

Traumatic Memory, Literature and Religion in Wu Zhaoqian's Early Exile

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Erreichbar, nah und unverloren blieb inmitten der Verluste dies eine: die Sprache.
(Only one thing remained reachable, close and secure amid all losses: language.)

Paul Celan¹

A Blank Exam Paper

On April 15, 1658, the scholars who aspired to officialdom in the Qing government were forced to take their exams in the most nerve-wracking possible environment, at Yingtai 瀛臺 within the palace compound in Beijing. It was freezing cold, and behind them, fully armed, fearsome soldiers stood guard. Their job was to write, with the Shunzhi 順治 emperor (r. 1644-61) himself looking on, in order to prove their worth and to redeem themselves from the suspicion of having cheated in a previous exam.

Wu Zhaoqian 吳兆騫 (1631-84), then twenty-eight, was among these poor souls.² The scholars were all Jiangnan men, there by imperial decree for a

I would like to thank the two anonymous readers whose comments, criticisms, and suggestions were taken into account in preparing this version of the paper. This paper will comprise part of a larger project that I am working on related to the exiled literati and their literary and cultural milieu in early Qing Manchuria. Partial funding of this project is provided by the National Science Council of Taiwan.

¹ Paul Celan, "Speech on the Occasion of Receiving the Literature Prize of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen," *Collected Prose*, trans. Rosemarie Waldrop (Manchester: Carcanet, 1986), p. 34.

² Most of the sources on Wu Zhaoqian are included in Li Xingsheng 李興盛, *Jiangnan caizi Saibei mingren Wu Zhaoqian ziliao huibian* 江南才子塞北名人吳兆騫資料匯編 [hereafter *Ziliao huibian*] (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2000); *Jiangnan caizi Saibei mingren*

reexamination of their *juren* 舉人 (Provincial Graduate) qualifications, which they had earned in the preceding year, in September 1657 when the Jiangnan provincial examination was held in Nanjing. In late December 1657, however, the chief examiners of the Jiangnan exam were accused of corruption, and in January 1658, the successful candidates, who were also under suspicion, were summoned to Beijing for investigation and reexamination.³

The mood of the exam site was described in contemporary and later accounts. During the Yingtai exam, “each of the *juren* was watched over at the side by two Manchu imperial guards who held knives. All those taking the exam trembled in terror, barely able to write” (是時每舉人一名, 命護軍二員, 持刀夾兩旁, 與試者悉惴惴其慄, 幾不能下筆).⁴ The examinees were supposed to produce two essays on the classics (*shu* 書),⁵ one rhapsody (*fu* 賦), and one poem, to be written under a time constraint with “invigilating officers spreading out in rows watching closely, and down in the hall fully armed soldiers densely posted” (監試官羅列偵視, 堂下武士銀鑼森布).⁶ The atmosphere was so oppressive, and the day so very cold, that the candidates could hardly concentrate:

The emperor himself commanded the front hall, and the candidates spread out several *li* away. They carried brushes and ink-stones themselves; stiff and cold amidst the ice and snow, they stood below the vermilion steps. In a short order of time, they would have to complete several tests. Soldiers and attendants hustled around, watching over the candidates at the side. All this would not stop until three rounds of such exams were concluded.

天子親御前殿, 士子數里外, 攜筆硯, 冰雪僵凍, 立丹墀下, 頃刻成數藝。兵番雜沓,

Wu Zhaoqian nianpu 江南才子塞北名人吳兆騫年譜 [hereafter *Nianpu*] (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2000); and *Jiangnan caizi Saibei mingren Wu Zhaoqian zhuan* 江南才子塞北名人吳兆騫傳 [hereafter *Zhuan*] (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2000). Li's three books (and other important source materials on exiles in Manchuria that he compiled in recent years) greatly enhanced the study of Wu Zhaoqian in particular and of the history of exile in the area in general. I have relied largely on *Qiuqia ji* 秋笳集, ed. Ma Shouzhong 麻守中 [hereafter QJJ] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), for the texts of Wu's writings, but I have also consulted the *Ziliao huibian*, *Nianpu* and *Zhuan* for the circumstances surrounding the texts.

³ See Meng Sen 孟森, “Kechang an” 科場案, in his *Xinshi congkan* 心史叢刊 (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1986), pp. 28-68.

⁴ Wang Yingkui 王應奎, *Liunan suibi* 柳南隨筆, 1.5a, *Xuxiu Siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 edition (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997), “Zibu” 子部, 1147:322.

⁵ More precisely, two essays, composed in the so-called eight-legged style, on the contents of the *Four Books* of the Confucian canon.

⁶ Li Ji 李集, *Hezheng qianlu* 鶴徵前錄, 23.49b, *Congshu jicheng xubian* 叢書集成續編 edition (Shanghai: Shanghai shudian, 1994), “Shibu” 史部, 28:759.

以旁邏之。如是者，三試而後已。⁷

Although an acclaimed writer already, particularly in poetry and *fu*, Wu Zhaoqian could not write a single word, hence turning in a blank paper (*baijuan* 白卷).

The contents of the exam should not have been challenging for Wu at all. It was familiar stuff and Wu was reputedly quick-witted. Three theories have tried to account for Wu's pathetic performance: (1) he was sick; (2) he was overwhelmed by fear and anxiety; or (3) he was too proud to be cowed into doing it.⁸ That Wu was suffering from illness which caused his poor performance in the exam cannot be supported by internal evidence in Wu's or others' writings. The argument that Wu was not willing to succumb to inhumane and oppressive treatment in the exam can be summarily dismissed because Wu was more than willing to talk to the authorities; he even improvised two poems to plead his case and hopefully to impress the emperor at the very beginning of the Beijing trial, on April 11, 1658, before the palace reexamination (see below for more on this). All factors considered, Wu was most likely paralyzed by fear. According to one account:

On the day of the palace reexamination, those who failed to produce the papers were fettered and thrown into prison. Wu Hancha, Zhaoqian, already a famous person, trembled and could not hold his brush. Investigations found no other irregularities; he was exiled to Shangyangbao.⁹

殿廷復試之日，不完卷者銀鑕下獄。吳漢槎兆騫，本知名士，戰慄不能握筆，審無情弊，流尚陽堡。¹⁰

Some other examinees were also unable to think or write. According to another account: "Among his [Ye Yingliu's] *tongnian*,¹¹ prominent literati such as Wu Hancha and Lu Ziyuan all trembled with fear, unable to complete the papers" ([葉應榴] 同年中名士如吳漢槎、陸子元，皆戰慄不能終卷).¹²

The consequences of this case were terribly grave—many heads rolled. On December 22, 1658, the throne passed sentences on those found guilty: Twenty of the original examiners would be executed, their immediate families enslaved and their properties confiscated. Many of the candidates were stripped of their *juren* titles and

⁷ Wang Jiazhen 王家楨, *Yantang jianwen zaji* 研堂見聞雜記 (Taipei: Taiwan yinhang jingji yanjiushi, 1968), p. 39.

⁸ See *Nianpu*, pp. 57-60, and *Zhuan*, pp. 71-72, for the various accounts surrounding these three assumptions.

⁹ Shangyangbao is mistaken here for Ningguta.

¹⁰ Dai Lu 戴璐, *Shiguzhai zalu* 石鼓齋雜錄, quoted in Meng Sen, "Kechang an," p. 53.

¹¹ During Ming-Qing times, successful candidates of the *juren* and *jinshi* degrees of the same year called one another *tongnian* (literally, same-year) or were described as *tongnian*.

¹² Xu Simao 許嗣茅, *Xunan bitan* 緒南筆談, quoted in Meng Sen, "Kechang an," p. 55.

were prohibited from sitting for the higher level examination that would lead to official appointments.¹³ The emperor was merciless in the case of Wu Zhaoqian and seven others: “They shall receive forty strikes [on the buttocks]; their family properties are to be confiscated, and their parents, brothers, wives and children to be exiled with them to Ningguta” (俱著責四十板, 家產籍沒入官, 父母、兄弟、妻子, 併流徙寧古塔).¹⁴ Ningguta was a remote place in what is now called Manchuria or Dongbei 東北, the Northeast.¹⁵

One can imagine how devastating it must have been for Wu Zhaoqian. He was a very proud young man. Born to a prominent scholar-official family of the preceding Ming dynasty, he was native to Wujiang 吳江 in Jiangsu. His father, Wu Jinxi 吳晉錫 (1599-1662), was not a high official like his ancestors, but respected by all as an upright official and a learned man (he was a Fushe 復社 member). After the fall of the Ming in 1644, Wu Jinxi received orders from various fugitive Southern Ming courts and led Ming loyalist resistance against the Qing until 1647, when he realized that the Qing mandate was irreversible. He shaved his head to become a Buddhist monk and retreated to a place in the mountains. Eventually, Wu obtained a pardon from the Qing court and returned home. He let his hair grow again and turned to Daoism.¹⁶

Wu Zhaoqian was known as a sort of prodigy and was well-versed in poetry and *fu* from an early age. Since 1648, when he was eighteen, Wu had been active in

¹³ There were five major examination scandals in 1657 involving many examiners and candidates in Shuntian, Jiangnan, Henan, Shandong, and Shanxi. The Shunzhi emperor and moralistic officials considered this as evidence of an epidemic of moral leprosy and influence-peddling, mostly among the literati from the southeast. The harsh sentences imposed on those found guilty reflected Shunzhi's determination to curb Ming holdovers, Jiangnan literary coteries, social decadence, and a decline in classical scholarship. See Frederic Wakeman, Jr., *The Great Enterprise: The Manchu Reconstruction of Imperial Order in Seventeenth-Century China* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 1004-5; Meng Sen, “Kechang an.”

¹⁴ Shunzhi 15 [1658], *Shizu shilu* 世祖實錄, *juan* 121, *Qing shilu* 清實錄 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985-86), 3:942. Eventually, after a great deal of rescue operations and a timely general amnesty in 1661, only Wu's wife joined Wu in his exile.

¹⁵ Ningguta is in present-day Ning'an 寧安 County in Heilongjiang 黑龍江 Province. It took Wu and his company four whole months to negotiate the distance from Beijing to Ningguta. The hardship of the trying journey claimed one life, and Wu himself fell gravely ill and sank in a coma at one point. Wu attributed his recovery to divine intervention.

¹⁶ Given Wu's family background and upbringing, the question naturally arises as to whether Wu harbored hostility against the Qing dynasty. While we do find some youthful works of Wu in the incipient years of Qing rule that lamented the demise of the Ming house and communicated the social turmoil of the Ming-Qing transition, overt Ming loyalist sentiments are almost non-existent in Wu's writings. Wu belonged to a new generation coming of age in the early Qing that, in the gradual political and social reconstruction of the country, sought to return to a normal life and pursue career opportunities in the Qing government.

literary club (*wenshe* 文社, *shishe* 詩社) activities and had led, with his two elder brothers, the local branch of the Shenjiao Club 慎交社 in Wujiang. In 1653, Wu Weiye 吳偉業 (1609-72), a great poet of the age, had met Wu Zhaoqian at a literary club gathering. Wu Weiye was very favorably impressed by Wu Zhaoqian's poetic talents; he praised Wu and two other young writers, Chen Weisong 陳維崧 (1625-82) and Peng Shidu 彭師度 (1624-?), collectively as the "Three Phoenixes of Jiangnan" (Jiangzuo san fenghuang 江左三鳳凰). In 1657, as mentioned above, Wu achieved his *juren* status. His future looked very bright. The 1658 exam and the subsequent disgrace that befell him, however, marked the end of Wu's good fortune and the beginning of a bitter life as an exile in a place outside China proper.

On April 23, 1659, Wu left Beijing for Ningguta. Upon leaving the capital, he composed a long poem for his friends from his native Wujiang, "Run sanyue shuorijiangfu Liaozuo liubie Wuzhong zhuguren" 閏三月朔日將赴遼左留別吳中諸故人 (Upon Leaving for Liaodong, Written on the First Day of the Intercalary Third Month: A Farewell to My Old Friends of Wujiang). Wu concludes the poem by saying:

從此家山等飛蓬	Beyond this place, home is no more than whirling leaves—
滿眼黃雲橫大漠	I see yellow clouds spreading all across the big desert.
自傷亭伯遠投荒	My sadness is like that of Tingbo, exiled to the wilderness he was; ¹⁷
却悔平原輕赴洛	How I regret going to Luoyang unsuspecting as Pingyuan. ¹⁸
一向冰天逐雁臣	Facing the icy sky I become a banished official like a goose;
東風揮手淚沾巾	In the east wind we wave good bye, tears soak my kerchief.
只應一片江南月	I should hope this stretch of Jiangnan moon
流照飄零塞北人	Will float and shine on the wandering man on the northern frontier. ¹⁹

This emotive, anguished, embittered, nostalgic voice of the exiled poet would be representative of Wu for the next twenty-two years.

The fixated memory and the remembering and narrating acts

Two years later we find Wu Zhaoqian still in a state of anguished despair. It was now the springtime of 1661, and Ningguta was still terribly cold. Almost two whole years had elapsed since Wu first arrived in his place of exile. This particular spring in his early exile was personally momentous for him, and his emotional ups and downs were extreme, for he entertained hopes of a reprieve or pardon—the Shunzhi

¹⁷ Cui Yin 崔駰 (?-92) of the Eastern Han dynasty. Li Bo had this couplet about him: "屈平憔悴滯江潭, 亭伯流離放遼海," in his "Shanfu donglou, qiuye song zudi Shen zhi Qin" 單父東樓秋夜送族弟沈之秦, *Li Taibo quanji* 李太白全集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1977), p. 787.

¹⁸ Lu Ji 陸機 (261-303) of the Western Jin dynasty was once exiled to the frontier for involvement in a failed conspiracy to overthrow the throne.

¹⁹ QJJ:149.

emperor had passed away in early February and the succeeding emperor, Kangxi 康熙 (r. 1662-1722), granted the country a general amnesty, which spared Wu's parents and brothers from the same exile. At this historic juncture, Wu cried out to be remembered, and showed, by way of texts, how he thought he should be remembered. He believed that should the memories surrounding him be properly established and rectified, his reputation would be salvaged, and his return to China proper viable.

Wu's writings in 1661 can be contextualized with his works from 1658 to roughly 1662, within which Wu's traumatic memories are tightly interwoven with the different strands of his early exile experiences. Both Wu's creative imperative and fervent religious commitment subtly point to his earlier trauma. Contradistinctively, Wu's pre-1658 writings are to be understood within the milieu of Jiangnan literary and cultural developments during the incipient years of Qing rule. On the other hand, the reunion with his wife in 1663 in Ningguta and the changes in life conditions and resources concurrent with social and historical happenings in Manchuria thereafter forced Wu to look squarely at his existence and future prospects in the place of exile. They demand different approaches than the ones adopted in this paper to give meaning to Wu's writings and experiences.

Within the time frame of this paper, Wu presented to us a web of texts, and we will read some of them: letters to his parents and friends, a preface for a fellow exile's collection of poetry, and some of his and others' poems. They all corroborate Wu's intended image of the wronged, exiled poet; taken together, they form Wu's autobiography in this early chapter of his banishment. In the pages ahead, we attempt to grasp the meaning of Wu's memories of his 1658 disgrace and his experience as an exile. We will conduct close readings of Wu's texts, mostly those produced in the first half-year of 1661. In the rich life story of Wu, this period was but a slice of life, but it was a particularly poignant moment in which we can situate his evocation of memory within a number of broader discourses that are political, historical, cultural, religious, and psychological.

Within the dialectical relationship between memory and narrative in Wu's texts, we are more interested in the psychological and emotional expressions and their implications than the truth of the claims embedded therein. We observe that Wu's acts of memory, and hence their expressive modalities, are psychodynamically determined; the narratives that emerge defy the general character of autobiography that is chronotopically framed. In this connection, we understand Wu's ruminations and writings as a process of self-constitution and identification more than as enumeration of experiences; and that, be the emerging narratives truthful or fabricated or, many times, both, they invite reading, understanding and interpretation to complete the processes of signification and communication.

Wu wrote two letters, one to his parents and another to a friend,²⁰ on the same

²⁰ Note that Wu's letters to his friends that we explore in this paper were addressed to one person, but judging from the contents of the letters, they actually had at least two persons as the intended

day: May 15, 1661. The letters exposed almost all the elements in Wu's narrative that he had in store for the world at this point in time. His letter to his parents was private, and its tone plain, direct, and intimate. The letter to his friend was at once personal and lyrical; although its language was not fancy, it was still very literary. This letter was meant to be impressive, to be read for its contents as well as its artistic values. Most importantly, as we will demonstrate below, the intertwining acts and ways of remembering and narrating subtly revealed Wu's psychological and mental self in exile, that Wu was plagued by a deep insecurity about his image and status in his parents' and friends' eyes; by senses of defeat, alienation and unworthiness; and by moods of pathos and uncertainty about life and the future.

Letters to parents

In the second paragraph of the letter to his parents, Wu dwells at length on what we will understand as the fixated memory in his exile narrative—the disgrace he incurred from the palace reexamination of his *juren* degree and his resultant banishment. His version contradicts other accounts of the event in that he insists that, rather than being punished for suspected dishonesty, he was framed and slandered by personal enemies whom he had made in his literary club activities (昌、發二賊因文社恨兒，遂乘機構毒).²¹ Our consideration here is not so much which version is true as in what triggered his remembering act. It certainly had something to do with the general amnesty that gave his parents and brothers freedom, and had a great deal to do with the imminent return to China proper of two fellow exiles, his *tongnian* Cheng and Cheng's father.²² The latter event fanned the hope for his redemption:

Yesterday, the 13th around four, a secretary arrived from Beijing with an edict: it was to recall my *tongnian* Mr. Cheng and his father. Your son went at once with them to the yamen, to see the reading of the imperial edict. Although it was not me receiving the pardon, the fact that one of us involved in the same case is returning is certainly a spark of hope for my own redemption. The day for our whole family's reunion will not be far off, I am mad with joy!

昨十三日申刻，忽有北京差章京齎詔而來，召程年伯、程年兄父子回去。兒時同往衙門看宣上諭，雖自己未蒙雜赦，而同案得還，便是死灰復燃之兆。我家骨肉重圓，

reader. This situation is reflected in the section-headings of the paper and translations of the originals, among other places.

²¹ QJJ:288. I could not identify Chang and Fa, but Li Xingsheng suggests that Fa was Wang Qizhang 王其長 (Wang's *zi* was Fa 發), an enemy of Wu in literary club activities. For this and other related materials, see *Nianpu*, pp. 55-57n8; *Zhuan*, pp. 66-70.

²² Cheng Han 程涵 (Duyuan 度淵) and his father Cheng Binwu 程賓梧. Cheng Han was one of the seven scholars mentioned along with Wu in Shunzhi's edit of December 22, 1658. The reason for his release is not known. See *Zhuan*, p. 115, and *Nianpu*, p. 80.

當即在適，不覺喜而欲狂。²³

At the time he wrote this, Wu already knew of the general amnesty that had released his parents and family, as he revealed in a March 19 letter to his parents. At the beginning of the March letter, Wu congratulates his parents for their regained freedom. He then continues rather disjointedly in a whining and depressed tone. With feelings of betrayal and hopelessness looming over him, Wu complains about having no letters from home and no money:

Last year, on the 26th of the 10th month, Mr. Ba²⁴ went to the imperial court in the capital. I entrusted to him a letter for you, a letter for my two brothers, and a letter for Fucao [Ji Dong] and Jiting [Song Shiyong].²⁵ Mr. Ba returned, and why was there not a single reply from any of you? I went to ask about it and he said my letter for you had been delivered to the Sun residence. I figured it must be that since our family was facing such a crisis, in all the chaos, you didn't manage to write back. Your son is safe in this place, and all I do is worship the Buddha, chant poetry and read books to while away the time. But I am utterly penniless. Even though I have managed to get by lately, I borrowed most of the money from other people. I beg you, father and mother, please send me fifty taels of silver.

去歲十月廿六日，巴公入朝，兒寄一信上父親，一字寄兩兄，一字與甫草、既庭。今巴公回時，何以都無回信？及往問彼，又云此信已投到孫宅，想遭此大故，倉猝之時，不及寄信耶！兒在此平安，惟有皈依佛座及誦詩讀書，以消歲月。但身無分文，雖目前稍足自給，然半貸之他人，乞父母措五十金寄兒為妙。²⁶

As for his salvation, Wu depends upon divine intervention for the appearance of the “golden rooster,” a ritual prop that was used on occasions of imperial amnesty or pardon:

On New Year's Day, I consulted Lord Guan through divination about the good and bad things that would befall father, mother and me this year.²⁷ Father, you got [the divine

²³ QJJ:288.

²⁴ Referring to Bahai 巴海, who was the Jilin General 吉林將軍 between 1659 and 1683, managing both military and civil affairs of the area. Wu and other exiles lived in his jurisdiction. Accordingly, Bahai was fairly kind to the exiles in Ningguta. Besides other largesse, because Wu was very short-sighted, Bahai exempted him from the land tax. From 1773 onwards, Bahai hired Wu as a tutor to his sons. See Zhang Yuxing 張玉興, “Bahai, Sabusu yu Dongbei liuren wenshi” 巴海、薩布素與東北流人文士, in his *Ming Qing shi tansuo* 明清史探索 (Shenyang: Liaohai chubanshe, 2004), pp. 499-514.

²⁵ See below for Ji and Song.

²⁶ QJJ:284.

²⁷ The cult of Lord Guan (Guan Yu 關羽) was a potent component of the Ming-Qing belief systems, popular among both the general populace and the gentry class. It also had ramifications

prognosis]: “All confines are broken through. Will meet no misfortune.” And mother: “I advise you to rest here and build a house.” And myself: “Apes and dogs will give way to the golden rooster.” Thereupon I knew that father and mother would certainly be pardoned, and your son would also be saved. The god is almighty, most wise, and nothing happens without his foreknowledge! There is no reason that the first two prognoses turned out to be correct but the last one should be inaccurate.

今歲元旦，兒求關聖籤，卜父母及兒一年之吉凶。父親得“藩籬剖破渾無事”；母親得“勸君止此求田舍”；兒得“直須猿犬換金雞”。兒爾時便知父母必免，兒亦得邀救。赫赫神明，可稱不爽，豈有應前兩籤而後籤不應之理耶？²⁸

Although this March letter already showed signs of impatience and complaint, Wu still kept his feelings in check. The May letter—written on the very next day after the official announcement of the Cheng son and father’s freedom²⁹—in comparison, is an explosion of emotion from deep within, and its textual details and configuration divulge that it was an irrational fear of being forgotten—heightened, no doubt, by the impending return of the Chengs—that prompted him to impress himself on his parents and friends’ minds as the wronged one. His letter was intended as an urgent reminder. Wu must have felt that he was in danger of being forgotten or pushed aside, since his parents must continue their lives without him, and he in exile was afraid that “out of sight” would be “out of mind,” no matter how irrational this was, since his parents had tenderly remembered to send him articles of clothing and money. At any rate, the rough conditions of his exile must have contrasted with the relative domesticity of the parents’ home life on which he looked with a certain jealousy and longing, as seen in this portion of the May letter:

. . . Father, I received your hand-written letter, from which I learned that you and all brothers had received the merciful pardon and returned home. I held the letter and read all that, my joys and pleasures were considerably more than usual, my jubilant reactions can’t be described in words. I kowtowed at once to the Guanyin Boddhisattva and the Mother Dou Immortal,³⁰ to thank them for their blessings. I then asked Mr. [Zhang] Tan

in the Ming-Qing political ideologies. See Prasenjit Duara, “Superscribing Symbols: The Myth of Guandi, Chinese God of War,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 47.4 (Nov. 1988): 778-95; Timothy Brook, *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late-Ming China* (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University and Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1993), pp. 279-80, 288-93, 306-8; and the various essays included in Lu Xiaoheng 盧曉衡, ed., *Guan Yu, Guangong he Guansheng: Zhongguo lishi wenhua zhong de Guan Yu xueshu yantaohui lunwenji* 關羽、關公和關聖：中國歷史文化中的關羽學術研討會論文集 (Beijing: Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2002).

²⁸ QJJ:285.

²⁹ See *Ziliao huibian*, p. 318, for the evidence for this date.

³⁰ Doumuyuanjun 斗母元君, a female deity in religious Daoism.

[gong]³¹ for all the details of your and mother's daily activities. Mr. Tan said that you, father, were absolutely at peace with yourself, and he enjoyed your company very much; and that you were totally absorbed in reading books, as if you had met with no misfortunes. He also said that mother took care of everything; he found her a woman of exceptional ability. Hearing all this, I was possessed by mixed feelings of joy and sorrow.

... 接父親手字, 始知父親及諸骨肉悉遇浩蕩, 已還故鄉。捧讀之次, 喜躍倍常, 其雀躍之狀, 總非筆墨可形。即向佛母大士、斗母聖前, 叩頭拜謝; 復向坦翁細詢父母起居。坦翁云父親意氣豪放, 相得甚歡, 讀書之外, 絕無他事, 若不知有患難者。云母親凡事料理, 真女中之英。兒聞此為之悲喜交集。³²

That his father was absolutely at peace with himself; and that he was totally absorbed in reading, as if he had met with no ill fortunes; and that his mother took care of everything indicate that his parents had reestablished a sort of normalcy or equilibrium in their lives. They appear, in the textual representation, not to share the anguish and pains that were being inflicted on their exiled son. This feeling of alienation and helplessness must have been hard to understand and articulate or even to admit on the part of Wu, and he reacted in a confusing state of *beixi jiaoji* 悲喜交集, experiencing “mixed feelings of joy and sorrow” that were bittersweet and melancholy.

A connection must be reestablished to reassure himself that the intimate link between him and his parents was not broken and that they did feel for him. The letter thus continues with something Wu can literally “hold on to”:

The silver and silk and other little things that you sent all arrived, but the pair of shoes is a bit too long and I have exchanged them with someone else. Earlier, on the 15th, the son of the Company Commander of the Blue Banner arrived from the capital, from whom I also received the letter, twelve taels of silver, and two reels of thread that mother had entrusted to Mrs. Xu.

所寄銀及綢併餘小物俱到矣, 但鞋稍長寸許, 已與人換了。昨十五日藍旗章京之子

³¹ Zhang Jinyan 張縉彥 (1599-1672), *zi* Tangong 坦公, was a high official first in the Ming and then in the Qing court. He became a victim of partisan politics in 1660 and was cashiered out. Accused of spreading seditious ideas, Zhang was sentenced to exile for life in Ningguta, where he arrived in the spring of 1661. With Wu and others, he founded a poetry club in Ningguta in 1665. He died in his exile. See Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, p. 1000n28; *Nianpu*, pp. 278-80. For more on Zhang, see Li Xingsheng, “Zhang Tangong ji qi Ningguta shanshui ji, Yuwai ji” 張坦公及其《寧古塔山水記》、《域外集》, in his *Zhongguo liuren shi yu liuren wenhua lunji* 中國流人史與流人文化論集 (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 2000), pp. 260-66; *idem*, “Zaitan Zhang Tangong ji qi Ningguta shanshui ji, Yuwai ji” 再談張坦公及其《寧古塔山水記》、《域外集》, in *ibid.*, pp. 267-77.

³² QJJ:287-88.

自京師來，復接母親所寄在許太太處家信，及十二金，線帶二條。³³

Such cash and materials such as silk, shoes (we will return to this pair of shoes later), thread, and other little things were extensions of Wu's parents: they were practical and desperately needed necessities of life as well as sentimental tokens of life at home that could be taken as proofs of his parents' concern and affection. Writing out this inventory calmed and soothed Wu. A much more conciliatory note comes after the mention of money and material items:

Now that you—father, mother, brothers—all managed to return home, even though I am left alone beyond the Great Wall, I am pleased. If mercy befalls me so that I can reunite with you, father and mother, that would truly be a providential blessing!

今父母骨肉已得歸家，兒雖塞外，亦所甘心。倘得邀恩復與父母團聚，乃真天幸也。³⁴

With this Wu returns to his parents' regained freedom and ushers in the story of his public disgrace and banishment that we have visited above. In the anxiety that nothing important will be overlooked or forgotten, he lays out his plans for being sprung from "hell" (see below) in painstaking detail. Witness these sentences: "I beg you, father, to go to the Ministry of Justice to make an appeal from injustice . . . item by item"; "Your son lives in a remote isolated land; no one but the two of you, father and mother, feel sympathy for me; now we are presented with the chance of a lifetime, I beg you a million times to appeal immediately, don't let your son be stuck in this remote region for long"; "This is a rare moment of imperial favor, you absolutely should not let the opportunity elude you" ("乞父親赴刑部將此沈冤 . . . 一一告明," "兒身居絕域, 憐憫兒者惟父母二人, 當此千載一日之秋, 萬乞速為申理, 無使兒久滯遐方," "今當此曠蕩之時, 萬不可失良會").³⁵ They all communicate an acute sense of anxiety and urgency, as does the paragraph that follows immediately after. It describes the severe weather and miserable living conditions of his life as an exile. It is, again, laden with minute descriptions. Wu describes Ningguta as more than ten times worse than "hell" (*huangquan* 黃泉), making another (earlier) spot for sending exiles, Shenyang 瀋陽, in comparison, "heaven" (*tiantang* 天堂).³⁶ The last bit of this paragraph is the most nuanced: "All these are what I literally lived through, they are not exaggerations. In the past, your son dared not tell you the very truth of the pains of living in this place, I just didn't want to upset you, father and mother" (此皆實實經歷之語, 非過激也. 兒向來寫信不敢十分言此地之苦者, 恐傷父母之心耳).³⁷ This magnifies the feeling of

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 288-89.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 289. For a study of an exile in Shenyang, see my essay, "Loyalism, Exile, Poetry: Revisiting the Monk Hanke," in Wilt Idema, Wai-ye Li, and Ellen Widmer, eds., *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature* (forthcoming from Harvard University Press).

³⁷ QJJ:289.

anxiety that we are exploring, augmenting the exilic hardship and begging his parents not to forget him.

Letters to friends

On the same day he wrote to his parents, Wu also wrote his friend Song Shiyong 宋實穎 (*zi* Jiting 既庭, 1621-1705) a letter. Song was a close friend of Wu when Wu was active in literary club activities in the years between 1648 and 1657.³⁸ Similarly, a fear of being forgotten and abandoned permeates the letter. Wu cries for communication and sympathy:

On winter solstice last year Mr. Ba went to the capital. I wrote you brothers a long letter with an extended regulated poem of thirty couplets enclosed. But the letter went astray, how very sad! This dragon wilderness is at the greatest distance away, utterly inhabitable. I heard absolutely nothing from my former close friends. In the three years since my banishment here I have received but one letter from Gongsu last winter. Shaoling [Du Fu] said: "Family and friends I have all over the world; / In the confusion of war they rarely write letters to me." Reading this poem only increases my distress and anguish.

昨歲冬至，巴公入都，曾勒長札并排律三十韻奉寄兩兄，而此緘竟屬浮沈，可為悵惘。龍荒絕遠，非人所居。夙昔知交，音問殆絕，謫此三年，止得公肅舊冬一札耳。少陵云：“親朋滿天地，兵甲少來書。”諷詠此詩，益增我勞結。³⁹

While this dwells on the friendship and kindly feeling that Wu cherishes and holds dear, Wu says something bitter and angst-ridden towards the end of the letter: "With the succeeding emperor on the throne, all the talented people will rise to the top. You should take advantage of this propitious moment to promote yourself. Do not think of your old friend (嗣皇在御，才士畢升，努力良時，勿以故人為念).⁴⁰ The frustration for Wu was twofold, that his friends were forgetting and purposely abandoning him, and that, unlike his friends, he could not capitalize on the rare opportunity to court imperial favor, even though he certainly would see himself as one of the "talented people." His sour tone toward Song Shiyong might have been misdirected, but it nonetheless betrayed the ambivalence and confusion of friendship and memory in his mind.

About half a year later, towards the end of the year, Wu wrote a long letter to another friend, Ji Dong 計東 (*zi* Fucao 甫草, 1624-75). Wu and Ji were very close friends. The two literally grew up together in their native place Wujiang. Ji's father, Ji Ming 計名, was Wu's childhood teacher.⁴¹ The senses of alienation, constant loneliness, helplessness and betrayal that we are examining, however, find their way

³⁸ See *Nianpu*, pp. 219-21.

³⁹ QJJ:268-69.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

⁴¹ See *Nianpu*, pp. 187-90.

into his ruminations and reflections on friends and friendship. It is a rambling, emotionally charged letter. Wu's suffering and depression were so intense that the letter seems incoherent (we will read more of this letter in the next section).

Wu criticizes his old friends and complains about the unhappy fate that heaven had assigned him in the same breath:

... To whom can I vent my anger and frustration? Even close friends of mine in the past have abandoned me as if I were muck, seeing me as a rotten rat. Oh merciless heaven, why do you treat me so very unfairly?

... 煩冤侘傺, 誰可訴語。即復生平故人, 亦復棄如糞壤, 視同腐鼠矣。不弔昊天, 一何至此!⁴²

And he distinguishes between two groups of friends, those from his literary and youthful days in Jiangnan and those he made during his dark and difficult times. He detests the former and treasures the latter:

In the past my bosom friends almost filled the three regions of Wu, quite a few of them were like Ji [Kang] and Ruan [Ji]. Then I met with misfortune and tragedy and found myself being tossed about and in dire straits, and there was not even one person willing to lend me a hand. Alas, that's why the ancients valued the friends they made in bad times.

弟曩年知契, 幾徧三吳, 嵇阮之交, 亦頗不乏。及遭患難, 轉徙窮途, 乃初無一欸之人周我涸轍, 此古人所以致重于窮交也。⁴³

Lastly, Wu writes about his feelings for Ji Dong, which are, admitted or not, bittersweet and laden with regret and sentiment. Ji would have found the second half of the following passage particularly enigmatic and unsettling:

The wanderer's feelings, frontier sadness—they morphed into a hundred forms. My love for my friends never once waned. It is a great regret that Xuantu and Huanglong are remote places at the sky's end. Not only there is no good occasion on which we can meet and drink together, even letters bringing faraway news that can ease my pain of separation are difficult to come by. Ten years of brotherly bonding! And we are separated like this. Recalling the past, brooding over the present, I am overwhelmed by tremendous grief and agony. Du Shaoling [Fu] says: "Family and friends I have all over the world; / In the confusion of war they rarely write letters to me." Alas, these are not empty words. I have quite a few poems in which I express my yearning for you, and I transcribed and meant to send them along, in lieu of a personal visit. But then I fear, when this letter reaches you, you might be just enjoying your success in the spring days. My inauspicious name will startle your ears and eyes. Thus, I burned them. I just asked

⁴² QJ:270.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

Dunsi⁴⁴ to copy an extended regulated poem of mine for me and I present it to you herewith. I imagine when you see it, you will be saddened. If you think of me, too, I hope you will show me some of your works. In the past, when Ji the Courtier [Kang] died in Luoyang, Xiang Ziqi [Xiu] mourned his death in “*Fu* on Thinking of My Friend.”⁴⁵ When Zheng Guangwen [Qian] was banished to the remote Taizhou, Du the Reminder [Fu] composed a farewell poem for him.⁴⁶ My dear brothers, you have a big heart, I trust you will not forget me because I have become a useless, deserted man.

客緒邊愁，百端橫集，停雲之念，無時去懷。但恨玄菟黃龍，渺在天末，不特把袂銜杯，難尋佳會；即雁書遙訊，慰我離愁，亦眇不可得。十年神契，睽絕如斯，憶舊撫今，愴恨何已。杜少陵云：“親朋滿天地，兵甲少來書。”信非虛語也。懷念之什，頗有數章，欲便錄寄，以當良覿。恐此札達時，正兄等春明得意之候，不祥姓名，致駭耳目，故復焚棄。聊托敦四，書排律一首奉正，想兄見之，當相淒惻也。倘承見懷，幸有以相示。昔嵇中散身死洛下，而向子期爲之感舊；鄭廣文遠竄台州，而杜拾遺爲之錄別。兄等雅懷，當不以廢棄相遺也。⁴⁷

Wu's words of longing and of sorrow at the beginning of the passage are familiar and expected. But Wu's affectionate tone of voice becomes pungent and bitter after he mentions that he rarely hears from his friends. One senses he could not stand to bare his soul without couching the sentiments in a mix of frustration, doubt and sarcasm. Wu was being passively aggressive, so to speak. His ambivalent attitude towards his old friend was dramatically borne out in the act of destroying the poems that he had written to express yearning and nostalgia for Ji. And he pictured himself loathed and rejected by his friend who was achieving success in life and career, real or perceived.

Wu nevertheless did send Ji Dong a long poem, which he requested someone else to copy for him. Wu did not disclose in the letter the nature of this poem, but we feel that it was not of brotherly love or affection. Burning up the poems he had written for his friends was, perhaps subconsciously and symbolically, an effort to sever ties with his friends and the past, at least their emotional value and significance. And the long poem in extended regulated form that he nonetheless presented to the outside world was to assert/reassert the identity of a writer of exceptional ability and talent. When everything was failing him, in an overwhelming fear of being abandoned and rejected, Wu trusted, once again, his poetry to perform a miracle, to rescue him from sinking into oblivion as a nonentity.

⁴⁴ Fang Gaomao 方膏茂, one of the sons of Fang Gongqian. See *Nianpu*, p. 291.

⁴⁵ “Sijiu fu” 思舊賦, included in *Wen xuan* 文選, *juan* 16.

⁴⁶ “Song Zheng Shiba Qian bian Taizhou Sihou, shang qi linlao xianzei zhi gu, jue wei mianbie, qing jian yu shi” 送鄭十八虔貶臺州司戶，傷其臨老陷賊之故，闕爲面別，情見於詩；Chou Zhao'ao 仇兆鰲, annot., *Dushi xiangzhu* 杜詩詳注, *juan* 5.

⁴⁷ QJ:271.

The literary endeavors of a man stricken with traumatic memories

Wu wrote to reconnect and to restore his self-image and reputation that had been damaged, complicated and transformed, though not entirely forfeited, by the imperial penalty and authority, which he had to reckon with in his exile. Literary writings—in the genres of poetry, letters, and the essay—were the means for Wu to confront his trauma, to rescue himself from obscurity and oblivion, and to engage in a discourse with society. Literature was not only a pastime for him to keep himself occupied in Ningguta, it was also the means for him to demarcate a space of authority and to give meaning to the life that he had to endure in his banishment. Wu believed in the power of literature as a source of salvation, physical and spiritual.

Wu's communicative model and “bureaucracy”

Intriguingly, the model by which Wu created, circulated, and capitalized on his writings was already foreshadowed in what we have called the fixated memory in his exile narrative—circumstances of his public disgrace. In essence, it is a communicative model with a “bureaucratic” infrastructure and logistics; its prestige and authority rest ultimately on imperial sanction and favorable public opinion rather than from the individual talents, and it is result-oriented.

We remember that Wu was retested, for his *juren* qualifications, in the palace compound in Beijing, i.e., the physical manifestation and embodiment of the imperial authority, where the writer/scholar Wu was supposed to produce some highly accomplished papers worthy of his *juren* privileges, which would become the contents in his “file” for the authorities to review and evaluate. The contents—or, rather, lack of contents—in Wu's file failed to meet the expectations of the authorities, who felt that the blank exam paper proved that the previous exam results were not valid. The automatic response of the bureaucratic machinery was harshly punitive.

In the earlier stage of this legal process, the case was complicated by, according to Wu, the submission of another “file” that indicted Wu—namely, the “letter for his own defense” (自辨之揭) of the scoundrel Chang 昌賊. Wu describes it as the “concrete evidence of his voluntary confession without even the need of a hearing session” (不訊自招之確證).⁴⁸ At a critical moment, Wu attempted to undercut his accuser's slanderous document by his own writing. On April 11, 1658, the day he reported to the Ministry of Rites, which supervised the examination system, Wu was handed over at once to the Ministry of Justice, which oversaw the administration of justice and the management of prisons and convicts. Wu relates in the May letter to his parents: “Your son was put on the rack, but my words were vehement. Shedding tears, I composed the poems” (兒於桁楊之下, 言詞激壯, 揮淚題詩). Wu makes a point of emphasizing that “these are all recorded in the files” (此皆載之卷案者),⁴⁹ reassuring

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 288.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

himself that the poems⁵⁰ made their way into the relevant files, properly transcribed and preserved. It is as if he believes that formalism and formalities beget reason and justice. That Wu should present emotionally charged poems as his affidavit (at least as part of it) must be considered as an unusual if not peculiar act, but he never doubted the appropriateness or legitimacy of doing so. (After the palace exam, on May 5, Wu improvised another poem to argue for his innocence during a hearing session in the Ministry of Justice.) Wu emphasizes that during the trial process, the poems were read by the emperor himself (曾呈先帝之覽)—this actually occurred after the palace exam—and that they must have won the high officials' sympathy and support (想長安士大夫自有公論).⁵¹ In this model of communication, the writings aim to earn imperial recognition and endorsement and to influence official and public opinion.

Unfortunately for Wu, even though the missing “contents” (the writings of Wu) in Wu's “file” were now refurbished and the file itself completed its trajectory (the emperor himself reviewed the file), it could not save Wu from dishonor and exile. Yet Wu's faith in the powers and potential of this model must have been very deep-rooted. In Wu's letter to his parents, after referring to the reading of the poems by the throne and the public opinion of the officials in the capital, Wu immediately writes: “This is a rare moment of imperial favor, you absolutely should not let the opportunity elude you. My file is in the Ministry of Justice. You should go directly to the ministry to appeal, I am afraid that the governors below wouldn't have the authority to handle this” (今當此曠蕩之時, 萬不可失良會. 兒案在刑部, 須赴部告理, 恐非下邊督撫所能主持也).⁵² This reflects Wu's belief in the viability and promise of this model, that even though his writings did not ultimately alter the decision of the former emperor, they might persuade the new emperor now. The potency of his poems and the opportunity with the new emperor were mentioned in the same breath.

Writing and imperial mercy

In the course of his early exile in Ningguta, besides coping with the confusion, loneliness, psychological and physical discomfort, and pain and melancholy brought on by the separation in space and time from homeland, Wu exerted himself by writing some very long letters and poems. It is clear that Wu intended these writings to form a favorable public memory and image of him and to elicit the admiration and sympathy of friends and family, informed readers, and, most importantly, the authorities. Wu confides to his friends in the May letter to Song Shiying:

Since I came to live beyond the Great Wall, I have given up everything. Like a blossom stem fallen into the mud, I have no fragrance any more. But my longing for my friends

⁵⁰ Two poems, both are included in *ibid.*, p. 130.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 288-89. Chang'an 長安 in the original stands for the capital, and in this context, Beijing.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 289.

never leaves my bosom. Whenever I think of my past companions, my heart aches. Even the palace ladies from Handan, after being married to menial servants, would still dream of the recesses in the palace when seeing the flowers in spring and the moon in autumn. Your humble friend's feeling is the same as theirs.

弟自出塞以來，萬端都謝，如泥中花蒂，無復芳菲；而懷友之思，未嘗棄懷。每憶曩年遊好，輒便傷心。邯鄲宮人，嫁身廝養，而春花秋月，尚夢深宮。區區鄙懷，庶同此耳。⁵³

Wu expresses an immense longing for his friends, but the metaphor he has created for himself is the deserted palace lady (*gongren* 宮人) who still misses the palace and, by extension, the emperor.

At one point, Wu exclaims:

I have sunken into this foreign land for a very long time. I have become habituated to the frontier style in my language and habits. The great elegant art [of poetry]! So rich in grace! But it has all been obliterated inside me. I am just about to try my hand at drawing a bow and to ride on horseback, training my body to be like one of those strong men. I dare not talk about the fond memories I had with my now distinguished friends, or discuss with you the joys of composing poetry and essays!

弟久沈異域，語言習俗，漸染邊風。大雅悵悵，磨滅盡矣。方欲控弦試馬，作健兒身手；何堪尚與青雲故人，論疇曩之誼，述詩文之樂乎！⁵⁴

In a poem written in this same year, Wu also says:

故囊無白袷	My old cases contain no white garments;
廢篋有青編	In the worn baskets there are some miscellaneous books.
漸覺詩書賤	More and more, I have come to think poetry is cheap,
奚嗟習俗儂	And it's no use complaining about frivolous customs. ⁵⁵

Are these signs of assimilation, that Wu was cultivating or adopting a new identity and life style? These new changes were more apparent than real, gestures more than actual resolutions and actions in life. Wu might have become more accustomed to the frontier language and culture, but he never really forsook his identity as a Southerner—*nanren* 南人, as opposed to the locals, *turen* 土人, in his own wording—and a poet. His remark can be considered as a momentary lapse caused by depression. Wu was still hoping eagerly for the imperial mercy and pardon: “The pole with a rooster [on top]

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 268.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 269.

⁵⁵ “Yijiu shuqing ji Chen Zizhang yibai yun” 憶舊書情寄陳子長一百韻, *ibid.*, p. 52. We will read more of this poem below.

will be sent down again, and the ring⁵⁶ on the knife will be spoken soon, so that Li Bo will be summoned back from Yelang, and Cai Yong from the northern wilderness” (雞竿再下, 早賦刀環, 召李白于夜郎, 還蔡邕于朔野).⁵⁷ He wished to be recalled to China proper like the historical exiles Li Bo and Cai Yong, whose disgrace was considered a minor event in a lifetime of achievement in literature and learning.

In the letter he sent Ji Dong towards the end of this year, Wu expressly states the importance and meaning of literature to him in his exile:

Since my banishment, I have given up all my past interests. Nevertheless, I still indulge myself in the art of “craving the insects.”⁵⁸ Under the frontier sky, there is not much to do, and I sit alone behind the chaste-tree door. I cut ice and cook millet, to satisfy my hunger and thirst. In the old basket that I brought with me are some remaining books. In the leisure time after eating gruel, I always engage Longmian [Fang Gongqian]⁵⁹ and other gentlemen in conversations on the books, and we write poems to match one another’s. Those are the street-talk-alley-song sort, but they nonetheless grew into a collection. I draw on the import of the *fu* by Yang Ziyun [Xiong] lamenting Qu Yuan, naming it *Zhi xie*.⁶⁰ Since autumn, I have returned to the learning of *fu*. I venture to say that my pieces achieve the Jiang [Yan] and Bao [Zhao] styles, and that they are in the class of Wang [Can] and Yang [Xiong]. However, I am a disgraced man shunned by the world. Even if my tone is comparable to that of the “White Snow”⁶¹ and my talents match those of Bian He, who discovered the precious jade, people will only read my works either in contempt or in sympathy. This person’s⁶² talents are less than the ordinary lot and his name did not go beyond his home county. Then suddenly he finds himself among the celebrities and has the pleasure of being in the company of the emperor’s carriage. Because of this, even those attendants serving in the imperial hunts and those petty proofreaders, when receiving a word or two from him, would exclaim: “This is Han [Yu] and Ou[yang Xiu] reincarnated!” My dear friend, when you hear this, would you not be shocked by its absurdity!

放廢以來, 萬緣都廢, 惟雕蟲一道, 猶尚纏綿。塞天無事, 寂坐荆扉, 斧冰炊稗, 以充饑渴。所攜故麓, 尚有殘編, 每暇之暇, 輒與龍眠諸君子商榷圖史, 酬唱詩歌, 街談巷曲, 頗成一集。取楊子雲哀屈之文, 命曰《質齋》。入秋以來, 復事賦學, 妄謂可

⁵⁶ The sound of *huan* 環 in the original may give rise to two meanings: to return or to be called back to office.

⁵⁷ QJJ:269.

⁵⁸ From a famous remark by the celebrated *fu* writer Yang Xiong of Han times, downplaying his own youthful *fu* works as minor art.

⁵⁹ See below for Fang Gongqian.

⁶⁰ *Zhi xie* is an expression from Yang Xiong’s *fu* “Fan ‘Li sao’” 反離騷.

⁶¹ An ancient *qin* 琴 tune, known for its purity and loftiness.

⁶² Certain words in the original must be missing between 亦將唾涕視之矣 and 彼才不逮于中人. As a result, the reference of 彼 is unclear.

以規模江鮑，接跡王揚。但負罪之人，爲時捐棄，縱調如〈白雪〉，才似和璧，亦將唾涕視之矣。彼才不逮于中人，名不出于里閭，一旦身躋雲霄，從容輦轂，雖復伏獵侍郎，金根校理，得其片言隻語，以爲韓歐復生。兄聞此言，得無駭其任誕乎！⁶³

As mentioned above, the development of this letter is rambling, and its reasoning incoherent, but several observations can still be made of this passage. First, even though Wu deliberately downplays his literary activities as a minor pastime, his love for creative writing is obviously enormous. Second, recently he excels in writing *fu*, a genre that requires considerable compositional skills and extensive book learning. He prides himself on being able to produce some *fu* on a par with those by acclaimed *fu* writers in history. Third, towards the end of the passage, he complains that one does not need to produce excellent works to achieve fame as a writer. One need only find oneself in an important official post and in imperial favor—celebrity is sure to follow. This means to mock at literary vanity, but it nonetheless betrays the obsession that Wu has with the imperial authority and the prestige and power of literature.

The two aspects of Wu Zhaoqian's experience in his early exile years that we have visited above are intricately interrelated. The narrative and autobiographical disposition in his writings and his persistence in writing subtly point to the traumatic memory of his 1658 public disgrace. Wu continued to mull over this traumatic episode and perhaps even dramatized, revised, and embellished it. For an exile to write reflectively about the most momentous events in his/her life can be a psychological act of reenacting so as to understand and give meaning to them; it has therapeutic effects of healing and reconstituting a sense of structure and order in life (we will return to this below). That notwithstanding, Wu's fixation on the 1658 memory was obviously also driven by a desire to produce a testimonial that would set the record straight. In this connection, Wu's revisiting of this particular event was not only introspective and retrospective, but also, more aggressively and ambitiously, prospective, forward-looking.

We have characterized Wu's communicative mode as a case of the bureaucracy at work. In the mechanism of bureaucracy, for a goal to be achieved, or a decision made, all necessary paperwork must be, theoretically speaking, in order, and no procedural step bypassed. Wu could not leave the 1658 disgrace behind as history and move on precisely because the most crucial and regrettable circumstance in his case was the all-important missing paperwork that he was supposed to produce in its particular time, place, and form—the palace exam papers. Wu attempted to fix the problem by “resubmitting” the paperwork (the poems) when the bureaucratic machine started to clamp down on him. It should have been too late to be of any use. But paradoxically, this paperwork did start to circulate in the system and yielded, at least in Wu's belief, certain of its desired effects. Consequently, Wu's 1658 memory generated two dynamics, that of absence and that of hope (albeit false, as historical hindsight

⁶³ QJJ:271.

informs) of redemption, both hinged on the act of writing and the results of the written work. Seen in this light, opening up the wound again gave Wu both pain and pleasure. Wu's exilic writings are generally marked by intense emotions and a strong authorial presence, and some of his works are considerably long. To be noticeable and attractive to the world, Wu had to enlarge himself and be very vocal. He feared being forgotten and he refused to be forgotten: the narrative that he set forth in 1658 had not come to its projected end.

The imperative of writing and the persistence and relevance of poetry

Besides the particular meaning and purpose for Wu Zhaoqian, writing and the creative process was also a form of expression and a psychological and emotional need for the exiles in Ningguta. In late June of 1661, Wu Zhaoqian wrote a preface for a fellow exile's collection of poetry, "Fang Yusan *Qixuantang shiji xu*" 方與三其旋堂詩集序 (A Preface to Fang Yusan's Poetry Collection *Qixuantang shiji*),⁶⁴ in which he ruminates on the dialectical relationship between exile and writing:

It is almost fate that talented people should weep, having to drift about alone. Yet since days of old, it has also been wanderers who write prolifically. . . . Even when one drifts about the Central Land, one writes letters telling one's sorrow; or when one leaves the guest parlor, one commits to paper the sadness. Imagine, then, that you journey to the most distant frontier, or are banished to the remote corners of the earth, just like [Zhao] Jingzhen who was demoted to a place beyond the Gate,⁶⁵ or Tingbo who was banished to somewhere east of Liao. The geese fly south, leaving the wanderer behind; the bridge that leads to the north is already distant. Beyond the White Wolf Hill, the fearful hanging path is difficult to negotiate; in the "Song of the Yellow Crane," homeland is sadly very far away.⁶⁶ Now that you have become one of the people with deep eye sockets and long nose, how can you not have doleful words? Thus, when Mao the Grand Master for Splendid Happiness stayed with the Helian tribe, he told of the pain of having to surrender to the Qiang people; or when Li the Defender [Ling] lived in the northern wilderness, a song was written about his seeing the Han gate in the distance. Note that not only [Liu] Yueshi would sing plaintively, with tears raining down on his

⁶⁴ Fang Yusan was Fang Yusheng 方育盛, one of the sons of Fang Gongqian. See *Nianpu*, p. 290. The approximate date for the composition of this preface is suggested by Li Xingsheng in *ibid.*, p. 83. See also *Zhuan*, pp. 115-16.

⁶⁵ Zhao Zhi 趙至 of the Jin dynasty was exiled to Liaodong. His letter "Yu Ji Maoqi shu" 與嵇茂齊書 was included in *Wen xuan*, *juan* 43.

⁶⁶ Read 黃鶴. Chinese princesses like Princess Xijun 細君公主 were given to the Wusun chieftain to strengthen the political ties. The "Huanghe ge" 黃鶴歌 attributed to her tells of her experiences.

horse in Fufeng;⁶⁷ or only Zichu would have a miscellaneous song, showing him deeply saddened by the fish in the Pi river.

由來才士，半泣飄蓬；自古羈人，偏多篇翰。... 中土漂搖，尚含毫而緘怨；客堂離別，猶援牘以抒哀。⁶⁸ 況乎絕塞長征，殊方遠戍，竄景真于關外，逐亭伯于遼東。南雁無憑，北梁已遠。白狼堆外，畏懸度之難行；〈黃鵠歌〉中，怨關河之甚渺。已作窈停之種，能無侘傺之辭。是以毛光祿之在赫連，自述降羌之痛；李都尉之居朔野，亦流望漢之歌。豈獨越石悲吟，淚盡扶風之馬；子初雜曲，心摧鄆水之魚。

There is a sense of fatalism saturating Wu's musing on the relationship between exile and writing. He believes that gifted men are destined to experience displacement and wandering, if not banishment or exile, and to suffer from feelings of rootlessness, homesickness, alienation, and utter pessimism. "Internal" exile is sad enough, and the physical and spiritual existence in "external" exile is unbearably painful and trying. Yet there is, Wu implies, also almost a grave and tragic beauty in this forlorn human condition itself—experiences of dislocation and the accompanying spiritual void and anxiety would compel writers to produce stirring and moving literature. And poetry, as Wu sees it, is a powerful genre with which to explore the complexity and depth of this human condition and need for meaning:

Therefore, he spread the silk and transferred to it his grief, his brush danced like singing strings, conjuring up the traveler's road in the mountain and river and the wind and snow of the frontier sky. Farewell poems written when the carriage took off, chanting on horseback, even the local customs of Zhenfan, or the spoken language of Xianbei, all became beautiful notes as if from bells and musical stones, comparable to richly colorful jades. He named the poems *Qixuan*, as a collection, which is filled with the depression and anguish of the detained official and the wandering experience of the banished man.⁶⁹ Grief enters the *pipa* lute, moving the Wusun people to tears;⁷⁰ sadness grows in the sound of the warning bell, telling of the pains for the goose-like official.

⁶⁷ See Liu Yueshi's 劉越石 "Fufeng ge" 扶風歌 in *Wen xuan*, *juan* 28.

⁶⁸ Note that this is a very elaborately and purposefully written essay. Its 4-4 and 4-6 sentence patterns, parallelism, allusive metaphors, intense imagery and rich diction make it read almost like a *fu* (the *fu* stylistic marker, *xi* 兮, can be effortlessly added to many sentences in the essay).

⁶⁹ *Qixuan* alludes to the lines "視履考祥，其旋元吉" from the *Book of Changes*, there prophesizing a man treading on a tiger's tail, but the beast does not bite him, allowing the man to return with unmatched luck. *Qixuan* expresses Fang's wish to return unharmed, after walking in great danger and peril, from his exile in Ningguta. Zhang Jinyan also wrote a preface for the book; see "*Qixuan cao xu*" 其旋草序 in Zhang's *Yuwai ji* 域外集, ed. Li Xingsheng 李興盛 (Harbin: Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe, 1984), pp. 37-39.

⁷⁰ The "Wusun gongzhu beichou ge" 烏孫公主悲愁歌 in "Wusun zhuan" 烏孫傳 of the *Han shu* 漢書 has these lines: "吾家嫁我今天一方，遠託異國兮烏孫王。穹廬為室兮旃為牆，以肉為食兮酪為漿。居常土思兮心內傷，願為黃鵠兮歸故鄉"; *Han shu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), 96B.3903.

These are immortal poems, not just accounts of distant journeys.

於是開繒寫怨，流翰陳絃，客路山川，塞天風雪。或車中之贈別，或馬上之行吟，以至真番土風，鮮卑國語，無不調成金石，麗錯瓊瑤。名曰《其旋》，都為一集。寄羈臣之幽憤，寫逐客之飄蹤。怨入琵琶，隕烏孫之涕淚；哀傳刁斗，感雁臣之苦辛。允為傳世之篇，聊當述征之作。

The emotional tone here is somber yet noble, melancholy yet somehow hopeful. The symbiosis of suffering and art in Wu's vision gives exilic literature a unique appeal and dignity—writing in exile is not likely to win glory or wealth, but might bring literary immortality. This is understandably a quest for self-empowerment and an assertion of self-worth and the creative pride, albeit tinged with a certain measure of fantasy and delusion. But at any rate, the intensity of emotion and feeling, the uncommon experiences, and the exotic and unfamiliar subject matter that became central to many exilic writings can easily inspire interest and curiosity, if not admiration and sympathy, among their readers. And Wu indicates that there are two types of readers of these exilic poems:

I have been banished to this place for three long years, ten thousand miles away—home is no more. I weep quietly at the river bank, just like a woman; I sob inwardly outside the tent, in the like of a palace maid. I am fortunate to have his company, both of us in the same banishment, and he shares his clothes with me. We care for each other in this frontier land, like Changluo [Chang Hui] and Su Wu; and in our involuntary stay in Guanzhong, he took pity on me, as Ziyuan [Wang Bao] pitied Shen Jiong.⁷¹ Of these wonderful writings, half of them came from our poetic gatherings. The poems captured the spirit of our conversations, conveying the deep sadness we shared in the meetings. I wish that by the city wall of Xianyang, people will pass around these songs from the distant mountains and rivers, and near the pavilion at Guangwu, travelers will think of these *fu* on fallen flowers.

僕三年久戍，萬里無家。掩泣江頭，已同女子；銜啼帳外，幾類官奴。幸並謫之逢君，遂同衣之容汝。相攜塞表，似長羅之共蘇卿；羈旅關中，等子淵之憐沈炯。凡茲華製，半屬分題。爰贅語于簡端，志悲懷于塵末。庶使咸陽城畔，人傳山水之謠；廣武亭邊，客記落花之賦云爾。

Exiles had one another as their immediate readers. Writing poetry in the foreign land became an activity for them to keep themselves entertained and their spirits up, and to foster friendship and bonding. But sometimes they also aimed for a larger audience, one that was back in China proper, as in the instance of the publication (at least the preparations for publication) of Fang's collection of poetry. Their return home may not be realized in the short term, or ever, and circulating their works back there was to maintain a voice, an identity, and a presence and link, even if only symbolic.

⁷¹ In the Liang-Chen dynastic changeover of the Six Dynasties period, many Jiangnan literati, including Wang Bao and Shen Jiong, were captured and detained in Chang'an.

Reading, writing and gathering meant a lot to Wu Zhaoqian and his fellow exiles in Ningguta. Wu as a poet was well respected by all, and he found his closest literary friends in Fang Gongqian 方拱乾 (1596-1666) and his sons.⁷² One of the Fangs, Fang Xiaobiao 方孝標 (1618-?), writes in “Da Wu Hancha jiedu *Tongjian gangmu*” 答吳漢槎借讀《通鑿綱目》(In Reply to Wu Hancha Who Asked to Borrow My *Tongjian gangmu* to Read) (1659):⁷³

可與言今古	With whom I can talk about the present and the past
荒邊只有君	In this borderland, there is only you.
賦詩能漸樸	Writing poetry, more and more we can use simple language;
觀史不徒文	Reading history books, we do not look only at the writing techniques. ⁷⁴

Fang Gongqian reveals their passion for the art of poetry in “Yu Hancha ji erbei lunshi” 與漢槎及兒輩論詩 (Discussing Poetry with Hancha and My Sons) (1659):

共笑貧病成百懶	We are all amused that in poverty and sickness we became so very lazy,
苦吟何事偏皇皇	Why, then, are we so fussy about refining poetry style? ⁷⁵

And the title of one of his poems shows how much he valued Wu as a reader and friend: “Guo er Biao wu. Ou zuo shi, shu qi ji shang, zhao Hancha laiguan” 過兒標屋偶作詩 書其几上 招漢槎來觀 (Going over to the House of My Son Biao. [There I happened to compose a poem, which I wrote down on a short table to summon Hancha to come see it]) (1660).⁷⁶

The exile's life in Ningguta was described by Wu with lamenting and

⁷² Fang Gongqian was one of the chief examiners of the 1657 Nanjing provincial examination. His son, Fang Zhangyue 方章鉞, took the same exam. For this and other reasons, Fang Gongqian was indicted for corruption and partiality. The Fang family in its entirety was exiled to Ningguta. The Fangs became Wu's closest friends in his trial in Beijing and in exile. In late 1661 the Fangs bought their freedom with fiscal donations to public works projects. See *Nianpu*, pp. 254-64. See also Li Xingsheng, “Qingchu shiren Fang Gongqian ji qi shizuo” 清初詩人方拱乾及其詩作, in his *Zhongguo liuren shi yu liuren wenhua lunji*, pp. 232-39.

⁷³ Books were certainly a rarity in Ningguta. A fellow exile of Wu, Yao Qizhang 姚其章 (*zi* Zhuozhi 琢之; *juren* 1657), was able to trade his copy of *Mingji yiwen* 明季遺聞 for a cow. See Yang Bin 楊賓, *Liubian jilüe* 柳邊紀略, *juan* 3, *Congshu jicheng chubian* 叢書集成初編 edition (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), p. 49. See also Zhang Yuxing, “Qingchu Dongbei shehui dongxiang tanxi” 清初東北社會動向探析, in his *Ming Qing shi tansuo*, p. 596. The early Qing edition of *Mingji yiwen* was likely of four *juan*, while Fang's *Tongjian gangmu* of 59 *juan*. It seems that Fang could easily barter his book for over a dozen cows.

⁷⁴ *Dunzhai shixuan* 鈍齋詩選, *juan* 7, included in *Ziliao huibian*, p. 158.

⁷⁵ *He Louju ji* 何陋居集, “Jihai gao” 己亥稿, included in *ibid.*, p. 160.

⁷⁶ *He Louju ji*, “Gengzi gao” 庚子稿, included in *ibid.*, p. 162.

bitterness. Literary and drinking venues provided respite and recreation for them, as Fang Gongqian divulges in the title of another of his poems: “Jiuyue shisan ye yue ming, erbei jiu Xu, Yao zhuzi guyin, chuixiao fushi, jiezhao xiang laofu chengshuo, yiwei boran” 九月十三夜月明, 兒輩就許、姚諸子酌飲, 吹簫賦詩, 詰朝向老夫稱說, 亦爲勃然 (On the Evening of the Thirteenth of the Ninth Month, the Moon Was Bright. My Sons Gathered with Xu and Yao and Others to Drink, Play the Flute and Write Poetry. The Morning after They Bragged about That to Their Old Man. I, Too, Was Excited for Them) (1660).⁷⁷

Considering Wu Zhaoqian’s purpose and ambition, writing in Ningguta during this phase of his exile was a lonely and sad thing. Wu had as his immediate readers but a handful of fellow exiles. True, he did send some of his works back to China proper along with his letters. But it would take many months for the letters to reach their receivers, if they managed to reach their destinations at all. Wu lamented, time and again, that he had not heard from his family and friends for a long time, and that he had received no response. It took a very determined mind to continue to write, and Wu did continue to write and send his works to his intended readers. And it was indeed writing, in the long haul, that would change his lot for the better.

Pondered in the context of daily life, literature acquired a new significance and became even more imperative among the exiles. Life without literature would certainly be more bleak and bland for these banished men from Jiangnan and other cultural centers of China. Writing and literary activities became a source of strength and comfort in their struggles to survive. If to write is to make contact between the world “in here” and the world “out there,” to write in the remote and isolated Ningguta was for the most part to put the seeming insignificance of their existence into the “here-world” only. Yet in a place whose race, culture and language differed dramatically from that of their own, the exiles sustained, continued and made sense of their selves and identities through literature and literary activities brought from their cultural past. Stripped of its prestige and cultural capital value—we do not forget that art and literature were intricately tied to larger discourses of class, identity and power in imperial China—literature became even more “pure.” It was pursued for its own sake, as part of the everyday life and as a comfort to the soul. It may be worthless, but it was accessible, and fun to do.

Memory, religion and identity

“Memories are produced out of experience and, in turn, reshape it.” Michael Lambek and Paul Antze suggest: “This implies that memory is intrinsically linked to identity.”⁷⁸ The literature that we have from Wu from this particular year encompasses enumeration of experiences and permutations of the self. In negotiating the cultures

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁷⁸ Paul Antze & Michael Lambek, eds., *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory* (New York & London: Routledge, 1996), p. xii.

from Jiangnan to Liaodong—or, in Wu's favorite metaphor, from the inner to the outer, *zhongwai* 中外—Wu must have cultivated or adopted new cultural identities so as to survive, but he did not reveal much of this in the texts. Instead, we see him reacting to displacement by clinging tightly to his old identities.

It has been observed that autobiographical writings by exiles betray an “illusion” in their attempts to sustain a continuity of identity that is facilitated by past memories. Judith Melton, exploring the issue of the autobiographical subject among exiles, writes:

A person's memory provides the continuity which allows a sense of identity. . . . Memory and illusion allow the individual to feel the self to be an “autonomous whole.” For the exile, social upheaval, particularly uprooting experiences and general upheaval, frequently breaks the thread of memory and consciousness and fragments the sense of self.⁷⁹

The self threatens to become fragmented and obliterated in exile, especially in harsh conditions. Recent autobiographical studies make much of the idea that the time-honored subject, the “I,” is not a self-contained entity but a linguistic, textual construct built by history, language, and culture. In such a theoretical understanding, the self is approached not as a historical self, or a memory saturated with referentiality, or a mediated fiction, but as a site frequented or intruded upon by intersecting discourses.⁸⁰ In other words, remembering is a process of self-constitution and self-identification. Thus, it is illusory for the authors to claim a truth value for their self-stories. Melton, nevertheless, maintains:

From the viewpoint of most modern critics, the self no longer exists as a unified, ahistorical being. From the viewpoint of the individual, the author, or the autobiographer, the illusion is mostly intact. Moreover, psychological health is more evident when the individual maintains a sense of psychological continuity, even if that sense of continuity is an illusion. Exiles whose self-continuity is disrupted have strong impulses to reestablish lost psychological continuity. The act of writing an autobiography helps to reestablish the thread of their identities. . . . For the autobiographer seeking some unity of consciousness, the act of writing becomes therapy.⁸¹

Indeed, illusion is a pervasive element in both the exilic sensibility and its literary formulations, East and West, and Wu's writings in 1661 are a case in point. We shall read the following extracts from Wu Zhaoqian's May letter to his parents in this light.

⁷⁹ Judith M. Melton, *The Face of Exile: Autobiographical Journeys* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1998), p. 73.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

We are interested in understanding Wu's psychological expressions when he was striving to forge a sense of continuity whilst negotiating everyday life as an exile in Ningguta. We observe an "illusion" within the illusion that we have just mentioned.

Memory and illusion

From Wu's letter, paragraphs 4-6:

Every day, I recite the "Zhunti Mantra" and chant the *Diamond Sutra* and the "Guanyin pumen pin"; up till now, I have already covered almost two thousand *juan* of them. I chant the entire book of the *Lotus Sutra* each month. All this is to ask blessings on father and mother, that misfortunes leave you and you enjoy long lives, and that our whole family returns home soon. Now that all of you have received the imperial favor, there is absolutely no reason that I alone should be stuck in this remote land. I had a dream the other day, in which there were signs of my returning home. All in all, almighty is the Buddha! And my serving of the Buddha is extremely devoted, too. As for the events on "the day for human beings"⁸² and the death of the emperor, I learned those in advance in my dreams. This is what is meant by mysterious. Earlier, when I first heard of the good news [of your receiving the pardon], my mind was disquieted. Then, on that very night, I dreamed that both father and mother were present at the Ministry to receive the imperial pardon. And someone nearby called me "your honor." Are these signs that your son will still have the opportunity to become someone prominent? Well, I shall leave it to Fate.

Earlier, on the 4th day of the 2nd month, the Cheng family traveled to the capital, and before then, I had known that the emperor had passed away. I sent you a letter, and I am wondering whether you received it or not? Your letters of the 22nd day of the 11th month last year and the 3rd day of the 1st month both arrived. And the two taels and four *qian* of silver also arrived. You need not worry about them. The thing is, letters entrusted to the Manchus are very safe. In the fall of last year, the family of my *tongnian* Mr. Yao sent fifty taels of silver, entrusted to the Company Commander of the Blue Banner; they all arrived in perfect form. All in all, in the future, when you send money, it will be best if you entrust it to the two Sun elders, or else, to Mrs. Xu. This is because the elder Xu Kang said, certain members in his family are not that trustworthy, and I fear there might be problems if you ask them to do it. But if Mrs. Xu herself has seen the stuff, it will be perfectly all right then. I am destitute living here, and I rely on Mr. Fang, Mr. Sun and others for assistance. But in the course of these three years, I have borrowed more than ten taels of silver from them already. The things that you sent me lately are just about enough to pay off the debt, not much is left after that. If by autumn I still can't manage to return, I beg you please, please send me twenty taels of silver and some clothes. The thing is, whatever reaches this place is greatly valued.

⁸² *Renri* 人日, the seventh day of the first month. Wu is referring to the death of the Shunzhi emperor on February 5th of this year.

These days I have been in pain because my shoes are worn out. And the pair you sent from home is too long and a bit too tight. Fortunately, Zizhang⁸³ has sent me a pair of cloth shoes, so that I somehow have a pair to use. When life reaches such a state, how miserable it is!

Recently, I have had some very good luck with the [Daoist] immortals, but not as much as last year. The immortals said father and mother should have had to come to the frontier, but thanks to your obeisance to the Great Buddha Guardian, you are blessed and do not have to any more. They told me this around the Lantern Festival,⁸⁴ when we had absolutely no news about anything over here. And the immortals revealed everything to me. Isn't this amazing? Father and mother, you should become every day more devoted to this. In the letter I sent you last, I tried my best to tell you about the many wondrous merits one receives from chanting the sacred name of the Great Guardian and the sutras and mantras. The letter has probably reached you and you have read all about it. Mother, you should chant the name of the Great Guardian, too. Every day, Mrs. Fang, wife of my respected friend, chants two *juan* of the *Diamond Sutra*, one *juan* of the *Lotus Sutra*, four to five thousand times of the name of the Great Guardian, ten *juan* of the *Amitabha Sutra*, and four to five thousand times of the name of Amitabha. How very devoted she is! The immortals said: "Mrs. Fang is devoted to the Lotus Terrace. Not only has she redeemed the bad karma from her previous life, she has also had her name recorded in the Lotus Land." The immortals also said: "If one persists in chanting the name of the Great Guardian faithfully, one will receive limitless good fortune." The immortals also said, the powers of the "Zhunti Mantra" are the king of all mantras. But one must observe a particular method in chanting it before one can expect any merits. They also said, when chanting the mantra, one should refrain from talking to other people. If one talks to other people, the merits would be blocked. In my last letter, I have detailed all this to you. I fear that the letter failed to reach you, so I repeat them one more time.

兒每日持〈準提呪〉，誦《金剛經》、〈觀音普門品〉，將已二千卷。每月誦《法華》一部，求父母消災延壽，全家早還故里。今一家骨肉，俱已邀恩，則兒無獨沈絕塞之事。前日之夢大有還鄉之兆，總之，佛力甚大，而兒之奉佛亦極虔敬。即如人日之事，鼎湖之升，兒皆先於夢中知之，此正所謂不可思議也。前日初聞佳耗，而心中皇皇未定，即於是夜夢父母皆在部中奉赦，傍有人呼兒為貴人者，豈將來兒尚

⁸³ Chen Kanyong 陳堪永 (d. 1667), son of Chen Zhilin 陳之遴 (1605-66) who was a high official in the late Ming and then a Minister of Rites in the early Qing. In the 1650s, Chen Zhilin was impeached for corrupt conduct in office (involving in partisan politics, like Zhang Jinyan whom we met above). He was exiled to Shenyang twice. The first time was in 1656 for about eight months. The second time was in 1658 and for good, he died in his exile. His trial in Beijing overlapped with that of Wu Zhaoqian, and the Chen father and sons and Wu became very good friends since then. There are quite a few poems from Wu's exile period that were devoted to Chen Kanyong. See Wakeman, *The Great Enterprise*, pp. 1001-5; *Nianpu*, pp. 264-74.

⁸⁴ The 15th day of the 1st lunar month.

有發揚之事乎! 當聽之蒼蒼而已。

昨二月初四, 程家人入京, 爾時已知大行之變, 兒寄一信, 不知曾到否? 父母去歲十一月廿二日及正月初三日兩信, 兒俱接到矣。其二兩四錢亦到, 不必掛念。總之滿人寄信甚確。昨秋姚年兄家寄五十金, 託藍旗章京帶來, 絕無遺失。總之, 以後父母寄兒盤費, 第一託孫二老為上, 次則許太太。因許康老云, 他家人有不守法者, 恐有差誤, 若經太太之目, 則萬萬無慮矣。兒在此甚窘, 賴方、孫諸公照拂, 然三年之久, 已貸十餘金, 頃所寄來之物, 止可還債, 所存已無幾。秋間倘不能歸, 萬乞寄二十金及衣服與兒。總之, 此地隨到一物, 皆是至寶。近日正苦鞋破, 而家中所寄之鞋又長而少狹, 幸子長寄兒一雙履, 得以替換矣。人生至此, 真為苦極。

邇來仙緣亦好, 但不如去年。仙云父母當出塞, 因虔奉金剛大士, 故得邀恩已不來矣。此皆元宵左右之言, 此間絕無消息之時, 而仙語如此, 豈不異哉! 父母於此, 益宜日加精進。前兒所寄信中, 力言誦大士名號及誦經呪之功, 想已達覽矣。母親亦宜念大士名號。方年伯母每日誦《金剛》二卷、《法華》一卷、大士號四五千、《彌陀經》十卷、彌陀號四五千, 真可謂勇猛。仙師云: “方夫人虔禮蓮臺, 不獨消宿世之愆, 已記名於蓮花中矣。” 仙師又云: “大士號若能虔持, 獲福無量。” 又言〈準提呪〉之力為諸呪之王, 須依法誦持, 始有功。又言誦呪時, 不可與人語, 語則為間斷, 向字已悉之, 恐未寄到, 故復述之耳。⁸⁵

The feeling of rupture in the present permeates Paragraph 5. “I sent you a letter,” Wu asks his parents: “And I am wondering whether you received it or not?” Letters were his only means to connect with his family and homeland, and he feared that this link, fragile as it already was, was broken, another rupture in his ruptured life. It must have been comforting, mentally and materially, for him to receive his parents’ letters and the enclosed articles and money, even after a lapse of quite a few months. Wu took measures to ensure that the tie to his parents was not to be severed, advising them to entrust valuable things to be sent to the Manchus (*Manren* 滿人), who were reportedly more trustworthy and reliable than the Chinese.

The rest of this paragraph laments material poverty caused by dislocation: Wu lived by borrowing and others’ largess, and he was not even warmly clothed. Yet what hurt him most, perhaps, was that the pair of shoes that his parents mailed was of the wrong size (家中所寄之鞋又長而少狹). Wu’s need for a pair of new shoes was dire; his old ones were worn out. It must have been heartbreaking for Wu to try on the shoes and find them too long and tight. It was frustrating enough that the shoes did not fit, but perhaps even more frustrating that his parents no longer accurately remembered his physical features and, by implication, him. (This should not have been the first pair of shoes his parents sent to Ningguta.) Memory of him was fading and ties to his family were now threatened. Wu sighs, saying: “When life reaches such a state, how miserable it is!” (人生至此, 真為苦極). Sadly and bitterly, he was suffering from the feelings of loss, dis rupture, and uprootedness, walking in a pair of shoes from homeland that did not fit.

⁸⁵ QJJ:289-90.

The disabling feelings related in Paragraph 5 are wrapped, most intriguingly, in Paragraphs 4 and 6, in which Wu discloses to his parents his recent religious and mysterious experiences. One's identity is subtly molded by enculturations of one's homeland: family, friends, social status, language, customs, religion, and so forth. Living the life of a displaced person, one is deprived of all these psychological supports; a rupture of being ensues. As Fred Weinstein suggests: "[P]eople everywhere need to maintain a sense of continuity, a sense of self-sameness over time. . . . Any individual must be able, through memory, to use time as an ordering principle for the succession of events that constitute his or her history."⁸⁶ Furthermore, geographical and emotional displacement often turns one "toward introspection and social or psychological probing,"⁸⁷ and, imaginably, religious probing, too. In these two passages in Wu's letter, boundaries blur between reality, dream, and fantasy. ("Illusion" and "fantasy" are used here advisedly and theoretically, not to belittle experiences that might not be empirically verifiable.)

Notably, Wu narrates his mysterious experiences in a linear time structure, even though the experiences themselves transcend the bounds of physical time and place. He stresses that his chanting of the "Zhunti Mantra," the *Diamond Sutra*, and the "Guanyin pumen pin" is a persistent, everyday practice, and his investment of time and effort can be measured by two thousand *juan*. Likewise, his chanting of the *Lotus Sutra* is pursued in a continuous manner, one whole book per month. All this, Wu intimates, is for the purpose of supplicating blessings from the Buddha, for his parents' good fortune and health, his family's freedom from penalty, and his own release from banishment in Manchuria. His religious piety, Wu believes, has yielded good results and his prayers have been answered, at least in part, by the Buddha. First, as he wishes, his family has regained freedom and returned home. Second, he is visited by prognostic dreams in which he is told of the release of his parents and a change in emperor. Third, in the dream where he sees his parents in the Ministry of Justice, someone nearby calls him "your honor" (*guiren* 貴人). Wu interprets it as implying that his becoming a high official in the future might not be impossible.

In Wu's religious world, Buddhism and Daoism coexist harmoniously. The Buddhist experience related in Paragraph 4 is continued almost seamlessly into its Daoist counterpart in Paragraph 6. The Buddhist deities, according to Wu, give him visionary dreams, and the Daoist immortals "talk" to him, by way of spirit writing such as poems and rhapsodies (*shifu* 詩賦) via divination and visitations. (This is not revealed here, but is in Wu's March letter to his parents.)⁸⁸ The Daoist immortals,

⁸⁶ Fred Weinstein, *The Dynamics of Nazism: Leadership, Ideology, and the Holocaust* (New York: Academic Press, 1980), p. 26.

⁸⁷ H. Stuart Hughes, *The Sea Change: The Migration of Social Thought 1930-1965* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 2.

⁸⁸ QJJ:286: "玉雲諸仙所著詩賦, 皆極其弘麗, 已成一集, 而所言之事, 竟已奇驗。惟勸兒輩念〈準提呪〉, 念觀音名號, 則萬罪冰消, 百祥雲集。"

Yuyun 玉雲 and others, divine that Wu's parents were originally condemned to join Wu in his banishment in Manchuria, but thanks to their faith in, and obedience to, the Great Buddha Guardian, they were spared the travail by heavenly intervention. And this, confides Wu, was revealed to him long before the actual events transpired.

“Almighty is the Buddha!” (*Foli shen da* 佛力甚大) exclaims Wu. He urges his parents to earn their merits the hard way, one day more devoted than the other, and he cites an example of success. The wife of his friend, mentor, and patron in Liaodong, Fang Gongqian, chants two *juan* of the *Diamond Sutra*, one *juan* of the *Lotus Sutra*, ten *juan* of the *Amitabha Sutra*, and four to five thousand times of the sacred names of the Great Buddha Guardian and Amitabha as her daily practice. Because of this, the immortals inform, she has redeemed all her bad karma from past life, and has gained entrance to the Lotus Land paradise of Bliss (*Lianhua* 蓮花).

Numbers proceed lineally, be it forward or backward, and cumulating merits by reciting sutras and names of the deities in the way Wu advocates parallels the passage of physical time. Time, above all, is the ordering principle at the very bottom of Wu's religious consciousness. Wu's intense desire for the sense of continuity is worked into the particular method of chanting the “Zhunti Mantra,” which, maintains Wu, is recommended by the immortals to him: “king” (*wang* 王) of all mantras, the “Zhunti Mantra” has to be chanted with utmost devotion and concentration, not to be disrupted by conversations. Should the exercise be hindered, nothing can be achieved. All this, Wu says, had been related in the last letter that Wu wrote home, but he fears that the letter has gone astray, and hence repeats it one more time. The senses of continuity, wholeness, and self-sameness are what Wu aspires to—be them physical, psychological, or spiritual—in his efforts to sustain his identity in a fragmented life.

Religious and mysterious experiences loom large in Wu's memory of exile. And they further constitute a collective, family memory of the Wus. Wu's father wrote him in the first autumn he spent in Ningguta in 1659:

My great-great-grandfather said, the most important thing is to stay warm. If one is warm enough, the wounds won't attack. But you live in such a freezing cold place, warm *Qi* is rare, and to make things worse, your clothes are light. Alas, what can we do? This worries me yet even more. But all this cannot be changed by human will, we can only beg the Buddha to fortify you. Every day, I, your wife, and your sister all chant the *Diamond Sutra*, the *Gaowang Guanshiyin Sutra*, and the “Great Compassion Miraculous Mantra,” for the purpose of saving you from your ill fortunes. The powers of Buddha are boundless, they will certainly save you from your adversities. The *Gaowang Guanshiyin Sutra* is the country-sutra of Gaohuan of the Northern Qi era. It saves people from their calamities, and is proven to be miraculously powerful. I got it from Li Guanxi, and Fucao also regards it highly. Even though you wouldn't be able to see it in your place, whenever we chant it over here, its powers can already fortify you. Also, you often chant the *Diamond Sutra* and the “Great Compassion Miraculous Mantra,” that would suffice!

先高祖嘗言，第一要暖，暖則痛不發。但居此寒慄之地，暖氣既少，衣又單薄，爲之奈何！則又增我愁耳。此非人力所可爲，只求佛力護祐。我與汝婦汝妹，每日誦《金剛經》、《高王觀世音經》、〈大悲神呪〉，以祈救汝苦厄，佛力無邊，自當脫汝於患也。《高王觀世音經》，乃北齊高歡國經也。救人苦厄，應驗甚神。我從李灌溪處得來，甫草亦甚稱之。惟汝處未之見，然我處誦自能護汝，況汝常持《金剛經》、〈大悲神呪〉，足矣！⁸⁹

In one of the comments by Melton that we cited above, it is argued that the exilic condition “breaks the thread of memory and consciousness” and “fragments the sense of self.” Wu’s misfortune did not only shatter Wu’s self, but also all those close to him. Wu and his family resorted to spirituality and mysticism to mend the rift in memory and consciousness brought on by Wu’s displacement, and to reach out to one another. Back home in China proper, the Wu family was particularly zealous in the *Gaowang Guanshiyin Sutra*. In their belief, the mystic power conjured up by reciting this sutra was so wondrous that it traversed over great distances in space and time to fortify Wu in Ningguta. In this mysticism and faith, the Wus were intimately, even though remotely, held together, and strong feelings of union, continuity, and transcendence were achieved. It is significant that this religious reckoning came early in Wu’s exile. Whether or not the thread of consciousness of the Wus was telepathically connected by virtue of the mystic powers is not for us to comment, but the consciousness associated with the sutra recitation and its elevating powers certainly transformed into a collective, empowering memory to linger in and affect the Wus.

Religious pursuits and cultural and historical memories

Cultural and historical memories are at work here, too. The syncretism of Buddhism and Daoism in the religious practice of the Wus reflected the larger Ming-Qing religious character, common in folk religions and, as in the case of the Wus, in literati and prominent families.⁹⁰ Beyond personal and familial religious practice and memory, Wu Zhaoqian’s spiritual endeavor in Ningguta was also driven, understandably, by a psychological need to continue and sustain a constitutive element in his identity from before his dislocation, and, tapping into its sources of tenacity and strength, to transcend the fetters imposed by exile. In this connection, no matter how genuine and palpable these experiences were for Wu, they can still be understood as a “substitution,” a resemblance and transformation of their original forms and a necessary accommodation of his former self.

One of the religious items that Wu possessed in Ningguta was a copy of the *Jin’gang jing* 金剛經 (Diamond Sutra), written in calligraphy by Fang Gongqian. One

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁹⁰ For a succinct account of the religious hybridity in the Ming-Qing traditions, see Kwang-Ching Liu & Richard Shek’s “Introduction” to their edited volume, *Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2004), pp. 1-25.

day after the morning worship session, Wu showed the sutra to its original owner. Viewing the sacred text again, Fang Gongqian sighed and wrote the following lengthy verse:

“Hancha shi yu *Jin’gang jing*, nai yu Yiyou chun shoulu, ji Lin zi Keren buke, Renchen fu jianzhi, bi er Zhang chisong zhe, gai er zuo ci” 漢槎示予《金剛經》，乃予乙酉春手錄，寄林子可任不克，壬辰復檢識，畀兒章持誦者，慨而作此 (Hancha Showed Me a Copy of the *Diamond Sutra*, Which Was from My Hand in the *Yiyou* [1645] Year. I Intended to Mail It to Lin Keren, But Did Not Manage to. In the *Renchen* [1652] Year I Looked at It Again and Added Another Postscript to It. Then I Gave It to My Son Zhang to Read and Chant. I Was Moved to Write This Poem). (1661)

有客朝梵餘
示我貝葉字
心知是予書
蒼茫迷記憶
前後筆勢殊
年歲分道媚
前書乙酉春
嘉興般若寺
書爲林溫州
同難許相寄
時才歷滄桑
痛矢入山志
後書壬辰冬
白門重作記
睽邈已八年
殘函塵廢置
雲樹不可攀
徒灑書空淚
剎那又十年
華彝三歷地
萬卷盡飄零
蓮花端在笥
衰晴勞摩娑
心傷魂欲墜
如出他人手
如憶他人事
甲申雖啞凶

Came a guest after the morning worship
To show me words of the Buddhist sutra.
I know inwardly it was my handwriting,
Although the memory is dim.
My earlier and later styles differed,
Among the different years, strong and graceful strokes varied.
I first dated it “the spring of *Yiyou*,
Written at Temple of the Highest Wisdom.”
I did that for Lin Wenzhou,
To offer solace when we were meeting with the same trials.
At that time we just experienced the chaos of change—
Determined we were to retire to the mountains.
Then I wrote down “the winter of *Renchen*”;
It was in Baimen where I added another postscript to it.
Until then, I had not set eyes on it for eight years,
It had been abandoned in a worn case, in dust.
Alas, the clouds and trees we could not reach,
Tears shed for our thwarted dreams.
In a flash, ten more years had elapsed,
Places inner and outer, three I had seen.
My ten thousand *juan* are all scattered about,
But the lotus flowers still rest solemnly in the bookcase.
I am in my sunset,⁹¹ it is hard to stroke the words one by one,
My heart hurts and my soul is exhausted.
It is as if the writing were from another person’s hand,
It is as if recounting someone else’s experience.
Although in the year of *Jiashen* I encountered great dangers,

⁹¹ *Qing* 晴 in *shuaiqing* 衰晴 might read *jing* 睛, then “failing eyesight.”

偷生猶偶遂	I somehow managed to save my skin.
林子雖別離	Although Lin had gone away from me,
關山猶同類	Despite the great distance separating us, we were of a kind.
只今天何方	But now, where on earth is this place?
踪迹胡然至	And why have I ended up being where I am?
生平好臨池	All my life I love doing calligraphy,
工拙等兒戲	Artful or clumsy, it is just a child's game to me.
流傳夫何心	I did not intend to have it passed around,
仗茲無上義	It was all the will of the supreme power.
疲腕對琉璃	Now I hold my tired wrist above the Resplendent Universe,
筆墨杼微勳	My inking is rather thin and loose.
百感歸一空	The hundred emotions will prove illusory in the end,
義盡融榮瘁	In the eternal flux of all things, ⁹² there is no glory or shame.
經歷歲月畸	The years and months that I have lived seem very extraordinary,
佛眼應無二	But in the Buddha's eyes, there is nothing odd about them. ⁹³

This poem has a clear chronological sequence which includes dates. Yet what gives time its substance and significance here are not such cues as *Jiashen*, *Yiyou* or *Renchen*, but the historical events that Fang lived through. This scroll of *Diamond Sutra* was a silent witness to history and Fang's life during the chaos of the Ming-Qing transition. It was swept along in the flow of history like its owner and was once forgotten. When it reemerged in Ningguta it went unnoticed by Fang but was valued by Wu, who used it in worshipping the Buddha. This copy of the sutra, in a sense, was a historical relic itself, and the traces of history inscribed on it—Fang's various calligraphy styles, the postscripts in which Fang disclosed the stories surrounding the sutra, and the physical condition of it—must have reminded Wu from time to time of the historical forces that shaped it and his own life. This *Diamond Sutra* has an immense expressive power and is a discursive embodiment of religious and historical memories. The emotional value that Wu attached to it and the emotional response that it inflicted on Fang should serve as a reminder that Buddhism as a religion was also part of the historical process. The exiles who practiced Buddhism in Ningguta were continuing and maintaining a practice that was as religious as it was social, cultural and historical, as Buddhism was a major part of the late Ming and early Qing life. This system of belief was inextricably linked to their former identities and to their personal and collective memories.

Another religious event in Ningguta in the summer of 1661 potently illustrates the spiritual as well as the earthly nature of the exiles' religious pursuits. On the Zhongyuan Festival 中元節 (the fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month), a group of exiles gathered to conduct a Daoist ritual. For the occasion, Fang Gongqian composed

⁹² *Xihua* 羲畫 in the original refer to the hexagrams created by the mytho-historical figure Fu Xi.

⁹³ *He Louju ji*, "Xinchou gao" 辛丑稿, included in *Ziliao huibian*, pp. 172-73.

a series of eight poems entitled “Zhongyuan ‘Buxu ci’” 中元步虛詞 (“Cantos on Pacing the Void,” Written on the Zhongyuan Festival), the subtitle of which tells the real story: “Mr. Tan, Dewei, Hancha, Zhuozhi and My Son Heng Set Up an Altar and Chanted Five Hundred *Juan* of the *Scripture of the Three Offices* as a Merit for the Underworld” (坦公、德惟、漢槎、琢之及兒亨, 結壇誦《三官經》五百卷, 曰以利冥).⁹⁴ The expressed purpose of the gathering and chanting the *Scripture of the Three Offices* was to create religious merit for the ghosts (this festival is otherwise known as the Hungry Ghosts Festival in folk belief). This seemed in keeping with the spirit of the occasion and was common enough among Daoist devotees; it is still a living tradition. But existing along with the ordinary significance of the event was probably a subliminal purpose of the exiles’ own.

Besides the Zhongyuan Festival, religious Daoism observes also the Shangyuan 上元 and the Xiayuan 下元 festivals, on the fifteenth day of the first and the tenth lunar months, respectively. The three *yuan* correspond to the three *guan* 三官, the Three Celestial Officials, namely, the Tianguan 天官 (Official of Heaven), the Diguan 地官 (Official of Earth), and the Shuiguan 水官 (Official of Water), in the Daoist celestial bureaucracy. According to the *Sanguan jing* 三官經 (Scripture of the Three Offices): “The Official of Heaven bestows happiness, the Official of Earth grants remission of sins, and the Official of Water averts misfortune” (天官賜福, 地官赦罪, 水官解厄).⁹⁵ Of the three, the Official of Earth is associated with the Zhongyuan Festival, and his largess includes remissions of sins. One feels that the exiles’ religious acts on the festival day were to create merit for the deceased as much as to seek merit for themselves—they hope for the celestial salvation, for their earthly “sins” to be forgiven and pardoned. Two of Fang Gongqian’s “Pacing the Void” cantos betray their interest:

函關消息問菩提	Messages of the Han Pass we now seek in the Bodhi tree;
清磬聲回地軸移	In the pure resonance of the brass bowl, the axis of the earth shifts.
東度西來無二義	Going to the east or coming from the west makes no difference,
月明江海共琉璃	When the moon shines, both the river and the sea sparkle clear.

地下同文有重輕	Earthly people of the same culture might weigh differently,
人間湛露共生成	Yet the human world is all nourished by the great imperial bounty.
但教臣罪容三宥	If this official’s transgressions are mercifully forgiven,
萬古天王都聖明	Heavenly kings of all ages are sagely wise! ⁹⁶

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁹⁵ The complete name of this book is *Taishang sanyuan cifu shezui jie’e xiaozai yansheng baoming miaojing* 太上三元賜福赦罪解厄消災延生保命妙經, *Xu Daozang* 續道藏 edition, in *Zhengtong Daozang* 正統道藏 (rpt. Taipei: Xinwenfeng chuban gongsi, 1985), 58:276.

⁹⁶ Nos. 7 & 8 in the series, in *He Louju ji*, “Xinchou gao,” included in *Ziliao huibian*, pp. 171-72.

There is a tinge of self-mockery and humor in both poems. The legends go that when Laozi 老子 stopped over at Hangu Pass he created Daoism by writing and leaving behind the *Daode jing* 道德經 (The Book of Dao); and that when the patriarchal master, Bodhidharma, came from the west, he brought to China Zen Buddhism. The two religions are able to coexist harmoniously and even complement each other in the first poem above, just as they were largely merged in the popular mind during Ming-Qing times. The second poem unabashedly reveals the ruling motive, object, and purpose of the exiles' religious undertakings and endeavors in their banishment: they are calling upon the combined powers of Buddhism and Daoism to save them from their misery and predicament.

Observe also how Wu concludes a long autobiographical poem that he would write later this year:

鮑焦空憤世	Bao Jiao's anger at the world was vain; ⁹⁷
郭璞且遊仙	Guo Pu's choice, rather, was to roam into the immortal realm. ⁹⁸
繫表深遐慕	In subtle and nuanced words, your devotion deepens,
區中謝廣緣	You excuse yourself from the all-encompassing, mortal feelings.
應知能却物	I know you are truly detached from worldly things,
誰是未忘筌	You are not one who is still trapped by the net.
蠖屈賢人隱	The looper arches its body, the worthy man hides;
龍馴靜者便	With the dragon mastered, the quiet one acts carefree.
願言乘氣嶠	I wish to ride on the masses of <i>Qi</i> ,
相見問真詮	To join you in seeking the true understanding.
跡滯愁難達	Yet my steps are restricted, and my sorrows suppressed;
情乖忿詎蠲	My feelings are upsetting, and my anger cannot be alleviated.
廬山春不度	The spring will not cross Mount Lu,
青海凍猶堅	The cold is stiff in Qinghai.
地脈通噓氣	The underground veins connect with the Great Breath—
天心合轉圜	The heavenly heart will eventually be moved.
未能期汗漫	I cannot aspire to be Hanman,
聊復卜筮筭	I resort to practicing divination. ⁹⁹

(lines 183-200)

Here Wu desires to rise above, to join his friend in seeking Daoist truth and refuge (lines 191-92); the sense of community and reunion is interpretively what is yearned

⁹⁷ Alluding to the chapter "Daozhi" 盜跖 in the *Zhuangzi* 莊子: "鮑焦飾行非世, 抱木而死"; Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, comp., *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, *Zhuzi jicheng* 諸子集成 edition (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), p. 431.

⁹⁸ Guo Pu (276-324) of the late Western Jin era wrote "Youxian shi" 遊仙詩 (Poems of Roaming into the Immortal Realm).

⁹⁹ "Yijiu shuqing ji Chen Zizhang yibai yun," QJJ:53.

for. Wu is met, however, by a series of insurmountable physical obstacles and adversities (lines 193-96). The feelings of frustration and rupture or rift are manifest. Lines 197-98 are most nuanced in that they, while still drawing on Daoist transcendentalism, intimate Wu's fantasy of imperial mercy for his and his friend's release: *tianxin* 天心 is the heart of the Heavenly King 天帝 and, read between the lines, that of the Son of Heaven, the emperor on earth.¹⁰⁰ Wu, nevertheless, has to come to terms with the cruel reality that his aspirations to be Hanman, a Daoist immortal remembered for his free, boundless roaming, will not be fulfilled (line 199). Listlessly, he turns to divination to redirect his mind and energy (line 200). The development of the meaning structure (and Wu's psyche thereby shown) resembles the underlying structure and dynamics of the religious and spiritual pursuits of Wu and his fellow exiles in Ningguta.

In fact, if we step back a moment and think about what Wu has said in the very beginning, we can see that the context and contours of Wu's religious calling and his psychological needs are already all there. Wu begins his March letter for parents as follows, and I quote to end this section:

On the 19th of the 2nd month, your son Zhaoqian kowtows to you, father and mother, one hundred times: Last night Commander-in-chief, Mr. Ba, came back from the capital. He said that father and mother and the whole family had been pardoned. Hearing that, I was mad with joy. Even if I placed first in all the three examinations,¹⁰¹ I would not have had the same level of happiness. I immediately went to the images of the Guanyin Bodhisattva, Zhunti, and Mother Dou to express my gratitude to the mercy of the Buddha. Now that you, father and mother, were saved and returned home, even though your son is still stuck in this remote desert, what regrets do I have? But the Buddha had promised me that your son would certainly return. Thus, there will certainly be a day on which you son will rejoin you, father. All I need do is strengthen myself and pray even more, so that I will return south soon, to serve you, dear father and mother.

二月十九日兒兆騫百拜父母兩親大人膝下：昨晚昂邦巴公自都中來，云父母及諸骨肉俱已遇赦。兒聞此信，不覺歡喜欲狂，比之聯捷三元，亦無此樂。聊向觀音、準提、斗母諸聖像前，叩謝佛恩。今父母已脫然還家，兒雖居窮漠，亦何所恨。但佛許兒以必歸，則我父子必有重聚之日，惟有慰加虔禱，以求早得歸南，侍奉兩親而已。¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ In a long poem of 1661 of Wu, *tianxin* occurs in this couplet: “臣罪何當惜，天心詎可量”；*ibid.*, p. 76. It clearly stands for the heart of the emperor.

¹⁰¹ Civil examinations at the provincial capital, the national capital and the palace.

¹⁰² QJJ:284. Later in the same letter, Wu says: “[玉雲諸仙] 又言：父親為諸生時，曾持 [〈準提呪〉] 三年，故成進士。當時若能久持不輟，則今日之厄皆消矣。兒聞此仙訓，如甘露灑心，迷人得路，虔持之心，日益增猛”；*ibid.*, p. 286.

The vicissitudes of Wu's trauma and narrative

Many exiles experience what has been called “psychohistorical dislocation,” resulting in a “breakdown of symbolizations around family, religion, authority in general, and the *rites of passage* of the life cycle.”¹⁰³ And it is believed that “the autobiographical act helps to heal the disruption in identity that they experience. . . . Writing down their [the exiles'] life stories helps them overcome the injuries of exile.”¹⁰⁴ The therapeutic powers endowed in the act of writing autobiography have much to do with the form and structure of a narrative. Marilyn R. Chandler, in “A Healing Art: Therapeutic Dimensions of Autobiography,” puts this most succinctly: “Designing and telling a life story is purgative, reconstructing, integrative, transformative activity. The basic requirements of narrative—pattern, structure, closure, coherence, balance—all engage a writer in crafting a whole out of fragments of experience.”¹⁰⁵ This holds true for a great many exile writers and their experiences. Our observations of Wu Zhaoqian's narrative of exile, however, depart from their wisdom.

The memory and narrative of Wu emerging from his letters, poems, and other prose writings, though coherent and structured, lack a beginning and resist a closure. The refusal of the closure came from Wu's relentless desire and determination to see the writing process and the associated empowering dynamics that he initiated in 1658 to be continued into the present and, if needed, into the future. This event in Wu's story and life could only be brought to a closure by, as Wu so passionately hoped, an official forgiveness from the emperor to let him go back to China proper.¹⁰⁶ And throughout, Wu was reticent about his Yingtai reexamination memory, which must have been very confusing, frustrating, painful, and hurtful. This missing empirical event, which can be considered as the real origin of Wu's miserable story, renders Wu's narrative epistemologically incomplete. Likewise, Wu never mentioned the physical punishment that came along with the emperor's sentence for him: Wu received “forty strikes” (*sishi ban* 四十板) on the buttocks. This certainly inflicted great physical and psychological pains on Wu, and the feelings of humiliation, insult, and shame must have been too enormous to swallow. We should remember that the imperial sentence marked the “official” beginning of Wu's exile. With these key

¹⁰³ Robert J. Lifton, *The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), p. 296.

¹⁰⁴ Melton, p. 83.

¹⁰⁵ Marilyn R. Chandler, “A Healing Art: Therapeutic Dimensions of Autobiography,” *a/b: Auto/Biography Studies* 5.1 (1989): 6.

¹⁰⁶ We agree with what Lambek and Antze observe of “memory as narrative”: “Written texts are finite, while narrative memory, in principle, is not. Breaks, endings, decisive moments of closure depend upon the other institutions in which the stories are inserted—ritual transformations and cycles, jural verdicts, therapeutic judgments, and . . . the failure of the world to bear witness.” See their *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*, p. xix.

recollections missing, the narrative emerged remains fragmented and disrupted—the sense of wholeness or oneness of identity is not achieved, and the process of healing through reenacting and giving meanings to past wounds and momentous events becomes problematic.

Memory is selective. We observe that Wu repeatedly returned to the act and circumstances of his writing the apologetic poems that aimed to win the sympathy of the emperor and the high officials. As argued above, that was a bittersweet experience for him, giving him an illusion and a fantasy that the power of his poems would ultimately save him from his disgrace. What Wu refused to admit, however, was that his poems failed and he was actually exiled. In this connection, Wu's revisits to this episode did not help put things in perspective, or at rest; instead of healing the wound, they prolonged it.

Wu's remembrances in their textual configurations, considered along with other related materials, betray signs or symptoms of what has been called traumatic memories. Insights offered by psychoanalysis are invaluable for us to understand the enigma of trauma. Psychoanalysts, as Robert M. Galatzer-Levy describes it, define trauma not in terms of external events but through the effects of events on the subject:

Psychoanalysts use the term to refer to events whose intensity is such that the person is overwhelmed to the point of not functioning in any ordinary psychological mode. . . . At the time of trauma, the traumatized person cannot give himself a minimal sense of safety or organization because of the intensity of the experience. He feels overwhelming anxiety, helplessness, or at least the threat of those states.¹⁰⁷

Bessel A. van der Kolk draws our attention to three major features of traumatic memories: (1) They generally remain unaffected by other life experiences; (2) They may return with a vividness as if the subject is experiencing it again; (3) These memories are primarily sensory and emotional; they cause a state of speechless terror, in which the victims may be unable to precisely articulate what they are feeling and thinking.¹⁰⁸ And literary critic Cathy Caruth speaks of the “literality” and “nonsymbolic nature” of the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) pathology: “The pathology consists . . . solely in the *structure of its experience* or reception: the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it. To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or event.”¹⁰⁹ Trauma also leads to extremes of retention and forgetting: vivid intrusions of traumatic images and sensations are as common as

¹⁰⁷ Robert M. Galatzer-Levy, “Psychoanalysis, Memory, and Trauma,” in Paul S. Appelbaum et al, eds., *Trauma and Memory: Clinical and Legal Controversies* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 142.

¹⁰⁸ Bessel A. van der Kolk, “Traumatic Memories,” in *Trauma and Memory*, pp. 245-46.

¹⁰⁹ Cathy Caruth, ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), pp. 4-5.

traumatic amnesia, the loss or absence of recollections for traumatic experiences.¹¹⁰

On April 15, 1658, at the Yingtai exam site, some of the candidates were mired in an engulfing paralysis and were *zhuizhui qi li* 惴惴其慄 or *zhanli* 戰慄, literally “trembling in terror.” (Derived from the poem “Huangniao” 黃鳥 (Mao no. 131) of the *Book of Odes*, the expression *zhuizhui qi li* is closely related to a historical event of involuntary suicides by imperial order.)¹¹¹ The environment and atmosphere were so terribly oppressive and frightening that Wu could not even hold his brush (*buneng wobi* 不能握筆). This reveals that the intensity of negative emotions and sensations impaired all of Wu's internal capacities and coping mechanisms. Panic-stricken, unable to react and function, Wu produced a blank paper. The poet was traumatized. It is also important to note that Wu was held in custody in the Ministry of Justice before and after the exam, having been cut away from sources of solace, organization, and support in the course of the crisis. Subsequently, he was publicly and mercilessly shamed and pilloried. Then came the unbearable agony of exile.

Traumatized persons tend to be involved in episodes similar to the traumatic event (Sigmund Freud named this “repetition compulsion”). We see that Wu repeatedly recreated (hence reenacted), with vivid details and emotion, his reaction to the accusation, and the act of writing the apologetic poems became his fixation with the 1658 event. We understand this as Wu's effort to regain control of what he had passively experienced. He recreated the writing episode in the hope of having his earlier failure to write to happen differently. Understandably, the 1658 memory caused immense anxiety, depression, guilt and shame in Wu. He regulated his awareness to reduce the psychological distress. The memories surrounding his breakdown at the Yingtai exam and the resultant physical punishment were thus barred or blocked from entering his mind and his writings. This is repression, a defense mechanism. Wu's situation was then further complicated by the trauma of exile. Thereafter, the 1658 narrative and the exile narrative were intricately interwoven; the two complicated, complemented, informed, and contended with one another. The accounts of his life in exile were littered with his 1658 memory. Wu's compulsive act of writing in Ningguta exhibited the same dynamics and anticipation as in his 1658 poetic defense. Besides religious piety, Wu's fervent practice of Buddhism and Daoism was also obviously driven by the desire to extricate himself from the traumatic experiences and memories.

Up till then, Wu's closest encounter with the emperor had occurred in 1658; it caused Wu great psychological damage and created an illusion of redemption through literature and, later, religion. The spring of 1661 saw the death of the Shunzhi emperor and the enthronement of Kangxi. The hope of impressing the emperor again sprang to life in Wu's bosom, and the traumatic memories returned to gnaw and devour him all over again. Sadly, reenacting the traumatic experiences, as psychoanalytic research has

¹¹⁰ Van der Kolk, “Traumatic Memories,” in *Trauma and Memory*, pp. 247-50.

¹¹¹ According to traditional commentary, this poem was made by the people to criticize Duke Mu of Qin 秦穆公 (d. 621 B.C.), who had “the three worthies” buried alive with him.

revealed, does not necessarily yield therapeutic effects.

Lord Guan's prognoses actually proved correct. Wu's parents did regain their freedom that year. As for the "golden rooster" that Wu had been so vehemently hoping for, it did appear, albeit not until twenty years later. After writing the May letter to his parents, Wu fell sick because he was putting all the hope and confidence he could muster into the words to his parents, but was seeing no results of his steadfast faith. Fang Gongqian relates in "Wenbing Hancha" 問病漢槎 (Inquiring about Hancha's Well-being) (May 31, 1661), no. 1:

傾城爭問病	The whole city inquires about your well-being,
病小見情深	Your illness is mild but our concern is deep.
故國全家信	Family letters from the former country
天涯獨子心	Disturb the heart of this lonely man at the end of the sky. ¹¹²

Wu was still in a state of lethargy and extreme despondency a few months later. Again, Fang Gongqian informs in his "Wen Hancha xiaoyang zhouwo zhaozhi. Shi wen qi shiren fulai" 聞漢槎小恙晝臥招之時聞其室人復來 (I Heard that Hancha Was a Bit Sick and Slept in the Daytime. I Wrote This To Call Him Over. [I just heard that his wife still had to come here.]):

鄉信偏能攪客思	Letters from home particularly stir the wanderer's emotion—
六千里路夢回時	A road of six thousand miles, you traverse in your dreams.
病多豈是驚風雨	You fall ill easily, but not because of the dreadful wind and rain;
情苦應知甘別離	You are suffering, try to cope with the pain of separation.
放梵暗明孤佛火	In the Buddhist hymns, the lone Buddhist lamp flutters;
借書斷續古人詩	On and off, you write out the poems of the ancients.
白頭轉作加餐語	How come it is this white-headed man who says, "please eat more"? ¹¹³
曳屣還來過短籬	Put on your sandals, come across the short fences to see me! ¹¹⁴

The next existing letter that Wu wrote his parents dates to March 8, 1662, the contents of which reveal that Wu had not received responses from his parents and friends to any of his 1661 letters. As can be observed in the above discussion, the Fang father and sons had been a wealth of emotional support for Wu in Ningguta. Unfortunately for Wu—but very fortunate for the Fangs—the Fangs had received an imperial pardon and returned to China proper the previous winter. In the March letter of this year, Wu relates that on New Year's Day he had consulted Lord Guan again. As

¹¹² *He Louju ji*, "Xinchou gao," included in *Ziliao huibian*, p. 169.

¹¹³ Alluding to the line, "Please, please try to eat more" (努力加餐飯), from No. 1 of the "Gushi shijiu shou" 古詩十九首; *Wen xuan* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), p. 538.

¹¹⁴ *He Louju ji*, "Xinchou gao," included in *Ziliao huibian*, p. 170.

in the previous year, his parents' prognoses were good. As for his own return, Lord Guan was not particularly encouraging this time.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ QJJ:292.

吳兆騫流放初期的創傷記憶 與文學、宗教的追求

嚴志雄

清順治十五年(1658)，順治帝以江南丁酉(1657)科鄉試疑有情弊，親自復試舉人於瀛臺。「江左三鳳凰」之一、以詩賦著稱於時的吳兆騫「戰慄不能握筆」，交白卷而出。南闈科場案定讞，吳氏被判流徙遼東寧古塔。十六年七月，吳氏抵戍所，開始長達二十二年的流放生涯。吳氏的作品構成清代文學遺產中相當特殊的一部分，是研治中國流放詩學一筆十分珍貴的材料。

本文集中探論吳氏順治十八年(1661)上半年所寫作的詩文及其致父母、友朋的書信。是年一月，順治帝崩，康熙帝繼位，大赦天下。此一歷史機緣煽起吳氏南還的熾熱願望，吳氏作品在不同層面上強烈地反映、形構出此一心理情境。本文以「創傷記憶」為理論、分析指歸，探究吳氏此一時期作品所呈顯的特色，並嘗試重構吳氏的心理、精神狀態。吳氏本年作品的心理、象喻結構必須溯源自順治十五年的創傷經驗、記憶，而其特徵約止於康熙二年(1663)；數年之間，有一相對獨立的意義脈絡可供指認。

流放是時間、空間、身分、文化的多重斷裂，而記憶是流人賴以維持自我的完整、統一感覺的心理、精神機制。吳氏順治十八年前後的作品具有濃烈的「自傳」意味，又兼有敘事的傾向，編織記憶以建構自我形象、身分的意圖十分強烈。吳氏自出塞至本年生活中最堪注意者，厥為吳氏固執不懈的文學創作及極其虔誠、精進的宗教追求。通過對重點文本的細讀推敲，並結合心理分析、文學理論對「創傷」的認識，本文嘗試提出觀察吳氏此一時期作品的一個新的認知詮釋視域，為進一步研究吳兆騫開拓一異於前賢的新方向。

關鍵詞：吳兆騫 創傷 流放 記憶 文學 宗教

