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Place: Meditation on the Past at Chin-ling

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WE begin with two poems on Chin-ling, separated by a span of thirteen and a half centuries. The first passage, from Yü Hsin's "The Lament for the South" (*Ai Chiang-nan fu*), was written in about 578 and laments the sack of the city, then the Liang capital of Chien-k'ang, during the rebellion of Hou Ching. The second is a song lyric (*tz'u*) by Shao Jui-p'eng 邵瑞彭 (1888–1938), written to the tune "West River," using the same rhymes and topic, "Meditation on the Past at Chin-ling," as another lyric to the same melody he had written eighteen years earlier; both of Shao's songs follow the rhymes of another version of "West River: Meditation on the Past at Chin-ling" by the great Sung lyricist Chou Pang-yen (1057–1121). Shao's song lyric was written in the 1930s, some years before the Japanese sack of the city in 1937, the city's location having been moved slightly over the intervening centuries and its name changed to Nanking.

Rather than concern for the real Chin-ling or for its rich literary history, our interest is in the formation of a mood and a poetic image of that city, an overlay of sites, images, and phrases that shaped the way the city was seen. We are concerned with the weight of such old images in representing the city: what happened between Yü Hsin's passage and Shao Jui-p'eng's lyric, where at last we detect an unmistakable weariness with the city's melancholy history. The

journey between the two texts is an interesting one; it teaches us how cultural memories, embodied in poetry, can become oppressive; and it teaches that those old poetic images can have immense power in shaping understanding.

Some,
 Like the quail, put on falcon's wings;
 Like the fox, borrowed the tiger's majesty,
 Only to wet the enemy's spears and arrows with their blood
 And fertilize the plain with their flesh.
 Our troops were weak, the enemy strong;
 The city stood alone, spirit was lacking.
 Hearts alarmed when they heard the cranes cry,
 Tears running down as if they listened to the Hsiung-nu flutes,
 They lost their halberds fighting at Shen-t'ing,
 Abandoned their horses on the way to Heng-chiang,
 Crumbled like the sand of Chü-lü,
 Broke up like the tiles at Ch'ang-p'ing.
 Cassia Forest was laid waste,
 Long Isle stripped of its deer,
 Turbulent, boiling,
 Disordered, chaotic,
 Heaven and earth were cut off from us;
 Spirits and men vented their wrath.

Yü Hsin, from "The Lament for
 the South" (11.203-230)¹

This land of battles—
 its time of glory is gone and hard to recall.
 Hall and tower of Lin-ch'un Palace
 have fallen to the weeds,
 and night tides rise angrily.
 From an iron flute several notes
 echo in autumn's wind,
 and the person of these sad songs
 is off at the sky's edge.

¹ William T. Graham Jr., *The Lament for the South—Yü Hsin's Ai Chiang-nan fu* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 75.

On the open terrace
 lean then in tears—
 pulley of an ancient well, its rope still tied.
 A flag of surrender once again comes from The Rock,
 its ancient fort engulfed in dreams.
 Its fine river and fine hills have sent on their way
 six other dynasties,
 by the Ch'in-Huai's misty waters,
 just as they used to be.

Mansion mirages pass by my eyes,
 phantom scenes scatter like fog.
 I go seeking the dragon banners,
 am abashed to find a mere village.
 I draw hands into sleeves
 in this age of the evening sun
 where four hundred cells of monks of the Ch'i and Liang
 quietly face
 red maple leaves fluttering down in the frosty sky.

Shao Jui-p'eng, to "West River"²

During the centuries that separated Yü Hsin from Shao Jui-p'eng, Chien-k'ang had flourished and fallen many times. As Chien-yeh, the capital of Wu during the Three Kingdoms, it had fallen even before Yü Hsin's time. Conquered by the armies of Tsin in their brief reunification of China, the city later became the Tsin's own capital when the dynasty lost control of North China; and it remained the capital, called Chien-k'ang, throughout the Southern Dynasties. During the T'ang, the city was often referred to by the county name Chin-ling, or by the name of the adjacent county Mo-ling, and finally in the Ming, it became the "Southern Capital," Nan-ching (Nanking). Yü Hsin lamented the sack of that Southern Dynasties capital in the devastating rebellion of Hou Ching; and several decades later, the city—by then the capital of the Ch'en Dynasty—fell again, on this occasion to the northern Sui army. During the T'ang it seemed to have been a pleasantly poetic city

² With the occasional subtitle: "Eighteen years ago I matched rhymes with Chou Pang-yen's 'Meditation on the Past at Chin-ling'; I do so again." Lin Yü-sheng, *Chin-san-pai-nien ming-chia tz'u-hsüan* 近三百年名家詞選. (Hong Kong: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1979), p. 214.

of ruins, but following the collapse of the T'ang, during the Five Dynasties, it became the capital of the so-called Southern T'ang, whose last poet-emperor, Li Yü, finally capitulated and surrendered the city to the founder of the new Sung Dynasty. As Nanking, it was the first and last capital of the Ming Dynasty, taken by the Manchus in 1645. It later became the site of the humiliating Treaty of Nanking in 1842, whereby Hong Kong and other concessions were given to Great Britain. Soon afterwards it became the stronghold of the Taipings, to be utterly devastated and its inhabitants massacred when it fell to Tseng Kuo-fan's imperial army in 1864. And it was a Republican capital, ruthlessly sacked by the Japanese in 1937. It was a city with a long and painful history, with each glory and each horror occurring in the shadow of past glories and past horrors.

In the sequence of poems on the city, we discover an inescapable truth: before the age of photographs and film, with their own stylized images, a place was known, remembered, and made memorable primarily through texts. These texts did not bring about the events that belonged to a place (there is no claim that classical poetry caused the Taiping Rebellion, though texts did play a role); but old texts often overwhelmed and assimilated events once those events had passed. Though different kinds of texts may compete to *be* the "true" history of a place, a place's history is constituted of texts and not directly of events. The vagaries, capricious choices, and powerful images in texts *are* the past for later ages. Courageous deaths, heroic acts, and memorable scenes have often been utterly forgotten. At the same time, minor, dubious, and even fictitious events have, through strong texts, become a real past, which historians labor in vain to undo. In fact, the first Sung emperor did not have Li Yü, the last ruler of the Southern T'ang, killed because of a line in one of Li Yü's songs; but the historian's austere truth is often ignored if it endangers the image of the past that a culture has enshrined. A good story, the legend of a person, or the image of a city, will outlive the facts. Good writing creates a place: the physical evidence before one's eyes is often no more than an aggregate of details from which elements are selected to confirm or trope on the familiar writing. Su Shih composed his famous song, recalling the great river battle at Red Cliff, at the wrong Red Cliff; but so long as he believed the place to be Red Cliff his error is insignificant.

Value—the sighs of appreciation, the chill of awe, the tears of remembrance—is something we grant to a place. There is a famous story about this in the *Lieh-tzu*.³

Once there was a native of Yen who, though born in Yen, had grown up in Ch'u. When he reached old age, he set off on a return to his native land. Passing through Tsin, his fellow-travelers played a trick on him. Pointing to a city, they said, "That over there is the capital of Yen." A melancholy look appeared on the man's face. Then pointing to a village shrine, they said, "That's the shrine of your village." And the man heaved a great sigh. Then they pointed to a house and said, "That right there is the home of your ancestors." Tears streamed down the man's face. They pointed to some tombs: "There lie the graves of your ancestors." The man couldn't control himself any more and fell to weeping. At this point his fellow-travelers doubled over in howls of laughter: "We were just fooling you—this is only Tsin." The man was greatly embarrassed; and when he reached Yen and saw the true capital and village shrine, the true home and graves of his ancestors, the melancholy he felt was much diminished.

The point of this parable is that value does not inhere in the place itself but is given to the place in the act of perception. But there is another, less obvious lesson here, equally important for our poetry of Chin-ling: in giving value to a place, we receive the identifications, the points of attention, and even the putatively appropriate responses from others.

The Chin-ling of poetry emerged over the course of several centuries, its images added and embellished, until at last it was dominated by a few powerful poems. Once the Chin-ling of poetry had acquired its full complement of images, once it became replete (in Chinese, *pei* 備), it achieved a kind of stasis, a fixed and virtually inescapable legacy for later generations. Later writers were doomed to speak of Chin-ling through the received images of Chin-ling—not because they were slavish imitators without originality, but because whenever they looked at Chin-ling or even thought of Chin-ling, the perfect lines of those old texts came crowding into their minds. To confront Chin-ling was to recall the past, but one in which a historical past and a literary past were inextricably woven together.

We might take a brief tour and describe this poetic city (any resemblance to the crassly empirical geography being purely fortuitous). As we come downstream on the Yangtse, called "Heaven's

³ *Chung-hsü chih-te chen-ching* 冲虚至德真经 (*Lieh-tzu*) (SPTK edition), 3.5b.

Moat" (*T'ien-chien*), which protects the city from invasion from the north, we pass Tan-yang County and Triple Mountain, then Mo-ling County, with its White Egret Isle and its Phoenix Tower. The city is situated to our right on the southern bank, with Yeh Mountain between it and the river. Beyond Yeh Mountain lies, fortified, The Rock (*Shih-t'ou*). In his "Diary of a Journey into Shu" (*Ju-Shu chi*), Lu Yu writes: "When you gaze at The Rock, you see it's not all that high; but it stands sheer over the river, winding along its bank like a wall. All boats must pass this to come to Chien-k'ang (Chin-ling). Whenever there is a disturbance in the region, one first of all holds The Rock securely—truly a strategic spot for control."⁴

On the other side of the city from The Rock is Bell Mountain, renamed Chiang Mountain during the Southern Dynasties as an act of frightened devotion to a bullying local deity, Chiang Tzu-wen.⁵ The Rock and the Bell flank the city and are important to its mystique. There was a legend that Liu Pei, the ruler of the Shu-Han state during the Three Kingdoms, sent his famous advisor Chu-ko Liang to Chien-yeh to spy out the topography; and Chu-ko Liang reported to him: "Bell Mountain is a dragon coiling; The Rock is a tiger crouching; this is a dwelling for emperors."⁶ This geomantically favorable location was supposed to have been noticed by the First Emperor of the Ch'in, who was disturbed by the presence about the place of the "royal aura" (*T'ien-tzu ch'i* 天子氣, or *wang ch'i* 王氣). Legend has it that he had a "canal," the Ch'in-Huai River, dredged in order the drain off such a threatening aura and thus protect his empire from southern rebellion.⁷

⁴ *Lu Yu chi* 陸游集, (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1976), p. 2416.

⁵ For a song on the legend, see Wen T'ing-yün, "The God, Lord Chiang," *Chiang-hou shen ko* (31895). All T'ang poems are identified by their numbers in Hiraoka Takeo, Ichihara Kokichi, and Imai Kiyoshi, *Tōdai no shihen, Tang Civilization Reference Series 11-12* (Kyoto: Institute for Humanistic Studies, 1964-65).

⁶ The *Wu-lu* 吳錄, cited in *T'ai-p'ing yü-lan* (facsimile edition, 1935; rpt. Taipei: Shang-wu shu-chü, 1980), 156.3a-3b.

⁷ Cited in Feng Chi-wu 馮集梧, *Fan-ch'uan shih-chi chu* 樊川詩集注 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1962), p. 273. Ch'in Shih-huang's desire to drain away the "royal aura" played a role in the aetiologies of other place names in the region; e.g., the story of the origin of the name Mo-ling, given in the *Wu-lu*, as cited in Li Shan's commentary to Hsieh T'iao's *Ju-ch'ao ch'ü*, *Liu-ch'en chu Wen hsüan* (SPTK edition), 28.31b.

Between The Rock and the Bell, wound about by the Ch'in-Huai and its lakes, lies Chin-ling (calling the city by its ancient county name, as was common in the T'ang), with its great imperial compound, the "Terrace City" (*T'ai-ch'eng*). The city and palace compound are filled with famous sites. There was "Rook Robe Lane" (*Wu-i hsiang*), on which were located mansions of the great clans, the Wangs and the Hsiehs. There were the famous pavilions, "Nomad Campaign" (*Cheng-lü t'ing*), and "Heart's Delight" (*Shang-hsin t'ing*), and "Magpie Lodge" (*Chih-ch'üeh kuan*). There were the great palaces such as Lin-ch'un and Ching-yang. Whether its edifices survived, or lay in ruins, or were merely a memory, each site had its stories. We know of Ch'en Shu-pao, the last pleasure-loving emperor of the Ch'en Dynasty, whose sensual and melancholy song, "On Jade Trees, Flowers in the Rear Courtyard" (*Yü-shu hou-t'ing hua*), was taken as a figure of decadence foretelling the imminent end of the dynasty. The omen was fulfilled; and as the Sui troops were entering Chin-ling, Ch'en Shu-pao scandalously hid himself and his empress in the well of Ching-yang Palace. The city was ripe with names, legends, and events, all waiting to be recalled.

Yü Hsin's lament over the fall of Chin-ling to Hou Ching's rebel army was set in a long poetic meditation on his own life, his family, and the fate of his dynasty, the Liang: his concern was not truly with the place itself, but with family and polity. It was nearly two hundred years after the sack of the city in the Hou Ching Rebellion that poets began to make Chin-ling an important locus for meditation on the past. Such neglect was remarkable because the seventh century was a season for effusive laments on old capitals and ruined sites. The former Wei capital at Yeh received more than its due. Perhaps poets were simply waiting for Chin-ling to develop a pleasing patina.

There is one full-fledged "meditation on the past at Chin-ling" (*Chin-ling huai-ku*), which might date from this period. This consists of thirty-six turgid lines by one T'ang Yao-ch'en, an author about whom absolutely nothing is known.⁸ The only reason to assign the poem to the seventh century is its style and its position within a

⁸ *Wen-yüan ying-hua* 文苑英華 (facsimile edition, Taipei: Hsin-wen-feng ch'u-pan kung-ssu, 1979), 308.1b.

roughly chronological sequence of authors in the early Northern Sung anthology *Wen-yün ying-hua*. Reading this piece beside the hundreds of later “meditations on the past at Chin-ling,” one cannot help observing the absence of the standard images that subsequently grew up around Chin-ling. Although the geographical site was Chin-ling, the Chin-ling of poetry did not yet exist. And without an established poetic city on which to write, T’ang Yao-ch’en had to borrow from a more general poetry of ruins, from Pao Chao’s “Weed Covered City” (*Wu-ch’eng fu*), written around 459. This famous poetic exposition, included in the *Wen hsüan*, provided a blueprint for the sorts of topics to be mentioned and phrases to be employed when describing any ruined city; T’ang Yao-ch’en essentially followed the blueprint, expanding on details that localized the object of his attention as Chin-ling.

The first true poet of Chin-ling was Li Po (701–62), who visited it often, in 747, 754, and 761. Li Po often balked at worn-out topics, but a worn-out city that had not yet become a worn-out topic allowed him to see an old world anew. Never thereafter would Chin-ling have such freshness.

石頭巉巖如虎踞，凌波欲過滄江去。鍾山龍盤走勢來，秀色橫分歷陽樹。
四十餘帝三百秋，功名事跡隨東流。白馬小兒誰家子，泰清之歲來關囚。
金陵昔時何壯哉，席卷英豪天下來。冠蓋散為煙霧盡，金輿玉座成寒灰。
扣劍悲吟空咄嗟，梁陳白骨亂如麻。天子龍沈景陽井，誰歌玉樹後庭花。
比地傷心不能道，目下離離長春草。送爾長江萬里心，他年來訪南山皓。

The Rock looms towering,
like a tiger crouching;
mounting up over waves as if to go
crossing the grey River.
And the Bell, a dragon coiled,
comes with onrushing force,
whose crests of color barely disclose
the trees of Li-yang.

Forty emperors and more,
three hundred autumns—
all traces of their deeds of glory
flow off with the eastward current.

Little fellow on a white horse,
 who was that man?—
 Hou Ching, brought a prisoner through the passes,
 in the year T'ai-ching.

What sturdy might it had,
 the Chin-ling of olden days!
 it rolled up heroes as in a mat,
 coming from all the world.
 Those caps and coaches are gone now,
 scattered in fog and mist,
 the golden palanquins and thrones of jade
 have become cold ash.

I knock my sword, chant sadly,
 and heave a hopeless sigh
 for the white bones of Liang and Ch'en
 tangled as strands of hemp.
 A Son of Heaven, the Dragon submerged—
 in the Ching-yang Palace well!
 and who now sings "On Trees of Jade
 Flowers in the Rear Courtyard?"

How much this place wounds my heart
 I cannot say:
 ranged clearly here beneath my eyes,
 the springtime grasses grow.
 Sending you on your way, the River,
 its heart ten thousand miles long,
 Some coming year you'll be back to seek
 the old Whitehairs of South Mountain.

Li Po, "A Song of Chin-ling: part-
 ing from Fan Hsüan" (08097)

As often in heptasyllabic verse songs of the mid-eighth century, we have an occasional closing message appended with only the most tenuous links to the main body of the song. In the mountains that flank Chin-ling the heraldic tiger and dragon suddenly seem to come alive, their continuing vitality painfully reminding the visitor of the human and political vitality that has departed from the city.

This dragon that is the Bell remains active. In contrast, once Chin-ling's fated span of three hundred years of rule is over, the dragon among men, the Son of Heaven, has followed the dragon cycle of activity and quiescence: he becomes the "Dragon Submerged." And we see Ch'en Shu-pao, ironically embodying that ancient emblem of resting force and gathering strength, in his dragon robes, cowering with his empress in the Ching-yang Palace well. Against this backdrop of ever vigorous nature, figures of the past gathered from all over the world, then scattered into mist, ash, bone, and the silencing of a song once heard here and heard no more—"On Trees of Jade Flowers in the Rear Courtyard."

Li Po's poem is neither complicated nor profound. Its considerable appeal lies in a tone of voice, evoking a mood in which we are to share for a moment—impermanence, loss, the sense that all those alluring moments in the past that seem so real to us are, at the same time, beyond us—a sentiment that is mere cliché in exposition, but compelling in the performance. The same kind of appeal animates Li Po's most famous Chin-ling poem:

鳳凰臺上鳳凰遊，鳳去臺空江自流。吳空花草埋幽徑，晉代衣冠成古丘。
三山半落青天外，一水中分白鷺洲。總為浮雲能蔽日，長安不見使人愁。

On the Terrace of the Phoenix
once the Phoenix roamed;
the phoenix is gone, the terrace is empty,
the River keeps flowing on.
In the palace of Wu flowers and grasses
bury the unseen paths;
caps and gowns of the days of Tsin
have become now ancient mounds.
Triple Mountain sinks half away,
out beyond blue sky,
as one stream of water divides midcourse
around White Egret Isle.⁹
All because the drifting clouds
block the bright sun,
not seeing Ch'ang-an,
makes a person sad.

⁹ The *fen* here may also be taken, as in popular poetic usage, as "reveal."

Li Po, "Climbing Phoenix Terrace
in Chin-ling" (08569)

As often in the poetry of Chin-ling, there is a magic of names, names checked against the present landscape to determine what still remains and what serves as yet another proof that things of the world go off, leaving their names behind like husks. "Phoenix Terrace" is a name that survives in human memory; but in the world before our eyes the name has come apart: the "phoenix" half of the name has flown away and the "terrace" half remains, empty in our vision. This is almost an emblem of texts, places, and the history that survives in texts: the texts, the old name of the terrace, embody a fullness; but whenever we see the place through those texts and the names in them, we find partition, something flown away and absent. And what flies away is never the terrace; it is always the phoenix, the magic creature, present for us now only in name and text.

What is the force of the last couplet in this poem? Li Po sees through a deserted cityscape to the vanished glories of the Southern Dynasties; he gazes toward Ch'ang-an, blocked from his vision by distance and clouds. And Ch'ang-an too is a name and an absence. Does he see Ch'ang-an's future prefigured in the ruins of Chin-ling? An answer may be in the bald opening of the following poem:

晉家南渡日，此地舊長安。地郎帝王宅，山為龍虎盤。
金陵空壯觀，天塹浮波瀾。醉客迴橈去，吳歌且自歡。

On the day when the House of Tsin fled south,
this place became the former Ch'ang-an.
The place was the home of emperors,
its mountains were tigers and dragons coiled.
Chin-ling, a vista of futile mightiness,
with the clear waves of Heaven's Moat.
A drunken traveler turns his oars and departs,
taking the moment's pleasure in songs of Wu.

Li Po. "Poems on Chin-ling"
(first of three, 08623)

Unlike the decadent and melancholy Chin-ling of later poets, the ancient Chin-ling of Li Po's imagination often found its historical

moment toward the beginning of the Eastern Tsin, when that dynasty, its princes fleeing a barbarian invasion of the North, reestablished itself on the southern shore of Heaven's Moat. These were not the conventionally brutal times of a dynastic founding, but an age of finely cultivated heroes, gallant and witty—the brilliant and sophisticated politician Hsieh An and his friend, the greatest calligrapher of history, Wang Hsi-chih. Although some poems cannot be dated, it is tempting to associate this version of Chin-ling with the political situation of the T'ang in 756, when most of the North had fallen to the barbarian rebels under An Lu-shan. At this time Li Po threw his lot in with the Prince of Yung, who had set himself up as an independent ruler in the lower Yangtse, just as a branch of the Tsin royal house had done. (Such are the perils of overly enthusiastic historical analogies: how could Li Po have known then that the Prince of Yung's brother, the emperor Su-tsung, would recapture most of the north and establish his own legitimacy, making Li Po and his chosen prince traitors?) We may even suspect that in some poems Li Po's Chin-ling is a "once and future" Chin-ling, with himself playing a role in the establishment of a new southern dynasty analogous to the roles played by Hsieh An and Wang Hsi-chih in the Eastern Tsin.

晋室昔横潰，永嘉遂南奔。沙塵何茫茫，龍虎鬪朝昏。
 胡馬風漢草，天驕蹙中原。哲匠感頽運，雲鵬忽飛翻。
 組練照楚國，旌旗連海門。西秦百萬衆，戈甲如雲屯。
 投鞭可填江，一掃不足論。皇運有返正，醜虜無遺魂。
 談笑過橫流，蒼生望斯存。冶城訪古跡，猶有謝安墩。
 憑覽周地險，高標絕人喧。想像東山姿，緬懷右軍言。
 梧桐識嘉樹，薰草留芳根。白鷺映春洲，青龍見朝暉。
 地古雲物在，臺傾禾黍繁。我來酌清波，於此樹名園。
 功成拂衣去，歸入武陵源。

Floods broke on the House of Tsin long ago,
 and they fled south in the Yung chia Reign.
 In a vast expanse of dust and sand
 dragon and tiger battled from dawn to dusk.
 Tartar horses grazed on the grasses of Han;
 "Heaven's Brats," the scourge of the central plain.

Wise statesmen were stirred by our falling fortunes,
 and the *p'eng* bird suddenly soared through the clouds.
 Buffcoat and helm gleamed in the land of Ch'u,
 pennons and banners stretched to the seagates.
 Hosts from Ch'in to the west, a million strong,
 with armor and pikes massing like clouds:
 Fu Chien bragged that his horsewhip could ford the Yangtse—
 needless to say, they were wiped out utterly.
 Then imperial fortunes returned to the proper;
 and of those foul nomads, no soul survived.
 Joking and chatting, they checked the ruinous course,
 and the people might now hope to survive.
 I visit those ancient sites at Yeh-ch'eng
 where there still survives the mound of Hsieh An.
 Here all around I survey the land's fastness,
 a high point, cut off from the noise of men.
 An image forms in my mind of Hsieh An's manner
 and I take to heart Wang Hsi-chih's words long ago.
 I recognize fine trees, the *wu-t'ung*,
 and sweet roots of the melilotus remain.
 There's White Egret, a spring island gleaming,
 Bluedragon Hill shows the dawn's first glimmer.
 The land is ancient, its cloud-creatures survive,
 but its terraces have collapsed, where millet grows dense.
 I come and pour out the clear wave for myself
 in this place where is set a famous park.
 After great deeds, brush dust from your robes and be gone
 back to Peach Blossom Spring in Wu-ling.

Li Po, "Hsieh An's Mound, North-
 west of Yeh-ch'eng, in Chin-ling"
 (08566)

Earlier poets frequently imagined past scenes in one or two lines,
 but it was Li Po's visionary gift actually to see history, to stand on
 Hsieh An's mound, close his eyes, and envisage the armored hosts
 of the Tsin stretched along the south bank of the Yangtse, from
 Ch'u down to the sea. "The land is ancient—its cloud-creatures sur-
 vive"—*yün-wu*, the shifting shapes of illusion.

In the background of this poem lies an anecdote from *A New Account of Tales of the World*:

Wang Hsi-chih and Hsieh An went up together to Yeh-ch'eng (east of Chien-k'ang). Hsieh was bemused, with his thoughts faraway, for he had the determination to transcend the world (i.e., to become a recluse).

Wang said to Hsieh, 'Yü of Hsia ruled the world with such diligence that his hands and feet were worn and calloused. King Wen of Chou didn't even allow leisure in the day for his evening meal. And today, when "the four suburbs are filled with fortifications," every man should be exerting himself. But instead people neglect their duty for empty talk, and hinder the essential tasks with frivolous writing. I'm afraid that's not what is needed right now.'

Hsieh replied, 'The Ch'in state followed the principles of Wei Yang, Lord of Shang, and perished with the Second Emperor (Erh-shih, r. 209-207 B.C.). Was it "pure conversation" which brought them to disaster?'¹⁰

Li Po's poem is an extended defense of Hsieh An's position here, and the dispute between Hsieh and Wang implicitly recurs in many variations in later responses to the ancient city. Chin-ling represented a world of ease and pleasure, a "land of loveliness," *chia-li ti* 佳麗地, as Hsieh T'iao (464-99) called the region. However, often in the Chinese tradition, such alluring ease and pleasure foreboded decadence and destruction. Hsieh An, Li Po, and later Wen T'ing-yün tried to reconcile the pleasant life with political vigor. For both Li Po and Wen, this was embodied in the image of Hsieh An himself and in the early Eastern Tsin, when indeed "joking and chatting, they checked the ruinous course," after which they were free to "brush dust from their robes," go off to Peach Blossom Spring and lead the life of an "immortal-recluse" (or a wealthy aristocrat with extensive estates). Hsieh An dismissed Wang Hsi-chih's argument with the example of Ch'in, which though austere and diligent, lasted only two imperial reigns. The image of the pleasure-loving heroes of the Eastern Tsin was attractive, but unconvincing to most visitors, who usually instead saw in Chin-ling a vision of Ch'en Shu-pao, cowering in his palace well. Some responded to this vision with uncomplicated moral condemnation, but more commonly Chin-ling suggested alluring sensual pleasure, tinged with a melancholy certainty of doom.

¹⁰ Liu I-ch'ing, *A New Account of Tales of the World*, trans. Richard Mather (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), pp. 63-64.

Li Po wrote often on Chin-ling, but he did not fully establish the “meditation on the past at Chin-ling.” Although far more popular in the later eighth century than Tu Fu, Li Po did not begin to exert pervasive influence until around the turn of the ninth century. Thus his Chin-ling poems did not shape the way his immediate successors imagined the city. It was still possible for the later eighth-century poet Lu Lun to “Moor by Night at Chin-ling” (14879) without mentioning a word about ruins, the Southern Dynasties, or The Rock and the Bell. From the same period Chu Fang could take leave of someone at Chin-ling and mention only the traveler’s destination (16733). But by the beginning of the ninth century it had become virtually impossible to think of Chin-ling as a mere landscape—or to avoid calling its mountains by their proper names, or to look at its grasses without thinking of what under them. The one explicit “meditation on the past at Chin-ling” of the late eighth century, a quatrain by Ssu-k’ung Shu (15575), consists of one couplet on anonymous ruins and a couplet on Yü Hsin:

It pains me that Colonel Yü
grew old as a subject of the Northern Dynasties.

This is not the sort of verse to come unbidden to the lips of every subsequent visitor.

The poems which, more than any others, gave the tone and images of Chin-ling to post-T’ang poets were the best and best-known works of Liu Yü-hsi (772–842). The earliest of these, from the autumn of 824, was written not at Chin-ling, but far up the Yangtse at Western Barrier Mountain, once a principal fortification of the Three Kingdoms State of Wu that defended the approaches to Chin-ling (then Chien-yeh) by a series of iron chains stretched across the river. The fortress and its river defenses were broken by a Tsin flotilla under Wang Chün, coming downstream from I-chou in Szechwan. Soon afterward Chin-ling, then Chien-yeh, fell, and the Tsin unification of China was thus completed.

王濬樓船下益州，金陵王氣黯然收。千尋鐵鎖沈江底，一片降旛出石頭。
人世幾回傷往事，山形依舊枕寒流。今逢四海為家日，故壘蕭蕭蘆荻秋。

When Wang Chün’s towered galleys
descended from I-chou,

the royal aura of Chin-ling
 in the darkness melted away.
 Chains of iron a thousand yards long
 sank to the river's bed,
 and from The Rock a single flag,
 mark of surrender, flew.
 How many times in human life
 comes this pain at events long past?
 while this mountain's form, as ever,
 lays its head by the chilly flow.
 Now we live in days
 when all the world is one;
 winds howl around the ancient fort,
 the reeds turn autumn.

"Meditation on the Past at West-
 ern Barrier Mountain" (1897)

As in much of Liu Yü-hsi's poetry, this famous piece holds disparate impulses uncomfortably together. There is the ceremony of *huai-ku*, "meditation on the past": a vision of the past followed by present response, which takes stock of what survives and what is gone. But the last couplet complicates the comfortable ceremony. There is the celebration of T'ang unity; and the implicit analogy with the Tsin reunification immediately suggests the recent suppression by T'ang imperial forces of growing regional autonomy. However, the impulse to celebration immediately confronts the *huai-ku* impulse to lament loss, which we find in the closing image of ruin, autumnal lateness, and utter desolation. The rejoicing in political unity suddenly dissolves, at best into a powerful image of the transience of dynastic power, at worst into a lament for the fall of Wu.

What happens in Liu's poem is a symptom of what will happen often in the poetry of Chin-ling, and in a larger sense, in most poetry treating the Southern Dynasties: immense attraction to its melancholy sensuality and nostalgia at the loss of such a world play uneasily against moral judgment. In this case we might say that two writers are at work: Liu Yü-hsi and the *huai-ku* itself. Liu Yü-hsi is trying to write one poem, but the mood of the *huai-ku*, infecting him, presses for another, contradictory poem. Reunification is to be

celebrated, but the cliché of the fifth line forces the poet to feel regret. The image of the ruined river fortress in the autumn wind is such a powerful presence in the *huai-ku* mood that it seizes the last line and dominates the triumphant vision of the Tsin conquest and T'ang unity.

In Liu's "Meditation on the Past at Chin-ling" (18765), the same process of movement into the mood of *huai-ku* begins to occur, but Liu wrests back control of the poem midway through. The poem begins with the magic of names:

潮滿治城渚，日斜征虜亭。蔡洲新草綠，幕府舊煙青。
興廢由人事，山川空地形。後庭花一曲，幽怨不堪聽。

High waters fill Yeh-ch'eng's shoals,
the sun sinks past the pavilion, "Nomad Campaign."
New grasses turn green on the isles of Ts'ai,
on Headquarters Hill the olden mists are blue.
Rise and fall follow from human actions,
these hills and streams, mere forms of the earth.
That song, "Flowers in the Rear Courtyard,"
has a hidden pain I cannot bear to hear.

Here the *huai-ku* begins writing the poem with the magic of old names, telling of nature's cycles and human impermanence. The *huai-ku* will lead the poem to the inevitability of human decline and loss, as the naming will lead Liu to The Rock and Bell, tiger and dragon, permanent guardians of Chin-ling with nothing now to guard. But at the third couplet—called the *chuan* or "turning" in late classical poetics—Liu resists these powerful forces of the poetic tradition by rebelling against the assumption that dynastic decline is an inevitable and purely natural process: "Rise and fall follow from human actions." The Mid-T'ang rationalist will even snub the magic of Heaven's Moat, The Rock, and Bell: "these hills and streams, mere forms of the earth" (or "empty forms" now)—there is no permanent geomantic basin for the "royal aura" here.

We read, or seem to read, the laws of inevitable cyclicity in the natural world around us. How do we know, then, that the fall of Chin-ling was not naturally inevitable, but instead "followed from human actions"?—by the evidence of the song, with its "hidden

rancor," its words bearing testimony that because prudent management of the polity had failed, a fall would inevitably follow. Two stances are available to the poet here: one involves resignation and acceptance, following the conventions of a hundred earlier *huai-ku* and taking as a theme acquiescence to nature's cycles; the other stance is to set oneself apart, to listen and judge, and in doing so believe that we can control our fate. That opposition between spontaneous, unreflective acquiescence and reflective judgment with the hope of control (the moralist's position) remains uneasily in the poetry of the city, sometimes one side gaining the upper hand, sometimes the other. It is also a struggle between received convention and the poet's capacity to resist it.

The developing struggle between the poet and past convention plays no role in Liu Yü-hsi's two most famous Chin-ling poems, from the "Five Topics on Chin-ling" (19273-277). A preface, added later, shows his special pride in them:

When I was younger, I traveled in the southeast, but felt a lingering regret that I had never visited Mo-ling [Chin-ling]. Later I became Governor of Li-yang and would gaze toward it from afar. I chanced once to have a visitor who showed me "Five Topics on Chin-ling" he had written. With a faint smile I fell into thought and these came to me in a flash. Later my friend Po Chü-i chanted them with an intense seriousness, swaying his head and sighing in appreciation a long time. He said, "After that line in 'The Rock' which goes, 'Tides dash on those empty walls, then turn back in stillness,' I am certain no later poet will try to write about the topic again." Although the other four are not as good as that one, they too do not fail to live up to what Po said.

Particularly interesting here is the notion of taking control of a place through words, writing about it so well that no later poet will treat the topic again. Of course, the kind of perfection that Po praised had exactly the opposite effect, ensuring that these sites were treated time and again. But in a deeper sense Po was correct: Liu Yü-hsi's poems took possession of the site. Two of the "Five Topics," "Rook Robe Lane" (*Wu-i hsiang*), and "Fortress on The Rock" (*Shih-t'ou ch'eng*), appear on or beneath the surface of most post-T'ang poetry on Chin-ling. They established the received conventions with which later poets had to contend.

"Rook Robe Lane" is attractively epigrammatic but not very deep, a variation on the theme of the indifference of nature to the

fall of human glory. Like so many poems of the city, it begins with the magic of Chin-ling's names.

朱雀橋邊野草花，鳥衣巷口夕陽斜。舊時王謝堂前燕，飛入尋常百姓家。

Beside Red Sparrow Bridge
 the wildflowers are in bloom,
 and evening sunlight slants
 past the mouth of Rook Robe Lane.
 The swallows before the halls
 of those olden Wangs and Hsiehs
 now fly into the homes of ordinary commoners.

This charming observation on nature's unsnobbish indifference to social class never failed to appeal to later writers. But Po Chü-i's poetic instincts were correct. In "Fortress on The Rock" we discover a more substantial and more mysterious achievement, of a flawless and haunting beauty of which one can scarcely believe Liu Yü-hsin capable (he had, after all, produced such a dreadful line as "Rise and fall follow from human actions").

山圍故國周遭在，潮打空城寂寞回。淮水東邊舊時月，夜深還過女牆來。

Hills invest the ancient capital,
 their full circuit still survives,
 tides dash on these empty walls,
 then turn back in stillness.
 By the Huai water's eastern edge
 the moon of olden days
 in the depths of night comes back
 passing over the parapets.

Here we find the lore of Chin-ling—The Rock standing as guardian over the city—joined with the conventions of *huai-ku*—the same moon shining even though the people of the past and the city's glories are gone. But both lore and convention disappear in the poetry. The history of the Southern Dynasties, the cycle of holding out bravely, and then falling softly, is echoed here in the sequential opposition between the blocked assault of the waves and the passage of the moon over the parapets. The shape that dominates the poem is the encircling wall—in the circuit of mountains and the

fortress—along with forces surrounding this enclosure, trying to break through. As often in *huai-ku*, nature continually reenacts human history, in ghostly repetitions that mark the absence of the human protagonists. But here the reenactment is truly “natural,” with no sense of forcing a pattern for the sake of an analogy. It is one of those rare quatrains in which basic antithetical categories seem to be truly embodied in the scene: violent force and steady, motionless counterforce; activity and stillness; blocking or withstanding and passage. And yet, in this perfection, we recall that Liu Yü-hsi had not been to Chin-ling, had not witnessed the scenes he describes; this was purely the mind’s vision, the poetic Chin-ling that ought to be. These most famous and influential poems on the city, which no later visitor to Chin-ling could ignore, were pure poetic fantasy.

By the Late T’ang “Meditation on the Past at Chin-ling” had become a set topic at which many poets tried their hands. Sheer quantity makes it impossible to treat the tradition as it deserves. Allied to our main topic and equally important in forming the poetic Chin-ling, there are numerous excellent “poems on history” (*yung-shih shih*) and historical songs of the ninth century, in which Chin-ling and the Southern Dynasties serve as the historical backdrop. These include Li Ho’s “Song of a Return from K’uai-chi” (20647); Tu Mu’s two “Songs of the Terrace City” (28225-226); Li Shang-yin’s two poems entitled “Southern Dynasties” (29120, 29334), two poems entitled “The Rear Palace of the Ch’en” (29134, 29509), “A Pair of T’ung Trees by the Ching-yang Palace Well” (29550), and “Ching-yang Palace Well” (29585); and many of Wen T’ing-yün’s historical songs including “The Bank Where the Cock Crowed” (31871), “The God, Lord Chiang” (31895), “Lord Hsieh’s Villa” (31901), and “Dawn Court at the Terrace City” (31904).¹¹ Such poems differ from “meditations on the past at Chin-ling” in presenting only the historical situation, with or without a judgment, and not including the poet’s response to an encounter with ruins.

Tu Mu’s “Mooring by Night on the Ch’in-Huai” (228243) was almost as important as Liu Yü-hsi’s poems in the formation of the poetic Chin-ling. Since I have discussed the poem in some detail

¹¹ For the pieces by Wen T’ing-yün, see Paul Rouzer, “The Poetry of Wen T’ing-yün.” Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1989.

elsewhere, I will not go into it at length here, but merely point out that the force of the poem depends on a sudden awareness of the difference between history and the timeless present, the difference between an anonymous landscape of nature and a scene that is recognized as a configuration of old names and past events, the difference between “On Jade Trees Flowers in the Rear Courtyard” as a simply sensual song and that same song as historical evidence, a memory of the fallen Ch’en Dynasty and the mark of its decadence.¹²

Mists veil the cold waters,
 moonlight veils the sand;
 that night I moored on the Ch’in-Huai,
 right near the taverns.
 The merchants’ girl does not understand
 the grief of fallen kingdoms—
 across the river still she sings
 “Flowers in the Rear Courtyard.”

During the ninth century, history was becoming an increasing weight upon the landscape. The impact of this can be seen in an allusion. In the third of Li Po’s “Three Poems on Chin-ling” (08625), there is an innocuous couplet:

苑方秦地少，山似洛陽多。

Its gardens little resemble Ch’in’s,
 but the mountains are much like Lo-yang’s.

Observe what happens to this in “Meditation on the Past at Chin-ling” (28794) by Hsü Hun (*cs.* 832):

玉樹歌殘王氣終，景陽兵合成樓空。松楸遠近千官塚，禾黍高低六代宮。
 石燕拂雲晴亦雨，江豚吹浪夜還風。英雄一去豪華盡，唯有青山似洛中。

The song of “Jade Trees” died away,
 the royal aura was gone,
 on Ching-yang Palace troops converged,
 and the guard-towers were bare.

¹² Stephen Owen, *Traditional Chinese Poetry and Poetics: Omen of the World* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), pp. 181-82.

Near and far lie catalpas and pines,
 the graves of a thousand officials;
 and millet, rising high, sinking low,
 over the Six Dynasties' palaces.
 Stone swallows brush the clouds,
 rain even in sunlit skies;
 blowfish puff through the waves,
 and again tonight comes the wind.
 Once its heroes left it,
 all its glory was gone;
 and only the green mountains remain,
 just like those in Lo-yang.

Li Po had made a simple observation of similarities; in the same terms of comparison, Hsü Hun is observing how, with the disappearance of its dynastic splendor, the place reverts to anonymous nature. Since Lo-yang was still a great city when the poem was written, this claimed similarity to Lo-yang in fact underscores the difference from Lo-yang, or perhaps reminds us of a Lo-yang in ruins long ago (Lo-yang having been the Tsin capital before the dynasty fled south and established itself in Chin-ling). Despite what Hsü Hun says, these green mountains are no longer merely "green mountains," as they had indeed been for Li Po; by Hsü Hun's time, with a weight of Chin-ling poetry, the green mountains are precisely "all that is left": they mark an absence, a loss, and their categorical anonymity is nature defined against mountains with names. Chin-ling is no longer "any place"; it has become very much a poetic "someplace."

As the T'ang state and society crumbled through the course of the ninth century, passing by Chin-ling became increasingly painful, a great cultural *memento mori*. Towards the turn of the tenth century, Wei Chuang (ca. 836-910) found himself in nearby "Shang-yüan County" (38896):

南朝三十六英雄，角逐興亡盡此中。有國有家皆是夢，為龍為虎亦成空。
 殘花舊宅悲江令，落日青山弔謝公。止竟霸圖何物在，石麟無主臥秋風。

Thirty-six heroes,
 the Southern Dynasties' lords,

struggle, pursuit, rise and fall,
 all were played out here.
 Having a kingdom, having a family,
 all was a dream;
 being the dragon, being the tiger,
 that too became emptiness.
 In the last blooms at his former cottage
 I grieve for the Magistrate Chiang;
 as the sun sets upon these green hills
 I lament Milord Hsieh An.
 What thing now at last survives
 of their plans to rule all?—
 stone unicorns, masterless,
 reclining in autumn's wind.

This is the sum of Chin-ling now: the stone representations of the unicorn, whose appearance was to mark the advent of the sage-king, are here funerary statues lying permanently in the autumn wind of destruction.

There are three, quite distinct ways of experiencing the ruins of Chin-ling. The first is an "innocent" encounter with the place, seeing it as a natural landscape with curious shapes, which, on closer examination, turn out to be ruins. In this version, Chin-ling is essentially anonymous and no different from any other ruined city. The second way of seeing Chin-ling is with the aid of a guide or guidebook; in this case, each site encountered is named and its story told. The third way of experiencing the city is different: in this case, the visitor to Chin-ling has lived for years with the poems and stories of the city; he always measures the experience of the physical place against a Chin-ling already firmly established in his imagination.

These variations in encountering Chin-ling also occur in reading a poem, even a poem on Chin-ling. The differences among these variations are particularly sharp later in the tradition, when a large body of earlier texts and images have become firmly established. As in the first, "innocent" experience of the city, we may encounter some uncomplicated loveliness and some curious formations in the text. Or as in the second case, we may be guided by notes that

reveal the lineage of every name and phrase, lineages of which we had no knowledge before. But the third kind of encounter may, in fact, be the only proper model for reading later poetry of the city. In the third case, even though the reader's particular history of literary experience cannot be identical to the poet's, it is still the same kind of background that the poet possessed and presupposed in his readers. To read the later poetry of Chin-ling, you must already know and love the earlier poetry of Chin-ling for its own sake. In the same way, to recognize the complex antiquity spread over the natural landscape of Chin-ling, you must come to the place with Chin-ling already inside you—like Liu Yü-hsi, who saw it perfectly without ever having been there.

Modern readers, both Chinese and Western, often reject such later poems as being nothing more than mere pastiches of allusions and references; this happens when the literary past embodied in the poem is not fully their own. Their experience of such later poems is essentially analogous to the second category of visiting the city: a weary itinerary through notes and explanations. Eventually such poems all sound alike. But a poem, like a place, escapes being reduced to mere category (another *huai-ku*, another ruined city) and achieves particular identity by the reader's depth of familiarity and history of imaginative engagement with the poem's past.

This is not to say that all later poetry that draws on such a complex poetic past is equally valuable; internalizing the past is simply the precondition for value. The Chin-ling of which such later poems speak is invisible in the landscape; that Chin-ling is in old texts, texts that themselves may be only a Chin-ling of the mind—like Liu Yü-hsi's. In one respect you cannot properly say that you "have been to Chin-ling" unless you have already brought the city with you and distributed it appropriately in the designated geographical space. We have seen how the disparate names and legends of the city were shaped into images and a distinctive mood in the T'ang; and now we discover we can no longer disentangle the historical Chin-ling, capital of the Southern Dynasties, from the poetic Chin-ling of the T'ang. Indeed, we call it "Chin-ling," the name that was current in the T'ang; but during the T'ang there wasn't much there—except poems.

There is a vast quantity of later poetry and song on Chin-ling.

Some poems merely run through the received images of the city; other texts argue with the received commonplaces and resist the images; still others try desperately to forget the received images and see the city afresh. Wang An-shih (1021-86), who withdrew into retirement on nearby Pan Hill, often moralized on the folly of those responsible for the fall of the Southern Dynasties. Fan Ch'eng-ta (1126-93), considering a temporary palace there, praised the superiority of his own Southern Sung over the Southern Dynasties, concluding ("Gazing on the Temporary Palace in Chin-ling"):

太平不用千尋鎖，靜聽西城打夜濤。

Ours is an age of peace—
no need for a thousand yard chain;
calmly I listen at the western walls,
where the billows crash at night.¹³

Without knowing Liu Yü-hsi's "Meditation on the Past at Western Barrier Mountain" and "The Rock," it might be possible to infer from these lines a claim of the security of the Sung Dynasty's Chin-ling against threat from the northern armies of the Chin; however, only with the earlier poems in mind does the precise quality of the lines become apparent.

Although Chin-ling topics continued to be frequent in *shih*, the song lyric (*tz'u*) came to be the most common form for the "meditation on the past at Chin-ling." The topic even made its way into *san-ch'ü* (vernacular songs), whose frequently brisk cheerfulness could be ludicrously at odds with the lofty melancholy that characterized most writing about the city. As an example I might cite the two opening songs of a Yüan Dynasty song suite by one Yü T'ien-hsi, which are a delightfully awful pastiche of clichés in a mismatch of generic style and topic.¹⁴

I.

Meditation on the past,
a meditation on the past,
those two words, "decline" and "rise,"

¹³ Fan Ch'eng-ta 范成大, *Fan Shih-hu chi* 范石湖集, (Hong Kong: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1974), p. 13.

¹⁴ *Ch'üan Yüan san-ch'ü* 全元散曲 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1964), p. 225.

swords and shields, how many times?
and who was the richest and noblest back then?—
the last ruler in the palace of Ch'en.

II.

Old trees in west wind and last sunlight,
on the Ch'in-Huai will ever be the capital of emperors.
I love how "the hills invest it," how "the river winds,"
how "the dragon coils and the tiger crouches";
and vaguely I espy
artifacts of the Six Dynasties.

Even before it was reborn as the Ming capital, the city had its poets. Sa-tu-la (1305?-55?) loved it and rewrote some of its old poetry, trying his hand at redoing Li Po's "Climbing Phoenix Terrace in Chin-ling." The fall of Ming Nanking, combined with the revival of the song lyric in the seventeenth century, brought a spate of "meditations on the past at Chin-ling." In such lyrics, Ming Nanking disappears seamlessly into the T'ang Chin-ling that recalls the Southern Dynasties. In his "Terrace City" (*T'ai-ch'eng*), Wu Wei-yeh (1609-72) speaks of the song "On Jade Trees, Flowers in the Rear Courtyard" side by side with the heroes of the Ming, concluding:¹⁵

可憐一片秦淮月，曾照降幡出石頭。

Alas how that single sheet of moonlight
upon the Ch'in-Huai,
once blazed on the surrender flag
emerging from The Rock.

Liu Yü-hsi's image of the capitulation of Wu will serve comfortably again for the fall of Ming, and, in a general way, again in the Republic, in the song by Shao Jui-p'eng, quoted earlier:

降幡又出石頭城，夢沈故壘。

A flag of surrender once again comes from The Rock,
the ancient fort engulfed in dreams.

¹⁵ Chin Jung-fan 靳榮藩, *Wu-shih chi-lan* 吳詩集覽 (SPPY edition), 12A.10b.

The old poetic images of Chin-ling do not fade. When Wu Wei-yeh returned to Nanking after the fall and wrote his beautiful one-hundred-and-sixty line poem "Response on an Encounter with the Old Gardener of the Southern Chamber [of the Imperial Academy]," the first line, on his arrival in the city, was: "Cold tides crash on the ruined fortress" 寒潮衝廢壘.¹⁶ Like the ancient *hsing*, the image announces a mood with complex associations; and every reader would have at once recognized the scene and the mood as belonging to Chin-ling and to none of the other great cities of China.

The later poetry of Chin-ling can easily overwhelm the reader. We will not attempt to survey all, but rather turn our attention to just two song lyrics separated by nearly eight centuries, to see what they make of the city. The first of these is by Chou Pang-yen (1057-1121), written to the melody "West River," with the occasional title "Meditation on the Past at Chin-ling":

佳麗地，南朝盛事誰記。
山圍故國繞清江，髻鬢對起。
怒濤寂寞打孤城，風檣遙度天際。

斷崖樹，猶倒倚，莫愁艇子曾繫。
空餘舊迹鬱蒼蒼，霧沈半壘。
夜深月過女牆來，賞心東望淮水。

酒旗戲鼓甚處市。
想依稀王謝鄰里。
燕子不知何世，向尋常巷陌人家，相對如說興亡，斜陽裏。

"A land of loveliness"—
those glorious moments of the Southern Dynasties, who recalls?
"Hills invest the ancient capital,"
 where the clear river winds,
 bobs of hair rising, face to face.
Raging billows in stillness dash
 those lonely walls,
far in the distance wind-driven masts
 cross the horizon.

¹⁶ *Wu-shih chi-lan* (SPPY edition), 2A.9a.

On the sheer cliff bank the trees
 still hang inverted.
 Never Grieve's skiff once tied up here.
 Only traces of the past remain,
 a dense foliage, blue green,
 and fogs engulf half the fortress.
 "In the depths of night the moon comes
 passing over the parapets,"
 from "Heart's Delight" gaze eastward
 to the Huai's waters.

Markets with wine pennons, festival drums—
 where are they now?
 I can imagine, ever so vaguely,
 the neighborhood of Wangs and Hsiehs.
 The swallows don't know what age it is—
 go into the homes of ordinary people in ordinary lanes
 and face to face
 seem to discuss rise and fall
 in the setting sun.¹⁷

Chou begins his lyric with a catchphrase, "land of loveliness" (*chia-li ti*), and goes on to build the rest of his song around Liu Yü-hsi's two famous quatrains, "Fortress on the Rock" and "Rook Robe Lane." Chou Pang-yen must have had in mind what Po Chü-i once declared, that the quatrain "Fortress on the Rock" had staked such a claim on the topic that no future writer would ever treat it again. But in this relatively new form of the song lyric and in this new age of the Sung, Chou Pang-yen could try to write his own poem that would come to represent the city, building his own claim on top of Liu Yü-hsi's. To a large degree Chou Pang-yen was successful: from the Southern Sung to Shao Jui-p'eng in the 1930s, Chou Pang-yen's lyric was echoed in most treatments of "meditation on the past at Chin-ling" in song lyric (*tz'u*) and vernacular song (*san-ch'ü*). Many tried this topic, both before Chou and after Chou, and failed to contribute lines and images to the poetic city. It

¹⁷ Lo K'ang-lich, *Chou Pang-yen Ch'ing-chen chi chien* 周邦彦清真集箋 (Hong Kong: San-lien shu-tien, 1985), p. 110.

is worth considering just how Chou Pang-yen succeeded, establishing a memorable text and his own identity through the lines and phrases of his predecessors.

He begins by naming the place with a phrase that refers to something timeless, a "land of loveliness"; but as language, that phrase belonged to someone in particular and to a particular age. Chou Pang-yen cannot even say "this land is lovely" without calling up the memory of the Southern Dynasties. So when he asks his question "who recalls?", he speaks on one level of the timelessness of the landscape, the fact that history is invisible upon it, but at the same time he recalls a history for himself and for all who know Hsieh T'iao's famous phrase. If Liu Yü-hsi's quatrains concerned the victory of timeless nature over human history, Chou Pang-yen's lyric reinscribes history in a scene of nature; and old poetry is the means.

He asks rhetorically "who recalls?"; and as if to substantiate the implicit claim that the place is desolate and forgotten, he quotes the opening of Liu Yü-hsi's "Fortress on The Rock," recalling for us Liu's recollection of the Southern dynasties past—"Hills invest the ancient capital." Poetic substitutions take the place of the substitutions that occur in the process of natural change. "Hills invest the ancient capital"; and we listen for the rest of the line: "their full circuit still survives." Whether calling attention to a circuit of walls now crumbled or to a breach in the full circuit of hills, Chou Pang-yen makes a substitution in the second half of the line, opening vision, making the circling motion low and fluid, and leaving a gap in the protective circuit: instead of "circuit surviving," we hear "where the clear river winds."

We have a suspension, a fragment of an old poem left hanging. Often when an old poem is cited, it is given in fragments, and we do not expect to hear more of it. Instead, we have those stern guardian hills, The Rock and the Bell, figured in the old metaphor of the mountain as a woman: "bobs of hair rising, face to face." Then to our surprise the old poem turns out not to have been merely an allusive shard; it returns slightly recast as "Raging billows in stillness dash those lonely walls"—in place of Liu Yü-hsi's "tides dash on these empty walls, then turn back in stillness." Liu Yü-hsi's claim to possess Chin-ling verbally haunts Chou Pang-yen's

song; Liu's quatrains will not go away. And that voice from the past was even stronger than Chou Pang-yen was aware: ironically an early anthology of song lyric reads "empty walls" for Chou's "lonely walls," the T'ang quatrain reclaiming a bit more of Chou's song through mistranscription.¹⁸

Two voices are contesting for control of Chin-ling. Chou Pang-yen figuratively tears down part of the full circuit of walls and gives us the river winding through; he turns the guardian mountains into bobs of hair; he takes the crashing waves and picking up the vector of their retrograde motion from Liu's lines, directs our eyes back to the open riverscape where "far in the distance wind-driven masts cross the horizon." He reminds us of the movement of the river, the emblem and embodiment of passing time; and on the river he points out forms of departure and loss.

Song lyrics were animated by movements of mood, and in each case the mood of the Liu Yü-hsi line or phrase is contradicted or changed by what Chou Pang-yen appends to them. The changes are breaches, both in the besieged city and in the claim of the old poet who occupies it, secure in his fastness, fending off challenges from newcomers who would wrest it from him (such figures of relations between poets—contending for mastery, occupying a space—were not uncommon in the Sung). Chou opens and expands the scene, adding new figures that soften the force of the earlier lines. Chou turns Liu's "tides" into "raging billows" in order to contrast them better with the still riverscape in the distance. Chou Pang-yen's lines are not simply themselves. They are a relation to earlier lines, and in their aggregate we hear a softening of force, just as we perceive diminished force in the landscape around Chin-ling.

The passage of the mast over the horizon marks loss and absence; immediately in the opening of the second stanza our eyes are directed to where a boat was once moored. A sheer bank, a tree hanging precariously from it, the memory of the mooring ropes—all are images of a precarious and unstable attachment, things that the powerful river promises to sweep away. We have a scene of absence, of a missing skiff, in words that recall an old folk song, which itself

¹⁸ This version is given in the *Hua-an tz'u-hsian* 花庵詞選, edited by Huang Shen (fl. early thirteenth century; first edition, 1249).

begins by asking where is Mo-ch'ou, Never-Grieve, the legendary singing girl.¹⁹

Where is Never-Grieve?
 Never-Grieve's west of Rock City.
 There's a skiff plying its pair of oars
 speeding Never-Grieve to me.

It doesn't matter that Chou Pang-yen is "weeping in Tsin" here, that Never-Grieve's "Rock City" was not the "Fortress (or, City) on The Rock," the title of Liu Yü-hsi's poem. If there ever was such a person, Never-Grieve was not from Chin-ling but somewhere else. But the city made her its own and had even named a lake in her honor; she is another vanished beauty added to its collection of vanished beauties. And since she is an absence, having "sailed away" over the horizon, it is easy to believe she once moored her skiff right here.

The fortress half sunken in fog is another movement of vanishing that points to what is missing. Only the old poems, invested with charge of the memories of the city, endure and recur. Liu Yü-hsi's quatrain will not go away: it comes back to complete itself as allusion to earlier poetry usually does not. It returns virtually verbatim, with only the word "return" (*huan*) suppressed, to leave a space in which the moon can appear between the crenellations. Chou closed the first stanza gazing east, watching a sail disappear over the horizon (then immediately looking back close by to the space of a missing boat). He ends this second stanza again gazing east, the direction from which Liu Yü-hsi's moon literally "came," gazing perhaps for other returns. There are lines—of battlements, of a ring of mountains, of the horizon—that serve as boundaries marking departure, absence, and return.

In the third stanza, some more things of the past, some more lines of old poetry, will indeed make the return trip. Return does not belong to permanent things, but to things of cycles, things that go off and come back in migrations. The old market is gone; but poetic vision can bring lost things back in the simple word *hsiang*, "I

¹⁹ Lu Ch'in-li, *Ch'üan Hsien-Ch'in Han Wei Tsin nan-pei-ch'ao shih* 全先秦漢魏晉南北朝詩 (Peking: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1983), p. 1346.

imagine," or better, "I envisage." This vision of the neighborhood of the Wangs and Hsiehs is hazy, like the fog about the ruined fortress; but out of it emerges another, more substantially migratory return—of the swallows and along with them, more lines from Liu Yü-hsi's quatrains. The swallows of Liu Yü-hsi's quatrains were nature's swallows (though he never saw them); the swallows of Chou Pang-yen's lyrics are Liu Yü-hsi's poetic swallows. Their metamorphosis from birds to poetic images occurs in the two lines that frame the return of Liu Yü-hsi's line. Before the Liu Yü-hsi line is added, "the swallows don't know what age it is"; after Liu's line, they "seem to discuss rise and fall in the setting sun." The swallows are no longer the neutral mechanisms of nature; they have meaning and thus can be figured as creatures that express meaning. If they don't know what age it is, how can they "discuss rise and fall?" They do not; they only "seem to." And in acknowledging such "seeming," Chou Pang-yen points to the way in which poetic vision does not emerge immediately out of the world, but is brought to it.

Chou Pang-yen's Chin-ling is a Chin-ling of old poetry: it is a past that cannot be lost, but one that willfully returns to stake its claim on the present city. The later poet struggles with it, tries to soften its force and make the old poetry his own. He frames Liu Yü-hsi's cheerfully indifferent swallows in sinking sunlight and makes them a self-consciously "poetic image." In Chin-ling you lament the loss of the past, and in doing so discover a past that simply will not go away.

The second of our later lyrics on the city is by Chu K'o-pao 諸可寶 (1845–1903), written to the tune *Ying t'i hsü*, with the occasional title "In 1867, lodging on a boat and recording my response to the times, the Imperial Army having recently taken Chin-ling":

西風遠吹病燕，過秦淮古渡。
只如此蒼莽江山，戰塵多少鞞鼓。
對荒岸，平無十里，斜陽盡送繁華去。
好相參得失前朝，陳雲飛聚。

太息雄城，鬱鬱王氣，枉龍蟠虎踞。
十年裏殘劫紅羊，舊時豪傑何處。
早枯桑埋沙萬骨，更顛血紫刀千纒。

付今夜，刀斗樓闌，健兒酸語。

桃花畫扇，燕子春燈，有幾多錯鑄。

剛看到，大旗紅日，萬騎千乘，綏帶將軍，列侯開府。

鏡歌鼓吹，旗幢牙纛，山河重攬東南勝，怕回頭，細讀闌成賦。

新愁舊感休題，鐵馬金戈，孝陵黯澹烟霧。

天涯倦客，少小曾游，認昔年故步。

奈雨度劉郎來到，望眼淒清，巷陌堆蓬，板橋髣髴。

瘡痍滿地，乾坤無恙，傷心私顧憔悴影，念家山偷弄琵琶柱。

聽它終古啼雅，也說興亡，不堪激楚。

From far away the west wind

blows sick swallows

past the Ch'in-Huai's ancient fords.

To such a vast expanse of rivers and hills,
how often have come the roll of the drums
in battle's dust?

I face the shore with its tangled growth
and a plain of weeds stretching ten leagues,
as the evening sunlight sends

all splendor on its way;

eagerly debating achievements and failings
of former dynasties,
the ranks of clouds fly in their clusters.

I heave a sigh for this mighty city,
the pomp of its royal aura,
where, unavailing, the dragon coiled,
the tiger crouched.

In only a decade there was a "red sheep" year of destruction,
and where now are the heroes of former times?

First, bleached branches buried in sands,
that are bones of ten thousand,
then blood from skulls streaming on blades,
in a thousand threads.

To this night belong
kettles beating the watch, Lou-lan Turks,
the sharp words of hardened troops.
A fan painted with a peach blossom,

and plays like “Swallow’s Note” or “Spring Lantern”—
how much bungling?

I have just seen
red sunshine on great banners,
ten thousand horsemen, a thousand wagons,
generals at ease, their sashes loose,
aides-de-camp of nobility.

Cymbal songs, the fife and drum,
pennons, ensigns, ivory-staffed battle-flags,
have again seized these rivers and hills,

the Southeast’s magnificence;
and I fear to look back,
to read too carefully Yü Hsin’s *fu*.

Cease this writing of poems on new sorrows,
on feelings the same as before,
on armored horses and metal pikes,
on the Ming Founder’s tomb, pale and dark,
and shrouded in the fog.

A weary traveler at sky’s edge,
who once rambled here as a youth,
recognizes old footsteps taken in days gone by.
Inevitable—young Liu always comes back

a second time,
and desolation fills his gazing eyes:
tumbleweeds piling up in the lanes,
and at Plank Bridge the trees stripped bare.

Gashes and wounds fill the earth—
Ch’ien and K’un are untroubled,
but I, my heart pained, look privately
on my haggard shadow,
and brooding on these hills of my home,
steal a tune in the frets of this lute.

And I listen to the crows,
cawing for all eternity—
they too discuss rise and fall,
but with a harshness not to be endured.²⁰

²⁰ Chang Po-chü *et al.*, *Ch’ing tz’u hsüan* 清詞選 (Ho-nan: Chung-chou shu-chü, 1982), pp. 153–55.

What is this song—a mass of tired clichés, deserving only the scorn of modern readers? Or, in the opinion of some of the best late Ch'ing and early Republican connoisseurs of *tz'u*, a memorable, boldly forthright, and intensely moving piece of poetry, “daring to say in a loud voice what others of the time could not say”?²¹ The question of value here cannot be separated from the question of what role the literary past should and may legitimately play in poetry. The sheer weight of the poetic past in this song is a large part of the reason modern readers would reject it, together with much of late classical literature; yet such revulsion against the textual weight of the past is incorporated within the song itself, as one of its central concerns. Yet the way in which it addresses the agony of being doomed to repetition—both political and literary—is also perhaps why it won the appreciation of connoisseurs.

By 1867 the poetic image of Chin-ling had acquired whole new layers of history's weight. The Ch'ing sack of Nanking under the Taipings could not but recall the Ch'ing conquest of the city as the last Ming capital—the world of the famous play “Peach Blossom Fan” (*T'ao-hua shan*), and most particularly the lovely lament for the city sung in the play's “Epilogue” (*Yü-yün*). In the Ch'ing, “meditation on the past at Chin-ling” meant a lament for the fall of the Ming city and of the Ming itself; there is more than a hint of Ming loyalism in Chu K'o-pao's song. Thus in Chu K'o-pao's song we have a lament for the sack of the Nanking of the Taipings, referring directly to the fall of Ming Nanking, made through allusions to Chou Pang-yen's Sung Dynasty song “Meditation on the Past at Chin-ling,” based on T'ang quatrains by Liu Yü-hsi, who was thinking of the ruins of the old capital of the Southern Dynasties.

The swallows before the halls
of those olden Wangs and Hsiehs
now fly into the homes of ordinary commoners.

* * *

The swallows don't know what age it is—
go into the homes of ordinary people in ordinary lanes and face
to face
seem to discuss rise and fall in the setting sun.

²¹ Hsia Ching-kuan, *Jen-ku-lou tz'u-hua* 忽古樓詞話, cited in Chang Po-chü *et al.*, *Ch'ing tz'u hsüan* (Ho-nan: Chung-chou shu-chü, 1982), p. 155.

* * *

And I listen to the crows,
 cawing for all eternity—
 they too discuss rise and fall,
 but with a harshness not to be endured.

A concise history of Chinese poetry from the T'ang through the Ch'ing can be discovered in the movement between these passages. With some amusement, the T'ang poet comments on nature's indifference to social class, its obliviousness to the decline of Chin-ling, its splendidly fecund continuity. The past lives only in the eyes of the beholder, and in his couplet Liu Yü-hsi shows that he is well aware of this truth. Chou Pang-yen matches the recurrence of the swallows with the recurrence of a poetic image: as the appearance of the swallows is repeated, so is the poetic response to Chin-ling. The birds are transformed entirely into creatures of poetry in the magnificently staged image of the last line, figuratively made to discuss the topic of which they were only oblique evidence in the T'ang poem. Framing their dialogue in the setting sun, Chou makes them "beautiful."

Chu K'o-pao's swallows appeared in the first line, sick and driven from Nanking over the Ch'in-Huai's fords by the destroying winds of autumn. Nature's figurative deliberation over rise and fall initially seems have been displaced from the swallows and given to the clouds: "eagerly debating achievements and failings of former dynasties, / the ranks of clouds fly in their clusters." But in the song's closure the form returns, in this case Chou Pang-yen's swallows replaced by carrion birds, crows that also "discuss rise and fall"—perhaps, considering the meals thus provided, less indifferent to the cycles of human history than the swallows. It is significant that repetition has become not beautiful, but inescapably ugly. The ugliness is obviously acknowledged for primarily historical reasons: Nanking was sacked time and again, and the carrion crows keep coming back. But the "cawing for all eternity" is also poetic repetition: the situation keeps recurring, and people keep writing about it, including this poem.

The song ends with a statement of not being able to endure the sound any longer; but that is not the only case in the lyric where

repetition is unbearable: "Cease this writing of poems on new sorrows, on feelings the same as before." Historical repetition brings with it poetic repetition, even in rejecting its own act of repetition (such rejection of repetition itself being a repeated trope). The lyricist is borne along, protesting, by what seems a fated inevitability of repetition. He is "Master Liu" (Liu Yü-hsi, a phrase used in another of Liu's poem about revisiting a garden in Ch'ang-an after long exile), returning to Chin-ling and the scenes of his youth, discovering ruin. He is the song-writer, brought to yet another "meditation on the past at Chin-ling." Not only is there a helpless plea to stop, there is also an attempt to avoid looking back to the parallels: "and I fear to look back, to read too carefully Yü Hsin's *fu*"—the passage with which we began, which tells of the fall of Chin-ling and its sack by Hou Ching. Chu K'o-pao and his readers instantly know precisely what it is that he fears to read in Yü Hsin's *fu*: but in rhetorically averting his eyes from the past text, attention is drawn to it all the more intensely.

The weariness of this song does not lie simply in the passages of comment on the weariness: the scenes of weed-covered expanses, deserted streets, and the occupying army all recall earlier Chin-ling poems. But the sack of Nanking was a real and overwhelming historical event—this repetition is not *mere* poetic repetition: the scene of Nanking now repeats scenes of Nanking/Chin-ling many times before. How does he know this?—he has read all the old poems.

Poetry, the past, and present experience become fused together, inseparable aspects of the same thing. The past survives in those texts, and the present is perceived through them. One becomes aware of the trap of repetition and announces such awareness; that too becomes part of the heritage; it is repeated. Within this Gordian knot we can find the reasons for both the late Ch'ing critics' praise and the contemporary readers' rejection. The articulate passion to forget and reject past events exists in direct proportion to the power they hold over us.

We do not know how to evaluate this song. It is in its way as strong and genuine as Li Po's poem on Phoenix Terrace or Liu Yü-hsi's quatrains—perhaps even more human. Nevertheless, most readers would prefer the directness of the T'ang poems—even knowing that Liu Yü-hsi had never been to the Chin-ling of which

he wrote so well. Chu K'o-pao would probably have shared this preference, and we recognize that the force of such a preference was part of what made Chu K'o-pao's song the way it was—a self-conscious act of diminished repetition.

But he also wondered about himself, that he cannot learn to forget but always remains attached to the past: however far and fast he runs, the chain runs with him. It is astonishing: the moment, here on a wink, gone in a wink, returns nevertheless as a spectre to disturb the calm of a later moment. Again and again a page loosens in the scroll of time, drops out and flutters away—and suddenly flutters back again into man's lap. Then the man says "I remember" and envies the animal which immediately forgets and sees each moment really die, sink back into deep night extinguished forever.²²

The swallows don't know what age it is—
go into the homes of ordinary people in ordinary lanes
and face to face
seem to discuss rise and fall in the setting sun.

AN EPILOGUE: "THE EPILOGUE"

Was it impossible, then, to write of Chin-ling or Nanking as an old site and not be caught up in the poetry of the past? It was if you were a former singing teacher turned woodcutter named Su K'un-sheng. For our epilogue, we choose the famous song suite from the Epilogue to "Peach Blossom Fan" by K'ung Shang-jen (1648-1718), describing the city after its sack by the Manchus. The song generally avoids reference to the earlier poetry of Chin-ling, except very lightly at the end. In its vividness of detail it is an immensely attractive piece. Yet in many ways—taken purely as a piece of poetry, apart from the play in which it is set—it is inferior to Chu K'o-pao's *Ying t'i hsü*. Su K'un-sheng's "Lament for the South" is little more than a description, item by item, of the desolation of Nanking after the fall of the Ming. It has less of the rich anger against history that we find in Chu's song, even though Chu's song is much harder to approach. Ironically, K'ung Shang-jen's relatively fresh treatment of the ruined city is unmistakably one of the past texts echoed and assimilated into Chu K'o-pao's song.

²² Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1980), pp. 8-9.

Su: . . . It was three years since I had been to Nanking when suddenly the mood came upon me, and I went toward the city selling firewood. My road passed by Hsiao-ling, the Ming Founder's tomb, and I saw that the precincts and sanctuary had become a pasture.

Liu: That's awful. What was it like in the Forbidden City?

Su: The outer walls had fallen over and the palace buildings had caved in. The whole place was growing with weeds.

Master of Ceremonies [wiping away his tears]:

I never thought the times would come to this.

Su: I made my way straight to the Ch'in-Huai, stood there a while, but there wasn't a trace of a soul about.

Liu: How about the Pleasure Quarters by the Long Bridge where we used to go all the time—you must have taken a look at that?

Su: Of course I did. There's not a single plank left on the Long Bridge, and all that remains of the Pleasure Quarters is a heap of tiles.

Liu [striking his breast]:

I can't bear it.

Su: At that point I began to hurry back, and what I saw all along the route was heart-breaking. I composed a northern song suite and called it "Lament for the South." I'll sing it for you. [Beating rhythm with a wooden block, singing in the I-yang style] I the woodcutter:

Drawn along by mountain pines and a wilderness of flowers,
 I suddenly raised my head
 and had come once again to Mo-ling.
 The last of the troops were still there in the ruined fortress,
 and gaunt horses lay in the empty moats,
 villages and suburbs, a shabby desolation,
 and facing the walls, a path of the setting sun.
 Often burned by wildfires,
 the tall catalpas guarding the tombs are mostly scorched.
 There mountain sheep run back and forth—
 how long, I wonder, since the eunuchs guarding the Royal
 Tombs ran?
 Pigeon feathers and bat dung have fallen, filling the halls,

bare branches and crumpled leaves mantle the staircases—
 who does the ritual sweeping?

Herdboys have broken the crest from the dragon stele.

The eight columns of white jade were toppled flat,
 and fallen red plaster rose half the wall's height.
 Shards of shattered glazed tile were everywhere,
 the kingfisher hangings, rotting away, were few in the win-
 dows.

Dancers in the Vermilion Court, the swallows and sparrows,
 always attend the Dawn Audience,
 and straight through the palace gate was a road—of weeds—
 to where dwelled a few beggars, or corpses of those starved.

Do you wonder about the Pleasure Quarters by the Ch'in-
 Huai of former days?—

torn window-paper blowing in the wind,
 broken balconies overlooking high waters.

I turned my eyes away, my senses numbed.

The powdered and painted beauties of those days—
 where now their mouth organs and pipes?

No more lantern boats, no bustle of the summer festival;
 the wineshop pennons down, dreary Double Ninth.

Just white birds fluttering,

green waters rolling on,

a few butterflies flitting among delicate yellow flowers;

but no one to look at the leaves, so recently turned red.

Do you remember strolling over the Half League Bridge at
 Blue Creek?—

of the old red planks not one is left—

autumn waters, a long stretch of sky, and a few passers-by.

And in the chill and clear evening sunlight

there remains but a single willow bending its waist.

If you go to the gate of the old brothels, no need to lightly
 knock,

and you won't have to worry about the little dogs yapping—
 there's nothing there but a dried up well, abandoned nests,
 and only some moss on the bricks, some grass on the stairs.

Those sprigs of flowers and branches of willow planted by my
own hand
have all been thoughtlessly taken for firewood—
and whose cooking fire, these black ashes?

I have seen Chin-ling's marble halls with orioles singing at
dawn,
and the flowers blooming early by the kiosks at the Ch'in-
Huai.

Who could have guessed they would melt as easily as ice?
With my own eyes I have seen its russet mansions rising,
with my own eyes I've seen feasts for fine guests,
with my own eyes I've seen those mansions fallen in
to this heap of green moss and emerald tiles.
I've slept my way through gallantry and love and awoken,
of fifty years of glory and fall I have seen enough.
In Rook Robe Lane the name isn't Wang,
on Never-Grieve Lake the ghosts call by night,
and on Phoenix Terrace, owls are roosting.
Our own mountains remaining—that dream was so real!
Our former world—so hard to let go!
I sing out this "Lament for the South,"
sing its sad sounds loudly, sing it till old age comes on.