw him as a follower of "Qin Learning"秦學, whose goal was to "enrich the state and strengthen the army" 富國強兵, and who relied too much upon empirical, legalistic methods (*xingming*, *fashu* 刑名法術), rather than on moral spirit.[18] Actually, after the Qin, true Legalists (in name as well as thought) had been few indeed: those ideas that did survive from Legalism were absorbed into the Confucian mosaic. As for Wang,

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but another man, seeing the same sight, decides that *precisely because* we are so small and weak, we must redouble our efforts toward helping others, and not succumb to the universe's size. Wang (at least before his retirement) might be compared to the second man. The attitude also appears in Han poetry: see P 53.

[18] Lin Jingwen林敬文 has a useful discussion of whether Wang was a Legalist or not: "Wang Anshi yanjiu"王安石研究, in *Guoli Taiwan Shifan Daxue Guowen Yanjiusuo jikan* 國立台灣師範大學國文研究所集刊 24.2 (1980.6), pp. 39-41.

"Qin Learning:" mentioned in connection with Wang by Chen Cisheng陳次升 (1094--1119), in *Song shi*宋史 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1977) 346/10969. (Chen on the first day of school in an academy using the *Zi shuo*, saw Wang's defenses of Li Si and Shang Yang, and asked "Isn't this a case of Qin Learning?")

"Enriching the state..." Emperor Gaozu of the Southern Song considered this to have been Wang's main goal. Wang Juzheng王居正 added that Wang's classical annotations expressed the heresy of "No Father and No King" 無父無君. (*Song shi* 381/11736.)

Too much reliance on institutions instead of morality: See Zhu Xi朱熹 (1130--1200), "On Reading the Surviving Remonstrances of the Two Chen's" 讀兩陳諫議遺墨, in *Zhuzi daquan* 朱子大全 (*SBBY* edition) 70.6bff.

he was never a Legalist in name; and although it has been said he was a *de facto* Legalist (he "used Legalist reality while avoiding the name 'Legalist'" 用法家之實而諱其名), that statement is probably distorted.[19] Why? Because Wang grounded his political theories, not on Legalist mistrust of human nature but on Confucian faith that humanity was basically good.

To be sure, some of Wang's ideas resemble Legalism on the surface. First, he admired systems: he praised government that operated by the rules and kept its promises.[20] One major virtue of the Zhou dynasty, as Wang saw it, had been its well-organized bureaucratic system.[21] Such a system depended upon *rules and measures*, without which even Yao or Shun would have ended up with a bureaucracy as mediocre as any other.[22] Second, Wang's struggle for "moral unity" 一道德 could be understood as a Qin-style attempt to regiment the people's thinking.

Yet Wang's Confucian orientation nullified most of the Legalism present in those ideas: he said that keeping promises was only a *tactic*

[19]Assertion by Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619--1692), in "Essay Upon Reading the *Zizhi tongjian*" 讀通鑒論 (*SBBY* edition) 1.4a. See also Lin Jingwen, p. 39.

[20]His famous quatrain "Shang Yang" 商鞅 lauds the incident in which Lord Shang demonstrated that the Qin government would do as it said: He offered ten pieces of gold to anyone who would move a wooden beam from the south gate to the north gate. When no one believed him, he raised the reward to fifty pieces of gold. One man moved the beam, and was actually given the money. (Li Bi 46.8a/1133; Zhou Xifu p. 115.)

[21]Wang's "Preface to the Interpretation of the *Zhou li* 周禮義序, *Linchuan* 84/878.

[22]"Wanyan shu," *Wen juyao* 7/867.

of good government, not its core.[23] And institutions without Yao or Shun to guide them were just as useless as Yao or Shun would be without institutions. Wang did not believe in forcing behavior through draconian punishments; his idea of "unity" envisioned a people who had been *persuaded* and *educated* to function (creatively but correctly) in accord with true human nature and a *Dao* that underlay all the different moralities and schools of thought that seemed to be at odds with each other. Such an approach to unity is a far cry from the Qin path of "burning books and burying scholars."

Finally, "enriching the state and strengthening the army" had never been an exclusively Legalist goal, and one could question whether that formulation defines Wang's major goals in the first place. (See Lin, pp. 40-41.) One need go no further than Confucius to find a definition of good government quite similar to the goals of Emperor Shenzong: "Adequate food, adequate military, and the people's confidence" 足食，足兵，民信之矣. (*Lunyu* 23/XII/7.) Wang, especially in his early career, opposed "unorthodox" ideas so adamantly that practically no one except Confucius and the Yellow Emperor escaped his criticism.[24] For him, not only were Buddhism and Daoism, Mohist and Legalist ideas unorthodox, but so were needless complications, in the social order and in Confucian ideas. Complications were what prevented

[23] Yang Zhongliang 楊仲良, *Tongjian Changbian jishi benmo* 通鑒長編紀事本末 (1893 edition) 59.15b, date 1072.2.4.

[24] So said Zeng Gong. Reported by Zeng's descendants to Li Bi, see note under "Master Han" 韓子, 48.7b/1188.

the nation from reverting to a basic agricultural way of life, in which Rites and Music would govern the people's thought. When Wang talked of "unorthodox ideas" 異端, rather than meaning "heretical doctrines" (the usual translation), he seems to have meant something akin to "*irrelevant* approaches:" the clutter of confused ideas or narrow scholasticism that distracted Confucians from their one important mission, to recover the *Dao* of the former kings.[25] The most bothersome "irrelevancies" were not other religions: Buddhists and Daoists usually functioned outside the Confucian arena, and at times could even serve as examples of moral or capable men for Confucians to follow, in private and even in public life.[26] The worst "irrelevancies," rather, were found within Confucianism itself. To preserve the letter of Confucian rites while losing their true meaning or motivation is to have "Rites that Deny Rites" 非禮之禮.[27] Conversely, for officials to cultivate a *Dao* or a "transforming influence" 化, without systematically going about state business, was equally harmful to the state. (P 10.)

Perhaps most important is that Wang did not view himself as championing an "orthodox" line of Confucianism over other lines; rather, he believed he could find the *spirit* of Confucianism, a spirit which

[25]"Wanyan shu," *Wen juyao* 7/867; *Linchuan* 39/410.

[26]See two early pieces: "Record of the Longxing Lecture Hall at Yangzhou" 揚州龍興講院記(dated 1045, *Linchuan* 83/871). And "Written on Master Ruixin's Wall" 書瑞新道人壁(dated 1053.6, *Linchuan* 71/756.)

[27]Title of essay in *Linchuan* 67/713.

could allow one to reconcile Mencius and Yang Xiong, and see the unity below Confucianism's surface conflicts.[28] This was the way to conquer the greatest irrelevancy of all: the mistake of forgetting what Confucianism had intended to achieve in the first place--a nation in which all the people had enough to eat, and were safe from harm. Rites and Norms, education, unity--all these were tools by which rulers could ensure that such prosperity and peace would continue. Any tool might be legitimate, if it worked: to use ideas from popular belief, religion, medicine etc. in the pursuit of this goal was no "heresy," but supremely Confucian.[29]

Wang thus had a far-reaching concept of "unity" (*yi* 一): a single *Dao*, inherent in Nature, that could apply to all human endeavors--from the creation of words, to the writing of the classics, to the organization of empires. Wang would later put this concept into writing, largely (it is thought) through his *Zi shuo* (字說 *Written Characters Explained*), which tried to interpret the structure and meaning of Chinese characters in the light of holistic principles. But Wang's way of thought, however holistic he may have believed it was, did not come across as a unifying force to those Confucians who disagreed with his goals and strategies. Some Confucians refused to accept

[28]Mencius and Yang Xiong: see "Yang Xiong and Mencius"楊孟, *Linchuan* 64/679. Trans. Williamson II/329. Wang believes both men held the same ideas about Nature and Destiny, although they appeared to differ.

[29]On using ideas from a wide range of sources: see Wang's famous "Reply to Zeng Gong" 答曾子固書. *Linchuan* 73/778; trans. Williamson I/367. See also P 10.

the idea of economic growth, and believed instead that rich and poor should learn to enjoy their lot; some even believed prosperity was a corrupting influence.[30] Many advocated a minimal structure and role for government--hardly compatible with Wang's state activism. Most schools of Confucianism insisted on maintaining some form of Rites and Norms; sometimes with the implication that it did not matter whether a society was rich or poor, so long as it maintained the *Dao*. In effect, for these people ideology took precedence over economic progress, although they would not have phrased the idea that way. Wang's approach, seen from their viewpoint, was "utilitarian" 功利 , flawed by an insistence upon quick material benefits, and was not Confucianism as they knew it.

Thus in two areas--goals and tactics--Wang's political ideas did not mesh with those of many other Confucians. For that reason alone, it is small wonder that theoretical opposition to him would grow so strong.[31]

[30]See Su Ch'e objection to Wang's poem "The Monopolists" (note under P 2).

[31]Part of Wang's concept of "unity" is seen in his essay, "On Avoiding Action Though Holding Office"祿隱., (with which most of his opponents would also have agreed). *Linchuan* 69/730. A few excerpts:

"...The words and actions of Sages and Worthies are the same in some ways, but not necessarily in all ways. We cannot pursue their meaning from any single direction. The *Dao* remains the same; physical actions differ. He is no Upright Man who understand Sameness but does not comprehend the Differences. What Upright Man would ever *insist* upon being different?... It happens when the *times* are 'different,' therefore his speech and actions cannot help but differ (from the times times): only by this 'differing' can he be 'the same' (with the *Dao*). If the times are different, yet he insists on being 'the same,' then his 'sameness' is in the field of actions, while what he differs from is the *Dao*: though his actions may accord with those of sages, his

Wang's Tactics for Achieving Confucian Goals

Conspicuous in Wang's political thinking are two traits: in modern language, one would call one of them *pragmatism*, and the other a deeply Confucian *faith in human goodness*. In his personal conduct (which Confucianism insists is directly related to one's qualifications for public office), Wang exemplified the quest to express "*humanity*" (*rén* 仁, sensitivity or unselfishness), and also *diligence*. All four of these qualities--especially his pragmatism and trust in human nature--underlie Wang's pre-reform thought.

Let us first discuss *pragmatism*. Though Wang admired the sage-kings Yao and Shun, it may be the third king, Yu, who is most significant for our understanding of Wang. It was Yu who had rechanneled the rivers, not only ending floods but bringing prosperity through improved agriculture. Such a project needed no ideology other than an urgent desire to improve the people's livelihood; no philosophical trappings, only broad technical ability. Wang's expertise at irrigation and dredging (developed through experience since at least 1048) in a small way made him one of Yu's successors.

Wang's use of an array of sources for his thinking, regardless of their orthodoxy or lack of it, is an obvious facet of his pragmatism. Even more characteristic was his life-long insistence on holding to

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Dao differs--how can he avoid becoming a 'petty man?'...
"...Sagehood calls the *Dao* its ancestor, just as waters call the sea their ancestor. One stream flows crooked, another straight, never 'the same;' but in the matter of being derived from the sea, all waters are the same..."

essential goals, and not being sidetracked by philosophical issues or illogical reasoning. He rigorously distinguished Substance 實 from Names 名 ; high-sounding conduct was less important than whether or not it produced results.[32] Empty gestures, no matter how noble, were usually irrelevant. Xiang Yu 項羽 (at Gaixia in 202 BC), for instance, though perhaps a nobler man than his enemy Liu Bang, had been right to submit to Liu's victory: with no popular support, Xiang Yu could not have won. (P 12.) By the same token, Liu Bang's last weak scion Liu Bei 劉備 (161--223), sad to say, should have relinquished the cause of maintaining a Han-dynasty outpost in Shu. To know when it no longer makes sense to fight for a cause, is the highest wisdom.[33] The superior man assesses a course of action not by whether it is hard or easy, but by whether it is right 義 .[34] Sometimes the right course is also the easy course.

More controversial was Wang's idea that (put grossly) money encourages moral conduct: people must have food and security before one can expect them to develop a sense of modesty or shame; government must "support men through wealth" 饒之以財 before it can "temper (restrain) them with Rites" 約之以禮.[35] This idea was not new, and

[32]"On Name and Substance" 名實論, especially part 3: *Linchuan* Appendix, p. 1068.

[33]"Reading the History of Shu" 讀蜀志, Li Bi 46.11b/1140.

[34]"On Courage and Generosity" 勇慧 , *Linchuan* 67/716; trans. Williamson II/354.

[35]"Wanyan shu," *Wen juyao* 7/872, *Linchuan* 39/412. The second phrase comes from *Lunyu*, 11/VI/27 and 23/XII/15.

agrees with many people's common sense, but it did have Legalist overtones. (Cf. *Guanzi*: "When the granaries are full, men understand Rites and Decorum; they know Honor from Dishonor once there is enough to wear and to eat" 倉廩實則知禮節, 衣食足則知榮辱.)[36] Wang used this philosophy to argue for higher official salaries. But the idea attracted controversy during the reform, when many Confucians felt that Wang's policies pursued only the "food and clothing" but made no progress toward "Rites and Decorum."

The controversy over Wang's pragmatism sometimes surfaced in references to Zhuangzi's image of the old farmer lugging a clumsy water jug to irrigate his fields, when he could have done the job faster with a well-sweep. The old man, believing that material contrivances would only lead to contriving minds 機心, was intended to represent a (misguided) devotion to mental and moral cultivation in the face of "expediency," wealth, and the easy path. Wang argued with Zhuangzi against the old man, and in favor of the "well-sweep" (i.e., improved economic and bureaucratic systems). Such inventions, by relieving men's physical burdens, did not eliminate civilized self-cultivation at all, but in fact were what made it possible.[37]

When Wang advocated economic growth and increased official income he was not being cynical or Legalist: he *believed in human*

[36] *Guanzi jiaozheng* 管子校正 (in *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* 新編諸子集成, vol. 5, Taipei: World, 1978) 1.1. Also in Sima Qian 司馬遷, *Shi ji* 史記 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975) 129/3255.

[37] See P 14. Also Wang's "Water Wheel" 水車, part of his series of "Farm Tool Poems" 農具詩, Li Bi 15.10a/441.

nature; was confident that people who were physically comfortable and properly educated, would *want* to abide by Rites and Norms. It was such faith in humanity that encouraged Wang's pragmatic approach to problems, and his confidence that correct ideology, which ultimately comes from the human heart, would propagate itself once institutions were set right. Early in his career he believed that men tended to rise to whatever responsibilities they were given: men treated like pigs or dogs would act like pigs or dogs; but if treated like human beings they would live up to or exceed expectations.[38] A difficult task, in fact, could serve as a forge to test or improve a man's capacity. Horses in the corral are all alike; one discovers their abilities by making them gallop.[39] This optimistic element was combined with pragmatism in much of Wang's thought. On education, he wrote that even when the ancient teachings are in decline, they will still influence people for the good: professors may have forgotten the true *Dao*, but parts of it will live indefinitely, if only as proverbs in the mouths of housewives and soldiers. Why can the *Dao* survive this way? Because ultimately it is a natural part of the human mind.[40] And, in a famous line of reasoning, Wang explained why a sage such as Yao would pick an unsatisfactory man such as Gun鯀 to channel the floodwaters: it was because the job was urgent, and Gun was the best man available. Even

[38]"Devolution of Responsibility"委任, *Linchuan* 69/735. Trans. Williamson II/368.

[39]"On Talent"材論, *Linchuan* 64/681.

[40]"Record of the Qianzhou Academy"虔州學記, *Linchuan* 82/859. Written 1064.2?

though it would probably fail, the task could not wait.[41]

Wang often thought, not in absolute terms, but in terms of degree--this is also a form of "pragmatism" or "realism." Hence, those who did think in absolutes or dichotomies felt his sophisticated analyses to be heterodox, and his pragmatism to be "expediency." They believed that "expediency," if adopted as official policy, would actually prevent (rather than encourage) the restoration of an all-embracing, long-lasting, absolute *Dao*.[42]

Finally, the characteristic that caused Wang to promote his ideas and stick by them so that they are still remembered, was his famous self-assuredness and utter indifference to opposition. As he put it:[43]

> There are many stupid men in the world, and the stupid insist on resenting the worthy. Add to that the fact that the worthy ones keep to themselves, not trying to cooperate with the stupid ones, and the stupid grow all the more jealous...

[41]"On Gun"鯀說, *Linchuan* 68/720. (Written 1061?) Wang posed this as an examination question 策問 in 1061: see *Linchuan* 70/746; trans. Williamson I/333.

[42]Wang's intellectual affinity to Su Shi (and relative lack of affinity with Sima Guang) may have something to do with the fact that Su, also, thought in terms of degree, and was even more eclectic or catholic than was Wang. (See Chapter 12.)

[43]"Reply to Duan Feng"答段逢書, *Linchuan* 75/797. Undated, but probably predates the reform.

Perhaps with some hyperbole, he wrote on Wang Hui's tomb about a Sage's character: a sage (Mencius or Yang Xiong) may only find one or two disciples while alive, and even they will misunderstand him. He is consequently misunderstood for thousands of years. But at least, if he lives long enough, he can leave writings behind, which someone who does understand may someday read.[44] With sageliness being so tenuous and seldom comprehended, it is no wonder that Wang would feel no obligation to explain or modify his reformist stance for the benefit of the "common crowd."

[44]Tomb inscription for Wang Hui 王深父墓誌銘, *Linchuan* 93/962, *Wen juyao* 7/942. Written 1065 or later.

11. THE REFORM YEARS: 1068--1076

Brief Outline of the Reform

Wang declined court service under Emperor Yingzong, for reasons of health, asking for a sinecure (1065.7.27). But when Shenzong took the throne, Wang became active. Shenzong was hoping to replace parts of the old administration, which was now fragmented and ineffective. Wang Anshi's backing and reputation influenced Shenzong to summon him. But once again Wang refused on account of health, and asked for a sinecure close to home. It is possible that Wang did not want to serve under the Prime Minister Han Qi.[1] Zeng Gongliang 曾公亮 (999--1078, who apparently hoped even more to see Han Qi retire), explained to the emperor that Wang was not the sort of man to make false postures: if he claimed ill health, one could be sure it really was a matter of health. Wu Kui 吳奎 disagreed, saying that when he had served with Wang on the Livestock Commission, Wang had proved self-serving and obstinate. Han Wei encouraged Shenzong not to give up on Wang--a worthy man such as Wang could only be "moved by Principle" 以義動 ,

[1] But this is not necessarily because of any long-standing dispute or resentment against Han. See Sima Guang's *Shushui jiwen* 溼水紀聞 (*Xuejin taoyuan* edition) 16.3a for the earliest claim that Wang resented Han Qi (and that Han did not take Wang seriously as an administrator) ever since Wang's first position in Yangzhou. This story, however, does not fit with Wang's existing poetry that mentions the period. See also above, page 17, note 3.

not "fetched through trickery"以計取.[2] Zeng and Han won the debate: the Emperor decided to see if Wang might accept the governorship of Jiangning--at home but no sinecure.

Wang accepted after only one refusal: a hint that he would be willing to appear in the capital if ordered again to do so.[3] Apparently encouraged, Shenzong tried again to see Wang for himself: in 1067.9 he summoned Wang to join the Hanlin Academy. Wang accepted immediately, but either took the long route to Bianjing through Linchuan, or else visited Linchuan first, then doubled back downriver to Jiangning again and then the capital.[4] He profoundly impressed the teen-aged Emperor in two famous special audiences, in which he urged Shenzong to emulate the sage-kings Yao and Shun, and choose ministers they would

[2]These opinions were submitted in 1067.3R. See *Xu tongjian* 65/1595; *Changbian* 209.13; Li Bi 44.14a/1091 (note under "Among the Pines"松間); see also Michael Dennis Freeman, "Loyang and the Opposition to Wang An-shih; the Rise of Confucian Conservatism, 1068--1086" (Diss. Yale, 1973), pp. 14-15.

[3]Texts of his refusal and acceptance: Cai 12/183-4; *Linchuan* 40/435, 56/610. His governorship began in 1067.5.18 and ended 1067.10.23. (*Jingding Jiankang zhi*, *juan* 13, table for year Zhiping 4.)

[4]On passing through Linchuan: confirmed in a stone inscription of a poem he wrote there in 1067. See Li Bi 18.2b/486. ("Shiming Spring"試茗泉.) Wang Fang was with him also. Wang either went up the river to Linchuan, then overland to the capital, or else returned to Jiangning from Linchuan, then took the canal to the capital. The latter route is more likely.

Williamson follows the traditional histories, according to whose chronology Wang did not reach the capital until 1068.4. Williamson surmises that from 1067.9 until 1068.4, Wang was still serving as governor of Jiangning. However, Wang might also have spent that interval at Linchuan. I believe Wang may have arrived in the capital as early as late 1067, but his first recorded audience with the Emperor did not occur until 1068.4. (See Williamson I/108, note 1.)

have chosen, not settling for the standards of even such a great monarch as Taizong of the Tang.[5] Though such speeches could have been "adroit flattery" (Williamson I/107), or genuine fundamentalism, one can see them also as an expression of Wang's pragmatic faith in human nature: his belief that high expectations were what drove people to achieve great things. An Emperor who aimed to be Yao or Shun would do better than one emulating lesser heroes.

By early 1069, Shenzong knew enough of Wang and his ideas that he promoted Wang to Second Privy Councillor, one of the ruling triumvirate of ministers. Concurrently, Shenzong authorized Wang to establish a Finance Planning Commission 制置三司條例司, the first new agency of the economic, administrative, and (Wang hoped) ideological reform that Shenzong wanted to sponsor. Other measures followed:

1069.7. The *Equitable Distribution System* 均輸法, for the southeast and south-central regions. An expanded transportation and payment network for trading and moving government supplies and tributary commodities. It was designed to stabilize prices, undercut profiteering, and save revenue.[6]

1069.9. The Finance Planning Commission unveiled its *Green Sprout System* 青苗法, a program of agricultural loans. The govern-

[5] First audience 1068.4, second 1068.9. See *Xu tongjian* 66/1619, 66/1629. For a more detailed English account of these events, see Williamson I/100-104.

[6] *Xu tongjian* 67/1648. T.C. Liu, *Reform*, pp. 4-5, 50-51; Williamson Vol. I Chapt. 12, includes translation of Wang's proposal for the measure (I/131-135). On modifications or cancellation of the proposal, see Williamson I/135, 139.

ment would lend money or grain to farmers in the spring, when the crops were to be planted (as green sprouts) and farmers often had no income, seed money or even food on the table. The farmers would repay at harvest time, in money or grain, at the low interest rate of two percent per month. Intended both to free farmers from the cycle of poverty and to break the hold of usurers and "monopolists," the Green Sprout System became a catchword in the anti-reformers' vocabulary. It was invoked ever since to represent all that was evil about the reforms: the government moneylending for profit (Confucian objection), and officials becoming the newest usurers in town (popular objection).[7]

1070.12. Wang's promotion to First Privy Councillor 同中書門下平章事 coincided with the implementation of the *Baojia System* 保甲法, by which the entire nation would eventually be organized into units of ten, fifty and five hundred households, each unit providing militia and officers. This system, whose goal was to better maintain public order, also contained the potential to convert the army from a mercenary to a militia force. Under a militia army, soldiers would continue to be farmers--consequently the state would save money, and the soldiers would feel they had something to fight for.[8]

[7] *Xu tongjian* 67/1656; Williamson Vol. I, Chapt. 13. Many popular objections to the system stemmed not from the system's principles, but from its improper execution: some officials forced people to take out unwanted loans; some added surcharges to the interest. A few did not actually lend the money, but still demanded that people "repay" them.

[8] *Xu tongjian* 68/1694. Also see a fragment of Wang's palace diary, apparently genuine: *Zhuzi daquan* (*SBCK* edition) 83.3a, dated 1069.11R.19. Also quoted in Deng Guangming, ("Wang Anshi's Actions Toward Northern Song Military Reforms, and the Principles Behind

1071.2. *Civil Service Examination Reforms.* Poetry and rote knowledge of the Classics 詩賦明經 were dropped from the *jinshi* examinations. Areas still tested included classical interpretation 經義, essays 論 and policy papers 策論. Ultimate purpose of the examination curriculum: to "Unify Morality" or "to make Morality Consistent" 一道德.[9]

1071.10. *Reforms of the Hired-Service System* 役法. A new nationwide tax was imposed to pay for certain local government services. In the past, citizens had been drafted to perform these services, often going bankrupt before they were through. They were asked now to contribute a set amount of money rather than working time.[10] (The rationale behind this scheme contrasts diametrically with the *baojia*

Them") 王安石對北宋兵制的改革措施及其設想 in *Songshi yanjiu lunwen ji* 宋史研究論文集 (Shanghai Guji, 1982), pp. 312-313.

T.C. Liu downplays this system's importance to the reform as a whole (*Reform*, pp. 57-58). Williamson gives a detailed history, including pre-Song precedents, and summarizes the system's fate after Wang's death. He also notes Liang Qichao's claim that this was the one reform measure for which strongest opposition came from the common people rather than from officialdom. (Vol. I, Chapt. 14, esp. p. 202.) Such a system had been advocated for years by Ouyang Xiu, Su Shi, Fan Zhen and others--officials who opposed the reforms in most other areas.

[9] See pp. 88-90 above. *Xu tongjian* 68/1698-99. T.C. Liu, *Reform*, pp. 6-7. The previous year's examinations had also emphasized policy discussions. (*Xu tongjian* 67/1672-73.) The pitfall of policy discussions was that they were hard to score objectively. As an example, the *Xu tongjian* claims that in that year the top candidate received his high honor because his essay sycophantically lauded the New Policies.

[10] *Xu tongjian* 68/1711-12. A detailed analysis is found in T.C. Liu, *Reform*, Chapt. 6. Revisions of this system had been proposed for years (*Xu tongjian* 55/1034); Wang's changes would serve as the basic pattern up through the end of the Chinese Empire in 1911.

system, by which national security was to change from reliance on hired forces to reliance on conscription.)

1072.3. *State Trade System* 市易法 . The government would buy surplus commodities for slightly more than the current price if prices were low, and sell them at slightly less than the current price if prices rose. Credit purchases and exchanges of goods were permitted. The state would make no profit; the object was merely to stabilize prices and undercut profiteering by "monopolists" and speculators.[11]

1072.5. The *Horse-Breeding System* 保馬法. Object: to increase the number of horses available for the military. Any household could raise a horse, provided by the government. Households who did so received tax reductions, and use of the horses when not needed by the state.[12]

1072.8. *Land Survey and Equitable Tax* 方田均稅法 . A re-registering of farmland, adjusted tax assessments and tighter regulations against tax fraud.[13]

1073.3. A *Bureau of Classical Interpretation* 經義局 was established, to write new standard interpretations of three Classics: the *Shijing*, *Shangshu* and *Zhouli*. Wang had overall authority, while

[11] *Xu tongjian* 69/1720-21; T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 6; Williamson Vol. I Chapt. 16. This system had been largely the invention of Wang Shao (in 1070.10), who had hoped to improve the borderland economies, and thus attract nomad tribes to accept Chinese sovereignty.

[12] *Xu tongjian* 69/1723; Williamson I/256-258. Also Chen Zhen 陳振, "Lun baoma fa" 論保馬法, in *Songshi yanjiu lunwen ji*, pp. 321-334.

[13] *Xu tongjian* 69/1730; T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 5.

Wang Fang and Lü Huiqing did much of the work. (*Xu tongjian* 69/1735.)

1073.9. *Guild Exemption Tax* 免行錢. Collected from commercial and manufacturing guilds, in lieu of requiring them to contribute supplies directly to the palace.[14]

1074.4. *Wang's first resignation.* Protests against heavy taxation, exacerbated by a drought, led Shenzong to abolish the reforms and immediately reinstate them. Wang Anshi submitted his first resignation, and was sent back to his former post as governor of Jiangning.

1074.7. With Wang temporarily retired, Lü Huiqing instituted the much-hated *Self-assessment System* 手實法, to establish a basis for collection of the Hired Service tax money. Middle-class households were ordered to list their belongings, allegedly even extending to chickens and pigs, each of which had a standard value set by the government. This measure stayed in effect for only a little over a year. (*Xu tongjian* 70/1761; Williamson I/349-50.)

1075.2. Wang returned to the capital as First Privy Councillor.

1076.6. The *New Interpretations of the Three Classics* were submitted, and began to be used as the basis for the examinations.

1076.10. Wang's final retirement to Jiangning.

1085. Shenzong died; Sima Guang came to power; all reforms were abolished.

[14] *Xu tongjian* 69/1742. T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 6. Also see his pp. 92-94, on how this measure helped make the eunuchs resent Wang's policies, because the measure reduced contact (and opportunities for graft) between guilds and the palace.

The Fate of the Opposition

The reforms were at once symptoms and causes of various trends in society and government, which are important to understand and have been well recounted elsewhere. Here let us look only at some of the human drama which the reforms precipitated among the officials, first mentioning aspects of the opposition to Wang before looking at the composition and actions of Wang's own party.[16] The present summary intends only to indicate roughly what kinds of pressures Wang faced during the years he presided over the most exhausting and ambitious political restructuring of the entire dynasty.

His first act as a court official under Shenzong was to write the permission for Han Qi to resign--Wang's first superior officer and a venerable statesman.[17] Wang may have known that he himself might well replace that man, but may not have realized that he was also being used as a tool in court politics: Zeng Gongliang's strong recommendations of Wang seem to have been intended primarily as a step toward toppling Han Qi and his group. (Freeman, p. 15.) At Han Qi's final

[16]Information on these events is voluminous but skewed: Wang's own journals are lost, and the tone of the official histories at times almost resembles *Lives of the Saints*, with Wang cast as the devil. Nevertheless, we must depend on these sources for certain facts, even if we try to revise their emphases. For more detail: the story of much of Wang's rise to power, as well as the rise of his opposition, has been recounted in English by Freeman, particularly in his Chapt. 1.

[17](1067.9.) *Linchuan* 47/494; Cai 12/186. Wang must still have been in Jiangning to write this.

audience with the Emperor (at which both Han and Shenzong wept), Shenzong asked if Wang Anshi had the calibre to manage the country. Han replied that Wang was not Prime Minister material, although more than qualified for his Hanlin post. (*Xu tongjian* 65/1607-8.) Wang impressed Shenzong nonetheless, as we have seen.

But Shenzong simultaneously brought other faces into his administration--perhaps aware of their mutual differences and intending to compare their ideologies in practice. Thus Sima Guang was appointed to the Hanlin Academy in the same year as Wang. Within a year (1068.8) occurred a famous debate in the throne room, at which Sima's static fiscal principles collided with Wang's dynamic economics. Their views were so irreconcilable that they could have been speaking separate languages. Although Shenzong would refuse Sima Guang's resignation several times over the next few years, it must have been clear already that Sima's ideas would play only a small role in the administration.[18]

The Finance Planning Commission was under the charge of Wang and his ally Chen Shengzhi; but Shenzong also appointed Su Che to the commission--perhaps on an "impulse," perhaps as part of a multi-partisan policy--most likely the appointment simply reflects the fact that partisan lines were not yet drawn.[19] Su Che, however, did not last

[18] *Xu tongjian* 66/1627; Williamson I/105-106. The two men also diverged in judging a case of attempted murder: Wang insisted, with the lower court, that the "plan" and "act" of murder were separate, while Sima believed they amounted to the same thing. The Emperor sided with Wang, but controversy over the case lasted into 1069. (*Xu tongjian* 66/1623-24, 67/1650.)

[19] "Impulse:" see Hatch in Franke, p. 920.

long on the commission; even if he had, he could hardly have bucked the reform. In this early stage, support for the reform was broad, with opposition to the specific reforms and to Wang himself at its weakest point, as attested by a political joke that began to circulate in 1069. Tang Jie 唐介 had died in 1069.3, reportedly because of anger at Wang. After his death, the saying went, the high ministries were plagued by the Four (Buddhist) Tribulations 四苦 : the Tribulation of Having Just Been Born 生 (Wang Anshi, young and strong); the Tribulation of Old Age 老 (Zeng Gongliang, seventy years old); that of Illness 病 (Fu Bi and Han Qi, bowing out for health reasons); that of Death 死 (Tang Jie); and, for good measure, the Tribulation of Tribulation 苦 (Zhao Bian 趙抃 , who could respond to Wang's measures only by wringing his hands and calling it a "tribulation"). (*Shao qian lu* 13/94; *Xu tongjian* 66/1638-39.)

The opposition appeared to weaken further as massive resignations and demotions changed the composition of the central court over the next two years. Early in 1069, Zeng Gongliang moved to a sinecure at Luoyang. In the fifth month, with Zeng out of town and Fu Bi ill, several officials were removed from office: one for refusing to carry out new regulations, one for protesting the first man's removal.[20] When the censor Lü Hui 呂誨 objected to these irregular resignations, Wang himself (secure in the Emperor's support) threatened to resign. (*Xu tongjian* 66/1641.)

[20] *Xu tongjian* 66/1640. The first was Zheng Xie 鄭獬, the second was Qian Gongfu 錢公輔 , hitherto a friend of Wang's. Including Teng Fu 滕甫, a total of three men resigned in one day.

Su Shi wrote a detailed essay explaining why Wang's changes in the examination topics were irrelevant. There was no personal attack, but the essay did indicate a strong and potentially difficult mind at work. The reformers responded by giving Su the distinguished but arduous post of Kaifeng governor, under the nose of the central court.[21] Su continued to submit strongly-reasoned memorials, which the historians claim caused Wang to "deeply dislike" him.[22] Lü Hui was less civil than Su Shi, and hence less fortunate: when Lü submitted a memorial that attacked Wang personally and vitriolically, the Emperor rejected the document, and Lü found himself in exile. Lü should not have been surprised: his attacks indirectly implicated Shenzong as well as Wang, and came before any significant opposition to the reforms had coalesced: the policies had not yet been implemented, to begin with.[23]

Each time a new reform was proposed or put into effect, opposing memorials would flurry in. (The histories and anthologies record few memorials in support.) In addition to criticizing the measures on theoretical grounds, some of those memorials, especially later ones, accused the proposed administrators of incompetence, corruption, un-

[21] 1069.5; *Xu tongjian* 66/1642. Su surprised the reformers by carrying out the assignment brilliantly.

[22] Su's 7000-word memorial of 1069.12 sounded the increasingly common theme that government should be guided by "morality" 道德, not "utility" 功利. The reign of Renzong in particular was to be admired: China then had not been rich or strong, but the whole world had cleaved to that emperor's Benevolence 仁. (*Xu tongjian* 67/1666-67.)

[23] *Xu tongjian* 66/1643-45, year 1069.6. Freeman mentions Lü Hui's political obtuseness (p. 99). Williamson includes Liang Qichao's rebuttals to each point of Lü's memorial (I/127-29, II/102-107).

trustworthiness, etc. Few took the useless and dangerous course of attacking Wang himself--yet even without attacking Wang, many of these protestors were banished.[24]

The vehement objections to the Green Sprout System drove Wang to claim ill health and retreat from the public scene. He even threatened to resign altogether. Particularly damaging was Han Qi's memorial from the provinces (1070.2), because Han emphasized the actual drawbacks in concrete form. Another protestor was Jiang Qian 姜潛, prefect of Chenliu near the capital, who found no takers for the Green Sprout loans, and resigned in anticipation of being censured for obstructing the program. The Emperor allowed him to resign, and would not accept Wang Anshi's counter-resignation. Instead, Shenzong authorized Zeng Bu to write a defense of the Green Sprout policy, which was then carved in stone.

Sun Jue 孫覺, once a protégé of Wang, was demoted for finding that indeed no one in Chenliu wanted to take out a loan, and for opposing the government's lending money for interest in the first place. He also accused Wang of misreading the *Zhouli*. (*Xu tongjian* 67/1674.)

The most thorough and effective demotions were those of remonstrance officials: Lü Gongzhu was removed from the censorate for pro-

[24]Some representative demotions: Liu Qi 劉琦 and Qian Yi 錢顗 (who attacked Wang's protégé Xue Xiang in 1069.8). Fan Chunren 范純仁, who offended the Emperor through the following report about the northern borders: "The ramparts are roughly complete, the troops are roughly trained, and provisions are roughly collected" 城郭粗全.甲矢粗修.糧儲粗備. Demoted to Chengdu, Fan still refused to administer the Equitable Distribution System. (All in 1069.8; see *Xu tongjian* 66/1651-52.) Most of these officials surely saw themselves in the role of "loyal ministers unafraid to speak truth."

testing coercion by the reformists, and for rumors (soon found untrue) to the effect that he had hinted Han Qi might launch a *coup d'état*. (*Xu tongjian* 67/1675.) Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032--1085) gradually came to oppose Wang's policies; in 1074.4 he, too, was dismissed from the censorate.[25] Six men were eventually removed for protesting the appointment of Li Ding 李定 (1028--1087) to a censorate post. Their sacrifice was partly successful, as Li ended up taking a lower position.[26] Not only was Li painted as sycophantic for claiming that the Green Sprout loans had popular support, but he was also found to have failed to mourn his own mother's death. Despite his explanation that he had not known she was his mother (because of a remarriage), the stigma of unfiliality proved indelible, especially after Li was contrasted with Zhu Shouchang 朱壽昌, who had sought his mother everywhere, and had just recently found her after a fifty-year separation. The verses that poured from every literary figure upon Zhu's mother's death undoubtedly represent in some cases an indirect rebuke of Li Ding, and inevitably of the reform party's moral character as a whole.[27]

Li Chang 李常, originally on good terms with Wang, was sent to the provinces after protesting that some local officials were exacting

[25] *Xu tongjian* 67/1674, 1677. This source takes pains to establish the early, prophetic, righteous and occasionally fatherly opposition to Wang's policies on the part of the Cheng school of philosophers. (See also Zhang Jian's case below, p. 112.) But in fact, Cheng Hao began as a supporter of Wang; and the "schools" were not well defined at the time. (Freeman, pp. 212-214.)

[26] *Xu tongjian* 67/1676-77. Also Williamson I/166-167.

[27] *Xu tongjian* 67/1681-82, year 1070.6. Wang Anshi was one of the ones who wrote a poem on Zhu's filiality: Li Bi 45.6a/1103.

repayment of Green Sprout loans that they had not actually lent out. (In 1070.4; *Xu tongjian* 67/1678.) The censor Zhang Jian 張戩 was demoted after memorializing against Li Ding and Lü Huiqing, and attacking Wang and Chen Shengzhi personally in court.[28] Chen Xiang 陳襄 was replaced on the censorate by Wang's friend Xie Jingwen 謝景溫. (*Xu tongjian* 67/1679.)

Wang's firing of Fan Zhen 范鎮 from the Hanlin Academy is significant in that Wang refused to include the customary bonuses and advantages 恩典 that had usually accompanied demotions in the Song. (Later, such harsh dismissals became something of a trend. See *Xu tongjian* 68/1692.) Wang was reportedly so wrathful that his hands shook as he put out the order. Fan himself was equally upset: his case reminds us not to underestimate the genuine, heartfelt outrage of many of the anti-reformers--a product, in many cases, of their sincere concern for the empire, often manifested in highly courageous acts.[29]

Most dedicated of all the opposition was Sima Guang, whose repeated requests to leave the central government were finally heeded in 1070.8, with an appointment to Yongxing Military Commandery. Unwilling to administer there under the reform, Sima was granted a sinecure at Luoyang, where he could write his history of China. His sting-

[28] *Xu tongjian* 67/1768. Zhang's elder brother was the Luoyang-school philosopher Zhang Zai 張載 (1020--1077).

[29] Su Shi and others congratulated Fan Zhen on this incident: though demoted, they said, his reputation was all the weightier. Fan replied, "What heart could I have to enjoy this reputation when it is made possible by the same thing that is harming the whole earth!" (*Xu tongjian* 68/1692.)

ing indictment of Wang's dictatorial regime, and of Shenzong's blanket permission for Wang to make and enforce policy, was Sima's last public protest for four years. (*Xu tongjian* 68/1702, year 1071.4.)

Su Shi's case, as might be expected, is less clear-cut than that of his colleagues. As *jinshi* examiner in 1071, he had asked candidates to analyze the appropriateness of dictatorial acts by various prime ministers through history.[30] Knowing that Wang would not accept the implications of such an examination question, Su resigned without waiting to be removed, and was sent to govern Hangzhou. There he proved himself not as doctrinaire as most of the anti-reformers. Seeing how the new measures did in fact suit the southern economy and had popular support there, he implemented many of the reforms during his tenure.[31]

Other, more subdued exits were those of the "old hands" 老成: Ouyang Xiu to Caizhou in 1070.7 (he was already in the provinces, his influence and health long since waned); Zeng Gongliang retiring in 1070.9; Fu Bi to Ruzhou in 1071.6, then to a convalescent leave at Luoyang in 1072. There, Fu joined the anti-reform circle of officials in exile, but spent much of his time in Buddhist activity.

Finally, certain anti-reformers did stay in office despite Wang: most notably Wen Yanbo, whom Shenzong retained as Commissioner

[30] *Jingjin Dongpo wenji shilüe* 經進東坡文集事略, by Su Shi, ed. by Lang Ye 郎曄, 1173 (Taipei: World, 1975) 22/344.

[31] He resigned from Kaifeng in 1070.4, arrived at Hangzhou in 1070.11. See Hatch in Franke, pp. 927-28.

of Military Affairs. Wen served as a decreasingly effective check against the reform party, finally resigning in 1073.4.

Such were the fortunes of the anti-reformers: largely scattered from the capital by 1071, some of them clustered elsewhere, particularly in Luoyang. Having originally advocated reforms similar to Wang's, they found no substantive grounds to criticize the new policies at first; their earliest criticism was forced to be largely personal or moral in nature. Only in exile did they gradually evolve a set of political principles to counteract the reform policies; but their enunciation of these principles would never significantly sway Shenzong.[32]

Members of the Reform Circle

The story of Wang and his circle during the reform is just as complicated as that of the opposition. We will look at only three questions here:

1. Was there a reform circle, and who were its members?

2. How did they (Wang in particular) treat the anti-reformers and other members of the government?

3. What factors led to Wang's resigning when he did?

First: *Who were the reformers*?

They were not a cohesive faction. They were less cohesive even than the anti-reformers, whose leaders may have lacked a united policy but at least had national reputations and in many cases had known each other intimately for decades. Wang's circle can be divided roughly into

[32]Freeman examines those principles in his Chapter 3.

four groups, from the point of view of hindsight: powerful subordinates; family and close friends; ordinary subordinates; subordinates with bad reputations. Let us look at representatives of each of those groups.

Group A: *Powerful subordinates*. Primarily Lü Huiqing and Zeng Bu. Lü Huiqing, of Quanzhou 泉州 in Fujian, had been known to Wang since Lü's stellar performance in the 1057 examinations, but he and Wang do not seem to have been close friends.[33] Zeng Bu belonged to Zeng Gong's clan, and thus was a distant kinsman and countryman of Wang's, as well as a friend.[34] Lü's rivalry with Zeng climaxed in 1074 with what is usually seen as an attempt by Lü to take over Wang's power and position. The earliest of Wang's subordinates to be personally attacked by the opposition, Lü became a scapegoat for the reform's evils, and was attacked especially often by those unwilling or unable to blame Wang himself.[35]

Zeng Bu was the second major policymaker after Wang. It was

[33]Wang's surviving writings include only two letters to Lü and no poetry. (Letters written app. 1080, see Chapter 12.)

[34]Zeng's "notorious" reputation seems to be a product of later historians. (It persists to this day: see Hellmut Wilhelm, "Wei T'ai" in Franke, p. 1184.) T.C. Liu rehabilitates Zeng Bu in "Wang Anshi, Zeng Bu and Bureaucratic Types in the Late Northern Song" 王安石曾布與北宋晚期官僚的類型, in *Qinghua xuebao* 2.1 (1960), pp. 109-129; rep. in *Songshi yanjiu ji* 宋史研究集 vol. 3 (Taipei, 1966), pp. 123-148.

[35]Attacks on Lü: Sima Guang's famous statement to Shenzong, mentioning the deceitful "men of Min," featured Lü prominently. (*Xu tongjian* 67/1658-59, year 1069.10.) Sima came close to accusing Lü to his face of being unfit for office, in a debate in front of the Emperor the next month. (*Xu tongjian* 67/1662.)

Zeng, not Lü, whom Wang appointed to answer Han Qi's memorial against the Green Sprout System (see p. 110 above); and Zeng took Lü's place at the Emperor's "Classics Mat" when Lü went into mourning.[36]

But by 1073, Lü was back as a drafter of edicts; a year later, in the crisis that caused Wang's first retirement, Lü was made Second Privy Councillor—on Wang's recommendation.[37] The anti-reformers' epithet for Han Jiang, the new First Privy Councillor, was "The Śramaṇa Who Transmits the Law" 傳法沙門("Law" a pun for "New Law," i.e. the reforms), while Lü Huiqing was dubbed "The Deva Who Guards the Law" 護法善神. (*Xu tongjian* 70/1754.) In fact it seems clear that Han (though loyal to the throne and to Wang personally) was not an avid reformist; while Lü, in addition to fiercely "guarding" the reforms, set about to inherit Wang Anshi's mantle, should Wang be unable to resume it--at his other colleagues' expense.

Understanding that the Emperor supported the new policies, Lü may have decided to use them as a vehicle for his own advancement. As soon as Wang had left the capital, the throne proclaimed that the new institutions would continue, but abusive bureaucrats would be prosecuted. The historian indicates that Lü, who was presumably behind this proclamation, intended to disarm popular resentment by curing the

[36] 1070.9, see *Xu tongjian* 68/1687. This position, ostensibly to lecture the Emperor on the classics, often gave its holders a chance to learn what the ruler was thinking, and to influence policy.

[37] Year 1074.4. *Xu tongjian* 70/1753-54. Wei Tai, with a foreboding air, describes how Lü Jiawen and Zhang E 張諤, both in tears, clung to Wang's arms as he was leaving for the south. Wang reassured them, "I have recommended Lü Huiqing..." (*Dongxuan bilu* 5.8b-9a; Shen, p. 167.)

reform's most objectionable ills. (Year 1074.4.23, *Xu tongjian* 70/1754.) Yet Lü's administration of the reform policies seems to have lacked even Wang Anshi's finesse. He banished (to Fujian) the anti-reformer Zheng Xia 鄭俠(1041--1119), not merely demoting him or sending him to a comfortable sinecure as Wang often did with opponents.[38] And the Self-assessment System, which began under Lü, seems to have raised more ire than it did revenue.

One reason why Lü made such counterproductive decisions may be that he had sent away some of the people who could have advised against them: the loss of the active, talented and dedicated Zeng Bu in particular harmed the reform administration. Zeng Bu and Lü Jiawen had antagonized each other; Lü Huiqing worsened the antagonism by publicizing it; once public, that antagonism became grounds for both Zeng and Lü Jiawen to be transferred out of the capital.[39] Feng Jing 馮京 and Wang Anguo were transferred along with Zheng Xia. Lü apparently had resented Wang Anguo for several years, and Feng Jing was gradually hardening into an anti-reform stance. Lü accused the two of having conspired with Zheng Xia to discredit the reform. The fact that the charge was probably untrue, but that Wang Anguo and Zheng Xia may have had their differences nevertheless, says much about how fragmented the

[38] About Zheng: see also p. 73 above. His presentation to the Emperor of a "Portrait of the Refugees" (through irregular channels) had caused the greatest uproar of all the events that led to Wang's first resignation. *Xu tongjian* 70/1759; Williamson I/351.

[39] Year 1074.5. *Xu tongjian* 70/1757-58; T.C. Liu, "Wang Anshi, Zeng Bu..." pp. 128-129.

court had become, even before Lü Huiqing's ascendancy.[40] In 1075.2 (if we believe the standard histories), Han Jiang secretly asked Shenzong to summon Wang Anshi back to the capital, because it had become impossible for anyone to cooperate with Lü Huiqing. Wang took only seven days to reach the capital from Jiangning, we are told. (*Xu tongjian* 71/1771, but see note 94 below.)

Lü, who now had followers, supposedly continued to undermine Wang. He had a rebellion plot investigated, one of whose alleged ringleaders turned out to be a sorcerer Li Shining 李士寧, who knew Wang. (Year 1075.4R.) Lü's complaining communications to the Emperor about revising the classical interpretations imply that Wang was being unreasonable, absent-minded and perhaps incompetent.[41] Even when it became advisable for Lü to seek a provincial appointment, he still seems to have hinted to Shenzong about Wang's unreliable health and an imminent search for a successor. (Year 1075.10, *Xu tongjian* 71/1780.) Both Wang and Lü claimed that their differences involved only national affairs, not personal rivalry or power politics. This is hard to believe; and (more to the point), there were many in Wang's administra-

[40] *Xu tongjian* 71/1768-70, year 1075.1. Evidence for Wang Anguo's enmity with Lü Huiqing comes largely from Wei Tai, *Dongxuan bilu* 5.1a. Lü's direct undermining of Wang Anshi allegedly extended even to revising Wang's new classical interpretations. (Confirmed by Li Bi in note to "Jinling Governor's Residence" 金陵郡齋, 43.7b/1046.) Indirect undermining included such strange actions as asking the Emperor to pardon Wang, and allow Wang to become a military governor in the provinces. Shenzong cut off that proposal by asking why one should pardon a man who was not guilty of anything. (Year 1074.11, *Xu tongjian* 70/1766.)

[41] Year 1075.9. See Shen, pp. 165-66.

tion who did not have Wang's qualms, and found it easy to differ with Lü on personal and factional grounds. Their combined weight forced Lü out of the capital for the rest of his career.[42] Lü left the court in a shambles of backbiting, with Wang Anshi and some relatively inexperienced hands to set things right again.[43]

Group B: *Family and Close Friends*--whether subordinates or equals of Wang. These include such people as Wang Fang, Wang Anguo and Wang Anli; Anshi's brothers-in-law Zhu Mingzhi and Shen Jizhang 沈季長 (minor officials in the reform); and later Wang's son-in-law Cai Bian 蔡卞 (1050--1117). Old friends included Han Jiang and Han Wei. Many of Wang's students also joined the administration: Lu Dian 陸佃 (1070 *jinshi*) and Ye Tao 葉濤 are the best known.

Although Wang's personal friends in the administration were not limited to these, it was still a relatively small group--a fact which suggests that the administrators of Wang's reform did not have the same wide-ranging personal bonds that had existed in other regimes (among the top officers of Renzong's less controversial and ambitious

[42] Lü's faction supposedly included his brother Lü Shengqing 呂升卿, also Zhang Dun and others. Lü's major opponents were Han Jiang, Deng Wan and (perhaps) Wang Fang. The latter two may have had the Lü brothers indicted for an improper land transaction. But Deng's goals seem to have been no better than Lü's: Deng, too, may have had designs on Wang Anshi's position. (*Xu tongjian* 71/1780; *Songchao shishi leiyuan* 70/937.)

[43] See Lü Huiqing's biography by Anthony Sariti, in Franke p. 711. But also note the attempt by Zhou Baozhu 周寶珠 to rehabilitate Lü's reputation: "A Brief Discussion of Lü Huiqing" 略論呂惠卿, in Deng Guangming ed., *Songshi yanjiu lunwen ji*, pp. 335-349. See also Chapter 12 below.

reform, for instance?). More important are the wide gaps in this list, some gaps left by friends or associates who became opponents and left the administration, and others left by those who had died. Among the alienated friends, Qian Gongfu 錢公輔, who resigned early, has been mentioned (p. 108, n. 20 above). His friendship with Wang may well have ended forever when Qian resigned. At the least his resignation obviated any chance of supporting Wang later. Su Shi was unable to cooperate fully with Wang. Wang's powerful friends and protectors Lü Gongzhu and Lü Gongbi became anti-reformers; Zheng Xia's anti-reform performance was stellar. Of Wang's closest friends from his youth at Jiangning, Zeng Gong was no longer a political ally; Sun Mou never sought office; Wang Hui and Wang Ling were dead. Would the latter two have supported Wang in the administration of his ideas? Had their deaths left him more of a loner, less dependent on friendships but more determined than ever to walk the Sages' path by himself, regardless of obstacles? The answers to those questions should be interesting.

But of the other people mentioned above: Han Jiang, loyal to the throne, did not always agree with Wang but did share the premiership with him at several points, and held Wang's place in that office during Wang's first retirement.[44] Han Wei and Wu Chong, much closer

[44]See Y. Shiba's biography in Franke, pp. 364-367. Wang's works reveal little literary (hence social?) contact with Han Jiang, but much with Han Wei. Shiba points out that it was partly the Han family's prestige that had allowed Wang to advance so rapidly; also that once Wang achieved his own prestige, they would in turn owe high positions to him.

friends to Wang, also differed with many of the new policies. Yet Wang's trust in their integrity seems to have been at least as great as the trust he had in such ostensible supporters as Lü Huiqing, and to have outweighed differences over policy.[45] Despite this friendship, the post-reform zealots would later list Han Wei with the anti-reform Yuanyou Party.[46]

It was in the all-important area of ideology that Wang used those closest to him. When he reorganized the National Academy 太學, the faculty included his students Lu Dian and Ye Tao (who was also Anguo's son-in-law), Wang's brother-in-law Shen Jizhang, Wang's distant relative Zeng Zhao 曾肇, Zeng Bu's brother. Was Wang using the opportunity to pack an agency with his "faction" of favorites? Or was it that education was a realm in which he felt it especially important to hire people upon whose views and character he could rely?[47] Surely one reason his opponents could see "no distinction" between partisanship

[45] See P 38, written to Wu Chong's rhymes, especially the final quatrain.

[46] S. Aoyama, "Han Wei," in Franke p. 387. Han Wei is described several times as protesting various reform policies. The *Xu tongjian* claims that Wang increasingly "disliked" 惡 Han in 1071, and even persuaded the Emperor to approve Han's petition to leave the governorship of Kaifeng for a provincial post. Wang supposedly accused Han of "cleaving to the Ordinary Crowd in their denial of what You have established." (Year 1071.5, *Xu tongjian* 68/1705-6.)

[47] Year 1071.10.17. (*Xu tongjian* 68/1712-13; T.C. Liu, *Reform*, pp. 65-66.) Lu Dian and Shen Jizhang also were major contributors to the *Shijing* annotations. See Qiu Hansheng 邱漢生 reconst., *Shiyi gouchen* 詩義鉤沈 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), Introduction, p. 2. Quoting *Changbian* 229.5ab, year 1072.1.18. And Lu Dian wrote, under his own name, "A New Interpretation of the *Erya*" 爾雅新義, 20 *juan*. (*Yueyatang congshu* edition.)

and personal favoritism in Wang's appointments was that in many cases Wang's personal favorites were also those whom he knew well enough to count on as good partisans.

Of his immediate family, Anguo and Anli both served under the new policies, but were not strong partisans. Anli especially was an able administrator, but more conservative than Anshi. He spent much of the first half of the reform in the provinces.[48] Anguo's fortunes rose as soon as Anshi reached office, with Anguo's *jinshi* degree and national professorship at Luoyang in 1068--a post that he held for over three years.[49] By temperament, Anguo was not a political activist, nor did he entirely support his brother's policies. He probably found life congenial in the cultured backwater that was the old capital. But as far as we know, he did not join the developing circle of anti-reform statesmen and philosophers that gradually took root there. Nor is the evidence persuasive that he indulged in riotous living while at Luoyang.[50] Anecdotes record him as having objected to Anshi's subor-

[48]His career (which did not climax until after Anshi's retirement, possibly because of nepotism considerations) is described in Williamson II/257-260.

[49]Fifty of his essays were presented to the throne in a formal recommendation for a degree, by Han Jiang and Shao Kang 邵亢 (1011--1071). *Tongjian changbian jishi benmo* 59.7b, date 1068.7.7. *Jinshi* also mentioned in *Xu tongjian* 66/1624; Williamson II/263.

[50]For an account of the Luoyang circle, see Freeman, Chapter 2.

Cai dismisses the anecdote in which Anshi advised Anguo to "abandon licentious 'tunes of Zheng,'" to which Anguo replied, "And *you* should stand apart from fawners and flatterers." (Cai 18/254-56; *Songchao shishi leiyuan* 17/201. Earliest extant source is Sima Guang's *Shushui jiwen* 16.7b.) But the same exchange of lines appears in two other widely differing anecdotes: *Dongxuan bilu* 5.1a, and *Shao qian*

dinates, especially Lü Huiqing; some sources relate that Anguo was so worried by the growing protests against the reforms, and his brother's defiance of those protests, that he wept "Our clan is doomed!" 吾家滅門矣.[51]

In late 1071, Anguo was promoted to the capital, as Collator in the Chongwen Yuan 崇文院校書. Reportedly, in his first audience with the Emperor he questioned whether his brother's policies had really revived the spirit of Yao and Shun; he further criticized Anshi's haste and his obtuse judgment of men. (Year 1071.10.21; *Xu*

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lu 11/81 (quoted also in *Xu tongjian* 71/1769). In the *Dongxuan* version, which seems more authentic: "Wang Anguo by nature was candid and blunt亮直, and too easily inspired toward envy and hatred. On a rest day, soon after being made Second Privy Councillor, Wang Anshi was reading through some of the light lyrics小詞 written by Yan Shu. Anshi laughed, 'Is it permissible for a man to be Prime Minister and write light lyrics?'

"'He was only writing them on the spur of the moment, to please himself,' replied Anguo; 'If you look at his career, it certainly was not confined to these!'

"Lü Huiqing, serving in the literary bureaus, was with them at the time. He snapped, 'The first thing a statesman must do is banish licentious music (lit. Melodies from Zheng)--how could one compose such things himself?'

"Wang Anguo replied with a righteous expression, 'It is more important to stay away from glib-tongued flatterers than to banish licentious music.' Lü Huiqing felt the remark was a comment on himself: from then on, he fell out with Wang Anguo."

It is hard to know when Wei Tai's above anecdote would have taken place, if it did. Wang Anguo would presumably have been away in Luoyang at the time mentioned.

The only other anecdote I have discovered concerning Anguo in Luoyang comes from the *Qingxiang zaji* 清箱雜記 (*Baihai congshu* edition), whose author Wu Chuhou吳處厚 recounts a poem he composed and recited to Anguo. The poem alluded to famous overweight or slovenly literary geniuses of the past. Anguo (reportedly stocky, swarthy and prone to perspire) did not find the poems amusing. (8.2b-3a; also *Songchao shishi leiyuan* 35/452; Shen, p. 324.)

[51] *Songchao shishi leiyuan* 20/201.

tongjian 68/1713-14.) Yet three years later Anguo is shown as standing up for his brother, in a confrontation with Zheng Xia after Zheng Xia had been demoted for criticizing the reforms through irregular channels:[52]

> ...Anguo, on horseback, saluted Zheng with raised whip, saying, "Sir, you deserve to be called independent and fearless!"
>
> "I never thought," observed Zheng in reply, "that the Prime Minister would be hoodwinked by petty men and that things should come so soon to such a pass!"
>
> "You are wrong," said Anguo; "My brother believes that a king's minister should not flinch from resentment: only when all the ire of the Four Seas and Nine Continents has devolved onto his own shoulders can he count as having done his loyal duty."
>
> "But," answered Zheng, "I have never heard that when Yao and Shun were on the throne, and Kui and Qi served as their ministers, the Four Seas and Nine Continents would resent anything!"

Although Anguo lost that argument, he showed himself loyal to Anshi, who was also a friend and protector.

Perhaps it was because his criticism of Anshi's policies offended the Emperor; perhaps it was because Anguo clearly was not as politically astute or motivated as Anshi was--whatever the reason, Anguo did not rise much higher in the government. He was known for his poetry, flute-playing and personal warmth. Transferred to Jiangning soon after Anshi, in the wake of the Zheng Xia incident, he died

[52] *Xu tongjian* 71/1769. Recounted under year 1075.1, but would have occurred in 1074.

that fall at forty-six.[53]

In contrast to Anguo, Wang Anshi's son Wang Fang seems to have been not only a confidante and loyal clansman, but a political ally as well. The few extant records of him, however, are surely tinted by the resentment that often accrues to the sons of powerful men.[54] Fang must have looked, acted and thought much like his father, though perhaps endowed with less imagination, less humor, and certainly worse physical health. After passing the *jinshi* at age twenty-four (1067) he served as sheriff of Jingde Prefecture 旌德縣 (near Huangshan in present Anhui). In 1071.9 he was made Undersecretary to the Heir Apparent in the Left Secretariat 太子中允 and Expositor in the Chongzheng Palace 崇政殿說書. (*Xu tongjian* 68/1710.) Such positions gave him access to inner circles while avoiding a high rank which might incur charges of nepotism.

Wang Anshi occasionally wrote "little lyrics" (*ci* 詞), and has left us some lush, sentimental verse. But Wang Fang was apparently too

[53]Date 1074.8.17. Tomb inscription, *Linchuan* 91/946.

[54]Shao Bowen provides the raciest anecdotes in this regard. Li Fu 李紱 of Linchuan (1673—1750) completely debunks Shao's story of how Wang Fang one day burst in upon his father and Cheng Hao, dishevelled and carrying a woman's hat, yelling that Han Qi and Fu Bi should have their heads cut off. See *Mutang chugao* 穆堂初稿 (1740 edition, presently unavailable). Quoted also in Liang Qichao 梁啓超, *Wang Jing gong* 王荊公 (also titled *Wang Anshi pingzhuan* 王安石評傳) Shanghai: Kwong Chih, 1911; Chapter 19, pp. 257-8. Also Cai 15/215. For Shao Bowen's anecdotes, see *Shao qian lu* 11/81-82.

By extension we are probably wise to suspect Shao's other assertions: chiefly, that Wang Fang was the madman behind the more outrageous reform proposals, and that in later years Wang Anshi would dream of Wang Fang's soul in chains for his sins.

serious for such things. After the laughter spread that he had never penned a *ci* in his life, Wang Fang finally did compose one (quite a good one, still recited years afterward), and never wrote another.[55] The phenomenon of father and son together illuminating the Classics, however, drew such praise as:

> Writings--Confucius twinned;
> Learning--double Dukes of Zhou!
> 文章雙孔子，術業兩周公.

"That man understands this father and son!" said Wang Anshi about the author of those lines.[56]

Wang Fang's death in the early fall of 1076, after years of illness, must have shaken his father profoundly. There is little doubt that the loss of this son influenced Anshi's decision, three months later, to retire for good.[57]

[55] *Quan Song ci* I/383-4. The story is related by Chen Shan 陳善 (fl. app. 1147) in *Menshi xinhua* 捫蝨新話 (*CSJC* edition) B4/83. See also Tang Guizhang ed., *Song ci jishi* 宋詞紀事 (Shanghai Guji, 1982), p. 104.

[56] It was Fan Tang 范鎡 (1073 *jinshi*) who presented the poem containing that couplet. See Li Bi's note to P 60. A different version of the story: *Nenggaizhai manlu* 8/214.

[57] The *Xu tongjian* claims that Wang Fang died of a burst ulcer after Wang Anshi chastised him for his part in impeaching Lü Huiqing. But Cai argues that this story is unlikely, as is the notion that Wang Fang was ever involved in impeaching Lü to begin with. According to Cai, Wang Fang's scholarly duties, his failing health, and the lack of mention of him in contemporary accounts, should all indicate that he took no part in day-to-day politics. (Cai 12/264; Williamson II/253-4.) According to Wei Tai, Fang was ill already in 1074, on his father's

A portrait begins to emerge, then, of Wang Anshi as isolated from political and social realities, surrounded by a cluster of friends and family. This portrait needs to be clarified, however.[58] The people just described in Group B did form something of a circle, yet they were not tightly knit, nor were they the major policy-makers or administrators. Many of them even differed with Wang's politics. And none of the famous sycophants (to be mentioned in a moment) were personally close to Wang in any meaningful sense.

There remain several other personal associates of Wang, whose relationships to him may have influenced history or history-writing, but who cannot be considered members of any "group," because association with Wang was all that they had in common. A listing of these people, of whom for the most part we know little, may help show more of Wang's "circle:"

First, many have speculated about Wang's friendship with Lü Jiawen 呂嘉問 (*zi* Wangzhi 望之). Lü was to become the black sheep of the great clan that included Wang's personal friends and political opponents Lü Gongzhu and Lü Gongbi. He seems to have evolved from a zealous

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first return to Jiangning. During Anshi's second premiership, Wang Fang was with him in the capital, but was too ill to walk from the day of his arrival until he died. (*Dongxuan bilu* 10.12a.)

[58] T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 62: "He...accepted few social engagements, declined to drink, and kept only a few chosen friends...Wang was frequently surrounded by his subordinates, who discussed official business with him incessantly and thus prevented others from getting close to him or from mentioning anything unfavorable about the reform." (See *Changbian* 251.23, year 1074.3.25, referring to Lü Jiawen specifically.)

reform partisan into a personal supporter and friend of Wang. He wept at Wang's first resignation, and was soon transferred to the provinces by Lü Huiqing. (See p. 117 above.) In his loyalty to Wang, he reportedly went so far as to steal drafts of anti-reform memorials written by his great-uncle Lü Gongbi--this was what made the Lü family expunge him from the clan records, reducing our available information about him in the process. That incident, if true, also raises questions about his reliability and sense of values: T.C. Liu finds it a mystery why Wang continued to trust and use Lü in 1075 after returning to power.[59] Be that as it may, their friendship continued. It may well have been at Wang's request that Lü was made governor of Jiangning in 1077.10; later he was demoted slightly, to Runzhou 潤州 (modern Zhenjiang, at the junction of the Grand Canal with the Yangzi). Wang's poems to Lü (most or all from this period) go beyond the formal requirements of their relationship, in expressing sympathy, admiration and encouragement for Lü to survive the hostile political environment.[60] The existence of these poems suggests that Lü Jiawen may have been one of Wang's more intimate political associates during the reform.[61]

The case of Cui Gongdu 崔公度 (*zi* Boyu 伯禹)--if we can believe the *Song History*--suggests another reason for Wang's fatigue as

[59]"Wang Anshi, Zeng Bu..." pp. 129-130.

[60]See in particular four poems written at Jiangning: Li Bi 2.2a/185ff. (Li's note gives 1077.10 as Lü's appointment to Jiangning. See Chapter 12.) Also Li Bi 27.5b/666, 40.11a/973, 40.11b/974.

[61]*Shushui jiwen* claims Wang sided with Lü Jiawen even against Zeng Bu in debate over the State Trade System. (14.4b-5a.)

the reforms progressed. Though not close friends, Cui and Wang had been acquainted for at least a decade.[62] Cui had been a young idealist as had Wang; came from a humble background; was a friend of Wang Ling and Sun Jue; and Ouyang Xiu had admired his writings. The *Song History* claims that Cui's lack of pedigree made him feel his entire career hinged on a strong connection with Wang Anshi. Appointed to office after submitting a policy memorial that pleased Wang, Cui then pursued Wang literally night and day, to the amusement of onlookers. He was even seen grabbing Wang's sash from behind in order to brush some dirt from it.[63]

The freelance intellectual Wei Tai 魏泰(ca. 1050--1110), whose sister was married to Zeng Bu, seems to have followed the reformers' circle enough to learn (and possibly invent) many anecdotes about the inner workings of the political factions. His stories, which do not shy from sardonic innuendo, focus exclusively on personalities, not on policy or larger issues. Those stories are the reason he is important to us today. His comparative youth suggests that he may have spent more time with Zhang Chun and other later reform partisans than he did with Wang himself. Also, one suspects Wang had little time available to spend with a man who was not an official (Wei's assault on an examination officer while taking the *jinshi* had terminated any chance for a career).[64]

[62] A letter to Cui can be dated 1059. *Linchuan* 74/787.

[63] *Song shi* 353/11152-53. Shen, p. 107. Liang Qichao dismisses this story (p. 130).

[64] Hellmut Wilhelm, "Wei T'ai," in Franke p. 1184.

Group C: *Subordinates in General.* By far the bulk of Wang's administration. Although these included some close friends of his, most of them were younger men he had not known before, and whom he hired for expertise in a certain area, or for their ideological zeal. Most of them served the reform as ably and loyally as they would any administration. Wang Shao 王韶, the general who won territory and originated several reform measures, was generally praised even by those who believed the aggressive policies themselves were unwise. Xue Xiang 薛向, a financial and trade expert, appears now to have been scrupulously honest and able, regardless of accusations made against him at the time.[65] Shen Gua 沈括 (1030--1094) performed much of his spectacular irrigation work under Wang's regime.

Many of the lower-level reform officials are known to us primarily through Wang's poems of encouragement sending them off to provincial posts.[66] Many of these verses try to convey a sense of camaraderie, if not "factional" spirit. They indicate that Wang hoped his forces could coalesce into a group of friends with a common mission. It is now difficult to know how widespread and genuine that camaraderie may have been, and further, how it withstood the infighting

[65] T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 66. Xue's honesty was questioned in several memorials at the beginning of the Equitable Distribution System. (Year 1069.8, *Xu tongjian* 67/1650.)

[66] See P 16, in which Wang sends off his old acquaintance Song Minxiu to a new assignment. The often-anthologized poem sending off Wang Jing 王靖 (*zi* Zhanshu 彥叔, whom Wang had known for at least a decade) does not read like Wang Anshi's work, says Li Bi. (Li Bi 32.2b/784; Guangzhou p. 269; Zhou Xifu p. 109.) Another partisan, and somewhat of a friend, was Yuan Jiang 元絳 (1008--1083). See Wang's poem celebrating Yuan's military victories: Li Bi 28.8a/693.

under Lü Huiqing's administration.

Group D: *Subordinates who Later Gained Bad Reputations.* Opportunists, sycophants and manipulators among Wang's followers have traditionally been singled out to show that the reform failed partly because Wang hired "small men." Liang Qichao has argued that most of the people so labelled were actually good Confucians, and that the worst of them were given little or no power until after Wang had been dead for several years.[67] Modern research shows: 1) Some of these "small men" were actually unimportant figures, singled out by the opposition to discredit the reform party's reputation. (Example: Li Ding's unfiliality, see p. 111 above.) 2) Wang's hiring practices brought in new faces, and changed the administration's character. Promoting men from the lower ranks, largely on the basis of their practical experience, installing them close to their homes for long terms (four years was common), and expanding the role of government officials in making money for the state--all these practices violated long-established guidelines for insuring that officials would be moral and responsible. The sheer number of new appointees that Wang promoted could easily appear to the opposition as a phalanx of "small men," especially from hindsight. 3) The conduct of most of Wang's "small men" can be seen as normal in any bureaucracy: aside from a handful of leaders with broad outlooks, most officials are simply professional officers whose strongest concern is their own advancement and security. As Wang's power weakened, no one

[67]Liang Qichao Chapter 18, pp. 232-286; Williamson II/121-126.

remained to check the abuses that inevitably surfaced in the course of such normal bureaucratic behavior. (T.C. Liu, *Reform*, pp. 78-79.)

No important subordinate (except perhaps Lü Huiqing) tried to thwart Wang directly. Chen Shengzhi, however (from Fujian, older than Wang, and acquainted for many years) may have been hard to deal with.[68] Zhang Chun's abuses and major power came after Wang's death. Perhaps the only subordinate whose moral standards were unquestionably low, and harmful to Wang, was Deng Wan 鄧綰 (1028--1086), who obtained his first appointment by flattering Shenzong, Wang, and Chen Shengzhi, then told his disapproving compatriots "Laugh and curse me all you want, but this plum job is mine" 笑罵從汝，好官我自為之.[69] But Deng seems to have harmed Wang's reputation in the history books more than he ever hurt Wang's administration at the time. Compared with the power and influence of Han Wei or Wu Chong, Deng Wang and the other sycophants probably influenced policy little or none at all.[70]

[68]According to the *Xu tongjian*, few missed Chen when he was removed as Commissioner of Military Affairs in 1075.4R. He was labelled a shifty, selfish coattail-rider (71/1774). But Liang Qichao has found no evidence to describe Chen's character one way or another (p. 235).

[69]Dates: 1070.10, 1071.4. *Xu tongjian* 68/1690, 68/1702; Williamson I/262; T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 74.

The *Xu tongjian*'s veiled vitriol may undermine this anecdote's value as history: one gets the impression that the historians were deliberately emphasizing the stupidest, vilest examples among Wang's followers, implying that Wang and Shenzong were simpletons to believe in such people.

Liang Qichao agrees that Deng Wan must have been as bad as he is described, but asserts that Wang put Deng at a distance after Deng's true character became clear (p. 247).

[70]The only other figure I have found roughly comparable to Deng Wan is Tang Jiong 唐坰, who reportedly advanced in office by flattery, and lost his position through equally undecorous attacks on Wang. (In

Wang Anshi's Career as Leader of the Reform

How did Wang act, react and change during nine years in high office? He began as an idealist, a self-defined outsider, a "rustic." Although he had decades of experience, it was a major jump from governor of Jiangning to being the Emperor's highest executive. The largest challenge he faced perhaps was not what he thought it was: it was not how to formulate policies, or how to find talented assistants to carry them out. Rather, it was how to get the bureaucracy and nation to cooperate in following his course. Or (in his formulation) *how to make the nation one*. The ramifications of this challenge--to get and keep support--are the keys to understanding his career in the capital, and will form the center of this narration.

Although Wang had been an official, he may have owed his fame more to his writings than to anything he had done. Neither he nor anyone else knew how his written ideas might translate into action on a national scale. A more subtle point: he may have put too much faith in writing (*wen* 文) itself. He could trust *wen* to advance his theories and make people listen; but was he perhaps too sure that restoring the ancient *wen* and *Dao* (even if possible) would help cure the nation's

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1070.7 he supposedly "pleased" Shenzong by saying that the second Qin Emperor had not been aggressive enough; and "pleased" Wang by recommending a beheading or two, to bring recalcitrant officials into line. By 1072, Wang had little confidence in Tang's loyalty and did not promote him in the customary way. This was enough to turn Tang about-face. Tang's anti-Wang tirade in the throne room got him demoted to Chaozhou.) The historian here seems to want to show Wang's administration as having been riddled with friction. (Years 1070.7, 1072.8. *Xu tongjian* 68/1685, 69/1729.)

ills? Did he pin too many hopes on a standard educational system, and on the civil service examinations' ability to identify talent? Having been given what was almost a blank check to install the ancient *Dao* in a place of honor, did he forget to think what other kinds of measures might be even more necessary?[71] His strength lay in daring to try what more experienced statesmen would have known was impossible; because of the force of his daring, he was able to make his projects succeed for several years. But eventually they did indeed succumb to reality. Before that happened, he had already been worn down by mental pressures, some of which surely resulted from not understanding the exact strength or nature of his opposition.

Not only did he trust *wen* too much, but he was fairly adamant about what kind of *wen* should guide a reformed nation. Although his promotion of "unity" was intended to transcend ideological disagreements, that goal was not apparent even to such a subtle observer as Su Shi. Wang had advocated holism or "oneness" (一 *yi*); Su and others discovered that the result had been a push toward "sameness" or "conformity" (同 *tong*), especially in the norms for political writing, which took its cues from the examination system. Years later, Su wrote:[72]

[71] This is the gist of a mildly hostile comment by Fang Hui 方回 (1227--1307), "Colophon to a Reading of Wang Anshi's Explanations of the *Odes*" 讀王荊公詩說跋, in his *Tongjiang ji* 桐江集 (manuscript, rep. by National Central Library, Taipei, 1970) 2/147-8.

[72] "Reply to Zhang Lei" 答張文潛書. In *Dongpo qiji* 東坡七集 (*SBBY* edition), "Dongpo ji" 30.8b-9a. Also in Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞, *Zhongguo wenxue piping shi* 中國文學批評史 (Shanghai, 1934; rep. Taipei: Commercial, 1969), p. 164.

> Feebleness in the area of letters has never been worse than today, and the true cause of this lies with Mr. Wang. Although his writings (*wen*) were not necessarily bad, his trouble lay in the fact that *he liked to make others be the same as himself*. Even Confucius, in his day, could not make other people be the same: (his disciples') Yan Yuan's humanity and Zilu's bravery could not be transplanted from one to the other--yet Mr. Wang wanted to assimilate *the whole world* with his own learning.
>
> The beauty of (various plots of) land is the same in that they all grow things; their difference is in what they grow. Among them are those bare-boned, cracked and salty lands, upon which grows nothing but brown straw and white reeds--*this* is Mr. Wang's "sameness."

In other words, Wang seems to have committed the error of "arrogance"矜, which, according to Zhuangzi's fisherman, comes about when one thinks "those who are the same as oneself are fine; but those who are not the same as oneself are no good no matter how good they may be" 人同於己則可，不同於己，雖善不善.[73] Wang was either unaware of, or *unconcerned* about how his customary way of talking could polarize factions, once his rank began to amplify the volume of his speech. Early in the reform, he reportedly glared at his opponents in the throne room, saying "You gentlemen just sit and never study any books!" 公輩坐不讀書耳. Zhao Bian satirically answered, "But you are mistaken, sir: what books were there to study in the days of (the

[73] *Zhuangzi* 31, "The Fisherman"漁父 (*Zhuangzi yinde*, Harvard-Yenching Index Series, rep. Yaipei 1974) 87/XXXI/25. A.C. Graham translates it as "bigotry:" *Chuang-tzu: The Seven Inner Chapters and Other Writings from the Book* Chuang-tzu, (London: Allen and Unwin, 1981), . 251.

sage-kings' ministers) Kao, Kui, Ji and Qi?"[74] Perhaps the fact that Wang *did not fear* such confrontations blinded him to the necessity to deal somehow with what they signified: was direct confrontation the best way to vanquish opposition in the long run? Or should he have learned from the "Persuasion" tradition that he so despised (and Su Xun admired) --convincing people of *A* by pretending to advocate *B*, for instance?

If the diary fragments quoted by Zhu Xi and Chen Guan are authentic, then we can be reasonably sure that Wang's language to the Emperor could be almost as peppery as when among friends.[75] His disdain for the "common crowd" and banal minds carried extra explosive potential when uttered in the halls of state:[76]

> ...Take the case of moving a big jug. You must be outside the jug before it can go anywhere; how can you move it if you are sitting inside it? If one wants to mold the Empire's affairs, and "move" the common throng, one must hoist oneself out of the common throng before one can move them. But so far Your Majesty has not managed to avoid sitting inside the common throng; how,

[74] *Xu tongjian* 66/1635, under year 1069.2. Source: *Shao hou lu* 20/127.

[75] Sima Guang pointed this out in his first "Letter to Wang Anshi" 與王介甫書, dated 1070.2.27. *Sima Wengong wenji* 司馬溫公文集 (*SBBY* edition) 10.9b.

Wang quoting himself to the Emperor in his diary (speaking about military personnel since the Five Dynasties): "These types are all basically shiftless, treacherous and slippery..." 比等皆本無賴姦猾之人 ... *Zhuzi daquan*, *SBCK* edition, 83.3a.

[76] Fragment of Wang's palace diary, preserved in Chen Guan 陳瓘, *Siming zun Yao ji* 四明尊堯集 *juan* 3, "On Daoist Ways" 論道門 (unavailable; quoted in Deng Guangming 1979, p. 43).

then, can You move them, and make them accord smoothly with Your Majesty's actions?

In 1070, rumors spread to the effect that Wang had summed up his philosophy before the Emperor in these three phrases, later called the "Three Not-worths" 三不足 :[77]

天變不足懼	Heaven's changes are not worth fearing;
人言不足恤	Men's opinions are not worth our caring;
祖宗之法不足守	The Ancestors' Laws not worth preserving.

The rumors gained credibility when Sima Guang posed an examination question asking candidates to debate those three points. This examination question, even more than Su Shi's a year later (1071) clearly was designed to elicit an anti-reform response (see p. 113 above).[78] Shenzong cancelled Sima Guang's questions, in order to prevent one branch of his administration promoting criticism of another branch. But the next day he asked Wang if he had in fact made such statements

[77] *Xu tongjian* 67/1673, date 1070.3.21. Deng Guangming 1979 (p. 23) quotes the better-known version from the *Song shi*: 天變不足畏,祖宗不足法,人言不足恤 ("*Song shi* Wang Anshi zhuan zhu," p. 163.) The English translation is the same, except that the second and third phrases are reversed.

[78] Certain parties these days (he wrote) are claiming that Heaven and Man are unrelated, and therefore eclipses or earthquakes are "not worth fearing," or that "the laws (norms) of the ancestors" may not be all good, and can be altered; or that the opinions of banal men are "not worth" heeding. These claims imply that the ancient wisdom must be revised or reinterpreted; is that a correct point of view?...

as the "Three Not-worths," which were now rumored to be almost the administration's motto. Wang answered that he had not heard such phrases, but he did accept part of the formulation: about the first statement, "Your Majesty personally attends to all matters of state, you do not 'flow on the stream' of pleasure, or act 'wild and wasted;' in everything, You fear only that the people may be harmed: surely this is the right way to 'fear Heaven's changes.'" (Here Wang is implying that it is correct to fear Heaven's changes, but one must limit the definition of what such changes are: one should guard against droughts or floods, but eclipses and other portents are indeed not worth one's concern.) When it came to the second statement, Wang pointed out that Shenzong did indeed "care about" public opinion, and rightly so; yet there are some people whose opinions are truly not worth heeding. (Wang quoted the *Zuo zhuan* and *Zhuangzi* in support.) And "As for the Ancestors' Laws being not worth preserving--why, that is as it should be!" said Wang: "Renzong, in his forty-year regime, revised (the system) time and again. If the Laws were set entities, and an Emperor's sons and grandsons were obligated to preserve them through all generations, then by what justification did he, their ancestor, revise them several times himself?"[79]

Wang's support for that third point, when connected with such things as Li Ding's "unfiliality," would easily make the reform movement

[79] *Tongjian changbian benmo* 59.10b-11a; Deng Guangming 1979, pp. 29-30. Deng devotes his third chapter to demonstrating (convincingly) how the "Three Not-worths" formed an integral part of Wang's thought.

appear as a collection of men who had no respect for the past.[80]

Although we can never be sure, it seems unnecessary to accept allegations that Wang branded Fu Bi guilty as Gun and Gonggong combined (legendary incompetent ministers), or that he lumped Ouyang Xiu with the "common crowd," adding that Ouyang brought harm wherever he went.[81] Some of Wang's authentic writings and statements criticize *groups* or *types* of people, and demolish *ideas* he thought were wrong; but I have found no unquestionably authentic examples of blatant personal attacks. If he indeed said such things about Fu Bi and Ouyang Xiu, they were probably private remarks not intended for the history books. More typical of Wang's style of argument, or at least more verifiable, is the quatrain he posted in the premiers' office, in response to Wen Yanbo's subtle jibe at Wang's technocratic, contortionist style of government. (P 14.)

Despite disagreements, Wen Yanbo and Wang could communicate if for no other reason than their common erudition. Wang's toughest prob-

[80]Wang's basic point about ancestral laws was that "recent" ancestors (any rulers after the Zhou!) had not known the true Rites and Norms any more than present rulers did. The only "ancestral laws" worth recovering were the ways of Yao and Shun--and even those would have to be adapted for modern times. In 1071.3, Wen Yanbo (trying to change the subject after Shenzong noted popular satisfaction with the new policies?) said, "The ancestral institutions all still exist: there is no need to promote new ones and lose the people's hearts."

Wang retorted, "If the institutions all 'still existed,' then the finances should be adequate, and China should be strong. But none of that is the case right now, so we cannot say that 'the institutions all still exist!" (*Xu tongjian* 68/1701.)

[81]For both stories see *Xu tongjian* 68/1707, dated 1071.6.11 (Ouyang), 1071.6.21 (Fu Bi). Lin Jingwen carefully refutes the allegations that Wang turned against Ouyang Xiu this way (p. 38).

lems came not from senior statesmen like Wen, but from the "common crowd" of beureaucrats who did the bulk of government business, from opponents in the provinces, and from Wang's own unscrupulous underlings. Seldom did human nature behave the way Wang's plans would have required it to. He criticized the Qin dynasty for having coerced people to think a certain way; yet, under pressure, he ended by having to use coercion himself.[82] Bureaucrats stayed at their posts and sabotaged the new policies through inertia; subordinates hid their true faces from Wang; and those opponents whom he had exiled continued to find avenues to protest him--avenues more troublesome to the reform than simply speaking their minds, which is what had got them deposed at first. These opponents in the provinces gradually formulated an anti-reform ideology (see Freeman, Chapt. 3); those closer to the capital developed alliances with the eunuchs, Empress Dowager and imperial relatives, the effect of which was to hurt Wang from behind. (T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 94.)

Wang first felt this new threat at the New Year's Lantern Festival in 1073, when he accompanied Shenzong to view the celebrations. As Wang was about to ride into the main palace gate, the sentries put up their bludgeons to stop him, but his horse kept going. The high-ranking eunuch Zhang Maoze 張茂則 then barked at the horse to stop, and had the sentries beat Wang's driver. The driver protested, saying "This is the

[82]"Record of the Qianzhou Academy" 虔州學記, *Linchuan* 82/859. Closer examination reveals that Wang believed orthodox ideas such as his own resided naturally in the human mind: the Qin's mistake had been to coerce people to give up their natural minds and embrace a false ideology.

Prime Minister's horse, what's the problem?" But it seems there was a new policy: "A Prime Minister is a servant of His Majesty like anyone else; if he can act like this, is he not on his way to becoming another (usurper) Wang Mang?"

Wang Anshi's sharp reaction to the insult indicates that he knew there was more behind the incident than the whims of a single eunuch. He claimed illness and asked to be relieved of all substantive duties. Shenzong just as adamantly refused to accept the resignation. "Each time you ask to resign," said the Emperor, "Our eating and sleeping become fitful. It must be that We have somehow mistreated you: please forgive Us. Might it be the incident at the Xuande Gate?" Shenzong also summoned Wang Fang for a private talk, and explained his position to Wang Gui and Feng Jing. (The latter may have been partly responsible for the incident--he had authority over, and good relations with, the palace guard and many of the eunuchs.)[83] Wang had threatened to resign twice before, almost toppling in 1070 after Han Qi criticized the Green Sprout System. What was more serious this time was the new source of the provocation: attacks from within the palace could be parried only by the Emperor. Wang had no power to send eunuchs or the Empress Dowager to the provinces. How much pressure from the inner palace would it take to force Shenzong (a notably filial ruler) to have

[83] T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 94. The story of the incident is collated from two sources: the *Linxi yeshi* 林希野史 (unavailable) and the *Changbian* 242.7-9 (date 1073.2.1), the latter based on Wang's journal. Also *Tongjian changbian benmo* 60.2b-4a; Shen, p. 68.

no choice but to sacrifice a minister for the sake of the ruling house? Would that event come faster if Shenzong also began to doubt Wang's policies themselves? Did he in fact ever doubt them?

Imperial undermining of Wang continued, but he did have one or two strokes of luck: two months later, a solar eclipse, which the eunuch-controlled astronomy bureau had been warning of for months, was masked by clouds. But the fact remained that Wang now had a second sphere of confrontation to heed, in addition to his dealings with subordinates and equals. On that older front (reformers vs. other officials) the reformers had gradually been resorting to defensive measures which surely prodded the eventual conservative backlash. Of these measures, the "packing" of the academies with Wang's partisans, friends and relatives has been noted above (pp. 121-122). Another inauspicious action was the establishment of a capital-city police unit charged with investigating those who spoke against the administration. (*Xu tongjian* 69/1717, date 1072.1.19.)

Meanwhile, Wang remained aggressive and energetic in promoting his projects, of which the Yellow River Dredging Commission provides a small and suitably controversial example of Wang in action.[84] A man named Li Gongyi 李公義 had invented an "iron dragon claw" to dredge the river deeper for flood prevention. A eunuch Huang Huaixin 黃懷信, who studied the device, found that it worked but was too light. Wang

[84]Founded 1073.4. This story comes from *Shushui jiwen* 15.2b-5a. This source must be used with care, as it was told to Sima Guang by Chen Zhijian陳之儀, one of the anti-dredgers who was impeached during the affair. See also *Xu tongjian* 69/1737-38.

Anshi had the two men develop another dredger, an eight-foot weighted log with iron tines like a rake or harrow. According to the histories, Wang kept pushing for this method even though "everyone knew it was useless." (It often stuck in the silt, or turned upside-down.) Even with good methods, Yellow River projects always involved astronomical costs. Northeastern officials all opposed the method, except one named Fan Ziyuan 范子淵 who reportedly changed his tune when he came to the capital and found out how much Wang liked it. Wang formed the Yellow River Dredging Commission and made Fan its chairman on the spot. A canal was deepened, to test the device and prevent floods if successful; but apparently Fan Ziyuan's accounts of the method's success were untrue. Much of the time the harrow did not even reach the bottom, and the silt level rose and fell more or less as always.[85] By 1076, Wang no longer believed in either Fan or the claw-dredger; and after Wang left for Jiangning, Wen Yanbo memorialized against the project. Fan's job was thus in danger; Fan countered with a memorial to Shenzong which warned against giving in to Wen (who, said Fan, wanted to replace Wang as premier): to give in now would show weakness and invite rancor against the new policies. Cai Que 蔡確 further memorialized against the anti-dredgers as being a faction. Shenzong yielded to Fan and Cai: the anti-dredgers were indicted, and their indictments gained speed after another test of the dredger finally brought results.

As the above story may show, Wang supported technical projects,

[85] The *Xu tongjian*, however, accepts reports of the project's success. (69/1743-44, year 1073.10.)

but seems to have been unmindful of the factional disputes that could hinder their success. He had a special dedication to river projects, perhaps because of the amount of suffering they could relieve. One pointed poem, written to Shenzong, practically dares the Emperor not to follow the people's will, spend money and dredge the Yellow River's eastern channel.[86] Wang respected the popular will, and was passionate about the people's welfare. Yet this attitude did not always show in practice. Though he welcomed any news of popular approval of the new policies, he seems not to have examined the other inevitable reports of suffering and resentment, not even just to see if the resentment should be taken seriously or not. Sometimes bearers of bad news were even demoted, while those who brought good news often found positions in the capital. One famous record shows Wang rather casually brushing aside reports of popular resentment, almost as if the nation's farmers were sick children complaining about their medicine which had not yet taken effect:[87]

> In 1073.11, Wang wanted to punish severely clerks who did not abide by the reforms, but His Majesty did not approve. Wang adamantly insisted on it, saying, "If we do not do this, the reforms cannot continue."
>
> His Majesty remarked, "I hear that the common people are having a bitter experience with the reforms."

[86]"The River's Force"河勢, Li Bi 25.2a/611; Guangzhou 273-74; Zhou Xifu p. 107. Probably written in 1069.7.

[87]*Songchao shishi leiyuan* 5/49; *Shushui jiwen* 16.5b. See also P 16.

> Wang replied, "There are common people who resent cold snaps and summer rains—this is hardly worth our attention!"
>
> Said His Majesty (sardonically? wistfully?): "How much better it would be if there were no resentment even of cold snaps and summer rains!"

Wang made that statement in the fourth month of a drought. The new policies were in place, and the Classical Interpretation Bureau was beginning to solidify the ideology. Wang faced opposition from three fronts, which he dealt with in three different ways: in handling other officials, Wang sent opponents out of town; if opposition came from the palace, Wang threatened to resign. And when opposition came from farmers and shopkeepers, his reaction was to brush it aside. "The mass in roiling talk, what's the use in vying with them? / Although this does not give me joy, it holds no hurt for me..." (P 23.)

By 1074.4, the drought had lasted nine months, and Shenzong was ready to rescind the Guild Exemption Tax to placate nature. Wang told him that even Yao and Shun had suffered droughts: our task is to put human affairs in order. "But that is just what frightens me," said the Emperor— "the fact that out human affairs are not in order. The Guild Exemption Tax we are levying is too heavy, people's emotions are running against it, everyone talks about the harm it has done—from high ministers to the consort clansmen."

"I have heard this too," said Feng Jing.

Wang commented, "Irresponsible officials all find a haven with Feng Jing—that is why he alone has heard this talk, and I haven't!" (*Xu tongjian* 70/1750, year 1074.4.)

In this case, Wang was right that the talk they mentioned did not necessarily indicate true popular suffering: the "high ministers and consort clansmen" (plus eunuchs) who were complaining were precisely those with whom the guilds had contact and through whom businessmen would tend to relay their grievances. But whether justified or not, grievances reported through powerful clansmen would not simply go away. And when Zheng Xia secretly brought Shenzong a drawing he had made of refugees who were undeniably suffering (in the North, where the drought followed locusts from the year before), Shenzong could not withstand the challenge. Zheng Xia literally dared the Emperor--first repeal the reforms (i.e. placate the Elements), then behead me if it does not rain within ten days. Shenzong rescinded the *baojia* system, the Guild Exemption Tax and other reforms in the capital area, and had the State Trade System investigated. It rained that very day. In this action Shenzong had succumbed to (and Heaven seemed to have proved) two ideas especially distasteful to the reformers: that the reforms were a sin against Heaven, and that sins against Heaven inevitably received Heaven's punishment in such forms as droughts or locusts. The reformers protested; Lü Huiqing and Deng Wan wept, asking the Emperor if he really intended to discard his years of effort on account of one crazy man's words. Shenzong then proved himself still a reform partisan, by reinstating all but the Land Survey. Perhaps he felt that his token abolishment had been all that Heaven and the conservatives needed to see.[88] In conjunction with resumption of the reforms, Zheng Xia was

[88] *Xu tongjian* 70/1751-52, year 1074.4.6. Also Freeman, p. 104.

impeached for having presented his case to the Emperor irregularly.

Zheng's impeachment probably helped Wang, but the attendant intrigues among some of Wang's subordinates were no help. Shenzong's renewed support for Wang did not influence the Empress Dowager to like him. The strain of administering the new policies and bucking the opposition, which often came in surprise developments, certainly affected Wang's health. This time he was serious about resigning. After seven petitions, Shenzong finally allowed Wang to go back to govern Jiangning, arriving 1074.4.15. (*Jingding Jiankang zhi* 13.24a.) Was it now that Wang began to sense a waning of the Emperor's enthusiasm for Wang specifically? At some point Wang wrote a bitter ballad, "It is not Easy to Depend on Thee" --a kind of piece that earlier he might not have expected to find himself writing. (P 54.)

Lü Huiqing began what is usually labelled as his fight for more power. Wang Anguo was demoted by Lü, and died soon after joining his brother at Jiangning in 1074.6. We should consider the possibility that Anguo's death was related to the stress of being banished by the man against whom he had insistently warned his brother. And it is also plausible that Wang Anshi's troubles in dealing with Lü Huiqing took on emotional dimensions after Anguo was fired.[89]

After reaching Jiangning, Wang Anshi worked with his son on the classical interpretations, and wrote poetry that reads as if he had retired for good.[90]

[89]So says the *Mo ji* A/14.

[90]Few of Wang's writings, however, are conclusively datable to this period; we know more about what happened in the capital while he

It is interesting that his precipitous return to the capital eight months later (1075.2) partly involved a Daoist magician, in ways still not entirely clear. Li Shining 李士寧 --whom we know mostly through anecdotes--was an acquaintance of Wang's. From Shu, illiterate, reputedly several centuries old, Li had some quality or talent that favorably impressed some of the most distinguished statesmen of the time. Ouyang Xiu called him "neither heretical nor orthodox" 不邪亦不正.[91] We need not take too seriously the story that Li once walked up to Wang Anshi, asked "Are you 'Badger'?" (Wang's baby name), and predicted that within two decades Wang would be Prime Minister.[92] More important is the fairly friendly, perhaps admiring tone of the poems Wang wrote to Li: these suggest that the two men knew each other, though they were not intimate.[93]

While Wang was at Jiangning, there occurred an uprising at Xuzhou. Its two leaders were brought to the capital in 1075.1.17 to be indicted, and at some point the investigation revealed a connection with

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was gone than we know of his own life at this point. But it seems safe to assume that Wang thought of this time as the furlough it turned out to be, not as a real retirement.

[91]"Presented to Li Shining"贈李士寧, in *Ouyang ji*, "Jushi ji" 9/62. Dated 1067. Quoted by Li Bi following Wang's "Presented to Daoist Master Li Shining"贈李士寧道人 38.4b/922.

Li may have had hypnotic powers as well: see Liu Bin's *Gongfu shihua* 貢父詩話 (*CSJC* edition), p. 14. Biography of Li in *Zhizheng Jinling xinzhi* 至正金陵新志, comp. 1344 by Zhang Xuan, 13B.86b-87a.

[92]*Tieweishan congtan* 鐵圍山叢談 by Cai Tao 蔡絛 (d. 1126), (*Zhibuzuzhai* edition) 4.14b-15b.

[93]Li Bi 19.7b/508, 38.4b/922, 48.15b/1204.

the Imperial clansman Zhao Shiju 趙世居 . It further developed that Zhao had received a pair of dragon swords from Li Shining. Zhao was then arraigned in 1075.3.4, when Wang Anshi had already been back in office for two weeks. But it is conceivable that some insiders had known quite early of the Li Shining connection, and that Lü Huiqing planned to emphasize Li's role in the rebellion, leaving public opinion to draw a connection to Wang Anshi. If this were the case, it would explain why Han Jiang called Wang back to the capital with such alarm, on grounds that Lü was getting out of control, and why Wang reportedly took only seven days to arrive.[94] Even if Li Shining's role had come to light only after Wang's return, it is still possible that Lü Huiqing or someone else would try to exploit it anyhow. However it had been, Li's accusers were no match for Wang: Wang personally commuted Li's death sentence, exiling him instead.[95]

Wang's final stint in office was less eventful and productive

[94] *Xu tongjian* 71/1771, date 1075.2.11. The notes to the *Changbian* reason that the Li Shining connection was not discovered until Zhao Shiju's arraignment, after Wang had already returned to the premiership. (260.6-8, also in Shen, pp. 44-45.) Shao Bowen and Wei Tai tell the more dramatic version, in which Wang happened to come back from Jiangning just when Lü Huiqing was framing a case against him. (*Shao hou lu* 17/111; *Dongxuan bilu* 5.4ab. *Dongxuan* version also found in *Songchao shishi leiyuan* 71/944.)

About taking only seven days: this may be exaggerated. One record says Wang did not leave the governorship until 1075.3.1. (*Jingding Jiankang zhi* 13.24a.) The poems that seem to date from this time indicate a normal journey, preceded by at least several days of preparations and worry, and even some foot-dragging. (P 39, P 74.)

[95] After Wang died, Li Zhiyi found the commutations for Li Shining and others, in Wang's own handwriting. (*Mo ji* A/15.)

than his first six years had been. His faction was splintering, and he had less control of its members. No new major reforms were forthcoming. Just after leaving Jiangning, he had already known he would miss the place. And he began to recall his youth. (P 74, 75.) He started referring to his official career as a dream:[96]

> ...Why must I wait again for the millet to cook
> Before I can realize that the world of men is the world of dreams?
> 何須更待黃粱熟，始覺人間是夢間.

His major work for three years had been the annotation of the Three Classics, the permanent vehicle by which his "Laws" would be "transmitted." Soon after reaching the capital, he presented the newly-

[96]"Nostalgia for Mt. Zhong" 懷鍾山, Li Bi 45.4b/1100. The "millet cooking" refers to the famous story of the man who fell asleep at an inn, dreamed an entire official career, awoke and found it had been a dream, compressed into such a short time that the millet was just ready as he was awakening. The dream had been induced by a Daoist, as a way to cure the man's desire for fame and glory. Wang means: "Why must I enter this distasteful official life again?" I tentatively date the poem to Wang's second term as Premier. (Li Bi posits 1067, when Wang was first being recalled from mourning. But Wang's opening words are, "After retiring for *old age*, I came back here to serve among the ranks..." 投老歸來供奉班.)

Millet story: Original title, "Record of the Inside of the Pillow" 枕中記, or "Old Man Lü" 呂翁. By Shen Jiji 沈既濟(750?--800?). In Li Fang 李昉 et al. comp., *Taiping guangji* 太平廣記 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981) 82/527-8. Rep. with notes in Wang Bijiang 汪辟疆 ed., *Tangren chuanqi xiaoshuo ji* 唐人傳奇小說集, (rev. ed. Shanghai, 1959; rep. Taipei, World, 1980), pp. 37-42. Translated by William H. Nienhauser, Jr., in Y.W. Ma and Joseph S.M. Lau ed., *Traditional Chinese Stories: Themes and Variations* (Columbia, 1978), pp. 435-8.

annotated *Odes* (*Shijing*), *History* (*Shangshu*) and *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli*), collectively called *New Interpretations of Three Classics* 三經新義. (The *Shijing* seems to have been only a draft, which the Wangs continued to work on for the next six months.) In addition to these, there was a dictionary to compile which would guide all future classical explication.[97] These works deserve careful study, especially now that parts of the *Shiyi* (notes to the *Shijing*) are available. But for now, let us simply summarize what Wang was trying to achieve through these annotations.

First, *his choice of the three works to be annotated* reflected a position that he shared with other reform-minded officials dating to the Qingli-era reforms and earlier.[98] This school of thought valued the *Zhouli* in particular, for its institutional emphasis, as an example of how to construct an ideal society. (It was not necessarily seen as

[97]The *Zhouguan xinyi* 周官新義, which was largely Wang Anshi's work, exists intact. (*CSJC* edition, from *Yongle dadian* via *Yueyatang congshu*.)

The *Shiyi* 詩義 was partially reconstructed recently: *Shiyi gouchen* 詩義鉤沈, Qiu Hansheng 丘漢生 ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982). Wang Anshi, Wang Fang, Lu Dian, Ye Tao and Lü Shengqing all played roles in its writing. Wang Fang did lexical glosses, Wang Anshi annotated the larger meanings. (*Shiyi gouchen* introduction, p. 3.)

Annotations to the *Shangshu*, largely Wang Fang's work (based on his father's Classics Mat lectures to the Emperor) are lost, except for a section by Wang Anshi called the *Hongfan zhuan* 洪範傳, which survives in *Linchuan* 65/685.

Cai Tao had heard from Zeng Gongliang and Sima Guang that the *Shi* and *Shangshu* had been the work of Wang Fang and Wang Anshi's students, while Anshi himself had annotated the *Zhouli*. This was confirmed when Cai Tao saw the manuscript of the *Zhouguan xinyi*: the handwriting was Wang's own "slanting wind and slender rain" 斜風細雨. (*Tieweishan congtan* 3.21.)

[98]For a fuller discussion of the issues in this paragraph, see T.C. Liu, *Reform*, pp. 30-34.

a literal blueprint for the Song, however, or even for the Zhou.) Emphasis on the *Zhouli* often carried with it an inability to appreciate the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu*, the chronological history of Lu). The *Chunqiu* appealed instead to those who believed *a)* that morality was the prime influence in government, and *b)* that the *Chunqiu* text concealed moral judgments in every choice of words. Wang did not deny either assertion, but pointed out that the commentaries on the *Chunqiu* were so uneven that one could not rely on them for understanding the text; and at the moment there was nothing better than those commentaries.[99] Whether Wang really called the work "Torn-up clippings of government bulletins" 斷爛朝報 is beside the point (many people who work with that classic have been tempted to make similar remarks).[100] What mattered to Wang *in his role as premier* was that the *Chunqiu* was too difficult and obscure to be a textbook for civil service candidates. An elite education should start with what was easy to understand: *Odes*, then *History*, then *Rites*. One could then continue to the *Chunqiu* (or *Changes*, or other classics) if one wanted to.[101]

The *Shijing* and *Shangshu* primarily served to prepare learners for the all-important *Zhouli*. The "Odes" 詩, in Wang's etymology, were "Words from the Temple" 寺言 (i.e. Temple of Government--palace of

[99]"Reply to Han Zongshu" 答韓求仁書. *Linchuan* 72/765.

[100]*Xu tongjian* 68/1709, date 1071.8. Yin Tun 尹焞 (*hao* Hejing 和靜, 1071--1142) defended Wang's reasoning here: see Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞 (1850--1908), *Jingxue lishi* 經學歷史(Changsha, 1896), p. 51ab.

[101]See Lu Dian's quotation of Wang, in Cai (appendix), p. 385. About the *Changes*, see "Reply to Han Zongshu," *Linchuan* 72/764.

the Nine Ministers). They had been composed in a place where only "Words of the Rites and Norms" could be uttered: thus the *Shijing* taught the student how to speak of Rites and Norms.[102] The *Shijing* and *Zhouli*, Wang believed, were "sufficient to explain each other" 詩禮足以相解. The two works had a common origin and a single purpose: to inculcate the values of an orderly society.[103] The *Shangshu* wrote of the sage-kings, the best who had ever ruled. Its "Hong Fan" (洪範 "Great Norm") section Wang saw as a set of principles for ordering society: a prelude to understanding the *Zhouli*. (Lin Jingwen, p. 46.)

Second: *Wang's goal in writing new annotations* was not so much to correct inaccuracies in the old ones, as it was to revive the spark that had died once the old exegetical tradition had become institutionalized. For centuries, teachers had simply lectured without eliciting reactions; students recited but asked no questions. Why? Because the set annotations gave the illusion of explaining everything; there seemed nothing left about which to ask.[104] In order to make students probe the classics' real meaning, to *think* rather than absorb information, Wang wanted to ingrain them with holistic approaches to characters and structure, and an expectation that the classics contained even

[102]Attributed to Wang's *Zi shuo*; quoted and satirized by Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716--1797) in his *Suiyuan shihua* 隨園詩話 (Beijing: Renmin Wenxue, 1982) 2:6/35.

[103]*Linchuan* 74/786. *Shiyi gouchen*, Introduction, p. 10.

[104]"Postface to the Commentary on the 'Hongfan'" 書洪範傳後, *Linchuan* 71/759.

more wisdom than most men imagined.

Third, *Wang's approach to annotation* was similar to that of other Song scholars, and in many ways more traditional than one might expect. Song classicists and thinkers of many persuasions showed a desire to revive the creative process through which the ancients had transmitted wisdom "through the mind"心傳; or by which a modern man, without a human teacher, could align his thinking in such a way that he would "gain the realization by himself"自得. This ideal led scholars to try to invent a scholarship relevant to their times; to question annotations; to suspect the authenticity of texts (would not "Classics" that were actually written in the Han be just as worthless as Han annotations, Han justice and Han morality?); to annotate intuitively, sometimes with no scholarly basis; even to alter the texts themselves. (Pi Xirui, p. 53ab.) Wang's scholarship included all those facets but the last. Although he produced much sound scholarly work, much of his etymology was intuitive--but based on the kind of intuition that comes when one "knows" one has aligned oneself with the material so well that the answer jumps into one's mind unbidden. Perhaps less excusable was Wang's frequent use of textual glosses to promote specific new policies, such as unification of officers and clerks; government engaging in commerce; adequate official salaries.[105] But there were certain age-old scholarly assumptions that Wang did not challenge: he accepted that

[105]This occurred most often in the *Zhouli* annotations. See S. Shoji 庄司莊, "On 'Ta tsai' in Wang An-shih's 'Chou-kuan hsin-i'" 王安石「周官新義」の大宰について, in *Shūkan tōyōgaku* 集刊東洋學 23 (1970.5) pp. 81-82. Also *Shiyi gouchen*, Introduction, p. 20.

the *Odes* were edited by Confucius, that they were written with a purpose, that their sequence meant something, and that they contained comments about state affairs at the time they were composed.[106] His explanation of the meaning and order of hexagrams in the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing*) is not as iconoclastic as his reputation might lead one to predict.[107]

In the end, his ideals for the New Classics foundered because he miscalculated human nature: examination candidates under the new order did not learn to think better, but simply transferred their rote-learning habits to the new material. (What choice did they have? It was the party line.)[108] And needless to say, conservatives found the works appalling. They (like Wang himself), having lived through

[106]See "Explication of the 'Guofeng'" 國風解 (*Linchuan*, Appendix, p. 1071); "Explication of the Sequence of the 'Zhounan' Odes" 周南詩次解 (*Linchuan* 66/701). More specifically, Wang venerated the traditional glosses to the Odes ("Shi xu" 詩序) perhaps even more than earlier commentators had; he believed these glosses predated Confucius. (*Shiyi gouchen*, Introduction, p. 8. Also "Reply to Han Zongshu," *Linchuan* 72/761.) He also knew the traditional scholarship exhaustively: according to Lu Dian, Wang's copy of the traditional glosses was so worn that the words were scarcely legible. See Lu You, *Laoxue'an biji* 老學庵筆記 (*Baihai* edition) 1.7b; *Shiyi gouchen*, Introduction, p. 15.

[107]"General Treatise on the *Changes*" 易泛論, *Linchuan* 63/668; "Explication of the Names of the Hexagrams" 卦名解, *Linchuan* 63/671. Also his "Explication of Images in the *Changes*" 易象解 interprets the hexagrams as a path to be followed by the Superior Man. (*Linchuan* 65/697.) All three of those essays, however, may date from his youth, when (as he told Han Zongshu) he had thought he understood the *Book of Changes*, not yet having discovered how difficult it was. (*Linchuan* 72/764.)

[108]Reported by Chen Shidao 陳師道 (1053--1101), *Houshan congtan* 後山叢談 (in *Biji xubian* 筆記續編, Taipei, Kuang Wen, 1970) 1.8a. See also Pi Xirui, p. 55a.

changes of regime and intellectual ferment, having written examination essays under some of the most experimental minds of the dynasty, had learned to think, to be "scholars" as Wang was--in a way that would be impossible under any heavily-enforced ideology. On the surface Wang's ideas seemed simplistic for a milieu as sophisticated as the Song. He wrote his annotations with students in mind, but had failed to realize how important it was that they impress mature literati as well. Conservatives were bound to resent any set of texts that owed their textbook status solely to the Emperor's patronage of their author. Reformist propaganda and unscholarly etymologies within the annotations surely increased this resentment tenfold, and were likely what doomed the *New Interpretations* to oblivion within a few decades.

Zhu Xi comments that the Northern Song clearly had *needed* reformed interpretations of the classics; Wang was providing them, and many of the ideas he used in them were common at the time. Thus Wang's *hubris* must have grown stronger as his annotations took shape and went into use.[109] Wang saw the Classics, literally, as tools to run the nation: correct interpretations had to appear as soon as possible, both as a guide for future officials, and to give the reforms a canonical legitimacy. Seen in this light, Wang's urgency as Prime Minister is understandable. (See Shoji, p. 83.) Yet even so, to his opponents this urgency could only appear as slapdash haste unbefitting a scholar, while Wang's desire to provide a canonical basis for the reform looked like a wish to dictate, to "make others be the same as himself." (See

[109] *Zhuzi daquan* (*SBBY*) 70.9b; Shoji, p. 66.

p. 135 above.) Among intellectuals, suspicions persisted that Wang avoided the *Chunqiu* because it was beyond his ability, despite any rationalization Wang might make in public. Su Che rather snidely summed up the conservatives' opinions:[110]

> Wang Anshi (Su uses Wang's name, not the respectful 'Duke of Jing'), *in his capacity as Prime Minister*, explicated the Classics and circulated his explications nationwide. But when it came to the *Chunqiu*, he was totally unable to make sense of the meaning. That is why he defamed it as "torn-up clippings of government bulletins..."

One thing that surfaced with the presentation of the *New Interpretations* was further friction between Wang and Lü Huiqing. Shenzong gave Wang, Lü and Wang Fang promotions, but Lü advised the Emperor to accept Wang Fang's *pro forma* refusal.[111] The rancor that resulted grew worse in the ninth month of 1075, when Wang asked permission to revise the *Shijing* annotations. Wang told the Emperor that he wished to preserve the annotations made by Lü Huiqing's brother Shengqing, but it seems that Shenzong wanted Shengqing's glosses taken out.[112] The Lü's themselves feared that Wang was being deceptive, and that it was Wang

[110] Quoted by Li Bi in notes to "Jinling Governor's Residence" 金陵郡齋, 43.7b/1046. Li then defends Wang's classical annotations as being outstanding in places.

[111] *Quyu jiuwen* 2/12. Also *Xu tongjian* 71/1777, date 1075.6.21. The promotion was to Auxiliary Academician of the Longtu Pavilion 龍圖閣直學士.

[112] See Wang's petitions to revise the annotations: *Linchuan* 43/460.

himself who wanted the changes. Lü Huiqing's long, complaining communications to Shenzong try to imply that Wang was forgetful and irrational, that Shengqing's contributions were substantial, high-quality, and could not be detached from the work done by the other scholars in what was truly a joint venture. (See Shen, pp. 165-166.)

The Lü brothers were on their way out, as the reform party continued to fragment. (They had sent away Zeng Bu and Lü Jiawen, neither of whom had come back. Chen Shengzhi had resigned as Military Affairs Commissioner in 1075.4R, replaced by the more conservative Wu Chong.) Lü Huiqing requested Shenzong three times for a provincial appointment. Even though Lü knew he was in political trouble, he still used his imperial audiences to hint about Wang's poor health, and to wonder aloud whom Wang might prefer as a successor. (*Xu tongjian* 71/1780, date 1075.10.)

Deng Wan was among those who tried to manipulate Wang and the Emperor, hoping to improve his own position in the empty space left by Lü Huiqing. Deng Wan, at the suggestion of a Lian Hengfu 練亨甫 (1073 *jinshi*) told Shenzong that Wang felt mistreated--as Prime Minister, he wanted emoluments such as a Military Affairs Commissionership for Wang Fang, edict-drafter positions for all his brothers, literary posts for his nephews and in-laws, and a large estate in the capital. Deng could accomplish a number of purposes by planting this rumor: drive a rift between Wang and his sovereign; make it appear as if Wang really wanted to retire; cause other officials to resent Wang if the demands were actually granted--in short, he thought he could harm Wang by appearing to support him; have a better position if Wang left; and appear loyal

to Wang if Wang stayed. Shenzong knew already what kind of man Deng was, but did not show it. The next time Shenzong saw Wang, he tested Wang by saying, "Please do your best to stay in office for Us--We have almost arranged everything you asked for; the only thing left to find is a good solid mansion." Wang was floored, but Shenzong laughed the matter off. The next day Shenzong finally let Wang know where the rumor had come from. Wang demanded Deng's impeachment.[113] By late 1076, Deng was banished to Guozhou (*Xu tongjian* 71/1793.) Shenzong had done what Wang could or would not do alone--allow a manipulative underling to stumble and fall.[114]

We need not accept Wei Tai's hyperbole that Wang spent most of his second term of office asking to retire; nevertheless he did make such motions at least once. That was in 1075.10, just after Lü Huiqing's departure, when a comet appeared and Shenzong did not seem placated by Wang's memorial that the comet was irrelevant and not an omen. Wang stayed on sick leave until the next month, when his associates urged him to come back before others could harm their party. The *Xu tongjian* says that Shenzong was overjoyed to see Wang come back, and Wang's power grew greater than ever. (71/1785, date 1075.11.)

Power he may have had, but there is little record of Wang doing much during the next few months, other than continuing to revise the

[113] *Dongxuan bilu* 6.8ab; *Songchao shishi leiyuan* 70/935-6.

[114] The *Xu tongjian* changes the story slightly, having Deng Wan (afraid of his own fate should Wang retire) sincerely begging the Emperor to retain Wang, using the same speech summarized above. (71/1794.)

Shijing annotations, which he presented at the end of 1075. In fact, the salient national events of Wang's second term can be listed rapidly:

After unsuccessful negotiations by Shen Gua, the Song relinquished formal claim to thirty *li* of territory that were in Khitan hands. (Date 1075.7, *Xu tongjian* 71/1772, 1777; Tao Jinsheng, pp. 144-154.) Lü Huiqing's Self-assessment Tax was abolished after its inventor's demotion. (*Xu tongjian* 71/1782, date 1075.10.) Annamese forces massacred Song towns at Jiaozhi; Wang had to send troops to attack Annam.[115] In mid-1076 Wang Fang died at thirty-two.[116] Despite the Byzantine machinations within which the traditional histories say that Wang Fang spent his last days, we would probably do better to ignore the stories and simply state that his death capped a long illness, and left his father shaken, depressed and probably wearier than ever.[117]

[115]Dates 1075.11, 1076.2. *Xu tongjian* 71/1783, 1786-87.

[116]Cai (without attribution) gives the date as 1076.7, or 1076.9 (Cai 19/263).

[117]According to the histories, Deng Wang and Wang Fang had tried in 1075.10 to indict Lü Huiqing in a land scandal at Huating. The case lay dormant into 1076, when Wang Fang, Lian Hengfu and Lü Jiawen plotted to stuff the relevant briefs in with some other official business, and obtain a guilty verdict *without Wang's knowledge* (the senior Wang being against such infighting; remember that the histories paint Wang Fang as a blackguard). But Lü Huiqing, at Chenzhou, heard of the plot and sent to court an impeachment of Wang Anshi, in which he accused Wang of abandoning all moral principles, of being a Persuader, of lying, conniving, betraying the Emperor. The Emperor asked Anshi what had provoked this; Anshi did not know, and asked Wang Fang. When Fang explained the situation, Anshi cursed him, thus aggravating Fang's illness and killing him. It was remorse mixed with grief that made Wang all the firmer about wanting to retire. (*Shushui jiwen* 16.3b; *Xu tongjian* 71/1793-94.)

The main weakness in that story is that the real Wang Fang was

Wang Anshi for months had been little more than a figurehead, whose presence aided the reformers' unity and whose advice helped Shenzong keep the new policies on an orthodox track. Shenzong's respect and affection for Wang may indeed have never been higher--it was at least high enough that nothing Wang said would convince Shenzong to let him retire. By the ninth month of 1076, Wang Anshi had to turn to Wang Gui, asking him in two frank letters to explain his position to Shenzong:[118]

> ...When I look at myself, I find my actions are inadequate to please the masses; resentful anger accumulates, truth to tell, among my closest and most valued friends. My wisdom has not been enough for me to understand other people; cunning and dangerous traps keep emanating from those with whom my association has been deepest...

He hoped Wang Gui would convince the Emperor that men who had stayed in office too long, in the condition Wang was in, always brought harm to the state.

Wang Gui's words, following four or five petitions by Wang Anshi, finally obtained Shenzong's consent. Wang's resignation took

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probably too ill to engage in politics. The evil portrait of Wang Fang's character; the resemblance of his death to Tang Jie's death (see p. 108 above); the resemblance to another story (also suspect) about Lü Huiqing sending damaging information about Wang from the provinces; the vagueness about dates--all suggest that the episode may be an amalgam of hearsay and unrelated anecdotes. (See also p. 126, note 57 above.)

[118] From the second of two letters to Wang Gui: *Linchuan* 73/778; Cai 19/264. Cai dates them to 1076.9.

effect on 1076.10.23. Retaining the title of First Privy Councillor, with the added rank of Military Governor of Zhennan 鎮南軍節度使, he was sent at age fifty-five to govern his hometown of Jiangning once again.

He had perhaps misjudged human nature. He had inadvertently proved that one could not always overcome opposition just by being unafraid of it. Yet he had changed the way the Song government worked, more than anyone since the dynasty's founding. In eight years he had written little poetry, no essays; had set the standard by which all literati would be educated; lost his favorite son who had helped him do it; and had been victimized by people he thought were his friends.

Wang, Han Wei and Wu Chong (one of his replacements) held a farewell gathering during a snowfall.[119] Snow, through the ages, had signified good crops to come, had inspired friendly gatherings, and had buried aged statesmen. It represented the obstacles that could block a woodcutter's path, and blanket a fisherman's boat (i.e. bring trouble into the retired life). Snowflakes stood for human efforts, that are "lighter than a hair" when separate, but "united can outweigh a thousand stone." How would the government fare without Wang? "I watch you heroes twain / In my decline, with quietly folded arms." (P 38.)

[119]Wu Chong and Wang Gui shared the position of First Privy Councillor which Wang had vacated.

12. RETIREMENT AT JIANGNING: 1076--1086

Overview of Wang's Retirement

Was Wang's retirement bitter? Serene? Detached? Anxious? Fascinating and contradictory clues have surfaced via history, hearsay, and Wang's writings. One senses that his first two or three years of retired life were fretful and lonely; gradually he became serene for a few years, but in the end, when the government changed, he suffered an acute depression that worsened his health and soon killed him. At times he sensed that all was not well at court, yet (toward outsiders at least) he seems to have maintained a faith that the reforms themselves would succeed. As always, he cared little what people thought of him personally, and did not regret his treatment of colleagues during his years in power. The friends who had broken with him now lived elsewhere; he spent time with a younger, less ambitious and less complicated group. Freed from workaday pressures, his mind (disciplined through years as chief executive) could now devote itself to two pastimes for which hitherto there had not been enough time: writing tight, understated poetry, and exploring Buddhist doctrine. The latter two activities were common for retired literati: that fact makes it all the more important and interesting to examine just how Wang went about them. No one knows anymore exactly what kind of

Buddhist Wang became, but his development as a poet is amply and clearly preserved.

Following are the events of his retirement, as nearly as we can trace.

At the end of 1076, Wang moved into a house connected with a large temple complex at Mt. Zhong.[1] The Taiping Xingguo Temple 太平興國寺, comprising several smaller temples, was spread over the southwestern face of Mt. Zhong, where the Ming Imperial tomb stands today. Wang lived fairly close below this, and would often wander, visit and live among its various cloisters, streams and scenic spots.

Immediately he began to petition to resign from the governorship of Jiangning.[2] Three petitions later, in mid-1077 he was given the sinecure of Emissary from the Jixi Shrine 集禧觀使; he accepted the post but continued to decline the titular rank of Premier (*shixiang* 使相) that had been created for him.[3] His position with the Classics Bureau was his only remaining responsibility. Perhaps with some

[1] *Changbian* 279.11. He donated the land that went with his appointment as a Merit Cloister常住 for this temple, in memory of his parents and son. (Petition to do so: *Linchuan* 43/461. Memorial thanking the Emperor for approving it: 60/648. We do not know for sure when he donated the land. The *Changbian* lists it under 1076.12.4; see also Shen, p. 167.) According to a Ming source, it was Wang who facilitated the combining of various small temples into the Taiping Xingguo complex. (See *Jinling fansha zhi* 金陵梵刹志 3.67a/433.)

[2] *Linchuan* 5/619-620; Appendix, p. 1062; Cai 19/266-7.

[3] Petition accepting the Jixi Shrine appointment but asking to be relieved of the titular premiership, *Linchuan* 57/620. He was replaced as Jiangning governor by Yuan Jizhong元積中, 1077.10.4. (*Jingding Jiankang zhi* 13.25a.)

humor, he noted how trying it was to be set out to pasture like a worn-out horse, but with the reins still attached--and to be "talented" only in the sense of a great tree that has outgrown its useful size.[4] It may have been in 1077 that he presented his commentary on the "Great Norm" chapter of the *Shangshu* ("Hongfan zhuan" 洪範傳), after which he proceeded with the *Zishuo*, which would take him six more years to complete.[5]

Late in 1077, Wang's supporter Lü Jiawen was sent from the capital to govern Jiangning. His name was under a cloud, but Wang reminded him that clouds disperse.[6] Lü's further downward transfer the next autumn (to Runzhou nearby) shows that although Wang supported and sympathized with him, Wang had truly retired and was not actively pulling his weight in court affairs.

Yet he still had some weight to pull, if we can believe Wei Tai. Wei does not specify whether he thinks it was Wang Anshi or his wife who was trying to maintain the family's prestige, but merely describes the alleged incidents behind Lü Jiawen's appointment as follows:[7]

[4]"Reflections upon the Classics Bureau" 經局感言 , Li Bi 43.4b/1040. The image of the great tree, whose use to itself lies in uselessness to others, comes originally from Zhuangzi. (*Zhuangzi yinde* 11-12/IV/64-90; trans. A.C. Graham, pp. 72-74.)

[5]"Hongfan zhuan:" *Linchuan* 65/685. The tentative date is Cai's (20/270).

[6]"I Ascend the Eastern Ridge with Lü Jiawen" 與呂望之上東嶺 : Li Bi 2.2b/186. Lü replaced Yuan Jizhong, date 1077.11.6. To Runzhou, 1078.9.16. (*Jingding Jiankang zhi* 13.25a.)

[7]From *Dongxuan bilu* 5.10a-11a; *Songchao shishi leiyuan* 8/85. About Wei's reliability as a reporter: He did visit Wang in 1083 or 1085, therefore at least his description of Wang's house is an eyewit-

When Wang Anshi became premier the second time, he came on the heels of a factional clique. Those who once had been his loyal hands were gone; those who remained he could no longer trust--and the trustworthy ones were incompetent. Most of the time he could consult only with his son, Wang Fang. But then Fang died. Realizing what a hard path he had to walk, Wang regretfully requested to resign once more; whereupon he was again sent to administer Jinling, with the titular rank of premier. Soon after he arrived, he turned in his badge of office and requested a sinecure. Presently he obtained the post of Envoy from the Huiling Shrine 會靈觀使, residing in Jinling. (8)

One day (in the fourth or fifth month, when Wang was still governor? See note 10 below), a Mr. Wu, younger kinsman of Mme. Wang, came to visit, and stayed in the Incense Hall of a Buddhist temple. (9) It happened that there was to be a service in honor of the Tongtian Festival 同天節, after which the local officials would meet in that same Incense Hall. (10) Ye Jun 葉均, the governor,

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ness account (see note 14 below). (Visit mentioned in *Dongxuan bilu* 12.8b. Present text says the year was *guichou* of the Yuanfeng era: this must be a mistake for *guihai*--1083--or *yichou*--1085. Wei seems to have written his anecdote primarily to show that he had talked with the great statesman in person.)

[8]Envoy from: or "Commissioner of." Standard records, and Wang's own works, name it the Jixi Shrine. But Wei Tai's anecdotes mention the Huiling Shrine consistently.

[9]Madame Wang: Standard records name her the Lady of Yue 越國夫人, but Wei here calls her the Lady of Yu 豫. Mr. Wu (either a brother or cousin of Mme. Wang) could have been Wu Xiandao 吳顯道, to whom Wang once sent a cordial poem (Li Bi 22.6b/556). Li, however, identifies Wu Xiandao as an *elder* kinsman. Another, younger kinsman known to us was named Wu Yi 吳頤. The censor Sun Sheng 孫昇 described him as an unsavory fellow who took advantage of his connection with Wang, and made himself generally disliked around the capital. (Year 1086.2R, *Changbian* 369.33b; Shen, p. 53.)

[10]Tongtian Festival: The date of this national holiday varied. In 1068, Emperor Shenzong set it on the fourth month, tenth day. In 1076, it fell in the fifth month (in Hangzhou at least). (*Song shi* 112/2673; *Changbian* 275.11a, date 1076.5.18; Shen, pp. 30-31.) This was the one time of year when certain local officials were allowed to attend musical entertainments presented by courtesans. If the festival

sent someone to tell Mr. Wu to leave. (11)

But Wu refused to move out. Right until the end of the service and during the general meeting in the Incense Hall, Wu kept cursing them from behind a screen. Ye Jun averted his head and did not listen, but Mao Kang 毛抗, his fiscal intendant, and Li Zong 李綜, his staff supervisor, took great offense and sent a note to the prefecture, asking that Wu be summoned for interrogation.

The prefectural government sent two guards with a warrant to take Wu into custody, but Wu fled to Wang Anshi's house to hide--Wang as yet unaware of the whole business. Presently the guards arrived at Wang's gate, saying "We are making an arrest!" The commotion reached the inner court, not stopping even when Wang stepped out by chance and saw it. Wang snapped at the guards to get out.

When Governor Ye Jun heard of the incident, he had the two guards flogged, and taking Mao Kang and Li Zong with him, he visited Wang and apologized: the guards had breached their discipline, he said, because they were not acquainted with Wang.

Wang made no reply, merely repeating "I see, I see," but Mme. Wang cursed Ye and the others from behind her screen, saying "Ever since my husband resigned as Prime Minister, seven out of ten of his people have turned against him--but so far no one would have the nerve to arrest a member of my family right in the house! Yet you fellows just might dare, am I right?"

Ye Jun and his men rushed away.

Just at this time, an Imperial envoy arrived on a mission of inquiry, and heard about the fight over the

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occurred in the fourth or fifth month during the Yuanfeng era, then it seems Mr. Wu would have arrived after Wang had tried to abdicate the governorship of Jiangning, but before his appointment to the Jixi Shrine (which would be made in the sixth month).

[11] Ye Jun should not have still been there. He had been governor of Jiangning since 1075.3.1, but had been ordered to the capital when Wang was sent to replace him (1076.11). Perhaps he had remained as acting governor; or perhaps Wei Tai has the wrong name or wrong year. (*Jingding Jiankang zhi* 13.24ab.)

> Incense Hall. That incident topped the list of things he reported to the court upon his return. Subsequently Ye Jun, Mao Kang and Li Zong were dismissed, and Lü Jiawen was made Governor. In addition, Wang Anshang was installed as Judicial Intendant of the Jiangdong region, and ordered to move his headquarters to the residence at Jiangning. (12)

Wei's story, if true, confirms several things: court officials might appoint conservatives to Jiangning, but Shenzong would not hesitate to replace them with people amenable to Wang if necessary.[13] Wang may well have had some obnoxious and opportunistic relatives who caused bad feeling among other officials. And perhaps Wang, by his modest style of living, was inviting the kind of cavalier treatment that Ye Jun's officers allegedly gave him.

Wei Tai's is the earliest description of the house Wang had found for himself, seven *li* east of the city wall and seven *li* west of Mt. Zhong: Wang called it the *Banshan* Villa 半山園 ("Villa Halfway to

[12]Wang Anshang was indeed given this post, in 1077.10.11. Shenzong had the headquarters moved to Jiangning so that Anshang could be near his brother. (*Changbian* 285.5a; Wang Jinguang, p. 76. Wang's petition requesting the appointment, *Linchuan* 58/623.)

[13]Several Jiangning governors during Wang's retirement had ties to him: Lü Jiawen (1077--1078); Chen Yi 陳繹 (1082.3--1083.6); Wang Yirou 王益柔 (1083.6--1084.9); Wang Anli (1084.9--1086.12).

Lü's appointment to Jiangning may have been a convenient device to separate Lü from Wang Shao and other opponents, and thus alleviate a growing factional conflict. Again according to Wei Tai: in 1077, Wang Shao demanded (at least half-seriously) that Lü Jiawen be boiled alive, to appease the drought in the capital--just as Bu Shi 卜式 had wanted the reformer Sang Hongyang boiled in the Han dynasty. *Dongxuan bilu* 6.3ab. Bu Shi: see *Han shu* 漢書 by Ban Gu 班固(32--92), (Beijing, 1975) 24B/1175-76.

the Mountain").[14] The place often flooded until Wang, using his years of expertise, cut a canal southwestward to the city moat. He could now go to town by boat, or into the hills on a donkey—and did both often. The house stood scruffily in plain view, like a roadside inn; when people suggested that Wang put a wall around it, he answered with silence. He would remain this frugal until he died: at his later house in town he would break pine boughs into a rough canopy when the weather grew hot.[15]

Madame Wang seems to have endured the rusticity, maintaining the dignity of an elder statesman's household whenever she could, even as Wang sabotaged that dignity in other ways. The servants did not cross her lightly, according to the following pair of stories:[16]

> (Madame Wang Anshi) had a fetish for cleanliness, while Wang himself was careless and sloppy. There was often friction between them. (In 1077), after Wang requested to retire to his private home from the governorship of Jiangning, Mme. Wang continued to use a rattan bed that was official property. When clerks from the commandery called to claim the bed, no one dared broach the subject (with Mme. Wang). But one day Wang Anshi climbed onto the bed with bare feet

[14] *Dongxuan bilu* 12.7a. Included in Li Bi's note to "Two Poems Written on the Banshan Temple Wall" (P 61-62). Li adds his own data. For descriptions of the site in the 1940's, when it was a military stable, and in 1980, see Huang Chang 黃裳, *Jinling wu ji* 金陵五記 (Jiangsu Renmin, 1982), pp. 35-39, 161. It lies north of the Zhongshan Gate, just inside the Qing-dynasty city wall, but was well outside the wall in Song times.

[15] Colophon (by a monk who knew Wang) to "Autumn Heat" 秋熱, Li Bi 5.1a/243.

[16] By Zhu Yu 朱彧 (1075?--after 1119), in his *Pingzhou ketan* 萍州可談 (*CSJC* edition) 3/42. See also Shen, p. 28.

> and lolled at length. The minute his wife saw him, she had the bed sent back.
>
> ...Her cleanliness fetish involved not only the fear of being dirty herself, but a concern that others would be polluted: After the Wangs' elder daughter had been married (for at least several years, living in the capital), she came to Jiangning for a visit. Mme. Wang, most excited, cut a length of silk crepe and made a robe for her son-in-law (Wu Anchi). It was valuable and rare material.
>
> Suddenly a cat came and lay in the clothes chest. Cursing the maids, Mme. Wang snatched the robe out and stuffed it (into a crawl-space?) underneath the bath chamber, and would not give it to anyone. It finally rotted because no one had the courage to take it out.

According to Shao Bo, Wang himself could be difficult as well. Wang hired an old soldier to sweep and draw water, praised the man incessantly, but suddenly fired him when the soldier bumped into a lampstand. Some on Wang's staff grumbled that he was still hiring and firing on moody whims, just as he had treated high officials in the past.[17]

Wang spent much time working on his dictionary project, the *Zi shuo*, sometimes at home, sometimes taking the manuscript on outings. We are told that he worked on this book like a man possessed; he would snack on lotus seeds while he pondered the classical lore, and if the

[17] *Shao hou lu* 20/129; Shen, p. 7. The monk Canliaozi 參寥子 (or Daoqian 道潛) also mentioned that soldier, but his point was not that Wang was capricious: rather, that Wang continued to run his household as if it were an office or a military camp, with generous praise for competent sweeping or fire-lighting, but strong anger for "incompetence at the job." (*Houshan congtan* 6.10b.) A further observation: bumping into a lampstand could start a fire. Wang may have been concerned with safety.

servants forgot to replenish the seeds in time he would absently gnaw at his own fingers until they bled.[18] Lu Dian (Wang's student, Lu You's grandfather) nostalgically recalled animated discussions with Wang about the structure of characters, and the daytrips Wang took on his donkey: one servant carrying the *Zi shuo* in front, and another following with a wooden chamber-pot.[19]

But Wang did not intend to sink into a bookish oblivion. He entered the natural world also, as much as he could, and with the same self-effacing passion with which he embraced learning. When books grew too dusty, he said, one should "toss them aside;" a scholar who did not at least stroll through his garden each day would never understand much worth knowing. (P 13.) Through writing, thinking and action, Wang had searched all his life for a natural order that would embrace perfect human relationships, include birds and animals, and be organically connected with the Chinese way of writing. This search now found its expression in his wanders through the countryside, or among the trees behind his house: "I go where my thoughts take me, into brambles that hands push open of their own accord." (P 100.) By being a cog in Nature's machine, he could realize both Confucian and Buddhist reality: only by having "No Mind" could he enter the natural mind. Few visitors ever forgot the sight of the famous man on his

[18] *Mengzhai bitan* B.11a. Also Lin Jingwen, p. 29; Williamson II/302, quoting from Wu Chongyao's 1853 colophon to Wang's *Zhouguan xinyi*.

[19] Lu Dian, *Taoshan ji* 陶山集 (*CSJC* edition) 11/121. See also Winston W. Lo, "Philology, An Aspect of Sung Rationalism," in *Chinese Culture* 17.4 (1976) p. 8 note 18.

donkey. Here is Wang Gong's recollection:[20]

> ...I once paid him a call. As I was leaving, I saw him go out, mounted upon (the donkey), with a servant on foot holding the reins. I asked Wang's majordomo, "Where is the Prime Minister going?"
>
> He replied, "If the servant with the reins walks in front, the servant leads; if he is behind the donkey, the donkey leads. If the Prime Minister cares to stop, they may stop; sometimes they sit under pine trees or boulders, or at country houses--farmers' and well-diggers' homes--or at a temple. He always takes books, and may recite them while riding or resting. They also take a bag of about a dozen flatcakes. After the Prime Minister has eaten his fill of those, he gives the rest to the servant, and what the servant has left get fed to the donkey. Sometimes people in the fields will bring food and drink as gifts: the Prime Minister eats these as well. Generally he never starts with a particular place in mind; he may even turn home after a step or two. He comes quite close to having 'No Mind' at all."

Wang Zhi 王銍 (fl. 1126) records the following:[21]

> ...In the late Yuanfeng period, Wang Anshi stayed in the country at Mt. Jiang, using a donkey to get around. One day, at the hottest time of the year, Judicial Intendant Li Maozhi 李茂直 (later a Yuanyu partisan) went to visit him, and met him on the way. Wang alighted from his humble mount to greet Li, and sat with him by the road. Wang stayed as he was, while Li sat on a camp stool. They talked for a long time, during which the sun crept westward. Li ordered a parasol opened, but the sun shone past it directly onto Wang. Li ordered his retainers to shift the parasol so it would shade the Prime Minister. "Don't bother," said Wang: "Suppose I spend my next life as an ox--I'll need to

[20] *Qingxu zazhu* 3.3b. (Wang Gong 王鞏, *zi* Dingguo 定國, fl. 1073.) Also Shen, pp. 101-102.

[21] *Mo ji* B/24; Shen, p. 102.

be plowing fields under this same sun." 不須. 若使後世做牛, 須著與他日裏耕田.

Another visitor (whom Wang may not have cared for), after eating lunch with Wang, arranged to ride up Mt. Zhong together. Wang insisted on bringing up the rear. The sun was blinding; Wang plodded along on his donkey without a fan, pretended to turn back for home, then simply dropped from sight for the rest of the day.[22]

Haphazard though his outings may have seemed, Wang was no ordinary rambler: if he passed through a town and wrote a poem, the citizens were likely to carve it on stone.[23] His inner drive would carry him to the peak of a hill that his horse and boy had no energy to climb. (P 101.) And the verses he wrote were tighter, quieter and subtler than those of his youth. One senses that—despite ill health—he had much energy left over from his years in office. This energy surfaced sometimes in anxious attacks (P 90), sometimes in his massive, furious-paced scholarly projects, and sometimes in a lost and undirected way, in outings and aimless recreation. No activity for him could

[22]The visitor was Zhang Shunmin 張舜民 (*zi* Fuxiu 浮休; Song, served under Shenzong). Quoted by Li Bi in notes to "My Horse has Died" 馬死, 42.10b/1026. (I have not found the original source. Li Bi attributes it to a *Nanqian lu* 南遷錄. This, however, was not Zhang Shumin's work, but was written by a Zhang Shiyan 張師顏 of the Jin dynasty, and does not mention Wang Anshi. I have not found the story in the only work by Zhang Shunmin available to me: *Huaman lu* 畫墁錄, *Baihai congshu* edition.)

[23]It happened with "Passing Again Through the Market at Yupogang" 重過余婆圌市, Li Bi 43.13b/1058.

quite take the place of work. Huang Chang suggests Wang may have been lonely in retirement, at his home with no wall, stripped of power, cut off from the capital. (Huang Chang, p. 37.)

At first he would not ride a sedan chair (he reportedly said that even the worst of the ancient kings did not use men for beasts' work); but he did take one along as he grew older, especially after his illness in 1084.[24] Aside from poetry, no pastime or hobby interested him. He was a bad chess (*go*) player, because his mind would wander from the chess board into reality, and into philosophical speculation. Once the playing pieces were back in the drawer, he wrote, and you weighed the black against the white, were they not the same? Who was the winner now?[25] Wang's interest (but not in the game) was aroused only when he played with a Daoist, who observed: "That piece is afraid to make the first move; this piece likewise. And precisely by being afraid to move first, there is no competition. That is how you enter the state of non-dying and non-living."[26]

In 1078.1, Shenzong changed the era name to Yuanfeng 元豐,

[24]Men for beasts: reportedly related by the monk Huihong 惠洪 in his *Lengzhai yehua* 冷齋夜話. Quoted by Li Bi after "My Horse has Died," 馬死 42.10b/1026.

Poems that mention riding a sedan chair: P 105; "Fayun Temple" 法雲寺 (Li Bi 2.3b/188--he forded a river in the chair); "Guangzhai Temple" 光宅寺 (2.5b/192); "Passing Again through the Market at Yupogang" (43.13b/1058).

[25]"Chess" 棊, Li Bi 41.2a/983.

[26]Told by Shi Huihong, *Lengzhai yehua* (*CSJC* edition) 3/14-15. See Li Bi's notes to "Chess," 41.2a/983. Wang tried to coax Ye Tao out of a strong chess habit, noting that the game could become an addiction. (*Pingzhou ketan* 2/28.)

named Wang Duke of Shu 舒國公 , Grand Secretary and Left Executive of the Department of Ministries 尚書左僕射 .[27] In autumn of that year, as Wang was writing the first in his series of bucolic panegyrics to the bumper crops of the Yuanfeng era (New Policies firmly in place), his friend Lü Jiawen was transferred to Runzhou nearby.[28] The next year his old associate Chen Shengzhi died, and the later-infamous Cai Que 蔡確 (1036--1093), who had not held high office under Wang, rose to Second Privy Councillor. Late that year, with chief censor Li Ding (the "unfilial") keeping the trial record, Wang's semi-opponent Su Shi was banished to Huangzhou, narrowly escaping a death sentence for undermining the reforms. Also punished were Su Che, Zhang Fangping, Sima Guang and Huang Tingjian.[29] (Wang Anli was among those who spoke up for Su Shi.) Even without the death penalty--a virtually unheard-of sentence for Song officials--a four-year exile to Huangzhou was a harsh punishment.

Also in 1079, Wang Anshi's student Wang Junzhi 王汾之 , and his nephew-in-law Gong Yuan 龔原 were impeached for what seem to have been minor breaches of ethics.[30] Next year (1080.9) Wang Anshang would

[27] Shu was Shuzhou, not far up the river, where Wang had served from 1051 to 1053. His three quatrains upon receiving the honor show a charming fondness for his memories of the place, but reveal little else about him. (Li Bi 42.6a/1017. #2 is translated under P 71.)

[28] See the first of "Five Ballads of Yuanfeng" 歌元豐五首 (seven-character quatrains), Li Bi 41.1a/981.

[29] *Xu tongjian* 74/1867-69, date 1079.12; Hatch in Franke, 932-3.

[30] Date 1079.11.6. *Changbian* 341.1ab; Shen p. 96, notes to "Sending Off Wang Junzhi" 送王汾曾 (Li Bi 40.11a/973). Wang Junzhi was the son of Wang Anshi's good friend Wang Jie 王介 .

be suspended from his post as Judicial Intendant of Jiangdong, for false reporting of a civil suit.[31] "Anshang's mistake lay in not tolerating minor irritations. Besides, he had never coordinated his plans with others; that was why it happened. But there is nothing we can do now, except to smart with the pain of it 徒能為之憂煎耳," Wang wrote to a friend.[32] Late in 1079, Wang's youngest brother-in-law Shen Jizhang was dismissed from his post at the National Academy for accepting a bribe from one or more students, perhaps candidates in the *jinshi* examination which was then under Shen's charge. Shen moved back home to Zhenzhou, across the river from Jiangning, and often saw Wang.[33]

The fact that such impeachments and banishments occurred indicates Wang's increasing irrelevance to court affairs: many of the victims were reformists, and some of the conservative victims were friends of Wang's. Among the perpetrators of these purges were several pro-reform partisans of whom Wang had been less than fond while in office. Meanwhile, in the fall of 1079 Wang wrote his second paean to the Yuanfeng era, in which any anxiety he may have felt was not revealed. (Li Bi 41.1a/981.)

In 1080, Wang was suffering from dizzy spells and blackouts

[31]Also punished was Sun Gui孫珪. Date 1080.9.7; *Changbian* 308.5a; Wang Jinguang, p. 76.

[32]Second letter to Geng Xian, *Linchuan*. Appendix, p. 1079. Wang Jinguang dates this to late 1080 (p. 76).

[33]*Changbian* 300.12b-13a, date 1079.10.13. Shen was convicted of accepting pottery and a bamboo mat.

that he thought might finish him if they persisted.[34] His sister died at her elder son's official post at Yingzhou 潁州, north of the Huai River. Earlier, Wang had written to her saying, "No one soothes tension and sickness for me except verses..." He might have added "religion:" verse and piety were his sister's greatest solaces as well.[35] During this time there was a minor crisis in Wang Anshi's household, as it seems his second son Pang did not get along with his wife. Wang Anshi had them divorce, but rather than simply sending the daughter-in-law home, he found her another husband--probably a thoughtful act. He also tried to find a new wife for Wang Pang, but we do not know when or if he succeeded.[36]

Wu Chong died in 1080.4; Wang Anguo was buried the same month. The understated epitaph that Anshi wrote, noting the highlights of Anguo's character--his natural literary gifts, his filiality--was later branded an example of Anshi's callous perversity 狠戾, because the piece was so short and clipped, and never once mentioned the word

[34] First letter to Geng Xian, *Linchuan*, Appendix, p. 1079. Wang Jinguang dates this to 1080, see pp. 74-75.

[35] P 33. Date and place of death: tomb inscription, *Linchuan* 99/1021.

[36] See note 32 above. The second letter to Geng Xian indicates that Wang may have hoped Geng could introduce a second wife for Wang Pang. The whole affair seems straightforward, but people have been misled by contemporary anecdotes that claim the divorce happened to Wang Fang (the anti-reformers' favorite target), and that there was a child involved. Wang Fang did not have a son of his own, says the *Dongdu shilüe* 79.6b. Instead, a son was adopted for him. But Wei Tai claims that Wang Fang had a baby son whom he hated, and that Fang also suspected his wife because his son did not look like him. *Dongxuan bilu* 7.11ab. Wang Jinguang unravels the rumors, pp. 71-86.

"brother." That comment can probably be disregarded now, as can the assumptions on which it was based--that Wang was a cruel man, and that there had been bitterness between him and his brother over the New Policies.[37]

The pro-reform partisan (and opportunist radical?) Zhang Chun was Second Privy Councillor, while the Military Affairs Commission continued to be headed by conservatives (Feng Jing, Sun Gu 孫固, Lü Gongzhu).

In late fall of 1080, Wang submitted corrections to the *Interpretations of Three Classics*, and was honored as Duke of Jing 荊國公, even more illustrious than the title Duke of Shu, which he had held for almost three years. Soon after, there came a series of letters from Lü Huiqing, asking Wang for a reconciliation. One of them survives:[38]

> ...When two people join forces and follow each other, one suspects this may yet be a divergence from Heaven's orders. And when they split apart, though there may be trouble, it does not follow that the situation was man-made. That being so, when one uses human feeling to judge appearances, one suspects it should be hard for those who have split to reunite; but when one prognosticates through the *Dao*, how can one know that what was caused by Heaven might be more (ideal) than (that which came about through) human action?

[37] Comments by Wang Shizhen 王士禛 (1634--1711), in his *Xiangzu biji* 香祖筆記 (Shanghai Guji, 1982) 12/235. Quoted and refuted in Cai 21/291-92.

[38] In *Dongxuan bilu* 14.1a-2a. Lü's salutation to Wang as "Premier Specially Advanced" 特進相公 indicates that Lü wrote after 1080.9, when Wang received the Dukedom of Jing.

> I was unworthily favored with an elbow-to-elbow acquaintanceship, which I stupidly thought was a team of shared minds. Heedless of all considerations, I strode too broadly; my failure to keep the discipline was as perilous as a mountain path. I did not lack for weeping at the sight of (a brother) with drawn bow; (39) apologies for stepping on toes never ended. And reckless words all hit their mark, while thick auras appeared everywhere. That I did not know how it would end, should show that I did not suspect enemies existed...
>
> Yet if one talks of the past, then it is worthless to harm a lifetime's joy with a momentary transgression; and if one talks of today, then (all these things), after eight years, should have altered with the evolutions of fate. After inwardly contemplating what was cold and indifferent, I find yet no petty causes for rancor; and looking up to measure the lofty and bright, what old evils are there to remember?
>
> With all respect, it is only you, Prime Minister in the Guanwen Pavilion by Special Advancement, who knows the subtleties of virtue, and has penetrated the nature of fate. Closeness and estrangement are blurred by that which we hold in common; hatred and love melt together in (a psyche) of Non-existence...

Two replies by Wang are preserved, as follows:[40]

> Anshi writes:
>
> You and I "share the same mind." That we ended with different ideas was all on account of state affairs; how could there be any other factor? Together in the maelstrom

[39] Alludes to Mencius. *Mengzi yinde* 47/6B/3. Lü means, "I earnestly wished to dissuade you from harming others."

[40] *Linchuan* 73/774. Also in the Southern Song edition of Wang's works from Longshu 龍舒: *Wang Wengong wenji* 王文公文集 (Shanghai Renmin, 1974) 6/70. Second reply: *Linchuan*, Appendix, 1080; Longshu 6/70.

of the Court, it was you alone who helped me: what vexation would I feel toward you?

Some people may have spoken ill of you--but I took no part in that talk, thus what grudge could you hold toward me? "To serve at any opportune time" is a theory I know nothing about: if you study the facts and speak to the situation, it should be clear that this is so. Think it through again, open up your understanding--the truth should rise effortlessly into view. As far as I was concerned, since in the past I had no "petty causes" to suspect you, when it comes to you today, what "old evils" could there be about me that are worth "remembering" now?

Yet you, with your strength and fire, are doing your deeds for a sage regime, while I--withered, feeble and sick--am simply waiting in the hills for my last day. Participation and retreat are two different paths; thus rather than "licking moisture on each other," we would be better "forgetting each other (in the stream)." (41)

I believe you shall be called to service any day. Do eat well, and take care of yourself in this season.

(The following appears only in the Longshu edition:)

I have earnestly received your repeated communications, which are more than adequate in propriety; I hardly dare hope for so much from an old friend. Nor would I dare to consider (this poor letter as a fitting) response; please peruse it with forgiveness. I understand that you have been awarded an auspicious assignment, for which I admire and envy you; and that you have written some essays, which I regret I have not yet seen. It is solely through (Imperial) kindness that I have been able to find a peaceful retirement; yet in abandoning my days to a wasteland of sickness and fatigue, I have obtained nothing. I presume your worthy brothers are all well.

[41]Alludes to *Zhuangzi*: Fish are better off ignoring each other in the water than trying to keep each other moist on land. I.e., "Let us go our separate ways, in which the water that comes between us also unites and nourishes us--rather than trying to maintain a strained friendship in adversity." (See *Zhuangzi yinde* 16/VI/23, 18/VI/73, 39/XIV/60. Trans. A.C. Graham, p. 90.)

The second letter from Wang, written 1081(?):

> I earnestly receive your wise instruction, with unconquerable regret and remorse.
>
> I hear that you have a new appointment to Taiyuan: have you set upon your way yet? I suppose you will be packing your bags forthwith and going westward. Your writings about the view of the Dharma-realm I have kept to read and enjoy, and to search for the savor of their meaning. To see ourselves and the world around us as a bubble, a phantasm--how sad it is if we do not rinse our minds clean in that truth, but sink instead into error!
>
> You and I may never meet again. All we have left is to slice and shave away from us the ways of this world, and walk the Path in common. In this way, though far apart, we may often seem to be "elbow to elbow." Though withered, moss-backed, blind, exhausted, do I yet dare to shrink from this (path)?
>
> I still hope we might meet and talk before we die, to delve into our recollections. But before that happens, do eat well and take care of yourself in this season. I presume your younger brothers are living peacefully, and surely they will go west with you. Your generous gift from the sea puts me to shame; I have not forgotten it. There is nothing appealing available in this village, only two baskets of grain which I send posthaste.
>
> Although I have suffered no great illness this year, my age is increasing, and deterioration approaches the nadir. Any activity that resembles exertion makes me collapse. The *Treatise on Words* (*Zi shuo*) that I have been writing is now roughly finished. It pains me that I could not yet forward it to you. As I see it, the ancients put many marvellous doctrines into these (written characters) in parable form; one regrets that Xu Shen transmitted only a small amount. (42) And there are falsehoods and errors. All of which makes it hard for my ponderings to reach a conclusion.

[42] Xu Shen 許愼(58--147), editor of the Han-dynasty dictionary *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字.

The three letters quoted above have been used to clear Lü Huiqing's name,[43] yet as far as Lü's character is concerned, they raise as many questions as they answer. What prompted Lü suddenly to write to Wang? If one accepts the standard premise that Lü had been a power-grabber, had he become remorseful now? Had Buddhism shown him how silly it was to battle over politics? On that same premise, one would suppose that Wang was now in a position to forgive Lü--Wang being retired, likewise in a Buddhist frame of mind, and reasonably secure that the reforms were working. Perhaps Wang had always forgiven Lü; perhaps he had always trusted Lü in the first place (an example of Wang's reported inability to recognize bad men?).

Yet there is a warmth in Wang's letters that suggests more than the above. Wang testily refutes Lü's intimation that Wang might have perpetrated "old wrongs" on him. He also makes it plain that, for a time at least, Lü had been the only man on Wang's side. Unless this is mere politeness or an indirect rebuke, we should assume Wang was telling the truth. A new picture then emerges, and I submit it as a hypothesis: These were two strong-willed men who disdained to play political games, and had disagreed about policy, sometimes vehemently--but aside from policy there was nothing they deemed important enough to argue over. They had both believed that whether or not they were friends was irrelevant: what mattered was that they shared the same goals for society. But some of their associates did play political

[43]Zhou Baozhu, pp. 345-6.

games. Wang had felt he could afford to overlook those maneuverings (he disliked being involved in such activities, and they were not directed at him or his policies anyway); but when Lü felt himself threatened and Wang not coming to rescue him, Lü had felt surprised, hurt and defeated. Lü may have honestly felt (or simply rationalized) that Wang wanted him as his successor, and that Lü had a responsibility to recommend himself to the Emperor whenever Wang's uncertain health became an issue. During Wang's first retirement (the time when Lü is said to have been maneuvering to take Wang's place and was known as the "Deva who Guards the Law"), Lü zealously enforced the New Policies, banishing people who seemed to impede his enforcement. He explained later, "After Anshi left, it was *his* reforms that had been established; I protected those reforms simply because I feared Wang would not make it back to court."[44] It had shocked Lü to find that even after he had protected the reforms, he personally was expendable. His fourteen petitions to the court did not get him reinstated, or his opponents punished (Zhou Baozhu, p. 345). If there had indeed been personal ambitions mixed with his dedication to the cause (one does sense in his phrases an awkward or unsuppressable desire to manipulate), it could easily have taken eight years or more for his inner conflicts to cool to the point where he could write as he did to Wang. Even at that, Lü's letter appears not so much as a pure apology as a demand for forgiveness.

[44] Notes to *Changbian* 265.6, date 1075.6.18. See also Zhou Baozhu, p. 342.

Genuine though Wang's forgiveness may have been, it is still plausible that Wang indeed may have scribbled "That Fujianese!" 福建子 at some exasperated moment in his study on Mt. Zhong; yet one need not go so far as to say that Wang felt Lü was evil, or that Lü had "trapped" and "hoodwinked" Wang.[45]

Also in 1080 occurred the death of the Chan master Zanyuan 贊元, to whom Wang had turned for advice since before the reforms.[46] Late that year, Wang and his brother-in-law visited the Western Cloister 西庵 where Zanyuan had lived: "We want to talk with a Follower of the Path / So mount our saddles, and try to make our search." (But was Zanyuan there?) For Wang, "With friends and kin my meetings are infrequent / From Time's passage I feel many wounds;" and "Our interest at its peak, yet hard concluded; / What shall we do about this pressing dusk?" (P 97-98.)

Probably in 1082, Wang submitted the *Zi shuo*, the project that "exhausted his life's (remaining) energy."[47] He had done much of his

[45]The story about scribbling "That Fujianese!" referring to Lü Huiqing: *Shao qian lu* 12/85. Refuted by Zhou Baozhu, p. 346. The phrase might have referred to *several* former associates, in which case it would translate as "Those Fujianese!"

[46]Wang's "Sacrificial Ode to Master Yuan of North Mountain" 祭北山元長老文 is dated 1080.9.4. (*Linchuan* 86/897.)

[47]Wang's opinion, reported by Huang Tingjian, *Yuzhang ji* 27.9b, translated below.

Date of completion: The only primary source that gives a completion date is Zhan Dahe's chronology, known to be inaccurate in places. Zhan gives 1082 for the *Zi shuo*'s completion, and also for promotion to Duke of Jing (Li Bi, p. 24). The latter promotion, however, actually had come in 1080.9 (*Xu tongjian* 75/1885). Cai places completion of the *Zi shuo* in 1080, with no supporting evidence (21/298-300). He probably reasoned that the two events did happen in

research and writing at the Dinglin Cloister on Mt. Zhong, where friends, admirers and staff provided assistance.[48] With the dictionary done, etymology gave way entirely to religion and verse: "Chant well the *Śūraṅgama*...Understand all surface causes are as dreams," he wrote to his homesick elder daughter in the capital; later he sent her his imitations of the Tang-dynasty Chan poet Han Shan ("Cold Mountain").[49] He himself was not only reciting that sutra but annotating it.[50]

Meanwhile, Wang Anli was a Hanlin Academician and Right Executive Assistant 尚書右丞 in the capital. Surely occasional political news came from him, as from Wei Tai and other visitors. But for Wang Anshi, the career he had left six years earlier appeared increasingly

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the same year and that Zhan had simply named the wrong year. Among later biographers: tables by Ke Changyi, Williamson and Lin Jingwen take 1082; Higashi supports 1080. Liang Qichao lists submission of the work in 1082, but lists the relevant documents under 1080. So far there is no proof for either date. I hypothesize that the *Zi shuo* was both completed and submitted in 1082, because Wang called it "largely complete" in his second letter to Lü Huiqing, written in 1081 or 1082 when Lü was being appointed to Taiyuan. (Letter quoted above, p. 181. On Lü's appointment to Taiyuan: Zhou Baozhu, p. 346.)

[48] Dinglin: see P 89, datable to 1083. Wang may also have contributed to rebuilding the temple's access road in 1079; see "Upon the Monks' Completion of Repairs to the Road to Dinglin, 1079" 元豐二年僧修定林路成, Li Bi 43.2b/1036.

[49] See P 44-46. "Cold Mountain" poems: Wang wrote twenty. The fourth is translated as P 50.

[50] "Explanations of the Commentaries and Sub-Commentaries to the *Śūraṅgama-sūtra* 楞嚴經注疏解 (sometimes called the "Dinglin Annotations"). These annotations are now lost, but it is said that Wang was perfunctory where others had been thorough, and thorough where others had been perfunctory. In other words, it seems to have been a scholarly work, not an act of piety alone. (Yu Dacheng, p. 44.)

dreamlike, while in addition he learned to tell himself "Gains and losses are autumn fluff--why sigh for them more than once?" (P 47.) Like the traveller in Handan who had dreamed an entire career--premierships, exile, attempted suicide--all in a few minutes, Wang had perhaps awoken to the vanity of ambition, and the irrelevance of much of what seems real.[51] The fact that Wang's career happened to have been real was no more pertinent to this realization than if it actually had been a dream. "Lucky we are, to share in a time of sages!" he told a friend--but might not this Yuanfeng era turn out to have been a dream as well? How literally did he intend his statement to be taken? (P 78, line 73.) On seeing some yellowed dishes by a stream, and learning they were left there by a friend's children who had been eating dates and chestnuts, Wang said to his follower Yu Xiulao: "A gang of children play and then quit--that is how a scholar should take on great duties and pass through wealth and honor." (*Lengzhai yehua* 10/48.)

Such was the ideal response to retirement. However, Wang's actual memories of his career ranged from "dream" to nightmare to overwhelming reality; his relief at having finished his task was mixed with regret. His writings give a varied record of what was surely more than mere stock reactions to a life of ease. Six years after leaving the capital, he could still fret at being cut off: he stood "Facing back at the Nation's gate, scratching my shortened hair / The palaces of the Nine Heavens, deep in five-colored clouds" 回望國門

[51] See above, p. 150, note 96.

搔短鬢，九天宮闕五雲深.[52]

While in office, he had sometimes longed to retire. But once he reached home, "where by the Ruler's Grace, once more among men I grow old," his emotions were mixed: "I hurt inside, hesitate on the road atop the knoll," thinking that as early as tomorrow he might be gone, and only a spring wind would wander there. (P 92.) Despite efforts to broaden his view and become more Buddhist, Wang's sleep was sometimes "invaded" by "the rights and wrongs of bygone Kings." (P 91.) Centuries earlier Tao Qian had retired, too, among men, where cart and horse made no clamor (because few people visited, and because the poet felt no "clamor" even when he heard them); but for Wang at first "each 'carriage and horse' I meet finds me guessing, panicky."[53] What panicked him? Was it the thought that a carriage might bring bad news about the reform? Or an Imperial staffer summoning him back?

He drafted at least one petition to the throne asking to serve again despite age and ill health--never sent, it was found among his papers.[54] And it is said that late in the Yuanfeng era the Emperor sent him two hundred taels of gold, having heard that he needed money. Wang knelt to receive it, told the envoy "I am living in leisure and

[52]"Six Years" 六年 , Li Bi 44.8b/1080; Deng Guangming 1979, p. 220.

[53]P 90. Alludes to Tao Qian 陶潛(365--427), "Drinking Wine" 飲酒 #4. See *Jingjie xiansheng ji* 靖節先生集 (Hong Kong: Zhonghua, 1973) 3/27.

[54]"Petition For an Official Appointment" 乞致士表 , *Linchuan* 60/649.

have done nothing useful." Immediately he gave the whole sum to local temples, with prayers for the dynasty's well-being.[55]

Occasionally he felt pangs of the old remorse that he was contributing nothing--"just getting through life: I am ashamed, but that describes me." But being older and feebler made the shame more bearable than it had been in his thirties. His sun was falling; what saddened him was that he *could not* aid his people, not that he *did not*. (P 94.) And such moods passed quickly. There is a poem, inconceivable for a younger Wang Anshi, in which he watches farmers desperately pumping water into the fields; too little rain has fallen, their songs are unbearable to hear--but then, "Lucky me! My easy post, no business to perform...Right on time, the lotuses raise emerald canopies...a thousand gracile beauties..." Too parched to feed the crops, the river can still float his skiff. (P 95.) Surely the young Wang would have seen this older Wang as callous, or at least brutally frank about reality. Was the Boddhisattva now on vacation? Or was Wang seeing the earth from a higher (Daoist or Buddhist) plane--anxious farmers over here, carefree retired statesman over there--all equal? Or, finally, was Wang simply confident of the outcome, both for the farmers and himself?

[55]Ye Mengde, *Shilin yanyu* 10/92. Uncomplimentary interpretation: *Shao hou lu* 24/158. Another version by Zhao Lingzhi 趙令時 (1051--1107) elaborates: Wang thought the money was a summons to return to the premiership. But when he learned it was only a routine bestowal, he was miffed and gave it to the temples. (*Houjing lu* 侯鯖錄, *CSJC* edition, 3/27; Shen, p. 111.) Of course it is hard to say whether Wang was "miffed." He could also have felt relieved, grateful, embarassed, put-upon or even impassive.

The Yuanfeng years had ideal weather: rains were sometimes late, but they came. Even though he had always denied the myth that weather responds to good government, one is tempted to think Wang had come to believe the Yuanfeng era was fated to get the bumper harvests its virtue deserved. His long "Ballads of Yuanfeng," then, should be read as sincere expressions of satisfaction at how things were going--not simply propaganda, and not attempts to convince a wavering Emperor to keep the reforms. (P 17-18.) What Wang saw around him, in short, gave him more cause for pride than shame. Although at first he may have felt lost among the "field and orchard paths," and pondered his failure to completely match his talent to the times, it seems that as the era progressed he grew more confident in the health of what he had established politically, and could let it run on its own. Most of his finest verse from retirement mentions no social issues, remorse, regrets or doubts. "For I have learned now to follow the crowd, and find heroic bragging tiresome." (P 47.) Melancholy cicadas sounded like "fine cries" to his ears, just as surely as did birdsong. (P 107, 106.)

His aimless rambles were not necessarily a symptom of frustration at being retired, nor did they signify that he had abandoned discipline or hope: these wanders seem to have started with his retirement, and continued through the decade at a steady rate. He learned to be serene, and take Nature as his tour guide:

"I carefully count the falling blossoms,
therefore long I sit;
Slowly seeking fragrant herbs delays my journey home."

(P 81.) He did have long bouts of sorrow as well, but we should be safe in assuming it was normal depression, not horrified remorse at the wrongs he had perpetrated on an innocent nation, as some traditions have it. He missed his son--

"...in one day departs a phoenix bird--
A ridgebeam snapped, for a thousand autumns to come..."

(P 60.) With those lines before us, we can probably disregard the tale that Wang awoke one night with ghoulish visions of his son manacled in Hell for his crimes.[56]

What regrets he did feel probably involved a desire to have done some things differently, or a better awareness of why his predecessors had acted as they had. Age had increased his tolerance. The following story, while perhaps not true, is at least plausible (*Mo ji* B/22):

> (In 1042), Wang Anshi achieved fourth rank in the *jinshi* examinations... At that time, Yan Shu 晏殊 (991--1055) was Commissioner of Military Affairs. The Emperor ordered the

[56] Those dreams were supposedly what prompted Wang to convert his home to a temple in atonement: *Shao qian lu* 11/82.

ten highest examinees to pay a visit of thanks. Yan Shu ordered the others to leave, until only Wang Anshi remained. Yan kept telling him, "You are from my home district; I have long heard fellow-countrymen tell of your moral excellence. Moreover, since I am an executive in the government, it is my good fortune to share in the honor of having a fellow-countryman perform so well in the examinations." Then he asked, "On the next rest day may I invite you to dinner?" Wang agreed.

After (Wang) had left, (Yan) sent an Imperial officer to invite Wang to the dinner. Yan was most solicitous (at the banquet), and went to greater lengths in his treatment of Wang than he had before.

Once they had eaten, Yan detained Wang again, telling him, "Some day, my countryman, your fame and position will be as great as that which I hold--greater, I dare say." He continued to sigh Wang's praises in dozens of ways; then he said, "Yet there are two things I would submit for you to hear, though I do not know if I dare utter them..." whereupon he ceased just at the point of speaking, pondering how to put into words what he wanted to say. (Finally) he made this vague pronouncement: "If you make accomodations, you shall likewise be accomodated" 能容於物,物亦容焉.

Wang nodded in slight agreement, and the company dispersed. Back at his lodging-house, Wang sighed: "How vulgar, for an official as great as Master Yan to give advice like that!" It bothered Wang considerably.

(Many years) later, when Wang had resigned the premiership and his brother Anli was Governor of Jiangning (1084.7), Wang mentioned this story, but added the following: "I was thoroughly put off when Yan said that. But when I myself served in the government, one after another of my life-long friends became enemies with me, and there was no guarantee that (friendships) could last out the times. As I think about it now, I wonder how Yan Shu knew that this would happen? And I am curious where those two phrases originated--"If you make accomodations, you shall likewise be accomodated." Did they come from elsewhere, or did Master Yan coin them?"

In mid-1083, Wang's old friend Chen Yi 陳繹, who had been governor of Jiangning for over a year, was stripped of his titles and

demoted to govern Jianchang Military Prefecture in Jiangxi.[57] That fall, a visitor named Deng Chou 鄧鑄 came from Linchuan. Wang mentions an "acrid" sorrow upon seeing Deng off again: it had been forty years since Wang had last walked the road at Black Horse Dyke (Litang, at Fuzhou) where Deng lived, and presumably since he had seen Deng as well. Actually, Wang may have passed through Linchuan itself fifteen years earlier. But it had indeed been forty years since he had lived there, and he must have known he would never see the place again. (P 48.)

The young painter and calligrapher Mi Fu 米芾 (or Mi Fei, 1051--1107?) came to know Wang this year, and wrote the characters for a signboard to put over Wang's study at the Dinglin Cloister: "Zhao Wen's Study" 昭文齋 . The legendary zither player Zhao Wen (according to Zhuangzi) was perfect and all-embracing when he *did not play*: only in silence could all modes of sound have equal value. Why did Mi Fu choose this name for Wang's study? "It must be, when I *do not* play my zither / That men still find a Partial and a Whole," wrote Wang. (P 89.)

Retirement was one form of "not playing the zither;" but Wang experienced that image in another meaning as well: "breaking the strings" --abandoning efforts to express himself, because those who

[57] He was accused of having once taken liberties with government property: specifically, substituting a pinewood statue of the Boddhisattva for a state-owned one, also trading off (state-owned?) herbal medicine for sheep, losing money in the process. His governorship at Jiangning lasted from 1082.3.10 to 1083.6.20. Wang Yirou 王益柔 replaced him, until 1084.9.3. *Jingding Jiankang zhi* 13.26b, Shen p. 93.

could have understood him had died. Zeng Gong's death in 1083 may not have struck Wang the most severely--Zeng seems not to have truly "understood" Wang for twenty years. But the loss of Zhang Gui was different. The only man to whom Wang would have wished to speak his feelings after his first resignation (P 39), Zhang had already died by then, and by the 1080's even his calligraphy at the Western Cloister had been plastered over. Once that happened, not only could Wang no longer speak to Zhang, but Zhang's words could not speak to Wang either. This was a painful lesson in how human affairs "dissolve like mist." (P 40.)

In late spring of 1084, Wang walked to a temple in town with Shen Jizhang, and wrote how past enlightenment (which had seemed like a dream at the time it occurred) now seemed to be a dream *from which he had already awakened*. (P 103.) Within a few days, Wang suffered a stroke and thought he might be dying:[58]

> In the spring of Yuanfeng 7 (1084), Wang became ill and did not speak for two days. After somewhat recovering consciousness, he wrote to Cai Bian (his second son-in-law), "I have suffered a sudden stroke; although my mind is clear, I have not been able to speak." He told Madame Wang, "Love between man and wife is no more than an accidental union. You need cherish no memories: just try to do good deeds." He clasped Ye Tao's hand (Wang Anguo's son-in-law), saying, "You are an intelligent man: you should read broadly from the Buddhist books,... and should not exert yourself on useless words of this world. All my life I have wasted my strength, vainly composing idle verbiage. I blame myself for this with deep remorse."

[58]From a lost "Sayings of Wang Anshi" 荊公語錄, quoted in *Sanchao mingchen yanxing lu* 6:2.18b-19a.

> Madame Wang tried to dissuade him, saying "You should not let yourself say such things!"
>
> "Nothing is constant in life or death," Wang replied; "I fear that when the time comes I may be unable to speak words; that is why I say these things today. This way, when it comes time I can simply go. What need is there for you to make suggestions?"...

Lying in bed at noon in early summer, still ill, he dreamed of the Yellow Emperor's fantasy land. That was the only place that was constant. Outside that fantasy, life held nothing that lasted--nothing beyond the obvious, bare objects which surround mortal beings. (P 104.)

But Shenzong sent a doctor, and Wang's health improved:

> After recovering, Wang reproached himself, saying "I may be familiar with all the principles of the universe, but my powers of concentration are still too shallow. As long as I am not yet dead I should use all my strength in cultivation and activity."... (See note 58.)

Grateful for his recovery, glad he could once more strive and sacrifice himself, Wang petitioned the throne to make the Banshan home into a Buddhist temple. Shenzong granted permission in 1084.6.20, and named it the Baoning Temple 報寧禪院 (*Baoning*, "Repayment for Tranquillity" or "Proclaiming Tranquillity").[59] The donation was in-

[59] Petition to convert to temple, *Linchuan* 43/461. Memorial thanking the Emperor, 60/648.
DATE: I follow the *Changbian* 346.11b, and *Xu tongjian* 77/1946. Su Shi visited the next month, and in a note to a poem writ-

tended to bless the Emperor with long life. The abbot was Wang's Chan master, Kewen of Baofeng (寶峯克文 , also called Zhenjing 真淨). Some time after the conversion, Wang moved out of the Banshan Temple and rented a small house inside the city wall.[60]

In 1084.7, while Wang still lived at Banshan, Su Shi passed through Jiangning. Finally pardoned after four years in exile, Su was slowly bringing his household from Huangzhou to an appointment at Ruzhou. He had picked up Su Che in Jiangxi, visited Mt. Lu, and now in Jiangning he sought treatment for an eye problem. Also, at the end of this month he lost a ten-month-old son.[61] Su visited with some of the major literati at Jiangning: Duan Feng, the governor Wang Yirou, the Chan master Baojue 寶覺 --all of whom were also friends of Wang. But of Wang's closest friends, we do not know if Su visited any except Ye Tao. What made the whole visit memorable for posterity (and, it seems, for Su himself) was the chance to talk at leisure with Wang

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ten then says "Wang Anshi's home had already been made into a temple" 荊公宅已為寺 . (Alternate reading: "Wang Anshi made a temple of his home" ... 以宅為寺.) See "Roaming Mt. Jiang with Wang Yirou" 同王勝之遊蔣山 , in Wang Wengao ann., *Su Shi shiji* 蘇軾詩集 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982) 24/1258, also note 16 on 24/1307.

Other dates have been advanced, though they make less sense: Shen quotes the *Changbian* as saying that Wang converted his home the next year, in 1085.6, after Shenzong had died and Zhezong had taken the throne. I have not found that passage in the edition of the *Changbian* presently available. (Shen, p. I66.)

[60]This house was near the North Gate, behind the Jiangning prefectural offices. (According to old residents of Jinling whom Li Bi interviewed, see Li Bi 4.1b/222.)

[61]"On the 27th of the 9th Month Last Year, a Son Named Dun was Born..." 去歲 九月二十七日 ... in *Su Shi shiji* 23/1239.

Anshi.[62] Tales blossomed about their meeting.[63] Zhu Bian summarizes posterity's view of how the encounter must have been:[64]

> ...Wang Anshi, in country garb, rode his donkey to the boat to call upon Su Shi. Su, hatless, came out to greet Wang, saying "Today I have the audacity to view you, Great Prime Minister, in country garb!"
>
> "How could the Rites be intended for people like us?" laughed Wang. (65)
>
> "And I know already," said Su, "that you have had no use for me in your cabinet!"
>
> Wang said nothing, but invited Su to tour Mt. Jiang.

Despite contrasting personalities and former political differences, there must have been an affinity between the two men. Although Wang had a stubborn temper, his thinking was far more flexible

[62]Evidence for Su's activities at Jiangning comes from the poems he wrote at the time in reply to poems presented to him, or to the rhymes of people mentioned: to Duan Feng, *Su Shi shiji* 24/1255; one to Wang Yirou written at Jiangning, two more sent from Yizhen, 24/1258-1262; one to the monk Baojue, 24/1258; four to Ye Tao, 23/1240, 1254-55. Also two to Wang Anguo's son Wang You 王旁 (24/1289), and four to Wang Anshi (24/1251, see under P 81).

[63]Shao Bowen gives a melodramatic account of how Su supposedly lectured Wang for allowing border troubles and factional purges to increase. Wang then blamed Lü Huiqing; Su in return rebuked Wang for not stopping Lü. This exchange is not reported anywhere else. (*Shao qian lu* 12/84.)

[64]*Quyu jiuwen* 5/37; Liu Naichang, p. 227.

[65]禮豈為我輩設哉. Direct quotation from the 3rd-century eccentric Ruan Ji (*Shishuo xinyu jiaojian* 23:7/551; trans. Mather, XXIII:7. Wang is humorously comparing Su to Ruan Ji, whose eccentricity inspired powerful men to protect and admire him in dangerous times.

and eclectic than is generally credited. Even in the heat of politics, their relationship had involved sophisticated debate over issues, not factional squaring-off. In Hangzhou, Su had enforced the new policies with gusto. Both men had a bent toward viewing issues, even state affairs, in relative or poetic terms rather than absolute; both had absorbed Chan ideas from some of the same teachers. Su's exile and Wang's retirement both involved a forced separation from officialdom. Those parties who had ousted Su were the same ones who would surely make life difficult for Wang if he were ever inclined to return. Both men were now wrestling with literature, religion, and indulgence in other activities they enjoyed, simultaneous with pangs of worthlessness at no longer serving the state. They admired each other's verse: Su was the long-sought visitor who could take up Wang's challenge to patch together a poem about an inkstone, using lines from other poems. (After Su came up with a first line, which Wang could not cap, Wang supposedly said, "Let's use our good weather to take a thorough look around Mt. Jiang--this (poem) is nothing to hurry about." *Quyu jiuwen* 5/37.) Other ties bound them: mutual friends, including the late Ouyang Xiu; Wang Anshi's early vigorous promotion of Su; Wang Anli's defense of Su after Su's impeachment.

What they might have discussed about history and politics is lost to us, but they did praise and imitate each other's verses. One anecdote, which may be based on fact, conveys the atmosphere of their meeting as follows:[66]

[66]"Wang and Su Praising Each Other," in *Songchao shishi lei-*

In the Yuanfeng period (1084), when Wang Anshi was in Jinling, Su Dongpo moved north from Huangzhou. Daily they consorted, talking of all the ancient writings and characters. When they let that rest, they would taste together the joys of the mystic trance (i.e. they practiced Chan meditation). Wang remarked to someone with a long sigh: "How many centuries must pass before another man like this will appear?"

After Su had crossed the Yangzi to Yizhen, he sent back poems to the rhymes of Wang Yirou's "Touring Mt. Jiang:" Wang Yirou was governor of Jinling at the time. Wang Anshi rushed to read them. When he came to these lines:

峰多巧障日 So many peaks cunningly block the sun,

江遠欲浮天 So far the river, trying to float on the sky--

Wang struck the table, exclaiming, "I have written until I'm an old man, but never came up with those lines!" (67)

Again at Mt. Jiang, (Wang) showed (Su) his latest pieces, (including the following lines):

積李兮縞夜 Crowded plumflowers, flaxen white they make the night,

棠桃兮炫晝 Tiered peach petals to sear the day! (68)

Su averred, "Qu Yuan and Song Yu have been gone for over a

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yuan, quoting *Xiqing shihua* 西清詩話. See also *Shilin guangji* 詩林廣記 by Cai Zhengsun 蔡正孫 (Song), (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982) B2/216-17.

[67]Su's first poem, "Touring Mt. Jiang with Wang Yirou" 同王勝之遊蔣山 may actually have been written in Jiangning during Su's visit. (*Su Shi shiji* 25/1258.) After seeing Su's poem, Wang Anshi then wrote one to the same rhyme. (Li Bi 25.11a/629.) Wang's own note confirms the gist of this story: "Su Dongpo has a poem 'Touring Mt. Jiang with Wang Yirou. I greatly enjoyed his lines...(quoted above)...so I wrote one to the same rhymes."

[68]From the first of Wang's pair of poems to his younger daughter, "Sent to My Daughter Mrs. Cai" 寄蔡氏女子 , Li Bi 2.7b/196.

> millenium, since which no one has recovered the phrasing of the 'Li Sao.' But now we see it again!"
>
> Said Wang, "Before hearing this praise of yours, I conceitedly held the same opinion--but would never dare tell that to ordinary men."
>
> Surely by this time the "ordinary men" had stopped making "tracks" to Wang's door!" (69)

Both men (the anecdote would have us believe) were well aware that theirs was a meeting of giants.

Su even considered buying land in the Jinling area, so that he could settle near Wang while there was still time. Conscious of the ten-year start Wang had over him in the secluded life, Su wished he could have come earlier, when Wang was in better health.[70] To talk of buying an estate near someone else's home, of course, was a common gesture in poems and letters. We do not know how serious Su's search may have been or how much it had to do with wanting to be near Wang, but it is a fact that he looked for land in Jinling and found nothing suitable. Their correspondence after the visit is cordial, respectful and written in prose as elegant as either of them ever mustered. To Teng Fu, Su Shi wrote "I have seen the Duke of Jing here often, and find it most delightful. We often recite verse or talk of things

[69] A reference to Wang's poem "Climbing the East Ridge with Lü Jiawen 與呂望之上東嶺, Li Bi 2.2ab/185, probably written late 1077. Lines 5-6: "The old hurly-burly (of favor-seekers, when Wang was powerful) was disgusting--but now these banal men's wheel ruts are swept away" 紛紛舊可厭，俗子今掃軌.

[70] See Su's quatrain under P 81.

Buddhist..."[71] To Wang himself, upon leaving Jinling Su wrote:[72]

> In the long time that I have tarried under your tutelage, nothing compares to this visit. Morning and night I have heard things I never heard before, to my incomparable comfort and good fortune. A night has passed since we parted--this wistfulness and admiration are impossible to put into words. I humbly long for your health and vigor, and do not dare call upon you once more. I sincerely hope that, in harmony with the times, and for the nation's sake, you will take care of yourself...

Another letter followed about a month later, from Yizhen across the river:[73]

> ...I originally wanted to buy land at Jinling, and almost succeeded: I could then accompany you with cane and sandals, and grow old beneath Mt. Zhong. But, that plan having come to naught, I now make it my daily business to seek land at Yizhen, where I have stayed for twenty days already. Whether this may succeed cannot be known, of course. Should success be my fortune, then--with a "shallow skiff" to go and come--visiting Your Honor should not be hard at all...

Su then spends the bulk of the letter recommending the writings, learning and character of his protégé Qin Guan 秦觀 (1049--1100) from neighboring Gaoyou. Qin is well-versed in history, Buddhism, medicine and law (in the broad tradition of Wang, Su and the greatest of the

[71] Letter to Teng Fu 與滕達道書, in Su Shi's collected works, *Dongpo qiji* 東坡七集 (*Guoxue jiben congshu*), "Xuji" 4.8ab.

[72] First letter to Wang 與荊公書. Quoted Cai 23/316.

[73] Second letter to Wang. *Dongpo qiji*, "Xuji" 11.21ab.

Northern Song literati): Su asks Wang to spread the word about this rare man.

Wang's reply conceals subtle levity in its polished, balanced phrases (*Linchuan* 73/776, Cai 23/317):

> ...Having earnestly received your numerous instructions, I understand that you are still roaming the region north of the Yangzi. A month has passed like no time, and with what unconquerable sorrow. When I obtained (from you) Mr. Qin's poems, my hands could not bear to put them down; and when Ye Tao came to read them he also felt them to be clean and fresh 清新, winsome and beautiful, similar to those of (the Six-Dynasty poets) Bao Zhao and Xie Lingyun. I wonder what Your Honor's opinion might be? As for the other writings, a present attack of dizziness prevents me from reading them closely, although I did give them a glance (lit. "have thrown a slice of meat in the cauldron"), and know their general import. Your admiration for Mr. Qin shows in your constant talk of him. I, too, upon receiving his verse, find my hands cannot bear to put the pages away. Yet I do hear that Mr. Qin has studied "important words and marvellous doctrines" --would he not laugh at our overzealous fondness (for his work)? I do not see you now--be careful in your voyaging...

Su stayed in the region another year, but he and Wang had met for the last time.

Shortly after Su's visit, Wang Anli was sent to govern Jiangning. He and Wang Gui had been impeached by Zhang Ruxian 張汝賢 for nepotism; Wang Anli brought a charge against Zhang's procedures; Zhang then broadened his accusation to include charges that Anli had associated with courtesans on public time. Although Shenzong did not accept or believe the impeachment charges, Wang Anli resigned anyway, renewing a petition to serve at Jiangning where he could be with his ailing

brother.[74]

Some time after Wang moved into town (a trip which he described as "pushing the raft upstream" --closer to a Headwaters or Source of tranquillity?), he rode a sedan chair back to the Banshan property. He frankly admitted (in verse) wanting to spend the night there, but knew it would make him feel sheepish to face the monks for whose work the place now provided a home. (P 105.) In 1084 he also presented the throne with his commentaries to the *Diamond* and *Vimalakirti* sutras.[75] His old friend the master Puji of Changgan died;[76] and perhaps this year or next, Madame Wang died.

No epitaph survives for Madame Wang: we do not know her full name. Only one or two anecdotes mention her and those are uncomplimentary (pp. 169-170). Other than her own fragment of a lyric (p. 20), the only surviving verse connected with her is Wang's understated, traditional "Song of Only One Day at Home," which is most likely a lament for a deceased wife: "Your voice, your face--I try to picture where you are / When we meet beneath the earth will that be you?"[77]

[74]Appointed 1084.7.17, took office 1084.9.3; replaced Wang Yirou. (*Jingding Jiankang zhi* 13.27a; *Xu tongjian* 78/1948-49.)

[75]See his "Memorial upon Presenting Two Sutras" 進二經劄子, *Linchuan*, Appendix, p. 1056. Reference to his illness dates the work to 1084.

[76]"The Monk Puji of Changgan Transmigrates While in Meditation" 長干釋普濟坐化, Li Bi 41.13a/1005.

[77]P 49. Date of Mme. Wang's death: probably 1084 or 1085. Reasons for this dating:

In P 46 "Sent to My Daughter Mrs. Wu" (datable to app. 1083), Wang says that he and her mother are healthy. Later, the daughter visited (according to Zhu Yu, see p. 170 above). And, if P 49 is

"Did Master Wang, too, feel the pain of mourning a deceased wife?" 公亦有悼亡之痛耶 queries Yan Fu.[78] One must conclude that he did. His wooden reputation softens upon a calm reading of that poem, and of others to his daughters, sister, brothers, and friends. Even his most intimate verse is reticent about what he felt most deeply, but he does give signposts which surely we may trust.

In the third month of 1085, when Wang was probably still weak from his illness, Emperor Shenzong died. The year that followed was stark for Wang. We have little record of his activities, possibly because he did little. Still, a simple review of events at court is enough to indicate what Wang must have felt about them.[79] In brief, Shenzong's son (Zhezong 哲宗, still a boy) took the throne, but decisions were made by his grandmother, the conservative Empress Dowager Xuanren 宣仁. By the fifth month of 1085, she had summoned Sima Guang to be prime minister, with the object of completely rescinding the reforms. Han Wei was transferred from the court to Chenzhou; Wang Gui died; other reformers or neutral officials were sent away. Wang twice declined the honorary title of Minister of Works 司空 under the new regime. (*Linchuan* 60/648-9.) The *baojia* system was abolished in the seventh month, followed that winter by the

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indeed a lament for a wife, then Mme. Wang died before her husband, i.e. before 1086.

[78]Yan Fu 嚴復 (1853--1921), commentary on Wang's poetry and biography: *Houguan Yan shi pingdian Wang Linchuan shiji* 侯官嚴氏評點王臨川詩集 (facsimile of handwritten comments on old edition of *Linchuan*; Taipei: Yee Wen, n.d.) 9.4a.

[79]Williamson I/380-88; T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 9.

Equitable Land Tax, State Trade System and Horse-breeding System. 1086 saw the demise of the Green Sprout loans and Hired Service System. Su Shi predicted that it would be unwise and perhaps impossible to rescind the latter measure, at least on short notice. (*Xu tongjian* 79/1983-84.) Wang Anshi's reaction was more dramatic:[80]

> When Wang heard that the Court was amending his reforms, he was placid and did not let it trouble him. But when he heard that the Hired Service System was being abandoned, and the old Service Requisition System restored in its place, it left him astonished and speechless; he finally said, "Has their abolition gone as far as this?!" After a long pause, he added, "In the end it will be impossible to repeal that measure! The last Emperor and I discussed it for two years before it went into effect: there is nothing we did not ponder to the utmost."

And so it proved: after its revival by the post-reformers, the Hired Service System would become the basic format for local government operations over the next eight centuries. (T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 109.)

One wonders if Wang was truly as impassive as the histories say. One contemporary wrote:[81]

> Recently I was a liquor official at Jinling. There was an old soldier from Wang Anshi's residence who often came to

[80] *Sanchao mingchen yanxing lu* 6:2.21a, quoting a work called the *Zhi shi* 邸史. Also Deng Guangming 1979, p. 221; *Xu tongjian* 79/1991. Dated 1086.3, a month before Wang died.

[81] Reminiscence by Tian Zhou 田畫 or Tian Hua 田畫 (*zi* Chengjun 承君), in notes to "New Flowers," Li Bi 2.6a/193. (About Tian: see *Shao qian lu* 15/109; associated with Wang in retirement, was present at Su Shi's visit: see *Quyu jiuwen* 5/37.)

buy wine. I would always ask about the Duke Wang's activities. The soldier told me, "The Prime Minister just reads in his study every day, and keeps hitting the bed with his hands and sighing. No one can fathom what is on his mind."

Wang had already been prone to aimlessness—especially after retiring, with no mission to perform. One late spring in his old age, he wrote:[82]

Leaning back against the screen
I scratch my head and sit;
A hairpin full of white-flecked hair,
the whole bed covered with books
斜倚屏風搔首坐，滿簪華髮一床書。

Lacking health, position, a supportive Emperor, and the ability to relax, the only mechanism for Wang to face the defeat of his life's work was probably that of taciturn Buddhist discipline. (There exists a copy of the *Śūraṁgama-sūtra* in Wang's hand, copied a month after

[82]"Late Spring"晚春, Li Bi 48.15a/1203. Wang's poem may be a wry echo of Han Shan's idyllic poem #31, which concludes:
What is there inside the house?
Nothing but a whole bed covered with books.
家中何所有，唯有一牀書
See *Han Shan shiji* 寒山詩集 (Taipei: Han Sheng, 1976) 10a. That in turn may stem from "Ancient Thoughts of Chang'an" 長安古意 by Lu Zhaolin 盧照鄰 (Tang), in a couplet about Yang Xiong 揚雄 (Han), whose ideas had never found a receptive learner:
Alone, aloof and hid is Yang Xiong's house
Year after year, through every season, a whole bed full of books.
寂寂寥寥揚子居，年年歲歲一牀書。
(*Lu Zhaolin ji*; Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980, 2/20.)

Shenzong died.)[83] Unusual fervor shows in his formal verses for the departed Emperor (P 22):

> An old court minister who wept on a former day
> By lake and ocean yearns toward the robe that remains.

And it is said that during this time Wang told what he thought of history writing—perhaps because he had caught a hint of how the new administration planned to record the history of Shenzong's reign.[84] Success has always been bitter, Wang wrote: great men's actions are misunderstood even as they happen; history books distort the facts even further, especially if written by men of "common minds." What ends up on the pages is dust, not the wise men's spirit. (P 24.)

On his deathbed, tradition has it, he wrote:[85]

> 汲水置新花 "Drawing water to put new flowers in,
> 取慰以流芳 I hope to console myself with the floating fragrance."

[83] Dated 1085.4.11. Facsimile by Shanghai Yiyuan Zhenshangshe 上海藝苑真賞社, reprinted (poorly) in the endpiece of Xiong Gongzhe 熊公哲, *Wang Anshi zhenglüe* 王安石政略 (Taipei: Commercial, *Renren wenku* series, 1970).

[84] The first version of the "Veritable Records of Shenzong" would be culled largely from Sima Guang's *Shushui jiwen* and other anti-reform sources. (Cai 25/330ff; Tao Jinsheng, p. 132; Williamson II/64-65.)

[85] "New Flowers" 新花, Li Bi 2.6a/193. Translation is by James J.Y. Liu, "Six Poems by Wang An-shih," *Renditions* 1 (Autumn 1973), p. 91. Titled "Final Poem" 絕筆 in Longshu 51/572.

But those "new flowers" soon would be forgotten, along with his "old self."

After Wang died he was indeed misunderstood, but hardly forgotten. Sima Guang made efforts to preserve Wang's moral and scholarly reputation even while overturning his institutions.[86] Largely because of Sima's policy, the new Emperor's eulogy for Wang, written by Su Shi, conveys respect despite possible hidden criticisms:[87]

PRESENTATION OF THE RANK OF GRAND TUTOR
TO WANG ANSHI

It is decreed:

> We, in examining the ancient and primeval, have perceived Heaven's Will ablaze with light. If there are to be great and extraordinary events, (Heaven) must bring forth an unusual man whose like the world rarely sees; must cause his name to tower in his time, and his learning to encompass a thousand ages. He must be a man whose wisdom can serve to achieve his *Dao*, and his debating skills to turn his words into action. His jasper and jade-like writings must suffice to embellish the Myriad Things, his peerless conduct to move the Four Directions with its influence. Using his ability within a limited span of years, such a man can deftly change the whole world's customs.
>
> Officeholder Wang Anshi studied Confucius and Mencius when young, and took Gautama and Laozi for his teachers in old age. He brought together lost writings as in a net, and judged them according to his own ideas. He gathered from lees and dregs the traces of the Hundred Philosophers, to make humanity anew. He was among the achievers of the Xining era, stood at the crown of all the period's worthies, and was employed at the forefront. His trustworthiness was stedfast to a degree unknown in ancient or modern times.

[86] See Sima's "Second Letter to Lü Gongzhu" 與呂晦叔第二簡, in *Sima Wengong wenji* 10.16ab; Williamson I/385-6.

[87] *Jingjin Dongpo wenji shilüe* 39/676. Trans. also in Williamson I/386-7.

> But just as his mission was about to succeed, there suddenly arose in him a yearning for hill and forest. What were "floating clouds" to him? He could cast off (worldly affairs) as though kicking off a pair of sandals. He often "fought for a place at table" with fishermen and foresters, and when among the elk and deer "did not upset the herds." (88) His attitude toward serving or retreating was excellent for its calm, and is worthy of attention.
>
> When We first took up Imperial office, Our grief unto sickness was without compare. Whereupon We longed for this elder from three reigns, who dwelt now on the Great River's southern side. We studied and watched his example, and wished to see personally his manner and bearing. Little did We think that the news of his end would reach Us in the midst of Our filial mourning. Why could he not live for a hundred-year span? For him We shed a spell of tears.
>
> Alas! At the crossroads of life and death, of serving and retreating, who can contradict Heaven? How could it not be Our part to provide funerary gifts, and words of sorrow and praise? Our affection is such that We would have him occupy the position of Tutor, to add lustre to those who pursue scholarship.
>
> Let this soon be known, and may Our order be obeyed!

Su Shi's adroitness at conveying multiple points of view was what made the above proclamation possible. It praises Wang's learning, but not his administration. Certain phrases seem to take away as much as they praise--thus satisfying the new administration's line. Witness the great man's "wisdom sufficient to achieve *his Dao* 智足以達其道 (not *the Dao*); Wang's turning (away from Confucius) toward Buddha and Laozi; his judging the Classics "according to his own ideas" 斷以己意, culled from lees and dregs--surely an indictment of the New Interpretations, by which he had hoped to "make humanity anew" 作新斯人.

[88] References to *Zhuangzi* 76/XXVII/30, 52/XX/36. "Elk" 麋 : actually *elaphure*.

Wang's willingness to leave office also receives more praise than one might expect for such a eulogy.

Although within a century Wang would be cast as a villain--then recast as a hero in the late nineteenth century--it is Su Shi's fence-straddling assessment which represents the steadiest, most typical view of Wang through history. Wang was indeed seen as an "unusual man"異人 who fit no mold, who could achieve his own goals, but whose goals did not entirely coincide with what the nation wanted or human nature would permit. And he was a rustic, who on a moment's notice could abandon high office for life "in the forest."

There even grew rumors that Wang was not human at all, but a fox spirit from the skies, and that was why he had no grandchildren. It was said that the Daoist Li Shining had recognized Wang for what he was--Li knew that Wang had been called "Badger" as a child, and that someday he would be Prime Minister.[89] Su Shi, we are told, said of Wang's verse on a temple wall: "There's the old wild-fox spirit!"[90] To call Wang a fox did not mean he was evil, but that he was inspired, wily, and unconstrainable by normal standards.

[89]The story comes from no less an authority than Zeng Gongliang (also a friend of Li Shining), if we can believe Cai Tao in *Tieweishan congtan* 4.14b-15b.

[90]*Songchao shishi leiyuan* 39/508; *Shi shi*詩事 (anon.), in Guo Shaoyu 郭紹虞 ed., *Song shihua jiyi* 宋詩話輯佚 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980), p. 528.

Wang's Friends and Associates in Retirement

Though Wang sometimes ate at farmhouses on his outings, one would exaggerate to say that in retirement he "fought for a place at table with fishermen and foresters." But he was in fact associating with somewhat different people than the idealist intellectuals of his youth, or the administrative experts and political giants of his years in the capital. His efforts to put politics out of his mind, to pursue long-standing interests in scholarship, Buddhism and verse, made him amenable to people whose interests were the same. But most of those people differed from him, of course, in that they had never had many other interests. That, and the fact that Wang was by far the most illustrious man in the area, inevitably colored his friendships.

He compensated for the gulf in status by making his demeanor as plebeian as possible, taking the Jin-dynasty hero Xie An for a role model. Wang lived within sight of Xie's estate; Xie's *zi* was the same as Wang's name; both had retired away from their original home; both had well served their nation, but ended as defeated heroes. Wang admired Xie's impassive calm, inner fire, immunity to personal ambition, and above all his ability to see his dynasty's peril "as a dream, / And to a butterfly compare himself." (P 78, lines 29-30.) Wang pondered how his own reputation after six hundred years might compare with Xie's; would posterity sense Wang's "essence" beneath history's dust, the way Wang could still sense Xie's essence behind those vanished footprints and "golden shards of noble prose / Scattered, fallen in the wake of autumn leaves" (lines 47-48)?

Such pondering found an outlet in Wang's humorous challenge to

Xie: my home sits by your mound, we share a name, you are already dead--why does the mound still bear your name instead of mine? (P 87.) Scholars whose own sense of humor was even weaker than they thought Wang's was, have taken that verse as a crowning example of Wang's arrogance. In fact, it seems safe to say that Wang used such humorous allusions to disarm and put into perspective his own concerns about his place in history, and to allay his neighbors' potential shyness at associating with a celebrity.

Among Wang's friends were the gentleman-farmer Yang Ji 楊驥 (*zi* Defeng 德逢), and the recluse Chen Fu 陳輔 who lived at Danyang.[91] Chen, like Wang, was from Jiangxi (Jinjiang); had cut off contact with Wang while Wang was in office, but became friendly again once Wang retired. Chen may have printed a volume of Wang's "Banshan" poems. Chen and Yang were also friends of each other: Chen would visit Yang each spring on the way back from tomb-sweeping on Mt. Jiang at the Qingming Festival. From 1081 through 1083, Yang was not home on that day. One of those times Chen left a poem on Yang's door, which read:[92]

> Before the blossoms on North Mountain float among pine pollen,
> And at Baixia, when winds blow light on slanting stalks
> of grain,

[91]Chen Fu styled himself Nanguozi 南郭子. Shen, p. 98.

[92]Story from "Wang Zhifang shihua" 王直方詩話 (*Song shihua jiyi*, p. 6). Quoted by Li Bi under P 17. Liu Yuxi's quatrain, "Poem of Blackshirt Alley" 烏衣巷詩, is found in *Quan Tang shi* 11/365/4117. Discussed in "Yiyuan cihuang" 藝苑雌黃 by Yan Youyi 嚴有翼 (*Song shihua jiyi*, p. 560). The poem is laden with allusions to Jinling.

Like a "swallow" from the mansions of Wang and Xie
"in ancient days,"
I come one time in every year, to see you in your home.

北山松粉未飄花，白下楓輕麥脚斜.
身似舊時王謝燕，一年一度到君家.

Yang liked the poem, and told Wang Anshi about it. Wang pointed out with a smile, "(Chen) is joking that you are one of the 'everyday common folk.'" Yang had a hearty laugh, realizing that Chen's poem was a variation on a famous quatrain by Liu Yuxi 劉禹錫 (772--843). Liu Yuxi's last two lines read:

...In ancient days, *swallows from the mansion-fronts of Wang and Xie*
Would *fly into the homes* of every-day common folk.

舊時王謝堂前燕，飛入尋常百姓家.

Wang and Xie had been Jinling's two great clans in the Eastern Jin. Wang Anshi not only was aware of the allusion, but was also conscious that he had inherited their mantle. Chen may have even been slyly joking about Wang in his poem. ("Wang's" mansion now stood next to "Xie's," after all.)

Wang's own verses to Yang Ji seem to cast Yang into the mold of a prosperous farmer, a beneficiary of the reform policies' bounty--a man who could content himself with bucolic pleasures for a whole

lifetime.[93] Their mutual affection may have been real, yet a vaguely-definable forced quality in Wang's verses suggests that their thinking and temperament may have had little in common. Beyond talk of crops and some "Pure Conversation" 清談, it is hard to know how deep this friendship went. (Did this forced quality have to do with the fact that Yang Ji had failed the *jinshi*, even with Wang's tutoring and the help of Wang's opponent Zheng Xia? See p. 74, note 8 above.)

Wang's most-mentioned and perhaps most satisfactory friendships at Jiangning were with younger men: aesthetes, students, aspiring Buddhists or recluses. These people did not share Wang's breadth of experience, often lacked his talent, and the political neutrality of some of them might have seemed shallow to a younger Wang. But they were young and unjaded enough to be able to treat him simultaneously as mentor and friend. They gladly helped prepare the *Zi shuo*; accompanied Wang on outings; joined in a light practical joke on occasion.[94]

Among these men, we know of a Cai Zhao 蔡肇 (*zi* Tianqi 天啓),

[93] P 17-18. Eight other poems to him exist: Li Bi 1.5a/167, 2.1a/183, 2.1b/184, 34.3b/834, 42.12b/1030, 43.6a/1043, 43.8b/1048, 43.15b/1062.

[94] The monk Huihong 釋惠洪 1071--1128) recounts how Wang once went with Yu Xiulao (see below) to the Banshan Temple, where Wang lay down for a nap. Yu Xiulao took Wang's donkey, trying to be as quiet as possible, and rode it to the Fayun Temple to see Master Baojue. But Wang had heard Yu go. When Yu returned, Wang pretended to be asleep. After a while, Wang "awoke" and came down the steps, saying "How dare you make off with my donkey for the sake of a monk!" Yu kowtowed, and (with the Banshan monks defending him) asked how he could make penitence. After a long pause, Wang slowly said, "I'll fine you one 'Poem on the Sound of the Pines.'" Yu composed one on the spot. (*Lengzhai yehua* 5/22.)

"a bold and handsome knight" who came to Wang's attention by being able to recite the entire "Eclipse of the Moon" 月蝕詩 by Lu Tong 盧仝 (790?--835).[95] He also tamed a troublesome horse of Wang's--riding it for miles with no reins until it grew docile.[96] He was one of the staff who edited the *Zi shuo*.[97] On one outing with Wang and an unnamed friend of Wang's, Cai's stamina at plodding behind two chattering old men was rewarded with Wang's humorous praise. (P 78, lines 101-104.) Wang's high regard for Cai may have helped Cai's later career. (*Ye xiansheng shihua* B.8a/22-23.)

But we know less about Cai than we do about two more colorful figures, a pair of brothers. Known as Yu Xiulao and Yu Qinglao (俞秀老，俞清老), their pursuit of the substance of inner cultivation (and achievement of its style at least) endeared them to Huang Ting-jian and Ye Mengde, who have both left anecdotes about them.[98] They

[95]"Wang Zhifang shihua," *Song shihua jiyi* p. 91. Also "Gengxi shihua" 庚溪詩話 by Chen Yanxiao 陳巖肖 (fl. 1147), in *Lidai shihua xubian* B/184. Cai passed the *jinshi* in 1079; died 1119. Lu Tong's massive poem (containing veiled indictments of eunuch-tainted government) is easily one of the longest Tang poems extant. *Quan Tang shi* 12/387/4364-67; *Tang baijia shixuan* 15.2b-6b.

[96]See Ye Mengde, *Ye xiansheng shihua* 葉先生詩話 (also called *Shilin shihua* 石林詩話), Yuan-dynasty edition (facs. Shanghai: Zhonghua, 1958) B.8a/22. For Wang's reminiscences on first meeting Cai, see the sequel to P 78: "Sent to Cai Zhao, Using the Former Rhymes" 再用前韵寄蔡天啓 (Li Bi 3.1a/205). Cai was fascinated by old script, as was Wang.

[97]"Long have I caused you gentlemen to suffer in this common undertaking" 久苦諸君共此勞. From "Visiting the Qi An Temple with Tan Shan of Qujiang and Cai Zhao of Danyang, after Completing the *Zi shuo*" 成字說後與曲江譚掞，丹陽蔡肇同游齊安院, Li Bi 43.2b/1036.

[98]Xiulao's original name is unknown. Qinglao's was Dan 澹. (*Ye xiansheng shihua* B.15a/29.)

came from Yangzhou; neither one ever married. The elder brother Xiulao, of whom Wang was especially fond, had poetic talent but died about the same time as Wang, without having made a name for himself. His Buddhist aspirations, like Wang's, sometimes found expression in folk-style verses, as Huang Tingjian tells us (*Yuzhang ji* 26.17b-18a):

POSTFACE FOR WANG ANSHI'S POEMS TO YU XIULAO

Yu Xiulao was (another name of) Yu Zizhi 紫芝 of Jinhua 金華 (in central Zhejiang). His grasp of the *Dao* was pure and ripe. However, according to Master Zhaoqing of Jianlong 建隆昭慶道人: "Xiulao excels in a hundred ways; his defect is that he likes to talk vulgar Chan, thinking it to be words of wisdom." (99)

Xiulao wrote ten "Ballads Chanting the *Dao*" 唱道歌, with which he wanted to lead all men by the hand into pastures of *nirvāna*. Although these songs could not be found inscribed in the chambers of famous monks, still hermits and patch-robed holy men, in the trees or by the water, often sang them as a way to drive their thoughts outward, past the pale of material objects. Without a doubt, he had more than halfway achieved a state of satiety with (the world), and could pursue on his own (the realm outside the Pale).

Future generations who do not know Xiulao may discern the quality of his character from the six verses that Wang Anshi wrote for him. (100) Originally, the monk Renze 仁擇 had these poems carved at the Hall of True Enlightenment 真覺堂 in Yangzhou's Temple of Chan Wisdom 禪智寺. Xiulao's younger brother Qinglao 清老 (Yu Zilin 俞紫琳) wanted to inscribe them also at the Pavilion of Inner Green at Dongyang 東陽涵碧亭. (101)

[99] 然建隆昭慶道人謂秀老百事過人病在好說俗禪秀老以為知言也

Alternate translation: "'...he likes to talk vulgar Chan.' Xiulao felt (Zhaoqing's) statement was perceptive."

[100] Probably Li Bi 42.2a/223, 5.6a/253, 27.8b/672, 28.2b/682, 41.12a/1003, 43.9a/1049.

[101] Dongyang: probably the Jinhua area, the Yu's birthplace.

I wrote this in admiration for these two brothers' purity and refinement.

Qinglao, the younger brother, was more colorful and erratic than Xiu-lao. He was also musical--Wang would have him sing on outings--but he cursed when drunk. The urge to enter a Buddhist order overcame him at least once. Huang Tingjian, his old schoolmate, saw him at Guangling in 1084, the year Wang established the Banshan Temple.[102] Qinglao told Huang Tingjian, "Wang Anshi wants to use me" (apparently as a temple staffer). Huang thereupon gave him the Buddhist name of Zilin 紫琳 (*zi* Qinglao), and it seemed that with no wife or children to support it should be easy to be a Banshan monk. But, all said and done, "It is hard for a living turtle to shed his shell" --the holy life did not agree with Qinglao, and the next time Huang saw him he was contentedly dressed in regular Confucian garb.

Ye Mengde tells of what may have been the same occasion: Yu Qinglao told Wang that he badly wanted to be a monk, but had no money for a license. Wang was delighted to give him the money. Qinglao then set a date for taking the tonsure, but the day came and went with no news from him. Later, Wang asked what had happened. Qinglao slowly replied that he thought it was none too easy to be a monk, either, and he had taken the money to the winehouse to pay off an old tab. Wang roared with laughter. (*Ye xiansheng shihua* B.15b/29.)

[102] Schoolmates: Huang and Yu had studied under Sun Jue in their teens. See Ye Mengde, *Bishu luhua* A.6la. The following anecdote is from *Houjing lu* 8/78; see also Shen, p. 13.

Huang Tingjian, in telling how a famous picture came to be painted, sums up the salient images of Wang's final decade:[103]

INSCRIBED ON THE PAINTING OF WANG ANSHI RIDING A DONKEY

> In his later years, Wang Anshi put the *Zi shuo* into final form, using elements from all the Hundred Schools of thought, expressing deep meaning with simple phrases. He often felt that his life's energy was finally exhausted in this book. When studious-minded people came to ask about it, he would talk, drawing with his hands (in the air), sometimes covering over a thousand characters in one sitting.
>
> Yu Qinglao of Jinhua once chased after Wang and the donkey, wearing a plain turban and a pagoda-sweeper's robe, clutching the *Zi shuo* in his arms. Back and forth they went, through the Fayun and Dinglin temples, over the Stream of Eight Virtues; toured with "carefree abandon" above the Jian Pavilion. Li Gonglin said, "Such a marvellous event must not go unrecorded!" (And so he painted this picture.) (104)

The point to be drawn from the painting that Huang described is simply that it was a *picture*, an *image*. Yu Qinglao's love for that image was what made him chase after Wang and his book. But how much could Yu perceive of the spirit that Wang had exhausted while writing the book? Were Yu, Huang Tingjian and Li Gonglin too struck by the sight of Wang on his donkey to understand Wang the prime minister, and (earlier) Wang

[103] *Yuzhang ji* 27.9b-10a; Li Bi 42.10b/1026; Cai, preliminary Chapter 2, p. 26. The painting is now lost.

[104] Li Gonglin 李公麟(1049—1106), famous painter who probably first came to know Wang during these years, may also have painted a full-face portrait of Wang from life. Deng Guangming (1979) surmises that the 1106 portrait he shows on his frontispiece is a copy from Li Gonglin's original. Whether done from life or not, the surviving portrait is a rich character study. The expression shows a whimsical, taciturn, bright and complicated man.

the emulator of sages? And, much as he enjoyed these men, was there anyone at Jiangning, other than the Chan masters, with whom Wang could talk as an equal?

Deng Guangming maintains that not even Su Shi could qualify as that equal. Wang's conversations with Su about Chan and poetry were simply Wang's way of socializing with someone whose political passions differed fundamentally from his own. (Deng 1979, pp. 219-220.) Wang could speak his true feelings only to a few, says Deng--many of them family: his second son-in-law Cai Bian 蔡卞 (1050--1117) was one. Soon after building his home at Banshan and closing its door to outsiders, Wang wrote, "I should invite no man but you alone / To talk and parse to the edges of the Cosmos" 獨當邀之子, 商略終宇宙.[105] But does this really mean that (as Deng says) Wang considered Cai a man "of the same aspirations and a common path" with himself--i.e. a political sympathizer? Or was it just that Wang wanted his conversations to be "cosmic," beyond state affairs. His villa (which the poem describes) was the right setting, and Cai one of those with whom such a conversation could take place.

Another such person was Shen Jizhang, Wang's third brother-in-law, who was also becoming a devout Buddhist.[106] Fired from his post at the National Academy on charges that he had accepted a small bribe from a student, Shen moved back to his home at Yizheng, across the

[105] "To Cai Bian" 示元度 , Li Bi 1.9a/175; Deng 1979, p. 220.

[106] They visited temples together, including the Western Cloister on 1080.10.24, and the Jingde Temple in town on 1084.3.19. See P 97-98; Li Bi 42.1a/1007.

river from Jiangning, in 1079.[107] Zhang Gui, whose death Wang felt acutely, had surely been a close friend. So were Chen Yi and Lü Jiawen, when they served in Jiangning--if only because they had been with Wang during the reforms.

But Wang seems to have tried hard to become a recluse, as he announced by mail to his old friend Sun Mou.[108] Still, "What man on this earth can hide from commotion 世上何人可避喧?" he wrote (line 6). Complete reclusion, for Wang, was only a theory.

In the end, his outer life--recluse, donkey-rider, honored statesman--was of less consequence to him than the development of his own thinking, and the assurance either that his life's work had meant something, or that it truly did not matter if it meant anything or not. Because Buddhist cultivation provided some of that assurance, it is no surprise that Wang's Buddhist activity increased as the years went on. A discussion of his Buddhism will conclude this biography.

Wang as a Buddhist

Did Wang Anshi surpass worldly perception through Buddhist understanding, or did full wisdom elude him all his life? Huang Ting-jian believed the latter (*Yuzhang wenji* 30.9ab):

[107] *Changbian* 300.12b-13a; Wang Jinguang, p. 76.

[108] "Sent to Sun Mou" 寄孫正之, Li Bi 37.3b/902.

COLOPHON TO WANG ANSHI'S BUDDHIST PIECES

> Wang Anshi in his study of Buddhism, was a case of "I thought it was a dragon--but there are horns; I thought it was a snake--but it has legs." (109) Yet after looking long at his character and demeanor, I find that he did in fact view "riches and honor as floating clouds," and did not mire himself in wealth and profit, wine or women. He was the great man of his generation. His late, brief verses are elegant, beautiful, refined to the essence: they have shed banality--and we cannot treat them according to "common sense."

Material things were indeed no more than "floating clouds" for Wang; doubtless he felt that way instinctively, without having to search his soul. But that was a Confucian virtue. (*Lunyu yinde* 12/VII:16.) And as for religious theory, Wang's *intellectual* understanding was well advanced, and he never lost the desire to make that understanding useful.[110] In old age especially, he pursued Buddhist truth with a fervor and tenacity at least equal to that of any activity in his lifetime. He officially received Chan teachings as a lay disciple of Banshan's abbot Kewen 克文 . If the deepst wisdom did elude him, it was not through lack of dedication.

And such activity was not unique to Wang, of course. Religion had been an accepted occupation for retired Confucians over many cen-

[109]This refers to getting the right answer in a "wrong" or roundabout way. Alludes to Dongfang Shuo 東方朔 (Han) using divination to guess correctly that it was a gekko that the Emperor had hidden under a cup. (*Han shu* 65/2843.)

[110]Intellectual understanding: seen in copious, erudite allusions to sutras in Wang's poetry; also technical discussions of doctrine in his prose. Note, for instance, a "Reply to Jiang Zhiqi" 答蔣穎叔書 , *Linchuan* 78/827.

turies, and would play a large role in Song neo-Confucian theory. Of the people in Wang's own time, one might note Fu Bi, who after leaving office spent most of his waking hours on Buddhism; also Wang Shao (demoted to Jiangxi about the time Wang Anshi was retiring). Wang Shao is said to have become a zealot, writing barely-coherent religious essays as he frantically tried to atone for the carnage he had overseen as a general.[111] And Su Shi pursued Buddhism all his life. In short, Wang Anshi's religious attitudes are worth describing, not to show that there was anything deeply unusual about them (there probably was not), but rather to present one more facet of Wang as a human being--like Li Shangyin, Wang Wei, Han Yu, Li Ao--not a "fox spirit," fanatic, or mere economic technician.

One could not grow up in Song China and be a stranger to Buddhism. (Freeman, p. 172.) Examination candidates took rooms in temples to study; retirees gave up all else for Buddhism; the state made money from the sale of monks' licenses. Many an official sent to a remote area would find Chan masters to be the only other erudite men in the region.

While still young, Wang knew monks and admired their characters and capabilities. No one knows now when Wang first became receptive to the religion itself, but it makes sense to assume that he grew more serious about it during Yingzong's reign in the 1060's, when Wang was observing his mother's mourning period and Anguo was copying sutras in

[111]The true facts, again, may have been less dramatic. But see *Pingzhou ketan* 3/46; *Shushui jiwen* 16.9ff.

blood. Here Wang met the monk Zanyuan 贊元, who was close to Wang's age and had come to live at the Western Cloister on Mt. Jiang.[112] Of all our information about Wang, the closest thing to a psychological analysis originates with Zanyuan. While the purpose of the story is to show Zanyuan's predictive powers, we can also see in it a description of Wang at a turning point in his life--tense, rational, honorable and motivated:[113]

> ...When Wang, Duke of Shu, commenced his mother's mourning period, he would read sutras in the hills, associating with Zanyuan like a brother. Wang asked for the Patriarch's (Bodhidharma's) teaching, but Zanyuan did not answer. After Wang urged him, Yuan finally said: "There are three obstacles to your wisdom (*prajña*), but you do have one aptitude that approaches the *Dao*. I believe after two lifetimes you shall ripen purely."
>
> "Please explain," said Wang.

[112] Zanyuan (or Juehai 覺海) had left home 出家 at two; became a monk at six; studied the Yangqi 楊岐 branch of Chan at Tanzhou 潭州 (i.e. Changsha) for about twenty years with Chuyuan 楚圓. After staying at several other temples, he came to the Western Cloister at Mt. Jiang, where he studied under Pujue 普覺, and eventually inherited the latter's position. See *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* 禪林僧寶傳 by Huihong 惠洪 (Song). In *Dai Nippon zokuzōkyō* vol. 137, 27/274ab. Also Andō Tomonobu 安藤智信, "Ō Anseki ni okeru hōgai no kei" 王安石における方外の契, in *Ōtani gakuhō* 大谷學報 47.2 (1967.11), p. 68ff; *Fozu lidai tongzai* 19:16/672c; *Linchuan* 86/897 (sacrificial piece to him, dated 1080.9.4), and 38/409 (eulogy); poems in Li Bi 22.5b/554 (dated 1080.10.24, a year or two after Zanyuan's death), 26.9b/654, and P 42.

[113] *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* 27/274a. See also *Fozu lidai tongzai* 19:16/672c; Shen, p. 66; Andō (1967), pp. 68-69; Higashi, *Shimpō*, p. 996. Andō and Higashi use the *Fozu lidai tongzai* as their source. The punctuation of the latter makes translation difficult; my punctuation agrees with that of Shen's modern editors.

> Zanyuan continued: "(First:) you are endowed with a mighty life-force, and your worldly *karma* is deep. With such a life-force meeting such deep worldly *karma*, you are sure to be entrusted with heavy state affairs. (Second:) you long to develop and save the nation, but cannot control whether you will be rejected or put to use: this makes your mind uneasy. As long as that uneasy mind of yours clings to political ambition, how will you ever learn to contain a thousand centuries in one thought? (Third:) you anger easily, and in your learning you value rationality; thus when it comes to understanding the *Dao*, your very 'knowledge' makes you stupid. Those are your three obstacles. But, you do 'view fame and gain as no more than fallen hair,' and you savor the waters' flow as a holy cleansing: this is where you approach the *Dao*. You should nurture this quality, and make it grow lush through the Vehicle of the Teaching."
>
> Wang bowed repeatedly, accepting the instruction. And after the Xining reign began (1068), Wang entered into court counsel, whereupon he put to great use the Perfect Truth he had learned, rose to high office and shook the world!

Both during the reform and after, Wang tried to practice what Zanyuan had recommended--although it may not have been this particular meeting that moved him to do so.

Before this, Wang had never mentioned Buddhist doctrines favorably in his prose, and seldom if ever in verse. But wherever he went he felt drawn toward men of the Buddhist path.[114] As a schoolboy he had found a friend in the monk Huili 慧禮. By 1045, when they were both at Yangzhou, Wang saw a lesson for Confucians in Huili's competence and intelligence. Confucianism is so easy to practice, wrote

[114] Andō (1967) counts over thirty clerical acquaintances in Wang's writings, most of whom have no biographies extant (p. 68).

Wang: no need to discipline the body or stifle desire--but how many Confucians are truly qualified even to administer a township? On the other hand, look at the well-run temples everywhere: surely many Buddhists have learned a lesson that Confucians seem to have forgotten.[115]

In 1053, on his inspection tour to Suzhou, Wang visited an old friend Ruixin 瑞新(Master Dead Mind 死心禪師?) of Jinshan 金山, whom Wang had known several years earlier at Yin Prefecture. But this time Wang found that Ruixin had just died, and was mourned by many. Should not lords and ministers learn from this monk (wrote Wang on the wall of Ruixin's cell)? If they want to be mourned as he is mourned, should they not first try to be the kind of man he was?[116] While Ruixin was still alive, Wang had described him somewhat as an outsider might: Ruixin showing Wang the place where he kept "what we (Buddhists) call our 'Classics'" (i.e. sutras). Originally (wrote Wang then) there had been only one *Dao*. But it split into eight or nine as people developed their own views and passed them down. Daoism and Buddhism continue to attract people with their practices of "non-thinking" 無思 and "non-action" 無為. The *unjealousness* of Buddhist and Daoist adherents "resembles" Confucian "benevolence" 無忮似仁, and their *undesirous* attitude "resembles right conduct" 無求似義. Though these men do not have the Confucian virtues, their *resemblance*

[115]"Record of the Longxing Lecture Hall at Yangzhou" 揚州龍興講院記, *Linchuan* 83/871.

[116]"Written on the Holy Man Ruixin's Wall" 書瑞新道人壁, *Linchuan* 71/756. Dated 1053.6.15.

to those virtues amounts to something better than many Confucians who claim to be pursuing the real thing.[117]

The early Wang was no syncretist: he insisted that the true *Dao* existed only in the Confucian tradition, not in the others. Part of Yang Xiong's greatness, said Wang, had lain in the fact that he could speak of an ideal "Great Man" 大人 *without* resorting to Laozi and Zhuangzi as so many of his contemporaries had.[118] Wang did approach the varied branches of Confucianism syncretically, trying to reduce them (*through reasoning*) to the original *Dao*.[119] A true master, he felt, would not be confused by the fragmented schools of all the philosophers.[120] But Wang did not yet believe in bringing neo-Confucian teachings into this totality.

Still, Buddhism continued to intrigue him. In an age-old tradition, he was torn all his life between a genuine desire and sense of obligation to serve in office, and an equally genuine dislike of service and a yearning for reclusion. Buddhism seemed an enticing kind of reclusion; but his Confucian common sense told him that ultimately Buddhism took people in the wrong direction—it made them live out povertybound lives deep in the woods, for the benefit of

[117]"Record of the Sūtra Repository of the Chunhua Temple at Lianshui Military Commandery"漣水軍淳化院經藏記, *Linchuan* 83/874.

[118]First "Reply to Wang Hui" 答王深父書 , *Linchuan* 72/768. Datable to the early 1060's.

[119]"Yang Xiong and Mencius"揚孟, *Linchuan* 64/679.

[120]"On Rites and Music"禮樂論 , *Linchuan* 66/706.

nothing but their own souls. ("Rites and Music," *Linchuan* 66/705.) Reclusion should be a temporary retreat to rest or study, to wait for an opportune time or a good ruler. It was for such rest and study that Wang wished he could stay longer among the peaks of Jiuhuashan (P 66). At Hangzhou, the greatest lesson Wang could learn from his visit to a temple was that "to serve and to retreat each has its reason" 進退各一理; ambition for fame or status is not always appropriate or achievable. (P 25, line 13.) On his trip to Suzhou (1053) Wang could feel tranquil, but it seems it was the *place* that provided that tranquillity—he had not yet learned to find it spontaneously in his mind:[121]

> In pure roaming I first feel my mind unburdened
> And in a quiet place, who can know that the world has forces?
>
> 清遊始覺心無累，靜處誰知世有機.

A greater sympathy toward Buddhism gradually evolved as Wang learned more of what was actually taught in those secluded temples, and at some point changed from outsider to insider. In the concept of the Boddhisattva he found an equivalent to the Confucian recluse: one who, having successfully cultivated himself, then "strains himself to bring men peace" 屈身以安人.[122] This was Wang's "activist" Buddhism.

[121]"At the Peaceful Pavilion on Lake Tai" 太湖怡亭, Li Bi 38.10b/934.

[122]This quotation is unverifiable, coming from Wei Tai (*Dongxuan bilu* 9.1a). The original point of the anecdote is that Wang was

But his religious thinking deepened as he continued to study doctrine. Perhaps at some point he began to think Buddhism could allow him to understand that same Original Nature that Confucius had understood.[123] Anything that allowed people to come closer to the Original Nature would surely help guide society back to the era of Yao and Shun.

Wang's critics were correct in saying that he brought Buddhism into his Confucian philosophy. At least one example survives from the *Zi shuo*, in the entry under the word *kong* 空 ("empty:" usual Chinese translation for *śūnya* or *sūnyatā*). Wang's first-draft entry was already quite Buddhist: "A workman 工 can hollow out 穴 the earth 土; thus what (was) solid (becomes) *empty* 空 ..." He later revised that to: "A hollow 穴 is made from an absence of earth 土; thus Emptiness has no Form 空無相. There is no workman 工 to hollow 穴 it, thus Emptiness has no Action 空無作. With no form and no action, no Empty name can be established."[124] It seems inconceivable that Wang would have thought such phrases, quoted almost verbatim from sutras, would not arouse animosity when used in the textbook for all official schooling. Perhaps retirement had isolated him from reality. More likely, I believe he sensed so strongly the truth of what he wrote,

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defending the Five-dynasties official Feng Dao 馮道--but the point for us is to note how Wang defended the Boddhisattva ideal even in the imperial court. His debating opponent was Tang Jie (1010--1069): that places the incident early in the reform.

[123] Described by Wang in "Original Nature" 原性. *Linchuan* 68/726; Williamson II/319.

[124] *Menshi xinhua* A3/29. All speculation on this passage must hinge on the assumption that it is an accurate quotation.

that compromise was more out of the question than ever. Whatever his starting point may have been, that passage in effect links Buddha directly to the mythical sage Cang Jie, inventor of writing, and the Yellow Emperor, in a syncretism that few Confucians could accept as public policy, even if they adhered to Buddhism in private.

After retiring, Wang found an additional use for Buddhism: as a solace; to "cool" his "ailing teeth" (P 107); to "forget speech" in the company of a Man of the Path who has advanced to the point even of "forgetting 'me'" (P 101). His friend Zanyuan was still at Jiangning when Wang arrived. When Wang felt bothered, he would visit Zanyuan (not a talkative man), and they would sit together silently for a day.[125]

Another monk at the Western Cloister, named Xingxiang 行詳, belonged to the Tiantai sect and used his formidable debating skills in discourses upon doctrine. One might speculate that Xingxiang's keen mind appealed to Wang at first. Wang wrote to Xingxiang about feelings of faltering will-power--shakily following Qu Yuan's path, unable to climb to the heights upon which Xingxiang lodged. (P 41.) But soon the abbot Pujue died, unhappy with Xingxiang (we no longer know why). Pujue passed his mantle to Zanyuan, not to Xingxiang; after that, Xingxiang apparently began to attack the Chan teachings, in effect attacking Zanyuan himself. Zanyuan did not resist, but repeatedly asked to resign his seat at the temple. Wang would not hear of it. Finally Xingxiang left--again we do not know exactly how, but

[125] *Chanlin sengbao zhuan* 27/274a; Shen, p. 66.

there seems to have been friction between him and Wang (Wang apparently being a major benefactor of the temple). Even so, Wang examined his own mind and found that his personal likes and dislikes had played no role: Xingxiang was bad, to be sure, but that did not mean Wang hated him and therefore expelled him. What happened, happened. The "great pine" (Pujue) had toppled, but Wang did not need its shade: open sky was good enough.[126] But when Zanyuan died in turn (approximately 1080), Wang did feel a loss. Their friendship had been special. Wang had admired Zanyuan's obliviousness to insult or praise--Wang himself had had a tough struggle with that issue. "Who shall inherit this? His remaining principles lie with me" 孰其嗣之. 我有遺則.[127] Feeling helpless, with time pressing against him, Wang went to the Western Cloister, hoping to find another monk to talk with. (P 97.) He found such a person in Kewen of Baofeng 寶峰克文 (also called Zhenjing 真淨, 1025--1102), a brilliant disciple of Huinan 慧南 (1002--1069, founder of the Huanglong branch of the Linji Chan sect). Huinan's temple was at Hongzhou, not far from Linchuan. Huinan, like Zanyuan, had been a disciple of Chuyuan 楚圓. Wang Anshi and Wang Anli both petitioned Kewen to be abbot at Banshan.[128]

[126]All the above is contained in the enigmatic, allegorical P 42 and its colophon.

[127]"Eulogy for Elder Juehai Zanyuan of Mt. Jiang" 蔣山覺海元公真讚, *Linchuan* 38/409. Also Andō (1967), p. 71.

[128]Petitions are found in the *Guzunsu yulu* 古尊宿語錄, comp. by Yizang 頤藏 et al. (*Dai Nippon zokuzōkyō* 2/23/2-4, rep. v. 118 p. 387), but not in the collected works of either Wang brother. See Guo Peng 郭朋, *Song Yuan Fojiao* 宋元佛教 (Fujian Renmin, 1981), p. 68.

Kewen spoke eloquently of universal salvation: everyone had the Buddha-nature and would surely become Buddhas, whether they believed it or not, and no matter if they were still mired in winehouse debts or other follies. Kewen perhaps appealed to Wang's populist side: the Wang Anshi who imitated Han Shan's poems, who cared for nothing so much as the common man's welfare, who felt out of place in the palace, rode a donkey, had been mistaken in his own home for a bedraggled old soldier; who sought wisdom from the humblest mouths; disdained money, prestige, and the posturings of career bureaucrats. Chan Buddhism, as imparted by Kewen, could simplify the "myriad changes" 萬變 of which the common crowd was so fond but which Wang had always felt impeded harmony. Kewen pointed a route toward the plain state in which the sages had lived: instinctively knowing the *Dao*, living in an age before any books had been written to explain the *Dao* and thereby obliterate it.

It is said that Wang's short quatrains written on the Banshan Temple wall sum up Kewen's philosophy (P 61-62):

> "...All living beings are no different from Buddha,
> Buddha is all living beings."

Beyond learning about doctrine, Wang's principle benefit from Kewen's teaching may have been serenity, seen in some of Wang's last poems and perhaps present in the back of his mind even during the most upsetting phase of the repeal of his new policies. Such a calm is not apparent to us in his poem "On Reading History" (P 24), but floats to the sur-

face in "New Flowers," traditionally said to be the last piece he wrote (see above, pp. 206-207).

Did Wang finally become a thorough Buddhist, or did he remain confused by the "horns" he saw growing on what he had thought was a "dragon"? Perhaps he did stay thus confused, in a way similar to his failure to make his governmental reforms permanent: trouble came not from lack of trying, but perhaps merely from the same dearth of time and experience that plagues all human beings.

PART TWO

WANG ANSHI'S POETRY

13. WANG ANSHI'S POETIC ACHIEVEMENT

Of the Northern Song's generally-acknowledged three greatest poets, it is said that Su Shi succeeded through "freshness" 新 , Huang Tingjian through "strangeness" 奇 , while Wang Anshi succeeded with his "skill" 工 .[1] Wang's best poems indeed contain subtle and intricate craft, not always evident at the first reading. His themes, allusions, and ways of using earlier conventions are straightforward and typical of the Song. As far as we know, he never formulated a new aesthetic theory, nor did he try to change poetry's face in the manner of Huang Tingjian's school. It was neither "newness" nor "oddity," but solid skill that stood at the center of his poetry.

Skill improves with practice: as Wang's craft improved, so did his poetry--steadily--throughout his life. Fatigue in late middle age did not sap his art, as may have been the case with Ouyang Xiu and Su Shi. In fact, late middle age was when Wang's poetic powers reached their height, as with Du Fu. For both Du Fu and Wang, constant honing of technique let the insights of old age find their best expression.

Wang practiced poetry assiduously, not only writing his own,

[1] *Houshan ji* 後山集, by Chen Shidao 陳師道(1053--1101). *SBBY* edition, 23.3a. Also Tiang, p. 36. (Chen listed Wang first.)

but also delving into the tradition. He perfected and made famous the technique of "line-collecting" (*ji ju* 集句): writing a poem made up entirely of lines from other people's poems.[2] Such compositions, which require encyclopedic acquaintance with earlier poetry, can be harder to write than original verses. Wang was a virtuoso at this technique. He also wrote palindromes, and poems with names of herbs, birds or famous people hidden in the texts.[3] Like most poets, he would sometimes try a dozen different words in one spot (P 74, line 3). He produced alternate versions of poems, or sets of different poems to the same rhymes.[4] He was fastidious about the written forms

[2]It is said that Wang was this technique's inventor. Actually, Shi Yannian 石延年 (*zi* Manqing 曼卿, 994—1041) had preceded Wang. Also Hu Guiren 胡歸仁 of Chengdu had practiced it in the 1050's, drawing on late-Tang and Five-dynasties material. And some poets had been consciously incorporating a line or two from earlier times into their work, at least as early as Han Shan. (*Han Shan shiji* 17b/104: lines quoted from Han-dynasty ballads, with little change in meaning or tone.) See Yoshikawa/Watson, p. 42; *Mengxi bitan* 14/156; *Gujin shihua* 古今詩話 by Li Xin 李頎, in *Song shihua jiyi*, p. 262; *Shixue guifan* 詩學規範, by Zhang Zi 張鎡 (b.1153), in *Song shihua jiyi*, p. 619; *Cai Kuanfu shihua*, p. 407.

[3]Palindrome 回文詩: Li Bi 40.13a/977. "Herb-name poems" 藥名詩 were known as early as the Liang (6th century). Wang's versions: a drinking poem (with Wang Xi 王晳), Li Bi 16.6b/485; a parting poem to a Mr. Wang and a Mr. Yang, Li Bi 18.2a/485. Bird names: in a parting poem for a Li Tuntian 李屯田, Li Bi 8.1b/298.

[4]*Poems with two versions*: "On First Leaving Linchuan" 初去臨川, Li Bi 39.2b/938; "Imperial Willows" 御柳, 44.5b/1074; possibly "Spring Comes In" 春入, 47.7b/1160. And "Moment at Mt. Zhong" 鍾山即事, which has both seven-character and five-character versions, 44.3b/1070. *Groups of poems with the same rhyming words*: "Riding the Sun" 乘日, "Rain Last Night" 宿雨, whose sentence structures, parallelisms and antitheses are closely related, Li Bi 23.5a/575. See also poems translated under P 74.

of characters.[5] In his mature writing, he often organized the allusions in his parallel couplets by category, region or historical period, as well as by the conventional criteria of tone, part of speech and contrasting meaning. He would pair Han allusions with Han, foreign allusions with foreign, and even tried not to change dynasties between allusions in the first and second lines of a couplet. For instance:

> ...A single stream, *protecting the fields*, escorts the green around;
> Two mountains *push the postern open*, sending blue along...
> ... 一水護田將綠遶，兩山排闥送青來 ...

Protecting the fields faintly alludes to the Han-dynasty Chinese border garrisons; *pushing the postern open* refers to the Han-dynasty general Fan Kuai 樊噲(d. 189 BC), who burst into the Emperor's quarters through a "postern door" 闥 , (after the Emperor had shut himself in for weeks out of apathy, abandoning his officers). Thus Han generals are paired with a Han general, in a poem that on its surface merely describes a country home.[6]

[5]Li Bi preserves two idiosyncratic forms from Wang's manuscripts (鼖 for 鼓 , 殊 for 殊), "Six Impromptu Poems: The Fourth" 即事六首，其四 , Li Bi 8.3a/301.

[6]"Inscribed on the Wall of (Yang Ji), Master of the Lake's South Shore" 書湖陰先生壁(#2 of 2): Li Bi 43.6a/1043. See Li's notes; also *Ye xiansheng shihua* B.9ab/23; Zhu, p. 105. Trans. in Yoshikawa/Watson, p. 47; Yangs, p. 72. Wang was evidently pleased with the lines: see *Tiaoxi yuyin* (Beijing: Renmin, 1981) A33/226.

Or:

...*Zhou Yu's* home became an *Araṇya*

Where *Lou Yue's* body had come to rest in a *stūpa*...

... 周顒宅作阿蘭若，婁約身歸窣堵波 ...

Sanskrit term paired with Sanskrit term; Buddhist layman paired with the Buddhist master he admired.[7] No other poet could write with such constrictions and still be natural and tasteful, said Ye Mengde.[8]

In his best work, Wang's care with words evolved into high art. His scenery glowed with the transcendence of Xie Lingyun's poetry (P 99). And (according to Huihong) Wang was one of only three Song poets who could write about an object, clearly and movingly, without naming what the object was.[9] Sometimes, however, he was so strict about his composition that he sacrificed spontaneity; many of his lines are too bookish to inspire much response from a reader.[10]

[7]Zhou Yu, d. 485. Hui Yue 慧約, surnamed Lou 婁. See "Touring the Western Village with Shen Jizhang, Passing by the Temple of the Precious Vehicle" 與道原游西莊過寶乘, Li Bi 43.1a/1033.

[8]*Ye xiansheng shihua* B.9b/23. Gao Buying believes this is not the couplet's intention, and the "allusions" are accidental. (*Shi juyao* 8/843.) But Wang practiced this elsewhere: see P 21-22, 40, 81.

[9]I.e. *willows* on the "Southern Dyke" 南浦, Li Bi 41.6a/991. The other two poets, again, were Su Shi and Huang Tingjian. (*Lengzhai yehua*, *Baihai* edition, 4.6a/1470.)

[10]See Liu Chenweng's comment about Wang's regulated verse in general: Li Bi 39.9a/951. I have found the bulk of Wang's uninspired poetry among his seven-word regulated verse: clever technique, but often little feeling. (Most of these are occasional poems.)

Usually his language flows well. Awkward or prosy passages are rare, although they have been singled out by critics. One cannot deny the dead syntax and awkward rhythm of the following:[11]

...The days among the creeks and brooks are short;
The days upon the river and sea are long...
… 溪澗之日短，江海之日長 …

But some of his prose-like lines can be as smooth, dignified and rhythmic as more typically poetic lines, as in this run-on couplet:[12]

One reading also makes me,
Moved within, ponder your lingering air
一讀亦使我，慨然想餘風.

Or this colloquial couplet:[13]

...With things on earth, endings are beginnings,
And men from what is old obtain the new...
… 物以終為始，人從故得新 …

[11]From "Sun Changqian Returns to Huizhou" 孫長倩歸輝州. Li Bi 13.8b/402; Yan Fu 9.8b.

[12]Poems to rhymes by Mei Yaochen, Li Bi 15.6a/433.

[13]"To Wu Chong's Rhymes Upon the New Year's Eve Which Was Also the Beginning of Spring" 次韻冲卿除日立春 . Li Bi 24.1b/584.

His honing of technique produced poetry like that for which he had praised Zhang Ji 張籍(ca. 767--ca. 830): concealing grandeur within an apparently artless exterior:[14]

> ...What looks humdrum is oddest and grandest of all--
> As if easily composed, yet tough and a trial to write.
> ... 看似尋常最奇崛，成如容易却艱辛.

Wang never belonged to a poetic school, style or aesthetic stance. He admired Li Shangyin, yet was not a "Xikun" poet. Ignoring Li Shangyin's erotic themes and dense allusion, he cited Li's patriotic passion and solid technique as the best bridge by which a modern poet might emulate Du Fu. (*Cai Kuanfu shihua*, p. 399.) This was an opposite tendency to the early-Song Xikun school's practice of emulating Li Shangyin's hazily sensuous atmosphere, at the expense of the precision and moral stance that Li Shangyin's poetry had also contained. Wang wrote didactic ballads and poems of moral concern, but was not a *guwen* poet any more than he was a Xikun poet. Much of his verse is "plain" or "bland" (*pingdan* 平淡) in the manner of Mei Yaochen and many of Ouyang Xiu's circle; yet there were pieces that Wang ornamented and loaded with allusions until they almost buckle from the weight. (P 86.) And he could be as sentimental, even sensual, as any late-

[14]"Inscribing a Poem by Zhang Ji" 題張司業詩, Li Bi 45.1a/1093.

Tang author.[15]

He wrote sheafs of poems in the style of Six-dynasties ballads (*yuefu*), of Ruan Ji, of Han Shan. He could write like Han Yu, Du Fu, Li Bo, Bo Juyi, and rather like Wang Wei.[16] Some of his Buddhist poems are as abstruse and learned as any in the literature, yet other poems demonstrate deep Buddhist sensitivity using no allusions at all. (P 61-62, 82, 91, 100, 101.)

If his broad reading and open mind allowed him to master so many styles, then it was his commitment to an original Confucian *Dao* that prevented him from merely being an imitator, and kept his poetry largely serious, stable and within the tradition. When he echoes earlier poetry, he writes in more balanced phrases than the writers he is echoing: less pessimistic, more organized, more logical and objective; sometimes amused, calm or wry. In other words, he is less overtly passionate and idiosyncratic than his poetic forebears were. This is a Song-dynasty tendency, noticeable first in the poetry of Ouyang Xiu and Mei Yaochen. They composed "plain," optimistic, straightforward verse to replace the ornamented decadence of the late Tang and the Xikun school, and to counter the idea among *guwen* extremists that perhaps poetry *per se* was not socially useful and hence not worth writing. (Egan, pp. 81-82.) More basically, the "plain"

[15] P 7-8. Also "Moments at Jinling" 金陵即事, esp. #3: Li Bi 44.1a/1065.

[16] *Yuefu*, *Ruan Ji*: Li Bi *juan* 11; P 6, 52, 54, 65, 98. *Han Shan*: Li Bi *juan* 4; P 50. *Han Yu*: P 66-67. *Du Fu*: "On Du Fu's Portrait" 杜甫畫像, Li Bi 13.1a/387; Yoshikawa/Watson p. 92; P 80. *Li Bo*: P 28, 74, 85. *Bo Juyi*: P 1-5. *Wang Wei*: P 79, 100, 102.

style and other tendencies of Song verse had their roots in the way Song society had changed from Tang times. Decades of internal peace; the government's commitment to a civil state that respected men of letters; the spread of knowledge and stimulation of curiosity through printed books—all contributed to a new tone of voice in literature. Despair yielded to cautious or even exuberant optimism; melancholy to contentment. Emotions quieted as reason gained a surer voice. Wang Anshi partook of these tendencies in his poetry, not through theorizing, but simply because he lived in the Song. The tradition upon which he drew was the whole Chinese poetic tradition, as the Song perceived it. Forming no poetic school, Wang had no poetic "descendants." But his work was widely admired. When his prodigious talent is combined with his catholic or middle-of-the-road stance, he may be seen to represent Northern Song poetry at its *best* in terms of quality, and *most typical* in style and content.[17]

One tendency in Wang's poetry that deserves examination is the extent to which his use of allusions and phrases from earlier poetry may have influenced Huang Tingjian's Jiangxi school of poetry. Both Wang and Huang came from Jiangxi; Huang admired and was fond of Wang; and their writing techniques resembled each other at times. Wang occasionally practiced what came to be the trademark of the Jiangxi school: taking an entire phrase from earlier poetry, but changing a word or two in order to improve it, to "transform it from iron into

[17]Mei Yaochen, Su Shi and especially Huang Tingjian consciously tried new approaches to poetry. Hence they must be considered unique or even seminal, but not typical.

gold" 點鐵成金. (Tiang, p. 101.) Sometimes the poet would draw a fresh meaning from the older phrase; sometimes he would dress the old meaning or allusion in fresh new words. Huang Tingjian is said to have called these techniques "snatching the embryo" 奪胎 and "changing the bones" 換骨.[18] By reinvigorating older poetry this way, a poet could produce from the combined reverberations a poetry stronger than what either the former poets or he himself could produce alone. This approach, which some called simply a form of imitation, became the foundation of the Jiangxi school's methods.

Some of Wang Anshi's practices resemble those of Huang Tingjian, and may have served as precedents. Wang's "collected lines" technique of writing was a case in pont: the spread of the poetical pastime in the Song may have influenced Huang's approach to the use of older material. Also, many of Wang's regular poems echo phrases or ideas from Tang or earlier verse (see above, p. 239, note 16). Some of them might be seen as mere exercises in the use of allusion (hence failures), while in others Wang managed to use allusion to heighten his own poem's effectiveness and even originality. (P 65.) Both his failures and successes remind one of the Jiangxi school, because of their extensive use of precedent.

But closer examination shows little relation between Wang's poetry and "Jiangxi" poetry. "Collected lines" as a poetic technique had little influence on Huang Tingjian: it had more to do with lyric-writing and recreation than with the serious kinds of poetry that Huang

[18] Tiang, pp. 121-122; James J.Y. Liu (1962), p. 78.

wrote.[19] And as for Wang's echoes of earlier poets, we find few instances of the kind of thing Huang Tingjian often did (lifting one, two or even four lines from another poet, with minimal changes): we simply see the same kinds of allusions and echoes that poets had been using since the Six Dynasties. These include faint echoes produced by a common rhyme or turn of phrase (P 74), or the conventional allusive technique of using one or two words to remind the reader of a story, a parable or another poem. Huang could have learned that type of allusion from anyone. To be sure, Wang Anshi used allusion often, and tried to make his allusions fresh and surprising; but simply using allusions is a far cry from espousing Huang's idea, that "When Du Fu wrote a poem, or Han Yu an essay, *there was not a single word that did not come from somewhere*" 無一字無來處.[20] Many of Wang's words in fact came from Wang alone.

Thus, although Huang may have admired Wang, Wang was not Huang's real teacher. Wang mastered many styles and moods from the greater tradition; yet simultaneously he could be disarmingly, frankly himself--unadorned, unallusive, individual yet wholly traditional. This must have been what inspired Su Shi (or a spinner of anecdotes) to sigh at this "wild-fox spirit," quiet, yet clever and ungraspable. (See under P 58-59.)

[19]Wang's *ji ju* lean toward ballad and narrative styles. Ouyang Xiu also practiced a form of line-borrowing, but inserting famous lines into some of his lyrics in a spirit of play. (Egan, pp. 154-156.)

[20]"Reply to Hong Chu" 答洪駒父(洪芻)書, *Yuzhang Huang xiansheng wenji* 19/204. See also Tiang, p. 101ff.

Above is a sketch of Wang's place in Northern Song poetry: a poet with skill, imagination and sincerity, writing the way poets had always written. As for his individual artistic development, the outlines are easy to trace. Simply stated, as he grew older he became more adept, more subtle and less concerned with the practical value of his verse. In addition to occasional or social poetry, which he wrote all his life, the poems most representative of his youth are probably the protest poems, or those in which he confesses with dismay his shortcomings as an official. (P 1-6.) In these and other verses up until middle age, he sometimes takes a combative, minority position: a man sensitive to Nature, set down among crass tourists; a balladeer who sympathizes with the barbarian husband of a Han concubine; an official unmoved by "The Mass of Men" squabbling at him.[21] He sometimes wrote on out-of-the-way topics, much as did Mei Yaochen: on the faking of "ancient tiles" to be sold as relics (Li Bi 46.6a/1129), on burning lice (15.6b/434), or on scabies (16.10a/463). In his early works he sometimes used allusions willy-nilly, apparently as they occurred to him, often in the form of direct quotations from the sources to which he was alluding.[22]

But after his eight years as Prime Minister, during which he wrote almost no verse, he returned to poetry with redoubled energy and greater subtlety. Except for a few pieces of what one might call

[21] P 7-8, 13, 18, 66-67, 68, 64.

[22] See "Remembering Former Times..." 憶昨詩..., written 1043. Li Bi 20.5a/523.

public relations for the regime (P 17-18), his poetry was not constrained by any immediate purpose. By retiring, he had freed himself from the sense of obligation to make his poems socially significant. And by freeing himself from that duty to write useful poems, he may also have freed himself from a need to write playful or virtuoso poems as a relief from the useful poems. Most of his verses from retirement fall into two types: descriptions of the places around him (almost religiously serene), and a continuation of the frank, sometimes wry verses he had written for years about his own life, or addressed to friends. It is in his last ten years that we find most of his best-crafted verse: allusions are apter, fewer, and better blended into the poems. Language is disarmingly simple, and thus frees the reader's imagination to add overtones or nuances. In many of the finest poems, not a seam shows, nor is there a trace of the work of composition, which for Wang could be arduous. His longer poems appear less organized than those of twenty years earlier, but actually read more coherently and plainly. (P 66-67 vs. P 78.) And his quatrains are among the best of the era.

Following are 107 of Wang's poems, accompanied by comments in which the issues raised above will be treated in more detail.

14. TRANSLATIONS OF POEMS

Section A. Public Verses

Ancient-style ballads; poems protesting or celebrating the state of the empire; poems about society, public service, and history.

禿山 BALD MOUNTAIN

1 吏役滄海上 On government tour upon the blue-dark sea
瞻山一停舟 I spied a mountain isle, there stopped the boat.
怪此禿誰使 So strangely bald, I thought, what made it so?°
鄉人語其由 A local man the reason did relate:

5 一狙山上鳴 "One ape upon the mountain made a cry,°
一狙從之遊 A second ape fell in with him to roam.
相匹乃生子 A match they made: children they did bear,
子衆孫還稠 Their sons abounded, grandsons even more.

9 山中草木盛 "When grass and trees upon the hill grew lush,
服實始易求 Roots and berries could be found with ease;
攀援上極高 Apes hopped and scrambled to the topmost patch
屈曲亦窮幽 Bending and crouching, to every hidden place.

13 衆狙各豐肥 "Soon hordes of apes, each growing fat and fine
山乃盡侵牟 Began to plunder the whole mountain bare
攘爭取一飽 Arms all athrash to snatch a single meal--
豈暇議藏收 Who could have time to talk of making store?

17 大狙尚自苦 "The older apes of course found this a trial;
小狙亦已愁 The little apes had long been worried too.
稍稍受咋嚙 Bit by bit the woods were munched and gnawed
一毛不得留 Till not one tiny sprout remained to grow."

21	狙雖巧過人	Though apes are craftier than human beings,°
	不善操耡耰	They show less aptitude for plow and hoe.°
	所嗜在果穀	To fruits and grains their passions most extend:
	得之常以偷	Often this food by stealing is obtained!
25	嗟此海中山	Alas now for this hill within the sea!
	四顧無所投	North, South, East, West they gaze--nowhere to go,
	生生未云已	Incessantly they multiply and grow;
	歲晚將安謀	As the year wanes, where is their policy?°

LOCATION. Li Bi 19.6b/506; *Linchuan* 13/188; Longshu 47/536; Guangzhou p. 237; Zhou Xifu p. 13; Iritani pp. 116-122.

DATE. 1047-1049, at Yin Prefecture.

Line 3. LIT.: "I remarked at its baldness: who made it so?"

Line 5. APE 狙. A macaque.

Line 21. I follow Iritani in ending the local man's speech after line 20, and resuming Wang's voice here. Zhou Xifu ends the speech after line 24.

Line 22. LIT.: "They are unskilled at wielding plow and hoe."

Line 28. LIT.: "The year is late: how shall they make plans?"

Wang's early poems indict what struck him as most evil or unreasonable about the way officials ran the country. On a tour as prefect at Yin, he had seen salt farmers left without a livelihood, after the government monopoly confiscated their illegal salt. (See p. 27 above.) And the sight of a monkey island, probably on the same trip, inspired him to unmistakable sarcasm about official stupidity

and rapacity. He may have had in mind Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773--819), who had compared monkeys to officials in his essay "Revulsion for the Monkeys" 憎王孫文. (*Liu Zongyuan ji* 18/498-500.) Liu's comparison had been less sardonic: he compared the despicable, selfish, restless monkeys 王孫 with their neighbors, the benevolent gibbons 猿. Wang, on the other hand, indicts all the "apes" (officialdom, and short-sighted people who tolerate such officials). Who but a bureaucrat is likely to be at once "craftier than (other) human beings" 巧過人, to have little inclination to raise his own food, to enjoy grains (taxes) and fruits (of others' toil), to obtain these things through stealing, and to be multiplying too fast? Wang feared that famine and drought would evolve into corruption, war and national weakness: he also conceived how economics and mass psychology could work if properly used. Here he blames the leaders for not seeing for themselves the problems and solutions that he saw.

The poem's art lies in its understatement, especially in lines 21-24. This carefully controlled tone of voice is what adds irony to what might otherwise be merely earnest, shrill or seditious.

兼并 THE MONOPOLISTS

三代子百姓 The Three Great Ages reared all men as offspring:°
公私無異財 Public and private, none had extra wealth.°
人主善操柄 The Ruler had the skill to wield the handle
如天持斗魁 Just as the Pole Star grips the Dipper's bowl:°

賦予皆自我 To "Us" all things were proffered,
by "Us" disbursed;
兼并乃奸回 To Monopolize was treacherous and twisted.
姦回法有誅 And twisted, treacherous men being purged
by Law,°
勢亦無自來 Their power had no place from which to build.

後世始倒持 But later ages grasped the sword's wrong end,°
黔首遂難裁 Hard it became to rule the black-haired throng.
秦王不知此 The King of Qin, not understanding this
更築懷清台 Even raised a Tower to Honor Lady Qing.°

禮義日已偷 Rites and right conduct day by day wear thin,°
聖經久堙埃 The Sacred Books lie muffled by old dust.
法尚有存者 Some of the Laws continue to exist
欲言時所咍 But would you speak for them?
You will be scoffed at!°

17	俗吏不知方	Common bureaucrats, not knowing statecraft
	掊克乃為材	Think talent lies in pillaging and seizing;
	俗儒不知變	And common learned men, inflexible
	兼并可無摧	Allow monopolists unscathed to flourish;
21	利孔至百出	Holes from which lucre flows appear by hundreds,°
	小人私闔開	Mean men open and shut them on their own:
	有司與之爭	The state's officials with those mean men vie!°
	民愈可憐哉	Are not the people to be pitied then?

LOCATION. Li Bi 6.5b/272; *Linchuan* 4/114; Longshu 51/577; Guangzhou pp. 208-211; Zhou Xifu p. 35; Shimizu p. 22. Trans. Williamson I/122.

DATE. 1053 at Shuzhou?

MONOPOLISTS 兼并. Men or factions who would arrogate to themselves the wealth or power that should belong to the ruler, or to all people. In the Song, the term referred to large landholders who used tax-free status (often gained by being officials) to increase their wealth to royal dimensions; meanwhile the tax burden fell on small landholders, who often had to give up their land in destitution.

Line 1. THREE GREAT AGES 三代 : The Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties; idealized antiquity.

REARED ALL MEN AS OFFSPRING 子百姓 : See *Zhong yong* 中庸 : "*Treat* the common people *as your offspring*, and all citizens will exhort each other" 子庶民則百姓勸 . (*Xueyong zhangju yinde* 學庸章句引得 , ed. by Zhonghua Minguo Kong Meng Xuehui, Taipei, 1970, chapt. 20.)

Line 2. Although this line grammatically could mean, "There was *no difference between* public and private wealth (i.e. the ancients were communistic)," it more likely means that neither side controlled *excessive*, inappropriate or undeserved resources. (Shimizu takes the first interpretation; Zhou Xifu and Guangzhou the latter.)

Lines 3-4. POLE STAR...: This analogy dates to the *Lunyu*: "To govern through virtue may be compared to the North Star, that holds to its place while all the stars look toward it" 為政以德 , 譬如北辰 ,

居其所，而衆星共之 . (2/II/1.)

Line 5. LIT.: "Taxing and giving out were all (controlled) by me (i.e. by the ruler)."

Lines 6-7. TWISTED? TREACHEROUS姦回 : This term is found in the *Shangshu* and *Zuo zhuan*. See *Shangshu tongjian* 尚書通檢, ed. by Gu Jiegang 顧頡剛 (Shumu Wenxian, 1982) 22/0664. And *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注, ed. by Yang Bojun 楊伯峻 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981) Xiang 23/1080.

Line 9. GRASPED THE SWORD'S WRONG END倒持 : I.e. the ruler allowed his subordinates to control the handle, while the blade pointed at him. (Common attribution for the fall of the Zhou dynasty: the Zhou kings allowed their vassals to control them. After the Zhou, China never regained sagacious government.) The phrase itself comes from the *Han shu*: "(The Qin dynasty)...*grasped* the Tai E Sword by the *wrong end*, proffering the handle to Chu" 倒持泰阿，授楚其柄. (Memorial by Mei Fu 梅福, *Han shu* 67/2920.)

Lines 11-12. THE KING OF QIN: (Actually the First Qin Emperor, Shihuangdi), built a terrace or tower to honor the Widow Qing, who had successfully managed and protected her deceased husband's wealth. The Qin emperor considered her conduct heroic; but Wang Anshi felt the emperor had been mistakenly glorifying greedy entrepreneurship. Sima Qian commented that such people as Lady Qing owed their fame only to the fact that they had money. (*Shi ji* 129/3260. See also Wang Anshi's "Opening the Granaries" 發廩 , Li Bi 17.5a/473.)

Line 13. WEAR THIN 偷 : Mores become perfunctory and strained.

Line 16. LIT.: "If you want to speak (of these laws), your contemporaries will laugh at you."

Line 21. HOLES FROM WHICH LUCRE FLOWS (lit. "PROFIT HOLES") 利孔 : see *Guanzi* 73/359: "If profits drain away through (only) a single loophole, the nation will have no foes; if they go out through two holes, the army will not be in straits; (but) if through three holes, one cannot wage war; if through four holes, the nation is sure to perish. The Former Kings knew this was so, and therefore stopped the people's raising (of profits), and blocked their paths to private advantage. Thus *it lay with the sovereign* to give and to snatch away, to make the people poor or rich..." In Wang's view, those "loopholes" were what drained revenue from the state into private hands, broke the smaller landholders, and thereby weakened China.

Line 23. Wang means that officials could profit not only by corruption, but by using their privileges to become monopolists in their own right.

"The Monopolists," in addition to its literary quality, is noteworthy for the diatribe that Su Che wrote against it after Wang's death; Su blames this poem for more catastrophe than any poem in history. His argument, in sum: This poem formed the seed of Wang's "Green Sprouts" agricultural program and confiscatory taxation, which together had attempted to eliminate the rich. But nations need rich people for strength and stability. Moreover, it is Nature's way to be uneven: there will always be rich and poor people. Wang, by trying to eliminate the rich, made it impossible to educate the rich to be happy in their riches and the poor in their poverty. Dissatisfaction on all sides has rent the country asunder.[1]

Liu Chenweng, replying indirectly to Su, comments that no one would have faulted the poem if it had a different author: the excesses of Wang's reforms caused people to blame even his verse.

Indeed, few would have faulted the poem at the time it was written, no matter who the author was. Its sentiments were high-minded, and the vices it described were true: few intellectuals would have denied that the "monopolists" were a cancer. It was the poem's language, more than its content, that made Su Che so angry. With his ancient vocabulary and measured tone, Wang was arrogating to himself the voice of the ancients: "monopolizing" the stance of the Three Great Ages, even as he twisted what Su and others believed the ancient kings had really done. (According to Su Che, were not Wang's loan

[1] "Five Examples of Unhealthy Verse" 詩病五事 . In *Luancheng ji*, 3rd collection, 8.7b-8a. Also in Li Bi's notes, and Cai 4/75.

programs an example of "state officials" "vying" for profit, one of the abuses that Wang's poem had decried?) In the 1040's, before many concrete actions had been taken, most people could agree that the ancient Way should be restored; all men of conscience could appreciate such a poem. But after Wang died, these lines would make painful reading for those who had ended outside his faction when he put his ideas into practice.

As in "Bald Mountain" (P 1), Wang reserves his strongest yet most understated accusation for *officialdom* (line 23), while saying nothing about the monopolists themselves. If evil men appear, it is not human nature's fault. Rather, we must blame the officials who have failed to guide and nurture human beings in the first place.

Wang had harsh words for bureaucrats, but did not spare himself either. Nothing bothered his conscience more than the thought that he, too, was no better than the officials he despised. We can see that sentiment in the next two poems.

感事 MOVED BY EVENTS

賤子昔在野 When my low self lived in the countryside
心哀此黔首 My heart took pity on these, the black-haired folk
豐年不飽食 Who even in a rich year eat no fill:
水旱尚何有 And what is left for them when streams run dry?

雖無剽盜起 Though butchering brigands do not yet arise,°
萬一且不久 That chance of a thousand lies not far away.
特愁吏之為 My special worry is the sub-officials
十室災八九 Who, of ten homes, lay waste to eight or nine.

原田敗粟麥 In highland fields, grain and wheat are ruined,
欲訴嗟無賦 Alas--no cash to tell the magistrate.°
間關幸見省 Those lucky ones who struggle to a hearing°
笞扑隨其後 Find bastinadoes chase them from behind.

況是交冬春 Worse is the time when winter turns to spring,
老弱就僵仆 The old and weak give in, fall and lie stiff;
州家閉倉庾 The Prefecture bolts shut the granaries
縣吏鞭租負 While County men with whips take rent and taxes;

鄉鄰銖兩徵 Your neighbors are assessed for grams of coin,
坐逮空南畝 Indictments and arrests empty the fields.
取資官一毫 Who gets the money? One dime for the state,
姦猾已云富 While thugs and traitors turn into wealthy men.

彼眚方眙然 Through this, those wall-eyed ones,
dazed and serene,°
自謂民父母 Style themselves "The People's Father
and Mother!"°

23 竭來佐荒郡 Now come I, officer to this weedy district;°
懍懍常慚疚 I shake with awe, embarrassed, sick inside
昔之心所哀 Because those very people I once pitied
今也執其咎 Are now the ones whose troubles I control!

27 乘田聖所勉 The Sage made efforts managing the Pastures--°
況予余之陋 How much more must I strive, with my low gifts;
內訟敢不勤 Do I dare slack from inner castigation?
同憂在僚友 And sharing these worries with friends
and fellow officers?

LOCATION. Li Bi 17.5b/474; *Linchuan* 12/178; Guangzhou pp. 214-216. Trans. Yangs, pp. 69-70.

DATE. 1053 at Shuzhou?

Line 5. LIT.: "The single-chance-in-ten-thousand, moreover, will not be long in coming."

Line 10. LIT.: "They want to sue, but alas they have no bribe-money."

Line 11. LIT.: "(Through) winding, precipitous (paths, those who) by good fortune are given a hearing..."

Line 21. LIT.: "Those *dazed* (officials) are yet serene."

Line 22. FATHER AND MOTHER 父母: Common term for prefects or similar local officials.

Line 23. LIT.: "Now I come to assist in this remote commandery."

Lines 27-28. THE SAGE 聖 : Confucius once served as an official in charge of pasturage 委吏 . He took the position only because he needed income: therefore he took the lowest rank available, concerned himself only with the cattle and sheep under his charge, and never succumbed to the temptation to speak on issues outside his job. (*Mengzi yinde* 40/5B/5.)

This piece's power resides less in the description of suffering farmers than in Wang's confession (lines 23-26): how can an emulator of the Sage live with himself when he finds that "today I am responsible / For all that once appalled me" (Yangs' translation). Wang has taken a post because he needs the money. He has expected to emulate Confucius by doing only his job, never debating issues above his station. Now he knows how Confucius felt: being a cog in a cruel system means he may do cruel things. Now that he has a chance to correct the system's defects, can he succeed? Will he work in vain? Will he do more harm than good? From a simple "low-ranked self" 賤子 , he has degenerated into an ineffective hypocrite, "low" or "mean" in his very character. The most he can do is write incisive verse, hoping to encourage himself, and convince his colleagues to share his concern.

潬縣修路者

ROAD WORKERS AT SHEN PREFECTURE

1 畚築今三歲 Scoops and pounders, three years now today--
康莊始一修 At last the Branching Highways take new shape.°
3 何言野人意 How can we state these fieldhands' aspirations?
能助令君憂 They hope to help reduce the prefect's cares.°
5 戮力非無補 Their efforts joined do bring them recompense
But in their hearts, what have they ever
論心豈有求 demanded?

7 十年空志食 Ten years, I have aspired toward vain food
囙汝起予羞 The sight of you at work drives me to shame!°

LOCATION. Li Bi 25.2a/611; *Linchuan* 16/218; Guangzhou p. 226.

DATE. 1053 at Shuzhou. Shen Prefecture is in the Shuzhou area, northeast of Hefei合肥.

Line 2. BRANCHING HIGHWAYS康莊. Five-way and six-way crossroads in ancient terminology. See *Erya*爾雅, in *Shisanjing guzhu*, 4/2216a.

Line 4. LIT.: "They hope to aid in (what makes) the prefect worry."

Line 8. LIT.: "Embarrassment arises in me because of you."

This poem not only provides a glimpse into Wang's thought, but is an example of Song-dynasty poetry and ideas in contrast to the Tang. Bo Juyi, as a local officer in 806, once saw poor farmers cutting grain, among them a woman with a baby desperately picking up what was left. He wondered "with private shame" 私自愧 what good he had ever

done to deserve his salary of 300 bushels a year: he who had never planted a row.[2]

Both Wang and Bo describe toiling people, then shame. But Bo's poem is basically a description, while Wang spends all his eight lines discussing motives and aspirations. Instead of a physical picture of the road, Wang gives us a verbal reference to it as a *kangzhuang* 康莊 --a "highway" such as the ancients had built. And instead of watching the actual work, Wang imagines what the workers are feeling. He is ashamed, not for his lot in life as opposed to theirs, but for the "vanity" 空 of his attitude: he finds himself working for the sake of pay, while they work--much harder--in order to make a good road. Bo Juyi felt a gulf between himself and the farmers; but Wang sees himself and the corvée laborers almost as equals--partners in maintaining the empire. The reason for Wang's embarrassment is that he has not been a well-motivated partner. His embarrassment is of a different order from Bo's distress at being an unproductive official, privileged by birth and education. And, although rhyme may have influenced wording, one notices that what Bo Juyi felt was "remorse" 愧 , while Wang is merely "shamefaced" 羞 .

[2]"Watching the Wheat-cutting" 觀刈麥. *Bo Juyi ji* 白居易集 , Gu Xuejie 顧學頡 ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979) 1/4. Trans. by Irving Lo, *Sunflower Splendor: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry*, ed. by Wu-chi Liu and Irving Lo (Bloomington: Indiana U., 1975), p. 202.

THE NINE WELLS (to the assigned rhyme *ying*)

Ten miles cliff-clinging, brook-fording°
Sheer drops, heights boulder-strewn, where no one plows°
We clutch vines, bend back bindweed
to reach the precipice's toes
Crane upward, such a teetering, spurting sluice!°
The edges of whose sounds
take to the woods to storm and rain;°
Whose most peripheral power rolls earth aside,
has made a creek ravine
Where insects tremble managing to fly,
beasts walk terror-stricken°
Frost and snow fall through summer, thunder cries in the cold°

The country people often see divine beings
Scaly armor, vast and silent, clouds behind.
I came here, stood long and got nothing from it--
Vainly counted sweet-flags that grew on the rocks.°

The eunuchs tied a dragon to a jade slip, tossed it in;
Clerks slew a dog, its blood poured into their silver horn

15 Beneath its shapes the land may hide things dangerous and weird
But that does not mean Heaven's thoughts dictate
grey skies and clear!

17 By their own logic, "hills and rivers slide and dry away"°
Incessantly mountains have filled valleys,
valleys have emptied mountains.°

19 Who can guarantee, in the thousandth autumn hence
That Heaven's Pillar will still not break, this spring
still tumble down?°

九井（得盈字）

1 沿濿涉澗三十里，高下犖确無人耕
3 捫蘿捩葛到巖趾，仰見吹瀉何崢嶸
5 餘聲投林欲風雨，赤勢卷土猶溪阬
7 飛蟲凌競走獸駭，霜雪夏落雷冬鳴
9 野人往往見神物，鱗甲漠漠雲隨行
11 我來立久無所得，空數石上菖蒲生
13 中官繫龍投玉册，小吏磔狗澆銀觥
15 地形偶爾藏險怪，天意未必司陰晴
17 山川在理有崩竭，丘壑自古相虛盈
19 誰能保此千秋後，天柱不折泉常傾

LOCATION. Li Bi 18.4b/490; *Linchuan* 12/182; Longshu 47/539; Shen, p. 38; Guangzhou, pp. 240-242; Zhou Xifu, p. 46.

DATE. 1050's, at Susong (see next note).

NINE WELLS 九井. A series of tarns or "wells" on a mountain in Susong Prefecture 宿松縣 (southern corner of modern Anhui, near the north end of the Boyang Lake). The seventh of these tarns was accessible only in the dry season, by "climbing on vines" 捫蘿. (*Jiangnan tongzhi* 34.9b.) At this tarn there stood a temple, to which local people came to beseech the dragon for rain. In this case, Wang may have been sent to pray for rain as part of a government ceremony. Perhaps this was in 1051-2 while stationed at Shuzhou. More likely it was in 1058, while on the Jiangdong circuit.

(There is also a mountain called "Nine Wells" near Dangtu, on the Yangzi River about forty miles south or upriver of Jiangning. But Shen says that area does not fit the scenery Wang describes, while the standard account of the Susong mountain does, even to the detail of "grasping vines" 捫蘿 to reach the waterfall.)

Line 1. TEN MILES: Lit. thirty *li*.

Line 2. LIT.: "High and downward, rocky and craggy, no one plows."

Line 4. LIT.: "Look upward, see the spurting and seeping—how steep and sheer!"

Line 5. LIT.: "The remaining sounds go into the woods; it is about to blow and rain."

Line 7. LIT.: "Winged insects tremble in terror, walking beasts are frightened."

Line 8. LIT.: "Frost and snow (seem to) fall in summer, thunder peals in winter." I.e. *strange things happen here*.

Line 12. SWEET-FLAGS 菖蒲: Calamus. This line may be a sardonic preview of one of Wang's most celebrated couplets from his later years (P 81):

"I carefully count the falling blossoms, therefore long I sit;
Slowly seeking fragrant grass delays my journey home."
細數落花因坐久，緩尋芳草得歸遲.

Compare also Bo Juyi's bolder line:

"The dragon cannot be a god; humans make him one."
龍不能神，人神之.

(From "Dragon of the Black Tarn," see comment below.)

Line 17. BY THEIR OWN LOGIC 在理: Lit., "According to the natural order."

Line 18. LIT.: "From ancient times, mountains and ravines have emptied and filled each other."

Lines 17-18. HILLS AND RIVERS SLIDE AND DRY AWAY 山川...崩竭: I.e. *kingdoms will fall*. In 780 BC, the three rivers near the Western Zhou capital changed course due to an earthquake. Boyang Fu 伯陽父 said it boded ill for the Zhou: "When *mountains slide and rivers dry away*, it augurs doom" 山崩川竭, 亡之徵也. (*Guo yu* 國語, Shanghai Guji 1978, 1/Zhou A/26.)

Cf. *Shijing* #193, about disasters and portents:

"A hundred *rivers* boil and froth,
Mountains and barrows crumble and *slide*;
High slopes become canyons,
Deep canyons turn into peaks..."
百川沸騰，山冢崒崩，高岸為谷，深谷為陵.

Cf. also *Zhuangzi* 24/X/15: "When the *river dries*, the canyon becomes empty; when a hilltop is flattened, a ravine fills up. Once sages have died out, great brigands cease to arise." 夫川竭而谷虛，丘夷而淵實，聖人已死則大盜不起.

Line 20. HEAVEN'S PILLAR 天柱: The last time it broke was in the mythical past when Gong Gong 共工, arguing with Zhuan Xu 顓頊 over who would be Emperor, knocked against it: the earth and sky tipped, so that all waters have flowed from west to east ever since. See *Liezi zhu* 列子注 (ann. by Zhang Zhan 張湛, Eastern Jin), in *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* v. 4, 5/52.

Here Wang attacks superstition, argues for practical government, and overlays his argument with what may be Buddhist and Daoist ideas.

Bo Juyi had attacked superstition in a humorous though somewhat preachy antecedent to the "Nine Wells:" a poem called "The Dragon of the Black Tarn" 黑潭龍, in the same meter that Wang's poem would later use. (*Bo Juyi ji* 4/88.) In summary, Bo says: The state has built a temple in a weird tarn, where people believe a dragon lives. Disasters are blamed on the dragon; therefore people sacrifice

pigs to appease him. Who eats that sacrificial pork? Rats and foxes: i.e, good-for-nothing scoundrels. Did the pig deserve to be slaughtered, and do the "foxes" deserve their meal? Does the dragon benefit? Does the dragon even know what foolish carnage is being perpetrated on his account?[3]

Like Bo Juyi, Wang disparages the mentality that would slaughter a dog to appease a mythical being. But Bo Juyi started analyzing the scene for us right away ("the dragon cannot be a holy thing--men make it holy," line 4). Wang is less simple and more objective: he looks around him to discover *why* such customs arise. Can we blame people for seeing visions, in this eerie canyon with its winter "thunder" and summer "frosts"? Wang feels he must sympathetically *understand* superstition before he can counter it: his trek into the canyon shows him how real these legends can seem. But though his mind can appreciate the weirdness, his heart is still immune, and the sight fails to impress him. He is immune to superstition because he is educated, and knows Nature's "logic" 理 ; he sees that dogs' blood, rocks, "Heaven" etc., do not control weather. Superstition contradicts common sense and hinders government: that is the Confucian objection, and the extent of Bo Juyi's message. But Wang goes a level deeper, to the realization of how fragile and ultimately unreal are the very mountains and gorges upon which both superstition and anti-superstition are

[3]See also the more profound poem by Lu You 陸游 (1125--1209), "The Waterfall of the Coiling Dragon" 蟠龍瀑布. Lines 5-6: How could mere water *intend* to startle me with its sounds? *Jiannan shigao* 劍南詩稿 (*SBBY* edition) 3.1b. Trans. Yoshikawa/Watson, p. 22.

based. What supernatural power can the earth possess if it is no more than shifting sand? People who think the land is permanent will grow nervous when it changes, and will pray to it out of fear. They think there is a permanent *Dao*, like the permanent earth, and are upset when it goes awry.

But someone who understands the real *Dao* knows that such a *Dao* is found, if anywhere, in impermanence itself. Evolutions are always with us, they are the norm: thus "Heaven's changes are not worth fearing" (see pp. 137-139 above). Wang sees landslides and changing riverbeds as Zhuangzi saw them: full of unexpected possibilities, not evil portents. When we lose a valley, we may gain a hill. When a nation falls, another rises. So instead of fearfully praying for water after a river shifts its course, we should adapt to the shifting *Dao* and rechannel our irrigation canals.

Just as Wang is impatient with the "supernatural," he strongly respects the natural: he pays tribute to the waterfall's might, and to the inevitable logic that could cause even this great sluice to run dry.

白日不照物 THE WHITE SUN DOES NOT LIGHT THE LAND

1 白日不照物 The "white sun" does not light the land:°
浮雲在寥廓 "Floating clouds" fill the sweep of sky.°
風濤吹黃昏 Wind and whitecaps blow through yellowing dusk,
屋瓦更紛泊 Rooftiles bob; a shambles greater still.°

5 行觀蔡河上 I walk above the River Cai, to watch
負土知力弱 Men shouldering earth: I see how weak is muscle!°
隋堤散萬家 By the Sui levee, ten thousand families strewn,
亂若春蚕箔 A tangled mass, spring silkworms on their trays.°

9 仍聞決數道 Still we hear talk of digging out more channels
且用寬城郭 Whose use will be to spare the city walls!
婦子夜號呼 Women and children shriek and howl by night,°
西南漫為壑 The Southwest has become a roiling gulf.°

LOCATION. Li Bi 11.3b/358 (#10 of 28); *Linchuan* 8/142; Longshu 39/457 (#21 of 25); Guangzhou p. 232.

DATE. Autumn 1056, in Kaifeng. See note 4 below.

Line 1. LIT.: "The white sun does not shine on things."

Lines 1-2. "WHITE SUN" 白日, "FLOATING CLOUDS" 浮雲. This image has long symbolized evil men blocking the rays of wisdom. See "Poem as I Approach my End" 臨終詩 by Kong Rong 孔融(153--208):

> "Slander and evil harm the fair and right,
> *Floating Clouds* smother the *White Sun*."
> 讒邪害公正，浮雲翳白日.

(In *Quan Han Sanguo Jin Nanbeichao shi* 全漢三國晉南北朝詩, ed. by

Ding Fubao 丁福保 ; Taipei: World, 1962, 2/44.)

Line 4. LIT.: "Roof tiles are an even greater shambles of floating."

Line 6. Could mean "I *watch* corvée laborers repairing the dykes, and thus know how weak men are..." Or conceivably, "When *I* shoulder up some earth, I realize how weak we are."

Line 8. LIT.: "Tangled as trays of spring silkworms."

Lines 11-12. WOMEN AND CHILDREN 婦子 . Cf. Wang Can 王粲 (177--217), first "Poem of Seven Sorrows" 七哀詩 , lines 9-10:

"Upon the road there is a starving *woman*
Whose *babe* in arms she casts out in the grass!"
路有飢婦人 , 抱子弃草間 .

(*Wenxuan* 23/498. Trans. also in J.D. Frodsham and Ch'eng Hsi, ed., *An Anthology of Chinese Verse: Han Wei Chin and the Northern and Southern Dynasties*; Oxford, 1967, p. 26.)

Wang wrote a series of twenty-eight ancient-style poems in the 1050's. Their first lines are their only titles; their diction, sense of sorrow, and enigmatic tone remind one of third and fourth-century poems, notably "Poems Singing of My Feelings" 詠懷詩 by Ruan Ji 阮籍 (210--263). We do not know what motivated many of these poems by Wang. Some of them lament current affairs, while others seem to reflect private troubles. "The White Sun" belongs to the category of current affairs: it speaks of how human ineptitude can make natural disasters worse.

This is the poem's background: In the 1050's, the Bian 汴 and Min 閔 rivers flooded at Kaifeng, the capital area. The authorities had the dykes rearranged in order to spare the capital city, but in doing so they deliberately breached some of the dykes, letting the

waters ravage vast stretches of farmland.[4]

Like others in the series, this poem follows pre-Song models in its exclusive use of description, somewhat sylized, with no direct mention of what the writer is feeling, and no outright recommendation of a remedy. But when he indicts stupid and cruel officials, Wang is not following the reticence of Ruan Ji but the indignant lamentations of Ruan's contemporary Wang Can, author of the most famous of all "Poems of Seven Sorrows" (see note to lines 11-12 above). Wang Can had shown the war-ravaged capital as "tangled beyond description" 亂無象 ; Wang Anshi finds a way to describe a different capital "tangled as spring silkworms on their trays" (line 8). Ruan Ji used allegories and symbols, while Wang Anshi's only allegory is the easily-recognized "floating clouds" that block the sun from the land (lines 1-2).

Wang's habitual concern for finding concrete solutions shows in line 6: he is watching laborers carry earth for a dyke; perhaps he picks up some earth himself to see what it weighs. He learns how weak a man

[4]I tentatively date these events, and the poem, to *autumn 1056*. One assumes that Wang saw the floods personally: several other poems by him mention these events. If he did, then the floods would have occurred in 1055, 1056, 1057, 1059 or 1060. The *Xu tongjian* records torrential rains and flooding at the capital only in 1056 (56/1363). Ouyang Xiu's first memorial about them is also dated to 1056.7.6 (by his Song-dynasty editor Hu Ke 胡柯 : *Ouyang ji*, "Zouyi ji" 14/862).

Mei Yaochen's collection mentions huge rains in the 7th month of 1057 (*after* Wang had left for the south). *Mei Yaochen ji* 27/965.

Li Bi quotes a work called the *Shuo ji* 朔記, which says that in 1058 the authorities opened a channel called the Permanent Flow Canal 永濟河 , to carry flood waters away from the capital city, avoiding a repetition of the 1056 disaster. Li Bi believes Wang's lines 9-10 do not refer to this action, but to some similar step proposed during the 1056 flood itself.

can be in the face of a flood. If this had been a more modern-style verse, or a Tang-style "Old Poem," he might likely have included in the poem a proposal for a system that could compensate for that weakness.[5]

[5]As in "Reducing Troops" 省兵 (probably written in 1049: Li Bi 17.4a/471; Zhou Xifu, p. 7). Or "The River's Flow" 河勢, written to Shenzong in support of a Yellow River project. (Li Bi 25.2a/611; Zhou Xifu, p. 107.)

TWO SONGS OF THE RADIANT CONSORT°

THE FIRST

When first the Radiant Consort steps
from the Han Palace,
Tears wet the spring wind, her forelock tips trailing
"To and fro she watches her shadow," no color to her,°
Yet even now can make her King unsteady.

But afterward the King indicts the painter--
"How often can one ever see such beauty?"°
That way of hers, no one could ever paint:°
They wronged the artist that day when they killed him.°

The moment she goes, her heart can tell
she will not return,
Alas! She has worn her last Han palace gown!"°
She sends her voice south over the frontier
Where only great geese fly, year after year.°
From a thousand miles the family passes news:°
"Stay well in the felt-tent city, think not of us."

Now do you see, good friend, just paces from you
shut within the Lofty Gates, Ajiao the Queen?°
There is no South or North
for a rejected human being!°

明妃曲二首 (其一)

明妃初出漢宮時，淚溼春風鬢脚垂，
低徊顧影無顏色，尚得君王不自持。
歸來却怪丹青手，入眼平生幾曾有。
意態由來畫不成，當時枉殺毛延壽。
一去心知更不歸，可憐著盡漢宮衣。
寄聲欲問塞南事，只有年年鴻雁飛。
家人萬里傳消息，好在氈城莫相憶。
君不見咫尺長門閉阿嬌，人生失意無南北。

LOCATION. Li Bi 6.2b/266; *Linchuan* 4/112; Longshu 40/472; *Shi juyao* 3/328; Zhu p. 71; Shimizu p. 35; Zhou Xifu p. 65 (1st poem only). Trans. Irving Lo, *Sunflower*, p. 338 (1st poem only).

DATE. Probably 1059 or 1060, in the capital. (See pp. 60-61 above.)

THE RADIANT CONSORT 明妃. Wang Zhaojun 王昭君. The outline of her story is as follows: She was an obscure Imperial concubine whom the Han Emperor had never seen. One day the emperor hired a painter named Mao Yanshou to make portraits of all the concubines, for the emperor's reference. Wang Zhaojun refused to bribe the avaricious Mao, therefore he made her portrait ugly. Later, a Xiongnu envoy came to choose a Han imperial concubine for his chieftain to marry, as part of a diplomatic agreement with the Han court. She was chosen. (Early versions say she volunteered.) When they led her out, the Emperor saw with a shock that she was the most beautiful woman on earth; but it was too late, she already belonged to the barbarians. She went and lived as a Xiongnu queen. (In Cai Yong's version: after her Xiongnu husband died, her Xiongnu stepson offered to take her as his wife, in accordance with local custom. She refused, and committed suicide.) Her grave mound in the desert stayed eternally green.

For major versions of the Zhaojun legend, see Eugene Eoyang, "The Wang Chao-chün Legend: Configurations of the Classic," *CLEAR* 4 (1982) 3-22; and Zhu p. 72ff. For pre-Song ballads, see *Yuefu shi ji* 樂府詩集, comp. by Guo Maoqian 郭茂倩 (fl. 1264-96); Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979, 29/424ff.

Line 3. TO AND FRO SHE WATCHES 低徊顧影 . From *Hou Han shu* 82/2941: As Zhaojun was being presented to the Xiongnu envoy, the Han emperor and all the court were stunned by her beauty, as she "lingered *to and fro, looking at her shadow*" 裴徊顧影 .

Line 6. LIT.: "In all my life, when ever has (such beauty) entered my eyes?"

Line 7. LIT.: "(Such an) attitude (movement, spirit) has never been paintable."

Line 8. THE ARTIST. Lit. Mao Yanshou 毛延壽 .

Line 10. OR: "How pitiable, she has worn out one by one her palace-style gowns" (Irving Lo trans.).

Line 12. GREAT GEESE 鴻雁: In the earliest extant ballad about Wang Zhaojun, she wished she could fly on the geese's backs, but they ignored her. (By Shi Chong 石崇 , 249--300. *Yuefu shi ji* 29/424; Zhu p. 74.) These are the geese upon whose feet the captured Han envoy Su Wu 蘇武 had tied a message, by which eventually he was rescued. (*Han shu* 54/2466.) The *implication* here for Wang Zhaojun: "They carried Su Wu's letter, but will they send mine?"

Line 13. A THOUSAND MILES: Lit. 10,000 *li*.

Line 15. AJIAO 阿嬌 : Empress Chen of the Han Emperor Wu, whom he put away in the Tall Gate Palace because he felt she was proud and jealous, and gave him no sons. She died there. See "Rhapsody on the Tall Gates Palace" 長門賦, attr. to Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 (179--116 BC), *Wenxuan* 16/327.

Line 16. LIT.: "Disappointment in human life has (nothing to do with) North or South!" I.e., Chinese have no monopoly on kindness: and cruel people are not always Barbarians.

COMMENT BY HUANG TINGJIAN on the first poem, in defense of Wang Anshi's Confucian standards: Huang felt this poem equalled the famous works about her by Li Bo and Wang Wei. Huang as a teen-ager had also discussed the poem with Wang Anshi's beloved friend Wang Hui (1024--1065, then in his late thirties). Huang had valued the poem for its depth and thorough expression, and for "harboring no lingering resentment." But Wang Hui had disagreed:

"Confucius said, 'Barbarian states who have true princes are still no match for the Chinese states who do not have them' 夷狄之有君，不如諸夏之亡也 . (*Lunyu yinde* 4/III/5.) To say that 'There is no South or North for a rejected human being' denies that statement (of Confucius)."

Huang Tingjian replied, "Your morals are undeniably most loyal and filial. But when Confucius 'considered living among the Nine

Barbarians,' (and someone remarked how rude and uncivilized they were), Confucius answered: 'When a Superior Man lives among them, what rudeness could there be?' 君子居之,何陋之有 (*Lunyu* 16/IX/14). I do not believe Master Wang Anshi was wrong at all." (I.e., barbarians can indeed be moral people, as Wang Anshi's poem implied.)

The next day, Wang Hui saw his maternal uncle Li Chang 李常 (*zi* Gongze 公擇, 1027--1090) and said, "Master Huang should choose bright teachers and forceful friends to be with him. His ideas show that he knows the ancients--the blood in his veins is immeasurable." (Quoted in Li Bi's notes.)

THE SECOND (P 8)

When first the Radiant Consort
comes to marry the barbarian
One hundred felt wagons
brim with barbarian maids!
Alone, she has no place to put the feelings she would speak;
When she plays them on the *pi-pa*, her heart knows what to think.
The pure gold plectrum, spring wind in her hands
Strumming, watching geese fly, she urges the Huns to drink.

Han Palace maidservants, in darkness shed tears
But travellers on the sands turn back their heads to gaze.
When Chinese love is shallow, truly barbarian love flows deep!°
Joy for human beings comes from knowing each others' hearts.°
Pity the green mound
sunk in brambles now
Even today, sad music hovers upon the strings!°

明妃曲二首 (其二)

明妃初嫁與胡兒. 氈車百兩皆胡姬.
含情欲說獨無處. 傳與琵琶心自知.
黃金捍撥春風手. 彈看飛鴻勸胡酒.
漢宮侍女暗垂淚. 沙上行人却回首.
漢恩自淺胡自深. 人生樂在相知心.
可憐青冢已蕪沒. 尚有哀絃留至今.

Line 9. CHINESE LOVE 漢恩 : Lit. "Han benevolence," i.e. the kindness that has been shown her by the Han emperor and court.

Line 10. CF. the "Nine Songs"九歌 #6, attr. to Qu Yuan:

"No sorrow is greater than the parting of the living;
No happiness greater than making new friendships."
悲莫悲兮生別離，樂莫樂兮新相知.

(*Chuci buzhu* 2.15a; translation from Hawkes, p. 111.) These lines were taken to mean that Qu Yuan had loved his king when he first entered the court, and still longed for the king even after being banished.

Lines 9-10. It is worth repeating a diatribe that this couplet inspired early in the Southern Song. Fan Chong范沖told Emperor Gaozong:

"Your servant has fathomed Wang Anshi's mind from his writings, yet I did not dare tell anyone. But it is this way: Most poets who have written about the Radiant Consort have considered it a bottomless shame and sorrow to live among the Hunnish barbarians; they have moved their readers to dolor and pain. Yet Wang Anshi said, 'When Chinese love is shallow, truly barbarian love flows deep / Joy for human beings comes from knowing each others' hearts.' If this were so, then Liu Yu would not be guilty of anything (劉豫, 1074--1143, Song official who defected to the Jurchens and served them as a puppet ruler of a buffer state in 1129), because the 'Chinese love (kindness 恩) for him was shallow but the barbarians' love was deep!' Those who would turn their backs on the lovingkindness of their kings and fathers; prostrate themselves to become thieves and bandits--all fit with Wang Anshi's point of view. This is what he called 'the art of destroying the minds of all the people.' Mencius said, 'He who would have no father and no king is a beast.' When someone denies his king and father because the Hunnish barbarians show him 'lovingkindness,' if that man is not a beast, what is he?"

LI BI'S COMMENT ON THE ABOVE: "Although Mr. Wang's idea was certainly wrong, what he was doing was striving for a new effect in his poetry, hoping to say something that no one had said before: he did not realize the error of his words."

SHAO BO'S COMMENT: This couplet implies that Wang Anshi approved of such fickle men as Feng Dao 馮道 (882--954). (*Shao hou lu* 10/61.) In the Southern Song, one's opinion of Feng Dao was a litmus test of one's political morality. Feng was a Five-dynasties official who had served several emperors and dynasties. Though Feng had believed himself to be a capable public servant, the Song-dynasty neo-Confucians found in him the most notorious disloyalty, fickleness and lack of principle in history. (See Wang Gungwu, "Feng Tao: An Essay on Confucian Loyalty," in Arthur Wright et al. ed., *Confucian Personalities*; Stanford, 1962, pp. 123-145.

COMMENT ON THE ABOVE COMMENTS: Neo-Confucians were not wrong to extend the meaning of Wang's poem into political ethics, because Wang certainly intended his verses to comment on more than just the Radiant Consort herself. And, although Fan Chong and Shao Bo must be exaggerating when they say Wang would have approved of traitors and opportunists, nonetheless they probably correctly sensed Wang's iconoclasm. One thought: from Wang's standpoint, the fact that an imperial subordinate would be forced to find "lovingkindness" among the Huns, is most likely an indictment of the Chinese *Emperor's* ineptitude or corruption, not a comment on the *subordinate's* morality or lack of it. Han "lovingkindness" was shallow because the Han court was not living up to ancient ideals. Wang Zhaojun *had taken the only alternative she could*. Besides, in marrying the Hun she was fulfilling the Han foreign policy that had sent her there. That was a loyal act.

Line 12. LIT.: "Still there are sad tunes that have been passed down until today!"

These two "Songs of Wang Zhaojun" did more than anything else to make Wang famous as a poet. Few of his verses have attracted more praise, invective or analysis.

They immediately inspired Ouyang Xiu, Sima Guang, Zeng Gong and others to write versions of their own.[6] None of those is as powerful or complex as Wang's two works, although Ouyang's comes close. Ouyang's first answer depicts harsh life on the steppes, Zhaojun's strumming of the *pi-pa*, and the innocence of young ladies back in China who love to play her tune but will never realize the anguish that produced it. Ouyang's second poem combines a comment on the ineptness of

[6]Ouyang's responding poems: *Ouyang ji*, "Jushi ji" 8/57; *Shi juyao* 3/314; Zhu p. 74. #1 translated in Ronald Egan, *The Literary Works of Ou-yang Hsiu* (Cambridge U., 1984), pp. 115-117.

Zeng Gong's versions: *Yuanfeng leigao* 4.11. Sima Guang's version: *Wenguo Wenzhenggong wenji* 溫國文正公文集 (*SBCK* edition) 2.23ab; Zhu, p. 75. Mei Yaochen's is in *Mei Yaochen ji* 30/1143. Liu Chang (in the capital during the late 1050's) also wrote one: *Gong shi ji* 公是集 (*Guoxue jiben congshu* edition) 18/201.

Han foreign policy with a warning that fate can victimize any one of us as it did her. (Political allegory is likely here.)

Sima Guang's version is not a political allegory (in the sense of taking Wang Zhaojun as a symbol for a Confucian official), because in Sima's view there was nothing allegorical about her: Zhaojun simply *was* a servant of her emperor, just as his male officials were. Her greatest sorrow would be lifelong separation from her ruler: "The Radiant Consort wiped her tears as she left the *Han sovereign*" 明妃揮淚辭漢主 (line 3); "For life and death, I know that I myself will not return / But I intend forever to dream of the Sovereign of Men" 妾身生死知不歸，妾意終期寤人主 (lines 19-20).

The sentiments and ideas in Wang's poems are richer than those of his friends' responses: rich enough to justify many of the different interpretations given them. Several of Wang's lines can be called revisionist, possibly iconoclastic. The theme of the first poem is simply stated: one can be maltreated anywhere, even among one's own people, or in a court where one has faithfully served. Wang Anshi makes Wang Zhaojun's story a genuine tragedy, in which all are victims and no one has the power to stop the bitter events. Wang Anshi's painter is not evil at all (another revisionist twist): instead, he has been wrongly punished for failing to paint unpaintable beauty. Zhaojun's family can only encourage her to accept her exile. If there is any potentially evil figure in the poem, it is the Emperor--selfish and irrational when he takes out his rage on the painter; too weak to keep Zhaojun and break a contract with the Xiongnu; "unsteadied" at the sight of her beauty; irresponsible because he has not noticed her

before.

Wang's personal experiences (imagined or real) in back of the poem are what make it powerful: experiences of being punished for failing at impossible tasks, as was Mao Yanshou; of being maintained in style but not respected (Ajiao); of being sent away against everyone's intentions (Wang Zhaojun). Beneath those experiences one can sense the collective Song experience of being a large nation forced to abide by tribal neighbors' wishes in order to keep them at bay.

That latter undertone surely struck a chord in the minds of Wang's contemporaries. And his sensitive depictions of human actions make Wang's poem appeal to modern readers more than Sima Guang's version.

Wang's second poem, which Yan Fu considers the better one, shifts the locale from China to the steppes. Scattered through the verse are two dozen words from the first poem. These repeated words link the second poem to the first, and convey a sense of Zhaojun being in constant reverie, recalling bits of her earlier life. We no longer hear of the Emperor, only of the other palace ladies weeping for her. Wang is undeniably revisionist now--he makes it clear that, sad as she may feel, Zhaojun has found a supportive home with the barbarians. Wang's was the first literati verse to say such a thing about her.[7]

[7]Among *non*-literati versions of the story, the *bianwen* manuscript from Dunhuang describes the barbarian prince as a devoted husband, and shows the Xiongnu community with sympathetic detail. But that unusual treatment is to be expected in a story that was recited to a frontier audience of mixed background, interested in the tale for its own sake. (Eugene Eoyang, 1982, pp. 14-15.)

But Wang goes even farther, when he actually labels the Han court callous and the Xiongnu deeply kind. In the eyes of later neo-Confucians, Wang showed immaturity or worse when he hinted that a rejected Imperial servant could legitimately find happiness serving someone else merely because the new person offered safety and love. (See note to P 8, line 9, p. 275 above.) For Wang, friendship was a union of hearts, no matter where or whose those hearts might be. Wang's lines 9-10 angered some neo-Confucians, because he seemed to echo a phrase by Qu Yuan, while perverting the exclusive loyalty that Qu Yuan was thought to have epitomized.

Even though Wang's contemporaries were not as severe as later critics in their moral standards for poetry, still sich daring lines in a high-quality poem could not help but stir the Song poetic world. Those lines had complicated the nostalgic image of Wang Zhaojun's green tomb. Should we sorrow for her exile? Or for the fact that only through exile had she found love and protection? And should we lament the foolishness that caused her sorrowful life? Or rather should we lament the narrow-mindedness that could see only sorrow in her story?

THE NORTHERN NOMADS SPREAD A BANQUET

Purple-robed retainers wield before the guests great cauldrons,°
Towels sheathe white rice, in its train comes millet stew;
They guide knives through the meat, slice it, feed it to the guests;
Shank and foreleg, jerkied or fresh,
on silver platters served.°

Solicitous, they urge the company to eat their fill,
Whisk back to quarters, meat and all--
once more pass goblets round;
Mountain greens, wild fruits awash in syrup and honey
With dried badger, salted boar, roasted and fried withal.

Our petty officers, now tipsy, make slight moves to rise
But small Huns grab them by the ears, entreating them to stay.°
At last the Huns stop drinking, and that brings us some relief:°
This is not a random thing: cup raised to cup in toast!

北客置酒

紫衣撩鼎置客前，巾韜稻飯隨粱饘．
引刀取肉割啖客，銀盤臂臑纂與鮮．
慇勤勸侑邀一飽，卷牲歸舍觴更傳．
山蔬野菓雜餴蜜，獾脯豕腊加烹煎．

9 酒酣象吏稍欲起，小胡捽耳爭留連.
11 為胡止飲且少安，一杯相屬非偶然.

LOCATION. Li Bi 7.7a/295; *Linchuan* 6/122; Longshu 46/528.

DATE. Probably 1060.1, at the Khitan border. See above, pp. 59, 62-65.

Line 1. CAULDRONS 鼎: Three-legged ritual vessels, used for banquets in ancient times, and mentioned in the ritual classics. The word may have been used here to sound ancient.

Line 4. "SHANK AND FORELEG" 臂臑: Prescribed among ritual banquet foods in the *Yili* 儀禮(*Shisanjing guzhu* 16/859).

Line 10. SMALL HUNS 小胡: I.e. "Hun underlings."

Line 11. LIT.: "And some peace comes, because the Huns have stopped drinking."

Part of a series written while escorting Khitan envoys back to the border, this poem probably describes a farewell banquet at the edge of Khitan territory. Escorting envoys was a common assignment for middle-level officials: the urgency of debate about how to manage the border is easy to understand when one realizes how many of the debaters, both "hawks" and "doves," had seen the frontier with their own eyes, just as Wang had. Even a decade earlier, Wang's vision of the constant threat to the Song spurred him to write soberly about the need to remake the whole army before it was too late.[8] In another poem, he compared himself to the "Goose Slave," that member in each flock of wild

[8]See "On Reducing Troops" 省兵: Li Bi 17.4a/471; Guangzhou, p. 252. Probably written 1049, at Yin Prefecture.

geese who stays awake to warn of danger. Goosehunters set up false alarms with torches, at each of which the "slave" cries out, waking the other geese. Eventually the other geese attack the "slave" in exasperation. The next time the hunters come--in earnest now--the "slave" stays silent, afraid to warn his companions again. The hunters net the whole flock. Wang's conclusion:[9]

"Complacently at peace, then being netted:
Nations have fallen thus since ancient times.
Peruse this 'Goose Slave' verse, my friend,
Disaster and fortune shall be revealed to you!"

偷安與受縶，自古有亡國。
君看雁奴篇，禍福甚明白

Wang's poems written on the mission with the envoys show a more complex view of the border situation. When he travelled there, he realized how

"Barbarian riders often come to shoot foxes and hares,
But Chinese troops will not mention lighting
the signal beacons."[10]

蕃馬常來射孤兔，漢兵不道傳烽燧。

[9]See "On the 'Wild Goose Slave,' to Zhu Mingzhi" 同昌叔賦雁奴, Li Bi 14.8a/419; Guangzhou pp. 247-249; Zhou Xifu p. 85.

[10]"Song of the White River" 白溝行, Li Bi 7.5a/291; Guangzhou p. 255; Zhou Xifu p. 76.

Seeing how solid the Khitans' power was, Wang could not merely advocate strength or conquest. Peace on the border--even an uneasy peace, or an expensive, temporary peace--was necessary, while the Song tried to strengthen itself.

The present poem shows the Khitans as complicated people. They can sometimes work within the ancient Chinese norms, and that is "some relief." But the Chinese realize that the Huns could force them into a drinking contest on a whim. "This is not a random thing--cup raised to cup in toast" (line 12): diplomatic gestures are to be sought after, but can easily degenerate into difficulties and aggression. Cautious rejoicing is in order.

Beneath the surface of this friendly ceremony, one notices that the retainers "wield" 揉 their cauldrons, towels "sheathe" 韜 the rice, the meat is "sliced off" 割 before the guests' eyes, and "fed" 喂 to them; it also may have been disorienting for the Chinese to have their ears pulled. In this part of the country, the nomads were the decisive force.

雜詠八首(第七首) EIGHT MISCELLANEOUS ODES: THE SEVENTH

召公方伯尊 Duke Shao, honored as a reverend elder
材亦聖人亞 In character second only to the Sage,
農時憚煩民 Fearing to hinder farmers in their toil
聽訟甘棠下 Held court beneath the old Crabapple's shade.°

嗟今千室長 Alas, men who control the fate of thousands
已恥問耕稼 Count it a shame to ask of crops and range
彈琴高堂上 But "play their zithers" high upon lofty halls,°
欲以世為化 Intending that the world thereby shall change!°

LOCATION. Li Bi 5.8b/258; *Linchuan* 4/110.

DATE. Undatable.

Lines 1-4. DUKE OF SHAO (召公 or 召伯), of the early Zhou. Legends say he set up his "courtroom" under a crabapple tree, to save the common people the trouble of going into the ducal palace during planting season. The people's nostalgia for this official is said to be the subject of "The Crabapple" 甘棠. (*Shijing* #16. Li Bi notes that Wang had questioned this legend in an essay, "Record of the Hill View Pavilion at the Fuzhou Governor's Chambers" 撫州通判見山閣記, *Linchuan* 83/873. Actually, the person speaking in that essay is not Wang, but the governor of Fuzhou; thus Wang may still have believed the legend himself. And it would be perfectly acceptable for Wang to use a legend as an example of good government, even if he did not believe the legend to be literally true.)

Line 7. "PLAY THEIR ZITHERS" 彈琴. Confucius' disciple Mi Buqi 宓不齊 (*zi* Zijian 子賤), when ruler of Shanfu 單父, merely "played his sounding zither, but never himself came down from the hall, and Shanfu was put in order" 彈鳴琴, 身不下堂, 而單父治. (*Lüshi chunqiu*, in *Xinbian Zhuzi jicheng* vol. 7, 21/277.)

Line 8. CHANGE 化: An ancient, pregnant word. Not merely "to change," but to be *transformed*, as in the gradual evolution of civilization.

The poems in the series to which this piece belongs resemble late Han or Jin-dynasty laments for the fragility of life, and the prevalence of stupidity. Most of the eight poems draw images from the *Shijing* and other basic classics. Many of them seem also to burn with a specific complaint. (Liu Chenweng notes #2 through #5.) This poem is more general: it attacks what Wang elsewhere called the "common crowd"流俗 --officials who, whether cynically or just through ignorance, imagine themselves to be "transforming" their realms through "non-action"無為 , when in fact they are merely "doing nothing." Given a choice between two legendary rulers to emulate, they pick the most convenient example--the man who played a zither in his hall--not understanding the rationale behind either man's style of government.

The poem is artfully simple: four lines recount ancient times, four lines describe today. The second half implies a contrast between ignorant "zither-players" and the ancient zither-playing sage. And the poem's major contrast is reinforced by two phrases that echo each other's sounds, and even look similar in written form: "beneath the crabapple tree" (*gan tang xia* 甘棠下 , line 4), vs. "atop lofty halls" (*gao tang shang* 高堂上 , line 7).

ON JIA YI°

1	漢有洛陽子	A son of Luoyang lived under the Han;
	少年明是非	When young, already he knew right from wrong.
	所論多感槩	The words he spoke waxed rich in fervent passion,
	自信肯依違	He trusted himself: was he a man to waver?
5	死者若可作	If those already dead could once more rise,
	今人誰與歸	To which of them might modern people cleave?°
	應須蹈東海	Surely he would "tread into the Eastern Sea"
	不但涕沾衣	Where more than tears alone
		would stain his robes.°

LOCATION. Li Bi 24.10b/602; *Linchuan* 16/215; Longshu 73/779; *Shi juyao* 4/523; Zhou Xifu p. 230; Guangzhou pp. 292-3.

DATE. Undatable.

JIA YI 賈誼 (201--169 BC). Called to court in his twenties by the Han Emperor Wen, he suffered exile, felt abandoned because his loyal views grated on the emperor's ear; considered himself slandered; was eventually invited back to court, but died young. (Biography in *Han shu* 48.)

Lines 5-6. LIT.: "If the dead could live, with whom (should) modern people associate?" A paraphrase from the *Li ji* (see *Li ji yinde* 禮記引得, Harvard-Yenching Concordance Series, rep. Shanghai, Guji, 1983) 4/70. I.e., "Who from the past is worthy?" More important, "*Who in the present is able to discern worthiness?*" Would anyone recognize Jia Yi's greatness if he lived in our own times?

Lines 7-8. Various interpretations are complicated by the alternate reading that Li Bi follows (若 instead of 但 for the 2nd word in line 8).

LIT. (standard reading 但): "(We) would surely have to tread into the Eastern Sea, not *merely* cry into our robes."

(variant reading 若): "*Rather than* feeling we had to tread into the Eastern Sea, *it would be better* to cry into our robes."

The following interpretations of the poem as a whole are possible, following the standard reading:

1. The Song dynasty stands in even greater peril than the Han did when Jia Yi was alive. If Jia Yi, Lu Zhonglian and other worthies could live again, whom among them would we follow? Threatened as we are by the Khitans and Tanguts, we would drown ourselves in the sea (as Lu Zhonglian 魯仲連 had said he would do if the Qin came to power), rather than just stand and weep as Jia Yi had. (Lu Zhonglian: see *Shi ji* 83/246.)

2. ...If the dead could live again, would people today choose any of the worthy dead as mentors? Jia Yi would find himself even less recognized, and the nation in even greater peril than in his day: surely he would jump into the sea, rather than merely weep as he had in the Han.

Li Bi's interpretation, following the variant 若 : "...Lu Zhonglian's dramatic threat to jump into the sea, could hardly measure up to the nobility and wisdom shown by Jia Yi, who merely wept." (Most commentators find this interpretation rather forced and irrelevant.)

Jia Yi, like the earlier Qu Yuan 屈原 , is a common topic for poetry about being loyal in the face of slander, misunderstanding and banishment. Of Wang's two poems about Jia Yi, this is the more conventional and probably the earlier. One assumes Wang wrote it as a comment on how the Song was in even greater peril than the Han had been, and how if Jia Yi lived today he would be equally unrecognized, and even more desperate, than in his own dynasty. This is no longer a time for Jia's weeping, or for Lu Zhonglian's noble suicide, but for wisdom. But who will listen to that wisdom?

The Guangzhou edition speculates that Wang wrote this after his "Ten Thousand Word Memorial" had fallen on Renzong's deaf ears in 1059. Although there is no proof of that, the poem does seem to fit with Wang's more youthful work.

His second poem about Jia Yi, however, turns the usual view upside-down. It could possibly date from the last few months of Wang's

life:

For a time, his plans and ideas were put to a bit of use
So who can say the liege monarch looked down on Master Jia?
Though high in rank and office, to have all one's words
overthrown--
From old, has this not happened to more than ten thousand
dukes and ministers?

一時謀議略施行，誰道君王薄賈生。
爵位自高言盡廢，古來何啻萬公卿。

("Jia Yi"賈生. See Li Bi 46.10a/1137; Zhou Xifu p. 230.)
It makes sense to assume that Wang, in 1086, an honored "duke" and "minister" all of whose words were being overthrown--would have come to think of Jia Yi as not so unfortunate after all. At least some of Jia's ideas had been accepted. Was that not more important than what his rank was?

WRITTEN AT THE CROW RIVER HOSTEL°

(by Du Mu 杜牧, 803--852)

Victory and loss are not for strategists to ordain;
To be a true man, bear your shame: through infamy endure!
So many "brothers" bright and bold, "beyond that eastern shore--"
Might they roll dust-clouds, riding forth anew? Who can be sure?

題烏江亭 杜牧

勝敗兵家事不期，包羞忍恥是男兒。
江東子弟多才俊，卷土重來未可知。

CROW RIVER HOSTEL

(Wang Anshi's Response)

One hundred battles' weariness saddens this soldier's heart,
Hard to remount his drive, once he has lost the Central Plain;°
Although "beyond that eastern shore" the brothers dwell there still,
For this liege lord, why would they want to "roll forth dust" again?

烏江亭 王安石

百戰疲勞壯士哀，中原一敗勢難回。
江東子弟今雖在，肯為君王卷土來。

LOCATION. Wang's poem: Li Bi 47.8a/1161; *Linchuan* 33/363; Longshu 67/718; Guangzhou p. 288. Du Mu's poem: *Fanchuan shiji zhu* 樊川詩集注, ann. by Feng Jiwu 馮集梧 (Qing), (Shanghai Guji, 1978) 4/279.

DATE. Undatable.

CROW RIVER HOSTEL (Wujiang ting 烏江亭): near the Yangzi River's western shore, northeast of modern He Prefecture 和縣 in Anhui, about twenty miles from Jiangning.

After the fall of the Qin dynasty, Liu Bang 劉邦 and Xiang Yu 項羽 (232--202 BC) fought for control of the empire. Xiang Yu eventually lost. With his 8000 men reduced to a handful, pressed to the edge of the Crow or Black River 烏江, he met the caretaker of the official hostel there. The caretaker had a boat waiting to take Xiang Yu back east across the river, where he might raise another army and be king again, if only of that region. But Xiang laughed, and said he had resolved to die. Of the "brothers from beyond the eastern shore" 江東弟子 that he had brought with him, now not one survived. How could he hold his head up before the people there, especially if they decided to make him king out of pity? (*Shi ji* 7/336.)

Wang's poem, line 2. LIT.: "After that defeat on the Central Plain, the trend is hard to reverse."

Wang's epigrammatic poems in response to other poets often reveal aspects of his thought. This and the next poem can serve as examples.

Xiang Yu's suicide has become one of Chinese history's most famous moments. He is widely regarded as a better fighter and somehow a nobler man than his opponent, even though he could be ruthless, myopic, and had lost the *Dao* and Heaven's approval. In the late Tang dynasty, when warlords were once again battling over the empire, Du Mu wrote the above reflection at the site of the Crow River Hostel. Would not Xiang Yu have been wiser and nobler if he had swallowed his shame, found a way to face the people east of the river, raised an army and made a second try? Du Mu is advocating a pragmatic attitude higher than conventional morality or dignity: an attitude whereby one could sacrifice even one's "face" for the sake of a good goal. And it is a

pragmatism suitable to times of upheaval, that would allow a man a second chance even if he had ignored the *Dao* or wisdom before.

But Wang Anshi's response to Du Mu is more pragmatic still: pragmatic to the point of iconoclasm, and perhaps (ironically) indicative of how settled and law-abiding China had become under the Song. As Wang sees it, Xiang Yu sorrowed because he realized he had lost the war as well as the battle. When he decided to end his life it was through reason, not nobility: his "drive" was spent; no true soldiers would bother to follow him now. A hero is a man who can recognize when to give up. And, by more than coincidence, this hero is in defeat because he has lost the *Dao*: he will never succeed. Tang romanticism has been replaced by Song responsibility and clear-cut morality.

The contrast between the two poems' diction is artful and subtle: instead of Du Mu's general or heroic words ("victory and loss" 勝敗, "endure infamy" 忍恥, "true man" 男兒), Wang talks of "a hundred battles' weariness" 百戰疲勞, and "brothers" who are no longer "bright and bold" 才俊 but merely "are there" 在. Wang echoes certain sounds from Du Mu's poem in his own: especially in line 2, "hard to remount his drive" (*shì nán huí* 勢難回) vs. Du's "to be a true man" (*shì nán ér* 是男兒). Those echoes make Wang's rebuttal sound more fluent.

"PEEKING AT THE GARDEN"°

With walking cane, several rounds a day

to view the garden--

Pull flowers straight, handle grass-blades--

will always freshen the mind.

But Master Dong, beguiled by the Commentary to the *Annals*:°

Would he bring himself to believe that "tossing books aside"

made sense?°

窺園

杖策窺園日數巡，攀花弄草興常新。

董生只被公羊惑，肯信捐書一語真？

LOCATION. Li Bi 41.8a/995; *Linchuan* 27/311; Longshu 76/810; Zhou Xifu p. 138; Guangzhou p. 294.

DATE. After 1070?

"PEEKING AT THE GARDEN" 窺園. Refers to Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (app. 179--app. 93 BC). Scholar and high official under the Han Emperor Wu. Expert on the *Chunqiu*, particularly the *Gongyang Commentary*. Played the decisive role in molding Han Confucian ideology, by uniting Confucianism with the *yin* and *yang* principles. This was not pure Confucianism as Wang saw it.

Dong is said to have concentrated so hard on his books that "for three years he did not *peek at his garden*" 三年不窺園. (*Han shu* 56/2495. Also *Shi ji* 121/3127.)

Line 3. LIT.: "Master Dong was simply deceived by the 'Gongyang Commentary.'"

Line 4. LIT.: "Would he be willing to believe that the phrase 'tossing out books' was true?"

TOSSING BOOKS 捐書. Advice given to Fan Ning 范甯 (339--401). Fan, a serious scholar concerned that Confucianism maintain an orthodox line, wrote the earliest extant annotations to the *Chunqiu*'s "Guliang Commentary." He had painful eye trouble, for which his

colleague Zhang Zhan張湛 jokingly prescribed the following remedy: "One unit of *tossing out bookreading* 捐讀書 , a second unit of thought-reduction, a third of looking strictly inward, a fourth of simplifying one's view of the outside, a fifth of rising late in the morning, a sixth of sleeping early at night. These six things should be boiled in a spirit-fire, placed in a breath-of-life steamer, steeped in the breast for seven days, then placed into the 'cubic-inch' (the heart)... If taken long and continuously, your gaze will penetrate beyond walls. Not only will this brighten your eyes, but it will increase your years." In other words, Fan Ning should *relax*, and *broaden his sensibilities*. (*Jin shu* 75/1988. Zhang Zhan annotated the Daoist classic *Liezi*.)

This poem has been used to counter rumors that Wang was so possessed by his book-learning that he would gnaw his own fingers. (See pp. 170-171 above.) Wang may have written it as a rebuttal to Sima Guang, his rival in politics and thought, while Sima was temporarily retired at Luoyang during the New Policies. There Sima had built a "Garden of Solitary Pleasure." Of the Study Pavilion within the garden, Sima wrote the following:[11]

1	吾愛董仲舒	I love Dong Zhongshu,
	窮經守幽獨	Who exhausted the Classics, staying aloof and alone.
3	所居雖有園	Although there was a garden where he lived,
	三年不遊目	For three years his eyes never wandered there.
5	邪說遠去耳	False teachings he dismissed far from his ears,
	聖言飽充腹	While Sages' words pressed full within his breast.

[11] "Ode on the Study Pavilion at the Garden of Solitary Pleasure" 獨樂園詠,讀書堂. *Sima Wengong wenji* 12.4a.

7 發策登漢庭 And when he revealed his policies in the court,
百家始消伏 The Hundred Philosophers began to dissolve and submit.

Wang supported flexible thinking all his life, opposing reliance on ideology or written words alone. And flexible thinking, he believed, should extend to poetry as well: a poet should use allusions or historical references to jolt or change the reader's perception. Too many poets simply chose allusions that made a *single* point, a point that agreed with the poem's title: this was not poetry, but mere "stringing facts" 編事, and of little use.[12]

Wang used that rationale in dozens of short poems on history, most of which challenge the wisdom of historical heroes, or question conventional assessments of what those heroes had done. The title "Peeking at the Garden" suggests Dong Zhongshu, hero of Sima Guang's poem: a dedicated scholar who does *not* peek at his garden. Wang's first two lines seem like an innocuous description. But they are actually a preparation for the second couplet, which advocates ways in which Dong and Sima could have learned to think better by delving into their "gardens" instead of their books: not just walking in the gardens for a rest, but examining the familiar "flowers" and "grasses" as if seeing them for the first time. Wang's real intention: one should step beyond the classics, to learn directly from common sense, Nature, and folk

[12]Reported by Cai Qi in *Cai Kuanfu shihua* 蔡寬夫詩話 (*Song shihua jiyi*), p. 419. See also Li Bi's notes.

wisdom.[13] And Sima Guang surely would have noticed that Wang, a *Zhou li* advocate, specifically criticized reliance on the *Chunqiu*.

The following poem is an even more famous example of Wang challenging conservatives in verse.

[13]Zhou Xifu's interpretation. See also Wang's famous "Reply to Zeng Gong" 答曾子固書, in which he says one should read broadly, and listen even to what farmers and seamstresses have to say. (*Linchuan* 3/778.)

AS FOR ZIGONG° 賜易也

Background:[14]

"In the Southern Hall of the former Central Secretariat at the capital, there was inscribed a poem by former premier Yan Shu 晏殊, 'On the Pole-Climbing Acrobats.'[15]..It had undoubtedly been written with a topical reference in mind. Later (under Shenzong), the Military Affairs Commissioner Wen Yanbo 文彥博 passed through the Central Secretariat one day.[16] He walked with Wang Anshi to a spot by the poem, and pointedly lingered there, reciting the poem at length: he, too, must have had something in mind. Several days later, Wang went back and put up a response."

ON POLE-CLIMBING ACROBATS

(Attributed to Yan Shu, 991--1055)

Atop their pole ten stories tall, they writhe their bodies round
Those feet afling and heels aflip--onlookers gasp to see!
While by the Han an old man dwells: I wonder if you knew?°
Though lugging his petty water-jug, he's poor no more than they!

[14]According to Ye Mengde 葉夢得 (1077--1148), *Ye xiansheng shihua* 葉先生詩話 B.9b/23.

[15]Yan Shu, of Linchuan. Famous writer of lyric verses, premier of China in 1043. His followers included the early reformers Fan Zhongyan and Ouyang Xiu. His collected works, except *ci*, are almost entirely lost. See above, pp. 190-191.

[16]This incident would have occurred any time between 1069.2, when Wang entered the Central Secretariat, and 1073.4, when Wen Yanbo resigned as Commissioner of Military Affairs.

詠上竿伎

百尺竿頭裹裹身，足騰跟倒駭傍人.
漢陰有叟君知否，抱甕區區亦未貧.

AS FOR ZIGONG

(Wang Anshi's response)

As for Zigong, well-spoken man who did not see the truth--

Mistakenly he gave his heart to the old man by the Han.

What business could a bobbing, dipping well-sweep ever hinder?

"Lugging a petty water-jug" just makes this body older.

賜也

賜也能言未識真，說將心許漢陰人
桔槔俯仰奴何事，抱甕區區老此身

LOCATION. Li Bi 44.11a/1085; *Linchuan* 30/338; Longshu 75/806 (untitled); Guangzhou pp. 286-287; Deng Guangming 1979, p. 99; *Ye xiansheng shihua* B.9b/23.

DATE. Yan's poem: 1043. Wang's poem: between 1069.2 and 1073.4 (see note 16 above).

BACKGROUND ALLUSION: Zhuangzi writes of Confucius' disciple Zigong 子貢 (named Duanmu Ci 端木賜), who at Hanyin 漢陰("the banks of the Han River") one day saw an old man watering his field with a jug, scooping one jugful at a time from the ditch, with a tremendous waste of time and strength. Zigong asked why he did not use a well-sweep. The old man replied it was because his Master had told him that mechanical contrivances 機械 would lead to contrived affairs 機事, and inevitably to "contriving minds" 機心; and a contriving mind by definition could not perceive the *Dao*. Zigong turned flustered on hearing this: it occurred to him that Confucius may have been training him to have a "Contriving Mind" that accepted the Possible and pursued Utility, and would not allow him even to put his own self in order, much less govern a nation. Zigong went back and told Confucius about

the wise old man with the jug. Confucius remarked that the old man was only half-wise: though he seemed to be practicing primal wisdom, he had *shut himself away from reality*; thus he could not function *within* the world as a truly primally wise man could do. (*Zhuangzi yinde* 31/XII/53-64. Trans. by A.C. Graham, pp. 186-187. Graham takes a somewhat different interpretation of Confucius' remarks, but his interpretation can still agree with Wang's poem.)

Wang's Poem, line 3. BOBBING, DIPPING俯仰. Alludes to another description in *Zhuangzi* of a well-sweep: "It *dips down* when you pull it, and *bobs up* when you let it go"引之則俯，舍之則仰。(*Zhuangzi yinde* 38/XIV/38.)

These two poems represent a debate between two Confucian camps, discussing the merits of an idealistic purity that had been condemned by an apocryphal Confucius as reported in a Daoist classic. The Confucius in the story advocated using such things as a "well-sweep": any device or idea, regardless of its source, that was practical, possible, and could make life easier. That was Wang's ideal Confucianism: flexible, "utilitarian." But the old farmer represented an equally prevalent brand of Confucianism; the kind that sought simplicity, personal discipline, contentment with one's lot. This was the Confucianism of the Qingli reformers (Yan Shu, Wen Yanbo, Fan Zhongyan, Ouyang Xiu), and many of their followers who eventually opposed Wang's new policies. (See Su Che's essay under P 2, p. 253.) These Confucians saw excessive political activism as a pointless exercise akin to acrobatics--impressive, but irrelevant to affairs on the ground. (Would Yan Shu object to sending men to the moon if he lived now?) We no longer know what Yan's specific target was, but his poem's philosophy is clear.

Wang's rebuttal is not strictly iconoclastic, because he does

repeat Zhuangzi's original conclusion: but he still rebuts what was probably the majority philosophy among prominent Confucians of his day. And Wang in unorthodox, to the extent that he is defending a supposedly Confucian idea described outside the Confucian canon.[17]

Wang's poem was likely composed on the spur of the moment, and has the flavor of scholarly banter or "linked verse," even while it advances a serious difference of opinion. Neither Yan Shu's poem nor Wang's alone would be famous without the other: both are straightforward statements, competent artistically but not startlingly so. But put together they summarize an enormous area of Confucian controversy: activist vs. non-interventionist; "utility"功利 vs. "morality"道德; experimentation vs. acceptance of fate. Wang is the winner in the rhetorical contest: he seizes the issue from Yan Shu, so that it is no longer a matter of whether the old man can get along with his unambitious ways, but instead is a matter of human welfare--can a good Confucian sit by and let generation after generation wear themselves down in drudgery? It is no accident that the last line of Wang's poem has become especially famous in modern China, where technical advancement is a major goal.[18]

[17]Deng Guangming finds a relation between the ideas in Wang's poem (though not the writing of the poem itself) and Wang's efforts to try new dredging methods on the Yellow River, in opposition to cautious conservatives.

[18]See "Let us Avoid 'Lugging a Petty Water-jug--Just Makes This Body Older'"... 不要"抱瓮区区老此身"讓王安石的"赐也"後有感. By Language and LIterature Group of Sixth Middle School, Xiangtan, Hunan; in *Guangming ribao* 光明日報 1976.2.12.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Fireworks peal, a year comes through the sound,°
Spring wind pours warmth into the spicy wine°
By thousands of doors, ten thousand homes,
first glistening of the sun,
All hang new peachwood plaques where the old talismans once hung.

元 日
爆竹聲中一歲除，春風送暖入屠蘇。
千門萬户曈曈日，總把新桃換舊符。

LOCATION. Li Bi 41.3a/985; *Linchuan* 27/308; *Qianjia shi* 2b; Zhou Xifu, p. 106; Guangzhou, p. 280. Trans. Liu Shih-shun, p. 115.

DATE. Undatable.

Line 1. LIT.: "Among the sound of the firecrackers, a year is rooted out."

Line 2. SPICY WINE 屠蘇. A wine made from the *tusu* herb, served at the new year to ward off disease. (*Jingchu suishi ji* 荊楚歲時記, *siku quanshu zhenben* edition, 2b-3a.)

These joyous lines have affected readers for centuries; the poem captures the essence of the New Year celebration. Modern commentators also see it as a paean to the dawn of the New Policies. Although they have no proof for that idea, I include the poem in this section of "public" verse on the chance that it may be true.

Wang does remind us of "change" throughout the verse: the year is "weeded out" or "newly appointed" 除 ; the sun dawns "bright" 曈曈 ;

old peachwood plaques are "exchanged"換 . But the key to the poem's effect as a composition may be its interweaving of energetic sights and sounds. A burst of firecrackers begins it; wind *brings* warmth; the sun is young and the city vast; everyone is awake, and all are doing the same thing. Firecrackers, spiced wine and peachwood are used to ward off evil, whether demons or disease. The chance to end old evils and start afresh is what makes a new year meaningful: therein also lies the resemblance between a new year and a political reform.

送宋中道
通判洺州 SENDING SONG ZHONGDAO TO GOVERN MINGZHOU°

1 漳水不灌鄴 "Zhang waters" had not "irrigated Ye"
不知幾何有 For how much time, no one has ever known,
後世有史起 Until in later years there came Shi Qi
乃能為可為 Who first was "able to do" what "could be done."°

5 余嘗憐洺民 I have had pity for the Mingzhou people—
舄鹵半不治 Half of their "brackish land" can serve no use.
頗覺漳可引 Strongly I feel one could divert the Zhang
但為談者嗤 But I am scorned by all who talk of this.

9 高議不同俗 When your high thoughts differ from the common run
功成人始思 Men heed you not, until your deeds are done.
夫子到官日 Upon the day you reach your new position,
勿忘吾此詩 Good sir, do not forget these words of mine!

LOCATION. Li Bi 13.7b/400; *Linchuan* 9/153; Longshu 42/487; Shen, p. 29; Guangzhou, p. 271.

DATE. Reform period, 1069—1074.

SONG ZHONGDAO 宋中道. Shen surmises that this was Song Minxiu 宋敏修. His elder brother was Song Minqiu 宋敏求 (*zi* Cidao 次道), Wang's collaborator on the *100 Tang Poets*.

MINGZHOU 洺州. In southern Hebei, near Handan and Anyang.

Lines 1-4. YE 鄴. Refers to the Anyang area, where the Zhang River flows. In Wang's time the Zhang had flooding problems, and irrigation was inadequate. Wang assigned Song Zhongdao to the area mainly to tame the river for irrigation. Such projects often aroused opposition on the grounds that they cost money and exhausted the corvée laborers who did the work. In the face of such reasonable-sounding and

powerful opposition, it took willpower to carry out such projects.

This poem speaks of an ancient official who had done the same thing Song Zhongdao was appointed to do. The story follows. (Based on *Lüshi chunqiu* 16/190; alternate, condensed version in *Han shu* 29/1677. Also consulted Timoteus Pokora, "Hsi-men Pao in History and Fictions," *Altorientalische Forschungen* 8.1981, pp. 265-298.)

King Xiang of Wei 魏襄王 (r. 319--296 BC) one night at a banquet praised his officials, likening them to his great-grandfather's famous officer Ximen Bao 西門豹, who had once been Prefect of Ye. But an official named Shi Qi 史起 replied to the king, saying Ximen Bao had not been that good: Ye Prefecture was poor and unproductive; "the Zhang River flows beside it, yet Ximen Bao did not know how to use the river (to irrigate); this was stupid of him. And if he did know, yet did not mention the subject, then he was disloyal. We should not emulate stupidity and disloyalty." (*Han shu*: "If Ximen Bao did not know how to use the river, he was unwise. If he knew how but *did not do it*, he was inhumane.")

The next day, King Xiang called Shi Qi to him, and asked: "Can the Zhang River really be used to irrigate the farms of Ye?"

"Yes it can."

"Then why do you not do it for Us?"

"Your servant fears Your Majesty cannot do it."

"But if you are truly able to do it for Us, We will do completely as you say."

But that was not the problem, Shi Qi explained:

"If Your servant carries out this project, the people will surely resent me, to such a degree that at the worst I shall be put to death, or if not that, at least they will accuse me. After I die or am accused, I hope Your Majesty will find someone else to complete the work I begin."

The king agreed, and appointed Shi Qi Prefect of Ye. Shi Qi went there and proceeded with the project. The people there resented him, and wanted to accuse him. Shi Qi hid, not daring to come out. The King sent someone else to complete the project, as Shi Qi had instructed. Once the water started to flow, the people profited hugely from it, and sang (in praise of Shi Qi)...

The parallels between Wang's time and the past must have made this an especially moving exhortation. Song Zhongdao was being sent from the same capital as Shi Qi, to the same region, for the same purpose, and against similar objections.

"Shi Qi" of course is a complimentary reference to Song Zhongdao. But it would be even more appropriate to take Shi Qi as represent-

ing Wang Anshi himself. (One could substitute "Wang Anshi" and "Shenzong" for "Shi Qi" and "King Xiang" throughout the original story, and it would still make sense.) The circumstances under which the poem was written parallel the story of Shi Qi completely, not only in details but in the central point being made: "Being Pleased with Results" 樂成 (the title of the *Lüshi chunqiu* chapter in which the story appears). Ordinary people will try to stop anything new until it starts to show results (line 10); knowing this, the best kings will persevere against all odds until their deeds are done. The *Lüshi chunqiu* concludes:

"It can be said that King Xiang of Wei knew how to recognize what was good. If one can truly tell what is good, then even though the masses complain, he will still not make changes on that account. A mediocre sovereign will stop a good thing just because it brings about murmuring, but a worthy sovereign under the same circumstances will succeed."

Throughout the reform, the problem of standing up to protestors, detractors and destroyers occupied Wang's thoughts. Like Shi Qi, he was prepared to ignore the "murmurings" or even sacrifice himself, so long as someone could finish the job for him. The job was what mattered; Wang could buck criticism for its sake. But fighting those tides was still strenuous, and sometimes it grew hard for Wang to maintain his own morale. This poem is a morale-booster for both Song Zhongdao and Wang himself.

Behind the poem's exhortation is the imperative that "one who knows something can be done, but does not do it, is inhumane" (see note

above, p. 303). If something "can be done" 可能 and we are "able to do it" 能為, then we *must do it*. Why? Because there are people who need their salty famrland watered, to end their hunger. That is the strongest reason for action, and the only reason necessary.

BALLAD OF YUANFENG, FOR YANG JI (P 17)

The hills on four sides, drooping, dull,
reflected scarlet sun;°
The land's bare back grew cracks, like a diviner's tortoise shell.°
The Master of the Lake's South Shore sat in his wattled hut,°
Watching them pedal the paddy wheel,
and longed for an autumn crop.

Then thunder coiled, lightning whipped,
clouds spumed and sprayed;
Midnight carted loads of rain down to the level marshland—
Now parched grain elegantly unfurls, burying the oxen's backs;
Beans that were dead revive, and their furry pods swell fat.
The water-pumping Dragon Bones hang upside-down at home,°
You pour for guests the wine you bought, recounting labors past.

Through seasons three, the five grains have been selling
cheap as water,
And now you see the western crop again will be that good.°
Yuan Feng: People's Bounty--our Sage communes with Heaven;°
One thousand falls, ten thousand harvests, all will be the same.
You, sir, live in the country, and indeed you are not poor:°
"Playing pushpin" into old age, of Yuan Feng you shall sing!°

元豐行示德逢

1 四山翛翛映赤日，田背坼如龜兆出．
3 湖陰先生坐草室，看踏溝車望秋實．
5 雷蜚電掣雲滔滔，夜半載雨輸亭皐．
7 旱禾秀發埋牛尻，豆死更蘇肥莢毛．
9 倒持龍骨�exhaust屋敖，買酒澆客追前勞．
11 三年五穀賤如水，今見西城復如此，
13 元豐聖人與天通，千秋萬歲與此同．
15 先生在野固不窮．擊壤至老歌元豐

LOCATION. Li Bi 1.1/159; *Linchuan* 1/81; Longshu 37/439. Trans. Williamson II/203.

DATE. Probably 1081, in Jiangning. (Yuanfeng lasted from 1078 to 1085; it was Shenzong's reign title during Wang's retirement. This was to be the fourth harvest of the era: see line 11.)

YUANFENG 元豐. This is one of several poems Wang wrote in praise of the era, during which the New Policies remained in effect and harvests were generally good. See above, p. 189.

YANG JI 楊驥(*zi* Defeng 德逢, *hao* Huyin xiansheng 湖陰先生 or "Master of the Southern Lakeshore"). Neighbor and former student of Wang's. A gentleman farmer who never held office, probably never having passed the degree; see above, pp. 211-213.

Line 1. DROOPING, DULL 翛翛. An impression of being molted or featherless. (See *Shijing* #155.)

Line 2. LIT.: "The land's back cracks open like omens appearing on a tortoise shell." Image derived from Han Yu's "Southern Mountains" 南山詩: "Or like the *tortoise's cracked divining lines*" 或如龜坼兆. (*Han Changli shi xinian jishi* 韓昌黎詩繫年集釋, ann. by Qian Zhonglian 錢仲聯; Taipei: World, 1977, 4/202. Cf. trans. by Charles Hartman, *Sunflower* p. 183.)

Line 3. MASTER OF THE LAKE'S SOUTH SHORE. Yang Ji's *hao* (see note on Yang Ji above).
WATTLED HUT 草室: i.e. Yang's rustic home.

Line 9. DRAGON BONES 龍骨 . A pump to raise water from a river or canal into a field. It consists of a chain of small buckets that move along a wooden beam when cranked: the structure resembles that of a chain saw, and it looks like a dragon's backbone.

Lines 11-12. These may subtlely echo Li Bo's lines:

"Ancient men and men *today*, just like the flowing *waters*,
Together watching the bright moon, it has been *always thus*."
古人今人若流水，共看明月皆如此.

("Wielding Winecups, I Ask of the Moon" 把酒問月 , *Li Taibo quanji* 20/457.)

Line 13. OUR SAGE COMMUNES WITH HEAVEN 聖人與天通 . The elements are in balance; the Emperor is in tune with the natural order; affairs are on course. (This seems to be the kind of *yin-yang* doctrine and hyperbole that Wang had argued against in prose, but sometimes allowed into his verse.)

Line 15. IN THE COUNTRY 在野 . Further implies: you are not engaged in state business. (Could refer to Wang himself as well.)

Line 16. PLAYING PUSHPIN 擊壤 . Perhaps best translated as SHUFFLEBOARD. An ancient game played with wooden wedges about the size and shape of shoes. (The players would place one wedge on the ground, then try to slide another to hit it from thirty or forty paces.) It was played by old men: thus it epitomized a prosperous land in tune with the *Dao*, where men could live long and end their lives at play. The "Song of the Pushpin Players" 擊壤之歌 (attributed to the times of Emperor Yao) is the archetypal paean to a utopian age:

We work when the sun comes out,
Rest when it sets,
Dig wells for our drink,
Plow fields and eat--
What is the Emperor's strength to ours?
日出而作，日入而息，鑿井而飲，耕田而食. 帝何力於我哉?

(See *Yuefu shi ji* 83/1165.)

LATER BALLAD OF YUANFENG (P 18)

Sing of Yuan-feng, sing!
Ten days and five, before each rain and wind°

Wheat-rows a thousand leagues, no soil shows through;
Joining mountains, buried in clouds, grain planted all around.
Wet rice as far as eye can see, and much sweet rice as well;
The Dragon Bones, a long time dry, upon the rafters hang.
Shad pour from the nets, to cover sandy isles;
Reed shoots, fat and sweeter far than milk from any cow.
One hundred coins will buy a peck of wine;
Today is not a feasting day, yet long we hear the drums:
Wu's native sons stamp feet and sing, the daughters rise to dance,°
They talk only of happiness—nothing has made them suffer.

This aged man has dredged a ditch whose waters flow southeast.°
Right in the center of the willows, a little craft he moors
On which his mood may float him, lying asleep, to pass Bai Xia,°
Where meeting people makes him laugh for joy and lose all care.

後元豐行

歌元豐，十月五日一雨風．
麥行千里不見土，連山沒雲皆種黍．
水秧綿綿復多稌，龍骨長乾掛梁柱．
鱘魚出網截洲渚，菰筍肥甘勝牛乳

百錢可得酒斗許，雖非社日長聞鼓
吳兒踏歌女起舞，但道快樂無所苦
老翁墅水西南流，楊柳中間栰小舟
乘興欹眠過白下，逢人歡笑得無愁

LOCATION. Li Bi 1.1b/160; *Linchuan* 1/81; Zhou Xifu p. 161; Guangzhou p. 277. Trans. Williamson II/204.

DATE. 1081 or 1082, in Jiangning.

Line 2. TEN DAYS 十日 ... An old cliché describing good crop weather: "Breeze that does not moan in the branches, rain that never breaks the clods; *a breeze every five days, a rain every ten*" 風不鳴條雨不破塊，五日一風，十日一雨. (Criticized as poetic license by Wang Chong 王充, AD 27--ca. 100: *Lunheng* 論衡, *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* vol. 7, p. 171.)

Line 11. WU' S NATIVE SONS 吳兒. Wu includes the Jiangning region.

Line 13. THIS AGED MAN 老翁: Wang himself. He dredged a channel from his house at Banshan to join the city moat. See above, p. 169.

Line 15. BAI XIA 白下. A bridge over the moat outside Jinling's east gate. Wang's boat would have passed under this bridge heading southward along the moat. (See maps in *Jingding Jiankang zhi*, *juan* 5.)

Atypical of Wang's verse, because of what appears to the modern reader as propaganda and exaggeration, yet somehow utterly in character, it is these two poems that open the *Linchuan* and Li Bi collections. Why have they struck such a chord with readers and editors? One notices the confidence of Wang's fluent language; his faith that his poems speak the truth; the generosity with which he simply says "ten thousand harvests all will be the same," even though his rational mind must have told him that the new order might last a generation or two

at the most. But he did not say that, he said "ten thousand years," and it rings true because he meant it. In other words, his language exaggerates but does not deceive. The Yuanfeng years were prosperous: he was reporting what he saw. Compared to their parents, the young people indeed would "never have cause to suffer" 無所苦 . Wheat rows may not have actually "reached into the clouds," but how else does a poet show that there is plenty of wheat?

It is interesting that Wang promotes the Yuanfeng era with the same unrelenting insistence as when he had catalogued abuses in his early protest poems (see P 2-4). When he descirbed himself in the protest poems, it was as an official who did not deserve his pay because he had failed to improve things. But now he can draw a pension, drift in his boat, because he has done his part to turn things around. His friend Yang Ji can be content as well, enjoying his farm, knowing that when times are this prosperous no one needs him to serve as an official.

These poems hint at the forcefulness with which Wang had discussed ideals with his early friends, encouraged Shenzong to adopt the New Policies, and vanquished opponents in debate. We can see Wang's famous stubbornness, born of calm optimism, unshakeable ideals, and the ability never to forget that the general welfare was all that mattered. As long as grain was growing as it should, then political infighting and Wang's own status were trivial issues.

One tradition maintains that Wang wrote these poems to flatter

Shenzong into preserving the New Policies.[19] This tradition assumes that Shenzong in the late Yuanfeng period wanted to abolish them. And that assumption depends in turn on the assumption that Wang somehow knew his reform policies were unreasonable, that he had spent his career in dread of Shenzong's "coming to his senses," and that Wang felt only flattery would persuade the Emperor to continue. However, evidence indicates that Shenzong supported the bulk of the reforms to the end, and even though there was some backbiting in the court, Wang's policies were never in serious danger even after his retirement. "Our Sage communes with Heaven" 聖人與天通 (P 17, line 13) could be flattery; more likely it is simply praise for the ruler, and a fairly conventional type of praise at that.

These poems are perhaps more valuable as historical documents than as poems: verses by the best Chinese poet ever to serve as Prime Minister; written in testimony to his own program, one of the most ambitious political programs a prime minister ever attempted.

[19]The source is Chao Yuezhi 晁說之 (1057--1129), quoted in *Shao hou lu* 24/157-8.

PRESENTING THE *ZI SHUO* (P 19)

The Yellow Emperor first "bestowed all things with proper names:"°
How much knows an old rustic, to try discussing those?
I am only fit to joke with men of "covering pickle jars,"°
How could I cause ghosts to weep upon an orange sunset?°

進字說

正名百物自軒轅，野老何知強討論
但可與人漫醬瓿，豈能令鬼哭黃昏

AFTER COMPLETION OF THE *ZI SHUO*

The Lake of the Three-legged Cauldron:
the Dragon ascended, his Books of Words remained,°
To cleave open the spirit-workings we have a Sainted Grandson°

But this aging officer by lake and sea has not "four eyes,"°
And lets a flood of dregs
stain the lofty gates.°

成字說後

鼎湖龍去字書存，闔闢神機有聖孫。
湖海老臣無四目，漫將糟粕汚脩門。

LOCATION. Li Bi 41.7b/994; *Linchuan* 27/311; Longshu 76/807; Shen p. 98.

DATE. Probably 1082, in Jiangning.

ZI SHUO 字說. "Treatise on Written Words." Wang's etymological dictionary, intended to be the standard for classical explication thenceforth. See above, pp. 184-185.

P 19, Line 1. LIT.: "The correct naming of the myriad things dates from Xuanyuan軒轅(the Yellow Emperor)." *Li ji* 23/9: "The Yellow Emperor gave correct names to the Myriad Things" 黃帝正名百物. *Zheng ming*正名 , usually rendered as "rectification of names," is an important Confucian concept. "If the names of things are not correct, then language will not be fitting; if language does not fit, then affairs will not succeed; if affairs do not succeed, then Rites and Music do not thrive; if Rites and Music do not thrive, then punishments will be inappropriate..." (*Lunyu* 25/XIII/3.)

P 19, Line 3. PICKLE JARS醬瓿 . I.e., "This work will be misunderstood and treated as worthless." In the Han dynasty, Yang Xiong wrote a *Classic of the Great Mystery* (*Taixuan jing* 太玄經), an imitation of the *Book of Changes*; and the *Fa yan*法言 , an imitation of the Confucian *Analects*. He expended as much of his life's energy on these as Wang Anshi did on his dictionary. Liu Xin劉歆(d. AD 23) told Yang Xiong, "You are troubling yourself for nothing! Scholars nowadays with rank and emoluments cannot yet understand the *Book of Changes*: what will happen to your *Great Mystery*? I fear posterity will use it *to cap pickle jars*." (*Han shu* 87B/3585.)

P 19, Line 4. GHOSTS 鬼 . "In the past, when Cang Jie created written words, Heaven rained grain, and *ghosts wept at night*" 昔蒼頡作書，而天雨粟，鬼夜哭. (*Huainanzi* 淮南子 , in *Xinbian zhuzi jicheng* vol. 7, 8/116.) Wang means, "My work does not have the power of Cang Jie.s original creation." Cang Jie: see next note.

P 20, Line 1. LAKE OF THE THREE-LEGGED CAULDRON 鼎湖. A legend tells how the Yellow Emperor made a great *ding* or ceremonial cauldron from ore at the base of Mt. Jing荊山 . When the cauldron was finished, a whiskered dragon descended to carry the Yellow Emperor and seventy of his retinue to heaven as Immortals. The lower officials who did not get a place on the dragon's back grasped his whiskers, but fell back to earth howling with disappointment as the whiskers broke. (*Shi ji* 28/1394.)

BOOKS OF WORDS 字書 . Cang Jie倉頡 , legendary inventor of the written language, was said to have been the Yellow Emperor's scribe. Presumably Wang means that Cang Jie ascended to Heaven, but left some of his wordbooks for us on earth.

P 20, Line 2. SAINTED GRANDSON 聖孫 . I.e. Emperor Shenzong. A metaphorical descendant of the Yellow Emperor, and sponsor of the *Zi shuo*.

P 20, Line 3. FOUR EYES 四目 : Cang Jie supposedly had four eyes. Wang means, "Although Shenzong is as great as the Yellow Emperor, I am a much less worthy scribe than Cang Jie."

P 20, Line 4. DREGS 糟粕 . I.e. all our present knowledge (including what is in the *Zi shuo*) is only dregs of the true ancient learning. And, according to Zhuangzi, written words by their nature can only be "dregs" of true knowledge. See title note to P 24 below.

These poems confirm the magnitude of Wang's purpose for his dictionary: to restore the fundamental importance of written words, after which words could once again serve to "correctly name" all things, and thus put Heaven, Earth and Man back into balance. Referring to his own knowledge as "dregs," and to his work as being destined to seal pickle jars, Wang is not merely being modest but is also noting how difficult it is to reclaim the ancient *Dao* in modern times.

The *Zi shuo* is now lost except for a few fragments, most of which are weaker passages preserved by critics with the intention of exposing Wang's mistakes.[20] Although we can still roughly reconstruct some of the book's contents and its underlying philosophy, Wang tells us little about how he viewed the project, how successful he thought it could be, or whether it had truly "exhausted his life's energy." The most we can ascertain from the two conventionalized poems translated here is the sincerity of Wang's efforts.

[20]The book was still extant in the Ming dynasty, but not in the Qing. (Ke Changyi, p. 238. See also Winston Lo, 1976. And see under *Zi shuo* in "Works Consulted" of this dissertation.)

神宗皇帝挽詞(二首)

TWO FUNERARY ODES FOR EMPEROR SHENZONG

THE FIRST (P 21)

將聖由天縱　When "Heaven does not stint," it forms a Sage,°
成能與鬼謀　"Plotting with phantoms" can
　　"make his powers complete."°
聰明初四達　His "keenness" "reached" "four quarters"
　　from the first;°
篤父盡旁求　"Noble virtue" from everywhere "broadly sought."°
一變前無古　"A single change" brought what had never been:°
三登歲有秋　Three "offerings," in each year
　　an autumn harvest.°
謳歌歸子啓　Paeans of praise shall rise to "Ch'i," the son
欽念禹功修　In humble longing that King Yu's tasks be done!°

THE SECOND (P 22)

城闕宮車轉　From wall and tower, out rolls the palace cortege
山林隧路歸　Homeward through hills and woods,
　　the tunnelled road.°
蒼梧雲未遠　By Hoary Trees the White Cloud is not far°
姑射露先晞　And on those Fairy Crags the dew soon dries.°
玉暗蛟龍蟄　Jade darkens, its young dragons hide away;°
金寒雁鶩飛　Wild ducks and geese of frigid gold, have flown.°
老臣他日淚　An old court minister who wept on a former day°
湖海想遺衣　By lake and ocean yearns
　　toward the robe that remains.°

LOCATION. Li Bi 49.3a/1211; *Linchuan* 35/378; Longshu 78/838; Shen, p. 113.

DATE. Summer of 1085, in Jiangning. (See above, p. 203.)

P 21, Line 1. A rephrasing of Zigong's statement about his master Confucius: "*Heaven* has endowed him *unstintingly*, and he *approaches Sagehood*" 天縱將聖. (*Lunyu* 16/IX/6.)

P 21, Line 2. LIT.: "Spirit-plans" "aid" (him in) "completing his abilities." I.e., "Shenzong has obtained some of his success through proper divination." Drawn from the *Book of Changes*: "Heaven and Earth set the positions, and the Sage *completes his powers*; men make plans, *spirits make plans*, the citizens *aid* that power" 天地設位，聖人成能，人謀鬼謀，百姓與能. *Zhouyi dazhuan jinzhu* 周易大傳今注, ann. by Gao Heng高亨 (Jinan: Qi Lu, 1979), p. 596; *Zhouyi Wang Han zhu* 周易王韓注 (in *Shisan jing guzhu*) 8/61.

P 21, Line 3. I.E.: Shenzong (like Shun) was keenly aware of events and ideas throughout his realm. See *Classic of History*: The Emperor Shun "*brightened* (in) *four* (directions) *his eyes*, and *extended* (to) *four* (directions) *his hearing* 明四目，達四聰. (*Shangshu tongjian* 02/0374.)

P 21, Line 4. I.E.: Shenzong has sought talented men from everywhere. See *Shangshu*: "From (all) *sides call forth* the *nobly virtuous*, and array them in their diverse places" 旁招俊乂，列于庶位. (*Shangshu tongjian* 17/0626.)

P 21, Line 5. A SINGLE CHANGE 一變. I.e. the New Policies. LIT.: "A single change was unprecedented in ancient times." See *Lunyu* 11/VI/24: "The State of Qi, with *one change* could become as the State of Lu; Lu, by *one change*, could attain the *Dao*" 齊一變至於魯，魯一變至於道. Wang's reform (his "single change") may have been meant also to attain the *Dao*.

P 21, Line 6. THREE OFFERINGS 三登. The ancient kings tried to store a full harvest's worth of grain for every three harvests. The contribution from all farmers of grain for the storehouse, when it amounted to one harvest's worth, was called an "offering" or a "sending-up" (*deng* 登). If a nation could keep two "offerings" on hand (that is, two years' grain supply collected over six harvests), that was called "steady" or "peaceful" 平. And if "three offerings" 三登 could be collected, that was "Great Peace"泰平. (Nine years's supply over twenty-seven harvests would cause Virtue, Rites and Music to flourish.) Wang is saying that the New Policies brought over nine prosperous harvests, hence Great Peace. (See *Han shu* 24A/1123.)

P 21, Lines 7-8. I.E.: "Shenzong is now succeeded by his son Zhezong, who we hope will carry his father's work to success." (In fact, under Zhezong the Empress Dowager Xuanren rescinded the New Policies; only after she died would Zhezong reinstate them.)

KING YU 禹: the first sage emperor of the Xia dynasty, who redirected the waters so that floods would end, and the land prosper.

CH'I (QI) 啓: Yu's son, the second Xia emperor.

P 22, Lines 1-2. WALL AND TOWER 城闕, HILLS AND WOODS 山林. Reminiscent of an old phrase about mortality and fate, originally found in Cao Zhi's ballad (曹植, 192--232):

> We are born in *gaily painted halls*;
> Then, singly, scattered, return to *hills and mounds*.
> 生在華屋處，零落歸山丘.

("Konghou Song" 箜篌引, *Wenxuan* 27/601. Translation adapted from Frodsham and Ch'eng, p. 40.)

P 22, Line 2. LIT.: "(Through) hills and woods, to the underground road it returns (into the tomb)."

P 22, Line 3. LIT.: "By Cangwu the Cloud was not far." (I.e., Shenzong will become an Immortal.)

HOARY TREES (lit. "dark-blue firmiana"): Cangwu 蒼梧, where the Sage Emperor Shun was buried.

CLOUD 雲: A white cloud waiting by the Emperor's burial mound, for him to mount and ride to Heaven as an Immortal. See *Zhuangzi yinde* 30/XII/32: "...To mount that white *cloud*, and take it to the Emperor's homeland" 乘彼白雲，至於帝鄉.

P 22, Line 4. FAIRY CRAGS: Lit. Guye 姑射, a mountain where Immortals live.

THE DEW SOON DRIES 露先晞: Lit. "The dew first dries" (i.e. dries at Guye before anywhere else.)

P 22, Line 5. JADE 玉. Han emperors and noble lords were buried in suits of small jade tablets sewn together with gold wire. On each square of jade were incised dragons or other immortal creatures. See *Xijing zaji* 西京雜記 (Han-dynasty; *Lidai xiaoshi* 歷代小史 edition, rep. Taipei: Commercial, *Renren wenku*, 1979) 3.3b.

DARKENS 暗. The jade burial suit has darkened after years underground. (Li Bi's interpretation.)

HIDE AWAY 蟄 (hibernate). The dragon incised on the jade suit (i.e. the Emperor's essence) is hibernating.

P 22, Line 6. I.E.: "Cold golden birds buried in the tomb will come to life and fly out of it."

In 210 BC the First Qin Emperor had been buried with a golden censer fashioned like a wild duck. Centuries later, a wild duck was seen flying out of that tomb when it was opened. Meanwhile, in Rinan 日南 (modern Quang Tri, Vietnam) were wild ducks or geese the color of gold; legend said they were real gold. And in AD 266, an official at Rinan was presented a golden duck-shaped censer, which he determined to be the very one that had flown from the Qin Emperor's tomb. See *Shiyi ji* 拾遺記 , by Wang Jia 王嘉 (Jin dynasty), (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981) 5/119.

P 22, Line 7. LIT.: "An old minister--other days--tears." This ambivalent line could mean, "I wept in former days, but am past weeping now." (Liu Chenweng takes this as Buddhist detachment; the surface meaning is that the Emperor has become Immortal, and Wang need no longer weep.) Or the line could simply mean: "I weep for those former times when Shenzong was still alive."

P 22, Line 8. YEARNS FOR THE ROBE THAT REMAINS 想遺衣. When the Yellow Emperor ascended to Heaven, he let fall his sword and bow, and perhaps a robe or cloak as well. (See note to P 20, line 1, p. 314 above.) I.e., Wang wishes he could see what Shenzong has left behind, even if he can no longer see Shenzong himself.

Poignant despite their formality, these ritual verses show something of Wang's feeling for what he and his young Emperor had attempted. Wang wrote the verses for the burial seven months after Shenzong's death, by which time the New Policies were being dismantled: "Ch'i, the son" (Emperor Zhezong) was *not* in a position to complete his father's work. Certain words stand out in the first poem: "from the first" 初 (line 3) may quietly imply that Wang approved of Shenzong's *early* ministers and policies, but was dissatisfied with the reform's administrators after Wang's retirement.[21] "A single change" 一變

[7]Liu Chenweng's suggestion. His viewpoint, however, may derive from the suspect tradition that Shenzong had begun to waver about the reforms after Wang left.

(line 5) leaves no doubt about why Shenzong should be remembered: the New Policies were his greatest work. "Three Offerings" 三[illegible] : prosperity had been Shenzong's goal and the proof of his success. "King Yu" [illegible] (one of Wang's favorite symbols) as a metaphor for Shenzong: the beginner of a tradition. Of all the Sage Emperors, Yu did the most to improve China physically. This poem is an elegy to the New Policies, and a challenge by a seemingly beaten man to those who would overthrow them.

The second poem is a personal view of Shenzong himself; an Emperor on his way to Immortalhood, watched by his aging minister on earth. Each couplet encompasses a scene and a mood. Fate has taken the Emperor from his bright halls to merge again with the sod (lines 1-2). But he will become an Immortal, as have other great rulers (lines 3-4). In his tomb a kingly spirit still hibernates, or perhaps flies off to dwell in another land (lines 5-6). Wang is left on the ground, embarrassed at outliving his emperor, wondering how to continue Shenzong's government with the small legacy that remains.

Wang's parallel phrases in both sets of middle couplets are particularly deft and moving, especially for poems in this ceremonial genre. Wang liked to avoid mixing different kinds of allusions in his parallel couplets: here he parallels two *Shangshu* references (first poem, lines 3-4), then two references to pre-Qin ideals (lines 5-6), in a couplet that is not only parallel but progresses, from a premise to a conclusion. And in the second poem, he parallels two "Immortal" images (lines 3-4), then two images of the inside of a tomb (lines 5-6). The two couplets themselves contrast with each other (light vs. dark), with

an escape at the end as the bird flies out. The second poem, with its strong sense of movement, would be a worthy memorial to any emperor.

One might note a further hint of Wang's sorrow in that latter poem: Immortality as a *deliberate escape* from the world's troubles. The *Zhuangzi* passage referred to in line 3 talks of "mounting that white cloud" specifically when "*There is no Dao under Heaven*: this is when (a sage) cultivates Virtue and cleaves to leisure; world-weary after a thousand years, he goes and rises in Immortality" 天下無道，則脩德就閒；千歲厭世，去而上僊。 (*Zhuangzi yinde* 30/XII/32; trans. also A.C. Graham, p. 179.) With Shenzong gone and the *Dao* in disarray, there would be more trouble than ever for Wang as long as he stayed on earth.

THE MASS OF MEN

1 The mass in roiling talk, what's the use in vying with them?
Although this does not give me joy, it holds no hurt for me:°
3 When "praise rang after praise," was Wang Mang worthy?
And was not°
the Duke of Zhou a sage, despite "four nations' slanderous talk"?°
5 Only the Sage can weigh another man,
No one can make a grain or ounce into a thousand stone.°
7 So know: the measure of a man depends not on their weighing.
Should I be praised or hated? That resides in me alone.

衆人

1 衆人紛紛何足競，是非吾喜非吾病．
3 頌聲交作莽豈賢，四國流言旦猶聖．
5 唯聖人能輕重人，不能銖兩為千鈞．
7 乃知輕重不在彼，要之美惡由吾身．

LOCATION. Li Bi 21.8b/542; Zhou Xifu, p. 119; Guangzhou, p. 267.

DATE. Probably during the reform era (1069--1076).

Line 2. A strongly prose-influenced line. LIT.: "This (是) is not something I like 非吾喜, (nor is it) something I find troublesome 非吾病." (One might also take the first two words as a compound, meaning "controversy" 是非, in which case the line would read: "Controversy gives me joy, it holds no hurt for me.")

Line 3. WANG MANG 王莽 (45 BC--AD 23). A consort clansman of the Han, who in AD 1 became *de facto* regent for the boy Emperor Ping. At that time, memorials flurried into court comparing Wang Mang's virtue with that of the Duke of Zhou (see line 4) --i.e., not only was Wang Mang a wise counsellor, but he did not take advantage of the Emperor's

youth to grab power for himself. (*Han shu* 12/349.) "*Praiseful sounds emanated* everywhere"頌聲並作 (12/360, the source for Wang Anshi's line): but as it turned out, within eight years Wang Mang did usurp the throne, and declared himself Emperor of the (short-lived) Xin or "New" Dynasty (AD 8--23).

Line 4. LIT.: "(Although) the Four Kingdoms spread rumors (about him), Dan 旦 (Duke of Zhou) was a sage regardless."

King Wu, founder of the Zhou, died leaving a young son as King Cheng. Dan, the Duke of Zhou (the new king's uncle) acted as regent. The Duke of Zhou was an honorable man, but his four brothers spread rumors anong the States that he would try to take the throne for himself. The brothers led a rebellion, which the Duke of Zhou defeated; in due time he turned the government over to King Cheng as he had promised, and was known as a sage ever since. (*Shangshu tongjian* 26.)

The source for Wang's line is the traditional Mao preface to *Shijing* #160 ("Odes of Bin"豳風, "The Wolf Drags his Beard"狼跋, *Shisanjing guzhu* edition 8/230): "The Duke of Zhou acted as regent; *four kingdoms spread rumors* in far places, and the King knew nothing (of state affairs) close to home. The Grandees of Zhou praised the Duke for not faltering in his *sageliness*." ... 周公攝政.遠則四國流言，近則王不知．周大夫美其不失其聖也．

Line 6. LIT.: "(A sage) could not take a 24th of a tael, or a tael, to be 30,000 catties."

Here is an example of how Wang disregarded criticism of his policies. Public outcry or slander by colleagues reportedly never fazed him. What did upset him was the feeling that he was *failing to do what he should* (P 3, P 4); that his Emperor had ceased to trust him (P 54); that the people's suffering might be real, not just their imagination. "Should I be praised or hated? That resides in me alone" (line 8): Wang's confidence was also a kind of self-reliance; he took personal responsibility for whatever might occur as a result of his actions.

The poem's specific target may be certain critics who accused Wang of manipulating a young Emperor for his own purposes. Wang's answer is to equate himself with the Duke of Zhou--a good regent--while

repudiating the example of the treacherous regent Wang Mang. That is a testy statement. Equally strong is Wang's assertion that "only a Sage can weigh another man:" i.e., our Emperor has already judged me. Whether he is right or not, I am what I am, and no critic can alter that.

The subtlest yet most pervasive element or repudiation is the poem's language. This is a *guwen* poem such as Han Yu had made famous, with prose-like rhythms and extensive use of grammatical particles. (Note line 2, which stretches normal poetic rhythm to the limit; the use of "can" 能 , and the informal word for "weigh" 輕重 in line 5; "can" again in line 6; "so" 乃 in line 7; "it" 之 in line 8; the words "man" 人 and "I" 吾 appearing three times, and "sage" 聖 twice.) *Guwen* such as this was the tool of writers who opposed prevailing trends and "common minds," favored a truth derived directly from the ancients, and were often supremely sure that they knew how to look for that truth.

READING HISTORY°

1 Success and fame have been a bitter thing since ancient times;
Who would you want to narrate, finally, how you had come and gone?
3 Events, murky when they occurred, are burdened with mistakes,
Their truth tangled further by the wrangling of common minds--
5 We inherit dregs, not filtered Essence;
This is not a Spirit
that scarlet brush or indigo ink can easily depict.°
7 How could your paltry records plumb the lofty Sages' thought?
You guard alone, on thousand-year-old pages, flecks of dust.

讀 史

1 自古功名亦苦辛，行藏終欲付何人
3 當時黯黮猶承誤，末俗紛紜更亂真
5 糟粕所傳非粹美，丹青難寫是精神
7 區區豈盡高賢意，獨守千秋紙上塵

LOCATION. Li Bi 39.3a/939; *Linchuan* 25/294; Longshu 73/780; Zhou Xifu p. 222; Guangzhou p. 310.

DATE. Probably 1085 or 1086, at Jiangning. (See comment below.)

READING HISTORY. The poem's theme comes from *Zhuangzi*, a passage in which the Wheelwright said to Duke Huan of Qi, "Might I ask Your Lordship what words you are reading?"

"The words of sages," the Duke replied.

"Are those sages alive?"

"No, they are dead now."

"Then it is the ancients' *dregs* that Your Lordship is reading, is it not?"

The Wheelwright explained (under the Duke's threat of death) that the sages could not have transmitted their secrets even by demon-

stration while they were still alive, to say nothing of written words: he knew this, because in his seventy years he had not been able to teach anyone the knack of hewing wheels, no matter how carefully others watched him work, or even if he had them try it themselves. That knack would likely die with him. By the same token, the Sages' knack for statecraft had also died, even though their books survived. (*Zhuangzi yinde* 36/XIII/68-74. Cf. trans. by A.C. Graham, pp. 139-140.)

Line 6. LIT.: "Red and indigo are hard pressed to depict this spirit." Cf. the tragedy of the "Radiant Consort," whose beauty her painter could not show the Emperor: "That way of hers, no one could ever paint" (P 7, line 7).

Commentators unanimously place this poem in Wang's final year, when he faced not only the destruction of his program, but the fact that all records of what he had done would be rewritten by the new conservative regime; the fact that the conservatives trusted "dregs" and "dusty books" to dictate their ideology (Sima Guang was a historian); and--most troublesome--the fact that not even the wisest historian could ever transmit to anyone the "essence" of what Wang had tried to do.

Wang could not summon enough Buddhist detachment here to conceal his bitterness: the perfect parallel couplets add weightiness. One would be justified, as with P 13, to see in these lines a direct rebuke of Wang's former friend Sima Guang, who loved books and theories too much to really know the world he was now trying to govern. As in the previous poem from over a dozen years earlier, Wang is utterly sure that he is right. He does not fear being misunderstood; in fact he fears nothing for himself. He only fears that *reality* will be misunderstood, and those who misunderstand it will control affairs, at the people's expense. This basic concern of Wang's early poems had continued into his old age; it is for this that he has been remembered.

Section B.

Verses Written to Friends, Acquaintances or Family

Most of these poems, which range from perfunctory to intimate, are addressed to someone, although the titles do not always indicate that. Two may be addressed to friends or family already deceased.

MASTER XIUGUANG OF HANGZHOU, AND HIS HALL OF JOY IN THE LAW°

The Buddha Law is different from this world,
It means to rinse off myriad things--to seek an empty void.
By following that Law, Master, your heart clings to no object;
With but a hall to lodge in, you have plenty and to spare:

Beneath that Hall's eaves, stones are placed,
a pair of towering peaks
Beside whose feet stand bamboos--green, spreading wide and out.
The moment I arrived, I felt my mind and viscera bursting,
The more so after sitting in thought from morn through afternoon.

I recall, once bravely I allowed that I would save the Age;
Now grown, watching how things are, my indignation mounts--
Florid chariots, horses sleek carry the men of might,
A few obtain what they had wanted; most grow glum and scared.

And so I learned, to serve and to retreat each has its reason:
No one at a glance can divide the worthy from the stupid.
In days to come, I shall build a house, return to plow and fish
Together with you on this spot--chanting of hills and lakes.

杭州修廣師法喜堂

浮屠之法與世殊，洗滌萬事求空虛
師心以此不掛物，一堂收身自有餘

5 堂陰置石雙嶙峋，石脚立竹青扶踈。
7 一來已覺心膽豁，況乃宴坐窮朝晡。

9 憶初救時勇自許，壯大看俗尤崎嶇。
11 豐車肥馬載豪傑，少得志願多憂虞。

13 始知進退各一理，造次未可分賢愚。
15 會將槩室仗耕釣，相與此處吟山湖。

LOCATION. Li Bi 20.1a/511; *Linchuan* 13/189; Longshu 48/551; Shenp. 45; Andō (1967) pp. 65-67.

DATE. 1040's or 1050, at Hangzhou. Wang was probably in Hangzhou five times in his life, all before age 30: in late 1046 on his way to Yin Prefecture; in mid-1048, on a trip from Yin back to Jiangning to bury his father, and on the return from that trip; early in 1050, on the way back to Linchuan; and again in 1050, when he visited Hangzhou from Linchuan between jobs.

XIUGUANG修廣, also known as Master Precious Moon (Baoyue Dashi 寶月大師, 1008—1068). A friend of Zeng Gong as well as Wang. Wang wrote a memorial poem after his death (Li Bi 45.6b/1104); Zeng Gong wrote a memorial inscription (*Yuanfeng leigao* 44.11a). See Andō (1967) pp. 65-66.

When young, Wang considered Buddhists as being similar to Confucian recluses: they were all people who for various reasons had chosen to cultivate Virtue and teach it to others, rather than serve in public life. He thought of a temple as a place in which to study peacefully, or to retire and live off the land. Because it was "different from the world" one went there to retreat. Although Wang had heard that Buddhism "seeks an empty Void," he had not experienced enough of its teachings to appreciate what "*śūnyatā*" really was. What

he had learned so far, at the time he wrote this, was that many reasons exist for retiring from the world, and one should not hastily judge another man's motives, whether he be a recluse or a conventionally successful man.

The idea of reclusion attracted Wang during some of his busier or more frustrated periods of service; the time that he wrote this poem may have been one of those periods. His longer-term interest in Buddhism was only beginning.

The language is *guwen*, with many grammatical particles, but it flows well and is not as prose-like as some *guwen* poetry.

TO WANG ANSHI (by Ouyang Xiu)

1 The Hanlin Poet: wind and moon, three thousand stanzas;°
Two hundred years, the Functionary's essays.°
3 I lament to my aged self that I still have a heart for this--
Some day who shall vie to top these worthies' talents?
5 In crimson halls, songs and dances vie for the latest style
But in a dusty place, someone is testing, brushing
green silk zither strings...
7 I often regret to know the name but not the man,
When we do meet, should we not linger over wine?

贈王介甫 歐陽修

1 翰林風月三千首，吏部文章二百年
3 老去自憐心尚在，後來誰與子爭先
5 朱門歌舞爭新態，綠綺塵埃試拂絃
7 常恨聞名不相識，相逢罇酒盍流連

LOCATION. *Ouyang ji*, "Jushi waiji" 7/395.

DATE. Cai (following Ye Mengde's assumption) places this poem and Wang's response in 1055 or 1056. (1046 is possible but unlikely, see above, pp. 22-23.) In 1056 Wang was in the capital; this was when the two men first began to associate in person. (Cai 5/83-85.)

Line 1. HANLIN (POET)翰林 : Li Bo李白 (701--762), who had been a member of the Hanlin Academy.

Line 2. LIT.: "The official in the Ministry of Personnel--two hundred years (ago)." Most readers would immediately assume this refers to Han Yu. But see note 22 below.

PRESENTED IN RESPONSE TO THE GIFT OF A POEM FROM OUYANG XIU

(by Wang Anshi)

I want to broadcast the Moral Way, and though my heart is strong°
This strained striving with essays leaves me drained
And if some other day I might glimpse Mencius,
For all my life how could I dare set sights on Master Han?
The man whom you salute is junior of all juniors;°
Rushing to meet me (clogs reversed) would overawe your guests!°
I only fear an empty name shall come of this,
How do I deserve your gift of noble verse?

奉酬永叔見贈 王安石

欲傳道義心雖壯，強學文章力已窮
他日若能窺孟子，終身何敢望韓公
摳衣最出諸生後，倒屣常傾廣坐中
祇恐虛名因此得，嘉篇為貺豈宜豪

LOCATION. Li Bi 33.4b/814; *Linchuan* 22/264; Longshu 55/620; Lin Jingwen, p. 38; Zhou Xifu, p. 49; Cai 5/83-84.

Line 1. LIT.: "Although I have a strong desire to transmit the *Dao* and Righteousness..."

Line 5. SALUTE 摳衣. Lit., to raise the edge of one's clothing--an ancient gesture of respect when entering a room. (*Li ji* 1/16.)

Line 6. LIT.: "Reversing of clogs often causes a sensation among the broad banquet seats." The great poet Cai Yong 蔡邕 (133--192) once gave a banquet. When the poet Wang Can 王粲 (177--217) appeared at the door, still a teenager and hardly known, Cai Yong rose to greet him, so hastily that he put on his clogs backward. This caused a sensation. (*Sanguo zhi* 三國志, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1959, 21/597.)

This first poetic exchange between the elder statesman and the young Livestock Commissioner did not produce art as memorable as their "Songs of the Radiant Consort" three years later (see P 7-8). Cai finds special fault with Ouyang's lines 5-6, and with Wang's lines 1-4: he blames their low quality on the Song-dynasty tendency to make poems into moral lectures, at the expense of flowing diction, beauty and rhythm (Cai 5/83-85). But Zhou Xifu takes an opposite view: he finds Wang's lines 1-4 a classic example of a Song-dynasty, Jiangxi-style opening, casually modulated and meant to be read in one breath; however, the rest of Wang's poem disappoints him.

But artistry is not entirely relevant to these poems, which were intended as rhymed greetings and serve that purpose more than well. Ouyang had known of Wang ever since 1046, when Zeng Gong had shown him Wang's essays (see above, pp. 22-23). But a decade passed before the two met. Wang had few opportunities, and some say little inclination to seek out Ouyang to begin with. (See above, pp. 25, 42-45.) Their friendship sprang from a common dedication to restoring the ideals of Mencius, and expressing these ideals through the *guwen* prose style of such writers as Han Yu. Ouyang Xiu was Han Yu's major promoter at the time, and Wang Anshi probably owed even more to Han Yu, both in prose and verse. Ouyang's idea that perhaps Wang could continue Li Bo's tradition, however, drew no response from Wang. Li Bo, Ouyang's favorite poet, was primarily a writer of pure verse, concerned little with statecraft or the *Dao*, and perhaps less interesting to Wang Anshi.

Here is a paraphrase of Ouyang's poem:

"Li Bo long ago wrote 3000 poems, and it has been two centuries since anyone wrote essays as great as those of Han Yu. I still harbor a desire to emulate and compete with those men--but I am old. Will it be you who takes my place after I go? The writing and thought at court these days is stylish but empty: true writers such as you are still testing their strings in obscurity, like Sima Xiangru before he was recognized. I wish I knew you personally; I am sure we can be friends."

And here is the gist of Wang's reply, which has been unnecessarily misunderstood:[22]

[22]Among the anecdotalists and later historians, the tradition that a ruthless Wang Anshi betrayed his old mentor Ouyang Xiu during the reform was a strong one: so strong that even this poem, written early in their relationship, aroused suspicion. Ye Mengde (often accused of being partial to Wang, even though he records much unfavorable information), thought Wang was comparing himself to Mencius, and comparing Ouyang merely to Han Yu: a flippant attitude if it were true. (*Bishu luhua* A.63ab.)

A man named Wang Chou王鑄 observed to Li Bi that Wang Anshi's poem must have been criticizing Ouyang for idolizing Han Yu. Li Bi denied this (noting Wang Anshi's obvious devotion to Han Yu's style and ideals), and surmised that Wang merely felt frustrated at having attained Han Yu's style but finding himself still dissatisfied, sated, tired of it as one tires of a completed achievement. Li Bi further believed that Ouyang's line 2 ("the Ministry of Personnel" 吏部) referred not to Han Yu but to Xie Tiao謝朓, the Six-dynasties poet who had likewise served in that Ministry, and about whom Shen Yue沈約 once said, "For *two hundred years* there have been no works such as these." Liu Chenweng emphatically refutes this "Xie Tiao" theory, and concludes instead (as I do) that "Mencius" and "Han Yu" in Wang's poem *both* refer to admirable aspects of Ouyang himself, and that the Xie Tiao allusion is too obscure to be likely.

The Song anecdotalist Chen He陳鵠 has recorded a supposed dialogue between Ouyang and Wang: Ouyang chuckles that Wang thought Ouyang's line was about Han Yu when it was really about Xie Tiao. But Wang has the last laugh, because Wang remembers a letter *to Han Yu* from Sun Qiao孫樵, in which Sun says the same thing that Shen Yue had said about Xie Tiao. Therefore the allusion, "Ministry of Personnel--*two hundred years*" could refer to Han Yu after all. (*Xitang ji qijiu xuwen*

"My writing is forced, not skilled, and ultimately expendable. But I shall never end my quest for the Truth, of which writing is but an expression. Some day I hope to catch just a glimpse of the ideas Mencius taught, but I will never have the audacity to emulate a writer as great as you or Han Yu. (I would like to emulate Han Yu, as you do, because Han was trying to convey the *Dao* of Mencius and others through writing: but in the realm of *writing alone*, I could never measure up to him or you.) Your deference to me is misplaced; though you may be a Cai Yong, I am no Wang Can. Your praise will give me a better reputation than I deserve."

What these two allusion-filled verses signify is the beginning of Wang's fairly intimate association with a circle of influential writers. Through Ouyang, Wang would meet Su Shi, Mei Yaochen (later as strong an influence on Huang Tingjian as Wang was), and other figures who are now less well-known. Some of these men were a vanguard in political thought and in literature simultaneously. To know them helped Wang, not because they could introduce him to high positions and other men of influence, but because of the stimulus they gave to his actual writing and thought. Ouyang's generosity in hoping Wang could carry on the *guwen* tradition was an auspicious beginning for

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1/1-2.)

While it is true that poets often tried to outwit each other with playful allusions, it seems likely in this case that the above anecdotes are apocryphal, that Ouyang's lines *do* refer to Li Bo and Han Yu (who were his favorite writers), and that Wang's poem intended nothing but respect for Ouyang.

See also Lin Jingwen, p. 38, for a thorough refutation of the idea that Wang was treacherous to Ouyang.

their friendship.

The next two poems were presented to members of Ouyang's circle.

DING BAOCHEN PRESENTS ME, WITH HIS POETRY, A GREEN INKSTONE:
THE KIND THAT IS CALLED "NEW STYLE FOR HALLS OF JADE"°

A Jade Hall stone:
the whole world clamors to inherit one
All the more if cut from green rock in the barbarous creeks

Alas, too long I have had nothing exceptional to offer
I stand abashed—you bear fine verses with your gift.

Long buried in miasmic fog, it still looks wet
Springtime ripples rinse it a fresher green

Much like your robe, old friend!
And as for hearts
the core, hardened and strong: your counterpart.°

元珍以詩送綠石硯 所謂玉堂新樣者

玉堂新樣世爭傳，況以蠻溪綠石鐫
嗟：我長來無異物，愧君持贈有佳篇
久埋瘴霧看猶濕，一取春波洗更鮮
還與故人袍色似，論心於此亦同堅

LOCATION. Li Bi 35.3b/858; *Linchuan* 23/276; Longshu 67/712; Zhu, p. 99.

DATE. Probably 1055 or 1056, in the capital. It is possible that Ding brought the inkstone to Wang at Shuzhou in 1053, on Ding's way from Duanzhou to Huangzhou. But more likely they met in 1056

through Ouyang Xiu.

DING BAOCHEN 丁寶臣 (*zi* Yuanzhen 元珍, 1010--1067). See comment below.

Line 8. LIT.: "When talking of your heart (pun for 'the ink-stone's core'): it is equally strong."

Perhaps it was some quality in Ding Baochen's character that inspired Wang to make this poem one of the best he ever wrote in the "thank-you" genre. Ding was a friend of Ouyang Xiu, and later of Zeng Gong and Wang Anshi. His career was rough, probably because of his forthrightness, daring and generosity. In 1052, he had had the misfortune to be stationed in remote Duanzhou 端州 (in modern Guangxi); his troubles worsened when the major rebellion of Nong Zhigao 儂智高 swept into the area. Ding succeeded in beheading a few of Nong's spies, but found he could not resist the rebels: he fled with some of the citizenry into the mountains, thus saving lives but bringing himself demotion and exile to Huangzhou.[23]

Wang's warmth and admiration must have sprung from a sense of affinity with Ding: Ding's concern for the people under his charge, and his courageous choice of safety in flight over defeat with honor during the rebellion were actions that agreed with Wang's social conscience and common sense. But we need not look at Ding alone to explain the poem's warmth. Wang Anshi was often warm: his verses to

[23]See Wang Anshi's tomb inscription for Ding, *Linchuan* 91/945; Ouyang Xiu's recommendation to the throne, defending Ding's actions during the rebellion, (*Ouyang ji*, "Zouyi ji" 16/881). Also, Zeng Gong's sacrificial text for Ding, *Yuanfeng leigao* 38.5a.

friends show him more generous and less stern than many imagine.[24] Nevertheless, this poem is extraordinary. Its artful, flawless construction conveys extra respect to Ding, and the simple architecture allows room for subtlety: lines 1-2, acknowledging the gift; 3-4, I am unworthy of it; 5-6, admiring the stone; 7-8, the stone reminds me of your likeness, your character, and our solid friendship. The progression of details is rich: the southern miasma is the forge that makes such solid stones, and hones noble characters. Water (life-giving) fills the poem ("creeks"溪 , "wet"濕, "springtime ripples"春波 , "rinse"洗). The inkstone is green--natural, pure; the man who brings it is a worthy user, because he writes well; its purity glistens; and--the warmest touch--*it is the color of Ding's robe*. Like Qu Yuan, Ding has found more purity in exile than he ever found at the central court. Wang can sympathize with that, because although Wang has never been exiled, he has served mostly in the provinces, where (like Ding) he is freer to do what he feels is right. Not only are Wang and Ding friends, but their friendship has a purpose: to be strong, through united ideals, symbolized by the clean, tough stone.

[24]For instance: four humorous and allusive poems to Geng Xian 耿憲 on a gift of a bamboo hat: Li Bi 41.9b/998.

BANQUET AT THE HOUSE OF MARQUIS PEI°

The Marquis Pei fetes me: sun approaching noon.
On four sides sit the honored guests, red faces every one.
He sweeps the highest hall for me, invites me to step in,
Brings forth grain sold from the market:
he knows the people are poor.°

Horizon-gazing vision smashes through ten thousand leagues,°
Past flax and mulberry, dusky, dark--on four sides mountains rise.
My wild-moor heart has not yet done with seeking;°
It would press on
to the Northern Bastion's waters, where I long to rinse my clothes.°

Suddenly, turquoise trees appear, with cherries hung about
I alight from my horse and gorge myself,
make no talk of their price!
Scarlet stars--sweep of pebbles--drop into my eyes
I must be halfway tipsy... roaming through azure skies,

While Marquis Pei has just sat down, among the sand and dust:°
A man in service bound to save the world should do it thus!

15 And our crowd, having made this chance escape from files and papers
How can we insensitively treasure this idle day?
17 And so we'll go home, clear the mats, sleep our sated eyes;
Tomorrow once again, the southward mountains we'll survey.°

飲裴候家

1 裴候飲我日向中，四坐賓客顏皆紅
3 掃除高館邀我入，自出糶麥憐民窮
5 天邊眼力破萬里，桑麻冥冥山四起
7 野心探爭殊未已，更欲湔衣北城水
9 忽見碧樹櫻桃懸，下馬恣食不論錢
11 赤星磊落入我眼，恐是半醉遊青天
13 裴候方坐塵沙裏，役身救物當如此
15 我曹偶脫簿領間，何忍愛惜一日閑
17 且歸拂席飽眼睡，明日更看滁南山

LOCATION. Li Bi 16.8b/400; *Linchuan* 11/172; Longshu 46/527.

DATE. 1058, 1054, or possibly 1042. The wording suggests that Pei's banquet took place in the Jiangning area (line 8: Wang has ambitions to go north), where Pei Yu and Wang must have been serving, in neighboring districts (lines 17-18: Wang says he must be back at work the next day). Wang seems to have come with his co-workers, and to have been serving near Chuzhou 滁州, across the Yangzi northwest of Jiangning (line 18). In 1056, Pei Yu had been sent to Wujiang 吳江 (Suzhou area, several days east of Chuzhou--too far for this poem); but by 1058 or 1059 he might have been transferred into Anhui.

Wang was never headquartered near Chuzhou, but he could have passed through on official business while on the Jiangdong circuit (1058), and possibly while at Shuzhou as well, in 1054. He would also have been within reach while serving at Yangzhou in 1042.

MARQUIS PEI 裴侯. I assume with Li Bi that this was Pei Yu 裴煜 (*jinshi* 1046, d. 1068?). He came from Linchuan, went to school at neighboring Jinxi, and seems to have been somewhat older than Wang. He and Wang may have known each other from their youths. In 1053, Pei may have held a sinecure at a Daoist temple in Shuzhou, when Wang was there. (See "Sending Off Dr. Pei of the Lingxian Temple" 送靈仙裴太博, in Li Bi 36.4b/884. Li Bi suspects this may be Pei Yu; I am not sure.)

In 1056 Pei was in the capital, an intimate of Ouyang Xiu and Mei Yaochen. He attended the banquet at which Wang Anshi first met Su Xun (see above, pp. 43-45). Soon after that (also in 1056) he was posted to serve at Wujiang near Suzhou. At the beginning of the reform period he would serve at Yangzhou, where he apparently died shortly thereafter.

Pei seems to have been forthright, motivated and poetic. When young, he studied in a temple at Jinxi. One night he heard a tiger roar outside the window. Pei pounded his desk, crying out "Will Mr. Pei finally end his poverty and low position? Roar three more times if it shall be so!" The tiger roared three times and went away: in 1046, Pei took first place in the *jinshi* examination. (*Nenggaizhai manlu* 18/458; also Shen, p. 26.)

Additional biographical information: Li Bi's notes to "Sending off Pei Yu to Govern Wujiang, with the Rhyme Word '*rán*' Apportioned to me at the Banquet Table" 席上賦得然字，送裴如晦宰吳江. Li Bi 31.10b/774.

Line 4. LIT.: "Brings out himself sold grain, pitying that the people are poor." Or, "He goes out himself to sell grain, pitying that the people are poor." Neither reading is easy to interpret. *The point seems to be* that Officer Pei pays for his banquets himself, instead of using public money.

Line 5. LIT.: "At the horizon, the strength of my eyes conquers (i.e. sees as far as) 10,000 *li*."

Line 7. WILD-MOOR HEART 野心: "My ambitious mind."

Line 8. NORTHERN BASTION 北城: Probably means Wang wants to carve out a career in the capital.

Line 13. SAND AND DUST 塵沙: The vast material knowledge that a Boddhisattva must master in order to save humanity. *Implication*: Mr. Pei is a man of Boddhisattva-like compassion.

Line 18. LIT.: "Tomorrow, once again we shall be looking at the mountains south of Chu 滁." (On the north bank of the Yangzi, northwest of Jiangning.)

Wang Anshi did not respond when Ouyang Xiu hoped he could succeed Li Bo (P 26). Yet Wang did try Li Bo's style sometimes. If Wang is not imitating Li here, he is at least nodding in Li's direction. The effect is to paint both himself and Pei Yu as figures from Li Bo's poetry: bold, ambitious but relaxed. Pei's banquet has a High Tang air: the wine brings glorious stupor, with visions of riding a fine horse, gorging on cherries, roaming a star-filled ether. Wang compliments Pei as a man who can give his guests such a memorable afternoon, and further calls him a true Boddhisattva--one who could enjoy sublime luxury, but whose natural generosity makes him want to help others first.

The poem resembles Li Bo's work specifically in some of the images, in the language's fluid energy, and in the way Wang seems to be casting himself and Pei Yu into roles. Some of the images that resemble Li's poems, especially certain ones about swashbucklers or heroes, are the red faces (line 2), the host's generosity (line 3), Wang's vision "smashing through" ten thousand leagues 破萬里 (line 5), Wang's ambition to wash his clothes in the capital moat (line 8), the "sudden" 忽 eruption of a cherry-dream (line 9), taking fruit regardless of the cost 不論錢 (line 10), roaming the Blue Heaven 青天 (line 12), and the phrase "should be thus" 當如此 (line 14).[25] Yet Wang Anshi was not

[25]It is hard to find in Li Bo's work specific sources for Wang's lines. However, there are some partially-definable similarities in rhythm and word choice.

For line 5, consider: "To take revenge, *a thousand leagues* is as a span away" 報讐千里如咫尺. ("Song of Youth" 少年行, *Li Taibo*

Li Bo, as other clues in this poem attest. Pei Yu's social conscience appears in line 4; he *sits* 方坐 in the "dust and sand," rather than striding through the ether (line 13); as for Wang, his *eyes* may smash through the distance, but he does not speak of going there himself (line 5); it is the practical "mulberry and flax" he notices on the plains, not flowers, water, swords, or mirror-bright moons (line 6); Wang longs to make his mark in the *capital*, not in a far land (line 8); he is only "half-drunk" 半醉 (line 12), and tomorrow he will be back at work (line 18). (Li Bo never held office.) We can see here not only how Wang was different from Li Bo, but also how the Song differed from the Tang. Song writers talked of real situations: store-bought rice, flax plants, the natural rhythms of dreams and waking, work and rest. Song language is calm and literal. And Song writers are less inclined to play a part: one could conceive of a Li Bo having no public ambition

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quanji 6/173.)

For line 12: "The roads of Shu are tough, tougher than mounting to the *Blue Heaven*" 蜀道之難，難於上青天 . ("The Roads of Shu Are Tough" 蜀道難 , *Li Taibo* 3/80.) Also, "I want to climb *Blue Heaven*, and pluck the shining moon" 欲上青天攬明月 . ("Seeing Off my Uncle, Collator Li Yun, at the Xie Tiao Tower at Xuanzhou" 宣州謝朓樓餞別校書叔雲 , *Li Taibo* 18/418.)

For line 14: "Together watching the bright moon it has been *always thus*" 共看明月皆如此 . ("Wielding a winecup, I Ask of the Moon" 把酒問月 , *Li Taibo* 20/457, see also P 17, notes to lines 11-12.) "Making pleasure in this world has *likewise been this way*" 世間行樂亦如此 . ("I Dream of Roaming Mount Tianmu--Chanted as a Keepsake" 夢遊天姥吟留別 , *Li Taibo* 15/342.)

For line 18: "The light boat has already passed ten thousand layered *mountains*" 輕舟已過萬重山 . ("Leaving Bodi By Morning" 早發白帝城 , trans. under P 74.)

Other Li Bo poems that might have inspired Wang: "The Wine Shall Soon be Served" 將進酒 (3/89); "Song of the Swashbuckler" 俠客行 (3/107); "Anchoring for the Night at Huangshan, Where I Heard Yin the Fourteenth Singing Chants of Wu" 夜泊黃山聞殷十四吳吟 (22/498).

yet writing as if he wanted to conquer the world; but when Wang Anshi writes of wanting to rinse his clothes "in the Northern Bastion's waters," even though the allusion and tone of voice echo former times, we can be confident he is expressing his own sincere sense of mission.

SENT TO WANG HUI°

A flash

youth, never ours again°

How many joyous days can follow?°

I look at my face

colors faded early

And you! poor friend, sickness mars your life°

Window bars frame watery dark

fog in the moon°

The boat yaws its hull, wind sends waves along

Completely untried square hearts,

old-time minds°

Night at the zenith, missing you

I launch a tragic song.°

寄王回深甫

少年倏忽不再得，後日歡娛能幾何

顧我面顏衰更早，憐君身世病還多

窗間暗淡月含霧，船底飄颻風送波

一寸古心俱未試，相思中夜起悲歌

LOCATION. Li Bi 36.9a/893; *Linchuan* 24/287; Longshu 60/665.

DATE. Before 1065: most likely 1054, possibly 1063.

WANG HUI王回 (1024--1065). Close friend and probably a relative of Wang Anshi; Anshi's mother had been almost a second mother to

Hui in his childhood. Like many of Wang Anshi's friends, Hui was a Confucian thinker whose ambition was to recapture the ancient *Dao*. He lived at Ruyin汝陰(in modern Anhui), reasonably close to both Shuzhou and Jiangning. Anshi may have visited him often in the 1050's. We know of one visit in 1054, after Anshi left Shuzhou. Anshi could conceivably have visited Wang Hui on his way from the capital back to Jiangning in 1063, but it would be an unlikely route, especially if Anshi were escorting his mother's coffin at the time. (About Wang Hui: see above, pp. 22, 37-38, 73.)

Line 1. A FLASH倏忽 . LIT.: "Youthful years, *in an instant*, cannot be obtained again."

Line 2. LIT.: "In later days, happiness can last for how long?" Cf. Du Fu, "How long can the face of things on earth stay set?" 物色生態能幾時. (From "Setting Off from Gong'an at Dawn..." 早發公安 . In *Du shi jingquan* 杜詩鏡銓 , Yang Lun ann., blockprint edition rep. Taipei: Chung Hwa, 1973, 19.19. This is likewise a poem on leaving a place by boat.)

Line 4. LIT.: "I pity you, who in your life and career have had even more illness."

Line 5. LIT.: "Through the windows it is pale dark; the moon is enveloped in fog."

Line 7. LIT.: 1) "One square-inch of an ancient heart, completely untried;" or,
2) "(Our) square-inch ancient-style minds, both of them untried." (The heart was thought to occupy a cubic inch.) Wang Hui was "untried," in the sense that he served only one year in office--in 1057 after passing the *jinshi*. And this poem may have been written even before that.

Line 8. LAUNCH起 . LIT.: "...*start* a sad song."

Writing from a boat, having left Wang Hui after a visit, Wang put several bleak feelings into this verse. He and his childhood friend were now starting to see each other age, never to be carefree again. Anshi felt unsettled, literally "adrift," unsure of the future; worse, he felt uncomfortably wrenched away from another "ancient-hearted" companion. He now had no one with whom to talk about pressing issues. It may even have crossed Anshi's mind that Wang Hui might die before their

next meeting--leaving Anshi to continue their mission alone (as Zeng Gong said--see p. 73). Du Fu comes to mind, especially in the desolate impression of a boat on a night journey in rough weather: "From here we leave, in vastness tiny oars" 舟楫眇然自此去 ;[26] "A lone lamp, frenzied piping, blown on torrents of wind" 孤燈急館復風滿.[27] Although there is nothing strikingly original in Wang's poem, his emotions are real and the language spontaneous. Liu Chenweng valued such naturalism artistically: the last couplet, he says, "reads like the sound of wind in a wooded canyon" 讀之如林谷風聲 .

Most of Wang's seven-syllable regulated verse is written to friends or acquaintances, and much of it is perfunctory though skilled. Within that corpus, this sole surviving verse from Anshi to Wang Hui stands out as a sign of how much their friendship encompassed.

[26]"Setting Off from Gong'an at Dawn," see note to line 2 above.

[27]"Hearing a Tartar Horn by Night" 夜聞觱篥 , *Du shi jingquan* 19.20.

LEAVING NORTH MOUNTAIN, SENT TO ANGUO

1 Sun and moon roil in competition with the waves°
I tighten my collar, watch my image--speckled grey alarms me
3 Youthful woes and cares have damaged my vigor
I have grown old, misusing half a life on state affairs

5 I shall not recommend one single "osprey" to the Court,°
To keep the Triple Briar strong at home is all I know.°
7 In how many bends of Blue Creek will the spring wind blow its best?°
We have our pact: when I return, we'll walk there, wine in tow.

離北山寄平甫

1 日月泛泛與水爭．披襟照見髮華驚
3 少年憂患傷豪氣．老去經綸誤半生
5 休向朝廷論一鶚．只知田里守三荊
7 青溪幾曲春風好，已約歸時載酒行

LOCATION. Li Bi 37.1b/898; Longshu 59/656.

DATE. Late 1058 or early 1059, en route from Jiangning to Bianjing. (See note 28 below.)

NORTH MOUNTAIN 北山. This is Mt. Zhong 鍾山, at Jiangning.

Line 1. SUN AND MOON 日月. The line has literal and figurative meanings:
1) The *sun* and *moon* struggle to show through a murky storm on the Yangzi;
2) *Days* and *months* are rushing, neck-and-neck with the water's flow (flowing water also represents "time").

Line 5. OSPREY 鶚. A man of great talent. Kong Rong 孔融 (153--208) recommended Mi Heng 禰衡 (173--198) to the Emperor, saying

that a hundred warriors could not measure up to this one "osprey" of a man. (*Hou Han shu* 80B/2653-4.) The times being chaotic and Mi Heng upright, his career was rocky and dangerous. *Wang means*, "I will not try to bring any more of you, my brothers, into the misery of official life (talented though you may be)."

Line 6. TRIPLE BRIAR 三荊. Three intertwining bramble plants in the garden: they started to wither when the three brothers of the household separated, then revived when the brothers changed their minds and stayed together. *Wang means*, "It would be better if we all stayed here at home." (*Xu qixie ji* 續齊諧記, by Wu Jun 吳均, 469--520 AD. *Han Wei congshu* edition, p. 1b.)

Line 7. BLUE CREEK 青淺 (Longshu reading). A famous creek that ran from north of Jiangning into the city. In Song times there was a large Blue Creek Shrine complex inside the east gate, with winding lotus ponds, pavilions, verandas and bridges. It seems a likely place for an outing. (See map section in *Jingding Jiankang zhi*, *juan* 5.)

Li Bi's reading is "*Clear* Creek" or "a *clear* creek" 清淺, which is possible but seems less likely here. Clear Creek is a common place-name in China, but I have not identified any Clear Creek around Jiangning in the Song. (See also P 76.)

Of over twenty poems to his brother Anguo, this is one of Wang's most moving. Liu Chenweng finds the sorrowful first four lines "impossible to read" 不可讀.

In 1059, Wang Anshi, who had been stationed at home in Jiangning, was ordered to the capital.[28] Wang Anguo, who had not yet passed the examinations, at age thirty-one had done little with his life. He and Anshi were different in character but were close friends.

[28] See p. 59 above. 1068 (when Anshi first went to serve Shenzong) is also a possible date for this poem, but I tend to place it in 1059 for the following reasons:

1. In 1059, Wang would be more likely to be "startled" at his own aging; by 1068 he should have been used to it.
2. In 1059, he felt more ambivalent and dissatisfied with his own career, and with the nation's potential to improve. The poem reflects such a mood.

They would miss each other. Anshi's poem reads at first glance like self-pity: actually his bitter words about "half a life misused on state affairs" are a way of consoling Anguo, who may have felt uneasy about ever having a career himself.

The poem's craft is adequate, and the parallelism of lines 5-6 is clever; but like much of Wang Anshi's verse, its beauty lies in the sincerity of what it says, and the apparently spontaneous way in which parallelism and other devices help Wang say it.

思王逢原 THINKING OF WANG LING

自吾失逢原 Since I lost Fengyuan
觸事輒慇懃 I respond to all things with brooding thoughts.
豈獨為故人 Not just for a friend
撫心良自悲 This breast-beating--I sorrow much for myself:

我善孰相我 If I am good, who can perceive it?
孰知我瑕疵 Who will know my flaws?
我思誰能謀 Put form to my ideas?
我語聽者誰 Listen when I speak?

朝出一馬驅 At sunrise, one horse speeds me out
暮歸一馬馳 And one gallops me back by evening
馳驅不自得 I gallop, speed, nothing gained
談笑強追隨 Talking and smiling follow, strained.

仰屋臥太息 I lie on my back inside, breathe deep and long
起行涕漣漪 Then rise to walk, soaked with flowing tears
念子冢上土 Aware that the earth upon your grave
草茅已紛披 Already wears a wide grass blanket.°

* * *

17	婉婉婦且少	And how young your gentle wife is,
	煢煢一女嫠	Now alone, a widowed woman.°
	高義動閭里	Her noble chastity has touched the neighbors°
	尚聞致財資	I hear, too, she has earned much wealth and goods.
21	嗟我衣冠朝	Alas! The official robes I wear°
	略能具饘糜	Barely bring gruel to the table;
	葬祭無所助	I have nothing to give toward burial or rites,
	哀顏亦何施	How can I make a proper show of sorrow?
25	聞婦欲北返	I hear your wife wishes to return North°
	跂予常望之	And hopes I will often see her.°
	寒汴已閉口	But the wintry Bian Canal has closed its mouth,°
	比行又參差	The journey will be mountainous and rough.
29	又說當產子	And now they say she shall bear a child
	產子知何時	A child, but does anyone know when?
	賢者宜有後	Worthy men deserve descendants,
	固當夢熊羆	So dream, of black bears and of brown!°

* * *

33	天方不可恃	Heaven is not for us to count upon
	我願適在茲	And my "desire" finds its "fit" in this.°
	我疲學更誤	I am exhausted, errors in my learning deepen--
	與世不相宜	The world and I do not agree.

37 宿昔心已許 We promised from our hearts, long since
同圖結茅茨 To thatch two huts upon a single hill.
此事今已矣 Now that is over,
已矣尚誰知 Over! But who is left to know?°

41 渺渺江與潭 Vast vast, you rivers and you tarns,
茫茫山與陂 Boundless, endless mountains, sloping ground:
安能久竊食 Can I much longer pilfer room and board,
終負故人期 Betraying, in the end, this old friend's bond?

LOCATION. Li Bi 10.7a/345; *Linchuan* 7/137; Longshu 44/516; *Wang Ling ji* pp. 397-8; Shimizu p. 157.

DATE. Probably 1059.10, at the capital.

Lines 15-16. WIDE GRASS BLANKET 草茅已紛披. Actually may mean, "The grass is thickly matted." Shimizu notes *Li ji* 3/8, which says, "Once grass has taken root upon a friend's grave, one no longer weeps for him" 朋友之墓有宿草而不哭焉. The standard interpretation is that grass takes root after a year; i.e. one stops mourning for a friend after a year. Thus Wang Anshi, still weeping after Wang Ling's grave has turned grassy, is sadder for Wang Ling than he might be for other friends.

But I am not sure the *Li ji* allusion is relevant. Indications are that this poem was written only four or five months after Wang Ling's death. The grass on the grave could mean several other things to Anshi: regret that he had not seen Wang Ling once before his death; sorrow at time's speed; or longing for the South, where grass grows in winter.

Line 18. The fourth character is printed as 兄 "elder brother;" is a variant. The *Wang Ling ji* believes both readings are mistaken and leaves that space blank. The "elder brother" reading makes logical sense but awkward grammar; it would produce a translation of "a widow with one elder brother" 一兄嫠. Although she did go to live with one of her brothers, I think the word 兄 here is forced.

Line 19. HER NOBLE CHASTITY 高義. Wang Ling's wife was later honored as a chaste widow, having refused her brother's efforts to have her remarry. (See above, p. 55.)

Lines 21-24. I.E.: "What right have I to appear as a mourner, who have not helped in your time of need?" Li Bi feels that with Wang being a high official, commanding a large salary, he ought to have donated to the funeral of such a close friend. However, it seems likely that Wang Anshi was merely being modest here: we do know that at least he contributed an inscription for the tomb. (*Linchuan* 97/998; Shen, p. 378.)

Line 25. RETURN NORTH 北返. To her parents' home in Tangzhou 唐州, Biyang Prefecture 泌陽縣. In southern Henan, roughly between Kaifeng and Wang Ling's home in the south. (See her biography, rep. in *Wang Ling ji* p. 405.)

Line 26. HOPES 跂. Lit., "She *stands on tiptoe* that I may often *see her*." This line is borrowed from *Shijing* #61 ("The River is Wide" 河廣):

> Who would say that Song is far away?
> I can *stand on tiptoe* and *gaze at it*.
> 誰謂宋遠，跂予望之.

But Wang's poem uses the words differently: "stand on tiptoe" 跂 seems to have a secondary meaning, "to hope." Wang's line might also simply mean: "If she returns North, she will be close enough that I can almost see her if I stand on tiptoe."

Line 27. CLOSED ITS MOUTH 閉口. The Bian canal, from the capital to the Huai River, was usually closed at the onset of winter in the 10th month. (*Dongxuan bilu* 7.2b.)

Line 32. BEARS. To dream of bears is an omen of having a son. See *Shijing* #189:

> What is this lucky *dream*?
> It is *small bears* and *great bears*...fine omen of a man-child.
> 吉夢為何？維熊維羆... 男子之祥

Wang Ling's child turned out to be a daughter. Later, Anshi found her a husband (see above, p. 55).

Line 34. *Shijing* #94:

> We meet by chance,
> And that *fits* my *wish*...
> 邂逅相遇，適我願兮

Wang seems to be saying, "I should be satisfied with having known Wang Ling even for a short time, as if *by accident*; and I should be grateful simply that he has offspring."

Lines 39-40. THAT IS OVER已矣. Reminiscent of *Lunyu* 16/IX/9: "The Phoenix does not arrive; the River brings forth no Chart--*it is all over* for me!"鳳鳥不至，河不出圖，吾已矣夫.

Wang Anshi's three shorter poems to the same title may be better crafted as verse, but this one is a remarkably spontaneous and revealing self-portrait.[29] While the other poems have the air of a public elegy, this long verse seems so private that one almost hesitates to read it. Wang's personal grief rages through a full sixteen lines at the start. Wang Ling appears hardly at all; there is no praise for him, other than the praise implied by the misery his absence brings.

Wang Ling had died in the 6th month (1059); the news was sent to Anshi at the capital, where he wrote this poem after the 10th month, when winter had begun (line 27). Conceivably, Anshi had heard of Wang Ling's death shortly after it happened. In that case, this poem would reflect two or three months of brooding. But it seems more likely that Anshi did not get the news until quite late (including the news that Wang Ling's wife was expecting a child, and might come north), and that he wrote the poem right after that, while still in the first stages of shock and grief.

This friendship had been precious and rare for the two men. Both considered themselves removed from the mainstream or "common

[29]"Three Poems Thinking of Wang Ling" 思王逢原三首 , Li Bi 30.10b/750. These are 7-syllable regulated verses, probably written later than the long poem. Certain phrases or images from the long poem reappear in these, but the emotions are modulated and presented with restraint, using various poetic conceits.

crowd;" with such an attitude they could easily feel lonely even though they had other friends. Their intimacy extends into Anshi's sixteen lines about Wang Ling's wife, his own wife's cousin--lines that radiate admiration and solicitude.

Of all Wang Anshi's reasons for grief, the hardest to eradicate was probably the loss of Wang Ling as a partner in planning how to remake the world. Wang Ling had died about the time Anshi was preparing his "10,000 Word Memorial" to the throne. Although Wang Ling may have advised Anshi not to bother trying to reform the state (at least under Renzong), he had always provided moral support, and there was much that the two of them could have discussed.[30] That is why Wang Ling's death made Anshi feel as desolate as Confucius did when "the Phoenix did not arrive, and the River did not bring forth its Chart--it is all over for me!" Without Wang Ling's presence and advice, it was "over" for Wang Anshi as well. (Lines 39-40.) Anshi had never been able to look at the "vast Rivers," the land or the people on it, without brooding over how much he owed them and how urgent it was that he be useful. Wang Ling could have helped his mission, if only from the background. Now Anshi owed Wang Ling a debt as well.

About the poem itself: the emotions are elemental throughout; from the litany of "Who will know my flaws?...Listen when I speak?" and frank repetition of "I," "me," to the lone horseback riding, the grassy

[30]About Wang Ling advising Wang Anshi to become a recluse and not to bother with political ambition: see "Sent to Wang Anshi" 寄介甫, *Wang Ling ji* 10/189. Discussed also in Shen Wenzhuo's preface, p. 2.

tomb, the concern for the family's livelihood, repetition of "Bear a child"產子 (lines 29-30) and "Over!" 已矣 (lines 39-40), and Wang's final cry to the rivers and mountains. It is no accident that the bulk of his allusions are to the *Shijing*, repository of the rawest and simplest human feelings, the classic in which time and again speakers call to a natural object, as a prelude to unburdening their emotions.[31]

[31]This is the technique of *xing*興, for which no ideal translation yet exists.

I DREAM OF ZHANG KUI°

1 From Shu, ten thousand leagues away, you whom I love return:°
Our meeting looks like joy, but our talk comes back to sorrow.°
3 Between the Kiang and Huai, your villa nestles where it was;
What day, what month will it be right to lay the new grave-path?°
5 You prefer the Crooked Dell, but are not sure if you shall settle;°
You found the River P'en, still you hesitate to go.°

7 Confusion overwhelms--this is the Chen Bridge, and a dream°
Yesterday's spring breeze, upon my horse, within my thoughts.°

夢張劍州

1 萬里憐君蜀道歸，相逢似喜語還悲
3 江淮別業依前處，日月新阡卜幾時
5 自說曲阿猶未穩，即尋溢水去猶疑
7 茫然卻是陳橋夢，昨日春風馬上思

LOCATION. Li Bi 32.13a/805; *Linchuan* 21/261; Longshu 69/739; Zhu, p. 97.

DATE. Probably before 1075: Bianjing. Possibly early 1060, on the way back from sending off Khitan envoys. (Wang Jinguang, pp. 120-121.)

ZHANG KUI張奎 (d. 1075?). Wang's brother-in-law, married to Wang's sister Wenshu.

Line 1. FROM SHU. Lit.: "From *roads of Shu*"蜀道, a notoriously difficult trek.

Line 2. ...OUR TALK COMES BACK TO SORROW 語還悲: Lit., "Our talk is still sad (however)."

Lines 3-4. I.E.: "Your country home still stands, but soon a new grave site will be chosen there." (Line 4, LIT.: "Days and months--in divining an auspicious time for the new grave path, what time will that be?") This grave might be for Zhang's mother, or conceivably for Zhang himself.

Line 5. CROOKED DELL (Qu E 曲阿): a town at Danyang 丹陽, near Jiangning.
PREFER: I take 說 to be *yuè* ("pleased with").

Line 6. RIVER P'EN (*PEN*) 溫水. Zhang Kui and Wang Wenshu actually did live here (see next poem). In Jiangxi, near Jiujiang.

Line 7. THE CHEN BRIDGE 陳橋. Just outside the capital.

Line 8. LIT.: "Yesterday's spring breeze, my thoughts on horseback."

Wang's sister had married Zhang Kui at age thirteen (see above, p. 12). Wang was always fond of them both, though he may not have seen them often. The Zhangs settled permanently by the Pen River, at the foot of Mount Lu near Jiujiang.[32] We do not know if Zhang Kui had many official appointments, where they were, or if he took his family to them.[33] We do know of one appointment he had, at Jianzhou in Shu (Sichuan): as soon as he arrived there from his tough journey, he learned that his mother had died. He turned around the same day and took the whole route straight home to mourn her.[34] This event im-

[32]See "Sent to My Sister Mrs. Zhu" 寄朱氏妹, Li Bi 8.5b/306; also P 33.

[33]His highest post was Secretary in the Supervisory Accounting Bureau 比部郎中: see tomb inscription for Wang Wenshu, *Linchuan* 99/1021.

[34]His wife and family may have accompanied him: see "To Wang Wenshu's Rhymes" 和王文叔, Li Bi 47.7b/1160.

pressed Wang tremendously, to the point that even riding near the capital would remind him of Zhang Kui on the "Roads of Shu."[35]

The poem is memorable for its construction: six lines of narration (a meeting, joy turning to sorrow, and confused half-sentences about where Zhang will go next). Only in line 7 do we learn it was a dream; and not until the last word do we learn that the dream sprang from thinking about Zhang. Li Bi calls this Wang's "genius at resolution" 結體之精. Zhu calls it "charging with backward lance" 倒戟而入. The languid air of Wang's meeting with Zhang is explained once we see Wang's horse taking him on the long road, whose rhythm has first led Wang to reminisce about Zhang Kui riding back from Sichuan, then finally puts Wang to sleep for a minute. The sense of mystery is inadvertently heightened for us by the fact that we know almost nothing about Zhang. We do not know if, when or why he may have settled at Qu E. And we do not know when he had been posted to Jianzhou, or when Wang wrote this poem. The "new grave path" would be for Zhang's mother--but it is conceivable that Wang's dream came after Zhang himself was dead. Could the grave path be for Zhang? Is this a poem of regret and longing, as well as friendship?

[35]See also Wang's poems written at the time: "Zhang of Jianzhou Resigns Due to his Mother's Death, the Day After Arriving at Jianzhou" 張劍州至劍一日以親喪, Li Bi 35.11b/874; "Sent to Zhang of Jianzhou" 寄張劍州, Li Bi 35.3b/858.

TO THE RHYMES OF A POEM SENT BY (MY SISTER) WENSHU

FROM THE P'EN RIVER BANK°

1 Hardships float and scatter
years and months draw out
2 Leaving, for no good, inked phrases--
the extent of our former lives.
3 We have faced each other as Chu does Yueh
--often across a thousand leagues°
4 Nothing like the Zhu Chen Village,
two clans that live as one°

5 My hair, after pain and sorrow
is grassy dark no more°
6 Peering far away has blurred my eyes°

7 No one soothes tension and sickness
for me
except an ode,°
8 So why not answer you with a song
"Brother Plumtree"?°

和文淑湓浦見寄

1 多難漂零歲月賒，空餘文墨舊生涯
3 相看楚越常千里，不及朱陳似一家
5 髮為感傷無翠葆，眼從瞻望有云花

7 惟詩與我寬愁病. 報爾何妨賦綠華

LOCATION. Li Bi 31.1a/755; *Linchuan* 20/248; Longshu 52/589; Shen p. 77.

DATE. Probably 1077-1079, at Jiangning.

Wang Wenshu died in 1080 at her son's official post north of the Huai River (see above, p. 177). Her husband Zhang Kui may have died in 1075, or perhaps earlier. (Wang's tomb inscription for her says that "she married at thirteen, *grew old at fifty*, and died at fifty-five" 十四而嫁, 五十一而老, 五十六而卒, *Linchuan* 99/1021. I believe "grew old" implies that she became a widow.) Wang retired in 1076, and this poem reads as if he were in retirement. Therefore I surmise that she continued to live at her husband's home by the Pen River in the late 1070's (before moving to Yingzhou with her eldest son), and that Wang Anshi wrote this poem then.

Alternatively, Wang wrote it at about the same time as P 30 (to their brother Anguo, tentative date 1058). The somber mood is similar, as is the mention of brotherly harmony.

WANG WENSHU 王文淑 (1025--1080). Wang's favorite sister. She had two sons and two daughters; the eldest daughter was mentally retarded and could not marry. Both sons had official careers. Wang Wenshu was bright, poetic, and a devout Buddhist.

See Wang's tomb inscription for her, *Linchuan* 99/1021; pp. 12 and 177 above; and P 32. See also Li Bi 20.4a/517 (?); 30.4b/738 (date 1060?); 31.2b/758; 34.10b/848 (after she was widowed); 37.8a/911; 47.7b/1160 (about the road to Jianzhou).

Line 3. CHU AND YUE 楚越 (i.e. "far apart"). Ancient kingdoms that corresponded roughly to the regions in which Wang's sister and he had their homes: she in the area of Mt. Lu, and he on the eastern plain.

Cf. lines by Meng Haoran 孟浩然 (689--740):

> ...*One thousand leagues* contained within an instant,
> Three great streams flash past in a single sitting.
> Happy together always, until now
> When as evening falls we become like *Chu and Yue*...

... 千里在俄頃, 三江坐超忽. 向來共歡娛, 日夕成楚越 ...

("Seeing Off my Cousin Yong to Tour Guiji After Failing the Examinations" 送從弟笔下第後尋會稽, *Quan Tang shi* 5/159/1621.)

Line 4. LIT.: "We have not managed to be peaceful, content and close to each other like the Zhu and Chen clans who are as a single family."

The village of Zhu-Chen near Xuzhou had only two clans, who

intermarried and lived in harmony. Bo Juyi made them famous in a bitter poem, in which he contrasted their happiness with his own lot as an educated, poverty-bound, rootless, hounded civil servant. ("Zhu-Chen Village" 朱陳村, *Bo Juyi ji* 10/184.)

Line 5. GRASSY DARK NO MORE 無翠葆. LIT.: "...has no more verdant luxuriance."

Lines 5-6. The grammar and tone may reflect a poem by Han Wo 韓偓 (844--after 914), included in Wang's *100 Tang Poets*:

> My heart, because of gratitude for blessings, has long been desolate;
> The hair at my temples, from living through turmoil, turned hoary early on...
> 心為感恩長慘慘，鬢緣經亂早蒼浪.

("Reflections upon Leisurely Gazing in Autumn, Outside the City" 秋郊閒望有感, *Quan Tang shi* 20/681/7800; *Tang baijia shixuan* 20.14a.)

Line 7. AN ODE 詩. Refers to the "Odes" (*Shijing*): see next line.

Line 8. I.E.: "Let me sing of family affection."
LIT.: "To respond to thee, why should I not recite 'The Cherry Flowers?'" "The Cherry Flowers" refers to *Shijing* #164, a song about love between brothers or siblings. The plant is *kerria japonica* (棣棠 or 棠棣), a yellow-flowered shrub similar to the cherry-plum or crab-apple. The *Shijing* poem begins,

> Blossoms on the *cherry-plum*,
> How beautiful and bright their calyxes;
> Of all people today,
> None compare to brothers...
> 棠棣之華，鄂不韡韡，凡今之人，莫如兄弟...

(Using Wang's official interpretation and gloss for it: *Shiyi gouchen* 9/126.)

Wang may have written this soon after retiring, in low spirits, his heart demanding a way to make light of his political exertions now that they had ended. Like Bo Juyi, or himself in P 30, he looked back on his life and discovered it had been a harrowing waste of time (see note to line 4). He and his sister were well-lettered, sensitive--but what good was that? A few writings were all that remained of the

days they had passed before now. They were thoughtful, sophicticated, but unhappy; grand but separated, like Chu and Yue. Misery had robbed Wang of health. He wished he and his sister could have been simple villagers at Zhu-Chen who naver left their valley, and truly resembled a family in their outlook. Wang's only consolation comes from the elemental "Odes," which "commune with the *Dao* and its virtue above, and end at Rites and Rightness below" 上通乎道德，下止乎禮義 . ("Preface to the Interpretations of the Odes" 詩義序 , *Shiyi gouchen* p. 1; *Linchuan* 84/878.)

When young, Wang had sensed the nation's need to recover the purity and simplicity that ancient writings had partially preserved. After growing older, this need seems to have become a passion. He felt worn by the misery and conflict that grow from overly-complicated ideas and misguided cleverness. Although he missed his sister and other family, the simplicity of the emotions he felt for them were a solace, as were the "Odes" that also sang of such emotions.

TWO POEMS WRITTEN WHILE GRADING CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATION PAPERS

THE FIRST (P 34)°

Curtains, hung an arm away, block passage through;
Papers in hand, we hear only laughter and talk.
A welter of factors: hard to grasp a patent on yes or no;°
Given stern Rules, whom shall men respect?°

Though snagless, bump-free essays they may craft,
How can they guarantee that nothing will scrape in their career?°
I believe high swans inhabit boundless space
Who should not have turned their heads to view
the outspread snare.°

詳定試卷二首 其一

簾垂咫尺斷經過，把卷空聞笑語多
論象勢難專可否，法嚴人更謹誰何
文章直使看無類，勳業安能保不磨
疑有高鴻在寥廓，未應回首顧張羅

THE SECOND (P 35)°

A boy who bragged of skillful rhapsodies
But grown old turned shamed and sorry: Yang Xiong was his name.°
Rewarded by his Prince with silk befitting a jester--
What is such talent worth today?
Generalships and premierships!°

5 Effete, not the same as when "Sir Guest" referred to brush and ink;°
Vulgar, unlike the *Erya*'s glossing of reptiles and fish.°

7 Yes it is time
to alter the House of Han's "Old Precedents."
I know from your new verse
you can vanquish that Weak Elder.°

其二

1 童子當年作賦工，暮年羞悔有揚雄
3 當年賜帛倡優等，今日論才將相中
5 細甚客卿因筆墨，卑於爾雅注魚蟲
7 漢家故事真當改，新詠知君勝弱翁

LOCATION. Li Bi 29.4a/710; *Linchuan* 18/238; Longshu 74/784-5 (#1 only); Zhou Xifu p. 88 (#2 only); Guangzhou p. 221 (#2 only).

DATE. Spring 1061, at the capital. (See above, pp. 65-66.)

THE FIRST, P 34. This poem may refer to Wang's argument with Yang Tian over whether to choose a third person for the top candidate. (Li Bi believes so.) If so, then Wang is saying: "There are two good writers here from whom to choose; but can we in good conscience select either one, knowing that their prowess will fail them anyway when they take office? What is more important? Rules? Or the job to be done? Is there not some better candidate? If we choose one of the present contenders, and fail a genius among the others, have we not thereby doomed that genius by not putting him to use?

P 34, Line 3. LIT.: "In discussing the multitude of contingencies, it is hard to have an absolute grasp of what is right or wrong."

P 34, Line 4. This line is hard to parse, and depends partly on the meaning of 更 : it probably means "The rules are strict: a man ahould *further* respect whom?" But possibly, "Rules are strict, and

men *change*: whom shall we respect?"

P 34, Lines 5-6. LIT.: "Even supposing that (someone's) essays can be read without a hitch, how can one guarantee that (that writer's) career will be free of friction?"

P 34, Lines 7-8. I.E.: There are talented men whom we cannot recruit, because they saw the net which we had spread for them.

THE SECOND, P 35. This is addressed to Wang's fellow examination grader Yang Tian.

P 35, Lines 1-2. This classic imitation of Han Yu's prose-like verse style comes naturally in a poem extolling the *guwen* spirit (see also lines 3-4 of P 34).

LIT.: "As for young boys who often bragged of how well they wrote *fu*, but in later years were ashamed of it--one of them was named Yang Xiong."

Yang Xiong 揚雄 (53 BC--AD 18), whom Wang's writings often mention, served as a forerunner of the *guwen* movement because he repudiated ornamental prose for being vain and useless, even harmful: he specifically opposed the *fu* or "Rhapsody" genre that had originally made him famous: "Yes, (I used to be fond of Rhapsody). Little boys carve worms and cut signet characters... But grown men do not do this" 然．童子彫蟲篆刻...壯夫不為也．(*Yangzi fa yan* 揚子法言, ann. by Li Gui 李軌, in *Xin bian zhuzi jicheng* vol. 2, 2/4.)

P 35, Lines 3-4. I.E.: "Han-dynasty emperors and kings considered rhapsody writers as court entertainers. But nowadays, men who write essays little different from the *fu* rhapsodies are recruited as 'generals and premiers.'" (A popular Tang term for the *jinshi* exam was the "General and Premier Examination" 將相科.)

LIT.: "At the time, (he was) presented with silk on a par with jesters. Today, if such talent were discussed, (he) would be among generals and premiers."

Sources for line 3: The rhapsodist Wang Bao 王褒 (fl. 58 BC) was often rewarded with silk by Emperor Xuan for his rhapsodies, some of which contained moral advice. Some people opposed this generosity to a mere word-craftsman. But Emperor Xuan replied that rhapsodies did have their uses, and that rhapsody-writers are "surely much worthier than *jesters* and gamesters!" 賢於倡優博奕遠矣．The Emperor went ahead and made Wang Bao a Grandee Remonstrant 諫大夫．(*Han shu* 64B/2829.)

The great rhapsodist Mei Gao 枚皐, sent on a mission to the Xiongnu, knowing nothing of state affairs, "laughed at himself as being a *clown or fool*" 誠笑類．Since he did not advance in the court as high or as fast as other men of talent, he complained that "writing rhapsodies is *buffoonery*; I am looked upon as a *jester*" 為賦乃俳，見視如倡．(*Han shu* 51/2366-67.)

P 35, Line 5. LIT.: "(The writings of modern scholars are) finicky, unlike when (Yang Xiong, in his 'Tall Willows Rhapsody') used 'Sir Guest' as a metaphor for 'brush and ink.'" Yang Xiong's *fu* referred to the brush as "Master of the Feathered Forest" 翰林主人, and the inkstick as "Honorable Sir Inky Guest" 子墨客卿. (*Wenxuan* 9/179.) Yang Xiong had used this conceit as a vehicle to criticize the emperor for holding expensive hunts. (See David R. Knechtges, *The Han Rhapsody* p. 80; *Han shu* 87B/3557.)

P 35, Line 6. Refers to contemporary classical exposition 經義, which was trivial compared to the lexical classic *Erya* 爾雅.

P 35, Lines 7-8. WEAK ELDER 弱翁. Wei Xiang 魏相, prime minister of the Han Emperor Xuan, presented his ruler with a list of twenty-three "Precedents" 故事 by which the nation could thrive forever. (*Han shu* 74/3137.) Wang Anshi is saying, "It is time to move away from Wei Xiang's way of doing things; and you, Yang Tian, are a good man to help."

Grading examinations involved enforced leisure while the candidates wrote their essays. During this time, Wang and Yang Tian must have discussed the old topic of how the examinations might be improved. Evidently Wang liked Yang's ideas, as the second poem shows. The first poem evokes the combination of languor and tension that must have permeated the examination sessions. Curtains muffle the place, obstructing Wang's vision, and--prophetically--"blocking (the candidates') passage through." The examination cells are as narrow as the talent to be selected: they are in fact a blind alley for many a worthy man; a net into which swans will dive upon bad advice. Candidates who test well, do so because they know how to polish words: but when will they find time to be "polished" 磨 in their turn by the real world?

The first poem is a tragedy, though written in a light tone. The sights, sounds, depths and heights of the poem (despite the clumsy lines 3-4) make it a haunting piece.

But the second is more famous. Playing on Yang Tian's name, Wang recalls how the ancient rhapsodist Yang Xiong had come to regret his early love of fancy writing. Yang Tian was another such man: one who saw that the standard Song examination, by which men's calibre was judged, required candidates to write essays more trivial even than the fancy writing of the Han, and for higher rewards than any Han rhapsodist would have dreamed. In other words, the Song examination system was for more distorted than the Han system of recruitment had been.

The real purpose of Wang's second poem, however, is to compliment Yang Tian on his poetry, to laud him as a progressive thinker. Thus it is an "occasional" or social piece, and (except for the acerbic lines 3-4) lacks the first poem's persuasive power.

THE LOTUS HALL: TWO POEMS IN REPLY TO HAN WEI°

THE FIRST (P 36)

I come home for old age, with a scarf of single cloth°
High honor still attached to me: I fill a vassal's post.°
Beneath the Lotus Hall, I divert the autumn stream°
And so can be a master to tortoises and fish.°

答韓侍國芙蓉堂二首 其一

投老歸來一幅巾，尚私榮祿備藩臣
〔君恩猶許〕
芙蓉堂下疏秋水，且與龜魚作主人
〔觀〕 〔聊〕

THE SECOND (P 37)

I have got back this battered, bothered body°
The Five Lakes' misty waters take the place of "wind and dust"°
My sole companions are geese and wild ducks°
And I do not serve as master to the tortoises or fish.°

其二

乞得膠膠擾擾身，五湖煙水替風塵
〔鍾山松竹〕 〔埃〕
只將鳥雁同為侶，不與龜魚作主人
〔容〕

LOCATION. Li Bi 41.13a/1005; *Linchuan* 27/314; Longshu 68/727 (#1); Shen p. 100; *Dongxuan bilu* 6.10ab. (Han Wei's poems are probably lost.)

DATES. The first: 1074 in Jiangning. The second: 1077 in Jiangning. (According to *Dongxuan bilu*.)

LOTUS HALL 芙蓉堂. Located in the northwest corner of the Jiangning prefectural offices, by the Qinhuai River. (*Jingding Jiankang zhi*, *juan* 5; Shen p. 100.)

HAN WEI 韓維 (1017--1098). One of Wang's friends in the capital. (See above, pp. 40-41, 162; also P 38 below.)

P 36, Line 1. SCARF OF SINGLE CLOTH 一幅巾. Literally, a scarf made of a whole width of cloth. The headdress of a Confucian recluse or retired official; evolved from commoners' garb. (High officials at the end of the Han favored this as a cultivated form of dress. Cao Cao 曹操, first ruler of the Wei, requested to be buried wearing such a scarf--220 AD. *Sanguo zhi* 1/53, note on 1/54.)

P 36, Line 2. LIT.: "Still holding to rank and salary for myself, I fill the post of outlying vassal.". Wei Tai's alternate version reads: "*My liege, in his benevolence, still allows me* to hold the post of outlying vassal."

P 36, Line 3. Wei Tai's version: "I *watch* the autumn stream..."

P 36, Line 4. Wei Tai's version: "And so can be a *sort of* master..."

P 37, Line 1. I HAVE GOT BACK THIS...BODY 乞…身. I.e., "I have retired." (An idiom: I used to belong to the State, but am now returned to my own charge.)

P 37, Line 2. FIVE LAKES 五湖. Here refers to the South in general.

WIND AND DUST 風塵. The commonplace world; an official career.

Wei Tai's version: "*Pines and bamboos upon Mt. Zhong* take the place of *grit* and dust."

P 37, Line 3. Is this a sly allusion to the golden duck, buried with the Qin Emperor, that flew from the tomb back to its Southern home? (See P 22, line 6.) I.e., Wang has escaped from the stifling halls of state to re-enter his Southern paradise.

Wei Tai's version: "I have only ducks and geese as my fellow *sojourners*."

P 37, Line 4. Cf. *Yanzi chunqiu* 晏子春秋: "The River God makes the waters his kingdom, and the *fish* and *turtles* his people" 河伯以水為國，以魚鼈為民. (*Xin bian zhuzi jicheng*, vol. 7; 1:1:15/22.)

The Lotus Hall sat in a remote corner of the Jiangning prefectural headquarters, overlooking the Qinhuai River. Wang--ostensibly in charge of the prefecture--may have had his office here, perhaps in charge of more waterfowl than people. Wei Tai says Wang wrote the first poem upon his first resignation from the premiership in 1074, and the second poem after his final retirement. That assertion makes sense: in the first poem, Wang is still drawing pay and is a nominal authority for the district. But in the second poem he has been set free to bob in his boat among ducks and geese in their own environment.

These are social poems that do not reveal Wang's inner reactions to retirement, and would lose their charm if they did. Perhaps Han Wei was no longer a close enough friend to be privy to such reactions. Or he may have been so close that he would have understood the nuances behind even such light-hearted verses as these. At least Han surely understood that no one converts from being prime minister to being retired country dweller without some strong, conflicting emotions.

和沖卿雪詩 并示持國

TO THE RHYMES OF WU CHONG'S "SNOW," SHOWN ALSO TO HAN WEI°

地卷江海浮 Earth aswirl, rivers and seas bob high;
天吹河漢湧 Heavens blow, up swells the Starry Stream;°
北風散作花 North wind scatters into petals
巧麗世無種 Whose deftest beauty has no earthly peer.

曛昏得照耀 Murk and miasma now may gleam and glow
塵滓歸掩擁 While dust and grit are covered and embraced;
荒林無空枝 Barren woods show not one empty branch,
幽屋有高壟 High ridgepeaks cap the obscurest tiled roofs.°

分纔一毛輕 When separate, each flake lighter than a hair
聚或千鈞重 United, can outweigh a thousand stone.°
飛揚目已眩 They soar and fly, soon dazzling our eyes,
摧壓聽還兢 But the snapping and crushing frighten those who hear.

漁舟平繫舷 Fishing skiffs level to their moored gunwales—°
樵屩沒歸踵 Woodcutters' sandals sink into the homeward track.
空令物象瑩 While this vain snow gives things such glowing form,
豈免川塗壅 One cannot deny that streams and roads are blocked.°

17 爭光嫦娥妒 Vying to glisten, Moon Lady waxes jealous;
失色羲和恐 Color drained, Sun's charioteer takes fright.
賴逢陽氣蒸 Then passive snow meets with the steaming Yang,
轉作水波溶 Spins into watery ripples, melts away

21 舞庭稱賀嚴 It has made men dance, rejoicing to the stern Throne;°
掃路傳呼寵 Or "sweep a path" to summon favorite friends.°
衝游謝少壯 Bold sorties I leave to the young and strong;
避臥甘閒冗 I lie well hid, content with an idle post.

25 吳侯絕俗唱 You, Marquis Wu, transcend the banal chorus,
韓子當敵勇 And Master Han toward the foe stands firm
勝負觀兩豪 Triumph or surrender? I watch you heroes twain,
吾衰但陰拱 In my decline, with quietly folded arms.°

LOCATION. Li Bi 7.2b/286; *Linchuan* 5/118; Longshu 40/465; Shi juyao 1/124; Shen p. 19. Han Wei's corresponding poem: *Nanyang ji* 南陽集 (*Siku quanshu zhenben* edition) 4.16b.

DATE. 1076.10, in the capital. (This is the second of two poems Wang wrote to Wu's rhymes. The first is in Li Bi 7.2b/286.) Wu Chong's "Snow" poem seems to have been written at a banquet celebrating the winter's first snow, and in this case also serving as a farewell party for Wang. Wu Chong, one of Wang's oldest and closest friends (though apparently more conservative politically) replaced Wang upon his final retirement in 1076.10. (The co-replacement was the conservative Wang Gui. See above, pp. 39, 162.)

HAN WEI: See previous two poems.

Lines 1-2. LIT.: "On the land the snow rolls; on the Yangzi and the sea it floats; / From Heaven it blows, and from the Milky Way it surges." Or (straighter grammar but less sense): "The earth curls

up, the river and sea awash / Heaven blows, the Milky Way surges."

Line 8. LIT.: "Obscure tiles have high banks (atop them)."

Line 10. A THOUSAND STONE. Literally "a thousand *jun*:" 30,000 catties or about 20 tons.

Lines 13-14. FISHING...WOODCUTTERS 漁...樵 . Implies the world of recluses and retirees, into which Wang is now headed.

Line 16. LIT.: "How can one avoid the blocking of rivers and roads?"

Lines 13-16. Wang's concern for the snow's harmful effects has a historical precedent. See *Yanzi chunqiu* (1:1:20/28-29):

One time it snowed for three days. Duke Jing, wearing a fox-fur coat, remarked to Yanzi, "How strange! It has snowed for three days, yet does not (feel) cold!"

Yanzi replied, "Of old, rulers could eat their fill yet know that there were hungry people; they could be warm yet know that others were cold; could rest at ease yet know of others' toil."

"Well said!" answered the Duke, who thereupon had coats and grain distributed to the poor.

Line 21. Accurate translation is impossible without knowing Wang's allusion. The *Shi juyao* believes this refers to a deep snowfall on New Year's Day, 461, which was considered to be auspicious. But Li Bi believes the allusion is to Wei Bin 韋斌 of the Tang, who was so "serious" and respectful that he stood in his place at a court audience even after the snow had accumulated as high as his feet. (*Xin Tang shu* 新唐書 , by Ouyang Xiu and Song Qi; Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975, 122/4354.)

Neither of the above allusions seems entirely satisfactory.

Line 22. The wealthy Wang Yuanbao 王元寶 of the Tang would give a "Gathering to Warm the Cold" 暖寒之會 (pun for "Meeting of Warmth and Cold") whenever a big snow fell. He would *have a path swept* from his home out to the main gate of the ward, and stand there to personally welcome his guests. (*Kaiyuan Tianbao yishi* 開元天寶遺事 , *Xu Baichuan xuehai* edition, rep. Taipei n.d., 3a/857.)

Lines 27-28. QUIETLY ("covertly") FOLDED ARMS 陰拱 . This is a quotation, but not a significant allusion. The phrase comes from the words that Sui He 隨何 spoke to Qing Bu (黥布 , d. 195 BC), convincing him to join the Han armies against Chu: "Your Majesty should have swept up your Huainan troops, crossed the Huai and fought day and night beneath Pengcheng's ramparts. But as it was, Your Majesty, with ten thousand at your command, took not a single man across the Huai. Rather you sat *with covertly folded arms*, watching for who would be the victor." (*Han shu* 34/1883; also *Shi ji* 91/2600.)

Some find in this and other poems an agitated or complaining tone 不平之氣, or an indication that Wang feared Wu Chong and the conservatives would destroy his New Policies after he left.[36] Although one need not accept such an extreme view, it is still likely that Wang was writing about more than mere snow. The poem is a series of allusions and conceits, some of which are political and may indeed have been slightly barbed. From this distance, and without Wu Chong's original poem, we cannot know exactly what Wang may have intended the "snow" to represent, if anything. But at the risk of putting words into Wang's mouth, let us try two different hypotheses: *One*, that the "snow" throughout represents an unawakened world, or the "common crowd" of bureaucrats and their ways. *Two*, that Wang uses "snow in several ways, in a series of conceits that are only partially related to each other.

According to the first hypothesis (snow as human error), the poem would read thus: "Erroneous ways sweep the world with the splendor of a Han or Tang dynasty--beautiful and clever, but a corruption of the ancient *Dao*. (Lines 1-4.) Such ideas can mask ugliness, blanket sordid reality, make barren places look rich and full (lines 5-8). Individual wrong ideas seem harmless, but their collective weight can crush a healthy branch, with an inauspicious crackling. Factions, if large enough, can destroy even as they dazzle (lines 9-12). Soon, com-

[36]Wu Rulun 吳汝綸 (1840--1903) believed this; reported by Gao Buying in *Shi juyao*.

mon people find it impossible to make a living. Dogged conservatism has 'blocked their path.' Recluses *hide themselves* when the blanket of misgovernment grows too thick. (Lines 13-16.) But, just as this 'snow' seems about to overpower the sun and moon, there comes an enlightened ruler (Shenzong the reformer), whose *yang* energy melts the winter and turns it into a nourishing stream (lines 17-20). 'Snow' (corruption) has inspired men to eagerly await good crops after it melts. Within its frigid whiteness, men have invited friends to 'warming' gatherings (lines 21-22). I have spent a life struggling against this 'snow;' now I am only too happy to bequeathe that struggle to men who are still vigorous: who better than my old friends Wu and Han?"

According to the second hypothesis ("snow" as a mixed metaphor): "Snow presages a stirring across the land. Wonders can take place: miasmas can shine, humble houses rise to prominence (lines 1-8). Snow also represents united human efforts that can dazzle the eyes and make momentous changes (lines 9-11). Snow further gives kings a chance to hone their virtue: when winter comes, a king must train himself to remember the cold and hungry (lines 13-16). Some things, including snow, can outshine the sun (lines 17-18). Yet nothing in this world stays the same--heat inevitably replaces cold; harmful snow will always melt into benevolent streams (lines 19-20). That is why men celebrate heavy snow--because at the bottom of winter's cycle, they know that warmth will come (lines 21-22). Today's snow is just such a cause for celebration: things are cold and stagnant now, but you two men shall lead next season's battles (lines 25-26)."

Wang claims to be a willing bystander while others fight their wars: he has quit politics to be a "woodcutter" or "fisherman."[37] But from his later poems written in retirement, we know that he cared sorely about the outcome of the other men's conflicts, even though he appeared to be coolly "folding his arms." He would hasten to aid the side he preferred, if it became necessary and if he had the strength. Did he trust Wu and Han to do as he would like? He only pretends not to be concerned.

The first interpretation of the poem is consistent but forced; the second is more likely but produces a poem that seems disjointed on the surface (although many poems written at social events were disjointed, sometimes amounting only to couplets in a series). The truth may lie somehwere between the two readings.

[37]Wang's martial images may refer to treacherous rivalries such as that reported between Wu Chong and Wang Gui; see Shen, p. 19.

TO ZHANG GUI'S RHYMES, ON HORSEBACK°

When first I took up my credentials, I grieved
I was too weak.°
"Bestowed" now with a jade "wheelround," I shame
at misplaced favor.°
Sickness has enfeebled strength: I should retire soon;
I pilfered those many official ranks, my blame is surely deep.°
Before any fertile blessings showed, vain slander came, and wrath.
As long as scabs and sores remain, how can there be praiseful songs?
In orange dusk, a trusty horse, the road to the City by the Kiang
What man can I hope to visit, to say what is in this heart?

次韻張唐公馬上

竭節初悲力不勝，賜環終愧繆恩臨
病來氣弱歸宜早，偷取官多責恐深
膏澤未施空諍怒，瘡痍猶在豈謳吟
黃昏信馬江城路，欲訴何人話此心

LOCATION. Li Bi 33.1a/807; *Linchuan* 21/262; Longshu 53/599. (Li Bi text is superior.)

DATE. Probably 1074.6, at Jiangning. Zhang Gui had died before 1073.6.1 (the date of Zeng Gong's sacrificial ode, see *Yuanfeng leigao* 38.2a). This poem seems best to fit Wang's state of mind when he was summoned back to office after his first resignation, in 1075.2. At that time Zhang Gui had been dead perhaps for two years, but Wang wished Zhang were still alive and in Jiangning to talk with him.

ZHANG GUI張瓌. (Of Quanjiao全椒, westward and inland across the Yangzi from Jiangning.) Old friend and confidante of Wang Anshi, Wang Anguo, and Zeng Gong. (He married a daughter to one of Zeng's nephews.) Lived at Jiangning in his later years (see next poem).

Wang wrote three other poems to Zhang's rhymes, that pour out Wang's heart in similar ways to this. (See Li Bi 23.2b/570; #3 trans. Yoshikawa/Watson pp. 92-3. Also see *Yuanfeng leigao* 38.2a. And above, p. 30 note 4; p. 69.) Zhang served with Wang as a drafter of edicts around 1061 (Li Bi 41.11b/1002); visited a Buddhist master with Wang (Li Bi 24.7a/595); substituted for Wang on a mission to the Khitans (Li Bi 29.10b/722).

Line 1. TOO WEAK 力不勝 . Lit.: "I was sad that my strength could not withstand the task."

Line 2. BESTOWED WITH A JADE "WHEELROUND"賜環. I.e. *ordered back to court.*

Xunzi records a series of ceremonial acts (involving puns) by which a ruler commanded his subordinates: he sent them away (*jué* 絕) with a jade *jué* (a disc with a section missing); he called them to come back (*huán* 還) with a jade *huán* 環 (a complete ring or disc). (絕人以玦，反絕以環。) Wang has been "bestowed with a *huán*" —homonymous with "bestowed with the right to *return* to the court." (*Xunzi* 27/322.)

Line 4. BLAME 責 . Or "responsibility." "I fear I have a deep responsibility for the acts I have committed while in this undeserved office."

What were these "fertile blessings" 膏澤 , "scabs and sores" 瘡痍 , and "songs of praise" 謳吟? Zhang Gui would have understood, but he was dead. And Wang could not spell out to anyone else what was in his mind. As with Wang Ling's death, the loss of Zhang Gui had robbed Wang Anshi of an "understanding listener" 知音 —one who could be trusted to know what Wang's words meant, in a time when it was not safe to speak plainly; a time in which, if Wang wrote too clearly what he was thinking, his words would paradoxically be misunderstood and wrongly used. One imagines that Wang was still smarting from being forced to leave the capital: slander and anger had been involved in his removal. To be summoned back now was small comfort, because the scars still stung from the last time, and his physical strength was fading. The fact that *he had known before he began* that he would be

too weak to complete his mission, only made him more uncomfortable.[38]

Wang's "trusty horse" (the only reliable thing or person in all eight lines) is as solid as home; but when Wang returns to the capital, the infighting there will feel like quicksand, against which his sick self can struggle less and less.

A poem like this shows immediately what sort of person Wang counted as a truly intimate friend: we need only compare it with the lighthearted poem from the same period to Han Wei (P 36), the long one to Wu Chong (P 38), the paeans to Yang Ji (P 17-18), the gratitude to Ding Baochen and Pei Yu (P 27-28). With Han Wei, Wang could talk airily of retiring to become "master to tortoises and fish," and modestly call himself an "unworthy royal knight." To Wu Chong he could muffle a list of state reponsibilities under brilliant allusions to snow. But to Zhang Gui, Wang puts up no front: he has felt helpless, and finds the Emperor's support of him in this condition to be ludicrously wrong. And there is no one with whom Wang can talk.

Wang was this open with only a handful of people: Wang Ling, Wang Anguo, Zeng Gong (in youth if at all);[39] the masters Zanyuan and

[38]We may guess what lines 5 and 6 are saying: perhaps Wang means that his betrayers slander him in vain, because the Emperor does not support ("bless") them: it makes no sense for his supporters to rejoice at Wang's return, because the dissensions have not yet healed. Or perhaps Wang means that before he has been able to bring "blessings" to the people (through his new policies), slander and anger have wastefully cut him short: how can anyone rejoice when the scars of dissension are still fresh?

[39]See "Sent to Zeng Gong" 寄曾子固 , Li Bi 17.6a/475; Zhu p. 84.

Xingxiang (P 41, 42); his son Wang Fang, perhaps his brother-in-law Shen Jizhang (P 97-98, 103), and Wang Hui (P 29). Of these, Wang Ling and Wang Hui died early; Xingxiang seems to have betrayed Wang; Anguo and Zhang Gui died before Wang's retirement. If an "understanding listener" (知音 "one who knows my music") is someone with whom a poet can dispense with humor, allusion, admiration, modesty and clarity, and exist with as an equal, then the only "understanding listeners" of Wang's that we can name with assurance are Wang Ling and Zhang Gui. Wang spent the last twelve years of his life without either of them. If he had other intimates, the number was small. Does this show that Wang was indeed "aloof"獨高 ? Or could he count himself lucky, because some people might go through life with no true friends at all?

This poem suggests a further "scar" in Wang's mind: the gulf that lay between him and the Emperor. Shenzong could easily have qualified as an "understanding listener" despite his youth, but his position would always separate him from Wang, while his absolute power made Wang's career ultimately insecure. Shenzong, as Emperor, could destroy Wang with one change of mind. To a lesser extent, so could Wang's other influential associates. None of Wang's "understanding listeners" were men in high office. He may have started his career among a group of like-minded fellows; but when he reached the highest office he found himself alone there among other great officers who were often half-enemy and half-friend. His ensuing reticence about communicating his true feelings took such deep root that he may not have truly opened up, even to his "understanding listeners," until after they had died. (As with Zhang Gui and Wang Ling.) Between him and

living friends there may have been a perennial wall or chasm that thwarted complete candor.

Thus the deepest sorrow of this poem to Zhang Gui may lie in the fact that Zhang could only become an "understanding listener" for Wang by dying. Perhaps the musician Bo Ya, too, had not realized what a friend he had had until Zhong Ziqi died. Thus it was remorse, not grief alone, that would cause Bo Ya to smash his zither instead of merely putting it away. (See P 40, notes to line 6.)

Wang Anshi smashed nothing--he just grew gradually weary.

GREAT MELANCHOLY AFTER THE POEM BY THE LATE ZHANG GUI OF QUANJIAO,
WRITTEN AT THE WESTERN CLOISTER UPON NORTH MOUNTAIN,
WAS PLASTERED OVER BY THE MONKS°

1 Ten gloomy years, I hike these hill-field paths°
Until at last I want
to drip the cup I hold into the Springs below.°

3 I walk the Eastward Road in hermit headcloth
but not as Yang Hu vowed°
The Western Gate's "Gaily Painted Halls"
a sea of long rafters°

5 Between the Dark World and the Bright there is a permanent wall--
I can stop cooking grain for you°
Truth and the World stand at loggerheads
long ago I snipped the sounding strings°

7 Ink from your brush--
are we not meeting each time I see it?--°
Dissolves again like mist, with human business°

全祝張公有詩在北山西菴僧者墁之悵然有感

1 十年怊悵躡山阡，終欲持盃滴到泉
3 東路角巾非故約，西州華屋漫修椽
5 幽明永隔休炊黍，莫俗相妨久絕弦
7 遺墨每看疑邂逅，復隨人事散如烟

LOCATION. Li Bi 27.6b/668 (extra notes in 1958 edition p. 325); *Linchuan* 17/229; Longshu 63/688.

DATE. App. 1083, in Jiangning. "Ten gloomy years" implies that Wang wrote the poem about ten years after Zhang died (line 1); or else ten years after Wang himself retired. Either way, one can date it to 1083 or perhaps 1086.

ZHANG GUI. See previous poem.

WESTERN CLOISTER 西菴. A small temple on Mount Zhong that Wang often visited, and where some of his friends served as monks. It was probably part of the Taiping Xingguo temple complex, and may have been specifically connected with the Dinglin Cloister within that complex, where Wang had a study.

Li Bi guesses that the Western Cloister may have been an informal name for the White Cloud Cloister 白雲庵 on Mt. She (see notes to line 1, and P 97-98). (Li Bi 22.5b/554.)

Line 1. LIT.: "Ten years, gloomily treading mountain field-paths." Li Bi believes "tread" (*she* 躡) is a misprint for *She* 攝 (the name of a mountain about eight miles northeast of Mt. Zhong). In that case the line would read, "Ten gloomy years on the field-paths of *Mount She*." Zhang Gui had spent time studying at the White Cloud Cloister on Mt. She; thus Li Bi surmises that the "Western Cloister" was this White Cloud Cloister. The standard reading may be better, however: Mt. She was far from Wang's house; the poem's title states that the Western Cloister was on Mt. Zhong ("North Mountain"), and if it had really been on the more distant Mt. She, one doubts that Wang would have visited the cloister as often as he did. Also, the original reading of "tread" 躡 makes good sense, and appears consistently in all texts.

Line 2. I.E.: "Only now can I bear the thought of pouring sacrificial wine on your grave."

THE SPRINGS 泉. The deepest springs of the earth. The "aroma" of a proper libation will "covertly arrive at the deepest wellsprings" 冥陰達於淵泉(*Li ji yinde* 11/27). These are also the "Yellow Springs" 黃泉, i.e. resting place of the dead.

DRIP 滴. This word suggests tears falling on the ground. Wang literally says, "...holding the cup, to drip into the Springs" —what falls to the ground could be tears as well as wine. Han Yu had used this image before:

> You call from above, and no one ever hears you;
> *Dripping* to the ground, your tears *reach into the Springs*...
> 上呼無時聞，滴地淚到泉

("Meng Jiao has Lost his Sons" 孟東野失子, *Han Changli shi* 6/293.)

Line 3. LIT.: "The 'Eastern Road' and 'cornered kerchief' are not of that former vow." I.e., "Like Yang Hu, you had planned to retire after a successful career, but illness and death have cancelled your plan." Alternatively (perhaps simultaneously), "I return home after a successful career (as Yang Hu wished to), but find your death has cancelled my plans to keep company with you."

YANG HU 羊祜 (221--278). Brilliant leader in the early Jin. The first Jin emperor assigned Yang Hu to govern strategic Xiangyang 襄陽, from which he could weaken and eventually annex the holdout kingdom of Wu to the southeast. Yang used the best Confucian tools: made Xiangyang prosperous, keeping his word with the enemy, until everyone trusted him. He had always assumed he would "do something great in the world" 建大功於天下 : this was his chance. After he grew famous, his son-in-law advised him to retire, since he had achieved so much and was so fond of home. But Yang answered that he was not finished. To a cousin he wrote, "Once I have settled this border problem, it will be right for me to '(put on my) *cornered kerchief* and (take to the) *eastward road*, return to my old village and make a mound to fit a coffin..." (*Jin shu* 34/1020.) Yang Hu died before he could finish his task; he could not return home in recluse's garb as he had planned. (*Jin shu* 34/1013-21.)

Line 4. LIT.: "The Western Gate area, where Yang Tan once chanted of 'gaily painted halls,' is full of long rafters (i.e., the spacious roofs *are still there*)." This nest of allusions basically means, "Buildings still stand at a place where men have died and been mourned without achieving their goals; yet compared to these men's immortal virtue, even these old buildings have only the briefest lifespan."

WESTERN GATE 西州 . The old "Xizhou" Gate at Jinling, that figures in the life of the Jin general and prime minister Xie An. For years, Xie An had wanted to retire to his beloved home, but the times were so precarious that the nation would be in trouble without him. As he rode through the *Western Gate* with friends, sadness at his future overcame him: then and there, he told them that for sixteen years he had known, through a dream, that he would die this year. (*Jin shu* 79/2076. For more about Xie An, see P 78.)

"GAILY PAINTED HALLS" 華屋 . I.e., the fleeting magnificence of life, from which we all must part. From a ballad by Cao Zhi:

> We are born in *gaily painted halls*,
> Then singly, scattered, return to hills and mounds...
> 生在華屋處，零落歸山丘

(See note to P 22, line 1.)

Yang Tan 羊曇 , a nephew and favorite of Xie An, was so saddened by Xie's death that he could never again bear to pass through the Western Gate. One time he was riding back from a party, and amid his drunken singing he did not realize where he was headed. When his friends told him, "This is the Western Gate," he wept, and burst out with Cao Zhi's poem--"We are born and live in *gaily painted halls*...!" (*Jin shu* 79/2077.)

...SEA OF LONG RAFTERS 漫修椽. The last five characters of this line are a paraphrase from a Du Fu poem, about yet another great man who never achieved his goals--Chen Zi'ang:

> Where the Omissioner lived in former days
> The large *hall* still has *long rafters*...
> 拾遺平昔居，大屋尚修椽

("The Old Home of Omissioner Chen Zi'ang" 陳拾遺故宅, *Du shi jingquan* 9.24a/326.) Du Fu's poem goes on to praise Chen Zi'ang 陳子昂 (661--702?), whose "Poems Inspired by What Has Befallen Me" 感遇詩 mourned his own misfortunes under the reign of Empress Wu. Chen's dwelling remained in beautiful condition, said Du Fu, but it was still just as mortal as Chen had been. The only immortal things about Chen would be his loyalty and right conduct, as expressed in his poems.

Line 5. COOKING GRAIN 炊黍. I.E.: "*I need not wait for you now.*" This entire line probably revolves around the story of Fan Shi 范式 and his lifelong friend Zhang Shao 張劭 of the Later Han. (Fan would represent Wang Anshi, while Zhang Shao could stand for Zhang Gui.) Fan and Zhang met as students at the Imperial Academy. Before going to their respective homes on leave, Fan made a pact that he would come back to see Zhang in exactly two years. When the time approached, Zhang told his mother to start cooking for the guest. "Why do you take so literally a promise made two years and a thousand miles ago?" she asked. But she warmed the wine, and soon Fan appeared!

Zhang Shao died with Fan in his mind. Fan, far away, dreamed that Zhang told him he was dying, and would be buried on a certain day. Fan woke from the dream in tears, asked for a leave and hurried to where Zhang was. But Fan was late, and the funeral began without him. Yet Zhang's coffin would not budge into the ground. Sensing that Zhang's spirit was waiting for someone, Zhang's mother halted the funeral. Soon a mourning carriage appeared, pulled by a white horse, its passenger wailing with grief. "That must be Fan Shi!" she said--and it was. A thousand mourners heard Fan's words-- "Yuanbo (Zhang Shao), you have gone! And *the dead and the living do not take the same path*; from now we say farewell forever." The coffin went into the ground as soon as Fan took up one of the ropes. (*Hou Han shu* 81/2676-77.)

Therefore, this line means, "Like Fan Shi, I have lost a fast friend; it is too late for me to warm the food for your arrival, as you once did in life for me."

Line 6. SNIPPED THE SOUNDING STRINGS 絕弦. I.E.: "I have given up trying to find a friend like you..." This is what the musician Bo Ya 伯牙 had done after his friend Zhong Ziqi 鍾子期 died: Zhong Ziqi had been Bo Ya's only "understanding listener:" the only man who could discern Bo Ya's thoughts through his music. "Bo Ya broke his zither and *snapped its strings*, never to play it again. He believed that there was no one left on earth for whom it was worth his time to play the zither again." (*Lüshi chunqiu* 14:2/140.)

This line means, "Those who know the Truth (such as you and I)

will always be in opposition to those with only common knowledge. Ever since you left, I have not bothered to try to communicate with anyone else: I know it is useless."

TRUTH, THE WORLD 真俗 . Wang surely knew that these were Buddhist terms: "Absolute Truth"真諦 vs. "worldly truth"俗諦. "Absolute Truth" is the knowledge of sages, that all is empty; "worldly truth" is the ordinary assumption that things have substance. To a beginning Buddhist the two views seem irreconcilable; he must give up "worldly" ideas, and accept the "Absolute" truth that all is empty. But at higher stages of understanding, one can learn that both emptiness and non-emptiness, and both their dichotomy and their unity, are one. "Truth" and "the world" need not be "at loggerheads" at all. Wang must have known this doctrine; yet as he presents himself in this poem, he is unable to enter into it. (More about this in the general comments below.)

For the earliest essay on how to reconcile the two ways of thought, see "The Meaning of the Two Kinds of Truth" 二諦義 , by Jizang 吉藏 (549--623). (*Taishō Tripitaka* vol. 45.) See especially the section in Shi Jun et al. ed., *Zhongguo Fojiao sixiang ziliao xuanbian* 中國佛教思想資料選編, series 2, vol. 1, p. 388. Trans. in Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, 1963), p. 360. Similar ideas existed throughout Buddhism, and are found in *Zhuangzi* as well.

Line 7. INK FROM YOUR BRUSH 遺墨 . This refers again to Chen Zi'ang. Chen's "remaining poems" insure that his spirit will live on. (Du Fu, see note to line 4 above.) But Zhang Gui's writings have no such luck. And even Chen's words shall perish someday: what will be left for us then? *Mist*--that with which we began.

Line 8. Another bow to Du Fu, though not a significant allusion:

The fellows of the Pear Garden have *scattered like mist*
梨園弟子散如烟

("Ballad on Watching a Student of Madame Gongsun Dance with Swords and Weapons" 觀公孫大娘弟子舞劍器行 , *Du shi jingquan* 18.7b/610.)

Wang could be as evocative as Li Shangyin or Du Fu. He could also use as great a labyrinth of allusions, at the expense of clarity. For that reason, let us paraphrase the ideas this poem presents, before discussing details:

"It has taken me a decade to get used to your death, but I am finally ready to make a libation for you. I know my wine and tears

will reach you below the ground, just as our thoughts and aspirations mingled in life. (Lines 1-2.)

"You were always in service, dying before you could retire: just so were Yang Hu and Xie An. Like them, you felt death approaching. I, who had hoped to retire along with you, must settle for lesser companions now. You are gone, survived only by buildings that bring painful memories. (Lines 3-4.)

"Death stops our friendship, keeping us in different worlds. This cuts me off not only from you, but from living men as well: because no one living knows me as you did. Isolated now from the world, I no longer bother to speak my mind to anyone. (Lines 5-6.)

"Your spirit lived an extra decade, through your poetry on the wall; but now that, too, is gone, back into the emptiness that is the beginning and end of affairs. (Lines 7-8.)"

It is monks, not ordinary men, who have blotted out Zhang's writing. Are they teaching a lesson about permanence? Wang must now face the total loss of Zhang Gui. He must transcend the *illusion of emptiness* that he now feels, along with the *illusion of fulfillment* that had been his while Zhang was alive. After that, perhaps he can conquer the dichotomy between "True" and "worldly;" will no longer feel isolated from the world, and will accept the possibility that perhaps someone other than Zhang Gui can also understand him.

Indeed, through its flawless architecture the whole poem shows a progressive awakening, a lesson in how to rise above grief. At first Wang wanders aimlessly; later he can perform a ceremony; later still he tries to view Zhang as if he were a historical figure. Next, Wang

accepts that he and Zhang have become separate. Finally, Wang learns to relinquish physical traces, and to understand *what it means* to say that human affairs "dissolve like mist."

It is in the details that Wang is most skillful. The first couplet moves from solid grief (downward-looking, earth-bound) to grief's resolution (upraised cup, flowing water).

The middle couplets are Wang's *tour de force*: an example of his pairing of words from similar categories, a technique that makes parallel couplets unusually harmonious. In lines 3 and 4 especially, both lines allude to the Jin dynasty, both involve men named Yang, both involve leaders who died with goals unfulfilled.

Other nuances: Line 3 may represent Zhang Gui (who had spent much time in Xiangyang), while line 4 has more to do with Wang (a man in Jinling grieving for a departed elder). And line 3 (the seeming fragility of the recluse's ideals) balances line 4 (the apparent permanence of great palaces).

Lines 5 and 6 both talk about pairs of friends (one member of whom is even named Zhang, if the right allusion has been identified). And they contrast two kinds of separation.

Wang uses two types of allusions: one quite shallow (merely a quote from someone's earlier poem, as in line 8's phrase from Du Fu); but sometimes so deep that the poem alluded to must be kept in mind to explain the current poem (as with the allusions from Du Fu about Chen Zi'ang, see note to line 3).

Indirectly, this poem can tell us several things about Wang's later attitudes toward literature.

First: he did not shy from using complex allusions; he actually liked them.

Second: even his most allusion-burdened lines could remain sincere and frank. The allusions aid his sincerity by expanding the contents of what he is saying, and by suggesting certain historical figures with whom Wang feels he and Zhang Gui compare.

Third: line 6 suggests that Wang's mind operated on at least two levels. In his most private mind, he was trying to transcend the misunderstandings that had always plagued human beings (he wanted to unite "Truth" with the "worldly"). But in writing a poem for a deceased friend, Wang chose to function in the Confucian realm, where one did not talk of things beyond the "worldly," or try to "transcend" what death had cast apart. Wang's public actions and most of his other verse also belonged to this realm of the palpable and apparent. Though he privately explored higher truths, he did not mention these explorations in public.

Fourth: if the above is true, we might draw another inference: Written words, for Wang, were far from the highest thing one could produce. They were useful only in the realm of the apparent, and need not be pressed into service to talk about spiritual subjects, which they could not express well anyway. Therefore, the loss of Zhang Gui's inscription might not be so tragic after all; and this poem of Wang's commemorating Zhang's calligraphy might not be so important either.

The sincerity of this poem, and the care with which it was crafted, suggest again that Wang saw Zhang Gui as an "understanding listener" of unusual quality.

	自府中歸寄西庵禪師行詳	RETURNING FROM THE GOVERNMENT OFFICE:° SENT TO CHAN MASTER XINGXIANG OF THE WESTERN CLOISTER°
1	意衰難自力	My will is feeble, strength of my own comes hard.°
	扶路便思還	I take the road, then think of turning back;
3	強逐蕭騷水	Struggle to follow withered, wasted streams,
	還看慘淡山	And from afar watch miserable, pale hills°
5	行尋香草遍	And trek in search of fragrant herbs--full circle
	歸漾晚雲間	And ripple home among late evening clouds.°
7	西崦分明見	The occidental peaks are clear to see
	幽人不可攀	But the man there hid cannot be reached by climbing.

LOCATION. Li Bi 22.6a/555; *Linchuan* 14/197; Longshu 60/668.

DATE. Probably 1074--1079, at Jiangning.

...GOVERNMENT OFFICE 府中 . Variant title from the *Linchuan* edition. It may mean that the poem was written during Wang's first retirement in 1074, when he still nominally served in the prefectural office at Jiangning.

XINGXIANG 行詳 : A Tiantai monk, friend of Wang's during retirement, who later seems to have disagreed with Wang. (See above, p. 228; also next poem.)

WESTERN CLOISTER 西庵 . On Mount Zhong; see note to title of P 40.

Line 1. MY OWN STRENGTH 自力 (Buddhist term). Strength that comes from one's own efforts, through cultivating virtue, tranquillity and wisdom. Contrasted with "strength from outside," that comes from praying to the Boddhisattva or praying for salvation.

Lines 3-4. Li Bi finds the structure of these lines reminiscent of Tang poetry: physical objects are desribed in a way that colors them with the poet's emotions or the flavor of the scene. This is done by making the emotion-filled adjectives modify the things them-

selves, rather than the whole scene. Example:

In the pool remains *sparse* and *lonely water*;
Floating, *longing breeze* beneath the window...
池殘寥落水，牕下悠颺風
(Bo Juyi, quoted by Li Bi.)

Lines 5-6. An ingenious parallel couplet. LIT.:

"I *walk out*, *seeking* *fragrant* *herbs everywhere*;
I *return*, *rippling* *evening* *clouds-among*."

He seems to have gone out on foot, and returned home by boat.

ALLUSIONS. Although there is no specific allusion for line 5, it recalls the traditions of Qu Yuan or of "Immortal" poetry. The poet, rejected in real life, finds a fantasy world (or a real hillside) in which he wanders among pristine herbs and finds comfort--comfort that lasts until he suddenly remembers how his king has rejected him, and how far away his home is.

Line 6 recalls the poem by Li Bo which Anshi enjoyed, "Leaving the Town of Bo-di by Morning" (see P 74).

Line 7. OCCIDENTAL PEAKS 西嵓. Perhaps where the Western Cloister was located.

This is an evocative variation on the common theme of seeking a hermit and finding him not at home. It is intriguing to see how candidly Wang admits his weaknesses to a man with whom he would later quarrel.

He depicts both a physical and a spiritual journey, that we may describe as follows:

The physical route: He headed toward his home (at Banshan?) from the governor's headquarters in the city. Filled with doubt, he hesitated whether or not to seek Xingxiang for advice. Riding by the canal, peering at Mt. Zhong through the depressing haze, he resolved to climb the mountain and visit Xingxiang. But after wandering for a day among the clean grasses below the mountain, he went home on his skiff. All day the mountain had been within reach--why had he not gone to see

the monk? Because Xingxiang was in a place too steep to climb.

The spiritual journey: If we take the poem at face value, he is telling Xingxiang, "I have felt doubtful and weak. I do not know what to do next with my life; progress is hard without a guide. I have tried to escape this depression by wandering through pristine mountains as Qu Yuan did. The trip home from there is as exhilarating as was Li Bo's voyage back down the river from Bo-di; and there is solace here. But this is the only peace and solace I know how to find: your religious version is too 'high' for me to grasp. I can perceive what you are doing, but will never reach such heights myself." Thus it could be a poem of admiration and regret.

Yet perhaps it is not so simple: Xingxiang seems to have been a difficult man, with whom Wang eventually had to break relations. Could Wang be saying, "I have found my answer without your aid; it may be escapist, shamanistic, Confucian, and may even be Buddhist. No matter about that--contact is no longer possible between us. Your pride has made you too aloof."

Whether it is a soul-baring statement of praise, or an intimate criticism, this poem shows how involved Wang was with religious men in his last years. The next poem is an even clearer example.

CHANT FOR THE WHITE CRANE: TO MASTER JUEHAI ZANYUAN°

PREFACE (By Li Bi)

At Linchuan I obtained a printing of this poem by Master Wang, followed by a colophon which I append here:

The poem "Chant for the White Crane" was written with the intention of retaining Master Juehai (Zanyuan) of Mount Zhong. Wang Anshi had long been acquainted with a preaching monk named Xingxiang 行詳 . When Wang settled in the hills, Xingxiang held discourses upon the sūtras and śāstras; with his famous skill at argument, he defamed the Chan sect.

Xingxiang grew even haughtier after the late Master Pujue 普覺 at the Western Cloister passed away, leaving Zanyuan to stand alone. But the Master (Zanyuan) did not struggle against Xingxiang, and often requested to resign from his seat at the cloister. Wang Anshi detained Zanyuan adamantly, refusing to let him go--Wang having awakened to Xingxiang's unprincipled cunning. Finally, Wang drove Xingxiang away, and retained Master Zanyuan. He wrote this poem in connection with that event. The White Crane stands for Zanyuan; the Red Crane, Xingxiang. The Tall Pine is Pujue. By reading this poem, one will understand that Wang's friendship outside the pale with these two men was by no means shallow.

Jingqi 景齊 , having owned the manuscript for a long time, now has hired a craftsman to cut it in stone, and appends this explanation of how it came about.

THE POEM

Lovely is the White Crane's voice
But Red Crane's call is despicable
White Crane is placid without a peer--
Red Crane's squawks are uncountable.

You cannot beckon White Crane toward you
But Red Crane will not be shooed away.°
When Tall Pine died, a victim to filth,
Red Crane was the reason why.

The North Hill Philosopher says:°

"The beautiful are naturally beautiful--
What action did I take that I am pleased with them?
The ugly, too, are ugly by their nature--
What action did I take that I am angry?
He who goes, shall go:
What might I lack, that I should chase behind?
And he who comes shall come--
What have I to prevent, that I should fend him off?
Why should I tire of "squawking" and demand more "peace?"
Why should I love cinnabar, and reject a paler hue?°
Do you claim, now that the Pine has died, I have no place to lean?
I have merely relinquished shade, to sit in the open dew.

白鶴吟示覺海元公

白鶴聲可憐，紅鶴聲可惡
白鶴靜無匹，紅鶴喧無數
白鶴招不來，紅鶴攆不去
長松受穢死，乃以紅鶴故

9 北山道人曰：

10 美者自美，吾何為而喜

12 惡者自惡，吾何為而怒

14 去自去耳，吾何關而追

16 來自來耳，吾何好而拒

18 吾豈厭喧而求靜？吾豈好丹而非素

20 汝謂松死吾無依邪？吾方捨陰而坐露

LOCATION. Li Bi 3.5a/213; *Linchuan* 2/94; Longshu 44/515; Shen p. 11; Cai 21/294-6; Andō 1967, p. 70 (partial).

DATE. Before 1080, at Jiangning.

JUEHAI ZANYUAN 覺海贊元 (d. 1080). Wang's friend as early as 1063. (See above, pp. 222-3, 228-9.)

PREFACE AND COLOPHON. Li Bi's preface, quoting Jingqi's colophon, was not available to Cai. If Cai had seen it, he might not have advocated the political interpretation that he did.

WHITE CRANE 白鶴. White in Buddhism connotes purity, while cranes have represented holy men, worthy friends, recluses. The legendary Chinese Immortals rode white cranes through the air. (See biography of Wang Qiao 王喬, *Hou Han shu* 82A/2712, note 3.) When the Buddha died, the sāl trees around him all blossomed as white as a flock of white cranes.

Lines 3-6. Compare with Han Shan:

...Compassion is as a wild deer,
While Anger and Wrath are like the family dog.
The family dog, you *cannot chase away*,
But the wild deer keeps *wanting to run off*...

...慈悲如野鹿 瞋怒似家狗 .
家狗趕不去 野鹿常好走 ...

(*Han Shan shiji* #155, p. 48a/165.)

Line 9. PHILOSOPHER OF NORTH HILL 北山道人. Or, "the Holy Man of North Hill (Mt. Zhong)." This is Wang himself.

Line 19. LIT.: "Why should I love cinnabar-red and reject plain white?"

Lines 18-19. Compare *gāthas* in biography of Bodhidharma, *Jingde chuandeng lu* 3/49:

> ...Nor shall you abominate the sight of evil,
> Nor shall you labor faster, watching good;
> Nor cleave to folly, tossing wisdom out,
> Nor grasp enlightenment, rejecting darkness...
>
> ... 亦不觀惡而生嫌，亦不觀善而勤措
> 亦不捨智而近愚，亦不拋迷而就悟...

In deliberately simple, almost archaic language partly reminiscent of Han Shan and of Chan gāthas, Wang spelled out what his previous poem had hinted: the question of what attitude to use in seeking religious training. He has in the past attached himself to human guides, but made a mistake in following Xingxiang as one of them. Wang now realizes that mistake. Xingxiang has now left, and Zanyuan should stay--but if Wang deliberately dismisses Xingxiang and retains Zanyuan, Zanyuan's religious ethics will never agree to such an action.

Fortunately, Wang in fact was not dismissing or retaining anyone. His mistake was not a matter of trusting the wrong monk; rather it lay in trying to map or plan his own religious development. With this poem, Wang asserted that he would no longer cling to specific people, or let his desires influence things. Such a declaration, even if insincere, would make Zanyuan feel easier about staying. And it is likely that Wang was being sincere.

We might take the last four lines to imply that Wang was learning not to treat Buddhism as another kind of goal to pursue. What Buddhism had to offer was not the comfort of health and long life *a la*

Daoism (line 19); one could not take shelter under a Master (line 20). It was necessary for Wang's religious development that he forego the numbing safety of ordinary religion, stop seeking what most people call permanence or security, and take his place in that very "dew" (the ordinary, transient, cold world) from which he had started. In other words, he was finding contentment, and learning--at least intellectually--to escape from selection and rejection, from right vs. wrong, and from other dualiries and contradictions. Could it have been its value as a record of that learning process that caused "The White Crane" to be craved in stone?

RECORD OF A DREAM

(Wang's own foreword:)

The night of the twenty-third, in the ninth month of the year xin you (1081), I dreamt that the Holy Man of Gaoyou's Earthen Hill 高郵土山道人 ° came to the Peak of Gathered Clouds 集雲峰 north of Mount Jiang. There he became a temple elder. He passed away while in meditation, but later reappeared at the Taiping Xingguo Temple on the south side of the mountain.° He and I slept together on the same bed. Searching in his bosom, he brought out a bamboo strip several inches long, wound about with raw silk. He bade me hide it safely. But I cast it down and would not take it. I wrote this poem for him:

The moon enters a thousand streams, its substance never splits;°

A Man of the Path does not again become a man on earth.°

At meditation places, to Zhong Mountain's south and north°

Some day the smoke of incense shall be offered to both his selves.

記夢

月入千江體不分，道人非復世間人

鍾山南北安禪地，香火他時供兩身

LOCATION. Li Bi 43.5b/1042; *Linchuan* 29/327; Longshu 76/814.

DATE. 1081.9.23, at Jiangning.

HOLY MAN OF GAOYOU'S EARTHEN HILL 高郵土山道人. Hard to identify.

TAIPING XINGGUO TEMPLE 太平興國寺. The great temple complex on Mt. Zhong, that included the Dinglin Cloister, Master Bao's pagoda, and eventually Wang's house at Banshan below the mountain. (See p. 164 above.)

Line 1. MOON: This common Chan and Huayan Buddhist analogy would later appear in Zhu Xi's Confucian metaphysics. The idea is that

reality, or Buddha-nature, or reason, exists in everything.
Cf. poem by Seng Run僧潤:

The image of a strip of moon splits into a thousand
streams' waters;
The sound of a single pine takes on the winds of all
four seasons...

片月影分千澗水，孤松聲任四時風

("To a Chan Student"贈禪客, in *Jingde Chuandeng lu* 29/217.)
Cf. also *Guzunsu yulu*, quoted by Li Bi:

The Buddha has omnipresent wisdom
Like the moon imaged upon the sea:
Scoop the sea, you shall get water
And the moon likewise will *follow* and be there.

佛具遍智，如月印海．撮海得水，月亦隨在．

Line 2. I.E.: "A man on earth" can inhabit only one body and personality at a time. But a "Man of the Path" has learned to be omnipresent, like the moon's myriad reflections. And once he has reached this stage, he need never slip back into his earlier ignorant state.

Line 3. ZHONG MOUNTAIN'S SOUTH AND NORTH. Literally, at both the Peak of Gathered Clouds and the Taiping Xingguo Temple. May also refer to the irrelevance of "north" and "south:"

...The stupid call the South the North;
The wise arrive at no more East or West...

愚人喚南作北，智者達無西東．

("Confusion and Enlightenment are Not Different" 迷悟不二, by Zhigong誌公, d. 514, *Jingde Chuandeng lu* 29/203.)

Both the dream and the poem are hard to interpret without knowing whether the monk was alive or dead when Wang wrote these lines--but perhaps this misses the point.

The poem's premise seems clear enough: the holy man will always reappear, even if he dies a thousand times--because his essence will multiply, and cannot be removed. If the moon can shine from two streams, then two temples can have incarnations of this holy man.

After dreaming that the monk has literally reappeared, Wang

considers the idea that in fact his essence will always exist, to reappear infinite times. It is only one step from that idea to the concept that people of two temples, worshipping what they believe to be different things, may in fact be bearing homage to the same entity.

Could we go farther, and say that Wang believed two apparently different systems of thought, such as Confucianism and Buddhism, could share the same essence? Later orthodox Confucians labelled the Chan disciple and syncretist Li Chunfu as an inheritor of Wang Anshi's ideas: was it because of the syncretism Wang may have revealed in such lines as these?[40]

Wang's poem is clearer than the dream itself. It is hard to know what the bamboo strip was, or why Wang rejected it. (Wang did not know what it was, either: if he knew, he surely would have called it by its name instead of describing it. Would it have had writing on it? A name?) What we can learn from the dream is that Buddhism was much on Wang's mind during his retirement, and he may have felt at a crossroads

[40]Li Chunfu 李純甫 (1185--1231) has left little political writing. Association of him with Wang Anshi is based largely on their general philosophies, and on the post-Song assumption that each of them was a kind of heretic. Li's ideas are available in his treatise objecting to the anti-Buddhist bias of neo-Confucian writings. See "Comments on the *Mingdao ji*" 鳴道集說: excerpts included in *Fozu lidai tongzai* 20:30/695-699. Partially translated in Jan Yun-hwa, "Li P'ing-shan and his Refutation of Neo-Confucian Criticism of Buddhism," in R.C. Amore ed., *Developments in Buddhist Thought: Canadian Contributions to Buddhist Studies* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfred Laurier Univ., 1979) 162-193.

The Qing-dynasty editors of the *Song Yuan xue an* 宋元學案 relegated Li Chunfu to the last section (*juan* 100), noting that he was mired in heterodoxy, and bold in his shameless views. (*Song Yuan xue an*, ed. by Quan Zuwang et al., Taipei: World, 1973, 100/1873.) The book specifically listed him as an offshoot of Wang Anshi's school of thought (table on 98/1830).

as to what he might become, whose model he should follow, who might be his teacher, or what responsibilities he might be taking up.

Doubts about the dream should not prevent us from appreciating the aplomb with which Wang turned it into a clever but sincere play on Buddhist doctrine, contained in a light-hearted poem to a friend.

(POEM SENT BY WANG'S DAUGHTER, MRS. WU ANCHI, FROM KAIFENG TO HER FATHER AT JIANGNING)°

No west wind blows through my small window gauze:°
This autumn air must pity how I keep remembering home.°
Eyes strain to see the South—I hate those thousand miles;°
Just as before, tears and all, I watch the yellow blooms.°

西風不入小窗紗，秋氣應憐我憶家
極目江南千里恨，依然和淚看黃花

TWO POEMS TO THE RHYMES OF MY DAUGHTER MRS. WU

THE FIRST (P 44)

The Suen Mound's Western Bend, its shore jet gauze°
Knows your chilly sadness now, as you remember home;
Can we upon this earth escape uniting and dispersing?°
You also "meet with festivals:" so let wind blow the blooms!°

次吳氏女子韵二首 (其一)
孫陵西曲岸烏紗，知汝淒涼正憶家
人世豈能無聚散，亦逢佳節且吹花

THE SECOND (P 45)

Autumn lamp, a spot projected on the lantern's gauze,

Chant well the *Śūraṁgama*; let no thoughts dwell on home:

If you can understand all surface causes are as dreams

On earth there shall be only the Amazing Lotus Bloom.°

(其二)

秋燈一點映籠紗，好讀楞嚴莫念家

能了諸緣如夢事，世間唯有妙蓮花

LOCATION. Li Bi 45.1b/1094; *Linchuan* 31/341; Longshu 54/617; Andō (1966) p. 27 (P 45 only); Cai p. 22; *Lengzhai yehua* 4/21 (P 45 and the daughter's poem).

DATE. Probably 1082. These poems seem to date from about the same time as P 46 (see notes to the latter).

The season is clearly autumn, around the time of the "Ninth Day" festival (9th day of the 9th month), when chrysanthemums bloomed and people picnicked on hillsides, thinking of absent family and friends.

MRS. WU ANCHI. Wang's eldest living daughter, married to Wu Chong's second son. The verse quoted here is all that survives of her poetry.

Daughter's Poem, Line 1. WEST WIND. Autumn or melancholy wind.

Daughter's Poem, Line 2. LIT.: "The autumn air should pity me remembering home." (A run-on or pivotal grammatical construction.)

Daughter's Poem, Line 3. LIT.: "I stretch my eyes toward the south of the Yangzi, a thousand *li* of resentment." Echoes the well-known quatrain by Wang Zhihuan 王之渙(688--742), "Climbing the Stork Tower" 登鸛雀樓:

...Wanting to extend to the limit my *thousand-league eyes*,
I climb to a higher storey on the tower.
...欲窮千里目，更上一層樓

(*Quan Tang shi* 8/253/2849.)

Daughter's Poem, Line 4. YELLOW BLOOMS 黃花 : Chrysanthemums, which bloom in autumn.

P 44, Line 1. SUEN MOUND'S WESTERN BEND 孫陵西曲 . (Spelled "Suen" to avoid confusion with the English word *sun*.) *Wang's own note:*

> "The Ninth-day Terrace 九日台 of the Southern Dynasties is by the Crooked Street of the Suen Mounds 孫陵曲街, only a few hundred paces from our garden."

(Sun Ling: the tombs of the Sun family, rulers of Wu 吳, 222--280, capital at Jinling.)

P 44, Line 3. May echo line 3 of Li Shangyin's haunting poem at a farewell banquet just before Li set off on a long assignment away from family:

> "This floating world has always had *uniting and dispersing*..."
> 浮世本來多聚散

("Written at a Banquet on the 19th of the 7th Month, Chongrang Mansion" 七月二十九日崇讓宅讌作 . In *Li Yishan shiji* 李義山詩集, ann. by Zhu Heling, blockprint edition rep. Taipei: Student Book Co., 1979, B.32/324.)

P 44, Line 4. BLOWING THE BLOOMS. The Ninth Day Festival was also known as the "Festival when Wind Blows the Flowers" 吹花節 . This line (and the whole poem to an extent) responds to Wang Wei's famous quatrain:

> Alone in a strange land, I am a stranger.
> Each time I *meet with a fine festival*, I doubly long for family.
> From far away I know my brothers have climbed a lofty place,
> Each one binds dogwood in his hair--only one person missing.
> 獨在異鄉為異客，每逢佳節倍思親
> 遙知兄弟登高處，徧插茱萸少一人

("Remembering My Brothers East of the Mountains, on the Ninth Day of the Ninth Month" 九月九日憶山東兄弟. *Wang Youcheng ji jianzhu* 王右丞集箋註, ed. by Zhao Diancheng 趙殿成 , *SBBY* edition 14.3a. Trans. also by Pauline Yu, *The Poetry of Wang Wei*, Indiana Univ. 1980, #3 p. 56.)

P 45, Line 4. AMAZING LOTUS BLOOM 妙蓮華 . Buddha's wisdom; pure as a lotus flower within a depraved world. Wang may be quoting from the *Śūraṁgama-sūtra* here:

> ...That which we pick is nothing but illusion,
> That which is not illusion has never been born.
> Upon what do these conjurations stand?
> On what is called the *Amazing Lotus Bloom*...

不敢無非幻，非幻尚不生．幻法云何立．是名妙蓮華

(*Lengyan jing*. *Taishō Tripitaka*.vol. 19, #945, 5/124c.)

Autumn melancholy suffuses Wang's daughter's poem: Autumn is a sympathetic being who keeps its lonely breezes away from her window so she will be less homesick. But she feels the chill nonetheless, and the chrysanthemums remind her of family gatherings on the Ninth Day Festival.

Her words ring crisply. The personification of autumn is a tender touch, as are the words "*small* window" and "pity"憐 . It was doubtless a touching poem to receive.

Both of her father's replies encourage her to make peace with her situation. His first reply takes the Ninth Day Festival as its theme; reminds her of the Ninth Day Terrace near her old home, hints that her family misses her too, and hopes that she will enjoy the festival where she is, knowing that her old family is celebrating it at the same time. Wang reinforces his message with allusions and echoes, the reference to the Ninth Day Terrace being a private one that only family would have understood. His second line echoes hers--he has the street by the Suen tombs thinking of her, akin to the way she described being pitied by the autumn air. Line 3 recalls banquets and farewells, adding warmth to what might otherwise be a stark statement. And line 4 recalls Wang Wei, missing his family but comforted that they are thinking of him even then.

Wang's second reply goes further than fatherly advice: he sent his daughter a copy of his new annotations to the *Śūraṁgama-sūtra* along

with this poem (according to *Lengzhai yehua*). Imagining her in her room at night, sleepless, Wang encourages her to focus on truth, and realize that all she has seen and felt around her is illusion.

If Wang had sent her the first poem alone, we could view their exchange as simply a conventional greeting on the occasion of the autumn festival. But Wang's second poem reveals the earnest emotion that underlay their phrases, just as it underlies conventional greetings among people anywhere.

寄吳氏女子一首 SENT TO MY DAUGHTER, MRS. WU

伯姬不見我 My eldest nymph, you have not seen your father
乃今始七齡 For what has now become the seventh year
家書無虛月 Yet never has a month passed without letters:°
豈異常歸寧 Would frequent visits home not be the same?

汝夫綴卿宮 Your husband graces the lords and officers,°
汝兒亦搢綬 Your children's waists wear silken pendant cords--
兒已受師學 Your son accepts the teachings of a Master,
出藍而更青 To whose "blue" he shall add rich "indigo."°
女復知女功 And, knowing well the womanly occupations,
婉嫕有典刑 Of gentleness your daughter has the form.

自吾捨汝東 Since I abandoned you to come eastward
中父繼在廷 Your Middle Uncle at this hall has stayed;°
小父數往來 Your Younger Uncle sallies back and forth°
吉音汝每聆 So that his favor'd voice you, too, have heard.

既嫁所願懷 We whom you cherish, in your married state
孰知汝所丁 Hardly compare to when you were a bride;
而吾與汝母 Still, I and your mother both, through lucky chance
湯熨幸小停 From medical brews a brief respite have gained.

丘園祿一品 In highest rank, we dwell on hill and garden
吏卒給使令 With clerks and orderlies at our command;
膏粱以晚食 Fat meats and tasty grains make evening meals;
安步而輜軿 To peaceful strolls we add a carriage screened.°

山泉皐壤間 Through mountain springs, and into marshy hollows°
適志多所經 I often pass, following my own desires--
汝何思而憂 What thoughts have come to you, to make you sad?
書每說涕零 That all your letters speak of streaming tears?

吾廬所封殖 What we have planted at our rustic home
歲久愈華青 Grows ever lush and brighter through the years;
豈特茂松竹 Do just bamboo and pine make leafy shade?
梧楸亦冥冥 No, plane-trees thrive too, and early-withering catalpa;°

芰荷美花實 Caltrop and lotus, comely blooms and seeds
瀰漫爭溝塍 Struggling for ditch and stream, brim everywhere.
諸孫肯來遊 Should grandchildren desire to come and play,
誰謂川無艇 Who could say there are no boats to bring them?

姑示汝我詩 For what they may be worth, here are my poems
知嘉此林坰 That you may know the woods and fields I prize:°
末有擬寒山 They end with imitations of Cold Mountain,°
覺汝耳目熒 To lift the dull glow from your ears and eyes.

39 因之致汝季 Pass their message to your younger sister°
季也亦淑靈 For she, like you, is gentle, bright and wise.°

LOCATION. Li Bi 1.11b/180; *Linchuan* 1/85; Longshu 43/509; Shimizu p. 142; Andō (1966) p. 33, note 22.

DATE. 1082-1083, sent from Jiangning to the capital.

Wang had not seen this daughter for six years (soon to be seven, see line 2). She lived in the capital; he had retired from there late in 1076. From this, we can date several other events:

1. Madame Wang was still alive and reasonably healthy in the poem; therefore she lived until at least 1083. (One source says she was alive also in 1084 when Wang suffered his stroke—but that is an anecdote. See above, pp. 193-94.)
2. If Wang's daughter visited Jiangning (as another anecdote mentions, p. 170 above), it was probably in 1083 or later. This poem may be the invitation for that visit.
3. Wang was probably writing his poetic imitations of Han Shan about this time. (See P 50.)

Line 3. I.E.: "We write each other monthly."

Line 5. YOUR HUSBAND. Wu Anchi 吳安持 at some point was Academician-in-Waiting at the Baowen Pavilion 寶文閣待制 (Li Bi note), but in 1082 or 1083 would still have been in mourning for his father Wu Chong (1021—1080). He had been engaged to Miss Wang before 1063. (*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.5b.)

Line 8. I.E.: "Your son(s) shall surpass the teacher." From the proverb, "*Indigo comes from blue*, yet is bluer than blue; water makes ice, yet ice is colder than water" 青出於藍而青於藍，冰，水為之，而寒於水 (*Xunzi* 1/1).

Line 12. MIDDLE UNCLE 中父. Wang Anli.

Line 13. YOUNGER UNCLE 小父. Wang Anshang, who had been made Judicial Intendant of the Jiangdong region (headquarters at Jiangning) in 1077. (See above, p. 168.)

Lines 21-22. "EVENING MEAL" 晚食 (actually "to eat only when hungry"); PEACEFUL STROLLS 安步. A complex allusion to the *Zhanguo ce* 戰國策. *Wang implies:* "My desires are modest, yet in fact I have been a high officer, and have been given the luxury that accompanies my rank."

The allusion: Yan Chu 顏斶 refused a king's offer to make him a high minister. Oblivious to the emoluments offered, Yan preferred freedom and integrity: "*Late eating* suits me more than meat; *peaceful*

strolls can serve better than a carriage; to be without guilt is preferable to high honor"晚食以當肉，安步以當車，無罪以當貴. (See *Zhanguo ce*, Shanghai Guji 1978, Qi 4, 11/413. Trans. also in J.I. Crump, Jr., *Chan-Kuo Ts'e*, Oxford 1970, #130, p. 162.)

Line 23. MARSHY HOLLOWS皐壤. Recalls *Zhuangzi* 60/XXII/81: "Is it the woods on the hills? Or is it the *marshy dells*, that make me so excited and joyful? Before joy comes to an end, sorrow succeeds it..." 山林與，皐壤與，使我欣欣然而樂與. 樂未央也，哀又繼之. Wang may be implying, "I am not subject to ordinary whims of joy and sadness."

Line 30. LIT.: "Plane-trees and catalpas are also lush." I.e., "Even trees that are supposed to wither early are thriving here; we are unusually happy."

PLANE-TREES AND CATALPA梧楸. *Firmiana* and *Catalpa bungei*, trees that usually lose their leaves early. Wang's happy garden contrasts with that in the "Nine Arguments" 九辯 #3:

> High Heaven evenly allots four seasons,
> But I grieve only for chilly Fall.
> White dew has dropped upon the hundred grasses,
> Sundered and sparse the *Plane-tree and catalpa* grow...
>
> 皇天平分四時兮，窃獨悲此廩秋.
> 白露既下百草兮，奄離披此梧秋.

(Attr. to Song Yu 宋玉, fl. 300--250 BC. In *Chuci buzhu* 8.4a. Cf. David Hawkes trans., p. 210, lines 1-4.)

Line 36. Difficult to parse. Probable meaning: "That you may know how to prize these woods and meadows."

Line 37. LIT.: "To *awaken* the *bewildered* glow in your ears and eyes."

Line 39. YOUR YOUNGER SISTER汝季. Probably refers to Mrs. Cai Bian, Wang's second daughter.

Line 40. LIT.: "(Your) younger sister, too, is gentle and bright."

Wang may have sent this along with the previous two quatrains, or shortly after, in order to put his solicitude into fuller form, give his daughter detailed news, and invite her to visit. He comforts her by telling only good news (turning three pessimistic allusions into

optimistic ones in the process: see lines 21-22, 23, 30). He notes what fine children she must have; and, as in the previous poem, he sends her some of his Buddhist writings to educate her out of her depression. He emits tenderness through homely detail and plain language, all of which may have been tailored to her personality.

To his other daughter he sent two poems (before 1084) in the "Li sao" style, in which images of plants and streams tumble from his brush, and he says over and over how he misses her and wants her to visit. Those poems are vastly different from the present one: perhaps because his daughters were different people, or because Wang was in different moods when he wrote to them. (The poem to the other daughter might date from Wang's illness.) As verse, the present poem to his elder daughter is more typical of the Wang Anshi we know. But his lush, romantic side did exist, and was praised by Su Shi.[41]

[41]See "Sent to My Daughter Mrs. Cai" 寄蔡氏女子二首 , Li Bi 2.7b/196. Su Shi's praise: *Songchao shishi leiyuan* 39/508.

SIX POEMS PRESENTED IN REPLY TO RHYMES BY SONG QI:°

THE SECOND

1 Long-reaching "East Wind" travels to this far edge of the sky°
Where my "ailing eyes" see "blossoms" before spring.°
3 When still apart, I wanted to answer you,
but was ashamed to force a sound out°
For I have learned now to follow the crowd,
and find heroic bragging tiresome

5 But failure or success, when all has passed,
truly is "like a dream"--
Gains and losses are autumn fluff,
why sigh for them more than once?
7 Now that we suddenly meet, old friend, wine is all;
Drunk, robes and hats may lean and slant at will!

次韻酬宋玘六首

1 東風漸漸客天涯．病眼先春已見花
3 遠欲報君羞強聒，老知隨俗厭雄誇
5 窮通往事莫如夢，得失秋毫豈更嗟
7 邂逅故人惟有酒，醉中衣幘任欹斜

LOCATION. Li Bi 32.9b/798; *Linchuan* 21/259; Longshu 54/614.

DATE. During retirement at Jiangning.

SONG QI 宋玘. From Jinxi at Linchuan, a friend from Wang's youth. Probably visited Wang at Jiangning early one spring during Wang's retirement (according to what Zeng Ji 曾極 of Linchuan told Li Bi).

Line 1. IMPLIES: "You have come all this way to see me in my remote retirement." (See notes to line 2.)

Line 2. BLOSSOMS 花. A pun for black spots in the eyesight--i.e., Wang's eyes are failing. These two lines paraphrase a couplet by Ouyang Xiu, written in the cold, rainy spring of 1038, from Ouyang's place of exile at Yiling below the Yangzi Gorges:

> I suspect the spring *wind* does not reach this *edge of the sky*:
> In the second month, we *still see no blossoms*
> in the mountain town...
>
> 春風疑不到天涯，二月山城未見花.

("A Jesting Reply to Ding Baochen" 戲答元珍. *Ouyang ji*, "Jushi ji" 11/74. About Ding Baochen: see P 27.)

Line 3. I.E.: "I did want to help you, but we have been far apart, and I am now out of office. I would not care to make a promise that I cannot fulfill." (Based on Li Bi's interpretation.)

Song Qi appeared on an empty hillside, says Wang, just after Wang had come out for a walk and was wondering who might be his companion this time (see the first poem of the six). Song was an old friend, had been treated well by Wang in the past, but they had not met for perhaps thirty years. Song had not enjoyed a successful career—possibly no career at all. (Sixth poem: "...Odder still, that such lofty talent has never met its time!..." 更怪高材終未遇.) He had apparently sought Wang's help earlier by letter, but Wang had not answered. Now that Song Qi was in town, Wang had to explain his silence: "I no longer like to brag or stand out from the crowd. I want only to make promises I can keep... But what do such things matter in the larger scheme? It all feels like a dream; let us drink and be in-

formal." In the final poem, Wang says he hopes the powers that be can someday find Song a position. The implication is that Wang himself cannot or will not help.

Wang is using these poems to smooth the situation. He has left the political stage for "exile" at the "ends of the earth;" finds his eyes failing and his mind serene. He hopes that Song can share that mood, can forget Wang's celebrity status, and abandon the illusion that Wang's rank might be of use. Wang encourages Song Qi instead to recall their youths, when they talked of ancient lore and tried their hands at writing.

Wang's echo of a poem by Ouyang Xiu in the first couplet serves a poetic purpose, in that it recalls Ouyang's poem's mood of light banter among friends. Assuming Song Qi knew that allusion, while other readers might not have, it would have made this poem more intimate and friendly. (This is one reason why poems to friends are often so allusion-laden, just as actual conversations among friends will be laced with references to shared experiences.) But that first couplet serves an additional purpose: as a way of letting the listener know that Wang is in a kind of "exile," away from the center of power, as Ouyang had been when he wrote his lines.

Any other thoughts Wang might have had while writing this were not for outsiders to know. Cordial as Wang was, this was as far as he went in communicating with someone who was not an "understanding listener."

	送鄧監簿南歸	FAREWELL FOR SUPERVISING CLERK DENG (CHOU) UPON HIS RETURN SOUTH°
1	不見驪塘路	I have not seen the road at Black Horse Dyke°
	茫然四十春	For a mist-filled forty springs.°
3	長為異鄉客	Long a wayfarer in other lands°
	每憶故時人	Prone to remember people from the past.
5	水閱公三世	Waters have flowed, and you, through life's three stages;
	雲浮我一身	A cloud afloat--my whole existence.°
7	濠梁送歸處	This Bridge across our Moat--a farewell place°
	握手但悲辛	There is nothing here but hands shaking hands sorrow and an acrid taste.°

LOCATION. Li Bi 22.4a/551; *Linchuan* 14/195; Longshu 57/636; Shen p. 52; *Shi juyao* 4/522; Zhou Xifu p. 185.

DATE. Autumn, 1083, at Jiangning.

DENG CHOU 鄧鑄. Of Linchuan. Another friend from Wang's youth, who in autumn of 1083 visited Wang at Jiangning, staying for over a month. Upon Deng's departure for Linchuan, Wang gave him a sheaf of his poems, and added this one, which the Deng family later had carved on stone. (Information from Li Bi.)

Line 1. BLACK HORSE DYKE (Li Tang 驪塘): At Fuzhou in Linchuan. Presumably the site of Deng Chou's home.

Line 2. FORTY SPRINGS 四十春. I.e., Wang had not been to Deng's home since 1043, when Wang visited Linchuan on leave from his first post at Yangzhou (see above, pp. 18-20). (However, Wang had been back to Linchuan at least three times since then, though evidently not to the Black Horse Dyke. He stayed almost a year in 1050-51, with a stint at Hangzhou; briefly in 1058; and for a month or two in 1067. See above p. 30; p. 53 note 13; p. 100 note 4.)

Line 3. WAYFARER IN OTHER LANDS 異鄉客 . Alludes to Wang Wei's thoughts of his brothers far at home: P 44, note to line 4.

Lines 5-6. LIT.: "Waters have passed through three generations of your life." I.e., "You have been a drop of water in the constant flow for three generations," or "You have aged through three generations of flowing Time."

This line has two origins, one Buddhist and one Chinese. *The Buddhist allusion* is to the lesson on how to distinguish permanent things from fleeting:

"The Buddha asked (King Prasenajit of Śrāvasti): 'O King, how old were you when you first saw the Ganges River?'

"'Three years after I was born, my loving mother led me...by that stream...'

"The Buddha asked, 'O King, what happened to the water between the time you saw it at three years old, and the time you were thirteen?'

"'It was exactly as it had been when I was three...and it has not changed to this very day, though I am sixty-two.' (Wang's age in this poem.)

"'The Buddha asked, 'Today you are beset with white hair and a...face that is surely more wrinkled than in your childhood. So when you look at the Ganges now, and compare it with when you were small, did the river have a childhood and an old age?'

"'No,' said the King.

"'Your face may be wrinkled,' said the Buddha, 'But this spirit never wrinkles. Wrinkling is *change*, what does not wrinkle is *unchanging*. Things that change suffer death 受滅 ; but those unchanging things have never been born, nor have they ever died 元無生滅.'" (*Lengyan jing*, *juan* 2/110bc; see also Zhou Xifu. Li Bi quotes a thoroughly different version, perhaps from another sūtra.)

The Chinese source, origin of the actual words in this line, is the "Lament for the Passing of Time" 歎逝賦 by Lu Ji 陸機 (262--303):

> Alas! A stream becomes a stream by *running water through* it;
> Water rolls and roils, and passes day by day.
> A *generation* becomes a generation as it *runs men through it*,
> And men slowly, softly walk into twilight...
> 悲乎 . 川閱水以成川, 水滔滔而日度 .
> 世閱人而為世 , 人冉冉而行暮 .

(*Wenxuan* 16/333.)

Line 6. A CLOUD AFLOAT 雲浮 . A common image for impermanence. The specific Buddhist source is the *Vimalakirti-sūtra*: "This *corporeal existence* is like a *floating cloud*, that in an instant changes and is gone" 是身如浮雲 , 須臾變滅. (*Weimojie suo shuo jing* 維摩詰所說經 , *Taishō Tripitaka* vol. 14, #475, 2/539b.)

Line 7. LIT.: "The Bridge across the Hao (city moat), where one takes leave of a person who is homeward bound." I.e., "This is a scene of our deep friendship." The Bridge on the City Moat was where Zhuangzi and his friend Huizi 惠子 debated philosophical points. (45/XVII/87.) After Huizi died, Zhuangzi said he had been left without a "target" or a second party 質 on whom he could hone his thinking. (66/XXIV/48.)

Line 8. LIT.: "As we shake hands, there is only sorrow and bitterness."

Even if Deng were not a close friend (and it seems he was), Wang gave him a souvenir worthy of one. The poem is perfect, starting with its understatement, established when Wang says "I have not seen the road at *Black Horse Dyke*" (rather than "I have not seen *you*"). It is this quiet reticence at the beginning that allows the final "sorrow and bitterness" to ring with such force. A "hazy" forty springs--old age covers memories with mist. Wang is a "sojourner in other lands," who misses Deng Chou just as Wang Wei missed his brothers. But Wang Wei had been only seventeen; how much more poignant must Wang Anshi's memories be at sixty-two? Yet Anshi is still understating: "I *am often prone to* 每 *remember* people from the past" (not "I *long for* old friends"). Gao Buying says of the first half of the poem that its "bracing dryness and deep probing" 爽塏沈至 surpass late-Tang verse.

Wang's best line is line 5: Only five words long, it is nevertheless compressed from two allusions. "Water has flowed past you for three generations" (i.e. "you are ninety years old" --hyperbole). But more than that: "You have been made to 'flow' like a drop of water through a river. And although you will pass away, something we call a 'river' or 'human race' will continue." Deeper still, "Your perception

of the river has not changed, but your face is older. If time, or the river, is constant, and our perception will live forever, then will not something akin to 'us' continue after our bodies die? How will it feel to be a dispersed cloud?"

The "Bridge over the Moat" is a generous, formal allusion to the quality of their friendship. That allusion gains strength when paired with the raw sadness of the final line: to shake hands is a friendly, happy act, but when those involved are elderly men who may never meet again, that warm gesture can bring sorrow. Compare Li Ling's third poem to Su Wu:

> Hand in hand we mount the river bridge,
> Where shall a wanderer go in dusk?...
> ...Magnify Virtue clear, with all your strength;
> Our pact--to meet again when heads are white...
> 攜手上河梁，遊子暮何之 ...
> 努力崇明德，皓首以為期.

(Attr. to Li Ling 李陵, d. 74 BC, third of "Three Poems to Su Wu" 與蘇武三首. *Wenxuan* 29/637.)

After that "white-haired" meeting, there would be no third time.

SONG OF ONLY ONE DAY AT HOME

Wretched, poor
I rushed for clothes and food°
For a hundred days of rushing,
one day at home.°

A lifetime's happiness--
bitter that it did not reach the end
Just now, grown old, we wanted
to bear each other up
Empty room bare, hollow
tasselled curtains drawn
Blue lamp half into the night
and the weeping sparse
Your voice, your face--I try to picture where you are

When we meet beneath the earth
will that be you?

一日歸行

賤貧奔走食與衣，百日奔走一日歸
平生歡意苦不盡，正欲老大相因依
空房蕭瑟施總帷，青燈半夜哭聲稀
音容想像今何處，地下相逢果是非

LOCATION. Li Bi 12.8a/323; *Linchuan* 9/149; Yan Fu 9.4a; Longshu 37/442; Zhou Xifu p. 218.

DATE. Most likely written in memory of Wang's wife, who probably died in 1084 or 1085. (Liu Chenweng, Yan Fu and Zhou Xifu support this interpretation. Li Bi says only that the poem probably dates from late in the Yuanfeng era; he does not mention it being about Wang's wife.)

Line 1. LIT.: "Low in station, poor, rushing for food and clothing."

Line 2. I.E.: "I spent most of our married life away from you, trying to make a living, and only came home one day in every hundred."

Lines 7-8. Alludes to the Han Emperor Wu's longing for his deceased concubine Lady Li 李夫人 . The Emperor missed her so strongly that a magician offered to summon her spirit. The magician had torches lit, and curtained off a part of the chamber. The Emperor, from across the room, saw moving within those curtains a shadowy figure who resembled Lady Li. More agitated than ever, the Emperor composed a poem:

> *Is it* she? *Is it not?* I stand and gaze at her.
> Wherefore so languid, her leisurely approach?
> 是耶?非耶?立而望之.偏何姗姗其來遲!

(*Han shu* 97A/3952.)

One should not read too much into this allusion to Lady Li: it is a common allusion on such occasions (Pan Yue used it): Wang is suggesting only that he has lost sight of his wife, and may never again fully recall her face as she was in life. He further wonders if there is an afterlife. But he is not comparing himself to the Emperor Wu.

On "Laments for a Deceased Wife" 悼亡詩 :

As a full-fledged genre, it began with Pan Yue 潘岳 (247--300), whose solemn ornamentation may never be equalled as a tool for making unutterable grief utterable.[42] Pan's wrenching sorrow is that of a fairly young man, grieving for a young wife to whom he must have been

[42] "Three Laments for the Departed One" 悼亡詩三首 , *Wenxuan* 23/500. #1-2 trans. by Frodsham and Ch'eng, pp. 86-88.

close. Li Shangyin (813--858) at thirty-eight lost his wife while he was away on assignment. His poem for her mentions, with subdued shock,[43]

When I returned, you were no longer here;
Your bright zither has lasted longer than you...
歸來已不見，錦瑟長於人.

He ends with a cry:

I will grieve until Heaven and Earth turn round,
And we no longer recognize each other face to face!
愁到天地翻，相看不相識.

Su Shi at age twenty-nine lost his twenty-six-year-old wife. A decade later he dreamed of her and wrote a haunting *ci*, containing the lines,[44]

And suppose we met, I should hardly recognize you--
Face full of dust
Forelocks frosty
縱使相逢應不識，塵滿面，鬢如霜.

[43]"Song in the Chamber" 房中曲, *Li Yishan shiji* 44/348. Trans. based on James J.Y. Liu, *The Poetry of Li Shang-yin, Ninth-century Baroque Chinese Poet* (U. of Chicago, 1969) #79. Written in 851.

[44]"Jiang shenzi" 江神子, in *Quan Song ci* I/300. Written in 1075.

Wang Anshi's poem shares with the above three a sense of grief barely controlled. One feels he is forcing his voice to be quiet because otherwise he could not speak at all. And like the other poets, Wang mentions homely objects: "clothes and food." (Pan Yue talked about his wife's calligraphy, her pillow and mat; Li Shangyin mentioned a zither; Wang's is the equivalent of "food on the table.") But Wang's situation is different: he is already old, mourning a wife of his own generation. Pan Yue's distracted grief showed some of the self-centeredness of a young man, akin to Wang Anshi's grief for Wang Ling (see P 31):

> No one will share the chilly winter with me!
> Brilliant moon, how brightly it shines...
> 歲寒無與同，朗月何朧朧.

By contrast, Wang Anshi's whole poem is a sober *apology* to his wife: all he cares for is her welfare. That she will never hear the apology is what makes the situation poignant.

Section C. Imitations, Allegories, Meditations

These include poems written in styles or manners of earlier times, meditating on themes not necessarily related to Wang's own life or immediate concerns.

擬寒山拾得
二十首其四

IMITATIONS OF HAN SHAN AND SHI-DE

(THE FOURTH OF TWENTY)

風吹瓦墮屋　The wind blew down a tile from the roof
正打破我頭　That hit me square, and so smashed up my head.°
瓦亦自破碎　The tile itself was smashed and cracked as well--
豈但我血流　It wasn't just my own blood that got shed.

我終不嗔渠　Yet to the end I never cursed that thing:°
此瓦不自由　The tile did not act on its own free will.
衆生造衆惡　The mass of beings create a mass of evils,
亦有一機抽　Behind the scenes, a "trigger" pulled them all°

渠不知此機　But they are not aware there is a trigger,
故自認-愆尤　Thus, by their personal views all blame
　　they place.°
此但可哀憐　This matter simply calls for sorrow and pity,
勸令真正脩　"Achieve true discipline" is my advice.

豈可自迷悶　How can you remain fuddled about yourself,
與渠作冤讎　And against that thing maintain a vengeful case?

LOCATION. Li Bi 4.5a/229; *Linchuan* 3/99; Longshu 50/565; Liang Qichao 22/291; Shimizu p. 169. Trans. by Jan Walls, *Sunflower* pp. 335-6.

DATE. Approx. 1082 at Jiangning. (See notes to P 46.)

Line 2. Li Bi quotes a *kōan* (source unidentified):

A monk asked Master Qingzhu 慶諸禪師, "What is the meaning of the Bodhidharma's visit to China?" (A typical question for a Chan novice to ask.)

The Master answered, "A piece of rock in the air. Got that?"

"No."

"Lucky for you! If you got it, it would have *smashed up your head*."

僧問慶諸禪師西來意，師曰："空中一片石．會麼？"

曰："不會．"師曰："賴汝不會．會，即打破你頭."

Line 5. I NEVER CURSED THAT THING 我終不嗔渠. See *Zhuangzi*: "A man taking revenge does not break Moye or Ganjiang (the swords his enemy had used). And even a man with a spiteful heart will not *resent a falling tile*" 復讎者不折鎮干·雖有忮心，不怨顧瓦. (*Zhuangzi yinde* 48/XIX/15.)

Lines 7-8. TRIGGER 機. The switch that a magician pulls. From the *Śūraṁgama-sūtra*:

As with a clever conjuror on earth,
Who conjures up a host of men and women
Though you may see their separate pieces moving
They really function from a *trigger's pull*.
The trigger rests, all things return to silence:
These conjurations become Natureless."

如世巧幻師，幻作諸男女.
雖見諸根動，要以一機抽.
息機歸寂然，諸幻成無性.

(*Lengyan jing* 6/131a.)

Line 10. LIT.: "Thus, they themselves assign guilt and blame."

Wang's wide reading included the 300-odd poems of Han Shan ("Cold Mountain"), the Tang-dynasty Buddhist recluse, whose works apparently were popular in Chan circles during Wang's time.[45] In retirement, Wang wrote twenty poems imitating Han Shan's rough, humorous

[45] Wu Chi-yu, "A Study of Han-Shan," in *T'oung Pao* 45 (1957), p. 445.

language. On first reading the imitations are identical to Han Shan's own work. Close examination of Wang's verses, however, shows that Wang's style is more polished than the original. Wang's poems make definite sense: Han Shan's generally do likewise, but Han Shan wrote some poems whose conclusion is either nonexistent or is left to the reader to draw. And not all of Han Shan's poems are Buddhist, at least on the surface.[46]

The poem translated here may be Wang's most successful imitation of Han Shan. If anything, Wang's language here is even more homespun than Han Shan's norm. Line 2 is arrestingly colloquial, down to its nonstandard caesura (after the first word rather than the second). Wang's antitheses, repeated words and narrative flow also resemble Han Shan.

Although Wang did not base his imitation on any single poem, the following Han Shan verse may have been one of his models. One finds similarities in wording, and also in narrative sequence: a story-situation in the first couplet, followed by a discussion and finally a moral:

去家一萬里 You go ten thousand miles from your home
提劒擊匈奴 With sword in hand, to strike the Xiongnu foe.
得利漿即死 Get the advantage, and they shall die;
失利汝即殂 Lose the advantage, and you shall be through.

[46]For instance, one about girls who flirt with young gallants, saying "You cannot play with us too long, for our husbands might find out" 何須久相弄，兒家夫婿知。 No Buddhism apparent. *Han Shan shiji* p. 20a; trans. Wu Chi-yu, p. 429.

渠命既不惜 Since you do not take pity for their lives,
汝命有何辜 Then how responsible are they for yours?
教汝百勝術 I'll teach you the art of winning every time:
不貪為上謨 *Do not be greedy:* that's the highest course.

(Han Shan Poem #89/p. 27b; see also Wu Chi-yu p. 421.)

Wang has made a good imitation of the style in such poems as the above; still, behind his rough-hewn language we can see a scholarly approach to versifying quite different from Han Shan's. Wang's poem makes verbal references to a *kōan* (or the *kōan* tradition), and weaves in these references with what is ostensibly his main allusion to *Zhuangzi*. The whole poem elaborates on Zhuangzi's statement that not even the most unreasonable man would blame a roof tile for falling on him. Wang explains here how to expand that attitude to cover all events in life. But Wang adds to this his allusion to the *kōan* tradition, in which a blow on the head--from a rock or a teacher--can shock a seeker into enlightenment.

The large part played by allusion places Wang's poem into the literati tradition. Thus it differs deeply from Han Shan's style and attitude. Yet the skill with which Wang composed his verse indicates his respect for the tradition Han Shan had perfected, and serves as a fitting tribute to the Tang recluse.

REACTIONS AFTER READING THE *VIMALAKĪRTI-SŪTRA*

The body is like a bubble, like the wind
Hack it with a sword, or anoint with fragrance--
it amounts to a single nothing°
He sat among men, contemplating, watching this principle
Though Vimala was ill, he had divine perception.°

讀維摩經有感
身如泡沫亦如風，刀割香塗共一空
宴坐世間觀此理，維摩雖病有神通

LOCATION. Li Bi 48.12b/1198; *Linchuan* 34/375; Longshu 74/786; Andō (1966) p. 26.

DATE. This may date from Wang's illness in 1084.

Line 2. HACK IT WITH A SWORD 刀割. Kalirāja, the evil king, sliced off the ears, nose and hands of the Buddha in an earlier incarnation, who bore it all unmoved. How could he stand such torture? Because the Buddha's nature 性 was like fire or water, unshakeable and unsliceable. (*Mahāpari-Nirvāna-sūtra* 31.)

ANOINT IT WITH FRAGRANCE 香塗. As a balm to dissolve feverish distress and bring coolness. The actual ointment used comes from white sandalwood 白旃檀. (*Mahāpari-nirvāna-sūtra* 大般涅槃經, *Taishō Tripitaka* vol. 12, #375/1/605b.)

Line 4. DIVINE PERCEPTION 神通. LIT.: "A spiritual penetration." Special understanding, ubiquitous power.

For Wang Anshi, Vimalakīrti was almost kin. Devout Buddhist though not a monk, brilliant debater yet not vindictive, Vimalakīrti

argued well with the Buddha's greatest disciples, even when on his sickbed.[47] Wang Anshi felt, along with "the educated elite of Chinese society...that here was a model that they could emulate, for though Vimala was a Buddhist, he could very easily have been taken for a Confucian gentleman." (Kenneth Ch'en, p. 385.)

Perhaps it was after his stroke that Wang looked to Vimala as an example of how much a sick man could do. All one needed was to realize that bodily suffering was just as "empty" as bodily enjoyment.

[47] *Weimojie suo shuo jing* 維摩詰所說經(*Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra*), *Taishō Tripitaka* vol. 14, #475, 5/544b. And Kenneth Ch'en, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton, 1972), pp. 383-385.

寓言十五首其十 ALLEGORY (TENTH OF FIFTEEN)

明者好自蔽 A bright man tends to hide himself away;°
況乃知我匹 More hidden still, knowing he is alone.°
每行悔其然 Each step I take, I rue that this is so—
所見定萬一 What others see of me is but a mite.°

不求攻爾短 I do not seek to strike at your shortcomings,
欲議世之失 But talk only of how the world has failed.
耘而舍其田 To weed a field, but not on your own soil:
辛苦亦何實 What harvest shall you reap from all your toil?°

LOCATION. Li Bi 15.3a/427; Longshu 50/569.

DATE. Undatable. Likely predates 1067.

Lines 1-2. HIDE AWAY 自蔽 . May refer to Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 in exile at Yongzhou (805--815). Liu wrote to some hibiscus plants that he had dug up in the woods to plant in his garden:

> When you are so lovely, yet do not *hide away*,
> How can you protect your solitary rooted spot?
> 有美不自蔽，安能守孤根.

("On Transplanting Hibiscus from the Banks of the Xiang to the Vihāra at Longxing Temple" 湘岸移木芙蓉植龍興精舍 , *Liu Zongyuan ji* 43/1232.)
In other words, a man of purity must hide himself, to avoid being mistreated by people who think they see his goodness, but do not understand what it really signifies.

Line 2. LIT.: "How much more so, when I know I am alone." Possibly: "How much more so, when there is only one person who knows me."

Line 4. WHAT OTHERS SEE OF ME 所見 . Could also mean, "What I *show of myself* is surely only 1/10,000th of what I am."

Lines 7-8. I.E.: "You neglect your own cultivation, trying first to remake other people, including me. But you will end up understanding neither me nor yourselves. Is this not a waste of time?"

ALLUSION: Mencius criticized human beings for wanting to "*leave their own field*, and *weed* the fields of others. What they demand of others is heavy, while the tasks they set themselves are light." 人病舍其田，而芸人之田。所求於人者重，而所自任者輕。 (*Mengzi yinde* 57/7B/32.)

The series to which this poem belongs is on the surface a complaint against the collective foolishness in which Wang had to live and work, and a lament for ancient times when wisdom prevailed. Beyond that, it is hard to know now what other "allegories" Wang may have intended to put forth here. The poems openly describe his frustration; he does not seem to be hinting at anything. The series may date from his early or middle career in the provinces.

Here, briefly, are the other poems' themes:

1. I have no chance to consort with superior men; thus I dare not speak lofty words, but must wander among petty men.

2. The ancient sages are disregarded, and sages of today go unrecognized.

3. The state should lend money at low interest to aid the people; but governments nowadays leave moneylending to "monopolists" and usurers.

4. Agriculture should be the nation's economic and spiritual mainstay.

5. We should return to the basics of Rites and Music.

6. Young scholars see everything in terms of profit and loss, interest and practicality. They do not even believe sages existed.

When such young men become rulers, the people suffer.

7. Petty men will do all they can to attack a pure man (察察 like myself?). Finding nothing to fault in me, they attack me for being fame-hungry.

8. About mediocre men who write political essays, are admired for those essays, and consequently are given high office: how can one expect men like this to do the empire any good?

9. The Tang dynasty (does he really mean "Song?") suffered continual problems, because although its founders' victory had been strong, their virtue was thin.

10. The present poem.

11. A man must be wary: one misspoken word's repercussions can last 100 generations.

12. Alas, the Tang dynasty suffered the fate of the Chen and Sui before it: ruined by shortsighted Emperors who had no worthy ministers.

13. Alas, the final remnants of ancient sages' Music are now found only in the "wilderness" 野 (i.e. outside the court).

14. Big whales (the Song state?) must beware of running aground in shallow water.

15. Tigers and ravens are felled by their enemy, man: but no one bothers to touch a harmless pheasant. (I.e. a man without talent, pride or ambition will be safe from slander.)

This poem is the most ambivalent of the series, though not necessarily by intention. Li Bi asserts only that its theme is "wanting to understand others though not understanding oneself" 不自知而

欲知他人 . Presumably, Wang is lamenting that most people assume they can understand him, convert him or argue with him, but do not realize how little they know of what his thinking truly is. Why are they wrong about him? Because they have never taken the time to understand their own selves.

Here is a paraphrase of what I believe the poem means:

"I must hide my rare brightness, to avoid being misused. I wish I did not have to do this--there are so many things I would like to tell the world. But people misunderstand me: whenever I do speak, they think I am attacking them personally. They respond by trying to find out what is wrong with me. But this they will never learn, because they have ignored their own need to examine their natures and do their own work."

Though this is not Wang's most subtle poetry, this verse and the others in the series do provide a glimpse of the "aloofness" that is said to have been one of Wang's major traits. (See above, p. 84.)

SIX IMPROMPTU POEMS: THE SIXTH

1	日月隨天旋	Sun and moon follow Heaven's whirl,°
	疾遲與天侔	Swift or slow depends on Heavenly plan.
3	寒暑自有常	Cold and heat have their own constant way,°
	不顧萬物求	They heed nothing that earthly beings demand.
5	蜉蝣蔽朝夕	Dim is a May-fly's knowledge of morn and night;
	蟪蛄疑春秋	Cicadas doubt there could be spring or fall.
7	眇眇萬古曆	Vast and aloof, the ancient Calendar
	回還今幾周	Returns in rings: how many circles now?

LOCATION. Li Bi 8.3b/302; *Linchuan* 6/124; Guangzhou p. 243.

DATE. Undatable.

Lines 1-2. HEAVEN'S WHIRL 天旋 . According to ancient theory, the sky revolves like a grindstone, while the sun and moon walk upon it like ants. As the sun and moon walk slowly rightward, the grindstone carries them swiftly leftward. Thus they end up "following Heaven," slowly revolving to the left.

Line 3. COLD AND HEAT 寒暑 . I.e. *Time*. Winters and summers.

The series to which this belongs consists of imitations of poetry from the late Han, the Wei and the Jin.[48] Here are descriptions of the rest of the series:

[48]Li Bi makes it a series of "Six Impromptu Poems" 即事六首 . I follow Li's listing, because apparently he saw Wang's manuscript copy (see Li's note under the fourth poem). However, the *Linchuan* edition rearranges them into a more logical order: #3, 4, 5 (on historical figures) become "Three Miscellaneous Odes" 雜詠三首 , while #1, 2 and 6 become "Three Impromptu Poems" 即事三首 . Perhaps Wang never gave them titles, hence the discrepancy in editions.

1. My shadow follows me, though I do not intend it. Why cannot friends and kin have a chance to be together as I am with my shadow?

2. Autumn night melancholy: the cicadas that call so sadly are too short-lived to know about this "autumn" to which they contribute.

3. Lamenting Jia Yi, who mourned the death of his king so bitterly that he himself died within a year. Where now can one find such serious devotion?

4. A lament for the zither-playing knight who sought employment from the King of Qi (who preferred the music of pipes to the zither), and was ignored for three years. Prejudice often prevents rulers from recognizing a man's talent.

5. A lament that the ancient Rites are gone. Formerly, sages had maintained ritual respect even for their enemies in war.

6. The present poem.

Thematically, poems #1, #2 and #6 belong together, and exemplify a contrast between the Song and earlier dynasties. This sixth poem echoes phrases from the Three Kingdoms and Jin dynasty: if declaimed aloud, it might even pass for a Jin poem. Yet Wang has left out the bitterness, the longing for escape, the heroic stance, the regret--early poets who wrote about Time's passage were seldom as serene as he is.

Specific inspirations for Wang's poem include Zhang Hua 張華 (232--300) and Guo Pu 郭璞 (276--324).[49]

[49]Zhang Hua: "Miscellaneous Poem" 雜詩 *Wenxuan* 29/645. Guo Pu, "Poems of Roaming in the Immortal" (#7) 遊仙詩, *Wenxuan* 21/463. Translation in J. Pease, "Kuo P'u's Life and Five-colored Rhymes (An

Zhang Hua's poem:

1	晷度隨天運	The sundial's angle *follows Heaven's journey*,
	四時互相承	Each of four seasons rises after each.
3	東壁正昏中	Murk centers upon the Eastern Wall, (in Pegasus)
	固陰寒節升	Frigid *yin*, from which the cold times rise.
5	繁霜降當夕	Thick-spreading frost descends to meet with evening
	悲風中夜興	And mournful winds erupt half through the night.
7	朱火青無光	Red candle flame turns blue and loses lustre,
	蘭膏坐自凝	Magnolia tallow hardens as it sits.
9	重衾無暖氣	Layered coverlets provide no warmth,
	挾纊如懷冰	I wrap myself in cloth--like hugging ice.
11	伏枕終遑昔	Prone on the pillow, until night's distant end--
	寤言莫予應	No one answers my sleepless talk,
13	永思慮榮替	My endless thoughts worry about glory and eclipse
	慨然獨撫膺	In stormy grief, alone I beat my breast.

Guo Pu's poem (free translation):

1	晦朔如循環	Last night, first gleam, *circle* round the ring
	月盈已見魄	Look! the moon, full, already shows its shade:
3	蓐收清西陸	The God of Metal scrubs clear Western turf,
	朱羲將由白	For Scarlet Sun shall drive that whitened road.

'Immortal' Chin-dynasty Writer and Diviner, 276--324)," MA Thesis, University of Washington 1980, pp. 175,237.

5	寒露拂陵苔	Cold dew wipes vines that climb;
		Woman-fronds
	女蘿辭松柏	turn from cedar, from pine--
7		The bright
	蕣榮不終朝	hibiscus ends before the *morning*,
	蜉蝣豈見夕	And *when will a May-fly see the night?*
9	圓丘有奇草	On Round Hills there grow grasses strange;
	鍾山出靈液	Spirit Liquor tumbles from Goblet Peak.
11	王孫列八珍	While sons of princes spread eight-flavored feasts
	安期鍊五石	A man named An-ch'i melts five kinds of rock.
13	長揖當塗人	Clasp hands, bow low to those who plod the road--
	去來山林客	Go, go! come wander in the wood!

Both of those early poems are tied to a season: Zhang Hua to winter, Guo Pu to fall. The poets are rooted to the world: Zhang shut in a room, Guo longing to leave the prison we call earth. Zhang is lonely, and desperately burdened by the inevitable rise and fall of nations, kings and factions. Guo Pu's may-flies are pitiable creatures who live less than a day--and so are we, because to an Immortal we are may-flies too. Zhang Hua found no escape from the whirl of time; Guo Pu's only escape was into fantasy.

Zhang Hua perished in a multiple execution in AD 300, on the eve of an eight-sided civil war. Guo Pu would lead refugees to the South, where he later died at the hands of a warlord he had been forced to

serve.[50] Both lived in an age when an official career resembled a mine field, and even reclusion did not guarantee safety. Half-willing fatalism dominated their thoughts, mostly because they had no psychological alternative. Images from *Zhuangzi* appear in their work, but often without his relentless objectivity and calm; Buddhism was known but not wide-spread; Chan Buddhism still lay in the future.

But when Wang Anshi lived, literati were not beheaded; the border tribes lived far away, and lost battles as often as they won them; conflicts within the ruling house were resolved through words alone. Sima Guang was writing a history that would view all events from a single perspective; Ouyang Xiu grouped ancient artifacts by a rational scheme. Wang Anshi does not even appear in his own poem, much less "beat his breast." He watches the seasons as if from above. Heaven has a "plan," a constant way that is surely sensible and understandable. "May-flies" do not need pity, they are merely ignorant. Like unenlightened people, they are part of Heaven's scheme whether they know it or not. Their salvation will consist in understanding what they truly are: there is no need to become Immortals or fairies.

All three poets talk of time as a cycle; but while Zhang and Guo emphasized "eclipse" 替 or "shade" 魄, Wang emphasizes "returning" 回, and the steady endurance of the "ancient calendar" 萬古曆.

Old poems that mentioned time's passage usually did so with sorrow, as in the anonymous Han "Long Ballad" 長歌行 (*Wenxuan* 28/612):

[50] Pease 1980, pp. 27-28, 33-34, 143-46.

"O how it runs, the Heaven-crossing Sun,
And sad O sad, the earth-traversing streams!"
逝矣經天日，悲哉帶地川

Man's fate is always involved:

"And these things being difficult to halt,
How shall we ever stretch our mortal span?"
茲物苟難停，吾壽安得延．

Faced with vast Time and hollow Space, a mere man's success or failure becomes all the more crucial:

"I only regret my deeds and fame are slight,
And nothing is proclaimed on bamboo or silk."
但恨功名薄，竹帛無所宣

Wang's calm *acceptance* of Nature's plan (in this poem, at least) may not completely describe his real attitude, but well illustrates how far Song thinking had evolved from earlier times.

IT IS NOT EASY TO DEPEND ON THEE

Hibiscus bloom by morning, yet at sunset they shall fall
And now could I alone--a woman--differ from these flowers?
I recall how long ago we met, both of us were young:
Of our two loves, no one could know who loved the other first!
Thy wistful longing moved my heart, I followed thee away,
Thy household I did manage--full bitter was that task.
But who can know how human beings twist and double back?
Slanderous speech, once in thine ears, split us in an instant.
That airy gown in which I married thee, I shame to wear,
At last I know it is not easy to depend on thee!
To depend on thee...
Nor yet have I forgot the pact we made on a former day.

君難託

槿花朝開暮還墜，妾身與花寧獨異
憶昔相逢俱少年，兩情未許誰最先
感君綢繆逐君去，成君家計良辛苦
人事反復那能知，讒言入耳須臾離
嫁時羅衣羞更著，如今始悟君難託
君難託…　　妾亦不忘舊時約

LOCATION. Li Bi 21.9a/543; Longshu 51/579; *Shilin guangji* 2/224; Zhou Xifu p. 132.

DATE. Undatable.

Taken at face value, this is a sensitive portrait of a woman estranged from her husband--another in a long tradition of poems on that theme. Such poems were often interpreted as allegories of the poet being mistreated by his ruler, or being estranged from unnamed people. Those allegorical interpretations may not always be correct, at least where the earliest poetry is concerned. But there are many pieces, even as early as the later *Chu ci* rhapsodies, that were written as allegories in which the poet talks of his king exactly as a woman would talk of her cruel lover.[51] In the Tang and Song, poets often wrote verses telling the stories of various women, and simultaneously relating those stories to political or other male affairs. Such poems could not strictly be called allegorical; rather, they were written from the point of view that "feelings between a man and woman *interrelate* with those between ruler and minister, friend and friend 男女之情，通于君臣朋友。[52]

Of all the poems that took women as their subject, the ones

[51] See "Chou si" 抽思, fourth of the "Jiu zhang" 九章. *Chuci* 4.15a-18b. Trans. Hawkes, pp. 166-169.

[52] Introduction by Zhu Heling to *Li Yishan shiji*, 4b.
Examples: Wang Wei's "Ode for Xi Shi 西施詠(*Wang Youcheng ji* 5.7b. Trans. Pauline Yu #10, p. 66.) This poem treats the beautiful concubine of the King of Wu in terms of her rise from obscurity (as if she were a regular official):

> Back then, the friends who washed silk at the stream--
> Who may ride home with her now?
> 當時浣沙伴，莫得同車歸。

See also Wang Anshi's poems about Wang Zhaojun (P 7-8), and Sima Guang's version of the same (P 7-8, pp. 276-77 above).

most likely not to be about women at all were those in which the poet spoke with the voice of a wife or concubine, especially the wife of a king or noble lord.[53] Why? Because both wives and scholar-officials were in fact *subjects* of the men they served: acceptance or banishment affected both female consorts and male ministers in much the same way.

We cannot prove that Wang wrote this as a veiled picture of his own career, or even of male affairs in general, such as politics or friendship. But there are reasons to believe it is not simply a poem about a woman. The first of these reasons: Wang seldom if ever wrote poetry just to tell a story. He usually tried to relate his verses to larger ideas. His "Songs of the Radiant Consort" make Wang Zhaojun a universal figure; surely the anonymous woman in this verse has a wider significance as well. Second, Wang wrote no love poetry, and practically nothing involving women *per se*, except verses to his sisters and daughters. Third, certain words in this poem seem unfeminine: "both of us were *young*" 俱少年, when seen out of context, sounds like "we both were *young lads*" (line 3). And "slanderous speech" 讒言, in literature, has led to political friction more often than to marital troubles. Fourth, there was a persistent Song-dynasty theory that Wang wrote this poem in sorrow after the Emperor Shenzong turned cold toward him. Even though that theory has problems, the fact that Song contemporaries assumed Wang's poem contained a hidden meaning should count for

[53]See the section under "A woman's Wretched Fate" 妾薄命, in *Yuefu shi ji* 62/902-908.

something.[54]

Wang was too much older than Shenzong for both of them to have been "young" at the same time. So if the poem is autobiographical, it may well date from Wang's earlier life. Or it might have been purely a literary exercise. Since we cannot determine the circumstances of its composition, we must treat it not as autobiography but as a drama, in which the characters cease to exist for us as soon as they leave the stage.[55] The poem will work best if we remember that the characters in this drama are not merely a woman and her husband, but are also *concurrently* a vassal and his superior--a minister and his emperor--a protégé and his mentor. Such an interpretation makes the poem more complex, but does not reduce its sensitivity or sincerity.

[54]About the Shenzong theory: it depends on the further unproven theory that Shenzong did in fact grow cool to Wang. Li Bi flatly rejected this rumor, and also said that such a resentful verse would be out of character for a high minister such as Wang. Li did find the poem's tone atypical of Wang, though, and perhaps rather puzzling.

The Shenzong theory reappeared in a comment by Xiong He 熊禾 (*zi* Wuxuan 勿軒, 1253--1312, follower of Zhu Xi), who believed Wang may have written this during his second stint as Prime Minister, after his position at court had been harmed by Lü Huiqing and Deng Wan's slander. (*Shilin guangji* B.2/224.)

[55]See James J.Y. Liu, *The Poetry of Li Shang-yin*, p. 32.

Section D. Lyrics (ci)

Wang's *ci* are neither numerous nor well-known, except for the frequently anthologized P 55. Most are serene in mood, crisp and clear in their train of thought, subtlely worded, and treat of either Jiangning scenery or Chan Buddhism. Because all of those characteristics fit with the poems from Wang's retirement, it seems likely that most of his surviving *ci* date also from his old age. The two lyrics translated here provide an overview of his style in the genre.

TREASURING JINLING'S PAST

(TO THE TUNE "GUIZHI XIANG")

1 Climb, approach the edge, send out your gaze
2 Now is the Old Nation's late fall
first harsh stirrings of air°
3 Thousand-mile Kiang, clear as boiled silk
blue peaks like cocoon frames.°
4 Voyaging sails, oars outbound
within fading light
Backs to the West Wind, wine banners stiffly aslant.
5 Parti-colored boats, watery clouds
River of stars, herons take flight
A painting would hardly be enough.°

6 Ponder what has gone!
burgeoning riches, rivalry for power
7 Sigh for what pushed at the "city gates"
and for Her "upon the tower,"
sadness and anger follow swift.
8 Lean from on high at the view,
(a thousand year stance)
rumble "Alas" for glory and insult

9 The old Six Dynasties, followed the water out
Here is only
Cold haze
Withered grass
Green congealed.°

10 To this day, ladies of commerce
Still sing time and time again
The tune that survived:
"The Garden Behind"°

桂枝香：金陵懷古

1 登臨送目
2 正故國晚秋，天氣初肅
3 千里澄江似練，翠峯如簇
4 征帆去棹殘陽裏，背西風，酒旗斜矗
5 彩舟雲淡，星河鷺起，畫圖難足

6 念往昔，繁華競逐
7 歎門外樓頭，悲恨相續
8 千古憑高，對此漫嗟榮辱
9 六朝舊事隨流水，但寒烟衰草凝綠
10 至今商女時時猶唱後庭遺曲

LOCATION. *Linchuan* 37/400; Longshu 80/864; *Quan Song ci* I/204; Tang Guizhang (1981) p. 78; *Song ci jishi* p. 49; Shimizu p. 64. Trans. and commentary: Hans Frankel, *The Flowering Plum and the Palace Lady* (Yale, 1976), pp. 124-27.

DATE. Probably from retirement.

Sentence 2. FIRST HARSH STIRRINGS OF AIR 天氣初肅. Lit.: "Heaven's air first grows stern" (or "shrivels tight"). Paraphrase of *Li ji* 6/66: (In the first month of autumn) "Heaven and Earth begin to *shrivel tight*" 天地始肅.

Sentence 3. KIANG, CLEAR AS BOILED SILK 澄江似練 Lit.: "The clear Yangzi looks like boiled silk." Echoes the famous line written at Jinling by Xie Tiao謝朓(464—499):

The *clear Yangzi*, peaceful as *boiled silk*...
澄江靜如練

("I Climb the Three Hills by Evening, and Gaze Back at the Capital" 晚登三山還望京邑, *Wenxuan* 27/589. See also Wang Zhifang 王直方, 1069—1109, *Wang Zhifang shihua*, in *Song shihua jiyi* p. 46.)

Sentence 7. GATE...TOWER 門, 樓. This echoes Du Mu:

Tiger-catcher Han *outside the gate*,
Zhang Lihua *upon the tower*...
門外韓擒虎, 樓頭張麗華...

(First "Song of Taicheng" 台城曲, *Fanchuan shiji zhu* 4/260.)
The Last Chen Emperor 陳後主 (whose capital was at Jinling) fell in 589. The twin evils that ruined the Chen had been the emperor's infatuation with his concubine Zhang Lihua ("in the tower"), and the presence *outside the gate* of the Sui general Han Qinhu ("Catch-tiger," 538--592), who conquered Jinling, capturing the emperor and his concubine.

Sentence 9. May echo a quatrain by Dou Gong竇鞏 (769--831), in the *100 Tang Poets*:

With aching heart I wish to ask about *dynasties gone*,
But only see the Kiang *flowing away* and never back,
And setting sun, east wind, spring *grass* grows *green*.
Partridges fly up to the Yueh King's terrace.
傷心欲問前朝事, 惟見江流去不回.
日暮東風春草綠, 鷓鴣飛上越王台.

("Stirred by a Mood While Travelling in the South" 南遊感興, *Quan Tang shi* 8/271/3053; *Tang baijia shixuan* 11.11a.)

SIX DYNASTIES六朝. The southern dynasties between the Han and the Tang that took Jinling as their capital: Wu, Eastern Jin, Song, Qi, Liang, Chen. An age valued for its culture and mourned for its political and military weakness.

Sentence 10. LADIES OF COMMERCE 商女. I.e. courtesans, singing girls, for which Jinling has also been famous.

"THE GARDEN BEHIND" 後庭. A song written by the Last Chen Emperor: "Blossoms on the Jade Tree in the Garden Behind" 玉樹後庭花. It praises his concubine Zhang Lihua, rather erotically. The Emperor

had hundreds of palace ladies sing this melancholy tune in unison for guests. Later ages felt such music had portended the Chen dynasty's fall: it was "music of a doomed nation" 亡國之音 . (*Yuefu shi ji* 47/680.)

This sentence of Wang's was a reworking from Du Mu's famous quatrain "Anchoring on the Qinhuai River"泊秦淮 (Jinling's pleasure quarter in the Tang: lined with floating winehouses):

> Mist caged in the chilly waters, moon caged by the sands,
> At night we anchor on the Qinhuai, near the drinking houses.
> *Ladies of commerce* do not know the pain of a nation doomed,
> And still, across the water, sing of
> "*Blossoms in the Garden Behind.*"

煙籠寒水月籠沙，夜泊秦淮近酒家·
商女不知亡國恨，隔江猶唱後庭花·

(*Fanchuan shiji zhu*4/273. Also trans. by Stephen Owen 1985, p. 181.)

Wang's only well-known *ci*, this is one of three pieces that survive from a large group of lyrics with the same tune and rhyme-words, that Wang and some friends wrote about famous sites in their home districts.[56] It is said, in fact, that Wang's crisp phrases and virtuoso

[56] I believe Wang wrote this lyric when he and some younger friends gathered one day in the 1070's or 1080's to write lyrics about their homes, all to the tune "Guizhi xiang." The only other surviving lyrics from that session are a pair by Huang Chang 黃裳 (1044--1130), titled "A Casual Gaze from the Yanping Tower"延平閣閒望 (his home town in Fujian: *Quan Song ci* I/372). The rhyming words are the same as Wang's , but appear in different orders. Huang Chang was the top candidate in the 1082 *jinshi* examination, under the New Policies, but his surviving works do not indicate that he knew Wang intimately. (*Yanshan xiansheng wenji* 演山先生文集 , *Siku quanshu zhenben* edition. Huang's *ci* are in *juan* 30.1a.)

According to the *Caotang shiyu* 草堂詩餘 (anon., pre-1200), Wang and "the various gentlemen"諸公 all put words to "Guizhi xiang," over thirty pieces in all, of which Wang's was reportedly the best. All we can say now is that Wang's lyric is better than Huang Chang's rather unfocussed efforts. See *Qunying caotang shiyu* 群英草堂詩餘 (anon., Southern Song, before 1195), 1343 edition rep. Kyoto 1980, 2A/140.

use of allusions caused Su Shi to marvel, "This venerable man is truly a wild-fox spirit of the moors!" 此老乃野狐精也 . (*Qunying shiyu* 2A/140.)

This is the type of "heroic" *ci* that Su Shi himself would make famous at the Red Cliff: the aura of history emanating from a well-known site, with the poet as a quiet or even awestruck observer.[57] The structure of Wang's piece is stately, grand and, characteristically, more subtle than at first appears. The first half shows Jinling now; the second half talks of Jinling's past. Overarching the piece is line 1: Wang "sending out his gaze" over the city from a mountain top. This is his "old country"故國 , the south, where the "first stirrings of cold" come not until "late fall." The river like "boiled *silk*" suggests not only culture and richness, but also calls to mind Xie Tiao, who had lived during Jinling's glory, and contemplated the same scene from perhaps the same mountain, singing of its beauty and weeping that the real Northern capital was in alien hands. Xie had thus summed up both Jinling's "glory" and its "shame." "Wine banners" and "parti-colored boats" refer to the pleasure quarters; "river of stars" suggests romantic trysts (the Herd Boy and Weaving Maid can cross it once a year).

In Part 2: "Ponder what is gone:" there are memories beneath this scenery. Jinling's beauty has lulled Emperors into debauchery: shameful dealings behind palace walls invited punishment from outside the city gate.

[57] See Su Shi's famous *ci*, "Treasuring the Past at the Red Cliff" 赤壁懷古 , to the tune "Nian nu jiao" 念奴嬌 . (*Quan Song ci* I/282.)

The pleasure quarters reappear in the last line: ladies on painted barges sing a song four centuries old, not knowing that where they sit was once a capital grander than they would ever see, and that this innocent tune had played a part in its decline. Two hundred years ago, Du Mu had heard their Tang predecessors singing the same tune, equally unaware of what it meant. Clearly, nothing fundamental has changed since the Tang; even in the Tang, little had changed since the Chen fell. Jinling's past, that inseparable melding of glory and shame, now sleeps beneath its shrunken grasses and muted city life.

Wang says nothing new here. It is a public piece, declamatory rather than personal, heroic rather than tearful. Its peculiar force most likely comes from Wang's love for Jinling, his knowledge of its past, and the fact that it was his real home.

TO THE TUNE "YULIN LING"

1 Diligence undaunted, sedulous, no surcease°

2 On the dark inside of ignorance
You struggle to make a nest.°

3 What avails floating fame, floating gain?
At every cherished place you care to linger,
Rebirths in desperate circle press!

4 How lucky there is miraculous enlightenment that sees the Void:
With a fingersnap, you can transcend.°

5 So for what cause
Forsake you the fullness of the tide
To treat one bobbing bubble as if it were the Fairy Seas?°

6 The original wellspring--innate--reality from Heaven--the Buddha

7 Is merely midst a few
Crazed ideas buried and sunk.

8 Greed dazes your eyes with beams bewitching
Until who would believe it said,
"From the beginning, there has never been a thing?"

9 One dawn, in borderless stupor
At last you shall be wrestled off by old man Yama,
Hell's king°

10 When that happens, even with
Your thousand kinds of artifice or plan
How can you stop his turning rough and mean?°

雨霖鈴

1 孜孜矻矻
2 向無明裏，強作窠窟
3 浮名浮利何濟，堪留戀處，輪迴倉猝
4 幸有明空妙覺，可彈指超出
5 緣底事，拋3全朝，認一浮漚作瀛渤
6 本源自性天真佛
7 祇些些，妄想中埋沒
8 貪他眼花陽艷，誰信道，"本來無物"
9 一旦茫然，終被閻羅老子相屈
10 便縱有千種機籌，怎免伊唐突

LOCATION. *Linchuan*, Appendix . 1053; Longshu 80/868; *Quan Song ci* I/205.

DATE. Probably from retirement, 1076--1086.

Sentence 1. LIT.: "Unwearying and diligent."

Sentence 2. IGNORANCE無明. *Avidyā*. Unenlightenment; ignorance of the truth that there is no self. The state that entraps one in endless reincarnations.

Sentence 4. FINGERSNAP彈指. Used to enlighten the seeker. (See *Fahua yishu* 法華義疏, by Jizang 吉藏 of the Sui. In *Taishō Tripitaka* vol. 34 #1721, 11/21/618c.)

Sentence 5. BOBBING BUBBLE 浮漚. I.e. mortal life.

Sentence 8. LIT.: "When (you are) so greedy that those eyes (of yours) grow dazed and sunlit-bright..."
FROM THE BEGINNING本來 ... Paraphrase of the Sixth Patriarch's

famous quatrain, line 3:

"From the beginning there has never been a thing..."
本來無一物

(*Tanjing duikan*壇經對勘, ed. by Guo Peng; Jinan, 1981, p. 17. Trans. by D.T. Suzuki in his *Zen Buddhism*, ed. by William Barrett; New York, 1956, p. 68.)

Sentence 9. LIT.: "One stupefied morning, you shall finally be coerced by that old Mister Yama."

Sentence 10. HOW CAN YOU ESCAPE怎免 ... LIT.: "How can you avoid his brusqueness?"

Wang's second line (and perhaps the whole lyric) is a reworking of a poem by Han Shan (*Han Shan shiji* 28a/125):

1 You bury your heads in dull and stupid doings,
You love to *reach for* the Demon *Cave of Ignorance*.
3 Again I advise you, hurry to train your ways!
But you are stubborn and stupid--that makes you absent-minded.
5 You will not take on faith what Han Shan says,
But circle and circle, till panic fills your life.
7 Not until they chop your head off, making you two pieces
Will you realize you have been a lackey and a thief.

1 汝輩埋頭癡兀兀，愛向無明羅刹窟
3 再三勸你早修行，是你頑癡心恍惚
5 不肯信受寒山語，轉轉倍加業汩汩
7 直待斬首作兩段，方知自身奴賊物

Writing *ci* gave Wang the chance to experiment with vernacular grammar, unusual rhythms, unconventional syntax. It is its language that makes the present lyric fresh. Conventional Chinese poetry seldom uses an abstract noun as if it were a concrete thing. (E.g., "I *saw eternity* the other night.")[58] But on Chinese poetry's outskirts (religious, colloquial or anonymous verse) we find Han Shan criticizing people who "love to *reach for* the demon cave of *avidyā* (ignorance)." From that line, Wang Anshi derives "Into the *inside of avidyā* you struffle to make a nest." Yet preceding that is Wang's first line, which consists of two words of the hoariest classical pedigree.[59] Classical and vernacular phrases alternate thereafter, though less extremely.

Wang has paid extra care here to the sounds of his words. Alliteration peppers every line; staccato dominates.[60] Serious themes and playful language characterize Wang's other *ci* as well. Most of those other lyrics are religious, and (because his religion was Chan?) are serene, even airy, and sometimes humorous.[61]

[58]"The World," by Henry Vaughan (1621/2—1695). In Helen Gardner ed., *The Metaphysical Poets* (Oxford, rev. ed. 1966), p. 271.

[59]*zīzī* 孜孜 is found in the *Shangshu*, *050022*, *210704*, *410091*. *kùkù* 矻矻 is first seen in the Han "Paean for a Sage Ruler Finding Worthy Ministers" 賢主得賢臣頌, by Wang Bao 王褒 (fl. 58 BC), *Wenxuan* 47/1029.

[60]*zī zī* 孜孜, *kù kù* 矻矻(1); *fú míng*, *fú lì* 浮名 浮利, *cāng cù* 倉猝 (3); *míng kōng*, *miàojué* 明空妙覺, *chāo chū* 超出 ; *táng tú* 唐突 (10).

[61]See especially five *ci* to Yu Xiulao's rhymes, "Su zhong qing" 訴衷情. *Linchuan* 37/401-2; *Quan Song ci* I/206.

Section E. Inscriptions

Poems inscribed at famous sites contain an extra dimension not immediately apparent in typewritten translation. Ideograms larger than human hands, placed at eye level or above, brushed onto temple walls or better yet cut into rock faces, partly moss-grown, when added to their original meaning can overwhelm a literate reader. The imagery and language of such verses tend to be plainer than normal, in order not to overshadow the visual and tactile force of the physical characters. Six-syllable verse was a common form for inscriptions, and Wang was a master of this form.[62]

[62] N.b.: P 83, translated here under Wang's poems from retirement, was also an inscription and could be included in this section.

題舒州山谷寺
石牛洞泉穴

INSCRIBED AT THE MOUTH OF THE SPRING
AT THE STONE OX GROTTO,
BY CANYON TEMPLE IN SHUZHOU

水泠泠而北出
山靡靡以旁圍
欲窮源而不得
竟悵望以空歸

Water
cool and clear
flows from the North
Mountains
rooted, ranked
surround the sides--
We would seek
the Headwaters
but seek in vain
Turn home at last
with longing gaze
and empty hands

LOCATION. Li Bi 18.6a/493; *Linchuan*, Appendix p. 1053; Longshu 14/694; Cai 4/68; Zhou Xifu p. 25.

DATE. 1051.9.16 (see below).

WANG'S OWN NOTE: "*On the sixteenth day of the ninth month, in the third year of Huangyou* (1051), *we went to Taihu Prefecture* (about forty miles WSW of Huaining) *from Shuzhou, passing through the Canyon* (Shangu) *or Qianyuan Temple* 山谷乾元寺, *where we spent the night. The holy man Wenrui* 文銳, *my brother Anguo and I took torches and visited the Stone Ox Grotto, where I saw an inscription by Li Ao* 李翺 (Tang, d. 844). *We visited again the next day, and I had these lines cut next to those of Li Ao.*"

BACKGROUND. Wang wrote this at age 30, soon after arriving at his post in Shuzhou. He and Anguo made several overnight trips in the area, perhaps to get acquainted with the prefecture. The grotto is about four miles north of Qianshan潛山 . (Site of a pavilion where Wang is said to have had a study, see *Jiangnan tongzhi* 34.3b.) Decades later, Huang Tingjian (age 36) would pass through this valley and see the grotto, sitting and reading atop a great rock that looked like an ox asleep. (*Jiangnan tongzhi* 34.8a.) He loved the scenery so much that he decided to call himself *Shangu Daoren*, "The Holy Man of the Canyon" 山谷道人 . He left a poem that complemented Wang's inscription (see commentary below). (63) Over 280 inscriptions are said to survive at the site, but Li Ao's is apparently lost. Wang Anshi's is the most celebrated among them. (*Anhui jinshi lüe* 安徽金石略 , ed. by Zhao Shaozu趙紹祖 of the Qing, 1.3b. In *Shike shiliao xinbian* 石刻史料新編 vol. 16, Taipei: Hsin Wen Fong, 1982.)

Like a *Chuci* in miniature (Qu Yuan seeking and failing to meet the goddess), Wang's inscription encompasses the valley's beauty and purity as well as man's inability to pursue that purity to its source. "Headwaters"源 suggests the "Peach Blossom Spring" 桃花源 , the legendary valley hidden beyond a hole in a mountain, where a fisherman found a paradise of people descended from a Golden Age, came back to civilization, and never found the people again.[64]

The "headwaters" can stand for whatever someone seeks: utopia, truth, serenity. The same kind of seeking was still on Wang's mind three years later, when he hiked deep into the cavern at the Baochan-shan Temple, turning back only because someone in the party wanted to

[63] Huang's poem may actually quote phrases from Li Ao's inscription (esp. "the Patriarch bequeathed a robe..."). See poem by Guo Xiangzheng郭祥正 (Northern Song), quoted in *Yudi jisheng* 23.7b.

[64] "Taohua yuan ji" 桃花源記 by Tao Qian. *Jingjie xiansheng ji* 6/1-3. Trans. by James Robert Hightower, *The Poetry of T'ao Ch'ien* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), p. 254.

be cautious. (See above, pp. 37-38.)

Wang's poem--spontaneous as Nature--contrasts markedly with Huang Tingjian's corresponding verse:[65]

司命無心播物 Fate's Master
blank-hearted
sows all things

祖師有記傳衣 The Patriarch
it is recorded
bequeathed a robe

白雲橫而不度 White Cloud
sideways
crosses not over

高鳥倦而猶飛 Birds on high
weary
are flying still

(The White Cloud is what Immortals ride to paradise; but here the cloud fails to "ferry"--*pāramitā*--anyone to that other shore, over the sea of mortal life.)

Wang's poem merely said, "A spring emerges from a mountain

[65]Recorded in *Gaozhai shihua* 高齋詩話 by Zeng Cao 曾慥 (d. 1155) in *Song shihua jiyi* p. 491; quoted also by Li Bi and Zhou Xifu.

wall. I try to follow the spring to its source, but the mountains block my way." Huang ornaments that idea: "The world is created at random, senselessly. But the Bodhidharma, or Patriarch, understood the essence of that fact, so that it made a kind of sense. Although he transmitted that understanding to some disciples, it has not yet reached us all. Some assume salvation is like a white cloud we can ride to the other shore. Yet true salvation does not lie in attaining anything we think of as 'salvation.' If we wait for a cloud to take us, we wait in vain. Birds (before whom Tao Qian had been ashamed, because he could not reach the clouds as they could) are really no closer or farther from enlightenment than we are. The clouds among which birds live are nothing special; 'Nature' is not necessarily the 'source' of salvation or truth."[66]

As philosophy, Huang Tingjian's poem may be more enlightened than Wang's. (Huang apparently believed Wang fell a hair short of true wisdom all his life, see above, pp. 219-220.) But as poetry, Wang's piece is more spontaneous ("natural" 自然 says Zeng Cao), more rhythmic, and far more humble. (This is not a value judgment on two human beings, but an attempt to better understand their thought.)

[66] My eyes *weary* of rivers and roads so strange;
My heart misses my life in hills and marshes.
I gaze at the *clouds*, ashamed before *birds on high*,
Approach the water, embarrassed at fish who swim...

...目倦川途異，心念山澤居。
望雲慚高鳥，臨水愧游魚。...

(Tao Qian, "On Pssing Through Qu E Upon First Serving as Aide-de-camp to the Military Administration" 始作鎮軍參軍，經曲阿作，*Jingjia xiansheng ji* 3/12.)

Wang's is a frank picture of his own experience at the place, with no interpretation attached or implied. Every word in his inscription--including "headwaters" --comes from the natural scene. Such a poem may in fact be closer to enlightenment--whether Chan or Confucian--than Huang's poem, which adds a "Master of Fate" 司命 and a Bodhidharma 祖師, forcing the reader to think in terms of what the scene *means*, rather than what it *is*. Huang's verse is crammed with words. The intricacy of his parallels ("had-no-mind" 無心 paired with "there are records" 有記, for instance) contrasts with Wang's relaxed simplicity. Wang's alternation of "and" 而 with "so that" 以, and his paralleling of "water cool and clear" 水泠泠 with "mountains rooted, ranked" 山靡靡 is daringly elementary. Those phrases work because of their beauty: if simple mountains and water can be beautiful, then so can simple words describing "mountains" and "water." The point is, the words must be beautiful in exactly the same way that the mountains and water are. And the poet may be in tune with his natural surroundings in order to choose the right words.

These two inscriptions illustrate a difference between Huang Tingjian, father of the Jiangxi School of poetry, and Wang Anshi, who may have been its grandfather: but the difference is not absolute. Wang wrote verses even more convoluted and allusion-burdened than the one by Huang just quoted (see P 11, 40, 86), and Huang wrote much like Wang at times.

This verse by Wang sums up for us his thought during the first half of his life: he was *seeking some ultimate wisdom* that could bring him universal peace and contentment. The place to seek that original

wisdom was in Nature. Although Wang already knew more or less what that wisdom was, he had not yet grasped it with any certainty.

題西太一宮壁二首 TWO VERSES INSCRIBED ON THE WALL OF THE WESTERN TABERNACLE OF THE GREAT UNITY (TAI YI)°

其一 THE FIRST (P 58)

柳葉鳴蜩綠暗 Willow leaves
buzzing cicadas
green shade°

荷花落日紅酣 Lotus blooms
falling sun
scarlet rapture°

三十六陂春水 Springtime waters, the Thirty-six Banks°

白頭想見江南 White hair longs to see
the Southern Shore.°

其二 THE SECOND (P 59)

三十年前此地 Thirty years ago
this ground

父兄携我東西 Father and brothers brought me east and west°

今日重來白首 Today I come again
my head white

欲尋陳迹都迷 To seek traces
all confused

LOCATION. Li Bi 40.13b/978; *Linchuan* 27/306; Longshu 66/704; Shen p. 97; *Shilin guangji* B2/220, quoting *Xiqing shihua* 西清詩話. According to Li Bi, the Linchuan text is incorrect. Li Bi's version is used here.

DATE. Probably 1068, in the capital.

SETTING. The Western Hall of the Great Oneness (or Spirit of the Great Unity) 西太一宮, a national Daoist shrine in the capital, built ca. 1023--1031. (*Songchao shishi leiyuan* 18/218; *Mengxi bitan* 1/46.)

P 58, Line 1. WILLOWS, CICADAS 柳蜩. Imply homesickness. Paraphrase of *Shijing* #197: "...Lush are the *willows*, the *cicadas call* 'hui hui'..." 菀彼柳斯，鳴蜩嘒嘒.

P 58, Line 2. RAPTURE 酣. Drunken euphoria, fiery enthusiasm, pleasant intoxication. The point between being sober and being stupefied. I.e., the flowers and sunset make a "rapture of redness."

P 58, Line 3. THIRTY-SIX BANKS 三十六陂. A place at Tianchang 天長, on the southwest side of the Gaoyou Lake 高郵湖, about 40 miles north of Jiangning. (See biography of Jiang Zhiqi 蔣之奇, *Song shi* 343/10916.)

P 58, Line 4. SOUTHERN SHORE 江南. Wang's homeland. Lit.: Jiangnan, "South of the Yangxi."

P 59, Line 2. EAST AND WEST 東西. May refer to the two Tabernacles to the Great One: the older Eastern Tabernacle, and the Western Tabernacle where Wang left the inscriptions. (It was about a decade old when Wang's father took him there.)

"Diction and sonority are spontaneous: pure to the utmost, distressed to the utmost" 語調自然，清絕愁絕. (Liu Chenweng's comment on the first poem.) Wang's economy with writing is perfect: no words are either lacking or superfluous.

The word *chí* 持 ("brought") dominates the second poem. The sense of *chí* is not that Wang's father and brothers had "brought" him to the capital, but literally they *bore him up*, even though he was fif-

teen at the time. The word conveys their solicitude for him, and his sadness that they have all passed away.

These poems, like the previous one, inspired variations. In 1086.7, right after Wang died, Su Shi was performing a sacrifice at the same shrine.[67] After gazing at those words from two decades earlier, Su finally said, "This is the old fox-spirit of the moors!"[68] Whereupon he wrote two verses of his own to Wang's rhymes.[69] Su put his own longing for home into words almost as spontaneous as Wang's original, with allusions to Su's native Sichuan instead of to Wang's Jinling. Su's second poem is a quiet elegy to Wang:

但有樽中若下 If I but have
within the goblet
Ruoxia wine

何須墓上"征西" Why should I need
a grave inscribed
"Westward Conqueror?"

聞道烏衣巷口 I have heard the Word
at "Black Robe Alley's gate"

[67] *Su Shi shiji* 27/1449; Liu Naichang p. 260; *Songchao shishi leiyuan* 39/508; *Shilin guangji* 2/219.

[68] But see the same quotation about P 55 above.

[69] "Two Poems Written Casually to Wang Anshi's Rhymes, After Seeing Old Poems by Him at the Western Tabernacle of the Great One" 西太一見王荊公舊詩，偶次其韻二首. *Su Shi shiji* 27/1449; *Shilin guangji* B2/220.

Where now it is
西今烟草萋迷 mist and grasses
tangled and confused[70]

Su Shi feels no ambition, but wishes only for a cup of wine. He has visited the retired Wang at the grand southern capital, heard and appreciated Wang's wisdom, and now Wang is dead--only tangled grass remains where he was. Or perhaps Su is praising Wang for Wang's own lifelong desire to live in reclusion (and hence to stay out of politics--a veiled criticism that Wang had not retired sooner?). Wang Anshi is now gone, like the Wangs and the Xie's before him, and as the rest of us will go. "Six-character verse seldom manages to be as fluent (as this verse by Su Shi)" 六言難得如此流利.[71]

Some say that while Su Shi was admiring Wang's verses on the wall, he turned to Huang Tingjian, saying "Of all those here, you alone have the brush-strength to match these lines."

Huang replied, "I might equal them if I invested all my

[70]WESTWARD CONQUEROR 征西. I.e., "Why do I need am ambition to serve my country?" Cao Cao 曹操 (155--220), general and First Emperor of the Wei, once said of himself that he hoped to be named General Conquering the West 征西将軍 as he had been when he put down rebels early in his career, and to have inscribed on his grave, "Here Lies Marquis Cao of the Han, *General Conquering the West*." (*Sanguo zhi* 1/32.) Su may be implying, "Why should Wang (or I) want a vain career of politics and cruelty such as Cao Cao had?"

BLACK ROBE ALLEY 烏衣巷. In Jinling: location of the great houses of Wang and Xie during the Six Dynasties. Famous in poetry since the Tang, as a symbol of vanished glory. (See Liu Yuxi's famous quatrain: p. 212 above.)

[71]Comment by Ji Yun 紀昀 (1724--1805), quoted by Wang Wengao, *Su Shi shiji* 27/1450.

strength, but I would not have Wang's natural ease 自在 ."[72] Huang proved those words in his own verses written to Wang's rhymes: we can see Huang investing "strength," but the strain he predicted is also evident. Here is Huang's first:[73]

風急啼烏未了 Wind whips
cawing crows
have not ceased

雨來戰蟻方酣 Rain comes
battling ants
at last euphoric

真是真非安在 Where is
real right
and real wrong?

人間北看成南 Among men,
a northward look
becomes the South.

[72] *Shi shi* 詩爭 (anon., Song) in *Song shihua jiyi*, pp. 527-8; also Fu Xuanzong 傅璇琮 ed., *Huang Tingjian he Jiangxi shipai juan* 黃庭堅和江西詩派卷 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1978), p. 179.

[73] *Shangu shi jizhu* 山谷詩集註 (*SBBY* edition) 3.10ab. Translated and analyzed by Tiang Seng-yong, in "Huang T'ing-chien (1045--1105) and the Use of Tradition," Ph.D. diss., University of Washington 1976, pp. 185-188. Trans. also by Michael Workman, *Sunflower* pp. 355-6.

Are these the same "ants" who will gnaw at the pillars of state if the Emperor is careless?[74] And is it the "rain" of good government that has calmed them into euphoria? Or is it rather a stormy "rain" of misguided reform policies that has set these insects ("small men") to battling and factionalism, thus weakening the state?

Was it that Wang had ambitions in the capital ("northward-looking") but ended out of office in the South?[75] Was Huang comforting Wang that men might "battle" over his policies, but that their value judgments are all relative?[76] Or does Huang's final line simply mean that a man who misses the South strongly enough will envision it in front of him, even if he is physically in the North? Perhaps this is Buddhist doctrine--one can rise above "north" and "south," appearance and reality. (*Lengyan jing* 1/108a; P 43, note to line 3.)

Huang's poem is so ambiguous that we cannot know if it does indeed try to judge Wang's career. Huang personally admired Wang, although politically Huang was more opponent than supporter. Here, however, Huang seems to have left politics aside to comment on how arbitrary the world's affairs ultimately are: "In the Xining and Yuanfeng eras, Wang was 'right;' while under the Yuanyou he was 'wrong.'

[74]See Wang's allegorical piece, "They Banquet in the Hall at Sunrise" 日出堂上飲, Li Bi 11.8a/367. And Wang Anguo's similar poem, "A Meaty Flavor Lingers in the Hall" 堂上有遺羶. In *Wang Jiaoli ji* 王校理集, (*Liang Song mingxian xiaoji* 兩宋名賢小集, *Siku quanshu zhenben* edition, 1975) 61.10b-11a.

[75]See Workman's rendition of the last line: "Men who head north wind up in the South."

[76]Tiang's theory, pp. 185-188. But Wang was already dead.

Reasons for this love and hatred are especially unsettled" 愛憎之論特未定也.[77] Huang's poem probably is ambivalent only to us, nine hundred years later; it must have been straightforward at the time. We cannot judge its significance anymore, only its artistry. As art, Huang's allusions lack Wang's simple force. One could say that Huang was talking *about* career, home, memories, while Wang and Su had been writing them down directly.

[77]Comment by Ren Tianshe 任天社 in *Shilin guangji* B/221.

題雩祠堂 INSCRIBED AT (MY SON, WANG) FANG'S SHRINE
在寶公塔院 *At the Pagoda of Master Bao*°

斯文實有寄 Our nation's Civil Art does have a home:°
天豈偶生才 Would Heaven nurture genius only on occasion?°
一旦鳳鳥去 Yet in one day departs a phoenix bird--
千秋梁木摧 A ridgebeam snapped, for a thousand autumns to come°

烟留衰草恨 Mist lingers withered grass resents it
風造暮林哀 Wind raises sadness in twilight woods°
豈謂登臨處 Who would predict, at this high spot for viewing--°
飄然獨往來 As though drifting, I come and go alone?

LOCATION. Li Bi 22.2b/548; *Linchuan* 14/194; Longshu 65/703; *Shao hou lu* 20/130; Cai 19/264.

DATE. Possibly 1077 or later; autumn, in Jiangning. (But see note below, under "background.")

AT THE COURTYARD OF THE PAGODA OF MASTER BAO 在寶公塔院. This may be Wang's original note.

The pagoda (burial place of the Liang-dynasty monk Baozhi 寶誌, d. 514, erected by a Liang princess) was the centerpiece of the Taiping Xingguo Temple on Mt. Zhong. The Kaishan Temple 開善寺 (founded 515) stood in front of it, and Wang's study at the Dinglin Cloister was nestled to the rear. (See Li Bi's note to P 101. Quoting *Jingding Jiankang zhi* 景定建康志. See also *Jinling fansha zhi* 金陵梵刹志, by Ge Yinliang of the Ming; 1627 edition rep. Taipei, 1980, 3.1b/301.)

BACKGROUND. There is reason to doubt the authenticity of this poem's title. First, the title in Longshu and in the *Linchuan* table of contents is different from Li Bi's edition: "(Inscribed at) the Ancestral Shrine at the Courtyard of Master Bao's Pagoda" (題)寶公

塔院祠堂. That could still have been Wang Anshi's family shrine--nevertheless there is no specific mention of Wang Fang. Second, according to a Li Zijing李子經 of Linchuan, the poem was a lament for Wang Anshi's friend Wang Ling, not for Anshi's son (and would hence be an early poem). Li Bi disagreed, but Cai suspects that Li Zijing may have been right anyhow.

Cai and Li Zijing have attractive arguments. The poem's images and tone of voice seem odd for a man mourning his son, but do fit with the verses Wang wrote in memory of Wang Ling (see P 31). But for their argument to be true, the poem would have to have been completely mistitled, because Wang Ling was buried at Changzhou, not Jiangning. (*Linchuan* 97/998.)

Li Bi argues that the poem could easily be an authentic elegy for Wang Fang: father and son had been close, had admired each other's abilities, and had been praised as "Confucius twinned" and "double Dukes of Zhou" (see above, pp. 125-6). Wang Fang had praised his father in extravagant terms; why would not Wang Anshi have praised his son likewise? (But Li Bi may have been influenced by Shao Bo: see commentary below.)

Line 1. LIT.: "This Civilization truly has men on whom to rely." ("This Civilization"斯文 : Rites, Music, education--a Confucian term. See *Lunyu* 16/IX/5.)

Line 2. NURTURE生 . Lit. "Give birth to."

Line 4. RIDGEBEAM SNAPPED梁木摧 . Recalls Confucius mourning for his disciple Zilu, shortly before Confucius himself died. "Mt. Tai has collapsed! The ridgebeam and pillar are snapped..." (*Shi ji* 47/1944.)

Line 6. OR: "Wind makes a blowing; twilight woods are sad." (A reading more parallel with line 5.)

Line 7. HIGH SPOT FOR VIEWING登臨處. Lit., "place where one 'climbs and approaches the edge'" (to view the panorama and ponder history: see P 55, line 1).

Without being sure of the poem's background, it is hard to appreciate this as a conveyor of Wang's thought, beyond its rather conventional images. Wang laments a man who could have been a pillar of the state, whom Heaven had brought forth with a purpose, and whose death left a gap that no one in a thousand years could fill. Wang identifies with the melancholy "withered grass" and "sunset woods."

Instead of being able to "climb the heights" with this person and ponder vanished glory, Wang now finds himself disconcertingly alone.

Was this a poem for Wang Fang? Shao believed that it was, and that it showed Wang Anshi at his most shameless, by comparing himself to Confucius and his son to the disciple Zilu. But, says Shao, such impropriety was only natural in a family where the son was audacious enough to call his father a greater sage than Confucius had been![78] Although Wang Anshi's poem seems more likely a memorial to Wang Ling or some other friend than to Wang Fang, there is little reason to fault it as "shameless" or "reckless" even if it were for Wang Fang. One simply wishes its phrases were more inspired. Perhaps if inscribed on a wall it would show the right density, and read less blandly than it does in print.

[78] Shao attributes to Wang Fang a "Eulogy to a Painting of Duke Jing" (i.e. Wang Anshi) 荊公畫像贊, which reads in part:

> The ranked sages left us teachings jagged and uneven.
> (But) the Great Synthesis (my father) made, is
> more glorious than Confucius!
>
> 列聖垂教，參差不齊．集厥大成，光于仲尼．

The title of that "eulogy" is anachronistic, as Wang Anshi was not named Duke of Jing until after Wang Fang had died. And we cannot find the poem anywhere except in Shao. The eulogy's doggerel quality and undeniable shamelessness make sense only if we accept the tradition that Wang Fang was a depraved troublemaker, and his father almost as bad. The evidence, however, weighs against that tradition.

題半山寺壁二首 TWO VERSES WRITTEN ON THE WALL AT BANSHAN TEMPLE°

其一 THE FIRST (P 61)

我行天即雨 When I walk, Heaven rains
我止雨還住 The rain stops when I halt.
雨豈為我行 How could the rain be acting for this "I"?
邂逅與相遇 It was by chance we met.°

其二 THE SECOND (P 62)

寒時暖處坐 When cold, sit where it is warm
熱時涼處行 When hot, walk where it is cool
衆生不異佛 All living beings are not different from Buddha
佛即是衆生 Buddha is all living beings.

LOCATION. Li Bi 4.1a/221; *Linchuan* 3/97; Longshu 48/544; Shimizu pp. 171-2; Andō (1966) p. 26 (#2). #2 translated by T.C. Liu, *Reform*, p. 36; also by Jan Walls, *Sunflower*, p. 335.

DATE. After 1084.6.20, at Jiangning.

BANSHAN TEMPLE 半山寺 . Originally Wang's home, see above, pp. 193-5, 230.

P 61, Line 4. "BY CHANCE WE MET" 邂逅與相遇. A quotation from *Shijing* #94, "We *meet by chance*, / And that fits my wish" 邂逅相遇適我願兮. (See also P 31, line 34.)

Two basic Mahāyāna ideas appear here, one in each poem. First is the idea that all events occur "by chance," with no cause or effect. We believe that we eat because we are hungry, or are reborn as rich men because we behaved well in former lives, or that the nation pros-

pers because we ruled it wisely. In reality, these ideas make no more sense than the notion that the rain decides to fall because we go out for a stroll. All things occur at random; yet (as the last line implies) "that fits my wish:" one can be at peace with randomness.

The second poem reminds us that the Buddha-nature is everywhere, in daily life as well as in philosophizing. ("Have you had your breakfast or not?" asks the Master. "Yes I have" replies the disciple. "Then get your dishes washed.")[79] The *Huayan* or *Avataṁsaka-sūtra* says, "The Mind, *Buddha* and *All Living Beings*--these three are *no different from each other*" 心佛與衆生，是三無差別 (Li Bi). All Buddhists have heard that "The Visible *is not different* from the Empty, nor the Empty from the Visible. The Visible *is* the Empty, the Empty is the Visible" 色不異空，空不異色．色即是空，空即是色．[80] Wang incorporated both those phrases and their meanings into these two verses, whose spontaneous serenity and harmony with nature puts them among the most memorable Buddhist poetry. Whether or not Wang "truly grasped" Buddhist wisdom during his lifetime somehow seems not so important after reading these.

[79]See D.T. Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism*, p. 91.

[80]From the *Banruo xinjing* 般若心經; see Shimizu.

Section F. Mountains, Rivers, Travels and Private Thoughts

These include actual trips to real sites, and thoughts that are unmistakably Wang's--not political allegories, not imitations of older verse styles, not memories inscribed on temple walls to be seen by visitors. These are all pre-retirement poems: poems of this category from Wang's retirement are left for the final two sections.

CLIMBING THE PEAK THAT CAME BY FLIGHT°

Upon the Peak that Came by Flight
a pagoda, one thousand stories tall°
Where (I hear) at cockcrow
you can see the sun ascend
I do not fear that "floating clouds"
will block my searching eyes
Simply because it is the tower's top on which I stand.

登飛來峯

飛來山上千尋塔，聞說鷄鳴見日升
不畏浮雲遮望眼，自緣身在最高層

LOCATION. Li Bi 48.10a/1193; *Linchuan* 34/373; Longshu 67/712; Zhou Xifu p. 10; Guangzhou p. 207.

DATE. 1046, 1048 or 1050 at Hangzhou. (See under P 25.)

THE PEAK THAT CAME BY FLIGHT (Feilai feng 飛來峰). A mountain said to be a piece of India's Spirit Vulture Peak 靈鷲山 (Gṛdhrakūta), that had broken off and flown to Hangzhou. The "pagoda" Wang mentions was not actually on the Feilai-feng, but on the mountain facing it; part of the Lingyin Temple 靈隱寺, founded in the Eastern Jin.

This poem may have been written another time, at Shaoxing, where there was also a "Peak that Came by Flight." (This is a rather common name for mountains in China.) See Yu Yan, "Proof that the Mountain that Came by Flight in Wang Anshi's Poem was at Shaoxing" 俞炎王安石詩飛來山在紹興証, in *Anhui shida xuebao* 安徽師大學報 1978.2. (Not available.)

Line 1. THOUSAND STORIES 千尋. Hyperbole. Lit., "1000 *xūn*" or 8000 feet!

Here is youthful optimism at its most infectious: Wang has made it to the top before sunrise, to see if dawn will come just when the roosters crow. He has overtaken the "floating clouds" in the sky. These represent evil men, obstacles; they are the clouds that blocked many a good man's view of the emperor, and prevented many an emperor from seeing the good men below him, and from spreading benevolence to the nation.[81] Such clouds also stand for ignorance and backwardness. But whether they are ignorance or evil, Wang *does not fear them.* Why? Because he has climbed above them, and found the ancient learning by which he can gaze down at all the forces that shape humanity, and make those forces work for the best.

Wang has changed the poetic conventions to go with his new spirit: it is sunrise, not sunset; Wang is away from home yet *happy*; he does not fear "floating clouds;" his climb to the heights leads not to sorrowful contemplation of graves below, but to exuberant thoughts of years to come.

[81] See P 6, line 1. Also Li Bo:

...All because those *floating clouds* are able to hide the sun,
Chang-an is not to be seen--that makes a person grieve."
總為浮雲能蔽日 ,長安不見使人愁 .

("Climbing the Phoenix Tower at Jinling" 登金陵鳳凰台, *Li Taibo quan-ji* 21/478. Trans. also by Joseph J. Lee, *Sunflower* p. 113.)

WHITE STAR CLIFF°

Spiring shoulders gallop south and east°
The herd of ridges folds together, azure splits into patches.
Foggy clouds, thick or thin, all inspire love°
Trees dense and open fit with rocks, and rocks with trees.
Spring has gone home, birds voice their pleasure°
Creek water motionless, fish slowly swim

How shall human beings find their own place
To sport as comrades with these fish and birds?°

太白巖

太白巃嵸東南馳，衆領還合青分披
煙雲厚薄皆可愛，樹石踈密自相宜
陽春已歸鳥語樂，淡水不動魚行遲
生民何由得處所，與茲魚鳥相諧熙

LOCATION. Li Bi 19.6a/505; *Linchuan* 13/187; Longshu 47/536.

DATE. 1047--1050, early summer. At Yin Prefecture.

WHITE STAR (TAIBO) CLIFF太白巖. Lit. "Venus" or "Morningstar" Cliff. About eighteen miles east of Yin Prefecture (modern Ningbo). Site of the Tiantong Temple天童寺, a major Chan center, called Jingde Temple in the Song. Wang came to know a Chan master Ruixin瑞心 at that temple, and visited Ruixin several times. (*Linchuan* 71/756; poem to him in Li Bi 13.6a/397; see also p. 224 above.)

Line 1. LIT.: "Mount Taibo steeply spires, galloping southeast."

Line 3. ALL INSPIRE LOVE 皆可愛 . Or, "All are (equally) appealing."

Line 5. LIT.: "Sunny spring has returned, birds' talk is joyful." *Returned* 歸 means that spring is *over* (has "gone home"), and summer is beginning.

Lines 7-8. LIT.: "From where will the people obtain a place / To be in happy companionship with these fish and birds?"

On a summer day, everything has its place. Rocks and trees complement each other, birds are happy and fish idle. Why can't humanity enter this picture? Wang implies it is because we humans gave up our niche--and all chance for contentment--when we abandoned our natural state. To regain our place, we must become natural again. What does "natural" mean? It means that differences are tolerated, and all things have value. Creatures eat their fill. Birds stay out of the water, and fish are not forced into the air. No one needs to hurry; no one fights.

Chan discipline can restore an individual man to this natural state within a lifetime: the monks at the Jingde Temple could vouch for that, and Wang understood the fact intellectually. But Wang's concern at the time was that the *people as a whole* 生民 begin literally to restore that happy life on earth, as things had been in the distant past. Mountains reminded Wang of this goal: they inspired him for his *return to the lowlands* and his real work. The days when he would retreat to the mountains permanently, walking straight into nature and shutting the gate behind him, would come later.

The idyllic warmth and earnest emotion of this piece might reflect on the birth of Wang's first daughter (early summer: 1047.4). Such an event can heighten a poet's appreciation of natural beauty, as

well as his concern for the future.

Wang's parallelism is colorful, subtle and not insistent. But one wishes that the final two lines were tauter, with a greater punch, to take advantage of the surprise element they contain.

POST STATION AT KO CREEK°

Partial moon, shade, shadow
waterclock not yet dripped midway
One lamp glows and gutters,
lights the autumn bed
A sick man feels wind and frost the swiftest°
In homeward dreams I do not know how long are streams and hills.°

We sit stirred by the circling seasons,°
sad we sing, and bold
Then rise to gaze at sky and land,
colors stark and cold°
More uproar strikes the traveller's ears, made by cicadas' drone
They cling to sparse paulownia,
its leaves half-way brown.

葛溪驛

缺月昏昏漏未央〔夜〕，一燈明滅照秋床
病身最覺風霜早，歸夢不知山水長
坐感歲時歌慷慨，起看天地色淒涼
鳴蟬更亂行人耳，正抱疏桐葉半黃

LOCATION. Li Bi 35.9b/870; *Linchuan* 24/280; Shen p. 86; *Shi juyao* 6/655; Zhou Xifu p. 19; Shimizu p. 103.

DATE AND SETTING. "Ko (*Ge*) Creek" 葛溪 is in Jiangxi, near Yiyang 弋陽, on the route from Linchuan to Hangzhou. Wang took that

route in 1050 (probably in autumn, after a summer at Linchuan: see p. 30, above). Although the poem's tone seems rather depressed for a young man, it does fit with the poem he wrote "On First Leaving Linchuan"初去臨川 (probably in 1050 also: Li Bi 32.9b/938). In the latter poem, his melancholy at leaving home mingled with his doubts that he would ever amount to anything. He would have reached Ge Creek three or four days after setting off from home, and could easily still be in the same frame of mind. (See also poems written at Gusu姑蘇or Suzhou, perhaps on the same journey: Li Bi 19.1a/495; 39.9a/931. And see p. 53, note 14 above.)

Line 3. LIT.: "The sick body feels most clearly how soon (winter) wind and frost arrive."

Line 4. LIT.: "In a dream of going home, you do not know how long the hills and rivers are." I.e., *you forget how far it is.*

Line 5. SAD WE SING AND BOLD歌慷慨. Cf. the long tradition of "heroic melancholy"慷慨, whose ultimate poetic source may be the "Short-song Ballad"短歌行 of Cao Cao曹操 (155--220):

> When we have wine before us, we should sing;
> How long is human life?...
> *Sad sighs* should come with *bold sorrow,*
> Melancholy thoughts are hard to forget...
>
> 對酒當歌，人生幾何？...
> 慨當以慷，憂思難忘...

(*Wenxuan* 27/598.)

Line 6. RISE TO GAZE起看 . The theme of rising at night to pace around. See "Nineteen Old Poems"古詩十九首 #19, written on a journey:

> Sad and worried, I cannot get to sleep;
> I wrap my robe about me, rise and pace...
>
> 憂愁不能寐，攬衣起徘徊.

(*Wenxuan* 29/636; also trans. by Charles Hartman, *Sunflower* p. 33.)

Some of Wang's language alludes to conventions of "autumn melancholy" dating to the Han and Wei dynasties (see especially lines 5-7). He used those conventions in several poems on that journey. But in this poem those images only add flavor to what is at bottom one of his more original and moving eight-line pieces. Each word reads as

if no one had used those images before. Liu Chenweng comments: "In both feeling and setting, line after line—phrase after phrase—when read together, add up to unbearable pain each time" 情景自句字字合讀之，每不可堪讀.

A sense of "halfness" pervades this poem: a *partial* moon 缺月, almost *mid*night 未央, foliage *half*-brown 半黃. By extension: Wang is halfway on his journey, half-young, half-successful, half-confident. There is a tension between his "sick frame" 病身, and his "sad and bold" singing, which should imply health.

The reader can vividly see the night passing: when Wang observes that the leaves are yellow, we know that morning light has come and he has not yet slept. Wang has left home only recently, but appreciates the length of each mile that already separates him. He can turn back only by dreaming. As a traveller, he is insecure. But is he not still better off than the cicada, who clings to a rapidly fading tree?

和平甫舟中
望九華山二首
其一

TWO POEMS ON VIEWING THE
NINE-PETALLED PEAKS FROM A BOAT,
WRITTEN TO WANG ANGUO'S RHYMES°

THE FIRST (P 66)

楚越千萬山　Of Chu and Yueh's thousand and ten thousand peaks
雄奇此山兼　Imposing, strange: these mountains here are both.
盤根雖巨壯　Though roots of giant shape may coil beneath,
其末乃修纖　They taper into long and slender ends.°

去縣尚百里　Full thirty miles before we reach the town°
側身勇前瞻　Turning sideways, boldly up we gaze:
蕭條煙嵐上　Desolate, withered mists, upon whose vapor
縹緲浮青尖　In hazy distance float the sharp blue tips.

徐行稍復逼　Slowly we press, slightly closer still
所矚亦已添　And that already adds to what we see.
精神去亹亹　Our spirit reaches out, unflagging, resolute
氣象來漸漸　As, wave upon gradual wave, the Air comes down.°

卸席取近岸　We ship our sail, select the nearer shore
移船傍蒼蒹　Swinging the boat beside the grey-green reeds.
窺觀坐窮晡　We peer up, sitting out an afternoon
未覺晷刻淹　Utterly unaware of the gnomon's sinking.°

17 江空萬物息 The Kiang flows blank, everything has ceased
四面波瀾恬 In all directions, lapping waves are eased;
巉然九女鬟 Jutting up, the topknots of nine ladies°
爭出一鏡奩 Jostle out of a single mirror-case.

21 臥送秋月沒 We lie down, sending the full moon to its end
起看朝陽暹 Then rise to watch the morning's rays ascend.
游氣蕩無餘 All roaming ethers now rinsed clean away
瑣細得盡覘 Each sharp-etched line receives full scrutiny

25 陵空翠蠒直 Sky-leaping kingfisher banners stiffly straight
照影寒鉾銛 Reflected downward, frigid knife-points keen!°
冢木立紺髮 Barrow-top trees erect as ruddy hair,
崖林張紫髯 Cliff-hanging forests spread out purple whiskers.

29 變態生條忽 Altered aspects born in flashing instants--
雖神詎能占 Though we were gods, how could we augur them?
當留老吾身 I should remain here, aging my mortal frame:
少駐誰云饜 Who could be sated from this short a stay?

* * *

33 惜哉秦漢君 Pity the sovereigns of ancient Qin and Han
黃屋上衡灊 Whose yellow palanquins climbed Heng and Qian°
等之事嬉遊 In what amounted, one must say, to sport:
捨此何其廉 How nobly frugal, had they this foregone!

我疑二古荒 I suspect the flagrance of those two great Kings
神物久已厭 From early on disgusted the divine beings;
埋藏在雲霧 The latter buried themselves in clouds and fog
不欲登昏險 Not wanting stupid, vile men to climb them.°

又疑避褒封 Or were the mountains evading Royal honor,
蔽匿以為謙 Hiding as a form of modesty?
或是古史書 Or perhaps, from within the ancient histories
脫落簡與籤 Some of the bamboo pages dropped away,°

當時備巡遊 So that the thorough tours of former times
今不在繒縑 Today exist no more on silken scrolls.°
終南秦之望 Zhongnan was the object of Qin's gaze,
泰山魯所詹 And "Mount Tai filled the Lu dominion's view;"

天王與秩祭 Sons of Heaven made orderly sacrifice,
俎豆羅醯鹽 Stands and vessels ranged with pickled and salted.
苟能澤下民 If that can nourish people down below,
維比遠亦沾 Then even lands this far should soak up blessings—

方今東南旱 But now this Southeast region suffers drought,
土肥燥不黏 The veins of loam harden in crackling heat°
尚無膚寸功 And neither inch nor span of cloud yet forms:
豈免竊食嫌 Have not these mountains failed to earn
their keep?

57 神莽言難知 The divine and vast is hard for me to know
士病言能砭 But I can probe the sickness of officials!
文章巧傅會 Their writings, cunning with twisted circumstance;
智術工飛箝 Mental techniques crafty as the Persuaders':°

61 蘧瑗互珪璧 Receiving, each from each, jade rings and scepters
論材自枏楩 They rank each other as tall as mighty camphors;°
苟以飾婦妾 Contrive to dress their wives and junior wives
謬云活蒼黔 And say of this, "We nourish the People's lives!"

* * *

65 豈如幽人樂 How can this match the Hermit's happiness?
茲山謝閭閻 In these hills he has bowed out from the streets.
宂石作戶牖 Grottoed boulders door and window make,
垂泉當門簾 A plunging water-curtain shields his gate.°

69 尋奇出後徑 He tracks for marvels up the back-door path;
覽勝倚前簷 Gazes at grandeur from his forward eaves
71 超然往不返 Above it all: once gone, he'll not turn back,
舉世徒咕咕 But lets the whole world vainly twaddle on.
73 高興寄日月 He spends his higher joys with sun and moon,
千秋伴烏蟾 A thousand autumns, friend to Crow and Toad.°

75	遐追商洛翁	Chasing the past, I aspire to the Shang Recluses,°
	秦火不能炎	Unscorchable by Qin's tyrant's flames.
	近慕楚穆生	From recent times, I have admired Sir Mu
	竟脫楚人鉗	Who pushed the Chu people's pincers from his throat.°
79	吾意竊所向	Audaciously I value these ideals
	人謀詠難僉	Well knowing how rarely human plans succeed.

LOCATION. Li Bi 17.1a/465; *Linchuan* 12/176; Longshu 40/460; Shen p. 35; Zhu p. 80.

DATE AND PLACE. Early in his appointment as sub-prefect of Shuzhou, Wang Anshi toured this area with Anguo. They started at Huaining, across the river from the Jiuhuashan or "Nine-Petalled" Mountains, and probably visited the Jiuhuashan then. (1059.9.2?) They spent a night on their boat at the foot of the mountains; Wang Anguo selected a rhyme, and each brother wrote a poem. A few days later (1051.9.16) they stayed at the Shangu Temple (P 57). Two or three weeks after that, Wang Anshi wrote a second poem recalling the Jiuhuashan (P 67 below). Anguo's poems are lost.

Evidence for dating: it was fall, and the new moon was rising when they got to the Jiuhuashan, thus it was probably early in 1051.9. (1051. 10 would have been winter.) Wang Anshi wrote the second Jiuhuashan poem in the second fortnight of 1051.9, when moss from "Heaven's Pillar" (Qianshan, near the Shangu Temple) still stuck to their clogs. (See P 67, lines 5-6, 53-54.)

NINE-PETALLED PEAKS, or JIUHUASHAN 九華山 . A mountain massif on the Yangzi near Huangshan. One of China's four great Buddhist centers (seventy-eight temples remain), the Jiuhuashan had never been included in pre-Buddhist cosmology: i.e. they were not among the Five Sacred Peaks. Originally called Jiuzishan 九子山 , they had been renamed Jiuhuashan by Li Bo, because their form reminded him of the Buddhist symbol of the lotus flower. (In 754: see An Qi et al., *Li Bo nianpu* 李白年譜 , Jinan 1982, p. 90. Also "Viewing the Jiuhuashan: Presented to Wei Zhongkan of Qingyang" 望九華山贈青陽韋仲堪 , *Li Taibo quanji* 10/267.)

Lines 3-4. LIT.: "Though their coiling roots are large and strong / Their ends are elongated and slender."

Line 5. FULL THIRTY MILES. Lit. "100 *li*."

Line 12. THE AIR 氣象 . Mountain atmosphere, coolness, aura.

Line 16. Cf. Han Yu, "Bitter Cold"苦寒 , line 42: (Sparrows shivering in the cold raise their heads and cry out): "What they want is *for the gnomon to sink away*"所願晷刻沒 (i.e. they want time to pass and winter to end). (*Han Changli shi* 2/74.)

Line 19. NINE LADIES 九女 . I.E.: An emperor's attendants. There is a tradition that a ruler's 81 female consorts or concubines attend him in groups of nine per night. (*Hou Han shu* 80A/2620, note 1.)

Line 26. REFLECTED DOWNWARD 照影. Lit.: "They make a reflection." Line 25 had the peaks jutting into the air like battle-flags; line 26 shows their reflections stabbing like swords into the water.

Line 29. Cf. Han Yu, "Southern Mountains"南山 line 41: "Bright and dusky have no *state of rest*" 明昏無停態 . (*Han Changli shi* 4/196. Trans. also by Charles Hartman, *Sunflower* pp. 175-189.)

Lines 33-34. Wang is comparing the Jiuhuashan to the Five Sacred Mountains. The First Qin Emperor once made a pilgrimage to Hengshan衡山 (219 BC, see *Shi ji* 6/248). The Han Emperor Wu visited the Heaven's Pillar (Tianzhu天柱), at Qianshan潛山 , renaming it the Sacred Peak of the South南岳 . (106 BC, *Shi ji* 12/480.) This latter peak, across the river from Jiuhuashan, was the location of the Shangu Temple that the Wangs would visit two weeks later.

The current Emperor Renzong仁宗 (r. 1022—1063) had a policy against portentology and other activities associated with the Sacred Peaks. (See Wang's "Record of the Immortality Mushroom Pavilion"芝閣記, *Linchuan* 82/864.)

Line 40. Li Bi says the "STUPID" 昏 were the Qin rulers; the "VILE" 小佞 were their ministers.

Line 44. LIT.: "There dropped out bamboo pages and tags."

Lines 45-46. LIT.: "At the time, (there were) thorough inspection tours, / But today those are not (recorded) on the silk and satin (historical records)."

Line 54. HARDEN不黏 . Lit. "Not sticky." Cf. Han Yu, "Bitter Cold," lines 65-66:

Snow and frost suddenly melt away,
The veins of loam are rich and *sticky* too...
霜雪頓銷釋，土脈膏且黏.

Line 55. LIT.: "There is not yet an 'inch or span' of results." Clouds converging to make rain were described as "converging by the inch and the span" 膚寸而合 . This is the rain from Mt. Tai, that nourishes whole regions. (*Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhu* 春秋公羊傳注, *Shisan jing guzhu* edition, Xi 31/1652a.)

Line 60. LIT.: "In thought-techniques they are skilled at Flying Pincers" (飛箝, the name of a chapter in the *Guiguzi* 鬼谷子 : i.e., amoral, cynical Persuasion theories of the Warring States; Machiavellian politics). Wang Anshi would later criticize Su Shi and Su Che for practicing this kind of thought. (*Xu tongjian* 67/1654.)

Line 62. LIT.: "In talking talent, (they call each other) catalpas and camphors."

Line 68. SHIELDS HIS GATE 當門簾. Or, more literally: "A plunging waterfall *serves as* his door-curtain."

Line 74. CROW AND TOAD 烏蟾. The sun and moon.

Line 75. SHANG RECLUSES 商洛翁 . The Four Hoary Sages of Mount Shang 商山四皓. They had gone into reclusion at the beginning of the Qin, thus preserving the learning that the Qin tried to destroy. They avoided serving not only the Qin, but also the Han that followed. (*Han shu* 72/3056.)

Lines 77-78. MASTER MU OF CHU 楚穆生 , advisor to the King of Chu. After the new King Mu took the throne, he often forgot to serve Master Mu with ritual wine. Master Mu recognized that this king was unreliable, and decided to retire "before the *people of Chu* have me *pincered* in the market square" (i.e. executed by choking with iron pincers). (*Han shu* 36/1923.)

其二 THE SECOND (P 67)

誰謂九華遠　Who could say the Nine Petalled Peaks are far?
吾身未嘗詹　Yet never had I seen them until now:
唱篇每起予　Each time a song or ballad rises from me
予口安能箝　What pincers could pinch shut these lips of mine?

憶在秋浦北　I yet recall, north of the Autumn Shore°
空江上新蟾　Over a "blank Kiang" rose the brand-new "Toad."
光潔寫一鏡　Clean-washed rays outlined a looking-glass
迴環兩堤奩　Encircled in a twin-shored mirror-case.

露坐引衣襜　We sat in dew, tugging collars tight,°
風行斂帽簷　Into the wind we walked, hat-brims aslant;
維舟當此時　We tied the boat, and so at last obtained
巨細得盡瞻　One thorough view, both massive and minute.°

試嘗論大略　I tried, that time, on great themes to expound.
次乃述微纖　As sequel let me trace more slender threads:

此山廣以深　These mountains, in their span and deep recess
包畜萬物兼　Contain and nourish all things ever known;°
噓雲吐霧雨　Around them, hissing clouds spit fog, then rain,
生育靡不漸　Birth and nurturing never stop their process:
巍然如九皇　Lofty as the Nine Sage Emperors°
德澤四海沾　Whose virtue soaks the entire sea-bound world!

此山相後先 These mountains, all observing proper order
各出群峯尖 Thrust each beyond the horde of pinnacles,
毅然如九官 Stern as the Nine Great Ministers,°
羅立在堂廉 Standing in bold array beside the hall,
挺身百辟上 Stiff-shouldered, high above the Hundred Nobles,
附麗無姦險 All cleave to the Sovereign, free from
vile treason.

此山高且寒 Not merely tall, but cold these mountains are:
五月不覺炎 Even in summer months one feels no heat:°
草樹萋已綠 Grass and bushes, lush, already green
冰霜尚涵淹 Drown beneath ice and frost, still clear and deep:
顏然如九老 Wizened as the Nine Hermit Elders°
白髮連蒼髯 These crags, their white hair merged
with hoary whiskers.

此山當無雲 And when at times all clouds depart their slopes
秀色鬱以添 Such comely colors, soft and warm, increase;
蜿然如九女 Nubile as the Nine Palace Concubines°
靚飾出重簾 Who, powdered and fair, step forth
from layered curtains.
珮環與中裙 Pendants and bracelets with their inner skirts:
紺玉青紈縑 Ruddy jasper, azure gossamer.

遠之妍西施　　From far away, the sweetness of Hsi Shih°
近或醜無塩　　On closer view turns homely as No Salt!°
變態不可窮　　Changing aspects inexhaustible!
詩者徒咕咕　　At which the poet vainly twaddles on.

*　　*　　*

我初勇一往　　When boldly first I strode into the field
役世難安怙　　Of national service--I could find no peace.°
浪荒不走職　　Impulsive; flagrantly I shirked my duties,
民瘼當誰矽　　And who was supposed to treat the people's suffering?

乖離今數旬　　Now, after long weeks footloose and at odds
夢想欲窺覘　　I wish to peek at my fantasies, dreams and thoughts.
自期得所如　　I had expected appropriate achievement--
何啻釋囚鉗　　Why stop at merely loosening my shackles?

念昔太白巔　　A reverie comes: the peak of White Star Mountain;°
下視海日暹　　We saw below, sun rising from the sea,
躡來天柱遊　　We've travelled to Heaven's Pillar and returned,°
屐齒尚苔黏　　The moss, damp, still clings to our clogs' teeth.

55 猶之健飲食 It's true, that in the serving of food and drink
臞饗亦云饜 After a few feasts, taste begins to cloy:
胡為慕攀踏 Why then do I yearn for clambering and tramping
已憊且不嫌 Never resentful, even when most weary?

59 豈其仁智心 Am I seeking the heart of "benevolence"
and "wisdom"
山水固所潛 That surely lurks within "waters" and "mountains?"°
男兒有所學 A man-child must learn certain things
through study:
進退不在占 Should I serve or retreat? Augury cannot tell me.°

63 功名苟不諧 The famous and successful, if ill-fitted
廊廟等閭閻 Make palace halls no more than village streets;°
況乃揄椽材 And in appointing pillars for those halls,
其誰辨楩柟 Who can select "catalpas" and great "camphors?"

67 歸歟巖崖居 So now return! To dwell on cliffs and crags,
料理帶與籤 To put in order bindings and book-tags,
得石坐兀兀 Obtain a rock to sit in solid stupor,
逢泉飲厭厭 Meet fountains, drink until serenely pleased.

71	取舍斷在獨	We judge our choices best in isolation:
	豈必詢謀僉	How could plans got from men be more complete?
	子語實慰我	Thy speech "truly comforts my heart," as though
	寧殊邑中黔	You were that "Black-haired dweller
		within the town."°
75	玉枝將在山	This jade-tree branch, fast upon the mountain
	當倚以蒹葭	Is to be "leaned upon" by "pulpy reeds."°
	詩力我已屈	My strength for poetry is long since humbled
	鋒鋩子猶銛	While thy blade still remains, as always, keen.
79	扶傷更一戰	Bear me up, we'll battle once again!°
	語汝其無謙	To say this to you, might I be unhumble?

Line 5. AUTUMN SHORE: Qiu Pu秋浦, the place from which they had viewed the peaks.

Line 9. SAT IN DEW露坐. Probably simply means "sat in the open air."

Line 12. LIT.: "The massive and the detailed get a thorough viewing." Cf. Han Yu, "Southern Mountains" line 4: "*Massive and detailed* are hard to explore completely"巨細難悉究.

Line 16. LIT.: "Contain and nourish the myriad things *equally*."

Line 19. Cf. Han Yu, "Southern Mountains" lines 145-6:

...And it is like walking among the Nine Plains,
Where grave-mounds hold sarcophagi within them...
又如遊九原，墳墓包擲柩

Line 23. NINE GREAT MINISTERS九官. The "cabinet" of the Sage Emperor Shun.

Line 28. SUMMER MONTHS 五月 . Lit. "The fifth month."

Line 31. NINE HERMIT ELDERS 九老. The poet Bo Juyi and eight of his eremitic friends. (*Xin Tang shu* 119/4304.)

Line 35. NINE PALACE CONCUBINES 九女 . The queen of King Zhuang of Chu 楚莊王 brought nine ladies to his harem, whose virtue (hence, beneficial influence on the king) outshone that of his Prime Minister. (*Yuefu shi ji* 29/435.)

Line 39. HSI SHIH (*Xi Shi* 西施). Famous beauty who ruined a king. (*Wu Yue chunqiu* 吳越春秋 , facsimile of Ming reprint of Yuan edition; Taipei: World, 1959, 9/249.)

Line 40. NO SALT (*Wu Yan* 無塩), actually "the Woman from Wuyan." Ugly consort of King Xuan of Qi 齊宣王 . Named Zhong Lichun 鍾離春 . See *Lienü zhuan* 列女傳 , *SBBY* edition, 6.8b-9b.

Line 44. I COULD FIND NO PEACE 役世難安怡 . Lit.: "It is hard for me to be peaceful and serene." Cf. Han Yu, "Bitter Cold" lines 51-52. (As Han Yu surveys the damage and death from the cold):

> Sorrow and depression stir me to angry sighs,
> My viscera find it *hard to be peaceful and serene*"
> 悲哀激憤噗，五藏難安怡.

Line 51. WHITE STAR PEAK 太白嶺 , the mountain Wang had often climbed at Yin Prefecture. (P 64.)

Line 53. HEAVEN'S PILLAR 天柱 . At Qianshan across the river. (See P 66, notes to lines 33-34.)

Lines 59-60. Alludes to *Lunyu* 11/VI/23: "The *wise* enjoy *water*, the *benevolent* love *mountains*. The *wise* are active, the *benevolent* tranquil. The *wise* are happy, the *benevolent* live long."

Line 62. LIT.: "To serve or retreat is not within the realm of divination." Cf. Han Yu, "Bitter Cold" lines 45-46 (about freezing sparrows):

> If even phoenix birds cannot survive,
> Then surely your kind *is out of the divination*...
> 鸞皇苟不存，爾固不在占 .

Wang has changed the phrase's context and meaning.

Lines 63-64. I.E.: "If success and fame go to the wrong people, then the quality of the government they run will be on the level of mere villages."

Lines 73-74. Zihan子罕 advised Duke Ping of Song 宋平公 not to build his great terrace until the people had finished their harvest, and could work on the project without loss. The people sang Zihan's praises for this: "The black-haired (commoner) who dwells in town / Truly comforts our heart" 邑中之黔，實慰我心. *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注, ann. Yang Bojun楊伯峻 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981), Xiang 17.7/3/1032.

Lines 75-76. I.E.: "I am hardly worth your company: I need to lean on your glory." Emperor Ming of the Wei 魏明帝had the empress' younger brother Mao Zeng毛曾 sit with Xiahou Xuan夏侯玄 at a banquet. People commented, "Now there is a bulrush leaning on a jade tree!" Xiahou Xuan was mortified, and showed it. The Emperor resented Xiahou's attitude, and had him demoted.

(The remark had two edges: in terms of rank, Mao Zeng would be considered the Jade Tree, whom Xiahou had the good fortune to come near. But in terms of cultivation, breeding, character, right to authority over the people etc., Xiahou was the true jade tree, and his purity was sullied when the "bulrushes" tried to share his radiance. However, Wang Anshi's use of this allusion seems to have no such implications.) See *Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語, by Liu Yiqing劉義慶 (403--444), ed. by Yang Yong楊勇 (Hong Kong, 1969) 14:3/466. Trans. by Richard Mather, *Shih Shuo Hsin Yü, A New Account of Tales of the World* (Minneapolis, 1976) p. 309.

Line 79. LIT.: "*Bearing these wounds*, we'll have another fight." (I take the reading of Li Bi and Longshu. But Zhu follows the alternate, *fu*復 "again" for *shang*傷 "wounds.")

These massive *tours de force* can each be read in three sections: a description of the mountains as Wang saw them; an essay on what they might represent; and a reflection on their value as a place to retreat and educate oneself. During these years, natural sites often reminded Wang of his search for wisdom: White Star Peak hid the secret of a "benevolent" world (P 64); a mysterious spring gushed from the Stone Ox Grotto (P 57); later, the cavern at Baochanshan awaited a creative explorer. The Nine-Petalled Peaks were a place to find wisdom, and in a way they also *were* wisdom: deep-rooted, but finely detailed at the top; beautiful one moment, ugly the next; now plain to see, now misted over--with a mist that often showed only their tips (the final goal), while

hiding the route up to them. They stood as a silent rebuke to ignorance and venality. But, like knowledge itself, they made no noise: the only people who could understand the mountains' rebuke to ignorance were those who already had conquered ignorance and found the mountains' knowledge for themselves.

Early emperors had found these vistas enticing, but for the wrong reasons. They worshipped the mountains, tried to appease them into bringing rain and riches, never realizing that such worship missed the point. By believing that the mountains had magic powers, the emperors blinded themselves to the much more potent, but hidden and unmagical roles that the mountains were truly meant to play. The mountains were remote, that men might safely live and contemplate among them. Their beauty was complex and stern, to inspire recluses' thoughts. Their quietness attracted exhausted Imperial officers to rest and recover. If emperors knew how to use such mountains, their bad officials could become good, and their good ones sages: wise emperors would come here to seek men who loved "mountains" and "waters," and would put these men to work. But in days of stupid emperors, the mountains would hide themesleves just as intelligent men would "hide" within them--to prevent their talents from being ill-used. (P 52.)

Wang was tired, doubtful of how much he could accomplish, disgusted with the official world, but forced to stay in that world to make his living: despite his ideals, "human plans" such as his "rarely succeed." He felt trapped by lack of time, knowing that he could solve important questions only through study and self-examination, not through divination or other quick methods; and such study would be pos-

sible only over a long stint in a place such as the Jiuhuashan.

About the poems' artistry:

Long poems, especially to predetermined rhymes, often turn into mere strings of couplets. But Wang has made two masterpieces, with fluid transitions, shifting images of cinematic clarity, modulated moods and points of view, and (most important) a train of thought in each poem. All done while tied to a set of rhymes in which obscure words outnumber common ones.

Han Yu had used these rhymes in "Bitter Cold," a poem that Wang surely knew by heart: Wang used several of Han Yu's rhymes and phrases (usually with unrelated meanings).[82] Another, less direct inspiration for Wang was Han Yu's "Southern Mountains."[83] The latter, longer than Wang's two poems combined, is a dazzling yet disciplined cacophony of bold similes and images, that follows the mountains south of Chang'an through a day and through the seasons; shows Han Yu trying to climb them, and compares them with everything from a double boiler to halberds to the Eight Trigrams. Wang's images are just as strong, but are classically organized: his first poem contains only lyrical, descriptive images (P 66, lines 17-28), while the second poem compares the mountains to human beings, but in orderly ranks of nine (from "Emperors" down to "concubines"), all of whom are moral paragons. Although Wang's vision of the mountains is more didactic and orthodox than Han Yu's, it is no

[82]"Bitter Cold" 苦寒 (72 lines): *Han Changli shiji* 2/74.

[83]"Southern Mountains" 南山詩 (204 lines) 4/194; trans. by Charles Hartman in *Sunflower*, pp. 175-189.

less rich and passionate. Wang's similes never lose sight of how the mountains actually look, unlike some of Han Yu's comparisons which are pure word-play. Tang poets had taken scenery and turned it into fantasy; but Song poets--even when they borrowed Tang phrases--often started and ended with eyewitness images, and lucid accounts of what they thought these images meant.

Wang's ties to the Shuzhou area--almost familial, though he spent only two or three years there--are nowhere more visible than in these and other poems he wrote there. He etched each crag and whirlpool of those mountains sharper than anything he would describe in his own city of Jiangning. His stay at Shuzhou coincided with the time when he was seeking knowledge all around him, and sensing it especially in the landscape. Thus, at Shuzhou it was the landscape that he recorded for us. But in Jiangning he had already begun to find knowledge within himself: thus we know what he thought and did there, but the landscape he shows us is more mental than physical.

靈山寺

TEMPLE AT SPIRIT MOUNTAIN (LINGSHAN TEMPLE)°

1 靈山名誰自 —"Spirit Mountain:" from whom commenced
this name?

波濤截孤峯 —Ripples, combers, cut by a lonely peak.

何年佛子住 —What year did Children of Buddha settle here?°

四面憑危空 —Toward four directions, lean into a
perilous void!

5 折椽與裂瓦 Pillars snapped in half; shattered tiles

委棄填西東 Tossed and abandoned, fill up west and east.

庫廊行抑首 Through vaults and corridors, walk with
downcast head:

居者莽誰容 Of the dwellers here, who shall repair
this tangle?

9 吾舟維其側 We moor our boat, tie it beside the mountain,

落日生秋風 Setting sun brings forth an autumn wind.

瞰崖聊寄目 Cliff-scanning makes a place for eyes to rest

萬物極纖穠 Where all is slender and verdant as can be.

13 震蕩江海思 Thundering, rolling sea and river thoughts°

洗滌堙鬱中 Rinse all away within this muffled shade:

15 胡為嬉遊人 And what do holiday travellers think they are up to,
過此無留蹤 When they pass here, yet never slow their step?
景豈龍遊殊 How could this view be less than the Dragon's Playground?°
盛衰浩無窮 In glory as in decay, a boundless reach!

19 吾聞世所好 I hear it said that what the world enjoys
樓殿浮青紅 Are towers, palaces floating green and red.
那知山水樂 How would they know that the joys of hill and stream
豈在豪華宮 Hardly depend on fancy flowered halls--

23 世好萬變爾 The world dotes on ten thousand variations,
感激難為工 But excitation is hard to make with art.°

LOCATION. Li Bi 21.6a/537; Longshu 48/549; Shen p. 49.

DATE. 1051.9 (see notes below).

SPIRIT MOUNTAIN (LINGSHAN) TEMPLE 靈山寺. A multi-tiered temple on a mountain top. Near Fanchang 繁昌, on the south bank of the Yangzi River, about 50 miles downstream from the Jiuhuashan. Resemblances between this poem and P 66-67 suggest that Wang wrote this at the same time (in the ninth month of 1051 while stationed at Shuzhou). (See lines 9-12 of this poem.)

CHILDREN OF BUDDHA 佛子. Buddhists. I.E.: "What year was the temple founded?"

Line 13. SEA AND RIVER THOUGHTS 江海思. Thoughts of retreating from the world.

Line 17. DRAGON'S PLAYGROUND (*Longyou*) 龍遊. Name of a temple

at Jinshan 金山 (near Zhenjiang, east of Jiangning, on the Yangzi), an area famous for its temples, grottoes and mountains. (Wang knew the Jinshan area: see poems in Li Bi 24.2b/586, 34.6a/839, 34.4b/860, 42.2a/1009, 47.4b/1154, 48.10b/1194.)

Line 18. LIT.: "Glory and decay are an endless watery vastness."

Lines 23-24. I.E.: "Most people appreciate buildings the most; but true inspiration must come from Nature." LIT.: "The world loves ten thousand variations and that is all; (but) an excited response (i.e. 'inspiration') is hard to create with craft."

Wang begins almost with a *kōan*, in which a questioner asks about human institutions, and is rebuffed with irrelevant answers straight from Nature:

"Where did this name come from?"

"There are waves and a mountain."

"But when was the temple founded?"

"A view from the peak."[84]

Most tourist sites are reknowned for their buildings. But here the temples are decaying, and passersby seldom stop to admire. If they are curious at all, it is only about the man-made traces. No one notices the natural setting, even when it outshines the popular Jinshan. By not noticing the scenery, people block themselves from the inspiration and spiritual cleansing it could give them.

This poem is important as being perhaps Wang's earliest and

[84]Cf. Wang Wei:

You ask the truth of failure and success:
Fishermen's songs carry deep onto the shore...

(See under P 107 below.)

strongest statement that raw Nature can say more to us than anything man-made. Human institutions, morality and ideals *come from* Nature. To understand those things, we must first understand Nature directly. Wang wrote reams of poems from this standpoint, especially after retiring, but nowhere as clearly as he had at "Spirit Mountain."

壬辰寒食 COLD FOOD FESTIVAL, YEAR *REN CHEN*°

1 客思似楊柳 Sojourner's thoughts
almost willows

2 春風千萬條 Spring breeze
thousand and ten thousand strands,

3 更傾寒食淚 Pour out again
Cold Food Season
tears

4 欲漲冶城潮 That would swell the Smelter's Town tide;°

5 巾髮雪爭出 Kerchiefed hair, snow struggles to burst out°

6 鏡顏朱早雕 Mirrored complexion, ruddy withered long

7 未知軒冕樂 And before I have even tasted the pleasure
of carriage and lofty cap°

8 但欲老漁樵 I want nothing,
only to grow old
with fishermen and woodsmen.°

LOCATION. Li Bi 23.4b/574; *Linchuan* 15/204; Longshu 72/772; *Shi juyao* 4/523; Zhu p. 88; Zhou Xifu p. 32.

DATE. 1052.4, at Jiangning.

COLD FOOD FESTIVAL 寒食節. The day before the Qingming or tomb-sweeping festival 清明節. (Qingming comes on the solar 4th day of the 4th month. The lunar and solar dates almost coincided in 1052.)

Line 1. LIT.: "Sojourner's 'thoughts' (pun: *si* 思 / 絲, 'strands') resemble the willows."

Line 4. SMELTER'S TOWN: Yecheng 冶城, the old smelting center of Wu. On the west side of Jinling. (*Jingding Jiankang zhi*, maps in *juan* 5.)

Line 5. I.E.: "My hair is growing white."

Line 7. I.E.: "I have never felt pleasure from official emoluments." Wang is still a junior official.

Line 8. LIT.: "I want only to grow old fishing and cutting wood."

When Wang was at Shuzhou, his elder half-brother Wang Anren died. Next year (1052), at the tomb-sweeping festival in spring, Wang took a leave to Jiangning to bury Anren and to sweep their father's tomb south of town on Oxhead Mountain (Niushoushan 牛首山).[85] With his other elder brother dead as well, Anshi now headed the family. He was thirty-one, starting a career, missing his father (dead thirteen years), and apparently in a mood to abandon officialdom for hermitdom if it were only possible (as he had said in P 66-67). The hyperbole of a young man writing such verse should not blind us to the real sentiments and the gradual, musical way in which he expresses them.

[85]On the date of burying Wang's brother: 1052.4 is given in Anshi's memorial inscription for Anren (*Linchuan* 96/987). See above, pp. 33-34.

SIX RANDOM MEDITATIONS: THE FIRST

My life's work has achieved nothing:
I shame to look at my image in the water
Tan dust blows into my eyes,
I see the hills and worry
Blurred and buried in haze,
the Kiang's south shore
I linger with my family
an extra moment.°

雜詠六首
勳業無成照水羞、黃塵入眼見山愁
煙中漠漠江南岸、更與家人一少留

LOCATION. Li Bi 46.3a/1123; *Linchuan* 32/352 (as #1 of 5); Longshu 75/802 (as #2 of 15).

DATE. Written on leaving Jiangning for a post in the north. I believe it dates to 1058.10 (assignment to the capital, see P 30); or possibly 1075.2 (second stint as Prime Minister). 1068 is also possible (Shenzong's summons to the capital), but the poem's mood seems out of place.

Line 4. FAMILY 家人. Li Bi's 人家("somebody") is surely a mistake.

Wang feels he has done nothing with his life: hence his shame to see how old he has grown. As he heads north for a new post, brown grit blows off the hills. This is the same "dust" he remembers from the capital: northern soil, "dusty" worldly affairs. He stands at the

south shore where his home is, the scenery blurred by the mist as if it were already a memory.

Wang's ideals came from Nature (see P 68). When he felt he had not lived up to his ideals, it was to Nature that he apologized: to water and mountains, rather than to men.

離蔣山 LEAVING MOUNT JIANG

出谷頻回首 My head turns often as I leave the valley
逢人更斷腸 But seeing people wrenches me the more°
桐鄉豈愛我 It's hardly that "Paulownia County loves me;"
我自愛桐鄉 Simply that I love Paulownia County.°

LOCATION. Li Bi 40.5a/961; *Linchuan* 26/300.

DATE. 1054, late 1058 or early 1059 are all possible. The title may be mistaken. See commentary below.

Line 2. LIT.: "When I run into people, I am even more heart-broken."

Lines 3-4. PAULOWNIA COUNTY (Tong xiang 桐鄉). This allusion implies, "I have hardly served the people here decently; they do not love me in particular." Tong Xiang, in the Shuzhou and Huaining area of Anhui, was where Zhu Yi 朱邑 (d. 61 BC) had served his first post. He later rose to high office because of his thrift and honesty. He asked to be buried back at Tong Xiang, because "the people there love me," and he felt they would respect him better than his own descendants would. (*Han shu* 89.3635.)

With subtle and allusive modesty Wang is saying, "I must now leave this place where I have served as an official. It hurts to part with the people here: is that because they will miss me and my benevolent service, they way they revered Zhu Yi? No, it is just that *I* am fond of *them*."

This poem may date from Wang's appointment to the capital in 1058.10, after serving as Judicial Intendant of the Eastern Jiangnan Circuit, based in Jiangning. (See above, pp. 50, 56; P 30, P 70.)

But I would rather speculate that the title is an editor's mistake, and that it should read "Leaving *Shuzhou*;" because Tong Xiang

was Shuzhou, and Wang had served there. The point of the allusion is that Wang is a man like Zhu Yi, who has come to love a place that was not his home, enough to want to be buried there. If we accept the poem's present title, then that place (for Wang) was Jiangning, and "Paulownia County" is a metaphor for it. But actually Jiangning was Wang's home to begin with (though not his birthplace): thus the allusion is a bit inappropriate. It would be perfect, however, if Wang were writing in 1054 upon leaving Shuzhou, which literally was "Paulownia County," and of which Wang clearly was fond.

He quoted this poem verbatim in 1078, after being made Duke of Shu(zhou), writing from Jiangning:[86]

Far stand Paulownia County's peaks, and long the rivers go,
Purple and turquoise link your ramparts, green fills the empty moat.
Today in Paulownia County, who "loves me?"
In former times, "I simply loved Paulownia County."

桐鄉山遠復川長，紫翠連城碧滿隍
今日桐鄉誰愛我，當時我自愛桐鄉

[86] Second of "Three Quatrains Upon Being Enfeoffed as Duke of Shu"封舒國公三絕, Li Bi 42.6a/1017. In the first of that series, Wang refers to the inscription at the Shangu Temple in Shuzhou (P 57). Would it make sense to surmise that this second poem is also quoting from lines written at Shuzhou, not Jiangning at all?

SUNNY SPRING WEATHER BEHIND THE EXAMINATION HALL°

Alone

dream-drifting

veranda west of the pond

Shrikes of a hundred tongues

perched on branch-tips

talk even louder

Mountain birds

could hardly know this is forbidden ground

But raise a chirping hue as always

when they meet warm spring.

崇政殿後晴即事

悠悠獨夢水西軒，百舌枝頭語更繁
山鳥不應知地禁，亦逢春暖即啾喧

LOCATION. Li Bi 45.5b/1102; *Linchuan* 31/344; Longshu 75/795.

DATE. Probably early 1061 at the capital, when Wang was a *jinshi* examiner. (See above, p. 65; P 34-35.)

EXAMINATION HALL. The Chongzheng Palace or Palace of Exalted Government 崇政殿, site of the *jinshi* examinations. Located in the deepest rear section of the Forbidden City in the capital. There was a thriving market just outside. See *Dongjing menghua lu* 東京夢華録, by Meng Yuan Lao 孟元老 (Song): in *Dongjing menghua lu wai sizhong*, mainland edition rep. Taipei: Ta Li, 1980, 1/10.

Is Wang perhaps telling us about himself, letting the shrikes speak for him? Like them, he has come to the Forbidden City from a rustic outside world, bringing his springtime instincts and rough-hewn sincerity despite regulations. Spring makes birds warble and Wang doze. Being part of nature, spring will flourish equally within the palace walls and outside them. So, too, do principles of good government, which are also natural. Those who control the "Forbidden City" should know that those forces cannot be sealed out--and should learn how to welcome and prepare for their arrival.

I SAIL INTO GUABU, AND GAZE TOWARD YANGZHOU

Setting sun, level village at the river's edge
"Ruined City" blocks the gleam, there is only murky grey°
This white head tracks and ponders what occurred in those old years--
Among the Commander's blue-robed men, I was the youngest one.°

入瓜步望揚州
落日平村一水邊，蕪城掩映祇蒼然
白頭追想當年事，幕府青衫最少年

LOCATION. Li Bi 43.13a/1057; *Linchuan* 29/331; Longshu 70/744.

DATE. Although there is no proof, this likely dates from 1075.2, when Wang was recalled from Jiangning to the premiership. Evidence:

1. The phrase in line 4 referring to Han Qi is close to that in Wang's memorial poem for Han Qi, written 1075.6. It is likely that such similar phrases would date from about the same time as each other.
2. The poem's phrasing, rhymes and mood resemble the next poem (P 74), which also seems likely to date from 1075.2.

Line 2. RUINED CITY 蕪城. The ancient wall of Yangzhou (or Guangling), subject of the "Ruined City Rhapsody" 蕪城賦 by Bao Zhao 鮑照 (414?--466), *Wenxuan* 11/227. Trans. by J.C. Chen and Michael Bullock, in Cyril Birch ed., *Anthology of Chinese Literature, from Early Times to the Fourteenth Century*; New York: Grove, 1965, pp. 190-3.

Line 4. THE COMMANDER 幕府. Han Qi, the great premier, who had been prefect at Yangzhou when Wang served there on his first post over thirty years before. (See above, p. 17.)

Going to his last assignment, reflecting on his first--Wang's lines are artless and haunting. The mood is placid, grey but not somber. Wang's old "commander," whom he had now displaced as premier, would die by summer. Next day the landscape would be green, though Wang

would not see it. His thoughts would dwell upon coming back to this home, just as he was mentally returning to memories of his early career.

THE BOAT MOORS AT MELON ISLE°

Jingkou and Melon Isle,
a whole river between,°
And Mount Zhong stands behind
just several "layered mountains"
Spring wind easily greens the Kiang's south shore

When will the gleaming moon
illumine my return?

泊船瓜洲

京口瓜洲一水間，鍾山只隔數重山
春風自綠江南岸，明月何時照我還
[又]

LEAVING THE TOWN OF BO-DI IN THE MORNING (By Li Bo, 701—762)

We left Bo-di this morning, among particolored clouds
A thousand leagues to Kiangling in a single day's return
On both shores, monkeys' crying never ceased
Already our light craft has passed ten thousand layered mountains!

早發白帝城 李白

朝辭白帝彩雲間，千里江陵一日還
兩岸猿聲啼不盡，輕舟已過萬重山

LOCATION. Wang's poem: Li Bi 43.13b/1058; *Linchuan* 29/331; Longshu 70/744; Zhou Xifu p. 141; Guangzhou p. 281; Shimizu p. 77. Trans. by Yangs, p. 73.
Li Bo's poem: *Li Taibo quanji* 22/496.

DATE. Probably 1075.2, when Wang was recalled to the premiership from temporary retirement. Evidence: In the poem, Wang is clearly leaving Jiangning for the north, in spring. This could have been 1045, 1068 or 1075. (In 1058 he left in winter, and in 1054 it was in autumn.) The mood seems to fit best with 1075. In any case, this poem predates three other quatrains that date from Wang's retirement, translated below.

MELON ISLE (Guazhou 瓜洲). On the north shore of the Yangzi, before the town of Yangzhou. The entrance to the northward branch of the Grand Canal, on the way from Jiangning to the capital.

Line 1. JINGKOU 京口. Now called Zhenjiang 鎮江, on the south side of the Yangzi, opposite Melon Isle.

In 759, on his way to exile in the Southwest, Li Bo had voyaged up the Yangzi. It was at Bo-di 白帝城 (White Emperor City), beyond the Yangzi Gorges, that he heard the news of his pardon. His exuberant poem tells how he turned around and shot down the gorges back to Jiangling in only a day.[87] Wang Anshi's poem to the same rhymes turns Li Bo's exuberance into serenity, but keeps Li's optimism. Unlike Li, Wang was not being set free, but was going back to rank and responsibilities--things that no longer engaged his attention as they once had. He was already anticipating when he could "return" home to retire for good.

While at Guazhou, he saw his friend Master Baojue (寶覺, Zuxin 祖心, 1025--1100?). And he may have visited the temples at Jinshan

[87] See An Qi and Xue Tianwei 安旗, 薛天緯 ed., *Li Bo nianpu* 李白年譜 (Jinan: Qi Lu, 1982), p. 104.

(Gold Mountain) where Baojue lived, on the south bank near Jingkou. Wang wrote this poem partly for Baojue. Later (perhaps 1078 or even 1085), Wang would refer to this poem in his three "Quatrains Upon Staying at the Longhua Temple with Baojue" 與寶覺宿龍華院三絕 (Li Bi 42.2a/1009).

The first of these:

Grown old on the dusty track, I weary of chasing and climbing
But even you, a man in seclusion, often come and go;
I recall my little verse, which brings back wistful longing;
Jinshan "stands behind just several 'layered mountains.'"

老於塵迹倦追攀，但見幽人數往還
憶我小詩成悵望，金山祇隔數重山

The second:

I pass old age within the world, and cease material climbing
Suddenly I recall my eastward travels here, ten years already.
There is only the moon of Jingkou from that time,
Along with you it follows me
as it did before.

世間投老斷攀緣，忽憶東遊已十年
但有當時京口月，與公隨我故依然

The third:

With you at Jingkou, between water and clouds
I asked the moon, "When will you illumine my return?"
It happens now that I return, and once more ask the moon,
"When will you illumine me
upon a sojourn at Jinshan?"

與公京口水雲間，問月何時照我還
邂逅我還還問月，何時照我宿金山

Wang also used those rhymes in a light verse (in retirement) inviting Ye Tao to an outing by boat the next day:[88]

Baihsia and Chang-gan Bridges, "stretch of river between"
Beneath bamboo clouds, new shoots are already mottled
And if tomorrow morning you should have a boating urge,
Before the sun sinks down and tide comes up, we can return!

白下長干一水間，竹雲新筍已斑斑
明朝若有扁舟興，日落潮生尚可還

[88]"Inviting Ye Tao" 招葉志遠, Li Bi 42.12b/1030.
BAIHSIA (Baixia): The bridge east of town, near Wang's home. CHANG-GAN was a bridge over the Qinhuai River, south of the city. (See maps in *Jingding Jiankang zhi, juan* 5.)
A BOATING URGE: Lit., "the urge for a *small skiff*" (the kind that retired men ride).

He used similar rhymes in a more somber poem "On Passing the Wan River Mouth" 過皖口 :[89]

West from the town of Wan, one hundred "layered mountains"
My tracks now buried among the far-flung mists
White-haired, left to reflect alone on my serving and retreating
Spring wind and Kiang waters shine on my faded skin.

皖城西去百重山，陳迹今埋杳靄間
白髮行藏空自感，春風江水照衰顏

This cluster of poems shows how certain phrases could run through Wang's mind like a refrain, and take shape in poems of varying moods and motivations. Material connected with the original poem (P 74) shows how Wang worked:

It took almost a dozen revision before he arrived at the word "green" 綠 in line 3. His first draft had:

Spring wind *comes again* to the Kiang's south shore
春風又到江南岸

Then he crossed out "comes" 到 , with a note "no good" 不好 ; changed it to "crosses" 過 , then "enters" 入 , then "fills" 滿 , finally

[89] Li Bi 47.3a/1151. Undatable, but written in 1068 at the latest. Perhaps written in 1059, on Wang's assignment to the Jiangdong Circuit. The Wan River flows from the Shuzhou area south into the Yangzi at Huaining: passing by the Wan River mouth, Wang thought of Shuzhou inland, where he had served in 1051—1054.

the present reading of "greens" 綠.[90] Sometime later, "again" 又 became "easily" or "naturally" 自 (although "again" 又 persists in popular editions).

Also instructive is the other poem Wang wrote at Guazhou, using similar phrases but with a more reflective tone:[91]

Our old plot we left by the River Ruh;
A new grave mound, set down upon Mount Zhong
For that, I ask the Yangzhou moon
"When will you illumine my return?"

故畦拗汝水，新壟寄鍾山
為問揚州月，何時照我還

Here he was reflecting upon his whole life: his family has left their farm-plot at the Ru River in Linchuan, and set up new "plots" (graves) upon Mt. Zhong. Wang Anshi is now at Yangzhou on the way north: when he "returns" home it will be to Mt. Zhong (to be buried?).

Of all these poems, the first one quoted is the best, and the best-known. Because Wang has borrowed Li Bo's phrases, Li's "monkeys" inevitably echo in the background. Water stretches from Jingkou across

[90] Hong Mai 洪邁 (1123--1202) heard of this draft from its owner, and perhaps saw it himself. See his *Rongzhai xubi* 容齋續筆, in *Rongzhai suibi* 容齋隨筆 (Shanghai Guji, 1978) 8/317.

[91] "Four Miscellaneous Odes: The First" 雜詠四首,其一. (Li Bi 40.6b/964.) He quoted this poem in the third quatrain to Baojue, translated above on p. 520.

to Guazhou, sparkling in moonlight. The land is wide and bright; home is still close; spring has reached the south, thus Wang will leave with a springtime impression of home; and he is already imagining a future homecoming. The mood is relaxed and easy: spring wind is all one needs to green the land; a trip to the capital and back requires only a boat. We are already hearing the calm that would mark much of Wang's verse during retirement.

LAKE PENG-LI°

Boundless and vast, Lake Peng-li, where in spring there is no land
But white waves and spring wind that soak the sky's far edges.
East to west, rudders wrenched hard, ten thousand ships turn back;
Old krakens for a thousand years sometimes surface in sport.°

I was a youth and slighted things, when I came from Zhen-nan°
Water wrathful as mountains, but all sails squarely set--
Into mid-channel, we saw backbones and tails writhing°
The hearts of other watchers plummeted, but I was overjoyed

Now in official robe and cap, on the road to Dragon Hill°
I buy wine below the temple, spend a night before the peak.
Am I not old? How can I serve as Dragon-slayer now?°
I would buy land, live on it, and put these "rivers and lakes"
behind!°

彭蠡

茫茫彭蠡春無地，白浪春風濕天際
東西檝拖萬舟回，千載老蛟時出戲
少年輕事鎮南來，水怒如山帆正開
中流蜿蜒見脊尾，觀者胆墮余方咍
衣冠今日龍山路，廟下沽酒山前住
老矣安能學伎飛，買田欲弃江湖去

LOCATION. Li Bi 8.8b/312; *Linchuan* 6/128; Longshu 47/533; Shen p. 23; Guangzhou p. 275;Zhou Xifu p. 146.

LAKE PENG-LI 彭蠡. Old name for the Boyang Lake 鄱陽湖 in Jiangxi, whose northern end merges with the Yangzi River.

DATE. Possibly 1058.3 or early 1059.

Boyang Lake is on the route between Linchuan and Jiangning. Wang was in that area in 1050-51, in 1058, and in late 1067 or early 1068. (See above, p. 31, p. 53, p. 100 note 4; P 48.) 1058 dates this poem best, for the following reasons:

1. We know from Wang's own inscription at Jinfeng that he visited Linchuan in 1058 "via Boyang" 自鄱陽.

2. This poem mentions springtime, feeling old and overworked, and wishing to retire. In 1051 he was only 30, and was between assignments; in 1067 he was coming out of a long reclusion, en route to meet a new Emperor for whom he held high hopes. Neither of those years fits the conditions in the poem as well as 1058 does. In 1058, age 37, Wang had been serving a frustrating term as prefect at Changzhou, and had just been promoted to the Jiangdong circuit, a position that kept him travelling much of the time. His Jiangdong assignment lasted from 1058.2 to 1059.5. His trip to Linchuan via Boyang, then, probably took place in 1058.3, still spring.

Zhou Xifu, however, dates the poem to 1076, when Wang retired for good. Zhou says Wang crossed the Boyang Lake then, on his way from the capital to Jiangning. Objections to this date are as follows:

1. Wang retired in 1076.10--winter, not spring--and the official record says he reached Jiangning before the end of the year. (*Changbian* 279.11, year 1076.12.25; see also p. 164 note 1 above.)

2. Wang probably did not come even near the lake in 1076. The lake would only be on his route if he took the overland road from the capital directly south to the lake, then down the Yangzi. This route was tougher and probably slower than the water route to Jiangning via the Grand Canal. There is no evidence that Wang ever took that land route in his life (we find no poems mentioning places along the way). There is also no indication that Wang took a side trip from Jiangning to Boyang or Linchuan in 1076. (Although he was named honorary Military Governor of Zhennan--on the Boyang lakeshore--he was not expected to actually visit Zhennan.)

3. It seems that Wang left the premiership in 1076 with relief that he could retire at last. But this poem shows a busy man *wishing he could* retire: that fits 1058 better than any other year.

Line 4. OLD KRAKENS FOR A THOUSAND YEARS 千載老蛟. Lit.: "Thousand-year-old ancient 'dragons.'" These are Yangzi Alligators 揚子鱷, says Zhou. Notes to the *Lü shi chunqiu* say that any fish weighing over 2000 catties can be called a "dragon" (*jiao* 蛟). (20/260.)

Line 5. WHEN I CAME FROM ZHEN-NAN 鎮南来 . It is unclear what portion of his "youth" Wang had in mind: the idea is that as a young man he had come to the capital from his home in Jiangxi, itching to grapple with the world.

Line 7. LIT.: "In the middle of the flow could be seen, creeping and writhing, backbones and tails."

Line 9. DRAGON HILL (Longshan) 龍山 . I have not yet found a Longshan near the Boyang Lake, although there is one at Wanzai 萬載 , about 100 miles southwest. It is a common place name, however.

Line 11. DRAGON-SLAYER. LIT.: "I am old--how can I emulate *Ci Fei*?" CI FEI 次飛 (or 次非). Ancient hero who saved a boatload of people by diving into the Yangzi with his sword and killing two water-dragons. (*Lü shi chunqiu* 20/260; *Huainanzi* 12/207.)

Line 12. LIT.: "Let me buy some fields; I want to reject these 'rivers and lakes,' and go away."
RIVERS AND LAKES 江湖 . Usually represent carefree adventuring or retirement. But here they are Wang's workplace--the cause of his weariness.

Wang's senses were especially keen to the Jiangxi region that he had known since birth: here he conveys a sense of all the land falling away as the lake rises and great waves form; boats streaming for shore; weird "dragons" breaking the surface. Wang had once welcomed such terrors: they resembled the world, upon whose surface people drifted, waiting for him to save them. But now he had been serving in that world: travelling on water for the empire, tussling with officials as prickly as "krakens." Never had a solid mountain looked so inviting. Here he could have wine--warmer than water. Here were fields, level land that never tossed or heaved like waves. "Rivers and lakes" had brought him turbulence, battering and too much challenge--not the freedom they were supposed to bring.

Vehemence surges through these lines: *no* land 無地 ; soaking

the sky's *limits* 濕天際 ; sailors leaning on their tillers 180°, *as far as they will go* 回 ; krakens "sporting"戮 ; young Wang *slighting* things輕事 ; setting his sails *square* 正開 ; meeting *wrathful* waves怒 ; Wang being not only brave but *joyful* 口台 . But suddenly the mood turns calm and warm. He has reached the "land" that had been out of sight; he "stays"住 --steadfast--by that mountain. He is reckoning what his real strength may be.

秣陵道中口占二首 TWO POEMS COMPOSED ORALLY ON THE MO-LING ROAD°

其一 THE FIRST (P 76)

經事才難就 To manage the world
talent hard to apply
田園路欲迷 The tracks back to field and garden
have almost lost me°
殷勤將白髮 Earnestly I bring this white hair
下馬照青溪 Down from the horse,
to mirror in Blue Creek.°

其二 THE SECOND (P 77)

歲熟田家樂 Crops are ripe,
country dwellers glad°
秋風客自悲 Autumn wind--
traveller, your troubles are your own!°
茫茫曲城路 Over the vast spread road
by Crooked Wall Town°
歸馬日斜時 Horse bound for home
the hour of slanting sun.

LOCATION. Li Bi 40.6a/963; *Linchuan* 26/300-301; Longshu 74/789; *Shi juyao* 8/783; Zhou Xifu p. 207; Shimizu p. 73 (#2 only). #2 trans. by Jan Walls, *Sunflower* p. 334.

DATE. Autumn, 1074? At Jiangning, about the time of Anguo's death.

MO-LING 秣陵. Area outside the southeast corner of the Jinling city wall.

P 76, Line 2. LIT.: "The road to a country home is almost blurred." I.e., Wang barely remembers the way back to his old home at Linchuan. (Li Bi's interpretation.)

P 76, Line 4. BLUE CREEK 青淺. Only *Linchuan* supports this reading. I use it because it is plausible and makes a more interesting translation. But the correct reading is probably "the clear creek" 清淺 (Li Bi and Longshu), referring presumably to a stream near Mo-ling. Blue Creek was on the other side of town from Mo-ling. It flowed from north of where Wang lived, into the city where there was a large garden inside the East Gate. (See note to P 30, line 7.) If Wang really did mean Blue Creek here, then he was passing by it on his way home, on the "road *from* Mo-ling," but not at Mo-ling itself.

P 77, Line 1. COUNTRY DWELLERS 田家. LIT.: "Farmers" or "farm families."

P 77, Line 2. LIT.: "(In) autumn wind, a traveller is sad on his own."

P 77, Line 3. CROOKED WALL (TOWN?) (Qucheng 曲城.) A Mo-ling place name (Li Bi's note).

Although the second poem is more often anthologized, the first presents an arresting picture of Wang caught between not knowing if his career will accomplish anything--or even if it will continue--and not remembering how to leave it and "go home" to where he had started. Is he a rustic again? Or still a statesman? Suddenly he cannot ride another step until he finds out. Confused, he dismounts to look himself over: what the creek reminds him is that, rustic or statesman, he is above all a white-haired old man. Hints of emotion 情 embedded in the setting 景 underscore the piece's starkness. Line 1 shows what he is thinking ("no place for my talent"); line 2 shows where he is (the road home, but it is a blur). Lines 3 and 4 run together into one sentence. The most evocative word in the poem is "earnestly" 殷勤: we

leave him searching his own reflection. We do not know what he finds, but "earnest" and "white hair" give us an idea.

The second poem is a more standard lonely-traveller piece, though subtle and perfectly written. But it does not reveal Wang himself as the first one did.

Assuming that Wang was writing about himself and not as a literary exercise, it seems likely that he wrote these in his first retirement (autumn, 1074). This was the time when he would have had white hair but was also still concerned about using his talents. Not feeling settled in Jiangning, he would see himself as a "traveller," unsure where he belonged. He was just beginning to grapple with the idea of leaving office, and with those personal and political ramifications that he would face two years later when he retired for good.

Section G. Retirement: Hills, Flowers, Paths and Temples at Jiangning

These are Wang's more public or social poems from retirement.

游土山示蔡天啓祕校

ROAMING THE EARTHEN HILL:°

FOR IMPERIAL LIBRARY COLLATOR CAI ZHAO°

定林瞰土山 From Ding-lin, down we gaze at the Earthen Hill
近乃在眉睫 As if from mid-flight, close as brow to lash--
誰謂秦淮廣 Who would call the Qin-Huai River broad?
正可藏一艓 A single dinghy could just hide within.°

朝予欲獨往 One morning I thought I might go there alone:
扶憊強登涉 Leaning wearily, somehow I could hike,
蔡侯聞之喜 The Marquis Cai heard of this plan with joy,
喜色見兩頰 Joyful colors shone on both his cheeks.

呼鞍追我馬 He called for the saddle, went to chase my horse,
亦以兩黥挾 A pair of "tattooed convicts" plucked me up;°
斂書付衣囊 Books he packed into the travel bag,
裹飯隨藥筐 Wrapped a rice lunch, added the medicine box.

悠悠阿蘭若 Quiet *Àraṇya*: secluded woods°
土木老山脅 Earth and trees grown old on mountain flanks
鼓鐘臥空曠 Drum and bell asleep in hollow broadness°
簨簴雕捷業 Wooden chime-beam, carved and crenellated

升堂廓無主 We ascend the hall, whose broad roof has no master:
考擊誰敢輒 What man would rashly dare to strike a note?
坡陀謝公冢 Steeply sloping, grave of Master Xie°
藏椁久穿劫 His buried casket long since bored and plundered:°
百金置酒地 Where banquets once were laid for a hundred in gold°
野老今行饁 Old country men now bring food to the farmhands.

* * *

緬懷起東山 Threads of nostalgia start from that Eastern Hill
勝蹟此稠疊 Noble footprints here lie layered thick;
於時國累卵 The nation's peril then was like stacked eggs:
楚夏血常喋 At Chu and Xia--blood often underfoot.°
外實備艱梗 Outside, a vexing dagger truly aimed,°
中仍費調燮 Within the realm, time wasted in maneuvers.°

公能覺如夢 But Master Xie could see it as a dream
自喻一蝴蝶 And to a butterfly compare himself,°
桓溫適自斃 With Premier Huan headed toward self-destruction,°
苻堅方天厭 And Fu Jian's threat, just then disgusting Heaven.°

且可緩九錫 He could delay the Nine Bestowals of Lordship;°
寧當快一捷 Why should he quicken at one victory?°
彼哉斗筲人 It was "peck-and-hamper men," easily swayed°
得喪易矜怯 By victory and loss to strut or cower
妄言屐齒折 Who fabricated that tale of "Broken Clogs:"
吾欲刊史牒 But I would write the truth on History's pages!

* * *

傷心新城壞 The Dyke at his New Fortress wounds the heart:
歸意終難愜 His wish for home was hard to satisfy,°
漂搖五城舟 Past the Five Ramparts he drifted, paddled
尚想浮河楫 Thinking the while of scudding over the Ho.°

千秋隴東月 Thousand-autumned moon east of the Tor°
長照西州堞 Long shone upon the Western Parapets—
豈無華屋處 What "gaily-painted halls" did he not have?°
亦捉蒲葵箑 Yet he would grab a palm-fan for himself.°

碎金諒可惜 We miss his "golden shards," noble prose°
零落隨秋葉 "Singly, scattered" they follow autumn leaves;°
好事所傳玩 Aficionadoes passed down treasured prizes:
空殘法書帖 Of them, vain calligraphic crumbs remain.°
清談眇不嗣 His "repartee," remote, is discontinued,°
陳迹悵如接 His footprints vague, there seems to be a link.

* * *

東陽故侯孫 Now come you, offspring of Dongyang's Marquis°
少小同鼓篋 (As boys we followed the same school-drum)°
一官初嶺海 First posted south beyond the sea and mountains,°
仰視飛鳶跕 "To watch hawks plop from flight into the drink"°

窮歸放款段 Now home and failed, pasturing your "slow horse,"°
高臥停遠蹀 You recline on high, quit walking to far places.
牽襟肘即見 When you pull your collar tight, your elbows show;°
著帽耳纔摩 Your ears press flat each time you don your cap.

數椽危敗屋 In a sparsely-raftered hall about to tumble
為我炊陳混 You cook and spread for us succulent food;°
雖為膏污鼎 Though no thick gravies smear the cauldron's sides,
尚有羹濡筯 There still is soup for chopsticks to dip in;°

縱言及平生 Unbridled talk runs to our very lives;
相視開笑靨 Our gazes meet, mirthful dimples show.
邯鄲枕上事 What things took place within our Han-Dan pillows?°
且飲且田獵 (Dreamed) banqueting, a (real) hunt and chase?°

或昏眠叅翳 Or floating sidewise through a murky slumber°
或妄走超躐 Or striding madly, leaping barriers
或叫號而寤 Or rising conscious after screams and cries?
或哭泣而魘 Or moaning watery tears and bolting awake?

* * *

幸哉同聖時 Lucky we are to share in a time of sages!
田里老安帖 To grow old tranquilly in field and hamlet,
易牛以寶劍 To trade away our precious swords for oxen:°
擊壤勝彈鉄 I'd rather "play push-pin" than
"make blade-music."°

追悽哀晉末 Recall with pity the declining Jin:°
此土方發蓁 This plot of ground, a tall, tottering height
強偷須臾樂 Where they struggled to steal the briefest
bouts of pleasure,
撫事終懲惵 And all endeavors led to dread and fear.
予雖天發民 Though I am one of "Nature's prisoners,"°
有械無接櫚 The shackles I wear have no bar to join them:°

翁今貧而靜 And, venerable elder, placid in poverty,°
內熱非復葉 You succumb no more to Duke Shê's "inner fever."°
予衰極今歲 My own decline this year has reached its nadir,
儻與鷄夢協 And Xie An's Rooster Phantom could be mine.°

委蛻亦何恨 Like "shedding snakeskin," grandsons come;
regrets
吾兒已長鬚 Are not for me--my son's beard, too, is long.°
翁雖齒長我 Though if one reckons teeth, you are my senior,
未見白可鑷 Your head shows not one white hair to be plucked:°
祝翁尚難老 May you forever be this hard to age!
生理歸善攝 And may your livelihood find kind support.

* * *

久留畏年少 The longer we tarry, the more we fear the lads°
譏我兩咕囁 Who taunt our hushy child-like whispering.°
束火扶路還 Bundled torches follow the homeward road,
宵明狐兔懾 Foxes and rabbits lurk beneath foxfire.

蔡侯雄俊士 Marquis Cai: bold and handsome knight,°
心慓形亦諜 Wise within your heart, agreeable in form,
異時能飛鞚 You who once made my horse's reins fly out--°
快若五陵俠 Swift as the swashbucklers by the Five Tombs--°

胡為阡陌間 What brings you to this place among rice paddies
跼足僅相躡 To follow so close behind, crooking your knees?°
詠欲交轡語 Forgive my wanting to talk with you,
rein to rein--
呿予不能嗋 My lips agape, they will not come together!°

LOCATION. Li Bi 2.8b/198; *Linchuan* 2/91; Longshu 43/504; Shen p. 9; *Shi juyao* 1/117; Zhu p. 63.

DATE. I tentatively date this to early 1081 (midway through Wang's retirement), for reasons given under line 86.

EARTHEN HILL 土山. Tushan, or Dongtushan 東土山, "Eastern Earthworks Mountain." Southeast of Jinling, near Danyang (Cai Zhao's home). Built in the Eastern Jin by Xie An 謝安 (320—385), high official and war hero known for his uncanny calm. Xie An had spent much of his first forty years as a recluse in Guiji 會稽 (Zhejiang), at a place called Eastern Hill or Dongshan 東山. When at last Xie reluctantly accepted a post at the capital (Jinling), he had this miniature mountain built in imitation of his beloved Dongshan. It was called the Dongtushan or simply Tushan. Here he held revels legendary for their gaiety, extravagance, and the quality of the guests. (*Jin shu* 79/2075.)

CAI ZHAO 蔡肇. A younger friend of Wang's during retirement, who helped edit the *Zi shuo*. See above, pp. 213-14.

BACKGROUND OR OCCASION. This commemorates an overnight outing to Xie An's Earthen Hill.

WANG'S COMPANIONS. We do not know how many people joined the outing in addition to Wang and Cai Zhao. There may have been four in the party (lines 60-72). Cai Zhao seems to have been the organizer (lines 7-12).

Another person who went was probably surnamed Shen (line 53). Shen had gone to school either with Wang or with Cai (line 54), had been exiled to the South (lines 55-56), and was now retired. This person may have been Shen Liao 沈遼 (1032—1085), or perhaps a relative of his. (See below under lines 53-76.)

Another person appears in Wang's poem whom we cannot identify at all. This is the recluse who lived near the Earthen Hill, older than Wang yet still black-haired (lines 83-92).

Lines 1-4. FROM DING-LIN. The Dinglin Cloister 定林庵 on Mt. Zhong, an hour's walk from Wang's home at Banshan just northeast of Jinling. The temple was presumably high enough to afford a view of the Earthen Hill about eight miles south, across the Qinhuai River.

AS IF FROM MIDFLIGHT. Implied by the word *kan* 瞰 ("to gaze from above") in line 1.

Line 2. LIT.: "Close, in (the space between) brow and lash."

Line 10. PAIR OF TATTOOED CONVICTS 兩黥. This is probably a private joke. It alludes to a passage in the *Shi ji* (79/2414). Fan Ju 范雎 (d. 255 BC), Prime Minister of Qin, took revenge on his old countryman Xu Jia 須賈, who had once undermined him, by serving Xu horsefeed at a banquet. "Two tattooed convicts" bent Xu over so he

had to eat like a horse令兩黥徒夾而馬食之 . In this poem, it seems two "tattooed convicts" are helping to lift Wang onto his horse.

Line 13. ĀRAṆYA阿蘭若 . A wooded retreat near a temple, where one or two monks may stay in special seclusion.

Line 15. LIT.: "Drum and bell lie in the empty expanse."

Line 19. MASTER XIE謝公: Xie An.

Line 20. BORED AND PLUNDERED穿掘 . A man named Wangshu Ling 王叔陵 dug up Xie An's grave to bury his own mother there. (From "Biography of Wangshu Ling" by a Chen Shixing陳始興 , quoted by Li Bi.)

Line 21. A HUNDRED IN GOLD百金 . Xie An would spend as much as 100 taels for a single banquet on the Earthen Hill. (*Jin shu* 79/2075.)

Line 26. CHU AND XIA楚夏 . The region around Wuchang武昌 and Jingzhou荊州 on the middle Yangzi, where Eastern Jin warlords had built power bases and threatened the Jin dynasty. Wang is referring especially to the warlord Huan Wen (see line 31).

Line 27. DAGGER利便 . LIT.: "Outside, truly a troublesome *sharpness* was being readied." This was the massive Former Qin empire in the north, which threatened the Eastern Jin from across the Huai River.

Line 28. MANEUVERS調燮 . The Eastern Jin was ripped with treachery, power-grabbing and dissension. Xie An, as premier, had to withstand an assassination attempt (among other things) by the ambitious Huan Wen (see line 31).

Lines 29-30. BUTTERFLY蝴蝶. Zhuangzi dreamed he was a butterfly, then woke up wondering if he was really Zhuangzi who dreamed of being a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming that he was Zhuangzi. (*Zhuangzi yinde* 7/II/94. Trans. Graham p. 61.)

Line 31. HUAN WEN桓溫(312--373). Eastern Jin warlord who helped the Jin resist the northern dynasties, then used his power to try to usurp the Jin court. *Wang's line says:* "Huan's evil acts caused his own destruction. 'He who does too much unrighteousness shall surely *cause his own downfall*'多行不義 ，必自斃 ." (*Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu*, Yin 1/12.)

Line 32. FU JIAN苻堅 (338--385). Emperor of the Former Qin, who in 383 attacked the Eastern Jin at the Fei River淝水 in modern Anhui. Under Xie's administration, the Eastern Jin defeated him. To Wang Anshi, this indicates that Fu Jian's actions had brought down "Heaven's disgust"天厭. "Since the Zhou's (lack of) virtue has *disgusted Heaven*, how can we compete with the nation of Xu?" (*Chunqiu*

Zuozhuan zhu, Yin 11/75.)

Line 33. I.E.: "Xie An could delay Huan Wen's usurpation." In 373, Huan Wen lay dying, bitter that the late Emperor Jianwen had willed him only the premiership, not the throne itself! He had already arranged for the palace to present him with the traditional "Nine Bestowals" 九錫. (Ever since Wang Mang and Cao Cao, it had been the custom for usurpers to have themselves given these "Nine Bestowals" from the Emperor before taking over the throne. See *Han shu* 99A/4070-4075; *Wenxuan* 35/781-787.)

Huan Wen's ambition was plain to see. But Xie An knew how ill Huan was, and secretly had the Nine Bestowals delayed; Huan Wen died before the proclamation ever came out. (*Jin shu* 68/2579.)

Line 34. WHY SHOULD HE QUICKEN寧當快? Xie An was famous for his calm. In 383, after hearing news that his forces had defeated the Northern Qin--in one of the most crucial battles of all time, a battle whose outcome had been riding on a hair--Xie An went on with his chess playing, showing no emotion. (But it is said he was so excited that when he walked into the other room, his clogs hit the doorsill with such force that their heels broke off. *Jin shu* 79/2075.)

Line 35. PECK AND HAMPER MEN斗筲之人. Mediocre men with no backbone or vision, who make up the bulk of most governments. (*Lunyu* 26/XIII/20.)

Lines 39-40. NEW FORTRESS新城. Xie An served in high office only out of duty, never because of ambition. He constantly yearned to retire. After defeating Fu Jian, Xie wanted to go home, but instead had to protect the dynasty from a new threat--Daozi, Prince of Guiji會稽王道子, who was gathering power. Xie An built the New Fortress to fend him off. This was at Guangling (near modern Yangzhou, down-river from Jinling). There he provisioned a boat, to take himself onto the ocean and south to his old home as soon as the situation was stable. But he died before that day could come. (*Jin shu* 79/2075.)

Line 41. FIVE RAMPARTS (or Five Towns)五城. Probably refers to five areas located around the Jinling city wall. (Shitou-cheng石頭城, Yecheng冶城, Taicheng台城, Huacheng花城, and Xincheng新城.)

Line 42. HO河. The Yellow River? Li Bi speculates this line may refer to the Eastern Jin general Liu Laozhi劉牢之 (*Jin shu* 84/2188-91). But this does not make much sense. Probably there is no allusion in this line.

Line 43. EAST OF THE TOR隴東. I.e., a moon rising over Xie An's hill.

Lines 43-45. WESTERN PARAPET (Xizhou Gate), GAILY PAINTED HALLS西州, 華屋處. It was while riding through the Western Gate that Xie An revealed to his friends that for sixteen years he had known he

would die this year. After Xie died, his follower Yang Tan could not bear to pass through that gate again. When he inadvertently did so, Yang (drunk and upset) wailed Cao Zhi's famous lines, "We are born in *gaily painted halls*, then one by one return to hills and mounds!" (Details under P 40, line 4.)

ALLUSION: Liu Yuxi, "Parapets at Shitou"石頭城, lines 3-4:

...*East* of Huai waters, a *moon* of older times
When night is deep, still comes across the *crenellated wall*...

淮水東邊舊時月，夜深還過女牆来.

(First in a series of "Five Verses about Jinling" 金陵五題, *Quan Tang shi* 365/4117.)

Line 46. PALM FAN蒲葵扇. A countryman of Xie An's passed through Jinling on a journey home, and Xie asked him how much money he had for the road. The friend said he had 50,000 palm-leaf fans to sell. Xie An grabbed one of the fans and ran off with it. As news of this incident spread, everyone in Jinling wanted one of the fans, and their price doubled. (*Jin shu* 79/2076.)

Line 47. GOLDEN SHARDS ("Shattered gold")碎金. I.E.: Xie An's writings. LIT.: "Those shards of gold are truly to be pitied." When Xie An wrote an "Argument Upon the Late Emperor Jianwen's Posthumous Title"簡文謚議 (the Emperor whom Huan Wen had hoped to usurp), Huan Wen praised the piece as "Xie Anshi's shards of gold" 此是安石碎金. (*Shishuo xinyu* 4:87/206; *Jin shu* 79/2073.)

Line 48. SINGLY, SCATTERED零落. The same words that Xie An's friend had intoned at the Western Gate: "We are born in gaily painted halls, then *singly, scattered* return to hills and mounds." (See under line 45.)

Line 50. LIT.: "In vain remain fragments of calligraphic copybooks." (Xie was a noted calligrapher.)

Line 51. REPARTEE清談. "Pure speech" or "Qing tan," the art of conversation that developed at the end of the Han, and for which Xie An was famous. This "repartee" on the surface seemed to lead nowhere, but at its best concealed political savvy and passionate convictions. It was especially valuable as a way to maintain culture underground, in times of extreme danger and corruption.

Wang Xizhi did not quite understand that point when he asked Xie An how he could indulge in such time-wasting when the world was tottering. Xie answered (in the best "repartee" tradition), "The Qin dynasty hired Shang Yang (商鞅, draconian Legalist), and perished by their second ruler's time. Was it 'repartee' that brought the Qin disaster?" (*Jin shu* 79/2074; *Shishuo xinyu* II:70.)

Lines 53-76. DESCENDANT OF DONGYANG'S ANCIENT MARQUIS 東陽故侯孫 . Probably refers to someone surnamed Shen 沈. I.e., a descendant of Shen Yue 沈約 (441--513), another celebrated Jinling literary man, who had served as Prefect of Dongyang 東陽太守 .

Wang may be addressing a man named Shen Liao 沈遼 (1032--1085). A relative of Wang's supporter Shen Gua 沈括 , and younger brother to Wang's friend Shen Gou 沈遘 (1025?--1067?). (The latter was a high official under Yingzong for whom Wang wrote a tomb inscription: *Linchuan* 93/961.)

Shen Liao came from Hangzhou, had served in office there and in the capital, had been exiled once, and now practiced Buddhism in retirement at Qiupu 秋浦 (on the Yangzi near the Jiuhuashan, see P 67 line 5). He was something of a poet, and exchanged verses with Su Shi as well as with Wang. Presumably he was visiting Jiangning at the time of this poem.

For information about him: See biography in *Song shi ji shi* 宋詩紀事 , by Li E 厲鶚 (1692--1752), 1746 edition 27.7b/553-4. Biography and abridged collection of Shen's poems, *Yunchao shichao* 雲巢詩鈔, in *Song shi chao* 宋詩鈔 , ed. by Lü Liuliang 呂留良 (1629--1683) et al. (rep. Taipei: World, 1969). Family line traced by Ren Changzheng 任長正 , "Investigation of the Seniority Within the Clan of the Song-dynasty Shen Zhou and Ming-dynasty Shen Zhou, and of Shen Gua and Shen Gou": 宋明兩沈周以及沈括.沈遘的行輩考, in *Dalu zazhi* 大陸雜誌 11.5 (1955.9), 147-8.

Evidence in favor of this person being Shen Liao:

1. *Shen's poems complement Wang's.* Shen Liao has three poems to the same rhymes as Wang's three poems on the occasion, touching on many of the same topics and people. (Xie An and Cai Zhao in #1, calligraphy or written words in #2. See *Yunchao shichao* 10-14, in *Song shi chao*.) Their titles are: "Written in Jest to the Original Rhyme-words of Dexiang's Three Poems, Seeing Off Wang Anshi (Duke of Jing)" 德相送荊公三詩用元韻戲為之 (#1); "A Light-Hearted Attempt to Reply to a Verse Shown me by Dexiang, Discussing Calligraphy" 德相所示論書聊復戲酬 (#2); and "A Verse Presented in Gratitude, Using the Previous Rhyme Words, Upon Dexiang's Generous Gift of Fresh Tea" 德相惠新茶復次前韻奉謝(#3). The identity of "Dexiang" may be relevant here. Dexiang 德相 appears as an actor in Shen's poem #1:

> Dexiang from of old has been an intimate;
> Solicitous of me, friendship never palling...
>
> 德相素相親，顧我情未厭.

And:

> Dexiang knows that I am *weary*,
> (My twin eye-pupils trapped beneath heavy lashes)
>
> 德相知我倦，雙睛困垂睫.

Dexiang often visited Shen Liao at Shen's retreat near the Jiuhuashan (#2). Thus he was a friend of Shen's, and it is possible that "Dexiang" and Shen Liao were together on the trip to the Earthen Hill.

2. *Shen Liao seems to have known Wang.* "Dexiang" may have been Wang himself. (The words "De xiang" could conceivably be read as

"Virtuous Prime Minister.") Whether that is so or not, it does seem that Shen Liao's poems address Wang directly: Poem #1 addresses an unnamed "Duke" or "Master"公, comparing him with Xie An, and later tells this modern "Duke:"

> I visited your chamber in the past
> You being empowered with the task of 'maneuvering;'
> The verse that praised me as a Tao Yuanming,
> Ill-deserved, still wrapped within its box...
>
> 我昔造公室，公方仗調燮.
> 辱枉淵明贈，今猶秘巾篋.

It is said that Wang Fang once wrote a poem to Shen Liao, praising Shen as a greater poet than Tao Yuanming: these lines of Shen's would then mean, "I once visited you (Wang Anshi) when you were Prime Minister. Your son praised me in verse as being greater than Tao Yuanming. That praise so embarrassed me that I have never taken his poem out of its box." (Wang Fang had written, "The other day, I read your compositions / That Tao Yuanming would know he could not equal"前日覩佳作，淵明知不如. See *Yunchao shichao* p. 1.) The last lines of Shen Liao's poem #1 may be a response to Wang Anshi's lines 89-90:

> ...Where do our hundred years finally take us?
> We shall end mounded in a "horse-mane" tomb.
> What need is there to sigh at *frosty hairs*,
> And further *pluck them out* before the window?
>
> 百年竟何往，終當封馬鬣.
> 何必悵霜毛，更相窗前鑷.

Shen Liao's third poem (thanking "Dexiang" for a gift of Fujian tea) would make special sense if "Dexiang" were Wang Anshi: Shen's lines on the plight of the tea workers read like an admiring imitation of Wang's early protest verse.

3. *Shen Liao's career corresponds to the man in Wang's poem:* Shen was exiled to the South (Yongzhou永州, west of Guiyang), and then retired to within easy visiting distance of Jiangning. The career of Shen Jizhang, the other possible "Shen" in this poem, shows no such correspondence.

Above is evidence supporting Shen Liao as being the companion Wang addresses in the poem. But the *contrary* evidence also gives one pause:

1. *Age difference.* Shen Liao, from Hangzhou and eleven years Wang's junior, is not likely to have been Wang's schoolmate as in line 54. Shen Jizhang, from Wuxing (near Jiangning), six years younger than Wang, is more likely.

2. *Home town.* Shen Jizhang's home at Wuxing was the same as Shen Yue's ("Marquis of Dongyang," ancestor of the man in the poem).

3. *All the favorable evidence is circumstantial.* Shen Liao could have written his three poems to Wang without actually going on the excursion.

In sum: Shen Liao *may* have been one of Wang's travelling companions; he at least knew about the excursion, because he did respond to this poem of Wang's and its two sequels.

Line 54. LIT.: "Young and small, the same drum and book-chest." I.e., "We were schoolmates." (*Li ji* 18/3: "One enters school to the drum and book-chest"入學鼓篋 .) Shen Liao might have attended Wang's school at Jiangning, although his hometown was Hangzhou, and if Shen was eleven years younger they would not have been "schoolmates" in the strictest sense.

Line 55. LIT.: "An official post, for the first time at Lingnan and the Southern Sea." I.e.: "When you had just arrived at your official post in the Southern regions..." Shen Liao had been demoted to Yongzhou永州 toward the end of his career. This was at the northern edge of the region usually considered Lingnan嶺南 (modern Guangdong and Guangxi).

Line 56. LIT.: "Looking up, you saw the flying kites (birds) fall." I.e.: "You pondered the meaning of ambition while you were in exile." A paraphrase from the *Hou Han shu* 24/838. The general Ma Yuan馬援 (14 BC--AD 49) reminisced about his feelings when he was at Jiaozhi in the far south, putting down a rebellion. Before he had conquered the rebels, he grew depressed, watching the swamps and mist. He said, "I *looked up at the flying kite-birds faltering* and falling into the water" (killed by the miasma)仰視飛鳶跕跕墮水中 , and recalled with regret how his cousin had told him to curb his ambition and stay at home. (See line 57 below.)

Line 57. SLOW HORSE款段馬. Ma Yuan's cousin had said that too much ambition, or pressing one's talent to the limit, would only bring pain. One should be content with a local position, simple food, a short-axled cart pulled by a "*plodding variety of horse*"款段馬 , and to be known as a good man. (*Hou Han shu* 24/838. The cousin was Ma Shaoyou 馬少游.)

Ma Yuan's mission in the south succeeded, thus he did not need to take his cousin's words to heart. But Shen Liao is "returning home as a failure"窮歸 (or "empty-handed," or "exhausted" --one should not take "failure" in the pejorative sense that the English implies). Ma Yuan had been sent south on an urgent mission that only a handful of men could have carried out properly. His success brought him glory. But Shen's career was more typical of real life: an exile to a post where "success" or "failure" were relative terms, and the most one could say was that he served out his time.

Line 59. ELBOWS SHOW肘即見 . I.e., "You are as frugal as Confucius' virtuous follower Zengzi." (Zengzi was too poor to afford new clothes. When he tugged at his collar, his bent elbows poked through the holes in his sleeves. See *Zhuangzi* 78/XXVIII/50.)

Line 62. "YOU" COOK...FOR US 為我炊. No pronoun in the original; we do not know who did the cooking.

Line 64. SOUP 羹, CHOPSTICKS 筯. These words go back to the *Li ji* (1/29), where one finds the rule that *chopsticks* are used to eat vegetable soup, but not soup without vegetables.

Lines 67-72. HAN-DAN PILLOWS 邯鄲枕. (Alternate translation: "What things took place within *the Han-Dan Pillow*?") A man took a nap with a magician's pillow, dreamed he walked into the pillow and lived out an entire career--yet the dream lasted only moments. (See above, p. 150 note 96.)

From these lines, it seems Wang and his companions camped at this ruined building, or at least took a nap there.

Line 68. BANQUETING / HUNT AND CHASE 飲 / 田獵. I.e.: "We had deep dreams indistinguishable from reality." Refers to *Zhuangzi* 6/II/81: "One who dreams he is *banqueting* 飲酒 may awake when day dawns. And one who dreams he is weeping, at daybreak *goes a-hunting* 田獵. And while he is dreaming, he does not know he dreams."

Lines 69-72. FLOATING...STRIDING... Ostensibly refers to the different illusions one experiences when dreaming, and how they show in the way one sleeps. Actually, these four lines may be a private joke about how each of the four men in Wang's party slept.

Line 75. SWORDS FOR OXEN 易牛. I.e., "Peaceful times are here." May allude to Gong Sui 龔遂, sent to govern the Bohai area, which had been plagued with poverty and bandits. He made men who carried swords exchange them for oxen, and those who carried daggers trade them in for calves. Peace ensued. (*Han shu* 89/3640.)

Line 76. PUSH-PIN 擊壤. See note to P 17, line 16.

MAKE BLADE-MUSIC 彈鋏. Lit.: "To tap on my sword-hilt." I.e., to be eager to be recognized, to use one's talent to enhance his ruler's power. Feng Xuan 馮諼 came to serve Lord Mengchang 孟嘗君, but was ignored because he had no apparent talents. He tapped on his sword, singing to it, "Let us go home, O sword," with hints that he was treated unequally. Lord Mengchang then treated him as a knight, and eventually Feng Xuan proved to be Mengchang's cleverest advisor. (*Zhanguo ce*, Qi 4, 11/395ff. Trans. Crump, Chapt. 154, p. 189.)

Lines 77-80. DECLINING JIN 衰晉末. From about 380 to 420, after Xie An died, when the Eastern Jin grew even more fragmented and insecure.

Line 81. NATURE'S PRISONER 天(之)戮民. I.e.: "I am a mere Confucian." "Nature's prisoner" is what Confucius called himself (according to Zhuangzi). Confucius did not know how to cast off the fetters of convention, emotion or rationality. He was "shackled"

within the pale of ordinary perception. (*Zhuangzi yinde* 18/VI/71. Guo Xiang's note in *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, blockprint ed. rep. Taipei: Chung Hwa, 1973, 6/148b.)

Line 82. NO BAR TO JOIN THEM 無接樻. Seems to imply, "I am fettered, to an extent, by my traditional knowledge, but I can already see a way to enlightenment." *Zhuangzi* (26/XI/27): "I could not but know that sage wisdom is a *cangue* and a *shackle-bar*; that benevolence and righteousness are *leg-irons* and *hobbles*."

Lines 83-94. VENERABLE ELDER 翁. I cannot yet find out who this was. He seems to have been a man who lived near the Earthen Hill, whom Wang met on the journey. He may have been an old friend.

Line 84. I.E.: "You have learned to be placid: worldly affairs or official duties do not upset you." Master Gao, Duke of She 葉公子高 could not control his inner fire or tension: "Nowadays, if I receive a command in the morning, by evening I have to eat ice! Am I hot inside?"今吾朝受命，而夕飲冰·我其內熱與. (*Zhuangzi* 10/IV/38.)

Line 86. LIT.: "Perhaps I am coordinated with the 'rooster dream.'" Xie An had dreamed of a white rooster, and interpreted it (correctly) to mean he would die in a Year of the Rooster.

Wang's mention of "this year"今歲 in line 85 may date this poem to 1081, the only Rooster Year of Wang's retirement.

Xie An's dream: Riding through the Western Gate, he revealed to his friends what he had dreamed one night years before, while the treacherous prime minister Huan Wen was still alive. Xie had dreamed he rode sixteen leagues in Huan's chariot, saw a white rooster and halted. He gradually interpreted the dream as follows: Riding Huan Wen's chariot meant he would take Huan's place. Sixteen leagues were sixteen years. The White Rooster meant that Xie would die in a rooster year. It had been sixteen years since the dream, and it was a rooster year now. Xie An did indeed die that year. (*Jin shu* 79/2076.)

Lines 87-88. LIT.: "As for 'being caused to shed skin,' what regret have (I)? / My son already has a long beard." I.e., "I have sons and grandchildren; my son is old enough to take my place." (To *have sons and grandsons* is to have Heaven and Earth make one's *skin shed*: *Zhuangzi* 58/XXII/27.)

The son is Wang's second, Wang Pang; the elder son had died in 1076. (See above, p. 160.)

Line 90. WHITE HAIR TO BE PLUCKED 白可鑷. This may refer, vaguely, to the story of the aged emperor who used to pluck out his white hairs. One day he asked his grandson, "Who do you think I am?"

"You're an old man."

The Emperor then and there decided to accept his age and throw away the tweezers. (Emperor Gaozu of the Southern Qi, and his grandson Xiao Zhaoye, Prince of Longchang 隆昌王蕭昭業. Li Bi

quoting *Nan Qi shu* 南齊書 .)

Line 93. THE LADS 年少 (or "lad"): Cai Zhao and any younger members of the party.

Line 94. HUSHY 咕嘤 . The brash Han general Guan Fu caused a commotion at a banquet, when he chided two great officials for whispering to each other when they should have risen for a toast. "...Today on an elder statesman's celebration, you make *hushy-hushy* ear-talk like little girls!" 今日長者為壽 ，乃效女兒咕嘤耳語 . (*Shi ji* 107/2849.) Wang may be poking gentle fun at Cai Zhao and the others, for growing impatient at times toward Wang and his older friends.

Line 97. MARQUIS CAI 蔡侯 . Cai Zhao.

Line 99. MADE MY HORSE'S REINS FLY OUT 能飛鞚 . Cai, an expert horseman, once tamed an unruly horse of Wang's. (See p. 214 above.)

Line 100. FIVE TOMBS 五陵 : Wuling, outside the Han capital of Chang-an, famous for swashbucklers and swordsmen.

Line 102. CROOKING YOUR KNEES 跼足 . Cai may have been slogging on foot, or perhaps he was riding a donkey and finding it smaller than the horse he was used to.

Line 104. LIT.: "My mouth agape, I cannot shut it!" I.e., "I am flabbergasted at the breadth of your wisdom."

AGAPE 咳 . The philosopher Gongsun Long 公孫龍 , after hearing Wei Mou 魏牟 expound on the *Dao*'s breadth and Gongsun's narrowness, was left flabbergasted. "His mouth, *agape*, would not close, nor could his uplifted tongue settle down--at that he bolted and fled" 口咳而不合 ，舌舉而不下 ，乃逸而走 . (*Zhuangzi* 45/XVII/80.)

COME TOGETHER 噲 . After hearing Laozi talk of the *Dao*, Confucius went home and was speechless for three days. Later he said, "My mouth was wide open and could not *come together*" 予口張而不能噲 . (*Zhuangzi* 39/XIV/62.)

This garrulous reverie (for which Wang apologizes to his young friend) "explains" or defines some of the thoughts that went into Wang's other verse from retirement--verse generally much shorter and more reticent. We see him examining here what it means to be retired--by reading history, watching his friends retire, and drawing inspiration from the scenery.

The poem starts with Wang gazing at mountains smaller and rivers narrower than they have ever been: his larger perspective on the world has made its parts seem to shrink. Xie An and his times seem "close as brow to lash" --because Wang has now come through a life like Xie An's, and knows its contours. History seems as close as yesterday. Yet this shrunken space expands again as soon as one walks into it, especially if one is old and weary. It is this theme--putting his life into perspective while old and weary--that occupies Wang's thoughts throughout the poem.

Lifted onto his mount, packing medicine, Wang visits a temple whose master is gone--as Xie An is gone, and as Wang will go. Xie An has been dead so long that now he lacks even a grave.

Wang compares himself with Xie An, from whom he is learning how to be a retired Prime Minister. Wang notes Xie's calm, and Xie's ability to see his whole career as a dream. Xie An's calm means much to Wang: Wang has learned one must be indifferent to defeat or success. He is sure that Xie An understood this too, and Wang would rewrite history to show that Xie was even calmer than his reputation says.

Every part of Xie's life fell short of Xie's ideals. He craved retirement, and had never sought office. When the premiership was thrust upon him, he knew he could never retire as he wished. But as Prime Minister he failed also: the North remained out of his dynasty's reach, and internal treachery never stopped.

Xie had lost control of his own life: now, Time has robbed us of the man himself. The memory of the instant when he announced he

would die has lingered more tangibly than anything else he did, wrote or said while alive. All that remains of him is the soil he trod.

Wang does not analyze Xie further. He turns now to another retiree, a long-time friend named Shen, whom fate has treated differently than it has treated Wang. Exile claimed Shen; glory claimed Wang. Shen chose his retirement, while Wang was forced into it by age. Now these two friends camp in a temple. They talk of life being a dream, and prove it when they sleep, as their dreams find expression in snores and cries. When they awake they wonder whether the world they see is not simply a new dream.

Dream or not, Wang realizes the difference between his own day and earlier decades: principally, we live now in "a time of sages" (line 73). Xie An had needed calm, because he lived in a fearful time and had to stay on guard. The Han general Ma likewise had had no choice but to stay in the South and fight (line 56). But Wang's friend can retire with a clear conscience, knowing the borders can stand strong without him (lines 57-58).

Wang then meets another recluse, who has stayed young for longer than Wang has been alive. The times have protected this man's black hair, and nourished his grandchildren: only a peaceful age has made his placid life possible.

Wang, then, has thought about four examples of retirement: Xie An's, Shen's, the old man's, and his own. Having examined what it means to be an old man, he is now free to reawaken to what a young man feels: he senses Cai Zhao behind him, chafing to move on. Wang advises him not to plod along with old men like him, but to be what Wang once

was.

The poem is a revealing introduction to Wang's mature artistry as well as his state of mind. His "odd daring, stubborn pride" descend from Han Yu (says Gao Buying). Compare the Jiuhuashan poems from thirty years earlier (P 66-67): at Jiuhuashan, Wang had tightly structured his poems, to keep them from rambling as long verses to set rhymes often do. But now he knows how to guide his various threads; he can seem to ramble yet not lose them. He can stray into private allusions and jokes; change the subject half a dozen times, move from the view at Dinglin into black woods, yet always keep to his interrelated themes: old age, historical awareness, retirement, a relaxed perspective in retirement; dreams and reality; a new communion with dead men even as he maintains companionship with friends.

Wang's subtlest moment is one that reads at first like propaganda: line 73, "Lucky we are to share in a time of sages!", following upon the dreams in the temple, begs us to realize that Wang (after a passionate career devoted to setting the world right) could see all "times of sages" as dreams, no more nor less real than other times.

山中 IN THE HILLS

隨月出山去 Following the moon, we go out from the hills°
尋雲相伴歸 Then seek a cloud to travel back with us.
春晨花上露 In springtime dawn, dew upon the blossoms
芳氣著人衣 Whose fragrant air attaches to our clothes.

LOCATION. Li Bi 40.4a/959; *Linchuan* 26/299; Longshu 71/760; *Shi juyao* 8/783; Zhou Xifu p. 193. Trans. by Jan Walls, *Sunflower* p. 335.

DATE. Undatable; spring.

Line 1. GO OUT FROM THE HILLS 出山去 . Jan Walls has "I follow the moon *into* the mountains," assuming that Wang lived outside the mountains and took a trip up into them. Wang's house was indeed on the flatland, but he also stayed for long periods at the Dinglin Temple on Mount Zhong. I surmise that he wrote this poem there. Thus, when he "goes out," it is to the flatland, and when he "travels back" 歸 , it is up to the temple again.

By choosing the rhymes "return" (*guī* 歸) and "clothing" (*yī* 衣), Wang added another verse to a long line of poems in those rhymes, associated often with mountains, travelling, twilight, reclusion and serenity. Other common words in that rhyme: a door-leaf--*fēi* 扉 ; turquoise mist--*cuì wéi* 翠微; sparsely, rarely--*xī* 稀 ; to fly--*fēi* 飛 .)

Wang's first couplet plays on one by Li Bo:[92]

[92]"Coming Down from Mt. Zhongnan, We Stay the Night with Husi of the Mountains, Where we Have a Banquet" 下終南山過酺斯山人宿置酒. *Li Taibo quanji* 20/451.

At dusk we come down out of the green *mountains*,

The mountain *moon following* us *homeward*...

暮從碧山下，山月隨人歸

In Wang's poem, the people follow the moon, not vice versa; and instead of going home out of the mountains, he returns "home" into them the next day.

"Following a cloud" is a common image for poetry about mountain journeys, as in Wang Wei:[93]

Alone toward a *white cloud*, *homeward bound*...

獨向白雲歸

Or:[94]

A humble perch, yet there I find my Nature,

And often *return* there *along with the white clouds*

卑棲却得性，每與白雲歸

Images about "clothing"衣 being brushed or blown upon abound in poems with these rhymes. Li Bo:[95]

[93]Wang Wei, "Returning to Wangchuan"歸輞川作, *Wang Youcheng ji zhu* 7.6b; trans. Pauline Yu #114, p. 195.

[94]By either Qian Qi錢起 or Wang Wei: under "Detaining Qian Qi Upon his Departure"留別錢起, *Wang Youcheng ji zhu* 8.3b.

[95]From poem quoted above, see note 92.

...In green bamboo we enter the hidden path

Where dark green creepers brush our travelling *clothes*...

綠竹入幽徑，青蘿拂行衣

Du Fu:[96]

Willow tendrils, light, light, touch spots *upon one's clothes*

輕輕柳絮點人衣

Pei Di 裴迪 (b.716):[97]

Cloud brightness encroaches upon sandal prints,

Mountain turquoise brushes *upon one's clothes*

雲光侵履跡，山翠拂人衣

Some of those "clothing" images were slightly erotic or at least romantic, as in this record of an outing with singing girls, whom the poet asked to tarry longer:[98]

Bamboo breeze lingers in the singer's fan,

Lotus *fragrance* sinks into the *dancing clothes*...

竹吹留歌扇，蓮香入舞衣

[96]"First Day of the Twelfth Month" 十二月一日三首 (#3 of 3). *Du shi jingquan* 12.17.

[97]"Huazi Hill" 華子岡 , #2 of "Twenty Poems of Wangchuan" 輞川集二十首 (其二), *Quan Tang shi* 129/1313; *Wang Youcheng ji* 13.3a.

[98]Chu Guangxi 儲光羲 (Tang), "Outing on the Lake with Auxiliary Secretary Wu Pingyi" 同武平一員外遊湖 . *Quan Tang shi* 139/1417-18. Wang knew Chu Guangxi's work (he has 21 poems in the *100 Tang Poets*).

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The image could be sorrowful:[99]

Cicadas toady already pain my thoughts,
Now *dew* by night again soaks through my *clothes*
晝蟬已傷念，夜露復霑衣

And it could be subtly sensuous yet pure, as when newborn swallows fly into a dancing-tower:[100]

They fly in through the curtains, take fright at the sound of bracelets,
Come to the window, blocking the dancers' *clothes*
入簾驚釧響，來窗礙舞衣

Wang's poem gains resonance through those precedents: a mountain hermit's retreat; communion with clouds, dew, branches; a rustic walk homeward; companions. His "clothing" image exceeds his forebears in lightness and purity: "fragrant air"芳氣 is cleaned of the erotic or wistful impressions one might find in Chu Guangxi's "lotus fragrance"蓮香 , and is "lighter" even than Du Fu's willow tendrils. Although Wang's poem stands well on its own, it is important to understand how it interplays with earlier poems in the reader's memory.

[99]Wu Jun吳均 (469--520), from "Four Miscellaneous Quatrains" 雜絕句四首 , *Jianzhu Yutai xinyong* 箋注玉台新詠 comp. by Xu Ling 徐陵 (507--583), ann. by Wu Zhaoyi吳兆宜 (fl. ca. 1672), n.d. (rep. Taipei: Kuang Wen, 1979) 10.13b.

[100]Xiao Gang蕭綱(Emperor Jianwen of the Liang, 503--551): "Newborn Swallows"新燕, *Yutai xinyong* 10.19ab.

Most of Wang's quatrains in fact are a response or dialogue--with people, with the setting, and in this case with other poets.

Not only are Wang's images pristine, but the poem as a whole is a distillation or overview of the experience--not an isolated moment or representative image (willow tendrils, baby swallows). The quatrain form, short though it is, can be monumental in scope: if the poet chooses to make each word carry as much weight as it can, then twenty weighty words can easily surpass the effect of many longer verses.

Thus in this poem Wang is not describing his actual retirement, but describing its *essence*, and in reference to literature almost as much as to reality. That he could write so freshly with such old rhymes is a result of his talent, his imaginative eye, and (some would say) of his sincerity.

THE SLANTING PATH

It happens to cross the road to the Southern Dyke,
Some dwellings face North Mountain's distant peak

Tips of grass
butterflies
yellow blooming late°
Water caltrops
dragonflies
blue-green burgeons deep°

斜徑

斜徑偶穿南埭路，數家遙對北山岑
草頭蛺蝶黃花晚，菱角蜻蜓翠蔓深

LOCATION. Li Bi 44.5a/1073; *Linchuan* 30/335; Longshu 71/763.

DATE. Undatable: early autumn at Jiangning.

Line 3. YELLOW BLOOMING 黃花. Lit. "yellow flowers." Chrysanthemums, that bloom in the fall.

Line 4. WATER CALTROP 菱角. A water plant that blooms in late summer or early autumn, and produces an edible nut.

Unlike the previous quatrain, which distilled a whole overnight journey, "The Slanting Path" flashes single images at us, allowing us to build from them a momentary picture. The mood is serene, optimistic, simple. Movement contrasts with settlement (road and path vs.

mountains and dwellings); yellow contrasts with green, grass with water, butterflies with dragonflies.

Li Bi was impressed when he visited the Jurchen capital and found a reception official who could recite this poem.[101] He also notes that the second couplet, which the Jurchen official admired, may be a reworking from Du Fu:[102]

Crossing through flowers
butterflies
deep, deep revealed
Touching the water
dragonflies
purposefully loft

穿花蛺蝶深深見，點水蜻蜓款款飛

Du Fu's lines were musical, sensuous, elemental. Wang's are subdued but idiosyncratic: another example of the difference between Tang and Song poetry.

[101] This happened in 1205 or 1207. The official was Li Zhu 李著. See *Jin shi* 金史, comp. by Tuo Tuo 脱脱(Yuan), (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1975) 62/1476, 64/1527, 99/2194.

[102] "Crooked River" 曲江(#2). *Du shi jingquan* 4.18/177.

NORTH MOUNTAIN°

North Mountain sends down green
to swell the terraced slopes
The straight canals and winding pools,
this bright and brimming time

I carefully count the "falling blossoms,"
therefore "long I sit,"°
Slowly seeking fragrant herbs
delays my journey home.°

北山

北山輸綠漲橫陂，直塹回塘灩灩時
細數落花因坐久，緩尋芳草得歸遲

LOCATION. Li Bi 42.8b/1022; *Linchuan* 28/320; Longshu 77/826; *Qian jia shi* p. 6b; *Shi juyao* 8/842; Zhu p. 101; Zhou Xifu p. 188; Shimizu p. 88.

DATE. I date this to before 1084.7, because Su Shi wrote a response to it, the latest likely date for which would be that of Su's visit to Jiangning in 1084.

TITLE. Longshu prints this as the third of "Four Quatrains on the Wild Rose" 薔薇四首, all four being poems to which Su Shi responded. (See also Cai 23/315.)

Line 3. Evolved from a popular song based on a poem attributed to Wang Wei:

I have been drunk, now chirping birds call to me;
A long time sitting; many *blossoms fall*.
醉來啼鳥喚，坐久落花多.

("Kunlunzi" 崑崙子, in *Yuefu shi ji* 80/1123. Based on Wang Wei,

"Written in Response to Instruction Upon Stopping at the Yang Family Villa in the Retinue of the Prince of Qi" 從岐王過楊氏別業應教, *Quan Tang shi* 126/1265. The first line has several wordings, but the line Wang Anshi used is the same in all versions. See also *Nenggaizhai manlu* 8/207; *Yougutang shihua* 優古堂詩話 by Wu Yan (Song), in *Lidai shihua xubian*, p. 267.)

Line 4. SEEKING FRAGRANT HERBS 尋芳草 . Perhaps based on Meng Haoran:

> ...I would go *seek fragrant herbs*,
> If it did not mean leaving a friend behind.
> 欲尋芳草去, 惜與故人違.

("Memento of Parting with Censor Wang Wei" 留別王侍御維, in *Quan Tang shi* 160/1639.)

This in turn may stem from the *Chuci*:

> *I regret* I came too late to know the Ancients--
> with whom shall I hold in hand these *fragrant herbs*?
> 惜吾不及古人兮, 吾誰與玩此芳?

("Jiu zhang" #6, *Chuci buzhu* 4.24a. Trans. also by Hawkes, p. 174.)

"Wang Anshi's poetic structure was especially refined and rigorous in his late years: his phrasing and wording admit not a hair into the seams between them. Meaning 意 coalesces with language 言 , and language is apportioned in accordance with meaning. Both blend as if born from Nature, until it seems one could never find a place where anything was fitted, forced or measured."[103] In other words, Wang's art shows no traces. All we see is a relaxed, serene picture.

And here Wang presents that serenity through physical setting 景 alone, without a single word derived from his thoughts or feelings 情 . Some say this is largely a Tang tradition, while the more typical Song tendency was to couple a line of setting with a line of

[103] Ye Mengde, *Ye xiansheng shihua* A.1b/2; also Zhu p. 102.

feeling, or to combine feeling and setting in a single line.[104]

One way Wang has shown "feeling" through "setting" alone is by his echoing of the settings of Wang Wei and Meng Haoran in lines 3-4.[105] Wang Wei simply "sat long, and the fallen blossoms multiplied." But Wang Anshi tells us *how* this can happen: because the poet is so absorbed in counting the blossoms as they fall, that he loses track of time. In Wang Anshi's line we feel time gradually pass, while with Wang Wei we felt a sudden awakening from a reverie.

In line 4, the echoes from Meng Haoran's *lonely* search for "fragrant herbs" add a complex emotional content to Wang Anshi's phrase: Wang Anshi may be hinting at some loneliness or sense of separation in his solitary walk. But on the surface Wang's words are contented; he may in fact be showing us that "searching for fragrant herbs" can be a happy activity.

Ultimately, Wang's choice of the words themselves does more to establish a "feeling" than his allusions do. The poem's overall pattern is a gush of energy in the first half, then quiet seclusion in the second; the mountain, then Wang; nature's glory, then a man's enjoyment; burgeoning water, then dying blossoms; exuberance, then contemplation; youth and old age. In each case, the first half and the

[104] *Shiyishi shihua* 石遺室詩話, by Chen Yan 陳衍 (Song); Taipei: Commercial, 1961, 14.2a. Also Zhu, pp. 104-5.

[105] *Yougutang shihua*, p. 266. Wu Yan suggests that these echoes may have been unconscious, not Wang deliberately making an allusion. Yet I believe Wang knew what he was doing: Line 3 seems most complete when read as a clarification of Wang Wei's line. And line 4 echoes a poem by Meng Haoran *to Wang Wei*--making the two lines "parallel" in subject matter, as Wang Anshi was fond of doing.

second half mingle. Specific words that contribute to these effects: "sends" 輸, "swell" 漲, "straight/winding" 直 / 回, "bright and brimming" 灩灩; then "carefully" 細, "therefore" 因, "slowly" 緩, "homeward" 歸.[106]

It would be fitting to quote Su Shi's poem in response, written to Wang's rhymes. Wang showed us the scene from within his own mind, while Su writes how Wang actually appeared to a sympathetic observer:[107]

You ride your donkey, far away
among the barren slopes.
I wish I could have seen you, sir, before your illness came.
You tell me I should try to seek a three-*mu* plot of land
And be with you--
I feel I am already ten years late.

騎驢渺渺入荒陂，想見先生未病時
勸我試求三畝宅，從公已覺十年遲

[106]Within lines 3 and 4: There is a balance between the "light, clear" 輕清 first halves ("I carefully count the falling blossoms") and the "allusive, heavy" 典重 second halves ("therefore long I sit," "delays my journey home"). This lifts Wang out of the overly-light 輕佻 realm of late Tang poetry.
According to Wu Ke 吳可 (Song), *Canghai shihua* 藏海詩話, in *Lidai shihua xubian* p. 333.

[107]*Su Shi shi ji* 24/1252; Cai 23/315.

APRICOT BLOSSOMS AT NORTH SLOPE

A slope of springtime water wends about the blossoms' forms
Each blossom's shadow lissom, lithe, augurs spring
And they will let spring wind blow them into snow;
They make the South Walk exquisite, and are ground to dust.°

北陂杏花
一陂春水繞花身，花影妖嬈各占春
縱被春風吹作雪，絕勝南陌碾成塵

LOCATION. Li Bi 42.6b/1018; *Linchuan* 28/319; Zhu p. 100.

DATE. Undatable; spring, at Jiangning.

Line 4. SOUTH WALK 南陌. Probably refers here to a path on Mt. Zhong. But it has romantic overtones of ancient capitals and beautiful women:

> ...At thirteen, "Sans Souci" could weave brocade,
> At fourteen she plucked mulberry upon the *Southern Walk*...
> 莫愁十三能織綺，十四採桑南陌頭

("Song of River Waters" 河中之水歌 , by Xiao Yan 蕭衍 , Emperor Wu of the Liang, 464--549. *Yuefu shi ji* 85/1204.)

> Night after night, moonlike beauties line the Northern Hall,
> And every morning clouds of riders swarm the *Southern Walk*...
> 北堂夜夜人如月，南陌朝朝騎似雲.

(Lu Zhaolin, ca. 634--683, "Ancient Memories of Chang-an" 長安古意 . *Lu Zhaolin ji* 盧照鄰集, Xu Mingxia ed., Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980, 2/20.)

MAKE EXQUISITE 絕勝. The exact meaning might be, "*Utterly magnificent* (upon the Southern Walk)..." This line may echo Han Yu, writing exuberantly about Chang-an's grass and willows:

> ...This, above all, is springtime's yearly glory,
> *Most exquisite*, mist and willows fill the Imperial City...
> 最是一年春好處，絕勝烟柳滿皇都.

("Early Spring: First of Two Poems Submitted to Auxiliary Officer

Zhang of the Water Board" 早春呈水部張十八員外二首 . *Han Changli shi* 12/557.)

With stark surprise, the final three words hit the listener who has been left unwary by the exuberant first couplet, and only slightly unsettled by the blossoms' sudden snow-like flurry. Associations of blossoms with death, and of dust with impermanence, are hardly new in poetry: and it is not newness, but the progression of words that gives the poem its impact. Strongest images are the gush of water 一陂春水 ; "augury" 占 ; "and, inevitably" 縱 ; "blow" 吹 , and "grind" 碾 .

The poem is optimistic, however. Why do blossoms fall? So that the tree can bear fruit. To Wang, fruit mattered more than blossoms, just as grain mattered more than shoots and summer more than spring. (P 84.) And though the shortness of their life may be a sad thing, it is also part of what makes blossoms beautiful. Compare the following Tang palace-style quatrain that Wang admired:[108]

On tree-branch tips and under trees, you search for traces
of pink;
One petal flies off to the west, another to the east.

[108]"Song from the Palace" 宮中詞 , by Wang Jian 王建 (app. 767--app. 830). Wang included this poem in the *100 Tang Poets*; he still admired it in his late years, says Chen Fu, one of Wang's friends in retirement. ("Chen Fuzhi shihua" 陳輔之詩話 , in *Song shihua jiyi* p. 291. Also *Nenggaizhai manlu* 8/215; Wang Jinguang p. 137. Wang Jian's poem, one of 100 of the same title, is found in *Quan Tang shi* 10/302/3445; *Tang baijia shixuan* 13.14a. Translated also in Burton Watson, *Chinese Lyricism*, p. 120.

It's simply that the peach blossoms are eager to bear
their offspring:
And one would be mistaken to resent the daybreak breeze.

樹頭樹底覓殘紅．一片西飛一片東
自是桃花貪結子，錯教人恨五更風

題何氏宅園亭 WRITTEN AT THE PAVILION IN THE HO FAMILY GARDEN°

荷葉參差卷 Teeming crowd—lotus pads curl up
榴花次第開 Each in its turn, the pomegranates bloom.
但令心有賞 If our minds can simply appreciate this scene
歲月任渠催 We'll let those years and months press
as they will.

LOCATION. Li Bi 40.2b/956; *Linchuan* 26/298; Longshu 67/723.

DATE. Undatable; spring.

HO FAMILY (or "Mr. He")何氏 . Mr. He may have been a friend of Wang's at Shuzhou. (Hinted at in Wang's quatrain "Written on the Wall of the He Family Home"書何氏宅壁 , Li Bi 43.7a/1045.) I tentatively date the present poem to Wang's retirement, partly because of the affinity of lines 3-4 to a poem "Seeing Off Lü Jiawen" 送呂望之 , which likely dates to early 1078 (see commentary below). The He mansion was probably in the middle of Jinling. Wang also visited there in 1084.3.19 (see P 103).

In the previous poem, Wang misdirected us with a glorious spring scene, then plummeted us into dead blossoms—spring's corollary. He expects us to sense the optimistic undertone. In this poem he does the same thing with the first half (buds opening all around), but then—anticipating that we will grow depressed at the inevitable end of spring—in the second half he recommends a cure for that depression, rather than allowing us to supply it ourselves. Both the cure and the tone of voice remind one of Han Shan:[109]

[109]#169, *Han Shan shiji* p. 52b/174.

...Sun and moon go sliding like a stream,
Days and night, like fire-sparks on a rock.
Heaven and Earth, *turn over as you will!*
Among the crags, in grand delight I sit.

... 日月如逝川，光陰石中火 ·
任你天地移，我暢巖中坐 ·

Wang was even more positive in a quatrain to Lü Jiawen, amid bright red blossoms:[110]

...Of years and blooming, what end could there be?
And *admiration from the heart* is just as limitless.

年華豈有盡，心賞亦無窮.

[110] "Seeing Off Lü Jiawen" 送呂望之, Li Bi 40.11b/974. Probably dates to 1078.1, see p. 175 above.

A TRIP TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN

The river plain, vast interlocking green;°
Deep trees stand dim and dusky, not a flower shows.°
Wind and sun, with nowhere for their ardor to alight
Begin to turn their bright aspect toward mulberry and flax.

出郊
川原一片綠交加，深樹冥冥不見花
風日有情無處著，初迴光景到桑麻

LOCATION. Li Bi 42.10/1026; *Linchuan* 28/321; Longshu 67/714; Zhu p. 103; Zhou Xifu p. 190; Guangzhou p. 231; Shimizu p. 94. Trans. by Yangs, p. 72.

DATE. After 1077? Early summer. The poem's mood fits with Wang's verses praising the Yuanfeng era's prosperity (P 17-18).

Line 1. LIT.: "The riverplain--a single stretch of interwoven green."

Line 2. NOT A FLOWER SHOWS 不見花 . I.e. spring is over.

Summer may have been Wang's favorite season during retirement, as we see in these lines and will find in P 106 ("Spring wind scoops away the blossoms / Then repays me with clear shade"). Perhaps it was because summer brings relief from spring's cold and its falling blossoms (see previous poem). But further, summer is when crops grow: what could be more meaningful than a good harvest and contented people? "Wind and sun" put their "ardor" to its fullest use when they nourish mulberry and flax (to become silk and linen, civilization's fabric),

rather than making flower gardens bloom. Or, as Wang put it in a more famous poem:[111]

> ...In bright sun and warm wind grows a wheat-field air;
> Green shade and hidden grass *surpass the blossom time*.

晴日暖風生麥氣，綠音幽草勝花時.

[111]"On Early Summer" 初夏即事, Li Bi 41.9a/997; *Linchuan* 27/312.

A HAPHAZARD STROLL

聊行尋芳草 Haphazard stroll, to touch the fragrant plants
獨坐隱團蒲 To sit alone, hid beneath reed-clump shade
問客茅簷日 I ask the guest: "That sun upon thatched eaves—°
君家有此無 Does your Master's home have it too?"

LOCATION. Li Bi 40.1a/953; *Linchuan* 26/297.

DATE. Undatable; summer.

Line 3. SUN UPON THATCHED EAVES 茅簷日 . Cf. Zhang Ji 張繼 (9th cent.), "Mountain Dwelling" 山家:

A plank bridge,
someone crossing,
gurgling spring;
Thatched eaves,
sun at noon
rooster crowing...
板橋人渡泉聲 茅簷日午鷄鳴.

(*Quan Tang shi* 242/2725.)

In dozens of old ballads, a handsome stranger rides up and asks a townsman, "Where does your Master dwell?" The answer: In a gold and marble hall, with music and feasts, women and handsome sons. In some versions the stranger then goes there, finds adventure and sometimes romance.[112] These ballads make plain that the only thing more wonderful than "the Master's" riches and glory is the even nobler and more

[112]The earliest extant ballad of this type is the anonymous Han dynasty "Encounter" 相逢行 , in *Yuefu shi ji* 34/508. (Later variations are included after it.)

dashing stranger. But the ballad changed in the Tang. Li Bo echoed it in a quatrain, in which the stranger is told simply:[113]

...Among the willows of ten thousand homes
The Master's house--by that slender dangling.

...萬戶垂楊裏，君家阿那邊。

The Master's house has become less obtrusive, and perhaps more humble.

It remained for Wang to turn the story around. Now it is the stranger who is challenged, by a rustic recluse who asks the stranger what kind of Master he comes from. The rustic's tone implies, "Have people such as you ever felt true, natural enjoyment?"

Wang may have had in mind a story from *Liezi*: a rustic, who knows only the farming life, wishes he could introduce his king to such treats as working with the blazing sun on one's back. (*Liezi* 7/86.) That story painted the rustic as a fool; but Wang's rustic is someone who has learned to find equilibrium wherever he is, including a thatched hut.

The poem is light, bland and quizzical. Its special quality comes from its echo of the ancient ballad, which adds romance and boldness to what would otherwise be just one of many verses about rustic pleasures. Liu Chenweng's comment: "The ancients never attained such clean-washed clarity and self-containment--this is close to the *Dao*."

[113]"The Encounter"相逢行, in *Li Taibo quanji* 4/118.

THREE ODES UPON NORTH MOUNTAIN:° THE THIRD

DAOGUANG'S SPRING°

1 A bamboo dragon loops rain waters, moves them round the hill°
To pour far, travel deep, quiet and making sound.
3 Clouds boil from the bathing tub, warming itself in the morning°
A rainbow hangs over the holy cauldron, clears again at noon.°
5 "Bronze buckets" brim with hermits' aspirations°
"Jade well-bricks" heighten a Boddhisattva's name.°
7 If spirit power (one must sigh) precludes ingenious skill,°
The well-sweep will decay; bamboo and mosses grow.°

道光泉

1 驌龍將雨遶山行，注遠投深靜有聲
3 雲湧浴槽朝日暖，虹垂齋鑊午還晴
5 銅餅各滿幽人意，玉甃因高正士名
7 神力可嗟妨智巧，枯槔零落便苔生
[復]

LOCATION. Li Bi 26.10a/655; *Linchuan* 17/226; Longshu 71/752.

DATE. After 1075, at Jiangning.

NORTH MOUNTAIN 北山 (Mt. Zhong). All three poems are set within the area of the Taiping Xingguo Temple. The first talks of "Master Bao's Pagoda" 寶公塔 (see also P 101), the second is "Abbot Juehai Zanyuan" 覺海方丈 (see also P 42).

DAOGUANG'S SPRING 道光泉. A hot spring on a ridge about 300 paces from the Liang-dynasty Lingyao Temple 靈曜寺, on the west side of Mt. Zhong (within the present Ming Tomb area). The monk Daoguang discovered it under brambles in 1075. He made a pool, and piped water from it to the temple. The temple abbot had a shelter built over the pool. It is said Wang Anshi planted two pines there, still growing in 1261. (Li Bi, quoting *Jingding Jiankang zhi*.) In about 1078 a monk

named Wanzong萬泉 found two more springs there, connected them with the first, and channeled some of the water into local fields. Wang Anshi, called upon to name the new springs, named them after Wanzong. *Linchuan* 83/871.

Line 1. BAMBOO DRAGON筧龍. The pipeline to the temple and the fields.

Line 3. BATHING TUB浴槽. Li Bi says this actually was a channel for floating (wine)cups, and that such a thing was common at Chan temples. I can find no confirmation of this, however. It seems best for now to take the word at face value as "bathing tub."

Line 4. HOLY CAULDRON齋鐏. Presumably a tank or pool to hold water for cooking (vegetarian meals); perhaps the tank from which water went to the temple.

Lines 5-6. I.E.: "Bronze buckets brim with *shadows*; / The well is filled with *emptiness*."

This interpretation assumes that the lines refer to a Southern-Tang poem "The Cold Well: Submitted for the Civil Service Examination" 奉試冷井詩. (Only surviving poem by Sun Xin孫忻, fl. ca. 968--975. *Quan Tang shi* 203/2126.) This highly ornate poem relates the concept of a "well"井 to its role as nourisher of a nation. (Refers to the *Book of Changes:* the "Well" is hexagram #48.) Lines 5-6 of Sun Xin read:

> *Bronze buckets* toward the *shadows* drop away,
> *Jade well-bricks* embrace a hollow roundness
> 銅瓶向影落,玉甃抱虛圓.

Assuming that Wang was being as ornate as Sun Xin, then Wang's two lines would mean: "The (shadowy) well-buckets incorporate a recluse's ideal (to *live in the shadows*); jade well-bricks enclose a hollow space that is higher than before they were installed. This '*hollow space*' or '*emptiness*' is the name that fits a Boddhisattva."

Line 6. BODDHISATTVA正士. Here, a "correct scholar," one who has learned the Buddha-truth as it should be learned, and has achieved Buddhahood.

Line 7. I believe this means, "It is a sad thing if people think almighty Spirit-Power precludes the use of physical inventions." (Lines 7 and 8 are hard to interpret, perhaps because of textual corruptions.)

Line 8. WELL-SWEEP桔槔. Represents labor-saving devices, good products of ingenuity; opposed by narrow-minded idealists. (P 14.)

BAMBOO AND MOSSES便苔. The first character is seen as 便 ("subsequently," Li Bi), or 筰 ("bamboo sedan-chair," *Linchuan*). Seems to be a corruption: neither character fits well.

In elegant phrases reminiscent of the late Tang, Wang describes the secluded beauty of the hot spring, at the same time praising what it represents. This is a case of Spirit Power *functioning through technological wisdom*: a wellspring can "pour far" into arid fields, "travel deep" into a dry cistern, all because two men understood that we need not wait for "spirit power" to work a miracle. Rather, one can let this power manifest itself in a project as Confucian as designing a water system. How does one let the power function? By keeping an "empty" mind, and keeping oneself in "shadow."

Wang sees the spring, its misty pools, "dragon" pipe, and imagines the well-sweep--ingenious in its time--that it replaces. In a famous poem he had used the "well-sweep" to represent his own plans for society. Does he now find himself being surpassed? And does that trouble him or please him? This stately, serene poem admits to neither emotion.

Section H. Retirement: Meditations, Reflections, Reveries

The following poems convey more private thoughts, in widely varying moods.

THE MOUND OF MASTER XIE:° TWO VERSES

THE FIRST (P 87)

My name, by chance, equals your cognomen°
My home shares with your mound one field of view
You went, but I have come: the mound is mine
The mound's surname should not belong to you!

謝公墩二首 其一
我名公字偶相同，我屋公墩在眼中
公去我來墩屬我，不應墩姓尚隨公

THE SECOND (P 88)

His traces, after all, are hard to track
Mountain moon, Huai River clouds
    alone of times departed.°
Once he went away
    (pity him)
        never came again°
His years grown dusky
    stream of tears
        gazing at loyal General Huan.°

謝公墩二首 其二
謝公陳迹自難追，山月淮雲紙往時
一去可憐終不返，暮年垂淚對桓伊

LOCATION. Li Bi 42.3b/1012; *Linchuan* 28/317; Longshu 71/753; *Shilin guangji* B2/217 (#1 only); Zhou Xifu p. 176 (#1 only); Huang Chang p. 161; Shimizu p. 53 (#1 only). See also notes to an ancient-style verse of the same title, Li Bi 5.2b/246; Shen p. 14. And see notes to P 78 above.

DATE. After 1076, at Jiangning.

MOUND OF MASTER XIE 謝公墩. The site of Xie An's home: a small hill a few dozen yards west of Wang's home at Banshan. (*Jinling fansha zhi*, p. 357.) Li Bi found it was "just a mound" when he visited in the 13th century. Huang Chang found the same thing in 1947: it was topped then with a scruffy pavilion (Huang Chang pp. 38-39). In fact it was unimpressive even when Wang visited it for the first time--local people could not tell him where it was. (Li Bi 5.2b/246.)

N.B.: This is not Xie An's "Earthworks Hill" 土山. That was located about eight miles southeast of Banshan, and was the site of Xie An's outings, not his home. (See P 78.)

P 87, Line 1. NAME / COGNOMEN 名/字. Xie An's *zi* was Anshi 謝安石.

P 88, Line 2. I.E.: "The only things left of him are the mountain moon and Huai River clouds."

MOUNTAIN MOON 山月. Probably refers to the moonlight at Xie An's banquets on the Earthworks Hill.

HUAI RIVER CLOUDS 淮雲. May allude to Xie gazing northward toward the Huai, where he held the enemy at bay, but on whose other side the former Jin capital was still in alien hands.

P 88, Line 3. NEVER CAME AGAIN 終不返. Xie An had no chance to return home to Guiji: he had to stay at Jinling as Prime Minister. Later he could not even stay at Jinling: toward the end of his career he had to build a New Fortress 新城 north of the capital, to combat the rebellious Daozi, Prince of Guiji 會稽王道子. (P 78, line 39.)

P 88, Line 4. LIT.: "In old age he wept tears, facing Huan Yi." I.e., "*He wept in gratitude to a man who had stood up to treachery.*" Huan Yi 桓伊, who had won merit in the Battle of the Fei River, saw how Prince Daozi was forcing a rift between the Emperor and Xie An. At a banquet, Huan Yi sang to the Emperor a daring protest against sycophants and traitors. Xie An, tears streaming down his face, grabbed Huan Yi's beard and thanked him, while the chastened Emperor watched. (*Jin shu* 81/2118-19.)

Although these poems are paired, they are utterly different from each other and have received uneven attention. The first poem, which now seems to have been no more than a bit of Wang's wry humor, has been vilified for centuries as a nasty example of his alleged compulsion to control everything: "In the palace he struggled with other officials over the New Policies; back in the countryside, he struggled with Xie An for his mound. This is another bit of sarcasm on his part."[114]

Actually, Wang's critics might have learned more about him if they examined the second poem rather than repeating criticisms against the first. The second poem is serious, and may be as much concerned with Wang as with Xie An.[115] It hints that Wang's decision to retire had not been entirely straightforward: perhaps he felt himself a victim (however slight) of slander, sycophancy and manipulation. Perhaps there were one or two things that could make Wang lose his calm even as Xie An had.

But it probably makes the most sense to ignore the biographical questions and see Wang's second poem as a distillation of ideas from his ancient-style poem of the same title, written long before he went to live there. Images in both poems include the "clouds" and "moon;" the recollections; and Xie An breaking control to weep before Huan Yi.

[114] *Tiaoxi yuyin conghua*, "Qian ji" 33/223-4. And p. 211 above.

[115] So says Huang Chang (p. 161), adding that the second is better poetry. Actually, Wang's unpleasant reputation was so cemented that even those who did read his second poem could misinterpret it. Wang Yu 王遇 (*hao* Donghu 東湖) assumed it was a satirical jab at Xie An, and could not understand why Wang seemed to support Xie in another poem. (*Tingzhai shihua* 艇齋詩話, comp. by Zeng Jili 曾季貍, in *Lidai shihua xubian* p. 294.)

昭文齋 (米芾題余定林所居,因作)

THE ZITHER PLAYER'S STUDY°

(Written in Response to Mi Fei's Inscription for my Quarters at Dinglin)

我自山中客	I am, of course, a rambler from the hills
何緣有此名	What is the reason for a name like this?
當緣琴不鼓	It must be, when I do not play my zither,
人見有虧成	That men still find a Partial and a Whole.°

LOCATION. Li Bi 40.2a/955; *Linchuan* 26/297; Longshu 68/725; Shen p. 95.

DATE AND BACKGROUND. The calligrapher, painter and writer Mi Fei 米芾 (also read Fu, 1051—1107?), first came to know Wang in 1083. Probably that was the year in which Mi wrote a signboard for Wang's quarters at the Dinglin Cloister on Mt. Zhong, where Wang had edited much of the *Zi shuo*.

THE ZITHER PLAYER (Lit. Zhao Wen) 昭文. An ancient zither or *qin* virtuoso, made famous by Zhuangzi. Zhuangzi's ideal was to realize how all things are equal: there is no "completion" or "lack," no "whole" or "partial" (成,虧). When Zhao Wen played the zither, he could be "wholly" in one mode only by "lacking" in the other modes (one can choose only one mode or key at a time). But once he *stopped playing*, all modes existed equally. (*Zhuangzi yinde* 5/II/43; Graham p. 54.)

"Playing the zither" is also a symbol of superior statesmanship: a man of highest virtue can simply play his zither in the hall, and the nation will be ordered. (See P 10, line 7.)

Mi Fei's intention: To honor Wang as a former "zither player" (great statesman) who has now retired to be a "non-player;" his "non-playing" surely brings even greater "harmony" to the state.

Line 4. LIT.: "Men (still) see that there is 'lacking' and 'completion.'" I.e., "I am not as skillful a 'non-player' as Zhao Wen was."

Linchuan takes an opposite reading: "People *do not see* the partial and the whole" 人不見虧成. (I.e., "I *am* as good as Zhao Wen.")

Wang's modest, playful response (which Liu Chenweng finds charming but shallow) seems to be saying, "You are making a pleasant joke about me, saying that I do not 'not-play' as well as I should." This could lead to several implications: Wang has never really quit his political duties (he has been editing the dictionary), but perhaps Mi Fei thinks he should. Or, once Wang has retired and silenced his zither, men have time to see and judge where his efforts have "lacked" and where they have succeeded.

Whatever the implications, they are given in a light-hearted spirit typical of the retired Wang's dealings with his younger friends, many of whom were artistic and out of the political mainstream, as was Mi Fei.

CASUAL LINES

Marquis of Rang, aged dictator on the Central Plain°

Dreaded those Roving Visitors from the dukes.°

I too, in ebbing years "rule my one trench;"°

Each carriage and horse I meet

finds me guessing, panicky°

偶書

穰侯老擅關中事，長恐諸侯客子来

我亦暮年專一壑，每逢車馬便驚猜

LOCATION. Li Bi 48.11b/1196; *Linchuan* 34/375; Longshu 75/791; Shen p. 111; Zhu p. 60; Zhou Xifu p. 220.

DATE. After 1076, at Jiangning.

Line 1. MARQUIS OF RANG穰侯. Wei Ran魏冉 (d. 265 BC), who served the King of Qin, and was responsible for the aggressive policies that eventually allowed the Qin to conquer China. He died in exile before that took place, stunned that he had been replaced by Fan Sui 范雎 (d. 255 BC), an outsider. Fan Sui had catapulted to the top of the Qin government merely by one clever, convincing speech. (*Shi ji* 72/2329-30.)

Line 2. ROVING VISITORS FROM THE DUKES諸侯客子. The Marquis of Rang in old age grew paranoid about roving agents who would undermine all he had done for his king and for his own power. Fan Sui, one of the cleverest "roving persuaders" in history, first entered Qin (escaping from Wei) hidden in a carriage driven by a returning Qin ambassador. The Marquis of Rang saw the carriage coming, stopped it and asked the ambassador, "What news is there from east of the Pass?"

"None."

"You shall be seeing the king: I presume you have managed not to bring along with you any *roving persuaders from the dukes*. There is no profit in (such men), only trouble for a man's kingdom!"

"I would not dare (smuggle in any agents)!"

The Marquis rode away, but his suspicions soon caused him to circle back and have the carriage searched. But Fan Sui had escaped by then. Within five years, Fan would win the Qin king's favor and re-

place the Marquis as prime minister. (*Shi ji* 79/2402-3, 2412.)

Line 3. RULE MY ONE TRNECH 專一壑 . I.e., "I am now a frog in a small well" (Wang was Envoy of the Jixi Shrine): my scope for action has shrunk to almost nothing." Alludes to the foolish little frog who was happy and proud to "*rule this single sinkhole* of water" 專一壑之水 (having no idea there were greater things outside). (*Zhuangzi yinde* 45/XVII/70.)

Line 4. LIT.: "Each time I meet a carriage and horse, I panic and make guesses about it." I.e., "I am as paranoid as the Marquis of Rang was: *I suspect each carriage hides an enemy*."

Wang may also be comparing himself with Tao Qian, quietly retired practically all his life. Though there were "carts and horses" where Tao lived, they did not seek him, nor did he find them bothersome:

> I built a hut where other people dwell,
> Yet there is no noise of *carriages or horses*:
> People ask me, 'How can this be so?'
> If my heart is far away, my place will be secluded...
> 結廬在人境，而無車馬喧 .
> 問君何能爾，心遠地自偏 .

("Drinking Wine"飲酒 , 5th in a series, *Jingjie xiansheng ji* 3/27.)

Although Wang is still being humorous, his tone is less superficial than in the previous poem. It is perilous to extract autobiography from poetry (poets seldom write exactly what they do or feel); yet the fact that Wang would mention being startled at the noise of a carriage shows that something may have been bothering him, especially when we read it in conjunction with the next few poems. We need not go so far as to say he was eager for a reappointment, however: that interpretation fits neither Wang's life as we know it nor the original allusion.[116] The allusion is not to a man awaiting an Imperial messenger, but to one who fears that any carriage may conceal an *enemy* sent

[116] See *Houjing lu* 3/27.

to unseat him. The poem may date, then, from Wang's early retirement, when he still worried that the New Policies might collapse without him, or that the men he had ousted might come back. Each carriage potentially brought an exiled friend, or a new conservative local governor; or news of a key death, abolition or outbreak of war. But wryly he finds these fears absurd: despite his high rank, he is now just a frog in a puddle. It is foolish for a frog in a puddle to think as if he were still a national figure: he should be learning to follow Tao Qian, and find contentment in his village lane.

The poem's aptness lies in its juxtaposition of humor with starkness; Wang's awareness of how foolish he is, combined with helplessly wondering how not to be foolish anymore. One senses that Wang in his early retirement had energy to burn despite ill health, but had not learned to use this energy for any purpose other than saving the nation.[117]

[117]Zhou Xifu dates this poem to Wang's late retirement, after Shenzong's death: every "carriage" that arrived would bring fresh news of how Wang's policies were being undone. The tone is "far different from his other Yuanfeng-era poetry," says Zhou.

My conclusion is different from Zhou's: first, I do not find the tone unusual; second, Wang sees himself in the poem, not as the *retired* Marquis, but as a frog in a pothole who *thinks he is* the Marquis, *still in power*. Though this does not preclude a late-retirement date, I believe the poem's complexity and humor fit better with his early retirement.

WALKING CANE

Walking cane tracks the waters,
swings about the Eastern Hill°
Until the feeling quits,
I journey back to bed
Where rights and wrongs of bygone Kings
invade my dreams:°
Plainly
my Lingering Habits are not all forgot.°

杖藜

杖藜隨水轉東岡，興罷還來赴一床。
堯桀是非猶入夢，固知餘習未全忘。

LOCATION. Li Bi 41.5a/989; *Linchuan* 27/309; Longshu 75/793; *Cai Kuanfu shihua* p. 407; Zhou Xifu p. 153.

DATE. After 1076, at Jiangning.

Line 1. EASTERN HILL 東岡. Zhou Xifu identifies it as White-Earth Hill (Baitugang 白土岡), a spot Wang often mentions in his poems set on Mt. Zhong.

Line 3. LIT.: "The rights and wrongs of Kings Yao and Jie come yet into my dreams." Yao represents the best of the ancient emperors; Jie, the worst.

Line 4. PLAINLY 固知. I take the variant 固 ("definitely"), instead of Li Bi's 因 ("therefore").

One day, says the story, Wang was napping on Mt. Zhong. He dreamed of a man in ancient garb and awesome aspect, who said "I am

Jie!" (the ancient evil emperor). He and Wang debated principles of government for over a hundred rounds, neither man backing down, until Wang awoke sweating head to toe. Wang smiled at his followers, saying "Do I have such lingering thought-patterns even now?" He then wrote this poem. (See *Cai Kuanfu*, Li Bi, Zhou Xifu.)

As a poem it is a perfect example of the narrative-quatrain structure: an opening 起 (Wang's stroll), a development 承 (back to bed), a twist 轉 (the dreams), and a final knot 結 (Wang's conclusion). Each stage is strongly presented, surprises the reader, and holds the reader's interest.

EMOTIONS AT NORTH MOUNTAIN

My Oath of Holy Incense I deliver to North Mountain°
Where, by the Ruler's Grace, once more among men I grow old.
I hurt inside, hesitate
on the road
atop the knoll
Tomorrow, spring breeze on its own shall travel and return.

北山有懷

香火因緣寄北山，主恩投老更人間
傷心躑躅岡頭路，明日春風自往還

LOCATION. Li Bi 42.5b/1016.

DATE. Probably after 1076; springtime, at Jiangning.

Line 1. OATH OF HOLY INCENSE 香火因緣. May refer to an oath of fealty or support between Wang and Emperor Shenzong. (Wang mentions such an oath in his letter of thanks to Shenzong on converting the Banshan home to a temple in 1084: *Linchuan* 60/648.) This would be congruent with "By the Ruler's Grace" 主恩 in the next line.

Li Bi says this line refers to a Lingzhen Ancestral Hall 禎真祠, which I have not yet identified.

Wang seems to have written this not long after his retirement began. He has served his Emperor as he swore to from the beginning; now the Emperor sees fit to have Wang return to the regular world. Wang accepts the decision, which was partly his own, but cannot avoid being somewhat unhappy, especially when he imagines a day not far off,

when he will disappear and the spring wind will blow alone.[118]

If that was so, then was the next poem in Wang's collection written on the next day, after Wang's mood had improved? One imagines him taking another trip up to the Dinglin Temple, where he began to look around him instead of into his own unhappy mind (Li Bi 42.5b/1016):

DINGLIN TEMPLE

Throughout spring, the deep-flung canyon knows no sight of flowers;
New pines, old cedars, simply lean and slant.
Earnestly I climb more, to the peak to gaze—
Inside the wall at Baixia, how many homes?

定林院

窮谷經春不識花，新松老柏自欹斜
慇勤更上山頭望，白下城中有幾家

(Baixia is Jinling, specifically the northeastern corner.) Wang is starting to find a perspective, and to learn to see the area (and his retirement) as a home "among men," with a place for himself as well.[119]

[118]This interpretation depends largely upon intuition. Li Bi could not determine what the poem meant. He thought it might be a poem of loneliness after saying farewell to guests; otherwise it might be referring to Wang's home at Linchuan.

[119]Note these two poems' rhymes: the first uses the same rhymes as Wang's more cheerful poems under P 74; the second uses the same rhymes he used to his daughter, in a similar tone of voice--P 44-45.

GAZING NORTH

I yearn to see Huai-nan, my head grows whiter°

Walking cane, soft breeze, I stand on the Watery Isle°

Pity the new moon, who is it lovely for?

Numberless dusk hills face each other, sad°

北望

欲望淮南更白頭，杖藜蕭颯倚滄洲

可憐新月為誰好，無數晚山相對愁。

LOCATION. Li Bi 47.12b/1170; Longshu 71/764.

DATE. Undatable. At Jiangning.

Line 1. HUAINAN 淮南 . The regions north and northeast of Jiangning, including Yangzhou, Gaoyou, Chuzhou and other places where Wang had been in his youth, and where some of his friends from early days had lived. (Wang Ling, Wang Hui, Zhang Gui.) Perhaps he was also thinking farther north, to the capital.

Line 2. WATERY ISLE 滄洲 . A hidden islet or shore, home of men who are worthy to be rulers but choose reclusion instead:

"...to go to the *Watery Isle* and take leave of Zhibo..."
臨滄洲而謝支伯

(worthy recluse who refused King Shun's offer of the throne). (Ruan Ji, "Note on Behalf of Zheng Chong, Advising the King of Jin" 為鄭沖勸晉王牋 . *Wenxuan* 40/890.)

Lines 1-2. May echo two lines by Du Fu, about longing to retire and go home:

"...This officer finds the *Watery Isle* seems *farther*,
Grown old, I grieve only that I have not 'shaken off my robes'" (and retired there)...

更情更覺滄洲遠，老大徒傷未拂衣。

("Wine Banquet by the Crooked River" 曲江對酒 , *Du shi jingquan* 4.18b/177.)

Lines 3-4. I.E.: "I wonder who is still alive in those far places?" This echoes four famous lines by Du Fu:

> ...I know not whom the *bright moon is lovely for*,
> Or how soon, on another night, one boat may sail home,
> Where I shall *lean myself, white-haired*, upon the
> courtyard tree,
> Our old garden, pond and terrace--are they still there?"
> 不知明月為誰好，早晚孤舟他夜歸
> 會將白髮倚庭樹，故園池台今是非.

(From second of "Two Poems on the Autumn Wind"秋風二首, *Du shi jing-quan* 16.14a/546.)

I believe Wang was recalling the days when he had just received the *jinshi*, and had friends throughout the Huainan region--many of them dead by the time he wrote this. The "Watery Isle" is where contentment lies, and respite, and old age--Wang has reached it (unlike Du Fu), and the moon is new, yet he feels old and severed from places he once knew. He has learned that one can still miss a place even if it is not one's home. One can still wonder "whom the moon is lovely for."

Like many of Wang's quatrains, the second couplet of this one is strictly but unobtrusively parallel.[121]

[121] See also P 19, P 80 (both couplets); P 81-82; "On Early Summer" 初夏即事, Li Bi 41.9a/997; "Willows"楊柳, Li Bi 42.9a/1023, trans. Yoshikawa-Watson p. 96.

江上二首 其二 TWO POEMS WRITTEN ON THE KIANG: THE SECOND

書自江邊使 A letter brought from the reaches of the Kiang:
鄉鄰病餓稠 My countrymen and neighbors, sick and hungry.°
何言萬里客 Why do they tell me this, a far-flung traveller?°
更作百身憂 It adds more to my century's worth of care.°
補敗今誰恤 To mend their hurt--who now has such compassion?
趨生我自羞 Or just live on--I'm ashamed, but that describes me.°
西南雙病眼 Southwestward, with this pair of ailing eyes°
落日倚扁舟 Under falling sun, I grip my "shallow skiff."°

LOCATION. Li Bi 24.12b/606; *Linchuan* 16/217; Longshu 71/763; Guangzhou p. 282.

DATE. After 1076, at Jiangning?

Line 2. LIT.: "My countrymen and neighbors (at Linchuan) suffer sickness and hunger in great numbers." (Cf. the first poem of the pair, not translated: "This famine year covers half the Nine Provinces" 凶年半九州.)

Line 3. LIT.: "How can one say that a sojourner from ten thousand *li*..."

Line 4. LIT.: "...(Who would know that I) would additionally have a hundred-life sorrow?"

Lines 3-4 seem to echo a couplet by Du Fu:

...Long have I been a *far-flung traveller*,
I owe remorse to my "*hundred-year*" lot in *life*...
長年萬里客，有媿百年身.

("Middle of the Night" 中夜 , *Du shi jingquan* 14.5b/475.)

Line 6. LIT.: "(I merely) pursue life--and am ashamed of myself (for that)."

Line 7. SOUTHWESTWARD 西南 . Looking toward Linchuan from Jiangning.

Line 8. SHALLOW SKIFF 扁舟 . I.e., "I am retired." The skiff symbolizes the carefree retired man who had done his part. (The first man to retire to a "shallow skiff" was the strategist Fan Li 范蠡, who had served the King of Yue and wiped out his shame, by defeating Wu. Fan Li thought now was the time to use his talents for his own family: he sailed inland on a "shallow skiff," changed his name and made a fortune. *Shi ji* 129/3257.)

Wang admired two lines by Li Shangyin:[122]

Rivers and lakes forever in my mind,

where I shall homeward go when my hair is white--

I would turn the Land and Sky around,

then board my *shallow skiff*...

永憶江湖歸白髮，欲迴天地入扁舟.

Wang had spent his youth and middle age as Li Shangyin had wanted to: he had "turned the world around" as few ever could. Now his white hairs had grown in, and there was a skiff for him--he could rest, as his tired frame demanded. But his conscience kept posing the same hard questions it had when he was a young officer ashamed to be part of what he most despised (see P 3). This time it was Wang's own neighbors who were hungry; he was far away, but could not have seen them--much less aided them--even if he were close. His "skiff" was

[122] *Cai Kuanfu shihua*, p. 399. Li's complete poem is "The Drum Tower at Anding" 安定城樓, in *Li Yishan shiji zhu* B.21/301. Cf. translation by James J.Y. Liu, *Li Shang-yin*, #50.

becoming a vain, hollow symbol.

But he had more complex thcughts about retirement, as the following poem shows.

RETURNING HOME ALONE

By myself
homeward from Mount Zhong
rain darkens it a shade
Green has turned half yellow--
rice fields frame the knoll.°

Tired farmers understand this water is too scarce
They watch the clouds, lean into their waterwheel rails,
and do not quit pumping°

Yes it is melancholy how they toil--
and has lasted long
Their songs at sunset seem to weep,
one is hard put to listen.

And lucky me,
my easy post, no duties to perform:°
My northward window, bed and mat
on which cool breezes blow°

Right on time, the lotuses raise emerald canopies°
Small ripples teasing snow--
a thousand gracile beauties--

Who is there to nap with me, together in this joy?
Though the autumn cove is shallow now,
it can float a covered skiff.

獨歸

鍾山獨歸雨微冥，稻畦夾岡半黃青
疲農心知水未足，看雲倚木車不停
[陂]
憔哉作勞亦已久，暮歌如哭難為聽
而我官閑幸無事，北窗枕簟風泠泠
於時荷花擁翠蓋，細浪鰷鯈雪千娉婷
誰能欹眠共此樂，秋滿雖淺可揚舲

LOCATION. Li Bi 4.10a/239; *Linchuan* 3/103; Longshu 51/575; Shimizu p. 5.

DATE. 1077 or 1081? I tentatively date this together with P 17 (1081), because weather conditions seems to have been the same. It could also date from 1077, when Wang had just retired--judging from the tone of voice.

Line 2. GREEN HAS TURNED HALF YELLOW 半黃青 . The rice is maturing: yellow tassels, green stalks.

Line 4. LIT.: "They watch the clouds, lean on the wood, their wheels do not stop."

Line 7. LIT.: "And as for me, my post is leisurely, and I am lucky to have no duties."

Line 8. NORTHWARD WINDOW 北窗 . Implies *leisure in a perfect world*. Wang is following Tao Qian's example: Tao Qian said that when he lay by the *northern window* on a lazy summer day, with a clean breeze coming in, it was as if he belonged to the golden age of King Fuxi. (*Jin shu* 94/2462-3.)

Line 9. LOTUSES / EMERALD CANOPIES 荷花 / 翠蓋. Each lotus resembles a rider in a carriage, raising its leaf as a canopy.

"To know how much is enough" 知足 usually refers to someone who has learned to control the urge for wealth or prestige: to "be satisfied with what one has." Such an attitude had always come naturally

to Wang. But it was harder for him to use that philosophy to "be satisfied with what one *has done*:" to reduce his sense of mission and compulsion to do useful work. His health and position now prevented him from helping others on a large scale, as he admitted with chagrin and despair in the previous poem. He had to learn that he could do society more good by functioning calmly within it than by being depressed about not being able to help.

The present poem shows that he could indeed achieve that mental equilibrium, or at least describe it on paper: he talks of the farmers' plight much as he would have forty years earlier--but his reaction is utterly different. Without irony or remorse, he sets out to enjoy the breeze. He calls himself "lucky" 幸 to hold a sinecure--he is neither smug about it nor ashamed, but matter-of-fact. He appreciates the leisure, and knows that there is no alternative for him. We can assume he would be equally matter-of-fact if he were in a difficult post and not a sinecure.

Equilibrium even influences the poem's structure: exactly half describes the farmers, while half shows Wang. Certain words and phrases deepen the poem:

"Green has turned half yellow" 半黃青 --this is the crucial midpoint, when the crop could either fail or else grow mightily. The outcome is set, but no one knows what it will be. The farmers' songs are "hard to listen to" 難為聽: Wang is sympathetic, pained, but has already told us why the men are waiting (they are weary, it has not rained).

The lotus plants are growing "on time" 於時 : that implies

hope for the rice. When Wang turns from the rice fields to watch the play of lotuses on water, he is not saying "Let the farmers eat cake," but is recognizing reality: the flowers are as real as anything else, they are natural, and nature is basically harmonious. He lacks a companion--this implies that people with his kind of leisure are rare. He is at leisure because he has done enough; he knows it is enough; he is "satisfied." He is in harmony with the world, whether it be with his boat or with the farmers' wailing.

VISIT TO THE QI AN TEMPLE, (FIRST MONTH OF) THE YEAR GENG-SHEN°

Willow upon willow, to the water's south and north
Behind the hills, before the hills, spots and spots of plums°

Until this body follows all things in their transformation°
I shall use this time to come here, year by lengthy year.°

庚申〔正月〕遊齊安院

水南水北重重柳，山後山前處處梅
未即此身隨物化，年年長趁此時來

LOCATION. Li Bi 43.1b/1034; *Linchuan* 29/325; Longshu 63/682; Iritani p. 133.

DATE. 1080.1, at Jiangning. ("First month:" given as the date of this poem in the title to the poem he wrote at the same temple two years later. Li Bi, same page.)

QI AN TEMPLE (Temple of Undifferentiated Peace) 齊安寺. Outside the east gate of Jiangning, by the road into town from Wang's house at Banshan. Also called the Jingmiao Temple 淨妙寺. Dated from the Southern Tang. (See Li Bi under the 1082 poem.)

Lines 1-2. LIT.:

"*South* of the *water*, *north* of the *water*, *layers* and *layers* of *willows*; *Behind* the *hills*, *before* the *hills*, *spots* and *spots* of *plumtrees*"

Note the repetitions and exact parallelism. The original also has alliteration, and perfect tonal contrasts:

shui / shan (water / mountain)
chongchong / chuchu (layers / spots)

Line 3. ALL THINGS' TRANSFORMATION 物化. Death. Or, the differentiation and evolution of all things from a primeval core. (*Zhuangzi yinde* 7/II/96, 34/XIII/14, 40/XV/10.)

Line 4. LIT.: "Year after year I shall long take advantage of this season to come here." (More alliteration and repetition: *niánnián*--year after year, and *cǐshēn / cǐshí*--this body / this time.)

When read aloud for its sound, this exuberant piece recalls the opening of Du Fu's poem welcoming a guest to his house in the country:[123]

South of the house, *north* of the house, spring waters all around;
And all we see are flocks of gulls that come *day after day*...
舍南舍北皆春水，但見群鷗日日来 ...

Wang's intensity comes from what his spring torrent of words is saying: a calm, intellectual statement about how to find repose in the face of seasons and death.

Wang may have written this poem on the temple wall. Two years later the words had yellowed and gathered dust; but the plums blossomed as before. Wang knew that he and his poem would follow in their cycle.

[123]"A Guest Arrives" 客至 , *Du shi jingquan* 8.4a/277.

與道原遊西庵遂至草堂寶乘寺二首

TWO POEMS ON VISITING THE WESTERN CLOISTER WITH SHEN JIZHANG, AFTER WHICH WE WENT TO THE THATCHED HALL, OR TEMPLE OF THE PRECIOUS VEHICLE°

其一

THE FIRST (P 97)

桑楊已零落　Mulberry, willow, already droop and fade,
藻荇亦銷沈　Likewise water weeds shrivel and sink.
園宅在人境　My garden home "stands in the realm of men"°
歲時傷我心　Where passing years and seasons wound my heart.°
強穿西塏路　We struggle over the road by the Western Dyke,°
共望北山岑　Both gazing toward North Mountain's pointed peak.°
欲與道人語　We want to talk with a Follower of the Path;
跨鞍聊一尋　So mount our saddles, and try to make our search.

其二

THE SECOND (P 98)

親朋會合少　With friends and kin my meetings are infrequent;
時序感傷多　From Time's progress I feel uncounted wounds.
勝踐聊為樂　A trek through famous ground can serve as pleasure,°
清談可當歌　And "pure discourse" may substitute for song.°
微風漾水竹　The still, small breeze stirs water and bamboo,
靜日暖煙蘿　A tranquil sun warms mist and hanging vines.
興極猶難盡　Our interest at its peak, yet hard concluded;
當如薄暮何　What shall we do about this pressing dusk?°

LOCATION. Li Bi 22.5b/554; *Linchuan* 14/196; Longshu 65/699.

DATED BY WANG: 1080.10.24.

SHEN JIZHANG 沈季長 (1027—1087). Wang's third brother-in-law, friend and political supporter. His home was at Zhenzhou, across the river from Jiangning. He lost his father at age four, and studied assiduously, passing the *jinshi* at only sixteen (1043). He became a professor at the Nanjing National Academy, and went on to a distinguished career in government and the academies. His creative and scholarly writings were quite numerous. In his late years, after being fired from his post, he studied Buddhist sutras with quiet dedication. (See tomb inscription by Wang Anli, *Wang Weigong ji* 王魏公集, *Yuzhang congshu* edition, 8.4b-9a. Also pp. 218-219 above.)

WESTERN CLOISTER 西庵. On Mt. Zhong, where Wang studied Chan. (See title note to P 40.)

THATCHED HALL TEMPLE 草堂寺. Also on Mt. Zhong. The former home of Zhou Yu 周顒(d. 485), Southern Qi official, calligrapher, poet; vegetarian; expert on Daoism, the *Book of Changes* and Buddhism. He had converted his home into a temple, much as Wang Anshi would convert his own home four years after writing this poem. (*Jinling fansha zhi* 3.66b/438, 3.82a/463.)

P 97, Line 3. STANDS IN THE REALM OF MEN 在人境. I.e., "I am a recluse, although I live in town." (A direct quote from Tao Qian: see P 90, line 4.)

P 97, line 4. May echo Ruan Ji's "Poems Singing of my Feelings" 詠懷詩: "Sorrowfully thinking, alone with *wounded heart*" 憂思獨傷心 (#1); "Despair and desolation *wound my heart*" 慷慨傷我心 (#10); "Gazing in the distance makes one sad; / Springtime air puts feelings in my heart" 遠望令人悲，春氣感我心 (#17); "Nothing but a life-prolonging art / Can ever be a comfort for my heart" 獨有延年術，可以慰我心 (#16). *Wenxuan* 23/487-492.

P 97, Line 5. WESTERN DYKE 西塍. There seems to be no identification for this place, or for the variant "Southern Dyke."

P 97, Line 6. GAZING TOWARD NORTH MOUNTAIN'S POINTED PEAK 望北山岑. Implies *somber longing*, including a longing to find a wise man on the mountain. Ruan Ji, "Singing of My Feelings" #10:

I walk out from the Upper Eastern Gate,
And *northward gaze* at Shouyang's *pointed peak*...
步出上東門，北望首陽岑.

(*Wenxuan* 23/490; trans. also in Donald Holzman, *Poetry and Politics:*

The Life and Works of Juan Chi (AD 210--263); London: Cambridge, 1976, p. 25. *Shouyang* was where four Shang-dynasty loyalist recluses had lived in poverty. The poem as a whole laments autumn, bad government, and human sorrow.)

P 98, Lines 3-4. FAMOUS GROUND / PURE DISCOURSE 勝蹟/清談. Both lines refer to the Six Dynasties, Jinling's golden age: its bygone sites, and the "repartee" for which its literary men had been famous. (P 78, note to line 51.)

P 98, Line 4. SUBSTITUTE FOR SONG 當歌. A possible echo of Cao Cao's "Ballad of a Short Song." (See P 65, line 5.)

P 98, Lines 7-8 (and line 2). Some echoes, in rhyme-words and tone of voice, from Ruan Ji's "Singing of my Feelings" #8:

...Yellow gold, one hundred ingots *finished*,
A constant worry, *too much* to spend it for.
Northward I approach the Taihang Road,
And *what shall I do* if I lose the way?
黃金百溢盡，資用常苦多．
北臨太行道，失路將如何．

(*Wenxuan* 23/489-90.)

The sentiments are Wang's but the language comes from the Wei and Jin dynasties. (Some affinities are listed in the notes.) If Wang has failed to capture a complete Wei-Jin atmosphere, it is because he uses more Wei-Jin phrases than poets from that time actually used. In particular: "in the realm of men" 在人境 , "substitute for song" 當歌 , and "Pure Discourse" 清談 (a term associated with the Wei and Jin in later dynasties, but not commonly mentioned in Wei-Jin poetry: see P 78, line 51.)

Wang has also used Wei-Jin themes, such as sorrow at the passing of time; isolation; and aspiring toward a wise man on a hilltop. Between the language and the themes, the first poem contains nothing wholly original other than the fact that it depicts a real event.

Song-dynasty consciousness shows only in the second poem, especially toward the end where the "tranquil sun warms mist and hanging vines." The vines are Jin-dynasty, but the serenity is Song, as is the fact that one cannot tell if the line, or the whole poem, is cheerful or melancholy. (Wei and Jin poems that mentioned short life were usually melancholy or defiant.) Wang's final couplet, too, is understated and matter-of-fact, and one can read it two ways: the two men regret that sunset is cutting short their outing, and that old age will cut short their explorations of philosophy.

One imagines that Wang visited the Western Cloister in search of the kind of companionship he had known there with the monk Zanyuan, who probably had just died. It was no hard thing to go visit the monks, even for elderly men--just ride their donkeys up the hill. That is Song optimism. But in writing about the event, perhaps the emotions involved suggested a Wei-Jin mode to Wang (though he reverted to Song phrases toward the end), or perhaps he set out deliberately to imitate early poetry. Whatever the motivation, the result is a pair of poems whose originality lies midway between Wang's typical verse and his famous "Collected Lines"集句 (poems written using complete lines from existing poetry). It was the middle type of poetry translated here--half borrowed, half new--that Huang Tingjian and the Jiangxi School would refine into a high art in the next generation.

歲晚 THE YEAR IS LATE

月映林塘澹 Moon shines upon the wooded pool--silent
風含笑語涼 Wind brings within it talk and laughter--cool
俯窺憐綠淨 I dart a glance down, loving green clean-rinsed
小立佇幽香 I stand a while--commanded by hidden fragrance,
攜幼尋新蔣 Grasp children's hands, to seek out lotus kernels
扶衰坐野航 Prop my old frame, riding the rustic ferry°
延緣久未已 Long dallying in mid-stride, I linger still°
歲晚惜流光 The year is late--cherish its moving light!

LOCATION. Li Bi 22.1b/546; *Linchuan* 14/193; Longshu 72/771; *Shilin guangji* B2/221; Zhou Xifu p. 177; Iritani p. 135.

DATE. Undatable. Probably written in late middle age.

Lines 5-6. Iritani suggests that Wang was taking Anguo's children or grandchildren on this outing, and that he may have felt old pangs at having lost his son Wang Fang.

Line 7. DALLYING IN MID-STRIDE 延緣. May allude to Confucius, age 68, "lingering in the reeds" by the water 延緣葦間, gazing at the departing "Fisherman" 漁父 who had taught him about the true *Dao*, but had then departed, refusing to let Confucius follow him. (*Zhuangzi yinde* 87/XXXI/43.)

"Deep in essence and subtle in ornament" 精深華妙, tauter than his youthful poetry, this is a piece that Wang himself compared to those of the nature-poet Xie Lingyun 謝靈運 (385--433). Many agreed with him.[124] But in fact we do not need to look to other poets to

[124] See the anonymous Song-dynasty *Mansou shihua* 漫叟詩話 (*Song shihua jiyi* p. 362), also *Shilin guangji*.

appreciate this piece: it is one of Wang's most characteristic and supple creations. It contains no overt allusions: all it has taken from earlier poetry are the overtones of individual words. Each syllable evokes reveries, especially the four rhyme words: "cool" (*liáng* 涼), "fragrant" (*xiāng* 香), "ferry" (*háng* 航), and "light" (*guāng* 光). The moonlight and silent pond suggest not only a waning year but a waning life--the "ferry" suggests a transition, perhaps even a Buddhist journey to the Other Shore. Wang spends most of the poem standing and lingering: the outdoors takes on a wondrous glow; he "loves" 憐 the green lotus leaves, and "cherishes" fleeting life. And a human warmth suffuses the scene: laughter 笑語 brought in on the breeze; children in tow 攜幼 ; a slow evening boat ride.

We hear echoes-- "laughter and talk" muffled through the curtains when Wang was proctoring the *jinshi* examinations (P 34); a boat "yawing its hull" under a stormy midnight moon, taking him away from Wang Hui perhaps forever (P 29); Wang walking through the garden to break out of set habits (P 13); two brothers going to sleep on a boat beneath the Jiuhuashan peaks, then awaking the next day on the same boat to the same mountains, bathed in light (P 68). These are the sorts of "allusions" that make this poem the treasure it is: Wang became as good a writer as Xie Lingyun, not by using Xie's phrases but by accumulating experience, technique and aspirations as Xie had done.

Some have wondered whether a man who could write such a poem could really have been as stern and unreasonable as Wang was said to be: the answer to that should be clearer now, but the question may be shallow and irrelevant. Iritani asks something more pertinent: might

this be the work of a man who loved humanity so much that he failed to see or plan for the dark side of other human beings? (See also pp. 82-84 above.) That may be too large a query for a poem to answer. But we may be sure that no matter how reticent, stern or serious Wang appeared, inside he was much like anyone else. He had probably always been warm-hearted; now in late middle age he had the poetic power to express it.

WHERE MY THOUGHTS TAKE ME

I go where my thoughts take me, into brambles
that hands push open of their own accord
Follow the ridge, cross a ditch
again I climb the terrace:°
Small bridge
wind and dew
coracle moon°
Lost birds
widowed she-birds
sense when I go and come.°

隨 意-

隨意柴荊手自開，沁崗度塹復登台
小橋風露扁舟月，迷鳥羈雌覺往來
[鏡]

LOCATION. Li Bi 41.6b/992; *Linchuan* 27/310; Longshu 75/797.

DATE. By all indications, this was written in retirement. The Longshu edition groups it among ten "Moments at Banshan" 半山即事十首.

Line 2. CROSS DITCHES 度塹. This "ditch" could also be the Jinling city moat.

Line 3. CORACLE MOON 扁舟月 . Lit., "*Shallow-skiff* moon." Either a moon shaped like a small boat, or a moon under which Wang could ride a boat. Either way, the "boat" suggests retirement from high office. (See P 94, P 95.)

Line 4. LOST BIRDS, WIDOWED SHE-BIRDS 迷鳥羈雌 . These are the birds who missed home and family when Xie Lingyun knew them:

...*Widowed she-birds* cherish their old mates,
Lost birds long for their former woods.
They have emotions, and they know love's labor
How can I part from the one my heart admires?...
鸛雌戀舊侶，迷鳥懷故林.
含情尚勞襲，如何離賞心.

("Going Out from the Western Archery Hall at Twilight" 晚出西射堂, *Wenxuan* 22/471. Cf. trans. by Frodsham and Ch'eng, pp. 126-7.)

These are also some of the birds who took shelter in the great Tong tree of the Dragon Gate, and from there listened spellbound to the mournful songs of the greatest musicians of all time. (Mei Sheng枚乘, "Seven Stimuli"七發, *Wenxuan* 34/749.)

SENSE 覺. I take the reading Li Bi recommends (but does not use in the text itself), from an "authentic edition"真本. It makes better sense than the usual reading of競"(the birds) *race* (back and forth)." I believe that "sense" was the original reading: it is often written 竟, which in turn looks like "in the end" 竟, which was the reading in many editions (through a miscopying of 竟?), and was then corrected by most editors to "race"競, which can be abbreviated as 竞.

Using "sense"覺, we find an allusion to Du Fu:

...No one *senses when I come or go*,
Stopped, listless, how long this feeling lasts!
無人覺來往，踈懶意何長.

("The Western Outskirts"西郊, *Du shi jingquan* 8.3b/276.)
Wang Anshi once praised the use of the word "sense"覺 in Du Fu's poem. (See *Du shi jingquan* note.) It seems likely, then, that Wang was alluding to that word and that line when he wrote the present poem.

The picture of Wang melting so thoroughly into Nature that only the birds knew he was coming and going, has nowhere been better portrayed. This is the approximation of "no-mind" toward which he strove: he does not think of himself as walking, but rather sees landmarks pop up in front of him, as his hands clear the way unbidden. The "shallow skiff" (his retirement) is now just a crescent gleam in the corner of his eye.

Why is it the "lost" and "widowed" birds who see him coming? Because these are the birds who have feelings, the birds with which a

human can communicate--if he has learned to silence his own feelings and to sense theirs.

CLIMBING THE PAGODA OF MASTER BAO°

Tired boy, weary horse, I leave at the pine gate,
Lean my own staff upon the base of the rocks;
Moon over the Kiang wheels blank sky into white day;
Clouds on the ridge split dark from yellow dusk

Squirrels bob on branches, lonely pinnacle
and then their sound arises,
Crows dart up, frigid bleakness
shadow slides toward shadow.

At this juncture, I know not who is hosting whom°
The Man of the Path forgets "me"
I have forgotten speech°

登寶公塔

1 倦童疲馬放松門．自把長笻倚石根
3 江月轉空為白晝，嶺雲分暝與黃昏
5 鼠搖岑寂聲隨起，鴉矯荒寒影對翻
7 當此不知誰客主，道人忘我我忘言

LOCATION. Li Bi 27.1a/657; *Linchuan* 17/227; Longshu 65/702; Zhou Xifu p. 179; Shimizu p. 109.

DATE. Probably after 1076, at Jiangning.

PAGODA OF MASTER BAO 寶公塔. Possibly Wang Fang's burial place, see P 60.

Line 7. WHO IS HOSTING WHOM 誰客主. Lit., "Who is guest and who is host." This may allude to the story of two worthy recluses who were good friends (Sima Hui 司馬徽 and Pang Degong 龐德公): Sima went to call on Pang, but Pang was out. Sima had Mrs. Pang make dinner. Sima started eating, and when Pang came back neither of them knew who was "host" and who was "guest." (*Sanguo zhi* 37/953-4.)

Line 8. MAN OF THE PATH (or "of the *Dao*") 道人: a Buddhist monk.

FORGETS "ME:" / FORGOTTEN SPEECH 忘我 / 忘言. Terms for a certain kind of enlightenment. See Tao Qian describing the quiet scenery by his house:

> Within all this, there is a real meaning:
> I would discuss it, but have *forgotten speech*.
> 此中有真意, 欲辨已忘言.

("Drinking Wine" 飲酒, #5 of 20, *Jingjie xiansheng ji* 3/27-28.) And see *Zhuangzi*: "Fish *forget each other* in streams and lakes; men *forget each other* in the ways of the *Dao*" 魚相忘乎江湖, 人相忘乎道術. (*Zhuangzi yinde* 18/VI/73.) Also, one *forgets* the net after catching the fish--thus, once one has attained a meaning 意, he *forgets the words* with which that meaning had been expressed. (*Zhuangzi yinde* 75/XXVI/48.) The ultimate "forgetting" is to *forget while sitting* 坐忘: one's limbs seem to drop away, as well as all knowledge and consciousness; one then *interacts* 通 with all things. (*Zhuangzi yinde* 19/VI/92; trans. Graham, p. 92.)

The pagoda stood in the Kaishan Temple courtyard, on a knoll in front of the Dinglin Cloister. Wang has ridden up the steep path from his house at Banshan, left his horse and boy at the temple gate, leaned his cane on the cliff base, and climbed the tower unencumbered. The mountain slope rises in back of it, while the city spreads below in the sunset, with the Yangzi beyond. There is already a moon out. A line of clouds stretches above the ridge behind the pagoda: the back of the pagoda has grown dark, while the side toward the temple still glows with twilight. Wang can hear squirrels rustling, and see faint shadows of crows--black flitting against darkness. In such a setting, he and

the "host" are equals, having "forgotten" all they ever "knew." (This Man of the Path may be Zanyuan, with whom Wang sometimes sat in silence for a whole day. Or it could be the memory of Master Baozhi, dead over five hundred years, whose pagoda it was.)

Some of the lines here may have sources in earlier poetry, but what can be traced is tentative and not entirely relevant. The poem is quiet and "mystical," somewhat like those of Wang Wei, but still unique. The middle couplets are among the best Wang ever wrote: in particular line 4 (the line of clouds); also the utter silence and blackness of the crows in line 6.

It is a transcendental beauty that does indeed lead beyond "words" and images to something else. Regardless of what Wang may have felt he lacked in aptitude for Chan enlightenment, he unquestionably knew how to write about it.

ONCE MORE AT THE PAVILION IN MR. DUAN'S GARDEN°

1 I lie in a nap, then follow the water round the eastern wall,
One smudge of cooking smoke reflects upon the water, dark,
3 Broad spread the lotus, a path is hard to seek,
Tattered willow strands, I know only the gate.
5 A green hill overlaid with dew, fresh as if washed in dye
White birds frolic, they are quiet and do not bother me
7 By Redsparrow Bridge one finds this scene today°
Could I feel stirred by the Wu-ling Headwaters?°

又段氏園亭

1 欹眠隨水轉東垣，一點炊烟映水昏
3 漫漫芙蕖難覓路，翛翛楊柳獨知門
5 青山呈露新如染，白鳥嬉遊靜不煩
7 朱雀航邊今有此，可能搖蕩武陵源

LOCATION. Li Bi 26.1b/638; *Linchuan* 17/222; Longshu 67/723; Iritani p. 137.

DATE. Probably after 1076, at Jiangning.

MR. DUAN. Duan Feng 段縫 (*zi* Yuezhi 約之), official under the New Policies who retired to Jiangning as Wang did, was a friend of Wang's, and seems to have been religious. (Shen, p. 5. Poems to him from Wang: Li Bi 1.5b/168, 1.11a/179, 2.1a/183, 5.3a/247, 43.11a/1053. For Wang's first poem written in Duan's pavilion, see Li Bi 26.1a/637.)

Line 7. REDSPARROW BRIDGE 朱雀桁. I.e., the south side of Jinling, where the great Jin-dynasty families had built their mansions, and where Duan's garden now stood. During the Eastern Jin, the south bridge over the Qinhuai River had been a floating structure called the Redsparrow Bridge.

Line 8. I.E.: "Having a garden this fine, there is no more

need to seek the Utopia at Wuling." (See P 57.) LIT.: "Possible to stir up Wuling's headwaters?"

The sentence can be read several ways, although the significance is the same:

1. "Could this cause a stir at Wuling Headwaters?" (Grammatical but makes little sense.)

2. "Having seen your garden, could even the Wuling Utopia move me?" (Marginally grammatical, makes more sense. Used in this translation.)

3. "This could easily be the same feeling as that of being *rocked in a boat* 搖蕩 at the Wuling Headwaters." (Iritani's interpretation.)

4. (Using the Longshu variant 遠望 for 搖蕩): "One can *see, from far away*, the Wuling Headwaters."

Duan and Wang both saw Duan's garden as a place to "forget contrivances" 忘機 and unite with Nature. (Li Bi 26.1a/637.) The "path" 路 and "gateway" 門 (both rather hidden) may suggest mental exploration. But the last couplet implies that Wang feels little need to explore further: the "headwaters" that he could not find thirty years before, are no longer necessary for him. He has found equal peace in the middle of the city.

The poem's message is well-worn, but there is beauty in the way Wang presents it, with soft images such as the smudge of cooking smoke, the hills freshly dyed, and the birds that are no bother: these homely images all call to mind the "roosters and dogs" at Wuling, whose sounds Tao Qian had described. And the visual richness is enhanced by "green, white, red" beginning three successive lines--although this may be a stylistic defect.

ON WALKING (FROM THE HO MANSION) TO THE JINGDE TEMPLE WITH SHEN JIZHANG°

I used to see, occasionally, flowers "just as in the dream."°
Reds and purples spread about, shallow fought with deep.
Today I come once more, as if from the dream awakened;
The stillness holds no lingering scent that I could chase or seek.

與道原〔自何氏宅〕步至景德寺

前時偶見花如夢，紅紫紛披競淺深
今日重來如夢覺，靜無餘馥可追尋

LOCATION. Li Bi 42.1a/1007; Shen p. 100.

DATE. (Wang's own note): Yuan Feng 7.3.19 (late spring, 1084).

HE MANSION. See P 83.

JINGDE TEMPLE 景德寺. Located in the Jiarui Ward 嘉瑞坊, close to the center of Jinling. (*Jingding Jiankang zhi* 46.19b; Shen p. 100.) Presumably the He family estate, from which Wang walked, was nearby.

Line 1. "FLOWERS AS IN A DREAM" 花如夢. I.e.: "Reality and illusion are all one." The grandee Lu Yuan 陸亘大夫 asked Master Puyuan 普願 why another master had said "All things stem from the same thing; true and false are all of one piece." The Master replied, "When ordinary people see this clump of *flowers*, they *resemble a dream*." Lu Yuan could not fathom what this meant. (*Jingde chuandeng lu* 8/135; Li Bi mentions a different version.)

One's first enlightenment may blaze like flowers, and leave a scent in the mind. But that enlightenment is just as much a dream as the flowers are; the scent fades as one gradually grows "still" 靜. One then forgets the experience itself and enters the kind of under-

standing that enlightenment produces: recognition that there is no birth or destruction, no dream or awakening--scented or otherwise.

On the surface, Wang is describing this stillness. But the words seem wistful: did he feel disoriented? Was he still attached to the scent, and upset at its fading? Did the visit to the temple bring back memories of his "enlightenment" experience, clinging to which interfered with his entering full enlightenment? Shimmering flowers, contrasted with "stillness," may hint at some mental turmoil or weariness that would soon trigger Wang's physical collapse.

Even though we can only speculate about the poem's mood, the actual words are clear and bland: without a single emotion in the phrasing, the words do not direct our mood, but leave it free to meditate and change moods.

晝寢 "A NAP BY DAYLIGHT"°

井逕從蕪漫 Let the well-path spread out with its weeds:
青藜亦倦扶 I weary, too, to walk with my green cane.
百年惟有且 One hundred years contain no more than this;°
萬事揔無如 Among ten thousand events, nothing is "such."

棄置蕉中鹿 So let that deer lie buried deep in brush,°
驅除屋上烏 Rush to clear the ravens from the roof—°
獨眠窻日午 I slumber alone, noon sun in the window
往往夢華胥 And often dream a "Perfect Flowery Land."°

LOCATION. Li Bi 22.5a/553; *Linchuan* 14/196; Longshu 76/812.

DATE. (Wang's note): 1084.4.17, noontime. (Wang would have been at the Banshan house recovering from his stroke.)

"A NAP BY DAYLIGHT"晝寢. Wang compares his nap to another famous nap taken by the Yellow Emperor. After thirty years on the throne, the Yellow Emperor had grown depressed at the state of the realm, and blamed his own bad conduct. He left the palace, fasted and meditated for three months. *One day he slept* and dreamed of a Land of Huaxu 華胥氏之國, reachable only on a Spirit Journey: a land with no leaders, greed, fear of death, favoritism, hatred or scheming, but only what was Natural. Here the Yellow Emperor found himself impervious to fire and lightning, would not drown in water or fall in empty space.

Twenty-eight years after this vision, all China had become like the Land of Huaxu, under the Yellow Emperor's leadership. (*Liezi* 2/13.)

Line 3. "SUCH"如. Sanskrit *tathā*. A man left home to become a monk, then came back years later as an aged Brahmacārin. His neighbors asked, "Does your former self still exist?" 昔人尚存乎.

He replied, "I am simply *such*: the former person is not the former person" 吾猶如也，昔人非昔人也. (Li Bi note from unidentified source.)

Line 5. DEER...IN BRUSH蕉中鹿. I.E.: "I want to ignore all attachments and ecumbrances that may be mere dreams anyway." Wang

is refuting the conduct of a wood-gatherer who sued a man for taking a deer he had killed, after seeing the culprit's face in a dream:

The wood-gatherer had killed a deer, and hid the carcass under a pile of brush he had already gathered in the woods. But soon he forgot where he had hid the deer, and decided the whole thing *must have been a dream*. A passerby heard the woodcutter talking about the "dream," went and found the deer in the area the "dream" had mentioned. The passerby and a friend of his debated how much of the whole experience had been a dream, with the friend suggesting that both men had dreamed it all. "But I did get the deer," said the man who had found it.

Later, the wood-cutter dreamed he saw the passerby taking his deer; he sued the passerby. The magistrate had them share the deer equally. (*Liezi* 3/36.)

Line 6. RAVENS ON THE ROOF 屋上烏 . I.E.: "I would ignore outer omens and manifestations." (?) The allusion is unclear. Li Bi quotes a passage, "Those who love a man will likewise (love) the crows upon his roof" 愛其人者，兼屋上之烏. (Li cites the *Shuo yuan* 說苑, apparently by mistake.) It might refer to the auspicious Red Ravens 赤烏 who gathered on the palace roof of the first Zhou king when he conquered the Shang. (*Shi ji* 28/1366.)

Line 8. PERFECT FLOWERY LAND (Land of Huaxu)華胥 . See title note.

After Wang's illness, it mattered less that he see his former career as a dream, or that he worry about returning to office, or about how his successors were behaving. He could ignore omens, fears and portents. His house could go to weeds, he could end his restless outings. His dream altered everything. At this point, merely to *dream* of a perfect land was enough to assure Wang that a paradise on earth could exist--even if he would not live to create it, as the Yellow Emperor had.

泝桄 I RAFTED UPSTREAM (or: *Passing By My Old Home*)°

1 泝桄開新屋 Upstream I rafted, opened a new house—
扶輿遶故園 Now borne on the palanquin, I circle
the old estate.
3 事遺心獨寄 Events have gone, my heart just sojourns
with them;°
路翳目空存 The shaded path, these eyes preserve for naught.
5 野果寒林寂 Wildwood fruits, in frigid forest lonely;
蠻花午簟温 Tropical flowers where noontime mats are warm,
7 難忘舊時處 It is hard to forget this place from bygone times—
欲宿愧桑門 That I wish to sleep here shames me before
the monks.°

LOCATION. Li Bi 22.5a/553; *Linchuan* 14/196; Longshu 76/817.

DATE. After late 1084, when Wang had converted his Banshan house to a temple and moved into Jinling.

UPSTREAM 泝. Wang has moved upstream, from Banshan into town.

Line 3. MY HEART JUST SOJOURNS 心獨寄. Li Bi's interpretation: "This heart is as if sojourning or temporarily lodged 寄. It responds to things, but never tries to cling to them."

Line 8. THE MONKS 桑門. The people who now occupy Wang's house. Lit. the *śramaṇa* or monastic community.

He is learning to detach himself from things around him, all of which are in flux as is he. But he discovers a weak spot in himself when he sees his old home: the attachment he still feels to its cold fruit trees and sunny flowers makes him ashamed; it shows that he has

given away the place less than willingly, in a spirit unworthy of the work for which it is now used. His words are quiet, but show him being just as strict with himself as always.

Wang's lingering attachment is conveyed in the poem's sensuality--the straight-moving raft and circling palanquin; the shaded path (see P 106), wild fruits and tropical (barbarian) flowers, lonely woods and languid mats. His struggle against the attraction of these things--even to the extent of giving his house away--coupled with his confession at the end, makes this poem one of his most intimate and moving.

半山春晚即事 MOMENT AT BANSHAN, LATE SPRING

春風取花去 Spring wind scoops away the blossoms
酬我以清陰 To repay me with clear shade
翳翳陂路靜 Dark-grown hillside, quiet path°
交交園屋深 Flutter and chirping, house within the garden deep°
牀敷每小息 The "couch arrayed" on which I often rest;°
杖屨亦幽尋 Sandals and staff, to search for hidden views
惟有北山鳥 There are only birds, from off the Northern Mountain
經過遺好音 Who, passing through, deliver their good news.°

LOCATION. Li Bi 22.1b/546; *Linchuan* 14/193; Longshu 75/798; *Shi juyao* 4/521; Zhou Xifu p. 183; Shimizu p. 101. Trans. Tagore, p. 135.

DATE. After 1076, at Jiangning.

Line 3. LIT.: "Covered and dark, the hillside path is quiet."

Line 4. FLUTTER AND CHIRPING 交交. (Could also mean "criss-crossing.") Tentative translation of a term that Wang has used obscurely. Li Bi says it describes the shaded path. It has meant "small" (as birds), also "flitting back and forth" (佼佼), and "chirping" (交交 or 咬咬; see *Shijing* #131, #215.)

Line 5. COUCH ARRAYED 床敷. One of the comforts that a sincere seeker arranges for the Boddhisattva. (*Da fangbian Fuo bao en jing* 大方便佛報恩經, *Taishō Tripitaka* 3/3/131c. Also *Shi juyao*.)

Lines 7-8. BIRDS...DELIVER GOOD NEWS 鳥...遺好音. (Lit. "fine cries.") I.e., "The times are good." This may allude to *Zhou yi* #62 ("Xiao guo" 小過): "Flying *birds deliver their voices*; it is fitting that they not go high, but that they come low: great good fortune" 飛鳥遺之音,不宜上,宜下,大吉. I.e., a ruler should let his laws and teachings go down to the people, not remain in the palace.

(Gao Heng.) That way, the people will "cherish his good words" 懷我好音 (*Shijing* #299). Wang finds birds flying low as they should, reassuring him that the nation is sailing on course.

With emotions as subtle as leaves compared to blossoms, Wang describes his life at Banshan. The first two sentences are among his most memorable: colloquial, revisionist, fresh, at once happy and poignant (and admired by Huang Tingjian).[125] Celebrating leaves instead of blossoms is a Song trait, a change from the Tang. Wang's personal relation with the breeze also shows the intimacy and human presence that makes his quieter verses somewhat different from those of Wang Wei.

Wang Anshi's emotions are deep: his optimism and joy at the shady leaves is only implied, not stated; we also feel some regret that the blossoms are gone. How welcome is this leafy "reward," after all? The garden is secluded; so are Wang's thoughts. He does not merely wander with his cane--he *searches*. And, though the birds give "good news," the allusions to what they may be saying are too obscure for us to be sure exactly how Wang felt about them.

Wang used these rhymes in several poems, with similar moods, perhaps written about the same time. Of them, this is the sublest, and lingers longest in the mind.[126]

[125]Reported by Wu Yu 吳聿 (Song). *Huang Tingjian he Jiangzi shipai juan*, p. 107.

[126]See also P 107, and "Xinhui Pavilion" 欣會亭, Li Bi 22.1a/545; "Walking in the Hills" 山行, Li Bi 22.2a/547; "Leaving Jinling" 出金陵, Li Bi 48.4b/1182; "Seeing Off my Nephew Zhang to Serve in the Qingzhou Command" 送張甥赴青州幕, Li Bi 22.3a/549.

定林院 DINGLIN TEMPLE

1 漱甘涼病齒 Rinsing in sweetness cools these sick teeth:
坐曠息煩襟 I sit in a broad place, rest my bothered collar°
3 因脫水邊履 And so shed sandals that skirt the water
就敷巖上衾 And move to the quilt outspread upon the cliff,°
5 但留雲對宿 I invited only clouds for night companions
仍值月相尋 But the moon seeks me anyway
7 真樂非無寄 True happiness shall never lack an outlet
悲蟲亦好音 These sad cicadas also are good news.°

LOCATION. Li Bi 22.3a/549; *Linchuan* 14/194; Longshu 63/684; Zhu p. 87; Zhou Xifu p. 173.

DATE. After 1076, at Jiangning.

Line 2. BOTHERED COLLAR 煩襟. "Collar" refers to "heart" or "bosom."

Line 4. QUILT UPON THE CLIFF 巖上衾. Li Bi has "upon the *cot*"牀上衾 : less poetic, though perhaps more logical. If it is a cot, Wang seems to have moved it outside.

Line 8. GOOD NEWS 好音. Lit. "Fine cries," see P 106 line 8.

Compare this poem by Wang Wei, especially lines 5-6:[127]

1 晚年惟好靜 In these late years I care only for quiet;
萬事不關心 Many affairs do not concern my mind.

[127]"Reply to Zhang of the Privy Treasury"酬張少府, *Wang Youcheng ji* 7.4b. Cf. trans. by Pauline Yu, #118, p. 197.

3	自顧無長策	I envision for myself no long-range plan
	空知返舊林	But blankly know to return to the old glen,
5	松風吹解帶	*Where pine breeze blows upon my loosened sash,*
	山月照彈琴	And *mountain moon* lights up my zither playing--
7	君問窮通理	You ask the truth of failure and success:
	漁歌入浦深	Fishermen's songs carry deep onto the shore.

Wang Anshi has kept Wang Wei's mood, while renewing Wang Wei's imagery. "Sick teeth," "quilt upon the cliff," "sad cicadas" are all original and specific. The modulation of "I invited *only* clouds"但 and "the moon seeks me *anyway*仍 is masterful--we see Wang being given more hospitality than he asked for; and in his peace he finds pleasure, even in those autumn insects that should be reminding him of his mortality.

It is Wang's images, and the interplay of mortality and joy, that have come to symbolize the Dinglin Temple in readers' imaginations long after the temple building has ceased to exist. This is harmony with nature: Wang has come to terms with life itself.

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APPENDIX A:

THE POEMS ARRANGED ACCORDING TO METRICAL FORM

I. *Five-syllable Ancient-style Verse* (wuyan gu shi).

P 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 16, 31, 38, 42, 46, 50, 52, 53, 66, 67, 68, 78.

II. *Seven-syllable Ancient-style Verse* (qiyan gu shi).

P 5, 7, 8, 9, 17, 18, 23, 25, 28, 49, 54, 64, 75, 95.

III. *Five-syllable Regulated Verse* (wuyan lüshi).

P 4, 11, 21, 22, 41, 48, 60, 69, 94, 97, 98, 99, 104, 105, 106, 107.

IV. *Seven-syllable Regulated Verse* (qiyan lüshi).

P 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 39, 40, 47, 65, 86, 101, 102.

V. *Five-syllable Quatrains* (wuyan jueju).

P 61, 62, 71, 76, 77, 79, 80, 83, 85, 89.

VI. *Six-syllable Quatrains* (liuyan jueju).

P 57, 58, 59.

VII. *Seven-syllable Quatrains* (qiyan jueju).

P 12, 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 36, 37, 43, 44, 45, 51, 63, 70, 72, 73, 74, 81, 82, 84, 87, 88, 90, 91, 92, 93, 96, 100, 103.

VIII. *Lyrics* (Ci).

P 55, 56.

APPENDIX B:

CHRONOLOGY OF WANG ANSHI'S LIFE

Supporting evidence for all events is found either in the dissertation itself or in standard histories and references. Events whose date or occurrence are questionable are noted as such. Wang's age has been converted to Western reckoning, subtracting a year from the Chinese *sui* calculation. Months and days, however, remain on the Chinese lunar calendar. *Datable poems* are noted in the years of their dates.

1021. (Tianxi 5. Emperor Renzong.)

1021.11.12. Wang born at *Linchuan*.

1030. (Tiansheng 8.) Age 9.

Wang's father took family to *Shaozhou*.

1033. (Mingdao 2.) Age 12.

Wang's grandfather died. Family returned to *Linchuan* for mourning.

1036. (Jingyou 3.) Age 15.

Wang's father took family to *Capital* (*Bianjing*).

1037. (Jingyou 4.) Age 16.

Wang's father took family with him to post at *Jiangning*.

1038. (Baoyuan 1.) Age 17.

At *Jiangning*. Wang Wenshu married.

1039. (Baoyuan 2.) Age 18.

At *Jiangning*. Wang's father died.

1041. (Qingli 1.) Age 20.

1041.9. Maternal grandmother Huang died at Linchuan.
Late in year: Wang went to *Capital*.

1042. (Qingli 2.) Age 21.

At *Capital*. Passed *jinshi*, 4th place.
Posted to *Yangzhou*.
--P 28?

1043. (Qingli 3.) Age 22.

At *Yangzhou*.
1043.3. Wang took home leave to *Linchuan*. Married.
1043.4. Han Qi went from Yangzhou to capital. Qingli Reforms began.
Late in year or early next year: Wang returned to *Yangzhou*.

1044. (Qingli 4.) Age 23.

At *Yangzhou*. Wang Fang born (d. 1076).
Summer: Ouyang Xiu submitted memorial "On Factions."

1045. (Qingli 5.) Age 24.

Yangzhou assignment ended.
Wang went to *Capital*.
1045.8. Ouyang Xiu banished from Capital to Chuzhou.

1046. (Qingli 6.) Age 25.

In *Capital*.
Zeng Gong visited Ouyang Xiu at Chuzhou, recommended Wang Anshi.
Late in year: Wang assigned to govern *Yin* sub-prefecture.
Went via *Hangzhou*.
--P 25? P 63?

1047. (Qingli 7.) Age 26.

At *Yin*. Daughter born (d. 1048).
--P 1, P 64.

1048. (Qingli 8.) Age 27.

At *Yin*.
Took leave to *Jiangning* to bury father. Via *Hangzhou* both ways.
Zeng Gong in Linchuan.
1048.6. Wang's infant daughter died.

1049. (Huangyou 1.) Age 28.

At *Yin*. Wang Anren passed *jinshi*.

1050. (Huangyou 2.) Age 29.

Left *Yin* via *Yuezhou*, *Hangzhou*.
Summer. At *Linchuan*.
1050.10. En route to *Hangzhou* via *Yiyang*, *Xinzhou*, *Longyou*.
--P 65.

1051. (Huangyou 3.) Age 30.

From *Hangzhou* to *Jiangning*?
1051.5. Exempted from capital service. Assigned to *Shuzhou*.
1051.9.2? Toured *Jiuhuashan*.
1051.9.16. At *Shangu Temple*. Climbed *Mount Tianzhu (Heaven's Pillar)*.
1051.9? Wang Anren died. Wang Andao already dead. Wang Anguo, Wang Anshang living with Wang Anshi. Anshi came to know Zhu Mingzhi, living at Shuzhou.
--P 66-68, P 57.

1052. (Huangyou 4.) Age 31.

At *Shuzhou*.
1052.4. Buried Wang Anren at *Jiangning*.
1052.5. Fan Zhongyan died (b. 989).
Wang printed an edition of Du Fu's poetry.
--P 2-4, P 69.

1053. (Huangyou 5.) Age 32.

At *Shuzhou*.
1053.6. Went to *Suzhou* to inspect flooding.

1054. (Zhihe 1.) Age 33.

At *Shuzhou*.
1054.7. Visited cave at *Baochanshan*, with Anguo and Anshang.
1054.9. Assigned to *Capital*, Livestock Commission.
Late in year? Wang's second sister married Zhu Mingzhi. Wang's third sister married Shen Jizhang.
Late in year. Wang met Wang Ling at *Gaoyou*, en route to *Capital*.
--P 28? P 29?

1055. (Zhihe 2.) Age 34.

At *Capital*, Livestock Commission. Met Ouyang Xiu.
1055.6. Wu Chong joined the commission.
--P 26, P 27?

1056. (Jiayou 1.) Age 35.

At *Capital*, Livestock Commission.
1056.5. Met Su Xun, Su Shi, Su Che, at Ouyang Xiu's house. Anguo also in the capital.
Autumn. Floods in Kaifeng.
1056.12. Escorted Khitan envoys to or from the *border*. (With Wu Chong.)
--P 6.

1057. (Jiayou 2.) Age 36.

At *Capital*. Wang Anguo in Yangzhou.
Early in year: Ouyang Xiu administered a reformed civil service examination. Su Shi, Lü Huiqing, Wang Shao, Jiang Zhiqi passed the *jinshi*.
1057.4. Su Shi returned to Sichuan for mourning.
1057.5. Wang left for post at *Changzhou*, via *Chuzhou*, *Yangzhou*.
1057.7.4. Arrived at *Changzhou*. Associated with Wang Ling.
1057.11? Anshi wrote to uncle Wu Fen asking for his daughter's hand on behalf of Wang Ling.
--P 28?

1058. (Jiayou 3.) Age 37.

1058.1. Anshi wrote again to Wu Fen on behalf of Wang Ling.
1058.2. Transferred to *Jiangning*, as Judicial Intendant for Eastern Jiangnan Circuit.
1058.3? Circuit tour included *Boyang Lake* and *Linchuan*.
1058.7. Wang Ling petitioned Wu Fen for engagement. Wang Ling was with Anshi at Boyang?
1058.10. Summoned to *Capital* (Budget Bureau post).
--P 5? P 75? P 30? P 70?

1059. (Jiayou 4.) Age 38.

At *Capital*. 10,000-word Memorial.
1059.6. Wang Ling died (b. 1032).
--P 31.

1060. (Jiayou 5.) Age 39.

In *Capital*.
1060.1. Escorted Khitan envoys back to *border*.
1060.5. Appointed to Finance Commission.
Published *100 Tang Poets*.
--P 32? P 7, 8, 9.

1061. (Jiayou 6.) Age 40.

In *Capital*. (Anshì and Anli in provinces.)
1061.1. Grader for *jinshi* examination.
1061.3. Attended Emperor Renzong's banquet.
1061.6. Drafting official in Secretariat.
1061.9. Grader for special examination, passed Su Shi and Su Che.
--P 34, 35. P 72.

1062. (Jiayou 7.) Age 41.

In *Capital*. (Drafting official.)
Sima Guang in capital.

1063. (Jiayou 8.) Age 42.

In *Capital*.
1063.3. Emperor Renzong died.
1063.8.12. Wang's mother died in capital. Family returned to Jiangning for mourning.

1064. (Zhiping 1, Emperor Yingzong.) Age 43.

At *Jiangning*, in mourning. Wang Anguo, Zeng Gong, Master Zanyuan also at Jiangning.

1065. (Zhiping 2.) Age 44.

At *Jiangning*, in mourning. Wang Hui died (b. 1024).

1066. (Zhiping 3.) Age 45.

At *Jiangning*.
1066.11? Wang Anli went to capital, with Wang Fang.

1067. (Zhiping 4.) Age 46.

At *Jiangning*. Ouyang Xiu charged with incest this year.
1067.1. Emperor Yingzong died, Shenzong succeeded.
1067.2. Wang Fang passed *jinshi*, given provincial assignment.
1067.9. Wang accepted appointment to Hanlin Academy.
To *Capital*, detouring via *Linchuan*.

1068. (Xining 1, Emperor Shenzong.) Age 47.

Arrived in *Capital*.
1068.4. Audience with Shenzong.
1068.7. Wang Anguo was given *jinshi* degree, assigned to Luoyang Academy.
1068.8. Second audience with Shenzong, debate with Sima Guang.

--P 58, 59?

1069. (Xining 2.) Age 48.

1069.2. Appointed as Second Privy Councillor.
1069.3. Tang Jie died. Teng Fu removed from Kaifeng-fu.
Zeng Gongliang sent to Luoyang.
1069.5. Su Shi governing Kaifeng.
1069.6. Lü Hui dismissed.
1069.7. Equitable Distribution System.
1069.8. Fan Chunren dismissed.
1069.9. Green Sprout System.
1069.10 Fu Bi dismissed.
1069.11. Han Jiang promoted.
--P 14? P 16? P 23?

1070. (Xining 3.) Age 49.

1070.2. Han Qi memorialized against Green Sprout System.
Wang's rift with Sima Guang began.
1070.4. Lü Gongzhu, Cheng Hao dismissed from censorate.
Li Ding given post in capital.
1070.8. Sima Guang left capital.
1070.9. Zeng Gongliang retired. Lü Huiqing into mourning.
1070.10. Deng Wan appointed to office.
Fan Zhen resigned from Hanlin Academy.
1070.12. Wang appointed as First Privy Councillor.
Baojia System.

1071. (Xining 4.) Age 50.

1071.4. Sima Guang to Luoyang. Su Shi assigned to Hangzhou, arrived 1071.11.
1071.5. Fu Bi to Luoyang.
1071.9. Wang Fang promoted to capital post.
1071.10. Reforms in Hired Service System.
Wang Anguo promoted from Luoyang to the capital.

1072. (Xining 5.) Age 51.

1072.3. State Trade System.
1072.5. Wang Shao won victories in the Northwest.
Horse Breeding System.
1072.8. Ouyang Xiu died (b. 1007).
Land Survey and Equitable Tax.
1072.12. Chen Shengzhi came to capital, out of mourning.

1073. (Xining 6.) Age 52.

1073.1.15. Wang was stopped by Palace sentries, told to enter palace on foot.

1073.2. Wang tried to resign. Shenzong refused.
Wang Shao recovered Hezhou.
1073.3. Bureau of Classical Interpretation.
1073.4. Wen Yanbo resigned. Yellow River dredging began.
1073.7 Drought began in the north.
1073.9. Guild Exemption Tax.

1074. (Xining 7.) Age 53.

In *Capital*.
1074.4. Shenzong abolished Wang's reforms to placate the drought, then reinstated them. Wang resigned, was sent back to govern *Jiangning*. Replaced by Han Jiang and Lü Huiqing. Wang Anguo probably also went to Jiangning at this time.
1074.5. Zeng Bu, Lü Jiawen, Zheng Xia assigned to provinces.
1074.6. Wang arrived at *Jiangning*.
1074.7. Lü Huiqing instituted Self-Assessment System.
1074.8. Wang Anguo died. Probably at Jiangning.
1074.11. Su Shi transferred from Hangzhou to Mizhou.
1074.12. Wang Shao promoted to Assistant Commissioner of Military Affairs.
--P 36? P 39? P 76-77?

1075. (Xining 8.) Age 54.

At *Jiangning*.
1075.2. Wang Anshang promoted, in capital.
Wang Anshi returned to premiership, in *Capital*.
1075.3. Wang commuted Li Shining's death sentence for rebellion.
1075.3.1. Wang replaced as Governor of Jiangning by Ye Jun.
1075.4. Wu Chong named as Military Affairs Commissioner.
1075.4R. Chen Shengzhi resigned as Military Affairs Commissioner.
1075.6. *New Interpretations of the Classics* presented. Promotions for Wang Anshi, Wang Fang, Lü Huiqing.
Han Qi died (b. 1008).
1075.7. Song relinquished disputed territory to Khitans.
1075.8. Han Jiang resigned.
1075.10. Lü Shengqing, Lü Huiqing sent to provinces.
Self-Assessment Tax abolished.
1075.12. Wang presented the revised *Shi jing* annotations.
--P 70? P 73? P 74?

1076. (Xining 9.) Age 55.

1076.1. Annamese forces massacred Yongzhou.
1076.2. Song attacked the Annamese.
1076.6 or 10. Wang Fang died.
1076.10. Deng Wan demoted to Guozhou.

1076.10.23. Wang resigned the premiership. Assigned to *Jiangning* as governor. Retained title of First Privy Councillor; was named Military Governor of Zhennan.
1076.12? Arrived at *Jiangning*.
—P 38.

1077. (Xining 10.) Age 56.

At *Jiangning*.
1077.6. Appointed Enissary of the Jixi Shrine; retired as governor.
1077.10. Lü Jiawen governed Jiangning (until autumn 1078).
—P 33? P 37? P 41? P 87-88? Autumn: P 6? P 84?

1078. (Yuanfeng 1.) Age 57.

In *Jiangning*, living at Banshan.
1078.1. Named as Duke of Shu.
Wang Pang in charge of grain and provisions for Jiangning.
Autumn: Lü Jiawen demoted to Runzhou.

1079. (Yuanfeng 2.) Age 58.

In *Jiangning*, living at Banshan.
Shen Jizhang in charge of national civil service examinations.
1079.10-12. Su Shi banished from capital to Huangzhou.
1079.11. Wang Junzhi and Gong Yuan impeached.
Late in year? Shen Jizhang, Shen Zhu impeached from National Academy, sent back to Zhenzhou or Jiangning.
Road to Dinglin Cloister repaired.

1080. (Yuanfeng 3.) Age 59.

In *Jiangning*, living at Banshan.
1080.1. Wang Wenshu died (b. 1025).
1080.4. Wu Chong died (b. 1021). Wang Anguo buried.
1080.9. Wang Anshi named as Duke of Jing.
Master Zanyuan died.
Late in year? Replied to letters from Lü Huiqing.
--P 42? P 56? P 96 (1080.1). P 97-98 (1080.10.24).

1081. (Yuanfeng 4.) Age 60.

In *Jiangning*, at Banshan.
1081.7.5. Chen Shidao prefaced a collection of Wang Anguo's works.
--P 78? P 17. P 95? (Autumn). P 43 (1081.9.23).

1082. (Yuanfeng 5.) Age 61.

In *Jiangning*, at Banshan. Submitted the *Zi shuo*?
1082.2. Chen Yi governed Jiangning (until 1083.6).
1082.5. Chen Yi visited Qi An Temple with Wang. (Li Bi 43.2a/1035.)
--P 19? P 20? P 18, P 44, P 45, P 50? P 46? (autumn).

1083. (Yuanfeng 6.) Age 62.

In *Jiangning*, at Banshan.
Spring. Wei Tai visited Wang. Mi Fei visited Wang.
1083.4. Zeng Gong died at Jiangning.
1083.6. Chen demoted and removed as Governor of Jiangning.
Autumn. Visit from Deng Chou of Linchuan.
--P 40? P 89 (spring). P 48 (autumn).

1084. (Yuanfeng 7.) Age 63.

In *Jiangning*.
1084.3.19. Walked to Jingde Temple with Shen Jizhang.
1084.3? Wang suffered a stroke or similar ailment.
1084.4.17. Dreamed of Yellow Emperor's paradise.
1084.6.20. Shenzong permitted Banshan home to become a temple.
1084.7. Su Shi visited, en route from Huangzhou exile.
Wang still living at Banshan.
Wang Anli resigned from capital post, returned to govern Jiangning.
This year? Wang presented commentaries to *Diamond* and *Vimalakirti* sutras.
--P 81? (spring). P 103 (1084.3.19). P 104 (1084.4.17).

1085. (Yuanfeng 8.) Age 64.

At *Jiangning*, living in town. Mme. Wang died?
1085.3. Emperor Shenzong died. Zhezong succeeded.
Sima Guang became premier.
1085.4.11. Wang copied out the *Śūraṁgama-sūtra*.
1085.7. Baojia System abolished.
1085.10. Shenzong buried.
1085.11. Equitable Land Tax abolished.
1085.12. State Trade, Horse Breeding Systems abolished.
--P 49? P 105? P 21-22.

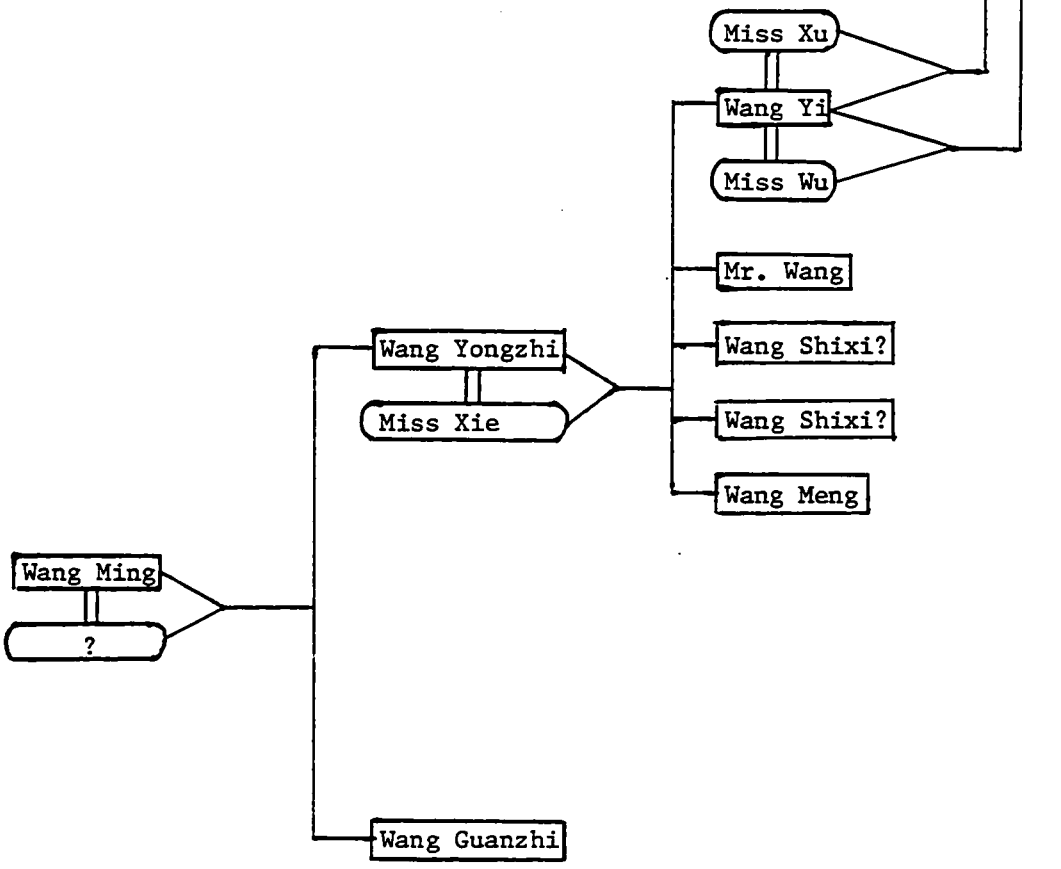
1086. (Yuanyou 1, Emperor Zhezong.) Age 65.

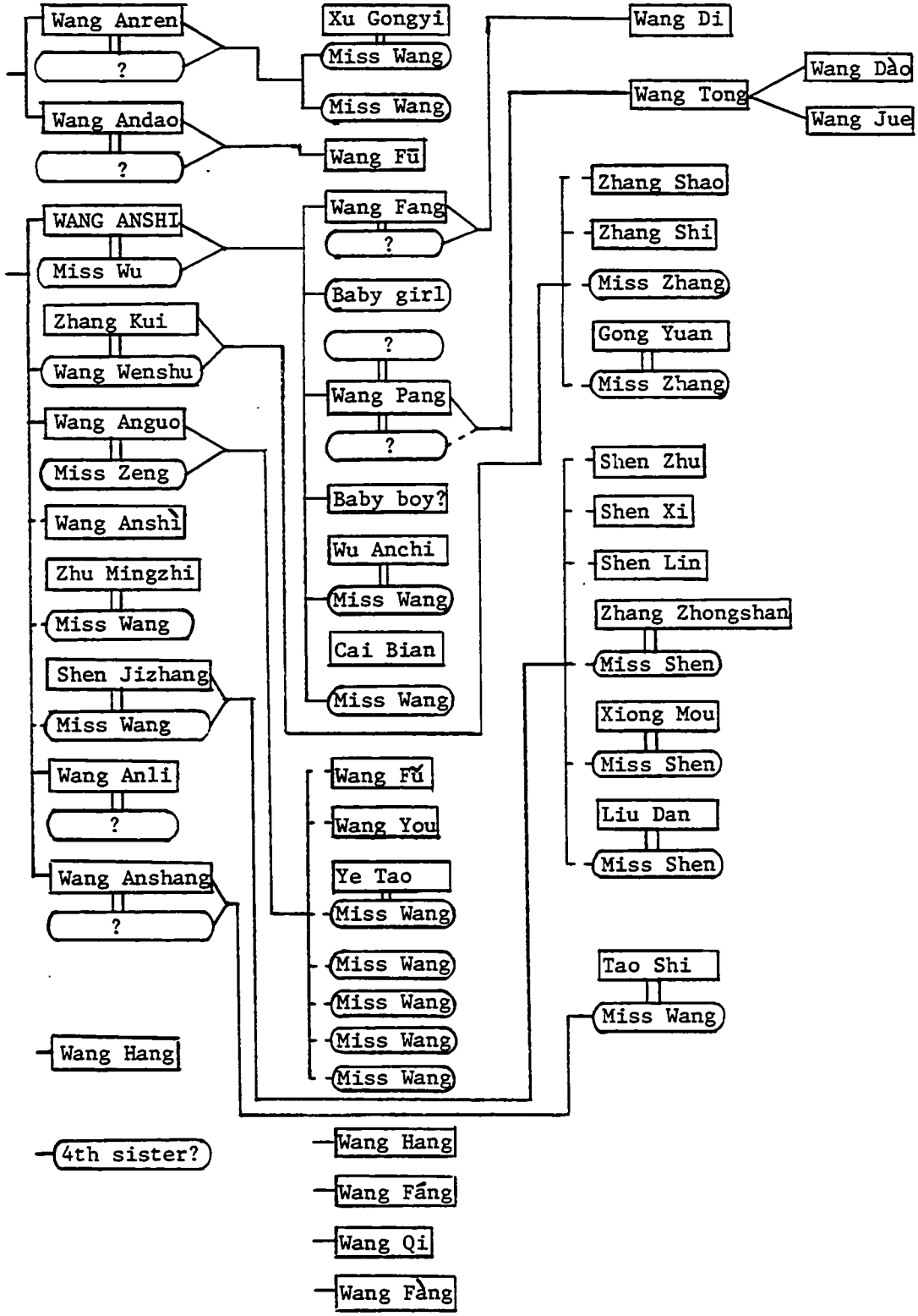
1086.2R. Green Sprout System abolished.
1086.3. Hired Service System restored to pre-reform format.
1086.4. Wang Anshi died.
Su Shi accepted into Hanlin Academy.
1086.9. Sima Guang died (b. 1019).

APPENDIX C

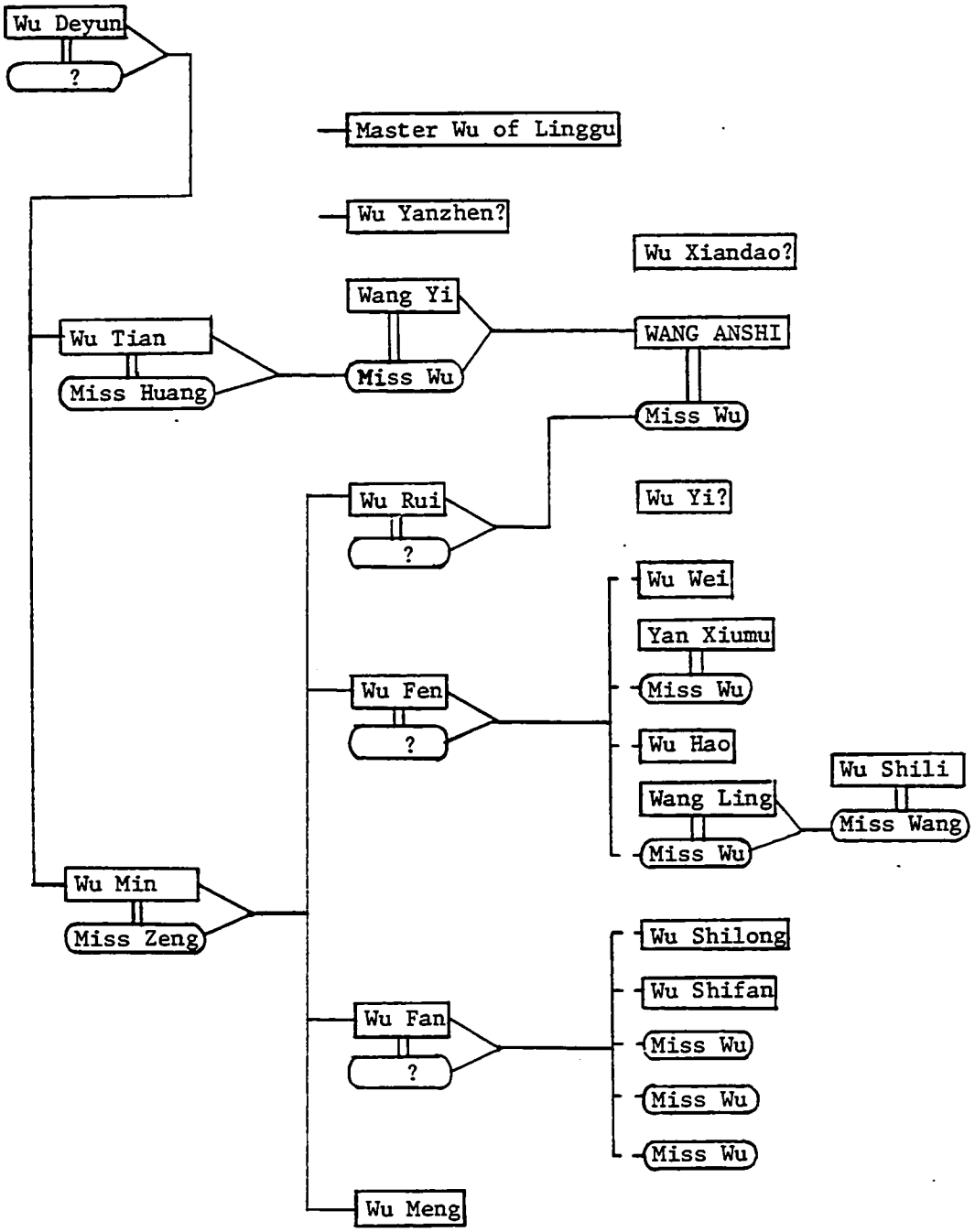
FAMILY TREES

1. Wang's Paternal Family Tree (abridged).




Wang Anren
?
Wang Andao
?
WANG ANSHI
Miss Wu
Zhang Kui
Wang Wenshu
Wang Anguo
Miss Zeng
Wang Anshì
Zhu Mingzhi
Miss Wang
Shen Jizhang
Miss Wang
Wang Anli
?
Wang Anshang
?
Wang Hang
4th sister?
Xu Gongyi
Miss Wang
Miss Wang
Wang Fū
Wang Fang
?
Baby girl
?
Wang Pang
?
Baby boy?
Wu Anchi
Miss Wang
Cai Bian
Miss Wang
Wang Fú
Wang You
Ye Tao
Miss Wang
Miss Wang
Miss Wang
Miss Wang
Miss Wang
Wang Hang
Wang Fáng
Wang Qi
Wang Fàng
Wang Di
Wang Tong
Wang Dào
Wang Jue
Zhang Shao
Zhang Shi
Miss Zhang
Gong Yuan
Miss Zhang
Shen Zhu
Shen Xi
Shen Lin
Zhang Zhongshan
Miss Shen
Xiong Mou
Miss Shen
Liu Dan
Miss Shen
Tao Shi
Miss Wang

2. Wang's Maternal Family Tree (abridged).



3. Notes to Paternal Family Tree.

Generation 1: Great-grandparents.

1. Wang Ming王明. Anshi's great-grandfather. Of Linchuan. Ancestors from Taiyuan. Did not serve in office. (*Taoshan ji* 10/113.)

Generation 2: Grandparents, Great Uncles, Great Aunts.

2.1. Wang Yongzhi 王用之. D. 1033? Anshi's grandfather. (*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.8ab.)

Miss Xie謝氏. D. 1053.6. Wang Yongzhi's wife; Anshi's grandmother. (*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.8a-9a.)

2.2. Wang Guanzhi 王貫之. *Jinshi* 1000; d. 1028. Anshi's great-uncle. (*Linchuan* 100/1034; Cai 1/40, year 1028.)

Generation 3: Parents, Uncles and Aunts.

3.1. Wang Yi 王益. *Zi* Shunliang 舜良, childhood *zi* Sunzhi 損之. 994—1039. *Jinshi* 1015. Anshi's father. Served in office. Literary works are lost. Born in Linchuan; died and buried at Jiangning. Had seven sons, three daughters. (*Linchuan* 71/750-1. *Yuanfeng leigao* 44.6a-7b.)

Miss Xu 徐氏. D. app. 1018? Wang Yi's first wife; mother to Wang Anren and Wang Andao. (*Yuanfeng leigao* 44.7a.)

Miss Wu 吳氏. 998—1063.8.12. Anshi's mother; Wang Yi's second wife. Born at Fuzhou, died in the capital, buried at Jiangning. (*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.4b.)

3.2. Wang ? . Died before 1053. Anshi's uncle; second son of Wang Yongzhi. (*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.8b.)

3.3-4. Anshi's uncles. Third and fourth sons of Wang Yongzhi. One of them was named Wang Shixi 王師錫 (1021?—1057?). Buried in 1057 (? Zhihe 4), aged 36. Lost his father "when young" in 1033. Therefore born app. 1021. Had a son and a daughter (not on chart). Failed the *jinshi* a few times. (*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.8b; *Linchuan* 93/963.)

3.5. Wang Meng 王孟. Died before 1053. Anshi's uncle; fifth son of Wang Yongzhi.
(*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.8b.)

Generation 4: Siblings, Cousins, Brothers and Sisters-in-law.

4.1. Wang Anren 王安仁. *Zi* Changfu 常甫. 1015--1051, *jinshi* 1049. Anshi's elder half-brother. Had two daughters.
(*Linchuan* 96/987.)

4.2. Wang Andao 王安道. *Zi* Zhongfu 中甫. Died 1051 or before. Anshi's second elder half-brother.
(*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.5b.)

4.3. WANG ANSHI 王安石. *Zi* Jiefu 介甫, *hao* Banshan 半山. Title Duke of Jing 荊(國)公. Posth. Wen 文. 1021--1086, *jinshi* 1042.

Miss Wu 吳氏. Married 1043, died 1085? Anshi's wife. Her great-grandfather was also Anshi's mother's grandfather; Anshi's mother would consider her a niece. Her grandmother Zeng was the paternal aunt of Zeng Gong and Zeng Bu.
(*Linchuan* 100/1029.)

Wang Hang 王沆. Born between 1021 and 1028, *jinshi* 1046. Younger cousin of Anshi.
(Cai 1/40, year 1028.)

4.4. Wang Anguo 王安國. *Zi* Pingfu 平甫. 1028--1074, *jinshi* bestowed 1068. Anshi's brother.
(*Linchuan* 91/946.)

4.5. Wang Anshi 王安世. Anshi's brother. Chief Recordkeeper at Dangtu, app. 1062.
(*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.5b; Li Bi 8.4a/303.)

4.6. Wang Anli 王安禮. *Zi* Hefu 和甫. Title Duke of Wei 魏公. 1034--1095, *jinshi* 1060. Anshi's brother. #36 in the fraternal ranking of his generation.
(Li Bi 1.2a/161; *Wang Weigong ji* preface.)

4.7. Wang Anshang 王安上. *Zi* Chunfu 純甫. Fl. 1077. Anshi's brother, #37 or last in the fraternal ranking of his generation. Appointed Judicial Intendant of Jiangdong Region 1077.10.11.
(Above, p. 168; *Linchuan* 58/623.)

(Miss) Wang Wenshu 王文淑. (Mrs. Zhang Kui 張奎妻.) 1025--1080. Anshi's sister and eldest younger sibling. Wang

Yi's eldest daughter. Had two sons and two daughters. (*Linchuan* 99/1021.)

Zhang Kui 張奎. D. 1075? Anshi's brother-in-law, married Wang Wenshu in 1038. Son of a Zhang Ruogu 張若谷.
(P 32, P 33; *Linchuan* 99/1021.)

Miss Wang (Mrs. Zhu Mingzhi 朱氏妹). Born 1032? Died 1065 or earlier. (*Wang Weigong ji* 8.9b.) Married 1054 at Shuzhou? (Not yet married in 1054.3.22: *Linchuan* 40/426.)
(Li Bi 18.1a/483, 20.4a/517, 8.5b/306.)

Zhu Mingzhi 朱明之. *Zi* Changshu 昌叔. Anshi's friend and second brother-in-law. Of Tianchang Prefecture, west of Gaoyou. Anshi met him at Gaoyou (in 1046?). Lived at Shuzhou in 1054, may have married Anshi's sister then.
(Li Bi 8.5b/306, 33.10a/825, 34.1b/830, 18.1a/483.)

Miss Wang (Mrs. Shen Jizhang 沈氏妹). 1033?--1088. (Born before Wang Anli.) Anshi's third younger sister. Married in late 1054? (Not yet married in 1054.3.22: *Linchuan* 40/426. Married by 1059, latest possible date for *Linchuan* 75/791.) Devout Buddhist her last ten years. Died of natural causes in 1088, 160 days after her husband.
(*Wang Weigong ji* 8.8b-9a; Li Bi 8.5b/306.)

Shen Jizhang 沈季長. *Zi* Daoyuan 道原. 1027--1087, *jinshi* 1043. Anshi's youngest brother-in-law. Of Zhenzhou 真州. Had three sons, four daughters.
(*Wang Weigong ji* 8.4b-9a. Li Bi 8.5b/306.)

Miss Wang (Fourth younger "sister" --i.e. cousin 四妹; one edition has "Fourth elder sister" 四姐). Mentioned in association with Shen Jizhang and a Huang Jifu 黃吉父 (甫).
(*Linchuan*, appendix p. 1078.)

Generation 5: Sons, Nephews, Daughters, Nieces, Sons-in-law.

5.1. Wang "Fang" (actually Pang) 王雱. *Zi* Yuanze 元澤. 1044--1076, *jinshi* 1067. Anshi's son, eldest child, first of his generation. Father of Wang Di by adoption.
(*Song shi* 327; *Linchuan* 59/637; *Zhizheng Jinling xin zhi* 13B.46b.)

5.2. Wang Fū 王旁. Anshi's nephew, second in his generation. Son of Wang Andao or Wang Anshi.
(Wang Jinguang, p. 72.)

5.3. Wang Pang 王雱. Anshi's second son, third in his generation. Appointed to the Jiangning Grain and Provisions Bureau in 1078.1. Divorced, probably during Anshi's retirement. One poem of his survives. At least one son.
(*Linchuan* 60/647, Appendix p. 1079, 71/760. Wang Jinguang, p. 71ff.)

5.4. Wang Fu 王旉. *Zi* Yuanjun 元均. Anguo's elder son, Anshi's fourth nephew.
(*Linchuan* 91/946-7; Li Bi 42.11b/1028.)

5.5. Wang Hang 王沆. Born before 1063. Son of Anshì, Anli or Anshang.
(*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.5b.)

5.6. Wang Fáng 王防. Born before 1063. Son of Anshì, Anli or Anshang.
(*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.5b.)

5.7. Wang You 王游. Born before 1063. Anguo's younger son, Anshi's nephew.
(*Linchuan* 91/946-7.)

5.8. Wang Qi 王旗. Born before 1063. Son of Anshì, Anli or Anshang.
(*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.5b.)

5.9. Wang Fàng 王放. Born before 1063. Son of Anshì, Anli or Anshang.
(*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.5b.)

? Baby boy, infant son of Anshi? 1056--1057?
(*Linchuan* 74/785; p. 49 above.)

Miss Wang (Mrs. Xu Gongyi). Married as of 1063. Anshi's eldest niece, Wang Yi's eldest granddaughter. Probably Anren's elder daughter.
(*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.5b.)

Xu Gongyi 徐公翊. Anshi's first nephew-in-law, married as of 1063. Serving in 1063 as Chief Recordkeeper of Anyi 安邑.
(*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.5b.)

Baby girl, born at Yin 鄞女. 1047.4--1048.6.
(Li Bi 48.9b/1192; *Linchuan* 100/1028.)

Miss Wang (Mrs. Wu Anchi 吳氏女子). Engaged as of 1063. Anshi's eldest adult daughter. Had at least one son and one daughter (not on chart).
(P 44-46. Li Bi 1.11b/180, 42.1a/1007, 42.12a/1029, 45.1b/1094. *Linchuan*, appendix p. 1053. *Yuanfeng leigao*

45.5b.)

Wu Anchi 吳安持. Engaged as of 1063, Anshi's first son-in-law. Son of Anshi's friend Wu Chong 吳充.
(*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.5b.)

Miss Wang (Mrs. Cai Bian 蔡氏女子). Anshi's second living daughter.
(Li Bi 2.7b/196; Shen, p. 9.)

Cai Bian 蔡卞. *Zi* Yuandu 元度. 1050—1117, *jinshi* 1070. Anshi's second son-in-law.
(Li Bi 1.9a/175; *Linchuan*, appendix p. 1063.)

Miss Wang (Mrs. Ye Tao). Anguo's eldest daughter, Anshi's niece. Married before 1080.
(*Linchuan* 91/947.)

Ye Tao 葉濤. *Zi* Zhiyuan 致遠. Anshi's protégé, Anguo's eldest son-in-law. Lived in Jiangning during much of Anshi's retirement.
(Li Bi 3.3a/209, 26.3a/641, 26.4b/644, 41.10b/1000, 42.12b/1030; Shen, p. 100; *Linchuan* 73/776, 91/947. *Sanchao mingchen yanxing lu* 6:2.18b-19a.)

Miss Wang (Mrs. Tao Shi). Anshang's eldest daughter, Anshi's niece.
(Li Bi 22.6a/555.)

Tao Shi 陶宷. Anshi's nephew-in-law.
(Li Bi 22.6a/555.)

Zhang Shao 張劭. Anshi's nephew; elder son of Zhang Kui and Wang Wenshu. Doctor of the National Academy 國子博士, serving at Yingzhou, 潁州 as of 1080.
(Li Bi 22.3a/549; *Linchuan* 99/1021.)

Zhang Shi 張視. Anshi's nephew, second son of Zhang Kui and Wang Wenshu. Sheriff at Yongqiu 雍丘 in Kaifeng as of 1080.
(*Linchuan* 99/1021.)

Gong Yuan 龔原. *Zi* Shenfu 深甫 or Shenzhi 深之. Anshi's nephew-in-law, married to younger daughter of Zhang Kui and Wang Wenshu as of 1080.
(*Linchuan* 99/1021; Li Bi 26.4a/643, 43.8b/1048; *Linchuan*, appendix, pp. 1075, 1077.)

Shen Zhu 沈銖. Anshi's nephew. Eldest son of Shen Jizhang. Implicated with his father in a bribery case in 1079?
(Above, p. 176.)

Shen Xi 沈錫, Shen Lin 沈鈐, Zhang Zhongshan 章仲山, Qian Qingxiang 錢青箱, Xiong Mou 熊侔, Liu Dan 劉旦.
Sons and sons-in-law of Shen Jizhang.
(*Wang Weigong ji* 8.9a.)

Generation 6: Grandchildren, Grandnephews and nieces.

6.1. Wang Di 王棣. *Zi* Yizhong 儀仲. D. 1129? Adopted from another branch of the family, to be son to Wang Fang 王雱. (Perhaps was a natural son of Wang Pang, #5.3.) Grandson to Anshi. Governed Kaifeng (?) in 1126, killed on the Shanyuan city wall during Jurchen invasion of Shanyuan in 1129.
(*Dongdu shilüe* 79/6b; *Zhizheng Jinling xin zhi* 13B.46b.)

6.2. Wang Tong 王桐. Son of Wang Pang, grandson of Anshi.
(*Zhizheng Jinling xin zhi* 13B.46b.)

Wu Mou 吳侔. (Not on chart.) Either the son of Wu Anchi (hence Wang Anshi would be his maternal grandfather), or else the son of Wu Anshi 吳安詩 (Wu Chong's eldest son, in which case he would be no relation to Wang Anshi). Sentenced to death in 1107 for treasonous conspiracy with the occultist Zhang Huaisu 張懷素. Also sentenced was his brother or cousin, Wu Anshi's eldest son Wu Chu 吳儲.
(Li Bi 43.14a/1060.)

Generation 7: Great-grandchildren.

7.1. Wang Dao 王燾. First son of Wang Tong (#6.2), grandson of Wang Pang, great-grandson of Wang Anshi.
(*Zhizheng Jinling xin zhi* 13B.46b.)

7.2. Wang Jue 王珏. *Zi* Dequan 德全. 1112—1164. Anshi's great-grandson, second son of Wang Tong. Published a version of Wang Anshi's *Linchuan* collected works at Hangzhou in 1151, where Wang Jue was Fiscal Intendant.
(Tomb inscription by Chao Gongsu 晁公遡, Song dynasty, in *Songshan jushi ji* 嵩山居士集, *juan* 54. Not available to me. See also Longshu facsimile edition, Introduction p. 1; *Zhizheng Jinling xin zhi* 13B.46b.)

4. Notes to Maternal Family Tree.

Generation 1. Great-grandparents.

Wu Deyun 吳德筠. Anshi's maternal great-grandfather (his mother's grandfather), and Mrs. Wang Anshi's paternal great-grandfather. Highest rank: Auxiliary Secretary for Agricultural Garrisons 屯田員外郎.
(*Linchuan* 98/1014.)

Generation 2. Grandparents, Great-uncles, Great-aunts.

Wu Tian 吳畋. Anshi's maternal grandfather; Mrs. Wang Anshi's great-uncle.
(*Linchuan* 90/939.)

Miss Huang 黃氏 (Mrs. Wu Tian). 970?--1041. Anshi's maternal grandmother; Mrs. Wang Anshi's great-aunt.
(*Linchuan* 90/939.)

Wu Min 吳敏. Died before 1058. Anshi's maternal great-uncle, Mrs. Wang Anshi's grandfather, Wu Tian's (younger?) brother.
(*Linchuan* 100/1029.)

Miss Zeng 曾氏 (Mrs. Wu Min). 985--1058. Aunt of Zeng Gong and Zeng Bu.
(*Linchuan* 100/1029.)

Generation 3. Parents, Uncles.

Miss Wu (the second Mrs. Wang Yi). 998--1063.8.12. Anshi's mother. Mrs. Wang Anshi would have called her "paternal aunt" 姑. Of Jinxi at Fuzhou. Married Wang Yi app. 1019.
(*Yuanfeng leigao* 45.4b.)

Master Wu of Linggu 靈谷吳先生. Anshi was his "nephew" 甥. Thus may have been a brother or first cousin of Anshi's mother. Lived at Linggu or Spirit Chasm in the southeast corner of Fuzhou. A recluse, he wrote several hundred poems, 32 of which he gave to Anshi to circulate and provide with a preface.
(*Linchuan* 84/881.)

Wu Yanzhen 吳彥珍. (Yanzhen is probably his *zi*; he might have been Wu Meng.) "Maternal uncle" 舅 of Anshi. (Li Bi 36.9b/894.) Therefore either a brother or first cousin of

Anshi's mother, and an "uncle" of Mrs. Wang Anshi. Professor in the Fuzhou Academy撫州學 at Linchuan. (Li Bi 39.1b/936.) Lived at Zhigang柘崗. (Li Bi 30.2b/734.)

Wu Rui吳芮. Died later than Wu Fen. Probably Anshi's father-in-law. (It is also possible that Wu Meng was the father-in-law. Shen Wenzhuo names Wu Rui, in *Wang Ling ji* p. 442. Shimizu names Wu Meng, p. 110. Neither gives evidence.) Either the father or uncle of Mrs. Wang Anshi. Anshi would have called him "uncle," because he was a cousin of Anshi's mother. As of 1058, Executive Assistant of the Imperial Library祕書丞.
(*Linchuan* 100/1029.)

Wu Fen吳奮. *Zi* Chengzhi成之. Died later than 1063.8, buried 1085. Wu Rui's younger brother; Wang Ling's father-in-law. His mother considered Anshi a grandson. Served as Executive Inspector at Haozhou, Shouzhou and Jiangning亳州，壽州，江寧錄事參軍. Permanent home at Biyang Prefecture in Tangzhou唐州泌陽縣 (modern Henan).
(*Linchuan* 100/1029, 98/1014, 74/789; Li Bi 36.8a/891; *Wang Ling ji* 17/303, p. 405, pp. 442-445.)

Wu Fan吳蕃. *Zi* Yanbi彥弼. Born app. 1008? Buried 1054. Wu Fen's younger brother. Passed the *jinshi* at age 44, but died before obtaining a post. Left two sons and two daughters, all young children when he died.
(*Linchuan* 100/1029, 98/1012.)

Wu Meng吳蒙. Died later than Wu Fen. Wu Fen's younger brother, possibly Anshi's father-in-law (see under Wu Rui above). Passed the *jinshi*. Once served as Census Inspector at Haozhou濠州司户參軍.
(*Linchuan* 100/1029.)

Generation 4. Cousins, Cousins-in-law.

Wu Xiandao吳顯道. (Xiandao may be his *zi*.) Of Jinxi at Fuzhou, therefore of Mrs. Wang's clan. Identified by Li Bi as Anshi's elder brother-in-law妻兄, i.e. Mrs. Wang Anshi's brother or first cousin. Was at Fuzhou in 1067, being among Wang Anshi's well-wishers when Wang set off from there for the capital.
(Li Bi 22.7a/557, 18.2b/456.)

Wu Yi吳頤. *Changbian* identifies as Anshi's younger brother-in-law; i.e. Mrs. Wang Anshi's brother or first cousin. Severely criticized by the censor Sun Sheng孫昇.
(*Changbian* 369.33b, year 1086.2R; Shen p. 53.)

Miss Wu (MRS. WANG ANSHI). Married 1043, died 1085? Niece to Anshi's mother.
(*Linchuan* 100/1029.)

Wu Wei 吳偉. Eldest son of Wu Fen.
(*Linchuan* 98/1014.)

Wu Hao 吳豪. *Zi* Teqi 特起. D. 1095. Second son of Wu Fen, (elder?) brother to Wang Ling's wife. He and Anshi arranged Wang Ling's daughter's marriage. He died escorting Wang Ling's coffin back north to be buried with his wife.
(*Linchuan* 98/1014, 74/787-88; *Wang Ling ji* pp. 407-8.)

Miss Wu (Mrs. Wang Ling). 1035--1093.12.27. Engaged 1058.7, widowed 1059.6. Of Biyang in Tangzhou. First cousin to Anshi's wife; daughter of Wu Fen. Lived at Tangzhou with her brother Wu Hao while mourning her husband, but refused Wu Hao's efforts to have her remarry; moved into a small house of her own. Read *Mencius*. Acted on her husband's social ideals, building irrigation ponds for her own and the family's profit.
(*Wang Ling ji*, pp. 405-6; *Linchuan* 74/789; P 31.)

Yan Xiumu 晏修睦. Elder son-in-law of Wu Fen.
(*Linchuan* 98/1014.)

Wang Ling 王令. *Zi* Fengyuan 逢原. 1032--1059.6. Of Guangling. Anshi's friend from 1054. Confucian scholar and thinker. Taught private students. His daughter married Wu Shili of Zhejiang.
(*Linchuan* 97/998, 74/789. P 31.)

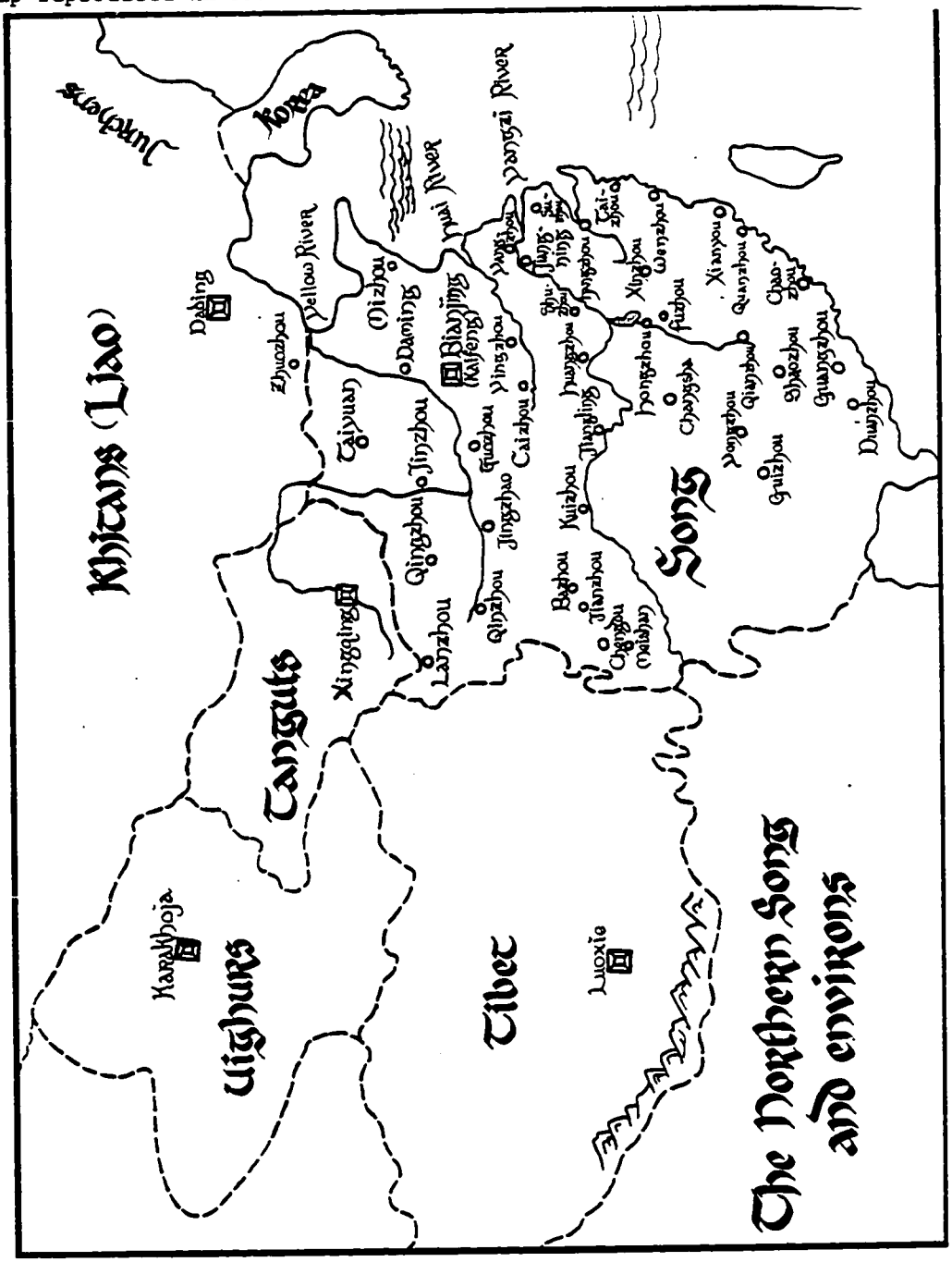
Wu Shilong, Wu Shifan 吳世隆, 吳世範. Sons of Wu Fan.
(*Linchuan* 98/1012.)

Generation 5. Nephews and Nieces.

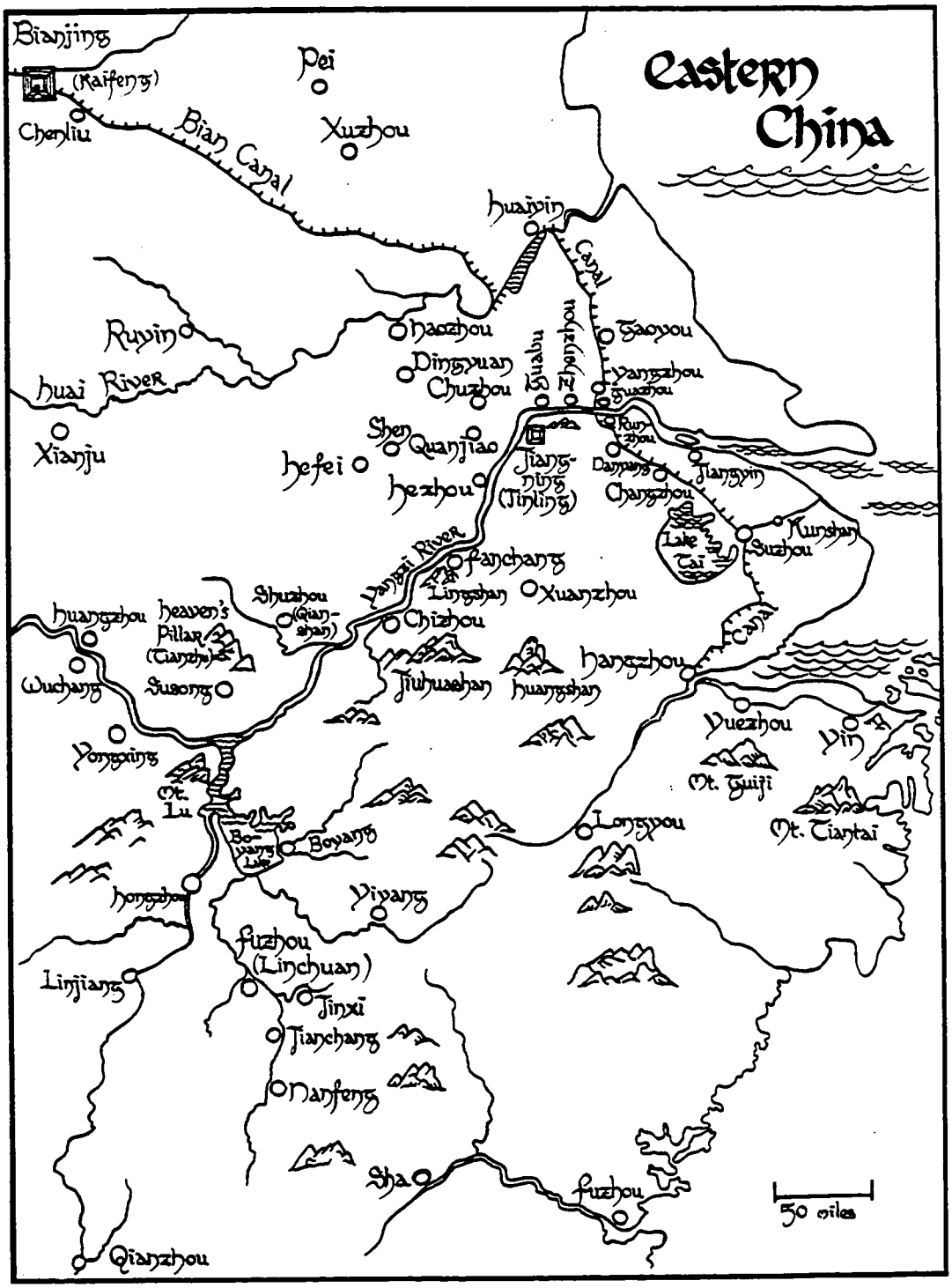
Wu Shili 吳師禮. From Zhejiang area. Son-in-law of Wang Ling; nephew-in-law of Wang Anshi.
(*Linchuan* 74/788.)

APPENDIX D: MAPS

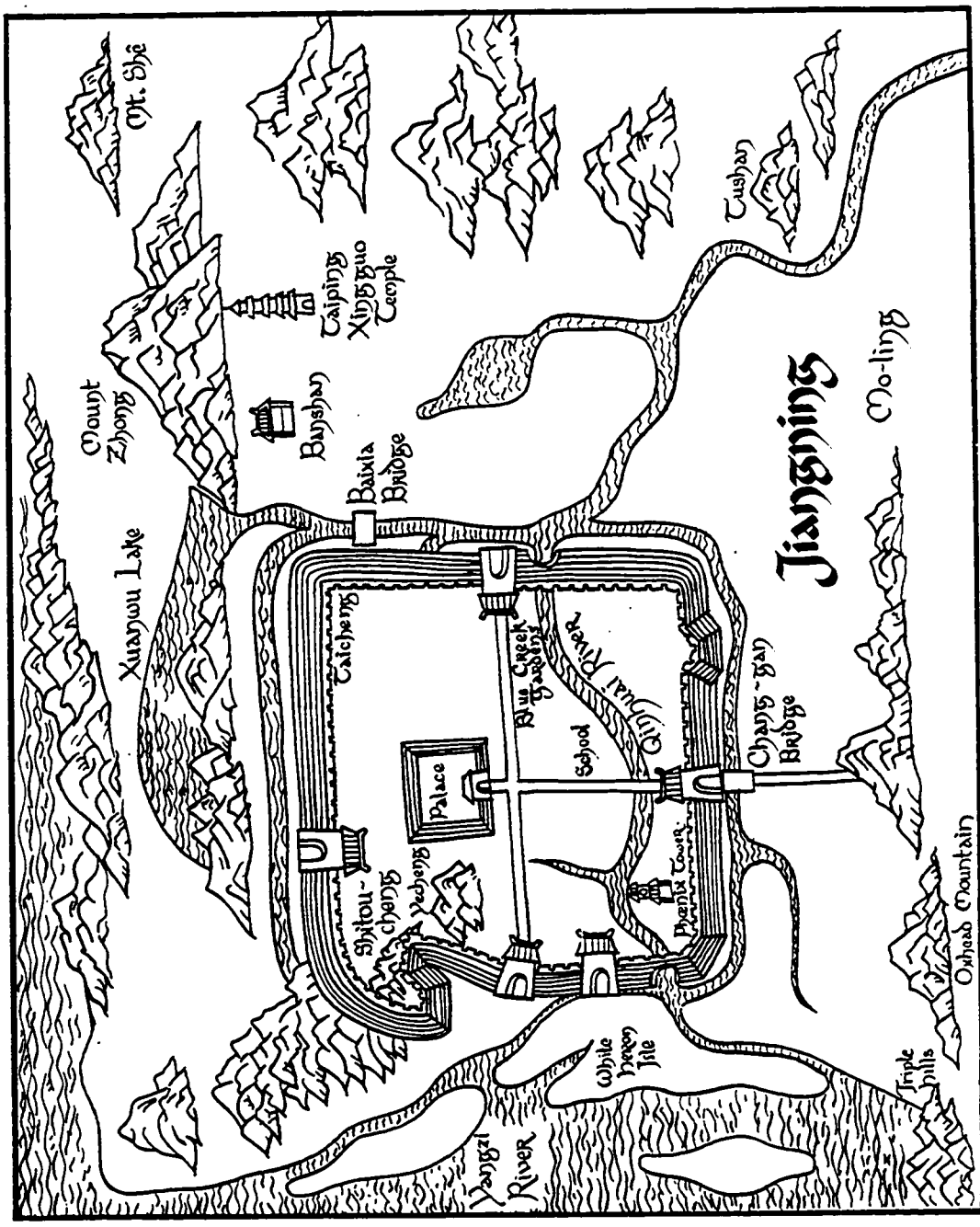
Map data obtained largely from the following: Tan Qixiang 譚其驤 ed., *The Historical Atlas of China* 中國歷史地圖集 (Shanghai: Cartographic, 1982) vol. 6; *Jingding Jiankang zhi*, *juan* 5; unidentified traditional map reproduced in Shimizu.



Map D 1. The Northern Song and Environs.



Map D 2. Eastern China.



Map D 3. Jiangning.

VITA

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